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**News Media and Global Influence:
The Story of China and India**

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News Media and Global Influence: The Story of China and India

INTRODUCTION

Three decades after the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) debates, encouraging trends are perceptible in global media and cultural resources and flow of information. The encouraging development of non-Anglo Saxon stakes in global communication flow coincides with the rise of economies beyond the core countries of Western Europe and North America. Developing economies, especially those of India and China, as Mosco (2009) observes, have rendered simplistic many earlier models of Western dominance. China and India, which in the 1970s were seen as part of the periphery or semi periphery of a world system - dominated by a core group of capitalist economies – now can boast of prolific media markets and industries and have also moved towards exports (Straubhaar, 2010).

Indian software companies like Tata, Infosys, Wipro and ICICI have made strong inroads in the global markets, especially in North America (Mosco, 2009) and the country's entertainment companies have tapped the large diaspora in overseas markets (Straubhaar, 2010). The Chinese state-owned news media (Xinhua News Agency, China Central Television (CCTV), Global Times and China Radio International (CRI)) have made international inroads through foreign investment for voice and influence in the global platform (Shambaugh, 2010; Zhang, 2009). This raises the possibilities of China's challenge to hegemonic global news and information flow. Keeping this in mind, this paper analyses the Chinese news media's potential of success in global markets.

While Indian news media could have been a likely competitor of China in a new global news and information order (Boyd-Barrett, 2010), the former's scope has primarily remained national, despite enjoying the advantage of being perceived as free and credible in the global platform. Considering that many Indian companies like those in information technology (IT), software and entertainment media sectors are encouraging foreign expansion (Baru, 2009), it becomes imperative to explore the privately-owned news companies' seeming lack of interest in international markets. Besides, while the transnational expansion of Chinese news media is a state-sponsored project (Thussu, 2010a) that are also meant to serve foreign policy objectives as the country's perceived soft power assets, the Indian state's cultural diplomacy efforts have so far been limited (Lee, 2010a). For obvious reasons, New Delhi cannot expect to get the country's fiercely unruly private media "to devise or shape a consistent message about Indian successes to a foreign audience" (Lee, 2010). Therefore, the absence of dominating and ambitious state-owned foreign news media refers to the Indian state's lack of interest in enhancing the country's soft power credentials. However, by retaining their non-propagandist nature, it could be in the interest of both the state and private news companies to emerge as the country's cultural asset and create a niche audience base through overseas expansion.

The interest in state-sponsored Chinese news media's international ventures and the Indian news media's lack of presence in foreign locations is pertinent keeping in mind the concerns of continuing imbalances in global news and information flow. While the traditional thesis of imperialism of Western media has been challenged in recent times with the rise of regional centres of cultural production, many structural inequalities like the economic dominance of the established players continue to be relevant (Boyd-Barrett, 2010a; Thussu, 2010a). The counter-hegemonic potential of Chinese and Indian news media becomes a subject of analysis, considering the prolific nature of their news media, their media markets and the two countries' much-hyped status as emerging global powers. Keeping these issues in mind, this paper raises the following research questions: **What are the conditions that influence the international success of Chinese news media? Why are the Indian state and private news companies not exploring the potential of overseas expansion? To what**

extent can the two Asian giants' news media contribute to their influence in global news and information flow?

LOOKING BACK: NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND NWICO DEBATES

Before delving into these questions, it would be essential to revisit some pertinent issues of global politics of the Cold War era that led to the movement of Non-Aligned Nations and the NWICO debates. This historic reference contextualises the development and growth of the Chinese and Indian media in their respective national markets in recent decades. The NWICO debates were closely related to the lack of balance in global news and information flow in the post-Second World War era. The revolutionary development of communication satellites in the 1960s and 1970s led to the global dominance of transnational media corporations (TNC): Based primarily in advanced capitalist countries, TNCs operate and maintain facilities in multiple countries (Herman & McChesney, 1997). Their ability to transmit content by bypassing national boundaries led to concerns of new forms of imperialism in the newly independent nations of Asia, Latin America and Africa (Mosco, 2009). "Developing countries... lacked equivalent means to originate expression, were overly dependent on information transmitted from the developed world, and were largely dependent on Western-based media to articulate and disseminate information even about the developing world" (Boyd-Barrett, 2003, p. 35). The developing nations along with some communist nations (which became part of part of global institutions like the United Nations, UNESCO and the International Telecommunication Union) formed the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to resist their forced incorporation within the sphere of influence of either of the superpowers, United States and Soviet Union (Herman & McChesney, 1997; Boyd-Barrett, 2003). The NAM challenged the advanced capitalist countries' hegemonic influence over news, entertainment and information flow through developed global media (based primarily in these countries), and called for global communication democracy through demands of universal access to and control over communication media (Herman & McChesney, 1997; Mosco, 2009). The movement came to be known as the call for New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) in the 1970s and 1980s (Herman & McChesney, 1997) and was mainly sustained through platforms like UNESCO (Boyd-Barrett, 2003).

The report *Many Voices, One World* (popularly known as the MacBride Report) was issued in 1980 to study the global information flow and suggest recommendations to eliminate media imbalances and increase plurality of channels and information for better national development (Herman & McChesney, 1997). The MacBride Report suggested the strengthening of national news agencies and the formation of collaborative networks to provide audiences with alternative news sources (Boyd-Barrett, 2003). Boyd-Barrett (2003) summarises the goals of the MacBride Report: removal of all barriers to free, better and balanced flow of information and ideas, elimination of imbalances and inequalities, respect for cultural identity and rights of different ethnic and social groups to participate in communication and in access to information. The NWICO campaign, which was challenged by the developed countries, suffered rude political defeat after countries like the United States (US), Britain and Singapore withdrew from UNESCO (Boyd-Barrett, 2009).

The NWICO debate continues to be relevant for raising the issue of lack of balance in news and information flow. In the light of its emphasis on the plurality of channels of communication, the current growth of the Chinese and Indian news media and the former's international expansion are significant. But it needs to be remembered that the rise of media outlets from these countries coincided with the universal acceptance of transnational capitalism, the rise of a neoliberal economic order and the unchallenged influence of the US that followed after the political defeat of the NWICO campaign (Boyd-Barrett, 2003). The concept of media imperialism (transnationals, based in the global North, dominating media markets of the rest of the world), raised as part of the NWICO

debates, was criticised for its crude political rhetoric (Boyd-Barrett, 2010a). Many of its concerns have been rendered irrelevant with the plurality of communication channels in the global South and the self-sufficiency of their national markets. The concerns of media imperialism to a large extent have become enmeshed with critiques of the structural inequalities of global capitalism that are manifested in the nature of media ownership, structure, distribution or content (Boyd-Barrett, 2010a). “What distinguishes the emerging global media system is not transnational control over exported media content, however, so much as increasing TNC control over media distribution and content within nations” (McChesney, 2010, p. 189).

While transnational control over media within nations remains a valid concern, the above critique of global capitalist media system does not adequately address continuing imbalances of international media flows like negligible revenue share of the media of the global South and their ideological conformity with hegemonic values. “There is little evidence to suggest that major imbalances with respect to distribution of resources or attention, or arising from the application of Western news values, have grown weaker; indeed they may have grown stronger” (p. 149). The counter-hegemonic potential of Chinese and Indian news media are considered keeping these issues in mind.

STATE, NON-STATE ACTORS AND GLOBAL MEDIA

Media, especially external broadcasting, have traditionally served as public diplomacy vehicles of national governments and have traditionally been employed to shape or impose information in target societies, during war and other times (Wang & Hong, 2011). For instance, Voice of America (VOA), the US government-funded broadcasting service, operated as the official voice and the public diplomacy component of the US government during the Cold War era and disseminated Western ideas of democracy and freedom (Wang & Hong, 2011) in the political and ideological battle against the Communist camp. However, in the changed information-rich geopolitical environment of the post-Cold War era, the nature and demand of public diplomacy has shifted from pure propaganda (the aim of convincing) to communicating and sharing alternative views and opinions (Wang & Hong, 2011).

It is accepted that pure propaganda would find no takers in the current media-rich environment that offers multiple choices of information to users. This has altered the intent of state-owned international media channels in recent times. Interestingly, there has been a proliferation of state-owned international news media (primarily broadcast channels) since 2006, which are driven by the goal of challenging the “BBC-CNN approach to world events” (Painter, 2008, p. 1). Some instances of state-owned international news media include France 24 (a joint venture between TF1, the country’s largest independent network, and state-run France Televisions), Russia’s English-language channel Russia Today (financed by president Vladimir Putin), Germany’s Deutsche Welle (offering programming in multiple languages including German, English, Spanish and Arabic), Euronews (financed by several European governments that announced Spanish and Portuguese services across Latin America) and Telesur (funded by Hugo Chavez of Venezuela) (Painter, 2008; Seib, 2010). Some of these channels like Germany’s Deutsche Welle and Euronews, despite being state-funded and their goal of challenging hegemonic BBC-CNN worldview, adhere to the latter’s proclaimed editorial principles of impartiality and view their output as public service rather than state voice (Painter, 2008). On the other hand, others like Russia Today and Telesur do not necessarily adhere to the principles of impartiality and neutrality in their effort to be counter-hegemonic (Painter, 2008). France 24, while adhering to the principles of impartiality for its public and private channels, gives considerable space to official French views (Painter, 2008). Disseminating French political values, which was the primary agenda of the channel, constitutes covering parts of the world that are traditionally ignored, encouraging debate and promoting economic and cultural development (Seib,

2010). The counter-hegemonic ambition of these state-funded international news media is fuelled by the common belief that proclaimed editorial principles of balance and objectivity are often flouted in reality by the dominant media players themselves (Painter, 2008). It may be noted that the commercial success of these state-owned media players depends on their ability to create a substantive audience base. However, scholars (Painter, 2008; Seib, 2010) argue that financial success of these state-funded news media have so far been limited. "Most rely heavily on government subsidies, which are sometimes accompanied by a full government partnership in the channel's operation. For all the prestige and influence that these channels may have, the market is too crowded for profits to be likely" (Seib, 2010, p. 737).

However, the significance of these state-led international news media remains in the fact that the latter's development coincides with the emergence of new trends of transnational journalism – proliferation of news with views. "... there is growing view that 'opinionated news' is becoming more popular than fair, balanced and neutral news, especially among the young" (Painter, 2008, p. 6). This remains an optimistic development as far as the growth of the state-led Chinese transnational news media is concerned. It can be said that political reform of China, which at the moment seems to be a distant dream, and the espousal of democratic values (as propagated by hegemonic media players like CNN and BBC) are not mandatory for the international acceptance of these Chinese overseas media outlets as long as they shift from pure propaganda towards subtle espousal of Chinese political agenda beneath the superficial guise of balance and impartiality. While this paper refuses to take a moral stand on whether journalism with distinct political agenda could adequately serve public interest, it agrees that such development would certainly increase plurality of voices, audiences' choices and perspective and may even correct information imbalance in certain cases (Painter, 2008). Therefore, the counter-hegemonic potential of new transnational state-owned news media like China's CCTV International ought not to be gauged just by their inability to challenge the economic dominance of established media players like BBC and CNN (that seems improbable in near future). Their challenge to the latter's ideological dominance too is significant. These new transnational players' ability to reverse information flow that has traditionally originated from the global North to South remains dependent on a number of factors including the nature of the market (domestic or foreign), existing media players (the number of foreign players in domestic markets) and the receptivity of the audience to such channels. However, their ability to offer news content and perspective, different from those of the established media players, can also be argued to be a significant yardstick of their counter-hegemonic potential (even though it may mean espousing similar styles of news presentation). For instance, Zhang (2010) observes that compared to CNN and BBC, China's global media report more on developing countries. With the phenomenal growth in the number of communication channels and choices available to news consumers, the challenge for Chinese overseas news media is to win over the allegiance of a section of the English-speaking global political and economic elite who are interested in China. In the debate of information hegemony, it is also significant that state funding has emerged as a significant economic model for the transnational media. This is primarily because in the current crowded media environment it has become increasingly difficult to operate as for-profit commercial entities. Seib (2010) observes that even private transnational media like Al Jazeera (that has always required significant funding from its owner, the Emir of Qatar) and BBC World (BBC's commercially-funded international broadcast network) have found it difficult to make financial profits in recent times. This development points towards the scope of Chinese capitalism (Beijing's massive development fuelled by state-owned enterprises) in global media businesses. This global process can be explained as one in which "the state advances as the private sector retreats" (Xin, 2010, p. 299). This is a significant development that deals a blow to the dominant assumption that only privately-owned media can offer credible news. Thus it can be said that the proliferation and scope of long-term survival of state-owned transnational media enterprises remain integrated to China's model of capitalist development.

It is also in the interest of the Indian state to invest in the country's transnational news media. Firstly, having global news media can assert the Indian state's economic might and its newly recognised global economic significance and enhance its international profile. The country's overseas media outlets may enhance its global prestige "in the way that a national airline might" (Painter, 2008, p. 5). Secondly, the Indian state may perceive its overseas news media as channels to make its foreign policy known in global settings. "Its foreign policy, regional concerns and geostrategic views have remained largely unknown to the rest of the world, particularly to a heedless west, which had become comfortable with its interpretation of India as a none-too-straightforward international performer... But today, its international actions and positions matter more and are perceived differently" (Malone, 2011, p. 37). In this ground the role of overseas news media could be of interest to the Indian state. Malone (2011) notes that promotion of democracy and human rights are part of the country's foreign policy. Transnational communication channels could be potential platforms to promote India's shared global values of democracy and its development model and may enhance partnership with other democracies of the developing world like Brazil and South Africa. State-private partnership too could be useful in this regard in case of possible international ambition of Indian news media. International expansion could be of interest to the countries' private news companies as well, which have witnessed high revenue returns and profits in recent years (to be discussed in the latter half of the paper). It could assert their global prestige and allow them to emerge as significant cultural resources in the long run.

From the perspective of critical political economy, it can be argued that even non-state media actors, with interlinked political and economic interests, may end up serving public diplomacy aims on behalf of national governments. Although profitability remains the primary concern of owners of corporate media, they may or may not influence output implicitly in line with their views and values through allocative control (that is by defining the overall goals and scope of the corporation and general deployment of productive resources) (Murdock, 1982). Drawing from political economists' critique of corporate media control, it can be said that "shared patterns of economic and social life" of political and economic elites may "produce a coincidence of basic interests and result in 'a cluster of common ideological positions and perspective'" (Murdock, 1982, p. 142). This may explain non-state media actors' interests in serving the national agenda in certain cases. For instance, it has often been argued that CNN's coverage of the Iraq war championed the American view that the invading forces were ushering in freedom in Iraq (Seib, 2010). Al Jazeera channels, which have been found to espouse non-partisan coverage, can also be said to be political in a certain sense though their editorial agenda primarily seeks to correct existing imbalances of dominant news flows. They are political actors in the sense that they are driven by the aim to dedicate substantial air time and context and analysis to stories of the developing world, for instance their news coverage of conflicts in Lebanon and Iran (Painter, 2008). Thus possible corporate-state partnership for Indian transnational news media may not necessarily imply unidirectional transmission of the country's foreign policy aims (which would serve little purpose to private news media). Since democracy and free media contribute to the country's global cultural attraction (Malone, 2011), the Indian state cannot afford to be defensive in its policy towards prospective global media and would have to remain open to scrutiny. The Indian news media's counter-hegemonic potential tends to remain limited in comparison to Chinese news media in terms of news values and content. This can be attributed to the corporate impetus of the country's privately-owned media. Referring to a study of India's first private satellite Hindi channel Zee TV, Painter (2008) observes that its "news bulletins were largely derivative of the style of Western media, adopting similar standards of production and news values" (p. 4). However, with the Indian state's financial involvement prospective transnational news media can aspire to emerge as a cultural resource in the way Bollywood films contribute to the country's soft power. Drawing from the success of Al Jazeera English, Painter (2008) says that a distinctive editorial perspective (that is hard to be defined), secure and steady financial base and pluralistic journalistic values could in theory be the strategy for long-term survival in crowded media

markets. Thus Indian news media through possible overseas expansion could further contribute to the plurality of communication channels and hold significant stake in the global news and information flow.

SOFT POWER – CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of soft power has been drawn to explain the hegemony and dominance of Anglo-Saxon values in global politics, including their manifestation in the international media space. Conceptualised by Joseph Nye in 1990 in his seminal book, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, soft power refers to domination that does not require the use of hard power (military and economic sanctions). While military and economic power may entail threats, sanctions (economic) and war, which may or may not yield desired outcomes within a reasonable time depending on resources, skill and luck (Nye, 2004), soft power does not require forceful intervention by the government and its impact can be realised only over a prolonged period of time. Soft power - a softer version of propaganda for furthering national interest - has emerged as a central component of public diplomacy in the era of globalised communication (Thussu, 2010). With the contours of public diplomacy having changed in recent times, the notion of soft power especially in relation to media has become a pertinent issue. This is related to the media's ability to provide diverse views in current information-rich saturated markets. It may be noted that apart from state-led initiatives non-state actors too can be effective in enhancing a country's soft power since it does not necessitate direct intervention of the government – the point is to enhance the cultural values, global charm and attraction of the country. Thus India's privately-owned free news media can also be included in the discussion of soft power. "Non-state actors – whether benign or malign, constructive or disruptive – now play increasing roles in the conduct of international politics and lead us to think differently about global development, conflict and reconciliation" (Kalathil, 2011, p. 1). There is general academic consensus on the fact that the scope of soft power resources (by both state and non-state actors) has been enhanced because of the rise in information and communication networks, which may offer greater opportunity in the dissemination of values, norms and ideas and thus increase a country's charm and attraction (Kalathil, 2011). However, it is crucial to remember that soft power is different from propaganda-based public diplomacy efforts of governments. The limitations of the concept of soft power also need to be considered before proceeding any further. For instance, there is no broad consensus on the extent to which soft power resources (culture/ media activities favouring the interests of the nation-state) can translate into positive, desired outcomes for the country though there have been attempts to measure the impact through techniques like opinion polling (Kalathil, 2011). Scholars like Lee (2010a) also argue that soft power efforts of a country cannot be effective in the instrumental sense in the absence of the state's hard power. Also, soft power – interest in a country's culture – would not necessarily make foreign governments accede to a country's foreign policy objectives (Lee, 2010). However, assessing the soft power potential of Indian news media still remains pertinent keeping in mind the possibility of their influence in the global information flow.

Ideological domination remains implicit in the exercise of soft power (Bilgin & Elis, 2008), because of which foreign publics show no apparent resistance to host countries' efforts of soft power. Nye's (2004; 2010) original conception of soft power refers to the shaping of audiences' taste and preference, which points to its subtle hegemonic process. Ideological hegemony, which remains inherent in the concept of soft power, becomes possible through a "historical process through which particular values have come to be considered as universal and right and others have been rendered parochial and less right" (Bilgin & Elis, 2008, p. 12). The continuing global charm of America remains integrated to the popularity of the country's media products including Hollywood movies among other things. The global acceptance of transnational media like CNN and BBC that are based in

advanced capitalist democracies of North America and Western Europe as professional media channels can be attributed to the universal acceptance of democratic values of freedom, credibility and professional objectivity. However, scholars (Wang & Hong, 2011) argue that with the proliferation of multiple communication channels, the notion of American soft imperialism has been challenged though ideological domination through the concepts of democracy and human rights continues. In that sense, Chinese notion of soft power that differs from Nye's (2004; 2010) original concept challenges hegemonic Anglo Saxon values and their corresponding ideological domination.

Chinese Soft Power

It is significant that in relation to the function of its state-owned transnational media, which are perceived as arms of cultural diplomacy, the notion of Chinese soft power surpasses Nye's original definition. The soft power potential of these media outlets also speaks of the Chinese state's aim to challenge the cultural hegemony and imperialism of the established transnational media by reaching out to global publics (Mingjian, 2008). There exist continuing debates in China as to what should constitute Chinese soft power, which also extends to its transnational news media. The view that traditional Chinese cultural values with ideas of harmony and peace could appeal to foreign publics and contribute to its soft power has had greater impact on the country's leadership than alternative views that emphasise the effectiveness of the state's political power and policies (Glaser & Murphy, 2009). Analysts of China, however, have also argued the importance of Chinese model of development as a potential soft power resource – that is, they argue that China's model of economic reform can be framed as a viable alternative to Washington Consensus (the US-led multilateral institution's strategy of economic and political development) (Glaser & Murphy, 2009). Such proactive policies are further required in relation to its news media's soft power. There is lack of consensus among the leadership on whether Chinese soft power should be expanded to proactively disseminate political values, but at present it is primarily employed for defensive purposes – to correct misrepresentations of the country, present a better image and to counter Western cultural and political inroads in China (Mingjian, 2008).

For Chinese overseas media to contribute to hegemonic information flow, they need to be proactive rather than defensive and contribute to alternative values and trends in the media landscape. For instance, China's journalistic training programmes in Africa (as part of its infrastructural/ technological assistance to African media) also entail propagating alternative views of journalism and journalistic practice that are different from normative liberal democratic models (Banda, 2009). With the proliferation of politically-oriented state-led news channels in the global media landscape, Chinese news media's proactive strategies can strengthen its soft power. The Chinese model of development that assures direct involvement of the state (in the form of state-owned enterprises) has already set a global example. In global media businesses, as discussed earlier, steady source of funding through state involvement has become a necessity with chances of profit reduced even for private media players in saturated markets. Chinese transnational news media can make better use of this alternative model of media business to contribute to a different political-economic order. Thus proactive strategies could strengthen its soft power in relation to its transnational news media. However, propagandist content would still be ineffective and innovative editorial policy would be essential to achieve the aims of the transnational news media. The overseas expansion of Chinese news media is considered an integral aspect of the state's cultural diplomacy efforts. Drawing from Xin (2010), it can be argued that the Chinese state-owned transnational media's soft power aspirations remain integrated to the state's cultural and political values and their intended hegemonic influence.

Indian Soft Power

While Chinese political values directly challenge hegemonic traditions, India by establishing democratic traditions (including free press) has endorsed preferred political values of the world's dominant powers. Indian values, which are reflected in its vibrant democracy, free and unruly news media, independent judiciary, active civil society and human rights struggles and appear attractive in parts of the world (Malone, 2011), show ideological conformity with advanced capitalist and democratic countries. Thus theoretically it could be easier for Indian news media to win over the support of the diaspora and sections of the global economic and political elite. "The regional order over the past two decades has been characterized by a move toward open markets, multinational cooperation, international rule-of-law, and an evolving democratic community—all backed by American pre-eminence... That India is rising through full and unapologetic participation in the American-led regional order works to its advantage" (Lee, 2010). This regional political-economic order remains crucial to the potential acceptability of Indian news media in foreign locations. It could be easier for the latter to contribute to its soft power because of their shared values with large parts of the developed world. In contrast to China, however, Indian soft power does not exist as a function of statecraft and strategy. The initiative and involvement of the Indian state in exploiting the country's soft power resources has so far been inadequate though it has begun to realise the need of exploring the potential of its soft power resources as a means of achieving its foreign policy objectives in the region (Lee, 2010a).

RISE OF CHINA AND INDIA

The economic output of China and India began to shoot up in the last decades of the 20th century. Quoting scholars, Mody (2010) predicts that by 2015 China's economy will level that of the US and by 2030 the former will be the largest one, followed by the latter and India. China and India opened their doors to foreign capital in 1978 and 1991 respectively and while the former emerged as the world's manufacturing factory, the latter grew as the location of software services (Mody, 2010). Both countries have been perceived by foreign firms as the destination for cheap labour and new consumers and have been often projected in the West as rivals vying for the second and third positions in the world economy (Mody, 2010). China progressed from egalitarian poverty to becoming one of the world's largest economies; on the other hand, India followed the path of export-led development very slowly (Mody, 2010).

CHINA

Background

Market reforms were initiated in China in 1978 by Deng Xiaoping and his successor Jiang Zemin. Provincial autonomy was allowed in the political system to some extent within the broad guidelines of the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (Mody, 2010). Private ownership of newspapers was not allowed in China and the media traditionally were expected to operate as party organs since the CCP's ascension to power in 1949 (Hachten, 2010). The trend began to change with the pro-market reforms of 1978. The traditional media expanded in the post-1978 phase (Hachten, 2010). The state subsidies for the press dropped with rise in advertising and other forms of financing, which allowed editorial independence to some extent in the following years (Hachten, 2010). The struggle for democratisation of the Chinese media system and temporary slack in the party-state's propaganda command structure in the post-1978 phase among other factors contributed to the pro-democracy movements of 1989 (Zhao, 2005; Zhao, 2008). In the following era, heavy censorship was resumed in

political reporting but the efforts of commercialisation continued (Hachten, 2010) with accelerated market reforms (Zhao, 2008). China's integration to World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 completed its negotiation with transnational capitalism (Schiller, 2008). The growth of the media sector in China coincided with its progression to the capitalist economic model. Scotton and Hachten (2010) observe that the "expanding media became part of a rapid economic revolution" that changed the country from Marxist Communism to authoritarian capitalism" (p. 1). Thus contemporary Chinese media can be defined by the logic of political control and market imperative (Zhao, 2008). Though government-controlled, the Chinese media are fairly diverse with different provinces and cities having their own television and radio stations, daily and weekly newspapers and magazines that operate as self-interested economic entities through advertising support (Scotton & Hachten, 2010; Zhao, 2005). The media companies also exist as part of large conglomerates that allow the state to maintain political control, while ensuring economic efficiency and international competitiveness at the same time (Zhao, 2005). According to rough estimates, there are about 2,119 newspapers, 369 television stations, 306 radio stations and 9,038 periodicals (Scotton & Hachten, 2010).

Apart from being the political instrument of the Chinese state, the communications and information sector over the past few decades has also evolved into a leading business investment and profit-making sources (Schiller, 2008). The country's push to increase "outbound foreign direct investment across the board" has been significant: "numerous market-building endeavours by Chinese companies are altering global political-economic dynamics" (Schiller, 2008, p. 109). The trend is visible across communication and information sectors including Internet companies, films and telecommunications. At the same time the Chinese state's political interests and the global discourse of a Rising China (Schiller, 2008) are interlinked with these outbound economic investments.

Chinese News Media's Global Aspiration – Why?

China's rise as an upcoming economic and political power is often perceived with uncertainty by the US and other countries. Finlay and Xin (2010) report that in February 2009, less than six months after the Beijing Olympics, a BBC World Service survey of public opinion across 21 countries revealed that the country's positive ratings fell six points over the year to 39 per cent and its negative rating rose from 33 to 40 per cent. The negative international opinion intensifies the Chinese state's need to correct the country's image and reputation in the global platform. With mainstream Western media becoming sceptical of China's rising economic/ military/ ideological power, the idea is to engage its own media to influence international opinion in its favour through messages of peaceful development and harmony (Zhang, 2009). The realisation that greater political and economic power would not necessarily translate into favourable international opinion has intensified efforts to "push Chinese perspectives and voices into the international arena" and "contest the discursive power of the West" (Sun, 2010, p. 59).

As Sun (2010) observes, communication and media exist in China not just as an important aspect of Chinese political power but also the manifestation of its economic power. The political agenda is also enmeshed in profound economic reasons that are interlinked with the country's ambition to be a global economic player. "The Chinese leadership... has poured resources into developing high-tech ICT as a means of spring-boarding into a stronger and more independent role within the transnational political economy" (Schiller, 2008, p. 113). Schiller (2008) also observes that the news media's outward expansion symbolises the state's aim of creating "a transnationally powerful Chinese capitalism that can hold its own by reaching global scale in the strategic communications and information industry" (p. 113). A recent article in the Times quotes Francis Fukuyama as saying

that state-owned enterprises, through which Beijing administered its massive development, are back in vogue (Karon, 2011),¹ which is significant for the long-term potential of its transnational media.

China's Global Media – Scope and Challenges

Shambaugh (2010) reports that in the year 2009-2010 the Chinese government invested 8.7 billion USD primarily on the external publicity of CCTV, Xinhua, CRI and the China Daily newspaper. While earlier overseas Chinese in Chinese speaking countries like Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau formed the target audience of the state-controlled transnational media, lately the focus has shifted to larger international audience. In the early 1990s CCTV started its first 24-hour satellite international broadcast in Mandarin. The 24-hour satellite English channel CCTV-9 was launched in 2000, followed by Spanish and French channels in 2003 (Zhang, 2009). Xinhua News Agency currently caters free or low cost news to more than 130 countries in Chinese, English, Russian, Arabic, French and Spanish languages (Scotton, 2010). It has also launched CNC world, an English language global television news service through government investment funding (Boyd-Barrett, 2010). The foreign websites of Xinhua also present local content to win over foreign audiences (Scotton, 2010). China has also funded a series of English and Chinese television stations abroad like the Blue Ocean Network (BON TV) and Great Wall TV in the US (Shambaugh, 2010). Apart from revamping the overseas edition of the English language newspaper China Daily, the CCP's mouthpiece People's Daily has also launched its English edition Global Times (Sun, 2010).

Global Reach – Strategic Partnerships and Alliances

Sun (2010) notes that the Chinese news media is aggressively driven by the strategy “to transmit more media content within the shortest possible time, over the largest possible distance, and to the largest possible audience” (p. 59). Strategic partnerships with foreign media have so far been a crucial strategy of the Chinese news media outlets to infiltrate international markets, which include collaborations with foreign media service providers. For instance, CCTV-9 negotiates with major transnational companies like the News Corporation's FOX and AOL Time Warner in the US markets (Zhang, 2009). The Hong Kong-based BTV broadcasts CCTV and few other provincial Chinese channels in Australia and New Zealand (Sun, 2010). The CRI too works through partnerships with nearly 117 FM and 32 AM radio channels and also with international content brokers like World Radio Network (WRN) across Asia, Europe, Africa, North America and Oceania (Sun, 2010). China has also struck agreements with Malaysia to boost investment in communication and other sectors like energy and infrastructure, according to an² Associated Press report (2011). Earlier news was exchanged on free-of-charge basis with the mainstream media in countries that enjoyed close relations with China. But outlets like Xinhua have slowly shifted to subscription-based models not just for economic reasons but also to counter claims of its propaganda intentions (Xin, 2009).

¹ Why China Does Capitalism Better than the U.S. Article appeared on January 20, 2011 on the website of the Time Magazine.

² 'Malaysia, China sign pacts to boost investment.' Article Published by Associated Press. Downloaded from Forbes.com website.

Limitations

Economic Logic versus Political Gain

While such strategic alliances can be an effective means of gaining foothold in the international market, experts observe that the negative perception of the Chinese news media (as the government's mouthpiece) remains a formidable barrier in securing such partnerships.³ Li Mingjiang, an expert of Chinese soft power and former diplomatic correspondent of Xinhua, says in an interview that the news agency's attempts of penetrating Australian news markets have so far not materialised. John Lee⁴, a commentator of Chinese and Indian media and foreign policy, observes in an email interview that partnerships with transnational media companies are often restricted to sharing purely factual content because of persisting doubts on the credibility and independence of Chinese media. Content-sharing with global media – even if purely factual – may consolidate the news media's position and could be useful in the long run. However, purely factual content-sharing offers little scope of transmitting Beijing's political messages and thus limits the impact of its political agenda. It may be noted that the foreign media outlets, as Mingjiang informs, have so far received limited success in securing the support of international advertisers.

African Media Markets

As understood from interviews, the overseas Chinese news media's influence has so far been strongest only in developing countries like Africa in the sub-Saharan region that are often dependent on China for investment and political support. For instance, in Africa Xinhua has also extended technological support for the development of the media sector and conducted trainings of journalists, apart from setting up bureaus and exchanging or selling news: "... many clients of Xinhua's services do not subscribe to Western news wires primarily for economic reasons" (Xin, 2009, p. 372). However, it may be noted that China's aid to African media may render certain political advantages to China. It may aid desirable coverage of China in African media and encourage the continuation of state control in the latter (Banda, 2009). The latter, though not desirable for media freedom, may work towards the creation of an alternative economic order in the global information landscape. Keeping in mind the proliferation of state-aided global media services, this implies China's distinct contribution in the new information order. However, the Chinese leadership views developed countries as strategically important for political message, says⁵ Lye Lian Fook, scholar of Chinese news media in an interview. Ironically, however, ideological content may have limited success with mainstream audiences in developed countries who are used to so-called free content of corporate-owned private news media. Purely factual content-sharing, increased coverage of local news and economic subsidies to existing players could be some immediate practical strategies to help Chinese transnational media's influence and voice in the developed media markets in the long run. The Chinese state may look towards making better use of its resourcefulness, when it comes to its immediate policy in developed countries. While overtly hegemonic grip may alienate mainstream audiences, the Chinese media's leadership should look at receiving the support of a niche clientele who are interested in China with non-propagandist content, distinctive reporting of world affairs and the guise of non-partisan coverage.

³ Li Mingjiang is currently an assistant professor of Chinese diplomacy and international strategies at S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies.

⁴ John Lee is a foreign policy fellow at the Centre for Independent Studies in Sydney and is a visiting fellow with Hudson Institute, Washington DC.

⁵ Lye Liang Fook is a research fellow at East Asian Institute with specialisations in Chinese politics, media and propaganda.

Propagandist Content

While Beijing continues to invest lavishly on state-of-the-art technological resources (Sun, 2010), the primary constraint remains unattractive, propagandist content. The blurring line between domestic propaganda and international communication are the main constraints for the commercial success of the Chinese international news media in developed countries. Of late, however, policy changes have been initiated to present a less propagandist face before foreign publics through measures like hiring foreign anchors, serious op-ed page commentaries and investigative newspaper stories (Shambaugh, 2010). Efforts of achieving credibility are often met with bureaucratic resistance (Xin, 2010). Differential policy towards domestic and international news content may help. The Chinese state could attempt to be less defensive and open in international markets for greater influence in the global mediascape.

Credibility of the News Media

Overt state control and being perceived as the Chinese government's mouthpiece, however, affect credibility and supposed editorial independence. "The strong state role... (in) ensuring strong political support and financial muscle actually has a downside... In this sense, there will always be doubts about the actions and real intentions of these corporations" (Lye and Chong, 2010, p. 14). Thus the Chinese state's excessive ideological involvement counterbalances the news media's competitiveness (resources and infrastructure). Higher standards of accountability and transparency are required in Chinese journalism especially in news of China though that may not necessarily imply Western standards. Without an honest and believable portrayal of contemporary news (including the myriad forms of contemporary social protests (Zhao, 2008)) and free information flow, the prevailing negative opinion of Chinese media is not likely to change. Lee says in his interview that the Chinese propaganda department would have to come to terms with the idea of critical reporting to realise the state-controlled transnational news media's political and economic agenda. The Chinese state's strategy was effective to a large extent in CCTV's coverage of the Sichuan earthquake though by no means it was truly open, objective, transparent and pluralistic (Sun, 2010). The transnational news media should aim to emulate this appearance of objectivity in its coverage of other pertinent news of China like social and political unrests, corruption scandals and epidemic threats. Such semblance of objectivity would also be required in news of the developing world, increased coverage of which could be Chinese news media's distinctive contribution in the media market.

Political Reform

Scholars (Xin, 2010; Sun, 2010) seem to suggest that chances of success of Chinese media companies appear to be limited in international news markets without political reform. This may not necessarily be so. It has been suggested that Chinese news media would be unable to offer what Western audiences expect without political reform. Political reform is a long-term process and the Chinese state so far has expressed little enthusiasm towards it. But news form and content, profoundly different from what Western media players offer, could even work in Chinese transnational news media's advantage if sold innovatively. Sun (2010) critiques Chinese news media's inability to adopt "news values and news-gathering practices which are truly independent of political and ideological control" as a major constraint in its success. However, one can say that China can do without emulating dominant news values and new gathering techniques. Firstly, it needs to be remembered that no news, even what is produced by dominant Western players, is truly independent and media outlets operate within subtle ideological and commercial constraints. However, operational and editorial independence and the need to not be overtly partisan, ideological and partisan are pertinent. Draconian information control too can be a constraint. Secondly, Chinese news media have better scope in the new journalistic and information order that is likely to offer space to

politically-oriented, state-owned news services. However, it is of concern that in recent times the Chinese government has reversed measures of freedom that was allowed to the media during the wake of the Sichuan earthquake in 2008 (Shirky, 2011). It is significant that Chinese soft power has contradictory effects and is thus lacking – the authoritarian state’s repressive and dominating role counterbalances the intended political messages of a peaceful and harmonious China. The public opinion continues to be affected by the country’s poor records in human and democratic rights and by the threat of its growing economic and political might. These constraints need to be counterbalanced by the country’s alternative media/ journalistic model, resourcefulness and proactive soft power messages.

INDIA

Background

In contrast to China’s one-party authoritarian Communist system, India has been a multi-party electoral democracy and currently has 28 strong states, each dominated by their own local ethnic politics (Mody, 2010). In the post-independence period of 1948-1985 the Indian state was marked by the hegemony of the Congress party in the political leadership of the country (for the whole period except in the immediate aftermath of the Emergency between 1975 and 1977) (Thomas, 2010). The economy was characterised by centralised planned growth and state involvement in a range of productive sectors including (broadcast) communications (Thomas, 2010) (the press, in contrast, has always been privately owned). Towards the end of the last decade, the country’s changing stance at the WTO exposed Indian businesses to external competition (Baru, 2009). Many large Indian companies - especially those in the IT (information technology) and software businesses - started expanding overseas and witnessed success (Baru, 2009). The success of the the IT, software and business process outsourcing companies have altered the country’s global image as a software hub (Baru, 2009) and contributed to its renewed international status and influence. The media sector expanded tremendously over the last few decades with the proliferation of advertising- and subscription-based private entities through policies initiated as part of deregulation, privatisation, economic liberalisation and globalisation (Thomas, 2010). The press along with other media entertainment industry have witnessed tremendous growth rate. A joint study by PricewaterhouseCoopers and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) projected 17 per cent growth for the Indian media and entertainment sector in 2007 (Thomas, 2010). The media scene is extremely vibrant with 6,000 newspapers, 450 television channels, and 350 FM radio stations, as per 2009 records (Thomas, 2010). Painter (2008) refers to a BBC World Service survey of 2006 to report that there exist about 31 broadcast in different languages that offer primarily India-centric news (the number could be higher in recent times) across the domestic market, differentiated by language, geography and genre. With NDTV in English and Aaj Tak in Hindi being the market players of 2006, the influence of foreign players like CNN International and BBC World Service were limited (Painter, 2008). CNN, however, forms local partnership with IBN, which gives it market edge (Painter, 2008).

Limited Global Reach

The Indian state has shown little keenness in exploring international audiences through global media and the efforts of private news companies too have been limited. The state broadcaster Doordarshan’s international broadcast channel DD World is currently available in 146 countries through satellite but it plays only peripheral role in catering to the Indian diaspora. Zee TV Hindi, to some extent, caters to the Hindi-speaking diaspora and in 2007 NDTV, India’s largest private channel, announced a global satellite English channel for the South Asian expatriates across Middle East and

Africa (Painter, 2008). Private Indian channels like Zee TV (runs a news channel – Zee News – along with entertainment channels as part of its buffet) and Sun TV, which are available though pay-based subscription, have discovered sizeable viewership in the US and UK markets among the Indian diaspora (Kohli-Khandekar, 2006). But these news channels have not yet developed as significant cultural resource with limited influence among the diaspora, nor have they expressed any desire to reach out to larger international audiences. Bennett Coleman Company Limited (BCCL), the owner of the country's largest selling newspaper The Times of India, bought Britain's Virgin Radio in 2008, leading to the proprietorship of three commercial radio licences⁶ (Ramesh, 2008). Ramesh (2008) in an article in The Guardian quotes BCCL's managing Vineet Jain on the company's global ambition: "... (BCCL) would aggressively grow in India and cherry-pick assets and brands around the world." Thus the private news media's focus primarily has remained national. These media companies have witnessed huge profit margins in recent years. HT Media Limited that owns newspapers Hindustan Times, Hindustan and Mint and a FM radio station has reported a profit of Rs 184.2 million in the year 2009. NDTV, which runs a bouquet of television channels in Hindi and English, saw a profit of Rs 205.2 million in the year 2009-2010⁷. Considering these media companies' high revenue growth, their lack of interest in investing in global news media seems surprising.

The Indian news agency Press Trust of India (PTI) formed regional (From Egypt to Singapore) partnership with Reuters in the post-World War era (Boyd-Barrett, 2010), which ended in 1953 due to internal differences. At present PTI along with other smaller agencies like Indo-Asian News Service (IANS) and Asian News International (ANI) cater domestic news and information to the Indian diaspora in the US, United Kingdom and the Gulf countries to a limited extent. Though these agencies have innovated with products and services, they have hardly transformed their business models in significant ways so as to emerge as global players (Boyd-Barrett, 2010). They maintain foreign bureaus in few other countries but their revenue bases are weak (Boyd-Barrett, 2010).⁸ KM Shrivastava, author and former journalist, says in an email interview that the Indian news agencies lack the revenue model necessary to maintain global capacity.

State, News Media and Weak Propaganda

The Indian state's disinterest in engaging foreign publics can be attributed to its historic constraints in engaging the news media for foreign propaganda. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of independent India, had envisioned the idea of an Indian news agency with global operations in 1946 (Shrivastava, 2010). In the Emergency era, Nehru's daughter and then-prime minister Indira Gandhi created Samachar News Agency by merging four agencies, PTI, United News of India (UNI), Hindustan Samachar and Samachar Bharti (which were in Indian and English languages), with the vision of global operations, modelled on AFP (Shrivastava, 2010). Following Gandhi's loss in the 1977-national elections, the succeeding Janata government dismantled Samachar for its political gain and interests (Shrivastava, 2010). The idea of an integrated news agency, which could emerge as a global player, did not sustain also for economic reasons. Indian newspapers – agencies like PTI and UNI were owned by newspaper cooperatives – preferred competition in the market, which propelled them to disintegrate Samachar (Shrivastava, 2010). The unfulfilled vision of a state-owned global media summarises the Indian state's challenges in engaging the media for foreign propaganda. While in the post-independence era the dominant ruling Congress party's vision of a global news

⁶ Passages from India. Article published in The Guardian website on June 9, 2008.

⁷ Annual Report of NDTV in 2009-2010.

⁸ KM Shrivastava, faculty member at the renowned media institute Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), New Delhi, is the author of the book, News Agencies: From Pigeon to Internet.

agency remained unfulfilled for political and economic reasons, the state's relationship with the news media has become more complicated in the post-liberation era of weak coalition politics.

The weak and fractious multi-party coalitions that have replaced hegemonic Congress party's grip in national politics over the past few decades have strengthened the power of the private media, with national government and political parties having become dependent on their support to retain power (Mohan, 2009). The increase in private advertising, the rising budget of private media and their lack of dependence on state subsidies have also contributed to the process (Baru, 2009; Mohan, 2009). Given the high degree of freedom that the Indian news media enjoy, the Indian state ends up directing most of its efforts in securing the support of the domestic media to gain public approval for its foreign policies (Baru, 2009). Thus engaging domestic media to garner internal public support for its policies is more important to the Indian state than engaging the media for foreign propaganda. "... a substantial part of the work of the External Publicity Division of the Ministry of External Affairs has in fact been in dealing with domestic media rather than international media. The Division is more often engaged in seeking internal publicity for external policy rather than external publicity for internal policy" (Baru, 2009, p. 11). Thus it can be said that internal public opinion has traditionally been of more importance to the Indian state rather than managing international publics' perception of the country. Foreign propaganda takes backseat in the face of the need to engage privately-owned, antagonistic, domestic media to gain internal publics' support in government policies. These cumulated factors explain the Indian state's limitations in exploiting the potential of mass media to enhance the country's international reputation. However, with the country's new-found global influence it becomes imperative for the state to engage foreign publics and share its views and perspectives on world affairs even though it may not necessarily mean propagandist content.

While India sets a fine example of a developing country's successful adoption of democratic political system and free press, it also has its flip side. The free information flow and lack of restrictions also mean that less fascinating stories of corruption scandals, scams and stories of poverty easily become common knowledge. The Indian prime minister's comment, as quoted in a recent Washington Post article, expresses the government's concern: "The impression has gone round that we are a scam-driven country and that nothing good is happening in our country" (Denyer, 2011). In recent times, however, the government has recognised the importance of media to cope with the country's image problems. Apart from revamping its public diplomacy website, foreign journalists' delegations have been flown down to India to encourage better understanding of the country. Online reports of ⁹Financial Express and ¹⁰Economic Times revealed that the government in 2008 considered the idea of launching a global English language news channel, which was to be tentatively titled Channel Asia, for uplifting India's image and to partake in competition in the global media platform. The proposal has so far not matured due to lack of financial resources and infrastructure, says ¹¹Sanjaya Baru in a telephonic interview. Despite the Indian state's recognition of the value of a strong international news media, it still has a long way to go to give shape to such vision.

National Market and the Private News Media

The private news companies, on the other hand, have stayed away from making significant international footprints for purely economic reasons. Satisfied with a booming and fast-growing national market, the desire to chart new markets is largely missing. The private media's distance

⁹ 'India may launch international news channel'. Article published in Financial Express on July 19 2007.

¹⁰ 'India mulls global BBC-like channel.' Article published in Economic Times on April 19 2008.

¹¹ Sanjaya Baru is the former media advisor to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and currently the Executive Editor of the national business daily Business Standard.

from the state and the absence of distinct political agenda further deter such efforts. “The Indian media market is far more exciting than international markets and promises high revenue growth,” says Suhasini Haider, deputy foreign editor of the national English language news and current affairs television channel CNN-IBN, in a telephonic interview. With 108 million television homes, more than half of which are cable-connected, India is one of the largest cable-connected countries, apart from China (Kohli-Khandekar, 2006). International media markets currently appear shaky to these private media outfits in comparison to the country’s expansive domestic market that promises high profits and returns. While the newspaper business in many advanced Western countries is struggling to survive, it is significant that India has the world’s largest newspaper market (Moro & Aikat, 2010). It is also significant that many transnational media companies like News Corporation (the parent company of Star India that owns Star News) (Kohli-Khandekar, 2006) and Time Warner (parent company of the news channel CNN-IBN) have Indian presence. The booming Indian media market has emerged as lucrative revenue source for both national and international players – the lack of state restrictions makes it easier for the established transnational media to operate in India. More than 70 per cent of News Corporation’s Asian revenues come from Star India (Kohli-Khandekar, 2006). With the government welcoming foreign direct investment (FDI) with open arms, it can be said that the news market is likely to open up further for foreign capital. According to a joint ¹²FICCI-PWC report of 2006, 21 per cent of FDI is currently allowed for news publications, whereas the limit is 49 per cent for cable networks. Thus at present the trend of the Indian news market is more of foreign capital coming inwards rather than the reverse – that of Indian news media going out. This is in contrast to the country’s entertainment media’s outward expansion. At present private news media’s profit motives deter their global ambition. “India has embraced global trade categories such as media fairly recently and there is still little experience of expanding into global markets,” says Lee. Baru observes that unlike Bollywood studios the Indian news companies are yet to discover the business model for successful overseas expansion. Baru says that for private news companies to expand overseas, state subsidy is essential because of the high infrastructural and financial investment required, which are even higher for broadcast media.

CONCLUSION

Thus in contrast to China, Indian news media, despite being perceived globally as free and credible, currently lacks international ambition. Since Indian soft power is not perceived as a strategy of statecraft, the state has traditionally not employed the media to engage foreign publics and has stayed away from investing in ambitious global news media. Its recent efforts of a global news channel have so far not materialised due to lack of resources, infrastructure and experience. On the other hand, Chinese news media are driven by state-led global expansion, which is referred to as state-sponsored contra-flow - news flow emanating from the erstwhile peripheries of the media globe (Thussu, 2010). With huge financial investment of the state, the transnational news media are globally competitive in terms of resources, technological innovation and infrastructure. However, its chances of success are affected by the state’s overt ideological influence. While China’s global news media are meant to contribute to its soft power resources, the strategies of pure propaganda are lacking. These external media outlets’ counter-hegemonic potential has remained limited when it comes to challenging the economic dominance of the hegemonic players. But Chinese news media’s significance lies in contributing to a new economic order in the media landscape (state-owned model for transnational media). Its global news media also have the potential in furthering changes in the nature of transnational journalism that is likely to accommodate news with views. Its global media could realise their soft power potential through proactive strategies. Thus China’s potential to

¹² The Indian Entertainment and Media Industry. Report jointly published by FICCI and PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2006.

contribute to the global news and information flow appears more significant at present than that of Indian news media. While the latter show ideological conformity with hegemonic news values, which could have worked in their favour in winning over audiences, such efforts so far have been limited. It is significant that Indian news media at present remain prone to further influence of Western capitalist development, which would be further magnified in news values and content. The state's weak involvement too has restricted the counter-hegemonic potential of its news media. The point remains that the story of both Chinese and Indian news media at present reflects further trends of the strengthening of the capitalist model in numerous forms with their corresponding inequalities.

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