

# MEDIA IN ACTION



# WORKSHOP TIPS:



GLOBAL ACTION PROJECT

Each workshop is designed to stand alone but we encourage you to use them all to get the most out of the curriculum. We also strongly encourage you to download the Workshop Principles & Facilitation Tips PDF on how to create a productive, safe and creative space for exploring issues, working together, and making media. Because you will be talking about and reflecting on oppression and inequality, which are deeply engrained and must be actively challenged, there can be difficult moments to facilitate through. If you choose not to review our broader document, consider referencing these very basic elements listed below - they will help support your use of the workshop.

## **Basic Workshop Principles & Tips:**

**“Safe Space”:** Create an atmosphere in the group that maximizes everyone’s comfort level and that is determined by the youth together. This supports collective ownership of the space they will be part of and work in creatively. Safe Space includes agreeing to disagree, confidentiality, respecting each other’s ideas and the right to choose not to answer a certain question. Ground rules are set by youth at the beginning of a new group to help to set the tone for a safe space of mutual respect.

**All voices heard:** Encourage active participation by all in the group. Direct but do not dominate discussion. Educators should have clear goals but adapt to, and be sensitive to needs and interests of individual youth and the group as a whole.

**“One Mic”:** State that one person speaks at a time. When people talk over each other, it causes the group to lose focus. The facilitator or any group member can say, “one mic” to remind people to take turns.

**Collective work:** The youth work as a collective. The facilitator is there to guide the youth through the production and analysis of their media. Every effort is made to include everyone and incorporate individual ideas. Compromise is essential when working in a collective. People learn through collective processing, discussion, making, and reflection.

# 02 POWER

Total Time:  
2 hours



GLOBAL  
ACTION  
PROJECT

CHAPTER





# POWER

total time: 2 hours

CURRICULUM WORKSHOP 2

## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

In the United States, the gap between the rich and poor is vast. This is not accidental but a product of the economic system that we live in. Understanding this is key to figuring out how inequality and oppression are created and sustained within our society so we can better organize towards social justice. In this workshop, participants engage in the interactive “10 Chairs of Inequality” exercise that demonstrates the dramatic concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, a relay race about media ownership, and explore community efforts to represent themselves. This workshop is an excellent introduction to many of the core critical concepts in G.A.P.’s Media Power Framework.

## OBJECTIVES

- Examine the role of capitalism in producing inequality
- Make connections between capitalism and other systems of oppression
- Introduce concepts of “dominant power, “oppression,” people’s power” and “liberation.”
- Learn about media ownership and consolidation
- Become familiar with G.A.P.’s Media Power Framework

## MATERIALS & MEDIA

- Newsprint Paper
- Markers and Pens
- 10 Chairs
- 10 signs that read “10% of population”
- 10 signs that say “10% of the wealth”
- The G.A.P. Media Power Framework chart (see Appendix)

## FACILITATOR NOTES:

*This workshop touches on the connections between three systems of oppression, Capitalism, Patriarchy, and White Supremacy, but focuses on Capitalism. (The Oppression & Liberation workshop more deeply explores the intersections between these systems.) Through an interactive activity, the “10 Chairs of Inequality,” participants see how capitalism leads to competition for resources, concentration of wealth, hierarchy, and systemic inequality. Following that activity, we look at media power and how the concentration of media helps to maintain a concentration of wealth against the interests of the larger society.*

*It is important to note that during the 10 Chairs activity, some participants will have to physically touch each other. Be mindful of your participants’ comfort level around this. While a certain degree of discomfort is part of the activity, some participants may have religious or other reasons why participation in this type of activity is inappropriate.*

# 1. THE TEN CHAIRS OF INEQUALITY \* 60 mins



*Welcome everyone!*

*Today we are going to look at the world we live in: why are some people rich and some people poor?*

*The difficult conditions that some communities live under are not random or just unlucky. In fact, the struggles that people face every day are the result of unjust power relationships in which some groups of people benefit from the way things are set up, while other people are hurt and have to struggle.*

*For example, many of our communities don't have much money and are often blamed for these conditions. Who's heard something like the following statement:*

*"People are poor because they are lazy and don't want to work."*

Take a few responses about the quote and contexts in which participants may have heard it.

*We're going to do an activity that will help us to look at inequality in our society.*

*Before we begin, let's define "wealth" together. What's wealth? What does it mean to be wealthy?*

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\* This has been adapted from an activity by United for a Fair Economy. For more: [www.faireconomy.org](http://www.faireconomy.org)

Take some responses from the group.

Young people often say things like: Fame, money, power, jewelry, status, stocks and bonds.

While all of these are valid, for the purposes of this activity we will only be referring to financial wealth.

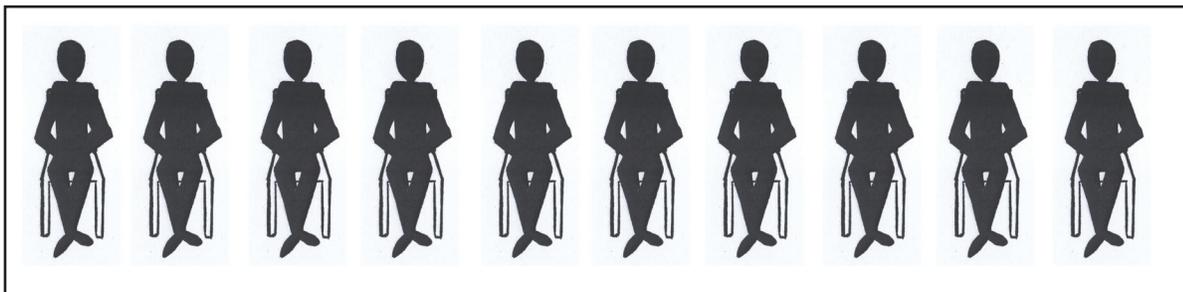
*In this activity, wealth equals what you own minus what you owe. For example, if all the furniture, electronics, clothes, and other stuff you own are worth \$3,000, but you owe \$5,000 to a bank, credit card or school, your total wealth is -\$2,000.*

Set up 10 chairs in a row and ask for 1 volunteer to sit in each chair.

*Each chair represents 10% of the wealth in the U.S. and each participant represents 10% of the U.S. population.*

Put a sign on each chair that says “10% of the wealth” and hang signs on each participant that say “10% of the population.”

This setup illustrates an equal division of wealth. Nobody would be richer or poorer than anyone else.



*How are you feeling? Is everyone comfortable?*

*So, what would it mean if this was how wealth was divided up among the people in the U.S.? How would you feel if everyone had the same basic things? Housing? Cars? Education? Healthcare?*

Take a few responses.

*Is this how things are in the real world? Has it ever looked like this in the U.S.?*

It is important to note that wealth has never been equally distributed among people in the U.S. And, this country’s history has been founded on actually taking wealth from people through colonization, slavery and expansion.

*I’m going to read some statistics, and you will have to rearrange yourself to represent that scenario.*

Select a participant on one end of the row of chairs to represent the richest 10% of the U.S. population.

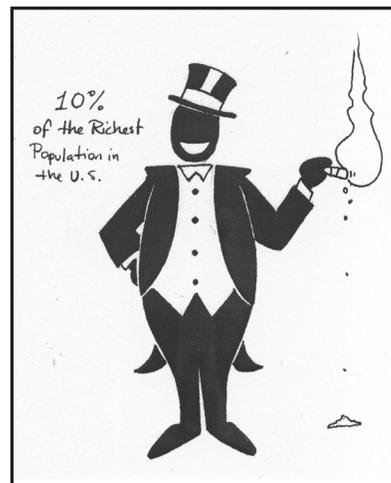
*We'll call this person "George."*

*This person represents 10% of the population - roughly the wealthiest 30 million people in the U.S out of about 300 million people.*

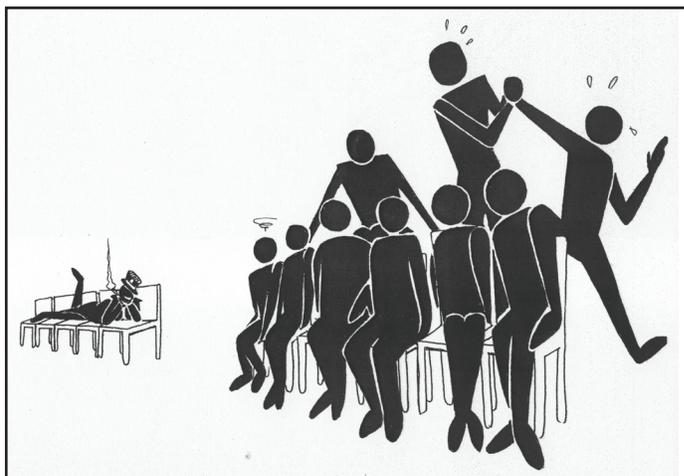
*In 1976, how many seats do you think George (the richest 10% of U.S. population) occupied?*

Take some responses.

*In 1976, the wealthiest 10% of people owned 50% of the total wealth held in the U.S.*



Ask the group to re-arrange themselves to reflect the wealth distribution in 1976. Take four of the chairs away from the people occupying them and give them to George. Now the remaining 9 participants will have to sit on the remaining 5 chairs.



Encourage George to physically occupy all the chairs by stretching out across them. Play up the disparity in wealth by pampering George (offer snacks, drinks, etc).

Begin to process what this scenario looks and feels like by asking the 9 people sharing 5 chairs how they feel. Then, do the same for George.

*How do you feel about the people you share those chairs with?  
How do you feel about George?  
What does this look like in the real world?*

This activity works best when facilitators use the growing physical discomfort of piling up in the chairs as a metaphor for the growing wealth inequality being illustrated.

*Now let's jump ahead to 1996. In 1996, the wealthiest 10% had approximately 70% of the wealth.*

Ask two more people, representing 20% of the population, to give up their seats. George now occupies 7 chairs and the remaining 9 participants share 3 chairs.

Process what this scenario looks and feels like:

- *How do you feel about sharing 3 chairs?*
- *What does it look like in the real world?*
- *How do you feel about George?*
- *George, how do you feel?*

Hold up George's arm. Explain that this arm represents the richest 1% of people in the U.S.

*In the 1970s, this arm occupied two chairs, 22% of the wealth. By the 1990s, this 1% is stretched over four of the seven chairs he occupies.*

*That means that the richest 1% of the U.S. population has more wealth than 90% of the population combined.*

Participants can now break from their positions on the chairs. The entire group should return to sitting in a circle.

*We just modeled the way our economic system has been working over the last 30 or 40 years.*

*What is economics?*

Take a quick popcorn brainstorm on what the word "economics" brings up for the group. Responses include "money," "trade," "exchange," "buying and selling stuff," "budgets," "getting by," "getting paid," "being able to get the stuff you need to live."

What is the economic system that we just modeled?

CAPITALISM.

*What is capitalism?*

Take some responses. These usually include "competition," "entrepreneurs," "the opposite of communism," "how America works," or even "freedom" and "democracy."

Here's a definition:

**CAPITALISM: It is an economic system based on private ownership, and private control of production. The driving force of capitalism is the search for profit. In this system, a few people accumulate wealth through the exploitation of the majority. Under capitalism, profit is prioritized over people and their needs.**

Reveal the definition and take some time to unpack it.

*Do you think this system is fair?*

*Can it ever lead to equality? Social Justice?*

*So far, we've been talking about wealth inequality as if everyone's affected in the same way.*

*Who is "George" in terms of race and gender?*

*And who is it that is struggling to sit on the few remaining chairs?*

*How did this situation come about?*

*How did the Georges get to be the Georges?*

Take responses.

*Now lets look at the richest of the rich in the U.S.*

Each year Forbes Magazine publishes a list of 10 wealthiest people in the U.S: [http://www.forbes.com/lists/2006/54/biz\\_06rich400\\_The-400-Richest-Americans\\_Rank.html](http://www.forbes.com/lists/2006/54/biz_06rich400_The-400-Richest-Americans_Rank.html).

*What do they have in common?*

*In 2009, all were white and most were men, except for two white women who are members of the family that owns Walmart.*

*In the United States, the wealthy are overwhelmingly white and male. Keep this in mind while we talk about power.*

*What does wealth have to do with power?*

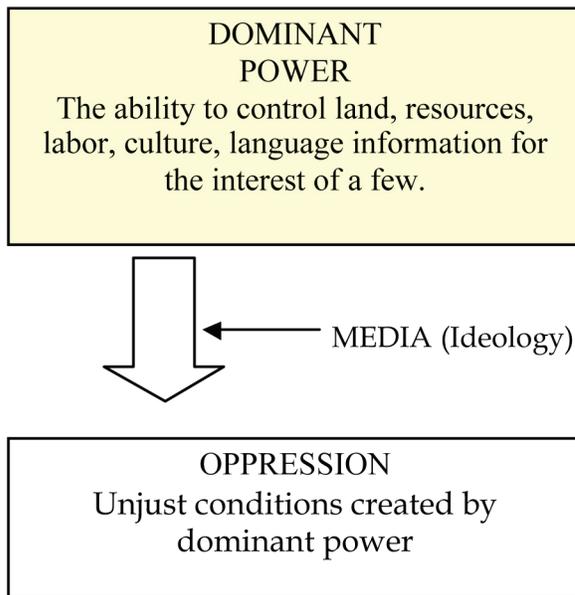
Take some responses.

*What does power look like in society?*

There may be a wide range of responses, including access to institutions or resources, the ability to own housing or land, physical strength, owning weapons, political rights, cultural acceptance, etc. Affirm that power takes various forms.

*Some groups in society have the ability to control land, resources, labor, culture, language and information (etc.) for their own interests. We call that the Dominant Power.*

On newsprint, draw GAP's Media Power Framework. Draw one part at a time.



Begin with the Dominant Power Box.

Next, draw an arrow from the Dominant Power box to a second box.

Label this box OPPRESSION.

*Oppression means the unjust conditions created by dominant powers.*

*How does the "10 chairs" activity reflect the relationship between dominant power and oppression?*

If the group has done the COMMUNITY MAPPING workshop, this can be a good time to refer back to the struggles that the group has identified in their community, and to think about how those conditions work in relation to this framework.

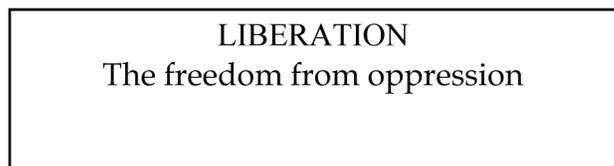
*So, there's dominant power. What about you? Are you powerless?*



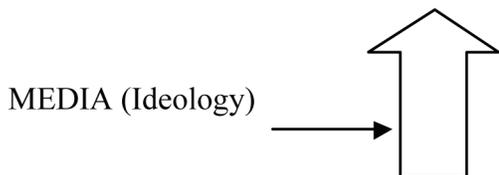
No! Challenge the group to identify power that they have or can create in the face of unjust conditions such as power in numbers, the ability to organize, culture, dignity, pride, ability to take care of themselves and each other, a vibrant history of resistance, etc.

*When we organize against oppressive circumstances, and fight for justice, we call it building People's Power.*

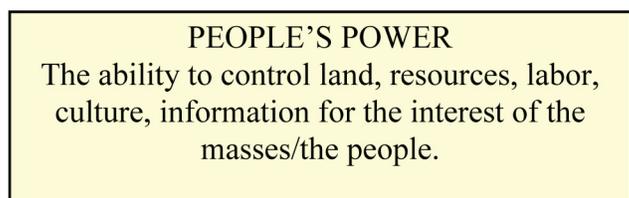
Again, if the group has done the COMMUNITY MAPPING workshop, refer to the strengths that they have identified in their communities where appropriate.



Label this box LIBERATION.



Draw an arrow from the People Power box upwards to another box.



Draw the people's power definition in its box.

*Liberation means: freedom from oppression.*

*How do you see, or how would you like to see, people in your community working to fight oppression?*

What would liberation look like, not just for your self or your community, but for the world This is a great opportunity for facilitator's to highlight organizers and social movements in your region, and also throughout the world (see MEDIA ADVANCING MOVEMENTS for some ideas). This should be an affirming, empowering moment.

## 2. MEDIA RELAY RACE 60 mins

.....  
*Many of you liked when we all had one chair. And you disliked when someone owned most of them. So why don't people complain more or fight back against the Georges of the world?*

*We're now going to do a fun activity called the Media Relay Race and look at one of the big ways that the Georges of the world keep us from complaining, criticizing and organizing against the system. The relay race will show how the growing concentration of media helps to maintain and control public opinion.*

Divide the group into teams of 3-5 participants.

Give each team a marker. Have the teams stand behind an imaginary line. Hang newsprints on the wall in front of each team.

Rules of the Game:

- *I will ask a series of questions, one at a time.*
- *Each team will need to discuss and agree on an answer before sending a runner to record your answers or best guess on the newsprint across the room.*
- *The runner has to be a different person each time, and only the runner can cross the line.*
- *If more than one team answers the question correctly, the first team that records their answer wins!*

Once all teams have come up with an answer, read out the correct answer. Briefly process team responses as the game progresses. For example: If no one knows that only 6 corporations own most of the media, you can ask why it is not common knowledge.

QUESTIONS:

ANSWERS:

In 1983, fifty companies dominated media—broadcast, newspaper, book, movie & magazine industry. Today, how many dominant media corporations are there?

6

Name the Six Big Media Conglomerates (point per name) that control over 90% of the entire US media market.

Time Warner  
Disney  
News Corporation  
Bertelsmann  
Viacom (formerly CBS)

BONUS: Who is the largest?

Time Warner.  
  
They own 12 film companies, including Warner Bros & multiplex cinemas in 12 countries. They own AOL, CompuServe, and Netscape. They have theme parks and Warner Brothers studio stores in 30 countries, 29 cable operations including CNN, Time Warner cable, 24 book brands, and Time, Fortune, and 33 other magazines.

QUESTIONS:

ANSWERS:

How many radio stations does Clear Channel own in the United States?

1200

Clear Channel Communications is a media company based in US. It owns more radio stations than any other corporation. It is involved in radio broadcasting, concert promotion and hosting, and fixed advertising in the United States through its subsidiaries. The company owns over 1,200 high-power AM, FM, and shortwave radio stations and more than 30 television stations in the United States.

Of the approximately 1400 local TV stations in the United States, what percent are owned by people of color?

3% are owned by people of color  
(while making up 34% of the population).

1% are owned by Latinos  
1% are owned by African-Americans.

How many are owned by women?

Also, 5% are owned by women  
(50% of the population)

Who owns Myspace?

News Corporation

(which is owned by Rupert Murdoch - who owns Fox News, the NY Post, and many other forms of media )

What company bought the website YOUTUBE?

On October 9th, 2006 Google bought YOUTUBE.

Bonus: For how much?

For 1.65 billion dollars

QUESTIONS:

ANSWERS:

What is the name of the news-media network that is run by about 150 collectives worldwide, and that was born at the Anti-Globalization protests in Seattle in 2000?

Indymedia

What is name of the oldest community radio network in the United States?

Pacifica

The Pacifica Foundation was founded in 1949 as a visionary alternative to commercially-driven media. They pioneered listener-sponsored, community radio and have been a beacon for noncommercial, free media.

What's the name of the artistic movement that emerged in the South Bronx in the late 1970s

Hip-Hop

Bonus:

What are the "4 Pillars" of Hip Hop?

Breakdancing  
DJing  
Emcee-ing  
Graffiti

(1 point for each correct answer)

What organizations or social movements are associated with the following 3 logos?

A) The Black Panthers

B) ACT UP

C) The Right of return for Palestinian refugees

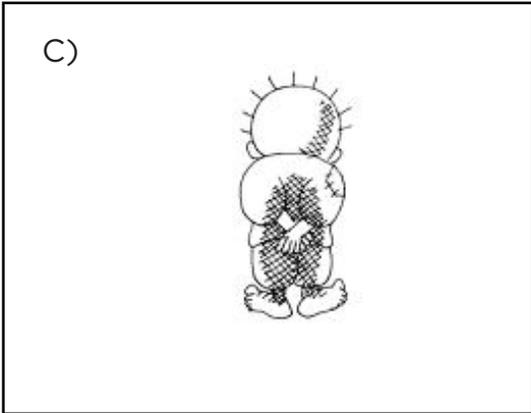
A)



The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was an revolutionary organization created in 1966 to defend the black community from police and to fight for black self-determination.



In 1987, The Silence=Death project merged with ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), a group that used direct action to end the AIDS crisis. They plastered posters around the city featuring a pink triangle on a black background stating simply 'SILENCE = DEATH.' The posters drew parallels between the Nazi period and the AIDS crisis, declaring that 'silence about the oppression and annihilation of gay people, then and now, must be broken as a matter of our survival.'



Handala: From approximately 1975 through 1987 Naji Al-Ali created cartoons that depict the complexities of the plight of Palestinian refugees. These cartoons are still relevant today and Handala, the refugee child who is present in every cartoon, remains a potent symbol of the struggle of the Palestinian people for justice and self-determination.

Count up the points. And announce the winner!

Processing Questions:

- *What did you learn from this activity?*
- *What does control of media have to do with power in our society?*
- *How can media be used to oppress people?*

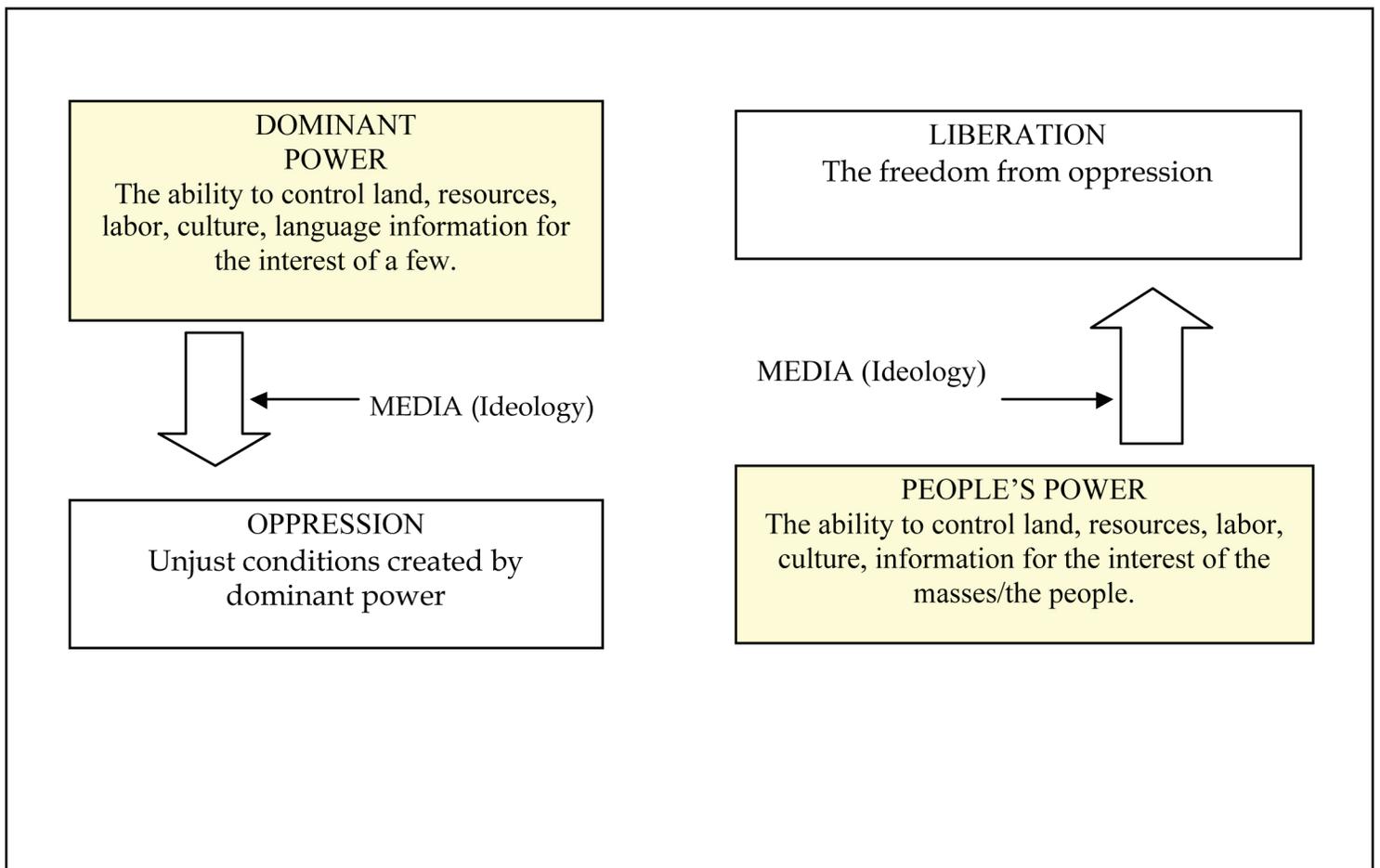
An important point to emphasize here is that corporate media overwhelmingly represents the interests of dominant power. Independent, community-based alternatives exist, but have few resources compared to the corporations.

**3. WRAP-UP:** 10 mins



- So what did we learn today about power?*
- What was new or surprising?*
- Does the story of George and his concentration of wealth and power make you angry?*
- Does it make you feel like you have power to make a change in the world?*
- How can we, with our video cameras, begin to make some changes?*

# APPENDIX A: GAP MEDIA POWER FRAMEWORK





# PEOPLE POWER



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