

Pros and cons of media globalization media essay



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Globalisation and its impacts have constituted one of the latest buzz words of today. It could be seen on the streets in any part of the world through the global reach of the Adidas sport shoes brand or the McDonald's fast-food chain, in our everyday media consumption through global media coverage of events such as the recent uproar in Egypt, terrorist actions such as the 911 and celebrity events such as the royal marriage of Prince Williams and Kate Middleton.

According to David Held and Anthony McGrew, globalisation “ denotes the expanding scale, growing magnitude, speeding up and deepening impact of transcontinental flows and patterns of social interaction. It refers to a shift or transformation in the scale of human organization that links distant communities and expands the reach of power relations across the world's regions and continents.” (Held and McGrew, 2002, p. 1)

The subject of media globalisation is primarily concerned with the domination of the global media industry by a small number of powerful transnational media conglomerates, and the extent to which these impact upon the worldviews of individuals in different parts of the world.

Media have a central place in processes of globalisation for three reasons. Firstly, media corporations have been among those corporations that have been increasingly globalizing their operations. Secondly, media organizations help to develop the global communications infrastructure that facilitates global information flows and cross-border commercial activities. Lastly, global media are the principal means through which we make sense of events in distant places, and the information and images that they carry are

central to the development of shared systems of meanings and understanding across borders. (Flew, 2007, p. 70-72)

With the radical critique of global media being associated with strong globalisation arguments, globalisation is seen as the dominant force in media industries currently, notwithstanding counter-trends and localized forms of resistance. (Flew, 2007, p. 72)

Cultural, Political and Economic Implications of Media Globalisation

Pros of Media Globalisation

The growth in global markets has helped to promote efficiency through competition and the division of labour - the specialization that allows people and economies to focus on what they do best. Global markets also offer greater opportunity for people to tap into more diversified and larger markets around the world. It means that they can have access to more capital, technology, cheaper imports and larger export markets.

The extensive reach of globalisation extends to daily choices of personal, economic and political life. For instance, greater access to modern technologies, in the world of health care, could make the difference between life and death. In communications, it would facilitate commerce and education, and allow access to independent media. Globalisation can also create a framework for cooperation among nations on a range of non-economic issues that have cross-border implications, such as immigration, the environment and legal issues.

Simultaneously, the influx of foreign goods, services and capital in a country can create incentives and demands for strengthening the education system, as a country's citizens recognise the competitive challenge before them.

A core element of globalisation is the expansion of world trade through the elimination or reduction of trade barriers, such as import tariffs. Greater imports offer consumers a wider variety of goods at lower prices, while providing strong incentives for domestic industries to remain competitive. Exports, often a source of economic growth for developing nations, stimulate job creation as industries sell beyond their borders.

The media industries have an innate tendency towards concentration of ownership and control, and that this tendency has been extended since the 1980s from the national to the global scale. Herman and McChesney (1997, p. 1) argued that " since the early 1980s there has been a dramatic restructuring of national media markets, along with the emergence of a genuinely global commercial media market." The principal consequence of such developments has been, as McChesney and Schiller argue, that " a transnational corporate-commercial communication began to be crafted and a new structural logic put in place... [as] communications... became a subject to transnational corporate-commercial development" (McChesney and Schiller, 2003, p. 6).

McChesney has noted a focus upon the relationship between media globalisation and the concentration and centralisation of media ownership, and the interconnected nature of these two processes. The trend towards a global media oligopoly hastened in the 1980s and 1990s, for dominant

media firms to seek international expansion in order to ensure their presence in a range of media markets and by concentration of ownership within media industries and the expansion of connections across media industries through the growth of multinational, cross-media conglomerates such as Disney, News Corporation etc.

Cons of Media Globalisation

Critical media theorists have always been concerned with tendencies towards concentration of media ownership and their impact upon politics, society and culture, and the impact of media globalisation led by Western transnational media corporations.

Herbert Schiller argued that the current stage of the US-dominated global capitalism was one where what he termed the entertainment, communications and information (ECI) industries had achieved economic preeminence; their influence was enacted not only in the political-economic sphere but upon global culture and consciousness; and the result was a form of cultural imperialism, whereby the ideas and ideologies of the dominant West (particularly in the United States) exerted hegemony over the populations of the rest of the world.

The radical critique of global media associated with critical political economy has experienced a resurgence of interest in recent years. The proposition that media ownership worldwide is subject to growing concentration, leading to reduced competition and increasingly homogenous media content worldwide.

Edward Herman and Robert McChesney have argued that “ the... global media system is dominated by three or four dozen large transnational corporations (TNCs) with fewer than ten mostly U. S-based media conglomerates towering over the global market” (Herman and McChesney, 1997, p. 1). This has often been taken as a given starting point for understanding the nature of global media today, and is routinely repeated by critics for globalisation (Flew, 2007, p. 73). For instance, Manfred Steger (2003, p. 76) argues that “ to a very large extent, the global cultural flows of our times are generated and directed by global media empires that rely on powerful communication technologies to spread their message... During the last two decades, a small group of very large TNCs have come to dominate the global market for entertainment, news, television, and film.”