I. Conflict theory

A. C. Wright Mills and the Theory of the Power Elite

1. Who are the power elite?

a. triumvirate

i. leaders from three areas

political system

economy

military

ii. historically

iii. interconnect

iv. 1960s: supremacy of military

v. cold war

military most essential org

military leaders influence domestic and foreign policies

determine distribution of resources: permanent war economy

control population

culture of fear

control public discourse: patriotism vs dissent

b. elite: cohesive w/ common world view

i. common economic interests

ii. common world view

iii. common policy goals

2. Nature of Power

a. command positions

i. president, high level cabinet officials

ii. corporate owners and directors

iii. military leaders

b. make “trunk decisions”

i. major foreign policy and domestic decisions

ii. decisions frame debates and possibilities

iii. mass media functions within these “frames”

c. institutions of manipulation

i. education

ii. media

(dis) inform

distract

consumerism

iii. public intellectuals