Globalization, Media Hegemony, and Social Class

Lee Artz

Three concepts—globalization, media hegemony, and social class—provide the necessary framework for understanding contemporary international communication. Yet, these terms and the conditions they purport to represent are so contested that each writer must begin by either summarizing the historical debates or providing singular definitions. The disagreements over globalization, hegemony, and class will not be resolved in texts, of course, but only in the course of ongoing social struggles. Consequently, researchers, scholars, and commentators—including those featured in this volume—can at best offer journalistic descriptions and theoretical observations that are differentiated primarily by the quality of their research, analytical expertise, and conscious or unconscious political preferences. Specifically, this text invites the conversation on media globalization to consider the dynamics of class conflict and negotiation as an analytical perspective having prescriptive potential.

Globalization

Despite the lack of consensus on either its definition or significance, globalization is the concept of the day, invariably invoked in debates over the dramatic and often contradictory economic, political, cultural, and technological developments affecting contemporary international relations. *The Economist* and *Business Week* have devoted entire issues to "borderless capital" and the "new economy" (e.g., October and November 1997), while progressive journals such as *The Nation, Race & Class,* and *Monthly Review* feature ongoing exchanges over whether globalization is simply a ruse by capitalist pundits (Sweezy, 1997) or the dawn of a new capitalist era. Globalization has been understood as the worldwide triumph of capitalist democracy (Fukayama, 1992) and the internationalization of civilization that no longer needs nation-states (Ohmae, 1995) or the final epoch of finance capitalism (Burbach, Nunez, & Kagarlitsky, 1997) and the rise of a "culture of entertainment

incompatible with the democratic order" (Herman & McChesney, 1997, p. 9). Giddens nondescriptively suggests that globalization is simply modernity intensified as "world-wide social relations . . . link distant localities" (1991, p. 63), while Mohammadi finds that globalization of technology stretches the "relations of power and communication" across the globe (1997, p. 3), and Pieterse recognizes a "uniform, standardized" world society based on "technological, commercial, and cultural synchronization" by and for the global North (1995, p. 45). And there are many, many more definitions and perspectives. Yet, whatever the meaning ascribed, globalization has become the elusive catchword for defining and critiquing the new world order, indicating that however we may define or understand the condition, we are now at least aware that we are all subject to its existence.

We undoubtedly live in a world that has grown smaller, while national boundaries remain, and nation-states continue to structure life for their citizens, as governments energetically advance the tenets of the market, while leading corporations use partnerships, joint ventures, and mergers to recruit regional capitalists who direct their respective governments to make structural adjustments favorable to "free trade." Consequently, as individual state regulations remove obstacles to international production, distribution, and consumption, transnational corporations have expanded operations. Informational, instructional, symbolic, and ideological changes within each country (and internationally) have facilitated and justified the political and economic structural changes necessary for the globalization of free market capitalism. Institutional policies by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the United Nations, the International Telecommunications Union, and various regional agreements, such as the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA), depend on government approval and enforcement. The state-approved policies presume and promote deregulation, privatization, and commercialization of national industries and public services, including media and telecommunications.

In other words, contrary to claims that capitalist globalization has superseded the nation-state (e.g., Hardt & Negri, 2000), in each case governments have promoted global capitalism and legalized its activity within state boundaries. Obviously, governments are subject to the political contradictions within the nation-state, including the prevailing social struggles over resource distribution and political power among social classes and groups, as well as whatever cooperation or contestation exists among elites. Throughout the global South, military governments have continually assured elite control through force, as in South Korea, Indonesia, Paraguay, Colombia, and elsewhere. Even in those nation-states averred to be newly democratic (e.g., Brazil, Nigeria, Indonesia), civilian regimes function as instruments of elite

rule with little concern for the working poor—albeit always facing the possibility of popular mass protest or revolt. It should be no surprise to find governments adopting regulations that continue to favor national elites who have hopes of entering the global free market, including in media, the culture industry, and telecommunications. Mosco and Mazepa's analysis of Silicon North in Ottawa, Canada, included here gives a clear example.

In Brazil, Robert Marinho's media monopoly Rede Globo, a recipient of Time-Life and CIA contributions in the 1960s, a defender of the Brazilian dictatorship, and now a "quasi-monopoly of sound, image, and textual media" (Amaral & Guimaraes, 1994, p. 26) has teamed with AT&T to capitalize on the privatization of the nation's telecom services. As deregulation overcame the region, Globo also formed a joint venture with News Corporation and TCI for cable and satellite services to Latin America.

In Mexico, following NAFTA and the privatization of public industry and increased foreign direct investment, some two dozen Mexican capitalists became billionaires. Carlos Helu, who now controls the formerly public telephone company, bought the Internet provider Prodigy, CompUSA, and stock in Apple Computers (Marichal, 1997). The Azcárraga family expanded the reach of its Televisa empire by purchasing Univisión in the U.S., establishing a subsidiary in Chile, and entering into joint ventures with News Corp, TCI, and Globo, among others. Meanwhile, the Mexican government awarded two newly privatized television stations to Ricardo Salinas—a chain store owner partnered with a government-favored importer and NBC—establishing the Azteca network (Fromson, 1996). In short, Helu, Azcárraga, Salinas, and other elites have not circumvented the nation-state, but instead have prospered because the government—whether PRI or Fox—licenses, protects, and promotes their interests nationally and globally.

In Italy the media are the government—at least in the person of Silvio Berlusconi. Adopting the U.S. advertising/programming model, Berlusconi parlayed an advertising agency into three television networks. He joined with Germany's conservative media mogul Leo Kirch in several European joint ventures. Berlusconi withstood a semipopulist challenge to limit his broadcasting empire, coordinated in part by an Italian government that not only rescued him from "various judicial enquiries and legal proceedings" in the 1980s but also streamlined the process of media monopolization and commercialization (Tunstall & Palmer, 1991, p. 73). Berlusconi's further global aspirations depend in part on whether the suprastate European Union Parliament drops its limits on media concentration and a requirement for 50% domestic content on television broadcasting (Stille, 2000).

Similar accounts of national governments servicing corporate elites, in media and other industries, occur on every continent, both in industrialized and developing countries. States are not withering in the face of unfettered

freedom, rather the new hegemonic imperative directs them to obey the logic of the market. As Herman and McChesney (1997) note, "centralizing and globalizing firms need and seek political support for their advances" (p. 172). When national governments adopt market-driven policies of deregulation, privatization, and commercialization, they become complicit in the dismantling of public enterprises, including the media and culture, or at the very least regulating away viable public media and cultural independence. In other words, the nation-state has not been passed over, but has become "an accomplice to its own dispossession" as it undergoes "redefinition according to the demands and pressures of supra-national actors" (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1992, p. 133). In short, governments have become facilitators for transnationals and their globalization policies.

The logic of global capitalist production and distribution recruits national, regional, and local participants according to the pragmatics of profits, efficiency, and corporate use. Transnational capital plays a pivotal role in the globalization process—representatives of the transnational corporations (TNCs) provide the political leadership that spearheads the deregulation and privatization of public transnational services, including telecommunications and the media (Burbach, 2001, p. 31). Globalization of the market includes the globalization of a particular model of government, one that is market friendly. Thus, governments serving the elites of developing capitalist nation-states function less to protect national independence and cultural sovereignty and more to adjust regulations and practices that might favor participation by their own domestic elites in the global marketplace. In this volume, Kundnani's assessment of the British government's passion for the Internet and communication technology highlights a dramatic Western example.

Communication Studies and Globalization

Whether one applauds or resists this new global impulse to privatization, all seem to agree that media and communications technology have been instrumental in the process. In the field of communication, the study of globalization follows at least three fairly disconnected approaches, mirroring in part the larger political and social debate over globalization and the public good and in part some disciplinary traditions. One models the administrative research of past decades in its appraisal of the comparative advantage of transnational media corporations (Gershon, 1997) and uncritical focus on the "convergence of technological innovation" in a pluralist world (Stevenson, 1994, pp. 17, 277–310) with little regard for the social consequences of vertically integrated and deregulated transnational media monopolies. In contrast, critical stances arise from investigations of the political economy of global media, their hold-

ings, operations, and influences (Bagdikian, 1997, Herman & McChesney, 1997)—albeit often without many details regarding the social and cultural consequences of a concentrated global media. Meanwhile, ethnographic and cultural studies are more sanguine about the reach of global media (often accepted as if "there is no alternative"), as they discover cultural responses—from homogeneity to hybridity and "glocalization"—indicating that cultures, communities, and other regional entities continue to contribute to a global culture (Lull, 1995; Robertson, 1992, Straubhaar, 1997). This text is filled with case studies and commentaries about the contradictions and complexities of intercultural exchange in the era of globalization: Eko surveys commercialized African radio, Algan assesses the privatization of Turkish radio, Sowards analyzes the cultural reach of MTV Asia, Min measures the independence and cultural resistance of Korean cinema, and Straubhaar and La Pastina provide an overview of Brazilian media's cooperation with successive elite governments.

As in the debates over economic and political globalization, disagreements over the significance of media globalization seem to accept the existence, if not the meaning, of certain conditions. Disputes may rage, but most recognize that communication technology has made possible dramatically increased information and data flow, streamlining capitalist production and distribution on a global scale and allowing a more rapid dispersal of news and entertainment. Although the terminology may be disputed, most also accept that transnational media corporations (TNMCs) are profit-driven, capitalist enterprises that produce and distribute commodified communication content globally and expand and benefit from the deregulation and privatization of the media, nationally and internationally. At this point, the struggle for meaning ensues: Negroponte (1995) and colleagues cheer on the rise of the information superhighway and the new "knowledge economy," stressing the democratic potential of new technologies and how they might circumvent or overcome the power of the state (Castells, 1998); Hamelink (1997) and others (e.g., Mattelart, 1994; Tomlinson, 1999) want an accounting of the TNMC's commercialization of culture that undermines public communication, human rights, and social solidarity, while some still question the cultural power of global media activity, contending that local actors can appropriate almost any media content for their own resistive purposes (e.g., Fiske, 1987).

The theoretical tension between the perspectives of political economy and the cultural studies approach might be assuaged if either followed their quest to conclusion. A study in political economy that stops short of ascertaining concrete social relations and cultural practices is incomplete. Political economy is nothing if it is not an explanation of actual social activity in the context of power, production, and use (Garnham, 1990; Mosco, 1998). Likewise, a cultural studies approach that dismisses [or brackets] the conditions of

power and production to focus exclusively on local uses of communication content is naïve at best and duplicitous if intentional (Budd & Entmann, 1990). Cultural studies would benefit immeasurably from concretizing the social conditions of reception and use (Artz, 1997; Condit, 1989). In either case, Antonio Gramsci's (1988) conception of hegemony helps resolve the static academic standoff by placing cultural activity in its socioeconomic and political context, recognizing both the structural constraints of power and the creative agency of conscious political activity. Given that perspective, this text disputes any reductive claim that global media simply dominate without regard to cultural resistance and social negotiation, and yet focuses on the social and cultural consequences of the corporate media influences rather than any particular audience response or semiotic interpretation. Here, hegemony (understood as leadership by consent) does not "move beyond" political economy or cultural studies, but incorporates and enhances their perspectives to better understand the globalization of the free market and the parallel globalization of commercial media models.

The Globalization of Inequality

Before considering the role of media and media hegemony in winning popular consent for globalization, however, some appreciation of the social contradictions confronting the world and its cultures is needed. A cursory look finds that consent is wide, but paper-thin, resting primarily on a narrow strata of elites and their service and political professionals who have benefited from concentrated foreign direct investment, even as the internationalization of production systems has pushed the majority of the world further from security and comfort. Indeed, class inequalities have crossed borders as resolutely and clearly as the satellite signals that announce the new global order, as particular norms of production and distribution have been universalized (e.g., low wages, efficient flexibility, English language dominant, centralized control, decentralized production, etc.) (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1992). Globalization has redistributed resources within nations to the domestic elite and internationally to the TNCs. The concepts of core and periphery, North and South, developed and developing are increasingly not national or geographic markers, but indicators of social class. Certainly there are "rich" countries and "poor" countries, but the "trend is one of ever-growing poverty and marginalization in the first world, while the third world has a large number of nouveau riche who are able to buy and sell in the global economy, creating vast fortunes that match or rival many in the first world" (Burbach, 2001, p. 39).

As for Eastern Europe and Russia—the formerly second world—shock-therapy privatization directed by Harvard-educated economists has

brought a "total economic collapse, as a self-serving and carnivorous capitalist" elite rises astride the survival poverty of millions (Kagarlitsky, 1997, p. 119). The European Children's Trust reports that "at least 50 million children in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union live in poverty" that "has increased more than tenfold in the past decade because of reductions in government spending on health, education, and social programs" ("Poverty," 2000, p. 14). The Western media has been silent, but since the breakup of the planned economy, "conditions have become much worse— in some cases catastrophically so. . . . [While] the old system provided most people with a reasonable standard of living and a certain security" ("Poverty," 2000, p. 14), capitalist globalization has "freed" millions from those expectations.

Worldwide, the free market system has treated humanity no better. One-third of the world is unemployed or underemployed. And, "despite three decades of rapidly expanding global food supplies, there are still an estimated 786 million hungry people in the world" according to the Institute for Food and Development Policy (Cook, 2001, p. 24). Surely, the new millionaires can avoid such realities in their gated-communities, sky-boxes, and travels to Rio, Fiji, the Virgin Islands, where "careful, or colorful landscaping, sweeping white beaches, rooms with breathtaking views, and fine Caribbean dining envelope visitors with a strategically planned opulence" (Farrant, 2001, p. 7E). Like most of globalization's accomplishments, vacation paradise is nearby if you can afford it, "if you choose to ignore the dire circumstances lurking just around the corner. . . . [But] poverty smacks your senses the moment you venture outside. Ramschackle houses with boarded up windows, dilapidated cars on blocks out front, threadbare yards, and weary-looking inhabitants, their long faces gnarled by lives long on economic misery" (Farrant, 2001, p. 7E). Inequalities in education, housing, health care, and quality of life accompany such impoverished human conditions. The disparities in access to communication technology, delineated here by Sussman, may lack the graphic purchase attending other social inequalities, but perhaps highlight the incredible gap between rich and poor in the capitalist world system: 85% of the world's population have no access to telephone, while 97% of Internet host domains are located in the global North.

There is more to the balance sheet of worldwide wealth: crushing poverty, child labor, malnutrition, illiteracy, and slavery. Twenty-seven million slaves (greater than the Atlantic slave trade, greater than the population of Canada) work daily for transnationals and their subcontractors, making charcoal for the Brazilian steel industry, casting bricks in Pakistan, and working in agriculture in India. Nor is slavery confined to South East Asia, Africa, or South America. It exists in the United States and Britain, where women and farm workers are locked in factories with armed guards (Bales, 1999).

By almost any measurement, poverty in the twenty-first century is unprecedented, rather it is the result of an international free market system that speculates in currency and investment, seeks to minimize labor costs, and repeatedly leads to overproduction resulting in massive unemployment and social instability (Chossudovsky, 1997). Naïve belief in U.S. exceptionalism provides no protection, as the current recession gives evidence of market speculation, overproduction, and sudden unemployment. In short, with or without the globalization terminology, the world—core and periphery—faces an unprecedented decline in the quality of life for millions, while a handful (like the 400 U.S. trillionaires) increase their incredible wealth.

Hegemony

If we understand hegemony in the classic Gramscian sense as the "process of moral, philosophical, and political leadership that a social group attains only with the active consent of other important social groups" (Artz & Murphy, 2000, p.1), it would seem unlikely that any political or cultural leadership could maintain support under such bleak conditions. In fact, capitalist hegemony should not be overstated. Western leadership is everywhere unstable, increasingly U.S. unipolar, and in constant need of threat and coercion. Lacking organized alternatives, millions tolerate and accommodate IMF and market dictates. Still, millions more resist. Santiago-Valles' essay in this volume describes the media activity of two movements of resistance in the Carribean, while Downing closes the book with examples of radical media that indicate further expressions of resistance. Even localized or diffuse resistance movements pose challenges to hegemonic leaderships with demands, resistive practices, and independent communication. In Chiapas, Mexico, the Philippines, Indonesia, Haiti, Brazil, Ecuador, and throughout many countries of the North (e.g., Italy, France, and Britain), well-organized social and political movements have hobbled transnational policies and their national manifestations—although the political potential of social movements is frequently obscured by commercial media, as Goeddertz and Kraidy reveal here in their case study of media accounts of antiglobalization protests in Seattle. Partly delusion, partly propaganda, global corporate media imagine only the benefits and stability of globalization, but the majority of the world does not join in the accolades and fanfare that resound mostly among the TNCs, their junior class partners, and the global corporate media.

Elites everywhere have adopted the mantra of deregulation, privatization, and commercialization as the world order of capitalist hegemony proceeds with declining social liberalism and rising economic conservatism

(Tehranian & Tehranian, 1997). National elites have internalized free market values and modeled their domestic social and cultural policies on "successes" in the North. Numerous revealing catch phrases—dollarization, McDonaldization, Disneyfication—indicate that capitalist elites of the second- and third-tier almost universally employ format modeling in national planning, television programming, and other economic, social, and cultural policies. Despite the callousness of the IMF, World Bank, and other trade and development institutions, transnational capitalism seldom needs coercion to armor the consent of elites. In every country, the dirty work of enforcement against subordinate classes falls to domestic free market zealots and their state power enforcers. From Argentina to South Africa, national governments confirm their commitment to IMF packages and the global free market system with social austerity and political repression against the working poor.

Much like TNCs merging with local entities to circumvent regulations or disfavor, to whatever extent materially possible, domestic capitalist leaders seek to recruit allies from other classes and social groups. Indeed, hegemony is more solid and more efficient than coercion because resulting social institutions educate, recreate, and extend leadership policies as normal, common sense practices—a point well argued by Murphy in his contribution to this text. To varying degrees, elites provide favor outside their circles through appeals to nationality, national patriotism, ethnicity, race, religion, or any other available cultural marker as a means for constructing a social bloc around hegemonic policies. Resulting policies advance elite interests, but more importantly, when practices and policies significantly represent the cooperating nonelite allies, cross-class participation in hegemony increases. Propaganda becomes ideology becomes common sense.

This analytical deployment of hegemony relies on Gramsci's rendering (Artz & Murphy, 2000; Buci-Glucksmann, 1980; Gramsci, 1988; Sassoon, 1987). Other interpretations of hegemony appear throughout a multitude of social critiques. Indeed, the term—if not the Gramscian concept—has become almost standard in contemporary scholarship, ranging from cultural analyses (e.g., Cloud, 1996; Fiske, 1987; Hall, 1986), to treatises in political science (Scott, 1990), history (e.g., Brow, 1990; Lears, 1985) and sociology (Gitlin, 1987). Unfortunately, Gramsci's crisp class-rendering of hegemony as a process of cultural and political leadership attained only with the conscious consent of others has been whittled to a process of negotiation between various discursive communities (e. g., Bennett, 1992; Condit, 1994; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) or more commonly passed off as coterminous with domination (e.g., Lull, 1995). Perhaps the most significant distinction between other applications and a clearly Gramscian approach is the presence or absence of class as a determinant.

Social Class

In contrast to widespread use of the terms globalization and hegemony, social class barely registers in most analyses of contemporary social practices, including media and cultural production. Moreover, although class politics are central to globalization and hegemony, discussing class in a text on media and globalization is a risky business. The concepts and relations are complex and unfamiliar to many.

Some communication scholars (e.g., King, 1987) accept the prevalent academic belief that power in the United States is overwhelming democratic and pluralist—the result of some combination of merit, skill, and persuasion. By extrapolation, globalization of American politics and culture—especially privatization of media and individual consumerism—would extend democratic vistas to currently underdeveloped societies (e.g., Gershon, 1997; Hachten, 1992; Stevenson, 1994). Accordingly, class and caste divisions that exist outside the industrial North and developing South will presumably disappear as free market production and individual consumption progresses (Fukayama, 1992). Otherwise, references to social class are summarily dismissed as being too simplistic for the postmodern world (Nelson & Grossberg, 1988) or they are thoroughly contested as outmoded (Hardt & Negri, 2000; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985).

The debate is further obscured, because "there is little agreement among social scientists . . . on the exact meaning of class or the explanatory power of the word itself" (McNall, Levine, & Fantasia, 1991, p.1). Ironically, many contemporary media studies (e.g., Carey, 1989; Lull, 1995) accept the inherent social dimensions of communication practices, but—reflecting the ideological hegemony of "capitalist democracy"—the concept of socioeconomic class is regularly avoided, ignored, or rejected. Yet, if one reads closely, it is obvious that the specter of social class haunts contemporary writings on media and culture, albeit usually as euphemism: elite, subordinate, minority, rich, poor, marginalized.

Because social class as a concept emerges most fully from both social structure and human agency, it pulls together the seemingly antagonistic approaches of political economy and cultural studies. More importantly, recognizing social class helps identify the impetus for and contradictions in globalization and helps clarify the workings of media hegemony.

Every society can be characterized by how the necessities of life are produced from nature—by the social relations that organize production, distribution, and consumption of necessities among groups and individuals in society. Capitalist society in its globalized condition has highly industrial-

ized productive forces producing goods collectively with highly stratified social relations—domestically and internationally—that also distribute benefits, rights, and responsibilities hierarchically. Now a globalized economic system of production and trade, capitalism is privately owned and operated for individual corporate profit. International capitalism employs communications technology to organize the immense productive power of collective wage labor in geographically decentralized locations, centralizing the diffusion of production of commodities for corporate sale. In contradiction to the highly collective production process—with hundreds of thousands involved in the creation, production, and distribution—neither the producers of goods nor society as a whole direct, control, or decide the goals of social production. Instead, the means of production—from natural resources to factories, railroads, and buildings—are privately owned and operated for narrow corporate profit. Mineral deposits, forests, water, and even the airwaves have been ostensibly "owned" by the public, as millions of citizens participate in transforming nature's bounty into items for human consumption, but the international move to privatization turns legal exploitation over to deregulated, commercialized corporate interests. In short, globalized production is increasingly socialized, but corporate decisions are narrowly bureaucratic and authoritarian. Moreover, the benefits and profits from such social production are unevenly distributed among social groups and individuals.

The primary social contradiction of contemporary capitalism is structurally expressed as an antagonism within these productive relations, relations that are not simply between individuals but social relations between classes. Individuals are everywhere and always crystallized from social experience, and all such experiences occur within historically-contingent, structured human relations, including social classes. Social class can be defined as a group of people who relate to production in similar ways and share a common location in the social relations of production (Therborn, 1983, p. 39). Thus, for example, the capitalist class comprises those who own the means of production but rarely work there. The working class does not own the means of production but sets them in motion by physically using tools, machinery, and labor power on raw materials and their products. In terms of production, the working class owns only its labor power, which must be sold to the capitalist for a wage, whereas the capitalist depends on the worker to create goods, which must be sold for a profit. Other classes can be similarly defined according to their relationship to the means of production. For example, the managerial middle class is excluded from ownership of the means of production and also generally does not work with the means of production. Instead, the manager's position is administrative and supervisory, organizing the labor process and commanding much of the knowledge about the overall productive process (Poulanzas,

1978). Administrative control of cultural production also gives those middle classes political legitimacy and power (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1992, p. 130).

These broad class categories are very rough sketches. In each case, we could delineate class groupings within a class and in relation to the overarching social structure (Wright, 1985). Finance capitalists have a different relationship to the means of production than do industrial capitalists or small business entrepreneurs. Likewise, industrial workers have a different relationship to the means of production than do teachers, retail clerks, or service workers. A much longer explanation and argument can be found elsewhere (e.g., Wright, 1985, 1991), but for the upcoming discussion on class and culture, we do not need to empirically identify all the relational nuances between social class positions in the United States. It should suffice to say that classes can be generally defined in terms of their relationship to the means of production, which lends analytical sense to the social structure.

Of course, structures don't act, people do. Moreover, by recognizing that the production of things occurs simultaneously with the production of social relations—including ideological practices, symbolic representations, and public discourses necessary to hegemony (Artz & Murphy, 2000; Bourdieu, 1991, 1987; Garnham, 1990)—we see that social class has a "subjective component, is a process, is defined in relation to other classes and is historically contingent" (McNall et al., 1991, p. 4). In other words, the importance of any class depends on its relation to the means of production *and* on its relationship to other classes and society as a whole. These social relations are framed (but not predetermined) by the structural conditions of production, including the size and strategic social position of each class and the political power of each class as determined by battles, alliances, and interactions with the rest of society.

The conditions and relations of class may be abstractly characterized, but their efficacy is imminently concrete. As Bourdieu (1987) argues, class structures only set the probabilities for social formations: "one cannot group anyone with anyone while ignoring fundamental differences, particularly economic and cultural ones. But this never entirely excludes the possibility of organizing agents in accordance with other principles of division" (p. 8). Other conditions, identities, and experiences, such as gender, race, ideology, culture, and institutional action shape the actual political formation of classes. Class structure only provides the context for other social processes—including hegemony, because material and political resources available for winning allies and building consent depend on the structure and practices organizing each society. Similar class structures allow for different class formations and representations (Cohen, 1990; Levine, 1988; Poulanzas, 1978). As individuals and groups become aware of their lived experience, they choose strategies drawn in large part from their class position and activity. Such human action

expresses and supports or challenges the structures and norms in political, ideological, and symbolic terms (Wacquant, 1991, p. 56).

Within countries of the global North, certain class formations are likely, easy, and stable: managers are convenient and willing allies of corporate owners; skilled workers, engineers, and planners are likely hegemonic allies of supervisors; and given sufficient incentive, skilled workers, small business owners, and farmers will be supportive of capitalist norms. Other formations are not likely: corporate owners joining union organizing drives or supporting worker demands for shorter hours and higher wages. Of course, race, gender, nationality, and religion influence class formations, as well, but the social structure sets some limits. It is more likely that black professionals or even employed black workers would join hegemonic institutions on dominant terms than it is that white CEOs would challenge corporate hiring practices on behalf of black workers. Why? Because structural parameters subject individual class members to a set of mechanisms that impinge on their lives as they think, choose, and act in the world (Wright, 1991, p. 23). Stuart Hall's (1984) rebuttal to postmodern dismissals of class analysis pinches reality too much. It is not that certain connections between class position and class action are necessary or non-necessary. More accurately, specific class actions are more or less possible, more or less probable, while some actions may be beyond imagination because they are beyond our actual experience, outside our vocabulary and sensibility.

The production of goods and relations has social and cultural manifestations, meaning that social class is not solely an economic condition, but has a symbolic, social range. In every working-class community, which can be readily identified in most every country of the world, groups are at least loosely affiliated through the site of production, whether it is oil, steel, auto, or agriculture, for example. Within these communities, recreation, entertainment, and social practices such as music, religion, education, and conversation occur with particular shared vocabularies, meanings, and codes. In other words, cultural practices reflect representations of shared class positions and experiences (Bourdieu, 1978, 1984). The prevalence of beer, football, video rental, and television in certain communities has some material basis in available disposable income and leisure time. In constrast, opera, polo, and yachting require different economic resources and create different vocabularies and meanings as well.

Cross-border renderings of U.S.-born rap music, for instance, invariably occur among urban poor, most frequently among the racially oppressed youth in urban centers, whether in Britain, Ghana, or Brazil—where samba, accordion folk, and rap cross-pollinate in the *favelas* as "ghetto music" (Billon, 1998). Cultural codes may not be determined by the class position of the artist or the audience, but nonetheless, identifiable codes parallel and give

voice to distinct class experiences that occur under very specific, concrete social and cultural conditions. In beat and lyric, the strident resistance of rap (sometimes politically conscious, sometimes antisocial) represents part of the experience of black working-class youth in the United States and logically and aesthetically appeals to urban minority youth frustrated in similar social positions. Rap is not so much appropriated as it is shared for similar communicative purposes.

Similarly, as Sowards reveals here in her discussion of MTV Asia, elite youth with considerable disposable income comprise the primary audience for American and Americanized pop music in South East Asia because across the region domestic capitalists and the administrators and professionals for domestic and multinational firms have access to comparable resources, share similar social and political positions in government and corporations, and support and benefit from similar political and economic policies—above all privatization. It seems almost natural that the offspring of this fairly homogenous corporate-dependent elite would find their cultural preferences from the same source that their parents find their economic leadership—the Western core. In the case of MTV Asia, Asian "spokesmodel" VJs host the party for Western consumerist culture and music. By and large, working-class youth are on the periphery of MTV Asia culture, pocket CDs, cell-phones, concerts, and all. At most, urban working-class youth aspire to that Asianized American culture through the purchase of knock-offs or by listening to mass market radio, while the overwhelming majority of the urban and rural poor remain in the margins of consumption with unmet rising expectations. In short, as in economics and politics, the cultural agenda in most countries is constrained but not dictated by the socioeconomic elite pursuing their own interests and identities.

Media Hegemony

Hegemony is not mechanical, not simply coercive, nor deceitfully manipulative. Rather, hegemony is the political outcome of a leadership's ability to intellectually and morally move society towards a reluctantly or enthusiastically agreed-upon set of cultural and economic practices. In other words, although hegemony is not a communication process per se, cultural and political discourses must reflect, organize, and interact with other social practices. Hegemony must be constructed using some of the ideas and concerns of all groups.

Leaderships only become hegemonic because they convince others to become allies through persuasive political and cultural practices, which necessarily require normalized interpretations best communicated to the masses via the media. Hence, capitalist hegemony needs parallel media hegemony as an

institutionalized, systematic means of educating, persuading, and representing subordinate classes to particular cultural practices within the context of capitalist norms. If culture is the ideological cement of society, then, to secure corporate interests, capitalist globalization needs media hegemony to recruit, tame, and popularize interpretations, information, and cultural behavior complementary to deregulation, privatization, and commercialization.

Internationally, media hegemony is obvious. Numerous scholars have documented well the stampede to privatization (Thussu, 2000; Herman & McChesney, 1997) and the universal predominance of mass entertainment and consumerism. The amateurish propaganda of formerly state-run media systems has been shoved aside by the more ideologically sophisticated commercial media systems. In the process, public media have been dismissed as tantamount to government media, as if private broadcasters better represent the public good. Privatized media systems appropriate global and domestic cultural offerings into "glocalized" commodities for sale to culturally distinct regional audiences, from "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" and rap to "Betty La Fea" and Islamic pop. As the global capitalist media marches behind the same market band that leads other corporations, the upbeat drumroll for expansion sends the global players rushing for consuming audiences everywhere, from Eastern Europe to East Asia and Latin America.

The current global class structure with all of its contradictions and complexity provides more material and political resources to the leading global corporations and their regional allies (who have collaborated in creating international regulatory institutions) than it does to the working class (which remains poorly organized even on the national level). Consequently, representatives and supporters of capitalist hegemony can offer tangible rewards to subordinate individuals and groups, including working and middle classes, who sign on to the globalization of consumerism. Transnationals and their regional allies also dominate international and national public discourse with their control of global mass communication. In contrast, appeals by the subordinate majority for human solidarity and democratic communication currently lack both political organization and a conscious global media expression.

The social and political strength of capitalism is its ability to satisfy other classes with individual material rewards that undermine the intrinsic working-class strength of solidarity and collectivity (Therborn, 1983). It has been decades since the working class in the United States has politically organized its ranks. Under its current leadership, it has little to offer materially or culturally to the broad middle classes. In Latin America, Asia, and to a lesser extent in Europe, the rewards of capitalism have been more elusive, prompting new leaderships to champion working-class-inspired social programs featuring considerable political action. For example, the Workers Party in Brazil,

the labor union movement in South Korea, Lavalas in Haiti, and even Hugo Chavez's "Bolivarian Revolution" in Venezuela advance populist programs hegemonically appealing to the working-class majority, the urban poor, and the peasantry.

Globalization of the free market also means that periodic contractions of production will further damage the developing world, especially because public and social services have been privatized and commercialized in the recent period. Meanwhile in the United States, a new recession (415,000 lay-offs in October 2001) has slapped awake investors and speculators, and potentially could affect the consciousness of American workers, whose appreciation of the benefits of consumerism depends on continued employment and affordable credit. In short, the seemingly unstoppable spread of capitalist hegemony will most likely stumble in the not-too-distant future, as recession, unemployment, and reductions in the quality of life tarnish the gloss of globalization.

Two responses to this scenario continue to push globalization forward, even as its ability to recruit allies dwindles. First, the United States and its junior partner Britain defend "enduring capitalism" at all costs, including military action, verifying Gramsci's declaration that hegemony is consent armored with coercion. Anticipating international dissatisfaction with an economic downturn and its class-biased assault on the world's majority, political leaders in the global North are prepared to protect what Gramsci called the kernel of capitalism—its economic power—its control over resource, production, and distribution. The U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are only the most recent visible sign of the global North's willingness to enforce its dominance, preferably with (at least tacit) consent of significant national and class allies. Restrictions on domestic civil liberties and militarily targeting social movements abroad further clarify the conscious intent of the strongest capitalist states, warning all, in the words of White House press secretary, Ari Fleischer, to "watch what they say, watch what they do" (Hart & Ackerman, 2001, p. 6).

Secondly, partnered with coercion dances partly complicit, partly oblivious consumerist entertainment, seducing thought to pleasure, reflection to escape. Herein lies the goal of capitalist cultural hegemony: to create a world culture—homogenized or hybridized—that ingratiates itself via individual satisfactions or ideologically induced national identities. This class deployment of coercion and consent simultaneously pummels the working class and pampers it with cultural confection and political pablum, thereby retarding its independent political growth and highlighting capitalist cultural hegemony (Halle, 2001; Freedman, 2001).

The ever-present question facing commercial media is how to deliver audiences to advertisers. Past practices have relied on direct export of the

Western product (e.g., Hollywood and network offerings dubbed into the language of the "foreign" audience with little regard for cultural variation). Consequently, after decades of intervention, cultural imperialism, and the "comparable advantage" of Western media, a homogenous middle-class culture has grown up internationally around pop music, fast food, action movies, animated features, and other McDonaldized, Disneyfied, Hollywood fare. However, global corporate media lead in many ways—subsidiaries through direct investment, joint ventures, the purchase of local operations, and even the promotion of alternative cultures. More importantly than the particular form, at issue for the globalization of cultural hegemony is the social use of media.

The most recent adjustment by the hegemonic leaders of global corporate media has been the export of the "model." Game show formats, soap opera genre, reality television, and other models are now sold by corporate owners to national and regional media operators, who culturally "dress-up" the Western media guest. ABC's "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" has some two dozen variations around the world (White, 2001); O Globo has perfected the U.S. soap opera for export; and commercial radio advertising/music formats predominate in Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere.

Above all, media hegemony indicates leadership and dominance, not control and domination. Indeed, the power of media hegemony is in its participatory effectiveness—second-tier capitalist media owners, protected and bolstered by their own nation-state politicos, advance the policies and practices of capitalist globalization through culturally familiar representations. Whatever the specific variant or hybridization, the dominance of the hegemonic model and values are apparent: atomized, individualized, and consumerist entertainment rules. Crabtree and Malhotra describe media practices in India as a case in point, in their essay included here.

While, cultural imperialism has not ended (too many examples of forced takeovers and media monopoly belie as much), leading global media have found hegemonic persuasion more cost-efficient and politically effective. Throughout the world, deregulating reform of the media has accompanied the parallel political reform of governments, reflecting the intimate connections between civil society and the state. Of course, liberalization of the media does not guarantee an open, democratic society: Guatemala, El Salvador, and Qatar have private media but few civil liberties. In fact, many governments continue to mete out punishment and repression, but they do so with more legitimacy when they have the cover of two-candidate elections and privatized media. In most cases, private media defend the newly reformed states, if not the particular governing party. In all cases, privatized media legalized by the newly reformed states promote cultural forms (entertainment, escapism) and practices (individualism, consumerism) that advance and reinforce market relations at the expense of public interests.

Occasionally, resistance by sections of the working class and other politically disenfranchised groups—or conflicts between factions of the capitalist class—spill over into public discourse and media coverage, opening the door to some limited working-class and indigenous participation, as in Mexico following Chiapas, or in Ecuador, the Philippines, and Indonesia over the last several years. Yet, no matter how deep the social crisis, private media seldom balk from staunch support of their national capitalist class (Fox, 1988)—with the possible brief exception of Joaquin Chamorro's *La Prensa* in Nicaragua during the 1970s. Corporate media may vary in size, stature, temperament, and format, but never in allegiance to their class. This allegiance to a class perspective is apparent in corporate media's global culture, a culture that has several identifiably remarkable characteristics:

1. Ownership of the production and distribution of the global culture continues to narrow, despite the modest rise of regional aspirants and the resistance of some governments, as in China and France.
2. Entertainment formats predominate. From Ghana to Brazil to Singapore and the West, broadcasting, music, and movies are entertainment.
3. Consumerism rules. Marked by individualism, immediate gratification, and unfettered acquisitiveness, consumerism is expressed in hierarchical fictional and nonfictional narratives in privatized mass communication.
4. Cultural variations draw from rich and diverse traditions, as in Brazilian telenovelas and rap, Nigerian juju videos, and Islamic and green pop in Turkey. Yet, when controlled and represented by corporate media, most advance and none challenge the basic individualist, consumerist tenets of the capitalist market.
5. The global culture of corporate media features two complementary yet distinct representations: homogeneity and hybridity.

Homogeneity reflects the intercultural dominance of the Western model; hybridity reflects the creative contributions and resistances to intercultural exchanges by cultural artists and audiences. Included in this text is Chew, Cramer, and Prieto's case study of Televisa's international hit program, "Sábado Gigante," that illustrates how homogenity can develop across nations, classes, and cultures through a pleasing pan-ethnic identity construction. Likewise, the international success of MTV, network game shows, pop music, and other homogenous cultural products indicate that subordinate, yet aspiring, classes around the world find pleasure, comfort, and assurance in a Westernized homogeneity of consumption.

In response to the globalization of homogeneity, audiences and artists in various locales have creatively appropriated the commodified cultural products

to fit local cultural or political needs. "Glocalized" cultural practices often represent local interests and meanings, subverting global media messages with more politically conscious interpretations and uses (Kraidy, 1999; Robertson, 1992), but just as frequently power remains intact except for the local particulars. If the model is still a store, not a community hall, it provides no real alternative to the supermarket chain. At any rate, corporate media have adjusted quickly, realizing that hybrid alterations of Western products are largely nonthreatening, potentially very profitable, and politically valuable as evidence of corporate media's cultural diversity and sensitivity. In addition to the locally generated hybrid culture, TNMCs now produce their own commodified hybrids gleaned from cultures around the world. Homogenous or hybrid, the question of power remains.

Here, cultural studies remind us that the consumption of media commodities is a social practice, open to interpretations and use beyond the intent of the producer. The cultural meaning and consequence of any text have as much to do with the social and political context of reception as they do with the sender-receiver dynamic. In Managua, Nicaragua, Brazilian soap operas are viewed by entire neighborhoods at the homes of those few with televisions, permitting much more democratic communication and meaning construction than that done by the single viewer passively atomized in a North living room. Still, as Mattelart and Mattelart (1992) reply, interpretations by readers and viewers are neither autonomous nor necessarily superior to the meanings proposed by writers and producers. Without access to mass communication resources, audiences everywhere are handicapped if their constructions of meanings are creative reactions to the productions of others, primarily the corporate few.

What is progressive about cordoning off human subjects as active receivers who are relegated to meaning-construction of others' texts? Why not have a society and a media that allows subjects to be subjects by producing their own texts? The "reader-as-producer" perspective expresses little concern regarding globalization, despite the fact that most intercultural communication and dialogue pass through corporate media and advertising filters—simultaneously pasteurizing cultural activity and bolstering capitalist media hegemony.

Media hegemony thrives because (in very practical terms) it not only affordably presents the most popular versions of Western culture—the representative epitome of individual success—it also appears to be the best promoter of indigenous culture and cultural diversity. Perhaps the music world and the human condition in general benefit from the global distribution of corporate finds of independent, indigenous, or hybrid mixes. However, in hegemonic terms, any music, movie, art, or political discourse or social commentary that passes through corporate media filters must meet the hegemonic

prerequisites of entertainment and profit, thereby weakening or undermining its political edge, class independence, and counterhegemonic potential.

Media and cultural hegemony speak for and lead the working class and other diverse subordinate groups because mass culture provides favorable and rewarding representations and images. From "Roseanne" and "Drew Carey" in the United States, to "Betty La Fea" in Brazil, and the popular radio show "Our New Home" on Afghan radio, life is good! We all can laugh, work, play, and shop in our own little worlds without regard, concern, or (hopefully) even awareness of any unpleasantness outside. Individually consumed mass pleasure makes for a solid consumerist hegemony, and the central tenet of capitalist media hegemony worldwide is to promote an interclass culture of pleasure based on continuous consumption. In image and narrative, this interclass culture is strictly American middle class in outlook: professional, managerial, or entrepreneurial and aspiring to move closer to corporate central.

To the extent that the global media set agendas and popularize models of entertainment, mass culture closes public discourse. To the extent that cultural practices resist commercialization, either by hybrid appropriations or by independent communication, they open public discourse to the possibility of a truly new world order. Cultural variations are not the issue, as corporate media will happily emphasize the cross-cultural character of the elite or moderate intercultural contributions that might jolt the U.S. middle-class palette into hybrid cross-overs (e.g., African music via Paul Simon, de-Latinizing Ricky Martin for a mass audience). More importantly, advertising and entertainment "undermines people's will to understand" their own social conditions and individual potential, as hegemonic middle-class lifestyles are emulated and even internalized (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1992, p. 153). Furthermore, a media focus on daily life undercuts access to history and the future, while a focus on individual consumption and desire denies access to collective, democratic, social possibilities for humanity.

The problem with the culture industry is not only in the stories they tell of hyper-individualism (Artz, 2000), but also in how they occupy the collective consciousness with celebrity, trivia, and self-aggrandizement. Pleasure is marketed as the goal, but it is always just beyond our reach, requiring another consumer purchase, then another. Of course, pleasure is not the same as happiness, satisfaction, or fulfillment—but the globalization of corporate media hegemony based on advertising thrives on individual desire, legitimizing mass consumption, mass production, and privatization—obstructing humanity's fulfillment as a by-product. Hybrid variations that do not challenge atomized pleasure, mass hedonism, or the commercial model may surely represent subordinate classes and cultures, but they do so as unwitting servants for capitalist cultural hegemony. For instance, by independently producing his own hybrid blend of Ghanian "highlife" music with American pop and reggae,

Kojo Antwi may have revived his country's classic "highlife" sound, but he cannot stem the multinational "flooding of sub-Saharan Africa with flimsy pop" (Zachary, 2001, p. 32), especially if pop impresario Quincy Jones takes over Antwi's productions and softens them for the world music market. In other words, the economic goals of global corporate media ultimately conflict with the social and cultural needs of communities, nations, and working classes worldwide. As the local media become commercialized, they are subjected to the laws of market more than the needs of the community. Privatized media subvert the local even if local, because they emulate the commercial global media and model its values.

Global capitalism will not willingly advance either democratic international institutions or democratic cultural exchanges. To paraphrase the abolitionist Frederick Douglass, capitalist globalization concedes nothing without demand. As noted already, lack is created, planned, and organized by a social production obeisant to corporate goals. Likewise, media and cultural adhering to privatization and commercialization are created, planned, and organized for similar corporate goals.

Global capitalism, in other words, creates a consumer market and cultivates a consumer ideology, but an increase in the quantity of goods does not systematically improve the well-being of people. TNCs, however, measure value in terms of sales of audiences to advertisers and sales of goods to audiences. Not surprisingly, advertising appears as the legitimate forebear of democratic freedom—free flow of information and free consumer choice indicate and define the ultimate free society. One would better break with the advertising/development model and measure the social use of the media in terms of the quality of human life.

Global Culture:
Privatization, Media Hegemony, and Class Power

The global corporate media harvest a global culture that can be packaged, advertised, and sold as neat, stylized, individual commodities: movies, videos, songs, CDs, magazines, and their synergistic cultural accessories from clothing to food and personal care items. The success of the entertainment and advertising model promoted by transnational media indicates the hegemonic leadership of global capital, as millions are attracted to the wafting, sweet smell of consumer pleasure. To continue to please the consumer palette, global media and their advertisers continually seek out new products and new markets, continually recruiting, appropriating, and stimulating—but always within a commodified frame. The diversity of cultural experiences, practices, and manifestations is off-limits to the corporate media unless it can be privatized. It isn't so

much that corporate media want to restrict the textures and variations of the human experience, it is that in their rush to riches, the corporate media undermine the very creativity they seek, by uprooting cultural practices from their social ground and replacing them with an artificially sweetened facsimile. Paul Simon discovers South African rhythms, produces them as pop hits with colorful African background singers and dancers, then record giants market this world music to the world, including back to the creative communities of its origin. This is not an aesthetic critique, nor an appeal to limit cross-cultural exchange—some of the most interesting music, art, and cuisine develop from hybrid mixings. The problem is simply that future cross-cultural exchange may become sterile if world culture follows the corporate trail. When homogenized hybrids are subsidized by TNMC promotions, both mediocre and profound alternatives that don't fit the acclimatized world culture of the market are shoved aside, marginalized. Already, upscale music groups in every developing country mimic U.S. pop, forsaking their own cultural traditions and the potential to create new ones, by following the celebrity, commodity culture of the North. Meanwhile, talent scouts and corporate trend seekers sniff out local talent like pigs looking for truffles—without supervision the finds in both searches are trampled. Gems of culture aren't treasured or polished; instead, they are carefully cut to fit the individualized display style suited for maximizing corporate sales.

The privatizing of media and culture transforms social experience into measurable, marketable, individualized consumer products. The dominance of consumerist hegemony—popularized by a global media hegemony of privatization and advertising—also disorganizes the working class and other subordinate groups, because it breaks down communities into atomized consumers, rewarding each with self-centered, impersonal, escapist entertainment that distracts individuals from societal functions and possibilities. Ultimately, the attractive individual pleasures enjoyed are like all confections—fleeting, addictive, and unnourishing to body and soul.

Politically speaking, the hegemony of consumerism advances the capitalist system. In ideological discourse, consumerism delegitimizes collective concerns and working-class values. "In the 1930s working people had a positive image in national culture [in the U.S.] and working class values were generally treated with respect . . . ordinary people were portrayed as equal in intelligence to the ambitious and wealthy, and morally superior as well. In the 1950s, however, all this changed. On TV shows, leading men wore suits and came home from offices, not factories, while the occasional blue-collar protagonists who did appear were treated as buffoons" (Levison, 2001, p. 28). As Butsch (2002), Scharrer (Moran, 2000), and Zaniello (1996) have thoroughly demonstrated, working-class characters continue to be disparaged in media fiction, while news frames generally distort working-class political activity as ill-advised and threatening to consumers (e.g., Goldman & Rajagopal, 1991;

Parenti, 1986). "Overall, mainstream news reporting of labor obscures class relations because capitalist hegemony prefers [and attracts] working class audiences that are interested in private consumption and have no political interest in production relations. Because the media monopoly determines how news will be defined, produced, and consumed, issues in strikes can be framed in terms of consumption, not production" (Artz & Murphy, 2000, p. 278). In ideological practice, consumerism helps corporations escape the leverage of organized working-class and social movement action, because consumerism privileges individual concerns while ignoring, obscuring, or disparaging social or collective concerns as those dreaded "politically motivated" "special interests." Globalized capitalist hegemony dramatically expands the division of labor across geographic regions, further dividing the working class by national, ethnic, and cultural difference, at least temporarily.

Global media and its world culture offer a simulated democracy in the form of individual consumer choice. This world culture often appears as vibrant, eclectic, and open because the creative stimulus for corporate media product is drawn in large measure from diverse cultures and their representations. This *vox populi* artistic and democratic gloss lasts as long as the shine of a new plastic toy—short-lived and constantly in need of replacement— because a global culture of corporate media hegemony seeks consumers and profits first, not human needs.

On the other hand, the cultural and political impulses of the subordinate—the working classes, national minorities, and other oppressed groups around the world—have immense potential power. Collective solidarity in political action and cultural expression could knock down the commercial barriers to free cultural exchange, and millions could "write their own stories" without the guiding hand of the media market, as Dorfman (1983) so eloquently expresses in his narration of the rising consciousness of the oppressed during the Allende years in Chile. A globalization of democracy, participation, unmediated cultural expression is desirable and possible.

An international culture of human solidarity led by the working-class majority in all of its diversity would build on but surpass the resistance and subversion present in hybrid cultural practices and localized political activity. Of course, to be liberating, a noncorporate global culture must be part of a larger political project. It must become a social crusade that uses media and culture to articulate and organize a new hegemonic project with a new class leadership, new cultural identities, and new political activities (much like the Harlem Renaissance and the Garvey Movement in the 1920s, the U.S. labor movement in the 1930s, the Cuban revolution of the 1960s, the Nicaraguan revolution of the 1980s, or even Chiapas in Mexico today).

Alternative cultural practices are not inherently counter-hegemonic, especially if they are quiescent, nonchallenging. Resistance, either as negotiated

hybridization of the dominant or as politically independent, can also camouflage power in working to improve the existing hegemony—seeking specific reform in an otherwise unchallenged structure. A successful hegemony, including media hegemony, invites such reforms because it leads by improving the participation and contribution of subordinates to the institutions and practices of hegemony. Indeed, one remains inside the logic of the dominant, including its hegemony, unless one participates in an organized alliance of the culturally active, politically conscious, and economically powerful (in social class position) that can construct a new hegemonic project.

Above all, hegemony means political and cultural leadership. Cultural hegemony means society in all of its divisions has internalized and normalized the relations and practices as common sense. Contemporary cultural hegemony is bundled in capitalist globalization, corporate media hegemony, and social class divisions, all ideologically tied together by consumerism. To break such a hold, assumptions and beliefs must be shaken by contradictory practices; recurring crises within capitalist hegemony must be countered with political programs that consciously offer and pragmatically deliver material, political, and cultural rewards from an alternative leadership. A new global culture for humanity must identify contradictions and breaks within capitalist hegemony and then consciously challenge its hierarchal relationships and cultural norms with calls for participatory social democracy.

As the essays in this text reveal, transnationals, their media, and national elites acting as junior partners respond to all challenges often with coercion but always with refined persuasive appeals that deliver representations favorable to capitalist hegemony. Around the world, radical media, social movements, and cultural and political expressions of working people and their allies are simultaneously resisting free market globalization and envisioning a globalization of human values and participation. In this confrontation, any new hegemony will necessarily need to project its political program to millions via an independent media that clearly speaks on behalf of working people and humanity for a new world order.

Tantum possumus, tantum scimus
(We do what we know)

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