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Editorial: Exploring the interdisciplinary intersection of communication and culture in today's mediated world

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Editorial on the Research Topic
Exploring the interdisciplinary intersection of communication and culture in today's mediated world

The modern landscape of communication is intricately tied to cultural expressions, influencing how we understand and interact with the world. It is essential to recognize that culture, its diversity, and its articulations have attained a hegemonic position in global discourse. Contemporary debates on communication for social, economic and political change often center on the concept of culture, with early literature categorizing culture as tradition. Dutta (2018) asserts that "The turn toward culture inaugurated development initiatives that sought to operationalize, measure, and incorporate culture into development efforts, marking culture as a profitable commodity to be transacted in global markets" (p. 90). As we navigate the complexities of a world increasingly mediated and negotiated by and through technology, the interplay between communication and culture emerges as a critical area of study.

The concept of mediatization of culture, the emerged in response to the increasing mediation of culture by institutional mass media, has gained increasing popularity in media and communication research in recent times. Tsuria (2015) states that the "discussion of the relation between media/communication and culture/society can be traced back to the emergence of communication as a discipline, and yet it is still constantly debated and theorized" (p. 1752). While various traditions of mediatization research differ in how they understand media—the institutionalist tradition construing them as independent social institutions with their own set of rules, and the social-constructivist tradition emphasizing the key role that they play in the construction of social and cultural reality—they all share a common understanding of the mediatization of culture as a process of transformation that occurs when media become deeply intertwined with various aspects of social life, including the production, distribution, and consumption of culture. As this dominant paradigm expanded its global reach, critiques of the paradigm emerged from the global South. Zhang's essay entitled, "*Cognitive perspective of metaphors in Chinese Hua'er folksongs*", shed light on the intangible heritage of *Hua'er*. This study explores how traditional folk songs use metaphors to convey cultural values and social norms, highlighting the complexities and richness of cultural expression in non-Western contexts.

Moreover, one of the key aspects of mediatization is the transformation of cultural practices through an increased reliance on media technologies. This transformation has resulted in the blurring of boundaries between media and culture, leading to the increasing significance of media as a means of cultural expression and exchange. Consequently, there has been a growing interest in understanding the impact of mediatization on cultural production, distribution, and consumption. Scholars (e.g., Krämer, 2013; Clarke, 2016; McEwen and Lui, 2021; De Alwis et al., 2022) have examined how media technologies have transformed cultural practices, creating new forms of cultural expression and redefining traditional ones. They have also explored the role of media technologies in shaping cultural values, norms, and identities. In their essay entitle, "*Assessing generative A.I. through the lens of the 2023 Gartner Hype Cycle for Emerging Technologies: a collaborative autoethnography*", King and Prasetyo re-consider existing claims made across contemporary media channels that generative artificial intelligence can be used to develop educational materials. Their study employed a collaborative autoethnography to examine the journey and unintended consequences experienced by a non-technology lecturer engaging with generative AI. This exploration is framed under the lens of the 2023 Gartner Hype Cycle for Emerging Technologies, highlighting the practical and theoretical implications of integrating advanced media technologies into cultural and educational practices.

Rapid advancements in media technologies have transformed the way we communicate, perceive and interact with each other, and understand culture. As the world becomes more interconnected, communication and culture are inextricably linked, shaping and being shaped by one another. By adopting a cultural mediatization approach, we can view media as integral to the production and circulation of cultural meanings, rather than simply as a means of disseminating information. In their article entitled, "*Mental health, violence, suicide, self-harm, and HIV in series and films of Netflix: content analysis and its possible impacts on society*", Peña and Sarrionandia conduct an in-depth analysis of how the topics related to mental health, violence, suicide, self-harm, and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) are depicted in the 10 most-watched films and 10 most-watched series on Netflix. They explore the frequency and context in which mental health issues, violence, suicide, self-harm, and HIV are presented, and discuss the potential societal impacts of such portrayals. Considering the impact that digital platforms have on viewers' behaviors, their study emphasizes the need to regulate violence in the media or to mitigate the impact it generates. Moreover, it highlights the need to realistically represent the complex issues that suicide, self-harm, mental health, and HIV constitute in the modern society. Their study highlights the dual-edged nature of media representations and calls for more responsible and sensitive portrayals in popular media.

Similarly, the intersection of media and cultural representation is explored in the article "*Branding countries through multicultural events: a quantitative analysis of the impact of the FIFA World Cup 2022 on Qatar's brand*" by Kerry et al.. Their study aims to analyze and better understand the branding impact of the FIFA World Cup 2022 on the Middle Eastern country of Qatar. Their study employs a quantitative content analysis to examine how the leading newspapers in the world's most influential countries, including United States, China, United Kingdom, France, and Germany, covered this event. The analysis focuses on corporate communication strategies and the framing of Qatar's national image. The authors discuss how hosting such a significant global event provided Qatar with an opportunity to reshape its international reputation, highlight its cultural diversity, and promote itself as a modern, progressive nation.

Globalization has intensified mediatization of culture, creating a complex interplay between global and local cultural practices. According to Tomlinson (1996), the "dystopian version of a global culture supposes the emergence of cultural uniformity (as distinct from unity) as the global expansion of one dominant set of cultural practices and values—one version of how life is to be lived—at the expense of all others" (p. 24). The increasing dominance of global media conglomerates has raised concerns over cultural homogenization and the erasure of local cultural identities. This necessitates a critical approach to media and cultural practices that recognizes the multiple and intersecting forms of power at play. Gao et al., in their study "*Cultural distance perceived by Chinese audiences in the Korean film Silenced: a study of cross-cultural receptions in film content elements*", explore the contradiction between the popularity of Korean films in China and the comprehension issues demonstrated by Chinese audiences. Their research acknowledges the burgeoning East Asian film industry and its ambition to reach wider audiences. They assert that the perceived cultural distance among Chinese audiences consuming the Korean film "*Silenced*" hints at potential cultural discounts within the Chinese film market for such thematic offerings. This study highlights the nuanced ways in which cultural products are received across different cultural contexts and the implications for film industries aiming for cross-cultural reach. Similarly, Vaidya and Osman, in their article "*Disney characters as moral role models: a discourse analysis of Coco and Encanto*", examine the role of popular culture in shaping moral perceptions. Their study focuses on the portrayal of resilience in Disney films, analyzing how these narratives contribute to societal discussions about resilience as a moral value. They argue that popular culture, particularly through Disney films, reinforces moral meanings and societal norms, demonstrating the significant impact media can have on public discourse and cultural values. These articles invite us to see the critical importance of understanding the complex dynamics at play in the global cultural landscape. As media technologies continue to evolve and global interconnectedness grows, it is essential to adopt a critical perspective that recognizes and addresses the potential for cultural homogenization while celebrating and preserving local cultural identities.

Building on the theme of cross-cultural analysis, Liang's work provides a detailed examination of how Classical Chinese stories are translated and received in the English-speaking world. In his article entitled, "*The strategy, function and efficacy of the peritexts in Giles's and Minford's English translations of Liaozhai Zhiyi*", Liang specifically examines the English translation of a collection of Classical Chinese stories—"*Strange Tales*

from a Chinese Studio" (*Liaozhai Zhiyi*)[1] by Qing dynasty writer Pu Songling. His work discusses the strategies employed in the peritexts of these translations and analyzes English readers' reviews from two online platforms. Zhao's analysis complements the broader discourse on cultural mediatization by highlighting the ways in which translation strategies and reader perceptions can influence the cross-cultural transmission of literary works.

The modern communication landscape is deeply intertwined and interconnected with cultural expressions, reflecting and shaping our global understanding. As culture becomes central to global discourse, it influences development initiatives and media representations, transforming into a valuable commodity in international markets. We believe that this interplay underscores the importance of critically examining the relationship between media and culture. As media continues to evolve, it is essential to advocate for responsible and sensitive portrayals that reflect the diverse realities of our interconnected world.

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1 Pu Songling assembled nearly five hundred short and lengthy tales over forty years, from the early 1670s to the early 1700s. The stories in this Research Topic are not intended to be frightening but rather to blur the boundaries between the supernatural and everyday reality, using physical and psychological detail to make the transition between these realms seem natural.

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