Chapter 3

Cultural Hegemony and Global Communication

This chapter examines the ways in which cultural hegemony plays a significant part in global communication in the era of globalisation and information technology. The cornerstone of this study is the theory of hegemony developed by Antonio Gramsci. The intellectual debates of Gramsci’s notions are based on ideas of civil society, hegemony, ideology and the role of intellectuals. The first part of this chapter deals with the notions of cultural hegemony and cultural imperialism. The second part of the chapter evaluates the nature of global media and communication and the functions of media hegemony in relation to cultural imperialism. The third section is an overall analysis of the cultural hegemony of global media and communication.

Cultural Hegemony

The term ‘hegemony’ is derived from the Greek *hegemonia* which means ‘leader’, ‘state’ or ‘ruler’. It means that a culturally diverse society is dominated by a social class or a culture for the benefit of the ruling class. Since the 19th century, ‘hegemony’ is used to indicate ‘political predominance of one state over another’. The western colonialists used ‘cultural power’ as a powerful weapon in the international arena. It resulted in establishing the superiority of the western industrial revolution and its values globally. Local civilisations and their norms and values were undermined. In the twentieth century, political scientists extended the notion of ‘hegemony’ as a theoretical concept, central to cultural hegemony. It explains how, one social class dominates and manipulates the other social classes of a society. Thus hegemony is a form of cultural imperialism enabling some states to impose their worldviews, values, and lifestyles on others. According to the
Columbia Encyclopedia, cultural hegemony denotes the indirect imperial dominance of the hegemon (leader, state) on the sub-ordinate states, by the implied means of power, rather than direct military force (1994: 1215). It is based on the assumption that one nation tries to force its culture, ideology, goods, and way of life on another country.

The key concept of hegemony is analysed in the work of Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist who wrote in the 1920s and 1930s. The notion of hegemony connects questions of culture, power and ideology. Gramsci argued that ruling groups can maintain their power through force, consent, or a combination of the two. In Selections from the Prison Notebooks, Gramsci explains the concept of hegemony:

[Hegemony is] the ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is ‘historically’ caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production (Gramsci in Evans 2006:16).

Hegemony is power mainly exercised through consent and the innovation of ideology. For Gramsci, the concept of hegemony is a means of maintaining the state in a capitalist society, in which the capitalist and dominant classes are controlling working class and sub-ordinate classes through dominant values and ideology. The innovation of ideology is necessary to hegemony and it is basically domination by consent. According to Gramsci,

the important social force that develops the value and knowledge to be followed is the intellectuals and the dominant groups maintain power by means of ideas that justify their positions. The costumes, way of thinking, acting, and morality are associated with dominant groups are defused
throughout societies by institutions such as churches, trade unions, school and political parties (Gramsci 1971: 242).

Gramsci states that “intellectuals are the dominant group’s ‘deputies’ exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government” (1971: 12). Thus, intellectuals play an important role in both exercising hegemony and challenging it. Ideology is also important in this context. James Lull explains that:

*Ideology* is a system of ideas expressed in communication; *consciousness* is the essence or totality of attitudes, opinions, and sensitivities held by individuals or group; and *hegemony* is the process through which dominant ideology is transmitted, consciousness is formed, and social power is exercised (Lull 1995:6).

Gramsci’s analysis on hegemony, as noted earlier, is inter-related with civil society, hegemony, ideology and intellectuals. He had developed these ideas in the context of Italian culture, but it is also relevant in media studies. The assertion of cultural hegemony through media needs to be understood in order to grasp how the domination through propagation of western values has been achieved.

**Civil Society**

Civil society is a vital term in the works of Gramsci. It denotes the dynamic governance through social structures in modern society. Hegel promoted the separation of the State from the Civil Society, arguing that the state has no business in interfering in society and economy, whereas Marx has explained the concept of civil society with the ascendancy of bourgeois society. It is a system of social relations based on the association of people independently of the state and the family. Before the emergence of civil society, people were members of different societies and guilds.
Though Gramsci’s concept of civil society is rooted in Marx, he provides an in-depth analysis of civil society. Gramsci’s civil society has two different dimensions. The first one is based on the common consensus and mutual motivation. It is a civil society with ample leadership. The other one is about the linkage of the civil society with the state and political society wherein exist coercion and power related to law, court, police, military, etc. Civil society operates through hegemony. Gramsci’s civil society is located in the superstructure and its roots lie in the material condition. Its role is the perpetuation of class relationships and prevention of the development of the class consciousness. Civil society is also a site where diverse interests compete. It is a domain where hegemony operates. The dominant values of the state and dominant classes are reproduced in the civil society through education, media and the value system as a whole.

**Hegemony**

In civil society ‘hegemony’ embraces and exercises the control through moral and intellectual leadership. It is not only a leadership of dominance but also an intellectual influence and internal motivation. In Marx’s historical materialism, societies must transform over time from oppressive economic systems to more liberating ones, until society reaches the state of communism. Marx believed that capitalism was an oppressive economic system because of the unequal distribution of the wealth among a few powerful people, and he believed that eventually, the masses would overthrow capitalism and move to a less oppressive system. In the Marxist thesis, the class is the dominant material force as well as intellectual force in society. Hegemony expresses the consent of the subordinate classes to the bourgeois dominance, which comes as power, consciousness and ideology. Hegemony doesn't impose its own ideology, but combines common elements, extracted from visions of the world and interests of the allied groups (Gramsci in Brooker 2003:120).). According to Gramsci, there is no monolithic power among
these hegemonic apparatuses. But class struggle in the Marxist sense explains the changes and the resistances to the hegemony of the dominant class.

Gramsci used the term bourgeois cultural hegemony to refer to the dominance of the bourgeois over other classes. In Gramsci’s theory of hegemony, oppressive regimes are able to stay in power through a combination of coercion and consent that keep the powerful people in power. The society has different power structures and strategies. According to Gramsci, the systems of power cannot be maintained by coercion alone. It works through consent. The operation of ideological hegemony can construct a secure civil society which bears dominant groups’ interests. The state dominates over civil society. He argues that ideology is the medium for the foundation of the proletarian hegemony in civil society (Gramsci in Fusaro 2010: 40).

Gramsci thought that three strategies can overcome the bourgeois hegemony such as crisis of hegemony, war of position and the intellectuals’ role. Gramsci believed that the media have a powerful role to play in the power structure. Therefore, critical media studies now look at how the media support the power structures such as government, capitalism, corporations, and patriarchy. Antonio Gramsci argues that the media promote the values of dominant power structures. Therefore, the concept of hegemony is a valuable vocabulary for discussing the relationship between media and power.

**Ideology**

Gramsci made a major contribution to the concept of ideology. It is a system of ideas, beliefs, and power. In traditional Marxist theory, power was viewed as force and coercion of ruling class domination. Gramsci felt that the missing element was pervasive forms of ideological control and manipulation that served to perpetuate all repressive structures. He identified two quite distinct forms of political domination, which is physical coercion and hegemony. He assumed
that no regime could sustain itself primarily through organised state power and armed force. In the long run, it needs to have popular support and legitimacy in order to maintain stability.

Gramsci divided Marx’s superstructure into coercive and non-coercive. The coercive is basically the public institutions such as the government, police, armed forces and the legal system. The non-coercive is the churches, the schools, trade unions, political parties, cultural associations, clubs, the family, etc. which he regarded as part of the civil society. Therefore Gramsci’s society was made up of the relations of production, the state or political society (coercive institutions), and civil society (non-coercive institutions). Thus, ideological hegemony means that the majority of the population accepted what was happening in society as ‘common sense’. Though the term is complex in nature, Marxism frequently describes ideology as a system of ideas that maintains itself in the face of contrary experience. Therefore, Gramsci’s ideology is a theory as well as praxis. Thus Gramsci suggests that capitalism maintains its dominance not just through violence and political and economic coercion, but through ideology.

**Role of Intellectuals**

In Gramsci’s view, the intellectual plays a crucial role in the legitimation as well as transformation of capitalism He says that “all men are intellectuals, but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals” (Moraes 2003). It means that everyone has an intellect and uses it, but not all are intellectuals by social function. He identifies two types of intellectuals: the traditional and the organic. Traditional intellectuals from traditional more of society and represent such interests. The organic intellectuals are part of the new capitalist society performing roles of legitimating or challenging the interests of dominant social groups and the ruling class. They are produced by educational system to perform a function for the dominant social group in society. The ruling class maintains its hegemony over the rest of society through this group. Gramsci emphasised that social order is maintained not just through coercion.
but also through active consent. In hegemonic societies, this consent is secured through the cultural leadership of the dominant groups. Intellectuals also have the capacity to criticise the dominant order. Gramsci envisages such a role for intellectuals to attain meaningful transformation of contemporary society.

Cultural hegemony operates in civil society through the function of intellectuals or intellectual power. Gramsci’s notion of hegemony theorises not only the necessary condition for a successful overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat and its allies but also the structures of bourgeois power (Brooker 2003: 120). It refers to a process of moral and intellectual leadership. Gramsci defines hegemony as a form of control exercised by a dominant class, or a group, controlling the means of production. In society, hegemony is obtained by the dominant class on production and distribution, knowledge and cultural imperialism (Wayne 2003: 173-174). In Gramsci’s view, a class cannot dominate by merely advancing its own narrow economic interests and purely through force and coercion. It requires intellectual leadership, alliances and compromises with a variety of forces. This produces and re-produces the hegemony of the dominant class. It operates through a nexus of institutions, social relations and ideas. In this manner, Gramsci developed a theory that emphasised the importance of the political and ideological superstructure in both maintaining and fracturing relations of the economic base. Gramsci has insisted on the independence of ideology from economic determinism and also rejected crude materialism, offering a humanist version of Marxism which focused on human subjectivity (Wayne 2003:174). James Lull examines how concepts like ideology, consciousness, and hegemony are interrelated within the processes of modern human communication.

individual and collective consciousness to some degree reflects patterns of ideological representation, cultivating perceptions of cultural themes and conceptions of time, space, and place. Institutional interdependence and textual congruities produce sustain
and expand dominant modes of thought and action in process of ideological hegemony (Lull 1995:42)

Gramsci’s cultural hegemony analysis can be fruitfully applied to globalisation and mass media theories. It enables the study of the global impact of media and to know how the media propagate cultural hegemony in the consciousness of the public. Thus cultural hegemony theories state that Western nations dominate the media around the world. It has a powerful effect on third world cultures due to the imposition of Western views and values. The smaller countries are losing their identity due to force feeding of cultural imperialism. The new social media networks and cyber culture enable societies to radically democratise the so called fourth estate and the mass media. But, they have also been controlled by dominant nations and hegemonic cultural institutions. Therefore, global media communication systems are the powerful vehicles of cultural hegemony.

**Global Media Communication**

Global media is a modern development coming out of the new information technology. Until the 1980s, media systems were generally national in scope by “the exclusiveness of language as well as by cultural and political factors” (McQuail 2006:216). Global media communication has provided new avenues of greater exchange of ideas and at the same time generated new ways of assertion of power.

The debates on cultural imperialism spread soon after decolonisation of nations. The assertion of American power in the Cold War and post-Cold War periods saw not only the economic and political domination, but also significant cultural imperialist projection. American culture is promoting the ideologies of consumption, instant gratification, self-absorption and the spread of global capitalism (Lechner and Boli 2012: 341). The outcome of the cultural imperialism
thesis was the sound call for a “New World Information Order” (NWIO). The gap between the information “haves” and “have-nots” widened in the last many decades. It resulted in the contention for overcoming the unequal communication system in forums like UN, UNESCO and International Telecommunication Union. The new quest for equity enabled nations to argue against the north south divide of the information imbalance, imperialism of the global media, unilateral flow of the global media etc. which are the basic ideologies of the media imperialism. Thus the third world nations took the leadership for demanding a new international information order.

In 1980s, the MacBride Commission Report came out as the first international document dealing with the world’s communication problems. It is known as the Many Voices, One World and also known as the MacBride Report. It was written by the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, chaired by Irish Nobel laureate Seán MacBride. Its aim was to analyse communication problems in modern societies, particularly relating to mass media and news, consider the emergence of new technologies, and to suggest a kind of communication order (New World Information and Communication Order) to diminish the problems to further peace and human development. But it was criticised by Western media groups. The West led by the US saw in the proposed NWICO a ‘Soviet–inspired’ attempt to control the Western liberal mass media values and principles of free flow of information.

Since 1990s, global media plays a crucial role in the development of global market economy due to the ‘communication revolution’. The production and distribution of media content is targeted to the global audience through information technology and global media communication. Global media is basically spread all around the world and gives ‘information’, ‘education’ and ‘entertainment’ through media. The industry consists of activities such as broadcast media, publishing, movies and entertainment, internet advertising, and other services. The industry
witnessed good growth during the last decade due to the technological advancements in the broadcasting and publishing segments, caused by the changing media consumption patterns. “The rapid changes in the global media system have been based on a ‘new information order’ of market freedom, and they have strengthened market rule” (Herman and McChesney 1998: 50). Denis McQuail writes about the global media communication:

Global mass communication is a multiphase phenomenon and the global media is unifying different societies and integrates them into one world. Geographical closeness or cultural proximity helps media cross borders. Global media is not a natural progression emerging out of the ordinary communication and interaction of people and cultures around the world. Rather, it is the results of deliberate human choice by a powerful group of nations, transnational corporations and international organisations (2006:220).

According to Mirza Jan, “the main issues in global media are trans-border data flow, cultural imperialism, media and information flows” (Jan 2009:70). Globalisation has largely been driven by the interests and needs of the developed world through the global media. In global media, liberalisation and market are the twin core concepts. Free markets and free trade are the hallmarks of neoliberalism, and this ideology serves global media to a large extent now. The ‘globalisation-market-liberty-integration’ process is served by the global media.

Imbalance in news circulation is a complex and varied phenomenon. The MacBride Report says that: There is no single, universal criterion by which to measure these imbalances and disparities, since news value differs from one country to another and from culture to culture, and even sometimes with in a single county (1982: 36). The global media system is dominated by the US based transnational media corporations. It promotes global market and commercial values. Thus the academic study of global communication has been more
concerned with empirical, descriptive, and ideological issues than with systematic theoretical development. The academic debates in communication focus on Americanisation of media in the world. Later it changed to more about globalisation because global media corporations play a prominent role in the global scene and media industries.

Robert McChesney, a media historian criticised multinational corporations in the following way:

1. The global media market is dominated by eight multinational corporations [General Electric, AT&T/Liberty Media, Disney, Time Warner, Sony, News Corporation, Viacom and Seagram, plus Bertelsmann, the Germany-based conglomerate] which also dominate US media.

2. Multinational corporations are horizontally integrated companies with their own publishing companies or broadcasting networks, and are able to distribute their own product.

3. International deregulation and free-market policies have created a climate that has been conducive to foreign investment in media.


The global media are central to the cultural or symbolic resources power. The global media have established a decisive and fundamental leadership in the cultural sphere. As already noted, the global media systems are dominated by US based transnational media corporations for the global market and promote commercial values. Thus, concepts such as globalisation, media hegemony, and social class are also related to the framework of global media and communication.
Cultural Imperialism

The term “cultural hegemony” and “cultural imperialism” are used in different ways in the academic circles. In general, “cultural hegemony” is rooted in the social class and ‘cultural imperialism’ in the domination of one culture over another. Hegemony is the indirect form of imperial dominance with implied means of power. In the praxis of hegemony, the leader of the state formally establishes it by means of cultural domination. Both ‘hegemony’ and ‘imperialism’ are imposed by the ruling class with artificial social constructs through economic institutions, technology and media.

Neo-Marxists prefer the broader term cultural imperialism because they adopt a more holistic view of the role of media and Non-Marxists deliberately prefer to use the term media imperialism. Cultural imperialism has different names in academic literature. It has been called “cultural power”, “cultural colonialism”, “structural imperialism”, “electronic colonialism”, “media imperialism”, “ideological imperialism”, etc. Cultural imperialism, according to The Harper Dictionary of Modern Thought (1998) is “the use of political and economic power to exalt and spread the values and habits of a foreign culture at the expense of a native culture”. The Dictionary of Human Geography (2011) defines imperialism as “the creation and maintenance of an unequal economic, cultural and territorial relationship, usually between states and often in the form of an empire, based on domination and subordination”. Usually, cultural imperialism refers to the cultural domination that associated with an empire. Therefore, the term has a set of political and economic meanings. In fact, “it is marked as a negative notion of power, domination or control”. It has also “a link between present domination and a colonial past”. However, it is a “process of imperial control that operates through forms of culture and that is more effective than earlier forms of colonial domination” (Hamelink 2008:151). In the Frankfurt School of Marxist traditions, capitalism is interpreted as a ‘homogenizing cultural force’ (Tomlinson 2006:228;
Brooker 2003:51). Critical theory and cultural imperialism theory are rooted in Marxist ideology and both are anti-capitalistic and anti-Western in the study of media globalisation. Dependency theory and the theory of cultural imperialism are also grounded in Marxist ideology. The Frankfurt School adopted an interdisciplinary approach to understand the industrialisation of culture, claiming that culture was becoming commodified, standardised and massified (Kellner 2005: 154-174). The emergence of mass media and information technology changed the concept of sociology of mass culture and cultural imperialism. Cultural imperialism embodies power over nations and cultures.

**Media Imperialism**

The concept of media imperialism focuses on production, distribution, and content of global media, as opposed to their reception (Tomlinson 1991). In the 1950s and 1960s, Latin American economists interpreted their countries' economic relations to Europe and the United States by developing a theory of dependency. The understanding of imperialism developed by the Dependency School allowed for the elaboration of the concept of media imperialism. The combination of culture and imperialism achieved common currency in academic and political debates in the late 1960s to 1980s. But in the 1990s, cultural imperialism lost its evocative attraction to the notions of globalisation and alternative globalisation. Since the end of the Cold War, there was the global push of neo-liberal policies of deregulation and privatisation and this had major implications for global media. The push of globalisation is an important element in thinking about media and cultural imperialisms.

Jurgen Habermas and Marshall Berman launched the post-war investigation of cultural imperialism. They depicted cultural imperialism as the imposition of modernity. They studied how the primary agents of modernity, such as the media, bureaucracy, science, and other social and economic institutions of the West, transferred the ‘lived culture’ of capitalism to non-Western cultures. These
scholars admitted that society were conditioned and manipulated by modern capitalist environment (Booker 2003: 140).

Pluralism in ownership and control, concentration and monopolies, transnationalisation, etc. transformed the social phenomenon of communication into a vast new industry. *Mac Bride Report* says:

In the communication industry there is a relatively small number of predominant corporations which integrates all aspects of production and distribution, which are based in the leading development countries and which have become transnational in their operations. Concentration of resources and infrastructures is not only a growing trend, but also worrying phenomenon which may adversely affect the freedom and democratisation of communication. Concentration and transnationalisation are the consequences, perhaps inevitable, of the independence of various technologies and various media (1982:111).

Media imperialism is a kind of political control by powerful countries through media. It exports not only media content, but also technology, production values, professional ideologies and ownership. It is viewed as purposeful and intentional because it corresponds to the political interests of the powerful capitalist societies. Thus “cultural imperialism is the broader terms of the global, historical, advance of capitalist modernity”. (Tomlinson 1991: 24) The effects of this type of cultural domination are reflecting the attitudes and values of Western, capitalist societies. This view is extremely pervasive and it is leading to homogenisation. Therefore, global media have a direct or indirect connection with cultural imperialism. Media imperialism “is an unequal relationship in terms of power” and cultural or ideological domination with Western cultural and economic values especially individualism, secularism, materialism and consumerism (McQuail 2006: 221).
Denis McQuail argues that there are at least four propositions to consider regarding media imperialism:

1. Global media promotes relations of dependency rather than economic growth.

2. The imbalance in the flow of mass media content undermines cultural autonomy or holds back its development.

3. The unequal relationship in the flow of news increases the relative global power of large and wealthy news-producing countries and hinders the growth of an appropriate national identity and self-image.

4. Global media flows give rise to a state of cultural homogenisation or synchronisation leading to a dominant form of culture that has no specific connection with real experience for most people (2006:222).

The top ten global media firms, of which six are American, mostly produce, distribute, and regulate almost all media outlets. The following are the top global media firms: 1.Comcast/NBC Universal, LLC (USA), 2. The Walt Disney Company (USA), 3. Google Inc. (USA), 4. News Corp. Ltd. (USA), 5. Viacom Inc./CBS Corp. (USA), 6. Time Warner Inc. (USA), 7. Sony Entertainment (Japan), 8. Bertelsmann AG (D), 9. Vivendi S.A. (France), and 10. Cox Enterprises Inc. (USA). These types of companies were growing and globalizing quickly. These corporates own television networks, cable channels, movie studios, and newspapers, magazines, publishing houses, music labels and websites. Hermen and McChesney depicted the global media as the “new missionaries of corporate capitalism”. They write: “Media outputs are commodified and are designed to serve market ends, not citizenship needs” (1997:9).

“The rise of a global media market is encouraged by new digital and satellite technologies that make global markets both cost-effective and lucrative”
Contributing to the trend toward media globalisation was the formation of transnational corporations, the World Trade Organisation, and the World Bank. All of these organisations helped to create a new form of global capitalism that uses global media to disseminate messages to global consumers. Thus, cultural and media imperialism implies the expansion of worldwide consumerism through global media culture and communication.

**Debates on Media and Cultural Imperialism**

Media is a significant terrain of the assertion of cultural imperialism. Imperialism is a specific form of domination with the notion of power and control. The dominance of one culture’s media over another and the mass mediated culture are central to cultural imperialism. Media are a significant element of modern culture. Media are part of an ongoing system of economic relations within global capitalism.

Appadurai specifies five factors in contemporary cultural diversity. He calls these dimensions “scapes”, as briefly noted in the previous chapter. The globalising cultural forces of media and communication produce complex interactions and disjunctures between different cultures. Appadurai discusses five ‘scapes’ which influence culture, and argues that these factors ensure cultural diversity, and not cultural homogeneity or domination. The five ‘scapes’, all of which refers to a type of movements, include ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes. Ethnoscapes refer to flows of people, such as tourists and immigrants. Mediascapes refer to mass media technology and images. Technoscapes include technology that crosses boundaries. Financescapes refer to flows of currency markets. Ideoscapes refer to images, specifically in the political and ideological aspects. These ‘scapes’ influence culture not by a uniform effect, but through their ‘disjunctures’. Thus, mass media plays a larger role in cultural diversity than in cultural standardisation. Appadurai argues that relationships between and among ethnoscapes, technoscapes, and financescapes
are “deeply disjunctive and profoundly unpredictable, since each of these landscapes is subjected to its own constrains and incentives… [and] each acts as a constrained and a parameter for movement of the other” (Appadurai 1996: 296-300).

John Tomlinson, a cultural sociologist has explored the social and cultural theory of modernity and made critical contributions to the debate about media and cultural imperialism. He has developed an insightful critique on discourses of cultural imperialism. His book *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction* narrates different aspects of cultural imperialism. He has analysed cultural imperialism into four categories: “Cultural imperialism as ‘media imperialism’, cultural imperialism as a discourse of nationality, cultural imperialism as the critique of global capitalism, and cultural imperialism as the critique of modernity” (Tomlinson1991:19-28). These are the categories of media, national domination, the global dominance of capitalism, and the critique of modernity. He says that “both ‘imperialism’ and ‘domination’ contain the negatively marked notions of power, domination, or control” (Tomlinson 1999:20). But “hegemony is more than social power itself; it is a method for gaining and maintaining power” (Lull 1995:31). For Tomlinson, globalisation is a “complex connectivity”. It is represented in the mechanism of the interaction of all the constituents of politics (power), culture (meaning) and economy (resources) in globalisation, but at its core is culture ( Tomlinson 1991:26).

Cultural imperialism theory argues that the global economic system is dominated by a core of advanced countries while third world countries remain at the periphery of the system with little control over their economic, cultural and political development. Multinational corporations are key actors in this system, producing goods, controlling markets, and disseminating products, using similar techniques (Jan 2009: 71). In the 1990s, media imperialism thesis in turn came under sustained attack. The notion of one-way flow of communication and
influence from the West was challenged by the counter-argument that global flows are ‘multi-directional.’ “The simple image of Western domination obscures the complex and reciprocal nature of interaction over centuries between different and increasingly hybridised western and eastern cultures” (Jan 2009: 70-71).

Cultural imperialism is purposeful and intentional with political interests of the powerful capitalist societies. It reflects on how the attitudes and values of the American capitalism spread and dominate. In the age of globalisation, media and new information technologies have been facilitating and propagating the cultural hegemony between countries and ethnic groups. Now, the US foreign policy is an “expansion strategy” of spreading the market-oriented value system and culture. Therefore cultural imperialism promotes Western culture and value system to the non-western cultures. Its hegemony and intellectual dominance is influencing people’s political and cultural perceptions.

Consumerism and associated values are at the centre of cultural imperialism. It creates individualist market-oriented values. Media manipulate the imperialist ideologies with appropriate language. Modern forms of cultural imperialism are rooted in mass media. “The Hollywood, CNN and Disneyland are more influential than the Vatican, the Bible or the public relations rhetoric of political figures” (Petras 2000). Cultural imperialistic penetration is closely related to political, military and economic domination. Cultural and hegemony is imparted through the media and technological networks throughout the world. Thus the mass media become an integral part of the western system of global political and social control. Petras defines cultural imperialism as "the systematic penetration and domination of the cultural life of the popular classes by the ruling class of the west in order to reorder the values, behaviour, institutions, and identity of the oppressed peoples to conform with the interests of the imperial classes" (Petras 2000:140).
Global media operate to convert a critical public into a passive audience. In the political sphere, cultural imperialism is atomising the people from their cultural roots, traditions, and separating individuals from each other. Consumerist culture, de-information, misinformation and media manipulation have lead to the disintegration of critical public spheres in the society. By the dissemination of half-truths and falsehoods, persuasion may be converted into manipulation and propaganda. False consent is developed through propaganda. Therefore media have less interest to serve as the organs of the public information and public debate than to provide market oriented propaganda.