



“New World Information Order” Battle between Developed and Developing Countries—Analysis from the Perspective of “Cultural Imperialism”

Xinyu Tan

German Institute of Engineering, Chongqing College of Mobile Communication, Chongqing, China.

How to cite this paper: Xinyu Tan. (2023). “New World Information Order” Battle between Developed and Developing Countries—Analysis from the Perspective of “Cultural Imperialism”. *The Educational Review, USA, 7(4)*, 408-411. DOI: 10.26855/er.2023.04.003

Received: March 22, 2023

Accepted: April 20, 2023

Published: May 15, 2023

Corresponding author: Xinyu Tan, German Institute of Engineering, Chongqing College of Mobile Communication, Chongqing, China.

Abstract

In order to create a fair world information order, developed and developing countries have been on the battle for several decades. This paper analyzes the phenomenon of culture imperialism in the modern world through three cases—American TV series, *Gangnam Style* and report on "China's arrogance", so as to figure out its causes, including abundant financial support and market-oriented production. With the rapid development of Internet, culture imperialism, to some extent, has been formed a powerful tide around the world. To counter this trend, China, as one of developing countries, must seize every chance to speak up with an appropriate form and way, tally culture products with the global trend, earmark more investments to promotion.

Keywords

Culture Imperialism, New World Information Order, Developed Countries, Developing Countries

1. Introduction

For such a long time, developed countries represented by the United States have mounted a new round of imperialism, which is totally different from the imperialism in the past several centuries towards developing countries by economic, political or sovereign interference obviously. Rather, these developed countries turned their hegemonic means to ideology, and modern people call it cultural imperialism, which is defined as the cultural aspects of imperialism.

In the recent decades, developing countries have started to have stronger and stronger desire to strive for more discourse power in the international community and they called for a fair world communication order, which scholars call "new world information and communication order" between developed and developing countries.

The New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO or NWIO) is a term that was coined in a debate over media representations of the developing world in UNESCO in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The term was widely used by the MacBride Commission, a UNESCO panel which was charged with creation of a set of recommendations to make global media representation more equitable. The MacBride Commission produced a report titled "Many Voices, One World", which laid out the main philosophical points of the New World Information Communication Order.

This paper aims to analyze three selected cases in the perspective of culture imperialism, so as to figure out the causes driving them to the predominance. The three cases range from television works, music to media reporting.

2. Case Study and Discussion

2.1 American TV Series

Friends, for instance, is definitely a classic work in several generations' mind. And this deep global impression has to

owe much to its international screening. According to the statistics in Wikipedia, *Friends* has aired in countries like the UK, Australia, New Zealand, India, the Philippines and Greece.

Although many years has passed, one can still take a glimpse of its popularity even in *iPartment*, a Chinese TV series which has similar plots from *Friends*.

Like *Friends*, Many American TV series, such as *Gossip girl*, *The Big Bang Theory*, *Modern Family*, *Nikita*, *2 Broke Girls* and Hollywood blockbusters, *Transformers*, for instance, gained a huge success in the global market.

2.1.1 Discussion

As Zhang (2012) explained how American TV series have helped the US achieve its dominant influence across the globe, the following factors should be taken into consideration.

First, American TV series have fantastic elements so as to move audiences easily. These fantastic elements, including novelty, geniality and amusement, plus high technologies, are glitzy enough to attract audiences from all countries and all walks of life.

Second, American TV series can effectively tout "American dream". American TV series scriptwriters pay attention to preserve American profile in the international community, crazy about trumpeting American values in the disguise of TV plots.

Third, American TV series' success owes much to market-oriented production. Compared with some contracts promising tens of episodes, most American TV series' agreements stipulate that investment is set to increase only if the number of viewers is up. So, scriptwriters, directors and producers are careful enough to cater to viewers according to the market needs.

Furthermore, most investors are well-educated and well-fixed into American mainstream, and the mainstream values accepted by these investors also affect the content of American TV series.

Fourth, American TV series manifest advancement in the American society vividly and delicately. In addition to American mainstream values, such as harmonious family and heroism, the American TV series advocate American life-style, which seems more acceptable.

2.1.2 The Halo Effect

The halo effect is related to cognitive dissonance in that once a person forms a positive impression of another person, he or she seeks to have that impression consistent with other impressions (Grcic, 2008).

The same goes to American TV series and Hollywood blockbusters (Zhang, 2012). When they have impressed foreign viewers a lot, the Halo Effect has made these viewers more susceptible to American administration's policies and more likely to mistake American main values for universal principles.

2.2 Gangnam Style Hit

Known for horse dancing, *Gangnam Style* from South Korea must be hailed as the most popular music in 2012.

"*Gangnam Style*" (Korean: 강남스타일) is a K-pop single by the South Korean musician PSY. The song was released in July 2012 as the lead single of his sixth studio album PSY 6 (Six Rules), Part 1, and debuted at number one on South Korea's Gaon Chart. "*Gangnam Style*" became the first YouTube video in the history of the internet to reach a billion views on December 21, 2012 (Gruger, 2012).

As of December 24, 2022, the song's music video has more than 4.6 billion views on YouTube (officialpsy, 2012).

The music does not only make PSY become an international superstar overnight, but also vindicates South Korean government's strategy that "export of cultural products promotes the construction of the country's soft power" (Peng, 2012).

As US magazine *Foreign Policy* said, *Gangnam Style* has become "a cultural brand promoting (South) Korean exports ranging from soft drinks to cosmetics to consumer electronics" (Peng, 2012).

2.2.1 Discussion

Korean government proposed strategies for "culture-orientated national development". And the government also improved its cultural industry management. For example, government established culture industry bureau in 1994 and South Korean committee for culture industry revitalization in 2000. Meanwhile, more funds were earmarked to support the culture industries.

Gangnam Style has three obvious factors to win its hands: repeated simple words, popular rhymes and funny dances. They are not originally Korean, but their combination formed the most popular product from South Korea, followed by improved South Korean profile and other Korean bestsellers, such as cosmetics and electronics.

For China, in spite of Confucius academies, Shaolin companies and the small niche of Chinese traditional things all

around the world, China's cultural promotion seems still remain in interest and hobby of those who are virtually interested in Chinese culture themselves, far from an inevitable tide sweeping the whole world.

What China can learn from *Gangnam Style* is that it must see beyond its own virtues, and have a market-oriented plan. South Korean TV series, cosmetics, automobiles, clothes and many other commodities are not limited in indigenous Korean culture but combining it with modern and international trend, even adding innovation for most of time.

In addition, South Korean enterprises insisted on developing their products omni-directionally. As such, once a product succeeded in one field, it would get high added values with some extra sum of funds cast in other fields. Take a successful movie as an example, since its hit, its characters' images will be made into cartoon toys for sales; its songs will be recorded to issue; its plot will be rewritten into an animation, etc.

2.3 Report on "China's Arrogance"

In 2009, after the conclusion of Climate Summit in Copenhagen, capital of The Kingdom of Denmark, An article titled "China tried to hijack Copenhagen climate deal" appeared in the *Guardian*. "The climate secretary, Ed Miliband, today accuses China, Sudan, Bolivia and other leftwing Latin American countries of trying to hijack the UN climate summit and "hold the world to ransom" to prevent a deal being reached. (Vidal, 2009) "

Two days later, the same media also published another article with a headline "How do I know China wrecked the Copenhagen deal? I was in the room". "Copenhagen was a disaster. That much is agreed. But the truth about what actually happened is in danger of being lost amid the spin and inevitable mutual recriminations. The truth is this: China wrecked the talks, intentionally humiliated Barack Obama, and insisted on an awful "deal" so western leaders would walk away carrying the blame. How do I know this? Because I was in the room and saw it happen (Lynas, 2009)".

The two articles are both from the *Guardian*, one of the most influenced western newspapers. Taking advantage of mighty discourse power, for a time, western press have boasted the false narrative into a higher-level — "China's arrogance" (Lüqiu, 2011). Dominating in the global publication, western press has made "China's arrogance" a buzzword in a globe. Later, though Xinhua news agency issued an article to refute the fictitious story, the article was too long or orientally narrated and eventually China missed the golden time to reshape its profile in the international community (Lüqiu, 2011).

3. Conclusion

When people go into raptures for 2012 Noble literature prize winner Mo Yan, a Chinese writer, and the success of *A Separation*, an Iran movie, in Oscar, people must foresee the battle on "New World Information Order" between developed and developing countries far from the end. Movies, literature, music, TV series and many other cultural products from different countries have constituted the indispensable elements in the battle. Unlike the so-called imperialism in the past centuries, such as war or physical colonialism, culture imperialism, in fact, referring to culture expansion, is no less than any imperialism in history. To some extent, it has been formed a powerful tide with the emergence of new technologies.

Some factors should contribute to the culture expansion for developed countries, two of which are abundant financial support and huge marketing spending having been discussed in the above cases.

Furthermore, the surplus of culture for developed countries has been strengthened due to the rapid development of Internet. Nowadays, a new TV series just put on in America, for example, could also be watched online one or two days later in some developing countries with better network condition. And the same goes to most movies from developed countries. At the very beginning, many cultural products are free for vast areas in the world, which seems a bad bargain. As audiences in the developing countries come to be addicted to them, it is time for these relevant shareholders to ask for payment of intellectual property. Also, in this way, developed countries have made preliminary success in value distribution, which could not be bought by money (Zhang, 2012).

China, as one of developing countries, must seize very chance to speak up. Since developing countries often have only a few platforms or chances to make their voices heard, diplomats and media practitioners have to be more active rather than passive, especially on issues relevant to their own countries and interests. If most people have been infused with plenty of distorted or false information, it will be too late to salvage ruined profile and tell the truth. The reason why "China's arrogance" could get round fast is an avalanche of distorted information with weak refutation. If China responded the incident swiftly and clearly, other imaginative stories would definitely not find their way.

What the most important is that when pointing out the misunderstandings, Chinese ambassadors and media practitioners must make sure that they have expressed their key points with an appropriate form and way which their targeted audience can "hear", "understand" and "accept". In this way, they can achieve effective communication.

For China, cultural products should be consistent with global popular trend too. An unusual song being spread

worldwide without language, culture and religious barriers cannot succeed until it is in accord with the global popular trend which almost everybody on earth would like to follow. *Gangnam style* from South Korea is not an exception to this magic formula. People should not confine themselves to their own method, instead, they should learn from each other to achieve creation.

And more investments should be earmarked to the promotion. People can find mega-sized posters of many foreign movies even before the movies are premiered. Apart from that, people can hear a lot about foreign movie information through program or watch relevant tidbits, and a series of related derived products, like cartoon toys, games and animations, come into being following the movie release.

On the contrary, many Chinese producers or investors are willing to spend a large sum of money on film production and staff payments instead of marketing spending. For most of time, Chinese movies have issued without noticing and informing.

In summary, developed countries exert their advantages to realize their cultural imperialism in the international community. As a result, they do not only have a good harvest in economy, but also have a strong influence in people's minds, thus facilitating foreign policies and big decisions of these countries. However, for China, as an emerging economy and a large developing country, it has started to attain much importance to the protection of their national culture and the development of their cultural industry. Though most developing countries lag behind in the cultural development, efforts paid by developing countries in recent years will bridge the gap gradually in future.

References

- Grcic, J. (2008). The halo effect fallacy. *Electronic Journal for Philosophy*, 15(1), 1-6.
- Gruger, W. (2012, December 21). *Psy's 'Gangnam style' video hits 1 billion views, unprecedented milestone*. Billboard. Retrieved December 22, 2022, from <https://www.billboard.com/music/music-news/psys-gangnam-style-video-hits-1-billion-views-unprecedented-milestone-1483733/>.
- Gu, S. (2012). *Language and culture in the growth of imperialism*. McFarland & Company, Inc.
- Li, X. (2009). *A Practical Guide for International New Reporting in English*. Foreign Languages Press. (in Chinese and English)
- Lüqiu, L. (2011). *Make no distinction between things*. China Renmin University Press. (in Chinese)
- Lynas, M. (2009, December 22). *How do I know China wrecked the Copenhagen deal? I was in the room*. The Guardian. Retrieved December 24, 2022, from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2009/dec/22/copenhagen-climate-change-mark-lynas?INTCMP=SRCH>.
- officialpsy. (2012, July 15). *PSY - Gangnam Style (강남스타일) M/V*. YouTube. Retrieved December 24, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bZkp7q19f0>.
- Peng, K. (2012, October 26). *How to hard sell China's soft power*. Chinadaily.com.cn. Retrieved December 24, 2022, from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2012-10/26/content_15848154.htm
- Sardar, Z. (1997). *Postmodernism and the Other: New Imperialism of Western Culture*. Pluto Press.
- Shi, H., Liu, Y., & Zhang, Q. (2011). *Doomed Abider: Global Strategic Game in a Media-Fast Era*. Wuhan Publishing House. (in Chinese)
- Vidal, J. (2009, December 20). *Ed Miliband: China tried to hijack Copenhagen climate deal*. The Guardian. Retrieved December 24, 2022, from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2009/dec/20/ed-miliband-china-copenhagen-summit#:~:text=The%20climate%20secretary%2C%20Ed%20Miliband,prevent%20a%20deal%20being%20reached>.
- Zhang, G. (2012). *Discourse Power*. China Renmin University Press. (in Chinese)