



## **Global Cultural Economy and Capital Involvement: A Case Study of the Production of the Television Series Game of Thrones**

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| Dikirim: 03-12-2025 | Diterima: 15-12-2025 | Dipublikasikan: 31-01-2026 |

### **Keywords**

Game of Thrones,  
Global Capitalism,  
Global Cultural  
Economy,  
Transnational  
Cultural Production

### **ABSTRACT**

This article examines how global capital structures shape the production and worldwide circulation of Game of Thrones within the contemporary global cultural economy. Drawing on Arjun Appadurai's framework, the study addresses a central problem in global media capitalism: structural inequality between core and peripheral actors in the distribution of economic benefits and symbolic power. Using a qualitative critical interpretive approach, the analysis explores how financial power coordinates media infrastructures, production technologies, creative labor mobility, and ideological circulation. The findings show that financial dominance constitutes the primary organizing force in the global production of Game of Thrones. Transnational capital controlled by HBO and WarnerMedia enables centralized control over production, digital distribution, and creative labor, positioning peripheral countries mainly as consumption markets rather than equal cultural producers. Furthermore, the global circulation of the series normalizes Eurocentrist narrative framing and symbolic representation. This article contributes to International Relations by demonstrating how popular culture functions as an instrument of soft power within global media capitalism and advances the political economy of culture by illustrating how financial dominance reproduces center-periphery inequality.

### **Kata Kunci**

*Ekonomi Budaya  
Global, Game of  
Thrones,  
Kapitalisme Global,  
Produksi Budaya  
Transnasional*

### **ABSTRAK**

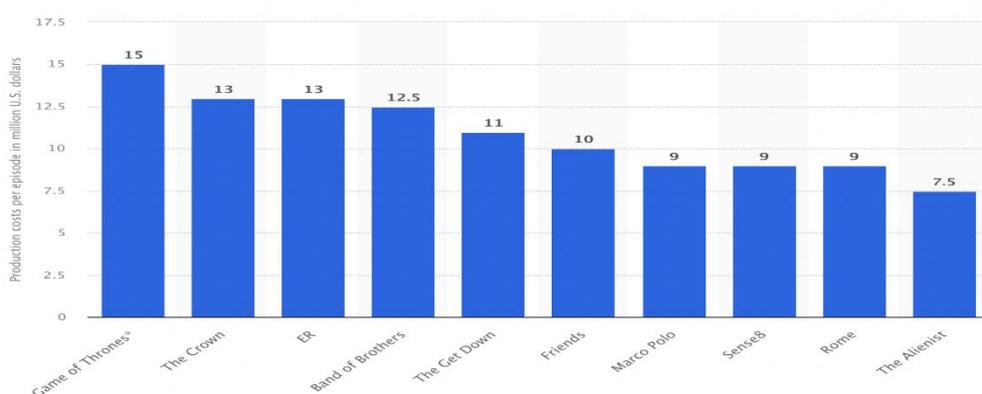
*Artikel ini menganalisis bagaimana struktur kapital global membentuk proses produksi dan sirkulasi global serial televisi Game of Thrones dalam konteks ekonomi budaya global kontemporer. Dengan menggunakan kerangka pemikiran Arjun Appadurai, penelitian ini menyoroti persoalan utama dalam kapitalisme media global, yaitu ketimpangan struktural antara aktor pusat dan periferi dalam distribusi manfaat ekonomi serta kekuasaan simbolik. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif dengan analisis interpretatif kritis, kajian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana kekuatan finansial mengoordinasikan infrastruktur media, teknologi produksi, mobilitas tenaga kerja kreatif, serta sirkulasi ideologis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dominasi finansial merupakan kekuatan pengorganisasi utama dalam produksi global Game of Thrones. Kapital transnasional yang dikendalikan oleh HBO dan WarnerMedia memungkinkan kontrol terpusat atas produksi, distribusi digital, dan tenaga kreatif, sehingga menempatkan negara-negara periferi terutama sebagai pasar konsumsi alih-alih sebagai produsen budaya yang setara. Lebih jauh, sirkulasi global serial ini menormalkan kerangka naratif dan representasi simbolik yang bersifat Eurosentris. Artikel ini berkontribusi pada kajian Hubungan Internasional dengan menunjukkan bagaimana budaya populer berfungsi sebagai instrumen soft power dalam kapitalisme media global, serta memperkaya ekonomi politik budaya melalui analisis tentang bagaimana dominasi finansial mereproduksi ketimpangan relasi pusat-periferi.*

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, the entertainment industry has expanded rapidly and become one of the most influential sectors within the global economy. No longer confined to film and television production, the industry now encompasses digital streaming platforms, global licensing networks, merchandising, and transnational content circulation. This transformation reflects the growing centrality of popular culture within global capitalism, where multinational media corporations mobilize large-scale capital to produce and distribute cultural content across national borders. In this context, popular culture functions not merely as entertainment, but as an economic and political force embedded in global market structures (Hesmondhalgh, 2013). One of the most prominent examples of this phenomenon is HBO's television series *Game of Thrones*.

Adapted from George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*, *Game of Thrones* premiered on HBO in 2011 and quickly emerged as one of the most commercially successful television series in history. Its final season in 2019 attracted 13.6 million same-day viewers in the United States alone, making it the most-watched episode in HBO's original programming history, while its global audience expanded further through international broadcasting, streaming services, and digital circulation (Lundberg et al., 2024). The scale of this success was underpinned by an extraordinary production budget, reaching approximately USD 15 million per episode in the final season (Statista, 2022). Such investment signals that *Game of Thrones* was conceived not primarily as a domestic television product, but as a global cultural commodity designed for transnational markets.

**Figure 1. Leading television series in the United States as of January 2019, based on production costs per episode (in million U.S. dollars)**



Source: Statista (2022)

Rather than targeting the United States alone, *Game of Thrones* was strategically distributed through international licensing agreements and regional streaming platforms, particularly in developing-country markets. As shown by its distribution across India, Brazil, and South Africa, global audiences were integrated into a system where consumption occurred locally, while capital accumulation and intellectual property control remained concentrated within U.S.-based corporations, particularly HBO and its parent company WarnerMedia. This pattern reflects a broader structural asymmetry within the global cultural economy, in which peripheral markets function primarily as sites of consumption rather than as equal participants in cultural production. Cultural products such as *Game of Thrones* thus operate as vehicles for capital expansion, reinforcing unequal center-periphery relations within the global media industry.

**Tabel 1. Comparative Overview of U.S. Licensing and Developing-Country Markets in the Global Broadcast Distribution of Game of Thrones**

Country/Region	Licensing & Broadcast Model	Distribution	Implications for Cultural Capitalism
<b>United States</b>	HBO (original)	Primary production and distribution; the largest share of revenue derives from domestic and global subscription	Capital core □ controller of narrative authority, capital flows, intellectual property, and profit accumulation
<b>India</b>	HBO Asia via Star India / Hotsar (until 2020); subsequently through other VOD distributors	Game of Thrones was legally broadcast via Hotstar as an official partner of HBO Asia: India constitutes one of HBO Asia's largest markets	Major peripheral market; growth in premium subscriptions; capital flows return to HBO as the core
<b>Brazil</b>	HBO Latin America	HBO Latin America broadcast all seasons of Game of Thrones simultaneously across the region; Brazil is the largest OTT market in Latin America	Western entertainment industries dominate the regional market; significant licensing revenues generated
<b>South Africa</b>	M-Net (DStv) as HBO's licensing partner	M-Net serves as the official distributor of HBO content; Game of Thrones aired each season through DStv's premium packages	African peripheral market; consumers pay for premium access, resulting in capital flows back to the core through HBO licensing

Source: Compiled by the Author (2025)

Within this system, high-budget cultural production exemplifies the logic of cultural capitalism, understood as the commodification of cultural content into globally marketable goods (Hesmondhalgh, 2013). Large-scale financial investments enable the deployment of advanced production technologies, global distribution infrastructures, and transnational creative labor, transforming cultural narratives into instruments of capital accumulation. However, existing studies on Game of Thrones have tended to emphasize its narrative appeal, fandom culture, tourism impacts, or representational politics, often treating economic structures as background conditions rather than as central analytical concerns (Brotman, 2022; Jenkins, 2006; Peaslee & Vasquez, 2021).

Similarly, discussions of soft power and Eurocentrist cultural influence have frequently focused on symbolic representation and ideological diffusion (Nye, 2004), while underexploring the financial and institutional mechanisms that enable such influence to operate on a global scale. As a result, the role of global capital in coordinating production, distribution, and cultural circulation remains insufficiently theorized within International Relations scholarship. This gap is particularly significant given that

global media industries increasingly shape how power, identity, and hierarchy are reproduced in the international system.

To address these limitations, this article adopts Arjun Appadurai's (1996) framework of the global cultural economy, which conceptualizes globalization as a set of disjunctive yet interconnected flows encompassing finance, media, technology, people, and ideology. While this framework has been widely applied to examine cultural globalization, this study departs from existing literature by foregrounding the role of global capital as the primary organizing force within these flows, particularly in the context of high-budget transnational television production. Using *Game of Thrones* as a case study, this article asks how global capital structures shape the processes of cultural production and worldwide circulation, in what ways financial power coordinates media infrastructures, production technologies, and transnational creative labor, and how these dynamics position developing countries largely as markets of consumption rather than as equal cultural producers within the global media system.

By situating *Game of Thrones* within the political economy of global media capitalism, this article advances a critical inquiry into what these capital-driven dynamics imply for structural inequality between core and peripheral actors in the global cultural economy. The novelty of this study lies in its integration of Appadurai's global cultural economy framework with a critical political economy perspective that emphasizes financial dominance over narrative analysis alone. In doing so, this article contributes to International Relations scholarship by demonstrating how popular culture operates as an instrument of soft power embedded within global capitalism, while simultaneously enriching the study of global political economy by revealing how cultural industries reproduce center-periphery hierarchies through transnational capital flows.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

This study adopts Arjun Appadurai's theory of the Global Cultural Economy as formulated in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996), not as a normative account of cultural globalization, but as a critical analytical framework. Appadurai conceptualizes globalization as a constellation of five interrelated yet disjunctive "scapes" ethnoscapescapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes which describe the transnational movement of people, technologies, capital, media, and ideas. While Appadurai emphasizes the fluidity and relative autonomy of these flows, this study critically engages with the framework by foregrounding the unequal power relations embedded within them, particularly the dominance of capital flows. Rather than treating the five scapes as horizontally interacting processes, this article argues that financescapes operate as a structuring force that coordinates and constrains the movement of other scapes within the global cultural economy. Through this critical lens, the framework is employed to examine how cultural production and circulation are shaped by asymmetrical capital relations, resulting in structural inequalities between core and peripheral actors in the global media system.

To underscore his departure from orthodox Marxist approaches, Appadurai emphasizes that global relations among ethnoscapescapes, technoscapes, and financescapes are disjunctive and operate according to distinct logics. Although Appadurai highlights the relative autonomy of these flows, this study adopts a critical stance by emphasizing the structural dominance of financial capital. In analyzing *Game of Thrones*, each scape is operationalized empirically: ethnoscapescapes are examined through the transnational mobility of creative labor involved in the series' production; technoscapes through the use of advanced production technologies and global streaming infrastructures; financescapes through HBO and WarnerMedia's transnational capital investment, licensing strategies, and revenue extraction; mediascapes through global broadcast and digital distribution networks that circulate the series worldwide; and ideoscapes through narrative constructions and symbolic representations that normalize particular understandings of power and hierarchy. This operationalization enables the analysis to

demonstrate how financescapes function as the primary coordinating force shaping the interaction of other scapes within the global cultural economy of Game of Thrones.

Critical theory is rooted in the intellectual tradition of the Frankfurt School, which emerged in the early twentieth century through thinkers such as Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse, and was later developed within the field of the political economy of media. In contrast to positivist or purely descriptive approaches, critical theory seeks to uncover relations of power, domination, and structural inequality embedded within social and cultural practices. Horkheimer (1982) emphasizes that critical theory aims not only to understand social reality but also to critique and transform it, particularly within the context of modern capitalism, which systematically reproduces injustice.

In the context of culture and media, Adorno and Horkheimer (2002) introduced the concept of the culture industry to explain how cultural products, including film and television, are mass-produced according to capitalist logics. Culture is no longer understood as an autonomous expression of society, but rather as a standardized commodity produced for economic profit and serving to maintain the ideological hegemony of the dominant class. Through these mechanisms, popular media contribute to the normalization of certain values, reduce the potential for critical reflection, and position audiences as passive consumers.

This perspective was further developed within the political economy of media, which foregrounds ownership, capital control, and market structures as key determinants of media content and distribution. Mosco (2009) argues that the political economy of communication focuses on three central processes: commodification, spatialization, and structuration. Commodification refers to the transformation of cultural meaning into economic exchange value; spatialization concerns cross-border expansion through technology and global institutions; and structuration highlights how power relations are continuously reproduced through social and institutional practices.

Within this framework, the production of globally scaled television series such as Game of Thrones cannot be separated from the interests of transnational capital. Major media corporations such as HBO and WarnerMedia operate within a global capitalist system that positions cultural content as both an instrument of capital accumulation and a vehicle for disseminating dominant ideologies. McChesney (2015) emphasizes that media globalization is not a neutral process, but one shaped by the interests of corporations based in core capitalist countries, particularly the United States, thereby generating structural inequalities between the core and the periphery.

This approach becomes particularly relevant when examined in relation to Appadurai's (1996) concept of the Global Cultural Economy. Although Appadurai proposes five scapes of global flows, namely: ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes to map globalization in a multidimensional manner, this framework tends to be largely descriptive and does not sufficiently foreground relations of capitalist power as the central axis of analysis. Appadurai conceptualizes cultural globalization as a fluid and fragmented process, yet he does not explicitly interrogate how these five flows are unevenly controlled by actors of global capital.

Accordingly, this study positions critical theory and the political economy of media as analytical lenses through which to reread Appadurai's Global Cultural Economy. The five scapes are not understood as equal and autonomous flows, but rather as mechanisms reproduced and coordinated by the logic of global capitalism. Within this framework, the financescape emerges as the dominant element that directs the mediascape, frames the ideoscape, shapes the technoscape, and constrains the meanings of the ethnoscape. In other words, global cultural mobility does not occur in a vacuum, but is embedded within and governed by the hegemonic structures of the global political economy.

Through a critical theoretical approach, this study situates Game of Thrones as a form of transnational cultural production that not only represents fictional narratives but also reproduces global

power relations. The dominance of Western representations, the stereotyping of non-Western worlds, and the concentration of economic profits in core capitalist countries demonstrate how popular culture operates as an instrument of soft power and cultural imperialism. In this way, critical theory enables the analysis to move beyond textual interpretation and to foreground the structural inequalities that underpin the global cultural economy in contemporary capitalism.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative research design using a critical–interpretive approach to examine the role of global capital in the production and circulation of popular culture through the case of *Game of Thrones*. Qualitative inquiry is particularly suitable for analyzing cultural and political-economic phenomena that require contextual interpretation of meaning, power relations, and structural dynamics rather than statistical generalization (Creswell, 2017; Merriam, 2009). The analysis focuses on the production period of *Game of Thrones* from 2011 to 2019, during which the series was produced, distributed, and consolidated as a global cultural product within the global media economy.

Data collection relies exclusively on secondary sources, selected through clearly defined criteria. First, academic journals and books were included if they addressed global media capitalism, political economy of culture, television production, or critical analyses of *Game of Thrones*. Second, industry reports and market analyses published by credible institutions such as Statista, Parrot Analytics, and media research organizations were selected to capture production budgets, distribution strategies, and audience reach. Third, news articles were drawn from established international media outlets with verifiable editorial standards, including *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Variety*, and *Hollywood Reporter*, particularly those reporting on HBO’s production strategies, licensing arrangements, and filming locations. Sources that were speculative, non-peer-reviewed without institutional credibility, or lacking transparent authorship were excluded to maintain analytical rigor.

The units of analysis in this study are defined at multiple levels. At the textual level, selected episodes and narrative arcs are examined to identify ideological representations and symbolic constructions related to power, hierarchy, and legitimacy. At the institutional level, production policies, filming location agreements, tax incentive schemes, and licensing contracts are analyzed to capture the political-economic dimensions of production and distribution. At the infrastructural level, digital platforms, broadcast networks, and streaming services are examined as mechanisms of global media circulation. These units of analysis enable the study to move beyond surface-level content analysis and toward an examination of structural relations within the global cultural economy.

Data analysis was conducted through qualitative content analysis guided by Appadurai’s five scapes: ethnoscares, technoscares, financescares, mediascares, and ideoscares. Data were first reduced by selecting materials directly relevant to global capital involvement in *Game of Thrones*. The selected data were then classified according to the five scapes, allowing patterns of interaction and asymmetry among them to be identified. Interpretation focused on how financial power structures the operation of other scapes, rather than treating them as analytically equal. Analytical findings were subsequently linked back to the theoretical framework to strengthen conceptual coherence.

This study acknowledges several limitations. The exclusive reliance on secondary data restricts access to internal corporate documents and firsthand accounts from HBO or WarnerMedia decision-makers, which may limit the depth of insight into proprietary financial arrangements. In addition, as a single-case study, the findings are not intended to be statistically generalizable across all global television productions. However, the analytical strength of this research lies in its theoretical generalization, offering insights into how global media capitalism operates through high-budget transnational television production and how such processes reproduce center–periphery inequalities within the global cultural economy.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Game of Thrones: A Cultural Product within the Currents of Global Capitalism**

The United States occupies a central position in the formation and management of global capitalism, not only through material economic dominance but also through the large-scale production and circulation of popular culture. Within the framework of the global cultural economy articulated by Appadurai (1996), cultural products such as Game of Thrones cannot be understood merely as entertainment, but rather as components of global cultural flows that connect capital, technology, media, and ideas across national boundaries. In this sense, Game of Thrones represents a concrete manifestation of cultural capitalism, in which culture is produced, distributed, and consumed as a global economic commodity (Hesmondhalgh, 2013).

In contrast to readings that focus primarily on the scale of production or the series' popularity in its country of origin, the most significant implications of Game of Thrones are evident in its external impacts on countries beyond the United States, particularly developing countries and semi-peripheral regions that hold broadcasting rights and distribution access. In this context, Game of Thrones operates as part of global mediascapes that enable the mass circulation of American narratives, visual imagery, and cultural values through cable television, streaming platforms, and digital ecosystems (Appadurai, 1996; Lobato, 2019). Its distribution to more than 170 countries through international licensing agreements positions these countries as markets for the expansion of cultural capital rather than as primary producers of cultural value (Oke, 2025).

From the perspective of financescapes, the production investment in Game of Thrones, which reached an average of USD 15 million per episode in its final season was designed to generate cross-regional capital accumulation rather than merely domestic profits. These capital flows are subsequently realized through international subscriptions, broadcast licensing, digital sales, and merchandise, the majority of which are consumed outside the United States (Oke, 2025; Statista, 2019). In this regard, developing countries function as strategic sites of consumption that sustain the economic viability of the global cultural industry, in line with the logic of cultural capitalism that positions culture as a source of economic value (Mosco, 2009; Hesmondhalgh, 2013).

The external implications of Game of Thrones can be observed concretely through the cases of Croatia as a semi-peripheral country and Indonesia as a developing country. In Croatia, Game of Thrones has triggered the transformation of cultural space into a global tourism commodity, particularly in Dubrovnik, which is represented as King's Landing. Studies indicate that the series has had a significant impact on increased tourist arrivals, shifts in perceptions of cultural space, rising property prices, and mounting pressure on local housing (Tkalec et al., 2017; Brotman, 2022; Contu & Pau, 2022). This phenomenon illustrates how mediascapes and financescapes operate simultaneously to extract economic value from local cultural representations in the service of global markets.

Meanwhile, in developing countries, Game of Thrones operates primarily through technoscapes and ideoscapes. Access via global streaming platforms enables the penetration of narratives, visual aesthetics, and particular political values that are consumed by local audiences without direct involvement in the production process. In this context, non-Western countries function largely as a market for the consumption of global culture, where power relations are asymmetrical: cultural values are produced in the centers of cultural capitalism, while developing countries become consumers and reproducers of these discourses (Schiller, 1998; Gill, 2008). This pattern illustrates how cultural hegemony operates through the normalization of tastes, production standards, and global political imaginaries offered by the series.

Accordingly, Game of Thrones not only represents the success of the United States television industry but also reveals the hierarchical workings of the global cultural economy. Through the interaction of ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes, the series

reinforces the positioning of developing countries as sites for the expansion of global cultural capitalism, while simultaneously deepening structural inequalities between producer countries and consumer countries within the global cultural industry system (Appadurai, 1996; Harvey, 2007; Steger, 2013).

### **The Transnationalization of Cultural Ethnographic Landscapes in Game of Thrones**

Ethnoscape is employed in this study not merely to trace patterns of human mobility, but to critically examine how global capital structures the movement, positioning, and valuation of people within transnational cultural production. In Appadurai's (1996) formulation, ethnoscape encompasses both the physical circulation of people and the symbolic constructions that emerge from these movements. This study extends Appadurai's concept by emphasizing that such movements are not neutral, but are actively organized and hierarchized by global capital in ways that reproduce unequal power relations. Accordingly, Game of Thrones is analyzed not only as an audiovisual text, but as a producer of transnational ethnographic landscapes shaped by the political economy of global media capitalism.

Rather than treating ethnoscape as analytically limited due to the difficulty of tracing direct migration flows, this study conceptualizes ethnoscape as a symbolic and material process through which global cultural products generate shared imaginaries and structured patterns of mobility. Game of Thrones constructs an "imaginary ethnographic space" that enables audiences across national boundaries to internalize Western cultural values without requiring direct physical movement. This process is inseparable from the economic power of HBO and WarnerMedia, whose financial capacity enables the global circulation of these imaginaries while positioning Western cultural frameworks as the default reference point.

Within this framework, Game of Thrones reproduces an ethnoscape grounded in Western European imaginaries through the construction of Westeros, which reflects feudal monarchy, white racial dominance, and patriarchal authority. This ethnographic landscape is globally consumed and normalized, shaping audience perceptions of heroism, political legitimacy, and racial hierarchy (Hardy, 2015; Hardy, 2019). The dominance of this ethnoscape reflects the asymmetrical power of Western media capital to define whose histories, bodies, and identities are rendered visible and legitimate within global popular culture. Audiences in developing countries are thus incorporated into a Western-centered ethnoscape despite lacking historical or cultural proximity to it.

Critiques of racial representation further illuminate how this ethnoscape operates as a mechanism of symbolic exclusion. Westeros is overwhelmingly populated by white characters, while people of color are primarily confined to peripheral roles as slaves, barbarians, or exotic Others (Hardy, 2019; Jones, 2019). These representations do not merely reflect narrative choices, but are enabled by production structures in which creative authority remains concentrated among Western elites. As such, the ethnoscape produced by Game of Thrones normalizes Western racial hierarchies as universal norms while subordinating non-Western identities within a global symbolic order (Schiller, 1998; Gill, 2008).

**Table 2. Percentage of Main Cast Diversity in *Game of Thrones* (POCs vs. White Characters) by Season**

Season	Estimated Total of Main Roles	POCs (%)	White Characters (%)	Notes
1	25	4-8%	92-96%	Dominance of Westeros; Khal Drogo (Jason Momoa, mixed heritage) as the only significant POC character (BlackFilmAndTV.com, 2024).

2	28	7-11%	89-93%	Introduction of Xaro Xhoan Daxos (Nonso Anozie, Nigerian) and Salladhor Saan (Lucian Msamati, Tanzanian) in Qarth (Vanity Fair, 2016).
3	30	10-13%	87-90%	Introduction of Missandei (Nathalie Emmanuel, mixed heritage) and Grey Worm (Jacob Anderson, mixed heritage) in Essos (Self, 2017).
4	32	13-19%	81-87%	Introduction of Oberyn Martell (Pedro Pascal, Chilean) and Ellaria Sand (Indira Varma, Indian heritage) in Dorne ( <i>The Telegraph</i> , 2019).
5	35	14-20%	80-86%	Expansion of Dorne; Areo Hotah (DeObia Oparei, Nigerian) in a secondary role.
6	35	14-20%	80-86%	Death of Areo Hotah; stagnation in diversity (Vanity Fair, 2016).
7	30	13-20%	80-87%	Renewed focus on Westeros; marginalization of POC characters (BBC, 2019).
8	25	12-20%	80-88%	Tragic endings of iconic POC characters Missandei and Grey Worm.

Source: Author's elaboration (2025)

As shown in Table 2, the proportion of people of color in Game of Thrones increases only when the narrative expands into fictional “non-Western” spaces such as Essos and Dorne, and declines as the storyline recenters on Westeros. This pattern indicates that racial inclusion is conditional and instrumental, serving narrative and commercial needs rather than reflecting a commitment to representational equality. Within Appadurai’s ethnoscape framework, this reveals a hierarchical cultural landscape in which access to visibility and narrative agency is governed by the logic of global media capital rather than by principles of diversity.

These symbolic inequalities are reinforced by material power relations behind the scenes. Data from the UCLA Hollywood Diversity Report (2020) show that none of the directors involved across eight seasons of Game of Thrones were people of color. This concentration of creative authority underscores how global capital controls not only representation on screen, but also the mobility and authority of creative labor, limiting ethnoscape mobility to subjects from the core of cultural capitalism. The operation of ethnoscape as a site of capital exploitation becomes even more apparent in labor mobility during production. Between 2010 and 2019, Game of Thrones injected approximately £251 million into Northern Ireland’s economy and employed around 6,000 crew members and extras (Contu & Pau, 2022). While often framed as local economic development, this labor mobility reflects an asymmetrical ethnoscape in which global capital accesses semi-peripheral regions to reduce production

costs while maintaining centralized creative and financial control. Core producers and creative elites retain high mobility and bargaining power, whereas local and migrant workers remain dependent on temporary, project-based employment.

Similarly, post-production tourism represents another capital-driven ethnoscape. In Dubrovnik, tourist visits increased by up to 300 percent following the series' global success, resulting in significant social and ecological pressures that prompted regulatory interventions (Depken et al., 2022; Waysdorf & Reijnders, 2017). This form of mobility is directly generated by the commodification of popular culture and primarily benefits global tourism industries and media corporations, while local communities bear the costs of overtourism, rising living expenses, and spatial displacement.

The case of Northern Ireland further demonstrates how ethnoscaping produced by global cultural production privilege capital interests over local sustainability. Although partnerships with HBO contributed to infrastructure development and skill transfer, benefits were unevenly distributed and contingent on the continuity of global production cycles (Peaslee & Vasquez, 2020). This reveals how ethnoscaping function as temporary and extractive arrangements shaped by global capital rather than as equitable forms of cultural exchange.

Taken together, the ethnoscape of *Game of Thrones* illustrates how human mobility, cultural imaginaries, and symbolic belonging are actively structured by global media capital. Rather than representing free flows of people and identities, the ethnoscaping generated by the series reproduce center-periphery inequalities by privileging Western creative authority, exploiting peripheral labor and spaces, and normalizing Western cultural dominance within the global cultural economy (Appadurai, 1996).

### **Transnationalization of Production Technologies in *Game of Thrones***

Appadurai (1996) conceptualizes technoscapes as global configurations of mechanical and informational technologies that move across borders and restructure cultural production. However, in this study, technoscapes are approached critically, not as neutral flows of innovation, but as unequal technological arrangements shaped by global capital ownership. In the case of *Game of Thrones* (GoT), HBO's transnational production system demonstrates how advanced production technologies circulate globally while remaining firmly controlled by corporate centers of capital in the United States and Western Europe. Thus, technoscapes function less as instruments of technological democratization than as mechanisms that sustain asymmetrical relations between technology owners and technology users.

The production of GoT relied on a tightly coordinated global network of high-end visual effects (VFX) studios located primarily in Germany, Canada, and Australia, illustrating a form of centralized technological orchestration across dispersed sites. While the series employed more than ten VFX studios operating simultaneously, key creative and technological decisions remained concentrated within a limited group of studios contracted and supervised by HBO. The sharp increase in VFX shots—from approximately 800 in Season 3 to over 2,200 in Season 7 (Post Magazine, 2017)—reflects not only technological advancement but also the escalating financial and infrastructural barriers required to participate in such large-scale productions. Studios such as Pixomondo, Image Engine, and Iloura functioned as specialized nodes within a global production chain, executing technically complex tasks without exercising meaningful control over narrative direction or intellectual property.

Beyond post-production, GoT's technoscape extended to advanced cinematographic technologies such as Spydercam systems and lidar-based three-dimensional mapping deployed in filming locations including Northern Ireland and Croatia. While these technologies enhanced visual realism and production efficiency, their use also highlights the temporality and conditional nature of technological transfer. Training programs provided to local crews such as Mackevision's instruction in digital asset management software in Northern Ireland or drone and rigging training in Dubrovnik, did not result in autonomous technological ownership. Instead, local workers acquired operational skills tied

specifically to HBO-led projects, reinforcing a model in which peripheral production sites supply skilled labor without long-term control over proprietary technologies or production infrastructures (Ramsey et al., 2019; Mandić et al., 2017).

Within this configuration, technoscapes intersect directly with global relations of production. Technological circulation in GoT did not dismantle center–periphery hierarchies but rather reproduced technological dependency, as local industries remained reliant on future inflows of foreign capital and projects to sustain newly acquired skills. The benefits of innovation thus accrued disproportionately to transnational media corporations that retained ownership over production technologies, digital pipelines, and distribution platforms. This asymmetry becomes more pronounced when technoscapes are linked to mediascapes and financescapes, where technological innovation feeds into transmedial expansion strategies designed to maximize global consumption and profitability.

The expansion of GoT into digital platforms, video games, and online fandom spaces further demonstrates how technoscapes operate as part of a broader accumulation strategy. While Information and Communications Technology (ICT) enables global audience participation, fans function primarily as value-enhancing agents within a corporate-controlled digital ecosystem. As Sashi (2023) notes, audience engagement operates as a form of economic complementarity rather than cultural co-production, reinforcing the commodification of participation itself.

Ultimately, Game of Thrones illustrates that technoscapes within the global cultural economy are not merely technological infrastructures but sites of power where innovation, labor, and capital intersect unevenly. The series shows how technological advancement can coexist with structural dependency, positioning peripheral locations as technologically capable yet institutionally subordinate. This finding reinforces Appadurai’s framework by demonstrating that technoscapes must be analyzed in relation to ownership, control, and global production hierarchies to fully understand how cultural capitalism operates through technology in contemporary media industries.

### **Transnational Capital Flows and the Concentration of Capital in the Production of Game of Thrones**

Within the framework of the global cultural economy, Appadurai (1996) defines financescapes as the flows of commodity speculation and financial capital that mobilize vast sums of money across national borders at high speed, whereby “currency markets, national stock exchanges, and commodity speculations move megamonies through national turnstiles at blinding speed, with vast, absolute implications for small differences in percentage points and time units” (p. 590). This concept highlights how the involvement of international media corporations such as HBO, WarnerMedia (formerly Time Warner), and global distribution partners has positioned GoT not merely as a cultural text, but as a transnational economic asset operating within circuits of global capital.

Capital flows in the production and distribution of GoT demonstrate that creative decisions, production scale, and marketing strategies are strongly shaped by the logics of global investment and return. Although the production process involves multiple countries and transregional labor, the United States continues to function as the primary center of capital accumulation as “node of a complex transnational construction of imaginary landscapes” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 53) that captures the bulk of revenues through licensing, international broadcasting rights, and digital distribution. Within this framework, GoT’s financescapes reveal how global capital extends Western cultural hegemony, with economic gains concentrated in core capitalist centers, while peripheral countries more often receive benefits that are temporary and contingent upon the production cycles of the global entertainment industry.

**Table 3. Comparison of Capital Flows in the Production of the Television Series Game of Thrones**

Aspect	Core Capital Centers (HBO/WarnerMedia)	Peripheral Countries (Locations & Partners)	Inequality
<b>Production Cost</b>	Total production budget of approximately USD 1 billion (Season 1: USD 6 million per episode; Season 8: USD 15 million per episode) (Statista, 2019; <i>Screen Rant</i> , 2022).	Tax incentives of up to 25% in Northern Ireland, contributing around USD 250 million to the local economy between 2010–2019 (Northern Ireland Screen, 2018).	Primary profits accrue to HBO, while peripheral regions receive temporary and project-based economic benefits.
<b>Global Distribution</b>	Licensing to more than 150 countries, generating HBO revenues of USD 6.75 billion in 2019 through Warner Bros. Worldwide Television Distribution ( <i>Broadcast</i> , 2019; Ramsey et al., 2019).	Partners such as Sky (UK, GBP 26 per episode) and Foxtel (Australia, AUD 52 per episode) function mainly as license purchasers ( <i>TorrentFreak</i> , 2015).	HBO retains control over global distribution and captures the majority of profits.
<b>Additional Revenues</b>	Approximately USD 125 million from <i>Game of Thrones: Conquest</i> (Sensor Tower, 2018), alongside global merchandise sales managed by HBO.	Around USD 10 million annually from tourism in Dubrovnik linked to the series (Tkalec et al., 2017).	Substantial revenues return to HBO, while peripheral regions benefit in more limited and indirect ways.
<b>Actors' Remuneration</b>	Kit Harington and Emilia Clarke earned approximately USD 500,000 per episode in Season 7 and USD 1.1–1.2 million per episode in Season 8; Harington's total earnings reached USD 14.3 million ( <i>Variety</i> , 2017; <i>The Hollywood Reporter</i> , 2018; FandomWire, 2025).	Supporting actors (e.g., Sophie Turner, Maisie Williams) earned approximately USD 175,000–210,000 per episode; local crews in Croatia and Northern Ireland received relatively low wages (Clark, 2019).	Elite cast members receive disproportionately higher compensation, while local labor remains underpaid.
<b>Capital Control</b>	WarnerMedia (acquired by AT&T for USD 85 billion in	Countries such as Croatia, Spain, and Morocco primarily	Core capital centers control financial decision-making, while

	2018) manages global capital flows and strategic financial decisions (Srinivasan, 2025).	serve as filming locations (Warner Bros. Fandom, 2025).	peripheral countries are confined to operational roles.
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Source: Compiled by the Author (2025).

Table 3 summarizes the flows of capital within the financescapes of GoT by comparing the roles of core capital centers (HBO/WarnerMedia) with those of peripheral countries (filming locations and distribution partners). Production costs reveal a massive budget controlled by HBO, with a significant increase from approximately USD 60 million in Season 1 to USD 90 million in Season 8 (Statista, 2019). Countries such as Northern Ireland benefited economically through tax incentives; however, the primary profits continued to accrue to HBO (Contu & Pau, 2022). Global distribution was dominated by Warner Bros. Worldwide Television Distribution, which licensed GoT to 150 countries and generated USD 6.75 billion in revenue in 2019, while partners such as Sky and Foxtel functioned largely as license purchasers rather than value producers (Broadcast, 2019; TorrentFreak, 2015).

Additional revenues from digital games and tourism generated substantial global returns for HBO, whereas the benefits for destinations such as Dubrovnik remained largely temporary and localized (Sensor Tower, 2018; Bloomberg, 2017). Actor remuneration further illustrates structural inequality: lead actors such as Kit Harington earned tens of millions of dollars, while local crews in Croatia and Northern Ireland received significantly lower wages (Variety, 2017; Business Insider, 2019). Capital control ultimately underscores WarnerMedia’s dominance, as peripheral countries primarily provided filming locations without meaningful financial or strategic authority (Srinivasan, 2025).

Critically, the financescapes of Game of Thrones demonstrate how global capital, mobilized through HBO and WarnerMedia, facilitates cultural expansion while simultaneously reinforcing Western hegemony. Peripheral countries such as Croatia and Northern Ireland gained economic benefits, yet the bulk of profits remained concentrated in the United States, reflecting the structural inequalities highlighted by Appadurai (1996). From an international relations perspective, this model suggests that global cultural production often deepens the dependence of peripheral regions on core capital centers, resulting in asymmetrical distributions of value and profit (Schiller, 1998). The analysis therefore concludes that while Game of Thrones emerged as a global cultural phenomenon, its financescapes ultimately reproduce unequal global power structures.

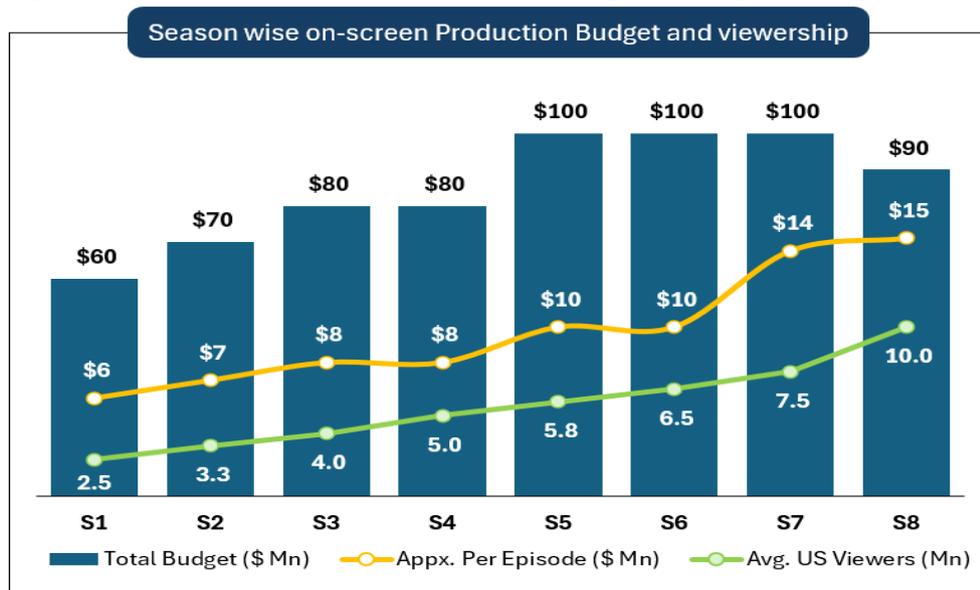
As part of the global media industry, the production of Game of Thrones relied on international capital for financing, distribution, and licensing across multiple national markets. HBO, as a principal corporate actor in the series’ production, operates within a global marketplace that enables access to substantial cross-border investment (Havens et al., 2009). Supported by these financial flows, HBO was able to deliver high-production-value content capable of attracting and sustaining a worldwide audience.

The financing, marketing, and distribution of Game of Thrones involved a highly complex network of global capital. Caldwell emphasizes that large-scale cinematic productions such as Game of Thrones rely on multiple forms of cross-border collaboration, ranging from capital investment and the use of international filming locations to transnational distribution networks. Filming sites in Northern Ireland, Croatia, Iceland, and Spain were selected not only for their aesthetic qualities but also for tax incentives and cost efficiency, illustrating how global capital strategically optimizes local resources in the service of global production (Caldwell, 2008).

Game of Thrones established an unprecedented benchmark for television production budgets over its eight-season run. The early seasons cost approximately USD 6–8 million per episode; however, as

the series progressed, production expenses increased dramatically. By Season 8, the cost per episode was estimated at around USD 15 million, driven by large-scale battle sequences, extensive visual effects, and elaborate set construction. These figures reflect on-screen production costs alone, which are estimated to total approximately USD 650–700 million across the series. Season 8 was the most expensive, with a budget of approximately USD 90 million for just six episodes (around USD 15 million per episode). Episodes centered on major battles such as “Battle of the Bastards” and “The Long Night” required particularly substantial investments in visual effects and logistical coordination.

**Figure 3. Estimated Production Costs and Viewership of *Game of Thrones***



Source: Oke (2025)

Beyond on-screen production expenditures, Oke (2025) identifies substantial hidden costs that fall outside the per-episode budget, including:

- a. Pre-production and development, such as scriptwriting, talent scouting, concept art, CGI pre-visualization, casting, and early-stage set construction;
- b. Marketing and promotion, encompassing global advertising campaigns, trailers, Comic-Con appearances, HBO promotional activities, and related merchandise;
- c. Post-production, including special effects, editing, sound design, reshoots, CGI refinement, dialogue re-recording, color grading, and sound mixing; and
- d. Administrative, overhead, and miscellaneous costs, such as travel, accommodation, insurance, on-set security, and logistics.

HBO is estimated to have spent approximately USD 1.5 billion on the production of *Game of Thrones* over its eight seasons. This level of financial investment redefined the economics of television production and established a new benchmark for high-end visual storytelling. Although HBO has not publicly disclosed direct revenue figures on a per-episode basis, the series’ most financially successful episodes can be inferred from audience ratings, merchandise sales, and streaming and licensing agreements. *Game of Thrones* ranks among the most expensive television productions in history, particularly in its later seasons, due to large-scale battle sequences, intensive CGI, and international filming locations. While the average production cost per episode in Season 8 was approximately USD 15 million, several individual episodes exceeded USD 20 million (Oke, 2025).

## **Global Media Distribution, Transnational Fandom, and Western Cultural Hegemony in Game of Thrones**

Within the framework of global capitalism, media does not merely function as a channel for distributing content but operates as a key ideological apparatus that produces, normalizes, and legitimizes particular worldviews at the global level (Mosco, 2009). Appadurai (1996) conceptualizes mediascapes as repertoires of images, narratives, and symbolic resources through which audiences imagine social reality across borders. In this study, mediascapes are not approached simply in terms of audience reach or platform expansion, but as sites of meaning production where narratives, symbols, and representational frames actively construct Western cultural dominance. In the case of Game of Thrones (GoT), global digital distribution and transnational fandom operate as mechanisms through which Western ideologies of power, civilization, and legitimacy are rendered familiar, desirable, and seemingly universal.

The global circulation of Game of Thrones through on-demand streaming platforms such as HBO Max exemplifies how mediascapes facilitate not only access but also ideological saturation. While the series reached audiences in more than 170 countries and attracted millions of viewers per episode (Statista, 2019), the significance of this reach lies less in numerical scale than in the standardization of narrative frames consumed across diverse cultural contexts. Through repetitive exposure, audiences encounter a coherent symbolic universe in which political authority, moral leadership, and historical progress are consistently associated with Western-coded institutions and identities. Mediascape, in this sense, functions as a soft power instrument by embedding Western norms into entertainment narratives that appear politically neutral yet carry strong ideological implications.

Social media platforms, particularly Twitter (X), further intensify this process by transforming narrative consumption into participatory meaning-making. Transnational discussions surrounding themes such as leadership, legitimacy, betrayal, and “deserved” power reproduce and circulate interpretive frameworks already encoded in the series. Although these discussions appear pluralistic, they largely operate within the ideological boundaries established by the show itself. As a result, social media fandom does not significantly contest dominant narratives but instead amplifies and normalizes them, reinforcing Western-centric understandings of politics and morality as common sense. This dynamic illustrates how mediascapes blur the boundary between entertainment and ideological socialization.

Transnational fandom, often celebrated as a space of cultural hybridity, in fact reveals the asymmetry of meaning production within the global mediascape. Jenkins’ (2003) notion of participatory culture suggests that fans actively contribute to media texts; however, in the case of Game of Thrones, fan creativity largely operates as a supplementary layer that extends, rather than challenges, the original ideological framework. HBO’s transmedia strategies ranging from international exhibitions to licensed merchandise, capitalize on fandom while maintaining strict control over narrative authority and symbolic capital (Peaslee & Vasquez, 2021). Consequently, fans across different regions function primarily as cultural consumers and distributors of Western narratives, rather than as autonomous producers of alternative meanings.

Crucially, the mediascape of Game of Thrones also works through symbolic exclusion and hierarchical representation. Non-Western regions such as Essos are framed through exoticized imagery and simplified moral binaries, while Westeros is depicted as the primary site of political rationality and legitimate governance. These representational patterns are not incidental but form part of a broader ideological framing that aligns with what Gramscian scholars describe as cultural hegemony: the ability of dominant groups to universalize their worldview through consent rather than coercion. Through global media circulation, these representations contribute to the internalization of Western superiority as natural and self-evident.

From a soft power perspective, Game of Thrones exemplifies how popular culture operates as an indirect yet powerful mechanism of influence. By embedding Western values within emotionally engaging narratives, the series shapes how global audiences imagine politics, civilization, and moral order without overt political messaging. Mediascape thus becomes a terrain where Western hegemony is reproduced not through explicit domination, but through aesthetic pleasure, emotional attachment, and narrative immersion. In this sense, the global success of Game of Thrones demonstrates that cultural power in the contemporary international system is exercised as much through symbolic narratives as through material capabilities.

### **Narratives of Power Ideology and Western Hegemony in the Ideoscape of Game of Thrones**

Within the framework of the global cultural economy, ideoscapes refer to the circulation of ideologies, values, symbols, and political imaginaries such as power, legitimacy, civilization, and social order that move unevenly across global contexts (Appadurai, 1996). In this study, ideoscapes are not treated as abstract ideas detached from media structures, but as ideological meanings actively produced, framed, and normalized through the global mediascape of Game of Thrones. This article argues that, as a cultural product sustained by HBO's transnational capital and global media infrastructure, Game of Thrones functions as a vehicle of Western soft power by embedding particular ideological narratives within globally circulated popular culture.

Narratively, Game of Thrones constructs a worldview in which politics is defined by constant struggle for power, strategic calculation, alliance-building, and the legitimate use of violence. Power is portrayed as something that must be seized, defended, and transmitted through domination, betrayal, and warfare, most visibly in the competing claims over the Iron Throne. As Riaz et al. (2021) note, such representations mirror real-world international relations, where political order is frequently framed as a zero-sum competition among powerful actors. Through its global circulation, this narrative normalizes an understanding of politics as inherently conflictual and hierarchical, shaping how global audiences imagine authority, stability, and legitimacy.

This framing resonates strongly with dominant Western paradigms of international relations that prioritize realism, power competition, and strategic dominance. Although Game of Thrones occasionally introduces themes of unity or moral responsibility, particularly in the face of existential threats, these moments remain subordinated to a broader ideological structure in which order is ultimately secured through centralized authority and coercive power. In this sense, the ideoscape of Game of Thrones does not merely reflect global politics but actively reproduces a Western-centric political imagination, positioning domination and hierarchy as natural features of world order.

The ideological work of the series becomes more explicit through its geopolitical symbolism. Westeros is consistently framed as the center of political rationality, institutional order, and moral authority, while regions beyond it most notably Essos are depicted as unstable, chaotic, and culturally inferior. This spatial division functions as an ideological map that mirrors global center-periphery relations. Westeros, often associated with Europe, is constructed as the locus of civilization and legitimate governance, whereas Essos is reduced to an exoticized periphery marked by slavery, fanaticism, and violence. Within Appadurai's ideoscape framework, this narrative geography reinforces a Western worldview in which progress, rationality, and order are implicitly monopolized by the West.

The Iron Throne itself operates as a powerful ideological symbol within this system. Beyond being a narrative object, the throne embodies an ideology of absolute domination and violence-based legitimacy. Its brutal physical form which constructed from melted swords, visually reinforces the idea that political authority is inseparable from coercion and conquest. As Kesseh (2023) argues, such symbolism parallels real-world hegemonic politics, where the pursuit of dominance often generates

prolonged conflict and human suffering. Yet, through repetition and narrative centrality, this ideology is rendered familiar and normalized for global audiences, illustrating how popular culture can naturalize hegemonic understandings of power.

The ideological hierarchy constructed in *Game of Thrones* is further reinforced through representational and symbolic practices. As illustrated in Figure 4, characters from noble houses are consistently framed as rational, morally complex, and politically legitimate leaders. Figures like Jon Snow and Daenerys Targaryen are positioned as embodiments of justice and rightful authority, reinforcing what Piórecka (2023) identifies as a “white savior” narrative, in which heroism and moral leadership are overwhelmingly associated with white characters. These representations function ideologically by aligning virtue, rationality, and legitimacy with Western racial identities.

**Figure 4. The Representation of Westerosi People in *Game of Thrones***



Source: Bussines Insider (2019)

Religious symbolism in Westeros further strengthens this ideological framing. The Faith of the Seven is portrayed as an orderly, institutionalized belief system with codified moral norms, closely resembling Western monotheistic traditions (Saunders, 2020). Empirical findings cited by Piórecka (2023) indicate that a majority of European and American viewers perceive Westeros’s religious and social order as more legitimate and “civilized” than those depicted in Essos. Such perceptions demonstrate how ideoscapes operate not only at the level of narrative, but also through audience interpretation shaped by repeated symbolic associations.

Figure 5. The Representation of People from Essos in *Game of Thrones*



Sumber: The British Museum (2017)

By contrast, representations of Essos, as shown in Figure 5, draw heavily on Orientalist tropes. Populations such as the Dothraki and enslaved communities in Meereen are depicted as violent, irrational, or culturally backward, reinforcing the stereotype that “the East is least” (Hardy, 2019). Religious practices associated with Essos, including the cult of R’hllor, are framed as fanatical and cruel, further entrenching the dichotomy between Western rationality and non-Western irrationality (Hardy, 2015). Piórecka (2023) finds that only 25 percent of Southeast Asian viewers perceive Essos positively, underscore the effectiveness of this ideological framing in shaping global audience perceptions.

The comparison between Westeros and Essos thus reveals a narrative structure that reinforces Western hegemony. Westeros is positioned as the embodiment of structured civilization, while Essos is framed as its primitive antithesis, reflecting an Orientalist worldview in which the West is implicitly constructed as superior (Hardy, 2015). From an international relations perspective, the ideoscapes of *Game of Thrones* promote Western values as universal, while marginalizing critiques from non-Western communities that view these representations as a form of cultural imperialism (Dyson, 2015). Global capital, mobilized through HBO, exploits these narratives to attract worldwide audiences, yet in doing so weakens cultural diversity by prioritizing Western-centric imagery. Despite its commercial success, such representations demand critical reflection on their broader implications for global cultural inequality.

Linguistic representation constitutes another critical dimension of the ideoscape. The hierarchical ordering of languages in *Game of Thrones* mirrors broader global linguistic politics. High Valyrian occupies the symbolic apex as a language of ancient imperial power, while the Common Tongue, rendered as English, functions as the default medium of communication and authority. Although English is not positioned as the most “prestigious” language within the fictional hierarchy, its dominance as the *lingua franca* of the global media industry grants it unparalleled symbolic power

(Rebane, 2019). Other languages are often associated with villainy, backwardness, or mistrust, reinforcing a linguistic hierarchy that aligns closely with real-world inequalities in global communication.

Taken together, these narrative, symbolic, and linguistic elements demonstrate that the ideoscape of Game of Thrones operates as an ideological extension of the global mediascape. Through repeated global circulation, the series normalizes Western values, political imaginaries, and hierarchies as universal, thereby functioning as an instrument of soft power. Within Appadurai's global cultural economy framework, Game of Thrones exemplifies how popular culture, supported by transnational capital and media infrastructures, contributes to the reproduction of Western cultural hegemony and center-periphery inequalities in the global order.

## **CONCLUSION**

This article contributes to critical literature on the Global Cultural Economy (GCE) by demonstrating that transnational cultural production is neither neutral nor horizontally structured, but deeply embedded in the power relations of global capitalism. Through the case of Game of Thrones, and by operationalizing Appadurai's five scapes, this study shows that financescape functions as the structurally dominant force, coordinating ethnoscape, technoscape, mediascape, and ideoscape in ways that reproduce Western cultural hegemony. This finding advances Appadurai's framework by empirically challenging the assumption of analytical equivalence among the scapes and re-centering financial power as the primary driver of global cultural flows.

Empirically, this study illustrates how Game of Thrones operates simultaneously as a global entertainment product and a mechanism of soft power. While transnational production sites benefit from short-term economic gains and technological exposure, they remain positioned within an asymmetric center-periphery structure, where creative authority, ideological control, and long-term value accumulation are concentrated in Western media corporations. The ideoscape of the series further legitimizes Eurocentric hierarchies by normalizing violence, domination, and Western political rationality as universal logics of power.

These findings carry important policy implications for developing countries that host global cultural productions. States should move beyond viewing global media projects solely as sources of tourism revenue or employment, and instead adopt cultural policies that strengthen local creative autonomy, negotiate fairer intellectual property arrangements, and ensure meaningful knowledge transfer. Without such interventions, participation in global cultural production risks reinforcing dependency rather than fostering sustainable cultural development.

Finally, this study opens several avenues for future research. Comparative studies across different global television series or streaming platforms could further test the hierarchical operation of the scapes. Audience reception studies in the Global South may also illuminate how hegemonic narratives are negotiated, resisted, or reinterpreted. More broadly, future research should continue integrating political economy, cultural studies, and international relations to better understand how global culture is produced, circulated, and contested under contemporary capitalism.

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