

Announcement

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Global Communication

Center and Periphery

Globalization

- “A shift or transformation in the scale of human social organization that links distant communities and expands the reach of power across the world’s major regions and continents” (2000: 4).
 - David Held & Anthony McGrew. *The Global Transformations Reader: An Introduction to the Globalization Debate*

Globalization & Communication

- Scholars of media and culture have analyzed communication in relation to globalization
- Stuart Hall uses poststructuralist Discourse in his analysis of globalization in *The West and the Rest*

The West and the Rest: Variations

- Underdeveloped
- Third World
- South
- Periphery
- Non-West
- Poor
- Developed
- First World
- North
- Center
- West
- Rich

Question

- We see the strength of this discourse in what happens when you describe conditions in the U.S. as “Third World”
- Hurricane Katrina (2005) provides an example

The concept of the West

- Classifies
- Represents verbally and visually
- Compares; helps to explain difference
- Provides evaluation criteria and produces knowledge and attitudes; functions as an ideology

The Semiotics of The West and the Rest

- Mostly connotative in the meanings that are generally assigned to them.
- Paradigmatic because their meanings are based on what they are different from - that is, on what they are *not*.

The West and the Rest...

- ... a set of ideas or *representations* working together to form a *Discourse*
- ... appear unified, but are not:
 - E.g., the West has its “internal others” who are like the Rest even though they are located within the West.
 - Some places that are geographically in the West are not included in it conceptually.

The West and the Rest...

- ... simplify complex realities
- ... like all other discourses (and unlike ideologies) are not true or false, but are *made* true or *made* false.
- ...are made true or false by the power behind them.

Discourse and Ideology

- Discourse is a way of speaking that produces knowledge about a subject
- Discourses are not true or false, but are *made* true or false based on their relation to power
- Marxist theory makes a distinction between “true” science and “false” ideology
- Ideology is a way of thinking that serves the interests of the ruling class

The West and the Rest...

- ... shape reality, like all other discourses, because they inform actual practice:
- E.g., they shape much of our assumptions and “knowledge” about the rest of the world and about globalization. Therefore...

The West and the Rest...

- ... are discourses that produce knowledge:
- That knowledge is a means by which power is exercised over “the Rest.”

The West and the Rest...

- Central to the European Enlightenment that assumed Europe was “the most advanced type of society on earth”
- This view of European superiority was bolstered first by Christian, and then “scientific” ideas of racial difference

The West and the Rest...

- ...Still active today
- ...discursively organizes the world into center and periphery
- We can see that center-periphery approach in media theories of cultural imperialism

Cultural Imperialism

- “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.”
 - Harper Dictionary of Modern Thought, 1977

Cultural Imperialism

- Emerged with the decline of European imperial powers (e.g. Britain and France) after WWII, and the rise of the U.S. as the dominant global power after the war

Cultural Imperialism

- Represents one phase in the history of U.S. “cultural transfer”:
 - 1945-1960s: Support for U.S. cultural diplomacy
 - 1960s to 1990s: Sharp criticism of U.S. cultural diplomacy (period when “cultural imperialism” came into popular use)
 - 1990s and beyond: Questioning of assertions of U.S. cultural hegemony

Cultural Imperialism

- Four areas of scholarly attention:
 - Media imperialism;
 - The domination of one nation by another;
 - Expansion and sometimes global dominance of U.S. consumer capitalism
 - Critique of modernity
- Our emphasis is on the first area

Cultural/Media Imperialism

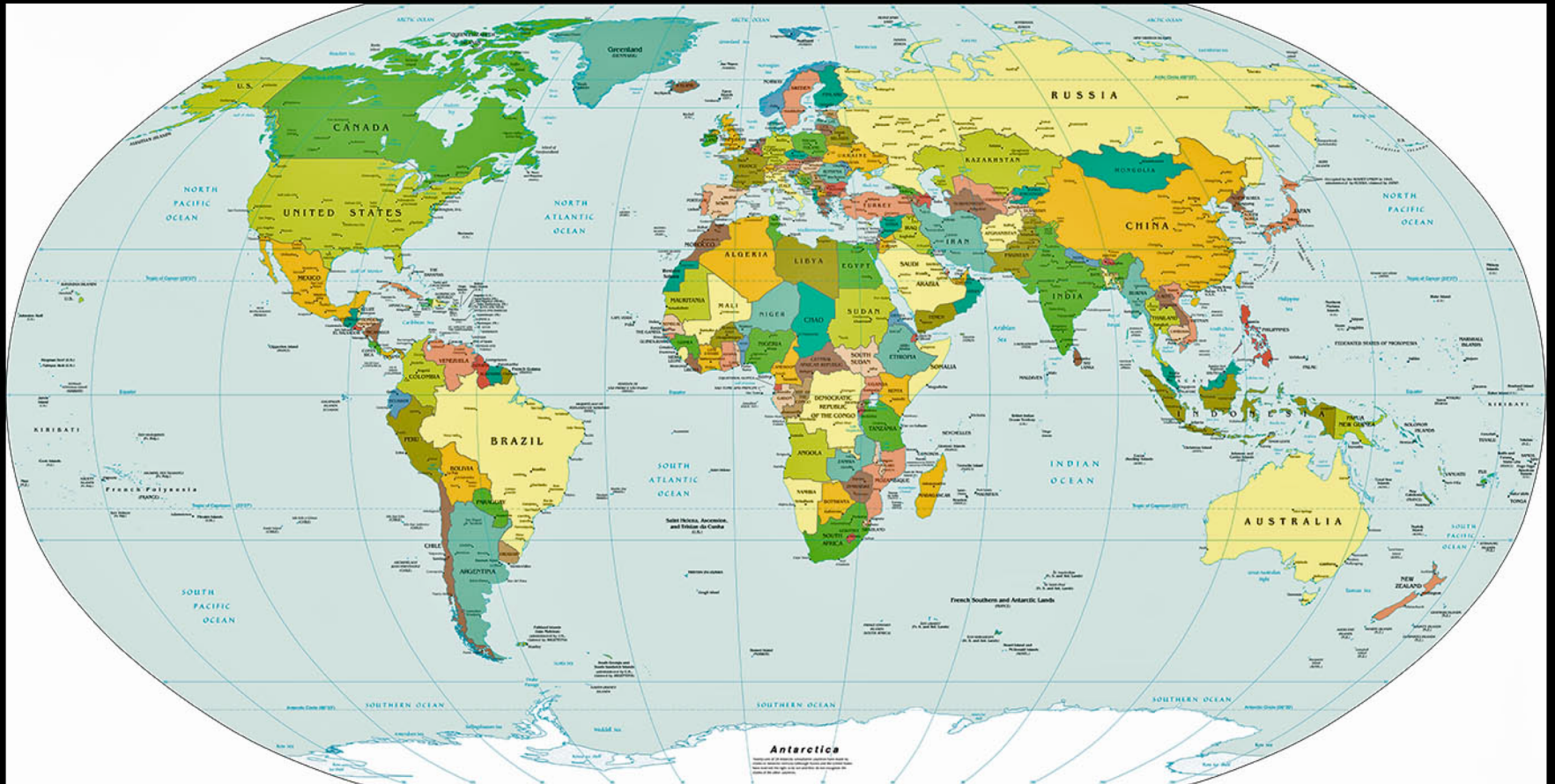
- Strong influence of Marxist thought from Latin American dependency and Frankfurt School theories
- Evident in the work of scholars like Ariel Dorfman, Armand Mattelart, and UCSD's Herb Schiller

The Center-Periphery Model

- Dependency scholars argued that the world economy had been organized into a dominant “center” or “core,” and a dependent “periphery”
- Cultural imperialism followed this center-periphery analysis of global communications



What is the difference between
this world map...



...and this world map?



What about this map?

Why “imperialism”?

American Empire

- Some scholars view the post-WWII U.S. as imperial in its exercise of power around the world
- This is evident in Schiller's analysis of global communications in the mid-20th century, and in the title of his book (*Mass Communications and American Empire*)

Cultural/Media Imperialism

- In Schiller's analysis, the U.S. did not only exercise cultural dominance through programming sponsored by the military and the state
- It also exercised cultural dominance through commercial programming that crowded out local programming in foreign nations

Cultural/Media Imperialism

- While the dominance of U.S. radio, television and films was a challenge for industrialized nations, it was an even greater challenge for poor nations
- It undermined their ability to develop their own media and cultural heritage

Cultural/Media Imperialism

- The commercial nature of U.S. media content and its consumerist values, promoted consumerism in nations whose resources were better applied to education and other social and economic needs

Cultural/Media Imperialism

- Advances in technology that made national control of information more difficult added to concerns of cultural imperialism:
 - E.g. Direct Broadcast Satellites (DBS) that made it possible to broadcast content across national boundaries without the permission of national governments

Cultural/Media Imperialism

- Schiller argued against calls for the “free flow” of information and instead advocated cultural protectionism for poor nations
- He also recommended international regulation of communications technologies (like DBS) that threatened national cultural sovereignty

Cultural/Media Imperialism

- Challenges to this model began to arise in the 1980s and 1990s

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