U.S. Cultural Imperialism Today: Only a Chimera?

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After revisiting the notion of "cultural imperialism" and reclaiming its valuable components, the article focuses on the most significant aspects of U.S. cultural imperialism in the current era of globalization. It goes beyond media imperialism to examine other domains of U.S. cultural influence at the heart of capitalist globalization, including business culture, management and labor practices, and cultural and political "development policies." Recognizing two levels of meaning associated with the ideas and practices distributed from the United States to the rest to the world, the author posits the sustained dominance of the first level, that is, the culture of consumerism. U.S. cultural imperialism as understood here—ultimately seen as a predominantly negative phenomenon from the perspective of self-determination by local people—is neither essential for, nor inherent to, globalization, but a contingent form of the global diffusion of consumerist beliefs and practices.

The concept of "cultural imperialism" has generally been discredited. Today, it is primarily European intellectuals and politicians warning against the purported threat of the "Americanization" of some part of European culture who employ the term. The French have been leading critics in this regard for a long time.[1] The latest large-scale manifestation of opposition to U.S. cultural imperialism occurred ten years ago, during the fierce debates over an exemption clause for "cultural works" in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations of 1993. More recently, members of the so-called anti-globalization movement have expressed similar concerns about the United States's cultural impact abroad, focusing on U.S.-based transnational corporations, but they usually do not speak explicitly of "U.S. cultural imperialism."

Intriguingly, interest in cultural imperialism has surfaced in quite a different way lately. Some influential U.S. journalists and

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international relations experts affiliated with neoconservative think tanks such as the American Enterprise Institute, the Hoover Institution, and the Heritage Foundation have suggested that U.S. imperialism benefits the rest of the world. Rather than the rebuke originally implied by the term "imperialism," they imbue it with higher moral authority, boldly calling for a "new, proud, American imperialism."[2] These new proponents of empire advocate a national moral renaissance and a self-conscious, interventionist role for the United States abroad based on a belief in the country's unique mission to spread freedom and democracy around the world, refurbishing a long-standing tradition of U.S. missionary universalism. The notion of empire is gaining a degree of mainstream acceptability because these right-wing unilateralists (concentrated around the Project for the New American Century, founded in 1997) have recently been joined by relative moderates, like human rights advocate Michael Ignatieff, who also see the exercise of unbridled U.S. power as the best hope for building a more stable world.[3]

This article will trace the development of the concept of cultural imperialism since the 1970s and then examine how U.S. cultural imperialism fits into this theoretical framework and gauge its relevance today. For the time being, U.S. cultural imperialism and the globalization of a particular brand of capitalist culture can largely be equated. In this context, the concept of U.S. cultural imperialism—or in some areas a broader Anglo-American cultural imperialism—retains its relevance and should neither be dismissed nor viewed as a positive phenomenon. Even if this cultural imperialism may have some localized benefits (e.g., regard for human rights), the overall effect tends to be negative in most cases. Nevertheless, the conventional view of cultural imperialism is inadequate, and scholars should approach the topic differently.

Cultural Imperialism Criticized and Revised

The term "cultural imperialism" was most popular in political discourse during the 1970s and 1980s, when some radical scholars of international mass communication, along with a number of intellectuals and politicians in Western Europe and the Third World, voiced concern about the homogenizing and potentially damaging effects of Western culture overwhelming the globe. They identified Western multinational corporations, especially U.S. media companies, as the major culprits. A series of UNESCO reports,

seminars, and declarations (most notably the MacBride Report of 1980) articulated these concerns, calling for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) whose objectives included democratizing communications, curbing the power of the transnational media lobby, and encouraging autonomous media policies in the developing world. It provided a moral platform for the restructuring of the global communication system from one dominated by four major Western news agencies to one in which control was distributed proportionately between the North and the South.[4] The NWICO movement focused primarily on the mass media, with limited attention to the larger questions of culture, identity, and globalization with which writers outside communication research became increasingly preoccupied.

By the early 1980s, academic writers had already begun to criticize the notion of cultural imperialism, preferring the term cultural globalization instead. Theoreticians of globalization have attacked the cultural imperialism thesis and related Marxist approaches along the following lines. First, they argue, it is no longer possible to conceive of the global cultural system as one in which the countries of the West (or the "core," to include powerful countries such as Japan) impose their cultures on the rest. The rise of newly industrialized countries makes such a perspective outdated. Second, the idea tends to conflate economic power and cultural impact, simply reading the latter off from empirical evidence about politico-economic interventions in local situations without addressing the reception of cultural imports domestically. Third, diversity may very well have increased as new hybrid cultural forms circulate within societies exposed to Western cultural influence. Fourth, the idea of cultural imperialism undervalues the creative ways in which consumers use globally distributed cultural goods. Fifth, it often entails a patronizing assumption that the "authentic" cultures of the developing world are being overrun by "inauthentic" cultural influences from the West.[5] The "imperializing culture" tends to be conceived of as homogeneous, its internal diversity, which may result from the influence of large immigrant groups from Asia, Africa, or Latin America in Western countries, downplayed or ignored.

These criticisms of the deterministic view of cultural flow implied in the orthodox cultural imperialism model certainly have merit. But they run the risk of adopting an uncritical cultural populism, in which the cultural resistance and creative power of audiences becomes a romantic celebration of the cultural insub-

ordination of consumers. Moreover, increased multiculturalism in the West does not preclude the existence of a hegemonic culture within each of these societies to which subordinate groups must accommodate in order to be accepted as citizens or residents.[6] This hegemonic culture in powerful states may, under certain circumstances, act "imperial" when extended beyond the borders of the country in question. Acknowledging that the dynamics of "imperialism" have become more complex and internally contradictory in the latter part of the twentieth century does not mean that we should abandon the exploration of underlying power differences and forms of inequality.

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The notion of "traveling cultures" has a particularly powerful impact on current approaches to the global influence of U.S. culture.[7] The "traveling cultures" idea focuses on how cultural languages travel to new areas and are appropriated by people of other cultures to tell their own story, a process that transcends stable, unified national cultures. This approach looks almost exclusively at the receiving end of these encounters, and as a result tends to overemphasize the active appropriation of cultural forms and to neglect cultural imposition through behavioral and structural forms of power. The first dimension corresponds with the sociological concept of agency, the second with the concept of structure that refers to all kinds of social constraints on human behavior.[8] Although intercultural contact zones are "inherently dialogical,"[9] this does not mean that the exchanges always take place on a level playing field. A more complete transcultural perspective should also encompass the study of the economic, technological, political, and social structures of such exchanges that tend to "force" them into certain forms and "steer" them toward certain results. We must maintain a critical awareness of the transnational movements of people, capital, and commodities and the conditions of inequity, disempowerment, and exploitation that drive these movements.

A second flaw in the "traveling cultures" theory of cultural globalization is its neglect of the nation-state. Despite the growing importance of transnational corporations and other nongovernmental organizations, the state has not declined to the extent assumed by proponents of transculturation. Instead, states are undergoing a transformation: transnational forces are reshaping their institutions and policies toward the intensified adoption of neoliberal concepts and practices.[10]

Media Empire

Taking account of the theoretical discussion outlined above, the spread of U.S. cultural forms around the globe begs a reexamination of how the United States fits into this globalizing context. Since cultural imperialism theory has traditionally focused on the mass media and other cultural industries, we shall start there. U.S. firms have always enjoyed a comparative advantage in the global media and popular culture industries because of a huge domestic market that offers economies of scale, ensuring that cultural exports can be sold at rates well below the cost of production for smaller nations.[11] U.S. firms also have the advantage of working in the principal international language, English,[12] and profit from cultural exchange programs that bring large numbers of foreign students, academics, and other professionals to the United States who continue to consume U.S. cultural products when they return home.

U.S. cultural forms have features that transcend social divisions, national borders, language barriers, and, more generally, distinctive cultures. Given the U.S. demographic makeup, it comes as no surprise that the country has been very receptive to external cultural influences, which then become incorporated into the fabric of U.S. culture. Black slaves and immigrants infused new traditions into the culture they found.[13] The contributions of various foreign cultures have often mixed to create particularly powerful hybrids; the combination of African and Celtic folk music, for example, produced popular musical idioms such as blues, country & western, and rock 'n' roll. U.S. popular culture evolves constantly, fermenting new forms and expressions. But, at the same time, because of myriad foreign influences, certain "universalistic" elements have crystallized that strike chords of recognition among people all over the world.[14] Though U.S. popular culture is not alone in this regard, U.S. culture industries have been

at the cutting edge of the development of a shared language of popular culture that can, in principle, be communicated without words, in part because of technological innovations.[15]

The process of U.S. transculturation, however, has not rested entirely on these advantages. The U.S. government has played an important role in promoting cultural exports, not only as a source of export income but also as a means of exporting beliefs, values, and practices that inherently favor U.S.-based corporate capitalism. U.S. officials emphasize the need for a free flow of information and entertainment across the world. But the reality of the "free market" entails regulation in various domains as well as state support. The U.S. government backs its film and television industries whenever foreign governments try to restrain the flow of U.S. audiovisual products abroad. It has contributed enormously to the development of communications infrastructures, such as satellites, while monitoring and threatening nations or specific institutions or groups that do not uphold media firms' copyrights.[16]

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The United States also uses diplomatic means to reduce or remove barriers to its media exports. During international negotiations over a Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) that began in 1995, the United States spearheaded the fight for an agreement encompassing all media, communications, and cultural activities. As proposed, it would have seriously eroded the already limited autonomy of local and state authorities to regulate foreign investments and the operations of transnational corporations in the realms of economic, environmental, and social affairs. The MAI was ultimately defeated in December 1998 by a global resistance movement that included a coalition of national and local politicians and a wide variety of transnational and local groups,[17] but such attempts at deregulation may be successful in the future.

David Hesmondhalgh has given an excellent overview of recent research findings concerning U.S. dominance in television,

film, and recorded music.[18] His findings provide evidence for a sustained U.S. cultural hegemony in the first two domains, and a broader Anglo-American predominance in the sphere of popular music. Thus far, the United States's global media influence has hardly been countered by the international popularity among specific groups of such indigenous cultural forms as Brazil's *telenovelas* (a local kind of soap opera), Hong Kong's kung-fu and gangster movies, or even India's large production of popular "Bollywood" films, nor by Latin American or Arab TV stations. The same applies to a shared British-American prominence in the music sector. As evidenced by the position of "Euro pop" (hardly popular elsewhere) or "world music," even "authentic" local music disseminated by the transnational music industry is often strongly influenced by musical standards, technology, and presentation styles originating in the United States and the United Kingdom. Japanese, European, and Australian conglomerates, and even corporations based in the developing world such as Brazil's media empire TV Globo, are challenging the predominance of U.S.-based media corporations. But these companies have extensive ties to and joint ventures with U.S. media companies, as well as with Wall Street investment banks. They tend to dominate their own national and regional media markets and are primary instigators and beneficiaries of the expansion of the U.S.-dominated global media market in the countries concerned.[19]

Although political and cultural elites in some countries have imposed regulations and subsidies to protect local cultural content, the major thrust is clearly in the opposite direction. Most countries have capitulated to the neoliberal forces at work in the media and culture world, which amounts to "Americanization" in the sense discussed later. As mass communication expert Denis McQuail has pointed out, this "Americanization" has, in varying degrees, taken place at the initiative of local decision makers, albeit from a weak position of power.[20] At each stage of European expansion, the

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United States has supplied essential components to the European television industry—an experience that television industries across the world have likely shared. In the last fifteen to twenty years, all public television monopolies in Europe have been dismantled, and competition for audiences has grown fierce. Though European governments, media firms, and channel managers are driving this process, U.S. culture industries have played an active role in this development. The result has been not just the commercialization of the system, but also the adoption of the "American way of television." This does represent a cultural threat to Europe, especially in terms of innovation, risk taking, minority appeal, cultural authenticity, and non-commercial values. However, a joint French-German television channel ARTE—financed by the respective governments in response to fears of U.S. cultural imperialism—has had only limited success.[21]

A good case can be made for criticizing the all-pervasive commodification of culture, epitomized most distinctively by U.S. and U.S.-style culture industries. During the GATT Uruguay Round negotiations (1986–1993), the French government attempted such a criticism. In addition to politico-economic aspects, the discussion centered around issues of cultural identity, style, and taste in relation to national geographic territories. But the nationalist and elitist rhetoric of cultural imperialism that the French adopted is problematic, as is their stance as the defenders of European culture. The opposition to audiovisual market liberalization became intertwined with issues of national cultural identity and sovereignty, predicated on a binary opposition between European and U.S. culture. The French drew lines between French-European cultural refinement and good taste on the one hand and U.S. vulgarity and superficial "mass culture" at the other hand. Such framing ignores the difficulty of using "national culture" as a means of cultural demarcation in light of the increasing fluidity of economic and cultural borders.[22]

Widening the Perspective—Other U.S. Cultural Imperialisms

U.S. cultural influence should not be reduced to the products of the cultural industries or "media imperialism." More attention should be given to other domains of U.S. cultural influence at the heart of capitalist globalization, such as state and business culture, management and labor practices, and cultural and political "development policies" for developing countries.[23] The United States

maintains a strong position in many of the domains that matter most in the current era of globalization. Examples include the standards and rules governing the Internet and other international communication networks; securities law and practice; and international legal, accounting, and management practices. Much of the information revolution originated in the United States and a large part of the content of global information networks is manufactured there, giving globalization a U.S. face. The country has also benefited enormously from the growing popularity of free-market ideology and the reduction of economic protectionism in the former communist world and elsewhere after the Cold War.[24]

U.S. culture has particularly influenced, and continues to dominate, corporate culture. Over the past two or three decades, transnational corporations based in the United States, Europe, and Japan have created strategic alliances over a wide range of industries that transcend national boundaries. Yet, many of these corporations retain distinctive "American" overtones in terms of business culture and production because, in most fields, U.S. companies have the "first mover" advantage, allowing them to set standards for management practices and production techniques. U.S.-based corporations also have a powerful competitive advantage over firms firmly embedded in the social market economies of Europe and Asia. The social costs that European and Asian firms carry enable them to function without undermining the social cohesion of the societies in which they operate but also

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make them less competitive with U.S. firms that do not have the same responsibilities. The kind of corporate capitalism aimed at the short-term interests of CEOs and shareholders that U.S. companies epitomize tends to crowd out social market capitalism and other forms of associative, stakeholder capitalism.[25]

Anglo-American managerial ideologies and practices also dominate most business education. Business education began in

the United States and has enjoyed enormous and increasing popularity over the last two decades. Leading U.S. business schools have formed strategic alliances with counterparts elsewhere in the world, founding international business schools biased toward U.S. business models, which then shape the practices of executives around the world.[26] U.S. management consulting firms have also been vehicles for spreading U.S. managerial styles to other countries. In the mid-1980s, some 700 of these firms were active in about one hundred countries, and their number has increased rapidly since then.[27] On the academic side, U.S. neoliberal think tanks, experts, and mentors (notably those of the economics and political science departments of the University of Chicago, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Harvard University) have been very influential in shaping governments' business and market policies abroad, for example, in various Latin American countries.[28] The diffusion of the American way of management has also occurred through the frequent speaking tours of American management gurus abroad; a widespread focus on U.S. companies and management practices in the business media (which goes back to the dominance of U.S. media); and the large number of popular books on management originating in the United States.

Globalization and governmental deregulation have not eliminated regulatory regimes and institutions for the governance of international economic relations. Private regulatory systems such as international commercial arbitration and debt-security and bond-rating agencies that fulfill rating and advisory functions, are essential for the operation and expansion of transnational capitalism. Although they function as mechanisms of what James Rosenau has called "governance without government,"[29] these agencies still tend to have ties to specific nation-states, and, once more, Anglo-American agencies dominate in these fields and have significantly expanded their influence abroad.

National culture does, to some extent, shape the management theories and practices that companies actually employ, including the degree to which they adopt U.S. managerial thinking. Particularly in Europe, some strains of management thinking recognize gaps between management theory as derived from North American business schools and local practices. They advocate a management style more aligned with the political and cultural pluralism of Western Europe. Japan has also been adept at borrowing U.S. management practices and tailoring them to the local environment. But the overall dominance of U.S. managerial thinking

remains a fact. Even if most of the capital comes from Australian, British, German, Dutch, or Japanese investors, and the corporation has no top managers who are from the United States, transnational corporations and the cultural forms they disseminate around the world retain an American flavor. While there is some evidence, as mentioned above, for different national styles of capitalism resulting from specific historical contexts and styles of regulation and corporate governance, the crucial question is the significance of such differences. In the current era of globalization, most governments have less power over domestic and foreign transnational corporations than they once had, and appear more or less complacent about this state of affairs.[30]

The U.S. flavor of globalization stems from the culture of possessive individualism and consumerism that has its most radical embodiment in American society. The current world of consumer goods has an American face, even when goods and services are produced outside the United States. While the development of global businesses outside the United States has indeed loosened the connections between the United States and transnational flows of goods and services, U.S.-style consumerism still drives these flows. To that extent, the globalizing of the profit-driven culture of consumerism is identical to Americanization. While there is no necessary connection here with the "national interest" of the United States or any other country,[31] clear ties remain between this type of globalization and the dominant financial, economic, and political interests in U.S. society (including those of foreign citizens and businesses participating in U.S.-based globalizing corporate capitalism).[32]

Neoliberalism, with its emphasis on markets, deregulation, privatization, and free trade has, from the 1980s, dominated policymaking in the United States and the UK, and increasingly does so in continental Europe. This has contributed significantly to the formulation of transnational legal regimes based on Anglo-American concepts. "From this perspective," as Saskia Sassen points out, "'international' or 'transnational' has become, in the most recent period, a form of 'Americanization,' though the process has hardly been smooth."[33] Although less widely recognized and more difficult to unravel than the U.S. impact on popular culture globally, this kind of "Americanization" is manifest in the legal forms that are on the rise in international business transactions and in the neoliberal emphasis of the policies that agencies like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World

Trade Organization have promoted in, or according to critics imposed on, the developing world.[34]

The Triumph of Capitalist Consumerism

In light of the previous discussion, the idea of U.S. cultural imperialism contains a granule of truth today. However, it is not the spread of uniformity as such—the focus of early theorists of cultural imperialism—whether U.S.-style or not, that is the basic problem here, but rather the kind of culture that capitalist modernity brings. The global dissemination of Americanized cultural goods and practices involves the spread of social visions of U.S.-style development, with its heavy emphasis on "progress" in the form of unlimited, quantitative growth and economic-technological expansion. It also diffuses a culture of performance and expressive individualism, so strongly articulated in U.S. society, which may be harmful for democracy in specific local contexts.[35] American culture has always been characterized by an aesthetic of performance.[36] This is a culture whose primary sources of attraction and gratification are the sensational spectacle, the outstanding performance, the extraordinary physical and acrobatic achievement, or the intense emotional thrill. This tendency is clear in film from the earliest days of silent movies to today's Hollywood blockbusters, in which narrative has become less relevant than the performance features and the emphasis lies on body language and action. Even the "high culture" of American literature displays this character, including self-conscious strategies of impression-management by certain authors and celebrity cults around them.[37]

The transnationalization of the U.S. culture of performance fits into a more general shift of emphasis from narrative to performance as the primary source of meaning and gratification in

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contemporary Western culture. It is one of the driving forces behind a larger dehierarchization and democratization on the aesthetic level that has resulted in the breakdown of the strict dichotomy between "high" and popular culture, and eliminated the idea of moral and social guardianship. This ongoing process of democratization in the aesthetic-cultural sphere must not, however, be confused with democracy. While the latter evokes ideals of social equality and justice, the former basically refers to an increase in individual freedom and, associated with it, freedom of self-expression—a tendency that can lead to extreme civil privatism with no links to any community life or common good whatsoever.[38] "In this sense of a continuous dehierarchization and an ever-increasing freedom of self-expression we may speak of a global Americanization of culture," Winfried Fluck contends in his analysis of the culture of performance.[39] Depending on the particular context, a culture of performance and self-expression may be either helpful for or harmful to democracy—and sometimes both. In specific instances it may have detrimental effects in terms of equality, justice, and social cohesion. "The victory of mood over moral structure in contemporary society" that accompanies the shift from narrative to performance may also result in a weakened resilience in the face of oppression and cultural imposition and an emphasis on the rewards of "immediate experience"[40]—what some analysts of contemporary life have called the "experience economies" of the most developed countries in the world.[41]

All of this amounts to a marginalization of the cultural space for alternative versions of the good life and a better society. In this regard a critique like Benjamin Barber's about the spread of U.S. capitalist consumerism through the globalization of trade and industry ("McWorld") rings true indeed.[42] The McWorld market system will lead to the standardization of cultures and consumption practices, which, in turn, will bring other dangers. Transnational corporations raise people's expectations through advertising, making consumers believe that their purchases will open avenues to a better life of freedom and opportunity, which generally prove false. McWorld threatens local de-

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mocracy and, more generally, civil society: transnational corporations have no interest at all in improving people's quality of life or strengthening civil society. Neither do they promote the kind of transnational solidarity that might empower global citizens to cooperate in dealing with common problems. Capitalist culture cannot really satisfy people's needs for community involvement, personal development, and meaningful relationships.[43]

Critiques of consumerism often imply some variant of the dominant ideology thesis in presupposing that consumers are uniformly incorporated by all commodities. But, to argue the other side, consumers, in the West or elsewhere, do not inevitably absorb the purposes and meanings of mass advertisements as prompted by capitalist entrepreneurs and instilled by advertisers.[44] Research has shown that consumers and recipients of media contents borrow selectively from the cultural repertoire on offer and appropriate the borrowings creatively, assigning their own meanings to products and practices.[45] By ignoring this phenomenon, critics of consumerism commit what Philip Schlesinger has termed the "fallacy of distribution," presupposing that "distributing the same cultural product leads to an identity of interpretation on the part of those who consume it."[46] While people in Western market economies are more likely than those in developing countries to have long experience with advertising that enables them, in principle at least, to handle advertising in a more informed way, one runs the risk of paternalism by assuming that people in the developing world are helpless before the onslaught of capitalist consumerism and advertising.

To the extent that advertising constitutes a pervasive public "art form," however, it has become the dominant mode in which thoughts and experiences are expressed. This trend is most evident in U.S. society. While alternative values and ideologies do exist in this culture, it is harder to find representations for them. Advertising distorts and flattens people's ability to interpret complex experiences, and it reflects the culture only partially, and in ways that are biased toward a capitalist idealization of American culture.[47]

At this level, goods are framed and displayed to entice the customer, and shopping has become an event in which individuals purchase and consume the meanings attached to goods. The ongoing interpenetration and crossover between consumption and the aesthetic sphere (traditionally separated off as an artistic counter-world to the everyday aspect of the former) has led to a

greater "aestheticization of reality": appearance and image have become of prime importance. Not only have commodities become more stylized but style itself has turned into a valuable commodity. The refashioning and reworking of commodities—which are themselves carefully selected according to one's individual tastes—achieve a stylistic effect that expresses the individuality of their owner.[48] This provides the framework for a more nuanced and sometimes contradictory second order of meaning. The dynamics of cultural change therefore entail both processes of "traveling culture," in which the received culture (in this case globalizing capitalist culture) is appropriated and assigned new meaning locally, and at the same time a "first order" meaning that dominates and delimits the space for second order meanings—thus retaining something of the traditional meaning of cultural imperialism. The latter is, ultimately, a negative phenomenon from the perspective of self-determination by local people under the influence of the imperial culture.

Traditional critiques of cultural globalization have missed the point. The core of the problem lies not in the homogenization of cultures as such, or in the creation of a "false consciousness" among consumers and the adoption of a version of the dominant ideology thesis. Rather, the problem lies in the global spread of the institutions of capitalist modernity tied in with the culturally impoverished social imagery discussed above, which crowd out the cultural space for alternatives (as suggested by critical analysts like Benjamin Barber and Leslie Sklair). The negative effects of cultural imperialism—the disempowerment of people subjected to the dominant forms of globalization—must be located on this plane.

It is necessary, of course, to explore in more detail how the very broad institutional forces of capitalist modernity actually operate in specific settings of cultural contact. The practices of transnational corporations are crucial to any understanding of the concrete activities and local effects of globalization. A state-centered approach blurs the main issue here, which is not whether nationals or foreigners own the carriers of globalization, but whether their interests are driven by capitalist globalization.

This form of globalization, whatever the nationality or ethnicity of its major agents—the owners of transnational corporations—still retains distinctive American features. My point is that U.S. imperialism as understood here is neither essential for nor inherent to capitalist globalization, but a contingent form of a process that is necessary to it: the global diffusion of consumerist

beliefs and practices. Even if U.S. influence could be excluded, or in the unlikely event that the United States ceased to foster capitalism, this form of globalization would continue to dominate, carried on by other agencies that are strong proponents of it. Some theorists envision the current "Americanizing" form of globalization giving way to one controlled by a transnational, hegemonic capitalist constellation, led by major transnational corporations.[49] Until this happens, however, the U.S. "cultural empire" is likely to remain in place.

Notes

[1] Jean-Philippe Mathy, *Extrême-Occident: French Intellectuals and America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
[2] As noted in the "Year in Ideas" issue of *Time*, 9 December 2001. See, for example, the correspondence pages in the *New York Post*, a morning paper that expresses the neoconservative trend of thinking most clearly. Rupert Murdoch's NewsCorp, which publishes the *Post*, also owns the television network Fox, as well as the *Weekly Standard*, a favorite magazine of neoconservatives. Edited by William Kristol, the *Weekly Standard* has a limited circulation (about 60,000 copies) but is highly influential among members of the current Bush administration. One also finds clear traces of this strain of thinking in *New Republic*, which has a more liberal bent. Kristol and Lawrence F. Kaplan, a senior editor at *New Republic* co-wrote a book in support of the recent Iraq war, *The War over Iraq: Saddam's Tyranny and America's Mission* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2003). Kristol and Robert Kagan are co-founders of the Project for the New American Century.
[3] William D. Hartung, "The New Imperialism," *The Nation*, 17 February 2003, 5–6.
[4] With significant exceptions like the Pan-African News Agency and the emergence of local press agencies in developing countries such as a Namibian Press Agency in the mid-1990s, the direct impact of NWICO is hard to assess. They have included the formation of a variety of associations and unions of concerned journalists and communications experts, the teaching of NWICO principles at communication schools in the South, as well as a heightened sense of the values of national culture vis-à-vis global culture at the level of government. NWICO concerns have also been incorporated into local agendas for the democratization of communications networks, such as the Philippine-based "People in Communication."
[5] John Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction* (London: Pinter, 1991); Reebee Garofalo, "Whose World, What Beat? The Transnational Music Industry, Identity, and Cultural Imperialism," *The World of Music* 35, no. 2 (1993): 18.
[6] The concept of hegemony is used here in the Gramscian sense of a mixture of coercion and consent, in which consent is the dominant element.
[7] James Clifford, *Travel and Translation in the Late-Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); Rob Kroes, "Advertising: The Commodification of

American Icons," in Annemoon van Hemel, Hans Mommaas, and Cas Smithuijsen, eds., *Trading Culture: GATT, European Cultural Policies and the Transatlantic Market* (Amsterdam: Boekman Foundation, 1996), 147.

[8] Stephen Gill has employed this distinction in analyzing the power of transnational capital. The first aspect concerns deliberate strategies and interventions by human actors and agencies, that is "the conscious, organised, exertion of political pressure by various sections or fractions of capital," which "also applies to elements in state bureaucracies, political parties, and international organisations supportive of such policy changes." The second dimension pertains to "forms of international structural power which, under certain conditions, create constraints on national fractions of capital, certain states, and labour, as opposed to transnational fractions of capital, for whom they can be viewed as a positive power resource." Stephen Gill, *American Hegemony and the Trilateral Commission* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 113.

[9] Günter Lenz, "Transculturations: American Studies in a Globalizing World—The Globalizing World in American Studies," *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 47, no. 1 (2002): 97–98.

[10] Saskia Sassen, "The State and the New Geography of Power," in Don Kalb et al., eds., *The End of Globalization: Bringing Society Back In* (Lanham, UK: Rowan & Littlefield, 2000), 59.

[11] Robert W. McChesney, *Rich Media Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times* (New York: The New Press, 2000), 102–103.

[12] Jeremy Tunstall, *The Media are American: Anglo-American Media in the World*, 2nd ed. (London: Constable, 1994).

[13] Rob Kroes, *If You've Seen One, You've Seen the Mall: Europeans and American Mass Culture* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1996).

[14] Neal M. Rosendorf, "Social and Cultural Globalization: Concepts, History, and America's Role," in Joseph S. Nye Jr. and John D. Donahue, eds., *Governance in a Globalizing World* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 118–119.

[15] Perhaps it is better here to speak of transculturally shared structures of feelings among people taking part in Western modernity rather than truly universal features common to all of humanity in the modern age. There have always been groups of people (even whole nations or culture areas) among whom these supposedly "universal" components of American popular culture do not ring a bell.

[16] The international system of intellectual property rights, in fact, disproportionately favors the developed world, and the Anglo-American countries in particular. Anglo-American law, relying on a definition of a cultural work as a fixed entity, tends to assign copyrights to the private companies that organize production. This capitalist notion of intellectual property rights fits uneasily with cultures that place greater emphasis on oral tradition, and the passing on of stories, tunes, and representations within the public domain. These include pre-industrial cultures, but also subcultures of peoples in industrial or post-industrial societies denied access to widespread literacy, or who have come to associate dominant forms of culture with oppression.

[17] The campaign against the MAI was the first major worldwide campaign against capitalist globalization, bringing together a network of hundreds of organizations from all over the world. Organizations from the United States

and Canada played a substantial role, making up 200 of the 600 nongovernmental organizations from 67 countries that participated. Leslie Sklair, *Globalization: Capitalism and its Alternatives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 287–291.

[18] David Hesmondhalgh, *The Cultural Industries* (London: Sage, 2002), 173–197.

[19] Kaarle Nordenstreng and Herbert I. Schiller, *Beyond National Sovereignty: International Communications in the 1990s* (Norwood, MA: Ablex, 1993); McChesney, *Rich Media*, 107.

[20] Denis McQuail, "Transatlantic TV Flow: Another Look at Cultural Cost-Accounting," in van Hemel et al., *Trading Culture,* 111–125.

[21] A fundamental barrier to a pan-European television culture is that there are too many different languages and cultures. Susan Emanuel, "A Community of Culture? The European Television Channel," *History of European Ideas* 21, no. 2 (1995): 169–176.

[22] Mel van Elteren, "Gatt and Beyond: World Trade, the Arts and American Popular Culture in Western Europe," *Journal of American Culture* 19, no. 3 (1996): 59–73.

[23] Another important carrier of U.S. cultural influence abroad that is often overlooked is evangelical Protestantism, particularly its Pentecostal variant. Engaged in spiritual warfare with their global competitors—Islam, socialism, secular humanism, and Catholicism—these religious movements help to reconfigure and legitimate the U.S. role in the "new world order" through material and ideological links between U.S. corporate capitalism, U.S. foreign policy, and their missionary empire. Steve Brouwer, Paul Gifford, and Susan D. Rose, *Exporting the American Gospel: Global Christian Fundamentalism* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Nancy A. Schaefer, "Exporting a U.S. Gospel of Health and Wealth," in Hans Krabbendam and Derek Rubin, eds., *Religion in America* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2003).

[24] Joseph S. Nye Jr., *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 79, 81.

[25] John Gray, *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism* (London: Granta, 1998). Hutton, chief executive of the (British) Work Foundation and a columnist for the *Observer*, is more optimistic about the opportunities for sustaining the various types of stakeholder capitalism and their accompanying social contracts in Europe. Wil Hutton, *The World We're In* (London: Abacus, 2003), 322–358.

[26] Research on INSEAD in Paris during the late 1980s suggests that these international business schools were then beginning to have a significant impact on the managerial ideology and behavior of European executives. See P. Carey, "The Making of a Global Manager," *North American International Business* (June 1990): 36–41; J. Marceau, *A Family Business? The Making of an International Business Elite* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[27] A. Stiffler, "Management Consulting Services Continue Rapid Overseas Growth," *Business America* 8 (1985): 13–14; Yair Aharoni, ed., *Changing Roles of State Intervention in Services in an Era of Open International Markets* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997).

[28] Jorge I. Dominguez, *Technopols: Freeing Politics and Markets in Latin America in the 1990s* (University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

[29] James N. Rosenau, "Governance, Order, and Change in World Politics," in James N. Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czempiel, eds., *Governance without Government:*

Order and Change in World Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1–29.

[30] Sklair, *Globalization*, 72; Hutton, *The World*, 369–392.

[31] Leslie Sklair, *The Transnational Capitalist Class* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 290.

[32] We should acknowledge, however, that American culture, conveyed through globalization, is heterogenous—criticisms of the dominant American way of life by U.S. environmentalists, feminists, journalists, intellectuals, and politicians are disseminated as well. See, for example, the U.S. components of the "anti-globalization" movement.

[33] Saskia Sassen, "The Spatial Organization of Information Industries: Implications for the Role of the State," in James H. Mittelman, ed., *Globalization: Critical Reflections* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), 18.

[34] Saskia Sassen, *Losing Control? Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 19.

[35] Winfried Fluck, "Emergence or Collapse of Cultural Hierarchy? Popular Culture Seen from Abroad," in Peter Freese and Michael Porsche, eds., *Popular Culture in the United States* (Essen, Germany: Verlag Die Blaue Eule, 1994), 74.

[36] Philip Fisher, "Appearing and Disappearing in Public Social Space in Late-Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture," in Sacvan Bercovitch, ed., *Reconstructing American Literary History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 155–158.

[37] Take, for instance, Mark Twain's skillfully planned and carefully cultivated appearances in public, and his obsessive focus on clever tricks and skillful manipulation in his writings. He was one of the first real stars of American literary culture in the modern sense of the word. Another good example is Ernest Hemingway.

[38] Robert Wuthnow, "Sociology of Religion," in Neil Smelser, ed., *Handbook of Sociology* (New York: Sage, 1988), 473–509.

[39] Fluck, "Emergence or Collapse," 74.

[40] Ibid., 62.

[41] Joseph B. Pine and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999).

[42] Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World* (New York: Times Books, 1995).

[43] Leslie Sklair, *Sociology of the Global System*, 2nd ed. (London: Prentice Hall - Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1995), 174, 280.

[44] Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill, and Bryan Turner, *The Dominant Ideology Thesis* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1980).

[45] Ien Ang, *Watching Dallas* (London and New York: Methuen, 1985); Tamar Liebes and Elihu Katz, *The Export of Meaning: Cross-Cultural Readings of Dallas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). For a more general overview see Chris Barker, *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* (London: Sage, 2000), 259–289.

[46] Philip Schlesinger, "Wishful Thinking: Cultural Politics, Media and Collective Identities in Europe," *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 2 (1993): 2–13.

[47] Michael Schudson, *Advertising, the Uneasy Persuasion: Its Dubious Impact on American Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 224–230; John R. Hall and Mary Jo Neitz, *Culture: Sociological Perspectives* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993), 104–105.

[48] This enhanced self-image glosses over real distinctions in the capacity to consume, although the ubiquity of the culture-ideology of consumerism means

that virtually no one can escape its images. Mike Featherstone, "Consumer Culture, Symbolic Power and Universalism," in Georg Stauth and Sami Zubaida, eds., *Mass Culture, Popular Culture, and Social Life in the Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), 22. See also Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* (London: Sage, 1991).

[49] William I. Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy: Globalization, US Intervention, and Hegemony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 12.