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THE PROBLEM OF MEDIA IMPERIALISM IN CURRENT CONDITIONS

The article examines the phenomenon of media imperialism, which characterized the state of global mass communications in the post-colonial period. In particular, the introduction of the concept of media imperialism into political and academic discourse is considered, and it is shown how this phenomenon was reinterpreted with the transformation of the global system of communications. It is proved that for today the key issues that characterized media imperialism either have lost their severity, or may be considered as generally positive, albeit inevitable, attributes of globalization. On the example of UNESCO's strategic documents, the current imperatives of world politics in the field of mass media are shown.

Key words: world politics, international information relations, means of mass communication, media imperialism, cultural imperialism, digital divide, UNESCO.

Awareness of the role of the mass media as a significant factor of sustainable global development, both at national and international levels, has long been the subject of attention from the world community. There is no doubt that mass communications are the vital component of the functioning of mankind. Full access to the international media space, including the ability to adequately represent cultural heritage and values, to promote national interests, to advocate stance on international issues has long been regarded as a powerful component of state power, as its "soft power". It's no exaggeration to say that state success in the international arena, effectiveness of its foreign policy to a great degree depend on its ability to use mass media with the object to influence world politics agenda and policies of other states.

One of the most sensitive problems of international affairs related to the mass media is the imbalance in the information exchange between developed and developing countries. The origins of this phenomenon may be reviewed both through the lens of historical perspective, including colonial division of the world and formation after the Second World War of the so-called socialist camp, self-isolated in the political, economic and informational sense, and through the lens of peculiarities of the formation of modern global information, specifically, media space, with salient tendencies towards the concentration of the lion's share of media flows in the hands of the media belonging to the leading countries of the world.

Issues of the media colonialism as well as of other forms of colonialism in post-colonial world were the subject of many studies both theoretical and empirical. However, media colonialism manifestations in nowadays conditions of globalized communications with cross-border mass media deserve special attention. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to determine the peculiarities of media imperialism and its' implications in contemporary environment.

Studies of the international communication, of the role of the media factor in the development of the international system were undertaken by foreign researchers such as C. Archetti, T. Aysens, R. Ammon, O. Boyd-Barrett, E. Gilboa, J. Hills, P. A. Karl, C. Sparks, J. D. Straubhaar, D. Strömberg and others; such domestic researchers as S. Danilenko, I. Filenko, G. Gridasova, E. Makarenko, N. Pipchenko, G. Pocheptsov, O. Vaganova, O. Zernetska and others.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) naturally became the first international institution that began to actively engage in international communication issues. Thus, in 1972 at the 17th session of the UNESCO General Conference it was stated that "because of their impact, the media of communication — whose scope is considerably widened by the utilization of communication satellites — demand of those who use them an acute sense of their responsibilities. Indeed, they may either faithfully serve UNESCO's objectives or, on the contrary, become a vehicle of the domination of world public opinion or a source of moral and cultural pollution. Furthermore, if the dissemination of information is the monopoly of a few countries, and if the international circulation of information is a one-way process only, the cultural values of most of the remaining countries may be seriously harmed" [1].

One of the key milestones in world politics in this field was the Declaration on the Basic Principles Concerning the Contribution of the Media to the Strengthening of Peace and International

Understanding, the Development of Human Rights and the Fight Against Racism and Apartheid and Incitement to war, adopted by UNESCO on November 28, 1978. It highlighted the importance of promoting a free flow and more balanced dissemination of information [2]. The problem of the imbalance of world information flows has also been reflected in discussions about the so-called New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), which took place under the auspices of the UN and UNESCO in 1970-80. At the 21st session of the UNESCO General Conference (Belgrade, 1980), the list of principles on which the NWICO should to be built was adopted. Among them, in particular, in the first place was stated "elimination of the imbalances and inequalities which characterize the present situation" [3].

This problem was also a subject of attention from academic researchers at that time. For example, in 1977, in a collective monograph "Mass Communication and Society", British researcher O. Boyd-Barrett substantiated the phenomenon of media imperialism and proposing the following definition: "the process whereby, the ownership, structure, distribution or content of the media in any one country are, singly or together, subject to substantial external pressures from the media interests of any other country or countries, without proportionate reciprocation of influences by the country so affected" (cit. ex [4, p.96]).

Appeal to the concept of imperialism, which refers to the general striving of a state, people or nation to power over other states; the process of conquest of this power and the constant domination of one nation over another, one state over another or several states [5, p.119], is not accidental, considering the situation in the world at the time: the collapse of the colonial system did not mean the disappearance of imperialist practices, because a lot from newly arrived states, having received formal political independence, were unable to ensure their sustainable socio-economic development. The reasons for this were mainly economic and technological backwardness, as well as attempts by the metropolitan states to preserve certain forms of control over former colonies. In other words, political imperialism has been replaced by economic, in particular, technological, and cultural imperialism (though undoubtedly, elements of political imperialism have also been preserved and still exist even now).

Media imperialism is often viewed as an integral part of cultural imperialism, as its particular case (see, for example, [6, p. 1102; 7, p. 360]). The latter is traditionally interpreted as the use by a powerful country of cultural means to achieve or support the political and economic ends of imperialism that were historically attained through military force and occupation [6, p.1101]; as both an integral part and product of a more general process of imperialism, whereby certain economically dominant nations systematically develop and extend their economic, political and cultural control over other countries [8, p.73].

In many studies, the phenomenon of cultural imperialism, in particular, in nowadays globalized world, is primarily viewed from the point of view of political economy — as an instrument through which the companies of the developed countries obtain an opportunity to draw higher income from sales of their goods and services in developing countries. From this perspective, cultural imperialism is interpreted as a way in which the transmission of certain products, fashions and styles from the dominant nations to the dependent markets leads to the creation of particular patterns of demand and consumption which are underpinned by and endorse the cultural values, ideals and practices of their dominant origin. In this manner the local cultures of developing nations become dominated and in varying degrees invaded, displaced and challenged by foreign, often western, cultures [8, p.74]. Mass media are considered, within the framework of this approach, as a means of broadcasting and popularizing cultural models, models of behaviour, etc., and, more broadly, the ideology of the global capitalist system itself.

However, in our opinion, this approach somewhat reduces the understanding of the concept of media imperialism, since it can be used for purely political purposes. The rather vivid example is the practice of using by Russia its mass media potential to preserve its political dominance in the post-Soviet space, many elements of which, in our view, can be characterized exactly as media imperialism. Suffice it to recall that in 2014 — year of "Revolution of dignity" — the share of Russian content on Ukrainian television exceeded 40%, which actually equalled the volumes of Ukrainian content and almost 2.5 times exceeded content from other countries [9].

Continuing with analysis of how the problem of media imperialism is a significant factor in contemporary international relations, I would like to note that in our opinion, the problem of media

domination in the present, with the widespread spread of satellite television and the Internet, has already significantly reduced its severity if did not disappear at all. Let's try to substantiate this idea. First, the availability of a wide range of mass media channels creates a heterogeneous information environment in which the audience can choose what suits its needs, including cultural ones. And the key problem for developing countries in this context is not so much the cultural pressure of foreign origin, but the technological backwardness, which places this problem at a slightly different level. In the end, the problem of technological backwardness also gradually loses its severity, including and thanks to the efforts of the world community.

Secondly, the threats attributed to globalized world, including media and cultural imperialism, can simultaneously be viewed as positive characteristics of the modern world. Thus, Western culture dominates in the world, with its own lifestyle, way of doing business, certain set of moral and ethical values, domination of English as a language of international communication, etc. But at the same time, this may be seen as a situation when there are some well-known and universally accepted (thus for someone maybe to some extent forced) patterns of behaviour, which obviously facilitates interpersonal, business, etc. communications, including cross-cultural, and benefits of having a generally recognized language of international communication are self-evident.

Thirdly, some of cultural patterns disseminated within global mass communications may serve as a catalyst for positive socio-cultural changes in developing countries, enriching them and opening up new perspectives and dimensions. Additionally, we should not underestimate the life potential and resistance of the existing cultures of the world, their ability, on the one hand, to successfully compete with other cultures, on the other, to develop and adapt to new conditions without losing the basics of their identity. According to D. McQuail, the 'problem' of potential cultural damage from transnationalized media may well be exaggerated. Globally, many distinct regional, national (and subnational) cultures within Europe and other regions are still strong and resistant. Audiences can probably tolerate several different and inconsistent worlds of cultural experience (such as local, national, subgroup and global) without one having to destroy the others. The media can extend cultural choices in a creative way, and internationalization can work creatively [10, p.259].

Fourthly, the problem of protecting the national media space from external influences is primarily a problem of national rather than international level, although international information law contains a number of different types of documents concerning this issue. Solving this problem may occur both in "defensive" and "offensive" dimensions. On the one hand, the state can regulate the level of presence of content of foreign origin in its media space, protecting it from unwanted external influences (but again, these efforts with access to the Internet and satellite television have limited effect); on the other — state should ensure presence of its "voice" in the global media space, including promoting the samples of nation culture and contributing to its recognition worldwide.

In addition, in contemporary world political discourse, in particular in UNESCO's strategic documents, the imbalance of international media flows has undergone tangible transformations. Thus, in the current Medium-term strategy for 2014-2021, the organization's strategic objectives include "Promoting freedom of expression, media development and access to information and knowledge". As to the media, the document notes that "media pluralism is a key pillar in strengthening democratic governance and facilitating the free flow of information" [11, p.26]. One of the sensitive vectors of this problem, which UNESCO regards to be one of the key directions of its activities are increasing the media and information literacy competencies of citizens, as well as support of strong journalism organizations, and up-to-date and impactful journalism education programmes.

Among the key issues to be addressed in this area are "freedom of expression, ethical dimensions of the information society, multilingualism in cyberspace, and transforming digital divides into digital inclusions" [11, p.27]. The last issue has two key dimensions: the availability of appropriate technical infrastructure and the availability of up-to-date ICT skills, and UNESCO concentrates its efforts on resolving these problems.

Conclusions. Media imperialism, as a phenomenon that characterized the media dimension of the development of the international system in the post-colonial period, became a matter of concern of international institutions, first and foremost UNESCO, and obtained proper reflection in academic studies of a theoretical and empirical nature. Media imperialism was regared, among other things, as an instrument of cultural imperialism, as a means of ensuring the steady domination of Western culture

worldwide. At the same time, the development of cross-border mass-communication media, such as satellite TV and the Internet, significantly reduced the severity of these phenomena, primarily due to the formation of a rather diversified media environment and the emergence of broad opportunities for any states to ensure their presence in global communications. The problem of the imbalance of international media flows in world political discourse has been transformed into a broader issue of "digital divide" and inequality of access to knowledge.

Prospects for further research are to analyse the practice of using various types of manipulative technologies in mass media to help achieve the goals of foreign policy in different states of the world.

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Терещук В. І. Проблема медіа-імперіалізму в сучасних умовах

У статті розглядається явище медіа-імперіалізму, яке характеризувало стан глобальних масових комунікацій у пост-колоніальний період. Зокрема, розглядається входження концепту медіа-імперіалізму у політичний та академічний дискурс, показується, як із трансформацією глобальної системи комунікацій відбувалося переосмислення цього явища. Доводиться, що на сьогоднішній день ключові проблеми, що характеризували медіа-імперіалізм, або втратили свою гостроту, або є такими, що можуть бути розглянуті як в цілому позитивні, хоч і неминучі, атрибути глобалізації. На прикладі стратегічних документів ЮНЕСКО показуються сучасні імперативи світової політики у сфері мас-медіа.

Ключові слова: світова політика, міжнародні інформаційні відносини, засоби масової комунікації, медіа-імперіалізм, культурний імперіалізм, цифровий розрив, ЮНЕСКО.