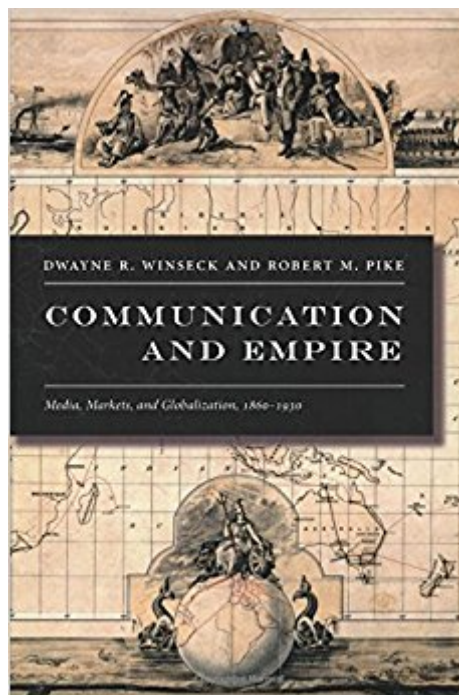




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Communication And Empire: Media, Markets, And Globalization, 1860â€“1930 (American Encounters/Global Interactions)



Synopsis

Filling in a key chapter in communications history, Dwayne R. Winseck and Robert M. Pike offer an in-depth examination of the rise of the "global media" between 1860 and 1930. They analyze the connections between the development of a global communication infrastructure, the creation of national telegraph and wireless systems, and news agencies and the content they provided. Conventional histories suggest that the growth of global communications correlated with imperial expansion: an increasing number of cables were laid as colonial powers competed for control of resources. Winseck and Pike argue that the role of the imperial contest, while significant, has been exaggerated. They emphasize how much of the global media system was in place before the high tide of imperialism in the early twentieth century, and they point to other factors that drove the proliferation of global media links, including economic booms and busts, initial steps toward multilateralism and international law, and the formation of corporate cartels. Drawing on extensive research in corporate and government archives, Winseck and Pike illuminate the actions of companies and cartels during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth, in many different parts of the globe, including Africa, Asia, and Central and South America as well as Europe and North America. The complex history they relate shows how cable companies exploited or transcended national policies in the creation of the global cable network, how private corporations and government agencies interacted, and how individual reformers fought to eliminate cartels and harmonize the regulation of world communications. In *Communication and Empire*, the multinational conglomerates, regulations, and the politics of imperialism and anti-imperialism as well as the cries for reform of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth emerge as the obvious forerunners of today's global media.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"I know of no other recent work that comes close to this one in sweep, detail, and complexity, yet is so compellingly relevant to our present times. Dwayne R. Winseck and Robert M. Pike have done a masterful job unraveling a tortuously complex and fragmented narrative of the rivalries, alliances, ambitions, and subterfuges in which the cable companies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries engaged."--Oliver Boyd-Barrett, editor of *Communications Media, Globalization, and Empire*

"The central arguments of *Communication and Empire*--that the 'empire of capital' is not coterminous with imperialism, and that many of the central features of the contemporary global communications system have their roots in the period of global commercial expansion before the high tide of imperialism--are both important and timely, and are supported with a wealth of original firsthand empirical material."--Graham Murdock, editor of *The Political Economy of the Media*

"*Communication and Empire* offers a noteworthy overview of the development of global communications systems prior to the Great Depression. . . . [A] groundbreaking analysis of the connections between private communications firms and broader issues of global development." • (Benjamin Schwantes *Enterprise and Society*)

"[T]he great strength of this book is its exacting elaboration of so many additional vectors, which together comprise first-wave globalization of instructive complexity. If the core of the book is a global industry history that joins hardware (the cables) and 'content' (the wire services), the book is also attentive to political and diplomatic history. Readers will no doubt see striking parallels--even continuities--between the global media system that Winseck and Pike describe and the one we know today." • (Lisa Gitelman *American Historical Review*)

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Although this substantial book is published in the "American Encounters" series of Duke University Press, it is in fact a detailed and almost global account of the role of electronic communications (telegraph, cable, and radio-telegraph) between 1860 and 1930; and of the power of the private companies which ran these communications. It shows that there is nothing new under the sun in international corporate activities: western corporations engaging in cartels, price fixing and exploitation in such regions as Latin America and China. Then, too, just as we talk about "universal access" to the Internet, there were many reformers who sought to regulate communication prices and make telegraph and cable accessible to the average person. (Many of these individuals were, incidentally, Canadians.) Thus "Communication and Empire" strikes a major chord for the contemporary reader. The book is not an easy read -- lots of detail -- but well worth the effort for social scientists and communication scholars. Do not ignore the footnotes which often explain the social and economic impact of technological advances in electronic communications -- something which some of the reviews of this book, which I have read, seem to have ignored. I highly recommend it, and should note that the paperback edition is reasonably priced, especially considering the quality of the print and illustrations. Stephen Harold Riggins.

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