

Mass Media

Theories of Mass Media

- The pluralist model
- The dominant ideology model
- The market model
- The elite-values model

The Pluralist Model

- The media is an ideological market place in which a wide range of political views are debated and discussed.
- The impact is neutral – it does not reflect the balance of forces within society at large
- Flaws: weak and unorganized groups are excluded from access to mainstream publishing and broadcasting

Dominant Ideology Model

- The media as a conservative force aligned to the interests of economic and social elites
- Promotes compliance and political passivity among masses
- Propagates bourgeois ideas and maintain capitalist hegemony (Marxian view)
- Ownership determines the political views

Dominant Ideology Model

- Noam Chomsky and Ed Herman “Manufacturing Consent” identified five ‘filters’ through which news and political coverage are distorted
- 1) the business interests of owner companies
- 2) a sensitivity to the views and concerns of advertisers and sponsors
- 3) the sourcing of news from and information from agents of power such as government and business-backed think-tanks

Dominant Ideology Model

- 4) pressure applied to journalists including threats of legal action
- 5) a belief in the benefits of market competition and consumer capitalism

Elite values model

- Focus on the mechanism through which mass media is controlled
- Editors, journalists, broadcasters enjoy significant independence and thus control the content of media. Media reflects the values of groups that are represented amongst its senior professionals

Market Model

- The idea is that TV and Media reflect rather than shape the views of the general public
- This is because media outlets are concerned with profit maximization and with extending market share

Mass Media and Democracy

It promotes democracy in four key ways

- 1) By fostering public debate and political engagement
- 2) by acting as a public watchdog to check abuses of power
- 3) By redistributing power and political influence (access to information and opportunities for information exchange)
- 4) By providing a mechanism through which democracy can operate (expansion citizens' participation through e-democracy)

Propaganda

- Propaganda is information or disinformation disseminated in a deliberate attempt to shape opinions and, possibly stimulate political action
- Propaganda implies 1) untruth and distortion
2) desire to manipulate and control public opinion