

Interview

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Roundtable Discussion of Emerging Technology Companies and Transcultural Challenges

<https://doi.org/10.1515/jtc-2022-0021>

Received December 23, 2022; accepted May 22, 2023; published online September 20, 2023

Abstract: The conference and special issue of *The Trajectory of Emerging Media and Technology Companies* at the *Journal of Transcultural Communication* explore how transnational media and technology corporations transform global communication. We leveraged various analytical tools to examine the companies' structure, the country-specific advantages, regulation methods and development dynamics, media system models, and the transcultural implication for business expansion and product/content/service distribution. We also invited three eminent communication scholars to share their perspectives on the global trajectory and paradox of technology companies.

Keywords: technology company; transcultural communication; transnational business

Transnational technology companies are reshaping the global media and communication industry, fostering business and cultural diversity across national borders. However, they also face techno-nationalistic tensions and regulatory restrictions that may clash with the geopolitical goals of host and home countries. The challenge of emerging companies to U.S. hegemony in media and communication studies raises questions about cultural imperialism and technology decoupling. A new dimension of transcultural communication is needed to understand the

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transnational technology corporations: their rising influence on the global (commercial) media system, their future strategy in the information technology competition, their impact on international and intercultural communication and relations, and their commitments to the nature, community, and world society for future generations.

Daya Thussu, professor of international communication at the School of Communication, Hong Kong Baptist University; Dwayne Winseck, professor at the School of Journalism and Communication from Carleton University; and Fei Jiang, professor, and dean of the School of International Journalism and Communication at the Beijing Foreign Studies University, accepted our invitation and joined our discussion. To begin the conversation, we asked them to answer the following questions:

1. Could you reflect on your research in connection to the critical observation of technology companies around the globe?

Daya Thussu: The first thing is to say that we should not forget history. The second point I want to make, which also connects to the first one, is that the power question is fundamental to the issues we're discussing here. If you look at actual digital power today, I call it the "Fabulous Five": Amazon, Apple, Meta, Alphabet, and Microsoft. They control both the hardware and software of our communication. And we see a lot of clones of these organizations developing all over the world. But what is exciting and distinctive about the Chinese Internet is that it has developed its own platforms, like what we discussed during this conference about TikTok and Tencent. This is a very interesting area for competitive research, and it doesn't gain as much attention as it deserves in my view.

The third point is that much of this digital discussion is often about the U.S. versus China. It is understandable, but it doesn't capture the complexity of the digital world in which we live today. For example, the largest "open Internet" in the world is in India today. According to the data dated October 2022, 70 billion digital payment transactions took place in India, which was bigger than China's digital transactions. It is revolutionary to look at the whole FinTech industry in India. They're also building the world's cheapest Internet-enabled smartphone in conjunction with Google, led by the telecom giant Jio, a major conglomerate with a powerful presence in cyberspace in India. Beyond the Western world and China, a large part of the globe is still at quite an early stage of their digital journey. Technology innovation that emerged in these countries and places have a massive potential for application adaptation.

The final point is what I call "de-Americanizing the Internet, de-centering the Internet". As we all know, the Internet has a distinct American imprint. It was

devised to be developed, managed, controlled, and continued to be dominated—to a large extent—by American companies, like the Fabulous Five. But Internet usage has been changed these years fundamentally, as less than 10 % of the digital population are American citizens nowadays. The majority of the digital population is in India and China. My argument here is about the BRICS countries: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. We mentioned China and India. But also, Russia has its established digital infrastructure, which is quite substantial and needs to be investigated. BRICS countries offer alternative perspectives to look at the world. In the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, BRICS countries almost all essentially pose a different position towards the conflict, which is different from what you would hear in Europe and North America. So I think there is an interesting geopolitical dimension to this debate.

Dwayne Winseck: I appreciate what Daya just mentioned, we need to bring historical understanding to bear on contemporary conditions. In this respect, we have seen the history of world communication tools developed during the 19th and 20th centuries. The 19th and 20th centuries were often seen as an era in which the British Empire ruled communications, both on the infrastructure and news content levels. That domination shifted to the United States in the 20th century after the First World War and the Second World War. And what we are seeing today is a similar transition away from America-centric communication and Internet system to either a China-centric communication system or a more multipolar world communication system. This (power-shift) framework has its value, but it also has restrictions, historically and contemporarily.

In the contemporary context, let's take China as our center to date back to the beginning of the 1870s, and let's look at the telegraph cable. From the North, we see a cable coming down from Northern Europe, through Russia, and the Korean Peninsula, then get into Tianjin. The capital behind the cable is Danish, German, Russian, and British. The technology itself is made by Siemens and Anglo-German Company. Then coming up from the South around the same time, we have a much more British-owned and controlled cable by the Eastern Extension. Telegraph lands in China through Hong Kong and Shanghai around the same time. These two companies cooperate to divide the market. Reuters, the international news agency also entered China at the same time, showing that there's a vast platform dependency using contemporary language between the news and the infrastructure already at this early age. Between 1903 and 1906, another cable comes across the Pacific to arrive in China. But history reveals that this cable is secretly co-owned by a consortium of American investors, British investors, Canadian investors, as well as Danish investors. And it is the state subsidies that developed it.

Here we see competition, cooperation, and conflict. What I'm trying to say here is to look at the multinational character and complexity of the ownership behind these companies, both cable technology companies and the news agency at that time. And I think a realist framework that hints at America versus Britain in the past or America versus China today focuses exclusively on states and conflict but not enough on capital and market, as well as cooperation and cartels. History taught us that: (1) Communication business in terms of capital, technology, and politics was very international and much less nation-state centric than we often assume; (2) news agencies were platform-dependent. Submarine cables and telegraphs—in terms of speed capacity and price of transmission—shaped the production, distribution, and consumption of news on a local, regional and international basis; and (3) capital, communications, and power were intertwined with a mix of competition, cooperation, conflict, and conquest.

What we have seen from the last 150 years is a mounting system of what I would call “forced interdependence”, within which nations, economies, people, and technological systems and risks have been forced into contact with one another and mandated institutional responses allowed us to co-manage these risks. During the 1990s, the image of the United States stood out, probably during the high peak of the globalization wave, and the Internet's development took on an American complexion, but this was never the whole picture. By the end of the 1990s and the early 2000s, we could already see things developed differently in China. Russia, South Korea, and other countries also developed the Internet in their unique ways.

[Post online publication correction added 11 April 2025: “Korea” was changed to “South Korea.”]

This is to say, we already had the multipolar and federated Internet by then. And what we see today is the perpetual decline of American dominance becoming more visible. I do not want to underplay the extent of American influence over communications through the US-based Internet giants, the “Fabulous Five”, as professor Thussu called them. They dominate some of the top layers of the Internet, such as operating systems, online retailing, online streaming, APP stores, and browsers. But they don't rule the material infrastructure of the Internet. The Americans no longer rule the domain name system through ICANN. What we're seeing is the kind of dispersal into a more multipolar world of controlling elements over the Internet infrastructure. For example, equipment manufacturing has shifted. Huawei has a dominant position in many areas of (telecommunication) equipment manufacturing, and we have Ericsson, Nokia, and ZTE fiber-optic submarine cables. The “Fabulous Five” are also laying their cables. They do it as part of consortia with traditional telecommunications companies, much like the role model as I started with—the joint ownership of the cables back in the 1870s.

As Professor Thussu also mentioned, the number of Internet users in China surpassed the U.S. in 2008, and the number of Internet users in India surpassed the U.S. in 2014. This is fundamentally reshaping the character of the Internet, which influences the design and governance of the Internet as power gets dispersed more towards Europe, China, the other members of the BRICS, and the rest of the world. And when we look at emerging technology companies, like the Chinese tech giants Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent, we should know that they are integrated within an international system of Capitalism through directors, capital investment, and so on.

Fei Jiang: I would like to point out three keywords when talking about the great development of the Internet or new multinational media corporations and their influence on global communication. The first word is the boundary, the second is the benefit, and the third is the order. “Boundary” is a kind of physical boundary which means that before the Internet most multinational media corporations for their effort in global communications, focus on how to promote their information across boundaries to reach more audiences. Then, when the Internet and the internet of things began to bloom, such a boundary was not a problem anymore. Instead, benefits and interests came to the front. It means how to make/keep their income and become the most influential ones in the market became important. The most prominent transnational media and technology corporations all get big scales of audiences around the world, and they tend to drive further public attention.

And now, due to geopolitical developments, the global communication order has become a new concern. I didn’t mean such changes linearly took place, the three keywords I mentioned or three phases are not happening one after one, but more like a circle. Professor Winseck mentioned news agencies, the arrival of the Internet and the Internet of things changed not only the audiences of news or consumption of news, which redefined the business of news agencies. It also redefined the idea of news. I also appreciate what Professor Winseck discussed as the three-phase (power shift) framework. But to me, this kind of power shift is not only about the changes in the old model or the way of thinking we are used to, like the idea of the North, the South, the East, and the West. Instead, it is a new idea shift. When we are confronting the booming of new technologies and new ways of global communication, we need new ideas to meet such new changes and challenges.

For example, when transnational media companies came to China, it was by the late 1980s. Most Chinese scholars believe that transitional media corporations have mapped the Chinese media landscape by the end of the 20th century. Professor Winseck just mentioned Huawei, indeed, Huawei grew fast. Still, if we look at the Huawei case in the complete picture of media ecology, Huawei indeed made its

success. Also, Chinese scholars tend to reflect upon the massive number of Internet users. According to the most recent statistical data, the number of Chinese Internet users is now over one billion, with 80 % mobile users. But this evidence is not enough for Chinese scholars to believe that China is currently mapping the global media landscape. Although the new technology has supported the development of Chinese media companies and technology companies to actively join the new global communications, there are still many things we need to see clearly. Who is mapping the media landscape and whether China will be remapped again in the future? I'm not quite sure.

2. In global media history, the term “emerging” embodies both relativist and transformative implications as the opposition to the dominant powers. And such dominant power has always been positioned around American companies, primarily when we refer to technology companies. How shall we look at those companies from Silicon Valley in the United States? Is it accurate that we call them American companies? And also, when we use the term “emerging” to talk about companies from China, India, South Africa, or other countries, how long shall we name them as “emerging” companies?

Daya Thussu: Again, the history part is essential. And the problem in our field is that we do not do enough research on communication history. It means that there is a hugely under-researched area. Communication is not just about the invention of the telephone, the telegraph, or news agencies. It is also about intercultural communication, which goes back millennia. We should not be just techno-centered about this, even if the main theme of our conference is about technology companies. These companies change, the ownership structures change, and what they reflect is the powers equations in the world. If you look at the 19th century that, you find, especially until the second half of the 19th century, most of the big companies are not American but European. It was because Europe was a very powerful origin of the world at that time and where the great imperial centers existed. Why are we using the language spoken in the United Kingdom on the edge of Europe as the language of global communication and cultural exchange or international commerce in the world? I think we should emphasize and reemphasize the fact that companies emerge from center economic infrastructure in place.

Some of the companies we describe as emerging companies today have a slightly longer history than what people usually realize, Alibaba, for example. And in the case of China, it is not an emerging power, it is an emergent power. I would say that who decides how long a company is an emerging company depends on who is projecting this. Think of the news media mentioned earlier, financial journalism, for instance, where it is based. Think of the crypto story, which was just told yesterday that it is going to take over the world. And today's Economist published another cover story

about the fall of crypto. So a lot of discourse is being promoted, and manufactured in ways that suit the power elites of the society. It is a complicated question, what is emergent and what is emerging, and who decides what is emerging or emergent?

Dwayne Winseck: I think it's no longer responsible for talking about Baidu, Alibaba, Tencent, or Naspers—one of the biggest shareholders of Tencent—as emerging companies. They are not. Naspers is a very old company in South Africa, and it used that very old established base in the traditional media industry to launch into a new generation of Internet media almost three decades ago. Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent are all now two decades old or more. Let's look at China Mobile, China Unicom, and China Telecom. These entities are the outcry of an entity that is a century, all how China Mobile, China Unicom, and China Telecom will split off in early 2001 or 2000, was inspired by an adaptation of the breakup of AT&T. My point here is that we can focus on the “Fabulous Five”, or ByteDance. But this is the top layer of the Internet, the content, and application layer. I would like to look down to the lower layer and look at the so-called communication stack. I want to look at who's building the equipment, who is laying the cables, who owns those cables, and who operates on those cables. And when you start to look there, the “Fabulous Five” have more modest rules. The dominance of American interests at that level is much less. And the exciting thing is that you see Google and Facebook sitting side by side with China Mobile or Vietnam Telecom in these joint ownerships at this lower layer, and they are very complex entities.

Let's not always assign a national flag too quickly to communications facilities or companies but pay attention to the interests behind the companies. Sometimes they're aligned with the state, but often, they also struggle to be in line with the state. That is true in China as it is elsewhere. Capital is a power of its own, often telling the state to bugger off. We have significant legislation development right now around Internet services, online streaming services, digital platforms, and so on. What technology companies (like Facebook, Google, and Netflix) is that they are not going to give the data to the regulators who need it to make policy? And they may refuse to distribute news in the country if the country's regulator applies such a policy to constrain their business. There is a clash between the states and the capital.

Fei Jiang: I agree with Professor Winseck that we should not always assign a national flag on the Internet or media technology companies. Chinese tech giants like Baidu and Tencent, some investment behind the company came from the United States, South Africa, or other stakeholders. It is not only the Chinese capital investing in tech companies in China. Second, Professor Thussu and Professor Winseck mentioned that Chinese tech companies like Baidu or Tencent are no longer emerging companies. They have emerged for a long time. There is a saying about the three decades media technology companies must go through. In the first decade, when emerging companies embraced emerging technologies, they established

something new. Then, during the second decade, they accumulated a lot of capital, and they must get more popular and familiar with their users/audience. After that, during the third decade, these companies strived to find emerging new ideas to develop further. Let's go back to Internet development in China. In 1993, the National Information Infrastructure Agenda for Action was released in the United States. In 1994, China established its first permanent connection to the Internet, making it the 77th country in the world to go online. From 1993 to 2003, this is the first 10 years for Chinese Internet companies to emerge. Then from 2003 to 2013, it's their second decade, and now we are witnessing the third decade to observe their business. It is a good and tough question when we call emerging technology companies "emerging".

Dwayne Winseck: The 30-year time frame is something that I've embraced for a very long time on account of a very old book written in 1947, it is called *Wiring a Continent*. It's about the history of the telegraph in the United States, and the author gives us three nice phases that can be used here to reflect on this time frame. The first phase is what he calls "methodless enthusiasm". There is a new technology, but nobody knows what the technology can do exactly. There is no business model, but a lot of people are excited about it, and there is great euphoria surrounding it. Some of such emerging technology or prototypes fail, but a few can succeed. Then it takes 10 years to develop, and we arrive at the second phase. Here, we get what is called "ruinous competition." The technology now is well understood, and we reach several decent-sized firms that compete in the market while entry into the market is still reasonably easy, and the capital-intensive nature of the industry is still relatively low. Then the third 10 years is called "strategic consolidation". That's when the ruinous competition leads the large firms to roll up the small firms. The formerly open technology is now closed, controlled, and used as a tool for the dominant player to consolidate power and extend the power of this new medium more profoundly into the fabric of our daily lives. Three decades, just like Professor Jiang said.

Daya Thussu: This time frame is quite interesting, but in today's age, it's been accelerated to the extent that you don't have to wait for a decade to see that change. A prominent example is in India, Jio, as I mentioned before, is now one of the most important companies in the digital space. It was only established in 2016. Today, it controls India's Internet, which is, as I said before, the second largest in the world. And 5G has just been introduced. Remember that we have yet to get 5G in many parts of Europe. This is happening with Chinese and Indian smartphones. One final thought, the Fortune 500 every year publishes the top companies in the world. If you look at the latest edition, which was published in August this year, China has more companies than any other countries on the list, which is much more than the United States, at a time when there is this decoupling or competition between the two countries. It is not just national flags that should or should not be considered, but also ownership structures, convergence at various levels, etc. It is very complicated.

3. On the one hand, we observe the kind of strategic capital flow among countries and technology companies. Especially in the case of Tencent or Naspers, for example, which are very active as investors in startups around the globe to grow their international or transnational profile. On the other hand, we also observe the rising regulatory power of technology companies in different countries. How shall we understand such power play behind the scenes? Are they detaching from each other, or would they walk hand-in-hand and sustain each other in the long run?

Fei Jiang: We can probably see this question from another perspective. Let's ask ourselves how the media or technology companies have gone so far. How deeply are their products and services embedded into the fabric of our daily life? That may help us define the companies, power plays, and the cultural background behind them. For example, the new CEO of Twitter, Elon Musk, announced that he would borrow the successful experience from Tencent, referring to WeChat. It means that the way how WeChat went into the fabric of its users' daily life provides values to be understood. It's not only about capital but also digital infrastructure, political order, and the users/audience, who may also define the characteristic of the technology companies.

Daya Thussu: China has its own versions of Google and Facebook. They went on the stage where they could operate independently in a global space. We don't see a German or French version of that. And this explains why regulation is important. Another point, these corporations can also be independent of political influence. Just spare a thought about what's happening today in Ukraine when the conflict began, Facebook officially said that "we allow our platform for hate speech against Russians". This is a clear violation of their guidelines, which they pump up all the time to be a wonderful view.

This is one example. Another example is Mr. Musk, who continued support for Startlink (satellite system) in Ukraine. How can you have a satellite system operating in a war zone without the approval of the Pentagon? But we subsequently found that was the case. We must be careful about the connection between state and corporate power and how it manifests in various contexts. The final thought, if there is a threat to Google or Facebook in the world, where is that coming from? That's not coming from China or India or Brazil. That's coming from the European Union because European Union has very high standards of how the Internet should behave, privacy issues, for instance.

4. The concept of Capitalism also associates quite closely with technological progress and innovation. Not only companies in the United States but companies in China, India, and South Africa are all driven by a kind of structural capitalistic mechanism. How do you see the forms of Capitalism connecting to digitalization? Had technology increased or reduced inequality in our world, and how shall we foresee better prosperity in the future driven by technology companies?

Dwayne Winseck: I think what we have is a complex double movement in which we're reverting to an old kind of Capitalism that is shown of effective, political, legal, and social controls. That is the model of Capitalism escaping the safety harnesses and was built up around the 20th century.

I believe in the varieties of capitalism model instead of the uniform model of global Capitalism. What I'm saying reflects more of a Canadian experience. I think we're seeing an intensification of capital, and we're seeing it conjoined with developmental states around the world. And the role of the developmentalist states is to expand the terrain of Capitalism. The purpose is to enable it to permeate all corners of society and individuals' everyday existence at a profound level, while also safeguarding it from democratic counter-movements that seek to subject it to certain guiding principles based on a humanistic worldview and the philosophical underpinnings of what defines the good life and democracy.

This is an upside-down turning of the relationship between Capitalism and society instead of the one in which Capitalism serves society and helps to benefit all of humankind. And I think people's lives are being impoverished and made more precarious. And we are living now in dangerous times because people lead more precarious lives. They realize that they are subject to forces outside of their control. (They now argue for this aversion to democracy and see anti-democratic movements emerging within the heartlands of liberal democracies, like the convoy protest, and insurrection that overtook the streets of Ottawa last year for 3 weeks, and was only put an end through the emergencies, the imposition of an emergent act by a democratic government.) The backsliding on democracy right now is very scary. We see this through not just the election of Trump and Brexit, but the hangover of Trumpism. This kind of populist authoritarianism is taking the route, and it is very, very destabilizing, but it is also elite-driven.

Daya Thussu: This is a very very complicated question. And I'm sorry if I am going to make it more difficult. I want to argue that Capitalism is not a European idea. The assumption is that Capitalism is only a recent concept, and after Karl Marx discussed it, it became the classic way to understand how Capitalism operates. If we go back in history and look at the 18th century, for example, 70 % of the GDP at that time came from Asia. The most significant chunk was in China, followed by India. If they were trading then, they must have had some trading system, right? That's the first thing to say. Second, whether Capitalism must associate with democracy. India, with its democratic structure for 75 years until now, has a very right-wing government. This government has introduced extreme left-wing policies, like giving up people's health insurance, which has never been done in India. This distinction between left, right, democracy and authoritarianism has to be deconstructed, especially by scholars who are not operating in that system. When the globalization discourse began, it was in the early 1990s. The assumption at that time was that

globalization would lead us to a uniform way of running the business and running a state. Let's think about the (different) power of the state during COVID-19. Capitalism is a complicated concept. It is not just associated with democracy. That is one version. If you think of how Capitalism operates in Sweden and how it operates in Brazil, it's a very, very different case study. So I think we need to be careful about lumping it all together.

There is also a 30 years cycle here. In the 1990s, globalization, the end of the Cold War, and the triumph of liberalism. And then, after the 2008 economic crisis, people in Moscow, and New Delhi, Beijing all realized that we can't depend on the Americans, and we got to think of (and work on) an alternative structure. Now we moved to the second decade of the 21st century. And there is already a lot of discussion about de-dollarization. After the Ukraine conflict, many people believed the Russian economy would collapse in 2 months. But now it is the 8th month of the conflict. Russia is doing okay, and in fact, Europe is collapsing.

We should be critical of the very binary way of looking at a complex world. And we need to be more nuanced about it. There are various models of Capitalism. As I mentioned in the case of Mody, he is a very right-wing nationalistic prime minister. Look at his economic policies. His government is more left-wing than any government since 1947 in India. China is led by the Communist Party of China, it still goes on discussions of socialism while also looking at consumer patterns and allowing the existence of market competition.

Fei Jiang: This is very interesting and again, a tough question. As Professor Thussu just said, capitalism is a common concept that goes back in history. Capitalism as a concept is common, but what is affiliated with the idea is uncommon. For example, Professor Winseck has mentioned that Capitalism to him is affiliated with freedom and democracy, and he has deep concerns there. But for me, I prefer to use the term equality or inequality affiliated with Capitalism. For example, the wide use of social media in China (driven by capitalistic corporations) has helped ordinary people access different kinds of news and information. This extended mass communication and brought information equality to the users. Only through social media, the mass communication into reality because social media has extended the last mile (between the media and the audience). Social media has introduced the influence of mass media into reality.

Dwayne Winseck: Let me clarify one thing here as I don't want to be linked to this idea that I think that somehow Capitalism and democracy are joined together. They are not. What I was saying is my critique that it is a double movement, and one of those movements is to go back to the time before Capitalism was joined with democracy. The two were brought together through political struggle, conflict, and reforms. This took place in successive waves over the 20th century. Civil rights, political rights, and social rights. Social rights were a right to get something from the

state that was founded through progressive taxation to reduce inequality. So whether or not Capitalism is linked to democracy is a question, and it's a problem. And my argument is that historically, it was not, but for a period of about a century, it was. My concern is that we're in a moment when it is becoming decoupled. And I think we have to be honest with ourselves that the measures of democracy, as well as people's well-being and freedoms, do correlate more strongly with some capitalist models of development than others. In particular, I would put that as the Scandinavian model, some of the European model, and the Canadian model. There is a strong link between certain varieties of Capitalism and democracy.

Daya Thussu: I think we have to be, again, a bit more nuanced about Capitalism and its excesses. I am not justifying the excess of new liberalism, but it would not have been possible for China since the 1970s to be able to achieve what it has achieved without a certain kind of marketization. And India would not be there as it is today as the 5th largest economy in the world in GDP terms.

5. During the anti-globalization movement in the 1990s, one of the most critical arguments was about transnational corporations, as they represent the investors' rights from the Global North to harness the entire global market (including Global South). By seeing how transnational technology companies are changing our landscape nowadays, could you propose one idea, one tool or any solution to help to improve transcultural understanding between different global, local, either political, corporate or public stakeholders?

Daya Thussu: Two words from my side. The first one is history. The Second one, is to read. Young people don't read anymore. So, read history, read a wide range of topics. I heard three presentations during the conference about TikTok in India, and I would suggest the authors get into the Indian social, political, and cultural contexts. Their work was just looking at very technical aspects of the case. So, my dear students, just read, read good stuff. It's never enough.

Fei Jiang: I would like to highlight some very interesting aspects between cross-culture, inter-culture, trans-culture, and international business. It means transnational media companies, as one kind of international business, confront different situations like cross-cultural, intercultural, and transcultural communication. What are their differences? Cross-culture is a comparative study. It means that two strangers meet each other, and say hello. After 3 or 5 minutes of greetings, they have no more topics to talk about because they didn't have any deep relationship. Intercultural communication means they know each other very well to some extent, and they can go deep into understanding each other's cultural structure. And transcultural communication, in the case of transnational business, for example, they have to forget about culture. From my point of view, transcultural communication is a kind of deep cultural communication. It means that we forget about values, politics or any kind of barriers, prejudice, justice, and so on. We do our business together and

share our kind of interaction on the level of “de-cultural communication”. So for the next few years, for communication scholars, for international or transnational business, we probably need to build up the awareness of such de-cultural communication, not intercultural or cross-cultural communication.

Dwayne Winseck: Professor Jiang offered some really nice thoughts to fire up one’s mind. And I like what he said about cross-culture. It is very shallow, right? We have to think about how we can go deeper. And this is the way we go deeper that we do these things. We meet one another face to face. We take each other seriously. We laugh at each other’s jokes. We smile at each other. We tell each other when we think they’re right and then when we believe they are wrong or disagree. And we have good practice right here.

But I would disagree in the business context for transcultural communication. I think in business, it has the mask of being technical and just business. But beneath the mask, there is a person. And like the sociologist Erving Goffman said we have a front stage and a backstage. And on the front stage, it may be just business. We know backstage how important the network and trust are. And all sorts of other things are working together to define the nature of the business. Certain characteristics depend upon the framework and particular type of business. The telecom business differs greatly from the movie, television, and publishing businesses. So the cultural background behind each of these industries will be very different. So, I think transcultural communication will be engaging in understanding the bridges that allow somebody in the academic world to talk with one another and develop ideas well beyond the meet and greet. And that will replicate across each subfield that makes up the tapestry of the complex societies and world in which we live.