

Project description: Mediating development geographies: towards new transnational relationalities

Supervisor: Dr Patricia Noxolo email: p.e.p.noxolo@bham.ac.uk

This project offers the opportunity to investigate an aspect of the everyday lived realities of mediated global inequalities, with a particular focus on mediated relationalities between global north and global south. Relevant media formats include, but are not limited to, television, radio, internet, wireless web and print media, and projects could focus on features of media production, consumption, distribution, regulation, or changing textualities. Case study focus should preferably be on media that are mainly or strongly produced and consumed in medium or low-income countries, though projects that focus on media that is produced or consumed mainly in high-income countries but which is thoroughly connected with or produced/consumed within the global south will also be considered. Preference will be given to projects that aim to link empirical research with theoretical explorations of the implications of mediation for development geographies.

The project arises out of the increasing convergence of the subdisciplines of mediated geographies and development geographies, particularly in relation to the mediation of development practice, and in relation to the growing economic and political importance of media industries and global connectivity for development.

Global media events spotlighting poverty and global inequality, such as Band Aid in the 1980s, sharpened geographers' awareness of the capacity of global media to build a wide-ranging popular constituency for global development. Critical studies have however questioned the dehumanising and distancing effects of the banal global circulation of images of extreme poverty and famine, whilst studies of audience agency challenge a simple relationship between consumption of positive messages of development and changes in attitude or behaviour. At the same time, the roles of non-governmental organisations as key global knowledge brokers spotlights their agency in facilitating global patterns of mediated connection, production and circulation. This complex mediascape of development is beginning to be recognised as patterns of production, circulation and consumption that occur in the context of a vast array of mediated transnational communication and representation.

As the concept of development becomes deeply enmeshed with integration into global markets, connectivity in the global south becomes a crucial issue for geographers to consider. Inequalities around access, training, funding and infrastructure for full participation in media industries have become pressing. At the same time, creative and unpredictable forms of popular media production and consumption (such as the recent sharp rise in M-commerce that has largely bypassed the home PC in Africa, and widespread practices of public readings of print media in urban neighbourhoods) draw attention to the specificities of the uneven geographies of mediation.

In light of this dynamic mediascape, this project encourages the in-depth study of an aspect of the mediation of development geographies. Its aim is to deepen theorisation of the effects of mediation on patterns of global inequality through empirical study of aspects of mediated practice. Candidates should present proposals for a preliminary theoretical focus and for a suitable and achievable case study, which successful applicants will develop with the support of the supervision team.

Entry requirements

Applicants are normally required to have a bachelors degree in a relevant discipline at upper second class or above (or equivalent), and a masters in a relevant discipline (or equivalent experience).

Funding

This project may be eligible for the competition for AHRC or ESRC scholarships through the University of Birmingham: see

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/calgs/scholarships/ahrc-application-midlands3cities.aspx>

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/dr-fees/ESRC-research-council.aspx>

These scholarships are available for UK and EU applicants only. Applicants wishing to apply for this funding should contact the School or supervisor by December 15th 2014 (AHRC funding) or January 5th (ESRC funding) at the latest.