

**Globalization and Culture**  
**Dr. Daya Kishan Thussu**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur**

**Lecture - 37**  
**Cultural Imperialism**

In this lecture I am going to be talking about, what are the implications of a media culture, a global media culture which comes essentially from the United States. How do we theoretically make sense of it?

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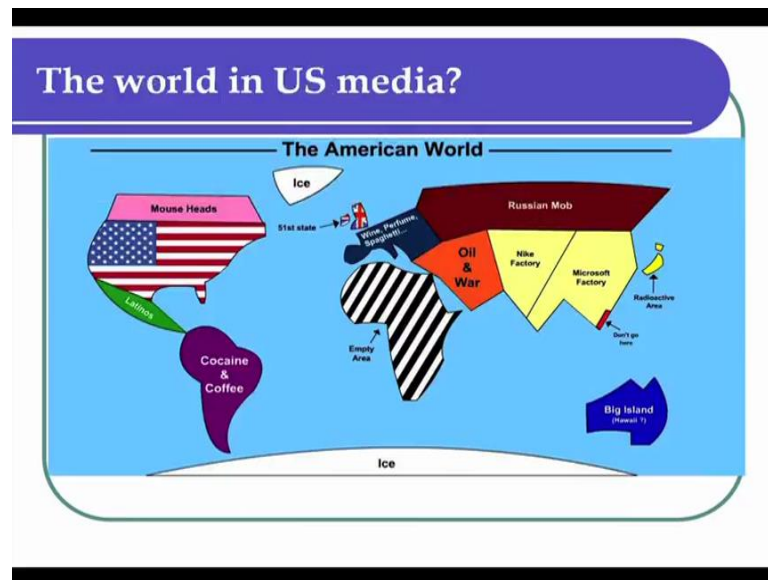


**A global commercial media?**

- Transnational market-driven, infotainment-oriented media
- Global conglomerates and concentration of media power
- Undermining of public media and privatization of the public sphere

What kind of approaches we might need, to understand? Why is it that US generated or inspired content has that amazing acceptability around the world.

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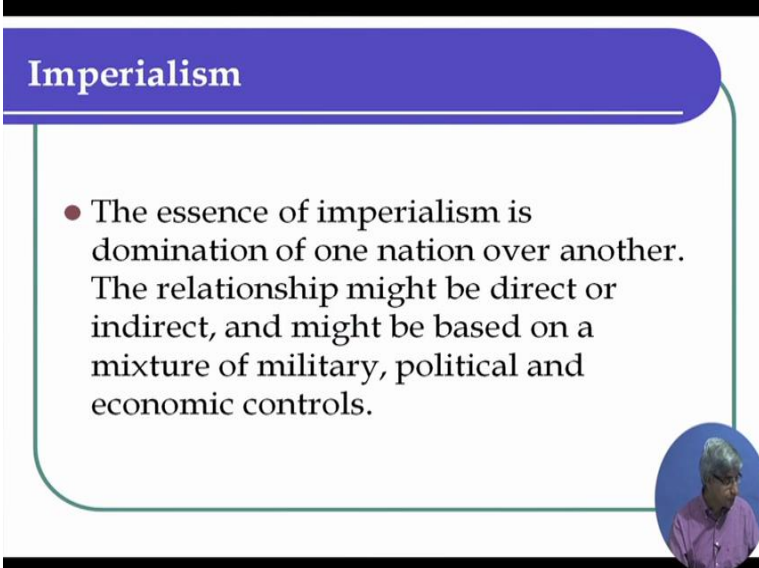


So, I am going to start with a map, which I found on the internet. I am not, I do not know who devised it, but I found it interesting because, it looks at how the Americans see the world, rather American media see the world. Of course, this is a mock map so not accurate, but if you look at it carefully, it reflects a certain approach that the US, mainstream US media, has towards the world at large so in this formulation apart from Europe much of the world is full of problem. Europe is, Canada is, but Africa is an empty space, because almost nothing happens in Africa. Latin America is known only for cocaine and coffee, oil and war is the story for middle east, japan is radioactive so you do not go there. They drop a bomb there and 2 day later they drop another one. So we see this you know radioactive, do not go there.

Here, which is Vietnam lot of ne palm still in this side. So avoid that. I do not know who made this map; there is a small mistake between India and China. It should be other way around. Microsoft is India and Nike is china. So they are the, like producing India IT and china manufacturing. One of the most accurate thing that I saw in this map speaking, half-jokingly is the 51st state, UK shown as 51st state. In fact, there is a very interesting novel by that title written by a former editor in chief of the guardian newspaper in London, where he looks at this future scenario, where UK has become the 51st state, and given US, UK foreign policy convergence with US, it is not that far fast an idea, but the point of this map is to show the distortions, this stereo types the limitations of a world defined by the US media, you could make a similar argument about the Chinese view of


the world, or Indian view of the world, or African view of the world you know this, but unlike African or Indians or like Chinese, even the American media is everywhere. Yeah so, they how they present the world becomes important because it has implication for another nation.

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**Imperialism**

- The essence of imperialism is domination of one nation over another. The relationship might be direct or indirect, and might be based on a mixture of military, political and economic controls.




Now, how do we make sense this phenomenon the American domination? There is an old school approach which is we go back to the notion of imperialism, that America is an empire, and like previous imperial powers it dominates. Imperialism in this in this definition is the essence of the domination of one nation over another; the relationship might be direct or indirect and might be based on mixture of military political and economic controls. Let us talk about culture, yeah. And we are talking about culture in this lecture. So imperialism is true broad a concept, and it looks at basically political and economic aspects of domination one country over another. And that is a very old discourse and imperialism is not necessarily a western concept that inspires other parts of the world and they have dominated they have shaped this course.

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**Cultural imperialism**

- 'the sum of processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating structure is attracted, pressured, forced into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even to promote the values and structures of the dominant centre of the system.' - Herbert Schiller, 1976

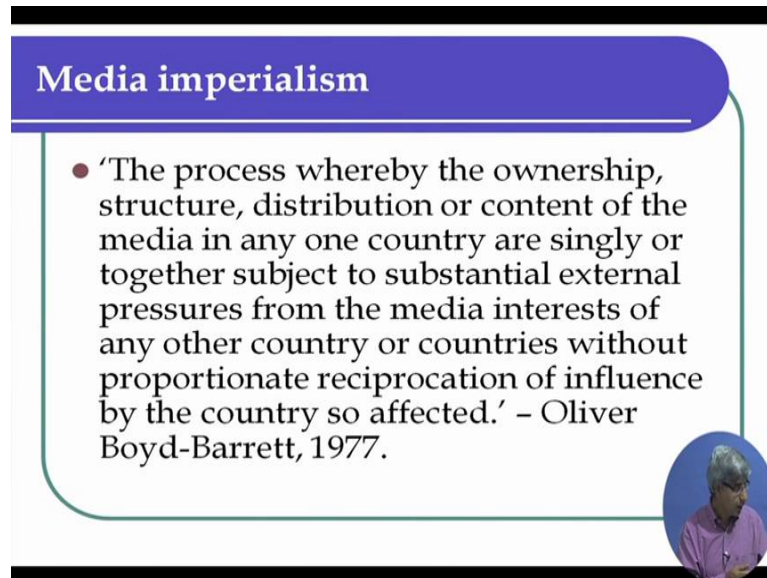
A small circular portrait of Herbert Schiller, an older man with white hair, wearing a light-colored shirt, looking slightly to the side.

So, let us narrow it down a little bit and look at what is called cultural imperialism. Now this idea is associated most closely with the work of late Herbert Schiller. In this quotation I have taken from his 1976 book. The sum of process by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how it is dominating structure is attracted pressured forced into shaping social institutions to correspond to or even to promote the value and structures of the dominant center of the system. It recommends how we change values, whether by coercion or by bribery or by persuasion, to confirm to the dominant value systems. This may include education, this may include social values, this may include class values, and this may include religious values.

A culture is a very complicated term. So culture imperialism is a very broad area, and you could argue that you know there is cultural imperialism within a nation state yeah. I mean different countries have different regional cultures, local cultures, village based cultures. So you know if you start thinking in those terms there are various complications in the debate. In Schillers formulation and remember this interesting time 76 in that, in the 1970, this was a major debate. And the debate was actually taking place at an international level, within the united nations. This was the time when, there was a very hated conversation going on within UNESCO, for what was then called a new world information and communication order, the existing communication order was unfair to match up the world. There were imbalances, there were distortions in what gets covered like that map I showed you earlier. So Schillers work has to be seen in that historical


context, where it emerged from it was, as you know looking at some national state level it was US verses the rest.

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**Media imperialism**

- 'The process whereby the ownership, structure, distribution or content of the media in any one country are singly or together subject to substantial external pressures from the media interests of any other country or countries without proportionate reciprocation of influence by the country so affected.' – Oliver Boyd-Barrett, 1977.



Again as I said broad discourse narrow, it down a bit further and look at what is described as media imperialism. The work is associated with Oliver Boyd Barret who in fact, in 2014 many, many years later when this concept had becomes less fashionable; Ashley wrote it which is the first book study of media imperialism.

He defines it as this is his original art in 1977, the process whereby the ownership structure distribution or content of the media in one country are singly, or together subject to substantial external pressures from the media interest of any other country or countries, without proportionate reciprocation of influence by the countries so effected. In other words, it is talking about the imbalance, in media flow. It is one-way flow. From north to south and within the north, there is a core. Which is an Anglo American core largely American. Then Anglo right, and therefore, there is an imbalance this very little reverse traffic, most of the traffic is from the north to the south and therefore, it creates a certain kind of domination and it was formulated in the in the context how imperial domination.

There is other work that time, which develop this idea further and looked at what are the manifestation of media imperialism. How do you, where do you see it, how do you measure it. One area of study was looking at television program exports.

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### Forms of media imperialism

- Television programme export to foreign countries
- Foreign ownership and control of media outlets
- Transfer of metropolitan broadcasting norms and institutionalisation of media commercialism at the expense of 'public interest'
- Invasion of capitalistic worldviews and infringement upon the indigenous way of life of the recipient nations - Chin Chuan-Lee, *Media Imperialism Reconsidered*, 1980.

Remember television unlike today which now, we say global phenomenon in the 70s, 80s. It was relatively small. It was an elite medium. Yeah it had not reached the mass audience in rest of the world of course, the first world it had, but what was then called the third one, it was not a mass medium. So a lot of programming was imported from the United States. The other area where this was manifest was an ownership structure, control of media. Even before globalization happened in many developing countries, media outlets are actually owned by foreign powers, often colonial powers former colonial powers. Transformation of transfer, sorry, of metropolitan broadcasting norms and institutionalization of media commercialism at the expense of public interest, again something which has become much more pronounced today because we are living in a much more commercialized world, but even in 1970s and 80s, the concern that commercialization of mass media is going to undermine public interest was invoiced by many people.

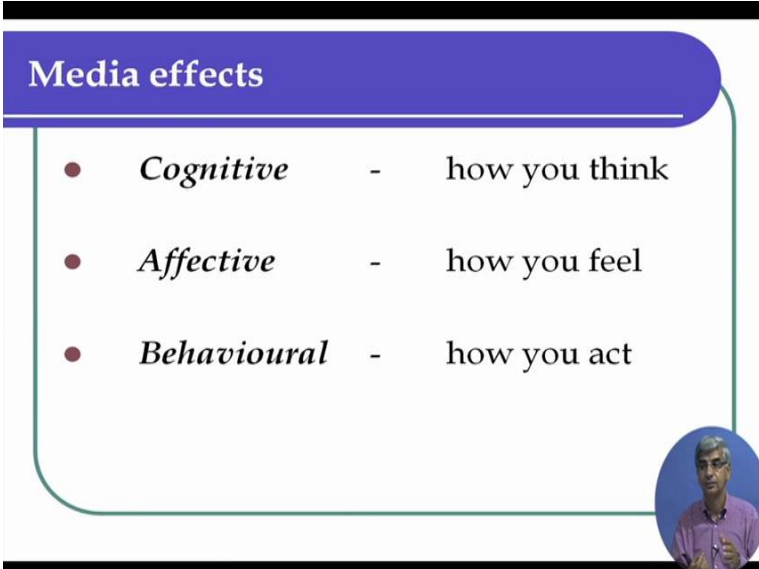
And the worry of this contest invasion of capitalistic world views, and infringement upon the indigenous way of life of the recipient nations, so invasions through skies, cultural invasion. CC Lee, who is a distinguished Chinese professor, now retired this was his PhD, media imperialism considered. So in the 70s, this is published in 1980s, so the work was done, in the 70s this was a big debate and it fitted with this UNESCO debate about new world information communication, and the debate was essentially grounded in

neo marks system which is looking at political economy of international media industries. It was very influential discourse, but it was also flawed in some senses.

So what it didn't do very well was to differentiate between this so called third world countries. So in their formulation Singapore, which is a city state pretty prosperous city state even then in 1970s, and India or China, which are continent size countries, were in the same category. India actually did not have a lot of western programming on it is televisio, but in their formulation it was the same undifferentiated mass of so called third world countries. There was one problem. The other problem was it did not really take into account the audiences. Yeah there is an export of program, but who is watching it and how is, how is it effecting their value systems there was virtually no work done on that.

And in any case, it is very difficult work to do how do you measure something as intangible as media and culture. So this is a debate which continues even today, so called media effects debate. How does media influence audiences and at that time this was apart from a few countries this was a hugely under developed area of research and scholarship? So very quickly I want to just pick a few approaches of media effects.

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**Media effects**

- *Cognitive* - how you think
- *Affective* - how you feel
- *Behavioural* - how you act

One is a very broad sense cognitive. How exposure to certain media or certain information sources effects the way we think. So if you ask an average person in China or in India or in Brazil, what you know what do they think of Africa. Average person I

am saying not university students, average person. They would have a rather distorted view of a continent, which has more than 50 countries, and the majority of these countries are not involved in civil war. They are, but the image one gets of Africa is constant extreme poverty and civil wars. If you think you can count the countries where there is a civil conflict today on your one hand or if you reverse that argument how people see in Africa the western world for instance. They would assume that everybody is very rich and comfortable and have this wonderful life. In fact, in the United States for example, there is a huge underclass of people living in extreme poverty, in the richest country on the planet. So cognition is important and media can influence and does influence how we think about the world.

The other approach is an effective. How we feel. And here again the emotional element is important. Visuals can be very important. How this can be used and is misused to achieve political aims social movements helping the you know refugees for instance you show lot of children you know chewing up a food and you can generate more money to you know you are effecting people's emotion effecting them to think about how you might help the needy. So feeling and especially visuals are very important in that and finally, the behavioral aspect of media. How media images can influence the way you act. So think of India against corruption movement in this country and think of the role of communication and media in that. How it created a certain debate within the country and actually outside too, but the most important issue was how to deal with corruption. It dominated headlines for days on it. It dominated social media it brought hundreds and thousands of young people on to the streets of Indian cities. And there are numerous examples I can give you from around the world.

So, all this discussion about how media influences, that is in terms of thinking or feeling or acting, was almost entirely missing from the cultural and media imperialism discourses that I mentioned earlier. Therefore, we need to think of something slightly different because media and culture imperialism though hugely influential and extremely important ways of thinking about the world because it talks about the structures and institutions. These are very important to see how this linkage is it operated what impact these have on the policy for example, but there are other ways to think about specially something as complex as the notion of culture.



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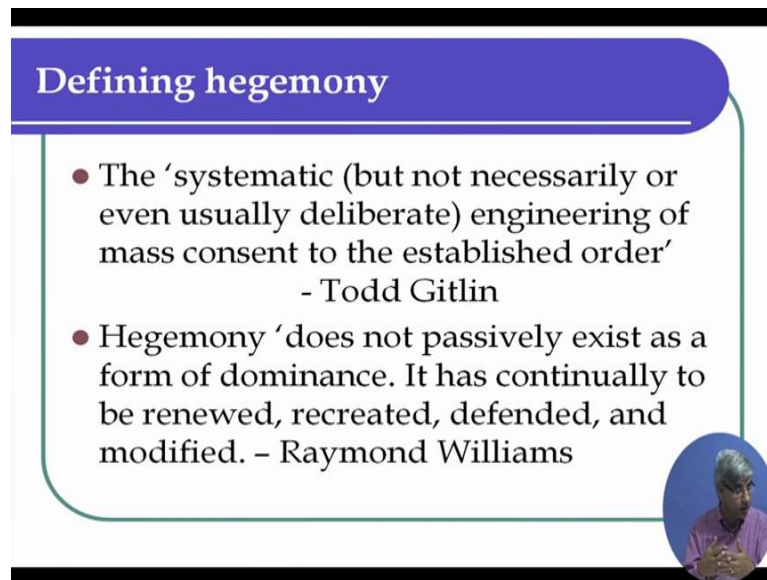
## Hegemony

- The Gramscian idea that 'cultural institutions like the media are part of a process by which a worldview compatible with the existing structures of power in society is reproduced, a process which is decentralized, open to contradiction and conflict but generally effective'

And therefore, a kind of older discourse, which is associated with Gramscian is perhaps more useful to deploy to understand cultural globalization. Gramscian was an Italian thinker, he was actually put in prison by the fascists, and when he was prisoned, he wrote notes, is called notes from note book from prison, sorry prison note book, where she essentially talked about different aspects of Italian history, but she came with an notion of hegemony, where she define here as cultural institution like media are part of a process by which a worldview compatible with the existing structures of power in society is reproduced a process, which is decentralized open to contradiction and conflict, but generally effective.


Hegemony is an interesting way of thinking about media and cultural expansion and adoption. I am going to spend a few more minutes to explain this in little more detail.

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**Defining hegemony**

- The 'systematic (but not necessarily or even usually deliberate) engineering of mass consent to the established order'  
- Todd Gitlin
- Hegemony 'does not passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. - Raymond Williams

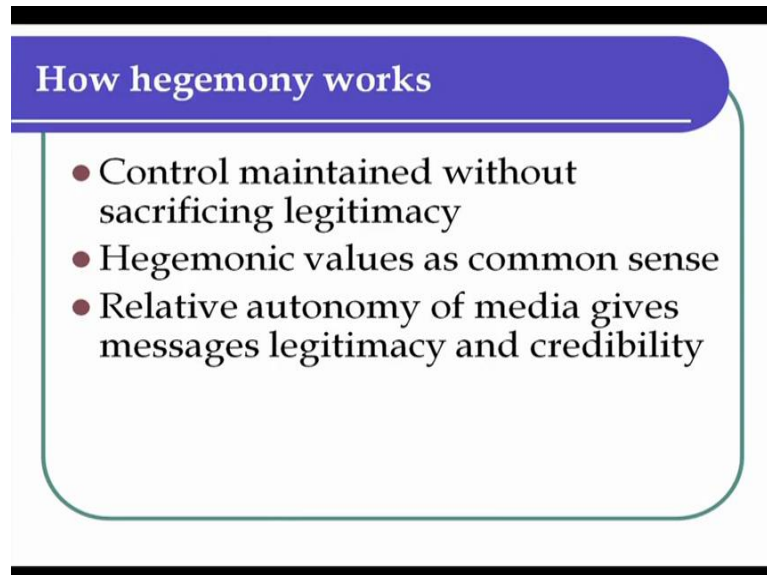


Here are 2 definitions of hegemony - One by Todd Gitlin - the system systematic, but not necessarily or even usually deliberate, engineering of mass consent to the established order; engineering of mass consent to the established order. You manufacture consent, a famous book by Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman. Another definition from Raymond Williams the famous British cultural historian and critic was a theater professor at Cambridge university. Hegemony does not passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed recreated defended and modified. So as an example you can just think of the cold war. For 50 years from 1950 end of the second world war all the way to 1991, when it formally ended with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The world was divided artificially, if you like into 2 caps.

Capitalist and communist, the biggest threat invests in this discourses the world peace was the real threat. The Russians are coming they are going to take over the world war. In reality and this is now in public domain. This lot of work we have done invest in Chicago as a whole cold war project where they produce dozens of books on it. That by 1980, early 80 late 70s, it was known that Soviet Union, was really not in the same position to compete with the west. It was bankrupt. The military expenditure had made it bankrupt, but in the mainstream media discourse, the debate was retained that, this is the biggest threat to the world. As the cold war ended, suddenly a new threat emerged. Islam became the biggest threat to the world. So you have to ask, how did that happen. What is

the role of media in creating that consensus, manufacturing, engineering that consensus? So it has to be recreated changed adopted etcetera.

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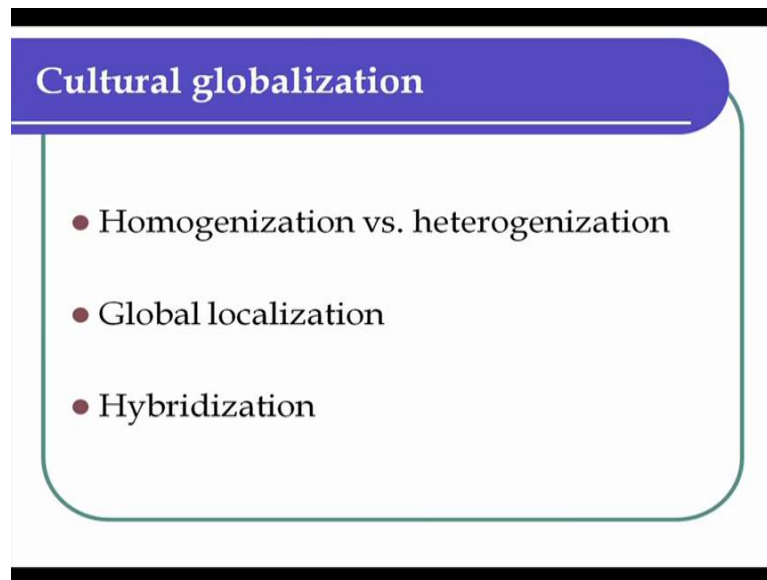
**How hegemony works**

- Control maintained without sacrificing legitimacy
- Hegemonic values as common sense
- Relative autonomy of media gives messages legitimacy and credibility

How it works. This is important to realize. Legitimacy is essential. So the US president can go and bomb Iraq, but he has to get it through his congress. Legitimacy is important. Hegemonic values as common sense. You see specially news operations. There is a common sense is view of the world. There is not necessarily the right view, but this is how it is projected at this is the right view and because media in the western world specially are relatively autonomous. They are not controlled directly by the state as it is in many other cases. So they create, they have created the creator ability and therefore, their hegemonic discourse, gets greater visibility and acceptance than would have been the case if the media were actually controlled by the state, as is the case of china. We say that is the Chinese government's view. We do not say that necessarily about the BBC or about New York times.

So, I would suggest that hegemony is a much more nuanced theoretical approach, in understanding cultures of globalization. Let me end with 3 points about cultural globalization.

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Because it is still relatively new phenomenon we are taking about 20 years and this is unfolding. What the big debate is between homogenization, heterogenization. This idea that we are all becoming very similar verses the debate that no actually the diversity is growing, because the world has become more globalized that is one area of discussion in debate. The other is about what is called global localization.

As I mentioned earlier is big conglomerates are constantly using local strategies to appear indigenous rather than foreign and that creates an interesting cultural discourse in itself. And finally, what is pure culture, cultures have always given and taken things from other cultures right all through history, so what you have is really kind of hybridization of cultures, but the crucial question there is, who is hybridizing with whom, and with what effect that is a central question we should keep in mind. I will stop this.

Thank you.