

# The **Political Economy** of News: **Colonialism and Imperialism** in the Media



Gretchen King, TÉLUQ & LAU



## AGENDA

Wednesday, August 8th, 9:00-10:30am



Part 1 – What is the political economy of news?

Part 2 – Colonialism and Imperialism in the Media

Part 3 – “The point is to change it”

“The power to narrate, **or to block other narratives** from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism....”

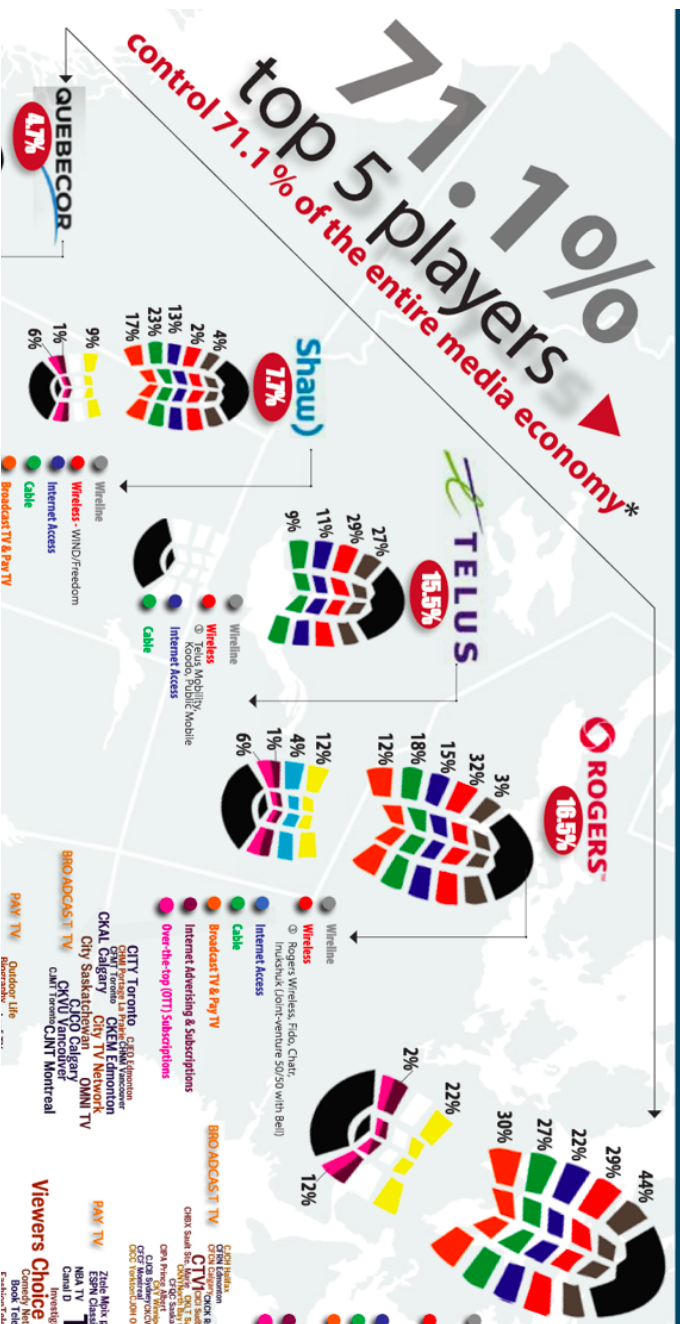
Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993)

## LITERATURE

### Defining the study of political economy of communication

Political economists study: *"the social relations, particularly power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution and consumption of resources."* (Mosco, 1996: 25)

## Canada's Top Media, Internet & Telecom Companies by Market Share (2016)



SOURCE: <http://www.cmcrp.org>

The poster depicts the eighteen largest telecoms, media and internet

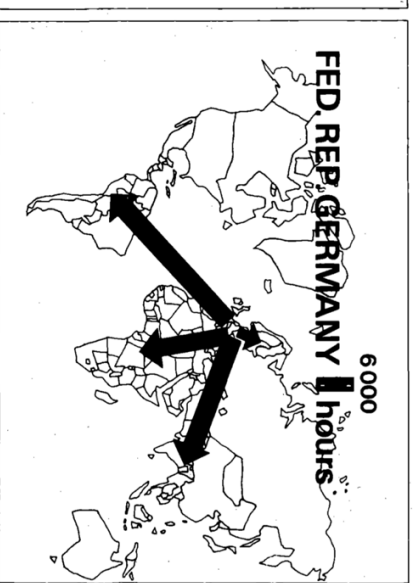
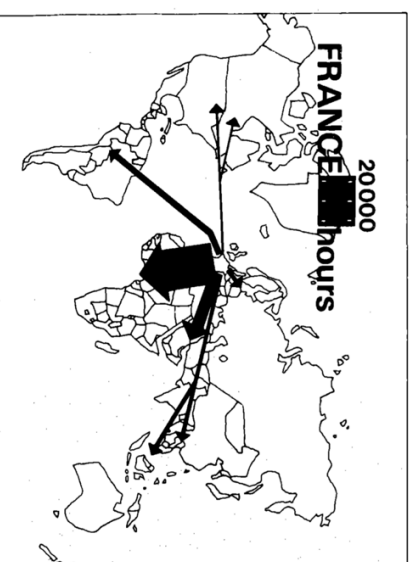
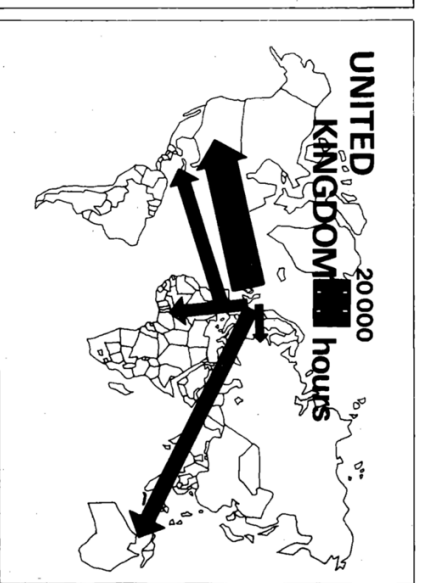
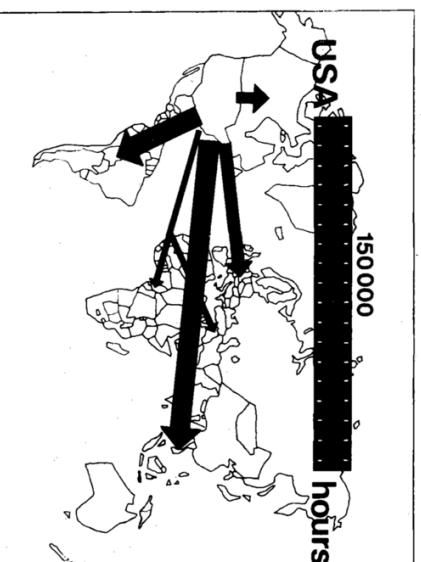
companies in Canada on the basis of their revenues in 2015. Together they account for nearly 90% of all revenues across the telecoms, media and internet industries.

However, just the "Big 5" — Bell, Rogers, Telus, Shaw and Quebecor, in that order — account for nearly three-quarters (71.1%) of all revenues.

## THEMES

Wasko (2005)

- 1) Commercialization
- 2) Integration
- 3) Market Concentration
- 4) Industry Studies
- 5) Globalization
- 6) Media/state relations
- 7) Resistance/opposition



SOURCE: *Television Traffic – A One-way Street?* (UNESCO, 1974)

Discussion of a **New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO)** drew heavily on political economic analysis and became an important focus of research during the 1970s and 80s (See Nordenstreng and Schiller, 1993, and Roach, 1993).



"Political economists' ... attention has been focused on the influence of concentration on the **availability** and **quality** of news, as well as the tabloidization of news." (Wasko, 2005)



SOURCE: Bourges, 1978



SOURCE: Mattelart, 1979

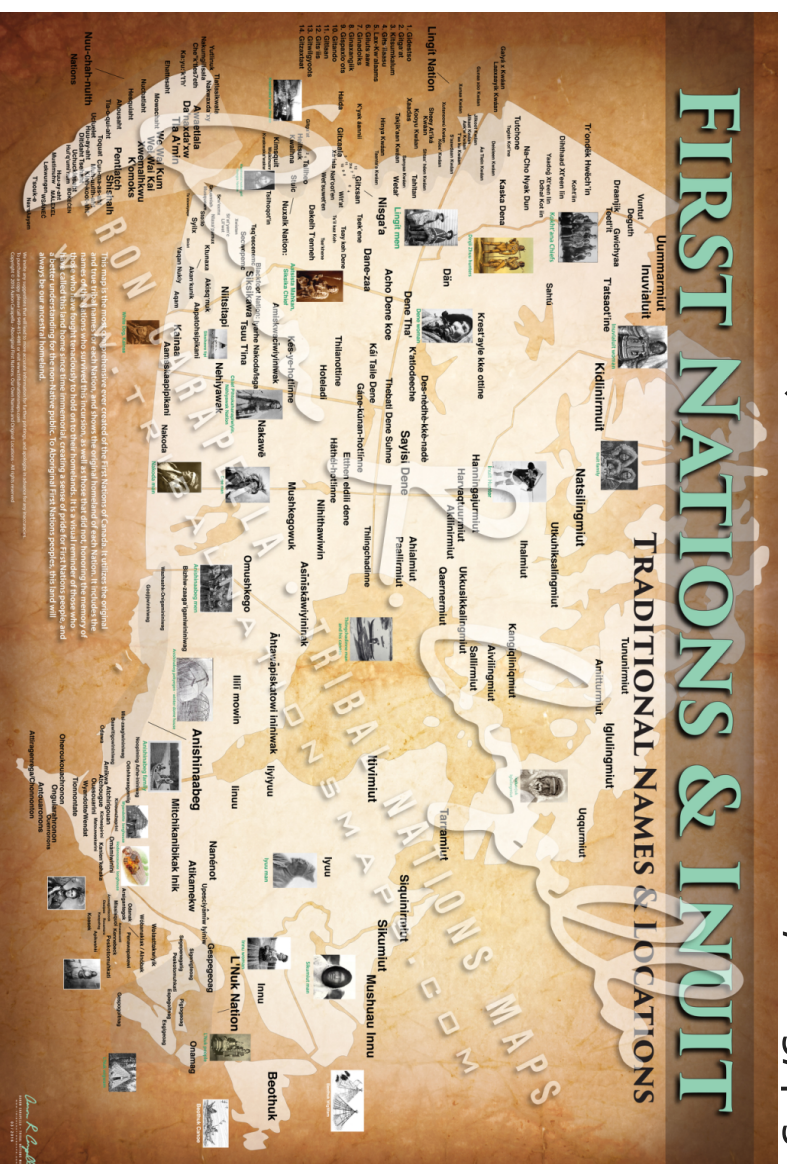
## COLONIALISM IN MEDIA **Palestine**

The main transmitter site for the Palestine Broadcasting Service (PBS), operating in Ramallah from March 1936 until the end of the Mandate.



SOURCE: [www.azraaksamija.net/memory-matrix-ramallah](http://www.azraaksamija.net/memory-matrix-ramallah)

"Canada's common culture is **built on the idea of two founding nations** (English and French), and government support for two official languages entrenches that idea. **It does not mention the country's original inhabitants** except in such commonly used phrases as 'Canada's Aboriginal People' or 'Canada's First Nations', which describe this relationship in possessive terms" (McMillan and Yellowhorn, 2005, p.318).

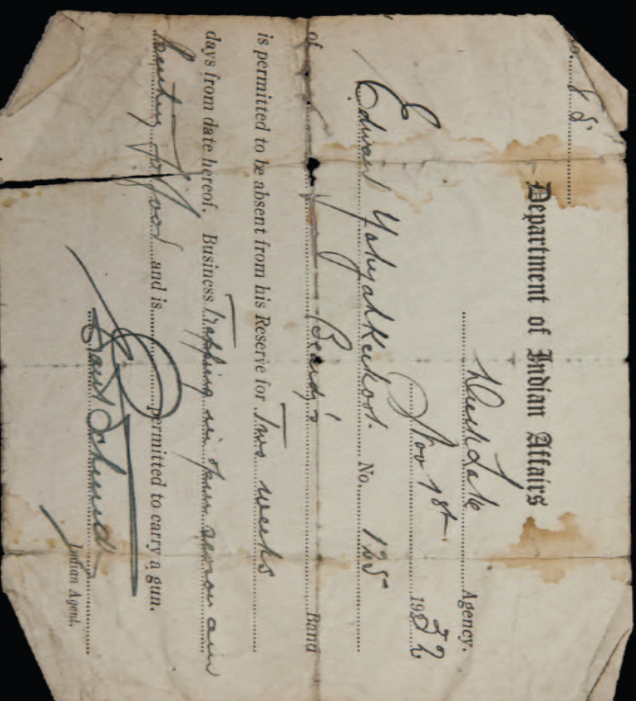


SOURCE: [www.indigenouspeoplesresources.com](http://www.indigenouspeoplesresources.com)



## 1700-1800s “Indian” policy disrupts Indigenous communications

Royal Proclamation (1763), Indian Act & Residential school system (1876), Northwest Resistance (1885)



## the pass system

From the Northwest Resistance of 1885 and for over 60 years, the Canadian Government denied many Indigenous peoples of the prairies the basic freedom to leave their reserves, all the while

SOURCE: [www.thepasssystem.ca](http://www.thepasssystem.ca)



### 1983 to present day – Policyming Indigenous broadcasting

- Northern Broadcasting Policy & Northern Native Broadcast Access Program (1983)
- The Inuvialuit Claims Settlement Act (1984)
- 250+ radio stations serve Northern & Indigenous audiences (1984)
- Defense of Kanesatake (1990)
- CRTC issues Native Broadcasting Policy (1990)
- Broadcasting Act (1991)
- Funding cut 22% to NNBP (1994)
- Last federally operated residential school closes (1996)
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996)
- Nunavut is created (1999)
- Task Force for Cultural Diversity on TV: “The under-representation of Aboriginal Peoples on Canadian television - they would be **virtually non-existent** without the presence of APTN” (2005)
- **Secwepemc Radio goes on air (2005)**
- Residential School Apology (2008)
- UN adopts Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)
- Truth and Reconciliation Hearings begin (2010)
- TRC final report and Calls to Action (2015)
- Canada formerly adopts the UNDRIP (2016)
- **TODAY - 100s unlicensed stations & 65 licensed, policy not reviewed in 27 years**



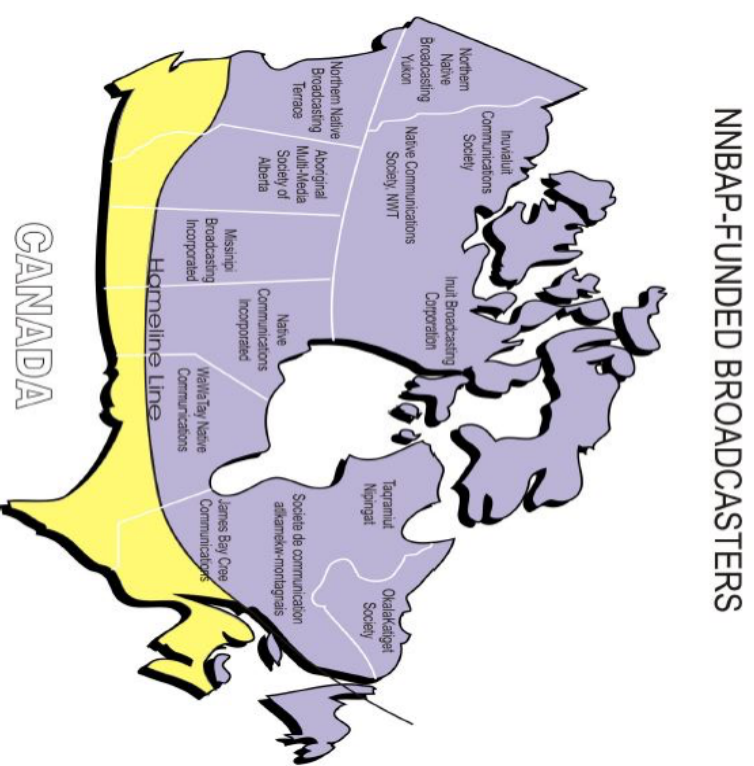
***“We did not get a license from the CRTC when starting because of our position that as aboriginal people we did not give up our right to make use of the electromagnetic spectrum to carry on our traditions, language and culture ... We are not pirates, we are Secwepemc.”***  
Neskie Manuel (2010)



## Broadcasting Act - S.C. 1991, c. 11 ([LINK](#))

3 (1) It is hereby declared as the broadcasting policy for Canada that ...

- (d) the Canadian broadcasting system should ...
- (iii) through its programming and the employment opportunities arising out of its operations, serve the needs and interests, and reflect the circumstances and aspirations, of Canadian men, women and children, including ... **the special place of aboriginal peoples** within that society, and ...
- (o) **programming that reflects the aboriginal cultures** of Canada should be provided within the Canadian broadcasting system as resources become available ...












**VIDEO EXCERPT (2:29:55 - 2:35:53), Monique Manatch - Rapid Lake Radio**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRzAEW1hAIQ>




Transjordan, a territory carved from the Ottoman Empire, was rearranged territorially and demographically by British colonialism and the Hashemite Amir Abdullah and ushered into a new age, the age of the nation-state. To render the new order permanent, a number of strategies were created that led to the **imposition of a new identity**, called national, on a population that adhered to a different set of identities. ... The new identity and the new national culture were then deployed not as the new products, which they in fact were, but as eternal essences that had always existed (Massad, 2001, p. 276).

## IN 2012, I CONDUCTED INTERVIEWS AT 16 OF AMMAN'S TOP STATIONS.

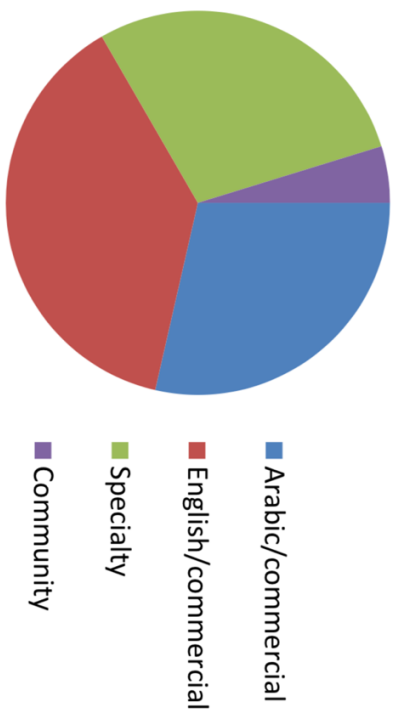
								
JRTV Sports 88.0	Amen 89.5	Melody 91.1	JRTV Koran 93.1	JRTV Foreign 96.3	JRTV Amman 99.0	Rotana 99.9	Mix 103.7	Hayat 104.7



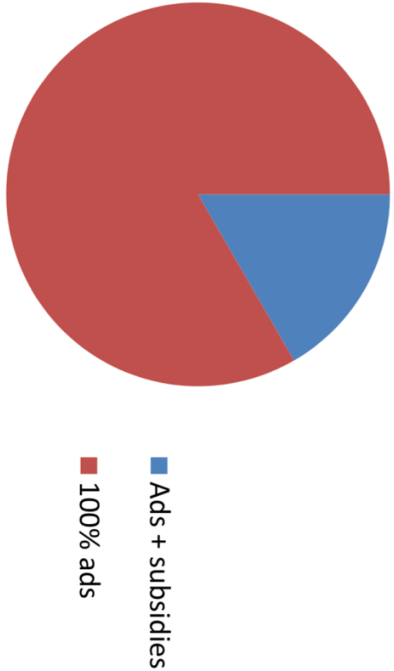
JBC 88.7	Nat'l 90.0	Radio al-Balad 92.4	Mazaj 95.3	Fann 97.7	Play 99.6	Hala 102.1	Bliss 104.2	Nashama 105.1
								

THE FM DIAL IN AMMAN – STATION FEATURES

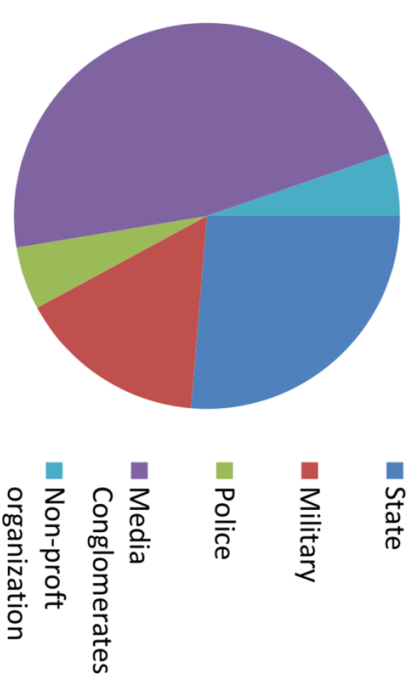
Format



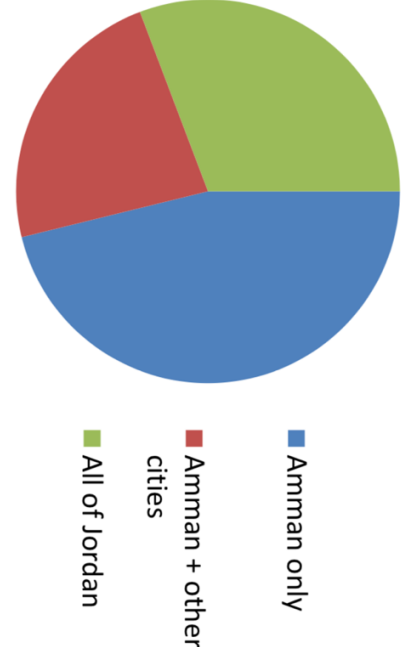
Income



Ownership



Range



#### WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT PRACTICES ON THE FM DIAL IN AMMAN?

- Monopolized by state power
- Imposing national identity
- Commercial place
- Maintaining social peace



Nashama FM logo, formerly an English station, now offering 100% Jordanian music.



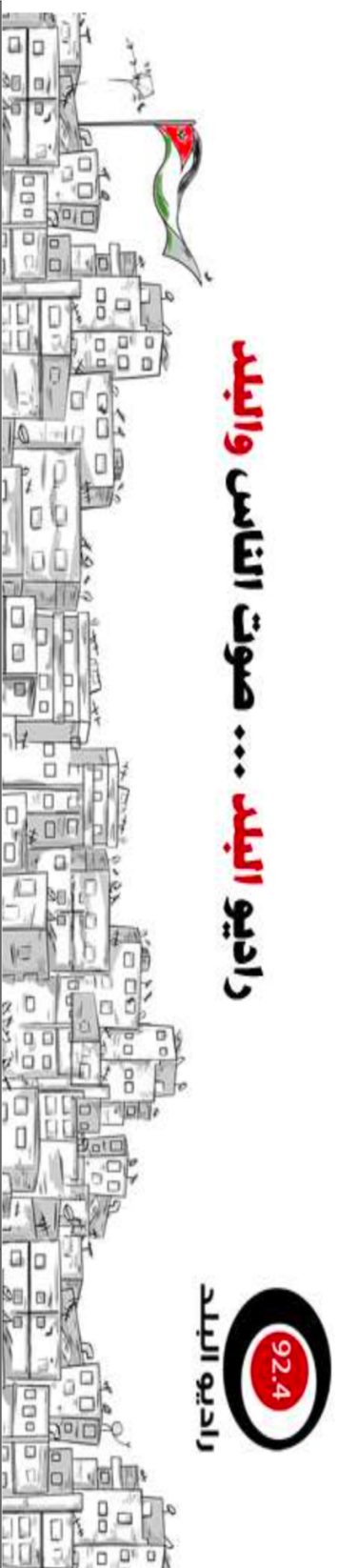


Interview with radio fan and taxi driver in recorded in Amman, Jordan:  
*Service radio is only for helping someone for a specific issue like needing money or food. They give us hope on these shows. Sometimes they deal with one person's specific problem. But to deal with these issues, they need to address the systemic issues, and not just case by case. There should be other mechanisms to deal with society's problem, not just by chance to get on air.*



## POLITICAL ECONOMY

### News at Radio al-Balad



Show	Description of Program	On-air
<i>Ain al E'lam</i> (Eye on the Media)	A critical look at the media scene in the region.	2004-present
<i>Sawt Al-Aghwar</i> (Voice of the Valley)	A program addressing various problems in Jordan's valleys.	2007-present
<i>Nas Wa Nas</i> (People and People)	This show covers human rights issues within Jordan.	2008-present
<i>Al-Majles</i> (The Parliament)	Live broadcasts and commentary from the parliament.	2009-present



### The 1906 Radiotelegraph Convention gathered 30 maritime States

Germany, the United States of America, Argentina (Republic of), Austria, Hungary, Belgium, the United States of Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Denmark, Egypt, Spain, France, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, the Netherlands, Persia, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Siam, Sweden, Turkey, and Uruguay.

Radio broadcasting relies on spectrum, or what Smythe (1981) calls “a peculiar natural resource” that is “nondepletable and self-renewing” yet requires global cooperation “for the radio spectrum to be used by everyone” (p. 301).

These characteristics of the radio spectrum for political economists like Smythe (1981) make radio spectrum allocation one of the best examples of the relationship between politics and technology (p. 308).

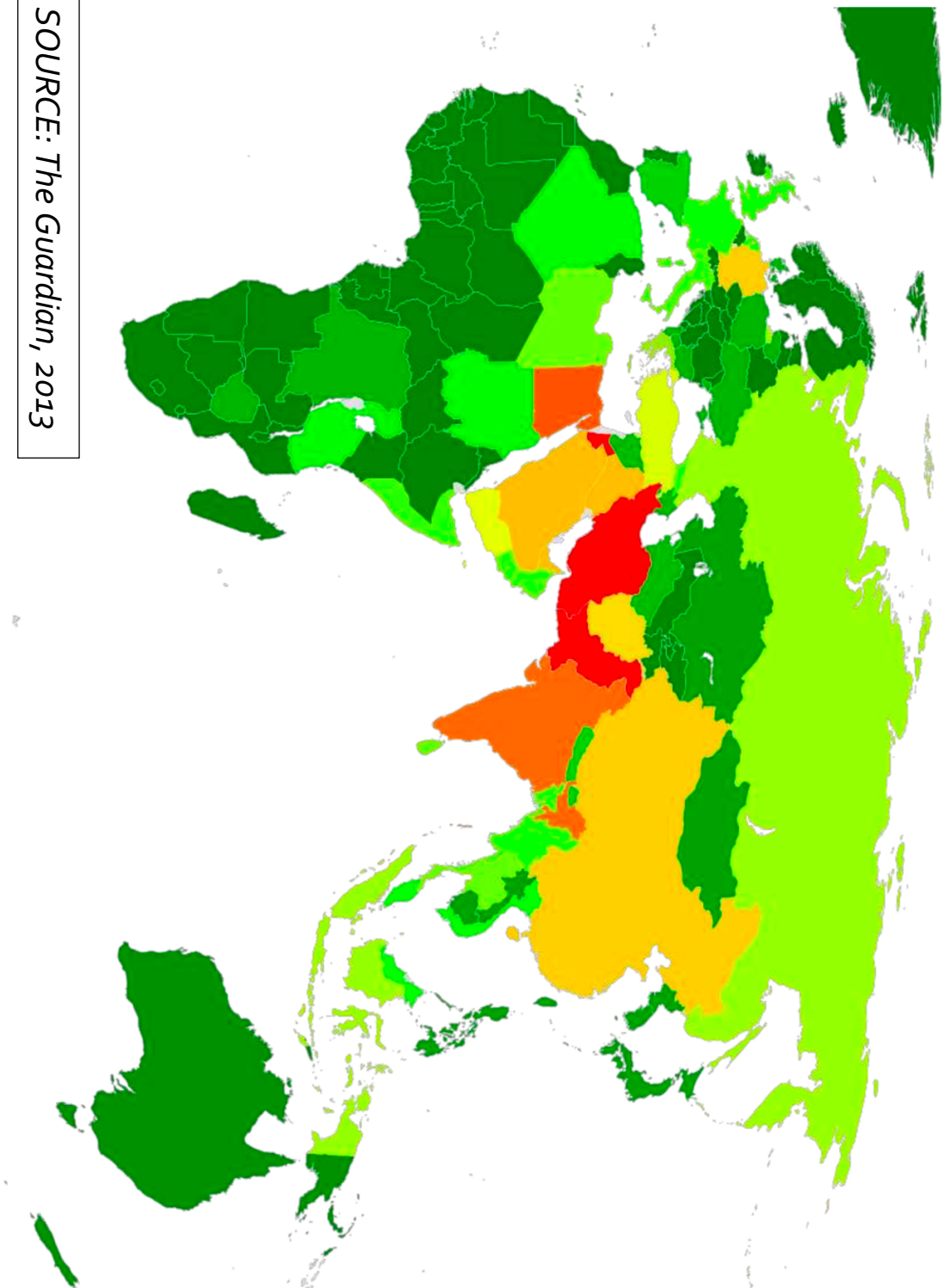
The politics and economics of the infrastructure of undersea cables connecting the internet today has not changed since the telegraphy network circled the plant to support imperial wars (Headrick, 1981).



**VIDEO EXCERPT (5:00-11:50), Andrew Blume – The Physical Side of the Internet**  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/andrew blum what is the internet really#t-274499](https://www.ted.com/talks/andrew_blum_what_is_the_internet_really#t-274499)

## IMPERIALISM IN MEDIA

### Internet



*SOURCE: The Guardian, 2013*

NSA's Boundless Informant Map - Jordan is red or most subjected to surveillance.

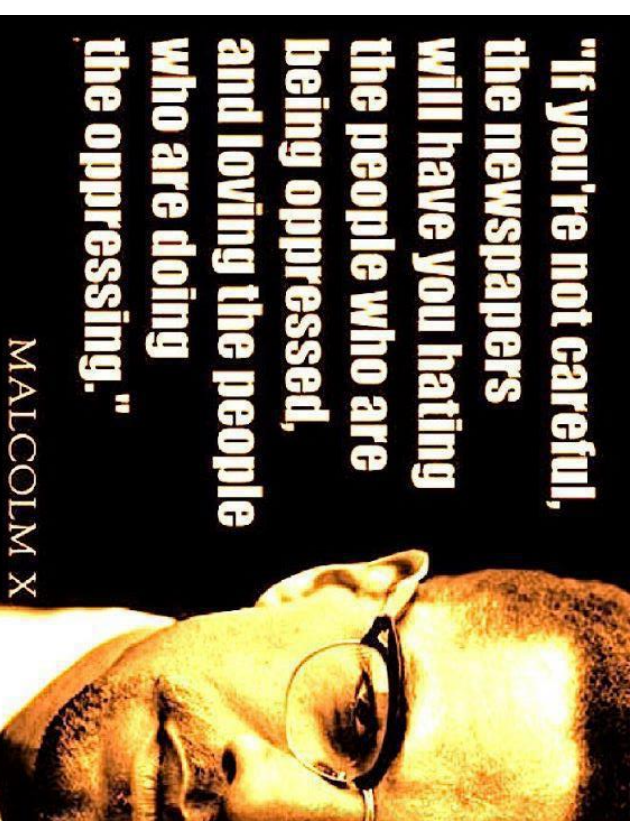




**VIDEO EXCERPT (14:41 – 17:08), To Sell A War - Gulf War Propaganda (1992)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaR1YBR5g6U>

"Media in the West is now an **extension of imperial power**. It is no longer a loose extension, it is a direct extension." John Pilger (Jan 25, 2018 - [LINK](#))



**AUDIO EXCERPT ([MP3](#), [25:43 – 27:10](#)), Radio Free Palestine 2018**

SOURCE: <https://archive.org/details/RFP2018>



- 1) Commercialization
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Marx pointed out: "Philosophers have sought to understand the system, **the point is to change it**" (quoted in Wasko, 2005).

CONTACT

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CANADA  
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MEDIA EDUCATION AND  
HUMAN RIGHTS

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 **LAU**  
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**M D L A B**  
media  
+ digital  
literacy  
academy  
of beirut

THANK YOU, MERCI, SHUKRAN !