Marketers' influence on media: Renewing the radical tradition for the digital age
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The distinctive contribution of critical political economy of media approaches has been to examine the implications of advertising as a system of financing media and the influence of marketers on media content, media provision, and access to communications. Classic contributions examined advertisers influence on non-advertising content and media firms' behaviour. The problems they identified are of central concern today, but critical political economy theory and analysis needs to be updated to deal with transformations in the ways marketing communications are produced and circulated within the changing dynamics of media-advertising relationships. Key features include the expansion of marketers' self-promotion ('owned' media), the 'disaggregation' of media and advertising, as marketers bypass media to target and reach consumers directly through online behavioural advertising, and the 'integration' of media and advertising through product placement, sponsored stories and native advertising (Turow 2011; Hardy 2013). This chapter explores the strengths and limitations of political economy perspectives and offers guidelines for contemporary analysis and critique of marketer influences on communications.

Advertising and Political Economy Critiques

Political economy addresses how resources are organised in societies. Critical political economy (CPE) refers to approaches that examine and critique the unequal distribution of resources and the power relations that sustain and reproduce such inequalities. In media and communication studies, critical political economy forms a distinctive sub-field, articulated in writings from the 1970s onwards. Its central claim is that different ways of organising and financing communications have implications for the range and nature of media content, and the ways in which these are consumed and used (Murdock and Golding 2005; Hardy 2014). Critical political economists generally share broader critiques of advertising as the leading ideological agency for capitalism due to its role in promoting consumerism and possessive

individualism, and for its regressive, stereotypical representations of gendered, racial and other identities. Advertising has been examined as part of a system of communications that 'engineers consumption to match production and reproduces the ideological system that supports the prevailing status quo' (Faraone 2011, 189). My focus, though, will be on another path of CPE enquiry that considers the consequences of media dependence on advertising finance and marketers' influence on media content and on what range of content and services media provides. Such analysis of the *relationship between media and advertising* is where I argue CPE has made its most distinctive contribution (Hardy 2014, 2015).

Media and Advertising relationships

The critical political economy literature has tended to advance instrumental or structural explanations of advertiser influence. Instrumentalist explanations focus on the intentional actions and behaviour of actors who seek to control communications. These may range from marketers' efforts to shape specific content or actions to influence the editorial environment, to efforts to influence the broader orientation of media firms' output and their allocation of resources for telling stories and reaching particular audiences. Numerous accounts such as Soley (2002) and Bagdikian (2004) examine instrumental power in the form of marketers intervening to censor or shape media content. Various studies have assessed advertisers' use of economic pressure and the threat of or actual withdrawal of advertising as a means of influencing media coverage and the extent of acquiescence or resistance by staff (Nyilasy and Reid 2011).

Structuralist explanations suggest that advertising operates as a 'impersonal force' (Curran 1986) created by the cumulative decisions of advertisers seeking the most cost-effective vehicles to reach target consumers, thus creating a source of finance that is unevenly distributed across media. Advertising subsidy functions as a *de facto* licensing system, determining which ad-dependent media have the resources to survive and thrive. One basis for structuralist explanations lies in economic analyses of ad finance, whilst another is rooted in historical scholarship that considers how the professionalization of marketing nevertheless resulted in a shift to less politicised and more 'neutral' decision-making about advertising effectiveness, as media planners relied more heavily on quantitative data over subjective judgements (Curran 1978, 1986). Advertising influence can be impersonal too in that the 'licensing' effect arises from the innumerable decisions of individual advertisers:

> Advertiser influence is so built in to the market context that not only is it often difficult to prove, but advertiser influence frequently occurs without the advertiser's inducing it by any specific act, sometimes even without the advertiser's wanting it. (Baker 1994, 103)

The implications of the uneven distribution of commercial subsidy for media serving poorer, ethnic minority audiences in the US are explored by Gandy (2000, 48; 1982, 2004) who finds: '[t]o the extent that advertisers place a lower value on gaining access to particular minority audiences, those who would produce content for that segment will be punished by the market…'.

Accounts such as Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model combine structuralist and instrumentalist explanations, with advertising finance amongst the five 'filters' that shape what news content is published by encouraging media to become advertising-friendly in order to compete for advertiser patronage (Herman and Chomsky 2008, 2, 15; Murdock 2011). Other studies have suggested that advertising influence is largely internalised by media management, influencing editorial strategies designed to maximise revenue (Curran 1978, 1986). For Baker (1994, 44) the influence of advertising on non-advertising content can include favourable editorial coverage of advertisers' products and corporate interests, creating an editorial environment conducive to marketers' promotions, favouring higher income audiences, and reducing partisan or controversial content that may divide or delimit target audiences (Baker 1994, 44).

The level of economic dependence on advertising revenue has always been a key factor shaping the structure and content of different media. Baker (1994: 45-49; Rinallo and Basuroy 2009) usefully summarizes factors that can affect the extent on advertising's influence within a given media outlet. These include the level and kind of economic dependence on advertising, whether widely distributed amongst many advertisers or concentrated on individual advertisers or organised groups. Another factor is the acceptability of advertising influence on content decisions (and the "cost" of public disapproval arising from knowledge of influence). When this 'cost' is internalised by media managers and workers, the influence of 'professionalism' may act to resist advertiser pressure, with 'accepted industry practice' another factor influencing behaviour. Consumer expectations and awareness of ad disclosure and ad separation from editorial are other, increasingly significant

factors. Finally, Baker includes the implications of conglomeration, citing examples of advertisers applying pressure on one part of the conglomerate's business in order to influence another.

Political economists insist on examining interrelationships between corporate media, ad agencies and big business. For example, the tobacco giant Phillip Morris held seats on News Corporation's board, while News Corp. head Rupert Murdoch remained on the Morris board for 12 years. The pharmaceutical giant Pfizer had directors on the boards of Time Warner, Viacom and Dow Jones. Such corporate interlocks indicate the 'continuing symbiotic relationship between news, advertisers, and advertising' (Bettig and Hall 2012, 165; Bagdikian 2004). The ways in which executive boards influence operations and editorial decisions requires situated analysis, yet the corporate integration of advertising and media raises profound issues for democracy, media and culture about the powers of commercial speech. Transnational communications conglomerates such as Aegis, Omnicom, WPP, Havas and Interpublic colonise media and political systems across the word (Sussman 2011).

Changing conditions
The CPE literature is valuable both for its own efforts to address historical changes and as a resource for assessing changing conditions. It shows that the relations between marketers, media and users are dynamic, suggesting in turn the need to consider different forms of power and influence by marketers in specific situations. Nevertheless, some general trends are discernible. First, marketer influence has increased across commercial media, and media systems where commercial media predominate. Second, the countervailing influence of professional norms and institutionalised practices to restrict advertiser influence has tended to weaken, or in some cases collapse. Third, a complex range of challenges for marketers can mitigate and limit advertiser power. These range from the inherent risk and instability of cultural tastes to highly volatile market conditions. There are also on-going challenges from technological aids and cultural practices of ad avoidance, from remote control zapping (McAllister 1996) to contemporary ad blocking.

The results of surveys, interviews with practitioners, commentary and analysis of corporate data indicate how pressures have increased on advertising-dependent media to comply with advertiser demands and offer a host of added benefits including exacting more and more 'editorial support' beyond paid advertising (McAllister 1996, 2000). Studies of US news

media show increasing advertiser pressures across local and national TV and convergent print/online news (PEW State of the News Media Reports at www.journalism.org; FAIR's Fear and Favour reports www.fair.org; McChesney 2013). The variant findings are important too, in that they highlight how different factors influence outcomes in specific settings. Price (2003) found that US national news correspondents felt insulated from advertisers, with only 7 per cent reporting pressure to report a story because of advertisers, although that set a relatively high threshold for advertiser influence. Indeed, indirect advertiser influence may be captured in the 20 per cent who reported owner pressure to cover or censor stories. De Smet and Vanormelingen (2011, 12) surveyed 100 news journalists in Belgium and found 35 per cent experienced pressure from advertisers, with 13 per cent often approached to favour marketers by one of the four agents identified (editor-in-chief, direct editor, marketing department, advertiser). Further, professional journalism norms such as the 'firewall' between editorial and advertising established in US news journalism (Gans 1980) were never as firmly established in the entertainment business, or in media sectors like consumer magazines which were based on closer interdependencies between media and marketers. Far from being a uniform dynamic, the intensification of ad pressure has varied, and met varying responses in changing work cultures and conditions, from resistance (Steinem 1990) to normalisation.

New Contexts: issues and challenges for critique

The intensification of marketing communications within media content has been accompanied by largely uncritical responses from academics, including within 'critical' studies of convergence culture. The latter includes the convergence culture approach of Henry Jenkins (2006), Mark Deuze (2005) and others, the creative industries approach of John Hartley et al (2013) and the 'new' critical media industries approach of Amanda Lotz, Tim Havens, and others (Havens and Lotz 2012). My argument (Hardy 2014, 2016) is that, while this culturalist scholarship is valuable and needed, it offers a problematic evaluation of media and marketing derived from its largely positive and affirmative reading of shifts towards greater consumer empowerment under capitalism. For instance, Deuze (2005) regards journalists' defence of editorial integrity against marketers (the firewall) as part of a conservative ideology to resist change and welcomes greater accommodation and collaboration with marketers. Jenkins goes further by suggesting that marketers are involved in processes of innovative content creation and storytelling that serve consumers and

empower users. The critical political economy tradition is needed here for its greater attention to power asymmetries under the structuring influence of capitalism, and for its attention to regulation and governance, not least the weakening of protections designed to prevent advertisers who pay the piper from also playing the tunes and influencing the playlist.

Media and Advertising integration and disaggregation
Digital media is at the apex of two key trends: towards the *disaggregation* of advertising and media and towards their *integration*. The characteristic relationship between media and advertising in mid-20th century media was *integration with separation:* adverts appeared alongside editorial matter in publications or between broadcast programmes. While advertisers controlled their ads, media businesses controlled editorial, packaging and distribution of the ad-carrying media. It can be argued that this was in fact a short-lived period, between the advertiser-sponsored broadcasting of the early 20th century and the growth of integrated content, such as ad-financed television, from the 1990s. Yet *integration with separation* reflected norms that 'advertising – as the major funding system of the mass media – should not unduly influence the non-advertising content' (McAllister 2000, 101). While there have always been pressures and opportunities to integrate, the principles of separation were generally upheld by journalists and creative professionals, supported by managers, underpinned by self-regulatory codes of conduct in both media and advertising, and subject to stronger statutory regulation in sectors such as UK broadcasting (Hardy 2010).

The emergent relationship is *integration without separation*. The integration of media and advertising takes various forms, many with long histories, such as product placement, coterminous with the birth of cinema. However, the opportunities and challenges of convergence and digitalisation, not least the struggles to finance an enormous expansion of media, has brought increased pressures from marketers and increased accommodation by media. Product placement, branded entertainment, advergames and infomercials are the most familiar outcomes (Lehu 2009; Hardy 2010, 2013). The emergent form is *integration without separation*, but this coexists with trends towards *disaggregation* of media and advertising. Marketers are less dependent on the intermediary role of media, and are able to profile, track and target consumers directly, with the resulting demand to reduce their subsidy to media by paying only the costs of delivering an advert onto a selected platform (Turow 2011). The traditional subsidy supporting the news, information or entertainment surrounding advertisements is diminishing, with profound consequences for communication resources,

public media and cultural pluralism (Couldry and Turow 2014). Both integration and disaggregation reflect a shift towards enhanced marketer power in an era of increased media dependence on advertising finance.

Convergence of owned, paid, earned and shared

Marketing professionals identify four main types of media: paid, earned, owned and shared. Traditional advertising means paying to insert advertisements into media vehicles or other advertising spaces. Earned media describes public relations activities to generate editorial coverage. The third area, owned media, refers to marketers' own content, and here exponential growth has occurred across digital publishing and the production of branded content for online and mobile platforms, which has the effect of also increasing pressures on media for greater accommodation in paid and earned media. Finally, shared media refers to the circulation of marketing communications across social media and online as messages are created, shared and adapted between users of various kinds from professional to amateur, including 'influencers' like vbloggers who can be encouraged to act on behalf of brands along a spectrum overlapping with paid media.

Shared also highlights another axis here in terms of levels of control over communications. Traditionally, earned media consisted of content derived from public relations activities and communications, but still subject to editorial control exercised by the media outlet. How much control and how much dependency, especially on elite sources, is a major topic for critical media studies (Herman and Chomsky 2008; see Hardy 2014). Studies also show increasing journalistic dependence on PR materials. 'Churnalism' is a term that emerged to describe the PR-inflected journalism increasingly appearing due to accelerating production pressures on news outlets—particularly underresourced local and online-only news—to constantly churn out 24/7 content updates and the corresponding requirement to meet that need by any means possible (Jackson and Moloney 2015). The relationship between media and PR sources varies across different cultures of journalism, with consumer and entertainment media tending to have much closer co-dependencies, while legacy professional news journalism exhibited much greater resistance to it. Ad spending has long been a factor in obtaining favourable editorial coverage, with some sectors such as US local news going further in offering editorial-ad packages as inducements for marketers. Todays growth in editorial content produced by or on behalf of brands marks the extension of owned and paid media into earned and shared media.

Branded Content and Native Advertising

Across digital media, new forms of integrated advertising are developing rapidly. Content marketing refers to the promotion of branded editorial content in marketers' own media and third party media. According to the Content Marketing Association (2016) it is 'the discipline of creating quality branded editorial content across all media channels and platforms to deliver engaging relationships, consumer value and measurable success for brands'. Branded content ranges from the Lego movie to Red Bull's high-altitude Stratos dive and other audiovisual, entertainment-based content, but another common form is native advertising, editorial-like material supported by an outside party or advertiser. Native advertising refers to promotional messages paid for by advertisers that match the form, behaviour and user experience of the digital media in which they are disseminated. Such ads appear in news feeds, publishers' websites, search results, posts in social media, email and other digital communications.

Native advertising is more integrated that its print-based antecedent, advertorials, reflecting the greater affordances and incentives for intermingling editorial and advertising online as well as the shifting conditions and normative values encouraging institutionalisation of advertiser-editorial collaboration (Carlson 2015). However, while advertorials are labelled as advertising, much native advertising is intended to disguise its ad status, blend into surrounding editorial, and fool readers. As an AOL executive commented it should "look and feel as similar as it possibly can to the surrounding content" (Ponsford 2014). A recent study tested native ads on 242 subjects and found that fewer than 8 per cent were able to identify native advertising as a paid marketing message (Wojdynski and Evans 2015). Another study found found 33 per cent of British readers tended to be disappointed or were very disappointed when they later discovered an article had been sponsored by a company, a figure that reached 43 per cent in the US where native advertising is more prevalent (Austin and Newman 2015).

Branded content has grown rapidly, becoming a major focus for marketers during the last five years. One report (Hoelzel 2014) estimates that native advertising will increase fourfold from $4.7b in 2013 to $21b in 2018, with spending in 2015 reaching $8b. In the UK, content and native advertising grew to £509m in 2014, accounting for 22 per cent of all display ad spending (Internet Advertising Bureau 2015). Billed as the saviour for newspapers losing

traditional ad revenue, publishers from the *New York Times* to the *Daily Mail*, Mashable and Refinery29 deploy editorial staff or special teams to create native ads. *The Guardian*'s Guardian Labs, for instance, worked on 400 branded content projects in 2015 (Hayday 2015). Where previously relations were formed between brands, marketing agencies and media sales, publishers are increasingly offering the agency functions themselves to brands integrated with in-house production. BuzzFeed, for instance, offers creative execution, cross-platform distribution and data analytics to brands. Vice offers 'sponsored content' packages through Virtue, its faux-distinct in-house marketing agency.

The key context for these changes lies in corporate responses to declining advertising revenues, the challenges of monetising content in new market conditions, and the declining effectiveness of display, banner and other visually distinct ad formats. Some of the digital native publishers like BuzzFeed have moved entirely from display advertising to branded content. On the technical side, media producers find it increasingly easy and inexpensive to format ads to match the surrounding content in contrast to traditional media. 'The effect', says the US Federal Trade Commission (2015, 2),' is to mask the signals consumers customarily have relied upon to recognize an advertising or promotional message'. Finally, such integrated advertising is expected to grow as a response to software assisted ad blocking.

Problems and governance of ad integration
Advertising has long been the patron of commercial media, yet various regulatory and market mechanisms set limits on that patronage. Regulations and industry norms upheld principles of separation of advertising. Market arrangements tended to work against advertisers exercising direct, instrumental power over editorial content. Marketers controlled adverts (paid media) but not the content around them. Public relations firms chased 'earned' media that they could not fully control. While the shifts we are seeing certainly pre-date digitalization, marketers' control is extending increasingly from advertising forms to integrated editorial forms.

Importantly, again, the pressures and implications are complex, with differing practices giving rise to different problems, for instance according to whether the promotions are paid or unpaid, published by brands directly or integrated into third-party editorial content. Much branded content is owned media, such as *Meet Me at Starbucks*, a storytelling video released recently on YouTube. As another indication of this complexity, an estimated quarter of

branded content is user generated rather than created directly by marketers. The particular problems associated with integrated marketing communications range from concerns about disclosure, deception, economic surveillance and privacy, to concerns about advertiser and ad-finance influences on media content, creative control, aesthetic agendas, editorial agendas, and corporate decision-making. Identification of advertising is an important issue, although by no means the only one, and here rules have been toughened in some media systems. In August 2015, the Advertising Standards Authority (UK), introduced new guidance for vbloggers' brand endorsements. The US Federal Trade Commission (2015, 2) brought in new guidelines for native advertising, reaffirming the principle that "advertising and promotional messages should be identifiable as advertising". However, industry push-back in the form of the Internet Advertising Bureau described the FTCs requirements for plain language to be used in describing branded content as overly prescriptive. So regulatory battles lie ahead over descriptions such as 'partner content', 'promoted post', and 'promoted by'. What is most notable, though, is that the FTC is not concerned about the implications of commercial sponsorship on media as such, but rather the likelihood of consumer deception. If an article is sponsored but does not promote the sponsor's brand. the article is not deemed an ad and so consumers do not need to be informed (even though the FTC recognises that sponsorship of the article is itself a form of advertising). More fundamentally, the FTC is not directly concerned with the impact of branded content on the quality and integrity of media channels. The concern is that, once we are past the hurdle of consumer recognition of native ads, little is left in the prevailing regulatory arsenal to support restrictions.

Media-marketing convergence

Media and marketing integration is arguably the next phase of convergence, following that of mass media, telecommunications and computing. Donaton (2004) was an early celebrant of the merging of entertainment content and commerce that has gathered pace over the last decade, with marketers moving increasingly into content production. The integration of media and marketing is occurring across corporate ownership, joint ventures, operations and practices, forms and formats, and relationships with users. This merging includes personnel, practices and values oriented to profit seeking activities on behalf of marketable goods and services, whether brands, celebrities, or media. Both commercial media and marketing firms recognise themselves as being in the same business, concerned with selecting and offering suitably engaging content to reach target consumers in the most cost-effective ways. For Carlson (2015: 861) media abundance has increased the strategic importance for news

publishers of advertising content itself in generating audiences, accompanied by efforts to advance new normative justifications that redefine journalistic work around a 'curational norm of providing a coherent mix of both editorial and advertising content'. However, such convergence remains conflict-ridden and contested, especially where institutionalised values other than profitability counter the normalisation of marketization. Key tasks for research are to examine the particular dynamics of changing practices, and the conjunction of forces that drive and resist such shifts.

Media integration and media studies

This next wave of convergence is something that media and communication studies is relatively ill-equipped to address. Marketing communications and public relations have tended to be specialist sub-fields with limited overlap with the rest of the field. The overwhelming preponderance of academic output on marketing communications embraces 'administrative' rather than 'critical' research in Lazarsfeld's (1941) terms, thus seeking to assist marketers in improving advertising effectiveness. When not explicitly affirmative, such scholarship tends to be descriptive, with normative-evaluative debate subsumed under managerial and operational concerns (such as minimizing ad clutter or consumer resistance) or narrowed to ethical considerations. While media and advertising integration *is* addressed in mainstream economic and business literature, it offers limited articulation across the full range of dimensions that media studies grapples with, which include the economic, political, organisational, practice-based, ethical, symbolic, social, and cultural.

By contrast, such broader articulation of media and advertising integration *is* addressed by two key traditions, critical political economy and culturalist scholarship. Culturalist approaches have emphasised people's immersion in branding and brand culture, and turned away from what were regarded as crude, Marxian theories of domination. The culturalist critique makes valid points, but the attack is lopsided. Critical scholarship is not wedded to presumptions of strong ideological effects or manipulation associated with mass media domination paradigms. Instead, it is distinguished by the concern to identify and address problems arising from the manner in which resources, including communication resources, are organised in social life, problems that are downplayed in culturalist accounts celebrating market provision. The radical tradition can be renewed by addressing the ways in which marketer power can be realised and undermined, challenged and contested. This requires

analysis of practices, policy (including regulation and governance) and problems (the formulation of critique).

Frameworks for analysis

I have proposed a framework for analysis of marketers' influence (Hardy 2014, 2015) that seeks to map the factors that tend to strengthen advertiser influence on media communications as well as countervailing forces that can serve to mitigate or contest advertiser influence. Such an approach seeks to bring the insights of earlier accounts into a more appropriate framework for examining emergent practices in convergent media. It proposes a broader and more open analytical framework than those derived from mass media influence (radical functionalism) or reception (manipulation). To do so, it incorporates political economic dynamics, regulatory contexts, work cultures and practices, as well as multiple sites of agency and user interaction. This chapter section summarises but also develops that framework in the context of emergent trends in advertising and their implications for analysis.

Studies of how the various agents operate and reflect on rules of exchange, including automation, can better illuminate how contemporary media-advertising relationships are produced and negotiated. Intermediaries have always existed between marketers and media in such forms as multi-agency creative work, media planning and buying. The digital era has added to the chains of intermediaries particularly through automation. As key examples of this, the growth of real-time bidding (RTB) and programmatic advertising show the rapid evolution and proliferation of ad-management using computing technologies. Intermediaries between the advertiser and publisher now consist of agency trading desks, demand-side platforms, ad exchanges and services from audience targeting firms to verification and fraud prevention (World Federation of Advertisers 2014). As a result, analyses of advertiser influence on media need to take account of more complex attenuations of power, as agency work spreads across digital advertising networks and into automation, including ad content-recommendation engines used to place branded content onto publishers' websites. Granting that earlier accounts engage with instrumental and structural explanations of power, such approaches need to be extended to incorporate more complex networks of actors and processes of automisation. For example, there is scope here to draw selectively on aspects of Actor-Network Theory (ANT) in examining the involvement of human and non-human

actants in advertising networks, while sustaining critiques of ANT's relative neglect of the temporality, wider power dynamics and social consequences of networks (see Couldry 2008). More synthesising critical scholarship might also draw on insights from 'new institutionalism', 'convergence culture' and media industry studies on the cultures, practices and governance of institutions, individuals, networks and groups. These themes are further developed in feminist, Marxist and culturalist studies of digital labour, precarity, work practices and performativity (Fuchs 2014). Greater attention to work cultures helps expand an account of governance, including how formal regulation and informal rules influence commercial integration.

While the radical tradition highlights key problems arising from media dependence on advertising finance, investigating and challenging these problems persuasively requires the examination of the configuration of influences in a more dynamic and open manner. Critical work needs a revised mapping of the main factors that tend to strengthen marketers' influence on media and communications services as well as a new mapping of countervailing forces in order to aid more open interrogation of marketer influences operating in specific instances. Here, I draw on Curran (2002) in seeking to identify for media-advertising relationships what that essay considers for media in general. My focus is on the power of marketers to influence editorial, operational or strategic decisions by communication providers in ways that favour marketers' messages and interests. For each of the factors identified below, we need to consider a *structural* dimension (economic), *sectoral* dimensions (institutional cultures shaping relationships in how communication services are organised) and *behavioural* dimensions (interactions and relations between specific actors, such as particular brand marketers, agencies and media firms, and computer systems). We need to consider specificities of firms, forms and formats, which have different norms and expectations influencing behaviours and which together form the institutional and cultural contexts.

The main factors that tend to enhance advertiser influence on (non-advertising) media content and services are: (1) the commercial orientation of the media entity and corporate level promotion of advertising revenue maximization; (2) the media entity's dependence on advertising finance; (3) the level of competition to attract marketing finance and the influence of competitor behavior; (4) corporate level relationships with marketers and marketing agencies; (5) institutional/operational level organisation and promotion of advertising

integration (technical, labour, content creation, media-marketer interactions and transactions); (6) professional/ pro-am normalisation of advertising integration; (7) user involvement; user support/acceptance of advertising integration; (8) Regulation and governance arrangements that are permissive of advertising integration.

These should be addressed together with the main factors that constitute countervailing influences: (1) the non-commercial orientation of the media entity (public service, community, radical, etc.); (2) low dependence on advertising finance; (3) market conditions favouring media sellers rather than advertising buyers; (4) corporate/institutional level separations between media and marketers; (5) professional and pro-am practices, cultures and norms resisting advertiser influence; (6) users' actual/predicted responses in regard to their capacities as consumers and influential publics; (7) governance and regulation restricting advertising integration; (8) civil society action and influence.

CPE attention to advertising as a support mechanism for media remains of central importance, but it needs updating as 'possibilities for the direct influence of content keep changing' (Leiss et al. 2005, 120). The classic CPE frameworks conceive of marketers as external to media firms in ways that no longer fit emergent patterns of corporate and operational convergence of media and marketing. Where postmodernists have tended in the pre-digital past to argue that the separation of media and advertising is irretrievable (Wernick 1990), a revised radical approach can inform a more nuanced analysis of the conditions in which commercial communications and media content combine and influence one another.

The CPE tradition is guided by critical social theory to identify and address problems. The extension of advertiser power in the digital age, as well as its limits, cries out for further study and public discussion. Ambitions for critical scholarship must include gathering evidence for a persuasive case to influence public policy-making, defending space to carry out that work in the academy, and drawing on the strengths of strong student interest in these topics to help counter the threats to provide courses that are entirely framed within affirmative, pro-industry perspectives. What is needed is critical scholarship that is informed by the theoretical sophistication of culturalist media studies, that gives close attention to material practices, but that continues to ask and address larger, critical questions about the ways in which advertising shapes our communication environments. A new phase of convergence is underway and we should make it our business to address it.

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