I. Social Construction, Power and Theories of Power

A. Theories of power historically

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

2. Identify a person, group, class that control society.

3. Identify the interests of the dominant group and how those interests conflict with other groups etc

4. Demonstrate the means by which they dominate society despite resistance

a. coercion

i. punishment

ii. threats

iii. torture

iv. limits of coercion

b. propaganda

i. lies, misstatements, faulty arguments, appeals to emotion that serve those in power

ii. House of Truth

c. ideology

i. system of ideas that justify power arrangement

ii. goal: powerless accept ideology (‘false consciousness”)

iii. Neo-classical economic theory

d. shape and control institutions

i. economic

ii. political

iii. ideological: education and mass media

iv. legal

v. military/police

B. Examples

1. Power Elite

a. U.S. is ruled by small elite group

b. “command” positions in three areas (orders)

i. political, economic and military

ii. common interests, goals, and world view

c. “trunk decisions”:

i. domestic policies: “business is business of America”

ii. foreign policy: “further U.S. business interests globally”

d. “debate”

i. health care reform

ii. financial crisis of 2007

e. elite act to advance own goals and against interests of the people

i. people need to manipulated so their consent is manufactured

ii. control of “free” media

iii. education

2. Class Domination Theory

a. upper class rules the U.S.

i. economic class: top 1%

ii. social class: association and world view

b. upper class controls economy (with little resistance)

i. ownership of the means of production

ii. interlocking directorates

iii. power elite exists within upper class

c. upper class controls political system (power networks)

i. candidate selection process

guarantees whoever wins election will represent upper class

works through campaign financing

ii. special interest process: lobbying

whoever goes to Congress passes legislation that benefits the upper class, or makes sure legislation that benefits people doesn’t get passed

works through lobbying

iii. policy planning process

organizations heavily funded by rich

think tanks, foundations, universities

“research”, create and write legislation

examples: “fracking is not harmful to the environment”,

“Affordable Care Act,” “Medicare Prescription Drug Bill”

“Clear Skies”, “Healthy Forests” “Monsanto Exclusion”

iv. opinion shaping process

control of ideological institutions: education, mass media, church

goal: manufacture consent

d. Empirically verifiable: Who serves? Who wins? Who benefits?

C. Postmodern Critiques of theories of power

1. Baudrillard

a. modern technologies have created a hyperreality

b. primary relationship of people is to hyperreality

2. Foucault

a. power creates compliant subjectivities

b. don’t need to be manipulate (coerce, lied to, or convince)

c. internalize norms and values of domination

d. Foucault: knowledge/power

3. Ewen

a. power to create reality and subjectivity is image

b. it is deployed by corporate media

i. entertainment (isn’t just entertainment)

ii. pr/advertising (isn’t just selling things)

iii. news/pr (isn’t about the world)

iv. video games (isn’t just about playing)

c. “create reality”: American Exceptionalism aka Americanism

i. no class conflict

no socialism, no Marxism

workers and capitalists in harmonious relationship

1950s: America as “finished society”

ii. American individualism

self-interested

self-willing

autonomous individual

captain of “his” ship

iii. model democracy

iv. model free market

v. cultural model to world: consumer utopia

vi. America is benevolent citizen of the world

vii. Myth of Peaceful and inevitable Progress

II. Mass Media and the Social Construction of Reality

A. Modern Cave

1. 11 hours a day in the average home

2. teens 7+ hours a day for media (college students female +10 hrs)

3. 75% get most or all of their information from television or related web sites

4. 90% time: corporate owned advertising sponsored

a. television 100% revenue/ 1/3 of time

b. radio 100% revenue/ 1/3 of time

c. newspapers 80% revenue/ 1/2 to 2/3 space

d. magazines 75% revenue/ 1/2 to 2/3 space

5. advertising

a. children: 16,000-20,000 commercials per year

b. adult 65: 9 years of life, and 2 million commercials

c. $500 billion business

4. video games

5. social networking

B. Concentration of Ownership

1. Trend: Increasing ^ 8 companies own 25,000 media outlets

2. Ownership ^in all media

a. TV and film: 5 or 6 companies

b. radio: Clear Channel

c. magazines: 3 corps own 11,000

d. newspapers: 80% corporate owned 1% competition

e. book publishing: four companies

d. music: worldwide 6 corps 80% of revenue

3. Shared monopolies: Telecommunications Act of 1996

4. Shared ownership

5. Interlocking directorates

a. 11 media corps have 36 direct

v. 8 media corps have board members

in 144 of the largest corporations

6. Global

7. Example: Time/Turner/Warner

Time-Turner-Warner-AOL

⇓

Warner film and TV production( including library and cartoons)

⇓

Cable network CW

⇓

TV Channels, Broadcast and Cable

⇓

Cable System

⇓

Movie theaters

⇓

⇐ ⇒

Magazines Music Publishing Retail Stores Sports Teams Toys AOL

Interlocking directorates:

American Express, Chevron, Citigroup, Colgate Palmolive, Dell, Fed Ex, Pepsico,

Pfizer, Sears

Synergy= vertical integration (production, distribution and exhibition of media content)

+horizontal integration(media content transformed to fit into all areas of distribution)/

C. Corporate News and social construction of reality

1. reinforce American Exceptionalism

2. distracting “reality”

3. profit

a. customers: advertisers

i. content attracts viewers

ii. viewers sold to advertisers

iii. more viewers=higher price to advertisers=profit^

b. expansion

i. domestic

ii. global

iii. 24 hr “news channels”

c. cost reduction

i. close bureaus

ii. cut staff, including reporters

iii. no investigative reports

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

iv. hire studio personalities “talking heads”

v. “shared services agreements” (83 markets)

video news stories

local interviews, graphics

scripts

office space

news director

4. Consequences for corporate “journalism”

a. dependent upon:

i. press releases

ii. press conferences/briefings

iii. guest experts: knowledgeable, objective professionals

experts and the war in Iraq

experts and health care

iv. public relations firms

function: sell an idea, a company, a policy, a country

public can be manipulated

appeal to emotions

“truth is not discovered but created”: Nayirah

VNR: video news release

v. government news releases (GNR)

Statue of Saddam

vi. access

vii. centralized sources

viii. new journalistic norm

“balance” is not the way to the truth

journalist: present both sides

journalist: remains neutral

b. local news as “advertainment”

i. advertising 30%

ii. violence: “If it bleeds, it leads”

iii. natural disasters (i. +ii. 54%)

Haiti

Philippines

Hurricane Katrina

<http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/mon-october-24-2005/hurricane-wilma>

iv. diseases: SARS, West Nile Virus, “The Flu”!!!

v. personalities

<http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/mon-august-2-2010/daily-show--8-2-10-in--60-seconds>

vi. political coverage

horse race: who is ahead in the race(polls), how can one horse stay ahead or get ahead (strategies), which horse won the “fake” debate and is it ahead now or still behind, which horse looks best (photo ops), which horse will win (speculation)

debates: Lincoln Douglas (12th), KennedyNixon (10th), ClintonBush (7th/6th )

I. Inside Job

<http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-march-4-2009/cnbc-financial-advice>

<http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/mon-march-9-2009/in-cramer-we-trust>