A Sociological Analysis of the Global Hegemony of Mass Media and Its Influence on the Americanization of Sri Lankan Media

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Abstract: The imperialism of the culture of mass media of America has shaped and reshaped the individual life of the masses of central and peripheral countries in the world. The modern electronic colonialism is leading to a new concept of empire and has led the masses to a cultural tsunami. The present transnationalism of Americanization builds up a psychological or mental empire which influences the minds, attitudes, values etc. of individuals of the world. The e Colonialism of the US media and communication adopts the values, norms and cultural trends in order to promote the western ideals of capitalism. The advancement of the technology of satellite and the cable television has accelerated globalization and influences more and more individuals. As a result of this, nothing is blocked any longer from the masses according to the structuralist view of the global system. This comprehensive media of the west also produced and modernized the information underpinning of global capitalism and the political hegemony. This trend of Americanization being a one-way flow of cultural influence promotes and dominates the lucrative businesses in the markets. In this research, I concentrated on the theory of structuralism, conduct the research adopting the mixed method. As the result of this research I found that the sub-systems such as the organisms, personality, the social systems, the cultural systems etc. have been changed by the American culture brought in by the mass media.

Key words: Americanization, Social System, Hegemony, Media Consumerism, Neo-Imperialism

Introduction

The concepts of globalization and transnationalism are attractive considerable scholarly debatable topics which prolong the multi-stranded connection together with home and host societies (McGrew, 1992; Kelly, 1999; Basch etal., 1994). Sri Lanka is a peripheral country that is saturated by the global mass media coming through the western central countries. The global cultural products such as television, music, cinema, books and literature are increasingly concentrated and have paved the way for the transnational practices (Transnational Communities Program, 1998). Accordingly, the community that has been sitting astride in very real sense, is neither here nor there but in both places concurrently (Portes, 1998). In this modern global society American communication system has been dominating the Sri Lankan mass communication patterns and the media industry. The American media corporation disseminates the social, emotional, psychological and aesthetic uses of the cultural material and empowers the cultural hegemony.

These cross boarder channels that represent the kinds of forms of media have been de-territorialized in character and have been challenging the traditional relationship of the nation states. American mass media try to change the society empowering the masses with the following aspects. They encourage the people for the technological progress, social access, communicative self fashioning, cultural literacy, within fantasy. Through these the masses are empowered socially and culturally. Accordingly, masses will lose the social and cultural hierarchy with the development of mass media in the world. This trend has already opened up an entirely new chapter. The masses of the peripheral countries have an insatiable hunger for the imaginary self-fashioning and the cultural self-empowerment. American media culture shows an unmistakable tendency towards them.

In this research, the analysis of data involves the following three-way relationships which are the cultural objects, institutional producers, and social groups of the users of media or collectivities (i.e., the mass audience). These three traditions are dominating the social and material fields in the world. The complexity and the dialectical combinations among the hegemony, mass media and the mass audience are ideologically analyzed through the experience of qualitative and quantitative methods. The concepts of hegemony and the mass media are the patterns alive involving every aspect of mass culture. This has been

dominating the decision making process, bureaucratic systems, corporate process of society, organizational logic, creative aspect and the consumerism of mass culture (Peterson 1976).

The creative setting of those actions and interactions of the masses can be considered as a trans-functional and the perceptual product. Accordingly, the hegemony can be defined as the *process of philosophical, moral, and political leadership that a social group attains only with the active consent of other important social groups* (Artz & Murphy, 2000, P.1). Although the traditional theoretical constructions of hegemony describe the political crisis, social changes and the cultural practices in the modern global society, it has been a significant tool for social and cultural critiques.

Man in the world is never set free from power and he is saturated by the diverse social forces, such as corporate power, legal and guidelines power, media power and other coercive powers. Power does not arise naturally and it establishes through the patterns of the man and practices of social structure. In other words hegemony offers templates for the masses and lets them build up in their own mind largely.

Society is structured on a power basis. The state or government too as coercion combined with hegemony. Hegemony is political power that flows from moral and intellectual leadership. Ruling class and other government authorities structure and continue their hegemony in society by constructing political and cultural consensus through the media, political parties, unions, religious institutions, schools, and other voluntary associations. Accordingly the government or state can never insist on or control any formations or structures of society unless other, more intellectual absorptions are involved. Antonio Gramsci says that society is manipulated and controlled by the direct practices and consequences of a "false consciousness" and the conceptions of values and life options that are to be pursued (Gramsci, Antonio, 1971).

According to the Marxist and post Marxist theories the ideological media are at the centre of the struggle and impose powers in order to change the ideas and thoughts. The media are more powerful than communication. In this global context communication has been manipulated by the media. Gramsci says that an idea cannot make history but ideology can make a society changed (Quoted in Artz & Murphy, 2000). Ideologies may be disputed as true or false but they can organize human practices.

Methodology

In this research I concentrated on the structuralist view of global system and capitalistic imperialism which can share with the theories of mass media and communication. I explored here the dialectical relations among the media and political, economic and social change in the peripheral and central countries.

The Sample was gathered from 1000 people considering its magnitude and relevancy to the objectives of the study. In order to examine the various factors, I corresponded the three levels of analysis: they are forms of individual, the organizations, and the national system. The techniques that I used in this research for data collection were qualitative and quantitative. The procedure of data analyzing and interpreting is the mixed method. In order to ensure the reliability and validity of data, the empirical generalization was utilized.

Background and Worldview:

Americanization or Americanization is a controversial concept in the present world and its influence is very high on the cultures of other countries of the world in this decade. Their institutional frameworks, business and multi ethnic popular culture and pattern of corporate governance, neo liberal state management policies, internationalization of competition, internationalization of production etc. are rapidly disseminated through the modern and new media. It symbolizes the liberal philosophy that directs the entire operation. This philosophy engenders the dominance of the ideology of liberalism and encourages the subjugation of other cultures in order to address the hegemonic desire. This pattern of behavior is a catalyst for imperialism.

Though the term (Americanization) has been used since 1907 it has become more prevalent since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 – 91 and with the advent of high speed internet facility in the mid 2000s. Americanization is speeding up through social media at present. For example Google, Face book, Twitter, Apple and skype are among the many innovative technological internet-oriented corporations based in the U.S. In 2015 the Wall Street Journal reported the "deep concerns in Europe's highest policy circles about the power of U.S. technology companies" (Tom, 2015). The strengthening of Americanization leads the world to the homogenization of ideas, images and institutions in order to sustain the domination of global society. Approximately 50 corporations controlled majority of US media markets in 1983, and at present seven incredibly powerful media corporations cover the entire US and have become influential news corporations in the world.

Since the 1920s the world and the world's media markets have been dominated by the Hollywood (the American film and television industry). Through these people across the globe see the American customs, fashions, way of life the scenery etc. (William, 2011; Michael, 2004). Most probably the American based

Television programs and the American films which are broadcast through the channels around the world have taken the responsibility for inculcating their social, political, economic, and moral values both in adults and children in the world.

American based artists, such as Elvis Presley and Michael Jackson were the very famous artists in the world and have sold over 500 million albums each. Michael Jackson's album Thriller, with a sale of 100 million in the world is one of the all time the best-selling albums.

This American based globalization process is not only a smooth continuous media process but it also creates a transnational capitalist class and shapes and directs their strivings for the social change in the world (William, Fennema, 2002). Accordingly the Americanization is a global vision that manipulates the masses for culture – ideology of consumerism.

This transnational circuit of media culture politicizes society for a consumerism culture and changes the structural settings of the world. The media capitalism which arises from these structural settings reinforces the hegemonic situation in society. Hegemony is a socio-political concept that arose in late 1800 in Europe. But ideology and the practice of this has been coming from a very long history. It had the ability to influence the practices and deal with a different ideology of society.

Media and information can control the thoughts and actions of the people and create the dominant thoughts through the dominant ideologies. Livingstone stressed that media dominate and create the class specific perception of reality (Livingstone 1976; Cheal 1979). These concepts have been covered by the extensive literature (Gans, 1975). Lazarsfeldian School's study of media has critically analyzed the effects and influences of the media on the masses and market techniques of the society (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1948; Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955).

Accordingly, the discourses on the hegemony of Americanization are not rare in this postmodern era in the west and Asian countries in the world. Jean Baudrillard, a European intellectual with interest in mass media argues that America is the source of modernity. America is the innovative version of modernity. The other European countries are the sub title version or the dubbed version of America (Baudrillard, 1988). Though the modernity and the mass media of America has empowered the consumer experience in Sri Lanka, the conventionally attributed logicism has not yet been built on this title.

Americanization, Neo-Imperialism and Sri Lanka:

America has been leading the world since the end of the cold war with the Soviet Union and has gained the victory of liberal capitalism. America organizes every power in hegemonic terms and for its own interests and purposes (Gilpin, 1971). Accordingly, the structure of the world is defined by the American assumptions and aspirations. The leadership of Americanization of the present world of technological management accounts for cultural homogenization. "The world is becoming Americanized just as America has become globalized" (Iriye, 1993:215). So the researchers argue that the globalization is Westernization, and consequently it can be referred to as the globalization of Americanization (Owolabi, 2001). The American language and culture are very close to the world culture and they have spread from Johannesburg to Tokyo and from Moscow to Beijing consciously establishing their dominance of the world. Globalization is western because technology, science, democracy and the global trade

originated there and it was advanced initially in the west and they were promulgated by the western countries (Van-

Laue, 1987). The neo-imperialism of America not only depends on the predecessors of America but also on the ideologies, the technological materials and the tools. Globalization is an American project that has deepened due to the differences of the world.

US Media Hegemony in the World

	Sony Corp. of America	Comcast	Walt Disney Co.	21st Century Fox	Time Warner	CBS Corp.	Viacom
Broadcast Television Network	Get TV	NBC, Cozi TV, Telemundo	ABC, LWN	Fox, My Net TV, Mundo Fox	The CW	CBS, The CW	
Cable Channels	Sony Pictures TV networks	NBC Universal Cable	Disney Channels Worldwide, ABC Family	FX Networks, National Geographic Channels	Turner Broadcasting System, HBO	TVGN, Showtime Networks	Viacom Media Networks
News, Political, Business Channels		MSNBC, CNBC, Weather Channel (JV)	Fusion	Fox News, Fox Business	CNN/HLN		
Movie Production Studio	Columbia TriStar Motion Picture Group	Universal Studios	The Walt Disney Studios	Fox Filmed Entertainment	Warner Bros.	CBS Films	Paramount Motion Pictures Group
National Sports Networks		NBC Sports Group, NHL Network	ESPN Inc.	Fox Sports Media Group	Turner Sports	CBS Sports	
Publishing			Marvel Comics, Disney Publishing Worldwide		DC Comics	Simon & Schuster	

The most famous seven brands out of the top ten global brands are based in the United States. Fast food and Coca-cola culture is rapidly growing up in Sri Lanka. Companies such as McDonald's, Domino's Pizza, Pizza Hut, Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken etc. are among the other numerous outlets around the world dominating the marketing system in Sri Lanka.

The companies such as IBM, Dell, Microsoft, Apple etc and much of the software are created by the US companies. US is very stable and in a very strong position in the software sector in the world (Carayannis & Campbell, 2011). In addition to this, the education sector of Sri Lanka has become the main target for Americanization. The process of Americanization has speeded up to increase the political ideology of liberal capitalism in the world. It connotes the pervasiveness of liberal economic values and ideology and paves the way for the free market economy in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, Sri Lanka has been saddled intimately with expectations and has broadened the physical and psychological boundaries. These experiences process through the social constructions perspective. These changes in the social process can be understood as follows.

Prevalence of the liberal economic values and ideology.
• Empowering the political ideology of liberal capitalism.
• Interdependence on the world's societies (Center and periphery).
• Reduction of the barriers of space, time and national boundaries .
• Undermining of the sovereignty and autonomy of the nation states.

Americanization is not a neutral political effort. It is the same old imperialism with new tools involving the operation of complex information and organizational system. This shows how the society propagates its culture for the imperialistic ends. Moralism and scientism of Americanization are deployed to legitimize and disguise the hegemony and pave the way for the cardinal principles of liberal values and for the liberal capitalism.

Telecommunication Infrastructure of Sri Lanka

The telecom sector of Sri Lanka's has expanded considerably over the last decade or so. The market sector was accelerated when the telecom (SLT) subsequently started to lose its monopoly status. Ex:

Telecommunication		By 2017
Telephones -	Number of Fixed Access Subscriptions	2,496,014
	Number of Cellular Mobile Subscriptions	28,228,635
	Fixed Broadband Subscriptions	1,124,259
	Mobile Broadband Subscriptions	4,515,327
Internet Connections		6,700,160

Telecommunication Regulatory Commission in Sri Lanka, 2017).

Through the Peo Tv channels, Dialog TV Channels and the cable TV channels, Sri Lankan masses access more Europe and US channels. They experience immensely increased availability of Western- cultural contents coming through the television channels and programs. Accordingly, the US culture dominates the Sri Lankan cultural industry. Therefore Sri Lankan cultural industry is systematically declining. This imbalance one way flow of global political, economic and cultural spheres has provoked and renewed the debate about the real implication. Social media usage in Sri Lanka is growing rapidly. There are more than 1.5 million Monthly Active Users in Sri Lanka. The largest age group is currently 18-24.

Media Influence on the Life of the Masses of Sri Lanka

Profile of **Life Change**

Test	Age	Mean	Std. Deviation	Asymp. Sig.
Kruskal-Wallis	Age group and Life Change (ALC)	4.2470	.54819	.004
	Education and Life Change (ELC)	4.2470	.54819	.001
	Occupation and Life Change (OLC)	4.2470	.54819	.000
	Monthly Income and Life Change (MILC)	4.2470	.54819	.001
				Asymp. Sig.(2-tailed)
Mann-Whitney	Gender and Life Change (GLC)	4.2470	.54819	.003
	Civil Status and Life Change (CLC)	4.2470	.54819	.364

Media imagery is a place of struggle where the powers that be are frequently forced to compete and defend what they desire to have acquired. The brilliance of these media systems is to make the entire process not to seem normal or natural for the rural life and the very art of social construction builds in their mind invisibly. Television, radio, print and other forms of media prepare the masses to see the world in different ways and also to look at important issues from different angles. In fact, the media constantly delivers to the masses its own philosophy which is created aesthetically based on the human nature. This process has set new social standards, and continues to influence the overall opinion regarding the nature of the world and the life of the rural masses.

They generate a great deal of popular sensationalized programs on the life of the masses at micro and macro level that affect the conditions of their everyday life. Both these segments should be carefully understood to see the media influence and impact on the individual and the rural social life. Individuals are connected to the larger social world through information. Accordingly, the media play a crucial role in almost all phases of daily existence. *ie*: families are watching TV while having food. Time-trapped parents sometimes use the TV as a surrogate baby-sitter, tolerating their children watching television. In these entire cases media products are connected to the ways in which we interact with other people on a daily basis.

The relationship between media and life of the masses does not remain static, they change the social life conditions and make new strategies which help create competing domestic image. Accordingly, the above table emphasizes how the impact of media on the life pattern and how far it has been changed by the media. The data of the table clearly show its close association with age, education, occupation, monthly income, and gender. [ALC: $P = 0.004$; ELC: $P = .001$; OLC: $P = 0.000$; MILC: $P = 0.001$; GLC; $P = 0.003$;]. But the changing pattern with the civil status has been slow [CLC: $P = 0.364$].

Media Events and Media Stories:

The patterns of these global media events manipulate the normal rhythm of broadcasting and Sri Lankan audience' lives. Though these broadcasts are live, the media events are most probably preplanned and take place in the distant companies. There are differences between media events and news events. Though the media events celebrate reconciliation and verbalize to very large audience they are necessarily hegemonic. Most probably the news events are not preplanned; they have the news worthiness (Dayan & Katz (1992).

The speedy domination of the media market by the American and the other multi-national companies can never be denied for a number of reasons.

The televisual technology and the citizen journalism are more authoritative and powerful as genres than ever in this decade in Sri Lanka. Through these technologies, local and foreign media events and media stories are ubiquitous and so, influence over 70% of the young populace in Sri Lanka. These current and significant national phenomena are produced under the supervision of the private and state media centers. These profit making and entertainment oriented media are very popular in Sri Lanka. If every citizen interacts with these media, the country will be alienated and it is necessary to take remedial action. These western patterns of media events and the media stories are functioning differently. Sometimes these stories and events are not relevant to our social and cultural systems of Sri Lanka. Media events have been probably bound with the policy of the media companies.

The economy and party politics of the company shape and reshape the events of the media. The convergence of both ideological positions allows the audience to experience this discursive strategy. Both state and private media and the foreign media access through Peo TV directly providing through disk antenna, constant news and the other media stories for the masses, in keeping with the social desire. This globalization process and the technological convergence in media staging liberal patterns in these social systems permeate the American popular culture and the American cultural imperialism into the daily life of people, as a result of this social transformation. This will cause the masses to adopt various attitudes and also to make a tremendous impact on the day - to - day lives of the audience.

These differences can be categorized as follows:

Media Events	Media Stories
Event	Incident, issues, phenomena
Sublime, ceremonial	Ordinary
Ideology-driven	Desire-driven
State-oriented	Individual-oriented
Manipulative	Spontaneous
Preplanned	Eruptive
Dramatic	Everyday
Visual	Written
Monopolistic	Contested
Live	Life
Party journalism	Entertainment media
Sun, (2001).	

Conclusion:

Globalization or Americanization is synonymous with Neo-colonialism of which the characteristic feature is the imposition of the American culture on the central and peripheral countries at the expense of the latter's indigenous cultures, customs, social norms, traditional beliefs and so on. According to the consumption pattern of the mass culture, we can argue that the diffusion of the culture of America is more dynamic, and malleable, both in transmitting and receiving the information. Social mechanism and the social context of America are deeply concerned with affairs, structures and the cultural values of the peripheral country. US hegemony of liberalism stimulates the egoistic propensities in the name of national wellbeing of the peripheral countries. According to the hegemony of the mass culture of America, local masses enrich their existing American cultural pattern through the media and pattern of internet communication. The talk shows, films, and the other programs mirror one type of society within the same frame work. Global media that contribute to the emergence of the American cultural imperialism influence the daily life of the masses. The cable TV, Satellite TV, Peo Tv channels etc of Sri Lanka access numerous global channels and present these programs to the local audience and destabilize the local contents. Accordingly we are currently witnessing that these local media centers through the telecast of these foreign programs, have been re-conceptualizing the Sri Lankan audience

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2/3/2018