

Example of political economy of communication essay

[Business](#), [Company](#)



Political economy of communication

Question 1 Consciousness Industry Approach

According to Jhally's perception and approach about the consciousness industry, the core objective of the media in the current world is to produce and maintain shared thoughts within the public in general. Generally, every society is characterized by an uneven distribution of wealth and income based on the global economic systems. The majority of the economic systems especially capitalism aids a small proportion of people in the society to gain control of the means of production.

The consciousness industry approach can be termed as an institution based approach, which is concerned with the core objective of incentives and other media institution. According to Jhally, the small percentage of the minority must be able to find ways in which they sustain their status quo within the society. The minority group uses myriad ways to struggle to the top of the prestige minority class. For instance, they convince the majority to pinpoint and back the current system of rewards instead of objecting. Therefore, they emphasize on living in respective dominations as freedom (Angus & Jhally, 2000). In general, the strategy is achieved through the mass media. In the United States, the mass media is usually obliged to instill various ideologies to the majority group on behalf of the minority class. The class that is in control of the mass media is referred to as the capitalist class. Usually, the capitalist class is few controlling of the wealth in the United States.

Therefore, they possess the majority of power and control in the states (Codevilla, 2010).

According to Sweezy, the United States of America is divided into two

distinct classes. First, there is the capitalist class which is described to be the owners of the means of production. The other group is the working class, who provide labor for wages driving the means of production. According to Jhally, the working class forms the largest percentage among the people in the United States (Whitten & Whitten, 2006). The capitalist class is renowned for its ownership of the means of production and capital goods used in the production. Additionally, they control laborers in the production sector. Categorically, there is the new middle class, which is responsible for control of labor in the production of goods. The old middle class, on the other hand, is entitled to the ownership of the capital goods used in the production of goods. However, the working class is entitled to none of the above (Domhoff, 2002).

In general, the capitalist class is said to be comprised of only 2 percent of the United States population. The middle class, comprising of both the old and new middle class, consists of 25 percent of the whole US population. Finally, the working class, who are the majority, comprises of 73 percent of the United States population. According to Zeitlin, if all the American adults in possession of million corporate stocks or above came together, the rose bowls 104, 696 seats would be half. The 2 percent minority of the United States population are renowned to be in control of the US economy.

According to statistics, 32.7 percent of the wealth in the United States is controlled by just 1 percent of the top population in the states. 28 percent of wealth, on the other hand, is controlled by the bottom 25 percent of the population. It's worth to note that a considerable percentage of the working class produces a negative net worth. According to statistics, 18 percent of

the population generated a negative net worth making the gap wider (Hill, 2012).

The majority of wealth of minorities is not earned income, but rather unearned income. In this case, the unearned income comes from capital assets such as stocks, bonds and trusts. In 1995, 37% percent of the US net worth in assets came from the bottom 90 percent of the United States population. Therefore, it meant that the minority capitalist class had the most shares of net worth assets. According to Jhally, most of the capitalist class began their life within the circle of their class and their capitalist's class from inheritance and income earned from the family. Therefore, the wealthy continued to be wealthier as the poor remained poor (Angus & Jhally, 2000). Apart from income and inheritance, the capitalists have been using some other strategies within their network to manage their wealth and income. For instance, the capitalist has a way of tying themselves together in the form of interlocking directorates, corporate interest groups and trade associations. First, the ties are in the form of interlocking directorates or in case of financial ties. In this regard, the capitalist ally themselves in group corporations like in stock ownership. To ensure control of the organizations, they take on board their own capitalists on board to be the directors of different firms. The capitalist gain power over various firms due to their diversified directors' positions in various forms and their majority shareholding (Janet Wasko, 2007).

In practice, the ties are made in order to fix their own general interests over the rest of the majority. The capitalist group has a great influence on the market thus distorting the market forces to their own advantage. However,

these strategies are not only used by capitalist in protecting their wealth, but also to the media. Media forms part of corporate entities in their strategies of publicizing their actions to appear ideal for the majority. These media companies are owned by the capitalist group who tend to have control of the majority wealth in the United States (Kit Konolige, 2001).

Generally, apart from being the owners of these big media companies like the Bloomberg, Time Warner and Summer Redstone they also emerge to the top richest individuals. Therefore, are interested controlling not only means of production, but the economy in general. The capitalist has their own strategies of maintaining their social class and thus remain in control of the largest portion of wealth. One of the major ways of maintaining their status quo involves interlocking directorates in order to tie themselves to the media. For instance, some of the members of the board of directors are also prominent personnel in large organizations. Other members of media corporations are also included in the list of the minority capitalist (Golden, 2009). According to Carlson, quite a number of large media corporations form interlocking directorates with at least 270 corporations in the United States.

According to the above mentioned ideologies about interlocking big corporations with the media companies, the capitalist form the dual-economic framework. Bowles and Edwards', the dual economic framework eventually leads to distortion of media issues concerning the minority capitalist class. In this case, the capitalist have in control of what the media has to say at any time. United States is considered to have numerous small business entities. However, these businesses generate a lot of revenue to

the government, which subsequently pushes the GNP up to a greater extend (Ghosh, 2004). Accordingly, Bowles and Edwards' categorize firms within the United States into core and periphery firms.

The core firms form part of the largest firms in the region with thousands of employees and sales surpassing billions of dollars. The core firms are actively involved in pushing up the GNP level. The periphery firms are those firms, which are not embraced by the core firms. However, there could be no a clear cut difference between core firms and the periphery firms. In this case, core firms can be said to be the top most 1200 corporations out of approximately 18 million America business entities. Core firms tend to grow and diversify at the expense of the other firms. The periphery firms have a little or no influence in the market comparing with the core firms (Bowles, 2005).

Therefore, as a result of common interests among the capitalists and their strategy to interlock directorates, they usually have a great influence on the media. The capitalists, On the other hand, are influential in the energy sector through which they can distort the policies in order to boost the fossil fuel industry. The majority of the capitalists are representatives and board of directors of the largest oil companies in the region. Therefore, the members of the boards are able to alter energy policies in order to improve their companies' net profits. The defense sector also exhibits the form of interlocking directorates and also through ownership. For instance, in the United States, general electric is renowned to have a quite considerable amount of stake in NBC.

Accordingly, financial systems in these organizations are also biased in order

to gain a reputation of their companies. This case happens because the largest media companies form part of the largest companies in the publicly-traded market. Ideally, capitalist form the top most groups of people who own the largest organizations and corporations in the United States. Besides, the capitalists are well connected with the rest of the rich people in the region, thus forming a network among them. Ownership of large media corporations by the capitalist enables them to have great influence on the media. In this front, interlocking directorate among the capitalist enables them to have full control over the economy and political scene (Bowles, 2005).

Generally, individuals owning core business entities form are usually the same persons involved in the media corporations. Therefore, the capitalist can opt to undertake monopoly powers in order to woe the market. Ties within the capitalists are of crucial importance in maintaining their status quo. The ownership of media corporations the capitalist perpetrate numerous biases in reporting different issues. Therefore, the board directors of these big media corporations try to twist information to their advantage. The capitalist will encourage silencing, distortion of information and bias within the media. The capitalist use these strategies in order to gain the majority and continue with their reign over the working and middle class. According to Jhally, the consciousness industry approach has shown a myriad of extreme interests by the minority class in the United States. Further, the media have been restructured to act on the advantage of the capitalist (Baiman, Boushey, & Saunders, 2005).

Question 2

According to Domhoff, big business organizations and big media corporations usually influence the way government implements and formulate policies.

The capitalist class is on the board of directors in big media and big business entities. Therefore, the coordination of the two enables the capitalist to have the majority say in the country. As previously mentioned, the capitalist class can make crucial decisions, which may affect the economic outlook of a country. The capitalist manipulates and shape policies to fit their personal interests without bearing in mind the effects of their actions. Therefore, the big business and media corporations usually participate in the formation of these government policies.

In general, some short term government policies are formed in concert with the big media and big business. The big media and big business generate a large amount of government revenue to the country thus adding the GNP. Implementation of any government policy will have a significant effect on the big business and subsequent big media corporations. The government finds it hard to, solely, make some policies, which could in the short run or long run adversely affect the economy (Domhoff, 2002). Therefore, the formation of such government policies is greatly influenced by the capitalist class.

The capitalist class has a political influence on the government. This is based on the fact that, some of the decisions that the government makes directly influence the big business entities as well as the big media corporations.

According to Domhoff, the capitalist form ties with big top government officials who hold significant office. Therefore, the capitalist again fall in safe hands when it comes to making crucial government policies. It is evident

that the capitalist workday and night in protecting their personal interests and status quo. It is through the interlocking with prominent government officials that capitalist are spared by the government policies (Mosco, 2009). The big media corporations still have a huge impact on the public since they give out information directed by the owners, capitalist. The public will thus have twisted information, which the capitalists want them to hear. The minority remain to have control over the middle class and working class too. As a result, the capitalist tends to protect their wealth and status quo through having ties with the other minorities in the region. The media, generally, will have a significant influence when it comes to convincing the public. According to Domhoff, the capitalist will influence what the media addresses to the public. The capitalist will always act in a certain manner and take necessary measures that will work to their advantage (Hill, 2012). In the United States, the capitalist usually win and dominate the majority of the people comprising the middle class and working class individuals. As previously mentioned, capitalist use various strategies, which will work, in their favor as long as their wealth and status quo is maintained. Essentially, the capitalists win the media through ties with the big media corporations and big business entities. The board of directors is usually the same within these big institutions, which leads to biases in the system. Therefore, it is through interlocking directorates of different big business that make the capitalist maintain their reputation (O'Connor, 2000).

According to Domhoff, the elite play crucial role within the capitalist class. In this case, Domhoff had a lot of old ideologies on Marxist and thus did not concur with Mill at some point. He described the upper class as the capitalist

who does not rule over the others, but rather it is exhibited through the activities of various organizations. However, these organizations are owned and financed by the capitalist who have their own personal interests.

Through these practices, the upper class protect their prestige, wealth and reputation within the society. The top most leaders in the organizations come together with the working class in organizations and control to form the power elite (Baiman, Boushey, & Saunders, 2005).

The power elite is described as the leadership group among the upper class in general. However, there is a clear cut difference between the power elite and the upper class individuals since not all the upper class members form part of the elite. On the other hand, not all power elite members comprise of the upper class. It is the role and duty of the power elite to maintain the relationship between them and the working class in the organization. As a result of centralized government, the corporations also operate in a centralized manner within the capitalist class (Bettig & Hall, 2006).

According to Domhoff, power can be translated from one form to the other in any society. He argued that organizational power could be turned into political power, and religious power and can produce military power. His argument was based on expressing that power can be created and passed into another aspect of society. The most powerful and controlling class in the economy is referred as the ruling class or dominant class. The ruling class forms social networks within the capitalist class such that they protect their general interests.

Therefore, the combination of social networks and interlocking directorates, enables the capitalist class to form the minority of the population with

control over the majority. The majority, on the other hand, has to adhere to the rules and policies formulated and laid down by the ruling class.

Accordingly, the power elite performs their responsibilities on behalf of the ruling capitalist under various strategies. For instance, the power elite can work under special-interest over the ruling class. The power elite act on their own special interest separate from the ruling class interests. Secondly, the power elite will work according to the policy-planning. The power elite will perform duties and carry out organizational obligations in line with the stipulated policies. The power elite also carries out candidate selection to get suitable personnel for a position in the organization. However, this procedure is quite demanding, and thus the power elite requires sufficient resources to make the entire process effective (Miliband, 2009). Finally, the power elite work according to their ideology concerning the organization and the ruling class in general.

In conclusion, the capitalist class within a society affects political, social and religious culture of the society. The capitalist will thus try to protect their prestige and wealth at the expense of the majority in the society. Therefore, due to their influence, most of the crucial government policies are formed in concert with the capitalist class of people. The control of resources among the capitalists forms a strong base upon which they can influence decision making not only in corporations, but also in the government.

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