

Mindset Shaping by Media: An Overview of Media Technologies Leading towards Media Imperialism in Media Mix

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Received 20 December 2014; accepted 5 January 2015; published 15 January 2015

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Abstract

When medium itself has become message and gets disproportionate importance, the substance of the message gets pushed back. Influence of visual media on culture and people has been increasing day by day. Though it influences people both positively and negatively, it affects more adversely than otherwise as the media has begun affecting the very identity of the masses and reduced them to passive subjects. The plurality of culture and identity of people in the third world countries are at stake. Strong resistance of the masses supported by a new order of international information is the need of the hour. Keeping this in mind, a revisit to the influence of visual media is deliberated here.

Keywords

Communication Imperialism, Culture, Media, Globalization, Nationalization

1. Introduction

The concept “global village” is a reality today. The life style and culture can now spread across even continents within seconds of time. Linking of electronic information would create an inter connected village by collapsing communication space and time barriers thus enabling people to interact and live on a global scale [1]. The style and response pattern hitherto not known has become a actuality, not as mere knowledge, but as an experience in life. This has changed totally the mannerism and psychological configuration of both individual and society. Communication technology and its day to day developments has become a tool for changing the physical life

How to cite this paper: Parashar, A. and Sreenivasan, G. (2015) Mindset Shaping by Media: An Overview of Media Technologies Leading towards Media Imperialism in Media Mix. *Social Networking*, 4, 17-21.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/sn.2015.41002>

style in the era of neo capitalism. They have already realized that the colonies lost to them politically can be regained and identity, interest etc. of people of those countries can be maneuvered by capitalist's interest using Media. This had paved the way for a new media culture which is "Eurocentric" in nature.

2. Media as a Tool

It has already been established that media can be used in place of weapons and proved its usefulness during First World War itself. The state of mind of a society can be better controlled through media. The UK had gone one step ahead in those days itself by popularizing the argument of "participation of the USA in the war", by lobbying among the intellectuals of US, who in turn guided common people. The reason being that in the event of the US not taking part, the UK had to face an eventual defeat. A propaganda agency "Creel Commission" (The Committee on Public Information) has been established for this purpose and it operated all medium to create passion for war—jingoism—among common people. Within a few months, the mass demanded for war which ultimately resulted in USA taking part in the World War-I [2]. It is possible to regiment the public mind every bit, as much as an army regiments their bodies [3]. Incidentally, Bearnys, the propaganda guru was a member of Creel Commission and had the responsibility of executing the coup of democratically elected Government of Guatemala.

One person, impressed by the role of media influence on mindset of people was Hitler who concluded that "Germany lost the war because it lost the propaganda battle", in *Mein Kampf*. Propaganda is a miniature battle. Had Hitler won the propaganda battle then, the history of world would have been changed during the World War II. Propaganda does exist on all sides of us and it does change our mental pictures of the world [3] in 1916, Thomas Woodrow Wilson elected as the 28th President of U.S. mainly by creating anti war emotions. It was a period of tremendous feeling against sending Americans to the warfront abroad. "Peace without Victory" was his campaign lead for blaming Germany to initiate war. Though he was in favor of a battle, he soon realized the difficulty of engaging people who were pacifist and not in favour of participating in a war. However, he also realized the strength of propaganda and used it effectively. The term "propaganda", incidentally, did not have negative connotations in those days [2]. It was during the Second World War that the term became forbidden because it was connected with Germany, and all those awful things. But in this period, the term propaganda just meant information or something like that.

3. Creation of Consensus

"Making of Consensus" is a mass media process by which leaders in capital society ultimately decide how the mass should think and formulate their opinion. It was Walter Lippmann, a famous US journalist and originator of the concept "cold war" formulated this new system of developing consensus among the mass in a democratic society. Whenever heads of state find the democratic set up unsuitable for their association, this art can be effectively utilized and overcome incompatibility of democracy [4]. It's a way of destabilizing democracy of a country without the knowledge of its own people. This destabilization process will eventually be accepted by the people as if it being a part of democracy. The critics who commented about the denial of people's voice in various socialist republics never saw the purposeful creation of consensus in western countries. When George Orwell brought out "Animal Farm" (1945), the western media gave wide publicity because of the satiric criticism on degeneration in Soviet systems. However, it took three decades or more to start a discussion on its preface which brought out "censorship in UK". The media of western countries are run by imperialistic force and they made sure that the only content acceptable to them should reach to the mass and not shown any interest on the totality of the subject covered by Orwell [2].

Media formulate the agenda of the thinking process of a society. They decide what should and what should not be the content in a thinking process. Media was never independent and their policy was designed by Corporates who controlled the capital from behind. Ultimately these capitalists have a role in finalizing the ruler of a country also. In a nut shell, media is a converging tool to protect the system of a country and act as a weapon to thrust upon any movement against the system. The media boss realized that a society can be better suppressed by the media itself rather than by bombs. Like economic force or political will, a media can conquer their mindset and thinking. People's style and belief will be altered and a new order can be established. This type of media business is the natural extension of propaganda industry started during the time of First World War. It was Havas of France, Reuters of UK etc., as a ring combination controlled the media market those days. Later AP of the

US joined this stream. Thus the capitalist force of developed countries has had an upper hand on News and corporate entities by virtue of their economic power. Due to the formation of this combination, indigenous nature of News has been lost.

The development in a country hitherto undertaken with public interest and social commitment has been changed. For e.g. news on the activity of liberation movement in Latin America was brought to that country through the partisan mindset of foreign news agencies. A time has come when developments in a country has been made known to their people by its enemy country.

4. Communication Imperialism

It is after Second World War, that imperialism becomes a theory that refers to the relations between developed and under developed countries [5]. Towards the end of 20th century, nationalism of media has been changed to globalization which leads to a situation of “non-national concern of media”. Media languages of Capitalism and Colonialism have made everything a tool to bring victory in any field which they feel good. Capitalists always use media to transform the views of masses. There are more than 150 news agencies, 80,000 radios & TV stations and around 20,000 important newspapers over the world. Reference texts, Historical books and even encyclopedia are being brought out by major publishing houses. All these capitalist’s forces affected the life style, social ethics and consumption patterns in developing countries. These news related establishments gather majority of their inputs through trans-national Corporations of developed countries and TV communication satellites majority are supported by the US capital. It is interesting to note that all major news agencies have associated with weapons industries either directly or through their business partners. Shares of major military industrial associates like IBM, Westinghouse, and Western Electric etc have their stake in Associate Press. The major ordinance factory Siemens of Germany and Matra of France run News agencies as ancillary establishments. By strategic use of news, unrest at one or other part of the world can be created and supplying arms to both affected parties their business can be promoted. This is most apparent when national television news coverage is increasingly becomes homogenised and only few news sources are shared in common worldwide [6]. Herman and McChesney (1997) argued that “The global media system is dominated by three or four dozen large transnational corporations with fewer than ten mostly US based media conglomerates towering over the global market” [7].

Fighting with each other is a natural character of human mind. Dean Keith Simonton (2001) [8], in a post war analysis of human behavior remarked that the human mind again became a legitimate topic of investigation, a legitimacy that could be extended to creativity as well. “It’s in war, the creativity of human mind is stimulated”. This was the concept which accelerated the communication imperialism in those days. At one side, developing news for war and thereby creating jingoism and at other side selling weapons and earning profit out of it. This tactics of weapon manufacturers ultimately decide who should come to power in third world countries and what sort of political change is required. Even if there is a change of political leadership, major policies should not be changed. India is an example of this phenomenon. The policy of both NDA and UPA Government towards the core sectors and media are one and the same, and they continue to implement the same policy from where the previous Government has stopped. The Transnational TV companies have formulated special terminology to achieve their goal of media imperialism. For e.g., the invasion of Iraq was treated as Iraq liberation Mission by CNN and BBC. The Iraq newspaper which depended on the US news agencies reproduced the same terminology. Another example is the usage of “social force” for terrorists, and “nationalistic movement” is reported as terrorists groups. In 1960s itself, the transnational corporation—Intel Sat—was established and the major share holder was a US based company. It is estimated that around 100 million people watch US television programs outside that country but their ethnic, nationalistic and historical issues are seldom covered in any of the US television programs. However, like a sedative, they also got subscribed and watch programs of US TVs. Each day, news papers around the world print dozens of pages of stock price information and available to the common man who are neither interested but exposed to stock chart in News paper and Television [9].

5. Globalization, Nationalization and Liberalization

Globalization is a phenomena involving the integration of economics, cultures, government policies and political movement around the world [1]. The Globalization of market has paved way for globalization of media also. Hence, the existence of political, economical and policy development of global economic scenario falls on media. It is difficult to see separately from the neo liberal market policies of 1990s. The global media is under the

control of West in general and US in particular. The transnational companies put many countries under one net of news world. Though the origin of transnational companies are related to Industrial Revolution of 19th Century, they are concentrated on “news manufacturing”. There was only a gradual development in print media where as Electronic media witnessed spontaneous changes and influenced culture both positively and negatively. The explosion of knowledge accompanied by revolution of communication has affected the global economy and culture. This has been accelerated by the invention of electricity, which acted as a catalyst in application of communication scenario, and makes us believe that even the latest invention has become obsolete very soon.

6. Positive Effect of Cultural Imperialism

Advocates of hard core communism are of the view that there is nothing positive in relation to imperialism. It's a perennial process for achieving total control of global resources with western countries at one side and developing countries in general at receiving side. It's a movement towards conquer and as such was based on fresh ideological construction [5] India was considered as a land of snake charmers and naked sanyasins at one time. From that stage, our long journey to modern age of Mangalyaan was supported by aids of western countries though mainly with an intention for trade. The education facility, infrastructure, transportation, communication, Electricity, etc have come to this country in early 18th century, thanks to the invasion of Europeans. They transmitted culture as well as science to the Indian life. This has stimulated the economy and life style of people, helping modern trends to emerge in agriculture, industry, health care etc. The agriculture in yesteryears was based solely on monsoon and hence restricted in nature. Modern irrigation facility has paved way for more agro based production, and helped farmers to grow cash crops etc. Thus spending power of people has increased many fold giving a boost to economy.

Education has totally changed the outlook of the society. Woman no longer performed Sati and reached at all spectrum of society and participated in democratic functioning of the Government in India, though there is scope of achieving much in this field. The wide spread education has a supplementary effect of unification of the country also. Though India has been drained during yester years, the influence of western in life style has touched on positive note also, though in small. Distance has become no longer an obstacle in daily life. Media has become the single largest contributor to the globalisation. People enjoy the facility and advantage of Television programmes across the world. Internationalization of television news and use of latest technology even at regional level media are notable achievements helping Media to erase the boundaries of countries across the world and interconnected various cultures. The concept of global village has become more reality due to the take over and domination of western media.

7. Conclusion

The invasion of culture has made people inert and passive subjects. The western countries through invasion of culture trashed the talents of all others and make them more passive through various mass communication tools, for which telecommunication and corporate capitalism moved in tandem. The march is towards a single culture with the pruning or stunting the growth of various shades of vibrant ethnicity. The curious thing about this convergence is that it submerges various old traditions which are older than the US. The cultural invasion through media can spell disaster for third world countries whose very existence relies heavily on its unique cultural identity and separate language. The Government must step in and rope in the services of all concerned, especially from the people who can grasp the threat looming ahead and are willing to stand up against media imperialism.

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