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Andreas Hepp & Nick Couldry

Prof. Dr. Andreas Hepp
University of Bremen
Institute of Media, Communication & Information
Faculty for Cultural Studies
D-28359 Bremen, Germany
E-Mail: Andreas.Hepp@uni-bremen.de

Prof. Dr. Nick Couldry
Goldsmiths College
Dept of Media and Communications
Lewisham Way, New Cross
London SE14 6NW, UK
Email: N.Couldry@gold.ac.uk

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Abstract:

In comparative media research the criteria of difference are mostly 'national-territorial': the nation state is taken as the unquestioned starting point. While this makes sense in specific fields (media systems, political economy), it ignores other criteria of difference, which may need to be formulated outside the frame of the 'national-territorial': race, gender, ethnicity, and deterritorialized popular cultures. From a critique of such 'territorial container thinking' in much comparative media research, the article develops a model of 'transcultural comparative media research', which works outside an unquestioned territorial frame. The term 'transcultural' indicates that comparing media cultures in times of media globalization must operate on different levels of comparison. On one level, there are still differences in national media cultures, in part stabilised by national political media systems. On another level, there are cultural differences which arise outside the framework of the national. How this analysis can be undertaken will be shown through empirical examples.

0. Introduction

The methodological base of international media research is comparative: but what should be the unit of comparison? So far the criteria of difference have been mostly 'national-territorial': the nation state is taken as the unquestioned starting point in comparing media production, representation, reception and appropriation in different countries. While this makes sense in specific fields of media research (media systems, political economy), which like most media politics remain territorially bound in many respects, it ignores other phenomena which may need to be formulated outside the frame of the 'national-territorial': cultural formation linked to race, gender and ethnicity, and deterritorialized popular cultures. In addition, it obscures our view of what 'media cultures' might be in an era of media flows that consistently overlap national borders.

Based on these considerations we want to argue in this article for a 'transcultural approach' to comparative media research. This transcultural approach does not start with the 'state' and its territoriality as the essential centre of comparison but outlines a more complex horizon for carrying out media research by comparing different media cultures understood as specific if often blurred cultural 'thickenings'. To make such an approach understandable we first criticise the 'container thinking' implicit in much of the present comparative media research. Then we outline our understanding of media cultures as 'cultural thickenings' or 'amalgamations'. Based on this we finally explain a 'transcultural approach' as a specific way of comparing media cultures. Overall we hope to develop arguments that provoke us to think about comparative media research in a new way.

It is important to emphasise at the outset that we see our argument as just one perspective on

a very complex theoretical problem. If we look from the perspective of national cultural discourse, we must agree with Ulf Hannerz that (national) cultures can no longer be seen as based simply on what is shared by their members since 'contemporary complex societies systematically build nonsharing into their cultures' (Hannerz 1992: 44). Seen from outside that national perspective, we can still think of media cultures or diaspora cultures, for example, as based principally on shared meanings but only on condition that we give up the assumption that such sharing takes place necessarily, or even importantly, within the container of national territories. It is the latter perspective whose implications we develop here, since it is the prospects for comparing 'media cultures' **- as part of a wider internationalising of media and cultural research -** with which we are more broadly concerned.[i]

1. 'Container thinking' in comparative media research

1.1 The problem diagnosed

Within sociology in general and sociology of globalization in particular we find an increasing critique of the 'container thinking' found in traditional sociology. A number of major sociologists have developed this critique.

For example Ulrich Beck (1997: 49) has criticised that 'sociology as intellectual order-keeping power' brought forward a 'container theory of society'. This container theory is manifested by the circumstances that in most (functional) sociology societies are by definition subordinated to states: 'societies are state societies, social orders are state orders'

(Beck 1997: 49).[ii] In this sense we are speaking of an American, German or British society, which is then thought of as bordered by a 'state container' as a 'territorial entity'. The argument Ulrich Beck develops here is that while such a way of thinking might be appropriate for theorising modern states at their beginning, it is not sufficient for social forms in times of globalization which transgress national borders and build up transnational social spaces.

Ulrich Beck is not alone in these arguments. Anthony Giddens had already mentioned in Consequences of Modernity the disembedding forces of modernity which for him consequently result in the processes of globalization. For sure, his critique of the concept of the nation state and national society is not as far reaching as Ulrich Beck's critique, but nevertheless Giddens reminds us that with globalization all 'societies are also interwoven with ties and interconnections which crosscut the sociopolitical system of the state and the cultural order of the 'nation'' (Giddens 1990: 14).

John Urry and Manuel Castells are two academics who have taken this discussion further (cf discussion in Moores 2007). For instance John Urry (1999) argued in his book Sociology Beyond Societies for a discipline of sociology that researches and theorises social processes beyond the unquestioned concept of a (national and territorial bound) society. How this can be undertaken is outlined in his book Global Complexity, in which Urry (2003) tries to theorise transnational social forms using the concepts 'network' and 'fluid'. In a comparable focus we can understand Manuel Castells (1996) concept of the 'network society'. Despite the criticisms that can be made of this concept, its power can be seen in the attempt to describe social structures and their transformation beyond a national-territorial frame.

Network structures and spaces of flows are articulated across territorial borders and nation states (Hepp 2006a).

We can sum up such critiques of 'container thinking' within social theory in three points (Hepp 2004: 13). First it is a critique of the container concept of the state, a rejection of thinking of the (nation) state as something like the 'reservoir of society'. Second it is a critique of thinking that the nation state is territorialised, i.e. that 'national cultures' are unquestionably related to a defined territory of living. Third it is a critique of theorising these national and territorial bound 'container societies' as functionally integrated, which ignores all the disembedding, transgressing and dysfunctional processes of contemporary social life. In this sense a critique of a 'container thinking' within social theory has to be contextualised within critiques of continued functionalist thinking in social research, and particularly media research (Couldry 2003, 2005): that anti-functionalist argument should therefore be assumed to run implicitly in parallel to our explicit argument here.

1.2 The problem persists

If we contrast these arguments with current discussions in media and communication studies, one arrives at the striking result that within international media research such 'container thinking' has yet to be superseded. Of course there are a number of works arguing exactly in such a direction for which John Tomlinson's (1999) book Globalization and Culture is an important example. Nevertheless in our perspective this is not the dominant trajectory. Again, we would like to take some well known examples to substantiate this.

The first example is the book <u>De-Westernizing Media Studies</u>, edited by James Curran and Myung-Jin Park (2000a). This book has the very important role of reminding us of the implicit 'western-centrism' in much of the present international media research. So the book is welcome in arguing for a more open-minded research perspective beyond the dubious centring of research on western models.

In the introduction James Curran and Myung-Jin Park (2000b) frame the whole book by arguing for a perspective beyond 'the self-absorption and parochialism of much Western media theory' (Curran and Park 2000b: 3). Beginning with Siebert et al.'s (1956) <u>Four Theories of the Press</u> they criticise western models for their blind acceptance of evaluating media communication in different regions of the world. In a specific sense we can locate the modernisation and media imperialism perspectives on international communication in this pattern as they start with western models of cultural change. The important point for our argument is that Curran and Park locate theories of globalization also within their critique. While globalization theory is right in criticising a western centrism, they argue, it is not able to theorise the power relations of global capitalism, as political economy in media and communication did, because it has abandoned a focus on the nation state as the relevant unit of comparison:

> "Indeed, cultural globalization is viewed as positive precisely because it is thought to weaken the nation. By contrast the political economy literature offers a less schooled approach, with one strand attacking the corrupting legacy of nationalism as the worm inside the apple of social democracy, and disputing liberal notions of state as illusory. But this tradition, in all its diversity, still tends to see the state as potentially the instrument of popular countervailing power and progressive

redistribution, and views the nation as the place where democracy is
mainly organised.' (Curran and Park 2000b: 11)

Curran and Park argue that the nation state continues to be relevant in comparative media research. Their main argument is that 'communications systems are still in significant aspects national' and that the 'nation is still a very important marker of difference' (Curran and Park 2000b: 11f.). Because of that, they not only organised the book De-Westernising Media Studies around the (itself western) concept of national media systems; they also developed a state centred model to compare these media systems between the dichotomies 'neo-liberal' vs. 'regulated' and 'democratic' vs. 'authoritarian'. In this sense, their 'de-westernised' model of doing comparative media research starts with the state as the unit of comparison, but claims that at least in part the related media systems have to be described with more context-sensitive categories than previously. This generates then the structure of the book as a whole. Differentiated into sections ("transitional and mixed societies', 'authoritarian neo-liberal societies', 'authoritarian regulated societies', 'democratic neo-liberal societies' and 'democratic regulated societies'), certain aspects of national media systems are discussed in the context of an increasing media globalization, while the implicit state reference-point for comparison remains in tact.

This trajectory also marks other publications on comparative media research. A further example is the book Comparing Media Systems by Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini. The arguments of the book have a comparable starting point, pointing out that 'most of the literature on the media is highly ethnocentric, in the sense that it refers only to the experience of a single country' (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 2). While this understanding of ethnocentrism is for sure itself quite restricted, it is nevertheless their point of departure to develop an

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exploratory system for doing comparative media research. In so doing, Hallin and Mancini develop three models of media systems, the 'polarised pluralist model' (typical for France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain), the 'democratic corporatist model' (typical for Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland) and the 'liberal model' (typical for Britain, United States, Canada, Ireland) (cf Hallin and Mancini 2004: 66-86).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss these different 'models' in detail. More important, in any case, is how the 'models' are constructed as reference points of comparative media research. Based on the state as reference point, and media systems as political frameworks, of (mass) media communication, Hallin and Mancini's 'models' are typified by referring to certain kinds of states. While such a procedure might be understandable for political aspects of media communication which, as we noted at the outset, remain at least to some extent state-related (since political legitimisation is based on decisions by people living in specific states),[iii] and while the tremendous advance of the model is its more open, pluralistic normative perspective (cf. Couldry 2005, McQuail 2005, Hardy 2006), the remarkable point is that Hallin and Mancini also make <u>cultural</u> conclusions based on their models, claiming that a state's relation to a model not only testifies something about its political media system, but also about its society and (media) culture. It is not that we rule out such cultural consequences of Hallin and Mancini's model; our argument however is that such consequences need to be argued for on a stronger basis than the <u>assumption</u> that each nation has a distinctive and territorially bounded culture, including a distinctive media culture.

In these two frameworks for comparative media analyses, we find once more, and perhaps unwittingly, the 'container thinking' so criticised in present social and cultural theory. Much current media research has an implicit 'territorial essentialism', even as it tries to move towards rigorous international comparison. The state remains the principal reference point of comparative research, on the basis of which media systems, media markets and media cultures are theorised. One can call this an 'international (and intercultural) approach' to comparative media research which might be visualised as follows (Hepp 2006: 78-80):

Figure 1: International and intercultural approach of comparative media research
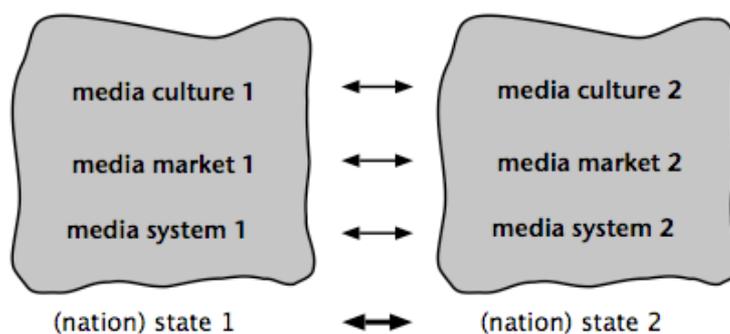
Our contention about this 'international approach' is not to deny that there are aspects of media communication related to the state that must be discussed in a (territorialised) state frame (see above), but rather to note the tendency in comparative media research to date to essentialise the relation between state, (political) media system, media market and media culture into a model of binary comparison or what we might call a binary comparative semantic.[iv] But if we focus on questions of media culture in particular, this 'territorial essentialism' is highly problematic, since contemporary media cultures are not per se bound in such national containers, and so are not necessarily available to be compared in this way.

2. Media cultures as territorialised and deterritorialised thickenings

If we focus more on questions of media cultures than media markets or media systems, different types of argument are necessary. (Note that this does not mean that our argument in what follows has no consequences for questions of (media) politics: indeed the current crisis of traditional politics in many countries (including the UK) remain closely tied to the histories of particular states as the continuing, if no longer fully legitimate, focus of political culture (cf Couldry, Livingstone and Markham forthcoming).)

When speaking about 'media cultures' specifically, we include all cultures whose primary resources of meaning are accessible through technology-based media. From this point of view, all media cultures have to be theorised as translocal phenomena, inasmuch as media make translocal communicative connections possible (Hepp 2004: 163-194). They are not 'placed' at a defined locality, but are articulated through 'disembedded' communicative processes while still being related to a greater or lesser number of localities within or beyond particular national or regional boundaries.[v] This said, we can understand media cultures as based on a connectivity of communication processes that might be based around a relatively centralised power structure power centred (as with traditional mass media) or marked by a more multi-centred power structure (as many hope for the Internet).[vi] They may be larger or smaller in terms of the contents and interests which focus together. We need to allow also for 'media cultures' which are highly generalised, for example different ways in which the celebrity/ audience relationship is worked out in different media/ political territories: a point to which we return later.

Describing media cultures in this sense as translocal phenomena, we also refer to a specific

understanding of culture. Some time ago, Jan Nederveen Pieterse (1995) divided principal understandings of culture into two, a territorial and a translocal one. The essence of his arguments is that territorial concepts of culture are inward-looking, endogenous, focused on organicity, authenticity and identity, whereas translocal concepts of culture are outward-looking, exogenous, focused on hybridity, translation and identification. Based on our arguments it seems helpful to us to understand cultures in general in a translocal frame: all present cultures are more or less hybrid, have to translate, change their identities and so on. In contrast to this, what is problematic for a general territorial conceptualisation of culture is that it refers to the already criticised container-thinking of nation states. With this concept, cultures are from the beginning interpreted as national cultures of territorial states: no other template or model is considered. More helpful than such territorial bordering is to suggest that cultures – as the sum of the classificatory systems and discursive formations on which the production of meaning draws (see Hall 1997: 222) – transgress the local without being necessarily focused on territoriality as a reference point of their meaning articulation. In this sense, cultures are a kind of 'thickening' (Löfgren 2001) of translocal processes of the articulation of meaning. Such a theorisation opens the possibility of understanding territorialisation, and deterritorialization, as contested practices through which specific cultures are articulated in their particularity – by the media and beyond (García Canclini 1995, 2001).

By focusing on this framework, it will be possible to describe the development of European media cultures during the last hundred years in a different way (cf. Hepp 2007). One can take, for instance, the works of Benedict Anderson, Orvar Löfgren or David Morley as examples of this. The rise of national cultures is related to the diffusion of the so-called mass

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media. When different locales are very intensively connected by media, different people can be involved in a communicative process, and the construction of a common 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983), 'home territory' (Morley 2000) or 'cultural thickening' (Löfgren 2001). Such reflections refer to the level on which questions of territory pertain to translocality. One can take television history as an example. First, television was marketed in the fifties as global, when it was called a 'window to the world'. Secondly, television had to be appropriated locally, that is to say it had to find its place in local life. And thirdly, the horizon of its first representations had the tendency of being nationally territorial, because the first important television events were national celebrations, national football games or national serial productions, but also the borders of TV networks broadcasting were the borders of nations. Like the print media and the radio before it, television helped to construct the territorialised 'cultural thickening' of a nation.

David Morley's metaphor of the 'home territory' is, at this point, important in a dual sense. On the one hand, it shows the specificity of these national media cultures. It is possible to describe national media cultures whose translocal communicative thickening has been territorialised in such a way that national frontiers are the main borders of many communicative networks and flows. The process of thickening of the national imagined community was territorially bound. On the other hand, Morley's metaphor of the home territory shows us quite clearly that this territoriality of the media-influenced home no longer exists in a pure form. In the time of globalisation, communicative connectivity is becoming more and more deterritorialised. With the distribution of media products across different national borders and the emergence of the internet, global communicative connectivity grows, which makes the thickenings of national media cultures relative and overlapping. One

must contextualise them as part of different networks of the media.

This means that the borders of the 'cultural thickenings' to which we belong do not necessarily correspond with territorial borders, even though territories continue to have a high relevance as a reference point for constructing national community. Rather, deterritorial thickenings gain relevance with increasing global media connectivity. If we take the case of media cultures today, we can say that we have both moments at the same time: on the one hand, territorially focused thickenings of communicative connections (hence it still makes sense to talk about mediated regional or national translocal communities as reference points of identities)[vii] but on the other hand communicative thickenings <u>across</u> territorial borders, thickenings which offer the space for deterritorialised translocal communities with corresponding identities. Analytically, we can make here a four level distinction between ethnic, commercial, political and religious aspects. On the level of ethnicity we have an increasing number of communicative thickenings of minority groups and diasporas.[viii] On the commercial level a high number of deterritorial popular cultural communities like youth cultures, sports communities and fan networks are discussed in much present research.[ix] On the political level over the last decades deterritorial social movements like the critical globalisation movement have gained relevance.[x] And on the religious level we see different belief communities like religious or spiritual groups, who define themselves in particular as not territorially bound.[xi] One can argue that all of these examples are based on translocal media connectivity and specific cultural thickenings which operate across territorial boundaries: each offers an important resource point for current identities.

But how can we do comparative media research in such a frame? This question will be

discussed in the last section of our paper.

3. A transcultural approach – or: How can we compare?

The arguments we have developed concerning questions of media cultures had the aim of showing that media cultures have on the one hand something to do with 'territorialization' – here understood as a specific process of meaning articulation – and on the other hand with 'deterritorialization' in the sense that many present cultural forms can't be related to specific territories. In all this shows how problematic an essentialist territorialised 'container thinking' is for doing comparative research on media cultures. But where to start if we still want to do comparative research? The answer we want to outline in the following involves developing a new comparative semantic, that we want to call a 'transcultural approach'.

Figure 2: Transcultural approach of comparative media research
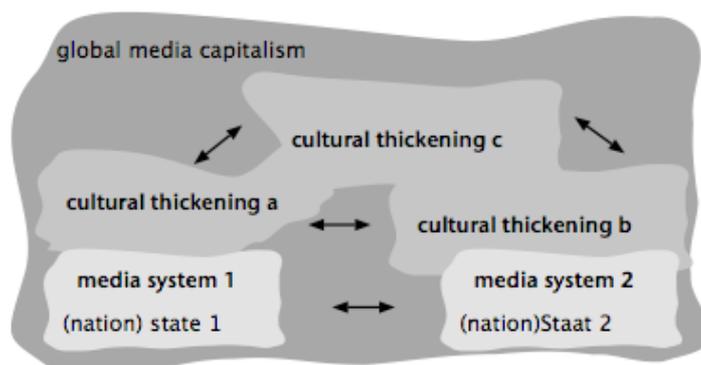
By using the term 'transcultural' we don't want to indicate that we should only focus on forms which are standardised 'beyond' or 'across' cultures. Rather we borrow the term from Wolfgang Welsch (1999) who used it to indicate that in present times important cultural

phenomena can not be broken down into dimensions of traditional cultures based in specific territories. Instead contemporary cultural forms are increasingly generated and communicated across various territories.

The transcultural comparative semantic we want to suggest takes the existence of global media capitalism as a starting point. Across different states global media capitalism becomes a structuring force in the sense that in different regions of the world media communication is more and more considered as an 'exchange of economic good' and not only as an communication process with the aim of a better reciprocal understanding (cf. Herman and McChesney 1997, Hesmondhalgh 2002). Nevertheless we have to bear in mind, that this global media capitalism does not standardise the articulation of meaning because of its 'over-determination' of meaning (Ang 1996). Quite often global media capitalism rather seems to be a source of ongoing cultural fragmentation, contestation and misunderstanding – not only between national cultures but also across them.

Within global media capitalism political media systems are the most territorially related entities, because the legitimacy of political decision making still is to a high degree state related. Nevertheless as soon as questions of media culture come to the fore, based on our previous arguments it becomes obvious that cultural thickenings can either be broadly territorialized (as with national cultures, articulated with reference to a state and its territory) or they can transgress states and their territories. Examples we have mentioned for this are diasporas, popular cultures, social movements or religious belief communities. The articulation of these communities refers to deterritorialised transmedial communicative spaces.

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Concerning the question 'How to compare?' a 'transcultural approach' overcomes the binary of an 'international approach' without excluding the state as a <u>possible</u> reference point of comparison. In detail this means that a 'transcultural approach' does not operate with a concept of media cultures enclosed by territorial states but with an understanding of the thickening of these phenomena in the frame of an increasingly global communicative connectivity. Such a 'comparative semantic' tries to consider the <u>specificity</u> of such thickenings and the complex interrelations between them.

4. Discussion by way of examples

Based on our arguments above, we want to take two examples from our present research to show how useful such a starting 'transcultural comparative semantic' is.

(1) Our first example is a research project on the Catholic World Youth Day as a media event.[xii] At first glance this research project seems to be 'comparative' in a traditional sense of the word as it investigates the media event within Germany and Italy. Nevertheless there are at least three arguments why research on media events like the World Youth Day must be conducted 'transculturally'.

First, the research project shows that this media event has especially a central role <u>within</u> the deterritorial belief community of Catholicism. These findings can be carried out for both the German and Italian media coverage as in both cases this belief community was the main meaning horizon of the media event. Second, the fact that the local happenings of the World Youth Day in Cologne were mediatized meant in the media coverage of both states that their

plurality was minimised to the single story of a pope visit in Cologne as the core of the media event. Both in Italy and Germany this focusing of the media coverage resulted in comparable patterns and forms of staging the sacred figure of the pope as a 'celebrity' who within the deterritorialsed staging of Catholicism and its catholic youth culture seems to work as a kind of general 'brand'. Third, we can see also differences between the discussion of the event in German and Italian media. For example within the German media relations were discussed between a possible re-emergence of religion (for which the World Youth day was considered as an example) and a new conservatism in the context of German elections. Also the official position of the pope to sexual morality played a significant role in the German media coverage but not in Italy.

It is not possible to discuss the results of this empirical study in detail.[xiii] Nevertheless these three arguments should show the need for a 'transcultural approach' in this research: On the one hand such a mode of comparison offers the chance to typify forms and patterns across territorial and national cultural frames with Catholicism in focus as a mediated cultural thickening of its own. This makes sense as the increase of a new form of youth catholic spirituality is important across Germany and Italy, and as the shaping forces of mediatization of religion are the same in both contexts. So there are core aspects of the media event that can be ascertained across different territorial frames. At the same time the media event of the World Youth Day is marked by various aspects of national contextualisation. The media event has a 'thematic core' shared by different states, territories and 'their' national cultures, which has something to do with the mediatization of a third space culture of Catholicism around its brand of the pope, but is thickened in a specific way in the context of different national (and regional) media.

Only a transcultural perspective is open for such complexities within contemporary mediated communication. A traditional international or intercultural approach must force this event into the 'container' of a national culture, and so distort it. There is no national cultural unit 'at the heart' of this media event, which was always from the beginning translocal in its production and reference-points.

(2) Our second example is deliberately more diffuse, since we want to use it to broach the difficult question of where we set the limits to the term 'media culture', and whether it is possible that, notwithstanding the global flows of celebrity signs, there might, paradoxically, be national celebrity cultures that would come within our definition of 'media cultures'. If so, this would return us to Hallin and Mancini's problematic, but on terms based more securely in a translocal approach.

It is beyond doubt that the celebrity's role in global media capitalism generates cultural 'thickenings' across national borders around particular major celebrities, particularly in those domains less dependent for transmission on language: music, sport, film, fashion. When Japanese and UK fans of The Beatles meet on Liverpool's Beatles Trail, they act out a shared but translocal fan culture even though they may lack the common language to articulate what it is they share. The necessary translocality of such media cultures was brought home to one of the authors when on holiday in China he walked into the garden of a hotel in Xi'an, only to find in front of a traditional pagoda and lake setting, a bronze sculpture of David Beckham's torso, arms uplifted to salute the crowd's adulation after a goal, and displaying one of his more recent haircuts. A member of the same (UK) tour group asked in puzzlement, 'But why?', on the basis that Beckham is an English footballer, not realising that Beckham the

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brand is much 'bigger' in Asia than in Britain. Whatever the national origins of Beckham's celebrity, Beckham the brand must be understood as from the outset transnational in nature. In this way, celebrity generates examples of media cultures that cannot be understood as other than translocal and transnational.

But that is not the end of the story, because it is equally obvious, if difficult to articulate precisely, that the way the relationship between 'celebrity' and its opposite (call it 'ordinary life') is lived out is different in, say, the USA from in the UK or France, let alone China or Iran. Can we therefore imagine nationally distinct celebrity cultures with distinct 'values' and ritual forms in these territories, even though many of the reference-points of those cultures would be globally shared (we have in mind much more than national variations in how a particular celebrity icon is interpreted)? This is an interesting but completely unexplored territory which reveals what is at stake in the move beyond the 'national container' notion of culture. Here, because of the pervasive globalisation in the celebrity industry, it is the national dimension of celebrity culture (in the broad sense: obviously there are local celebrities only known on a small scale) that has to be argued for, not the global or translocal dimension.

The argument needs to be made, as argued earlier, by identifying the factors which in particular locations and to different degrees lead to distinct 'cultural thickenings' around the basic forms of celebrity and fandom. One factor that is likely to be distinctive is religion's role in supplying models for, or reasons for forbidding or suppressing, adulation of exceptional figures. While religion, interestingly, is ignored in Hallin and Mancini's model for comparing media systems, elements included in that model could also be relevant here:

for example, the relative dominance for a long period of market-based media (USA), the closeness or distance of media outlets from civil society (US versus Sweden), and the changing economics (and resource-distribution for traditional news-gathering) within particular countries' media industries, especially their newspapers. This is an area still be explored, but it suggests how territorially-based factors could inflect media cultures many of whose reference-points are from the outset transnational. This illustrates therefore how we might approach those media cultures which <u>are</u> nationally distinct from within an overall approach to culture which is 'transnational', not 'international'.

5. Conclusion

We hope that these two examples have shown how a transcultural perspective can help us do comparative media and communication research in times of media globalization. If we no longer take the state territory as an unquestioned and essentialised starting point, we can be much more open to contemporary media cultures' complex inter-relations. Media cultures are by no means limited to 'nation state cultures'. Many aspects of media cultures have to be thought beyond such a narrow frame.

This is especially the case for highly controversial, power-related and contested aspects of contemporary culture: Catholicism and the deterritorial catholic belief community are one example, while Islam, including its more politicised dimensions, is another. When, following the 7 July 2005 bombings in London and following the foiled bomb plot against planes leaving London in August 2006, neighbours of those involved or arrested expressed to

journalists their shock at how people who enjoyed routine aspects of local culture (fish and chips from the local takeaway, talk about the local football team) could also be involved in such events[xiv], they expressed the tension between a traditional place-bound notion of culture and a different notion of culture which is from the start mediated and translocal. The tension however appears as such mainly only from an external perspective, since it is both possible, and increasingly likely, to combine both types of culture (and more) in one life.

It is only through a fully transcultural frame of analysis that we can properly grasp such tensions and in that way move, we hope, one stage closer towards a genuinely comparative and internationalised account of media's role in our everyday lives.

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Notes

[i] This article is a more developed version of our joint paper presented to the Internationalising Media Studies conference at University of Westminster, September 2006. Thanks to the conference's organisers and to our audience there.

[ii] Translated from the German edition.

[iii] Nevertheless we have to have in mind that especially in the context of media globalization also different forms of 'deterritorialised media politics' gain relevance, as the discussion about a global media governance shows. See for this O'Siochru et al. 2002, Guerrieri et al. 2004, Raboy 2004.

[iv] Also if more than two media cultures, markets and systems are compared this way that basic argumentative structure remains binary in the sense of comparing closed dualities.

[v] It is important however not to confuse two questions: the degree to which a locality is translocally connected through communication and the degree to which people living in that locality live their life within the physical space of that locality. The latter can never be reduced to zero since as physical beings we each must reside somewhere.

[vi] While we don't discuss questions of power on the following pages (because we want to focus on outlining founding ideas of doing comparative media research) these argument shows how far our thinking is related to questions of power. See for this concerning digital media Couldry and Curran (2003).

[vii] One example would be the identity of different German federal states like Bavaria or Bremen, another example the different national identities within Europe. In addition, the construction of Europe itself is a space of communicative connectivity and the originating European identity is historically a territorially bound process (cf Kleinsteuber and Rossmann 1994; Morley and Robins 1995).

[viii] See beside others Tölölyan 1996, Cohen 1997, Dayan 1999, Naficy 2001, Georgiou 2004, Silverstone and Georgiou 2005.

[ix] Some important examples for research on this are Amit-Talai and Wulff 1995; During 1997; Hills 2002; Pilkington et al. 2002; Storey 2003.

[x] Again only a few examples for research on this: Porta et al. 1999, Cohen and Rai 2000, Touraine 2002; Klein 2000; Hepp and Vogelgesang 2005.

[xi] Cf Knoblauch 1989, Hoover and Lundby 1997, Habermas 2005, Beyer 2006, Sumiala-Seppänen et al. 2006.

[xii] The research project 'Situational Community-Building by Religious Hybrid Events: The 20th World Youth Day 2005 in Cologne – The Mediatization Perspective" is founded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and is part of a wider research consortium. For further information see http://www.wyd-research.com.

[xiii] For some of the results of the research project see Hepp et al. 2005, Hepp and Krönert 2006, Hepp and

Krönert 2007.

[xiv] See for example, published under the subheading 'community reaction', the recollection by Kamran Siddique, 'My friend: the football fan who dreamed of being a doctor', <u>Guardian</u>, 15 August 2006, page 5.