

Political Economy of Media Effects

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Political economy is the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources (Mosco, 2014). Media effects research from a political economy perspective concentrates on understanding the various roles media institutions play in the production of dominant social, political, and economic hierarchies and meanings. In this regard, political economy perspectives on media effects range from strong effects (media content is strongly correlated with media effects) to more complex or subtle effects (media content is broadly indicative of historically situated social, political, economic processes). As such, the notion of media effects lines up well with a more general and ambitious definition of political economy, a definition that sees political economy as the study of control and survival in social life. *Control* refers specifically to the internal organization of social group members and the process of adapting to change. *Survival* refers to the ways in which people produce what they need for social reproduction and continuity. In this sense, control processes are broadly political because they constitute the social organization of relationships within a community, while survival processes are mainly economic because they concern processes of production and reproduction.

In order to address the political economy of media effects in more detail, the first section of this entry defines and describes a political economy perspective. The second section discusses what distinguishes a political economy of media effects. This includes a focus on power in media effects, especially the power of transnational media firms and the state to constitute social structural, more so than individual, effects. The final section addresses differences within the political economy of media effects, especially those separating strong and direct from complex and subtle effects.

Traditions in political economy

Political economy has consistently placed the goal of understanding social change and historical transformation in the foreground. For classic political economists of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and John Stuart Mill, this meant comprehending the vast social upheaval and transformation

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from societies based on agricultural labor to those rooted in commercial, manufacturing, and, eventually, industry. For Karl Marx, it meant examining the dynamic forces within capitalism as well as the relationship between capitalism and other forms of political economic organization, in order to comprehend the processes of social change that, he contended, would ultimately lead from capitalism to socialism.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, orthodox economics began to coalesce against political economy, by setting aside this concern for the dynamics of history and social change in order to transform political economy into a science of economics that would, like physics, provide static and general explanations for economic activity. According to this view, economics could precisely explain how buyers and sellers come together to set prices in the marketplace, without having to address the difficult processes of social and economic change that create the very conditions for setting prices. Contemporary political economists continue in the tradition of classic political economy by taking up social change and transformation, such as in the study of the transition from an industrial to a service or information economy. In doing so, they also continue to occupy various heterodox positions distinct from the economic mainstream. The study of the mass media, including media effects and communication technology, plays an important role in this research, because media and communication technology are major forces within the operation of today's economy.

Political economy is also characterized by an interest in the social whole, or the totality of social relations that make up the political, economic, social, and cultural areas of life. From the time of Adam Smith, through Marx, and up to the contemporary institutional, conservative, and neo-Marxian theorists, political economy has consistently sought to build on the unity of the political and the economic, particularly their mutual influence and wider relationships to social and symbolic spheres of activity. The political economist asks how power and wealth are related; how they influence our systems of mass media, information, and entertainment, including media effects; and how power and wealth shape media effects.

Political economy is also committed to moral philosophy, which involves both the values that help to create social behavior and the moral principles that guide efforts to change it. For Adam Smith in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), this meant understanding values such as self-interest, materialism, and individual freedom. For Marx, moral philosophy meant the ongoing struggle between the drive to realize individual and social value in human labor and the push to reduce human labor to a marketable commodity. Contemporary political economy tends to favor moral philosophical standpoints that promote the extension of democracy to all aspects of social life. In other words, it extends well beyond the political realm and the right to vote, to support for income equality, access to education, full participation in cultural production, the right to communicate freely, and the right to control the effects of media.

Another defining feature of political economy is its commitment to social praxis, or the fundamental unity of thinking and doing. Against traditional academic positions that separate research from social intervention, political economists trace their roots to the ancient tradition of providing advice and counsel to leaders. Political economists have consistently viewed intellectual life as a form of social transformation and social transformation as a form of knowledge. Although they may differ fundamentally on

what characterizes intervention, political economists share the view that any division between research and action is artificial. The political economy approach is also distinguished by many schools of thought, which have been influenced by praxis. For example, social movements have spawned their own schools of political economy, such as feminist political economy, which addresses the institutions of patriarchy; environmental political economy, which concentrates on social behavior and the wider organic environment; and a political economy that melds the analysis of social movements with the anarchist or autonomous theoretical tradition.

Research on the political economy of the media: Regional emphases

North American research about the political economy of the media has been influenced extensively by two founding figures, the Canadian Dallas Smythe (1981) and the American Herbert Schiller (1989). Their approach to communication studies drew on both the institutional and the Marxian traditions, as characterized by their concern with the growing size and power of transnational communication businesses as well as their interest in social class and media imperialism. Compared to European scholars, their work was less interested in providing an explicit theoretical account of communication. Instead, it was more driven by a sense of injustice about the integral part the transnational communication industry has come to play in a wider corporate order, an order that, they insisted, was both exploitative and undemocratic.

Owing in part to their influence, there is a large North American literature on industry and class-specific manifestations of transnational corporate and state power. In keeping with the tenets of political economy, this literature is distinguished by its concern to actively participate in social movements and oppositional struggles to change dominant media and create alternatives (McChesney, 2013; Schiller, 2014; Wasko, 2003). A major objective of this work is to advance public interest concerns before government policy and regulatory bodies, and includes supporting movements to create a new international economic, information, and communication order before international organizations.

European research is less connected to specific founding figures and is more concerned to integrate communication research within various institutional and neo-Marxian theoretical traditions. One of the two principal directions this research has taken is seen most prominently in the work of Murdock on class power (Murdock & Gripsrud, 2014). Building on the research of the Frankfurt School as well as on that of Raymond Williams, it traces the integration of communication institutions, mainly business and state policy authorities, within the wider capitalist economy. At the same time, it maps out the resistance of subaltern movements and classes to neoconservative state practice, specifically the liberalization, commercialization, and privatization of the communication industries.

The second principal direction European research has taken emphasizes class struggle. This is most prominent in the work of Armand Mattelart (2000) and more recently in that of Christian Fuchs (2014). Mattelart drew from a range of research traditions and worldwide national liberation movements in his understanding of communication as one of the principal means of resistance to power, and was an advisor to the government

of Chile before it was overthrown by a military coup in 1973. His work demonstrated how peoples of the less developed world, particularly in his native Latin America, used mass media to oppose Western influence and control through the creation of indigenous news and entertainment media.

Research on the political economy of communication from outside the West has covered a wide array of interests. Drawing on several streams of international neo-Marxian political economy, including world systems and dependency theory, political economists have challenged the fundamental premises of the developmentalist model (more media means more development), particularly its technological determinism and the omission of practically any interest in the power relations that shape the relationships between rich and poor nations and the multilayered class relations between and within them (Zhao, 2008). The failure of development schemes incorporating media investment sent developmentalist theorists in search of revised models that add new media into the mix. Political economists have responded principally by addressing the power of these new technologies to help create a global division of labor that serves capitalists more than workers. Contemporary research acknowledges that class divisions cut across territorial lines and maintains that what is central to the evolving international division of labor is the growth in flexibility for firms that control the range of technologies that overcome traditional time and space constraints (Hong, 2011).

Central coordinates of a political economy approach: Commodification, spatialization, structuration

It is well understood that the process of commodification entails taking goods and services valued for their use (e.g., food to satisfy hunger) and transforming them into commodities sold in the marketplace (e.g., farming to sell food). This process holds dual significance for communication research. First, communications technologies and practices contribute to the general commodification process throughout society. For example, the ability to precisely track and record sales and inventory via computer technology gives all companies greater control over production, distribution, and exchange. Second, commodification is a point of entry to understanding specific communication institutions and practices. This is because the general worldwide expansion of commodification, which began in the 1980s, was in part a response to global declines in economic growth and led to the increased commercialization of media programming, the privatization of public media and telecommunications institutions, and the liberalization of communication markets. The political economy of communication is notable for its examination of the significance of institutions, such as private business, in the production, distribution, and exchange of communication commodities, and government in the regulation of communications markets. When treating the commodity, political economy has concentrated on the economic value of media content (e.g., how a story is turned into a commercial TV program) and to a lesser extent on media audiences and labor.

Political economy has also paid attention to audiences, in particular to understanding the practice where advertisers pay for access to the audiences targeted by print publications, radio, or TV programs. This produced vigorous debate about the nature of

audiences relative to content—specifically, whether or not audience attention constitutes a form of labor power that media companies sell to advertisers (Smythe, 1981). The debate has been useful for the ways it extends the discussion beyond media content to place all businesses, not just media companies, at the core of communication research. It has also extended the debate over audience labor to include social media and online communities such as Facebook and Twitter, and the ways they are similar to and different from the labor of audiences described by Smythe (Fuchs, 2014). In addition to examining the commodification of media content and audiences, it is also important to consider the commodification of media labor. Managers cut their labor bills and expand revenues by automating more of the work done by media professionals and draw on the free labor provided by interns, bloggers, and those who post to social media websites. Workers have responded to this by bringing together various media workers, from journalists and broadcast professionals to computer and information technology specialists, into labor unions and worker associations that represent large segments of the increasingly precarious communications workforce (Mosco, 2014).

The second point of entry for the political economy of communication is spatialization. This refers to the process of overcoming the constraints of time and space in social life. The attention of classic political economists such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo ran to the problems of how to value the spaces taken up by the built environment as well as how to define and measure the value of labor time. Marx's aphorism that capitalism "annihilates space with time" came closer to spatialization, as he tried to describe the ways in which the business use of transportation and communication worked to diminish the time needed to move goods, people, and messages over space. Rather than annihilating space, today's political economists conclude that, when aided by transportation and communication, business transforms space. This can be seen, for example, through the tremendous upheavals in the international division of labor, where millions of jobs are relocated to low-wage regions of the world, especially to China and India.

Communication is central to spatialization because communication processes and information technologies promote flexibility and control, not just within the communication and information sectors but also throughout all industry. In this way, spatialization encompasses the process of globalization, or the worldwide restructuring of industries and firms. At the industry level, restructuring is exemplified by the use of digital technologies to develop integrated markets. Firms are restructured through their dramatic growth in flexibility, to the point of becoming effectively *virtual* companies through their use of communication and information systems. These systems assist firms in a process of continual change with respect to corporate structure, product lines, marketing, their workforce and customers, and their relationships to other companies and suppliers.

The political economy of communication has treated spatialization in terms of the institutional extension of corporate power in the communication industry. For example, communication systems in the United States are shaped by a handful of US-based firms such as Apple, Facebook, General Electric (NBC), Google, Microsoft, Time Warner Inc. (CNN), Twitter, Viacom (CBS), and the Walt Disney Company (ABC, Disney). These

are joined by non-US-based firms such as China's Alibaba, Bertelsmann, the News Corporation (FOX), and Sony.

The third point of entry for the political economy of communication is structuration. Prominent in the work of sociologist Anthony Giddens, structuration amounts to a contemporary rendering of another aphorism from Marx, which maintained that people do make history, but not under conditions of their own making. A focus on structuration within political economy tends to balance its typical tendency to concentrate on government and business institutions, by incorporating the ideas of agency, social process, and social practice. In effect, this requires broadening a conception of social class delimited to its categorical sense of "haves vs. have nots" and incorporating both a relational and a constitutional sense of the term.

A *relational* view of social class foregrounds the connections between, for example, business and the working class, particularly the ways in which the working class constitutes itself within that relationship as well as being an independent force in its own right. The political economy of communication has addressed class in these terms by documenting persistent inequities in communication systems in terms of access to the means of communication and the reproduction of these inequities in social institutions (Cao, Mosco, & Regan Shade, 2014). A *constitutional* conception of class views the working class as the producer of its own identity, both in relation to capital and independently of it, however tenuous, volatile, and conflicted that identity may be. This research demonstrates how classes constitute themselves—how they make history—under conditions that constrain this history-making activity.

Beyond social class, there are other dimensions to structuration that complement and conflict with class structuration, specifically *race*, *gender*, and *social movements*, and which together comprise much of the social relations of communication. Political economy has made important contributions to feminist studies and the political economy of the media (Eubanks, 2011) and has taken major steps in research on information technology, gender, and the international division of labor. This is seen particularly well in the double oppression of women in industries such as microelectronics, where they are paid the lowest wages and endure the most brutalizing conditions (Huws, 2014). Race figures significantly here, as it does as a principal constituent of hierarchy in the contemporary global political economy, because it helps to explain access to national and global resources, including communication, media, and information technology.

Structuration is a key conceptual component in understanding the process of constructing *hegemony*, or that sociopolitical process of defining what comes to be incorporated and contested as the taken-for-granted, commonsense, natural way of thinking about the world. This includes everything from cosmology through ethics to everyday social practices. Hegemony is the name given to a living network of mutually constituting meanings and values that, when experienced as social practices, appear to be mutually confirming. Among the tensions and clashes of various structuration processes, media align themselves in mainstream, oppositional, and alternative forms that play important roles in the construction of media effects.

Political economy of media effects

The major distinguishing characteristic of a political economy approach to media effects is its focus on how power, embodied in institutions such as media companies and governments, creates social structural, rather than individual, psychological effects. Specifically, political economy examines the effects of media commodities produced by private corporations and governments, such as news, entertainment, and advertising, on creating and sustaining social class, gender, and racial categories and relationships. Rather than demonstrate how an individual is made to believe or feel one thing or another, or to support one product or politician rather than another, political economists aim to demonstrate how powerful media help to constitute and replicate social classes, gender differences, and racial divisions. Although class, gender, and race are the primary social variables addressed in political economy research on effects, it is the case that ethnicity and nationality, among others, are also included.

Political economists historically addressed the ways power brings about social effects through the concept of ideology, which refers to the distortion of messages to achieve a particular end. Ideology analysis has emphasized the roles that dominant classes play in imposing their ideals and values upon lower classes, and indoctrinating them primarily through coercion into the dominant social and political order. Powerful ideologies include fascism, communism, and capitalism and there are numerous examples of how this process has worked, especially in authoritarian societies. However, since the work of Gramsci, political economists have come to rely more on the concept of hegemony, which, they maintain, is better than ideology at capturing the contested and contradictory nature of popular common sense. Specifically, hegemony emerges out of the symbolic and rhetorical tensions between traditional or conservative ideals and values, and those viewpoints that are more liberal or progressive.

Political economists describe the means by which advanced capitalist societies mutually constitute social divisions based on, for example, class, gender, race, and ethnicity, to maintain control through consent rather than through physical coercion. In essence, they demonstrate how modern mass media work to create hegemony. The term *hegemony* is situated between *ideology* and *values*, the latter being a term used in individualized, psychological approaches to media effects. Whereas ideology is identified with distortion or misrepresentation of social reality, values represent the widely held social norms through which differently placed people and strata are connected. Hegemony departs from these terms in that it constitutes an ongoing process where information and image, whether in news, entertainment, or advertising, are formed and re-formed within the operation of advanced capitalist societies. Hegemony describes the process whereby both information and image work to establish and sustain maps of common sense that remain sufficiently persuasive to most people. In doing so, the concept provides the social and cultural coordinates to define the “natural” attitude of social life, including the divisions that constitute social inequality. This makes hegemony a more valuable concept than ideology, because it is not imposed from above but is constituted organically throughout society. This organic constitution occurs via the dynamic and responsive geometries of power embedded in social relations and social organizations. Hegemony is also a more useful concept than values for the ways in which

it incorporates both common sense and power, whereas values leave little room for a consideration of power (Mosco, 2009).

In the same way that coercively imposing a dominant ideology from above is inadequate when compared to the consensual basis of hegemony, so too is a focus on individual effects when compared to social structural effects. This is because, of the many criticisms that can be leveled at the concept of dominant ideology (especially in advanced capitalist societies), one of them is the proposition that *any* dominant set of ideals or values can be seamlessly imposed on any mass of individuals, regardless of class. Following from the work of Raymond Williams, political economists such as Fuchs, Murdock, Schiller, Smythe, and Wasko have demonstrated that, given the contested nature of meaning generated by media, it is possible to challenge and change dominant media and to create alternative systems of meaning, albeit in a system shaped by deep inequalities.

A political economy of media effects can address the capacity of media to constitute social relations and social divisions because it positions media institutions squarely within the geometries of power, and as embedded in social relations and social organizations. But political economy can also identify opportunities to oppose hegemonic messages and create alternatives. Media institutions, including social media, are involved in the ongoing process whereby information and image are formed and reconstituted across geographical space. As such, they play important historically situated roles in mapping popular commonsense worldviews at any given moment. The commercial imperatives of mainstream media ensure that media institutions remain sufficiently persuasive to their audiences, even while dealing in various ways with the many voices and perspectives that knowingly and actively deviate from the mainstream. In doing so, media provide the social and cultural coordinates to shape and reflect the “natural” attitude of social life, even while spotlighting narratives that run headlong into the “natural” order of things. It is in this sense that commercial mass media can be said to be involved in the commodification of social and cultural life. Nevertheless, political economists maintain that the process of commodifying audiences is always a challenge, and not always successful, because the very differences in social relations that commodification creates also lead to resistance, embodied in oppositional and alternative media. When media messages create social divisions, they also make it possible for people who occupy different class, gender, and racial positions to draw on their different experiences to create simple and nuanced messages that can challenge the hegemonic view of those in power.

A political economy of media effects also attends to the extensions in reach of vast media corporations and governments over geographical space, extensions that take place in tandem with the growth and expansion of a global economy. This embodies the process of overcoming the constraints of time and space in social life, via the commodities on offer from media institutions to increasingly global audiences. Far from annihilating space with time, the business use of mass communication for the distribution of commodified media products has reduced the time needed to move these goods, including information, over space. In step with the perspective of current political economists, the business of disseminating commodified media content transforms space, in part by facilitating access to highly produced and tightly packaged content

distributed into new and existing geo-cultural markets, and at a fraction of the historical production costs. Along with the ease of accessibility and the opportunities for cost savings, the products themselves provide models for what top-tier media production and narrative structure *should* look like. In addition, the transformation of space necessarily encompasses the realm of ideas. As such, spatialization within the political economy of media effects amounts to a temporal and geographical extension of the hegemony of form and meaning. This has led some to contend that the media have advanced a new form of imperialism, in this case a cultural imperialism, that has subjected poorer nations to the control of media corporations and the governments that promoted them. This process has created a major debate within political economy, and between political economy and other approaches to communication, about whether cultural control can be equated with economic and political control (Schiller, 1989).

The political economy of media effects is also concerned with the ways in which media commodities that are widely distributed and consumed as part of a global political economy are themselves deeply woven into the fabric of agency, social process, and social practice. When commodified media products are transposed in various ways by audiences in temporal and geo-cultural settings other than the place of origin of the media product, their narrative and symbolic constructions of class, race, gender, and social movements may intersect (at the level of ideas) with how each is constituted or constrained historically by those circumstances. While this in no way imposes any particular set of values or ideals from one geographical space to another, views of the ways in which business relates to the working class, or gender relations are played out, or how any of the other social relations of communication are represented all become potentially compositional elements in the consensual constitution of hegemony. Power, social structure, hegemony, and contestation are therefore key elements in the analysis of the political economy of media effects.

Instrumentalist vs. hegemonic perspectives on media effects

Political economy is central to understanding the formation of media systems, which media effects scholars examine. Committed to a historical understanding of media, political economists have given particular attention to the technical development and expansion of commercial media following World War I. The eventual establishment of national broadcast networks was made possible by the burgeoning advertising revenues derived from the exponential growth of audiences for radio programming. National audiences led to the creation of national brands and national advertising that, despite initial audience resistance, expanded opportunities to fund increasingly sophisticated news and entertainment programming. The expansion of radio across the United States did not go unnoticed by journalists and academic commentators. Figures such as Walter Lippmann and Harold Lasswell became interested in the various intersections between broadcasting, politics, advertising, and democracy. In Europe, this included those scholars prominently connected to the Frankfurt School. Following the seemingly irrational horrors of World War I, there arose a popular fascination with the relatively new field of psychology, specifically the psychology of the crowd and the

idea of the *unconscious*. Edward Bernays, widely considered the founder of modern public relations, was largely able to structure and professionalize the field owing in no small measure to the fame and popularity of his uncle, Sigmund Freud. Further, as the world marched toward another war in 1939, it bore witness to the power of radio and the moving image in the rise of European fascism and in World War II propaganda (Ewen, 1996). These developments are closely tied to the origins of media effects research and have shaped debates about media effects ever since, especially between strong (instrumentalist) effects models and more subtle (hegemonic) effects approaches.

The term *instrumentalist* highlights a tendency within strong media effects models to view media institutions and content as *instruments* of political and economic power. A good example is Michael Parenti's *Inventing Reality: The Politics of the Mass Media* (1986). Media of mass communication are held to be powerful forces for creating the public attitudes that align with dominant interests. Parenti does not dismiss the role entertainment media play in disseminating what he calls *hidden ideological and political biases*. But it is the control of the commercial news media where Parenti most clearly sees distortion, and outright manipulation, to create support for the dominant political and economic order. In his view, even when people do not believe what the news media report, the simple act of airing it sets the agenda for public discussion. The power of elites to establish this agenda allows them to maintain a favorable system through persuasion and propaganda, and Parenti wonders openly about the extent to which mass media manage individual minds. Although he insists that people have opportunities to hold alternative views, and that media institutions are not monolithic, Parenti concludes by invoking the specter of conspiracy theory: Some may have fantasies about conspiracies, but not all conspiracies are fantasy. Preemptive invocations like this against the charge of conspiracy theory are a recurring feature of strong media effects models.

Noam Chomsky's *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies* (1991) provides another useful model of strong or instrumental effects. Mirroring Parenti closely, Chomsky maintains that one of the main roles played by the mass media in advanced industrial societies is the institutionalization of state and private power. This is done, in part, by containing attitudes and ideas within acceptable boundaries and by deflecting any potential challenges before they can gather steam and mobilize public support. Chomsky concludes that an enterprise like this has many facets, but one of the most important is the thought control evinced by elite intellectual cultures and by the national news media.

Chomsky's work with Edward Herman in *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (1988) provides what these authors call a *propaganda model* and applies it to the operation of the mass media in the United States. Citing Lippmann's writing on propaganda in the early 1920s, they concede that the propaganda function is not the only one served by commercial mass media but that it is a very important one. They recognize that an institutional critique, such as the one they propose, is often dismissed as conspiracy theory by establishment commentators. Disputing this charge, they position their approach closer to a critique of commercial capitalism, where market forces and self-censorship combine to shape the news. As such, they describe the propaganda model as supported by five main filters through which information must pass.

These include the size, ownership, and profit orientation of mass media; dependence on advertising for revenue; reliance on government sources for information; the threat of *flak*, or blow-back, in the form of letters and email, or lawsuits and bills before Congress; and, last, anticommunism and antiterrorism as rhetorical framing.

Peter Golding and Graham Murdock (2000) provide a good example of a more subtle or hegemonic media effects standpoint. The authors argue that political economy needs to be more flexible with regard to the roles economic or political forces play in the production of media content. They maintain that the economic organization of communications industries is an important place to start, and that economic factors in the production process tend to favor certain cultural forms over others. But they insist that certain perspectives can place too heavy an emphasis on the extent to which media operate as tools of elite power in the management of public opinion, and they cite Chomsky and Herman's propaganda model as a good example of this type. Golding and Murdock contend that it is equally important to attend to the complexities and contradictions that prevent this sort of control from being established.

Other examples of a more subtle or hegemonic media effects model can be found in a survey of research in Eileen Meehan and Janet Wasko's "In Defence of a Political Economy of the Media" (2013). The authors take strong issue with ongoing misrepresentations of a political economy approach to studies of the media. Drawing on several examples, they demonstrate that what is often held up and critiqued as a political economy approach to media studies is little more than a caricature. It is a version of political economy that is characterized by a naïve reliance on outdated ideas from the Frankfurt School, by an exclusive focus on media institutions at the expense of attention to media workers and audiences, and is based on a belief that post-World War II corporate media serve only the interests of capitalists.

Meehan and Wasko show that critiques such as these are rooted in an exclusive focus on strong media effects models within political economy. More attention needs to be directed at nuanced research that draws on cultural studies and on sociological research. This includes, for example, global approaches to feminist research that examine portrayals of women in international media and women's interventions to change them, especially through the use of alternative and emerging media. One project brought together an international group of ethnographers informed by a political economy perspective who investigated various ways of conceptualizing audiences, of documenting audience engagement and agency with regard to generic forms of programming, and of demonstrating complex understandings of audiences (Hagen & Wasko, 2000). In another study, 29 mainly political economy scholars from 18 countries used various qualitative and quantitative methods to record people's impressions and memories of Disney, while at the same time conducting a political economic analysis of Disney's presence within each economy (Wasko, Philips, & Meehan, 2001). An emphasis on the many complexities of conceptualizing media, audiences, and effects within the framework of a political economy approach that starts from an understanding of power distinguishes this hegemonic approach from one that reads effects solely from the interests of corporations and the state.

SEE ALSO: Critical–Cultural Theory, Media Power, and a Multieffect Reality; Globalization and Americanization; Media Dependency Theory; Media Effects: Comprehensive Theories; Propaganda Effects; Public Relations: Media Effects

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