Marxist Perspective on Media

Aspect	Explanation (OCR Focus)	Key Research / Evidence
Ownership & Control	Media is owned and controlled by the bourgeoisie — a small, powerful elite who use it to maintain capitalist dominance.	**Bagdikian (2004)** – *The New Media Monopoly*: five major corporations dominate global media output.
Media Purpose	The media functions as an *ideological state apparatus* (Althusser), spreading capitalist ideology and legitimising inequality.	**Marcuse (1964)** – argues mass culture creates "false needs" that keep people passive consumers.
Audience View	The audience is passive, accepting capitalist ideology and becoming victims of false consciousness.	**Miliband (1973)** – says media helps "manipulate the masses" into accepting capitalism.
New Media	Digital and social media appear diverse but remain dominated by capitalist interests (e.g. Meta, Google).	**Boyle (2019)** – identifies a "digital class divide" in access and ownership.
Evaluation (OCR)	Overly deterministic; underestimates audience agency and ignores alternative or independent media.	**Pluralists** argue media reflects consumer demand, not elite manipulation.

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Marxist Perspective on Media

Aspect	Explanation (OCR Focus)	Key Research / Evidence
Ownership & Control		
Media Purpose		
Audience View		
New Media		
Evaluation (OCR)		

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Neo-Marxist / Hegemonic Marxist Perspective

Aspect	Explanation (OCR Focus)	Key Research / Evidence
Ownership & Control	Media is largely controlled by the ruling class, but journalists and editors have *relative autonomy* and reproduce ruling-class ideas	**Gramsci (1971)** – ruling-class ideology is maintained through consent, not force.
Media Purpose	Bias is subtle — media often presents dominant ideas as "common sense" while excluding alternative views.	**Glasgow University Media Group (1976)** – *Bad News*: news coverage supports employers and government over unions.
Audience View	Audiences can interpret messages differently but most adopt the dominant-hegemonic reading because it feels natural.	**Stuart Hall (1980)** – *Encoding/Decoding Model*: audiences can accept, negotiate, or resist meanings.
New Media	New media can appear more democratic, but hegemonic ideas still dominate online discourse (through algorithms and corporate	**Philo (1999)** – media framing of issues like poverty and unemployment remains biased toward elites.
Evaluation (OCR)	Recognises some audience choice and journalistic autonomy — more flexible than traditional Marxism.	Critics argue it underplays active audience resistance and the diversity of online voices.

Neo-Marxist / Hegemonic Marxist Perspective

Aspect	Explanation (OCR Focus)	Key Research / Evidence
Ownership & Control		
Media Purpose		
Audience View		
New Media		
Evaluation (OCR)		

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Pluralist Perspective

Aspect	Explanation (OCR Focus)	Key Research / Evidence
Ownership & Control	Ownership concentration does not equal control — there's a diversity of owners and competition between outlets.	**Whale (1977)** – journalists are not simply tools of owners; they have professional independence.
Media Purpose	Media reflects public demand and provides a "marketplace of ideas." Power lies with consumers.	**Newton (1999)** – argues media is central to democratic debate and accountability.
Audience View	Audiences are active and powerful; their preferences determine what content survives.	**McQuail (1992)** – *Uses and Gratifications* model: audiences use media for specific needs (information, identity, diversion).
New Media	Expands diversity, access, and participation — users can create content (citizen journalism, social media).	**Ofcom (2023)** – notes interactivity and consumer feedback shape digital content.
Evaluation (OCR)	Overly optimistic — ignores structural inequality and corporate control of digital spaces.	**Marxists** argue economic power still determines who has media influence.

Pluralist Perspective

Aspect	Explanation (OCR Focus)	Key Research / Evidence
Ownership & Control		
Media Purpose		
Audience View		
New Media		
Evaluation (OCR)		

Postmodernist Perspective

Aspect	Explanation (OCR Focus)	Key Research / Evidence
Ownership & Control	Media is fragmented and decentralised — traditional ownership structures are less important than content creation and consumption.	**Strinati (1995)** – society is saturated with media images shaping identity and lifestyle.
Media Purpose	Media produces *hyperreality* — the distinction between real life and representation breaks down.	**Baudrillard (1981)** – *Simulacra and Simulation*: media symbols replace reality.
Audience View	Audiences are active, constructing identities through media consumption. There is no single shared truth.	**Jenkins (2006)** – *Convergence Culture*: users are "prosumers," creating and sharing content.
New Media	Core to postmodernism — online platforms, fandoms, and global media create hybrid cultures and interactive communities.	**Jenkins (2006)** – highlights participatory and collaborative media spaces.
Evaluation (OCR)	Recognises diversity and creativity but criticised for ignoring persistent inequalities in power and ownership.	**Marxists** argue economic control still exists, even in digital spaces.

Postmodernist Perspective

Aspect	Explanation (OCR Focus)	Key Research / Evidence
Ownership & Control		
Media Purpose		
Audience View		
New Media		
Evaluation (OCR)		

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Feminist Perspective

Aspect	Explanation (OCR Focus)	Key Research / Evidence
Ownership & Control	Media industries are male-dominated, shaping production through patriarchal values.	**Gallagher (2006)** – found women underrepresented in senior media roles worldwide.
Media Purpose	Media reinforces patriarchal ideology through objectification and limited female representation.	**Tuchman (1978)** – *Symbolic Annihilation*: women's achievements trivialised or ignored.
Audience View	Audiences can resist sexist messages, but repeated portrayals of gender stereotypes normalise inequality.	**Van Zoonen (1994)** – argues gender representations depend on cultural context and audience interpretation.
Media Representations	Women often shown as sexualised, domestic, or emotional; men as active and authoritative. Some post-feminist progress exists.	**Mulvey (1975)** – *Male Gaze* theory; **McRobbie (2009)** – notes contradictory messages in women's media.
New Media	Provides space for feminist activism (#MeToo, #BodyPositivity) but also for misogyny and online abuse.	**Gill (2008)** – argues sexualisation continues in post-feminist media; **Jane (2014)** – documents "online misogyny."
Evaluation (OCR)	Highlights gender inequality but criticised for overlooking class and ethnicity differences.	**Intersectional feminism (Crenshaw, 1989)** widens the analysis to multiple inequalities.

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Feminist Perspective

Aspect	Explanation (OCR Focus)	Key Research / Evidence
Ownership & Control		
Media Purpose		
Audience View		
New Media		
Evaluation (OCR)		

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