

# Strikes, tech, and the future of American cinema.

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A view of Los Angeles from the Hollywood sign

Jacob Sagers – SAG-AFTRA, Hollywood’s largest actor union representing over 160,000 employees, [voted](#) to go on strike earlier this week. The strike has brought nearly all production in Hollywood to an abrupt halt. The union is angry about tech companies controlling larger shares of film production while actors’ wages and opportunities stagnate. Broad changes to the film industry have come in recent years, with Netflix and other streaming services controlling larger shares of the market. Cable television subscriptions, once a pinnacle and staple of the American household, are predicted to fall nearly “64 million from today” by 2027. Movie theaters are also struggling. These challenges pose a question to American cultural influence and ideological power.

[Ideological Power](#) is the ability to make others to do what you want without force. Since World War 2, the rise of movie making in Hollywood has allowed the United States to have great ideological power through cultural standards and entertainment. Sometimes referenced as Americanization, the process of American cultural influence and power worldwide has been partially represented through the dominance of American cinema at worldwide box offices in previous decades. However, a changing market and competitors threaten the status quo and could reduce American ideological power. The COVID-19 epidemic hastened problems faced by movie theaters and cable television with Netflix, Paramount, and other streaming services becoming more popular. A lot of these companies are owned by tech firms, such as Apple, which are newcomers to Hollywood and do not have the same existing contracts and opportunities for actors. The buildup in tensions led to the strike is only one symptom of a complex issue.

More of the issue includes that streaming services are not yet completely profitable as they try to reach a global market. Their constraint could kill American film making if revenues are not met, actors are not paid, and labor disagreements are not resolved. If the American film industry is unable to adapt to future entertainment standards, American ideological power worldwide will diminish. Hollywood’s portrayal of the United States in an idealistic manner has helped American influence expand worldwide. Other competitors in countries where markets have not shifted in the same way might fill the void. If Hollywood cannot overcome these problems, American ideological power, policy, and influence will have a harder time finding ways to make it to the box office.

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