Media Nations
Global Dynamics of Media

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Some Comments on Battle of Symbols

"The concept was so compelling that I will adopt it — with reference of course — to the beginning of my remarks at tomorrow's Ohio State's summer quarter commencement ceremony, certainly a symbol in itself."

Karen Holbrook, President
The Ohio State University

"I read *Battle of Symbols* with interest and was pleased with the overlap in our ideas. I wish you the very best on the book."

Joseph Nye, Jr., Dean
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University

"We here at the Monterey Institute of International Studies fully appreciate the centrality of symbols in communication. I will make certain a copy of *Battle of Symbols* goes into our library so our students may also gain from it."

Chester Haskell
Former President
Monterey Institute of International Studies

"Fraim offers us a highly readable analysis of the mass media dominated symbolic universe in which we all live. The *Battle of Symbols* is entertaining, but it is also profound — offering readers important insights into the role of symbols in American society and culture."

Arthur Asa Berger
Professor of Broadcast and Electronic Communication Arts
San Francisco State University

"Most interesting. There are many 'goodies' in Fraim's bright and exhilerating work. A fascinating and compelling commentary on 'the battle of symbols.' "

Donald Theall
Professor Emeritus Trent University
Former President Trent University
Author *The Virtual Marshall McLuhan*

"Very interesting and disturbing because I think it is right on target."

David Aakers
Haas School of Business, UC Berkeley

"Every technology at one rearranges patterns of human association and, in effect, really creates a new environment which is perhaps most felt although not most noticed in changing sensory ratios and sensory patterns."

<div align="right">
Marshall McLuhan
"The Future of Man in the Electric Age"
BBC Monitor Interview with Frank Kermode
1965
</div>

"Your chart of media and cultures has provoked the idea that what you have assembled is actually the beginnings of a sensory profile of each group – something that we tried years ago to put together but didn't know how. Such a chart will give, if the studies are done right, an exact guide to the perceptual bias of the user. This could be invaluable to a marketer or a teacher or a propagandist of any stripe. (I don't use the word in a pejorative sense but in a technical sense.) It needs a lot of refining, but it is the proverbial 'back door' into the ways of knowing a group."

<div align="right">
Eric McLuhan
Email to John Fraim
3/27/03
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Much of this book was inspired by a slim little important book called <u>The Penguin Atlas of Media and Information</u> by three Australian media professors — Mark Balnaves, James Donald and Stephanie Hemelryk Donald. I appreciate all of their comments on the original concepts for this book. The type of data in their book and the comparative study of global media will (I feel) become one of the most important new disciplines in the 21st century.

Also, thanks to the many who have visited our website www.symbolism.org and have offered comments and suggestions and made it the most popular site for symbolism on the Internet.

<u>Table of Contents</u>

Introduction

The following is an extension of our on-going research into symbols and symbolism and their relationship to national and global culture. It is particularly an elaboration of the research in our book Battle of Symbols: Global Dynamics of Advertising, Entertainment and Media (Daimon Verlag, 2003).

In view of the tragic events of 9/11, the book Battle of Symbols proposed a basic taxonomy of traditional and contemporary duality symbols in Eastern and Western culture. It argued that the major duality symbols in the contemporary world come from the areas of advertising, entertainment and media. Most of the book concentrated on the *content* of symbols contained in advertising and entertainment while the *context* of symbols (or methods for producing and accessing them) represented by media received much less consideration.

The current book focuses on media and moves towards the development and application of a global symbolism of media use. Although symbols are not specifically the topic of the book, theories and techniques of symbolism are utilized with

discussion of such key aspects of symbolism as cycles, duality, alignment and correspondence.

While <u>Battle of Symbols</u> was basically about global opposition symbols of differentiation, a relatively small section of the book discussed symbols of commonality and alignment. The present work amplifies this section and suggests that the greatest symbols of commonality in the 21st century will come from common media use.

<center>* * *</center>

Some of the initial implications of viewing the world from this new symbolic perspective (we term "media nations") are explored in this work. We emphasize initial implications. In effect, we are more interested in original exploration than meticulous analysis, in suggesting new context rather than defining current content.

The book is divided into three sections. The first section suggests a framework for viewing the world from the perspective of media nations and provides a quantifiable method using readily accessible, accurate and current data. The second section applies data to a few selected nations and then offers a comparative data analysis of a number of nations. Finally, the third section proposes some areas of application.

In all of this, we attempt to simply suggest a different map of the world is possible rather than provide details of its geography and boundaries. More though, we suggest this different map is already in place yet invisible (or inaudible) to our present way of looking at the world through outdated "glasses." Hopefully, these ideas will stir other ideas and perspectives as well as provide tools allowing a different perception.

Many believe that *changing the world* is necessary. A few, though, realize that *seeing the world differently* is the real challenge. As Marcel Proust once observed, "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes."

And so too, seeing the world from the perspective of media nations does not involve seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.

Palm Desert, California
January 2004

I. Media

1. The Soft Boundaries of Nations

"Symbols of all kinds have detached themselves from their original roots and float freely, like dandelion seeds, around the world."

Walter Truett Anderson
All Connected Now

"Increasingly, resources and threats that matter, including money, information, pollution, and popular culture, circulate and shape lives and economies with little regard for political boundaries. International standards of conduct are gradually beginning to override claims of national or regional singularity. Even the most powerful states find the marketplace and international public opinion compelling them more often to follow a particular course."

Jessica Mathews
"Power Shift"
Foreign Affairs
January/February 1997

Underlying many contemporary global problems and conflicts is the perpetuation of traditional place-based communities and communication technologies based on the printing press and its production of written words in an era of electric spatial technologies and virtual communities. While many still view global confrontations as conflicts between familiar ideologies and cultural elements it is more useful and realistic to see them as conflicts between old and new communication technologies

as-well-as the "hard" boundaries of political nations and the "soft" boundaries of cultural communities.

Throughout history, particularly the recent age of imperialism and colonialism, national boundaries have been defined more by political power than consensus from common cultural elements such as language, religion or economics. Indeed a good part of the current world's national boundaries were forcefully forged by despots, czars, emperors, kings, kaisers or shahs and drawn into national boundaries at The Congress of Vienna in 1815, Berlin in 1884 and 1885 or The Treaty of Versailles in 1919.[1]

Footnotes

[1] See the interview "The Shah Always Falls," with the military historian Ralph Peters by Fredric Smoler in the February/March 2003 issue of *AmericanHeritage*. "There are certainly times when we desire stability in international politics, but in the underdeveloped world an obsession with stability means preserving failure and worse. Overvaluing stability is a heritage of the Cold War, over the course of which we rationalized our support of some very cruel regimes and we deposed elected governments we didn't like. You could justify in terms of the greater struggle. But you cannot justify it today … if you look at the 1990s, America has been defending the legacy of czars, emperors, kaisers, and kings. It's ludicrous. The greatest democracy in history defends borders drawn by European imperialists … When we say that borders are inviolable, that we always respect sovereignty, we pretend that somehow humanity has achieved this magical state where existing borders are perfect. Well, they're not perfect."

Today, however, nations and communities are much more likely to coalesce through mutual agreement around electronic communication technologies such as television, telephones and the Internet. In addition to the production of words, these new technologies increasingly produce images and symbols. Rather than being contained by the fixed boundaries of place, these new technologies float freely in the changing context of space. Rather than be forced together through the political power of kings, czars or shahs these communities are more likely to gather around celebrities and cultural icons like moths around yellow porch lights.

Some view these dynamics as confrontations between two types of power — the "hard" power of the past imperial, industrial world and the "soft" power of the emerging electronic, post-industrial world. Joseph Nye, Dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, notes, "Military power and economic power are both examples of hard command power that can be used to induce others to change their position."[2] In contrast to "hard" power, "soft" power represents "an indirect way" to exercise power:

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[2] Joseph S. Nye, Jr. *The Paradox of American Power* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.8.

A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world

politics because other countries want to follow it,

admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its

level of prosperity and openness. In this sense, it is just

as important to set the agenda in world politics and

attract others as it is to force them to change through the

threat or use of military or economic weapons. This aspect

of power — getting others to want what you want — I call

soft power. It co-opts people rather than coerces them.[3]

Whereas hard power is composed of direct military, political and

economic force, soft power is composed of indirect cultural

factors. While the traditional school of hard power still has a

substantial following, Nye and others suggest a contemporary

global trend towards soft power.

Mechanical Technology, Hard Power	Electronic Technology, Soft Power
Military, Economics, Politics	Media, Symbols, Images
Products, Hardware	Brands, Software, Entertainment
Industrial Age, Print Media	Information Age, Electric Media
Rules, Theories	Institutions, Values, Culture
Place, Content	Space, Context
Traditional Nations	Virtual Communities
Kings, Czars, Emperors, Shahs	Celebrities, Cultural Icons
Direct Influence, Coercion	Indirect Influence, Attraction

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[3] Nye, Ibid. p. 8, 9.

Table 1.1

Types Of Power

The dichotomies between "soft" and "hard" power can be extended to a
number of areas.

These dichotomies between communication technologies and types
of power can be extended to a number of other areas suggested in
Table 1.1 above.

Most of these dichotomies are familiar cultural elements
forming the media ecology of everyday life. While not as
apparent or familiar as opposing football teams, they
nevertheless work in the background forming a continuous dynamic
of global nations and cultures.

Nations defined by the "soft" boundaries and brought
together through "soft" power we term "media nations." Seeing
the current global map in terms of media nations rather than
political nations holds the promise of discovering hidden
commonalities in current political differences as well as
locating hidden differences in current political commonalities.
But more than forcing new boundaries over current maps, a media
nations perspective serves to make visible existing boundaries
hidden just a little below the surface of current political
boundaries.

2. Media Nations Method

A media nations perspective of media is concerned with the media particular populations *use* rather than the content of symbols these populations *produce*. In other words, it concerns itself with media *context* rather than media *content*.

Creating a media nations perspective involves considerations centered on media types, qualities, classifications, correspondences and dynamics. Once these considerations are addressed, analysis turns to media ratios in nations and media rankings on a global basis. After global rankings are classified, the creation of a Global Media Index (GMI) is possible through the comparative method.

* * *

The first step in viewing the world from a media nations perspective is defining contemporary **types** of media use. While media is a vague word, the most useful definition considers it

as embodied by the leading contemporary types of mass media and communications technology.

The second step is consideration of the major *qualities* of media. The most helpful is to see media from a physiological and psychological perspective. Here, Marshall McLuhan's analogy of media as extensions of various human senses is helpful.

The third step is the consideration of major classifications, dichotomies or *dualities* of media. Again, Marshall McLuhan's duality of "hot" and "cool" media offers a good framework to create a contemporary duality based around what we term "broadcast" and "interactive" media.

The fourth step locates *correspondences* of the major classifications of media to such factors as politics, economics, culture, trade and technology. This helps to provide a broader perspective for viewing emergent media nations and demonstrate its symbiotic connection with major cultural and social institutions.

The fifth step involves consideration of the *dynamics* or movement of media. We discuss basic theories of media evolution, cycles and dualities. If media moves by its own internal cycles (an important question which has never received nearly enough attention) then a large part of the challenge is to find alignment with the current stages within these cycles.

The sixth step involves identifying the *ratios* of media use in particular nations. Each nation possesses a mixture of media used in various ratios. For example, in Nation A, 59% of the population might use telephones, 31% read newspapers, 30% have a television set and 67% a radio. These ratios create a media profile for that particular nation. This data is currently readily available and updated regularly by a number of reliable global sources. Obviously, the ability to provide quantifiable data (rather than qualitative data based on media content) is one of the key benefits of a media use approach.

The seventh step involves translating national ratios into global national *rankings*. For instance, in the Nation A example above, the 59% telephone use might translate into a global ranking for Nation A of #8. In other words, Nation A is the #8 ranked telephone usage nation in the world. Like media ratios, these rankings are currently available and updated regularly by a number of reliable global sources.

Finally, from consideration of the foregoing factors it is possible to create a formula establishing a *Global Media Index* (GMI). This index considers national media ratios and rankings and establishes a type of media profile which includes the aggregate effect of media in a particular media nation.

Overall, a media nations perspective relies more on a comparative methodology than an analytical one. It is interdisciplinary with a particular reliance on the methods of comparative anthropology. Other relevant disciplines and subject areas involved in media nations analysis are media ecology, psychology (group, developmental and media), sociology, mass communications, communications theory, political science, marketing and demographics.

3. Media Types

Identifying types of contemporary communications media seems relatively simple if we consider the Hollywood defined "short list" consisting of entertainment media and primarily film and television. However, it becomes more difficult if we consider the broader perspective of media Marshall McLuhan addressed in <u>Understanding Media</u> which contained such diverse elements as housing, roads, games, comics, money and clothing.

For purposes of defining media nations, we use a selection of media types which is broader than Hollywood's "short list" yet narrower than McLuhan's extensive "laundry list." A selection that contains the major advertising media and communications technology meets this criteria.[4] Based on this criteria, our basic list is shown below in Table 3.1.

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[4] Jim Surmanek, *Media Planning* (Chicago, IL: NTC Books, 1996). In *Media Planning*, Surmanek lists the following major types of advertising media: the Internet; TV; radio; newspapers; magazines; out-of-home; interactive; traditional mail; fax machines; direct response (advertising messages with an 800 number such as TV, radio, magazines, newspapers, outdoor ads, direct mail); home shopping by TV; interactive Kiosks and video on demand.

Key Media
Television
Telephones
Computers
Radio
Newspapers

Table 3.1

Key Media

Two key media and communications technology devices on the list — television and telephones - needs to be further broken down for purposes of defining ratios of media within nations.

Television sets are the basic tool for accessing broadcast media and therefore television set ownership offers key data for media nation analysis. However, within the TV set ownership category, satellite television and cable television data is readily available and important. Satellite television is likely to demonstrate access to global broadcasting (and its attendant global images and symbols) while cable television likely to demonstrate the degree of programming segmentation within nations.

And, telephones need to be broken into the two great contemporary categories of telephones - line telephones and wireless (or cellular) telephones.

Once these considerations are added to the list, the
following list of media key media ratios in Table 3.2 is
obtained:

Key Media Ratios
Television Sets
Television Cable
Television Satellite
Telephone Lines
Telephone Cell
Computers (Internet)
Radio Sets
Newspapers

Table 3.2

Key Media Ratio Data

In providing this list, one recognizes additional forms of
modern hybrid media and types of popular entertainment like the
following:

- Films

- Magazines

- Books

- WiFi Devices

- CDs

- DVDs

- Online Video Games

- PDAs

- Pagers

Some of these carry large amounts of advertising (magazines, films) while others carry little or no advertising (books and CDs) and some have a limited amount of advertising (DVDs) while others are emergent hybrid media (WiFi which combines Internet and cellular telephone technology and interactive video games).

While data like the number of magazines in a particular nation or the number of movie theaters or films seen weekly by inhabitants offers valuable comparative media insights, it is beyond the scope of this early work in media nations.

One of the fastest growing types of interactive media –
online games — is not included in the list.[5] A number of
observers believe that online video games will become the
dominant media of the 21st century. Like movies and television,
the metaphors of video games will come to dominate major
institutions and such as the entertainment industry. However,
scattered broadband connections have not yet allowed for the

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[5] Bruno Bonnell, the President of video game company Atari, noted in a
December 2003 *New York Times* article that movies already reflect the
influence of video games noting, "The golden age of movies is gone … What
they do today to survive is they multiply the special effects to catch up
with what the kids want, because they've seen it in the incredible universe
of these video games. It used to be, 'Well, let's make a movie and then make
a video game version as a licensed product.' The next step to this will be
the collaboration between the stories, between the complexity of their
stories and the personal expression of the video game." Globally, the entire
video game industry earned $28 billion in 2002 and in America it is growing
at around 20% a year. According to *Fortune*, Americans spent more time playing
video games in 2003 — about 75 hours on average — than watching rented videos
and DVDs. And, a nationwide survey found that virtually 100% of college
students in 2002 played video games. Video games come in a few key media.
There are those that come on a CD for installation on computers, those that
need platforms (like Sony's Playstation or Microsoft's Xbox) and there are
those that are interactive online. It is the interactive online video games
that hold the greatest potentials for interactive media. Known as "massively
multiplayer online role-playing games (or MMORPG) these are played in real
time against friends or total strangers in remote locations. While MMORPG's
are played failry extensibvely, they have yet to catch fire because of
Internet limits of current broadband links to the Internet. Still, the most
popular current MMORPG is called Lineage with four million subscribers
worldwide, primarily in South Korea where Lineage is an outright phenomenon.

full impact of onine video to emerge. Once broadband connections become more readily available around the globe, online video gaming will become an important factor in creating media nations. It will also become an important figure for comparative media usage.

Finally, a few words should be said about the access and use of print media like newspapers, books, magazines and, to an extent, the Internet. In effect, more than access is necessary to use print media. Rather the ability to read is first of all necessary. In other words, literacy levels in nations have a strong relationship to the ratios and percentages of print media. And, as one might suspect, lower literacy levels relate to lower use ratios for print media and higher use ratios for non-print electric media like television which features images rather than words.

4. Media Qualities

One of the more useful perspectives on the qualities of media was developed by Marshall McLuhan. Basically, McLuhan viewed various media as extensions of individual senses. For example, television is an extension of the eye and the sense of vision while the telephone is an extension of the ear and the sense of hearing.

While it is relatively easy to locate individual qualities of particular media, the challenge today in the age of multi-media is to consider the aggregate quality of various types of media. Television might extend the eye and telephone the ear but what is the effect of a culture that constantly uses a simultaneous mixture of TV, telephones and other media?

In effect, one can say that citizens of media nations have a number of senses extended based on ratios of media types in these nations. Consideration of the overall effect of this

multi-media extension has the potential of creating a type of collective perceptual bias of the nation.[6]

For instance, nations with a high ratio of visual media technologies might possess a different sensory map than those with high ratios of auditory media technologies. At the same time, communities with high ratios of visual media technologies have similar sensory maps to others with high ratios of visual media technologies. As an example, a high telephone use nation is likely to find much commonality with other high telephone use nations but less commonality with high television use nations.

The quality of simultaneous perceptions from multi-media has a close relationship to the concept and history of synesthesia or the state where the various senses are mixed together and one "hears" colors and "sees" sounds. There is initial research relating this state with ancient cultures, children and artists. But there is much to learn from studying

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[6] Eric McLuhan remarks on the idea of creating a media profile of various groups in a 3/27/03 email to the author. "Your chart of media and cultures has provoked the idea that what you have assembled is actually the beginnings of a sensory profile of each group - something that we tried years ago to put together but didn't know how. Such a chart will give, if the studies are done right, an exact guide to the perceptual bias of the user. This could be invaluable to a marketer or a teacher or a propagandist of any stripe. (I don't use the word in a pejorative sense but in a technical sense.) It needs a lot of refining, but it is the proverbial 'back door' into the ways of knowing a group."

the correspondence between modern multi-media nations and the

state of synesthesia.

5. Media Dualities

"… the problem resides in the independence achieved by representations that, having escaped from the control of human beings, proceed to address them in a monologue that eliminates all possible dialogue from human life. Such representations, though born of social practice, behave as independent things."

Abselm Jappe

Guy Debord

Media comes in various types possessing certain qualities. However, can it be placed into large-scale categories or dualities that will help us better see global media nations?

Marshall McLuhan's view of media as extension of the senses focused on the individual senses. By focusing on the individual, the interactionary elements of media received less attention. But McLuhan offered an idea for looking at this interaction with his concept of "hot" and "cool" media which considered the *participation* of one's senses with media rather than *extension* of one's senses by media.

While it can be argued that all media offers extensions of particular senses, not all media allows equal participation.

McLuhan developed the key classification of hot and cool media to categorize various types of media.

Hot And Cool

McLuhan's "hot" and "cool" media appeared as a section in Understanding Media yet was never fully explored over his lifetime. In his famous book McLuhan suggested a form of dichotomy in media when he observed that media is either "hot" or "cool." To McLuhan, hot media is filled with so much information that it is non-participatory for the user. On the other hand, cool media offers less information and allows more participation by the user. An example of hot media is radio which radically extends one sense. On the other hand, cool media, such as the telephone, offers a participatory media for the user.

In a general sense, McLuhan felt that visual media was usually "hot" media which provided more information while auditory media was usually "cool" media providing less information. However, McLuhan felt that some visual media like TV was cool while other visual media like films was hot. In Understanding Media he offered a good elaboration noting:

There is a basic principle that distinguishes a hot medium

like radio from a cool one like the telephone, or a hot

medium like the movie from a cool one like TV. A hot medium

is one that extends one single sense in 'high definition.'

High definition is the state of being well filled with

data. A photograph is, visually, 'high definition.' A

cartoon is 'low definition,' simply because very little

visual information is provided. The ear is given a meager

amount of information. Telephone is a cool medium, or one

of low definition, because the ear is given a meager amount

of information. And speech is a cool medium of low

definition, because so little is given and so much has to

be filled in by the listener. On the other hand, hot media

do not leave so much to be filled in or completed by the

audience. Hot media are, therefore, low in participation,

and cool media are high in participation or completion by

the audience. Naturally, therefore, a hot medium like radio

has very different effects on the user from a cool medium

like the telephone.[7]

In addition to the above hot and cool variations between media,

McLuhan put forth the idea that there might be both "hot" and

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[7] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, pp. 22-23.

"cool" parts of one particular media. McLuhan offered an example in prose using a famous historical figure:

> Francis Bacon never tired of contrasting hot and cool prose. Writing in 'methods' or complete packages, he contrasted with writing in aphorisms, or single observations such as 'Revenge is a kind of wild justice.' The passive consumer wants packages, but those, he suggested, who are concerned in pursuing knowledge and in seeking causes will resort to aphorisms, just because they are incomplete and require participation in depth.[8]

This dichotomy McLuhan noted within individual media can also be viewed with computers and the Internet. For example, email among friends or virtual groups like lists is participatory and would probably be considered a "cool" aspect of Internet media. However, spam messages through email are non-participatory and more of a "hot" aspect of the Internet.

Broadcast And Interactive

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[8] Ibid., p. 31

A contemporary way of expressing McLuhan's hot and cool dichotomy is in viewing communications media by its direction of flow. In effect, media can be seen as moving in one direction or moving in two directions. Communication media flowing in one direction can be termed "broadcast" media. Communication media flowing in two directions can be termed "interactive" media.

Broadcast media can be both visual (like television) and auditory (like radio). Its major characteristic is that it offers little or no interaction with its audience. It is sent (broadcast) to an audience that has little or no method of responding to it. With interactive media (like telephones) there is no distinction between sender and audience as participants constantly play both roles as sender and receiver.

There are some differences with McLuhan's hot and cool media dichotomies, though. For example, while McLuhan classified television as a cool media, the broadcast and interactive perspective considers television a hot, broadcast media. One needs to consider the ability for the media user to respond to media and television (at least network TV) does not allow this response.

Equality And Freedom

The direction of media flow is more than mere esoteric speculation. It has a central significance to those perpetual paradoxical duality symbols of the American ideal: equality and freedom.

In this sense, one can say that broadcast media is the handmaiden of equality. Its expression in culture is through the maintenance of a capitalistic economy and a consumer culture built around mass communication, mass production and mass culture. Its expression in politics is through such equalizing movements (allowing an "escape from freedom") such as totalitarianism, socialism and communism. In America, equality and the broadcast media have traditionally been embodied in the Democratic Party.

On the other hand, interactive media threatens equality and is the ally of freedom. Rather than support a mass culture, it supports a segmented culture built around niche markets, differentiated products and a diversity of beliefs and social norms. Its expression in politics is through entrepreneurism and a market economy. Its expression in communications media is the Internet and the metaphor of a continuing conversation. In opposition to the equality of the Democratic Party, interactive freedom has become embodied in the Republican Party.

Perhaps the leading modern "poster child" for interactive media is the Internet. The best-selling book The Cluetrain Manifesto views the Internet as that epitome of interactivity, an ongoing conversation. As stated in the book, "A powerful global conversation has begun. Through the Internet, people are discovering and inventing new ways to share relevant knowledge with blinding speed."

Yet one needs to be reminded that interactive media is not democratic simply by itself but rather in its use. When the Internet came out, many said it was the greatest democratic medium in history. But this has not proven to be the case as those who are the recipients of millions of pieces of spam email every day can attest to. As Internet observer Lawrence Lessig notes in The Future of Ideas, "The forces that the original Internet threatened to transform are well on their way to transforming the Internet … the future that promised great freedom and innovation will not be ours. The future that threatened the reemergence of almost perfect control will."[9]

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[9] Lawrence Lessig, *The Future of Ideas* (New York, NY: Vintage, 2002).

6. Media Correspondences

If one accepts a perspective of modern communications media based on dualities of hot and cool, broadcast and interactive, then a number of other relationships beyond media can be discerned. In effect, a media ecology becomes visible and accessible. Table 6.1 suggests some of these correspondences.

Broadcast (One Way), Hot	Interactive (Two-Way), Cool
Equality, Democratic Party	Freedom, Republican Party
Socialism, Communism	Capitalism, Consumerism
Broadcast Television, Radio	Telephones, Talk Radio, TiVo TV
Oil power, electric power	Solar, wind, hydro power
Pyramid organizational structures	Network organizations
Commonality	Differentiation, Diversity
Audio, Ears	Visual, Eyes
Space	Place
Mass culture (1920s — 1960s)	Segmented culture (1970s — 2004)
Closed Source Programming	Open Source Programming
Export	Export & Import
Context, "Medium"	Content, "Message"
Centralized Power, World Wars	Decentralized Power, Terrorism
Monism	Dualism, Pluralism
Production (Producers)	Production & Consumption
Totalitarianism, Authoritarian	Democracies
Mature & Boomer Generations	Generation X & Millenial Generation
Youth, Beginning of Life, Feminine	Adulthood, End of Life, Masculine

Table 6.1
Broadcast & Interactive Media Correspondences

Politics & Power

Political power in America has been based on both broadcast and interactive media, or the concepts of equality and freedom. A few examples illustrate this point. Under the FDR administration power was based on the concept of equality. Under the Reagan administration it was based on the concept of freedom.

There is a temptation to link broadcast and interactive media with the two American parties. While history evidences a strong relationship between broadcast media and Democrats as well as interactive media and Republicans, one needs to keep in mind that the real correspondence is between broadcast media and the concept of equality, and, interactive media and the concept of freedom.

A close correspondence to these concepts are power relationships based on the centralized (federal) power of broadcast media and the decentralized or distributed (state) power of interactive media. Related to centralized (broadcast) power is pyramid based organizational structures and related to de-centralized power is network based organizational structures. An additional relationship is power based on corporations and its broadcast "closed source" environment and power based on community participation and its "open source" environment.

In a more general sense, one can say that authoritarian and totalitarian governments are based around broadcast media while democratic governments are based around interactive media. There is evidence to support this contention in world history as well as current global media use data.[10]

At the same time, there is strong evidence that connects capitalistic consumer economies to broadcast media. In fact, there is good reason to suspect that capitalism is based around broadcast media's equality rather than interactive media's freedom. Authoritarian governments like China with massive economies based partly on capitalism often use interactive media like the Internet more for broadcast control than interactive freedom. At the same time, they do this under the guise of freedom in much the same way corporations utilize the Internet in America.

<center>Economics</center>

Broadcast media has a strong correspondence to mass culture while interactive media a strong correspondence to segmented culture. Certainly American history demonstrates that both broadcast and interactive media can operate within a

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[10] See the data presented in the chapters on "Media Ratios" and "Media Rankings."

capitalistic economy. Broadcast media was present in the first phase of capitalism with the creation of a mass culture and its associated activities of mass communication, production and consumption. Interactive media has presided over the second (late) phase of capitalism which has witnessed the breakup of mass markets into segmented markets and niche products.

While both interactive and broadcast media have operated within the American capitalistic economy, history shows that capitalism has experienced periods more influenced by socialist economic principles (the broadcast equality during the presidency of FDR) as well as periods more influenced by free market and entrepreneurial capitalism (the interactive freedom during the last years of the Clinton presidency).

The popular notion is that capitalism and democracy is based on an interactive freedom. However, we need to keep in mind that capitalism was built through broadcast media with its attendant creation of mass communications and culture. In effect, rather than serve as the "poster boy" for capitalism, interactive media might offer the greatest threat to capitalistic economies.

Trade

Trade involves an exchange system defined by import and export of resources. While nations traditionally exchange natural and human resources they also exchange communication using various types of media. In effect, they can be viewed as importers and exporters of media.

A balanced trading relationship involves an exchange centered on interactivity where media is both imported and exported. However, an unbalanced relationship minimizes media interactivity and occurs where media export greatly overshadows media import or media import greatly overshadows media export. When media import surges over media export, a nation (or community) loses its uniqueness as a distinct place and becomes homogenized into the surrounding area.
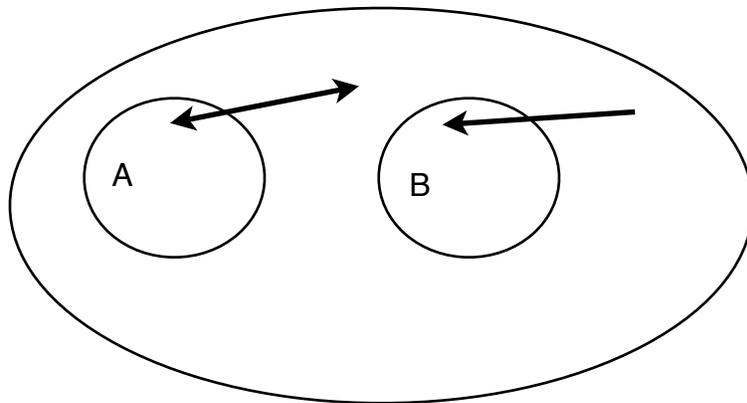
Illustration 6.2
Import & Export of Media

In Illustration 6.2 above, B Nation imports a great amount of broadcast media from its environment resulting in the loss of distinction from its surrounding environment. It becomes homogenized to its environment. On the other hand, Nation A maintains a good flow of media import and export. The result is that Nation A maintains its unique distinction from its surrounding environment.

Anthropologist Marcel Mause has shown the historic importance of exchange in his important work The Gift. He has shown that apart from the popular notion of exchange as an economic activity, it also played an important role in morality and in defining the individual. The ability to reciprocate the receipt of a gift was a central function in social situations.

The decline of balanced media trading relationships on a global scale is one of the great hidden factors underlying global dynamics today. Certain nations, cultures or communities are engaged in one-way broadcast media, the giving of "gifts," with little ability or desire to import or receive reciprocal "gifts." Nations maintain their cultural individuality by maintaining a balance between media. When they are subject to increasing amounts of one-way broadcast media they lose their individuality and merge into their surrounding environments.

The loss of cultural identity based on the flow of broadcast media is at the root of much of the violence in the Middle East. Individuals are concerned with the acknowledgement of their existence by being allowed to reciprocate to media.

Yet this is not allowed. But not only is it a problem in the large cities of the Middle East, it is also a problem in American suburbs such as Columbine. In effect, many homogenized suburbs of America can be viewed as similar to nations of the world which simply receive one-way broadcast without any opportunity for interaction. Some export capitols of American media are well known: the Hollywood entertainment community, the Madison Avenue advertising and communications industry and the Washington DC political community.

In a more general manner, and from the viewpoint of many nations of the world, America is seen as the grand nation of media export. And, in an even more general way, Western culture is seen as the grand culture of media export.

Cultural Elements

As we have suggested, broadcast media has a strong relationship to the creation and development of mass consumer culture while interactive media a strong relationship to

segmented, niche culture. However, in addition to these key

correspondences, broadcast and interactive media also have

strong relationships to leading elements and events of popular

culture which serve to symbolize equality and freedom. One is

certainly politics and the duality ideals symbolized by the

Democratic and Republican parties. In addition, they also find

symbolism in some of the broad elements of modern culture listed

below.

(A) Equality And Brands

A leading aspect of equality in contemporary culture is

represented by product brands. Historian Daniel Boorstin in The

Decline of Radicalism notes that instead of dividing people,

brands serve to unite under a common experience:

> The material goods that historically have been the symbols
>
> which elsewhere separated men from one another have become,
>
> under American conditions, symbols which hold men together.
>
> From the moment of our rising in the morning, the breakfast
>
> food we eat, the coffee we drink, the automobile we drive
>
> to work — all these and nearly all the things we consume

become thin, but not negligible, bonds with thousands of

other Americans.

Tony O'Reilly, the former CEO of brand powerhouse Heinz, echoes

the view of Boorstin noting "Truly great brands are far more

than just labels for products. They are symbols that encapsulate

the desires of consumers; they are standards held aloft under

which the masses congregate."

Advertising professor James Twitchell discusses the

equalizing effects of brands in his book Lead Us Into

Temptation.[11] Twitchell starts with the simple observation that

"we are powerfully attracted to the world of goods (after all,

we don't call them 'bads')." Far from being forced upon us

against our better judgement, Twitchell observes, "consumerism

is our better judgment." This is so because increasingly,

products and brands are what hold us together as a society,

doing the work of "birth, patina, pews, coats of arms, house and

social rank" - work previously done by religion and bloodline.

In effect, the experience of using a common contemporary

brand reanimates the past experience of early mass broadcast

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[11] James Twitchell, *Lead Us Into Temptation* (New York: Columbia University
Press, 1999).

media such as listening to a common radio broadcast (during the 30s) or watching a common television show (during the 50s).

(B) Messages And Freedom

While brands have an obvious relationship to modern cultural equality and a relationship to the early forms of broadcast media, discovering a large cultural "poster child" for freedom today is a more difficult task. We might agree that brands allow a type of congregation around equality, one could also argue that many brands symbolize freedom.

We might make the distinction, though, between the "medium" (context) of brands and the "message" (content) of brands. It is the "medium" of brands that promise a common experience. At the same time, the "message" of brands more often than not work at establishing the idea of freedom.

Contemporary culture is filled with numerous examples of leading brand messages promising freedom. The entire phenomenon of SUVs and offroad vehicles is certainly tied to the concept of freedom more than equality. So also are the rising popularity of

interactive video games, open-source development and peer-2-peer

communication exemplified by Napster and music sharing.[12]

Other examples of the infiltration of interactive media

into popular culture is the rise of reality television shows,

TiVo TV technology and talk radio. While much of the rise of

reality television programming is based on the economics of

creating leading television programming by using unknown actors,

a more subtle reason for its popularity is the proposition it

advances that television is an interactive media involving

audience participation. Reality programming uses content to

suggest interactivity. On the other hand, TiVo TV applies

technology to create this interactivity.

The phenomena of talk radio offers an interesting inroad of

interactivity into a basically broadcast media. Talk radio

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[12] An interesting extension of the idea of interactive freedom is occurring in
the open-source creation of advertising with something that Internet critic
Steven Johnson calls Mobspots, or advertising created by a crowd. Here, one
person might create the advertisement's music while another might write the
advertisement's copy and another create the advertisement's pictures or
images. One example is MoveOn.Org the Internet organization that supported
the candidacy of Howard Dean in the American 2004 presidential elections. In
October 2003, MoveOn.Org announced an open competition for a 30 second
commercial that "tells the truth about George W. Bush." The submissions were
rated by visitors to the site and the winning ad was put on television during
the week of the State of the Union address. As Steven Johnson noted in the
January 2004 issue of *Discover*, "Just as open-source applications are built
out of separately authored modules, the Web makes it possible to have
mobspots, political advertising created by a crowd."

maintains the illusion that radio is interactive and creates a

large electronic forum for communication. It is therefore not

surprising that this illusion finds its greatest support within

the ranks of Republicans, the party that represents the freedom

of interactive media. In the 90s and into the new century, the

Republicans have come to view television broadcast media as

increasingly under the control of Democrats so radio has come to

represent a conservative fortress in the midst of this TV

broadcast dominated environment. Yet while talk radio has

elements of interactivity, one needs to consider that the

greatest talk radio personalities are controlled by Clear

Channel Communications, one of the largest programming formula-

type broadcasting conglomerates in the world.

<u>Place & Space</u>

Electronic media create space and destroy a sense of place

while non-electronic media (such as print) support a sense of

place. This was brilliantly argued in Joshua Meyrowitz's

groundbreaking book <u>No Sense of Place</u>.

Although electronic technology has a general tendency to

blur the boundaries of place, the direction of communication

(defined by the dichotomy between broadcast and interactive

media) also influences this sense of place. Areas dominated by the reception of broadcast media (importing most of their communication as a "gift receiver" with little ability for the reciprocity of "gift giver") become homogenized with their surrounding environment and lose their sense of local place. On the other hand, areas dominated by interactive media (demonstrating a balance of trade between import and export of media) maintain a greater sense of place. Viewed in another way, place finds greater definition when broadcast media is exported than when it is imported. When imported broadcast media is significantly greater than exported broadcast media, differentiated place is homogenized into common space.

Yet while place still plays an important part in media, the overall trend of modern communications is dominated by electronic technology and its blurring of place boundaries creating the decline of a sense of place.

Centralized And Decentralized Power

"Electricity will take the place of God. Let the peasant pray to electricity: he's going to feel the power of the central authorities more than heaven."

Vladimire Ilyich Lenin

1918

Perhaps one of the great hidden correspondences of broadcast and interactive media is to centralized and

decentralized power. While capitalism preaches an interactive, decentralized freedom, there is good reason to believe this is little more than smoke and mirrors to hide the basic requirement of capitalism for centralized distribution of power.

Broadcast media is the communications version of this need for centralized power. And, there are also correspondences to broadcast media's centralization of power in the centralization of electricity and oil. In effect, electricity and oil are sent to consumers via a one-way direction that allows no ability for interaction. Attempts to generate power through decentralized natural resources such as wind and solar have traditionally met with opposition. The opposition has appeared to come from various sources in the scientific community but it has really come from the capitalistic system in general.

<u>Generations</u>

Broadcast and interactive media have a strong relationship to generations. In all nations, four generations can usually be discerned at any particular time. For example, in America these generations are Matures (born between 1925 and 1942), Boomers (born between 1943 and 1960), Generation X (born between 1961 and 1981) and Millenials (born between 1981 and 2003).

A number of leading researchers suggest generations are key symbols defining markets. In *Rocking the Ages* Yankelovich Partners executives J. Walker Smith and Ann Clurmans provide a new paradigm of generational marketing suggesting generations center around particular experiences, archetypes and products. They argue that key ideas, values and products relate to the three key current generations in America: the matures, baby boomers and the Xers. In effect, their argument can be seen as one suggesting that product symbolism clusters around generations.[13]

Mature (1925–1942)	Boomer (1943–1960)	Generation X (1961–1981)	Millenials (1981–2003)
Broadcast	Broadcast	Interactive	Interactive
Radio	Television	Cable TV	Internet

Table 6.3

Current American Generations & Major Media Preference

Smith and Clurmans argue that generational links bind together widely disparate individuals of varying education, incomes and life stages. These links cut across demographic and psychographic niches and might be a more effective means of segmenting markets than traditional marketing methods.

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[13] J. Walker Smith and Ann Clurmans, *Rocking the Ages* (New York: Harper Business, 1998).

But apart from centering on products and experiences, generations can also be viewed as centering around either broadcast or interactive media as Table 6.3 suggests. The Mature generation grew up with the beginnings of mass production, consumption and communication. The Boomer generation grew up with the beginnings of network television and was the last generation to grow up in a nation dominated by broadcast media. Generation X grew up in the early years of interactive media and witnessed the segmentation of the American mass market. And, the Millenials generation has grown up in an era of inundated with interactive media.

World Wars

There might be a relationship between war, and particularly world wars, to the dominance of broadcast or interactive media. As we show in the next chapter "Media Dynamics," the first half of the 20th century (1900 — 1960) was dominated by centralized broadcast media with its attendant correspondence to mass culture, totalitarianism, communism and socialism. On the other hand, the second half of the 20th century (1960-2000) was dominated by decentralized interactive media and market capitalism, terrorism and ethnic conflict.

The first half of the 20th century, when broadcast media dominated, saw two world wars. On the other hand, the second half of the 20th century, when interactive media was dominant, saw no world wars but the rise of terrorism and numerous regional civil battles.

The argument has been made that contemporary war is in decline by Ohio State University political science professor John Mueller. Professor Mueller argues that major war among developed countries is now rare and unlikely, and, despite appearances, conventional war in the wider world also is in decline. He observes that much of what now passes for war — "ethnic conflict" or outbreaks of the "clash of civilizations" — is actually something else: "opportunistic predation waged by packs, often remarkably small ones, of criminals, bandits, and thugs." [14]

Whether there is a relationship between broadcast media and large wars and interactive media and small civil battles needs to be explored. In the future, media ratios in nations might be a good predictor of war. If a relationship between broadcast media and large world wars is discovered, the return of the

[14] "Policing the Remnants of War" by John Mueller in *Journal of Peace Research* (September 2003), Sage Publications, 2455 Teller Road, Thosand Oaks, California 91320. Mueller is Chair of National Security Studies, Mershon Center and Professor of Political Science, Ohio State University.

cycle of broadcast media (discussed in the following chapter)

should engender great concern.

7. Media Dynamics

Perhaps the most important, yet least understood, correspondence of media is to time. A number of media theorists have brought forward arguments supporting the evolution of media from oral based to visual based and then a return to an oral based with electronic media. One of the first major theorists of media evolution was Marshall McLuhan and his ideas still offer the best framework for a discussion of media dynamics.

Marshall McLuhan divided history into three major periods, each shaped by a dominant communication form: oral, writing/ printing and electronic. According to McLuhan, each period has been characterized by its own interplay of the senses and therefore by its own forms of thinking and communicating.[15]

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[15] Much of this section is taken from the pre-publication article of Joshua Meyrowitz titled "Canonic Anti-Text: Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media*." This was written in 2001 and was to appear in: Elihu Katz, John Peters, Tamar Liebes, and Avril Orloff, (Eds.), *Canonic Texts in Media Research: Are There Any? Should There Be Any? How About These?*, Polity Press, which was in press at the time this material was sent to the author. We think it is one of the best short summaries of McLuhan's evolutionaries theories ever published.

Oral Based Media

Oral societies, as McLuhan suggested, live in an "ear culture" of simultaneity, circularity, and immersion. Hearing is multi-directional, fluid, and constant (the ear cannot be turned off in the way one can avert or shut one's eyes). Since the primary form of communication is speech, the oral world is "unified" both informationally and sensorily.

There are not great differences in what different people know and communicate about. And people in oral societies have a mythic, "in-depth" experience where all the senses live in relative balance. Multiple daily experiences and interactions involve sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell woven together. The oral tribal world is a "closed society" of high interdependence and lack of individuality.

Print Based Media

Literate cultures emerged with the development of writing with the phonetic alphabet. This broke through the tribal

balance and gave oral peoples "an eye for an ear" and made the sense of sight dominant. It also served to distance people from sound, touch and direct response. Unlike the other senses, the eye can experience the world from a great distance and with detachment. Such detachment is encouraged by the use of semantically meaningless symbols that represent sounds to produce words and sentences and paragraphs.

Unlike earlier ideographic symbols, phonetic writing bears no resemblance to the physical world experienced through multiple senses. It takes many sequentially written words (themselves composed of sequentially organized arbitrary symbols) to describe what can be understood in an instant through the tone and gesture of oral interaction.

With the spread of phonetic literacy, the oral world, which fostered shared experiences for those in the same space, divides into separate experiences for those who read and those who do not. The literate world splinters further into different experiences for people who read different types and levels of texts.

The spread of individual writing and silent reading encourages the development of introspection, individuality, "rationality," and abstract thinking. The shared experience of the tribe and the experiential cohesion of the extended family

diminish. With the coding and decoding of lines of one alphabetic symbol after another, the oral world of circles and cycles — with its repeating seasons, chants, and rituals — yields, over time, to a world of straight lines: assembly lines, single story lines, "rational" lines of thinking, belief in linear progress. Organic "acoustic space" is replaced by "visual space" that is divided into uniform and sequential areas.

This new sense of space encourages the development of artificial perspective, which shows a scene from a fixed viewpoint. With printing, large territories can be subjected to homogenized practices (nationalism, standardized laws, fixed pricing, standardized measures of intelligence, and so forth). From the circular world of sounds with its round huts and round villages, people move over time toward houses with straight walls on relatively straight streets in grid-like cities.

The world of simultaneity shifts toward one-thing-at-a-time, one-thing-after-another experiences. Magical thinking bows to linear cause-and-effect analysis. In short, the structures of the physical, social, and mental worlds of literate cultures come to resemble the linear patterns of letters on the pages of printed texts.

Electric Media

Finally, electric media bypass the lines of print and cause an overlap in experiences that resembles the directness, speed, and simultaneity of oral interaction. Humans are "retribalized." Electronic media return us to village-like oral encounters, but on a global scale. With electronic media, print-fostered divisions fade in significance, and everyone is involved in everyone else's business. Empathic responses extend beyond local geography. The widespread use of radio, television, and computer lead to a decline in all those cultural structures fostered by the spread of printing, including one-thing-at-a-time logic, disciplinary boundaries, print-supported hierarchies, and delegated authority. Instead, there is a "revulsion against imposed patterns" and people hunger for "wholeness" and "depth of awareness."

McLuhan suggested the world would become a "global village" under the retribalizing effect of electric media. Whether this has happened is still being debated as electricity is certainly not disributed evenly throughout the world but has much more of a correspondence to Western culture. Even if there is some form of "global village," a lot of the village is without electric lights. Obviously, global conflicts and diversity are very

persistent today and the movement towards globalism seems halted

somewhat from its pace in the late 90s.

Media Dynamics & Psychological Dualities

In all of this, one can see a general cyclic pattern of media evolution from oral to visual. This is not surprising considering developmental psychology has shown a corresponding development in individual senses from oral to visual. In effect, media evolution can be said to have a correspondence to psychological development. A number of scientists have also noted the relationship between human development and evolutionary trends.[16]

The movement from oral to visual senses has a strong correspondence to the two great psychological dualities, life and death. Freud's brilliant disciple Otto Rank suggested this in Will Therapy when he observed that human psychology is a paradox caught between the dual fears of life and death:

> The fear in birth, which we have designated as fear of
> life, seems to me actually the fear of having to live as an
> isolated individual, and not the reverse, the fear of loss

---

[16] Eric Neumann, *The Origins and History of Consciousness*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

of individuality (death fear). That would mean, however,

that primary fear corresponds to a fear of separation from

the whole, therefore a fear of individuation, on account of

which I would like to call it fear of life, although it may

appear later as fear of the loss of this dearly bought

individuality as fear of death, of being dissolved again

into the whole.[17]

To Rank, the conflict was never resolved within the individual.

As he observed, "Between these two fear possibilities, these

poles of fear, the individual is thrown back and forth all his

life."

The paradox that Rank finds in the dynamics of birth and

death find expression in media dynamics and their cyclic

interplay between oral based media and visual based media.

Media Cycles

Cycles are common to nature and evidence the fact that life

is a continual process of the cyclic movement from beginnings

(birth, life) to endings (death). Just as birth and death are

---

[17] Otto Rank, *Will Therapy* (New York: Dover, 1978).

the two grand symbols of the world, the beginning and endings of cycles can be viewed as bookend containers for congregations of duality symbols.

   Whether cultures have cycles similar to nature is one of the central questions of modern science, or at least modern western science. For our purposes, assume that culture has cycles similar to nature and that these cycles are represented by the dualities of broadcast and interactive media. This opens the interesting speculation that broadcast and interactive media have correspondences to the *context of nature* and time rather than the *content of culture*. One might here suggest the extension of Marshall McLuhan's famous axiom to read "The medium is the message and the message is time."

   Much of this goes against the popular conception of media as providing a method for producing and accessing the images of symbols rather than manifesting a particular stage in a cycle. In effect, popular opinion focuses on the content of media and fails to consider its context in time. However, much is opened up by consideration of media and its relationship to natural cycles, sequence and dualities.

Oral Media	Visual Media
Youth, Beginning Cycle	Age, Ending Cycle
Ear, Electronic Technology	Eye, Mechanical Print Technology
Equality, Death	Freedom, Separation, Life

Broadcast Media	Interactive Media

Table 7.1

The Dynamics of Media

For instance, as illustrated in Table 7.1 above, youth and the beginning of cycles evidence a strong relationship to the equalizing effect of broadcast media. On the other hand, age and the ending of cycles shows a strong relationship to the freedom and diversifying effect of interactive media. As we argue, the direction of media evolution (as well as symbol movement) parallels psychological growth, moving from unconsciousness to consciousness, feminine to masculine, equality to freedom, commonality to segmentation. In this sense, the media "zeitgeist" moves from broadcast at the beginning of cycles to interactive at the end of cycles.

20th Century American Media Cycles

America was founded at the parodoxical intersection of the twin symbols of freedom and equality, or one might say, interactive and broadcast media. Their cyclic dynamics have constantly pushed against each other to dominate periods of American history. These dualities have waged war under the

banner of the Republican (interactive media, freedom) and the Democratic Party (broadcast media, equality). These political ideologies have also dominated the "zeitgeist" of the times under the guise of a mass culture of equality and a segmented culture of freedom.

1900 — 1960	1960 — 2000
Broadcast Media	Interactive Media
Mass Culture	Segmented Culture
Democratic Socialism (FDR)	Republican Entrepreneurism
Network Radio & TV	Cable TV, Internet, Cell Phones
Mainframe Computers (IBM)	Personal Computers (Apple)

Table 7.2

20th Century American Media Cycles

The cyclic battle between the media dualities is evidenced throughout American history but it is perhaps most noticeable in the 20th century with the rise of electronic media. The first half of the 20th century (1900-1960) was dominated by the equalizing bias of broadcast media and its symbolic correspondence in various cultural and political forms such as totalitarianism, Nazism, Fascism, communism, socialism and mass production, communications and culture. The second half of the 20th century (1960-2000) was dominated by the freedom of interactive media and its support of such cultural events as postmodernism, relativity, diversity, differentiation, consumer

capitalism and custom production, niche-communications and segmented culture. Table 7.2 (above) illustrates this duality cycle.

Based on the theory of back-and-forth cyclic swings of media, the current period of interactive segmented media will give way to the beginning of a new cycle and a return to the dominance of broadcast equality. Whether this has already began to happen with the increasingly broadcast nature of original interactive media like the Internet is an excellent question. When it does happen though, media power will be based on a reduction to commonality rather than production of differentiation like it is today. New relationships will be discovered that draw together currently disparate populations.

20th Century Global Media & Political Cycles

Current opinion views national and cultural conflicts as basically confrontations between political ideologies and religious belief systems. In effect, as confrontations between ideologies and beliefs. However, the underlying structure of these confrontations might be more cyclic (relating to positions in media cycles) than ideological.

1900 – 1960	1960 – 2000
Broadcast Media	Interactive Media
Totalitarian, Communism, Nazism, Facism	Democracy, Market Capitalism, Terrorism, Rogue States,
Equality, Mass Movements	Freedom, Diversity, Segmentation

Table 7.3

20th Century Global Media Cycles

In Table 7.3 above, the correspondence between global media and political systems in the 20th century is noted. One can see that it parallels the evolution of American media development in its movement from mass based broadcast systems to interactive systems. For example, the development of mass culture and FDR socialism in America during the 20s and 30s had a global correspondence with the rise of totalitarian, communistic, Nazi and Fascist governments. And, the emergence of American media segmentation in the second half of the 20th century has a global correspondence in democracy, market capitalism, terrorism and rogue states.

While one can see a global movement from broadcast to interactive media, not all nations have been pulled along in the same cycle. In essence, nations represent different points in their media cycles. For example, some nations are dominated by the broadcast cycles in the age of interactive freedom. As we will later see, these are the low interactive nations with strong authoritarian governments such as Pakistan and

Afghanistan. Even nations which are within the general

interactive trend might still find they are at different

positions within the interactive cycle. For example, the nations

which bypassed telephone lines to go directly to cell phones are

at different positions in the interactive cycle than nations

where cell phones have developed from a long hisotry of in line

phones.

The occupation of different places within media cycles

might explain many conflicts today which are finding greater

difficulty with traditional explanations based on conflicting

ideologies, politics or religious systems.

For example, consider Nation A and Nation B which have

similar political systems and religious beliefs yet are

constantly in the midst of an ubiquitous cultural battle. Much

of this conflict could relate to various positions in the media

cycle and the consequental domination of different types of

media.

Nation A media use might be dominated by the equality of

broadcast media (representing a beginning cycle) while Nation B

might be dominated by interactive media (representing a ending

cycle).[18]

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[18] However, this example plays down the correspondence between politics, religion and media use. The real question is whether similar political and religious systems demonstrate similar ratios of media use.

II. Nations

8. National Ratios

Marshall McLuhan argued that electric technology would have a unifying effect creating one common "global village." While the contemporary world is certainly subject to many common symbols operating under an increasing global economy, it is more useful and realistic to view the world not as one "global village" but rather as a number of media nations possessing various ratios of electronic and non-electric communications technology. Citizens within these media nations use different types of media in various use ratios.

For example, consider media types and usage in the hypothetical media nation represented in Table 8.1 below.

Tele. L	Tele. C	TV Sets	TV SAT.	TV Cable	Radio	News.	Int.Host
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
25	90	50	30	50	70	40	70

Table 8.1
Media Ratios – Hypothetical Nation

While these figures are fictional, current media ratios for global nations are monitored and updated on a regular basis by a number of reliable global publications and research

organizations.[19] Basic source information for global media information is published under upcoming tables and detailed publication source information appears in Appendix A.

In the above example, the figures represent the number of particular media per 100 members of the nation's population. For instance, 25 out of 100 citizens (or 25% of the population) have telephone lines and 50% have television sets and 70% of the population has Internet access. The highest media is cellular telephones with 90% of the population owning cellular phones while the lowest media is telephone lines with only 25% of the nation owning inline phones.

<u>United States Media Ratios</u>

Consider media ratios in the world's leading media nation, the United States, in Table 8.2 below.

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[19] A comprehensive reference of global media research sources and publication infromation is published in the Appendix of this book. Some of the key sources are *The World Bank Little Data Book*, *The Illustrated Book of World Rankings*, *The Europa YearBook*, *World Statistics Pocketbook*, *World Press Encyclopedia*, *The Economist Pocket World in Figures*, *Economist Book of Vital World Statistics*, *International Telecommunications Union*, *World Bank Development Indicators* and *The Penguin Atlas of Media and Information*.

Tele. L	Tele. C	TV Sets	TV SAT.	TV Cable	Radio	News.	Int.Host
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
66	25.6	847	12	76	208	21.5	15

Table 8.2

Ratios of Key Media in United States

Source: Col. 1 — International Telecommunications Union, 2000

Col. 2, 7 — World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2000

Col. 3 — World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2000; Zenith 2000

Col. 4, 5 — Zenith 2000

Col. 6 — International Telecommunications Union, 2000

Col. 8 — World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2000

(From The Penguin Atlas of Media And Information)

A number of interesting observations can be made about ratios of key media in the United States. Perhaps the major figure that stands out is the tremendous number of television set ownership at 847% (or averaging over 8 sets per person). Compare this to the relatively low percentage of cellular telephone ownership at 25.6% or television satellite at 12%. Notice the relative high number of radio ownership at 208% (or averaging over 2 sets per person).

Laws of Media Ratios

National media ratios like the one above for the United States can be generated for each nation of the world. What might

these media ratio figures tell us? Is it possible to generate

any general laws of media ratios?

While the study of media nations is a relatively new field,

we argue that media nation ratios within nations have the

potential to provide startling new insight about nations. In

fact, we suggest that these figures represent an increasingly

important method for defining postmodern nations based on

elements of "soft" cultural power rather than traditional "hard"

political power. These questions fall into three major areas we

briefly discuss below. They are important to consider before

media ratio laws can be established.

(A) Relationships Between Media Ratios

First of all, there is the question of whether there are

relationships between the media ratio figures. In effect, does a

high ratio in one area create a low ratio in another area? For

example, consider Table 8.3 below which lists some of these

potential relationships.

High TV (Broadcast) Ratio = Low Cellular (Interactive) Ratio
Low TV (Broadcast) Ratio = High Cellular (Interactive) Ratio
High Newspaper (Literacy) Ratio = Low TV (Non-Literacy) Ratio

Table 8.3

Might there be laws that apply to these relationships? Can a general observation be made that high broadcast media ratios in a particular nation (high television, radio, cable and satellite ownership) brings with it low interactive media ratios in that nation (low inline and cellular telephones and Internet use)? Some of these relationships carry hidden factors. For example, high cell telephone use brings high interactivity yet the reason for this might be factors other than traditional political ones that one might immediately suspect. Reasons could center on factors such as a difficult landscape for inline telephones or coming late to the technology of telephones.

Again, much more study needs to be done in this area but the results could provide significant new insights into modern nations.

(B) Relationships Between Media Ratios & Cultural, Political Elements

In addition to the question of relationships between media ratio figures, there is also the question of the relationship between these ratios and outside cultural and political elements.

| High TV (Broadcast) Ratio = High Authoritarian Government Ratio |
| Low TV (Broadcast) Ratio = High Democratic Government Ratio |
| High Satellite TV Ratio = High Influx of Global Soft Power |
| High Cable TV Ratio = High Segmentation, Diversity |

Table 8.4

Media Ratios & Cultural, Political Elements

For example, in Table 8.4 above, are authoritarian governments most likely to be found in nations with a high degree of a particular media, such as broadcast television? Conversely, are democracies more likely to be found in nations with higher degrees of interactive media like the Internet and cell phones?

(C) Ratios of Use

Media ratios noted so far in this book relate to media ownership. However, a second important group of figures relating to media use needs to be considered. The percentages of people who own media devices is one thing; the number of hours these are used and the percentage of use is another thing.

Tele. L	Tele. C	TV Net.	TV SAT.	TV CAB	Radio	News.	Int. H	Other *
13 Hr.	9 Hr.	15 Hr.	19 Hr.	**	20 Hr.	3.3 Hr.	3.5 Hr.	10.6 Hr
13.9%	9.6%	16% **	20%	**	21%	3.5%	3.7%	11.3

Table 8.5

Use of Key Media in United States

Data from Veronis Suhler Stevenson Communications Industry Forecast. Exception is telephone data (columns 1 and 2) which is from Yankee Group. Both data sources were

published in <u>The Wall Street Journal</u> 1/26/04. Bottom row represents the hours translated into total percentages of all media use. * Other Media – Includes media not mentioned in our 8 categories but necessary for inclusion in order to calculate correct weekly hourly use percentages. This media and hours per week (weekly percentage of total in parenthesis after the hours figures) are recorded music at 3.3 (3.5%); magazines at 2.5 (2.6%); books at 2.0 (2.1%); home video at 1.3 (1.4%) and video games at 1.5 (1.6%). Total for the "Other Media" category in the far right (9th column) above is 10.6 Hours or 11.3% of the total weekly media use. ** Cable & Satellite — The 19 Hrs./Wk. is combined viewing for both cable and satellite television in the Veronis Suhler Stevenson data. TV Net in column 3 above means weekly viewing of broadcast (network) television.

Table 8.5 (above) shows the number of weekly hours various media are used in the United States. Note that key broadcast media (TV) holds 36% of time while key interactive (telephones) holds 23.5%. Note also that ownership (Table 8.2) does not evidence a correlation to use. For example, line telephones (Table 8.2) hold 66% owership but 13.9% use.

9. National Rankings

Media ratios show percentages of media within nations and have the potential for establishing what Eric McLuhan has termed a "sensory profile" or "perceptual bias" of these nations. As we have suggested, media use ratios open the door for a new comparative field which is able to quantify the increasing

prevalence of soft power over hard power in defining

contemporary nations. Unlike cultural or popular cultural

studies, it is less concerned with the content of culture (in

the form of leading story genres and brands) than with the tools

used to produce and access this content.

While national media ratios have their own inherent

importance to analysis of individual nations, these ratios find

greater relevance to the overall perspective of media nations

when they are given global rankings and compared with the

rankngs of other nations.

United States Media Rankings

All nations have particular media ratios and each of these

media ratios has an additional global ranking.

For example, consider the media ratios for the United

States (from the previous Table 8.2) translated into media

rankings in Table 9.1 below.

Tele. L	Tele. C	TV Sets	TV SAT.	TV Cable	Radio	News.	Int.Host
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
66	256	847	12	76	208	21.5	15.08
#5	#15	#1	#15	#5	#2	#23	#1

Table 9.1

Ratios & Global Rankings of Key Media in United States

While the media ratios of the United Staes (in row 2 above) alone have the potential of providing powerful insight into the nation, it is when they are translated into global rankings (row 3 above) that some startling new insights begin to appear.

As one can see, the United States is ranked #1 in the world in Internet access and television set ownership and #2 in radio ownership. On the other hand, it is ranked #23 in the world in newspaper readership and #15 in both satellite television ownership and cellular telephone ownership.

Some interesting questions are generated by these rankings. Perhaps the most interesting question is what other nations do these rankings compare with. Are these the traditional political ally nations of the United States that one might suspect? Or, do we arrive at a counterintuitive cast of new soft power allies?

Top Nations And Key Categories

With these questions in mind, we provide the following
tables listing the top ten ranked nations in the world in the
key eight media categories we have chosen to focus on. We
provide tables for each of the main eight types of media and at
the end a master table listing all together.

Top 10 Telephone (Line) Nations

The top ranked telephone line nations of the world, shown
in Table 9.2 below, evidence a predominance of northern European
nations.

Rank	Nation	Per 100
1	Luxembourg	72
2	Norway	71
3	Swaziland Switzerland	70
4	Iceland Denmark	68
5	Sweden United States	66
6	Canada	63
7	Netherlands	61
8	Germany	59
9	Singapore France	58
10	Hong Kong	56

Table 9.2

Top 10 Telephone (Lines)

Source: International Telecommunications Union, 2000

(From The Penguin Atlas of Media And Information)

Telephones, along with the telephone line network the
Internet, represent the leading interactive media in the world

so one would expect the nations listed above to possess the various corresponces that match interactive media we have suggested. Perhaps the most unusual addition to this list is Swaziland.

Top 10 Telephone (Cellular) Nations

Cellular telephones provide the greatest interactive media in the world today. Therefore, high cellular phone ownership should provide a map of nations with a high interactive media profile. When looking at the table below consider the major correspondences we have discussed previously to interactive media (such as the degree of freedom demonstrated as opposed to broadcast equality).

Rank	Nation	Per 1,000
1	Finland	572
2	Hong Kong	475
3	Norway	474
4	Sweden	464
5	Japan	374
6	Denmark	364
7	Israel	359
8	Italy	355
9	Singapore	346
10	Portugal	309

Table 9.3

Top 10 Telephone (Cellular)

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2000

(From The Penguin Atlas of Media And Information)

U.S. Telephone (Cellular) = #15 (256 per 1,000)

<u>Top 10 Newspaper Nations</u>

Newspapers are vestiges of print media in the world of electric media. While newspapers are increasingly an online interactive media, they still represent basically the print version of a "broadcast" media. One of the key factors to consider is that high newspaper use also represents high literarcy rates.

Rank	Nation	Per 100
1	Hong Kong	79
2	Norway	59
3	Japan	58
4	Finland	45
5	Sweden	44
6	South Korea	39
7	Kuwait	37
8	Singapore	36
9	Switzerland	34
10	UK	33

Table 9.4

Top 10 Newspaper

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2000

(From <u>The Penguin Atlas of Media And Information</u>)

One of the surprising things is the presence of the Middle Eastern nation of Kuwait on this list.

Top 10 Radio Nations

Radio is the oldest of the modern broadcast media but like television it has gone from common network broadcasts to local segmentation. However, the emergence of conglomerates like Clear Channel in the Unided States with its formulisic programming is moving radio in the United States back to the network programming era. Because of its low cost and portability, radio is one of the leading sources of information in developing nations.

Rank	Nation	Per 100
1	Nigeria	216
2	United States	208
3	Finland	148
4	UK	143
5	Denmark	113
6	Canada	103
7	South Korea	102
8	Switzerland	99
9	New Zealand	98
10	Netherlands Slovakia Norway	96

Table 9.5

Top 10 Radio

Source: International Telecommunications Union, 2000

(From The Penguin Atlas of Media And Information)

Top 10 Television Set Nations

Television set ownership is perhaps the most important media in the world as it represents the main agent of one-way broadcast communication. The startlingly high number of television sets in the United States really represents a segmentation of the American family as separate television sets go into the rooms of individual family members. The predominance of TV sets in the leading Western nations is apparent in Table 9.6 below except for the addition of the Middle Eastern nation of Oman.

Rank	Nation	Per 100
1	United States	847
2	Canada	715
3	Japan	707
4	El Salvador	675
5	UK	645
6	Finland	640
7	Australia	639
8	France	601
9	Oman	595
10	Denmark	585

Table 9.6

Top 10 Television Sets

Source: World Bank, World Development Indications, 2000

Zenith, 2000

(From The Penguin Atlas of Media And Information)

<u>Top 10 Television (Satellite) Nations</u>

Satellite television opens a nation's broadcast reception to global entertainment, news, symbols and brands. Perhaps more than any other factor, it is the grand media agent of globalism or homogenization. Most entertainment and brand symbols from Hollywood and Madison Avenue are "imported" into nations through satellite television. Notice the startling representation of the Middel Eastern nations in Table 9.7 below.

Rank	Nation	% Houses
1	South Korea Kuwait	77
2	UAE	75
3	Oman	72
4	Saudi Arabia	61
5	Australia	37
6	Germany	31
7	Japan	29
8	Qatar Jordan	28
9	Croatia	22
10	Hong Kong Sweden Norway	20

Table 9.7

Top 10 Television (Satellite TV)

Source: Zenith 2000

(From <u>The Penguin Atlas of Media And Information</u>)

Top 10 Television (Cable) Nations

Whereas satellite telelvision serves to import global symbols and images into nations, the effect of cable television is to segment national markets by offering greater programming choices. While the United States is first in TV sets, it is #5 in cable television following the high percentages of Singapore, the Netherlands and Belgium. Note the high ranking of China on the list. Does the high number of cable television homes in China represent greater programming choice in the world's largest authoritarian nation?

Rank	Nation	% Houses
1	Singapore	95
2	Netherlands	94
3	Belgium	91
4	Taiwan	80
5	United States Switzerland Canada	76
6	China	70
7	Israel	69
8	Argentina	63
9	Denmark	57
10	Germany	55

Table 9.8

Top 10 Television (Cable TV)

Source: Zenith 2000

(From The Penguin Atlas of Media And Information)

Top 10 Internet Host Nations

Along with cellular telephones, the Internet represents the great interactive media of the contemporary world. Since the beginning of the Internet era, the United States has led the world in Internet use. However, note the substantial representation of the Scandanavian nations in Internet use. One of the most noticeable absences from this list are Eastern and Middle Eastern nations. Despite proclamations by technoenthusiasts, the Internet still remains largely a Western media.

Rank	Nation	Per 10,000
1	United States	1,508
2	Finland	1,116
3	Norway	754
4	Sweden	581
5	Denmark	540
6	Australia	478
7	New Zealand	476
8	Canada	423
9	Netherlands	403
10	Switzerland	371

Table 9.9

Top 10 Internet Hosts

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2000

(From The Penguin Atlas of Media And Information)

Master Table

Top Ten Media Rankings

The results of the previous individual media tables are reproduced together in Table 9.10 below allowing for simultaneous comparisons.

Rank	Tele. L	Tele. C	TV Sets	TV SAT.	TV Cab.	Radio	News.	Int.
1	Lux.	Finland	U.S.	S.Korea Kuwait	Sing.	Nigeria	Hong K.	U.S.
2	Norway	Hong K.	Canada	UAE	Nether.	U.S.	Norway	Finland
3	Swazi. Swiss	Norway	Japan	Oman	Belgium	Finland	Japan	Norway
4	Iceland Denmark	Sweden	El Sal.	Saudi A	Taiwan	UK	Finland	Sweden
5	Sweden U.S.	Japan	UK	Austria	U.S. Swiss Canada	Denmark	Sweden	Denmark
6	Canada	Denmark	Finland	Germany	China	Canada	S.Korea	Austral
7	Nether.	Israel	Austral	Japan	Israel	S.Korea	Kuwait	New Z.
8	Germany	Italy	France	Qatar Jordan	Argen.	Swiss	Sing.	Canada
9	Sing. France	Sing.	Oman	Croatia	Denmark	New Z.	Swiss.	Nether.
10	Hong K.	Port.	Denmark	Hong K. Sweden Norway	Germany	Norway Nether. Slovak.	UK	Swiss

Table 9.10

Top 10 Nations In 8 Key Media Categories

Source: Col. 2 — International Telecommunications Union, 2000

Col. 3, 8 — World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2000

Col. 4 — World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2000; Zenith 2000

Col. 5, 6 — Zenith 2000

Col. 7 — International Telecommunications Union, 2000

Col. 9 — World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2000

(From The Penguin Atlas of Media And Information)

The table shows some striking facts. One is the strong representation of the Scandanavian nations of Finland, Norway, Denmark and Sweden. These nations show strong representation in both broadcast media and interactive media with a stunning representation of cellular telephone rankings, the greatest contemporary interactive media. What might these high rankings of cellular telephone use in the Scandanavian nations tell us about Scandanavian nations? What does high cellular telephone use in general tell us about nations?

This is an interesting question. Since cellular telephone is an evolution of the telephone, it does not necessarily suggest a high interactive culture per se but might also demonstrate a fast track route into the age of interactivity for nations that do not have a telephone line infrastructure. These might be nations that have come late to the telephone technology (such as developing third world nations) as well as nations whose geography (mountainous) makes it difficult to create an inground telephone line infrastructure.

Another noticeable fact in the table is the high rankings of Middle Eastern nations (Kuwait, UAE, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Qatar) for satellite television. While more research needs to be done in this area one conclusion is that these nations show a high access to global images and symbols, or

television produced outside their national boundaries. Might this be part of the reason the Middle East is so susceptible to Hollywood entertainment and garners such a disproportionately large perception of America from these images?

A final brief observation that is suggested by Table 9.6 above is the #1 ranking the United States in the greatest broadcast media device, television sets. At the same time, one notes the United States' absence from the top ten of the greatest interactive media, cellular telephone phones.

Outside of the media *ownership* rankings shown in Table 9.6, we need to also consider world rankings for weekly media noted in Table 8.5. For example, how does a 9.6% share of weekly time (Table 8.5) for cell phones rank on a global basis? Clearly, developing this data is important to a media nations study.

10. Global Media Index

As we have shown, comparative media rankings among global nations can be developed. While it is relatively easy to compare individual rankings with other nations, the real challenge is the development of an aggregate profile by exploring various approaches. One approach involves the development of a ratio between interactive and broadcast media. The other involves the development of an aggregation profile from ratios and rankings.

While it is obviously early in the "game" of developing a media nations perspective, we feel it is possible to eventually develop what we term a Global Media Index (GMI) which allows a quick, visual comparison of common or different media nations. In effect, a GMI index might form the new method for establishing the boundaries of nations and alliances in the 21st century. It also, might represent a powerful new method of market segmentation.

Interactive To Broadcast Ratio

One method of formulating a GMI is arrived at through a formula that compares rankings between interactive and broadcast media.

As we have argued through this book, the world's leading broadcast media is television while the world's leading interactive media is cellular telephones. Using cellular telephone rankings and television set rankings the following formula is relevant to creation of what might be termed a ratio based GMI or GMIR.

> - Rank of Cellular Telephones (CT) Per 100
>   - Rank of TV Sets (TS) Per 100
>
> $$CT/TS = GMIR$$

Illustration 10.1

GMIR

Global Media Index — Ratio Interactive To Broadcast

A formula developed from this data should relate interactive media to broadcast media. The most obvious way to do this is by dividing cellular telephone (CT) rankings in a nation by television set (TS) rankings as done in Illustration 10.1 above.

For example, comparing the top ranked cellular telephone nations of the world with their television set rankings, one can develop the following Table 10.2.

Nation	CT Rank	TS Rank	GMI = CT/TS
Finland	1	6	.16
Hong Kong	2	31	.06
Norway	3	12	.25
Sweden	4	16	.25
Japan	5	3	1.66
Denmark	6	10	.6
Israel	7	43	.16
Italy	8	24	.33
Singapore	9	40	.22
Portugal	10	14	.71
United States	15	1	15

Table 10.2

Top Ten - Ratio Based Global Media Index

(Based on Top Ten Cellular Telephone Nations)

Note: Some CT nations are tied in the rankings. The United States, ranked #15 in CT, is included for comparison.

A number of observations can be made from Table 10.2. Perhaps the major observation is that when TV sets in a nation have a higher ranking than cellular telephones, that is when broadcast one-way media is ranked higher than interactive two-way media, the GMI will be greater than the number 1. Conversely, when interactive media has a higher ranking than broadcast media, the GMI will be less than the number 1.

The lower the GMI, the greater the ratio between interactive and broadcast media. Here, the lowest GMI ranking in the above charts is cellphones in Hong Kong with a .06 GMI. The higher the GMI, the greater the ratio between broadcast and interactive. Here, the highest GMI ranking in the above charts is for cellphones in the United States at a 15 GMI. The second highest GMI, far ahead of the other nations, is Japan with a 1.66 index.

Apart from GMI rankings, another key observation is the similarity (or difference) in the GMI numbers. In this regard, note the similar GMI of Norway and Sweden in the table.

Aggregate Profiles

While the ratios between the two key broadcast and interactive media play an important part in the establishment of a GMI, still, they do not take into consideration the other media within nations. Might it be possible to create a media nations profile from consideration of all key media ratios and rankings within a nation? And, when creating this profile, might it be advisable to assign different weight values to various media in order to create a more realistic media nations profile? For example, these values might be assigned by breaking down

media use within a nation: a particular media type that receives 40 hours/week of use might be given twice as much weight as a media type that receives 20 hours/week of use.

In order to visualize how this aggregate profile formula might work, consider the hypothetical nation we presented in Table 8.1. The first row under the column headings represents the media ratios, the second row represents the rankings and the bottom row the percentages of use (hours per week) that each media receives. The rankings and hours are completely

Tele. L	Tele. C	TV Sets	TV SAT.	TV Cable	Radio	News.	Int.Host
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
25	90	50	30	50	70	40	70
#10	#5	#20	#25	#15	#9	#30	#2
5 Hrs.	8 Hrs.	8 Hrs.	10 Hrs.	15 Hrs.	7 Hrs.	3 Hrs.	20 Hrs.

Table 10.3
Media Aggregate Profile

arbitrary and do not relate to real figures of any nations.

A few words of explanation are in order regarding the breakouts under the television categories. For purposes of our ratios, the 8 hours/week use under TV sets means 8 hours of network television (as distinguised from satellite and cable television in the other two columns). Overall television use of 33 hours/week is of course arrived at by adding all TV categories of network, satellite and cable (8 + 10 + 15 = 33).

The total hours per week of aggregate media usage in our

hypothetical nation above is arrived at by adding all media

hours in the bottom row.

```
TL + TC + TVSET + TVSAT + TVC + R + N + I = Total
 ( 5 + 8 + 8 + 10 + 15 + 7 + 3 + 20 = 76 Hours )

    Global Media Index Total Media Use (GMIT)

                GMIT = 76
```

Illustration 10.4

GMIT

Global Media Index — Total Media Use

From adding the 8 key media hour rates, we arrive at 76

hours. Our hypothetical aggregate figures might be termed a GMI

Total (GMIT) and expressed as GMIT 76 as shown in Illustration

10.4 above. In general, one would suspect GMI Totals to be

higher for developed nations than developing nations. In other

words, developed nations are much more likely to own and use

media than developing nations.

Yet apart from a media use division between developing

nations and developed nations, might GMIT figures also represent

additional cultural correspondences? For example, might lower

overall media use represent more interpersonal (face-to-face)

interaction without the imposition of media devices? In effect,

might lower GMITs represent higher rates of what Harvard's Robert Putnam has described as "social capital?"[20] Here, no distinction is made between interactive and broadcast media reasoning that any media causes less personal interaction. In effect, recalling Marshall McLuhan's insight that media extend the sense, lower GMITs represent a lower aggregate extension of the senses.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

While GMIT offers an interesting and valuable insight into overall media use, the various ratios of media use within the GMIT might be assigned weighted values based on their weekly hours of use. Media might then be given numbers based on their percentages of overall GMIT.

For example, in our hypothetical illustration, Internet media use receives a 26% rating arrived at by dividing the particular media's hours per week of use by the overall media use (20/76 = .263 = 26%). The other percentages (rounded to the nearest percentage point) are posted in the bottom row of Table 10.5 below.

Tele. L	Tele. C	TV Sets	TV SAT.	TV Cable	Radio	News.	Int.Host
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

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[20] Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*. (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

25	90	50	30	50	70	40	70
#10	#5	#20	#25	#15	#9	#30	#2
5 Hrs.	8 Hrs.	8 Hrs.	10 Hrs.	15 Hrs.	7 Hrs.	3 Hrs.	20 Hrs.
7%	11%	11%	13%	20%	9%	4%	26%

Table 10.5
GMIT – Percentages

How does one use these various percentages in formulating an aggregate media profile of the particular nation? One approach is to add the major categories of broadcast and interactive media and arrive at another type of ratio.

For example, by adding the key interactive media of telephone lines, telephone cellular and Internet we arrive at an overall interactive percentage of 44% (7 + 11 + 26 = 44). By adding the key broadcast media of TV Sets (Network TV), TV satellite, TV cable, radio and newspapers we arrive at an overall broadcast percentage of 57% (11 + 13 + 20 + 9 + 4 = 57). Note that the percentages come out slightly more than 100% since we have rounded off the percentages in our figures.

However, in addition to the percentages each media hold to the aggregate media total, the hours per week of use might also be given a global use ranking.

Tele. L	Tele. C	TV Sets	TV SAT.	TV Cable	Radio	News.	Int.Host
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
25	90	50	30	50	70	40	70
#10	#5	#20	#25	#15	#9	#30	#2
5 Hrs.	8 Hrs.	8 Hrs.	10 Hrs.	15 Hrs.	7 Hrs.	3 Hrs.	20 Hrs.
7%	11%	11%	13%	20%	9%	4%	26%
#8	#5	#10	#20	#14	#7	#27	#3

Table 10.6
GMIT — Use Rankings

For example, in Table 10.6 above, the ratios of use for the hypothetidcal natoin in the 5th row is translated into a ranking on global use in the bottom row. For example, the Internet use of the nation at 26% equals a gobal use ranking of #3.

In general, we should expect to find a strong correlation between media ownership rankings (access) in the third row of Table 10.6 and media use rankings in the sixth (bottom) row of table 10.6. However, media access and use might not always show a close relationship as evidenced in the network television column that shows ownership at #20 and use at #10.

Speculations & Questions

The creation of a Global Media Index for viewing the world from a perspective of media access and use is in its infancy but holds great potential. Again, as we have argued, a particular formula will not allow us to invent a new world but rather give us a new set of glasses to see what is already here but so far invisible to us.

As we move forward in creating this new set of glasses, a number of questions beg answers. The individual reader most

likely has developed some of his or her own. Here are some of ours. For our purposes, assume that a relevant GMI (perhaps a combination of the ratio and aggregate method we suggested) has been obtained.

(A) GMI & Ideology

Is there a relationship between the GMI and dominant political ideology, political party and ruling government of a nation? Here there is historical evidence that suggests authoritarian governments are related to high broadcast media nations rather than high interactive nations.

And, as we have suggested, broadcast media is more closely tied to equality and the symbolic expression of equality in the Democratric Party while interactive media is more closely tied to freedom and its symbolic expression in the Republican Party. How, though, might this play out on a global scale?

(B) GMI & Belief

Is there a relationship between the GMI and dominant religion or belief system of a nation? One would expect that high interactive media nations which demonstrate the dominance

of freedom over equality are also highly diverse nations with many sects and religious beliefs competing against each other. This is certainly the case in the highly interactive United States where religion has been likened to a spiritual supermarket.[21]

(C) GMI & Cultural Content

Is there a relationship between GMI and the content of popular culture of a nation? More specifically, is there a relatonship between GMI and leading film genres, corporations, brands, celebrities, television programs, fiction and non-fiction books and music?

(D) GMI & Social Capital

Does GMI have a relationship with social interactivity? Earlier, we hinted at the notion that a lower aggregate number of media use in a nation (lower GMIT) might mean greater (unmediated) interpersonal communication and ultimately a higher degree of what has been termed "social capital."

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[21] Robert Greenfield. *Spiritual Supermarke*t. (New York, NY: EP Dutton, 1975).

Certainly an argument can be made that higher degrees of interactive media represent higher interpersonal communication while higher broadcast media represents lower interpersonal communication. But what of simply the effect of media use in general on social capital?

(E) Degree of Commonality & Difference

Do nations that show close GMIs have closer cultural bonds than those that show close political and religious similarities? In effect, is the emerging "soft" power a more potent postmodern "adhesive" for nations than the "hard" traditional power of politics?

The idea that there can be new nations aligned and created on the basis of close GMI ratios and old alliances broken apart based on widely separated GMI ratios is one of the key arguments for a media nations perspective.

(F) The Dynamics of GMI

Does the GMI possess and demonstrate an internal movement? For example, consider the GMIT (aggregate media use) we previously discussed. Does this number simply continue to get

larger and larger or does it become smaller? Or, does it show a cyclic pattern of increase and decease?

The Synesthesia of Multi-Media

We have offered a few approaches to the creation of a Global Media Index or system for making media comparisons between nations. There is a long way to go in this process but the there is good reason to believe the results will be well worth the efforts.

Again, the overall goal is to consider the aggregate effects of modern multi-media on various populations. While comparing isolated media is relatively easy, the real challenge is in the development of what might be termed a collective media profile of a group at a particular point in time. In effect, a sensory profile that takes into consideration the combined effect of all sensory extensions in operation on a daily basis in the life of citizens of particular nations.

Here, it is important to consider the ancient idea and state termed synesthesia or the mixing of senses. Important media scholars and theorists such as Canada's Donald Theall have observed the close relationship between synesthesia and great works of art and artists. Also observed is its close

relationship to original (oral) states of culture as well as the childhood of individuals.

While synesthesia has mostly been considered from the perspective of a psychological problem, a much more enlightened view consider it as an analogy for the general postmodern condition of mankind and the constant, simultaneous exposure to multi-media.[22]

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[22] Donald Theall. *The Virtual Marshall McLuhan*. (Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queens University Press, 2001).

11. Media Neighbors and Strangers

Media equality between nations is based on similarity of media ranking numbers. Media difference between nations is based on divergence in media rankings.

Media	< U.S.	< U.S.	U.S. Rank	> U.S.	> U.S.
Telephones	3 Swizterland Swaziland	4 Ireland Denmark	5	6 Canada	7 Netherlands
Cellphones	13 Austria	14 Ireland	15	16 UK	17 Japan
Newspapers	21 France	22 NZ	23	24 Venezuela	25 Slovenia South Korea
Radio	–	1 Nigeria	2	3 Finland	4 UK
TV	–	–	1	2 Canada	3 Japan
Satellite	13 France Lebanon Nigeria	14 Pakistan	15 Czech.Rep	16 Spain	17 Ireland
Cable	3 Belgium	4 Taiwan	5 Switzerland Canada	6 China	7 Israel
Internet	–	–	1	2 Finland	3 Norway

Table 11.1
Media Neighbors and Neighborhoods of the United States

Nations surrounding one nation (with rankings immediately below and above the nation) can be termed "media neighbors" and the common media space they all inhabit termed "media neighborhoods." Nations with opposite media rankings can be termed "media strangers" as they do not inhabit common media space.

In Table 11.1 above, media rankings surrounding the United States (immediately below and above U.S. rankings) are identified and one can see media "neighbors" and "neighborhoods" of the United States.

The table provides some interesting and counter-intuitive media neighbors for the United States. For example, Taiwan and China are "media neighbors" for cable television while Nigeria and Finland are media neighbors for radio and New Zealand and Venezuela are neighbors for newspapers. And, note that Pakistan and Spain are media neighbors for satellite television.

In this data, what nation is closest to the United States considering all media rankings? Canada appears in the rankings three times in the table while Ireland, Japan and Switzerland appear two times.

However, the number of appearance times in the rankings might be less important than the weight one gives to various rankings. We have argued throughout that media can be classified as one-way broadcast or two-way interactive. In this sense, nations that are closest on the key interactive and broadcast media have more importance than others.

As we have observed, the key interactive media is the telephone and the key broadcast media is the television. So, instead of considering media rank neighbors across a relatively wide array of various media, one looks to a nations telephone and television ranking neighbors to find this commonality.

Using this criteria, one of the closest neighbors of the United States for interactive media is Ireland which is just below the United States for both telephones and cell phones. And, close neighbors for broadcast media are Canada and Japan that are ranked next to the United States in television sets per capita.

Media Strangers

While media neighbors and neighborhoods demonstrate media similarity, media "strangers" can be arrived at by identification of media use differences and oppositions.

We have focused on the top media nations in key media categories. But what of the bottom media nations in key media categories? For example, consider the bottom cellular telephone nations of the world shown in Table 11.2 below.

Rank	Telephone (Cellular)
127	India
128	Kenya
129	Morocco
130	Nigeria
131	Tanzania
132	Uganda
133	Georgia
134	Malawi
135	Myanmar (Burma)
136	Senegal

Table 11.2
Lowest Interactive Media
Bottom Cellular Telephone Nations (Per Capita)
Source: Illustrated Book of World Rankings, 5th Edition

One observation is the high number of African nations in the lowest interactive media list. In fact, most of the nations are African. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, India is ranked as one of the lowest cell phone user nations. Perhaps not surprisingly, Pakistan (#112) and Iran (#122) are among the lowest cellular telephone nations in the world.

Next, consider the bottom TV set (broadcast) nations in the world represented in Table 11.3 below. These represent nations which have little exposure to the one-way communication form of television and one would expect them to be the most out-of-touch nations with Hollywood entertainment, symbols, brands and world

news. Unlike the lowest interactive nations congregation in
Africa, the lowest broadcast nations are scattered around the
globe.

Rank	Lowest TV Sets
178	Comoros
179	Haiti
180	Burkima Faso
181	Ethiopia
182	Cape Verde
183	Mozambique
184	Nepal
185	Chad
186	Rwanda
187	Mayotte

Table 11.3
Lowest Broadcast Media
Bottom Television Set Nations (Per Capita)
Source: Illustrated Book of World Rankings, 5th Edition

National media "strangers" or oppositions can be brought
into sharp focus by comparison of the top cellular telephone and
the bottom cellular telephone nations. In order to easily
visualize these, we present the top cellular nations in the left
column below and the bottom cellular nations in the right column
of Table 11.4 below.

Rank	Top Telephone (Cellular)	Rank	Lowest Telephone (Cellular)
1	Finland	127	India
2	Hong Kong	128	Kenya
3	Norway	129	Morocco

4	Sweden	130	Nigeria
5	Japan	131	Tanzania
6	Denmark	132	Uganda
7	Irael	133	Georgia
8	Italy	134	Malawi
9	Singapore	135	Myanmar (Burma)
10	Portugal	136	Senegal

Table 11.4
Highest & Lowest Interactive Media
Top and Bottom Cellular Telephone Nations (Per Capita)
Source: Illustrated Book of World Rankings, 5th Edition

The nations represented in the two columns above have little in common regarding interactive media as well as the numerous correspondences to interactive media we have noted. And, we argue, alliances attempted between nations in column one and column two are very difficult.

Just as opposite interactive media nations can be shown in one place, so can opposite broadcast media nations also be shown as in Table 11.5 below.

Again, as we noted with the interactive oppositions in Table 11.3, the nations represented in the two columns below have little in common regarding broadcast media and the numerous correspondences to broadcast media we have noted. And again, alliances attempted to be established between nations in the two columns would be very difficult.

Rank	Top TV (Sets)	Rank	Lowest TV (Sets)

1	United States	178	Comoros
2	Canada	179	Haiti
3	Japan	180	Burkima Faso
4	El Salvador	181	Ethiopia
5	UK	182	Cape Verde
6	Finland	183	Mozambique
7	Australia	184	Nepal
8	France	185	Chad
9	Oman	186	Rwanda
10	Denmark	187	Mayotte

Table 11.5
Highest & Lowest Broadcast Media
Top and Bottom TV Set Nations (Per Capita)
Source: Illustrated Book of World Rankings, 5th Edition

At the same time, though, this is not to say that alliances between nations in the two columns (in both broadcast and intereactive opposition nations) are impossible to establish. The difficulties the nations have in relating to each other might be great but they might not be in the political arena as much as in the media one.

Understanding this might in fact help clear currently hidden roadblocks between nations to better understanding and communication.

III. Applications & Variations

12. Media Cultures

> "The unreciprocated gift still makes the person who has accepted it inferior, particularly when it has been accepted with no thought of returning it … We must give back more than we have received."
>
> Marcel Mauss
> <u>The Gift</u>

> "The hatred of non-Western people is not based on the fact the West stole everything from them and never gave anything back. Rather, it is based on the fact that they received everything, but were never allowed to give anything back."
>
> Jean Baudrillard
> <u>Ctheory</u>
> May 2003

One of the critical acts of early society was the mutual reciprocity of exchange. The importance of exchange was recognized in the important book <u>The Gift</u> by Marcel Mauss. The book presents the first systematic study of the custom — widespread in primitive societies from ancient Rome to present-day Melanesia — of exchanging gifts. In <u>The Gift</u>, Marcel Mauss notes "The unreciprocated gift still makes the person who has accepted it inferior, particularly when it has been accepted

with no thought of returning it … We must give back more than we have received."

The need for the reciprocity of exchange has roots deep in the fabric of society and culture. Throughout history exchange has appeared under various guises. In America, the long-term exchange trends have been monitored over the years by a number of organizations and also in some major studies. Perhaps one of the leading studies of American exchange throughout American history and up through the 1950s was David Riesman's <u>The Lonely Crowd</u>.[23]

A more recent study monitoring American exchange in the 1980s and 1990s was by Harvard University's Robert Putnam resulting in the book <u>Bowling Alone</u>.[24] The research related exchange to what Putnam termed "social capital." Putnam found a long trend through the 80s and 90s of a declining social capital in American communities evidenced by the decline of social activities and the rise of performing once social activities, like bowling, alone.

French philosopher Guy Debord in <u>The Society of the Spectacle</u> suggested declining social exchange was a problem of

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[23] David Riesman. *The Lonely Crowd*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).

[24] Robert Putnam. op.cit.

all nations and cultures of the modern world.[25] Debord saw the dichotomy between broadcast and interactive media in terms of "spectators" and "participants" arguing modern man is becoming a spectator to life.

The Broadcast of Western Culture

The leading manifestation of exchange in the modern world is economics. Yet economics has hijacked "gift" exchange to such an extent it is now difficult to see exchange as a moral and social system rather than an economic one.

While most in the contemporary world is distracted into thinking exchange comes from economics, the historic social system of exchange described in The Gift has really emerged in media. In effect, the key manifestation of gift exchange in the contemporary world is interactive media. And, the key manifestation of the "unreciprocated gift" is broadcast media.

If media exchange has taken over the historic function of gift exchange in culture, it has done so in a quiet, backdoor way. Yet there is growing evidence that interactive media is replacing economics as the modern manifestation of gift

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[25] Guy Debord. *The Society of the Spectacle*. (New York, NY: Zone, 1995).

exchange. This helps explain the increasing number of cultural

wars that exist in that "twilight zone" of explanation -more

than economic in origin, yet not quite political or religious.

While the decline of reciprocity is a common problem for

all of modern mankind, there are still strong cultural

correspondences between broadcast and interactive media.

Marshall McLuhan suggested these correspondence in Understanding

Media when he talked about hot mediums being used in cool

cultures:

> … it makes all the difference whether a hot medium is used
>
> in a hot or a cool culture. The hot radio medium used in
>
> cool nonliterate cultures has a violent effect, quite
>
> unlike its effect, say in England or America, where radio
>
> is felt as entertainment. A cool or low literacy culture
>
> cannot accept hot media like movies or radio as
>
> entertainment. They are, at least, as radically upsetting
>
> for them as the cool TV medium has proved to be for our
>
> high literacy world.

An insightful and useful application of viewing cultures as

"hot" broadcast or "cool" interactive, that is gift givers and

gift receivers, is provided by French philosopher Jean

Baudrillard. In effect, Baudrillard provides an application of

Marcel Mauss' gift exchange theory for Western and non-Western

cultures. Writing in the May 2003 issue of Ctheory, he observes

"The hatred of non-Western people is not based on the fact the

West stole everything from them and never gave anything back.

Rather, it is based on the fact that they received everything,

but were never allowed to give anything back."

Western Cultures	Non-Western Cultures
Gift Giver	Gift Receiver
Broadcast	Audience, Spectators
Exporter	Importer
Pyramid Organization	Network Organization
Producer	Consumer

Table 12.1

West As Broadcast Culture

The position of Western culture as "gift giver" and non-

Western culture as "gift receiver" without being allowed to

reciprocate could be the hidden basis for the growing tension

between cultures. Here Western culture plays the role of

producer and exporter, the broadcaster of "hot" one way media,

or, the "gift" giver. And, non-Western culture plays the part of

consumer and importer, the audience for the one way messages

from the West, the gift receiver with no possibility of

reciprocation.

In addition to its role as exporting media, there are other correspondences of broadcast media with institutions of Western culture such as the dominant pyramid system of organization and the centralization of power sources. This dichotomy is illustrated in Table 12.1 above.

Hollywood Broadcast to American Suburbs

Yet, while broadcast media might have a strong correspondence to Western culture, it is important to keep in mind that most of the contemporary world is a captive in some form or another of broadcast media. While it might be more of an agent of Western culture than non-Western culture and a vehicle of advanced capitalism, broadcast media is also part of the "wallpaper" of the modern world's increasingly virtual technological life. In many ways, modern man is like Debord's "spectator" to life than a participant in life.

America itself, the great originator of broadcast media in Western culture, is at the same time a captive to broadcast media. Messages are broadcast (or exported) from core symbol making cities such as Hollywood, New York and Washington to the rest of the nation. American suburbs are some of the key targets of this one way broadcast media with little ability for exchange

or reciprocity. A major reason behind the tragedy of events like Columbine does not concern the content of media as much as its broadcast direction and its inherent lack of reciprocity.

13. Cycles, Power & Media

Natural cycles and their accompanying symbols are inevitable. A day is born with the rising sun and dies with the setting sun. A year is born in January and dies in December. Spring turns into summer and summer turns into fall and fall into winter.

The natural cycles perpetually replay themselves. However, whether cultural cycles and symbols mirror these natural cycles and symbols is still debatable. Many have put forth strong arguments that cultural cycles exist.[26] Yet regardless of whether cultural cycles exist or not, it can be observed that cultural power is obtained by alignment of cultural elements to natural cycles and symbols.

The dynamics of alignment of cultural power and natural cycles is shown in Illustration 14.1 below. Natural symbols at

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[26] See particularly Neil Howe, and William Strauss. *The Fourth Turning*. (New York, NY: Broadway Books, 1997). Their book contains the leading research on cycles in American history.

the beginning of cycles (left side of top arrow) are larger than natural symbols at the end of cycles (right side of top arrow).
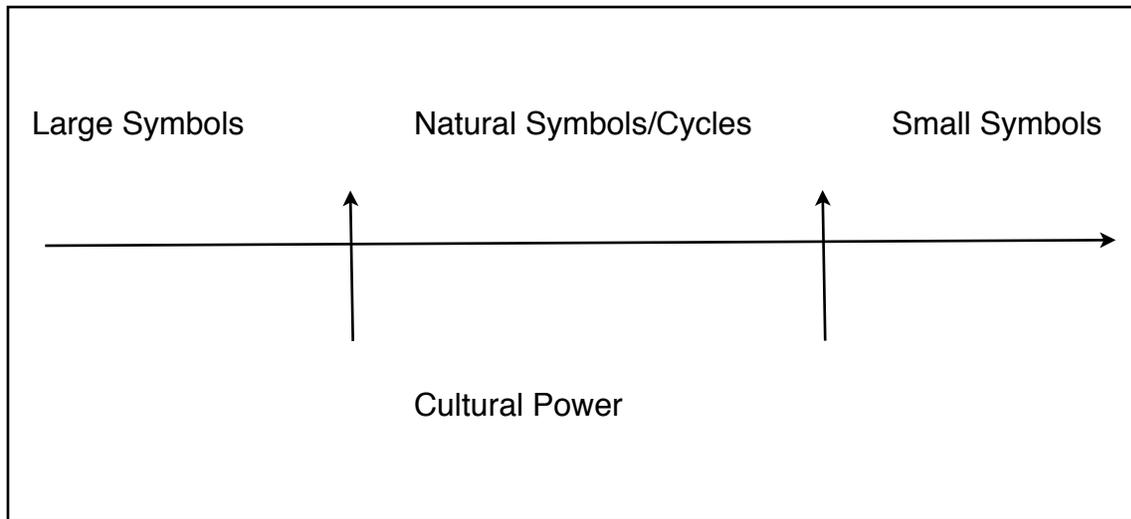
Large Symbols   Natural Symbols/Cycles   Small Symbols

Cultural Power

Illustration 13.1
Cultural Power & Natural Cycles
Cultural power is obtained by alignment of cultural elements to large
symbols at the beginning of cycles and smaller symbols at the end of
cycles.

One suggests that cultural elements (such as media) need to align with natural cycles by the production of large symbols (broadcast media and its symbols of mass culture) at the beginning of cycles and the production of smaller symbols (interactive media and its symbols of segmented culture) at the end of cycles.

As we have observed, the beginning of cycles are dominated by equality and its large attendant cultural symbols associated with mass culture and broadcast media. On the other hand, the end of cycles are dominated by freedom and its smaller, segmented symbols produced by interactive media. In effect, at the beginning of cycles, power is obtained through a *reduction* to larger common symbols. At the end of cycles, power is obtained by the *production* of smaller, differentiated symbols.

The Current Interactive Cycle of Segmentation

The current period represents the end of a cycle with the corresponding dominance of cultural factors such as freedom, diversity, differentiation, market segmentation, postmodernism, lack of authority, relativity, niche products and an over-production of information.

Political control today, under the postmodern symbol of freedom, is based more on keeping Americans apart than in bringing them together. But political leadership in the past, under the symbol of equality (such as the administration of FDR and European totalitarian movements), was based on bringing people together.

Leadership in contemporary society finds a correspondence with economic, religious and cultural segmentation. Within the

current marketing and advertising mantra of differentiation, the products which rise to leadership are those that find niche market segments by differentiating themselves from competitors.

This segmentation is certainly a part of daily life evident in such things as the continuous retro-replay of older genres of music, films and syndicated television shows, the continuing brand extensions of products so there are fifty different types of toothpaste and breakfast cereals at the supermarkets and 500 different channels on cable television. On a global basis, the current cycle of segmentation finds correspondence in terrorist activities, ethnic "cleansing" and perpetual border disputes.

The Coming Broadcast Cycle of Equality

The length of the current period of interactive media and its attendant freedom and segmentation is difficult to predict. Unlike the simplicities and quick answers of the "Idiot Guides" modern cultures have come to expect, the coming and going of stages in cycles is much more subtle and sublime: its edges more like the gradual color changes of watercolor paintings or 60ish lava lamps than the sharp and dramatic outlines of mechanical pencil drawings.

There is the possibility (and even the probability) that the interactive media cycle of freedom and segmentation has already ended and the broadcast equality cycle has started under such "trickster" media as the Internet, or, under the guise of broadcast media imposing as interactive media.

Whatever the case, power based on alignment to segmentation will give way to power based on alignment to equality. The leaders of tomorrow will be the first to effectively align themselves with the emerging symbols of equality. These new symbols will bring about *reduction* rather than *production*. Instead of producing more information about smaller subjects, the new equality symbols will produce less information about larger subjects.

There are a number of cultural and global correspondences that could serve as foundation stones for the coming cycle of equality. Some of the most important ones are generations, genders, beliefs and technology. Generations of the world are increasingly brought into contact through the images of electric media.

While there will be a number of manifestations of the equality stage of the cycle, the most important one will be media technology. During our postmodern period at the end of a cycle, media has been used to maintain power through

segmentation. But the new use for media will be alignment with the emerging symbol of equality. Power will be maintained through media commonality rather than media segmentation. Media commonality will serve to link domestic communities together in new patterns. More importantly, it will find new links between the segmented nations of the world.

The Nostalgia of Mass Culture

In many ways, the problem is that many people are confused as to who the real villains are. The "bad" guys no longer wear black hats and modern propaganda, also known as advertising, has learned to be tricky, subtle, friendly and largely invisible. Consumer culture and its main agent of advertising has finally obtained that rarified status of a ubiquitous and unseen medium.

Perhaps the real problem is what might be termed a hopeful nostalgia for the old mass culture of the past which continues to draw collective attention backward, pulling attention away from the realities of the present. The effect is the same as the mannerisms of a magician who distracts attention away from the trick being performed.

This is not all that surprising as collective psychology continues to find itself stuck in the memories of past cycles.

McLuhan oriented media observers might call this the "rearview" mirror effect or the tendency to see current technologies with the perceptive tools of the technologies of the immediate past.

This nostalgia makes many believe that the totalitarian type of power exercised during the beginning of the 20th century media cycle is the real villain. And in many ways, they long for a return to this type of power. It was a power based on the desire of many to "escape from freedom."

Under the spell of nostalgia for that old mass culture and a totalitarian power that united vast groups of people, many today fail to see the exercise of contemporary power is really based on the segmentation of vast groups of people. They fail to see that contemporary control and power is created by providing greater freedom. They fail to see that this freedom increases diversity while lessening "social capital." They fail to see that this freedom ultimately pushes people farther and farther apart so that it becomes increasingly difficult to mount any type of united front against the controlling powers.[27]

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[27] A good summary of this argument about the contemporary problem of freedom and liberty is contained in the interesting book *The Future of Freedom* by Fareed Zakaria (New York, NY: WW Norton, 2003).

14. Media Tricksters And Paradox

In spite of the current dominance of interactive media and its correspondence in the over-production of information, differentiation and diversity, it is important to keep in mind that capitalism was founded by application of the mass communication nature of broadcast media and, currently, there is no indication it can effectively operate under a continuing structure of interactive media.

At the same time, it is in the interest of capitalism to provide the illusion of freedom while maintaining the underlying structure of equality. In effect, consumers are given more and more choices (television programs, political candidates) that are less and less different. To paraphrase a famous musician, "500 channels and nothing on." Ironically, one can say that there has developed an equality of difference.

While there has been a number of types of "trickster" media (broadcast media posing as interactive media) in the history of capitalism, the greatest current trickster media is the Internet. Certainly this viewpoint goes against the popular buzz

which heralds the Internet as the greatest interactive media in history.

There is certainly an amount of truth to this popular conception of the Internet. Aspects of the Internet such as List Serves, peer-2-peer communication, open source programming and email have provided revolutionary degrees of interactive communication. One example is the use of Internet interactivity in political campaigns. Perhaps the first major use was during the Jesse Ventura campaign for Governor of Minnesota in the late 1990s. The most powerful use of the interactive nature of the Internet for a political campaign was in the Howard Dean presidential campaign of 2004.

However, even the greatest Internet techno-enthusiasts have to admit that the original promise of the Internet as a revolutionary interactive medium has been diminished over its short history by its increasing commercialization, or put in another way, it broadcast nature. One of the leading Internet observers to point this out has been Stanford Law School professor Lawrence Lessig who has argued the Internet's underlying "code" creates more equality of control than interactive freedom.[28]

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[28] Lawrence Lessig. *Code and Other Laws of Cybserspace*. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000).

And too, while the Howard Dean campaign employed interactive aspects of the Internet for meetings and fundraising, the candidate's position on issues, as well as his overall platform, was not subject to interactive formulation but was rather one that was basically broadcast in nature. True "open source" political campaigns still await the experiment where the interactive community plays a large part in formulation of the platform of the campaign.

While trickster media is basically about capitalism's agent of broadcast media posing as interactive media, there are also reversals of this trend, or, forms of broadcast media taking on more of an interactive nature. For example, consider the interactive aspects of talk radio, TiVo technology and reality television programming. All of these represent popular interactive inroads into broadcast media.

However, unlike an increasingly broadcast media (like the Internet) posing as an interactive media, with these reverse forms of trickster media (broadcast becoming more interactive) the point is less *deception* (posing as interactive while really broadcast) and more *suggestion* (that broadcast might possess a "user friendly" interactive nature after all).

The Paradox of Electronic Media

Yet part of the trickster nature of the Internet might be attributed to what we term a general paradox of electric media. The paradox is that all electric interactive media demonstrate aspects of both equality and freedom.

For example, McLuhan suggested that electronic media was related to equality and oral media and would have a unifying effect and "retribalizaing effect" so that the world would return to a "global village" that existed under ancient oral cultures. However, as we have suggested, world equality under electronic media has been far from a reality. In fact, one could even make a good argument that electricity has been at the root of increasing freedom and segmentation.

The paradox is seen in Western and Eastern culture. In a broad sense, one can say that Western culture is a visual eye culture that is based around analysis and separation. Eastern and Middle Eastern culture, on the other hand, is an oral ear culture that is based around integration rather than separation. At the same time, electricity is far more dominant in Western culture than Eastern culture.

An extension of the paradox includes the greatest interactive media in history, the Internet. While the Internet can be viewed as a great trickster media — making users feel

they have interactive freedom when in effect they are part of a

huge system promoting capitalistic broadcast equality — it can

also be seen as existing at the center of the modern paradox

where equality battles freedom.

At this paradoxical center, the Internet's content of words

are like islands in the great electric sea of cyberspace. In

essence, with the Internet, the visual media of the alphabet

confronts the oral media of electricity.

The confrontation between the two dualities of media is

similar to the confrontation between the ideologies of equality

and freedom during the founding of America.

15. Blackouts And Light

> "We are certainly coming within conceivable range of a world
> automatically controlled to the point where we could say, 'Six
> hours less radio in Indonesia next week or there will be a great
> falling off in literary attention.' Or, 'We can program twenty
> more hours of TV in South Africa next week to cool down the
> tribal temperature raised by radio last week.' Whole cultures
> could now be programmed to keep their emotional climate stable in
> the same way that we have begun to know something about
> maintaining equilibrium in the commercial economies of the
> world."
>
> Marshall McLuhan
> *Understanding Media*

The vast majority of people are perpetually distracted from the powerful ubiquity of media use. In effect, most are concerned with what's on TV. Only a few are concerned with whether TV is on in the first place. The majority continues to monitor media *content* when the real power resides in media *context*, those communication technologies that allow production and access to media content. The real power does not reside in the content of broadcast media but rather in the action of broadcast, in the fact that power is "on" in the first place.

In this sense, events which enable interactive media or disrupt broadcast media could have profound effects on the collective psychology of nations in the 21st century.

For example, consider the fact that during the war in Afghanistan, American military aircraft dropped millions of paper pamphlets on the population telling them of America's friendly intentions. Yet might efforts have been better directed at dropping interactive communications media like cell phones and then enabling their activation? Might it have been relevant to give media use in Afghanistan more consideration and acknowledge the fact that Afghanistan is ranked one of the world's lowest nations in use of cellular telephones?

While enabling interactive media in nations might have startling results, incredible results might also come from disruptions of broadcast power. In 2003, Americans in the Northeastern part of the nation experienced the largest power blackout in American history. Yet although the 2003 blackout caused tremendous disruption, it was only a few days until the power, and televisions, were back on.

What of future power disruptions that might last for weeks or even months? The effects in most areas such as heating (or air-conditioning) and lighting are obvious. But what will be the effects of large groups of people cut-off from the broadcast

media of television for extended periods of time? Might a type of new "light" come from this darkness?

A comment by the the psychologist Wilfred Bion is very relevant to the ability to see with a "faint light" when the bright lights (of television) are turned down or off. In "Brazilian Lectures" Bion observes:

> Instead of trying to bring a brilliant, intelligent, knowledgeable light to bear on obscene problems, I suggest we bring to bear a diminution of the light, a penetrating beam of darkness; a reciprocal of the searchlight … The darkness would be so absolute that it would achieve a luminous, absolute vacuum. So that, if any object existed, however faint, it would show up very clearly. Thus, a very faint light would become visible in maximum conditions of darkness.

As modern nations began to realize the great subliminal power of media use, the "faint light" of the boundaries of media nations will slowly become visible like invisible ink held under a special light.

And perhaps we will begin to acknowledge that much of the conflict in the world is caused by clashes of media rather than

words of politicians. This basic acknowledgement might even lead

to a different understanding which will help to usher in the new

cycle of equality when the current cycle of freedom and

segmentation has finally exhausted itself.

About the Author

John Fraim is President of The GreatHouse Company a marketing consulting firm and book publisher. He is the author of *Battle of Symbols: Global Dynamics of Advertising, Entertainment and Media* (Daimon Verlag, 2003). His book *Spirit Catcher* won the 1997 Small Press Award for Best Biography.

He is also a leading authority on symbolism and the creator of www.symbolism.org, the Internet's most popular site for symbolism.

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