

The Production of Resistance: Digital Imperialism & Online Empires

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to pick up and extend a few key concepts as utilised by Hardt & Negri (Empire: 2000). These concepts will be evaluated through the lens of digitisation in particular the creation of digital consciousness. Hardt & Negri's starting point is that sovereignty, power, resistance and control have been significantly altered. The nature of these changes can be expressed through a number of paradigms (Political Economy, Networked Society & The Wealth of Networks); these models will be briefly considered. What will be argued next is that power, sovereignty and resistance have become re-articulated through new centres. Greater attention will then be spent on Hardt's & Negri's argument and consideration of resistance as a form of negation and "the will to be against". By linking digital identities and online activism through case studies and examples this paper will conclude with an argument that online empires do contribute to the creation of a shallow and fleeting resistance. The key conclusion being that new forms of consciousness as determined by virtual production and engagement are contributing to the creation of imagined resistance.¹

We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality—judiciously, as you will—we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors . . . and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do. Anonymous Bush insider (reported by Suskind, 2004)²

¹ Apologies for the quality and 'incomplete' nature of this document – If you have any questions and observations please pass these on as this is very much a work in progress.

² <http://csc.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/9/6/796>

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