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NEWS AND IDEOLOGY:

AN EVALUATION OF "CRITICAL STUDIES" OF NEWS

by

Jovanka Matić

B.A. University of Belgrade, 1978

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ABSTRACT

A new, critically oriented view of mass communications has been developing in the literature. This emerging approach to mass communication research deals with communication as a social process and emphasizes the close relationship between media content and the social context in which it is produced. This new communication literature often uses the term "ideology" to study the relationship between mass media and the social order. The mass media are seen to be components of a process of social control. They are seen to foster legitimation and perpetuation of current social arrangements in advanced capitalist societies.

The thesis examines this emerging literature, focussing on studies of news. More specifically, the thesis explores the ideological nature of news as it is reflected in the studies of Edward Epstein, Leon Sigal, Bernard Roshco, Herbert Gans, Gaye Tuchman, Todd Gitlin, the Glasgow University Media Group, and John Hartley. Each of these studies, it is argued, offers a different explanation of news as an agency of the established social order. These studies also reflect quite different understandings of communication as a social process and are dependent upon differing conceptions of the way in which society is organized. Their different theoretical frameworks embody

different concepts of ideology. The result is that news is characterized as an ideological institution differently in each study.

The thesis concludes that among the eight studies examined, those related to a Marxist theoretical framework offer more comprehensive accounts of the ideological aspects of news. However, despite the promise inherent in neo-Marxist developments of the concept of ideology, these studies fail to give a full, historical materialist explanation of the relationship between news and the social system within which it is produced. Such an explanation requires a theory of the media which takes into account the ways in which the operational mode and all the products of the media are structured by the underlying dynamics of the capitalist economic system.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Many new questions have opened up in the social sciences in the light of changes which our world has undergone in the last few decades. Despite the promise of new communication technologies, said to be bringing us closer to the realization of the idea of a "global village", the world is actually more than ever split between North and South, East and West. The term "domination" has assumed a central position both in the international political scene and in domestic debates within advanced capitalist societies. Questions relating to the gap between developed and underdeveloped countries and "cultural imperialism" have been brought to prominence. At the same time, the issue of the fragmentation and cooptation of all classes into the dominant political and cultural institutions has been raised: "How (do) radical inequalities in the distribution of rewards come to be presented as natural and inevitable and are understood as such by those who benefit least from this distribution"? (Murdock and Golding, 1979, p. 12). The critique of class domination had to address the question of consciousness.

In answering new critical questions more and more social scientists are turning their attention to mass media as a unique

feature of modern society. Indeed, the mass media are present in every sphere of human life in industrial societies: they are intertwined with politics as much as with sports, with education and the family; they enter both our public and private lives; they are important for wars as well as for entertainment. The communications industry is expanding rapidly. As disseminators of social imagery and knowledge, the media are important agents of socialization. In a word, they are an unavoidable part of any study concerning modern social developments and, especially, the social consciousness of the modern age. But are the mass media the effect or the cause of changes in modern society? Do they bring a "new industrial revolution in the field of culture" (Gerbner, 1972, p. 38), or the "industrialization of the human mind"? (Enszenberger, 1974, p. 4). Are they agents of progress or agents of the status quo, means to know or means "not to know"?

Unfortunately, much of the existing communication theory and research could not provide useful leads for answering critical questions in new areas of inquiry promoted by the social movements of the 1960's. The relatively short history of mass communication research reveals that its first forms - examination of the effects of mass media on mass audiences, based on assumptions about the persuasive power of radio as the new communication medium - were followed by numerous empirical studies and descriptions of audiences, measurements of "direct effects" of mass communications on opinions, attitudes,

information and behavior of individuals, refinements of more and more sophisticated empirical research methods - and "frequently expressed concerns at the direction and shape scholarship in the field (was) taking" (Golding and Murdock, 1980, p. 59).

In the late 60's and early 70's, a more integrated and critically oriented view of mass communications began to develop within the social science. New questions concerning the relations between the mass media and social order - which not only went unanswered in the previous generation of mass communication research, but which were not even recognized as important - are now being raised. They underlie "a fundamentally different approach to mass communication research" (Halloran, 1980, p. 187). As Halloran summarizes it, this emerging approach first and foremost deals with communication as a social process. It studies media institutions not in isolation but in relation with other institutions and within the wider social context; and "it conceptualizes research in terms of structure, organization, professionalization, socialization, participation, and so on" (Halloran, 1980, p. 170).

The focus of media studies is moving towards the identification of the media's influence on other social institutions, on setting the social-political agenda, on legitimizing certain forms of institutional arrangements and behavior, on cultural change, and on defining social reality in general. This approach stems from a wide range of positions with the common claim that the study of the mass media should be

incorporated into general sociological, economic, and political theories. However, it is predominantly developing within, or in relation to, a Marxist theoretical framework.

This emerging orientation in mass communication theory and research is often characterized as a new, "critical paradigm". It "revitalized" the concept of ideology. It is precisely the introduction of this concept into media studies that some authors see as the decisive step which brings us nearer to understanding the full importance of the mass media for perpetuating domination (Sumner, 1979; Hall, 1982). As the mass media came to be understood as important political and ideological institutions, their role in the process of social control attracted more and more investigation.

The aim of this thesis is to examine the theoretical understanding of news as an ideological institution in this new communication literature.

By convention as well as by the claims and the culture of Western journalism, news is expected to be balanced, impartial, unbiased, and neutral. Newspapers which once, in the almost forgotten days of "yellow journalism", were distinguished by their flamboyant approach to big city scandals, now try to attract the widest possible readership by abandoning a recognizable interpretation of the news which would deny them "objectivity". Popular belief, however, credits television above all with the most objectivity. The brevity of news items, the supposed lack of first-person statements and editorial comments,

along with the belief that "the camera never lies", contribute the most to the widely-accepted trustworthiness of this newest news medium. Many news researchers, however, agree that the "objectivity" of what we read, hear, or see in the news is not to be taken for granted. Contrary to the claims of journalists and popular belief, the news presented in the mass media is "biased", "distorted", and "ideological".

This thesis concentrates on studies which claim that news is neither neutral, impartial, unbiased nor balanced; instead news presents reality in a way that serves the interests of powerful groups in society and as such acts as an agent of the status quo. The thesis will consider eight studies which attempt to identify the major social forces which shape the way the events are reported in the news and to explain how news functions as an institution of the established social order.

All the studies examined were published after 1970 and belong to the new stream of research which developed in opposition to the previous research tradition. The particular choice of studies does not pretend to provide a comprehensive presentation of the richness of findings about the ideological functioning of the news. Rather, the objective is to present and examine news studies which are representative of new research approaches in media studies. The thesis thus discusses the findings of the studies presented in regard to epistemological, theoretical, and methodological approaches they employ and the concepts of ideology that they use. More specifically, the

thesis examines assumptions made about the broader structure of society and the nature of the communication process within different bodies of theories and the way these assumptions influence their characterizations of news as ideological. In the concluding chapter the thesis attempts to evaluate the findings of the studies examined from the perspective of a need for a historical, materialist analysis of the relationship between news and the social system within which it is produced.

Historical context of "critical studies" of news

The new characterization of news as an ideological institution can be understood only if situated within the historical context of communications studies as a whole. A starting point for the analysis of "critical studies" of news is thus found in the differences between the previous research tradition and the new research approach these studies are said to represent.

Two distinct phases may be distinguished in the vast body of work that came to be known as conventional communication theory and research. In the first phase, the media were seen as extremely powerful persuasive agencies. This view was established upon a stimulus-response model of communication, derived from behavioral psychology: a sender emits a message which produces an effect in the receiver. The mechanistic, uni-directional, cause-effect structure in the stimulus-response

model assumed persuasion for the purpose of behavioral modification to be "the archetypal case of communication" (Carey, 1979, p. 412). Psychological definition of the communication process was further supported by the "mass-man" theory. This theory presupposed that in the course of industrial capitalist development modern societies became "mass societies", composed of rootless and alienated individuals. Isolated from social relations and values of their stable rural communities, newly urbanized men and women were extremely vulnerable to the false appeals, suggestion, and influence of the media.

Based on these premises, the early theory of communication could account only for propagandistic communication. It directed the research to a simple measuring of the effects of the media on mass audiences. Media messages were understood as "means by which the intentions of communicators effectively influenced the behaviour of individual receivers" (Hall, 1982, p. 61) and were read in terms of the intentions of the communicators. A main analytical category of this research was that of the concept of propaganda. The historical, social, and interpersonal contexts of the communication process were not taken into account. The theory of mass society saw both the sender and receiver as isolated from these contexts; furthermore, contextual analysis could not be fitted into the empiricist notion of behavioral psychology that both stimuli and effects were easily quantifiable and measurable (Selucky, 1982).

A stable research stream of mass media effects was established in the 1930's, first in the U.S. It was a time of intensive capitalist development, a period that saw the emergence of mass markets and mass audiences on an unprecedented scale, as well as the first world war and the rise of fascism in Europe. Industrialists were interested in exploiting the assumed persuasive power of the media for commercial purposes; government, on the other hand, was equally interested in channeling this power on behalf of the "public interest". The early alliance of communication research with the pragmatic objectives of advertisers and government bodies made it fully subordinate to the dominant economic and political interests. Growing out of the "propaganda activities of the US government during World War I and the need of advertisers and the mass media for tax-supported university research which would provide them with the techniques of market research" (Smythe, 1981, p. 250), the new academic "discipline" encouraged neither theoretical nor critical work; it served and supported rather than criticized or challenged.

With a reassessment of the impact of the media during the late 1940's and then in the 50's and the 60's, a new academic "orthodoxy" was established: the influence of the media on individuals is very limited (if it exists at all). The stimulus-response model of communication, refined over time by the introduction of more and more intervening variables, was first modified into the "two-step flow" model. Small groups to

which the individual belonged (the family, the church, the work community) were demonstrated to constitute the filters between the media and the individual. The mass society thesis was undermined by this rediscovery of primary groups, bound with strong personal ties and mutual dependencies. Detailed studies of audience reactions introduced the notion of selective perception by the audience; its members bring their own structure of attention to media messages and understand and remember communication selectively, according to prior dispositions. A selective audience behavior was further demonstrated by a number of "uses and gratifications studies". The notion of passive, atomized, defenceless individuals was replaced by the view of active audience members who satisfy their different needs through different media programs. Instead of the pessimistic assumptions of mass society, the new, optimistic, functionalist-pluralist view of society as a mechanism regulated in equilibrium was to dominate a whole generation of research.

Although new theoretical developments were important and valuable, the mainstream communication research of the 50's and 60's was predominated by a "value-free, positivistic, empiricist, behaviouristic, psychological" orientation (Halloran, 1980, p. 165). The same combination of behavioral psychology and functionalist sociology characterized the work on

both sides of the Atlantic.[1] The central focus of communication scholars was the area of individual and small group behavior and the question of the media's short-term effects. Studies aimed at identifying the precise psychological and sociological conditions under which attitudes, opinions and behaviour, change. Switches of choice - "between advertised consumer goods or between presidential commodities - were viewed as a paradigm case of measurable influence and effect" (Hall, 1982, p. 59). The "scientistic" methodological approach in these studies, based on the positivist canons of orthodox American social science, sought the ultimate verification test of media effects in controlled experimental methods and survey techniques.

Centered around the Lasswellian research formula of "who says what in which channel to whom with what effect", a whole "liberal-pluralist" research tradition assumed a transmission view of communication. It uncritically adopted into the theory the ideal of "objective reporting", promulgated as the professional credo of American journalism at the turn of the century. In the service of the economic interests of the first wire services, selling their news to newspapers with widely differing viewpoints and intertwined with the interests of advertisers looking for the largest possible readership, this ideal of accurate factual reporting divorced from partisan opinions rendered obsolete the 19th-century style of "personal

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[1]Carey indicates that after WWII "a kind of intellectual Marshall Plan grew up" by which "American communication research made deep inroads into Europe" (Carey, 1979, p. 409).

journalism". Objectivity and its commonly accepted opposite, bias, came to be accepted as administrative guidelines for the later media (radio, television) and quite naturally, became the main organizing concepts in media research (see Hackett, 1984). "Objective reporting" as an analytical concept implied that facts can be separated from value judgements and that "journalists can stand apart from the real-world events whose truth or meaning they transfer to the news audiences by means of neutral language and competent reporting techniques" (Hackett, 1984, p. 232). Bias, understood as favoritism towards one political party or candidate was seen to stem from the political prejudices and social attitudes of communicators. Media organizations were understood as closed organizational systems; audiences were abstracted from the social structure. The analysis of communication phenomena in their "systemic context" was still greatly lacking in the vast and ever growing body of literature: "There were few if any questions about power, organization and control, little reference to structural considerations and rarely were attempts made to study the social meaning of the media in historical or contemporary contexts" (Halloran, 1980, p. 166).

Clearly, as many critics argued (Smythe and Van Dinh, 1983; Melody and Mansell, 1983), the predominant orientation in conventional communication theory and research was administrative. Due to the type of problems selected for study, the research methods employed, and the ideological

predispositions of the researchers that were implicit in their interpretations of the findings, this theory and research tended to serve the private corporate interests that paid for it. When directed at institutional arrangements at all, they tended to be apologetic or, at best, reformist.

In the late 60's, a dissatisfaction with the approach and the results of conventional communication research began to grow among social scientists of various theoretical persuasions. The main assumptions of this research and of theories underlying it started being challenged in the light of changes in the social sciences in general.

The new, emerging approach in studying mass communication phenomena is seen to differ from the previous research tradition in many ways. Curran, Gurevitch, and Woollacott (1982) emphasize that both the shift between the two phases in the earlier research and the shift towards the new approach in studying communications are related to a different understanding of the power of the mass media. Starting with the notion of omnipotent media, through the "limited model" of media influence, scholarship in the field is coming back to the characterization of media as powerful agencies. In fact, the same critics emphasize that it was a "disillusionment with the capacity of 'effects research' to fully explain the power of the media (Curran et al., 1982, p. 16) that first prompted the shift.

Hall (1982) argues that the central difference between "mainstream" and "critical" approaches lies, above all, in

profound differences in their theoretical perspectives, based on assumptions of how social formations in general are to be analyzed. He emphasizes that the central feature of the "pluralist" research tradition was precisely its administrative character, by which the whole research was bound and thus kept from crossing over its own confines of apologetics: not only was the research practically subjugated to dominant economic interests (being concentrated largely on identifying how to deliver specific audiences to the advertisers), but the apologetics of American society was built into the very theory the research rested upon. The issues that were absent from this research, Hall stresses, had to be absent because they were "theoretically outside the frame of reference" (Hall, 1982, p. 59). This theoretical framework, in turn, relied on a very specific, although unstated, set of political and ideological presuppositions. Society in these postulates was liberal-pluralist, consisting of competing groups and interests, none predominant. Such a definition of society excludes economic processes, classes, and institutional power-relations. It argues that society is held together by a broad popular consensus on social norms based around "the core value system". The pluralist vision implied the idea of society without classes, of "the end of ideology", and of the resolution of natural conflicts interests and values within the framework of the pluralist consensus. However, as Hall emphasizes, the value consensus was never - and could not have been - explained. Despite this,

pluralism became "not just a way of defining American particularism, but the model of society as such, written into social science" (Hall, 1982, p. 60).

At the heart of pluralism was the definition of power based around the notion of "influence". Hall argues that a way for the new "critical paradigm" in communication studies was opened when this concept of power along with the notion of consensus started being challenged. The assumed consensus, problematized by practical social movements in American society as well as theoretically, was discovered not to be an "agreement to agree on fundamentals", but a consensus around a particular form of society - "a definite set of social, economic and political structures" (Hall, 1982, p. 63). The media began to be seen not as agencies reflecting the consensus, but as producing it. Their role and functioning began to be defined as ideological. This is for Hall the very heart of the "critical paradigm".

The shift towards a new communication paradigm was first marked by a new analytical emphasis on the structures and practice of media organizations in media studies. The concern with media institutions was influenced by developments in the sociological study of large organizations which yielded theories of organizational structure and behavior as well as analytical tools for the examination of work practices and production processes in media organizations. Further, this concern was prompted by a Marxist reappraisal of the role of the media in society; in this perspective, the media were seen "not as an

autonomous organizational system, but as a set of institutions closely linked to the dominant power structure" (Curran et al., 1982, p. 16). Within the theoretical frameworks of the sociology of organizations and the sociology of the profession, the interest in various aspects of media organizations resulted in different studies concerned with institutional structures and role relationships, work practices and professional ideologies, and interactions of media institutions with their socio-political environment. Another stream of research, "adopting a fundamentalist-Marxist approach" (Curran et al., 1982, p. 18), centered around the political economy of media institutions. According to this perspective, which places the emphasis on the analysis of structures of ownership and control, the contents of the media are primarily determined by the economic base of the organizations in which they are produced.

In the last decade, however, the "classical Marxist" view of the media, based on the metaphor of base and superstructure and the notion of ruling ideas being ideas of a ruling class, started to be challenged. Changes in this view "arose in part because of internal developments in Marxism but also because of the influence of other theoretical traditions" (Curran et al., 1982, p. 22). Berger and Luckmann's (1966) "social construction of reality" approach, Goffman's (1974) frame analysis, and the work of ethnomethodologists on the strategies involved in the understandings of everyday situations, contributed significantly to by-passing the notion of the media as "mirrors" of reality.

Saussurean linguistics, the structural anthropology of Levi-Strauss, the semiotics of Barthes - all incorporated in structuralism - along with the Althusserian Marxism, strongly influenced the whole direction of mass communication research. The attention of many researchers in the field was redirected towards the analysis of "texts" and formal qualities of media discourse. Concerned with studying the internal relations of signifying practices, structuralist media research is based on the assumption that whole societies and social practices apart from language can also be analyzed "on the model of a language" (Hall, 1982). Further, structuralist studies, based on Althusser's reformulation of ideology (1971), give a relative independence to ideology and argue that it needs to be analyzed in its own terms. Within this approach, "the classic conception of ideas as wholly determined by other determining factors (e.g. class position)" (Hall, 1982, p. 82) was finally overthrown.

Another theoretical tradition opposed to the "base superstructure way of formulating the relationship between ideal and material forces" (Curran et al., 1982, p. 27) drew upon the British tradition of cultural studies which were initiated through the work of Williams, Thompson, and Hoggart. This theoretical orientation places the emphasis on culture which is seen as inter-woven with all social practices. While structuralism focusses on the autonomy and articulation of media discourses whose "logic of arrangement" interpellates subjects rather than itself being subject to changes by organized human

activities, culturalist studies seek to place the media and other human creative practices within a society conceived of as a complex expressive totality.

The most recent media studies (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham) have attempted to combine culturalist and structuralist views, by "historicizing the structures" of the "ideological matrix" (Hall, 1982). The "theoretical bridge" is found in Gramsci's (1971) work and his notion of hegemony. Gramsci himself has not unequivocally defined nor applied the concept of hegemony. His concept however has been elaborated so as to provide a historical dimension to the analysis of structure of discourses. Gramsci argued that no hard and fast line can be drawn between ruling with force and ruling with consent of the ruled. Hegemony is the name given to a ruling class domination through ideology, through the shaping of popular consent. The history of the social formation was seen as sedimented in historically-elaborated discourses on which "for example, broadcasters could draw for the work of signifying new and troubling events" (Hall, 1982, p. 73).

However, all these new approaches in media studies are strongly criticized for abandoning the economic determination of social practices, even in the "last instance". Political economists especially argue strongly against giving the priority to ideology at the expense of detailed consideration of the economic determinants of the mass media (Murdock and Golding, 1979). This approach points to the increasing monopolization of

the culture industry and focusses on the examination of the economic processes and structures of media production.

It is only recently that the political economy approach moved beyond the criticism of returning to the base/superstructure dichotomy. Smythe's (1981) theory of the media pointed out that the relation between the media and advertising is of a strategic importance for the normal functioning of capitalist material production in general. Mass media, in Smythe's view, produce audiences as commodities and sell them to advertisers. Through advertisements, the audiences are "instructed" to buy consumer products. The contents ("the free lunch") provided by the commercial mass media are seen as both "ideological education" and as a bait to obtain the main product of the media: the audiences which market consumer goods to themselves. The dialectical tension within individuals and that within commodities, "plus the intersecting dialectical tension between people and commodities" (Smythe, 1981, p. 5) are for Smythe the location of the production and reproduction of ideology.

The studies of news reflect strongly all these new theoretical developments in communication studies in general. This thesis attempts to demonstrate how these different theoretical traditions influence the research problems posed in relation to the ideological character of news and the way in which these problems are analyzed. The analysis presented in the following chapters rests upon the assumption that materialist

theory of the media must take into account the underlying dynamics of the capitalist economic system and the ways it structures both the operational mode of the media and their products.

Chapter one presents studies that define news as the product of news organizations. Three studies are discussed: Edward Epstein's News from Nowhere: Television and the News (1973); Leon Sigal's Reporters and Officials: The Organization and Politics of Newsmaking (1973); and Bernard Roshco's Newsmaking (1975).

Chapter two deals with a study of Herbert Gans: Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time (1979) and a study of Gaye Tuchman: Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality (1978). Both authors analyze news as a form of knowledge.

Chapter three examines Todd Gitlin's characterization of news as a hegemonic frame developed in his study The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left (1980).

Chapter four analyzes Bad News, More Bad News, and Really Bad News of Glasgow University Media Group (1976; 1980; 1982) which examine news as an ideological code.

Chapter five presents John Hartley's study Understanding News (1982), centered on the analysis of news as an ideological discourse.

The concluding chapter summarizes differences among these studies in their theoretical characterization of news as ideological and suggests how useful they are for a historical, materialist understanding of news as an agency fostering a perpetuation of current social arrangements in advanced capitalist societies.

I. NEWS AS A PRODUCT OF NEWS ORGANIZATIONS

> "Without standardization, without stereotypes, without routine judgements, without a fairly ruthless disregard of subtlety, the editor would soon die of excitement"
> (Walter Lippmann: "Public Opinion")

In the 1950's and the early 60's, with a wide acceptance of Lasswell's research formula of "who says what in which channel to whom with what effect", the first forms of early communication research - audience analysis (whom) and effects analysis (audience effects) - were accompanied by two other departmentalized research areas: control analysis (who) and content analysis (what) (Curran, et al., 1979).

Control analysis grew upon the assumption that certain places within the channels through which news is flowing serve as "gates" through which it might or might not be admitted (Lewin, in McQuail, 1972). Mainly concerned with the process of selection which was recognized as the decisive factor for the resulting picture of reality in the news, control analysis concentrated on the activities of "gate-keepers". In the then existing theoretical framework which saw the media as passive channels of information flow in the service of the social ideal

of objective reporting in the public interest, gate-keeping studies could point only to the personal values of the communicators as the source of disparity between the picture of events in the news and reality. Whether this discrepancy was seen to originate in the political partisanship on the part of owners, advertisers, and editors or in the "social heritage, the 'professional reflexes', the individual temperament, and the economic status"[1] of the much studied Washington correspondents, control analysis in general assumed journalists to be the creators of news, the authors of their own practice.

It was precisely at this juncture that the whole theoretical framework of media studies in the "conventional" communication research began to crack. It was recognized that communication is not an intra-individual process. Journalists, the starting point of this process, do not work as individuals on their own; they are a part of some larger structure - mass media organizations. The end of the 60's and the early 70's noted a rise of a new stream in news media research: organizational studies. These studies were important as a step towards the understanding of news as a social and ideological institution.

This chapter deals with three organizational studies: Epstein's News From Nowhere: Television and the News (1973),

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[1] This was the conclusion of Leo Rosten's study of Washington correspondents, characterized by Roshco as the first sociological study of journalists (cited in Roscho, 1975, p. 47-48).

Sigal's Reporters and Officials: The Organization and Politics of Newsmaking (1973), and Roshco's Newsmaking (1975). All three authors point out that news is not just a reflection of journalists' personal biases. In fact, they claim that there is a "systematic distortion in the images of events" (Epstein, p. xii) presented as news in the mass media. This chapter will discuss how this distortion is defined, how it is explained and how it is analyzed in each of the studies. By considering the theoretical understanding of news as systematically distortive, a conclusion will be drawn about the nature of the break between organizational studies and the previous research tradition.

Organizational studies center on the analysis of the process of newsmaking: "In order to comprehend what news is, and even more, what news means, it is essential to understand how news gets made" (Sigal, 1973, p. 2). The analysis of the complex processes by which news is gathered, synthesized, and presented to the public, is assumed to uncover the forces which shape news content. The focus is on the conditions of news production. These conditions are not reducible to personal political preferences of media owners, advertisers or editors and reporters. News is produced in large bureaucratic organizations with rules of their own: it is the product of their general operating rules, structural constraints, work routines and policies. Therefore, news must be understood and studied as the product of news organizations. The theoretical foundation for such research approach is found in organizational theory. It

assumes that "members of (large) organizations eventually modify their own personal values in accordance with the requisites of the organization" (Epstein, 1973, p. xiv).

Edward Epstein: Distortion as unrepresentative selection

Among the authors discussed in this chapter, Epstein above all finds the assumptions of organizational theory to provide an adequate theoretical framework for his study of American network news on television. In fact, he has chosen to examine television networks as the organizations to which organizational approach can most fruitfully be applied. As a prototype of the organizational approach, Epstein's study clearly demonstrates its advantages over the psychologically inclined approach in studying the activities of communicators, but it demonstrates the limitations as well.

Epstein explicitly limits himself to examining news only within the confines of the organizational procedures of its production. Focussing on the investigation of actual institutional imperatives, organizational routines, and working exigencies of TV networks through the immediate observation of the work situation, he draws connections between the inner workings of these organizations and the news output. The limitations of his findings are contained in the very premises of the research approach: the social context within which communication organizations operate is taken as unproblematic;

it is present only in the form of external constraints imposed on the operations of news organizations. Any questions about social stratification, political power, and dominant interests, are neglected. However, it is asserted that the media are not a passive channel of information flow: certain impersonal and informal structures of news organizations influence journalistic work and products in fundamental ways. The discrepancy between the real events and their picture in the news cannot be accounted for by the term "bias".

Epstein's starting premise is that the directions which large organizations take are determined by pressures to satisfy internal needs rather than by their proclaimed goals or external circumstances. The key to explaining the particular "outputs" of organizations therefore lies in defining the basic requirements which a given organization needs to maintain itself. The formulation of news, as the particular product of news organizations, he argues, is explicable in terms of what the news organizations have to do to stay in business. The characterization of news organizations as primarily business organizations is the main feature of this organizational study, compared with the other two.

In order to survive in a competitive world within which they operate, television networks have to answer to certain economic and political constraints. The economic constraints come from the commercial nature of television. Above all, Epstein emphasizes, television is an advertising medium.

Networks are essentially in the business of selling the audience to advertisers, as all the other news media are. It is only that the networks are selling a national rather than a local audience. The single economic incentive of commercial networks is to maximize their audience: "It costs (them) the same to reach 30 million as 10 million viewers; (they) just get three times as much money for the same time if a larger audience tunes in" (p. 83).

Television news audiences, however, do not tune in because of the good quality of the news programs. Numerous studies done by networks themselves, Epstein says, have discovered that this audience is by and large "inherited" from the preceding entertainment programs; it stays tuned in because of pure inertia. As the practice has shown, investing in better news coverage beyond a certain point, will not bring a corresponding increase in audience size, and therefore in advertising revenue. The broadcasters thus see the main economic aim of news programs as "audience maintaining" rather than "audience creating". They are pressured by the economic mechanisms of network operations to fill the scheduled news time at the least possible cost.

Epstein points out that this economic logic, imposed on networks as a structural constraint from without, affects the news operation in very fundamental ways. A strong commercial drive to spend as little as possible for news production presses the networks to keep the minimum number of camera crews in few big cities. A preference is given to coverage of anticipated

events, especially "media-events": press conferences, speeches, hearings, interviews which are usually planned for the convenience of the mass media, have the highest probability of yielding usable stories. Television demands more "timeless" than "timely" news. The news without time constraints can be transmitted through less expensive channels and will not lose its validity if postponed. Economic costs also dictate selecting news from only a few locations, despite the fact that television in this way fails to take advantage of its greatest assets. The scheduling of the news programs is as well the consequence of economic considerations: news is never aired in prime time. In fact, it appears that news is the cheapest way of filling air time when the share of the audience is small.

While the economic structure of television networks presses for less and cheaper news, government regulation of the broadcasting industry has the opposite result. Epstein asserts that a substantial volume of news and public affairs programs have governmental origin: "Through direct and indirect pressures the Federal Communication Commission creates a demand for news that licensees might not otherwise find it in their interest to provide" (p. 61). The political constraints which the FCC poses on broadcasters - although more in the form of a threat than in its actual actions against licensees - influence not only the amount of news programs, but their content as well. Most directly, the news content is influenced by the FCC's Fairness Doctrine which obliges broadcasters to present "contrasting

viewpoints on controversial issues of public importance" (p. 48). Epstein explains that this form of governmental regulation of the broadcasting industry, rationalized in the concept of public airwaves that must be used in a public interest, has modified the principle of the "free market of ideas". Since public airwaves allow room for only a limited number of television stations to operate, individual broadcasters are understood to be the marketplace itself and must therefore themselves supply the competing viewpoints and ideas.[2] In practice, as Epstein points out, the requirement of fairness does not result in objective presentation of all the points of view; rather it ammounts to artificial presentation of two sides of an issue. They are juxtaposed in a way which suggests that "the truth" must be somewhere in the middle. The model "point - counterpoint" is thus the most usual pattern of the news story.

Within this basic framework composed of economic and political constraints, the news organizations develop certain internal operating procedures. They encompass journalistic routines for gathering, filtering, evaluating and arranging information in a visual form; criteria for reaching decisions about the content of news and news programs; and practices for recruiting journalists. These procedures, reflecting

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[2] The traditional concept of a free market of ideas which was designed for the newspapers, allows each individual member of the press to express freely any preferred version of events. Individual papers in this view are assumed to be the competing parts of the market. However, in the case of broadcasting, the number of TV stations is limited, and therefore each TV station must act as if it is the market place itself.

organizational needs more than anything else, further shape the news shown on television.

Organizational procedures of news production, Epstein concludes, result in a picture of reality that does not correspond to the real world. It is first the process of selection that is to be blamed for the distortion. Of course, news cannot present the reality in all its complexity but has to select some of its aspects while neglecting others. Epstein does not find problematic the question of what is to be selected among the many occurrences: the ideal of objective reporting which lies at the heart of his definition of distortion, holds that news should reflect the most important and the most interesting aspects of the real world. What are the most important things to be presented is explicable in terms of objective characteristics of the real events themselves. The news, however, Epstein demonstrates, does not follow these criteria of objectivity. It prefers predictable events. It functionally neglects events with less advance warning. News programs consist of more prepared (delayed) news than spot news. It presents to the audience not what is newsworthy in itself, but what a small number of correspondents and camera crews, assigned in preselected, geographically balanced locations, judge - according to budget limits - to be newsworthy.

Selection of events coverage is followed by techniques in editing the news which, again, do not follow the criteria of objective presentation. News pictures concentrate on elements of

action, drama and conflict - elements with good visual effects. News insists on the model of "highly dramatic conflict between clearly defined sides" that has to keep viewers' attention and yet not confuse them by presenting overly complex issues. This general concern with holding audience interest necessarily involves the use of simple symbols with universal, instant meaning which the mass audience can easily recognize.

All these forms of distortion, Epstein argues, have an objective cause. He concludes his study by noting that "certain consistent directions in selecting, covering and reformulating events over long-time periods are clearly related to organizational needs" (p. xviii). The relatively stable procedures, criteria and values by which news is gathered, selected, reconstructed, and presented on television are derived from the structure of commercial television. Analyzing individual journalists' values, Epstein discovered much more consistency between their actions and corporate needs than between their actions and their personal preferences. Thus he concludes that even a value premise involved in judging one subject or one aspect of the story to be more interesting, in the last analysis, also fits the internal requirements defined as organizational policies and practices.

Epstein writes: "A fraction of the film taken of an event is selected, and rearranged, to stand for the whole event. Depending on what fragments are selected, and how they are ordered, any number of different stories can usually be edited

from the same material" (p. 175). His conclusions about the influence networks have on the news can help us understand why that particular event has had a greater chance to be chosen for coverage. They can help us explain why one of the possible versions of the story will not be supportive of, for example, Communist viewpoints (such a version is specifically excluded by the FCC's Fairness Doctrine). But this is where Epstein's analysis stops.

Epstein considers news organizations as closed entities, sufficient unto themselves - as if they were not connected with society at large. The most valuable conclusion of his analysis is at the same time its weakest part: almost everything is explained by reference to the economic logic of network operations. Once Epstein draws a direct connection between the networks' economic imperatives and characteristics of news content, he does not pursue the analysis any further. The organizational theory, with its functionalist premises, itself limits further analysis.

Epstein's definition of distortion in TV news is comparable to Hofstetter's concept of structural bias (cited in Hackett, 1984). Distinguished from political bias, which results from the ideological convictions of journalists, structural bias is the inevitable product of the character of the medium - in this case, of the economic structure of television. For the elimination of "structural bias" Epstein proposes the same solution designed for "political bias" centuries ago: the free

market of ideas. He emphasizes that a systematic distortion of reality in network news cannot be avoided without a structural change in network television. But a different set of organizational requirements "might simply mean that the contours of network news would be propelled in different directions" (p. 272). Instead of a radical change of the organizational structure of television, "alternative sources of national news are necessary for balance. Different news media with different organizational requirements would produce different versions of the news" (p. 272-273), and in the free competition of ideas compensate for the inevitable "systematic distortions" of reality in the news.

Leon Sigal: Distortion as manipulation

Sigal's study Reporters and Officials uses the organizational approach to examine the political context of news production in The New York Times and The Washington Post. While Epstein defines TV networks as business organizations above all, Sigal holds that newspapers cannot be characterized as primarily profit-making enterprises. Even if profit would be the motivation for most of the other media, he claims, that in the Times and the Post "professional and social objectives take precedence over profits" (p. 8). In the operation of newspapers economic factors will not make any direct incentives for behaving this or that way. In fact, Sigal argues, newspaper

organizations work under laws which are different from the laws of any other commodity producer.

Epstein's emphasis on the economic nature of news organizations is replaced with the emphasis on their political character. Sigal finds the key feature of news organizations in the place and role they have in the political system: The Times and The Post constitute a very important "network in the central nervous system of the U.S. government" (p. 185).

Sigal however limits his examination to only one aspect of the complex relation between the press and the political system. His study focusses on the interactions between the press and the government only: between reporters and officials, particularly in Washington, "a one-industry town" and "the most important site for newsgathering". Sigal justifies this deliberate orientation to "artificially narrow" the social position of the press and completely ignore its relation to the public, on the grounds that a "special relationship" between a journalist and his news source in large measure determines what is published as news.

Journalists, by the very nature of their job, must rely on second-hand information. Most news therefore is not what has happened but what someone says has happened. "What the news is depends very much on who its sources are" (p. 189), Sigal says. The choice of sources is therefore crucial in newsmaking.

Examining the content of the two newspapers, Sigal has discovered that its most important sources are the officials and

agencies of the government. In the sample he analyzed, government sources accounted for one half of all the sources; nongovernmental sources generated only 15 per cent of all sample stories.

The domination of news by government officials is partly the consequence of the organizational practices in newsgathering. News organizations necessarily develop routines in newsgathering in order to coordinate activities of their members, to restrict their subjectivity, and to economize on staff. Thus they routinely concentrate reporters on the news beats in government departments and agencies, where news is most likely to emerge. The routine organizational practices are a means of coping with the uncertainty of news. They bring a steady flow of information; but, they "take on a life of their own" (p. 101).

The routine channels for newsgathering are precisely that mechanism which enables official dominance of news, Sigal says:

> "In direct daily contact with officials in one department and out of touch with other parts of the government, the reporter on the beat gradually absorbs the perspectives of the senior officials he is covering (p. 47).... Specialization along beat lines enables reporters to develop proficiency in one area of government policy and process but at some cost.... The result in extreme form is that reporters become spokesmen for their news sources rather than dispassionate observers" (p. 49).

However, this "official dominance of news" does not have merely psychological reasons and is not to be blamed on reporters only. The reliance on routine channels develops into reporters' dependence on government officials in another sense.

Routine channels for gathering news such as press conferences, press releases, speaches, trials, hearings, and other nonspontaneous events, by themselves give the officials a considerable control over the flow of information. The news sources are left with much of the task to select the content, the form, and the timing of disclosure of information. They of course perform this task in a way which protects their interests.

As the other main finding of Sigal's study shows, most news does come to reporters through routine channels. In the sample he analysed, 58.2 per cent of the stories came through routine channels, 25.8 percent through journalistic enterprise (interviews, independent research or analysis), and 15.7 through informal channels (briefings, leaks, nongovernmental proceedings).

Sigal argues that such predominant use of routine channels reflects efforts of official news sources to confine the dissemination of news to these routine channels. Government officials adapt their practices to match newspaper routines. Dissemination of information through routine channels has become a standard operating procedure within government itself.

Officials disclose information because of their own bureaucratic needs and politics, Sigal argues. They exploit the media's need for news in order to deliver messages to their key audiences and to other parts of the government; the internal governmental network for information circulation is inadequate

for their bureaucratic needs. For officials, the press is a tactical field for political maneuvers, a conveyer belt that will disseminate selected information in order to either affect policy outcomes or promote career advancements.

Reporters and officials, therefore, need each other. However, their position in this symbiotic relationship is not the same. The insatiable apetite for news on the part of news organizations makes the reporter more dependent on the source. This dependence is reinforced by the competition among reporters on the beat: "The incentive to get the news first makes reporters willing to play along with their sources in order to obtain disclosures on an exclusive basis" (p. 56). Threatening the access of uncooperative reporter to information, the officials can easily turn the routines of newsgathering to their advantage.

So long as the organization and politics of newsmaking remain as they are, Sigal concludes, "journalistic practices will continue to foreclose access to the many and grant it to the few, and the few will be the holders of political power, not their opponents" (p. 193).

Sigal's analysis brings to light the importance of the "special relationship" between the "two information-processing machines" - the press and the government - for the explanation of news content. It points to the significance of access to news channels as the force that strongly shapes the news reports. The mere fact that "news space is more readily available to high

administration officials than it is to spokesmen of any other organization or institution in the society" (p. 190) accounts for the way the news deals with the social world. Sigal's conclusions contain valuable insights about the ways two closely related bureaucracies - one composed of journalists and the other of officials - interact.

However, Sigal's explanation of news as the product of a definite political context is reducible to one single concept - the concept of manipulation. His whole analysis of the conditions within which news gets made rests on the manipulative model of communication. Isolating government-press interactions from their wider social context, he sets up a closed circle in which the concept of manipulation accounts for everything. In his study it appears that the press exists only to enable the government to get information about itself, while the government exists only to be the main audience for the newspapers.

Sigal is aware that the isolation of the reporter-official relation from the social context is artificial. But it is not the narrow focus of the study that is the primary cause of its main shortcomings. In fact, such a focus of the analysis is itself the consequence of his theoretical premises. Sigal's very definition of news - it is what someone says has happened - implies the inevitability of the manipulative character of news. The manipulators, however, are not the journalists, but the sources - the prime communicators in the continuum of transmitting the information. Sigal endows government officials

with the biggest power to make the news. However, he does not pursue the analysis of the basis of this power which is used for the protection of the particular interests. His analysis does not open the question of the nature of these interests and their links with social/political stratification. For Sigal, government is simply a large bureaucratic organization, with developed division of labor, specialization of functions, and bureaucratic policies. News organizations are just the same. The premises of organizational theory appear sufficiently able to explain how these organizations operate and interact, and how political news gets produced in the course of these interactions. It is in the bureaucratic needs of these two organizations that Sigal finds the explanation for all his research questions. Journalists need news. It is most likely to emerge from government officials. It is thus the news organizations' requirement for efficiency that endows the officials with power. This power is used to protect the officials' interests such as career advancement. The officials use their power in a personal interest to get more power. The circle is closed here and everything is explicable from within it.

Sigal's model of mass communication is not essentially different from the understanding of this process in the "conventional" communication theory and research, generally concerned with propagandistic activities of communicators. He, however, puts government officials - and not professional

journalists - at the place of prime communicators. However, journalists' values still influence the news in certain ways. But, the values of journalists are not their individual values or the values predominant in the social circles from which they are recruited. Sigal introduces into the analysis the concept of journalists' ideology.

The ideology of journalists influences the final configuration of news, Sigal says. They cannot interpret the events they cover without a framework of meaning. This framework is not entirely subjective: it is the "product of a time, a culture" - and organizational theory again comes to the fore - "and most immediately, a worklife shared with others" (p. 2).

Sigal thus defines ideology in terms of a group's world view as an "ideal type". It is an occupational belief system. Ideology consists of values widely shared among the occupational group. In this descriptive sense of the term (Geuss, 1981), every occupational group has an ideology. The most significant part of journalists' ideology is a set of conventions on what makes news. A part of this set is, for example, a convention about "objective reporting"; it demands from journalists more "straight news" and a minimum of explicit interpretation which is not attributed to a source. Another convention holds that people with no office in a recognized organization have no claim to publicity. Sigal says that this particular ideological tenet perpetuates government officials' dominance over news. But he does not analyse how this convention, or any other, enters

journalists' beliefs. These beliefs are just there: Conventions in the news community are "just the way things are done around the newsroom" (p. 3).

Ideology is for Sigal a purely psychological phenomenon. It is a "patterned reaction to the patterned strains of a social role" (p. 90). This understanding of ideology is borrowed from Malinowski's account of the function of myths. Primitive tribes use myths to "sanction moral authority, to justify an otherwise anomalous status in society or to reduce anxiety over an event" (p. 90). Ideology is therefore a psychological rationalization of a conflict situation. Sigal points to the conflict between natural inclinations of journalists to side with one point of view or another in controversial issues and the need to be neutral observers, and to their dependence on officials for livelihood as the strongest role strains.

The causal connection between a particular role strain and a particular ideological tenet, however, is unclear, he says. Whatever the explanation, ideological beliefs appear only as "myths" to help resolve journalists' psychological problems in doing their job. If the origin of the particular conventions of news reporting could be explained, Sigal suggests that the explanation should be sought in organizational needs. Many of these conventions, he comments, derive from the imperatives of organization in an earlier journalistic era: rooted in the earlier economic organization of the newspaper industry, they have persisted long after the organization has changed. They

continue to exist now even amidst the pressures for changes: mental inertia on one hand and social reinforcement on another encourage reporters' continued adherance to traditional patterns of newsgathering. What the mechanisms of this social reinforcement are, and what the social forces behind it are, Sigal does not explain.

Bernard Roshco: Distortion as "management"

Roshco's study Newsmaking attempts to put the analysis of news in a broader sociological perspective. "News reflects the society from which it emerges" (p. 5), the author says. The particular news content is the "end-product of a social process that results in some information being published while other information is ignored" (p. 4).

Roshco's analysis is concerned with two fundamental questions: "How do the relationships the press maintains with other institutions determine what it defines as news, where it seeks news, and how it presents news? How is the news content of the American press shaped by the dominant values of American society?" (p. 3). In the course of considering these problems, he tries to explain why news distorts complex situations; why long-lived social problems remain unreported; why most news is managed; how the journalists distinguish who is newsworthy and who is not; why some sources have inherent disadvantages in seeking access to the press; and why the American press

developed a definition of "objectivity" that encourages distorted reporting. The analysis is defined as a study in the "sociology of news".

Roshco defines news as a form of knowledge. "Sociology of news" thus shares the same analytical perspective with sociology of knowledge. The underlying premise of the sociology of knowledge is that "all cultural artifacts produced in a society are influenced significantly by the ways in which the society is organized" (p. 6). By considering how society is organized Roshco ends up "sharing the same analytical perspective" with functionalism. His concept of social structure and its effects on the communication process is borrowed from Merton's analysis of group structure. Roshco accepts Merton's findings as a universal rule that holds for "groups of all sizes and any activity, from a street gang to a national citizenry" (p. 62).

Studying arrangements of a group structure which facilitate the requirements for effective authority, Merton found that group structure is organized in such a way that those in authority are at the nexus of a two-way communication flow. The higher a person's social rank is, the larger the number of others with whom that person originates interaction, and the larger the number of people who originate interaction with him or her: "Stratification therefore affects visibility and observability within groups, which in turn affect the flow of communication within them, which in turn affects the exercise of authority by group leaders" (p. 62). Observability and

visibility are the key concepts of Roscho's sociology of news. They apply to every group, every social institution and hierarchical organization: they are "a commonplace social condition: different members of a group have varying capacities for knowing what others in the group are thinking or doing and for letting others know what they are thinking or doing" (p. 61).

Journalists report the events which are easily observable by them and most visible to them. They naturally favor high office holders - as the most visible aspects of institutions - as the routine sources and subjects of news. As the differences in social visibility grow out of the social stratification, Roshco concludes that "social structure is the major influence" (p. 5) on the news content.

Roshco's attempt to study news in its institutional context surely overcomes the limitations of Epstein's and Sigal's approach. However, the use of Merton's functionalist concept of social stratification prevents him from drawing the connections between the news and dominant power relations among social groups. His concept of stratification is reduced to differences in social position within a group as a hierarchical arrangement of individuals. National citizenry in this view is just the largest social group, composed of individuals with different place in its hierarchical structure.

If it is true that news favors the interests of those from the top of this structure, then, Roshco argues, it is because of

the very nature of news as a specific type of knowledge and because of journalistic routines in newsgathering.

According to him, news belongs to the "acquaintance-with" type of knowledge, which is diametrically opposed to "knowledge-about" type. The former is composed of facts; it is concrete and descriptive, and it is gained through personal experience or immediate apprehension. The other type (scientific knowledge) deals more with concepts; it is abstract and analytical, and is usually acquaired through formal education or systematic investigation.

A successful communication with the "layman" audience requires the transformation of knowledge-about into acquaintance-with. For reporters themselves, on the other hand, it is more difficult to convey knowledge-about ideas than acquaintance-with personality. News, thus, by its very nature distorts complex situations and social issues, and makes "who" more important than "what".

In the categorization of news as a specific form of knowledge Roshco finds the basis for a special connection between journalists and news sources:

> "A significant distinction between seekers of acquaintance-with (reporters) and of knowledge-about (scientists) is that the former do not devise intellectual problems or generate original data for their solution. Instead, the mass-media reporter is prototypically an observer, describing the issues others frame, the problems they raise, the solutions they offer, the actions they take, the conflicts in which they engage. Thus, the nature of news as a form of knowledge makes the reporter dependent upon news sources for most of the knowledge he will transpose into media content" (p. 63).

Roshco's concept of news here aproaches Sigal's: news is manipulated by a source. This manipulation, however, does not have to be deliberate, as it is in Sigal's model. Roshco emphasizes that in some fields, like sports, entertainment, and politics, reporters can be first-hand observers. In reporting many other domains of social life, however, journalists have to rely on proxy "institutional observers" who, because of the needs of their own organizations, generate information or summary interpretation of complex data they collect themselves. Without these "surrogate observers" a great deal of newsworthy information would not be visible to reporters; with the proxy observers, however, that which serves their institutional interests is all that is visible. Thus, for Roshco all information deliberately issued to the media is "managed" by definition. Every act by which sources decide whether certain information will be revealed, which details in it will be emphasized, and when the information will be offered, is an act of news management. The problem is not that each particular view is partial but rather that organizational procedures of newsgathering do not give equal chances for news management to all potential sources: they routinely favor certain sources and routinely disregard others.

In order to "manage the uncertainty endemic to news", news organizations develop some standard procedures which meet organizational requirements for efficiency. They naturally concentrate reporters on locations with a promise of maximal

return in information for their investment in time. Journalists thus functionally favor high officials from the top of the social hierarchy, since in this coverage both journalists' ability to observe and sources' visibility are the greatest. News thus for the most part is news from and about authorities.

It could be argued that Roshco's study is probably more valuable in the questions it poses than in the answers it offers. The assumption that "news reflects the society from which it emerges", the formulation of the research problem in terms of the institutional context of news production, the questions of how social values influence news content and how the notion of objective reporting came about are all the cornerstones of a sociological approach in news analysis. However, Roshco's "sociology of news" ends up by discovering the reason for the way news distorts complex situations, not in "the ways in which society is organized", but in the nature of news as a form of knowledge. Being concrete and descriptive rather than abstract and analytical, news oversimplifies social problems and presents only what is visible at the surface. Due to the characteristics of news as knowledge, the sources are able to manage the content of news; "helped" by journalists' routines the top officials are the privileged managers of social issues.

With his theoretical understanding of how society is organized, based on concepts of observability and visibility; with the assumption that social institutions are just

hierarchical bureaucracies, explicable by the premises of organizational theory; and with the understanding of communication process as transmission of "different points of view" which originate in differences in hierarchical positions, Roshco could not explain the problems he has underataken to study other than through an idealist notion of the nature of news as a universal type of knowledge. However, apart from the concrete-abstract opposition, he does not make any other distinction between knowledge-about and acquaintance-with types of knowledge. He notes that they have "different functions in the lives of individuals and society", but does not consider this difference worthy of analysis.

The analysis of how social values influence news content is the most superficial part of Roshco's study. He argues that predominant social values influence the news judgement which, in turn, consists of news values: "The basis of news judgement is common occupational experience leading to a consensus regarding news values within a news organization" (p. 106). News judgement is shaped by the social structure within which the media function. But this structure is again reduced to bureaucratic relations between hierarchical organizations and the individuals in them. Without much analysis, except for the explanation of the tendency of the media to favor institutional and authority sources over others , and except for the description of the process of identification of reporters' values with the values of their scurces, he concludes: "News judgement is therefore a

reflection of the economic and political arrangements that control the social order and shape its social values" (p. 118). What those economic and political arrangements that control the social order are, how they shape social values and how both influence mass media content, are questions that Roshco does not entertain.

In considering why the press developed a definition of "objective reporting" that encourages distorted reportage, Roshco is more concerned with pointing to individuals who were the first to formulate particular "definitions" as well as the contradictions these definitions contained, than to explain why. He suggests, however, that the explanation for objective reporting as the "institutional ideology of the American press" must come from the consideration of organizational needs. The first formulation of impartial journalism, based on an early distinction between news of facts and news of opinion, demanded nonpartisan pursuit of factual accuracy and reporting the opinions only if they were attributed to a source. The motto: "All the news that's fit to print" encompassed everything which could be put under quotes. This orientation for working was very convenient for news organizations at the time when news became more plentiful and newpapers engaged in multiple editions. It facilitated rapid processing of news; it put on the sources the responsibility for supplying content and freed reporters from the need of extensive knowledge. as well as from the charge of bias. But over time, Roshco emphasizes, when the world became

more complex and the audience more educated, this form of "passive objectivity", which took everything at face value, was not sufficient any more. Especially with the arrival of the radio and newsmagazines there arose a stronger need for more analytical reporting, for presenting more" background". This growing concern for more interpretive reporting resulted in two trends: editorial content was extended but was now written by journalist-"analysts"; interpretation when published was attributed to "experts". The conflict of accuracy versus objectivity which encompasses the notion of journalists'social responsibility not to promote untrue statements results in a new form of journalism - investigative reporting.

Roshco argues that the existing notion of objective reporting promotes distortion because it still values the attribution to the source more than the content and does not have a form of refuting untrue statements in a way that will not be considered as injecting subjectivity. Bias, he says - personal preferences and values which are a reflection of one's life history - is inevitable. But such bias should not impede a more objective reporting if objectivity is understood to reside not in the quality of the product but in the mode of performance: objectivity is a method. In news reporting as well as in scientific research "it is objective to disprove but unobjective to falsify (p. 55). As knowledge-about and acquaintance-with present types of knowledge with different orders of truth, it must be understood that true

knowledge-about, objectively reported, may contradict true acquaintance-with, objectively reported. Objective pursuit of truth in different categories of knowledge is not conducted according to the same criteria. Interpretation and objectivity therefore should not be incompatible in news reporting, as they are not in scientific investigation. Though it is not objective to omit relevant data deliberately or publish inaccuracies knowingly, one is not guilty of being unobjective as a result of unwittingly presenting evidence that is not complete or accurate. Journalists therefore should interpret facts in the light of the present level of knowledge-about. What is not known today, will be known tomorrow, but the first condition for this better state of things is - more balance.

For Roscho thus the fundamental question of mass media performance is not how to prevent packaging the information from sources - since that is inevitable - but how to broaden the range of news sources: how to give new visibility-seekers an equal opportunity for making news and managing it. The "socially invisible" have at their disposal few means for attracting the attention of the media: "Essentially, a symbolic protest is news management by the socially invisible" (p. 101). Maximum visibility can be attained by socially shocking and disruptive acts. But such acts carry a risk of public disapproval not only of the acts themselves but of the social issues behind them. The very nature of news as acquaintance-with type of knowledge, Roshco emphasizes, presents an obstacle for new

visibility-seekers: reporters tend to ignore their social issue and emphasize the symbolic performance. But he suggests, the only real problem for new sources is to gain initial visibility. Sacrificing public sympathy for their issue at the beginning, they will gradually come to control the routine means of news management, and finally bring the new problem to visibility: the free market of ideas will bring out the truth. As this free market is temporarily abolished by the nature of news and of journalistic work, by the same factors it can be established anew. The chance of getting initial visibility Roshco argues, lies in the need of the mass media for fresh, audience-arresting news. The very need of the media for sensationalism, he hopes, will induce them "to publish content that could help to subvert institutions whose values they tacitly support by the nature of their normative reporting" (p. 119).

A discussion presented above demonstrates that organizational studies, representing a whole new stream in mass communication research, were successful in what they aimed at. Centered on the examination of news as the product of news organizations, these studies radically broke away from the view central to much of the previous research that journalists are the authors of their own practice and that media messages can be "read" in terms of the intentions and biases of the communicators. The organizational approach in studying mass media brought to prominence the institutional pressures that

shape individual behavior (Roshco). It asserted that "organizational processes and bureacratic policies account for more of news content than ... the political proclivities of individual newsmen" (Sigal, p. 5). News, it was realized, is not simply the arbitrary choice of a few people (Epstein). Journalists are structurally limited in their work by the structures of the prevailing mode of newsgathering, general operating rules of news organizations, legal regulations, routinized work procedures, by institutionalized interactions with their social environment, and by the values implicit in their professional ideologies.

The findings that structural operating of news organizations gives privileged access to powerful institutions and individuals, that it favors the groups who can process information to the forms ready-made for the media's use, and that professional conventions give publicity to office holders rather than to any other social group, resulted in the understanding of news as "distortive" in favor of prevailing social arrangements. However, based on a particular set of theoretical assumptions, organizational studies define this "distortive" character of news in a specific way. Despite the differences in approach, Epstein, Sigal, and Roshco share the same conclusion: news distorts the picture of reality. Epstein describes this distortion as unrepresentative selection, oversimplified presentation of issues through point-counterpoint model, and as editing which stresses dramatic effects. Sigal

defines it as predomination of manipulated news from official sources passed through official channels. For Roshco, news is distortive because it is "managed" by some sources rather than by others and because it oversimplifies complex social issues. Although all three authors realize that news is "selected", "manipulated", and "managed" in the interests of "power-holders", the theoretical premises behind their analyses do not allow them to relate news to these interests, to the source of their power, and social structure in general. Instead, news is defined as distortive in an opposition to idealized "free communication".

At the heart of Epstein's, Sigal's, and Roshco's studies lies a traditional liberal myth of the "free press" which mediates between "the officialdom and the citizenry" (Sigal) and promotes a free policy debate by ensuring a two-way communication link. The media in this model act as a watchdog of democracy: they guard the public interest by providing the maximum diversity of expression and by leting "the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market" be the ultimate test of "truth" and of good society.[3]

The concept of the free market of ideas and the non-problematic definition of the public interest, on the other hand, rest upon a liberal-pluralist vision of society. Both Epstein and Sigal imply this vision; in Roshco's study it is

[3]The words of United States Supreme Court Justice Oliver Holmes, one of the main propagators of the idea of the free press in the first half of the 20-th century (cited in Hamilton, 1981, p. 9).

more explicit. According to him, social stratification equals the division of society into hierarchies with varying degrees of power and wealth. In organizational studies thus society is presented as a summary of hierarchical institutions with competing interests and values - and "occupational ideologies". Such society can effectively function only if all competing interests are equally presented. Organizational studies' definition of the ideological character of news rests precisely upon the understanding of news as, ideally, being objective, neutral, and above all, representative. Although both Sigal and Roshco criticize journalists' conventions of "objective reporting" as contributing to distortive reporting, they implicitly accept its premises as the very criteria by which to measure news functioning. It is only that instead of positivistic premise which holds that news pictures reality accurately if it presents "hard facts", these authors emphasize the other "objectivity" premise: news should balance different opinions. Sigal and Roshco thus argue for a democratization of access to news - various "news managements" from a variety of sources will ensure the diversity of viewpoints and provide the public to choose the best political alternative in or out of government. Epstein is concerned with the media as a whole in providing this essential function in society; thus he argues for a different organizational structure of television which will bring some kind of "systematic distortion" but will balance the existing kind of distortion which characterizes news in

commercial television. With the specific understanding of society and the communication process, organizational studies thus could accept only the liberal myth as a standard against which a performance of the media should be measured.

Sharing the same central assumptions, Epstein, Sigal, and Roshco however offer different explanations for the distortive character of news. These differences result from placing a different emphasis on the organizational processes of news production. Epstein thus, influenced by sociology of organizations, focusses his analysis on the institutional structure of news organizations and role relationships within them. Sigal's emphasis is on work practices and sociology of profession. Roshco's study is centered around interactions of news organizations with their sociopolitical environment.

With its particualar set of theoretical assumptions, the organizational approach when emphasizing different parts of news production must result in partial - and contradictory - accounts. Thus, for example, Epstein tends to reduce the whole news processing to the commercial nature of television which reacts in a form of direct economic pressure to spend as little as possible for the bigest profit; Sigal and Roshco, on the other hand, show a complete neglect of the economic side of organizational processes. For them, news organizations are not conventional commodity producers, running after profit. In a support of this conclusion, Sigal finds it important to cite the words of the owner of The New York Times: "We are not people who

feel we must have yachts" (Sigal, p. 9). If The Times was concerned with profit, Sigal adds, it would never station a news correspondent overseas, because it costs thousand of dollars and does not bring a corresponding increase in circulation. And if it is true that The Times and The Post are among the leaders in advertising linage, then it is not because they sell specific audiences to advertisers, but because advertisers respect them due to their "role as the nation's cultural trend-setter" (Sigal, p. 9). Such a conclusion comes from a complete misunderstanding of the economic foundation of the press.

A lack of economic perspective makes Sigal and Roscho to consider professional ideology of journalists not in the perspective of the changing market and work situation of the media, but in purely functionalist terms which then stress the "growing complexity of the world" (Roshco) as an explanatory concept. Sigal's explanation of journalists' ideology is purely functionalist. Functional explanation of ideology in general holds that ideology is a "mechanism for restoring equilibrium to a system put out of joint by the constraints of modern life" (Carey, 1979, p. 416). This is, naturally, in a perfect accord with the approach that considers news organizations as stable, regulated mechanisms, operating in a stable social system.

A research method, common to all theree studies, is also partly responsible for the shortcomings of Epstein's, Sigal's and Roshco's findings. All three authors rely only on participant observation, trying to induce the structures which

influence news production from the observable forms of journalistic working processes. What participant observation can reveal about the workings of media institutions depends entirely on the theoretical framework in which the research method is cast. Relying on liberal-functionalist premises, organizational studies of Epstein, Sigal, and Roscho could not uncover the ideological character of news other than partially.

II. NEWS AS A FORM OF KNOWLEDGE

> "A mirror always gives the image of the one who holds it"
> (Aldous Huxley: "After many a summer")

The understanding of news as the product of news organizations, which was promulgated by organizational studies of the late 60's and early 70's, opened up a further investigation of news as a social product. Roshco (1975) already pointed out that a study of news must be connected with the sociology of knowledge: in the understanding of news as a form of knowledge he indicated the ground for examining how the way society is organized shapes the news. As shown in the previous chapter, however, Roshco's analysis did not overcome the limitations of the organizational approach in studying news.

This chapter presents two studies which analyze news not only as an organizational product but primarily as a form of knowledge and from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge: Herbert Gans' Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time (1979) and Gaye Tuchman's Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality (1978). Both Gans and Tuchman start from the premise of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge that all knowledge is

situationally determined: "What one knows is based on one's location in the social structure, including one's class position and class interest" (cited in Tuchman, 1978, p. 177). Gans combines the notion that all knowledge is relational to the knower's perspective with the presupposition drawn from organizational studies: how and for what purpose knowers are organized also affects their perspectives. Journalists' perceptions of American society, determined by their class position and by the manner in which their work is organized, he concludes, make the news supportive of the values of the dominant white middle-class male sector of society. Tuchman in her study combines Mannheim's premise with other concepts borrowed from the sociology of knowledge which stress the role of men and women as active creators of social meanings. Although - and in fact just because - journalists are the most powerful group among them, she argues, the news legitimizes the status quo and prevents "an analytic understanding (of society) through which social actors can work to understand their own fate" (p. 180).

Both Gans and Tuchman claim that news in its nature, as a form of knowledge, is ideological. This chapter will analyze how the ideological character of news is defined and explained in each study.

Herbert Gans: Ideology as class-based values

The central assumption of Gans' analysis of news is that there is no such thing as objective knowledge. Any relation to the world is based on values which make objective knowledge impossible. Although journalists try hard to be objective, Gans says, neither they nor anyone else can in the end proceed without values. Gans therefore undertakes to identify the values and the ideology of journalism - a profession which deems itself objective and nonideological.

Journalists make news from the endless variety of available stories according to rules that guide their news judgement. They cannot exercise news judgement without a picture of nation, society, and national and social institutions in their collective heads. This picture is an aggregate of judgements about the nature of external reality. It is inevitably based on values. Sometimes these "reality judgements", as Gans calls them, take a form of preference statements, when their root in values becomes more obvious.

In order to extract the values implicit in preference statements about nation and society, Gans examined the content of television and newsmagazine news on a random sample. He is aware that these values must be found between the lines. Since journalists do not insert values into the news deliberately, they must be inferred. The methodology used he describes as qualitative content analysis. It focused on actors and

activities the news reported, on the ways actors and activities were described, the tones in which stories were told, the connotations given to commonly used words.

For the most part, he finds, news is about a fairly small number of actors and activities. Actors who dominate the news are "Knowns": incumbent presidents, presidential candidates, leading federal officials, state and local officials, and violators of the laws and mores. Only a fifth of the available time or space is devoted to those not in official positions - the "Unknowns". "Most ordinary people never come into the news, except as statistics", he stresses (p. 15).

The major activities reported in the news (besides protests, crimes, and disasters) are government conflicts, government decisions and personnel changes, and national ceremonies. The society, as presented in the news, is "made up of such symbolic complexes as Government, Business and Labor, the Law, Religion, Science, Medicine, Education, the Arts - complexes that have also become sections in the newsmagazines" (p. 19). Conversely, he points out, there are no news or magazine sections about "the Social Structure, the Class Hierarchy or the Power Structure" (p. 20).

The recurring subjects of the news are the persistence of nation and society and the conflicts threatening their cohesion. The news insists on presenting the nation as a unit. Yet, dominated by stories about conflict, it has to picture population divisions. As far as class divisions are concerned,

journalists do not view people as having class interests. The news does not deal with people as earners of income. Insofar as the notion of class is present at all, it is used principally as a cultural concept; it appears more in features on lifestyles and fashions, than it does in economic and political stories. "Strikes are, of course, reported as conflicts between labor and management; but they, as well as disputes between cities and suburbs, or growing and declining regions, are seen as incidents soon to be resolved rather than as permanent conflicts of interest", Gans notes (p. 24-25).

On the basis of this analysis, Gans specifies that the most visible and important enduring values[1] in the news are "ethnocentrism, altruistic democracy, responsible capitalism, small-town pastoralism, individualism, moderatism, social order and national leadership" (p. 42). Among these he views the last two as the most important and influential and analyzes them in more detail. The social order which the news prefers is a particular type of order: it is the order of "public, business and professional, upper-middle-class, middle-aged, and white male sectors of society" (p. 61).

Gans warns, however, that different people with different preconceptions may perceive many different values in the news. News consumers will therefore infer different values from the news. For the understanding of news as a form of knowledge it is

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[1] Gans distinguishes enduring values as values persisting over a long period of time from topical values which are the opinions prevalent in a particular moment.

more important, Gans seems to suggest, to accept the fact that news must contain some values and to determine the origin of these values.

The values in the news, he argues, being a part of news judgement, are values of journalism as a profession rather than of journalists as individuals. They necessarily stem from the class position of journalists as an occupational group in the social hierarchy and from the way journalistic work is organized. This conclusion Gans bases on two different theoretical premises. One is drawn from Mannheim's sociology of knowledge: knowledge is determined by the social position of the knower. The other comes from organizational studies: the organization of journalistic work determines what the journalists look for and what they see.

Applying Mannheim's premise to journalists as a professional group, Gans indicates that the journalists in CBS, NBC, Newsweek and Time belong to the upper-middle class and in their work naturally express the values of this stratum of social hierarchy:

> "For the most part, the news reports on those at or near the top of the hierarchies and on those, particularly at the bottom, who threaten them, to an audience, most of whom are located in the vast middle range between top and bottom. Journalists themselves stand just below the top levels of these hierarchies, and their position affords them a better view of the top than of either the bottom or middle. But their best view is of their own position. When journalists have autonomy, they represent the uppermiddle-class professional strata in the hierarchies, and defend them, in their own vision of the good nation and society, against the top, bottom and middle" (p. 284-285).

This particular view of the good nation and society Gans identifies as the ideology of journalists. It consists of the enduring values, conscious and unconscious opinions and reality judgements. Values that enter the news most often are the enduring values. They are political values implying the advocacy of one kind of social order. But they are included into news unconsciously, being built into news judgements. The very unconsciousness of their presence allows journalists to see themselves as objective, nonideological observers.

Gans' identification of news as ideological rests upon this understanding of news as supportive of a particualar set of values. If news includes values, he says, it also contains ideology. For Gans, ideology is primarily a set of political values. In these terms, he follows the traditional distinction between radical, ultraliberal, liberal, moderate, conservative, ultraconservative and right-wing extremist ideologies. Gans argues that journalists do not recognize that they have an ideology just because their definition of ideology is too narrow. It applies only to deliberately thought-out, consistent, integrated, and inflexible set of explicit political values, which is a determinant of political decisions. Given this definition, he indicates, ideology is deemed significant only in Communist countries, while most American political groups are thought not to be ideological: "Although the news distinguishes between conservative, liberal and moderate politicians and party wings, these are perceived as shades of opinion; and being

flexible, they are not ideologies" (p. 30).

Gans own definition of ideology, however, differs from the one he criticizes only with regard to the degree political values are internally consistent and the degree the bearers of these values are conscious of them. In fact, he terms journalists' ideology as 'paraideology', in order to "distinguish it from the deliberate, integrated, and more doctrinaire set of values usually defined as ideology" (p. 68). This paraideology is a set of only partially thought-out values. It is neither consistent nor well integrated, and is flexible on some issues - but it is ideology nevertheless" (p. 68).

Mannheim, from whom Gans draws his definiton of ideology, placed the origin of ideology in class position and interests. This premise implies that every world view has only a partial validity, since it is for ever caught in the class position of its bearers. Objective knowledge is therefore unachievable. Mannheim tried to avoid agnosticism resulting from his epistemology by espousing the concept of the "objective intellectual" who, being unattached to any class could transcend and synthesize the class-bound perspectives of others, in a search for the "whole truth about society". Gans is however aware of the paradox involved in this concept. "Mannheim's intellectual bears some resemblance to the journalist as objective outsider, but neither exists in the real world", he emphasizes (p. 311).

Gans thus chooses a faithful relativistic position: journalists, as everybody else, do have values which necessarily make their perception selective. He emphasizes that these values result from the position of journalists in class hierarchy as an occupational group rather than as individuals. But journalists are not free social agents left to freely insert their class values in the news. They are a part of news organizations which by their own organizational arrangements structure what journalists see and how they look for news. Journalists' values therefore must reflect their work context - a complex system composed of sources and audiences both of which exert pressure on journalists. News, Gans emphasizes, is not just a product of journalists. It is rather the product of complex social relations: it is " information which is transmitted from sources to audiences, with journalists - who are both employers of bureaucratic commercial organizations and members of a profession - summarizing, refining, and altering what becomes available to them from sources in order to make the information suitable for their audiences" (p. 80).

Gans' analysis of the communication process as a social process, however, does not overcome the limitations of functionalist organizational studies nor the weaknesses of the understanding of communication within the "liberal-pluralist" tradition. The media are characterized as a transmission belt carrying ideas and information from sources to the people; however complex this "belt" is conceived to be (journalists

summarize, refine and alter information they receive), it is implied that the communication process is a system closed into its own confines and explicable from within. News organization, understood in terms of its formal and informal structures, its division of labor and power, and conflicting source-interests and audience-interests is thus naturally the central focus of Gans' analysis.

Gans emphasizes that the main aim of his study is analytical rather than critical. But his analysis of the structure of the news production process is not analytical enough to account for the news as a complex social product structured by social relations and influencing social relations; on the other hand, it is explicitly critical of the attempts of others to do so. A strong empiricist orientation makes Gans reject the notion of the media as setters of political agenda by the claim that little is known about the consequences of the news. At the same time, he rejects the notion of journalists as "agents of social control", "myth makers", "power distributors", "moral guardians", since these assumptions cannot be empirically tested. Whether journalists and news have some wider social role, Gans claims, can be studied "only if all news media were suddenly to disappear for a time" (p. 291).

The structural context of journalists' work is thus defined very narrowly. Firstly, news production is divorced from its economic context. The crucial word in journalism, according to Gans, is "limited". Journalists have to cover news with limited

staffs and time and report it in a limited ammount of air time and magazine space. Strict journalistic deadlines result in one overriding aim of work - efficiency. The need to obtain the most suitable news as quickly and easily as possible and the choice of efficient methods of empirical inquiry thus pervade story selection and production. A part of the explanation for the particular value orientation of news lies here: the most efficient sources of news are leading public officials. The news sources as well as everybody else, have some values. Their values are implicit in the information they provide. The reliance on public officials and on other authoritative sources, Gans stresses, is almost sufficient by itself to account for the way the news pictures nation and society.

Journalistic efficiency, however, is not merely a means to the highest profit at the lowest cost: it is not "the rationally calculated commercial or industrial kind associated with profit calculations or time-and-motion studies" (p. 283). News firms, Gans argues, are not conventional manufacturers of conventional products. Their profit comes from the sale of advertising rather than from the product itself. On the basis of this overlooking of the specific economic nature of news production, Gans excludes economic considerations from his analysis. Instead, he insists on the specific nature of journalism as a profession obliged to obey its strict deadlines, which are so essentially different from the deadlines of any other empirical discipline. Excluding from the study the commercial nature of the media and

its influence on the news, Gans must fall back on the insistence upon the essentially "hurried" nature of journalistic work as the crucial characteristic of the news production process.

However, it is not only news production that is denied its economic basis in Gans' analysis. His vision of society as a whole lacks the materialist understanding of the economic structure of monopoly capitalism and of the class structure of power. If class structure nevertheless does come into this picture then it is conceived of as the result of different occupations of people and their income differences. Class conflict in this scheme is then easily reducible to differences in political orientations and values. Such a scheme, of course, cannot provide a cornerstone for a materialist analysis of social relations. And indeed, Gans does not know on what to center his examination of source-journalist-audience relationship. Being aware of the linearity of the model of the communication process which he uses, he attempts to define this process as essentially circular, with a large number of feedback loops: journalists can chose their sources, sources are at the same time part of the audience, the audience can affect the choice of sources, and so on. However, the analysis of this circular process, in which sources, journalists and audiences coexist under the conditions of "tugs of war", results in a lot of contradictory conclusions rather than a valuable insight into its structure.

Thus, for example, Gans claims that the relationship between sources, journalists, and audiences is resolved by "power". But what the specific powers of the agents in this relationship are, he does not say clearly. Sometimes he claims that we do not "get the news we deserve" because the audience has too little influence on news selection and production. From another perspective he views the audience as quite powerful: it is the judge of news credibility, and it buys the newspapers. The potential power of the audience is even greater than the power of the sources. The final shape of the news story is more audience-related, Gans argues elsewhere: while journalists are closer to sources, editors are closer to audiences, and the latter are more powerful than the former. The audience, however, is more interested in local than in national or international news. Why then national news persists on television and in magazines Gans cannot explain other than by arguing that journalists do not know what their audiences want, are not interested in knowing much - and do not think the audience is able to determine what it should know.

The same superficiality and inconsistency applies to the discussion on journalist-source relationship. Sources can make themselves available to journalists, Gans says, but it is the journalists who decide what sources are suitable; immediately thereafter, however, he adds that sources have somewhat more power in this relationship than reporters because of the strong competition among the latter. Source's access to journalists

reflects the social structure, he states further: the power of sources consists in their ability to supply information and exert pressure to remain sources.

If Gans cannot consistently specify the results of the "wars" involved in his scheme of the communication process, it is because he sees the "powers" of its three constitutive agents as powers of a different nature. However, these powers are interrelated, and the mutual dependence keeps them in a state of balance.

The sources, Gans argues, are crucial for the final content of news. But, it would be to oversimplify the relationship between news and power-holders to claim that the ruling class "rules" the news. News indeed

> deals mostly with those who hold the power within various national and social strata; with the most powerful officials in the most powerful agencies; with the coalition of upper-class and upper-middle-class people which dominates the socio-economic hierarchy; and with the late-middle-aged cohort that has the most power among age-groups" (p. 61-62).

However, the dominance of well-known public officials in the news is the result not only of their power to impose themselves as sources but also of journalists' natural inclination to find it easier to make contact with sources similar to them in class position. Sources in positions of formal authority are considered more productive, reliable and trustworthy than others, from organizational as much as from personal perspectives: Journalists apply the same criteria professionally that they and others use in everyday life,

placing greater trust in people who are similar to them. Journalists thus have the last word in news producing.

It is precisely the attempt to oppose the "reduction" of news to the dominant political interests that makes Gans fall back on journalists and their values as the most decisive shaping force of news. News organizations are endowed here with a substantial autonomy: in spite of the variety of pressures and influences to which they are subjected, journalists manage to keep the ultimate control of news production in their hands.

In fact, Gans insists that there is a mutual dependence relation between journalists and power holders. Journalists neeed the sources for information that they have to supply to audiences. Power-holders, however, equally badly need journalists, since journalists are the managers of the symbolic arena, "the public stage on which national, societal, and other messages are made available to everyone who can become an audience member" (p. 228).

If journalists have any social function, then Gans finds it here: journalists bring different values and opinions of competing interests to this "symbolic arena" which is a political battleground. In a word, they supply the free market of ideas. In performing this essential function, Gans demonstrates, they are not objective nor neutral: they display certain values which colour their perceptions. The origin of values in journalists' ideology Gans finds in a particular historical political movement in the U. S. - the Progressive

reformist movement of the early twentieth century. Journalists were an intrinsic part of that movement and its national leadership. As a professional group, Gans concludes, today's national journalists are Progressive reformers. Although the movement no longer exists, its ideas are still present in many political, social and cultural reform efforts. In fact, Gans adds, the values of journalists as Progressive reformers "coincide almost completely with the major themes of political rhetoric, which is also centered on the nation as a unit, advocates much the same kind of capitalism and democracy, pays allegiance to small-town pastoralism, supports individualism and moderation, and preaches order" (p. 206).

And here, finally comes the central point of Gans' analysis: "It appears as if the original upper-class and upper-middle-class Progresive vision of America has by now diffused to a larger portion of the population" (p. 206). A pluralist insistence on the consensus of norms and values as a main cohesive force of society is confirmed: news with its particular values reflects precisely those values which are "diffused to a larger portion of the population".

Gans thus resolves the problem of "objectivity": to reflect the consensus, journalists do not have to be objective or neutral. Their values as a professional group coincide with the values of what has been identified as "America's civic religion" (p. 294). The long-held assumption of functionalism-pluralism about "the core value system" keeping together American society

is not only reaffirmed, but further specified. Gans identifies what the accepted values are and traces their origin back to the particular historical movement. What he cannot explain is how the consensus of these particular values has arisen. But that is not the question he is concerned with. He is more interested in pointing out that journalism in America is different than anywhere else: While in other countries the government in power is either the actual or (with its veto power) a latent manager of the symbolic arena, in America its actual managers are news organizations and journalists. The journalists have more power than the rest of us, Gans concludes, "but mainly because they express, and often subscribe to, the economic, political, and social ideas and values which are dominant in America" (p. xv). Gans re-establishes the ideal of "objective journalism" in a new form. The condition for truly democratic media are journalists, not neutral and impartial, but "ideological" in a way that reflects the values of the majority of population.

It should be acknowledged that in some regards Gans' analysis differs from organizational studies. He introduces, first, the relation of news to dominant social order into the analysis; he places journalists not only in the hierarchical positions within bureaucratic organizations but primarily in a class structure. Furthermore, he considers journalists' views not only as an occupational ideology containing conventions about what news is but as a set of values containing a definite conception of the good social order. However, with his strong

apologetic orientation, his analysis comes closer to that of the "liberal-pluralists" than organizational studies do. Gans' characterization of news as ideological, further, is very similar to the concept of news as carrying a political bias.

However trying to present the communication process as complex, Gans' analysis of that process - broadened from "national" to all journalists - can be easily, and correctly, summarized in one sentence: "American newsworkers are middle class and hence the attitudes implicit in the news are inevitably those of middle-class Americans" (Tuchman, 1978, p. 163).

Gaye Tuchman: Ideology as a means not to know

The aim of Tuchman's study of news is more ambitious than Gans'. She attempts to develop theoretical premises for the analysis of the news media, defining her attempt as "an applied study in the sociology of knowledge" (p. 2).

Journalism, Tuchman indicates, transforms occurrences and happenings into news events. News is a product of professionals, with professional concerns, who work in complex organizations, subject to certain inevitable processes. News professionalism has developed in conjunction with modern news organizations in such a way that professional practices serve organizational needs. But there is much more involved in the nature of newswork than professional practices in the service of organizational

needs, Tuchman says.

Like Gans, she argues that journalism legitimizes existing social order. The legitimation, inherent in professionalism, however does not stem from journalists' personal nor class and organizational values. In order to discover the origin of this legitimation, Tuchman undertakes a sophisticated analysis of journalists' professional knowledge. She explores this knowledge as the outgrowth of news organizations' use of time and space.

A key to the construction of news, Tuchman says, is the netlike formation of the dispersion of reporters in search for occurrences that can be transformed into news stories. A "news net", developed by news organizations as a "news blanket" to insure that all potential news will be found, is cast through space and time. For reasons of efficiency reporters are placed in space on locations where information systematically occurs: organizational needs thus inextricably link the "news net" to centralized, legitimized institutions. As well as spatially journalists are also temporally concentrated. Routine processing of news which is embedded in their rhythm of work, finds its formal expression in temporal typifications of events, distinguished as "hard", "soft", "spot", "developing", and "continuing" news.

Because of a pattern of centralization at legitimated institutional sites, the news net identifies some sources and institutions as the appropriate locations of facts and dismisses others. Only those occurrences that happen at the appropriate

time in the appropriate place are identified as news. This transformation of some occurrences of the everyday world into defined events Tuchman pictures by using Goffman's (1974) notion of a "frame": news imposes a frame on reality and selects some "strips" from it. The frame of news, she argues, is embedded in the "organizations of newswork and of newsworkers"(p. 1); its contours are set by the "spatial and temporal anchoring of the news net" (p. 5). And it is held firm by the objectification of organizational needs to impose a structure upon time and space in journalistic professional knowledge.

Being a reporter, Tuchman stresses, means knowing how to find stories pertinent to one's placement in the news net; it also means "being able to use typifications to invoke appropriate reportorial techniques" (p. 58). A proper territorial dispersion of reporters (local, regional, national, international), their organizational (city hall, police, govenment bodies) and topical specialization (politics, finance, sports, culture) as well as news typifications are most important parts of reporters' professional knowledge. But reporters do not see these categories of their professional knowledge only as useful technical devices for coping with the glut of idiosyncratic occurrences. They accept them as if they existed independently of the context of their work and were meaningful in themselves - as absolute, "natural" categories. In a word, they objectify them. Drawing upon Berger and Luckmann's view that "instead of existing as formulations subject to

continual revision and reconstruction, objectified ideas may elicit set ways of dealing with the world" (p. 58), Tuchman argues that this is indeed happening in newswork. The objectified categories of journalists' professional knowledge channel their perceptions of the everyday world. As a result, only some strips of daily life are delineated as news. Selected occurrences - only those within reporters' spatial and temporal reach - are transformed into "objective facts" - "facts as a normal, natural, taken-for-granted description and constitution of a state of affairs" (p. 210-211). In this way, news as a frame imposes order on the social reality. It is a window on the world.

This order which the news imposes on reality legitimizes the status quo. Tuchman draws this conclusion from the analysis of source-journalist relationship. Similarly to Epstein, Sigal, Roshco, and Gans, she considers this relationship as determined by organizational needs; however, Tuchman's analysis is radically different. She suggests that it is the information the sources possess that endows them with power to be sources. The information which they control, on the other hand, responds to their position in the political structure. The search for facts and the choice of sources mutually determine each other, Tuchman emphasizes. As professionals, journalists know that whom one asks for information influences what information one receives.

News professionalism requires rapid identification of facts, so that deadlines can be met. Journalists thus could not

accomplish their work if they regarded all sources of information as questionable. A crucial aspect in source-journalist relationship is hidden in the selective structure of the news net: journalists assume the legitimacy of institutions to which the news net is linked. Any challenge to the legitimacy of these institutions dismantles the news net. Tuchman suggests that if the institutions of everyday life were delegitimized, all the facts and occurrences would be suspect, and this would require long procedures of verification. Credibility of news, she concludes, is maintained by reportorial methods of creating a "web of facticity", and this in turn is based on the assumed legitimacy of the institutional sources of information. These sites are then objectified as the appropriate sites at which information should be gathered.

Verification of facts in news, however, is a professional as well as a political accomplishment. News organizations place report at some places, and not at others. Promoting the institutions which dispense centralized information as their primary sources, journalists are able to work fast; but, at the same time, they reaffirm and reinforce public and political legitimacy of these organizations. Central sites of news gathering are objectified as the legitimate and legitimating sources of "both information and governance" (p. 210).

News therefore, as an ally of legitimated institutions, both draws upon and reproduces institutional structures. The connection that Tuchman makes between journalistic work and

institutional structures overcomes the limitations of the organizational approach as used in organizational studies presented earlier. For Tuchman, communication is not a closed system, isolated from the social system; it is very much a part of it - and it is a part of social system that is not only passively influenced by the social structure but actively influences it. Drawing information from legitimate social institutions, and reaffirming their legitimacy, the news presents these institutions as unquestionable, as being "naturally" there - as if they were not a product of the particular social arrangements at a particular moment. Tuchman argues that journalistic methods of identifying facts, including methods of identifying appropriate sources - and they are the very basis of newswork - objectify social phenomena:

> "(Creating the web of facticity) simultaneously accomplishes the doing of newswork and reconstitutes the everyday world of offices and factories, of politics and bureaucrats, of bus schedules and class rosters as historically given" (p. 87).

It is on this legitimation of the status quo that Tuchman bases her identification of news as ideological. Her concept of ideology is different from the one used by Gans, although both start from Mannheim's premise that knowledge is situationally determined. It is the fundamental human condition of knowing (which is a relation between knower and known) that the knower is historically and culturally situated, she argues. At the same time, however, Tuchman is aware of the agnosticism implied in this view:

> "If the perspectives and concepts of the knower are determined not by the object of knowledge, but for example by his or her class position and ... class interest, then it is argued that knowledge is irremediably ideological, and 'knowledge' a term which must continually be resolved back into 'ideology'" (p. 178).

Tuchman holds that knowledge can be distinguished from ideology. She points to Dorothy Smith's (1974) suggestion to "distinguish analytically between knowledge and ideology by examining what is not said or done rather than what is articualted or accomplished" (p. 179). Whether methods of knowing obscure the truth or help to reveal it appears to be the valid criterion for the problematic distinction in question. Smith identifies ideology, as contrasted with knowledge, with the interested procedures (based in class position or class interest) which people use as a "means not to know". Viewing ideology in this way, Tuchman explains, "connotes that ideology prevents knowledge by limiting inquiry - by closing off the possibilities of an analytic examination of social life" (p. 179). Applying the notion of ideology "as a means not to know" to the examination of the work processes of the news media, Tuchman argues that news "blocks inquiry by preventing an analytic understanding of the society" (p. 180) and therefore it is ideological.

The concept of ideology as a means "not to know" is related to the concept of ideology as "knowing wrongly". The former, however, aims at emphasizing methods of knowing (and not the content), from the perspective of their obscuring or revealing the truth. But this still does not resolve the problem Tuchman

is trying to deal with at a theoretical level. She does not give any indication of what would be those objective criteria for judging whether some methods or procedures of knowing block inquiry or help the understanding of society. If one is to view news as an obstacle to revealing the truth, then legitimation of the status quo can only be seen as a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition. To solve this problem, Tuchman introduces another theoretical concept into the analysis. In the notion of news as a frame, she combines the notions of news as a product of professionalism and as a social construction.

"The act of making news is the act of constructing reality itself rather than a picture of reality" (p. 12), Tuchman argues. News organizations in fact perform work upon the everyday world to make sense of daily experience. Taken by itself, she stresses, a fact has no meaning: "It is the imposition of a frame of other ordered facts that enables recognition of facticity and attribution of meaning" (p. 88). In their everyday work, reporters are engaged in the activity of making sense of the world by constructing meanings. The distinction between viewing news as a construct of reality and a picture of it, Tuchman explains, has a theoretical basis. She finds the basis for her phenomenologically oriented analysis in the "interpretive", rather than the "traditional" sociologies.

In the view of traditional sociologies, human activities are the product of socialization to norms derived from objective characteristics of the social structure. Institutions and social

classes generate norms which individuals, through agencies of socialization (family, school, profession) incorporate into their identities. In this view, society creates consciousness and accordingly, society's definition of news is dependent upon its social structure. Thus, news mirrors society: journalists, socialized to societal attitudes and professional norms, based on social structure, produce stories about important or interesting items. This theoretical model, Tuchman argues, cannot explain social change other than as a result of the inadequate socialization of some individuals. It denies people the power to create new meanings subjectively. Instead of being perceived as creative social actors, people are seen as objectified members of groups.

By way of contrast, interpretive sociologies stress that society just helps to shape consciousness; people through their active work shape their world and its institutions, collectively constructing social phenomena. Through socialization, people learn to use norms as a resource for the construction of meaning. Human activities are not a mechanical response to internalization of social norms, but rather are creative, subjective, or interpretive activities, which draw upon social norms and constitute society as a shared social phenomenon. An interpretive approach to news, Tuchman says, "emphasizes the activities of newsworkers and news organizations rather than social norms, as it does not presuppose that the social structure produces clearly delineated norms defining what is

newsworthy" (p. 183). Thus, news does not mirror society. In the process of describing an event, news defines and shapes that event.

Based on these theoretical notions, Tuchman proposes a theoretical formulation of news as a social construction and a social resource for the action of social actors. It is news as a frame that both produces and limits meaning, she concludes. On the one hand, news gives social actors the materials for producing social meanings. On the other hand, journalistic professional practices treat as unproblematic what ought to be explained: they assume the legitimacy of temporal and particular social arrangements. These practices prevent some strips of occurrences from being defined as news. They limit "the access of radical views to news consumers and so limit everyone's use of the media as a political and social resource" (p. 176). These practices limit the "right to know" and thus, Tuchman argues, truncates the abilities of social actors to transform institutions and structures of society.

In the end, in characterizing news as ideological, Tuchman draws back to the ideal of representativeness. However hard she tries to make a distinction between what prevents and what enables knowledge, she finally insists that all knowledge is constructed within a frame. Each frame is equally valid - or equally invalid if it objectifies knowledge produced within it. News thus should open up for all the particular constructions within particular frames, since social actors have the "right to

know" them all.

Tuchman's definition of news as a frame radically breaks from the traditional understanding of news as a mirror of "reality". Her notion of news as a social construction, on the other hand, points to the significance of the examination of the social processes through which these constructions are produced and interpreted. Tuchman herself, however, stops just at the point where her analysis should start. Instead of pursuing the investigation of these social processes, she satisfies herself with demonstrating that structural organization of newswork favors some definitions of reality over others and thus prevents the use of the media as a political and social resource by non-elites.

Tuchman does not analyze what is the social force behind a particular organization of journalistic work. She notes that the mechanism that ties the media to legitimate institutions has an historical context but reduces it to the "growth of centralization as a method of getting as much information as possible for the minimum investment possible" (p. 20), as the result of the increase in the competition for advertising revenue. She points out that the growth of the American penny press was associated with the development of a free-market economy and the capitalist challenge to the colonial mercantile society. The nineteenth-century newspapers accepted ideas offered by the new capitalist elite and its radical redefinition of the public and private spheres of life, identifying the

private sphere with self-interest. The twentieth-century media, however, were not involved in the same way as their predecessors in the new significant socio-economic transformation - the processes of centralization, concentration, and conglomeration. Modern media themselves became big corporations and monopolies with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo; nevertheless, they continue to apply earlier historical concepts of public and private to new phenomena. In this way they obscure the structure of the modern economic system. By maintaining an artificial and outdated distinction between public and private, the mass media "play down the heavy involvement of the corporate sector and the government in one another's activities", Tuchman notes (p. 163).

Tuchman's sophisticated analysis consistently remains on the phenomenological level. Her attempt to account for the media as as instrument of social control is based on inducing dynamics of society from its static, phenomenological forms. These dynamics, however, are not within the reach of Tuchman's theoretical categories. Trying to establish a theoretical framework different from "traditional sociologies" and the "base-superstructure" metaphor, she falls victim to the trap of the other extreme. Tuchman's discussion of "social actors" as creative constructors of social meanings evades the problem of structural determinism altogether. She mentions that journalistic methods of identification of facts are embedded in "common understandings" of the everyday world and its

institutions. By taking the existence of social phenomena for granted - as being "naturally" there - these "understandings" presuppose the legitimacy of existing institutions. But Tuchman does not establish the relation between the "common understandings" of the everyday world and the construction of social meanings. How much are everyday understandings the basis, the starting point, or the limitation for the construction of reality? What do the people as creators of social meanings draw upon, how are these meanings influenced by the whole socio-economic, political, and cultural context in which they are produced? Without any "structural determinations", the meanings they construct - and news - although emphasized as socially embedded, appear as self-defining. The only concept of power Tuchman is operating with is the power of people to be active and creative subjects.

Both Gans and Tuchman concentrate on the analysis of the organizational processes of news production. However, instead of relying on the organizational theory which insists on news as the product of news organizations, they are concerned with news as a form of knowledge and the question of its objectivity. They both argue that "objectivity" of news, as understood by journalists themselves, is an empty ideal. While Gans re-esablishes the ideal of "objective" news in another, relativist, form, Tuchman moves away from the notion of reflection to the notion of "definitions of the the situations".

Hall (1982) argues that this later term stimulated a whole new conceptualization of the medias' functioning. Breaking with the view that media are transmitting an already-existing meaning, this notion lead to the realization of medias' functions in terms of "signifying agencies": "The media define(d), not merely reproduce(d), 'reality'" (Hall, 1982, p. 64).

But this notion itself acquires different meanings when placed in the different frameworks of social theory. Even Gans' analysis can incorporate the notion that news, "among other things, is the exercise of power over the interpretation of reality" (p. 81). It does not contradict his apologetic purposes to argue that "whatever the nature of external reality, human beings can perceive it only with their own concepts, and therefore always 'construct' reality" (p. 79-80).

Both Tuchman and Gans rely on participant observation and interviews in gathering analytical data. Guns further bases some of his conclusions on content analysis of a six-month sample of stories. He admits that the methods by which he identified the values in the news were impressionistic, based on a set of hypothesis derived from "over 10 years of watching TV news and reading the newsmagazines" (p. 6). He further specifies that his content analysis looked at the news with very general categories. Faithful to relativism, Gans finally places the doubt on the validity of any content analysis for "reading ideologies", claiming that the values of the analyst must influence the results.

Tuchman's methodology consists of "reconstructions of the construction processes" through which journalists construct meanings. She relies on the analytical methods developed within ethnomethodology. However, concentrating on the phenomenological forms of these processes, she fails to grasp the dynamics beneath the "craft consciousness" of journalists which objectify social phenomena. Her analysis centers on a problematic of social actors in such a way that classes become reducible to inter-personal relationships.

III. NEWS AS A HEGEMONIC FRAME

> "You think we lie to you. But we don't lie, really we don't. However, when you discover that, you make an even greater error. You think we tell you the truth."
> (Leon Sigal: "Reporters and officials")

Goffman's (1974) frame analysis on which Tuchman based her notion of news as a frame (Chapter two) was taken up by many media students. Within, or related to, a Marxist framework, it is used to point how the media frame social issues in accord with dominant interests. The notion of news as a frame is used as the main analytical category by Gitlin and the Glasgow Group.

Gitlin identifies media frames as "persistent principles and patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion" (p. 7). The media, he argues, are not flat mirrors of reality. They are "more like fun house mirrors, narrowing and widening, lengthening and shortening, distorting and neglecting what is already there - somewhere" (p. 10). Media frames interpret the events by plausibly representing a world that the audience already recognizes as a real world, making, in such a way, the reality beyond people's direct experience look natural. As people in their everyday life frame

reality in order to understand it and choose appropriate actions, media frames organize the world both for journalists who report it and for audiences that rely on their reports. Although unspoken and unacknowledged, media frames are unavoidable. Every news gathering, Gitlin insists, and even "the unpublished UPI newsphotograph at the very least, produces a range of information within a certain range of frames" (p. 52).

The Glasgow Group incorporates in its notion of news as a frame Hall's view of the news as an encoded message, it attempts to discover the cultural codes behind media messages. Gitlin, on the other hand, combines the frame analysis with Gramsci's concept of hegemony. Both, however, rely on the similar concept of ideology. This chapter examines Gitlin's study The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left (1980). Chapter four will present the news study of the Glasgow Group.

Todd Gitlin: Ideology as "framing"

Hegemony, in Gitlin terms, is "a ruling class' (or alliance's) domination of subordinate classes and groups through the elaboration and penetration of ideology (ideas and assumptions) into their common sense and everyday practice; it is the systematic (but not necessarily or even usually deliberate) engineering of mass consent to the established order" (p. 253). Hegemony is achieved by the dominant and

collaborated in by the dominated. It unites persuasion from above with consent from below.

Hegemonic ideology, Gitlin explains,

> "enters into everything people do and think is 'natural' - making a living, loving, playing, believing, knowing, even rebelling. In every sphere of social activity, it meshes with the 'common sense' through which people make the world seem intelligible; it tries to become that common sense" (p. 10).

This seeping of the hegemonic sense of the world into popular "common sense", where it is reproduced and sometimes generated, is a historical and by no means straightforward process. People in their everyday life dispute hegemonic terms, struggle to transform them, accept them partially and unevenly. Continually resisted, challenged, and limited, hegemonic ideology therefore has constantly to be removed, recreated, and modified. Gitlin emphasizes that the notion of hegemony he is working with is an active one: It is through a complex web of social activities, involving both the dominant and the dominated, that "those who rule the dominant institutions secure their power in large measure directly and indirectly, by impressing their definitions of the situation upon those they rule and, if not usurping the whole of ideological space, still significantly limiting what is thought throughout the society" (p. 10).

Gitlin relies on Gramsci's contention that in liberal capitalist societies no institution is devoid of hegemonic functions, and none does only hegemonic work. The cultural industry as a whole, however, along with the educational system,

most coherently specializes in the production, relaying, and redefining of hegemonic ideology. Within this industry Gitlin identifies the mass media as core systems for the distribution of hegemonic ideology within the advanced capitalist society.

By virtue of their pervasiveness, their accessibility and symbolic capacity, he argues, bringing "a manufactured public world into private space", the mass media, of all the institutions of daily life, specialize in "orchestrating everyday consciousness" (p. 1-2). Every day, through their normal organizational procedures they define "the story" from many possible stories, identify its main protagonists and issues, covering up the selectivity of these procedures with the claim "and that's the way it is."[1] A news story is a choice. It adopts a certain frame and rejects or downplays material that does not fit within it. These frames are the main bearers of hegemony.

Gitlin argues that hegemony should be studied by pointing out its workings in some concrete case: the best, in the case of an organized opposition movement, which directly challenges the prevailing structures of power and definitions of reality. Thus he concentrates his study on the way the major American news media, CBS News and the New York Times, dealt with the New Left - student radical movement in the 1960's. He attempts to examine in detail the frames through which the New Left was presented to the American audience. More specifically, he aims to discover

[1]The famous slogan of Walter Cronkite's TV news program.

the conditions of the emergence and transformation of particular media frames. He also attempts to demonstrate the "effects" of mass-mediated messages: how the workings of the mass media conditioned public images of the New Left and moreover, the actual course of its history.

Examining the relations between the major media and student opposition movement, he notices several phases of their interaction: "At first the mass media disregarded the movement; then media discovered the movement; the movement cooperated with media; media presented the movement in patterned ways; the quality and slant of these patterns changed; different parts of the movement responded in different ways; elements of the State intervened to shape this coverage" (p. 24).

The news media "discovered" the movement and the central national organization in a rising New Left, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), in 1965, when it was becoming a mass student organization. Although the movement itself was not actively or consistently seeking major media coverage during all five years it had already existed, the media could not ignore it, especially at the time it was organizing the first major national demonstration against the Vietnam war. Routines of news coverage, Gitlin indicates, make the media attentive to opposition movements. The media need new, dramatic stories, coming from sources that are other than official. On the other hand, the legitimacy of news rests on its claim to objectivity. It has to acknowledge mass movement's oppositional statements

about reality, since it cannot afford to be seen as inaccurate or incomplete by the public who accord it legitimacy. But the everyday workings of journalism - news values, journalistic routines, notions of objectivity and balance - which do not dare to ignore the large-scale social conflicts and opposition movements, work at the same time in such a way as to amplify the issues which fuel these same movements. They arouse political opposition in high places. Drawing upon this conclusion, Gitlin undertakes to identify the operation of hegemony by tracing how the agents affected by such practices of the media defined these practices as problematic and how they acted to resolve the problematic situation.

Gitlin's analysis takes into account every New York Times story and every CBS News piece about SDS and antiwar activity in general in 1965. He uses qualitative, "literary/linguistic" content analysis. Gitlin finds this methodological procedure the most suitable since he is interested not only in the literal content of media versions of the New Left, but primarily in discovering the symbolic content of messages and in indicating their political significance. "Literary/linguistic" analysis, he indicates, offers "strategies for noting and taking account of emphasis" in the text of messages (p. 305). Thus he bases the interpretation of the latent text meaning on the examination of the usage of "position, placing, treatment, tone, stylistic intensification, striking imagery" (p. 305) as the ways of registering emphasis. Exploring the suggested meanings of

particular news frames, Gitlin pays attention, for example, to whether reporters use a movements's own preferred labels or those of its opponents; whether they take the movement at face value or emphasize what the demonstrators look like; whether or not they list the picket sign slogans permitting the students to articulate their own position or rely on characterizations of officials; how they use quotation marks, etc. This identification of the nature of frames, helped by qualitative content analysis, is then combined with the analysis of procedures by which the particular frames were established. Gitlin reconstructs the "process of production" of major stories, by interviews with their authors and by identifying the initiators of stories, interventions in their final form and incentives for the changes made, if any. The analysis is further accompanied by the provisional reconstruction of the actual history of the student movement. The memories of the main leaders of the movement, in which Gitlin himself was very active for some time, as well as its documents, help Gitlin compare the actual history of the movement - as he is able to reconstruct it, with the images of the movement in the media.

By a close observation of media coverage Gitlin finds that there was a certain progression in the images presented of SDS. He notes that the movement's picture changed from that of a serious movement (March 1965), to a marginal, ineffectual, contested oddity (April), then, to a mixture of absurdity and menace (June), and subsequently to undoubted menace (October).

Although the evolution in this pattern of coverage was not uniform, there was a definite emphasis in the coverage at all times: the initial respectful exposition of SDS's activities and goals was replaced by the characterization of SDS as an extremist, deviant and dangerous group.

Gitlin notes that SDS, a multi-issue organization which worked in university reform, civil rights, community organizing and against the Vietnam war and corporate domination of foreign policy - and initially presented as such - was progressively reduced to the image of an antiwar organization only. Its presentation was further framed by trivialization of the movement by the emphasis on its language, dress, age, style; polarization of the movement against ultra-right counter-demonstrations; emphasis on its internal dissension; marginalization of demonstrants as deviant; disparagement by numbers through under-counting; and disparagement of the movement's effectiveness. Other frames became prominent later, such as reliance on the hostile statements of government and other authorities, and emphasis on the presence of Communists, on "Viet Cong" flags and on violence in demonstrations.

Gitlin's main research problem lies in identifying where these frames come from. Some of them, he indicates, can be attributed to traditional routines in news treatment. Galtung's and Ruge's (1973) classification of criteria for news selection can explain some news coverage. The news describes the novel, exceptional event rather than explaining the underlying,

enduring conditions in normal everyday life that cause it. Event-oriented, it decontextualizes occurrences and abstracts them from the political situations that provoke them. It values the unusual over the usual. It reports what went wrong today, not what goes wrong every day. The news is concerned with the visible conflict, not with the deep consensus. It treats a demonstration as a potential or actual disruption of legitimate order, not as a statement about the world. Its traditional narrative structure, selecting for dramatic (and preferably melodramatic) conflict, makes contrasting antiwar Left and pro-war Right demonstrants appear as the "good copy". It favors the person versus the group. Its style of the human interest story deprecates collective motivations in favor of personal and idiosyncratic reasons. It is interested in the fact that advances the story over the one that explains it.

Some of the treatment, Gitlin accepts, follows from technical and organizational features of news coverage. Scarcity of time for news production, of correspondents and camera crews, and of newspaper space and air-time, matter a lot in the way events are covered. All these shortages lead to stereotyping, resulting in the construction of simplistic packages around events. The subtleties of situations and processes unavoidably are under-reported. Only the longer, more exploratory background story or a takeout contain even the technical potential for presenting such complex issues as an opposition movement. Most of the stories about it, however, appeared as single stories,

provoked by a single event, telling about a single issue. This practice is intensified by the traditional journalistic requirement of "pegging" the news. Additionally, news organizations, for reasons of efficiency, place reporters at institutionalized beats. This dispersion of journalists at centralized sites makes the officials the main sources of news, and gives them the opportunity to insert their own views of the situation in the news.

In particular, the coverage of unorthodox politics, Gitlin emphasizes, comes from the norms of dealing with deviance in general. Journalism has traditionally equated insurgency and protest with deviance. Protest events, in turn, according to these unspoken rules, are certified by arrests. For editors and reporters, arrests are the best sign that something significant has taken place; additionally, they are dramatic, have around them the aura of human interest, and can be reported routinely. Gitlin explains that "the practice of taking arrests as the 'handle' on the story and the threshold for newsworthiness descends from the operational code of crime news coverage and the police beat. Very often it was police reporters who were assigned to cover the student movement" (p. 42). The stories, because of such practice, very easily absorb the police view of the events.

For understanding the media frames in general, Gitlin explains further, it is relevant to know that stories spread horizontally, from news organization to news organization, as

well as vertically, from sources to journalists. Reporters covering the same event very often borrow angles, issues, and questions from each other. Especially when in unfamiliar social territory, they are prone to becoming a hermetic group, taking the cues from their peers, rather than outwards, from the events. The mechanisms of this emulation are simple, direct and everyday, Gitlin says; reporters talk to each other in a newsroom, on a beat, or in the course of covering "breaking" story; editors read the competition; network news staff watch the other networks' versions. Furthermore, they all rely on the same wire services, and all read The New York Times, that alone sometimes is that "critical mass that certifies a story's significance, even its frame" (p. 99).

But still, even if all these accounts, usually pointed out by diverse students of news, were taken together, some of the framings would not be explained unequivocally. Naming a set of factors, Gitlin notes, is not the same as accounting for a specific decision in framing. The factors that are usually singled out do not by themselves explain what is omitted from the coverage. They do not make clear, for example, why the requirement of a balance of opposing views is satisfied by presenting antagonistic statements of the authorities, instead of contrasting them with the movement's certified opinion. Nor do they help us understand how initial frames in The Times or wire services and their classification of stories were selected. The explanations of media images, expressed above, cannot

account precisely for Gitlin's main findings in the analysis of the pattern of the coverage: the shift in framings had a coherence that did not correspond to actual changes in the movement's composition or tactics; the direction of the shift was towards alignment with government policy. Gitlin concludes, faced with the insufficiency of the usual accounts of the workings of journalism, that the analysis of news "must move outside journalism proper into the larger realm of politics and history" (p. 70). The shift of frames did, ultimately, he indicates, correspond to something real in society:

> "the movement was becoming more radical, more disaffected, and more militant; it was spreading... it threatened the prerogatrives of the powerful, the adequacy of their ideological self-justifications and their very discourse... (it) was coming to reject the core hegemonic principles of the American system, and it was beginning to find allies at every class and race layer of the society" (p. 77).

The way the major national media cover an opposition movement, Gitlin concludes, is itself ultimately a political act. It is the outcome of a complex interaction in which the political assumptions and strategies of editors and news executives and owners combine with conventions of newsworthiness and technical factors of news production. Gitlin argues that "political commitments and media frames (are) inseparable" (p. 144). The dominant media in 1965, he argues, were commited to political stability within the dominant, largely unquestioned, ideological order. As relayers of news, they worked within a political consensus led by the Johnson administration. However, after the Tet offensive in 1968, it became clear that the

Vietnam war was not on its way to being won, at least not in a short time. The foreign policy elite began to turn against Johnson's war policy as the economic bill for the war came due: inflation, deficit in the balance payment, instability of the dollar in the international market. As the war lost legitimacy and popularity amidst what the political-economic American elite experienced as an economic and political crisis, the media elite became sympathetic to moderate antiwar activity. Still, this elite held that ending the war was the task of responsible authorities, not radical movements.

Normal journalistic routines, however, worked to amplify the radical movement, which at that time tried to use the media to generate still wider support and publicity. When mass movements mobilize, Gitlin says, the routine journalistic procedures work, in a sense, too well. By amplifying destabilizing news, they arouse political opposition in high places. A media spotlight is usually a magnifier of street rhetoric and demonstrative or violent militancy. These are the moments, Gitlin emphasizes, when the media managers intervene for political purposes - precisely to change the standard frame. Outside political authorities may themselves intervene to force the change if it is not forthcoming spontaneously.

Finally, Gitlin concludes that the media relay and continue to relay a hegemonic frame:

> "The news routines are skewed toward representing demands, individuals and frames which do not contradict the dominant hegemonic principles: the legitimacy of private control of commodity production; the legitimacy

> of the national security State; the legitimacy of technocratic experts; the right and ability of authorized agencies to manage conflict and make the necessary reforms; the legitimacy of the social order secured and defined by the dominant elites; and the value of individualism as the measure of social existence" (p. 271).

Journalism, however, has to "process" social opposition. And it does so in a way that diffuses its image and yet controls it at the same time. It absorbs what can be absorbed into the dominant structure of definitions and pushes the rest to the margins of social life. The media do incorporate some information which challenges the established system of power, but within a frame which minimizes and muffles, softens and blurs its significance.

A hegemonic frame, Gitlin claims, is built into journalistic routines: "Simply by doing their job, journalists tend to serve the political and economic elite definitions of reality" (p. 12). In some moments, however, normal journalistic routines are interrupted by the intervention "from above". Political and economic elites, Gitlin argues, which include owners and executives of media corporations, intervene directly to change or reinforce prevailing journalistic practices in critical times, when the routines produce news that no longer serve a coherent, hegemonic interest, that no longer harmonizes with the hegemonic ideology. And that is exactly what happened in the news coverage of the New Left in 1968. The frame shifted.

"Moderation-as-alternative-to-militancy" frame was brought into play, and more deliberately so over time, Gitlin indicates. Within the general shift in political momentum, when the Vietnam

war began to lose its political support, the media helped frame the responsible opposition as an explicit alternative to the radical, confrontational Left. The moderate antiwar movement was actually growing, with a wide popular base and high political support. "It was the media, though, that in this setting did a good deal to present (it) as an alternative to the rest of the antiwar movement," (p. 210) making demonstration violence a central theme of the coverage, stressing moderation and playing one against the other. What is sure, Gitlin claims, is that the change in framing came about by the intervention of media managers. Some of these interventions - although they are hard to unearth because of the canons of journalists' autonomy from newspaper and network executives - Gitlin identifies by his detailed reconstruction of the production of particular stories. Still, he argues that the instances of direct intervention in news operations are interesting "not as proofs of conspiratorial management, but as indices of the weight of routine framing, the institution's commitment to it, and the force of the norm of reportorial independence" (p. 212).

Gitlin sums up his analysis of the news coverage of the radical student movement by suggesting that the New Left had taken The Times, which published the first item about it, by surprise. The first respectful treatment filled a vacuum before hegemonic policy had been formulated. After The Times' early hesitation between respectful and trivializing coverage, the theme of the dangerous movement arose. The framings that

marginalized and disparaged the antiwar movement catered to the "administration's view of the world". The correspondence of the media's and administration's view on the New Left was not just a random coincidence, but neither was it always a straight consequence of a direct political intervention in the news operations. Gitlin argues that The Times' framings were rather "partly the professional, informal, unreflective, 'free' response of Times' reporters to their editors' responses, in turn, to the Johnson administration's escalation of the Vietnam war; and partly their political response to the unsettling emergence of a radical movement" (p. 214). .

The media, Gitlin insists, do not passively reflect the interests of the State, parties or corporations. Nor are they absolutely autonomous. They have certain independence from top political and economic elites - independence which is real, but bounded. The reality of this autonomy, Gitlin argues, helps legitimize the institutional order as a whole. The elites however prefer not to let such independence stretch 'too far', since it serves the interests of the elites as long as it is 'relative' - as long as it does not violate core hegemonic values. The media's room for manoeuvre is limited by the potential threat of the State which comes to the foreground in critical moments. Yet, Gitlin comes back to Gramsci's conclusion, "between crises and normal situations - between situations requiring extraordinary State or corporate interventions into the news, and situations in which the routine

procedures are left to take their course - there is no hard-and-fast line" (p. 279).

Gitlin's use of the concept of hegemony is based on the contention that this notion overcomes the limits of the classical Marxist base-superstructure dichotomy. Hall (1979), who characterized Gramsci's concept as "the immense theoretical revolution", argues that the concept of hegemony is set "at a critical distance from all types of economic or mechanical reductionism, from both 'economism' and conspiracy theory" (Hall, 1982, p. 334). Social relations of production, Gitlin wants to argue, do not mechanically determine the ideological superstructures. However, they set limits on common-sense understandings of the world. Trying to avoid economism, Gitlin however reduces his explanations of news to "conspiracy argument". The media, he argues, "of all the institutions of daily life, specialize in orchestrating everyday consciousness" (p. 1-2). In Gitlin's analysis the media appear as a relay system for the direct transmission of a ruling ideology to subordinate groups. Gitlin is trying hard to point that hegemony is not a simple process - it is historically specific and dialectic; hegemony is resisted, struggled against, disputed and transformed, always created anew. However, there are only two agents in this process (three in crisis situations): media managers and audiences which allow their consciousness to be "orchestrated". "From within their private crevices" these audiences rely on media "for concepts, for images of their

heroes, for emotional charges, for a recognition of public values, for symbols in general" (p. 1).

Alienated, isolated individuals and pervasive, omnipresent and omnipotent media were already known in communication studies and in that generation of research which relied on the "mass-society theory", the stimulus-response model of communication and the concept of propaganda.

Gitlin reduces the question of ideology production to the question of the bias of prejudiced communicators. Tracing the origin of particular news frames he points to the media owners and executives as the ones who decide what frames news will be cast into. Journalistic routines which produce ideological news, he says, "are finally accountable to the world view of top managers and owners" (p. 272). Media managers, on the other hand, have a vested interest in the status quo. The very power and prestige of media corporations presuppose the liberal capitalist order as a whole, Gitlin argues. Journalists accept the definitions of newsworthiness from their editors. Their values and and their stereotypes reflect their upper-middle-class position and the commercial interests of big organizations they work for. These values are further "ordered" by the ways in which journalists are trained, recruited, assigned, edited and promoted on the job. As media managers "train" journalists, so they "train" the audiences. Media managers in Gitlin's analysis appear as mind managers.

Gitlin accepts the culture of industrialist societies as given. A wide acceptance of dominant hegemonic principles (the legitimacy of private property, the legitimacy of the state, individualism...) is taken for granted, not problematized. Hegemony is already incorporated in common-sense notions. Gitlin thus does not explain how and why the common-sense notions come to be widely accepted, but uses them as an explanatory category. Although his examination of news as frames presents a definite theoretical achievement, Gitlin cannot account for the source of ideology beyond the notion that "false consciousness" produces more "false consciousness".

Gitlin's concentration on a case-study and specifically on the coverage of the New Left, results in many illuminations about the particular historical movement and the role the media played in its development; it contributes to discussions within the left on its strategies towards the media as a potential resourse. However, the way Gitlin uses the notion of hegemony places him next to proponents of the manipulation argument.

IV. NEWS AS AN IDEOLOGICAL CODE

"Who are you neutral against?"
(Mark Twain)

A central theoretical premise in the study of the Glasgow University Media Group (as in Tuchman's and Gitlin's) is that facts do not exist outside of a frame of reference. News thus inevitably works through interpretative frameworks. In this sense, it is not a natural or neutral phenomenon. It is socially manufactured, a highly mediated product. In its detailed study of British news bulletins, the Group demonstrates that television news is a "representation of sets of events or facts which consistently favors the perceptual framework of one group" over others (Volume 2, p. 121-122). This framework is skewed against the interests of the working class and organized labor. News is ideological. Using this term, the Group emphasizes that it does not convey the meaning of merely illusory or false thinking. News is ideological in the sense that it represents and serves the interests of one social group or class.

The Glasgow Group uses the notion of news as an encoded message which carries a preferred meaning as the main analytical category. Arguing from the position that social practices

governed by a code are not arbitrary or autonomous, the Group attempts to establish that news frameworks embody the dominant cultural assumptions of contemporary society about how the world does, might, and should work. It follows that to reveal the structures of the cultural framework which underpins the production of news is to unpack the coding of news messages. By decoding, the Group argues, it will be possible to show that the "social and professional assumptions lead to particular frames of reference which are not neutral images of reality" (Volume 1, p. 17).

A natural point of entry for such an analysis is the news message itself. The Group therefore finds the most fruitful methodological approach for cultural decoding of news messages in the content analysis of news. Most of the news studies, the Group indicates, "forget" to study the media output. Ideally, it is suggested, mass media research should combine participant observational studies of the news production processes with the sociology of audience response and the content analysis of the media output. The analysis of news content, as the output of complex media organisations, prepared for the audiences, has until now been the most neglected among these three branches in the dominant media research tradition. The Group has therefore chosen to concentrate on the content analysis, making a study of impressive scope: it has recorded and analysed, in quantitative and qualitative terms, all the national news presented by BBC1, BBC2 and ITN during the first 22 weeks of 1975, in their 8 daily

bulletins.

The analysis is organized around one central theoretical premise. A conflict between capital and labor is seen as the basic organizational principle of modern society and its central dynamic force. Assuming that this basic social conflict will highlight better than anything else the problems of maintaining neutrality in reporting, the study focusses on the examination of industrial news.

The analysis is conducted on three levels. On the first, with regard to the range of possible and available stories, the actual choice of news stories is considered, in order to discover the rules and assumptions guiding journalists in selection processes of news production. The insight into content absent from the news bulletins, the Group argues, is as significant in media research as the analysis of content presented to the audience. The codes of news production work through the verbal and visual language as well, making the analysis of the selectivity at the linguistic and visual level "at least as important to an understanding of how the news works as a cultural form as are omissions and inclusions at other levels" (Volume 1, p. 39). The study therefore encompasses linguistic and visual analysis of news. While in examining the linguistic components of news the Group has found the theoretical approach developed by sociolinguistics fruitful, the area of visual analysis posed a lot of methodological problems. Limiting itself to an attempt to "generate methods" for this

sort of analysis, the Group admits that its findings are only descriptive.

Cultural codes of news production are first discovered at the level of the usual form in which the news is presented on television - news bulletins. Although to the audience they appear as a very natural form of presenting the news, patterns of news bulletins have a coherence which reveals the nature of news programs as something more than just the sum of individual items. By conducting a computer analysis of bulletin profiles, the Group demonstrates that they have a clearly defined structure in which every story receives predictable treatment. All three channels examined (BBC1, BBC2, and ITN) use the same classification of news stories and show no ambiguity in placing a particular story under foreign, politics, industrial, disasters, crime, human interest or other category. The number of items in each of these categories is similar from bulletin to bulletin as well as from channel to channel. A high proportion of the items within a bulletin is of one particular length (30 seconds), while all the channels give the same relative predominance to the foreign, political, and industrial news.

The Group found a high similarity of bulletin profiles in all three channels, with regard to the length of bulletins, the number of items within them and their duration, distribution of items by category and relative duration of categories, as well as placement and presentation of items. This demonstrates that the same rules are employed in making the news programs, despite

the big differences between the BBC and the ITN and the fact that they are in competition. This leads the Group to suggest that as the "sameness" of news from bulletin to bulletin and from channel to channel cannot be accounted for by the erratic patterns of domestic and world events, neither is it explicable in terms of economic workings of television stations and their quest for audiences.

In addition, the placement of news items and their juxtaposition, as well as other characteristics of prearranged bulletin profiles, cannot be explained only in terms of the professional criteria of reporting and presentation. In fact, fragments of information, presented as television news, have no substantial connection of their own: Bulletin structures therefore must be artificial. Items are mostly connected verbally and this very formal link in discourse demonstrates the artificiality of the bulletin profiles. But the news bulletin profiles are not arbitrary; on the contrary, the news is continuously placed in a preferred order. This consistent ordering of news in itself provides a structure for interpreting the world in a definite way, promoting some social values over others. Although to the news viewer, who is used to experiencing the news as a sequence of unconnected stories, bulletin profiles appear as "natural", the normative ordering of news and limited ways in which this ordering varies, the Group argues, "cannot be dissociated from a taken-for-granted interpretation of the world above and beyond the 'facts' and 'events' being reported" (p.

118).

Bulletin structures mediate in a quite specific way the information transmitted, giving the news a preferred reading by its placement, duration and relation to other items. By such an analysis it is established that journalistic practices which lead to highly predictable bulletin profiles have the characteristics of a code: "As well as being a means to communicate, they are a social index of a system of values" (p. 120). What these values are and how they are promoted in news is further analysed in a close examination of the nature of television industrial coverage.

All three channels presented much the same picture of industrial life, and this picture appears to be higly selective and manufactured. The Group indicates that there is no direct relation between the size of an industry and the ammount of television coverage it received: engineering industry with 8.5 per cent of the total employed population was given 3.5 percent of the whole coverage; distributive trades category with 11.9 per cent of all the workers - only 0.7 per cent; the car industry, in contrast, received 24.4 per cent of reporting although representing only 2.1 of all employees. This unrepresentativeness of the industrial world in television news is even more observable in the way television covered industrial disputes. There was no single item on television about the stoppages in 7 different industrial sectors which accounted for 37 percent of all stoppages and for 17 percent of all the

working days lost.

A selection of disputes for reporting, however, is not explicable in terms of their severity. The three sectors given most prominence in strike reporting - the car industry, transport and communication, and public administration - all had a significant dispute record, but the overall pattern of coverage reveals a highly specific focus upon chosen disputes within some sectors. The car industry, the Group demonstrates, received 28 percent of all strike reporting, while shipbuilding, with 38 major stoppages and 6.7 per cent of the total working days lost, was covered by a single report in only one bulletin on BBC1. The engineering industry recorded 260 stoppages and 24.9 per cent of the total days lost and yet was covered by only 5.3 per cent of the total dispute reporting. The absence of coverage, the Group emphasizes, was not a result of geographical distance or inaccessibility nor the special nature of the subject. In fact, the engineering dispute was reported only with regard to its implications for the motor industry.

The nature of strike reporting reveals the rules guiding television presentations of industrial relations. In general, the picture of industrial disputes was highly distorted. The source of "facts" tended to be management, in line with a general tendency to obtain facts from official sources. The labor side was looked to for "events". Formal balance in terms of the time allocated to the two sides, however, does not reveal the true nature of this coverage. Overall, the workers and their

representatives received more time than management. The balance, in fact, was often sought not in contrasting management and workers, but rather in contrasting groups of workers with different attitudes to the dispute. The type of coverage afforded to each side was quite different. While, for example, journalists interviewed management with questions that were either an open invitation to give their views or to lead to those, the role of the "devil's advocate" was reserved largely for interviewing shop stewards. The coverage routinely concentrated on the effects of union actions, neglecting their causes. In the absence of essential background information, the activities of strikers appeared irrational and unreasonable. Selecting the coverage of two biggest strikes in the period examined for case studies, the Group demonstrates how the distortion of these disputes was established by particular frameworks chosen for reporting.

The strike of the Glasgow dustcart drivers was covered in 102 bulletins over a period of three months. During the entire strike not one of the strikers was interviewed on the national news. The strikers were demanding parity with the minimum wage earned by heavy vehicle drivers in other industries. They attempted to settle the issue on a national level in a strike called a few months before the one in question, but they went back to work after a promise from the corporate employer that it would be willing to negotiate a local agreement. This essential issue - a claimed promise by the corporation to make a local

parity agreement - never came to the fore despite the extensive coverage of the strike. Instead, from the first day of the strike, the reporting focussed on a potential health danger for the city population. Archive pictures of uncollected refuse, shot during the previous strike, were shown and the question was posed whether the situation would be repeated. As the strike went along, the dispute itself and the real cause of the strike figured less and less in reports; it was mentioned only occasionally as a strike "for more pay". The framework established from the outset - a potential health hazard - predominated for months before the health danger was actually announced by the authorities. In such a coverage, the Group indicates, Glasgow strikers could appear only as unreasonable and unresponsible citizens who were threatening the health of the whole city.

Another case study demonstrates even more clearly the assumptions and values guiding the journalists in presenting industrial conflicts. The strike began in one of Leyland Motor's factories with the demand of engine tuners to be graded as skilled workers and to receive greater pay. It coincided with a speech of the Prime Minister about government policy on industry and investment that contained a reference to the car industry. Commenting on previous failures of private capital and emphasizing that now government money was involved in the car industry, he appealed to "management and unions in the car industry to cut down on manifestly avoidable stoppages of

production" (Volume 1, p. 225). The reference to private capital was immediately dropped from the coverage as well as the appeal to the "management" side: 7 times on BBC1, 6 times on BBC2 and 16 times on ITN this speech was referred to as relating to the workforce and strikes only. The speech was further incorporated into a dominant view that strikes were the main problem facing the car industry in general and Leyland Corporation in particular, to the point that "manifestly avoidable stoppages" became "sensless strikes in the car industry". However, alternative accounts of Leyland's problems were available to television journalists. For a long time Leyland suffered from the chronic failure of management to invest. Between 1968 and 1972, 95 per cent of the firm's profits were distributed as dividends to share holders and only 5 per cent were re-invested. Yet, against 63 references to strikes as the root cause of Leyland's problems, television news presented 16 accounts referring to problems of management and 3 referring to the lack of effective investment. Other available figures, showing that over half of the loss of production at Leyland had nothing whatever to do with disputes, were never quoted in the 94 times the strike was reported.

How can such high selectivity of industrial coverage and a distortion of industrial life in news be explained? The angles from which the Glasgow and Leyland strike were reported are not just isolated pieces of "bias", the Group emphasizes. The organisation of reporting around certain angles results in

establishing the dominant view of an event, coming from a highly partial and distorted view of relations within industry. At the heart of news production and the selective patterns of television coverage there is a definite way of seeing and understanding industrial life. Thus, it is not that the constraints of bulletin duration, technical or manpower limitations, program budgets, geographical or other access difficulties make the picture of industrial life highly unrepresentative. The explanation for the selection criteria at work, the Group suggests, has to be looked for in culturally valued preferences in contemporary society.

In fact, it is in the nature of journalism to describe the world through particular cases, set up as a general model. Selected industrial events are thus often presented as implying significance for whole areas of industry not otherwise reported. By such mechanism, "heavy" coverage of one event - a dispute in this case - becomes proportionately "heavier", resulting in a tendency to overstate contextually the significance of disputes isolated in this way. This is even more so if the news is defined and organised within a given framework of reference (seeing the Glasgow strike from the angle of a health danger and the Leyland strike from the angle of strike-prone workers). It is contemporary cultural codes that allow the often taken for granted generation of specific basic frames of reference".

Modern industrialized society has two central values: uninterrupted mass production and full consumer satisfaction.

Together they constitute the definition of successful social development. These two central social values, which the news promotes as primary social concerns, are built into selection criteria and define the content of news. The car industry, which received the biggest coverage of all is the pre-eminent symbol of the mass-production industry in the culture of modern society. This industry then may be used to symbolize the main problem of production in an advanced industrial society: strike-prone workers, not content despite high wages. Strikes in transportation-communication industry and public administration services figured so prominently in reporting because they affected people as consumers. Because of a high cultural concern with consumer satisfaction, it appeared natural to report these strikes from the perspective of their effects rather than their causes.

The news content, the Group further argues, is organised in such a way that coherence is given to only one set of views, opinions and explanations. Mass media have a power to control these explanations. To the extent the chosen explanations presented in news favor some interests over others, the news is ideological. This preference of one set of explanations is built into journalistic routines, into the content of the news and, even more, is the organising principle of the coverage, as the Group demonstrates in a case study of television reporting of the British economic crisis.

During the four months covered in the sample for this examination, different opinions crystallized about the nature and causes of the persistent growth of inflation facing British society. One of them, promoted by the centre of the ruling Labour party, insisted on the causal relationship between wage and price increases, claiming that the higher wage costs were passed on as higher prices. The increases in wages, in turn, were blamed on the trade unions which managed to fix wage rates above their market value. In opposition to this, there was a whole range of other opinions, from the right to the left, which explicitly denied the excessive wage claims as the fundamental cause of the crisis. Wage increases were understood as a process of catching up on increases in the cost of living, and inflation was explained as the result of inadequate governmental policies in controlling and restricting the money supply (conservatives) or as a manifestation of the decline of the productivity of the British industry (leftists).

Yet the central theme which was implicit in the coverage was that wage increases were the main cause of inflation. While this view was regularly and systematically repeated on all three channels, the view that inflation was not wages-led was severely underrepresented. In support of the former, 96 statements were aired (56 reported statements, 14 direct statements from media personnel, 12 interview questions and 14 interview responses); against it - only 12 (7 reported statements and 5 interview responses). However, a quantitative representation of the

coverage severely underestimates the role of the dominant explanation in news coverage. A heavy repetition of statements in favor of some view is only one dimension of the manner in which dominant explanations come to be established; the Group reveals and describes many others used in this particular case.

Much of the news simply presupposed that wages were a central problem in the way that wages and price figures were routinely compared. The level of price increases could have been shown in relation to some other factors - increases in government expenditure, for example, or the ammount of money used in speculating with land and property. To have done so, however, would have been to support the validity of other opinions about the inflation and to acknowledge other causes, apart from wages. Instead, television news relied only on those official statistical figures showing that wages were far outstripping prices. A number of other accounts available at the time showed that in fact real wages were falling. Statistical figures from which a number of other conclusions could have been drawn were used to emphasize consistently only one interpretation; qualifications on the measures implied in statistics were simply given very rarely. The same "method" was employed by TV news in citing the official Price Commission Report on how much the wages contributed to price increases. The largest figure possible to arrive at from the indications given in the report was calculated and presented in the news. In no bulletin was the information given that the proven figure for

the effect of wages was only 20 per cent, which represented a decline from the previous quarter.

Such a detailed analysis of selection criteria that guide journalists in their work, of the nature of interpretive frameworks the news uses to present a dominant explanation of events, and of the manner in which dominant explanations are established, speaks strongly in favor of the Group's conclusion that news is produced from within a limited and partial understanding of the social and industrial world. Cultural values which this partial view embodies reveal its central thesis, namely the liberal notion that there is a fundamental consensus in society: "The media work within an ideological framework of consensus, an element of which is that if everyone works hard and co-operates then all will prosper" (p. 232). Television news, the Group indicates, tends to speak in terms of "one community" and "one nation", neglecting the differences between different sections of society. Such a view allows only a limited range of explanations for conflict and crisis. Social success is defined in terms of normal full production which is, in turn, equated with being strike- free: "Within this limited range of inferential frames to explain crisis, there are two which feature predominantly in descriptions of the workforce and unions. First, that the conflict is the result of industries being strike prone; and secondly that the strikes, militancy and unrest, are often caused by a small minority" (p. 233).

This belief about how society works is reflected in the news values themselves. It prestructures what the news is to consist of and in a sense what the journalists themselves actually see as existing or as being significant in the world. Journalistic appeals to news values, the Group argues, are no more than appeals to the validity of this world view within which they work, and which assumes that everyone lives in the same world and sees it in the same way. Such news values and journalistic practices established upon them are unable to encompass or explore the rationale of alternative world views. When it appears, alternative information is fragmented in a flow of news organized within the dominant framework. It is not used to systematically develop alternative themes and explanations. Its appearance however, creates the illusion of balance for television viewers.

The Glasgow Group strongly emphasizes that at all times the organisation of news is constrained by the limits of the world view within which it is produced. At the same time it argues against regarding television news as merely ruling-class propaganda. If it were so, news would quickly lose its credibility. Neither can the world-view that underlies news production be equated with the ideology of journalists as a social group, a point which is at the basis of Gans' explanation of news ideology. It is the cultural framework of the society which, together with professionalization, underpins the manufacture of news. The news does not reflect the events in the

world "out there", but is the manifestation of the "collective cultural codes of those employed to do (the) selective and judgmental work for society" (p. 13-14). The code works at all levels:

> "in the notion of 'the story' itself, in the selection of stories, in the way material is gathered and prepared for transmission, in the dominant style of language used, in the permitted and limited range of visual presentation, in the overall duration of bulletins, in the duration of items within bulletins, in the real technological limitations placed on the presentation, in the finances of the news services, and above all, in the underpinning processes of profesionalization which turn men and women into television journalists" (p. 10-11).

But the explanation does not go further. It is argued that central cultural conventions and codes within the realms of a dominant consciousness determine the interpretive frameworks; that they are so deeply ingrained as cultural assumptions that only occasionally, if at all, do they come up for questioning; and that they are difficult to see precisely because they are taken for granted. But how are these cultural conventions and codes developed? How do they come to be accepted by the journalists and the audience? What is their relation to a ruling-class ideology? None of these questions are answered in the Glasgow study. On the one hand, the argument goes against any reductions of cultural production to class interests. The base/superstructure dichotomy is too simplified an explanation to be applicable to the broadcast output. On the other hand, the Group acknowledges that in television news the ideology of one particular class is dominant and preferred. The solution is found in simply avoiding any attempt at theoretical explanation:

"Whilst agreeing that some general theories of society, especially those that stress the role of class structure and conflict, are more feasible than others, we cannot agree that such theories at present offer us the concepts to analyse the manifold variations of cultural reproduction in our society" (Volume 2, p. 414).

The Group claims that any theory of media production will have to be a general theory about society; such a suitable theory, however, still has not been developed. This approach leaves some important study conclusions without a proper basis for generalisations. The findings of the Glasgow study strongly indicate that journalists work within the consensus-view which assumes that the normal workings of the market economy will somehow benefit everyone within it. But the Group itself admits that such a conclusion is not new nor unknown even to some news viewers. Still, it is argued, until the constant flow of television output is subject to close scrutiny and analysis as the Group has done, "any charges of omissions, slanting, or bias are merely hot air about a cool medium" (Volume 1, p. 10).

The Glasgow study is significant, however, not only because it systematically verified some already existing impressionistic observations. Its findings could be seen as a contribution to the validity of the concept of hegemonic ideology. The notion of hegemony is not used, acknowledged, or mentioned in the whole study. Nevertheless, some of the theoretical concepts used resemble strongly Gramsci's ideas. Consensus corresponds to

Gramsci's consent, which, he supposed, exists in every human society. The Glasgow Group's explanation for news ideology, which is similar to Gitlin's outlook, is rooted in the vague notion of a culturally dominant consciousness. In the book Really Bad News[1] however, there is a section which speaks more generally about mass media in a class society. Conclusions presented here follow directly from a Gramscian theoretical framework. Here the media embody a view of the world reflecting the perspective of powerful interests: "The extent to which the population at large is likely to acknowledge the correctness and legitimacy of this view will vary according to the period, the state of economy, and above all the level of class antagonism which exists" (p. 132). In periods of political and social calm or in periods of economic boom, the existing order is likely to be regarded by most people as legitimate, or at least unavoidable. Nevertheless, in most times, the consent of subordinate groups cannot be taken for granted - it has to be worked for: "The privately owned press and public and commercial broadcasting are crucial agencies which on a day-to-day basis attempt to secure the consent of these groups and the acquiescence of the working class as a whole" (p. 133-134).

This analysis is primarily applied to public broadcasting, and the turning point in British history, which directed the BBC

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[1]Only half of the members of original Glasgow University Media Group took part in writing the book Really Bad News which is presented by the publisher as the third volume of the study and the natural continuation of the first two volumes.

towards the promotion of consensual ideology, is found in the economic boom and affluence of the 1950's. In that period, when the state became responsible for the orchestration of the relation between labor and capital, it appeared that the living standard for all social classes would gradually improve and that the interests of all would be accommodated in the welfare state; all political parties committed themselves to economic growth and full employment. Until recently the provisional and temporary nature of this historical phase has rarely been recognised. Public broadcasting now finds itself caught in a contradiction: "It is committed to an ideological perspective which is founded on the view of consensus, 'one nation' and 'the community' while having to report phenomena which cannot be fitted easily into this framework of understanding" (p. 136). Broadcasters still attempt to secure some form of agreement by giving privileged position to views similar to theirs and by closing off access to radical explanations of what society is and how it could work. This may be done routinely and quite unconsciously, as long as the people are not demanding social and political changes on any large scale. It is only in crisis situations, then, that a more direct control of journalistic works may be necessary, and then it comes either from senior broadcasters or politicians.

It is clear that this analysis follows directly from Gramsci's argument. Establishing by its findings that the main function of the mass media is cultural legitimation of the

consensus and the status quo, the Group gives a positive value to a "hegemony paradigm", emphasizing that this function of the mass media does not depend on the private or public ownership of the medium. Its analysis does not reveal any structural differences between the output of the BBC and that of the ITN, despite their different economic nature.

The conclusions about the ideological nature of news are further checked by the analysis of its linguistic and visual components. Accepting the idea that the spoken and visual vocabulary of news are the outward and visible expression of newsroom codes and conventions, and therefore that they should be included in any study of news, the Group has made its study the most complete content analysis of television news done so far. With the assumption that the relationship between language and the things it describes is never neutral, linguistic analysis is supposed to provide evidence of the ideological preferences of broadcasters. The Group uses the approach developed by sociolinguistics, which understands language as a means of establishing, maintaining, and mediating social relationships. The unit for this analysis is not a sentence but the news text as a set of meaningfully related sentences. The analysis thus concentrates on the examination of why the text is structured in one way rather than another.

In general, the study reveals that there is a high degree of predictability in the way news talk is organised. In a linear structure of information of decreasing importance, a single

theme is established usually from the outset and developed in a single direction. There is a high level of redundancy in the language, although there are not many descriptive terms used. In the sample of one week of industrial news, the absence of information relevant for understanding the items under discussion is especially noticeable. The plurality of meanings inherent in conflict situations is typically reduced to simple formulae which include identifying the industrial disputes in terms of the workforce, attributing their cause to labor only, and reducing the workers' aspirations to cash demands. In all these aspects, the Group indicates, news talk is a highly restricted code, reflecting not broadcasters'intentions so much as a collective value system within which they are working.

A restricted code of news talk, the Group suggests, reveals a value preference for a particular view of the causes and nature of industrial conflict: it constructs a preferred sense in which the message is to be heard. The use of language in the news follows not the logic of reported events or relationships per se, but a more general cultural code. Thus news presents capital accumulation as everybody's problem, "while the problems of the workforce are presented as 'failure' - failure to communicate, to resolve, to understand, to wait or as a moral failure by a greedy minority" (p. 169). For example, the words "action", "dispute", "stoppage" are used as synonymous with "strike". A stoppage of production may have very different causes, but with this constant usage, it becomes naturally

associated with a strike. The breakdown in social relations is implied to be the responsibility of labor. Furthermore, the vocabulary used to describe the process of free collective bargaining, which implies the equality of rights of both sides, is usually reduced to reporting in terms of rights and coercions. Although the concept of free bargaining allows for the usage of terms equally applicable to both labor and management, the news does not consist of a balanced set of descriptions. Selecting among the terms "claim", "threat", "offer", "proposal", "appeal",or "demand", journalists reserve negative terms like "demand" and "threat" for the labor side, describing management in positive terms as a side that "offers", "proposes", and "appeals". "The absurdity of applying concepts like 'offer' and 'demand' to the wrong side shows how this code works to legitimate the side which responds and makes concessions rather that the side which makes requests as though of right" (p. 185). Linguistic codes, the Group concludes, ammount to a particular version of managerial ideology.

As the news implies a preferred way to hear the story, it is also organised such that it can be seen in a preffered way. Contrary to the claims of broadcasters, the Glasgow Group comes to the conclusion that it is not the "visual imperative" that makes the news the way it is. Visually interesting film is the most esentially "televisual" element of the news bulletins. Furthermore, the use of such film is an essential part of the "news-as-it-happens" notion. However, tha analysis reveals that

most of television pictures consist of "talking heads"; the Group finds that among the talking heads it is the news personnel that appear most often. It is never less than 25 per cent of the news bulletin that the newscaster reads to the camera. The total ammount of time spent by newscasters and correspondents reading to the camera is far greater. Visual components of the news are of secondary importance in the main visual medium of contemporary culture. The visual aspects of news presentations do not determine whether or not the stories are run or how much importance they ~~are~~ given, for example. The news will present the most visually interesting shots but within the limits that govern the particular story. These limits are set by the "story logic". The rules governing the juxtapositioning of film shots come not from the "film logic" but from the audio text. Visual inputs, the Group finds, are subordinate to the journalistic text and used mostly only illustratively. In testing the role of visual components of news the Group uses the theoretical concepts developed by Pierce[2] in distinguishing the relationship between signifier and signified. Piercian division is applied to text/image relationship and distinguished as iconic when the text is descriptive of a picture; as indexical when the text is partially descriptive; and as symbolic when the text is non-descriptive. A news film shot is used as a unit of analysis and the assumption made that

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[2]Charles Sanders Pierce; American philosopher and logician who developed a semiotic model of meaning.

the extent to which the text/image relationship is not iconic is a crucial measure of the extent to which the producers mediate the visual information given. The dominant relationship between text and visual is found to be indexical. The Group finds that iconic and symbolic relationships are comparatively rare. "All the visual apparatus available for reporting the world without the overt mediation of the journalist has in the 20-plus years of broadcast journalism hardly affected the journalists centrality in the news presentation process", the Group concludes (p. 298). The verbals, therefore, are the dominant carriers of meanings - and these have already proven to be skewed against labor.

In an attempt to establish a methodological ground for the examination of the visual organisation of news, the Group devotes a lot of attention to examining the rules for opening and ending news programs, to the way news presenters themselves are presented, to the visual rules governing interviewing, e.t.c. The important finding from this analysis is that visual elements of news tend to emphasize strongly the neutrality of the news towards the things happening in the external world. This neutrality is stressed by the studio settings, by the distance at which newscasters appear on a screen (neither intimately close nor too distant), as well as by the lack of camera movements. This visual illusion of television neutrality contributes a lot to popular credibility, which hides the manufactured nature of television information.

"Cultural bias", the Glasgow Group argues, is inevitable; however, its scope and directions are not. In order to move towards a more democratic broadcasting, a few proposals are made concerning access to television, and the accountability of public broadcasting institutions and their control. The Group argues strongly for easier access by less powerful groups to television and for democratisation of controlling bodies, which should be truly representative of the whole population. The main goal of broadcasters and especially of public television, it is emphasized, should be to present diversity of views in the whole population rather than to present a single image of the "real world".

The emphasis on more democratic controlling bodies and more democratic access to television, as solutions that will make television news better than it is now, comes as a surprising conclusion to the Glasgow study. It is important to note that these proposals are given in "Really Bad News", published by authors comprising only half of the original members of the Group; still, they appear to be in sharp contrast to the main findings of the study. It is not that the elitist members of the BBC's Board of Governors cause the television news to be skewed against the interests of organised labor. And it is not that the workers' side does not appear on television. By doing their routine work and believing in their objectivity and neutrality, journalists produce a highly distorted picture of the industrial relations in the news. Dominant cultural codes allow them to do

so, while still preserving the illusion of the objectivity of news for many television viewers. Without examining the social forces and mechanisms through which these dominant cultural conventions and codes become the common-sense awareness of social process, one has to end up with the fake conclusion - as the Glasgow Group does - that changes in the controlling bodies of broadcasting institutions will bring the changes in news.

V. NEWS AS AN IDEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

> "But even as we speak, language speaks us".
> (John Hartley: "Understanding News")

A study of John Hartley's Understanding News reflects new theoretical developments of the concept of ideology within structuralist and culturalist studies of the media. At the heart of these studies is the notion that "the elaboration of ideology found in language its proper and privileged sphere of articulation" (Hall, 1982, p. 65). Drawing themselves upon diverse theoretical traditions, these studies center on the question of signification. They argue that things and events in the real world do not contain an intrinsic and single meaning which is then transferred through language. Rather, "the world has to be made to mean" (Hall, 1982, p. 67). Signification as a social practice, which is at heart of ideology, thus has to be studied in language.

This chapter presents Hartley's semiotic analysis of news discourse.

John Hartley: Ideology as "neutralization"

Compared with many news studies, which assume the existence of the real world and news reports as two separate entities and try to point out the ideological distortion of the "real" in the "reported" by comparing the two, Hartley's central analytical premise is a complete reversal: "It is not the event which is reported that determines the form, content, meaning or 'truth' of the news, but rather the news that determines what it is that the event means" (p. 15). In this theoretical understanding "reality" is, above all, a human construct. The reality one observes depends on how the observer looks at it: "the natural and social world does not consists of objects, forces or events which exist, independently of the observer, in a state where their identity and characteristics are intrinsic to their nature and self-evident" (p. 12).

In the physical no less than in the social world, Hartley emphasizes, the true nature of things lies not in things themselves, but in the relationships which people construct and then perceive to exist between them. The medium through which these activities are performed is language. The world is realized, he concludes and emphasizes - in both senses of the word: "made real and understood as such", in language. The "nature of the real", it follows, is not a source of human understanding of reality; quite the contrary, it is the result of human activities conducted through the medium of language-systems. Language thus appears as the only "reality" that can be subject to analysis.

By the means of language people select and organize their experiences. Learning new experiences equals learning new sub-languages: new sets of terms, rules and conventions which govern how some particular sub-set of language operates. But people have no individual control over language. Its rules and conventions they can neither ignore nor alter. Language is a system of socially structured meanings.

Defining news discourse as a specially differentiated sub-system within language, Hartley attempts to explain how its meanings are socially structured. Semiotics makes a clear distinction between language and discourse. As Hartley explains, discourses are different kinds of use to which language is put. They are dependent upon the overall language-system for their elements (signs) and their rules and conventions (codes). Language as a general sign-system, however, determines only the way people can produce meanings, understandable to others. What people actually say depends on the context in which the language is uttered and received. "In discourses language systems and social conditions meet", (p. 6). he indicates. Any attempt to understand a particular discourse thus must take into account both language system and the social, political and historical conditions of its production and consumption. Studying a specific discourse, Hartley insists, cannot be divorced from its social function.

Hartley thus defines news as a discourse generated by a general sign system in relation to a social structure. He

undertakes the analysis of news discourse by examining its two major determinants. On the one hand, he discusses the features of the general sign system in which the news is encoded; on the other, he considers the social forces which determine how news messages are both produced and "read".

Facts and events, as it is argued in semiotics, have no meaning in themselves. Their meanings are constructed through language. What makes the news meaningful therefore is not the world it reports but rather the sign system in which it is encoded. The language, however, Hartley indicates, consists of only meaning-potentials. A sign cannot be understood by reference to things it "stands for". A meaning which a sign gives to its external referent is not determined either by the nature of the referent nor by the nature of the sign. The relation between signs and their referents is arbitrary - there is no necessary relationship between dog and a sound-image "dog". Meaning, it is argued in semiotics, is made possible by the relationship between sign and sign. Thus for example, the meaning of the term "terrorist" is derived from the relation between it and other signs like "soldier", "freedom-fighter", "guerilla" etc.

In fact, both sign and referent, Hartley emphasizes, are merely potential when it comes to meaning. Referents are not pre-given entities with fixed determined properties. Only some of their characteristics are selected by signs for emphasis. Depending on a context, selected characteristics may appear less

relevant in comparison with others or interpreted differently. Neither do signs have fixed internal meanings. Their capacity of multi-accentuality - of putting different evaluative accents on the referents - makes the particular choice of accentuation and the directing of the sign towards a particular kind of meaning dependent on the context of the use and on the users.

Signs are used in the process of socio-verbal interaction and are necessarily oriented to somebody. Their meaning is therefore always the product of the dialogic interaction that occurs between addresser and addressee (speaker, text, image/hearer, reader, viewer). Further, Hartley adds, meanings of signs can be multiplied up into a "second order of signification" which goes far beyond what they seem actually to say. A sign on its own simply "denotes" its distinctive features which set it apart from other signs; but at the same time it has a capacity for "connotation" and "myth", by symbolically presenting more abstract concepts and values.

The arbitrariness of a sign, its capacity for multi-accentuality, and orientation as well as for connotation and myth, make it a bearer of only potential meanings. Signs therefore by themselves do not command a general acceptance of their meaning. Still, Hartley indicates, social discourses promote some dominant accentuations. People struggle over what they should signify. The winner in this struggle is a dominant economic class which by virtue of the legitimation power based on its social position succeeds to impose the dominant meanings.

News, Hartley argues, carries preferred meanings. Journalistic codes of unambiguity, clarity and "facts", for example, direct news discourse towards a single, uni-accentual meaning. By the way a story is told and signs combined one with another, their multi-accentual potential for meaning is filled in, until the signs are "closed" into a "preferred reading". Any discourse which seeks to "close" the potential of signs, Hartley says, and to prefer one evaluative accent over another, is ideological: "Such discourses present evaluative differences as differences in fact" (p. 24).

As preferred meanings cannot be understood by the language system itself, the analysis has to turn to the social context of their production. Semiotics itself cannot explain how the signs come to accept a dominant meaning. In order to examing the "shaping forces that determine how the potential of sign/referent is going to be realized in a particular context", semiotic analysis has to import theoretical concepts from "outside". Hartley supports his analysis with Gramsci's notion of hegemony. In this concept he finds a suitable account for the social role of news and role of mass media in general. Hegemony is here, however, combined with the concept of ideology which is different from the one used by Gitlin. Ideology in general - and news as ideology - "neutralizes" class conflict.

The capitalist mode of production continuously generates essential social inequalities. People however, voluntarily accept, and submit themselves to capitalist social relations as

they rarely experience the exploitative relationship between capital and labor as such in the "lived reality" of everyday life. A dominant economic class, Hartley argues, following Gramsci, maintains its advantageous social position not by direct coercion (which is only a last resort at its disposal) but by hegemony - seeking and winning the consent of subordinate and powerless groups.

The consent is made possible by the "neutralization" of class antagonism. The basic social conflict is "translated" into other, socially acceptable, forms. "Consent is not won by convincing people that noughts are in fact crosses - it is won by taking the real conditions in which people live their daily lives and representing them in ways which do 'make sense'", Hartley emphasizes (p. 59). Specific social positions of the subordinate and allied classes are presented in neutral terms and granted the status of eternal forces of nature. Hartley notes that for the "neutralization" of the potentially antagonistic class relations a number of translations are necessary. He specifies that they include translations "from condition to appearance, from class subject to individual personality, productive labor to earnings, class antagonism to 'natural' differences, from power to authority and from class to culture" (p. 57). Among these, Hartley singles out "cultural translation", emphasizing that successful hegemony requires that translation from class to culture be achieved in as many spheres as possible. It is in the sphere of culture, he notes, that

social hierarchies can be maintained without any apparent reference to class. Originating as inequalities in the social position in the process of production, fundamental divisions among people emerge in the cultural sphere as "natural" differences in taste, competence, status and personal preferences.

The ideological translations "mask" social relations. They transform power interests into "general" or "national" interests. By hiding the real exploitative relations among people and presenting them in a socially acceptable form - as "natural" differences between individuals, these translations enable the consent of subordinate groups. A complex task of winning consent for hegemony by ideological translations is perceived as the main function of the media, the family, education, the law and the state. Thus news, for example, talks about people as individuals with personal attributes, not as individuals whose condition is determined by their class relations. Considered as members of groups, they are presented as parts of the family, the nation or the public. None of these agencies "working for consent", Hartley emphasizes, could perform its ideological role alone.

Analyzing the social forces which make the news discourse ideological, Hartley points to capital and the state as the most influential ones. Most of the mass media, Hartley emphasizes, are owned by private corporations; even if they are not, the media operate in a commercial climate. They cannot escape the

norms of commercial life that is everywhere around them and forces them to behave and measure their results in the terms of commercial undertakings. By emphasizing the competitive commercial environment of news production, Hartley does not intend to argue that because of the commercial context the news media simply reproduce the ideologies of those who own them or of their class. However, the iron laws of commercialism strongly influence the allocation of resources in the media, their direction to mass rather than minority markets as well as define the broad limits of "acceptable"opinion they present in the news. In recent times, Hartley further insists, by the long term tendencies in the developing pattern of media ownership such as concentration, diversification and multinationalization, capitalist control in the media has been intensified rather than relaxed.

The state and the media, he indicates, are in arms-length relationship. The only way the state openly influences the news is the law of libel and Official Secrets Act. The state, of course, is not without means - many of which are behind-the-scene contacts - to keep journalists and their products "in line". However, Hartley emphasizes, the media could not perform their role if they openly served a particular class or group. Their credibility is dependent on their being identified not with a class or sectional interest but with the "general" or "public" interest. Although there are direct constraint from the capital and the state, media work in a

climate of routine autonomy. But the relative autonomy of the media and their commitment to impartiality, objectivity, neutrality and balance, he insists, are the "necessary conditions for the production of dominant ideological meanings" (p. 55).

It is in the practical everyday work context of newsmaking that ideology is produced, Hartley argues. Journalists, in their everyday work, select some events for reporting and construct them into stories. These activities are done according to "rules" developed in the journalistic profession. Selection of events for attention follows some conditions which are applicable not just to news, but to the perception of events at large. These criteria, generally accepted the world over, correspond to news values, identified by Galtang and Ruge (1973) (frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite nations, reference to elite persons, personalization, negativity). News values, as established and institutionalized journalistic criteria of selection are not under the individual control of journalists. Although widely accepted and "objectivized", they are neither natural nor neutral. In fact, Hartley argues, they are an ideological code - a code which sees the world in a very particular way.

Journalists, as Hartley argues further, could not "make sense" for their audiences of the events they report if they did not have the ideas of the proper places of these events in the

order of things and if they did not have available "maps" of the social world. Ideological translations are achieved by means of routine professional assumptions about what the overall map of social relations looks like, Hartley argues. He specifies that, at the most general level, these maps assume that society is fragmented into distinct spheres (politics, sports, culture); is composed of individual persons "who make their own destiny"; and by its nature is hierarchical and consensual. The notion of consensus, he emphasizes, is a basic organizing principle in news production. Consensus, for example, assuming that everybody has equal rights in society and equal access to the expression of grievances, can explain dissent only as deviancy: "The terms used to characterize strikes, direct action and other expressions of dissent concentrate on notions of irresposibility, irrationality, and either mindlessness or bloody-mindedness", Hartley emphasizes (p. 84).

The process of selection, based on ideological news values, and the process of construction of news stories, which rests upon specific journalists' conceptions of society, therefore determine significantly the news content. The ways in which events are made meaningful in news discourse, however, as Hartley emphasizes, are primarily related to a mode of address which the media use in their communication with the audience. As the meaning is always the result of socio-verbal interaction between addresser and addressee, he points out that a mode of address in the media is based on the journalists' conception of

the audience. Since the receiver in mass communication is not known, journalists have to construct an image of the audience. In its early radio days, for example, the BBC developed a paternalistic, elite orientation to its listeners. An alternative mode of address was developed later to replace the BBC's formal and high moral tone. This orientation, now accepted by all the modern media, places journalists "on the side of the audience": journalists are concerned to find out the facts on behalf of the the public.

The language employed in news programs, Hartley concludes, is the media's own version of the language of the public to whom it is principally addresses. The public, in turn, is seen to consist of non-political families, relaxing at home: it is a mass of ordinary people of "ordinary common sense". The orientation of media discourse thus rests upon "the idea of appealing to common sense, to what 'most of us' think, and to the 'common stock of knowledge'" (p. 96).

The media, Hartley argues, translate the events into a "commonsense public idiom, drawing upon the raw materials from the cultural and "linguistic environment". Precisely by doing so, they perform their ideological role. For, common-sense notions, although appearing as obvious and neutral timeless wisdom, are neither neutral nor timeless. They are produced "in a specific society by the ways in which that society talks and thinks about itself and its experience" (p. 97). They are thus a historical product of a historically specific social

arrangements: whole histories of social formations are sedimented into discourses.

But the media themselves do not originate the commonsense categories, nor the public idioms into which the news stories are translated:

> They take their stories... from the groups, institutions and people with power and 'representative' status. They take their commonsense stance and their public idiom from both these sources and from their image of what their audience thinks and says. Hence, as a result, when they translate the doings of the mighty into the language of the rest of us, they implicate us in the thinking and policies of our elders and betters" (p. 105-106).

Thus, Hartley concludes, dominant definitions of the world are granted the status of what "most people think". This actively contributes to the continuing dominance of those definitions and of the groups whose interests are made to appear as "natural" and "the same as our own".

Common-sense notions, embodied in news discourse, work against the background of a world that is silently taken for granted. Constantly produced and reproduced, common sense thus reproduces the social reality itself. Hartley here accepts a general structuralist stance: through the use of language, through the everyday reproduction of language structures and its ideological content contained in common-sense idioms, people unwittingly reproduce social structures and relationships.

Although Hartley attempts to "historicize" the language structures by using Gramsci's notion of domination which is always historically specific, his understanding of news ends up

in a language overdetermination. Language remains the central mechanism of social control: "At the very moment we begin to use language we enter the wider world of social relations - but at the same moment we have our first encounter with a form of social control" (p. 2).

Hartley's language determinism does not live any space for a creative human action: "as we speak, language speaks us" (p. 2). He finally reduces ideology to language. Instead of being one of the forms of appearances of ideology, its "field of articulation", ideology in Hartley's analysis becomes language itself. Thus it becomes easy for Hartley to suggest that the way to overcome the problem of ideology is to learn to decode messages in a new way. The idea of "enlightening" the television viewer is the main aim of his study: "If we can find out how the news works, what interests it serves, and analyse its meaning... our critical understanding of news discourse and of the world constructed within it can change even if the news doesn't" (p. 9).

It is important to note, however, that Hartley takes into account many factors decisive for news content so easily forgotten by others - even if he does not elaborate on their significance. He acknowledges that the media function as producers of audiences for advertisers; insists that the capital is one of the main social agencies shaping the news; and above all, he points out that the process of the production of ideology is not completed before it is consumed by the audience.

Both the process of encoding and decoding of news messages, he emphasizes, are socially structred in some ways and a part of his analysis is devoted to the still unsufficiently explored area of social determination of decoding processes.

CONCLUSION

As has been demonstrated in the above discussion, eight studies of news presented explain news as an ideological institution very differently. Still, some larger differences as well as similarities are noticeable. On the one hand, there is a great similarity in the ways in which Epstein, Sigal, Roshco, and Gans define news as ideological; on the other, a quite different definition of the ideological character of news is implied in Tuchman's, Gitlin's, the Glasgow Group's and Hartley's studies which, again, share some similarities.

While the first group of authors measures the media's performance against a supposed ideal of objective, representative, and "multiperspectival" (Gans) news, the latter news researchers concentrate on the relation of the media to dominant economic and political interests in a class-divided society. Thus, in the first case, news is characterized as ideological because it fails to picture the "real" world objectively and representatively. In the other, news is seen as ideological because it defines reality from the perspective of partial and particular accounts of the world which are presented as universally valid and legitimate. The first group of views criticizes the news for being skewed towards one contending

side. Instead of presenting a full diversity of interests and values, born under the "invisible hand" of a democratic market and competing in an open arena of parliamentary politics, news displays favoritism towards the values and interests of the elite. The second group of views however, insists that news, even when balancing different accounts, relays interpretive frameworks which are consonant with the interests of the dominant classes and thus fosters perpetuation of the existing class domination. Furthermore, while one group of studies holds that with more democratization of access, "the free market of ideas" will be "restored", the second argues that ideological operating of news is the inevitable product of social relations in monopoly capitalism. The concepts of ideology that these two groups of views rely upon, obviously, belong to different - and centrally opposed theoretical frameworks.

Epstein, Sigal, Roshco, and Gans derive their categories of analysis from the traditional liberal concept of the "free press". They hold that the media should "mirror" multifaceted reality. The mass media here are mediators between sources and audiences. They are custodians of the "public interest" and thus required to be autonomous of all political groups. In the "tugs of war" situation (Gans), the media have to balance the political power of officials (since they provide information) and the economic power of the audiences (since they "buy" the news). The sovereignty of news consumers to choose which of the supplied accounts are "true" is taken for granted; the audience

is thus not a necessary part of the analysis. Furthermore, since the "managerial revolution" (Murdock, 1980, p. 40) is assumed, the question of the ownership and the control of capital over news production is completely neglected in favor of the analysis of processes of control performed by managers: A small number of news media executives are ultimately responsible for news content" (Sigal, 1973, p.2).

The analysis in these four studies thus naturally focusses on the relation of the media with the state and with political interest groups. In this sphere, power appears as the power of functionaries and politicians. Murdock argues that the "de-centering of the power of capital" and a person-oriented view of power which is seen as being concentrated in the spheres of the state and the political, are the central features of the pluralist vision of society (Murdock, 1980, p. 39). And indeed, the theoretical framework implicitly, if not explicitly referred to (Roshco), in both Epstein's and Sigal's as well as in Gans' study, is essentially functionalist-pluralist. The narrow focus of these analyses upon the organizational processing of communication - and touching upon the wider social structure only in passing (class stratification in Gans') makes it appear as though it does not require a theory about how society is organized and functions. However, a specific set of theoretical assumptions does operate behind an apparent lack of social theory.

The structure of news production in these studies is examined as if it were not organized under conditions of monopoly capitalism. When the commercial nature of the media is recognized at all, then it is understood in terms of the direct economic pressure to produce "cheap news" (Epstein). Power appears as if progressively dispersed among a plurality of independent elites and interest groups and thus justifies the focus of analysis on the interests and actions of the key individuals in political hierarchy. Thus for Roshco it is perfectly justifiable that the president of the U.S. should be the pivotal source and subject of news.

Such a functionalist view of power accords a considerable autonomous power to journalists as well: they are the ones who transmit the news on which power-holders in a political sphere depend. Journalists are thus seen to be in a mutual-dependence relationship with government officials, although the latter are a little more powerful due to the competition among the former.

Theoretical pluralism further appears to be in perfect accord with epistemological relativism. On the one hand, Epstein, Sigal, and Roshco accept that news is managed "by definiton" (Roshco), since the values of the sources are implicit in information they provide; they still however hold that journalists can be objective and must be able to separate facts from values - at least by accepting (the right definiton of) "objective reporting" as a value (Roshco). This implicit conflict in the epistemology of these three authors, Gans

resolves in favor of a complete relativism: journalists are not objective, and cannot be; in fact, their own values influence news the most. In Gans' analysis, the ideal of "the free press" is taken to its logical conclusion: news can reflect popular consensus only if the "ideology of journalists" itself contains "the core values" that keep society together. By preserving its "own conception of good social order", news will serve the public interest the best, since journalists' own unconscious values prevent its usurpation by any particular political force. As "democratic media" can perform their function properly only if they reflect the value consensus, so is this value consensus the essential condition for truly democratic media. News organizations that serve an audience of many millions, Gans concludes, cannot be expected to operate with ideologies that are unpopular with large numbers.

Situated in the historical context of communications studies as a whole, Epstein's, Sigal's, Roshco's, and Gans' studies of news could be said to be "a shift of interest" (Curran et al., 1982) in communication research in general, rather than an approach different from the "liberal tradition" in media analysis. This shift in the site of study from "effects research" to the analysis of the production side of mass communication, which was almost completely neglected until two decades ago, had to bring some new insights about the communication process. The examination of the structural context of the work of communicators greatly contributed to the

understanding of the communication process as socially organized and thus connected to economic, political, and social practices. But the structural context of media activities as analyzed in these four studies is taken very narrowly. From its narrow confines, it could be realized that news fails to achieve the ideals of objectivity, diversity, and detachment not because of journalists' false performance, but because the way journalistic work is organized favors some sources over others. At the same time, such a partial account of communications from within this limited social context has to end up arguing for more competition within the industry (Epstein), improved performance of journalists who will give access to the "invisible" (Roshco), and for government intervention which will guarantee truly representative media (Gans). The central features of the social context of communication in these studies are, in a word, "theoretically outside the frame of reference" (Hall, 1982, p. 59).

In the studies of Tuchman, Gitlin, the Glasgow Group, and Hartley, the ideal of "objective journalism" is "taken to pieces" rather than being "taken for granted". The concepts of ideology which these authors use as their main analytical category is radically different from the notions of "a set of given intentions" or "a given point of view". Their analyses argue that "ideological news" is much more than just a set of isolated pieces of bias, easily identifiable as favoritism towards one or another political position. News thus can be

"objective" and still be ideological. In fact, the apparent objectivity of news - in forms of accurate presentations of "facts" and balancing of opposing views - is the condition for its normal functioning as ideology. Such objectivity gives news a needed credibility, and at the same time allows framing of events and issues within the confines of dominant cultural assumptions - within a field of ideas of the ruling class(es).

Instead of using the liberal myths as criteria for measuring the performace of the media, these four authors consider the media from the perspective of institutionalized social relations in a class society. Gitlin, the Glasgow Group, and Hartley replace the functionalist-pluralist vision of society by a Marxist-informed view and analyze society in terms of class domination and class structure of power. Tuchman, however, in an explicit opposition to the "instrumentalist" reduction of "superstructure" to the ruling ideas of the ruling class, evades the concept of class in favor of the notion of "men and women" acting according to their "social position". Nevertheless, all the authors radically problematize the notion of the spontaneous value consensus in higly developed industrial societies. If consent to a social system based on structural inequalities among people does exist at all, then the mass media must be seen as agencies taking part in producing rather than reflecting popular consensus.

Evolving from the "relatively limited conception of media 'agenda-setting' (the ranking of issues in terms of their

perceived importance) in election studies", the understanding of the power of the media is broadened here to pointing to their influence on "frames of reference through which people understand the world" (Curran et al., 1982, p. 16). Media are seen as "signifying agencies" (Bennett, 1982) rather than as accurate or slightly distorting mirrors. News is understood here as operating as ideology precisely by presenting particular "definitions of reality" - in the forms of either particular constructs (Tuchman), particular frames (Gitlin), particular codes (The Glasgow Group), or particular sign systems (Hartley) - as universally valid accounts of the world. These particular definitions of reality, Tuchman, Gitlin, the Group, and Hartley agree here - serve dominant economic and political interests. Their explanations, however, of how it happens and why, differ. The differences reflect different conceptualizations of ideology which, again, belong to different theoretical frameworks.

On the one hand, Gitlin and the Glasgow Group, share a similar understanding of ideology "as framing" (Hackett, 1984, p. 246). They argue that the pictures of events in the news are framed from the perspective of hegemonic interests (Gitlin) and are combined in an ideological code which finally lays the blame for all social problems "at the door of the workforce" (the Glasgow Group). To support these conclusions, both compare the picture from the news with the picture based on facts derived from an independent source. This view implies that social events have some objective characteristics which are "knowable".

Ideology is then understood as "false consciousness" which in the disguise of natural, "common-sense wisdom" hides the economic and political interests of the dominant class(es). Journalists thus produce ideological news usually unconsciously by framing the events and issues within dominant cultural assumptions (the Glasgow Group) and common-sense notions (Gitlin).

The Glasgow Group, however, abandons the attempt to explain how these "cultural assumptions" develop and become dominant, claiming that a suitable social theory for such an explanation has still not been developed. Gitlin, on the other hand, traces the origins of hegemonic frames to journalistic routines, the particular ideology of media elites and, finally, to direct interventions of the government officials. Both explanations thus come close to seeing the media as an instrument of the ruling class, and although trying hard not to, can easily slip into promoting the "manipulation" argument. Audiences are seen here as passive receivers of media messages, easily "duped" by "preferred readings" contained in the news. The strategic role which the media perform by carrying advertisements and by selling audiences to industrialists is not even touched upon: the way in which the capital controls the media, their operations, and their products is thus beyond the scope of analysis.

Tuchman and Hartley differ from Gitlin and the Glasgow Group, firstly in their epistemological premises. They break

radically from the mirror metaphor in any form. For them, reality is above all a human construct. This view holds that the world does not exist independently of the observer, in a state where its identity is self-evident and intrinsic to its nature. Facts as such have no meaning in themselves; their meaning is socially constructed (Tuchman). Furthermore, language is not a neutral transmission belt: it mediates the reality in a way which "is not a distortion or even a reflection of the real"; this mediation "is rather the active social process through which the real is made" (Fiske and Hartley, 1978, p.161). Trying to save these notions from implicit idealism, both Tuchman and Hartley insist that meanings are socially embedded and constructed.

For Tuchman, knowledge about the world is socially constructed within a frame. This frame-concept of ideology, however, differs from the one described above. Tuchman defines the frame as ideological when it results in "objectification" of knowledge produced within it. Ideological news thus objectifies social phenomena and limits inquiry: it does not supply all "social actors" with a relevant knowledge which they could use as a resource in constructing meanings relevant to their "social situations". However, since "all knowledge is constructed within a frame", it seems that Tuchman's distinction between knowledge and ideology rests on implying a perfect representativeness of all social meanings in news. "Social situations" of Tuchman's social actors are also not precisely defined and seem reducible

to interests and motivations of the individuals.

Hartley's concept of ideology is much more complex. Here, ideology is understood as a part of social practices which neutralize class conflict rather than (only) as a "false consciousness" ("ideology as neutralization" - Hackett, 1984). Hartley's conceptualization of ideology is derived from the development of this notion within structuralism and cultural studies, and describes ideology as social practices which are part of the everyday appearances of capitalism. Hartley points out that in capitalist social relations structural conditions of market production appear different from what they really are. These translations from conditions to appearances include translations of class subjects to individual personalities, of class antagonism to "natural" differences, and above all, from class to culture.

Hartley's analysis of news, the only one among the eight studies presented that includes the examination of audiences' receptions of news, emphasizes that the audiences are by no means passive in deriving the meanings from the media messages. He also points to "capital" as one of the most decisive social forces shaping the news content but satisfies himself only by pointing that the narrow question of the ownership of the media is not very relevant, since even government-owned media work in a commercial climate and in this way do not differ essentially from privately-owned ones.

Although Harley's analysis points to more significant "determinants" of news that should be studied than the other news analyses considered here, he ends up in linguistic determinism. He tries to characterize language as a mode of "articulation" of ideology but comes very close to identifying the two.

The above discussion speaks strongly in favor of the conclusion of some critics (Curran, Gurevitch, Woollacott, 1982; Bennett, 1982) that many of the important issues about mass media are now posed in relation to, and within a Marxist framework rather than between Marxism and other accounts. However, in the studies presented in this thesis which rely on a Marxist framework, the explanations of news as ideology still oscillate between a manipulation argument and idealism-oriented accounts. The process of ideological reproduction cannot be fully understood without an analysis of the economic context within which it takes place and the role which the media play in that context as one of its important constituents. And this is precisely the theoretical aspect which is most critically lacking in the studies examined here.

The media are not only very profitable investments and big and powerful conglomerations with a vested interest in preserving the status quo of their owners. They are an essential part of modern capitalism. As Smythe (1981) demonstrated, the political economy approach to the analysis of the media does not

have necessarily to present the commercial nature of the media as both "necessary" and "sufficient" explanation of media's ideological functionings nor slip into simple "instrumentalism". Examining the changing structure of capitalism in the last two centuries, Smythe points out that the mass media are the "systemic invention" of monopoly capitalism. The emergence of the mass media as we know them today in the "core capitalist area" is connected with a historical process of transformation from competitive to monopoly capitalism, and the emerging need of industrialists to manage demand for their products. Marketing the brand name products through advertising is thus the main function of the mass media. In Smythe's terms, the media produce the audiences as commodities which they sell to advertisers. The audiences "work" to market consumer products to themselves. At the same time they reproduce themselves as consumers. Thus the audiences play very important role in enabling the circular processes of commodity production.

If the media are to be seen as an important part in enabling the functioning of capitalism itself, the analysis of the media will have to focus on the audiences rather than on journalists. A study of news thus must be concerned with the underlying dynamics of the capitalist economic system and the ways in which its imperatives structure the workings as well as all the products of the media - news, entertainment, advertisments and the audiences.

As Murdock and Golding have demonstrated (1979), the control of capital over media is increasing. Media in Europe follow the full commercialization of the media already achieved in the most advanced capitalist society. Capital thus appears to be that social force which has to be analyzed as structurally determining not only the processes of production of the media's outputs but also the processes of their reception.

The realization of the fact that the explanation of the "relationship between material and social production and the rest of a developed social formation constitutes perhaps the most difficult aspect of a materialist theory" (Hall, 1979, p. 326) makes the task of developing a historical materialist analysis of the relation between news and a social system within which it is produced an even more challenging one.

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