

What does the expression “beyond media imperialism” imply? Address the question that media imperialism, as a theory, needs to be revised by engaging with a relevant example that supports this vision.

The term media imperialism means an over-concentration of a larger entity's mass-media over a smaller one- these entities normally represented as countries (Imperialism, 2022). In modern times, media imperialism isn't just an effect caused by the mark left from the era of imperialism, but mass-media companies looking to gain financially and politically from a global expansion. In this essay, I'm going to talk about the history of imperialism, and how imperialism of the past has resulted in the forms we see today. I will then talk about media imperialism's future and the variables that could shift its relationship with mainstream media. As an academic reference, I'm going to use the *MacBride report* (MacBride, 1980). Although published more than 40 years ago, it has various chapters that engage with the subject of media imperialism, such as flaws in communication flows; disparities between Developed and Developing countries; and about the future of communication. I will also use *Beyond Media Imperialism: Asymmetrical Interdependence and Cultural Proximity* by Joseph Straubhaar (Straubhaar, 1991) as it provides an alternative viewpoint on the idea of media imperialism and talks about asymmetrical interdependence: the idea that countries can possess certain degrees of power over more dominant ones regarding media flows.

The word imperialism refers to a system in which country rules other countries, sometimes having used force to get power over them. It first came into transmission in the early 18th century when referring to the Napoleonic powers and was also reserved for describing the empires of Rome & Britain. Through decades and in some cases centuries of foreign control; external culture and practice was infused into these inferior societies through from a dominant force, described by the MacBride report as '*one-way flow*' (MacBride, 1980). . 62 and 28 colonies have gained independence from the UK and France, respectively, but features of these societies still reflect the impact of the imperialism inflicted in times past. French is at least the secondary language in 21 African countries (Chutel, 2018) and English is spoken by roughly 1.5 billion people (Crystal, 2008). Cricket is the most popular sport in India and the Caribbean, also known as the West Indies. In this era of technological advancement, this idea of imperialism has expanded further than countries or empires and

now a lot of political and social responsibility lies with mass-media organisations. I could talk about countless conglomerates such as Comcast, the Walt Disney Company and Amazon, and their dominance over various forms of media. But as these groups have media interests in other areas than news-based media such as film & entertainment, for this essay, I will be using media publisher News Corp and their founder Rupert Murdoch. Just looking at the list of assets News Corp owns; you can see it has amassed an empire of mainstream news channels. In America, it owns popular newspapers the New York Post, the Wall Street Journal and broadcaster Fox News. In the UK, it owns the Sun, the Sunday Times, and the Daily Mail. He caters to a wide range of social class. As prominent as it is UK and US media, it doesn't compare to its monopoly in Australia: owning just over half of national and local papers. Behind China and Egypt, Australia had the 3rd highest newspaper ownership concentration- significant as the former two's media is controlled solely by the state (Evershed, 2020). Through his populist tabloid newspapers, he has been able to distribute agenda to protect his political allies (Gabbatt, 2022) and business interests. A few examples of this include the Sun and the Times' endorsement of Britain's exit from the European Union (Britain Votes Brexit, 2022). Across the Atlantic, we are descending from an era of misinformation endorsed by right-wing media outlets such as Murdoch's Fox News (Bump, 2021). Less developed countries offer different social problems: it's less of a political issue than it is a cultural issue. It argues that cultural identity can be lost in these types of countries as they lack the infrastructure to produce national or regional mass media, making importing media a more reliable option. Straubhaar uses Brazil as an example of a country that has countered overseas media imperialism (Straubhaar, 1991, p.39). During the 1950's Brazil used to lack infrastructure due to costs but unlike a lot of third world countries, the government of Brazil was able to build on an existing flourishing cultural industry with radio and invest in other forms of media. Another example used by Straubhaar was commercial television in Egypt and India who built upon cinema and music industries (Straubhaar, 1991, p.44). He argues that it's healthier for developing countries to consume locally produced content as they reinvest money into their own country's developing economy through persuasion of advertising, in turn increasing investment opportunity for stronger programming. Another benefit of local production is that unlike imported media, viewers can get cultural value from this content. Reflecting on the MacBride report, specifically conclusions and recommendations (MacBride, 1980, p.253), although a lot of mainstream

media has been turned into a spectacle for producers to gain: the development of technology and social media has enabled people to have a wider variety of choice regarding media content. The report recommended that each country needed adequate media and technology infrastructure to accommodate its citizens for education and development (MacBride, 1980, p.256). This is some-what reflected today with almost every nation in the world having their own national broadcaster- although many of these nations' media exists under heavy censorship. Also in the conclusion, the report talks about '*reducing the commercialization of communication*' (MacBride, 1980, p.260): a heavy feature of the tabloid-style newspapers of Rupert Murdoch.

In conclusion, imperialism has existed for centuries in various forms but ultimately has the same goal of profit. A contemporary sub-division of imperialism has been created through the advancement of technology and it has been allowed to grow through increasing concentration of media ownership perpetuated by mass-media companies such as New Corp and Comcast. To an extent, Brazil can be used as an example as a counter to media imperialism and provide a balance to the type of content we see, supporting the model of assymetrical dependence: '*The inbalance in news circulation, the one-way flow of messages and ideas, is a common concern for all countries... because the problem is so basic, solutions to it cannot be delayed*' (MacBride, 1980, p.149)'.

Portfolio Content

I followed the subject of my essay by using Murdoch and his media ownership in my portfolio. The first thing I included on the page is a video from 1967 where Murdoch is being interviewed for a series about five notable Australian's, along with a transcript. It was quite an old clip, so I went onto Premiere Pro to edit in subtitles. I included it because I find it interesting about how he talks about the power of mass media organisations and the effects, positive or negative, it can have on society. This interview was broadcast 55 years ago, yet he is very familiar with features of media imperialism such as concentration of ownership and is aware of the social effects it causes. His awareness of media imperialism in 1967 alongside his assets in 2022 shows that the social effects of media imperialism are the collateral result of conscious decisions made for expansion and profit. Each heading of the

images below are quotes from the video above. I have four notable quotes through 5 images. 3 of these slides are dedicated to newspaper front pages. *"The power of newspaper proprietors can be greatly overdone"* reflects the abuse of journalistic powers as proved by the 2011 Murdoch-endorsed News of the World phone hacking scandal. *"I think the newspaper can create great controversies..."* is represented through the Sun's appalling coverage of the Hillsborough disaster in which they baselessly accused Liverpool fans of various crimes such as assaulting emergency service workers. 98 Liverpool fans have died because of the event. *"... stir up arguments within the community..."* is showcasing the public divide in opinion caused by the withdrawal of the UK from the EU: spurred on with the use of iconic imagery such as the Queen and the Union Jack by newspapers such as the Sun. The last two images represent a key quote said by Murdoch in the video that is very relevant to the essay question: *"It's not a perfect system obviously, but can you think of a better one?"*. In one of the images, I photoshopped the logo of Brazilian broadcaster TV Globo onto the flag of Brazil to demonstrate an alternative system of national mass-media that can exist alongside the borderless imperial version we see today. Behind ABC (American Broadcasting Company), TV Globo has the second-largest TV network in the world. The other image under this quote is an index in the form of a map showing the freedom of the press throughout the world (RSF's 2022 World Press Freedom Index: a new era of polarisation, 2022), and the key. I have included this to show that only a select few, primarily Nordic countries, are determined to have more media freedom than the countries represented by the lighter shade of blue- including the UK, US, and Australia. I also wanted to show how limited media freedom is throughout the planet: as you can see most of the graph is covered by warmer colours representing less media freedom. Another reason for its inclusion in my portfolio was to show that countries like Brazil have increased interdependence but still lack the media freedom of countries with established infrastructure, as the media of developing nations is primarily controlled by the state. This has been taken further with the list of African nations with at least one major news broadcaster, this reflects on the MacBride report calling for nationally owned mass media companies: and the proof this has improved to an extent (MacBride, 1980, p.256).

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