

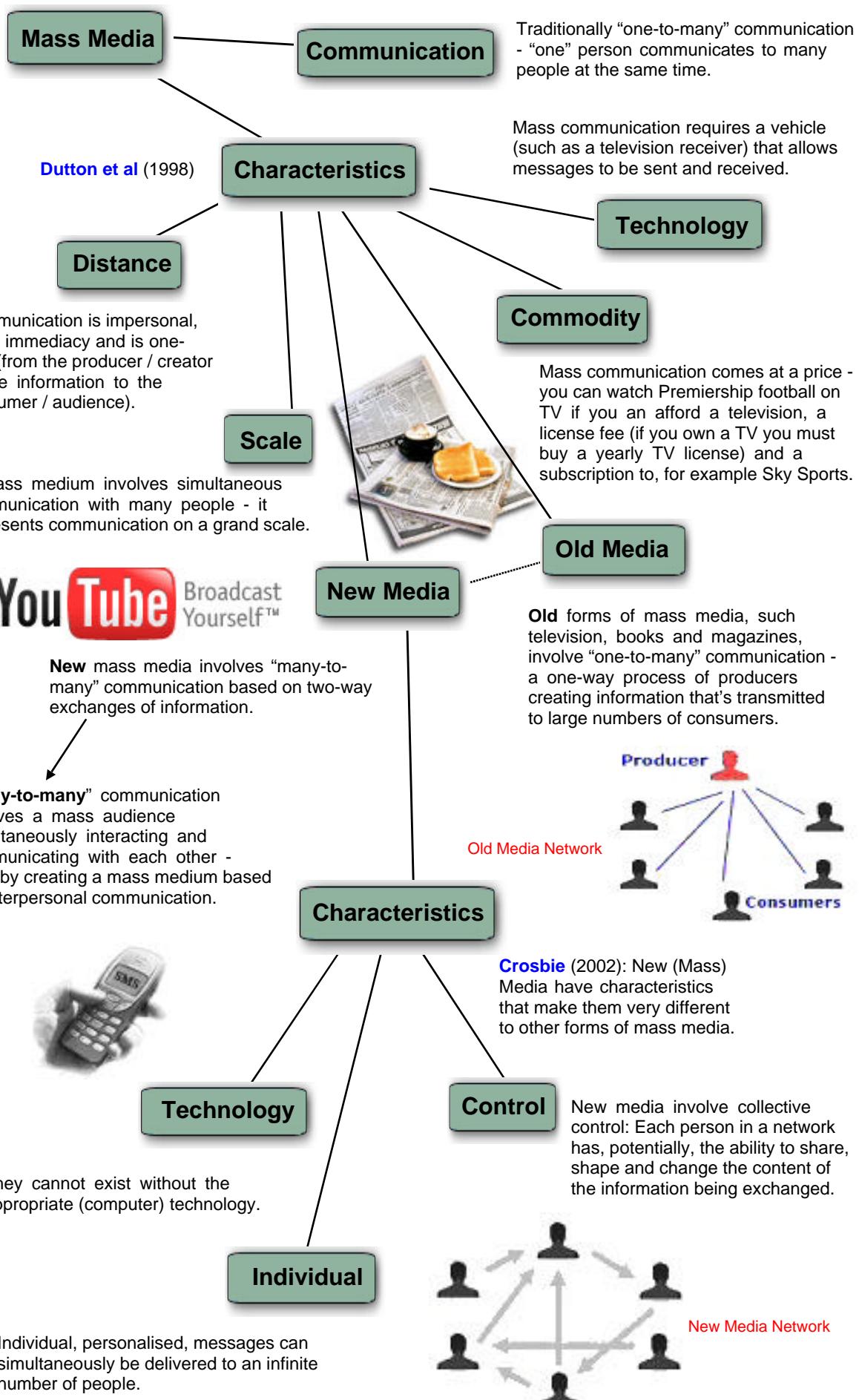
# **AS Sociology**

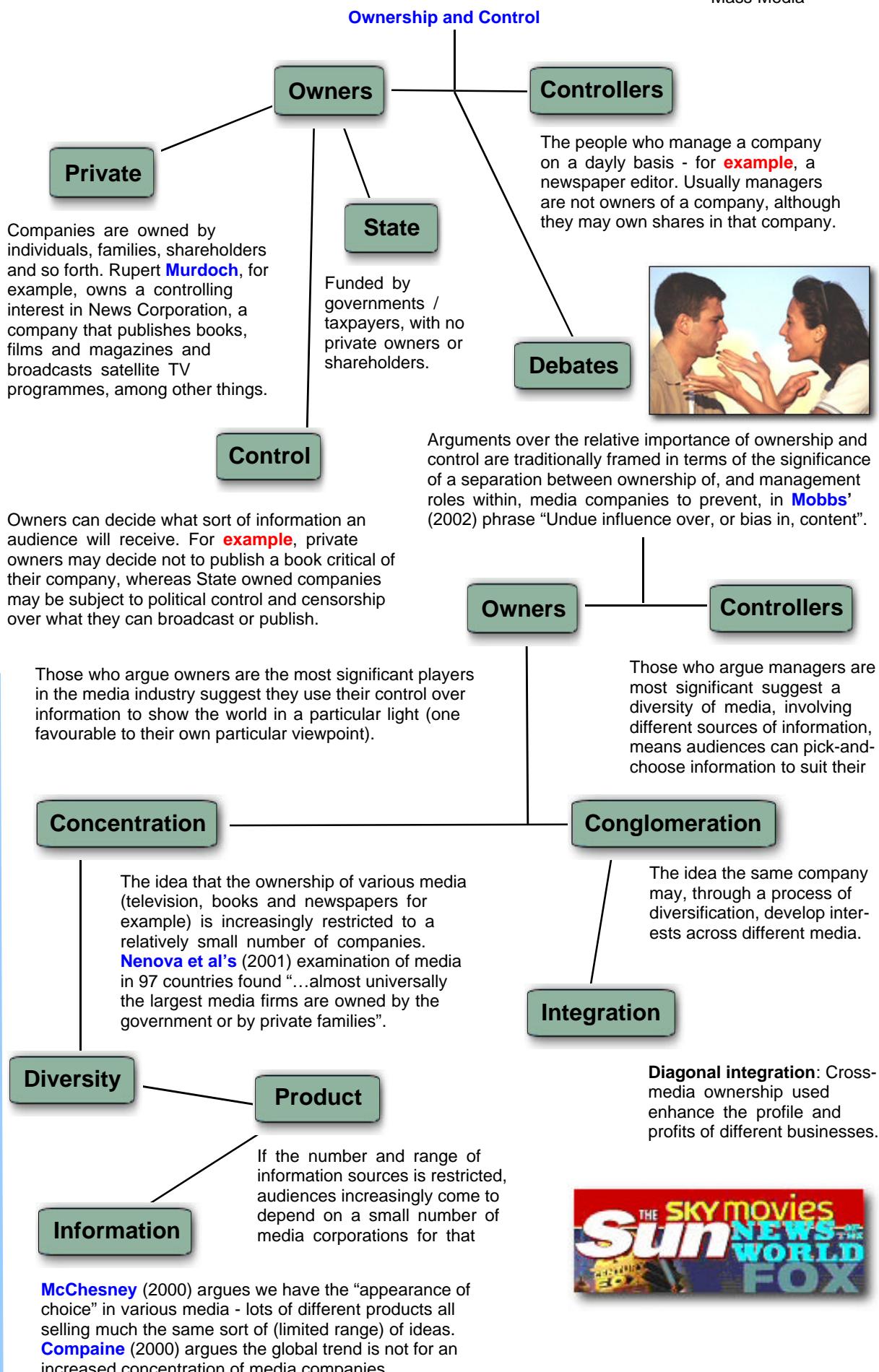
**Revision  
Mapping**

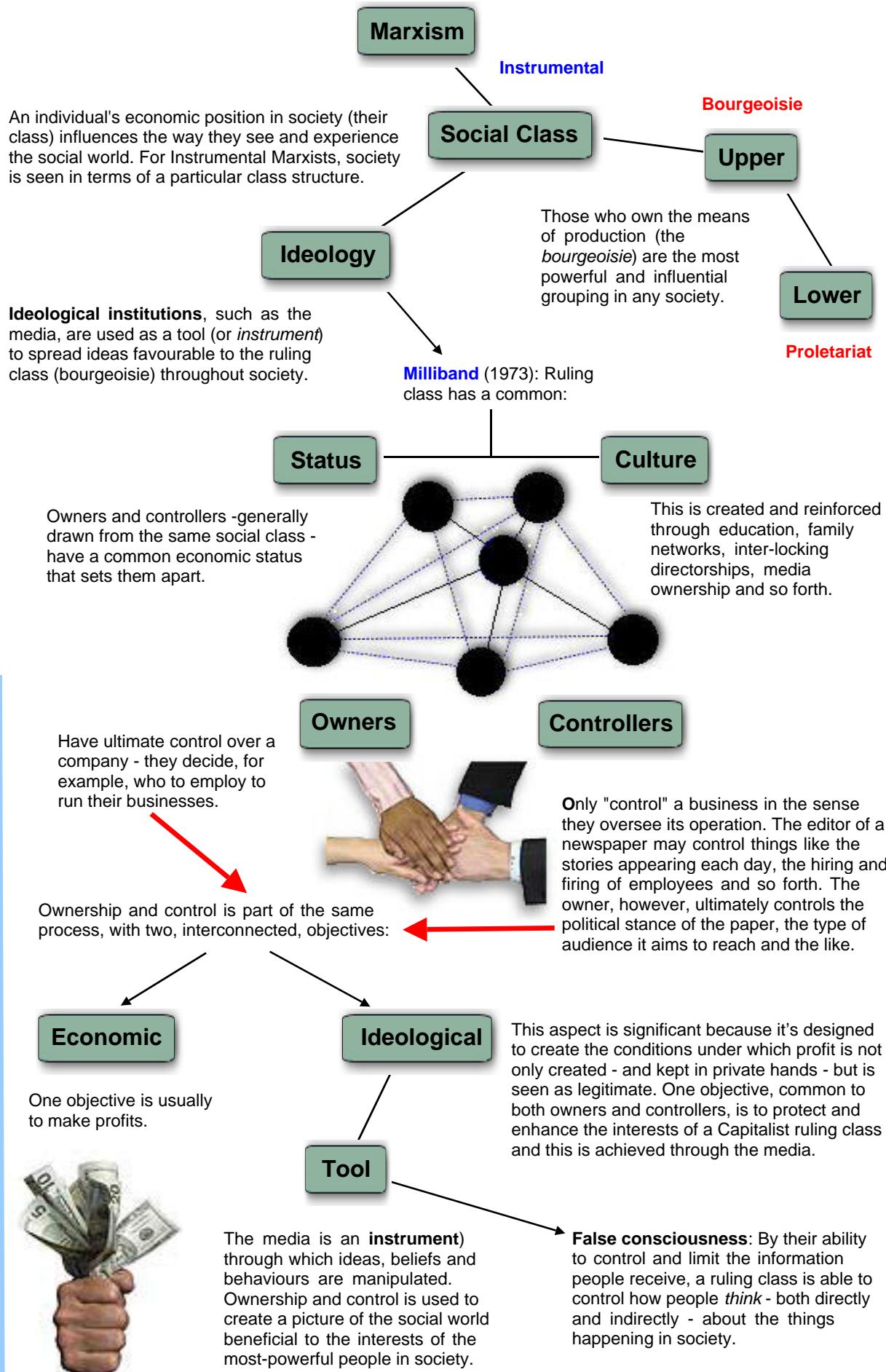
**Mass Media**

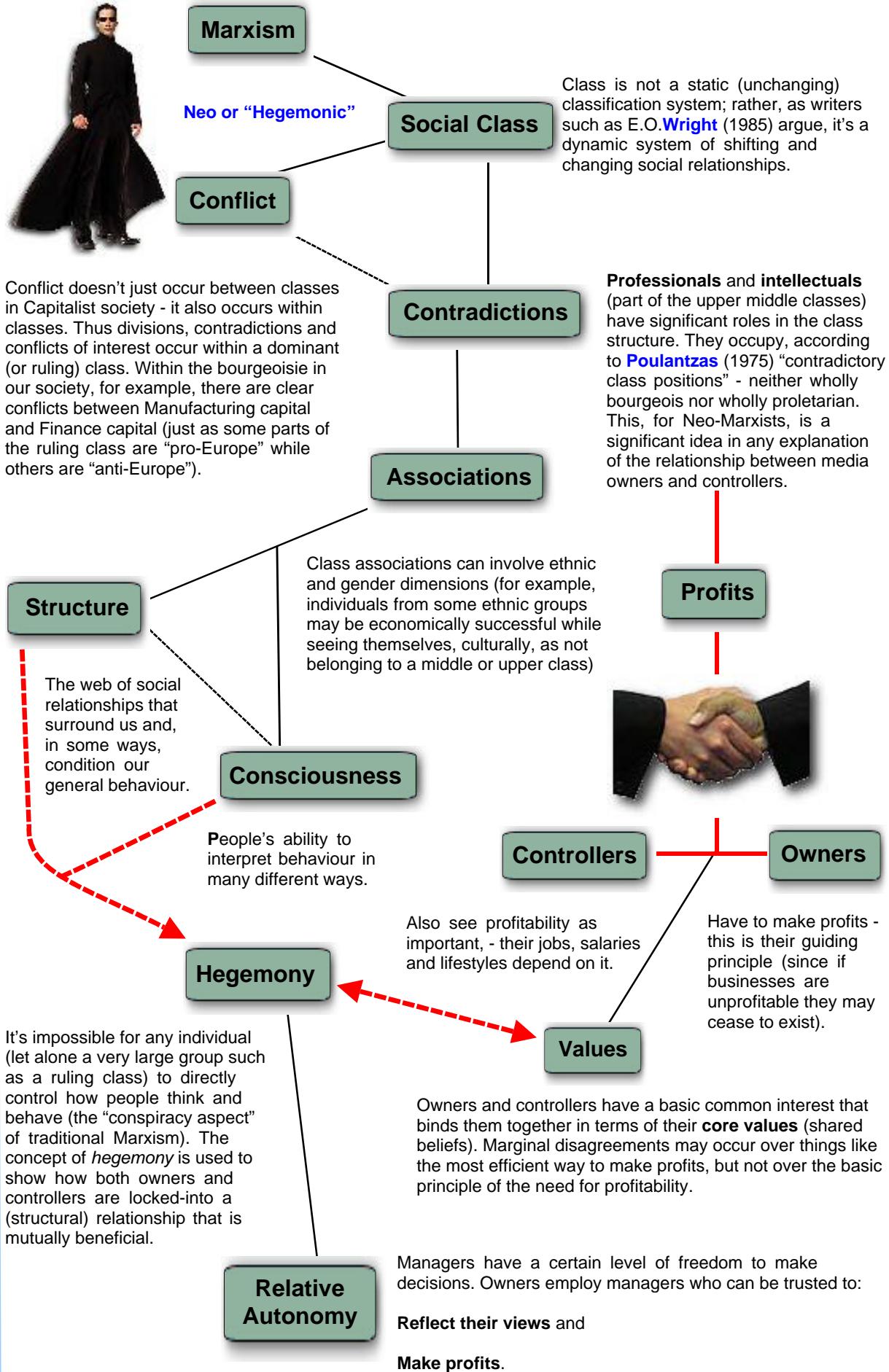


**“Different explanations of the relationship between ownership and control of the mass media”.**





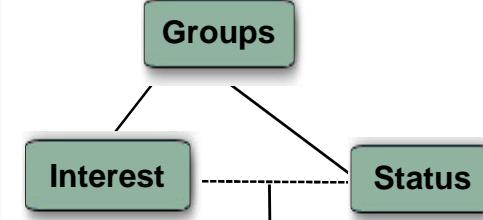






An **example** of an Interest group might be a business (such as a publishing company) organised to pursue some economic or social objective.

## Pluralism



Alternative way of looking at the relationship between ownership and control that stresses how social groups compete against each other in the economic market place.

An **example** of a status group might be a Trade Union publishing information specific to the members of a particular occupation. One aspect of the Union's role might be to promote and enhance the reputation (status) of its membership.

## Competition

### Explicit

**Example:** Different newspaper groups competing for readers.

### Implicit

**Example:** Different political groups promoting different economic, political or cultural views they want reflected in the media.

## Power

### Owners

Media owners are powerful players in any society since they're in a position to have their views heard.

### Controllers

Pluralists argue those who control the day-to-day running of the media are also powerful.

### Economic

**Example:** Making profits or gaining market share increases the economic power of particular groups at the expense of others.

### Political

**Example:** Being in a position to influence decisions made by governments.

### Ownership

Modern ("joint-stock") media companies tend to be owned by groups of shareholders. **Burnham** (1943) argued that, where no single shareholder had overall control of a business, meant directors and managers were the main policy-makers.

### Elites

The day-to-day running of a major media business is in the hands of a **technocratic managerial elite** - people who run a business in the best interests of the shareholders. This is a powerful group because their job depends on knowing what an audience wants and being able to provide it.

### Competition

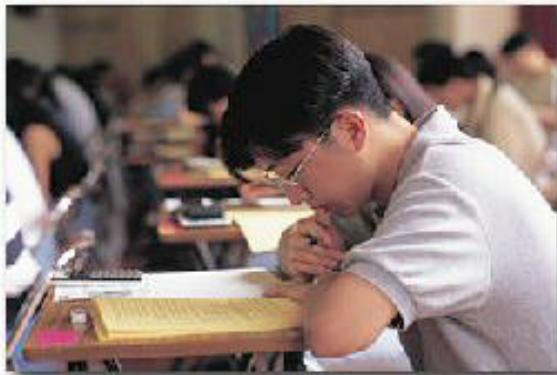
To survive, a business must compete successfully in a market place which means consumers influence the behaviour of an organization: if consumers don't like - or buy - what's on offer the seller either improves or changes their product or they go out of business.

### Diversity

Private media ownership promotes *competition* and *diversity*. **Bernard** and **McDermott** (2002): "Current media ownership rules in the UK prevent any one entity acquiring excessive influence in the sector, thereby ensuring plurality of voice and diversity of content".

**2 marks**

Explain what is meant by the 'concentration of ownership' of the mass media.

**Exam Questions****8 marks**

Identify and briefly explain two criticisms of the Marxist view that the mass media simply serve capitalism.

**Item**

According to the pluralist view, the media simply respond to demand, providing what their viewers, listeners and readers want. If the media have any influence over people, it is because they reflect and reinforce society's basic values, not because they impose their ideas on the public. In fact, any attempt to do this would be likely to fail: the audience would simply tune to another channel or buy a rival newspaper closer to their own views. Any publisher or broadcaster who persisted in producing unpopular output would risk going out of business.

Today's society is composed of a great diversity of groups, none of which is able to dominate society or the media. Pluralists argue that the media reflect this diversity in their output, catering for many tastes and giving the public a wide range of choice. In recent years, technological advances such as the internet and digital broadcasting have increased the choices available.

**20 marks**

Using material from the Item and elsewhere, assess the pluralist view of the mass media.