

The United States and Cultural Globalization: Power Dynamics in Global Media Flows

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the contemporary dynamics of global media flows. It emphasizes the power struggles between American film and TV's global dominance and competing industries using Bollywood as case study. An examination of Bollywood's rich cultural narratives and strategic engagement with international audiences is presented as a significant force in the global film industry, challenging the traditional dominance of American media. Empirical analysis of viewership trends and market data reveals that while American media continues to exert substantial influence globally, Bollywood's rise reflects a shift towards a more diversified cultural landscape. The findings highlight the complexities of cultural globalization, illustrating how diverse media products can coexist and thrive in the international arena. Ultimately, this research underscores the importance of recognizing the contributions of non-Western media industries in shaping global cultural consumption patterns and calls for further evaluations of the prevailing narratives surrounding cultural hegemony.

Keywords: Global Media Flows, Media Markets, Globalization, Cultural Exchange, Hegemony

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of globalization has emerged as a defining force influencing interactions across nations, economies, and cultures in a world that is changing dramatically. This revolutionary process has brought in an era of cultural exchange within the media sectors, bringing with it, power tussles surrounding global dominance between larger cultural industries such as America's, and the rest of the world. The following study explores the complex relationship between cultural dynamics and globalization, illuminating the significant influence of transnational connections on the production, consumption, and distribution of media. The paper addresses a timely and significant issue in global media studies, focusing on the competition between Bollywood and American cinema, which is increasingly relevant in today's interconnected world.

This paper comprehensively offers literature on key themes of globalization and global media flows through explorations such as the fluidity of cultural creation, the challenges people face in gaining acceptance, and the shifting power relationships that influence the media landscape. From the historical diffusion of American cultural products that have penetrated international markets to the regulatory changes affecting labor markets and production patterns, each aspect adds to the complex picture of global media flows. In addition, factors propelling cultural globalization in the media industries are explored with theories surrounding the function of unofficial processes, market structures, and governmental actions. The study navigates how international value chains are changing, how transnational norms are emerging, and how the complex interactions between national and transnational cultural domains are being seen through both scholarly and industrial lenses.

Whereas cultural globalization is a product of both complexities and contradictions such as hybridization and cultural exchange (Boman, 2021), this paper limits its exploration with a strong focus on the complexities of cultural globalization in the media sectors. It, therefore, aims to apply an interdisciplinary approach that draws on various fields, including cultural studies, media studies, and globalization theory, to provide a well-rounded perspective on the power dynamics, structural realities, and contemporary trends that shape global media flows.

To provide practical dynamics of today's global media environment, the paper also aims to use a comprehensive analysis to illustrate the global reach and influence of diverse film and TV industries. Finally, the paper aims to demonstrate how contemporary shifts in media consumption and distribution through the rise of streaming platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and so on, can significantly influence global cultural exchange and perceptions of media flows.

This paper demonstrates that it is critical to understand the subtleties of cultural globalization across media sectors in this age of unparalleled interconnectedness and cross-border contacts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding the Dynamics of Globalization – Cultural Exchange in Media Industries

Globalization has no commonly adopted definitions. However, it is widely accepted as a worldview based upon the interdependence of nations, economies, cultures, and populations due to cross-country trades in goods and services, technology, and flows of investment, people, and information. It can also be studied in different dimensions such as economic, political, cultural, and environmental (Mariadoss, 2018). Although globalization is marked mainly by economic activities, alongside politics, its focus is on its cultural dimensions. Globalization thus creates opportunities as well as challenges for cultural exchanges that take place during cross-border activities.

Today's heavily globalized world had its origins soon after the end of the Second World War. From factories to the high streets, goods taking distant journeys across country borders became one of the signatures of globalization. The allied nations had created a rules-based system for international commerce and finance to permit companies, products, science, and technology to move across borders. The world would enter into an era known as hyper-globalization by the 1990s, making it more interconnected than it ever was before. This era was when China became a big new player on the scene by joining the World Trade Organization. Alongside the initial player, the United States, China grew to dominate global trade. China attracted expansions from multinational companies into its shores, where these companies would begin to spread worldwide. The years 1990 to 2008 marked an increase in the total trade in goods and services from 39% to 61% of world GDP. This great globalization boom allegedly created opportunities for billions of people to lift themselves out of poverty. As far as the West was concerned, consumers began to enjoy cheaper and more accessible travel and goods (*The Economist*, 30 September 2020). Thus, globalization presents huge potential for narrowing down the existing imbalances of the control over capital, technology, media and communication industries between developed and developing countries over time.

Globalization gave rise to the world's interconnectedness from cross-country integration in political, economic, cultural, social, and technological dimensions. Economically, firms in less industrialized countries could now tap into more and larger markets worldwide to become part of international production networks and supply chains that form central conduits of trade (Mariadoss, 2018). The political dimension involved the enablement of free trade among countries. For instance, international governance institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) stepped in to begin regulating trade practices by countries to avoid trade barriers to open market entry. The results were the availability of goods and services, improvement of national competitiveness, and attraction of direct foreign investment. In addition, multinational corporations easily expand to other countries by either establishing outpost operations, outsourcing functions, or both. This expansion, in turn, facilitated the creation of employment opportunities and made it easier and less cumbersome in initial costs for countries to enter global markets. The spinoff is poverty reduction globally (which is considered absolute, rather than relative poverty reduction), availability of more access to capital flows, technology, human capital, cheaper imports, and larger export markets, and consumers enjoying more affordable products. Economic outcomes of these expansions included outsourcing functions that spread capital and risks of doing business, promoting foreign investment, and providing a basis to mitigate the migration of skilled labor to industrialized countries to seek employment. Other outcomes included integration and international standardization of products services and practices among countries of their operations.

Globalization has also yielded great significance for communication. For instance, forces of globalization and

“informatization”, which have great importance for communication, have already caused changes in some industries, policies, cultures, societies, and communities that have no choice but to take part in this new global communication (Soporoni & Horga, 2008). Informatization is the process by which information technologies such as the internet or other communication means transfer economic and social relations so that the cultural and economic barriers are reduced to a minimum (Kluver, 2000). Informatization is thus a spreading instrument for these changes in globalization. The globalization of communication also follows economic and military globalization: the ideas, information, and people are following the economic and military fluxes transforming societies and markets, and at the same time, affecting their knowledge and behaviors, as well as their attitudes towards culture, society, and politics. However, globalization based on communication is also arguably generating exclusion rather than incorporating the whole world because it is not equally accessible to everyone. ‘The numbers are more than enough to reveal it: 90% of internet users are Westerners; in 2004, in the USA, there were 195 million internet servers, in Europe 22 million, whereas in Africa only 300,000; the city of New York alone has more phone channels than the entire continent of Africa’ (Soporoni & Horga, 2008, p. 270). Therefore, for a country to participate in the globalization process, it must gather a minimum level of the required means and infrastructure to be connected to the rest of the world.

Today, the trading system relies strongly on advances in transportation, and most importantly, on media and communication industries in lengthy and complex supply chains. Thus, flows of communication have been identified as crucial drivers of globalization. The direction of such flows remains at the center of globalization discourses (Boyd-Barrett et al., 2009; Georgiou & Silverstone, 2007; Thussu, 2007). With flows of communication predominantly originating from the West, globalization has increased Western cultural influence in other parts of the world. Yet, it is similarly responsible for making alternative models based on cultural, institutional, and historical backgrounds. Hence, the possibilities of increasing these alternative models have arguably created more diversity than uniformity (UNESCO, 1998). Thussu (2007, p. 10) argues that cultural influences need to be propagated from multiple directions – that is, from other parts of the world to the West and the West to the rest. A more comprehensive flow of media needs to include the global, transnational, and geo-cultural flow of media to capture the broader realities of societies being mediated. Thus, a proposition using terminologies like “dominant flows” and contra-flows, also termed “subaltern flows” (Thussu, 2007), captures the need for more global attention towards interesting and emerging competitive industries, for instance, the Nigerian media. The Nigerian media houses the world’s third-largest film industry, *Nollywood* (France 24 English, 2016). Yet, within the context of global media flows and cultural realities, the Nollywood industry suffers infrastructural and informalization barriers that tend to hinder its potential maximum global impact. Dominant flows primarily emanate from the global North, with the United States at its core, then Britain, and Japan in that order. Conversely, contra-flows originate from the erstwhile peripheries of global media industries, including transnational and geo-cultural regions. Transnational and geo-cultural regions [subaltern flows] such as Southern urban creative hubs such as Cairo, Hong Kong, and Mumbai, trading in cultural goods (Curtin, 2003) show media traffic is not just one way. Therefore, cultural globalization may suffer from partial global representation.

Despite the technical possibility of more direct means of communication and/or interaction with different cultural contexts, individuals still most frequently engage with “the global” not simply through communication technology but, more specifically, through mass-mediated texts. This means that the most influential global cultural producers/distributors still hold the greatest power to shape the global imagination even though people may create and distribute their own alternative cultural products (Darling-Wolf, 2018, p. 126). Furthermore, appreciation for the U.S.- produced texts and the recognition that “America” still maintains a privileged symbolic position in the global imagination does not necessarily translate into an upbeat assessment of the United States or into a desire to adopt values and/or practices associated with its society or culture. For instance, commenting that “the United States, it’s magical, there’s a magical side. Before it was El Dorado,” a French woman in her 20s nevertheless noted that she had an “extremely bad image” of the United States and “hated their politics” (Darling-Wolf, 2018, p. 129).

Darling-Wolf (2018) presents how the historical omnipresence of the United States’ cultural products shaped the French and Japanese media consumers’ global imaginations and their respective cultural landscapes. There is a relative lack of exposure to “non-native” cultures on the part of United States audiences that influences their

global imagination. Hence individuals' experience of "the global" remains largely imagined (Lule, 2012, p. 55), and the product of their engagement with various transnationally distributed commodities or cultural texts rather than a sustained relationship with individuals living in different places under different conditions. For example, media consumers in France, Japan, and the United States provide a broader reflection on how the global imagination takes shape in individuals' daily lives and different contexts. According to a French consumer, "We are always more or less influenced by something, some images" ... A Japanese consumer states, "The only information we can get comes from the media, television, newspaper, or the internet". A consumer in the United States also says, "I think my interest in looking beyond my immediate (surroundings) was really through TV and film and books... I think it's interesting in the US because I think media can keep you insular, but I think there is also opportunity anywhere you are to expand your horizon" (Darling-Wolf, 2018, p. 125). These responses are in complete agreement with their global imagination, which comes from transnational media. In addition, the historical significance of globally distributed cultural forms adds a significant dimension to their continuing influence.

However, the premier position of complete economic domination of global cultural industries held by the United States has experienced threats. This is due to the entry of other major players such as Japanese animation companies, Bollywood, Endemol, etc., into the competition for a piece of the world mass media market. Endemol, for instance, a major European competitor of America's dominance has formed a significant global presence with operations in over 30 countries and over 300 broadcasters. These include a branch in the USA based in Los Angeles, California which produces popular global formats such as *Fear Factor*, *Deal or No Deal*, *Extreme Makeover*, and much more. Endemol also has a long-standing presence in the UK, India, Australia, as well as Africa, with original formats running consecutively over many years (Reference For Business, n.d). Despite such threats, "America" still holds a central position in the global imagination of the French and Japanese media.

Role of Television in Globalization

Since media industries play essential roles in globalization, it is imperative to see how television increases globalization. Since its inception, television has aided globalization mainly by driving the flow of information from the West to the rest of the world and vice versa. The relevance of television in global media flows is revealed by studies showing that 'despite the growth of the internet in the late 1990s to early 2000s, it was being used only by about 15 percent of the world's population in 2006, while television and film had a much larger audience base (Thussu, 2007, p. 10). Thus, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, television and satellite facilitated flows that were, by nature, multivocal, multimedia, and multidirectional. This facilitation happened through their contribution to a global media landscape which represents a complex terrain of these natures of flows. However, in addition to television and satellite, these flows were also made possible by 'digital technology, and the growing use of online communication, partly because of the deregulation and privatization of broadcasting and telecommunication networks' (Thussu, 2007, p.11).

However, television's consumers and cross-border interests have also been an important consideration in increasing media flows. As Thussu (2007) notes, the shift from a state-centric and national view of media to one defined by consumer interest and transnational markets has been a critical factor in the expansion and acceleration of media flows: from North to South, from East to West, and from South to South, their volume varies according to the size and value of the market. For example, the transnational global media flows, with the Indian film industry and the Latin American telenovelas as significant examples, have a robust regional presence but are also aimed at audiences outside their primary constituencies. Parts of a UNESCO (2005, p. 44) report on 'International Flows of Selected Goods and Services' illustrate growth strategy as 'expansion to non-traditional countries, both industrialized and emerging, such as Japan and China', thereby supporting the above view. This also implies that transcending linguistic and geographical boundaries is a crucial ability of transnational television, making it particularly important in relation to media flows. This notion agrees with Hall's argument that television is central to a 'global mass culture', dominated 'by the image, imagery, and styles of mass advertising' (Hall, 1991, p. 27).

Television replaced print media in bringing about imagined communities within nations. However, the

boundaries of the nation-state defined its diffusion until the rise of satellite television transmission, the internet, and DVD. It is noteworthy that cross-border trade in finished programs characterized even the earliest television. As Thussu states, nationality scarcely matters in this market-oriented media ecology, as producers view the audience principally as consumers and not as citizens (2007, p. 11). Accordingly, control of television by the government and a few public and private channels have not been able to stop “the whole world” from entering people’s homes. Such entrances occurred through means like the importation of programs, news, formats, and practices, and thus standards and genres, styles, and tastes. In other words, television enabled a move from national broadcasting to global television trade and production. Therefore, ‘television is simultaneously very national and very international’ (Kuipers, 2011, p. 542).

Television, as a purveyor of global culture, is paramount in transnational media. It has caused events in one part of the world to affect people and societies far away. However, this does not indicate that the traditional ways of a society can be ignored due to globalization. This is what Kuipers (2011) attempts to explain in the study comparing the globalization of television fields in European Countries of France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Poland. The analysis is done by comparing the “opening up” of national cultural fields and the formation of a transnational field with its own standards, practices, and cultural geography. This analysis can also be considered by integrating Bourdieu’s concept of a field of cultural production with globalization theory. Cultural production here is the struggle for recognition and the power to decide what counts as worthy of recognition. In contrast, globalization theory represents the cultural globalization of opening national fields to international markets and standards.

The following section provides further insights into globalization of the media by looking at its global value chain. This further enhances an understanding of a combination of processes, including informalized activities, constituting a vibrant global media trade system.

Global Value Chain (GVC) of Globalization

The Global Value Chain (GVC) framework helps evaluate the economic and cultural importance of the trail of activities involved in global trade. Hopkins and Wallerstein (1986, p. 159) introduce the Global Value Chain through their “commodity chain” concept within a world system theory. Their commodity chain concept was used to establish the potential and extent to which a capitalist world economy had been an organizing force and a structural reality from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Hopkins and Wallerstein identified the concept of “commodity chain” as a network of labor and production processes whose result is a finished commodity (Hopkins & Wallerstein, 1986, p. 159). According to Feenstra (1998), the GVC perspective is useful as a unique tool to comprehend the global economy characterized by a twin process of international fragmentation of production, and at the same time, integration through trade. Gereffi (1994, p. 97) describes a chain as one consisting of “a sequence of value-adding activities” resulting in a finished commodity. Chalaby (2016) then demonstrates that television content production is increasingly being coordinated on a global scale by a newly emergent television content value chain. This value chain comprises content production, distribution, and aggregation.

Further, Chalaby (2016, p.38) notes that the old television production model was disassembled through “a combination of factors, including economic growth, rising industrial complexity, deregulation measures, trade liberalization, and new technology, consumer demand and preferences” (p.38). Therefore, media firms progressively concentrated on those activities in which they retained a competitive advantage resulting from this process. Production segments that would gradually form a chain through which TV content began to travel from inception to consumption became the result of the strategy. As broadcasters stepped up foreign outsourcing in search of the best programs and formats, together with the period when their own suppliers expanded across borders, this chain began to gain international scope.

Chalaby’s analysis revealed that ‘the formation of the TV content value chain has given an opportunity to many new businesses to flourish and remain independent’ (p.52). Also, ‘globalization is at once a structural reality – television is globalizing because value-adding sequences have become international and a structuring reality – firms’ decisions and strategies are coordinated by a value chain that is global in scope’ (p.54). Again, whereas

international fragmentation remains prevalent in the TV industry, alternating reintegration through trade is happening, explaining the GVC model's relevance to globalization. An instance of this is the cultural television format, whose advent deepened global media flows. However, such formats are operated as Intellectual Property (IP) with know-how that falls within television shows and traveling alongside ready-made tapes.

Role of Transnational Cultural Production in Cultural Globalization

Cultural production ultimately emerges into cultural globalization as national fields are prone to open to international markets and standards. This can be explained, starting with the notion that cultural production yields power struggles. These struggles occurring between actors competing to get recognized by institutions, persons who want to have the capacity to grant recognition, and actors who eventually have the power to grant these recognitions constitute Bourdieu's conceptual 'field of cultural production'. Furthermore, as this field crystallizes, the actors that have gained control then determine 'the tastes of consumers and producers, setting aesthetic standards inside the field and in society at large'. In turn, the outcome of these struggles leads to "cultural consecration and legitimation" that extend beyond the field itself into global arenas (Kuipers, 2011, p. 542). Explaining further, Kuipers posits that:

"Cultural production always entails a struggle over standards even when these standards are thoroughly popular: what constitutes a good quiz show, telenovela, sitcom, or video clip? Such issues of quality and legitimacy, at times, superseded moneymaking, and market shares. Even a field with as little autonomy as television is characterized by a tension between the short-term logic of the market and more long-term striving for quality and artistic innovation. This tension between culture and economy increasingly plays out on the transnational level" (Kuipers, 2011, p. 543).

By comparing the internationalization of television in France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Poland, Kuipers observed that they respectively followed different trajectories in this transnational arena. 'These trajectories depended on the power dynamics and institutional relations in the national field and the position of the TV field vis-à-vis other fields, particularly, the government. Government policies directly influence incorporation in the transnational field' (p.554). When considering a (formerly) protectionist France and Poland, buyers are more hesitant to buy imports. This differs from buyers from "transnationalized" Italy and the Netherlands, who are less reluctant and, therefore more receptive to imports. All four countries are still currently incorporated in a transnational TV field. Hence, 'this field is transnational but not exactly global: It has the United States as its main center, with secondary centers in Europe (United Kingdom, Germany) and some Japanese and Latin American connections' (p.554).

Kuipers (2011) answers the question of how national fields influence or moderate the process by which national cultural fields "open up" to transnational cultural exchange. In turn, the author also answers how the globalization of television affects national cultural production. This suggests that the global cultural field simply disperses to the transnational cultural fields and vice versa. Neither global cultural fields nor transnational fields disappear in the exchange. It is noteworthy that successful cultural production is the one that fits the socio-cultural and institutional contexts of its new territory. Kuipers also states that 'this process of incorporation in the transnational cultural field is mediated by market structure, government interventions, and particularly, cultural policies, such as regulation of imports and stimulation of national production' (p.549). Also, – "transnational cultural trade implies the creation of transnational standards, professional habitus, and organizational forms as well as economic value" (p.554-555). And that – "national institutions do not disappear. Rather, national and transnational fields increasingly intersect, and national fields maintain their own dynamics and relative autonomy even when incorporated into a transnational arena" (p.555).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section outlines the relevant theories and concepts that underpin the study of globalization and global media flows, with a focus on an analysis of American cinema and its competitor, Bollywood. The study utilizes a rich intersection of theoretical perspectives between Cultural Globalization, Dominant and Contra Flows, Transnational Cultural Exchange, Cultural Hegemony, and Hybridization that are particularly relevant.

Cultural Globalization Theory

Cultural globalization refers to the processes through which cultural products, practices, and values are disseminated across national boundaries, leading to increased interconnectedness among cultures (Schwarz & Wach, 2022). This theory proposes that globalization is not a one-way process; rather, it involves a complex interplay of cultural exchanges where local cultures can influence and reshape global narratives (Hsu, 2020). In the context of this study, Bollywood serves as a prime example of how other cultural industries can assert their presence in the global market, challenging the dominance of Western media (Malhotra, Sharma, & Thakur, 2023).

Dominant and Contra-Flows

The concepts of dominant flows and contra-flows, as Thussu (2007) posits, are crucial for understanding the dynamics of global media. Accordingly, dominant flows refer to the media products and cultural narratives whose primary origin is from the global North, particularly the United States. On the other hand, contra-flows represent the cultural outputs from the global South that seek to challenge or subvert these dominant narratives. This framework helps to analyze how Bollywood films not only compete with American cinema but also contribute to a more diversified cultural landscape.

Transnational Cultural Exchange

This concept emphasizes the significance of transnational connections in shaping cultural production and consumption. It underpins that cultural products are not merely exported or imported but rather are re-interpreted and adapted within diverse cultural contexts. The study examines how Bollywood films engage with international audiences, incorporating elements that resonate with diverse cultural backgrounds while maintaining their unique cultural identity (Sheets et al., 2022).

Cultural Hegemony

Drawing on Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony, this theory explores how dominant cultures maintain their power through the dissemination of cultural norms and values. Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony refers to the dominance of a particular cultural group over society. According to Gramsci, when the ruling class successfully manipulates societal norms, values, and beliefs, dominance is achieved (Sebagai, 2023). The study critiques the notion of American cultural hegemony in global media and investigates how Bollywood's rise challenges this dominance by offering alternative narratives and representations that reflect the experiences and aspirations of non-Western audiences (Clini & Valančiūnas, 2023).

Hybridization

The theory of hybridization refers to the concept that cultural forms are not static but are constantly evolving through interactions between different cultural influences (Ivanov, 2023). This framework is relevant for analyzing Strategic collaborations between Bollywood and Western media, enabling them to incorporate elements across industries while also retaining distinct cultural characteristics. Thus, this study also highlights how the process of hybridization contributes to the global appeal of Bollywood and its ability to resonate with diverse audiences.

METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methodology employed in this study to analyze the global impact of Bollywood films and their competition with American film and TV. The research design adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative case studies with quantitative data analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of cultural globalization in the media sector.

Qualitative Data

Case Studies: Data sources including interviews and commentary from film critics, industry experts, and

audiences were sourced from reputable media outlets, film reviews, and academic journals to gather diverse perspectives on Bollywood's global appeal.

Cultural Analysis: The study sourced information from existing literature on cultural globalization and transnational media flows to examine the incorporation of Indian cultural elements in Western media, focusing on music, dance, and fashion as depicted in Bollywood films.

Quantitative Data

Viewership Statistics: Industry reports, sourced from Motion Picture Association (MPA), Parrot Analytics, and Statista provided data on global box office revenues and viewership statistics for American Film and TV, and Bollywood films. This data provided insights into the financial performance and audience reach of both global industries in various international markets.

Market Analysis: Reports from market research firms and industry publications were reviewed to assess trends in media consumption, including the rise of streaming platforms and their impact on global distribution of media industries.

Data Analysis

A. Qualitative Analysis

Thematic Analysis: The qualitative data collected from case studies were subjected to thematic analysis. Key themes related to cultural resonance, diaspora engagement, and strategic collaborations were identified and analyzed to understand how Bollywood films connect with global audiences.

B. Quantitative Analysis

Statistical Analysis: The quantitative data on box office revenues and viewership statistics were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify trends and patterns in the global consumption of American films and TV shows. This included calculating growth rates, market shares, and audience demographics.

Comparative Analysis: A comparative analysis was conducted between Bollywood and American films, focusing on box office performance and audience reception in key international markets. This analysis aimed to highlight the competitive landscape and the shifting dynamics of cultural consumption.

Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the global impact of Bollywood, its obvious limitations include the reliance on secondary data sources which may introduce biases, as well as the qualitative analysis which is subject to interpretation.

Case Study of Bollywood's Global Impact

Bollywood, the Hindi-language film industry, has long made its entry in the global media scene as a strong competitor, challenging the dominance of American cinema. Bollywood is in Mumbai, India. This brief case study examines the elements that have contributed to Bollywood films' global success as well as its effects on cultural globalisation.

In India, Bollywood plays a critical role in nominating the country as a "soft power", thereby growing the economy in addition to promoting the country's culture, songs, dances, values, and beliefs. In 2019, study shows that the Indian box office generated over US\$2.5 billion in revenue (Diwanji, 2020). Bollywood also forms part of the services sector of the country accounting for more than 50% of the Indian economy (Dastidar & Elliott, 2020). With a rich history and an annual production count of over 1,000 films, Bollywood stands as one of the world's largest film industries. Bollywood films have been increasingly popular recently not only in India but also in a number of other international markets, such as the Middle East, North America, and Europe. The

growing number of foreign film festivals that feature Indian cinema and the expanding diaspora audience are proof of Bollywood's global influence (Hong, 2021). The world's biggest film producer, Bollywood, has therefore continued to attract unprecedented scholarly study and media attention due to its current commercial expansion beyond its traditional areas in South Asia (Roy, 2012). As Razdan (2019) observed, the increasing interest of Chinese moviegoers in Bollywood films over the past ten years is a fascinating trend. This is particularly interesting while exploring the Bollywood industry's global competitiveness considering China's landsliding population of 1.412 billion as the world's second most populous country.

Bollywood's Key Success Factors

Bollywood films' global success, together with its effects on cultural globalisation is driven by several elements such as cultural resonance, diaspora engagement, strategic collaborations and digital platforms.

A. Cultural Resonance, Diaspora Engagement, and Strategic Collaborations

In Bollywood films, there are often incorporations of universal themes such as love, family, and social issues, making them relatable to diverse audiences. The vibrant storytelling, colorful visuals, and engaging music resonate with viewers, transcending cultural barriers (Sheets et al., 2022). Cultural resonance is defined by how consumers perceive a brand and whether it aligns with their values and identity (Suzy, 2024). Bollywood's success in authentically telling stories that represent core global values, beliefs and themes create contribute to the industry's competitiveness among worldwide audiences.

Moreover, Bollywood enjoys a thriving Indian diaspora that play a crucial role in the industry's global success. India's massive population and corresponding significant number of its diaspora in countries like the United States, Canada, and the UK, Bollywood films cater to the cultural nostalgia of Indian expatriates while also attracting local audiences. For example, outside the country, films like "*Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*" and "*Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*" have become cult classics among both Indian and non-Indian viewers (Rajan & Ullah, 2023).

Bollywood has also increasingly engaged in collaborations with international filmmakers and production houses to produce global blockbusters. For instance, the film "*Slumdog Millionaire*", directed by Danny Boyle, featuring a Bollywood-style narrative and music, gained critical acclaim and commercial success globally (Slumdog Millionaire, Aytakin, 2019), due to its leveraging of Bollywood's cultural symbolisms. This collaboration not only introduced Bollywood to a broader audience but also showcased the potential for cross-cultural exchange.

B. Digital Platforms

The rise of streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video has further propelled the global reach of Bollywood films (Harris et al., 2022). These platforms have made it easier for international audiences to access Indian cinema, leading to a surge in viewership (Thambusamy & Church, 2023). For example, the Netflix original film "*Ludo*" received positive reviews and attracted a global audience, highlighting the growing interest in Bollywood content (Steede et al., 2018).

Impact of Bollywood on Cultural Globalization

Bollywood films' global success illustrate the dynamics of cultural globalization, where it is possible for non-Western media products to gain significant traction in the global market (Davids, 2023). The influence of Bollywood is evident in the increasing incorporation of Indian cultural elements in Western media, such as music, dance, and fashion (Thangalakshmi, 2017). Additionally, Bollywood portends a global presence that challenges the notion of American cultural hegemony, despite global power of the United States, demonstrating that diverse narratives can coexist and thrive in the international media landscape (Iamia, 2015).

Bollywood serves as a compelling case study of how a non-Western media industry can successfully navigate the complexities of cultural globalization. The industry exports cultural products that resonate with universal themes, engaging with the diaspora, forming strategic collaborations, and leveraging digital platforms.

Therefore, Bollywood has carved out a significant space in the global media market with 3.6 billion international audiences of Indian films (Lee, Hsieh, and Fan, 2013). This case study highlights the importance of recognizing and analyzing the contributions of diverse cultural products in understanding the dynamics of global media flows.

Empirical Analysis of the Influence of American Media on Cultural Consumption Patterns

As presented in this paper’s discourse, American media has significant influences on global consumption patterns, despite strong competitors like Bollywood. The following empirical data and case studies provide an analysis of trends and examples of this phenomenon. Viewership statistics data from reputable Analytics companies such as Parrot Analytics, and Statista Data, as well as metrics from Motion Picture Association (MPA), have been obtained to observe global consumption of American media.

Viewership Statistics

A. Global Box Office Revenue

The following Motion Picture Association (MPA) 2021 data provide insights into the global box office revenue of American films. For instance, in 2020, American films accounted for approximately 70% of the global box office revenue, highlighting their dominance in the international market. In addition, by 2021, the global box office market increased by 81% compared to 2020, to the value of \$21.3

billion, as a result of the re-opening of theatres after lockdowns of COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, Rivkin, MPA’s Chairman and CEO stated that more than 940 films entered production as of 2021 which was more than double the 2020 figure (Rivkin & Motion Pictures Association, 2021).

Based on the MPA’s 2021 Theme Report on the theatrical and home/mobile entertainment environments, the following data shows global trends across both consumption markets:

Table 1: Global Trends in the Consumption of American Media. *Source:* Motion Picture Association’s 2021 Theme Report (Rivkin & Motion Pictures Association, 2021)

Consumption Market	2021 Global Trends
Home/ Mobile Entertainment Market	<p>Content released digitally and on disc in 2021: \$78.5 billion.</p> <p>Percentage increase compared to 2020: 14% driven by digital.</p> <p>Digital market increase outside the U.S. in 2021: 24%, compared to 2020</p> <p>Number of subscriptions to online video services worldwide in 2021: 1.3 billion</p> <p>Percentage increase in online video service subscriptions compared to 2020: 14 %.</p> <p>Online video subscription global position in 2021: Second largest subscription revenue market, surpassing satellite TV, as a result of a \$17.9 billion, or 26 percent, increase.</p>
Theatrical/ Global Box Office Market	<p>All films released in each country around the world in 2021: \$21.3 billion</p> <p>Percentage increase compared to 2020: 81% (numbers based on re-openings following COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns).</p> <p>The international box office market excluding U.S. and Canada: \$16.8 billion)</p>

	<p>Percentage increase in international box office market: 76%, accounting for 79% of the global market.</p> <p>Top three U.S. box office markets outside the U.S./Canada in 2021: China (\$7.3 billion, including online ticketing fees), Japan (\$1.5 billion), and the U.K. (\$0.8 billion)</p>
<p>Combined theatrical and home/mobile entertainment</p>	<p>Combined global theatrical and home/mobile entertainment market, excluding pay TV: \$99.7 billion,</p> <p>Percentage increase compared to 2020: 24%, surpassing 2019’s total.</p> <p>Combined global theatrical and home/mobile entertainment market including pay TV: \$328.2 billion</p> <p>Percentage increase including pay TV: 6% increase, matching 2019’s record high.</p>

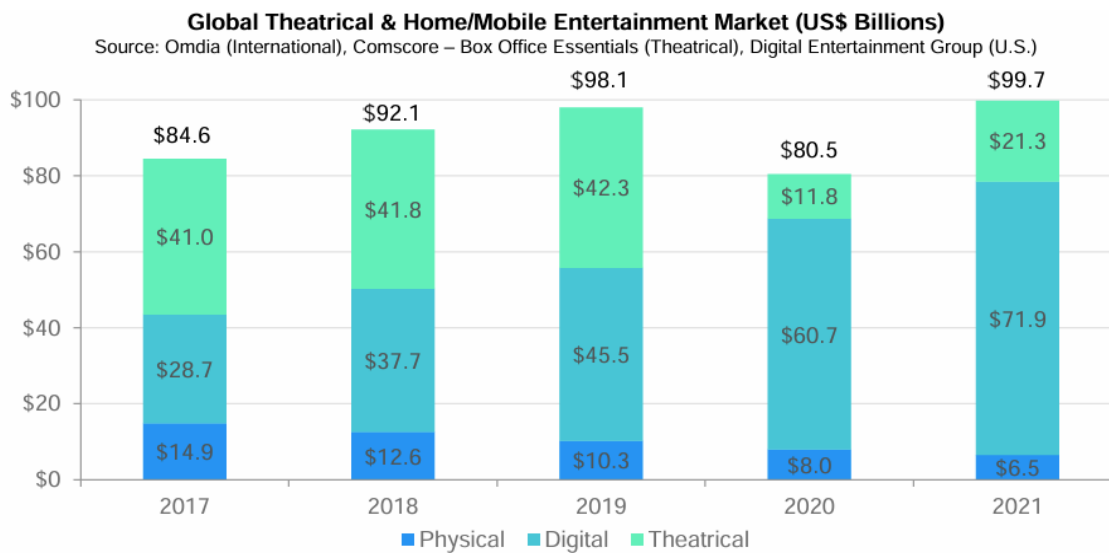


Figure 1. Source: Motion Picture Association’s 2021 Theme Report (Rivkin & Motion Pictures Association, 2021)

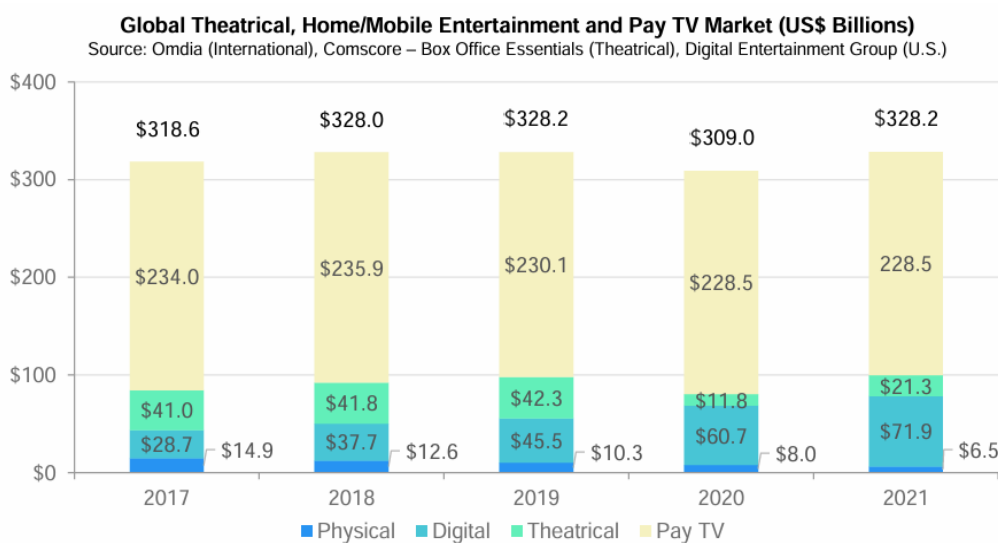


Figure 2. Source: Motion Picture Association’s 2021 Theme Report (Rivkin & Motion Pictures Association, 2021)

The table and figures above show that the United States had a substantial impact on global media reach in 2021 given the revenue generation of \$99.7 billion from the combined global theatrical and home/mobile entertainment market. The growth of 24 percent since 2020 suggests an upward projectile of the States' global market dominance considering its ability to return to the market and regain stability after 2020's COVID pandemic lockdown. The revenue even increases with an inclusion of pay TV to the combined global theatrical and home entertainment market, reaching a value of \$328.2 billion, and equivalent to a 6 percent increase since 2020, matching 2019's record high.

In addition, the digital content streaming marketplace in 2021 produced 72 percent of the combined theatrical and home/mobile entertainment market, which was an increase of 46 percent from 2019 (Rivkin & Motion Pictures Association, 2021, p.3).

B. Streaming Service Subscriptions

The United States media have accounted for a global boom in streaming, with data showing subscriptions in 2020 surpassing the 1 billion mark. This implies a 14 percent increase in streaming, as of 2021, reaching 1.3 billion (Rivkin & Motion Pictures Association, 2021). Moreover, statistics from American streaming giants like Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime Video are publicly available to provide useful illustrations of the consumption patterns of American media. For example, as of 2021, Netflix reported over 200 million subscribers worldwide, with a significant portion of its content being American-produced films and series. By 2024, Statista data shows that Netflix reached up to 277.65 million paid subscribers globally, by the second quarter of 2024. The data reveals an increase of an excess of 8 million subscribers in comparison with the previous quarter (Stoll, 2024b). In addition, whereas Netflix is an American video-on-demand over-the-top streaming service, most of its subscribers are based in the EMEA region (Europe, Middle East, and Africa). This global population of consumers accounts for almost 94 million (Stoll, 2024b) of the streamer's total subscriber base.

Market Share Analysis

A. Video Streaming Worldwide

The global media market is increasingly shaped by online video streaming. This innovation in media consumption has impacts on viewing behavior around the world. In 2023, the United States accounted for the largest share of revenue worldwide within the online video streaming also known as *over-the-top (OTT)* services. Worldwide revenue of OTT services reached an estimated 288 billion U.S. dollars. With OTT services users bypass the need for traditional cable or satellite subscriptions and stream media content via the Internet. This has provided an enabling environment for countries like the United States to reach users across diverse geographical regions of the world increasingly than ever before. As of June 2024, Statista data reveals the number of OTT video users worldwide to be an estimated 3.9 billion, with higher penetration rates in countries like the United Kingdom and Canada outside the United States (Stoll, 2024a).

In addition, market trends for Subscription video-on-demand (SVOD), a type of service that allows users to stream unlimited digital video content at a fixed monthly rate, reveal an estimate of 1.3 billion subscribers as of 2023. Again, the United States is a global key player accounting for the highest SVOD revenue in the world considering that it is the home of major global streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+ (Stoll, 2024a).

B. Cultural Exports

Trends in American cultural exports including film and television reveal a significant impact on global markets. Parrot Analytics data reveal several TV productions originating from the U.S. that other countries and regions consume in greater numbers than their country of origin. Data on the consumption of American shows by these countries reflected in the figure below takes into consideration factors including consumer research, streaming, downloads, and social media, among other consumer engagement metrics. The data does not consider, nor is impacted by the availability of platforms in each region (Parrot Analytics, 2023).

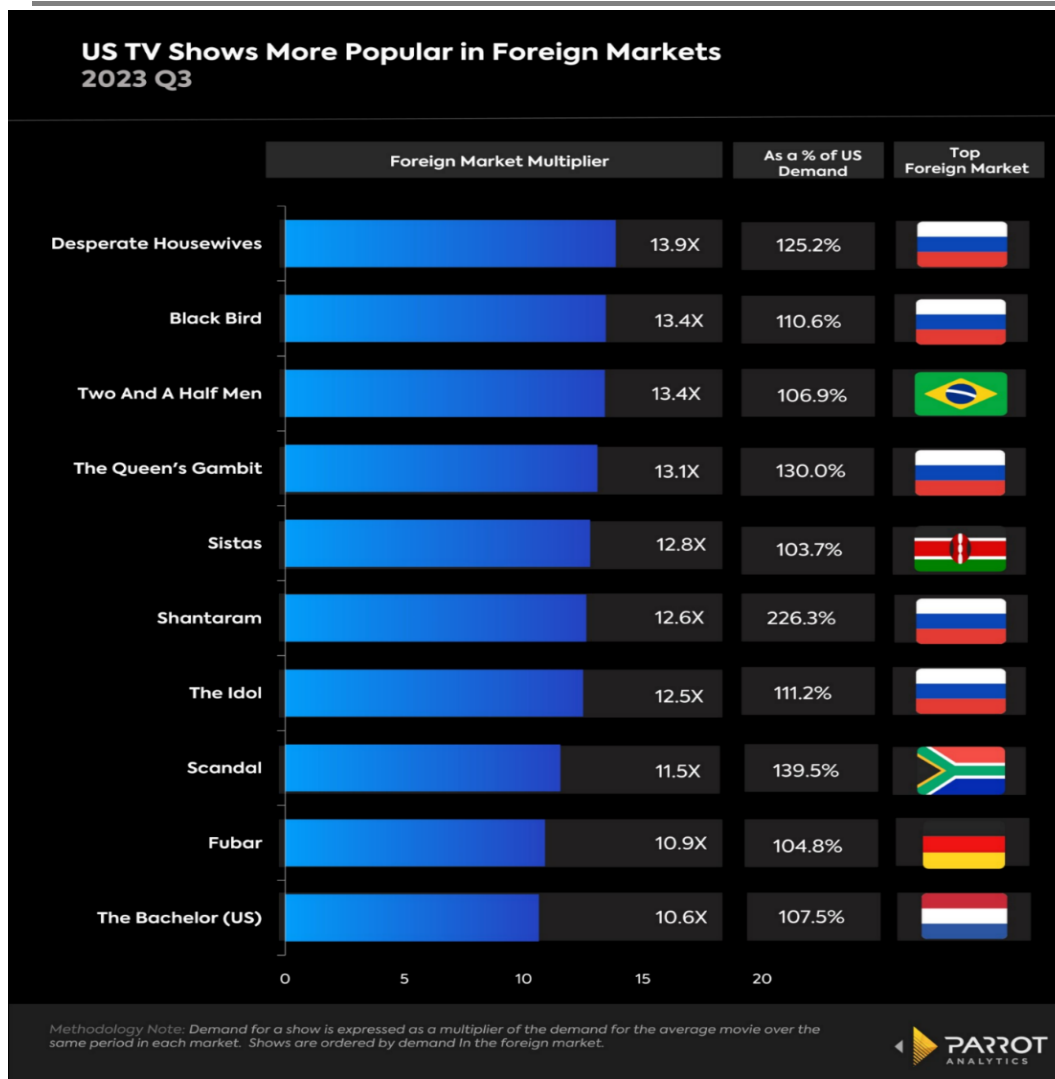


Figure 3. Source: Parrot Analysis Demand Data (Parrot Analytics, 2023)

For instance, the above 2023 data show that Russia is the highest consumer of American shows, above engagement among U.S. viewers. Russian viewers are drawn to U.S. series, that feature Russian characters (Parrot Analytics, 2023) such as Irina Korsakov (Wiksteria Lane, n.d.). Hence Parrot Analytic’s demand data revealed that the American show, *Desperate Housewives* gained 25.2% higher demand in Russia, compared to the U.S. in the previous quarter of 2023. Irina’s involvement in the 6th season was partly responsible for the increase in Russian views. Another example where the U.S. significantly exported cultural products in film is *The Queen’s Gambit*, a Netflix series about the game of chess highlighting Soviet chess players. Again, the film amassed a 30% higher demand in Russia than its domestic market. While this film originated from the U.S., it was a relevant cultural export to the Russians who have a rich history of chess (Parrot Analytics, 2023). Furthermore, the data shows that countries like Brazil, Kenya, and South Africa, were higher consumers of U.S. TV shows and movies such as *Two and a Half Men*, *Sistas*, and *Scandal*, well above their American domestic market.

Other Example Case Studies

A. The Success of Hollywood Blockbusters, Format Adaptations, and the Age of Monoculture

The release of “Avengers: Endgame” in 2019 serves as a prime example of American media’s global influence. The film grossed over \$2.798 billion worldwide, making it the highest-grossing film of all time (Marvel, 2019). From the TV show, *Friends*, to *The Office*, *Game of Thrones*, to *Baby Shark*, America’s lead in cultural exports for global consumption has seen the rise of “monoculture”, a phenomenon referring to an age of universality — the 20th-century aegis of white, middlebrow American entertainment, usually starring white Americans (Chayka, 2019).

“The universality that monoculture entails is valuable because what everyone already knows is what they are likely to keep consuming — hence the overwhelming popularity of reboots and sequels. It’s also why Netflix paid \$100 million in 2018 to keep Friends on its platform for another year (WarnerMedia later outbid Netflix, \$85 million a year for five years, to put the show on HBO Max)” (Chayka, 2019).

The above analysis shows that American cultural exports in motion pictures heavily influence global perceptions of the world in general, with influential shows and movies continuing to portray Americanized stories, objects, and viewpoints that serve as base notions for other media industries even when producing indigenous stories.

Impacts of United States' Dominance on Cultural Globalization of the Media

The historical dominance of U.S. popular cultural texts has resulted in consumers around the globe being familiar with Disney, Hollywood, and U.S. television series. In addition, it has also resulted in a relative lack of reciprocal exposure to “non-native” culture on the part of U.S. audiences, at least when compared to the other cultural contexts of this work. For instance, research into the different histories of transnational influences in three countries including France, Japan, and the United States shows that U.S. media consumers have a different relationship to “global” texts than their French and Japanese counterparts (Darling-Wolf, 2018). Therefore, there is a need to decentralize the U.S. cultural experience in our analyses of global processes.

The preceding discourses in this paper suggest the dominance of the United States over the flow of media products, shaping them, and at the same time, influencing consumer preferences. These outcomes have defined the global cultural landscape, all of which have made a significant impact on cultural globalization. The cultural consumption patterns and global imagination are significant results of influences from the historical dominance of American cultural products, such as Disney content, Hollywood films, and popular television shows. Hence, due to its hegemonic dominance, the United States continues to stand as a major force in the global media landscape. Cultural exports originating from the US are continually recognized widely and consumed in an international range of markets.

In addition, irrespective of criticisms targeting American politics and ideals, “America” retains its privileged symbolic status in the world’s imagination and continues to arouse global curiosity and appeal. In addition to influencing consumer preferences, the U.S. cultural hegemony sets global norms and trends in the media industry’s production and dissemination methods. The hegemonic impacts of American narratives and representations in the international cultural arena strengthen its dominance. The impact transcends entertainment media to include a broad spectrum of cultural products.

Whereas the United States still takes the lead in the world media scene, there are new known challenges to its total economic dominance. As discussed, major players like Bollywood, Japanese animation studios, and European media corporations like Endemol have entered the market. These powerful players brought new dynamics to the competitive terrain of cultural globalization. Therefore, the dominance of American cultural goods is arguably under threat considering that these rivals have cut large market shares while expanding the range of available global media.

Understanding both the long-lasting impact of American cultural exports and the changing dynamics of a more competitive and diversified global media business is crucial when examining how the United States has affected cultural globalization. A more multipolar and inclusive global media landscape is being heralded by the rise of new players and alternative narratives, even as the United States continues to influence global cultural flows and consumption habits. Comprehending and manoeuvring through these multifaceted processes is essential to appreciating the complex interactions of globalization, cultural diversity, and hegemonic powers in today’s media landscape.

The media and communication industries play indispensable roles in facilitating globalization by enhancing information dissemination and exchanges between parent multinational corporations and their outposts. Their telecommunications and the internet are central to these roles, especially in sustaining the dismantling of economic, social, and cultural boundaries both within and among countries of the world. In this manner, the benefits, and opportunities inherent in globalization far outweigh the losses and challenges. Siochru (2004)

argues that content – or “copyright” – industries, such as television, music, video, film, and the internet, are at the forefront of cultural preparation for consumerism. Such cultural preparation is an essential precondition and accompaniment to opening new markets for various products and breaking down cultural and other barriers. This positioning of content industries is first, directly, through advertising. Second, it is through indirectly promoting consumerist and individualistic lifestyles. The various ways in which aspects of the media industry are significant in globalization are further discussed.

Global Media Governance and its Impact on Post-Colonial Nations

The following discussion further delves into the power dynamics and policy frameworks that have influenced global media flows by exploring the impact of media and communication policies on globalization. It focuses on historical shifts, the influence of global governance, and the interplay between national and supranational entities. It ultimately contextualizes the United States’ role in shaping global media governance through its promotion of neoliberal policies, contrasting it with other models like the Soviet approach. The section also highlights the continued impact of colonial legacies and how global policies have influenced domestic media landscapes, particularly in post-colonial nations.

Global media governance was already in place well before the pressures of globalization of communications and media policy. However, shifts in global communications policy began to result in the nation-state’s regulatory power undergoing reconfigurations from the post-Second World war era to the era of globalization of communications and media policy. Historically, shifts in global governance have resulted in the rise and decline of the so-called Fordist mode of regulation which, in terms of communication policy, reinforced a sense of national cohesion (Graham & Marvin, 2001, p. 74). Nevertheless, the bipolar ideological division of the world as defined through the Cold War remains central to the current definition of ‘free’ media and information flow. Meanwhile, the brutal legacy of colonialism continues to shape the problems and solutions in the field of global media and communication policy. Hence, for most post-colonial political leaders, nationalizing communications infrastructure and using mass media to integrate fractured colonial nation-states was high on their agenda. Also, multilateral institutions and bilateral agreements that set the normative framework for the terms of domestic “development” mediated their national policy objectives (Chakravarty & Sarikakis, 2006).

However, the continuation of the Cold War in the 1960s compelled nation-states to split into adopting two models of media governance, namely state-owned media reflecting the Soviet model and privately owned commercial media reflecting the US model. The multilateral institutions focused on communication, promoting modernization and Westernisation based on the already ‘developed’ experiences of Western Europe and the US (Schram, 1964; Tunstall, 1977). As a result, the rise of the Fordist mode (greater state intervention in markets and welfare provisions) became inevitable. This is reflected in the formerly colonized nations reconfigured as the Third World becoming the physical site of “hot wars” and political battles over competing systems of governance. With the failures of the efforts of most post-colonial nation-states at modernization and development, neoliberal policy reforms focusing on the transformation of the state in shaping national policy began to emerge. Chakravarty and Sarikakis (2006) contend that the profound changes that take place in the field of global communication and media policy should be seen as a kind of ‘reregulation’ of neoliberal governance; meaning that the nation-state loses autonomy in relation to supranational regimes (WTO, World Bank, IMF, etc) and regional and local governance bodies. It has also meant the reorganization of the functions of the state to include ‘partnership’ with parastatal, non-governmental bodies as well as private capital.

Finally, reregulation also includes the internationalization of policy regimes in effect blurring the distinction between domestic and foreign policy. Therefore, there is a need to rethink the normative claims about public interest and social justice in a transnational, if not post-national, era of policy practice. In Nigeria, the national broadcast stations replicate global broadcast structures and facilities, including media management and policy bequeathed by the colonial administration. Also, the pattern of establishing the first television in the country as an act of protesting the colonial administration produced a model of using television stations as political propaganda tools. The above issues “conceived later years’ paradigm of undue bureaucratization and political domination of state media” (Betiang, 2013, p. 2). These imply that government policies together with the broadcasters, strongly influence television program formats and their national adaptations production in the country.

Local Media Resilience and Adaptation in the Face of Globalization

This section discusses the interplay between local, regional, and global media production, with a focus on the Nigerian film industry, Nollywood. It explores how local media can thrive despite the presence of powerful regional and global corporations, highlighting the role of piracy, cultural preferences, and the structure of local media consumption. This analysis is crucial in advancing the understanding of how local media can resist or adapt to globalization forces, within the broader theme of cultural globalization and the role of the United States in these dynamics.

There has been an expanding influence of regional media and its interface with global media corporations operating across the African continent. Hence, Adejunmobi (2011) identified the following issues as summarily expressed. Firstly, regional media corporations represent a greater threat to local media production than global media production. Secondly, the threat often consists of seeking to co-opt rather than suppress local media production. Thirdly, the likelihood of being co-opted, accompanied by a gradual loss of autonomy, is greatest where local media have achieved a high level of success at attracting relatively large audiences, independently of both regional and global media networks. However, the expanding reach of regional media corporations working in tandem with global corporations across the African continent and in other parts of the developing world does not inhibit the growth of many forms of local media production.

Adejunmobi contends that the scale of piracy in Nigeria means that both global and regional media corporations have minimal incentives for becoming involved in local film production and distribution on that site beyond what Pay TV offers. Also, most individual copies of Nigerian film sales occur outside the distribution networks controlled by regional or global corporations. However, “widespread piracy also means that these producers will continue to favour smaller, rather than larger investments in the productions that they fund” (p.73). The immediate consequence of continued lower levels of funding is that operating “profitably on a scale of production that is unsustainable for highly capitalized regional and global media corporations” (p. 73) strengthens rather than diminishes piracy operations.

Another factor that has worked to the advantage of small-time marketers, as the study highlights, is that ‘in a region of the world where well-equipped cinema theatres are rare, or expensive, or considered sites of vice’ (Adejunmobi, 2011). This is corroborated by Larkin (2008), “film viewing is more frequently associated with small rather than big screen” (p.73). In keeping with this, the unwillingness to subscribe to satellite television by fans of locally produced films in Africa due to their past film viewing practices may lead to more preferences for buying individual films in the open market than watching them on satellite television channels. Thus, the dominant regional media corporation, DSTV, must continue to dedicate specific channels to Nollywood and fragment the Nigerian films’ audience along linguistic lines to remain relevant. However, it is common knowledge that domestic production of media necessarily incorporates local cultural effects, and where local audiences have a choice, they usually prefer locally originated and produced television program content, especially in the local language. These are underlying issues that strongly favour mass production in the hugely popular small-scale Nigerian Nollywood films industry, which relies on direct-to-video distribution.

CONCLUSION

The exploration of global media flows reveals a complex interplay between local, regional, and global media industries. These complexities are seen through highlighting the competition between Bollywood and American cinema. Findings from the study show the significant influence of American media on global consumption patterns – thus, American films command a substantial share of the international box office. However, another interesting angle of the discourse explores the resilience of local media, using the Nigerian film industry, Nollywood, as an example. Nollywood illustrates that local productions can thrive amidst the dominance of global corporations, driven by cultural preferences, piracy, and unique consumption structures. Key insights from the study indicate that globalization presents opportunities for cultural exchange and market expansion. Yet, it still poses challenges such as cultural homogenization and economic inequality. Also, the rise of streaming platforms has further transformed the media landscape. As such, there is a need to further re-evaluate known models for traditional distribution and strategies of audience engagement.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies that track the evolving dynamics of media consumption across different cultural contexts, particularly in emerging markets. In addition, comparative analyses between various regional media industries could provide deeper insights into how local narratives can be effectively integrated into the global media discourse. In practice, media industries may consider the adoption of hybrid strategies that leverage both local cultural elements and global trends to enhance their appeal. Collaborations between local filmmakers and international platforms are keys to fostering innovation and broadening audience reach. Furthermore, addressing the challenges of labor exploitation and environmental impact within the media sector is crucial for promoting sustainable practices.

Finally, it is necessary to embrace the opportunities that globalization presents, while actively addressing its challenges. This strategy will be essential for fostering a more inclusive and resilient global media landscape. Stakeholders in the media industry must prioritize cultural diversity and equitable development to navigate the complexities of globalization effectively.

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