I. Corporate News and the Social Construction of “Unreality”

A. Structure of Corporate News

1. concentration of ownership

a. domestic

b. international

2. television news

a. shared monopoly

b. source for majority of Americans

B. Goal: profit

1. expand viewership in order to increase advertising revenue

2. cut costs

3. maintain positive relationship with advertisers

C. Result

1. new as entertainment

a. news is “wrapper”: attracting viewers

b. advertising is “package”: what is really being delivered

c. News director to anchor: “Don’t get too full of yourself. Just remember you fill up the empty space between commercial

2. new as propaganda

a. reinforce dominant narratives about American society

b. manufacture of consent

3. undermining of U.S. democracy

a. democracy and the First Amendment: Jefferson

b. function of journalism in democracy

4. social construction of “unreality”

a. uninformed citizenry

i. collective illusion about American society and the world

ii. unable to identify policies that are and are not in their interests

b. passive citizenry (Tarde, Lippmann)

i. watching tv

ii. cell phone tweeting their “resistance”

II. TV News as entertainment:

A. “Look”

1. Short visually stunning segments between 30 seconds and

two minutes: avg >a minute

2. juxtaposed to suit advertisers

3. pods of commercials every three to five minutes

a. three minutes

b. about 30 seconds per, including advertising and promos

4. bumpers before the commercial, stay tuned.

B. Stories: Content

1. “The Hype”: Teasers

2. “The Hook”: “if it bleeds it leads”

3. natural disasters

3. disease

4. car crashes, plane and train crashes

5. “war”

6. celebrities

7. political coverage

a. polls and strategy

b. results of surveys

c. who won the debate?

a. surveys

b. pundits

C. Total news time

1. local: 10 minutes

2. national: 20 minutes

J. “Unreality”

1. “Fear being murdered by a stranger”

a. Annenberg Study

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/150464/americans-believe-crime-worsening.aspx>

b. actions

c. policies supported

d. militarization of police: SWAT

i.45,000 raids per year +1400% since 1980s

ii.80% serve drug warrants to private residences, also doctors’ offices, private poker games,

iii. No knock, 60% violent entry, flash bang grenades, automatic weapons

iv. Wrong house! NYC 1 in 10, 1/3 find no drugs, less than one third find weapons

v.Primarily target minorities and low income

e. <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2015/jun/01/the-counted-police-killings-us-database#>

d. reality

2. “Death from Ebola”

a. chances of dying from Ebola

b. reality

3. “In a crisis the poor and minorities will loot, rob, rape and murder.”

a. New Orleans

b. reality

II. TV News as Propaganda

A. ? It is not directly controlled by government, how then can government

control it.

B. “cutting costs” and propaganda

C. Cutting costs

1. close news bureaus all over world

2. fire staff, including reporters

3. no investigative reports

<http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/mon-january-14-2013/investigating-investigative-journalism>

4. “shared services agreements” (83 markets)

a. video news stories

b. local interviews, graphics

c. scripts

D. Consequences for corporate “journalism”

1. dependent upon:

a. press releases: government and corporate

b. press conferences/briefings: government

c. public relations firms: VNR: video news release

d. government news releases (GNR)

e. centralized sources

i. AP, NYTimes

ii. stenographers for those in power (see a-d)

iii. native advertising

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_F5GxCwizc&feature=youtu.be>

f. new journalistic norm

i. objectivity = “balance”

ii. present both sides: guests on never-ending 24hr “news” shows

iii. journalist: remains neutral

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjuGCJJUGsg>

g. experts

i. government officials, business execs,

Military and ex-military, intelligence and ex-intelligence

a. conflicts of interest

b. marginal professional or academic competence

c. no constraints on lying or misrepresenting the truth

d. acceptable boundaries of thought

ii.Think tanks: American Enterprise Institute, Brookings Institute

iii.pr firms: dial an “expert”

iv. front groups: American Council on Science and Health, Californians for Statewide Smoking Restrictions

2. Uninformed Public: view of world from point of view of powerful

a. economic recovery

b. no global warming

c. elections determine something!

d. wars of self-defense