

Flow of Online Content from Production to Consumption in the Context of Globalization Theory

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ABSTRACT *Some studies have regarded globalization as a process of cultural homogenization, while others see it as one of cultural heterogenization. This conflict stems from their focus on either the production or consumption side of cultural products based on globalization theories bifurcated into political economy and cultural studies. This study covers the production, distribution, and consumption sides in online content flow and examines the effects of economic, geographic, and linguistic factors. This question is explored through the study of longitudinal changes in the number of Internet hosts from 1995 to 2010, online network connectivity among 174 countries, and geographic distribution of the top 300 web domains. The results suggest that the economic factor was most likely to have an impact on the flow of online content from production to consumption, but that its impact weakened over time. In addition, geographic proximity accounted for the bilateral relationship between countries. Limitations of world-system theory are also discussed.*

Keywords: globalization, cultural imperialism, cultural proximity, critical transculturalism, world-system theory, online content

Introduction

Although globalization has been widely discussed, there is an ongoing debate over its effects on culture. Three major theories attempt to explain the influence of globalization on global culture: *cultural imperialism*, *cultural pluralism*, and *critical transculturalism*. *Cultural imperialism* views globalization as cultural homogenization, particularly Americanization, whereas *cultural pluralism* regards it as a process of diversification, that is, cultural heterogenization. Between

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