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Paul C. Adams, Julie Cupples,
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Shaun Moores

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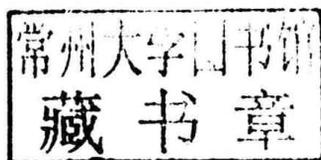
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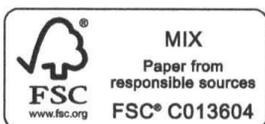
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Communications/Media/ Geographies

Although there are human geographers who have previously written on matters of media and communication, and those in media and communication studies who have previously written on geographical issues, this is the first book-length dialogue in which experienced theorists and researchers from these different fields address each other directly and engage in conversation across traditional academic boundaries. The result is a compelling discussion, with the authors setting out statements of their positions before responding to the arguments made by others.

One significant aspect of this discussion is a spirited debate about the sort of interdisciplinary area that might emerge as a focus for future work. Does the already-established idea of communication geography offer the best way forward? If so, what would applied or critical forms of communication geography be concerned to do? Could communication geography benefit from the sorts of conjunctural analysis that have been developed in contemporary cultural studies? Might a further way forward be to imagine an interdisciplinary field of everyday-life studies, which would draw critically on non-representational theories of practice and movement?

Readers of *Communications/Media/Geographies* are invited to join the debate, thinking through such questions for themselves, and the themes that are explored in this book (for example, of space, place, meaning, power, and ethics) will be of interest not only to academics in human geography and in media and communication studies, but also to a wider range of scholars from across the humanities and social sciences.

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Preface

The process of creating this book began at the 2012 meeting of the Association of American Geographers in New York City, when Adams, Jansson, and Moores met and floated the idea of a co-authored book. The project soon expanded to include Cupples and Glynn, bringing in another geographer and another media/communication theorist, who would contribute a hybrid chapter written from both disciplinary perspectives at once. Along the way Routledge and the anonymous reviewers helped tremendously and the project benefited from their insights.

The five of us approached co-authorship somewhat cautiously because we had little interest in trying to speak with one voice (that would, indeed, defeat the purpose of using multiple authors to convey the diversity of issues in media and communication geography!), but we also wanted to see where it would lead us to undertake a co-authored book that brought together an interdisciplinary team in a closer configuration than a typical edited volume. The format we settled on—a series of chapters written by one or two of us, and a final chapter crafted as a kind of discussion—allowed us to speak together while retaining our various voices.

An organism combining parts from different animals is called a chimera. The word also means something vain and foolish, as well as something grotesque and monstrous. The term stands as a warning to those who would try to bring unlike things together heedlessly. We hope we have arrived at that magic spot where the blending of DNA in our chimera is neither monstrous nor foolish, but instead offers a bit of inspiration to others—although we can't guarantee that there will not be some who find the result disconcertingly heterogeneous.

This book is a communicative project in a double sense. First, we want to reach out to an audience that can identify with and react to our ideas concerning an expanding interdisciplinary terrain that cuts across geography and media/communication studies. Second, our dialogical format gives space to each author to react and comment on what the other authors have argued, as well as reacting to others' reactions. As a communicative project, this book is an important step in a longer sequence of academic place-making efforts (book projects, journal articles, workshops, conferences, and so forth), all

with the ambition of marking out the research field of media and/or communication geography (many of which will be indicated in our four respective chapters). The book opens up a communicative space that, in a concrete way, represents what our field looks like to us, while at the same time constituting an active part in producing that very field. If there is not a unified model of our field at this point, there is at least, we believe, a strong argument for transcending pre-established borders of academic labor and, as such, an invitation to other scholars to follow.

Each of us has become indebted in different ways while undertaking this project. Enrichment Funds from the Association of American Geographers (AAG) and funding from the Communication Geography Specialty Group made it possible for André to attend the 2012 AAG meeting in New York, give a substantive lecture, and plant the seeds of this project. Paul Adams' travel expenses to that conference were helpfully defrayed by a Faculty Travel Grant from the Graduate School of the University of Texas at Austin. A version of Paul's chapter was presented at the Rethinking Globalization and the Question of Scale conference that was held at North Carolina State University, in April 2014. He particularly thanks the organizers of this event—James Mulholland, Rebecca Walsh, and Steve Wiley—for their invitation to the conference as it honed the ideas presented here. He also built ties with Julie and Kevin while in New Zealand and teaching at the University of Canterbury as a Visiting Erskine Fellow, and is grateful for that opportunity.

André Jansson's work on this book project is part of an ongoing research project, *Cosmopolitanism from the Margins: Mediations of Expressivity, Social Space and Cultural Citizenship*, funded by the Swedish Research Council. Thanks to this funding, Jansson also had the opportunity to present an earlier (and shorter) version of his chapter at the 17th International Sociological Association World Congress, Yokohama, 13–19 July 2014. He is very grateful to his colleagues Karin Fast and Johan Lindell, who took the time to read and give constructive comments on a draft of the present chapter.

In addition to the specific acknowledgments offered in his chapter, Shaun Moores would like to thank all those members, past and present, of the University of Sunderland's Centre for Research in Media and Cultural Studies (CRMCS), who have worked together to create a strong and supportive research community in what, at times, has been a challenging institutional context. CRMCS funded his attendance at the Annual Meeting of the AAG in 2012, where he first met Paul Adams and met André Jansson for a second time (after André had kindly invited him to a symposium at Uppsala University in 2010). Also, his work on the position-statement chapter that appears in this book was partly enabled by teaching remission funded by CRMCS in 2014.

The participation by Julie and Kevin in this project has benefited from two key sources of funding. The first is the Erskine Fund at the University of Canterbury (UC) that enabled Julie and Kevin to spend two months in the

geographically focused Department of Film and Media Studies at the University of California-Santa Barbara in 2010–11 and enabled Paul to spend a semester teaching media geography classes with them at UC in 2011. The second is a research grant from the Marsden Fund of the Royal Society of New Zealand (MAU1108, 2013–16) for a project explicitly positioned at the intersection of media studies and human geography entitled *Geographies of Media Convergence*. This grant has funded much of their recent fieldwork and conference attendance and given them the intellectual space to think in more depth about what it means to bring geographic perspectives into dialogue with those in media studies. With respect to their contribution to this volume, they wish to thank Māori Television in Auckland, in particular the *Native Affairs* team and the former head of news and current affairs, Julian Wilcox, as well as a number of Ngāi Tūhoe, especially Hemi Hireme, Tame Iti, Tracy Johnson and Maria Steens, who have taken time to read our analysis and give us feedback.

While acknowledging these debts, we take full responsibility for any flaws or inaccuracies that may have crept into our various accounts.

P. Adams, J. Cupples, K. Glynn,
A. Jansson, and S. Moores

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Introduction

Paul C. Adams, Julie Cupples, Kevin Glynn, and André Jansson¹

Communications are meaningful interactions; geographies are the spaces and places where communications happen; media are systems and structures that facilitate communication and connect, configure or constitute geographies. Sometimes these relations are easy to identify, and sometimes spaces and communications are woven together into hybrid patterns where the boundaries between them get blurry and ambiguous. This book is an excursion into questions about media, geographies, and communications led by five tour guides with rather different perspectives. Two of us are geographers and the other three are scholars of media and communication. Two are from the UK, two are from the USA (although one now lives in New Zealand), and one is from Sweden. Our research into the geographies of media and communication has been conducted in Europe, the USA and Canada, Central America and New Zealand. All five of us share a fascination with questions arising from the geographical study of media and communications. Conversely we are intrigued by the application of media and communication theories to geographical phenomena. Each of us views these questions differently and positions our scholarship in contrasting ways relative to our home disciplines and our areas of specialization, but what has brought us together is a common interest in the ways that socio-technological developments as well as human experiences blur the boundaries between the real and the virtual, between first-hand and mediated, between geographical spaces and representational spaces, and between the places and practices of media consumption and those of media production.

Our decision to join forces is somewhat unusual, as evident in the rarity of multi-author, multi-disciplinary books. We embarked on the project to help provide a bridge between disciplines, something that all of us have called for in previous research (Adams and Jansson, 2012; Glynn and Cupples, 2015; Moores, 1993, 2012). This time around we chose to construct not a bridge but rather bridges, in the plural, in keeping with the three pluralized terms in the title. While plurals are popular, we particularly endorse their use in the context of interdisciplinary works like this one. Through the intersecting angles of our theoretical and empirical work, and our contrasting disciplinary

positions, we believe we render the contours of an interdisciplinary research field more tangible and open it up to further debate.

We would flatter ourselves to suppose that two geographers could speak for the discipline of geography, or that three theorists of media and communication could speak for the immense body of media and communication scholarship. Part of the challenge we face here stems from the fact that our respective disciplines are each over-specialized and fragmented. Turning first to geography, Patricia Gober, a former president of the Association of American Geographers (AAG), described the discipline as “unprepared for the challenge of synthesis” because its practitioners were scattered by increasing specialization and split by a fundamental divide between physical geography and human geography, and between qualitative and quantitative geography, while teaching in ways that force students into “specialized boxes” (2000: 5, 7). Mei-Po Kwan, an editor of geography’s flagship journal, the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, identified a second major divide within geography in addition to the human versus physical divide; this is the antagonism between spatial analysis, on the one hand, exemplified by technical and quantitative methods, and critical social theory, on the other hand, grounded in Marxism, humanism, feminism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, and queer theory (2004). A focus on media has the capacity to bridge this divide, as exemplified in the work on geographic information system (GIS) as media pioneered by Sui and Goodchild (2001) and developed more recently by critical GIS scholars such as Jeremy Crampton, Sarah Elwood, Agnieszka Leszczynski and Matthew Wilson working on themes surrounding the “geoweb,” as well as in the work on geospatial technologies being carried out in media studies, with the work of Lisa Parks (2005, forthcoming) being of particular significance here.

Turning next to communication and media studies, in 1999 Robert Craig, former president of the National Communication Association, claimed flatly that “communication theory as an identifiable field of study does not yet exist” (1999: 119). This is an astonishing claim to make about a topic of study that has attracted so much attention (many times more than geography). What is lacking, in his view, is the kind of scholarly engagement that would produce coherence and synthesis. The various schools and approaches associated with the study of communication simply ignore and talk past each other (ibid.: 120). A decade later W. James Potter, former editor of the *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, described the study of mass media as “so fragmented that it is very difficult for scholars to understand, much less appreciate, the incredible array of great ideas and findings that have been published” (2008: xiv). He traced the problem to the way each academic “neighborhood” focuses on a narrow range of questions and fails to put its key questions into the context of media studies in general (ibid.: xv). Similar arguments were formulated a few years later by John Corner (2013) in a critical account of whether the diverse landscape of media and communication