I. Soci

A. Traditional idea

1. def: capacity of person or group to realize desired interests even against the resistance of others (Weber)

2. assumptions

a. person/groups are able to identify interests

b. within society there are persons/groups with different and conflicting interests

c. person/groups can act individually or collectively in order to achieve their goals

d. person or group can gain/maintain power in society

3. power and society

a. shape and control social institutions to further interests/ maintain power

i. economic

ii. political

iii. ideological

iv. legal

v. military

b. control and/or eliminate opposition

4. means

a. force

b. propaganda

c. ideology

d. institutional subversion

5. new means

1. it is deployed by corporate media

i. entertainment

ii. advertising

iii. news

b. power of the image

c. “produces subjectivity”

i. compliant subjects who don’t resist

ii. experience domination as freedom

iii. do not need to be forced, lied to, or convince through

ideologies

iv. fascist utopia or consumer utopia

d. “create reality”

i. consumer reality

ii. entertainment genre

iii. news and “American Exceptionalism”

D. Constellation of Power: Corporatism

1. Large corporations dominate constellation

a. socially constructed phenomenon

b. governed by an institutional logic and legal decision

c. U.S. economy

i. size

ii. concentration

iii. shared monopolies

1. goals:

i. control over other institutions

ii. maximize profit

1. interests

i. lower taxes

ii. privatization

iii. deregulation

iv. expansion

v. wealthfare

2. Control economic system

a. labor

b. means of production

c. market

d. communities

3. control the political system (“power networks)

a. campaign financing

b. lobbying

c. regulatory appointments (revolving door)

d. benefit

i. wealthfare

ii. deregulation

iii. privatization

iv. “bailouts”

4. own mass media

a. corporate owned

b. advertising sponsored

c. concentration of ownership

d. benefit: power to frame social discourse

i. controls information

ii. controls ideas

iii. experts

e. benefit: advertising

i. subjectivity is constructed

ii. compliant subjects who experience domination as freedom

iii. branding children and the triumph of consumerism

iv. “I buy therefore I am”

5. education

a. underfunding

b. gatekeeping: knowledge and class

c. devaluing knowledge and intelligence

d. social construction of ignorance and passivity

6. judicial/criminal justice system

a. judges

i. campaign financing

ii. lobbying

iii. appointments

b. laws

c. two cj systems

7. military-industrial complex

(military-industrial-intelligence-security complex)

a. allocation of resources

b. weapons contractors

c. security contractors (2003/3,512; 2006/116,000)

c. “empire of bases”/ benefits of war

d. . privatization

8. Christian right

1. economically: aligned with interests of capitalist class

b. politically: aligned with Republican party

c. what power do they have?

B. Traditional Theories of Power: Pluralist, Power Elite, State

1. Pluralist

a. power

i. fluid, not concentrated

ii. decentralized

iii. power is legitimate (consensus)

iv. no one person or group

v. compromise

b. public has power

i. electoral process

ii. interest groups to shape public opinion

iii. lobby

c. institutions are neutral

d. conventional wisdom: US

i. representative political system

transparency, accountability

parties

elections

ii. competitive economy

iii. open educational system

iv. free press

2. Power Elite (C. Wright Mills)

a. society governed by elite triumvirate

b. hold command positions

i. political system: president, high level cabinet officials

ii. economy: corporate owners and directors

iii. military: leaders

c. cohesive= common outlook

d. make “trunk decisions”

i. major foreign policy and domestic decisions

ii. decisions frame debates and possibilities

e. other institutions shaped historically by power elite

i. education

ii. media

3. State autonomy theory

a. government is predominant power

b. “state”

c. monopoly on the use of force

d. defense

e. regulation and taxation

f. power over corporations

C. Two other theories

1. Domhoff: class domination theory

a. economic elite (corporate community) has power in U.S.

i. core composition: managers and owners of large corporations

ii. combined economic and social class

iii. cohesive community

common economic interests

common social experiences

social interactions

b. evidence

i. who rules?

ii. who wins?

iii. who benefits?

c. how: control political system through power networks

i. special-interest process: lobbyists, trade associations

ii. policy-planning process: foundations, think tanks

iii. candidate selection process: campaign financing

iv. opinion-shaping process: PR firms, media

2. Institutional or structural theory of power (Chomsky)

a. power is impersonal, embedded in institutions

1. institutions are governed by internal logic

c. agency constrained by logic of institutions

d. dominant institution: corporation

e. internal logic of corporation: maximize return on investment for shareholders.

f. creates a system of power relationships: constellation of power