

## Reader's Report: An Analysis of Thussu's "A New Global Communication Order for a Multipolar World"

Jiaxin Yang<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The University of Melbourne

Correspondence: Jiaxin Yang, The University of Melbourne.

doi:10.56397/SSSH.2023.04.09

### Abstract

With the rise of digital mediatization, there has been a growing scholarly interest in the shifting global media landscape. This report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the redefined global communication order as discussed in Thussu's article, with specific emphasis on the role of India and China. Furthermore, this report critically examines the limitations of Thussu's work, which although paradigm-shifting, does not engage in extensive empirical research. It is hoped that this reader's report will inspire further scholarship in the field of communication, particularly concerning the study of global media dynamics.

**Keywords:** global communication order, China, India, media

### 1. Introduction

Daya Thussu has researched the impact of the two growing countries on the geopolitics of international communication in great detail. Most recently, Thussu has compiled an article on the new global media order based on a keynote speech at the Australian New Zealand Communication Association (ANZCA) at the University of Sydney. In his article, Thussu (2018) discussed the implications of this potential new order for the global communication order and the broader communication plan by analyzing the changing demand in China and India. Then he concluded with the development of digital globalisation and recommendations for a future model of global media order.

The current global media communication order is still dominated by Western countries (Thussu, 2018, p. 52). However, the growing media influence of China and India became an exert factor on the global order. The author expanded on existing scholarship and provided an advanced perspective.

Firstly, I will analyze the article's structure and then discuss the conclusions of Thussu as it relates to the existing literature.

### 2. Summary

Thussu (2018) in the first part introduced two facts. On the one hand, China has the most significant number of Internet users in the world, and the next is India. On the other hand, both countries aspire to play a prominent role in the *Post-American World*. He claimed that a new global order of media communication is forming a new model. His article presents an explanation of the argument using the exponential growth of the media in China and India as examples (Thussu, 2018, p. 53).

After introducing his argument, the author used data and literature to analyze the background and changes. The data from US Government Economics (2016) and Forbes (2017) in which the US remains the dominant player in global media and digital globalization (Thussu, 2018, p. 53). The article argued that the development of the US media is inextricably linked to its economic, political, and military hegemony. Thussu (2018) pointed out that while US digital companies dominate digital media globalisation, there has been a dramatic change in the

distribution of users (p. 54). The increasing speed of access to content in non-Western countries has contributed to the emergence of new voices and perspectives among users. This trend challenges the world media domination of two countries, the US, and the UK. The author claimed that the rise of China and India could trigger the most significant shift in global communications (p. 55).

Thussu showed the rise of China and India as examples to support his argument. Examining the rapid economic, internet user, and technological developments in both countries while pointing out the obvious contrast between them (Thussu, 2018, p. 56).

First, Thussu described the development of China. China's economy has grown rapidly over the past two decades, particularly in terms of corporate expansion and import trade. China's economic base has facilitated the development of the Internet industry. China's internet technology is expanding globally and has the most significant number of internet users worldwide, so while Western-dominated engines are waning, China is becoming the new champion of globalisation (Thussu, 2018, p. 56). Thussu also explored the concept of the 'One Belt, One Road' project and its impact on the construction of communications networks. While accelerating the pace of Chinese media outreach, has not gained China global credibility through its massive expansion and technological prowess (Thussu, 2018, p. 57).

To further support this argument, Thussu (2018) next examined the potential changes in India (p. 58). Like China, India's rapid growth in internet users and the growing popularity of the internet have led to a dramatic change in the Indian media. At the same time, India's electronic communications market is growing, accelerating the development of network infrastructure. Thussu also pointed out the potential scale and scope of growth in rural areas and among young people, which could make the Indian media more visible in the international media arena (p. 59). Because India has a professional and long history of journalism that creates different opportunities for growth than China, there is only the possibility that Indian media will expand in the face of digital globalisation (Thussu, 2018, p. 59).

After an analysis of China and India, Thussu (2018) reflected on the fact that globalisation is no longer entirely Western and that China and India represent the rise of Easternisation. He also discussed how Asia has provided a new model for the development of global media (p. 59). In this subsection, Thussu presents China as a critical player in the negotiations to advance a multipolar media order. In short, a large part of the developing world and accustomed to operating under US cultural hegemony, in contrast to China which, despite its exploitative nature, may still increase its attractiveness as an alternative model to free market capitalism. Significantly, Thussu further explores the success of state-led capitalism in China (p. 60).

In the final part of the article, Thussu (2018) described the process of media studies in a multipolar world while offering constructive ideas for media development in China and India. Analyzed by the examples of China and India, it emerges that existing global communication models challenge the theoretical framework of Western state-dominated media but have not been studied in communication studies. On the one hand, the US-led 'modernisation paradigm' has spread and is used globally. On the other hand, China and India were not fit into the Cold War ideology that split the globe into a capitalist camp led by the United States and a communist camp centred in Moscow. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the transitional stage of the media in the communist countries of the former Eastern Bloc have led many scholars to reassess the media in the West (p. 60). The literature suggests that a growing number of scholars are advocating the 'de-Westernisation' of media studies and promoting the expansion and true 'internationalisation' of communication and internet studies (Thussu, 2018, p. 61).

Thussu's current research effectively supports his claims. Internet developments in China and India are having an increasing impact on the global communication order. He has argued for active participation in the diversification of media communication in China and India while adapting and reshaping the global media and communication research field (p. 62).

### 3. Critical Discussion

Thussu not only engages with past and present scholarship on globalized media but also complements the work of previous scholars. The literature also adds to the vision of a new global media order for future research. The first part of this paper has summarized the literature and the next part will critically discuss the contribution of Thussu's arguments in the field of global media.

When the text is in the section on globalized media development, the author highlights the work of British media sociologist Jeremy Tunstall for his groundbreaking proposal that *The Media are American*. Tunstall (1977) claimed that although most of the mass media originated in Europe, the global media is still dominated by the United States, where almost every type of mass media has been industrialized. In Thussu's article, it is interesting to consider how he explores the advantages of media development in China and India, and the media's behaviour in both countries, in a context where the US still dominates globalized media.

While most scholarship has focused on censorship and surveillance in China and the control of ideological narratives by the party-state, he does not examine these aspects but instead delves deeper into and explains the forms of online capitalism specific to China. Thussu discusses how China and India have strengthened their media through economics and policy. These explanations all contribute to an understanding of the field of media studies in non-Western countries, where the US-dominated media paradigm does not always fit the media environment of each country, particularly China and India. Indeed, the new global communication order is not a simple concept; it is often subject to individual countries' changing cultural, political, economic, and military contexts (Thussu, 2018, p. 53).

Another of Tunstall's (2007) arguments, *The Media Were American* is mentioned again by the Thussu in the last part of the article. In the 30 years since the publication of his first book, Tunstall has focused closely on China and India and their rapidly growing populations, considering the role of the media in the collapse of the Soviet Union, the rise of soap operas in Brazil and Mexico, the growing power of India's national film output, Bollywood, and the relative decline of media influence in the US. The relative decline of media influence in the United States. Tunstall (2007) reconsiders the concept of 'media globalisation', assuming the re-emergence of stronger national cultures and national media systems.

Thussu (2018) focuses on China and India and demonstrates that the development of global media will be influenced by these two countries, resulting in a new global media order. The author's development of Tunstall's work is that he draws on previous literature and existing data to prove and expand on Tunstall's hypotheses in the book. This suggests that the author has added to the work of previous scholars, but that his findings are not novel or unique.

For example, Thussu cites the work of Rachman (2016), who discusses the impact of 'Easternisation.' He has a unique perspective on China and India and avoids the suggestion that almost all Asian countries are somehow opposed to China in terms of the impact of its rise on Southeast Asia. Similarly, he avoids the triumphalism of a larger proportion of Westerners about the prospects for India, and Rachman (2016) claimed that the media and communication are essential ideological resources in managing the 'Easternisation process' (Rachman, 2016, p. 256). This shows that there were already scholars who were aware of the importance of media development in China and India before Thussu's article was published. We can say that although Thussu's ideas are valuable, they are not innovative. This results in his research not being a major contribution to the field of communication. Thussu is the development of a theory of globalized media from the perspective of the media order by data and an outlined approach.

Although Thussu's work makes a limited contribution to the field of research on the new global communication order, his detailed data and developability study illuminate the available literature while supporting his arguments. One of how the author's work adds value to the field is by singling out the importance of the two countries of China and India, narrowing the scope of his study in comparison to globalized media. Thus, Thussu's work is considered a lesser study than other more important and established theorists and scholars in the field. While Tunstall discusses the potential for media development in multiple non-Western countries, Thussu uses his analysis to illustrate the uniqueness of China and India to the prospects for media development. Furthermore, Thussu adds that in the global communication order, the return of Asia requires a radical reassessment of at least two centuries of pedagogical parameters as well as Western history and modern narratives (Thussu, 2018, p. 61). Thussu argued that the rise of China and India has reshaped the global communication order.

#### 4. Conclusion

Overall, although Thussu's study is not completely new in the communication field. However, his analysis of China and India is a more accurate case study to extend existing research in the global media order. Furthermore, Thussu (2018) concluded with an additional point, "With the globalisation of media in China and India, does this key group help to strengthen the voice of the South on the global stage?" (p. 63), which is undoubtedly another new argument worthy of examination by future scholars. While digital globalisation has brought individual countries' borders infinitely closer, each country's media has different characteristics. Thus, using the media in China and India as examples, the author opens the door to understanding non-Western media, exploring the multiple possibilities of a global media order from an Eastern perspective, improving the overall paradigm for understanding media and making a definite contribution to future scholarship.

#### References

- Rachman, G., (2016). *Easternisation: War and Peace in the Asian Century*. The Bodley Head.
- Thussu, D., (2018). A new global communication order for a multipolar world. *COMMUNICATION RESEARCH AND PRACTICE*, 52-66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/22041451.2018.1432988>.
- Tunstall, J., (1977). *The media are American*. Columbia University Press.

Tunstall, J., (2007). *The Media Were American*. Oxford University Press.  
<https://global.oup.com/ushe/product/the-media-were-american-9780195181470>.

### **Copyrights**

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).