

Peter Simonson and David W. Park (Eds.), **The International History of Communication Study**, New York, NY: Routledge, 2016, 527 pp., \$69.95 (paperback).

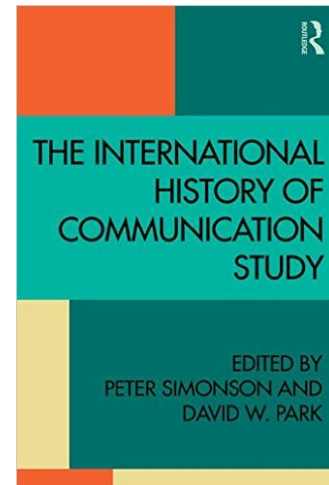
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This book advocates the study of communication as both a historically specific accomplishment and a universal anthropological fact. The 23 chapters of the book ***The International History of Communication Study***, edited by Peter Simonson and David W. Park allow readers to see culturally-varied forms of communication under different names for distinct purposes. It is a collection of social practices and institutional imperatives in Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, which have not received much attention until now. In order to understand a multiplicity of communication studies and the lines of interaction, influence, and hegemony among them, this collection provides an insightful exploration of those collective stories from the 1920s to the present which focus on the period since World War II. Transnational histories of communication focus on movements of people, texts, ideas, methods, paradigms, organizations and research initiatives, and pay special investigation to how those movements serve, not just as lines of transmission, but are constitutive of communication as an organized endeavor.



Building on Simonson, Craig, and Jackson's (2013) earlier work *Handbook of Communication History*, the present volume begins by proposing the terms like *communication study* and *transnational turns*, and the four main stages of communication study. Besides introducing new theories, the new volume describes communication study outside academic settings. It deals with communication in transnational organizations like UNESCO, as well as commercial and civic groups. It also goes beyond the traditional canon to include work by female scholars outside the United States and Europe.

Part I, *New Theories*, contains two chapters: The first deals with the transnational flow of ideas while the second is concerned with the gendered work and the history of communication studies. These chapters take new theories as their primary framework for transnational histories of communication studies and illustrate them through brief case studies, including the contrastive histories of communication studies in France and Germany, and the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University.

Part II, *Transnational Organizations*, contains two chapters. The first identifies UNESCO in the historical study of communication and the second tells the story of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) in a global perspective of communication and media research. These chapters provide a general overview of mass communication work and focus on community-based studies. These studies have facilitated the flow of ideas and people, and solidified hegemonic and counter-hegemonic paradigms and political orientations to communication research and social networks. They

have shaped communication research and education since the 1930s. And in this transnational development process, communication studies have established four main types of organizations or agencies: philanthropic organizations, commercial organizations, government agencies, and intergovernmental agencies. Transnational academic associations have developed into the major forces and have become important forms in the transnational development of this field. The two chapters in this part provide us windows on the international history of communication studies, not only on the geopolitical climate in the second half of the 20th century, but also on the field of communication's structure as refracted through the field's two major global associations, IAMCR and the International Communication Association (ICA).

Part III focuses on different global regions in the transnational history of communication studies: Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The authors hold that communication as an institutionalized field is rooted largely in Europe, "which reflects systematically on the press as an agent of public opinion formation and social cohesion" (p. 107). Constrained by intellectual traditions, education, research institutions, political systems and transnational lines of influence that vary across national contexts, communication study has developed differently in different parts of Europe. The differences and similarities in the careers of the female academics in communication science, and the contextual history of communication studied in Portugal and Spain are described and contrasted. This part also discusses the development of Norwegian media, the United Kingdom's institutionalized communication study, and the Eastern European perspective on media and communication studies. All these underline the need for further national-and transnational-oriented comparative studies of communication and media histories.

The North America section looks at how American academic fields developed the study of communication. Three major strains of communication study—journalism, speech, and mass communication—have a long history in America and Canada, dealing with the interaction between a "men's world" and a "women's world," media policy, international vectors of education, the media ecology of interdisciplinary entanglements in today's new digital cultures, and globalization.

In the Latin America section, communication study in Mexico and Brazil developed through "deeply transnational lines of intellectual exchange, institutional initiatives, and geopolitics" (p. 323). The authors argue, "Communication study in Latin America grew out of a traditional journalism education that dates back to the early 20th century and the institutionalization of communication and information sciences that began in the late 1950s" (p. 323). In the 1960s, the political Left has exerted a major influence on Latin American communication study, intellectually, and beyond.

Asia is the most populous continent on earth and there is growing interest in the history of communication studies in Asia, especially in China, India, and Japan. The Asia section examines the history of Chinese communication studies in the 20th century, depicting the pre-revolutionary era of U.S.-influenced journalism and education, the ideological currents of Mao's China, and the neoliberal logic of communication-shaped development since the 1980s. The Indian panoramic view of the role of UNESCO is also explored as it relates to the training of media professionals from the late colonial era to the present. This section also looks at the distinctly Japanese uptake of the European rhetorical tradition in the late

19th century in regard to oratorical and debate societies. The differences between these transnational traditions are described in detail, and the international linkage between nations is amplified at the same time by the spread of both ICA and IAMCR beyond their national borders.

In Africa and the Middle East section, communication study has been diversified by colonialism, linguistic differences, and national projects, which have aimed to modernize and create a complicated, varying, and interconnected set of trajectories. Although the histories of communication studies in Africa and the Middle East have received far less treatment than those in Europe and North America, there is much to be gleaned from the distinctive flow of communication study out of Europe and North America into Africa and the Middle East. Readers will notice that geopolitics in Africa and the Middle East is still regarded as a backdrop on which communication has been projected. Those anti-colonial critiques, and intellectual traditions from outside the regions are expected to meet the local cultural and institutional arrangements. These arrangements are also designed to respond to the fast-moving target of communication study.

All in all, this book presents us a comprehensive and panoramic examination of the international history of communication studies. The book's main limitation comes from its panoramic approach. Such a universal perspective is certainly useful in drawing an overall picture of communication studies, but it oversimplifies the complication of individual variations in the development of communication studies in different parts of the world and the way they shape the processes and outcomes. Likewise, this book traces the history of communication studies on a continental basis. Although the history of communication studies in individual countries is mainly presented in a synchronic order, it could lead to baffling interwoven relationships among the various forms of communication studies around the world.

Nonetheless, these limitations do not undermine the book's unique contribution to scholarship in the field. It provides a comprehensive picture of the international history of communication studies. This line of research will surely continue to expand, as the history of communication study helps to develop and improve the field of communication studies.

Reference

Simonson, Peck, J., Craig, R. T., & Jackson, J. P. (Eds.) (2013). *The handbook of communication history*. New York, NY: Routledge.