




Ownership

Week 7





Concentration

- It is important because it allows us to consider
 - Democratic distribution of communication power
 - Democratic safeguards against abuses of economic, political, and cultural power
 - Open up paths for creative contributions
- Power (to influence policy, the market; within and between firms);
Institutional investors
- *Mode of ownership matters*





Corporations Matter

- Policy and regulation
- Quality of products
- Labour conditions
- Mutual reinforcement of power (interlocking boards)





History

- 1985-2000: Rise of the mega-corporation
 - Acquisitions, mergers (profits for investors through conglomeration)
 - Speculation around Telecom, Cultural Industries and IT
 - Enron
- 2000 onwards: IT mega-corporations
 - GAFAM (“running the internet”)
 - Continued corporate influence





Conglomeration Synergy to Convergence

- Synergy; mergers & acquisitions (outcomes ??); volatile and risky
- Contemporary Concerns: Lobbying/Content & Cross-Promotion
- Vertical Integration (undulations in response to new tech, policy, new business fashion, yet still a significant factor in the market and media power of the major cultural industries)





Interacting Mega-Corporations in 4 Sectors

- Enter IT after 2000 (Digital Disruptions);Crisis of financialization (disintegration)
- Cultural Industries, IT, Telecom, Consumer Electronics
- First Tier (Global), Second Tier (Regional, National)
 - Small companies and innovation
 - Proto-markets and independence (spaces of innovation) vs. centralizing tendencies of cultural industries





Networks, interdependence, alliances

- Complex subcontracting/networks of interdependence
 - Low Risk; High Return vs. creative autonomy/independence
- Intercorporate alliances/joint-ventures
 - Share risks, power, rewards
 - Co-opetition





History 2010

- Telecom Mega-mergers
 - Greater equality of access is less important than maximizing investment opportunities for business/consumer convenience
 - Mobile Telephony in the US (AT&T/Verizon/T-Mobile): providing “service”
 - Net Neutrality





Cultural Industries: Growth?

- A matter of definition/politics
- Becoming more important as part of national economies; not the center of global business
 - Market Capitalization (real value)





Expansion of Commodification

- Ambivalent process (access) (labor)
- Fueled by discourses; corporate “pull”

