PROPAGANDA ANALYSIS: A CASE STUDY OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S MINORITY OUTREACH CAMPAIGN PROMOTING THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The story broke January 7, 2005; the headline read: "Education Deparment paid commentator to promote law." Toppo (2005) reported,

> Seeking to build support among black families for its education reform law, the Bush administration paid a prominent black pundit $240,000 to promote the law on his national syndicated television show and to urge other black journalists to do the same (p. A01).

Debate erupted from politicians, journalists and public relations practitioners regarding the legality and ethicality of the arrangement. It begged the question: Is this propaganda?

Propaganda permeates our information-driven society and appears where most would not expect it. While its most notable past use may have been during wartime, it is found in our politics, news and education (Delwiche, 2002; Doob, 1935; Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999; Severin & Tankard, 2001). These three arenas came together in 2003 when Ketchum, a public relations firm under contract with the U.S. Department of Education, was instructed to cut a deal with Armstrong Williams, a news commentator and public relations executive, to promote the governmental education program known as No Child Left Behind. Williams was actually paid $252,931 of taxpayers' money to periodically comment on the No Child Left Behind Act during his broadcasts, to interview Rod Paige, then Secretary of Education, for radio and television spots to be

aired during his show in 2004, and to use his contacts to encourage others in the media to favorably cover No Child Left Behind (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

John Gibbons, a spokesperson for the Department of Education, said that the purpose of the campaign was "to reach out to minority audiences… (and) put out basic information to audiences" (Kurtz, 2005, p. A01). Gibbons also claimed that the contract with Williams conformed to standard government procedures (Toppo, 2005).

When asked about putting an end to paying commentators for policy promotion during a January 26, 2005 press conference the President responded,

> I expect my Cabinet Secretaries to make sure that that practice doesn't go forward. There needs to be independence. And Mr. Armstrong Williams admitted he made a mistake. And we didn't know about this in the White House, and there needs to be a nice, independent relationship between the White House and the press, the administration and the press. So, no, we shouldn't be going for it (Bush, 2005a).

Bush concluded this line of questions by stating, "Our Cabinet Secretaries must realize that we will not be paying commentators to advance our agenda. Our agenda ought to be able to stand on its own two feet."

The Department of Education deal was brought up again in the March 16 press conference after the Justice Department issued a related opinion. Bush then said, "There is a Justice Department opinion that says these—these pieces are within the law, so long as they're based upon facts, not advocacy. And I expect our agencies to adhere to that ruling, to that Justice Department opinion" (Bush, 2005b).

Armstrong Williams responded to the initial story in *USA Today*. He acknowledged that the contract could be perceived as unethical, but claimed he "wanted

to do it because it's something I believe in" (Toppo, 2005). Throughout the initial turmoil Ketchum refused to comment. Even when CEO, Ray Kotcher, discussed the scandal in his *PR Week* (2005) editorial piece, he focused solely on the impact of the event on the industry and glossed over Ketchum's role in the contract.

One side defended the campaign as a legal outreach program (Toppo, 2005); the other side condemned it as "covert propaganda" (Miller, 2005; Pelosi *et al.*, 2005). The goal of this thesis was to use a propaganda framework to examine the campaign by conducting a through qualitative analysis of this controversial campaign.

Background

No Child Left Behind

The No Child Left Behind Act was proposed by George W. Bush during his first week in office; he called it a "cornerstone of my Administration" (U.S. Department of Education, 2005a). After negotiations, including the removal of provisions for a voucher system in which students could transfer to private or religious schools, the law passed with considerable support—a 87-10 vote in the Senate and 381-41 vote in the House—and was signed into law on January 8, 2002. According to the U.S. Department of Education Web site (2005a), the law was based on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and focused on "four pillars," accountability, state and community freedom, educational methods and parent choices.

The accountability portion of the law focused on student testing. All schools and all students (at least 95%) must participate. Results had to be reported both generally for the school as well as for sub-groups within the school. Sub-groups include ethnic, racial,

disability and economic groups, as well as students with limited English language proficiency. The purpose was stated to be assurance that students were performing at their grade level thereby closing the "achievement gap" (U.S. Department of Education, 2005a).

The state and community freedom pillar referred to the provision that rewards "high accountability" with the flexibility to reallocate federal funding. There were four major State grant programs, and up to 50% of the funding from these could be moved to programs for teacher quality, educational technology, innovation, school safety and drug education, or disadvantaged children (U.S. Department of Education, 2005a).

The focus on educational methods encompassed recommendations for practices to improve education at the school level, a focus on reading and math skills, and teacher standards and continuing education programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2005a).

The final pillar, referred to as parent—and student—choices, set up a system where students at consistently under-achieving schools could transfer to another public school in their school district. Students at a "persistently dangerous school" as identified by their state or students who had been victims of a violent crime at school were also eligible to transfer under this provision. Students changing schools under the school choice provision had to be provided transportation by the school district (U.S. Department of Education, 2005a).

There was relatively little media coverage of the bill in the year between its proposal and passage. Media interest built in the month prior to its passage and steadily increased since then. Proponents called the law a historic education reform to assist often over-looked students; opponents referred to the program as "counterproductive" and

"destructive;" key concerns focused on the law being an unfunded mandate (Bruce, 2001; N.A., 2001; Sanchez, 2001).

Who is Armstrong Williams?

Williams was born in 1959 and grew up in Marion, South Carolina. He received a B.A. in political science and English in 1981 from South Carolina State University. Soon after, he began his career by spending one year as an aide to the late Senator Strom Thurmond, a South Carolina Republican, and then four years as an assistant to Clarence Thomas, who at that time was the chairman of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Williams was introduced to the public relations field as a vice president of governmental and international affairs with B&C Associates. The company was self-described as the "oldest and most widely respected African American owned public relations and crisis management group in the United States" (H.W. Wilson, 2004; Williams, 2005).

Williams' first book *Beyond Blame: How We Can Succeed by Breaking the Dependency Barrier* was published in 1995 by Simon and Schuster. It was republished under the title *Letters to a Young Victim: Hope and Healing in America's Cities* in 1996. Williams' second book, *The New Racists: How Liberal Democrats Have Betrayed Minority Americans* was slated for July 2006 release. Williams had a syndicated television program, radio show and newspaper column (Keen & Drinkard, 2005; Williams, 2005). Although his syndication service Tribune Media Services dropped him after the scandal, Williams is still self-syndicated. He has been a regular guest on CNN, CNBC and NPR (H.W. Wilson, 2004; Williams, 2005).

Armstrong Williams, known for his Christian advocacy and conservative values, was dubbed by *The Washington Post* as "one of the most recognizable conservative voices in America." In addition to his journalistic duties, Williams was the CEO and founder of the public relations and media firm the Graham Williams Group and The Right Side Production, Inc. (H.W. Wilson, 2004; Williams, 2005).

The Deal

The Office of the Inspector General published a *Review of Formation Issues Regarding the Department of Education's Fiscal Year 2003 Contract with Ketchum, Inc. for Media Relations Services* that outlined the two-part deal with Armstrong Williams. The minority outreach campaign was crafted as a sub-contract for a pre-existing contract with Ketchum, a large public relations practice. The minority outreach campaign originally went into effect on December 2, 2003; it was extended on June 24, 2004. The Graham Williams group was paid $113,441.06 and $139,490.56 respectively for the two contracts (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005).

The second contract, which was nearly identical to the first (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005) stated that:

> Ketchum, the contractor, shall arrange for production of two television and two radio ads that would run on the 'Right Side' for six months. The ads shall include the Secretary and Mr. Williams and shall focus on NCLB. Ketchum shall arrange for Mr. Williams to regularly comment on NCLB during the course of his broadcasts (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

The contract (U.S. Department of Education, 2003) went on to clarify that the ads were to be produced by the Graham Williams Group, Armstrong Williams' public

relations firm and the subcontractor of this agreement. The ads were to run on all the show's affiliates for 23 weeks. The contract also called for Williams to feature U.S. Department of Secretary Rod Paige and "other Department officials" on the show and to utilize his "long term working relationship with America's Black Forum" to encourage others to cover No Child Left Behind.

The Fallout

News of the Department of Education deal with Armstrong Williams broke on January 7, 2005. Reporter, Greg Toppo, announced in *USA Today* that Armstrong Williams had been paid $240,000 to help promote the Department of Education's No Child Left Behind Act. Williams responded in Toppo article that "I wanted to do it because it's something I believe in" (Toppo, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

The same day, Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Representative Henry Waxman, Representative David Obey, Representative George Miller and Representative Elijah Cummings wrote a letter to President Bush denouncing the Department of Education/Williams campaign and related campaigns. They referred to it as "covert propaganda," as well as "unethical and dangerous" and demanded that the President publicly condemn this practice (Pelosi *et al.*, 2005).

Representative Miller also wrote to the Inspector General that day. In the letter he requested "an immediate and full investigation" into the legality and ethics of the campaign. Miller stressed that his request had no connection to the merit of any government policy, only how that policy had be promoted (Miller, 2005).

Both the request to the President to condemn the practice and the request to the Inspector General to investigate were filled. When asked in the January 26 presidential

press conference (Bush, 2005a) if he planned to order an end to the practice of paying commentators to promote policy Bush replied, “Yes, I am. I expect my Cabinet Secretaries to make sure that that practice doesn’t go forward.” In April 2005, the Inspector General published the complete report requested by Representative Miller. It was found that the contract with Ketchum and the two subcontracts with the Graham Williams Group represented no violations of contract law or ethics (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005).

On February 2, 2005 Senator Frank Lautenberg introduced the Stop Government Propaganda Act in the U.S. Senate. Lautenberg claimed the legislation put teeth in existing anti-propaganda laws. The bill had two major provisions. It made the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, traditionally added as a rider, a permanent law. The second change added stronger enforcement power for the law, calling for the U.S. Justice Department to enforce it. When the Department of Justice “fail[ed] to act” private citizens could sue. The bill also called for withholding the salary of any Department head who refused to meet a Government Accountability Office’s office ruling on funding propaganda ("Stop Government Propaganda Act," 2005).

Later that same year, Lautenberg proposed a second bill, the Truth in Broadcasting Act of 2005. The purpose of this act was to amend the Communications Act of 1934. It would require the U.S. government to fully disclose its role in any “prepackaged news stories” it distributed. It also prohibited the removal of disclosure notifications from the pieces ("Truth in Broadcasting Act of 2005," 2005).

On September 30, 2005, the Government Accountability Office issued its opinion concerning the Department of Education/Williams campaign. It stated that because the

Department of Education took no steps to ensure that the public was informed that it was the source of the campaign headed by Armstrong Williams, the campaign amounted to "covert propaganda" and was in violation of the Consolidated Appropriation Act of 2004 and therefore also the Anti-Deficiency Act (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2005b).

Similar Cases

This was not the first time the government had promoted its interests by paying public relations firms to help secure news coverage. The Bush administration had been condemned twice previously for lack of transparence when using video news releases (VNRs) to promote policy (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2005a, May 19, 2005 2005). According to the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), a VNR is produced by an organization outside the news media, often a public relations firm. It is designed to look like a television news segment and fit seamlessly into news programming. Many are distributed to the media with suggested lead-ins for the news anchors to use in introducing the piece. Because these pieces are designed to look and sound like genuine news pieces, it is often unclear that the source is an organization outside the news agency which aired it (Public Relations Society of America, 2004).

According to *ABC World News Tonight* ("Managing the news," 2005), the Clinton administration was the first to employ VNRs to promote policy. However, the key difference was that the Clinton administration claimed that each release included identification of its government source. In contrast, the George W. Bush administration was admonished by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) twice for its less than transparent VNR efforts.

The first time, Ketchum, the same public relations firm heading up the No Child Left Behind campaign, was the contractor for a January 2004 Medicare prescription drug plan VNR. In the case, Ketchum, on behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services, produced three VNRs, two in English and one in Spanish. The VNRs consisted of three parts: video clips to be incorporated in segments reproduced by news agencies, introductions, conclusions and facts which also could be incorporated into a new story, and prepackaged news reports intended to be run "as is" (Barstow *et al.*, 2005; Kornblut, 2005; "Managing the news," 2005; U.S. Government Accountability Office, May 19, 2005 2005).

The English story packages featured Karen Ryan (a former news reporter turned spokesperson for hire) and an interview with Health and Human Services Secretary, Tommy G. Thompson. The VNRs took a pro-Medicare stance, not the balanced view one would expect of a true news story. Much of the criticism of these pieces focused on the signoff "This is Karen Ryan, reporting." The Spanish version, which received less scrutiny, had a similar conclusion. Critics claimed this was misleading and Ryan should have closed instead by announcing her affiliation, i.e. "This is Karen Ryan, for the Department of Health and Human Services" (Barstow et al., 2005; Kornblut, 2005; "Managing the news," 2005; U.S. Government Accountability Office, May 19, 2005 2005).

On May 19, 2004 the Government Accountability Office issued a decision stating that:

1. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services's (CMS) use of appropriated funds to pay for the production and distribution of story packages that were not

attributed to CMS violated the restriction on using appropriated funds for publicity or propaganda purposes in the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution of 2003, Pub. L. No. 108-7, Div. J, Tit. VI, § 626, 117 Stat. 11, 470 (2003).

2. CMS, in using appropriations in violation of the publicity or propaganda prohibition, incurred obligation in excess of appropriations available for that purpose. See B-300325, Dec. 13, 2002. Accordingly, CMS violated the Antideficiency Act, 31 U.S.C. § 1341, and must report the violation to the Congress and President in accordance with 31 U.S.C. § 1351 and Office of Management and Budget Circular No. A-11 (U.S. Government Accountability Office, May 19, 2005 2005, 2005).

The VNR package was labeled so that the media outlets receiving would know it was from an outside source. However, the GAO held that the story packages intended for the viewing audience must also be labeled in such as way that the audience could be aware of the true source. The GAO declared that the Medicare VNRs were "covert propaganda."

On July 30, 2004 the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) issued a memorandum opinion contradicting the GAO's opinion. They found that the Department of Health and Human Services' VNRs did not constitute covert propaganda. It was first noted that the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 specifically required the broad dissemination of information concerning the Act's prescription drug coverage, discount card program and transitional assistance for low-income people. The USDOJ also said that the language of the VNRs made clear that the "reporters" were citing opinions of Medicare officials (U.S. Department of Justice, 2004).

The USDOJ claimed that the GAO focused too narrowly on the covert portion of covert propaganda and ignored that the piece must also meet the definition of propaganda as it is commonly understood (this definition was not offered in the report), which the USDOJ says it did not. It "takes as a given that the VNRs… are purely informational in content," and because they did not advocate action to be taken, the pieces did not meet the definition of propaganda (U.S. Department of Justice, 2004).

The investigation into the Medicare VNRs prompted a second investigation; this time into VNRs produced by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). The ONDCP produced seven VNRs in an attempt to fulfill the Drug-Free Media Campaign Act of 1998, which required the ONDCP to conduct a "National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign." Like the Medicare VNRs, these were clearly labeled for the media outlets as VNRs, but the material prepared for the viewing audience did not explicitly state the source of the piece. The ONDCP argued that because news media outreach was part of their charge the publicity and propaganda ban in the annual Consolidated Appropriations Resolution did not apply. The GAO disagreed and found that this was also a case of covert propaganda (Connolly, 2005; U.S. Government Accountability Office, January 4, 2005).

The Roles of Public Relations and Journalism

The Public Relation Society of America (PRSA) officially defines public relations as "help[ing] an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other." The organization focuses on the role of research, long-term systematic approaches, communicating to multiple audiences and evaluation (Public Relations Society of America, 2005).

Likewise, the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) offers a definition of journalism. According to SPJ, the role of journalists is to provide the public with the information needed to maintain self-government. This information must be "accurate, comprehensive, timely and understandable" (Society of Professional Journalists, 1996b).

Beres (2005) points out the key difference between journalism and public relations comes down to for whom you work. Journalists work for the public; public relations practitioners work for the client. While some of the tools may be the same the two professions are quite different in their main objective. Beres (2005) takes issue with labeling those in public relations "journalists" and goes so far as to state that the two should not be taught under an umbrella school of journalism and communication, as they are in most colleges and universities.

Statement of Problem

When the arrangement between Armstrong Williams and the U.S. Department of Education surfaced, it was an immediate source of debate among the media, public relations industry, government and general public. Members of the news media and public relations industries questioned the legality of the deal, but much of their discussion focused on the deal's ethics and how it reflected poorly on both industries (Kotcher, 2005; Toppo, 2005).

In Congress, representatives condemned the arrangement and demanded an investigation. Representative George Miller, ranking minority member of the House education and workforce committee, wrote to the Inspector General the day the story broke. He said:

> The use of covert propaganda by the federal government is unethical and illegal and is extremely dangerous to our society. For our government to participate in the undermining of public confidence in government is deeply disturbing and troublesome. Such behavior must not be allowed to continue (Miller, 2005, p. 1).

There were at least three laws that could have potentially been violated by the agreement between the Department of Education and Armstrong Williams. First was the Anti-Lobbying Act which bars the spending of any Congressional appropriation on "personal service, advertisement, telegram, telephone, letter, printed or written matter, or other device" with intent to effect policy ("Anti-Lobbying Act," 1948). Second, the Anti-Deficiency Act forbids any spending by officials which was not expressly authorized by Congress ("Anti-Deficiency Act," 1974). Finally, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004 states "no part of any appropriation contained in this or any other Act shall be used for publicity or propaganda purposes within the United States not heretofore authorized by Congress" ("Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004," 2004).

One side defended the campaign as a legal outreach program (Toppo, 2005); the other side condemned it as "covert propaganda" (Miller, 2005; Pelosi et al., 2005). This was a highly controversial situation that could represent an illegal use of public funds if it proves to be an example of propaganda. In the very least, the resulting controversy will change the way public relations and government outreach are perceived by the public and, hopefully, the way they work together in the future.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to provide a thorough and comprehensive examination of the Department of Education/Williams campaign. This was accomplished by subjecting it to Jowett and O'Donnell's (1999) 10-point propaganda framework. The framework was based on a composite of accepted definitions of propaganda. Jowett and O'Donnell also provided expected outcomes for each point that are characteristic of propaganda. While the framework assumed a propaganda campaign was being used, it still supplied expectations of an analysis for propaganda in each point of the framework. Arguments that the Department of Education/Williams campaign was in fact an example of propaganda were supported or opposed based on how closely the campaign met the framework's expectations of propaganda.

The event had raised concerns over the blurring line between what is and is not acceptable in public relations. Ray Kotcher (2005), Ketchum CEO, dubbed this a transformative event in public relations. He called for "an industry-wide review of disclosure and other practices in government contracts." Kotcher said, "We must clarify the rules—for everyone." The Department of Education/Williams deal will be held up as an example in public relations, the news media, and the government alike. This qualitative study will provide an in-depth examination of this controversial campaign.

The research will be of interest and benefit professionally to public relations practitioners and theorists, as well as journalists and media critics. It also will provide valuable background and insight for those debating the legality and ethics of this situation.

Research Questions

The objective of this research was to provide a thorough case study of the Armstrong Williams minority outreach campaign promoting the No Child Left Behind Act performed on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education. Subjecting the campaign to a previously accepted definition and framework of propaganda provided a broad understanding of the campaign as a whole. This case study was investigated for various traits of propaganda as outlined by Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) and provided a backdrop for discussion of the following research questions.

RQ1: Does the case study's fit with expectations of propaganda support or oppose arguments the campaign is an example of propaganda?

RQ2: What aspects of this analysis can be applied to similar government contracts, and what aspects are unique only to this case?

RQ3: Do any guidelines for future government public relations contracts emerge?

RQ4: What role should public relations firms play in promoting government policy?

Methodology

The methodology was a qualitative case study. It employed Jowett and O'Donnell's (1999) established framework for analyzing a propaganda campaign and focused on the 2004 minority outreach campaign executed by conservative media commentator and public relations firm CEO, Armstrong Williams, as a sub-contractor for the U.S. Department of Education.

The framework consisted of 10 points, each of which examined a different aspect of the campaign—1) ideology and purpose, 2) context, 3) identification of the propagandist, 4) propaganda organization structure, 5) audience, 6) media utilized, 7) techniques used, 8) audience reaction, 9) counter-propaganda and 10) effects and evaluation (Jowett, 1997; Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999). According to the framework's creators, the key strength of this method was that it took into consideration the social climate in which the campaign was designed, executed and received. While this methodology lacked the support of quantitative figures and statistics, it was an excellent means to compile a thorough and comprehensive analysis of this long-term campaign. The methodology is discussed further in Chapter III.

Rationale and Theoretical Framework

The research was significant for its exploration of where the line between editorializing and peddling government politics lies, as well as its documentation of this controversial public relations campaign. The Department of Education/Williams deal and its ramifications was a hot topic concerning the current U.S. administration and a well-respected public relations firm. In a January 13, 2005 opinion editorial in *PR Week*, Ray Kotcher, Ketchum CEO, called the event "transformational" for the public relations industry. It spurred investigation requests from the U.S. House of Representatives (Miller, 2005; Pelosi et al., 2005) and the introduction of a bill to halt to similar activities.

The theoretical framework for this research was Jowett and O'Donnell's (1999) 10-point framework. The framework was first established in 1986 and since then has been utilized by other scholars for similar research (see Similar Studies in Chapter II).

The framework was based on a composite of accepted definitions of propaganda. According to Jowett (1997), the framework "set out a matrix designed to facilitate the examination of all the elements of a propaganda campaign from a broader perspective and 'as a flow of information' within the sociocultural context" (p. 75). See Chapter III for a detailed explanation of the 10-point framework.

Definition of Terms

This section attempts to provide a primer on the key terminology for this research. Providing a basic understanding of these concepts will allow each reader to more thoroughly comprehend this study upon the initial reading.

The campaign itself was designed to promote the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The law was proposed by George W. Bush during his first week in office; it was signed into law nearly a year later on January 8, 2002. According to the U.S. Department of Education Web site (2005a) the law was based on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and focused on "four pillars," accountability, state and community freedom, education methods, and parent choices. The four pillars were discussed further in Chapter I, Background. Proponents called the law a historic education reform to assist often over-looked students; opponents referred to the program as "counterproductive" and "destructive;" key concerns focused on the law being an unfunded mandate (Bruce, 2001; N.A., 2001; Sanchez, 2001).

There were two government agencies involved in the debate over this campaign: the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ). According to its Web site (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2005c):

> The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is an agency that works for Congress and the American people. Congress asks GAO to study the programs and expenditures of the federal government. GAO, commonly called the investigative arm of Congress or the congressional watchdog, is independent and nonpartisan. It studies how the federal government spends taxpayer dollars. GAO advises Congress and the heads of executive agencies about ways to make government more effective and responsive. GAO evaluates federal programs, audits federal expenditures, and issues legal opinions. When GAO reports its findings to Congress, it recommends actions. Its work leads to laws and acts that improve government operations and save billions of dollars.

The USDOJ is a Cabinet department, meaning it is part of the executive branch of the federal government. Its mission is:

> To enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States according to the law; to ensure public safety against threats foreign and domestic; to provide federal leadership in preventing and controlling crime; to seek just punishment for those guilty of unlawful behavior; and to ensure fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans (U.S. Department of Justice, 2005).

The USDOJ oversees all Supreme Court cases concerning the United States and offers opinions and advice at the request of the President (U.S. Department of Justice, 2005).

Scope, Limitations, and Assumptions

The scope of this research was limited in that it covered only the U.S. Department of Education/Armstrong Williams campaign. Although there were other similar cases—

the Medicare campaign and the Anti-Drug campaign—and accusations of even more government arrangements with journalists, the results from this research can only be applied to the specific campaign which it analyzes.

Limitations of this research included the campaign's recent completion and discovery. It was still being debated in the media and the government, and it was not possible yet to judge the long-term effects. The project was also limited by the methodology. This was a qualitative case study. It provided an overview of the campaign, but it did not measure or quantify any aspect of it. Also the advertisement created by Williams in partial fulfillment of the contract could not be secured from an independent archive. Williams' program was aired on smaller cable networks, so it was not available from a major archiving service. The advertisement used in the analysis was downloaded from Williams' Web site after the discovery of the campaign. It could not be known with certainty that the downloaded advertisement was the exact format that originally aired.

There were several assumptions at work in this case; most focus on what we expect from our government and news media. Conventional wisdom states that news is informational, and our news media is independent from our government. An independent media is one of the keystones of American society. Freedom of the press is assured by the first amendment, and it is essential in preserving democracy.

The Society of Professional Journalists' (SPJ) code of ethics charges the media with seeking the truth and reporting it. It specifically states that "Journalists should identify sources whenever feasible, distinguish between advocacy and news reporting, [and ensure that] analysis and commentary [are] labeled and [do] not misrepresent fact or context." Journalists are to separate news and advertising and avoid anything that may

blur the lines between the two. The code also addresses the need for reporters to act independently, avoiding any conflicts of interest (Society of Professional Journalists, 1996a).

Similarly, the Public Relations Society of America offers a code of ethics for its professionals (see Appendix B). Among the professional values embraced by the organization are honesty and independence—namely professionals are responsible for their own actions. PRSA also lists three pertinent code provisions. Practitioners should protect the free flow of accurate information, provide open communications through proper disclosure of information, and work to strengthen the image of the profession (Public Relations Society of America, 2000).

Outline of Remaining Chapters

Chapter II contains a review of literature related to this project. The chapter begins by covering propaganda, specifically its history in the United States, various definitions, its differences from persuasion and role in political communications. A brief overview of studies implementing the 10-point framework follows.

The methodology was outlined in Chapter III. This chapter begins with a discussion of the values of qualitative research for this project. It was followed by an outline of Jowett and O'Donnell's (1999) system and how to implement it. The system was employed in Chapter IV, Findings. Each point of the framework was applied to the Department of Education/Williams campaign. These results were discussed in the Conclusion, Chapter V.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Propaganda

History in the United States

While propaganda has surely been at work nearly as long as man has been able to communicate (Cole, 1998b; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989), what we consider modern propaganda was developed during World War I (Chomsky, 1997; Cole, 1998c; Cull *et al.*, 2003; Severin & Tankard, 2001). The inundation of propaganda during World War I and World War II—from both sides—was likely the source of process's bad image. The word propaganda has a negative connotation for many people (Delwiche, 2002; Doob, 1935; Severin & Tankard, 2001).

The United States entered WWI in 1917 and within weeks President Woodrow Wilson had created the Committee on Public Information (CPI). The CPI was charged with coordinating the official U.S. propaganda efforts to garner support for the war. The Committee was headed by George Creel whose methods and research later became the basis of the publicity and public relations industries. The CPI was dissolved in 1919 (Cole, 1998a, 1998c; Cull et al., 2003; Jackall & Hirota, 1995).

The CPI employed a variety of methods—leaflets, press releases, speeches, poster art. The most notable poster "I Want You for the U.S. Army" can still be seen today (Nelson, 1996). One of the most innovative media for the time was the use of film. Weekly newsreels, as well as features films promoting the war were produced. The CPI

also exercised control over the distribution of commercial films and limited any film deemed detrimental to their efforts (Cole, 1998a; Cull et al., 2003; Jackall & Hirota, 1995).

The "first study of panic behavior triggered by a mass medium" (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995, p. 66) took place after the infamous October 30, 1938 *War of the Worlds* broadcast. The research, headed by Hadley Cantril from the Office of Radio Research of Princeton University, explored the extent of the panic, why this particular broadcast had a unique effect, and why certain people reacted so strongly. Results showed that faith in the medium and the social climate at the time were key factors in the acceptance of the message. According to Lowery and DeFleur (1995), the study was significant for enforcing changing views about the power of the mass media.

In 1939, the Institute for Propaganda Analysis outlined and defined seven techniques used in propaganda: bandwagon, plain folks, testimonial, glittering generalities, name calling, transfer, and card stacking (Lee & Lee, 1939). This was the first attempt to categorize propaganda, and these techniques are still being cited in recent mass communication texts (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999; Severin & Tankard, 2001).

The bandwagon technique is based on the idea that everyone else is doing it, and so should you (Delwiche, 2002; Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999; Lee & Lee, 1939; Severin & Tankard, 2001). In effect it uses peer pressure, although it is possibly imaginary. The technique plays to an individual's desire to belong and fit in. According to Delwiche (2002), there can also be an implied sense of urgency, but this is oftentimes exaggerated by the propaganda source. Severin and Tankard (2001) noted that this particular device is often found in advertising, wartime and government promotions.

Another propaganda technique based on fitting in is the plain folks device. Plain folks promotions attempt to convince the audience that a product or personality is just like them. It is "of the people" (Delwiche, 2002; Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999; Lee & Lee, 1939; Severin & Tankard, 2001). Severin and Tankard (2001) believed this technique is most prevalent in political campaigns, as exemplified by Bill Clinton during his first bid for president.

Some propagandists chose not to tout that everyone is doing it, but that one influential person is doing it. This is the testimonial technique. Testimonial can go both ways, either endorsing or condemning a product. Its potential success is based on the reputation of the testifier. This can be a very honest and straightforward approach when an appropriate source is cited. Misrepresentation can occur when a source with no background or expertise is used (Delwiche, 2002; Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999; Lee & Lee, 1939; Severin & Tankard, 2001).

Delwiche (2002) combined a few of the propaganda techniques into the category "word games." One word game is glittering generalities. This propaganda device attempts to make the audience accept the message without concern for any supporting evidence. The term glittering generalities refers to the virtue words used to describe the object of propaganda. The words can have strong emotional effect on people (Delwiche, 2002; Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999; Lee & Lee, 1939; Severin & Tankard, 2001). According to Severin and Tankard (2001), glittering generalities is used in naming of products, as well as in politics and business.

The opposite of glittering generalities, another word game, is name calling. In this case, the object of propaganda is aligned with words having negative connotations. Like

glittering generalities, this technique relies on a strong emotional response from the audience (Delwiche, 2002; Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999; Lee & Lee, 1939; Severin & Tankard, 2001). Severin and Tankard (2001) pointed out that name calling is not common in advertising. Promoters avoid mentioning their competitors by name, even if it is in a negative light.

In the transfer technique, the propagandist uses a symbol of something held in high regard by the audience. The purpose is to shift the positive feelings associated with the symbol to the object of propaganda (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999; Lee & Lee, 1939; Severin & Tankard, 2001). Severin and Tankard (2001) listed advertisements and certain background music selections as common uses of transfer.

Lee and Lee (1939) referred to the final technique, card stacking, as a monopoly of propaganda. Card stacking can support or reject the propaganda object. Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) described the device as a collection of arguments supporting the propagandist's cause, while ignoring any arguments that do not. Examples of card stacking given by Severin and Tankard (2001) were some television commercials, historical cases and control of the news.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt created a new agency similar to the CPI during WWII, the Office of War Information (OWI). OWI was active from 1942 until 1945. The OWI efforts were split into domestic and foreign campaigns. On the home front, OWI built support for the war—including the highly successful Rosie the Riveter campaign—and collected and filtered news from other agencies. Abroad, work included enemy surrender campaigns and pro-American radio broadcasts to both Allied and enemy nations (Cole, 1998b, 1998c; Cull et al., 2003).

Like the CPI, film was a medium relied heavily upon by the OWI. The OWI Bureau of Motion Pictures produced newsreels, feature films and shorts, as well as distributed films from other sources. One of the most notable propaganda films of the time was the *Why We Fight* series produced by the U.S. Army and directed by Hollywood's Frank Capra (Cole, 1998a; Cull et al., 2003; Lowery & DeFleur, 1995; Meyerson, 1995). The series was used in a seminal mass communication research study by Carl Hovland to determine the effectiveness of film to both teach factual information and to motivate attitudes. He found that film was an excellent means of quickly educating large groups, but its persuasive power is limited (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995).

Even before the OWI was instituted, the Roosevelt administration began to counter-Nazi propaganda through radio broadcasts to foreign countries in their native language. These broadcasts, later under the auspices of Voice of America (VOA), fell under the jurisdiction of OWI after its inception. When Harry S. Truman disbanded the OWI, Voice of America continued. Although commitment to and funding for the VOA has ebbed and surged over the decades, it is still broadcasting around the world, now in 53 different languages (Cole, 1998c). VOA's success inspired the creation of Radio Free Europe, which sent anti-communist messages to the Soviet bloc from 1950 to 1989, Radio Free Asia, a similar program in Asia, and Radio Martì and Television Martì, special broadcasts to Cuba which launched in 1985 and 1990, respectively (Cole, 1998b, 1998c; Cull et al., 2003).

The close of WWII in 1945 marked the beginning of the Cold War. This ideological conflict between communism and capitalism continued until the Soviet Union was dismantled in 1991. While there were armed conflicts which occurred during this

time, the Cold War itself was not a violent one. It relied on propaganda aimed at both citizens and foreigners. Both the United States and the Soviet Union attempted to sway international opinion in their favor and gain new allies (Cole, 1996; Cull et al., 2003; Oakes, 1995).

According to Cole (1998a), the tensest period of the Cold War was the first decade when U.S. foreign policy was one of containment. The goal was to isolate communism and the expansion of the Soviet Union. Propaganda efforts within the United States attempted to villainize communism and the Soviet Union. Abroad, the United States worked to secure a buffer of friendly nations around the Soviet Union and use the threat of nuclear attack to intimidate the Soviet Union (Cole, 1998a; Cull et al., 2003; Oakes, 1995).

In 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower established the United States Information Agency (USIA). While this was less than a decade into the Cold War, the USIA was the first official propaganda agency created during peacetime. Existing propaganda efforts, such as Voice of America, moved under the USIA's jurisdiction. USIA materials were distributed solely outside the United States as required by the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948. While the restrictions in the Smith-Mundt Act only applied explicitly to material produced by the USIA, it did imply a certain expectation that American people should not be propagandized by their own government. The purpose of the USIA was to promote U.S. foreign policy, although the content and focus vary with the different presidential administrations. The USIA was absorbed by the U.S. State Department in 1999 (Cole, 1998c; Cull et al., 2003; Snow, 2002).

When Kennedy took office in 1960, he continued support of the USIA. Propaganda efforts of the Kennedy administration focused on anti-communism, the space program, and military actions. Early in his term, Kennedy had to justify the United States' involvement in the Bay of Pigs. A year later in 1962, the Soviets installed nuclear weapons on Cuba. Kennedy used threat of nuclear attack to force the removal of the weapons. This apparent win of the Cuban Missile Crisis was used to further the U.S. anti-communism Cold War message (Cole, 1998a, 1998b; Cull et al., 2003).

Throughout the early 1960s, U.S. propaganda was employed to support the South Vietnamese government. According to Cull (1998), this was a good opportunity for the Kennedy administration to reaffirm the United States' power after the failure at the Bay of Pigs. In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson used an alleged North Vietnamese attack to convince Congress to pass the Tonkin Gulf resolution which granted Johnson the ability to further pursue the war (Cole, 1998c; Cull et al., 2003).

Throughout the conflict in Vietnam, propaganda was used in what was dubbed psychological warfare. Campaigns were launched to persuade North Vietnamese to immigrate to the south, as well as to encourage surrenders. At home the State Department used atrocity stories in their efforts to validate the expense—both of money and of life—of the military actions. The State Department released a White Paper with justification for the war (Cole, 1998c; Cull et al., 2003).

According to Jowett and O'Donnell (1999), the Vietnam War left a lasting imprint on the collective American psyche. The idea of "not another Vietnam" was an ongoing sentiment the government had to battle when entering the Gulf War in 1991. A

summary of propaganda research of the Gulf War follows under the section called Similar Studies.

Definitions

Propaganda can be difficult to define. Harold Lasswell (1937), one of the first contributors to the study of modern propaganda, defined it as "the technique of influencing human action by the manipulation of representations. These representations may take spoken, written, pictorial or musical form" (1937p. 521). While this may be the first definition of modern propaganda, according to Doob (1935) there are nearly as many definitions as there are authors who write on the subject.

Because the case study was based on the work of Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) it relied more heavily on their definition of propaganda: "Propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist" (1999, p. 6). While this was the definition Jowett and O'Donnell gave in their book, part of the attraction of their methodology was that several of the 10 points draw upon the work of other scholars. The 10-point framework was itself a consolidation and application of several definitions.

For example, Pratkanis and Aronson (1997) offered the following description of propaganda which encompasses several of the 10 points from Jowett and O'Donnell's framework:

> Propaganda involves the dexterous use of images, slogans, and symbols [point 7: Special Techniques to Maximize Effectiveness] that play on our prejudices and emotions [point 2: The Context in Which the Propaganda Occurs]; it is the

> communication of a point of view [point 1: Ideology of the Campaign] with the ultimate goal of having the recipient of the appeal [point 5: Target Audience] come to 'voluntarily' accept this position as if it were his or her own [point 8: Audience Reaction] (p.11).

Within these relatively broad definitions of the practice, scholars have broken down propaganda further. Two of the most common divisions of propaganda are white propaganda and black propaganda. In Nelson's (1996) *A Chronology and Glossary of Propaganda in the United States* white propaganda was defined as:

> Forms of propaganda in which the source of the message is correctly identified and what is said also tends to be truthful. Persuaders who have facts or events on their side often rely on a white propaganda utilizing straightforward, honest communication to make the case (p. 274).

He also defined black propaganda as "the use of fabrications, deceptions, big lies, and false source attributions" (Nelson, 1996, p. 128). These two divisions have often been combined into what is referred to as gray propaganda. Nelson (1996) defined this as "forms of propaganda located between white propaganda and black propaganda in which truth and falsity are mixed" (p. 177).

Also key to this research was an understanding of if advertising and public relations are propaganda. Nelson (1996) provided definitions of both these terms as well. "Advertising is a planned communication activity, which is paid for by an identified sponsor and utilizes controlled messages carried by media to persuade audiences to engage in a voluntary transfer of goods, services, or ideas" (p. 117). The definition of public relations (PR) is not nearly so straightforward. Nelson (1996) borrowed from

several definitions, but highlighted that PR is the systematic communication of an organization with its publics. Because the media is a common tool implemented by the PR practitioners, one can see how the division between the two fields, advertising and public relations, may at times be blurred.

Differences between Persuasion and Propaganda

According to Jowett and O'Donnell (1999), "Persuasion is interactive and attempts to satisfy the needs of both the persuader and the persuadee" (p. 1). While propaganda is a form of persuasion, not all persuasion is propaganda. Persuasion is based on discourse and dialogue; propaganda is intended to be one-sided (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999; Pratkanis & Aronson, 1997).

Pratkanis and Aronson (1997) speculated that propaganda is a modern derivative of persuasion. The goal moved from being one of mutual education to merely disseminating a point of view. They argued that this is caused by a number of factors. First, today's audiences are bombarded with messages and the senders (propagandists) are forced to employ different means in order to compete for attention. Due to the overwhelming volume, messages are now shorter and shallower. Messages are immediate and there is little time between messages to process information. Each of these factors hinders the traditional give-and-take indicative of mere persuasion (Pratkanis & Aronson, 1997).

Role in Political Communications

Delwiche (2002) contended that propaganda plays a role in political communications, even though some may be reluctant give it such a label. When we examine the definitions of propaganda and the ways in which it differs from persuasion is

it easy to see why it has a place in the political arena. Propagandists (political candidates, leaders, agencies) want to direct their audience (voters, legislators, the public) to a specific end (voting patterns, or support of policy). Propaganda in political communications has been seen in war time to build support for government actions (Cole, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c; Severin & Tankard, 2001), as described earlier in Chapter II, The History of United States Propaganda, but it also has been prevalent in election campaigns, government agenda setting and issue campaigns (Delwiche, 2002; Nelson, 1996).

Glittering generalities and plain folks appeals (see Chapter II, *History in United States* for discussion of these appeals) are the two most common techniques used in political election campaigns (Black, 2001; Lee & Lee, 1939; Severin & Tankard, 2001). According to Cole (1998b), candidates now rely on an "arsenal of propaganda tools." A significant portion of campaign budgets is spent on paid advertisements, direct mail, telemarketing, internet marketing and marketing research. These are all examples, as Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) put it, of media utilization techniques. The target audience, of course, is potential voters; the purpose is election.

According to Severin and Tankard (2001), elections are often framed by all candidates and their parties through agenda setting. Additional coverage is given to selected issues which raises the perception of the issues' importance by the audience. Attempting to set the media's agenda is a tactic of candidates to control the flow of information and avoid topics they do not wish to discuss. Agenda setting may continue after the election to bring specific issues of concern to the administration to the fore. The

U.S. Department of Education/Armstrong Williams campaign could be one example of a special issue campaign.

Similar Studies

In Jowett and O'Donnell's book *Propaganda and Persuasion* (1999), they conducted four case studies that utilized the 10-point propaganda analysis system. The first examined a campaign to encourage women to go to work during the Second World War. The propagandist was cited as being both the U.S. government and industry.

The changing social context and unique media utilization techniques made this case unusual. At the time, the prevailing attitude was that women's place was in the house. As men left for war, the ideology of the country shifted, and it was presented as patriotic for women to join the workforce. The purpose of the propaganda campaign borne from this was to maximize wartime production by encouraging women to enter the workplace. The target audience was both men and women, most were young families with children.

A town was built to facilitate these working women. Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) considered the town itself—it was built from nothing for the sole purpose of this campaign—and the town's services to be part of the very unique propaganda techniques of this campaign. Controlled flow of information was one media utilization technique that was key. The authors evaluated the campaign as successful, saying: "The housing project at Vanport City met working mothers' needs in a sensitive and helpful way. Never again have American working women been treated as carefully as they were when women's work was needed for a national emergency (p. 311)."

The second case study in *Propaganda and Persuasion* (1999) concerned the Gulf War. While propaganda was prevalent on both sides, the main focus of this case study was on the U.S. forces. The most important contextual issue for the U.S. propaganda was to take into account domestic feelings about the Vietnam War. Propaganda had to be crafted in such a way as to combat the "not another Vietnam" sentiment.

The authors stated that the focus of the Gulf War case study was the United States, but noted that there were many organizations involved. The most obvious was the U.S. armed forces, but Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) admitted that some more covert sources were unknown at the time of their study. Likewise, the structure of some of the organizations, even some of the known organizations, was beyond the scope of the study.

In the discussion of media utilization techniques, Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) mentioned the possibility that different media may be used to evoke different messages. For example, television may lend itself better to emotional appeals, while print may be better suited for ideological appeals.

Jowett (1997) followed the first edition of *Propaganda and Persuasion* by publishing another case study of the Gulf War in *Desert Storm and the Mass Media*. The study was based on data from "a nonsystematic (or impressionistic) gathering of a wide range of data from newspapers, magazines, and television broadcasts." Strengths of the study were cited as being the establishment of a thorough timeline of the campaign and the attention to the socio-political context. Each of the 10 points was explored in Jowett's independent case study. However, he noted that it would be quite some time before the full implications could be evaluated.

The third case study explored in *Propaganda and Persuasion* (1999) concerned the propaganda battle to limit tobacco advertising and force the tobacco industry to admit to the health problems connected to tobacco use. The ideology of "capitalism and First Amendment-versus-government intervention for the purpose of public protection (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 333)" frames this ongoing conflict. Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) identified the propagandists on both sides of the conflict. On one hand was the tobacco industry made up of several large international companies. On the other was the collection of private and government public health organizations.

Although, Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) asserted that the effects of this campaign were becoming more predictable, they admitted that the full impact could not be judged as the campaign was still ongoing. A series of legislative and legal victories pointed to the slow success of the counterpropaganda efforts in this case study.

The final case study in *Propaganda and Persuasion* (1999) looked at the efforts of Wyeth-Ayerst to protect the drug Premarin. Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) noted that because both sides of the campaign were so strong it was difficult to label one the propagandist and the other the counterpropagandist. Because it came first, the authors chose to label Wyeth-Ayerst the propagandist. The primary counterpropagandists were animal protection organizations.

In 1996, Patricia Tillson, under the supervision of Jowett, applied the 10-point framework to the STOP ERA campaign (although she omitted the ninth point, counter-propaganda, stating that it was beyond the scope of the research). Tillson's case study focused on the messages, techniques and channels of a propaganda campaign to halt the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. According to Tillson, this research was

significant "for its comprehensive examination of an effective propaganda campaign within the American political system." Tillson cited several propaganda techniques used to maximize effect. She applied both terminology used by Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) and that used by the Institute of Propaganda Analysis (1939).

The most recent study using Jowett and O'Donnell's (1999) 10-point framework was Kendrick and Fullerton's (2003) analysis of the Shared Values Initiative—a pro-United States advertising campaign aired in predominately Muslim countries. The authors called the campaign historically significant because it was the "first television 'advertising' campaign sponsored by the U.S. government to predominantly Muslim countries" (p. 2). The key socio-historic context for the campaign was the increasing tension between Muslims and the United States after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

The propagandist in this case, the U.S. government, was quite open. Advertising guru, Charlotte Beers crafted the campaign and worked for the U.S. State Department. "According to Beers, the primary target audience for Shared Values Initiatives was 'the people'" (p. 9).

Summary

The literature review provided an overview of the history of modern propaganda in the United States. The practice's beginnings date back to World War I, and it seems to be ever-present and more and more ubiquitous since its inception. The chapter covered its history, definitions, how it differs from mere persuasion and its role in political communications.

Eight similar studies were discussed. Most employed all 10 points of the framework. Some could only superficially examine one or more point because information was not readily available. This was most often due the short amount of time elapsing since completion of the campaign.

Jowett and O'Donnell's (1999) 10-point framework was presented as an appropriate method to examine an outreach campaign. The 10 points encompass not only Jowett and O'Donnell's definition of propaganda, but also aspects of many proposed definitions. By applying the theoretical framework to the U.S. Department of Education's minority outreach campaign, the following research provided a thorough and comprehensive examination of the campaign. It appeared arguments that the Department of Education's campaign was in fact an example of propaganda seemed to be supported based on how closely the campaign met the framework's expectations of propaganda.

The objective of this research was to provide a thorough case study of the U.S. Department of Education's minority outreach campaign promoting the No Child Left Behind Act. Subjecting the campaign to a previously accepted definition and framework of propaganda provided a broad understanding of the campaign as a whole. The case study was investigated for various traits of propaganda as outlined by Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) and provided a backdrop for discussion of the following research questions.

RQ1: Does the case study's fit with expectations of propaganda support or oppose arguments the campaign is an example of propaganda?

RQ2: What aspects of this analysis can be applied to similar government contracts, and what aspects are unique only to this case?

RQ3: Do any guidelines for future government public relations contracts emerge?

RQ4: What role should public relations firms play in promoting government policy?

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Research

The method followed a qualitative approach set out by Jowett and O'Donnell (1999). Mertens (1998) explained qualitative research as "an in-depth description of a specific program, practice, or setting" (p. 159). She went to describe it as "interpretive, naturalistic… complex, contextual… and inductive" (p. 159-160). Among the reasons cited for applying a qualitative method was the nature of the research question. A qualitative approach allows the analyst to investigate various aspects of a campaign instead of focusing on a single dimension such as audience reaction or techniques utilized.

A qualitative approach is not the only way to study propaganda. Content analysis is also a popular method and the basis of the seminal study by the Institute of Propaganda Analysis (1939). However, content analysis is narrow in scope and can not take into account the social or historical context of a campaign. A broad perspective is the strength of Jowett and O'Donnell's (1999) system.

Jowett and O'Donnell's 10-Point Framework

Jowett (1997) described the system as a "10-step program of propaganda analysis which sets out a matrix designed to facilitate the examination of all the elements of a propaganda campaign from a broader perspective and 'as a flow of information' within

the sociocultural context" (p. 75). He said the 10 dimensions may overlap somewhat, but together they provide a broad and in-depth look at the entire campaign, how and why it was created, and the impact it may have had. Because many propaganda efforts are covert in nature, it may be difficult or even impossible to truly identify all 10 points of the framework, but it provides the analyst with a structure that can be applied to a long-finished or a still-in-progress campaign.

This case study examined the following dimensions of the U.S. Department of Education minority outreach campaign to promote the No Child Left Behind Act: 1) ideology and purpose of the campaign, 2) context in which the campaign occurred, 3) the identity of the propagandist, 4) structure of the propaganda organization, 5) the target audience, 6) media utilization techniques 7) special techniques used to maximize effect, 8) audience reaction, 9) counterpropaganda and 10) effects and evaluation of the campaign.

1. Ideology and Purpose of the Propaganda Campaign

The first frame Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) proposed for examining propaganda was the ideology of the propagandist. If their definition of propaganda is accepted, which as discussed in Chapter II aligns well with other definitions, the purpose of all propaganda is to "achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 6). We begin with the ideology to determine to what ends the campaign is designed.

Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) suggested that analysts search for:

> a set of beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as for ways of perceiving and thinking that are agreed on to the point that they constitute a set of norms for society that dictate what is desirable and what should be done (p. 281).

Cues of the ideology may be verbal and visual. The ideas evoked by the propagandist may be those of the past, present, or future (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999).

2. Context in Which the Propaganda Occurs

According to the Jowett and O'Donnell (1999), the sociocultural context in which the propaganda message was crafted not only affects the form the message takes, it affects the way in which the message is received by the audience. This is why it is important to take this dimension into consideration. Jowett and O'Donnell pointed to several issues to consider: conflicts—past and present—the mood of the times, high profile issues, power struggles and the parties involved in those struggles. While they did not believe a specific context must be addressed, it was suggested that a propaganda message will relate to the context in which it exists.

3. Identification of the Propagandist

Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) believed that to determine the true motivations, the analyst must identify the actual propagandist. According to the authors, the source is quite often an institution or organization. There may be a single individual as the propagandist, but this person is often only an agent for the larger organization. The source may readily disclose its identity, but in many cases the source operates in secrecy. Misrepresentation of the source of the message is one sign of black propaganda, or propaganda intended to deceive (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999).

4. Structure of the Propaganda Organization

Propaganda is typically crafted by "a strong, centralized, decision-making authority that produces a consistent message throughout its structure" according to Jowett and O'Donnell (1999, p. 284). They offered several dimensions to examine when evaluating the propaganda organization's structure. Formal rules, rituals, internal culture and membership makeup are all aspects that can provide important information about the organizational structure. The organization's goals and the ways in which the goals are achieved—especially media utilized—are features to investigate. According to the authors, the selected media is often owned by the organization.

5. Target Audience

According to Jowett and O'Donnell (1999), "The propaganda message is aimed at the audience most likely to be useful to the propagandist if it responds favorably" (p. 286). While it is not required of propaganda, the audience is typically very large. The authors noted—and it was of particular interest to this case—that the distribution mechanism, i.e. a television show, can attract a ready audience to target.

6. Media Utilization Techniques

At its most basic, this dimension is a look at which media are implemented by the propagandist and how they are used. Modern propaganda may employ any and all media available. In describing media utilization, the analyst also explores flow of information, how the media are used, how the message is presented to the media, and the symbols and slogans used. A propaganda message will be consistent with the ideology and is often associated with control over the flow of information (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999).

7. Special Techniques to Maximize Effect

Propaganda employs a variety of methods to influence the audience. In 1939, the Institute for Propaganda Analysis outlined and defined seven techniques used in propaganda: bandwagon, plain folks, testimonial, glittering generalities, name calling, transfer and card stacking. While some appeals are easily pigeonholed into one of the seven propaganda techniques categorized by the Institute of Propaganda Analysis, it can often be difficult to narrow a technique down to being only one of these seven. Some propaganda analysts, like Jowett and O'Donnell (1999), prefer to use broader categories based on the following principles.

- Propagandists may use the audience's predisposition to their advantage. People are more likely to accept a message when it seems in line with already held beliefs.
- Like the testimonial technique, source credibility and opinion leaders may be used.
- Local organizations may be established to provide information. In these cases the entire environment of the place is working toward the propagandist's ends.
- Group mentality also can work to the propagandist's advantage. When part of a group, individuals are more likely to go along with the perceived majority of the group.
- Reward and punishment can be used as motivators for acceptance of the message.
- Having a monopoly on a communication source is a way to ensure a consistent and repeated message, aiding in acceptance of the message.

- Much like the Institute of Propaganda Analysis's (Lee & Lee, 1939) transfer technique, Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) suggested that analysts look for visual, verbal, and musical symbols of power.
- Finally, propaganda is often associated with emotional appeals.

8. Audience Reaction to Various Techniques:

Next the analyst should examine the reaction of the target audience to the propaganda. According to Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) the most important thing to consider for this point is the behavior of the audience, i.e. voting, donations, purchases, memberships, and adoption of campaign language.

9. Counterpropaganda

Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) explained counterpropaganda as existing to oppose the efforts of the original propaganda message. It too can be open or covert and can take as many shapes as propaganda. The arts are often utilized in counterpropaganda. The authors suggested that analysts look closely at whether the public realizes the counterpropaganda's purpose is contrary to the propaganda.

10. Effects and Evaluation

Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) stated, "The most important effect is whether the purpose of the propaganda has been fulfilled" (p. 297). This can be illustrated by adoption of the propaganda's language in other areas, the passage of legislation, and sponsorship by legitimating sources. The analyst should look at how each of the points aided or hindered the propagandist's goals (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999). If the goals were not achieved, why?

Applying the Ten Point Framework

In analyzing a campaign, Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) suggested a series of questions to ask for each of the 10 points in the framework. The authors pointed out that each question, even each point, cannot necessarily be answered for every campaign.

1. Ideology and Purpose

1a Is there "a set of beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors… that are agreed on to the point that they constitute a set of norms for society" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 281)?

1b Are there representations, verbal or visual, of preexisting struggles, past situations, current frames of reference to values systems, or future goals and objectives?

Expected Outcome

While there is no specific ideology for a propaganda campaign, it is important to identify the ideology in order to understand the campaign. The purpose of a propaganda campaign is to achieve acceptance of the ideology. This can mean influencing people to adopt attitudes corresponding to those of the propagandist, or engage in certain behavior, or maintain the legitimacy of the source organization (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999).

2. Context

2a What events have occurred and how has the propagandist interpreted them?

2b "What is the prevailing public mood?" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 282)

2c "What specific issues are identifiable? How widely are those issues felt? What constraints exist that keep these issues from being resolved?" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 282)

2d "Is there a power struggle? What parties are involved and what is stake?" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 282)

2e "What has happened to lead up to this point?" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 282)

2f "What deeply held beliefs and values have been important for a long time?" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 282)

2g "What myths are related to the current propaganda? What is the source of these myths?" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 282)

Expected Outcome

Successful propaganda takes into consideration the socio-historical context in which it exists, however it is not required of propaganda (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999). Examining the context is essential to understanding a propaganda campaign. It also helps in interpreting the effects and evaluation (point 10).

3. Identification of the Propagandist

3a "Who or what has the most to gain from this?" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 283)

Expected Outcomes

The propagandist is likely the leader of or an agent for the source institution or organization. The source often conceals its larger purpose, and the propagandist agent may be a "front" for the true source. While secrecy is not required, it is very typical of propaganda campaigns (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999).

4. Structure of the Propagandist Organization

4a How did the leader gain that position?

4b How does the leader inspire loyalty and support?

4c What are the organization's goals and means for achieving them?

Expected Outcomes

Propaganda usually originates from "a strong, centralized, decision-making authority that produces a consistent message throughout its structure" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 284).

5. Target Audience

5a Who is the anticipated receiver of the message?

5b How was this audience selected?

Expected Outcomes

A propaganda audience is most often a mass audience. Propaganda is directed at those who are most likely to further the propagandist's goals if the campaign is successful. The distribution system itself may be used to identify a receptive audience (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999).

6. Media Utilization Techniques

6a Which media are used?

6b Is the message consistent with the purpose?

6c How does the message flow "from one medium to another and from media to groups and individuals?" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 288)

6d "When an audience perceives the media, what expectation is it likely to have?" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 288)

6e "What is the audience asked to do to respond to the message?" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 288)

6f "Does it seem the audience is asked to react without thinking?" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 288)

6g "Are the media used in such a way as to conceal the true purpose and/or identity of the propagandist?" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 288)

6h "How are the visual and verbal messages consistent with the ideology?" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 289)

Expected Outcomes

Modern propaganda may be sent through any and all available outlets. According to Jowett and O'Donnell (1999), propaganda "attempts to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist" (p. 1).

7. Special Techniques to Maximize Effect

7a Does the message align with preexisting opinions of the audience?

7b What is the perceived image of the source? What if anything is done to affect this perception?

7c What symbols are employed?

7d What emotions are evoked?

Expected Outcomes

There are many techniques employed by propaganda. The Institute of Propaganda Analysis outlined seven classic techniques: bandwagon, card stacking, glittering generalities, name calling, plain folks, testimonial and transfer (see *History of United States* in Chapter II for details). Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) preferred not to limit techniques to a comprehensive list and instead provide basic principle under which various techniques might fall. These include creating resonance, source credibility, face-

to-face contact, group norms, reward and punishment, monopoly of communication, visual symbols, language, music and arousal of emotions.

8. Audience Reaction to Various Techniques

8a What is the behavior of the target audience?

8b Has the audience adopted any of the propagandist's language or slogans?

8c "Does the target audience take on a new symbolic identity? If so, how does it talk about the identity?" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 297)

8d "Does the propaganda purpose become realized and part of the social scene?" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 297)

Expected Outcomes

Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) believed the purpose of a propaganda campaign is to achieve acceptance of the ideology, and a successful propaganda campaign will result in this reaction by the target audience. Audience members will think, believe or act in accordance with the specific goals of the campaign.

9. Counterpropaganda

9a Are there messages contrary to the propaganda in mainstream or underground media?

9b "Is it clear to the public that counterpropaganda exists to oppose propaganda?" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 297)

Expected Outcomes

Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) asserted that because the United States has independent media, one would expect counterpropaganda to exist for a propaganda campaign, especially one originating from a government agency.

10. Effects and Evaluation

10a Has the purpose of the propaganda been fulfilled?

10b If the overall campaign was not a complete success, where specific goals realized?

10c If the campaign failed, why?

10d Was the propagandist's language or behaviors adopted in other contexts?

10e Was any legislation adopted?

10f "How did the selection of media and various messages techniques seem to affect the outcome?" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 298)

Expected Outcomes

Because most propaganda goals are long-term in nature it can be difficult to completely evaluate a campaign unless a substantial amount of time has passed. The success of a propaganda campaign will likely be attributed to factors examined in the previous nine points, such as an articulated purpose, a campaign that takes into account the socio-historical context, an appropriately selected audience, proper media utilization, and the use of special techniques to maximize effect (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999).

Data Sources

The minority outreach campaign ran from December 2003 to December 2004 (U.S. Department of Education, 2003; U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005), but data sources were drawn from before, during and after this timeframe in order to analyze each of the 10 points.

Since the campaign was made public, data to evaluate most of the 10 points was readily available through secondary printed sources. The actual contract describing the purpose and extent of the campaign was public record and was obtained by *USA Today* through a Freedom of Information Act request. This was useful for determining the purpose of the campaign and identifying the propagandist and target audience. It also provided some information on the media utilization techniques used.

Armstrong Williams had an extensive Web site with archives of his syndicated column and guest and topic lists for his television program. Recently, clips of selected episodes of the television program *The Right Side with Armstrong Williams* were added to the site. The clip from October 26, 2004 episode included one of the advertisements produced for the contract. The archived columns, from both the year prior to and during the campaign, were a key component of establishing the propaganda agent's ideology. These contributed to the examination of the campaign's context, the structure of the propagandist organization, media utilization techniques and special techniques to maximize effect. The advertisement and program lists provided information on the media utilization techniques and special techniques to maximize effect.

The U.S. Department of Education also had a comprehensive Web site dedicated to the No Child Left Behind program. The site was available at http://www.ed.gov/nclb and an online tool called the Internet Archive (http://www.archive.org) provided snapshots of the Web site during the campaign's timeframe (The Internet Archive, 2005). The Internet Archive was searched using the No Child Left Behind Web site URL to retrieve archives of the pages as they appeared during the campaign. Both current and archived pages were used in the analysis. The No Child Left Behind site provided

significant information for the ideology, purpose, context and structure of the propagandist organization. It also contributed to the discussion of special techniques to maximize effect, audience reaction and effects and evaluation.

In determining audience reaction and the effects of the campaign, public opinion polls from the campaign year and the years prior and after were used. Specifically, the Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public School was consulted. *The 35th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public School* was published in 2003 and it focused on the No Child Left Behind Act. Subsequent years continued the focus. The 35th poll collected data from May 28 to June 18 of 2003—the summer prior to the launch of the campaign. The 36th poll collected data from May 28 to June 18, 2004—the middle of the campaign—and the 37th poll collected data from June 9 to June 26 2005—the summer after the campaign's completion and discovery. The samples consisted of 1,011, 1003 and 1,001 individuals, respectively (Rose & Gallup, 2003, 2004, 2005). According to Rose and Gallup (2003), each survey employed "an unclustered, directory-assisted, random-digit telephone sample, based on a proportionate stratified sampling design" (p. 52).

One component of the campaign was to encourage others in the media to comment on No Child Left Behind. The level of blogging on the topic and the number of *New York Times* articles published on the topic were used as indicators of the amount of informal and formal coverage of No Child Left Behind. Blogs, short for "Web logs," provide a snapshot of what people were talking about at a certain point in time. This relatively new medium is gaining respect in journalism as a means to gage public opinion. In some cases topics appear in blogs before they appear in the mainstream media

(Fernando, 2004; Mateas, 2004; Pack, 2004). *IceRocket* (http://www.icerocket.com) is an online tool which searches blogs (IceRocket, 2006). *IceRocket,* established in 2004, indexes a longer time frame than most of the newer blog search engines and can conduct searches limited by timeframe. *IceRocket*'s advanced search feature was searched using the term "No Child Left Behind" as a phrase to retrieve a count of blog entries for each month in the data collection time frame. Likewise, the *New York Times Archive*, available through ProQuest Direct, was searched for the phrase "No Child Left Behind" for each month in the timeframe. *The New York Times* was selected to represent formal coverage because it is traditionally accepted as the newspaper of record for the United States.

Finally, the U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General's report, *Review of Formation Issues Regarding the Department of Education's Fiscal Year 2003 Contract with Ketchum, Inc. for Media Relations Services*, provided valuable information on the effects and evaluation of the campaign.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

1. Ideology and Purpose

Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) described ideology as "a set of beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors… that are agreed on to the point that they constitute a set of norms for society" (p. 281). The ideology of the Department of Education and the No Child Left Behind Act was described in the *U.S. Department of Education Strategic Plan 2002-2007* posted on the No Child Left Behind Web site. The plan stated that the mission of the Department was "to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the nation" (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. i).

Rod Paige, then Secretary of Education, opened the plan with a "Secretary's Statement," in which he focused on the role of children in the country's future and pointed to "the importance of our education system to our economy… our national security, and to the strength of our democracy itself" (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. v). Secretary Paige evoked the September 11, 2001 attacks, claiming this made "education more important than ever" because "above all else, we must ensure the safety of our children" (p. v).

Williams was selected to promote the legislation because it was felt that his work exhibited a "strong emphasis on moral striving and rededication to the family" (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). In his articles published prior to the start of the campaign, Williams declared his support for Bush's educational reform (Williams,

2002a, 2002b, 2003), although he was disappointed that the bill did not pass as Bush had originally proposed it (Williams, 2002b). In each of these instances and in references to the policy during the campaign Williams compared the No Child Left Behind Act to a "new civil rights movement" (Williams, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2004a).

In the *Strategic Plan*, Paige referred to No Child Left Behind as the Department's "North Star" (p. v). This could likely be one reason a campaign to promote the Act was launched. In the document outlining the details of the contract with Armstrong Williams, the campaign was referred to as a "Minority Outreach Campaign," and it was stated that the Department of Education was seeking ways in which to "[educate] the African American community with messages about No Child Left Behind" (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

Expected Outcomes

The nature of the ideology does not impact whether the campaign resembled propaganda as defined by the 10-point framework. However, an understanding of the ideology applies later in the analysis. When comparing the first point of the framework to expected outcomes for a propaganda campaign it is the purpose that is most important. The purpose of a propaganda campaign is to achieve acceptance of the ideology; Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) give three examples: influencing people to adopt attitudes corresponding to those of the propagandist, to engage in certain behavior, or to maintain the legitimacy of the source organization. The example that best fits this situation was maintenance of the source's legitimacy. If the No Child Left Behind Act was the "North Star" of the Department of Education's five-year plan, it follows that the success and acceptance of the Act impacts the Department's perceived legitimacy.

2. Context

No discussion of the social context of the early 21st century United States can ignore the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001. This single day had a dramatic effect on America and how many other situations are framed by Americans. Tracy (2005) linked the attacks to a resurgence of patriotism, describing the attacks as "an all-consuming mediated event that brought about something unprecedented in the American collective psyche." He said "this new wave of patriotism [is] a collective psychic and social phenomenon fostered within the context of commercial mass media's perpetual creation and renewal of consciousness as a psychic precondition" within the United States.

While it may seem disconnected to relate the September 11th attacks to a campaign promoting an education program, the Secretary of Education did just that in his statement introducing the *Department of Education's 2002-2007 Strategic Plan*. Secretary Paige echoed Tracy's sentiments stating that "September 11 awoke a dormant spirit of resolve, of patriotism, and of community" (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. iv). He went on saying that "September 11 made education more important than ever… above all else, we must ensure the safety of our children."

The idea that education will be of equal quality and standard for all children is integral to the myth of the American Dream. McNamee and Miller (2004) said, "According to the American Dream, education identifies and selects intelligent, talented, and motivated individuals and provides educational training in direct proportion to

individual merit. Most Americans believe that education is the key to success: to get ahead in life you need a 'good education'" (p. 95).

According to Jowett and O'Donnell (1999), the socio-historical context also includes any existing power struggles. With Bush declaring the No Child Left Behind Act a "cornerstone" of his administration (U.S. Department of Education, 2005a), one can see why it would be integral to maintain the legitimacy of this program during this time frame. The No Child Left Behind minority outreach campaign took place during the year preceding the 2004 Presidential election; it concluded just a month after the election.

Expected Outcomes

Successful propaganda takes into consideration the socio-historical context in which it exists, however it is not required of propaganda (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999). Examining the context is essential to understanding a propaganda campaign. It also aids in the interpretation of point 10: the effects and evaluation. While this point on its own many not support or oppose arguments concerning the propaganda nature of the minority outreach campaign, it was vital to the goal of this research: to provide a thorough and comprehensive case study analysis of this campaign as a whole.

3. Identification of the Propagandist

Two documents, the "Amendment of Solicitation/Modification Contract" (U.S. Department of Education, 2003) and the Department of Education Inspector General's Final Report concerning the media relations services (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005), provided the most concrete information on the identification of the propagandist and the relationship between the various agents

involved in this case. The U.S. Department of Education appears to be the ultimate source. In 2003, the Department of Education contracted with Ketchum Inc. to develop a "long-range comprehensive communication strategy" for No Child Left Behind. After the contract was awarded it was decided that a minority outreach component should be added. Ketchum was instructed by the Department of Education to subcontract with the Graham Williams Group for this component of the work. Armstrong Williams was the CEO of the Graham Williams Group and the primary contact for the contract. Williams was a propaganda agent for the ultimate propaganda source—the U.S. Department of Education.

What remains unknown at this time was the role the President may have played in the propaganda campaign. The Department of Education ultimately reports to the President of the United States, however Bush denies any prior knowledge of the deal with Armstrong Williams (Bush, 2005a).

Expected Outcomes

Analysis for the third point of the framework fit quite well with the expectations of a propaganda campaign. Here the propagandist was an agent for the source institution (as is often the case in propaganda). The source had at least partially concealed its larger purpose, and the propagandist was a "front" for the true source. The advertisement which ran on Williams' television program was labeled as being from the Department of Education. Although, the spot was downloaded from Williams' Web site after the campaign became public. It can not be guaranteed that the spot originally ran with the same attribution (Williams' program was carried be numerous smaller cable networks, not a major network, therefore archives were not readily available). The contract also

required Williams to regularly comment on No Child Left Behind during his programs and to use his contacts with the American Black Forum to encourage other producers to address the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). These two aspects of the arrangement concealed the Department of Education's role in the campaign. While secrecy is not required, it is very typical of propaganda campaigns (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999).

4. Structure of the Propagandist Organization

Within the Department of Education, the chief officer was the Secretary of Education, who reported to the President of the United States. The Secretary of Education was nominated to the post by the President of the United States and was confirmed by Congress (U.S. Department of Education, 2005b). The Department of Education listed six goals in its *2002-2007 Strategic Plan* (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). First was to "create a culture of achievement;" next was to "improve student achievement;" third was to "develop safe schools and strong character;" fourth was to "transform education into an evidence-based field;" fifth was to "enhance the quality of and access to postsecondary and adult education", and finally to "establish management excellence." The means proposed for achieving each of these goals was the implementation of the No Child Left Behind program.

The Graham Williams Group was co-founded and now led by Armstrong Williams. It was self-described as "an international public relations and media firm" (Williams, 2005). However, according to Source Watch (Source Watch, 2005) the firm was not rated by major public relations trade publications.

Expected Outcomes

According to Jowett and O'Donnell (1999), propaganda usually originates from "a strong, centralized, decision-making authority that produces a consistent message throughout its structure" (p. 284). In this case that authority was the U.S. Department of Education. The Department's Web site (U.S. Department of Education, 2005a), press releases (U.S. Department of Education, 2005a) and *Strategic Plan* (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) were evidence that messages about No Child Left Behind were consistent throughout the departmental structure. The goal of the minority outreach campaign was to communicate those messages to the African American community (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Analysis for point 4: structure of the propagandist organization fit well with the expected outcomes for a propaganda campaign.

5. Target Audience

Point five in the framework was more difficult to analyze than it may at first appear, because the audience the Department of Education claimed to target was not necessarily the audience that was actually targeted. According to contract documents, the target audience was minority and disadvantaged communities (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005). The Right Side productions was selected as an appropriate vehicle because it was believed to be "a conduit to 12 million targeted viewers" and had an audience make up of 39% American black and 21% Latino (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). However, the Graham Williams Group submitted information to the Department of Education regarding the economic background of the audience. Market research indicated that the audience of The Right Side Productions

"consists of sophisticated and affluent people." They were "40% more likely to have a full service brokerage account and 91% more likely to have securities valued over $100,000" (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005). The program had a high percentage of minority viewers, but they were certainly not disadvantaged.

There were two possible interpretations of this apparent disagreement between what was said and what was done. The first interpretation was that the market research was ignored by the Department, and the target audience was never actually reached. The second, and more likely, interpretation was the Department of Education was disingenuous in its claims to target those who were most impacted by the law and was actually targeting more affluent minorities. These people had the potential to act as opinion leaders in the minority communities and had more political power making them better able to help the administration. Neither interpretation reflects well on the Department of Education.

Expected Outcomes

A propaganda audience is most often a mass audience such as this one. Propaganda is directed at those who are most likely to further the propagandist's goals if the campaign is successful. If the goal of the campaign was to maintain the perceived legitimacy of the Department of Education, then it follows that a propaganda campaign for No Child Left Behind, at least a successful one, would target the group that could best further this goal. The actual targeted audience—as opposed to the stated targeted audience—could play the greatest role in propping up the Department's legitimacy in the

situation. Affluent minorities could better serve the goal due to their substantially greater political and social influence.

According to Jowett and O'Donnell (1999), the distribution system itself may be used to identify a receptive audience. That was exactly what was attempted here, although depending on the interpretation accepted this may or may not have been executed well. The intent of the campaign, regardless of the interpretation accepted, resembles the expected intent of a propaganda campaign.

6. Media Utilization Techniques

The campaign as it was designed in the solicitation contract employed a variety of media. It was to use primarily radio and television, but due to nature of The Right Side Productions, material distributed via Williams' television and radio broadcasts was likely to appear in his syndicate print column distributed by Tribune Media Services and on his Web site. Because Williams' television and radio broadcasts also were syndicated, the messages distributed through them reached a variety of markets through at least thirteen national and local television stations (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Williams also appeared regularly as a guest on other news programs and held numerous contacts in the media industry, this afforded him additional opportunities to promote the No Child Left Behind Act and to encourage others in the media to do so, as was specified in the solicitation contract with the Department of Education.

The message in both the advertisement featuring Rod Paige (Williams, 2004c) and the commentary from Armstrong Williams' print columns, which were available on his Web site, (Williams, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005) framed the No Child

Left Behind Act as a constructive education reform that had already had positive effects on education in the United States. The television advertisement did contain a label naming the Department of Education as a sponsor (Williams, 2004c) (although as mentioned earlier it could not be verified that this label ran during the original programming), however, the radio advertisement was merely the audio track of this piece (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005). The audio did not mention the sponsorship. All interviews and discussions of the Act by Williams on his televisions and radio broadcasts would be perceived by the audience as being unsolicited commentary. It could not be known with certainty if Williams disclosed his arrangement with the Department of Education when contacting media representatives about commenting on No Child Left Behind, although he claimed he did so (Toppo, 2005). Williams cited 168 activities to promote No Child Left Behind—other than the advertisements—in a report to the Department of Education. These activities included guest appearances, speeches and publications (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005).

The articles and television and radio shows were editorial in nature and tend to present Williams' views in a persuasive manner (Williams, 2005). The advertisement on the other hand was more in the style of a public service announcement. In fact, the Department of Education stated that the eight new advertisements (four for television and four for radio) were not actually created as per the contractual agreement. A single advertisement ran which was comprised mostly of footage shot prior to the contract to create a public service announcement (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005). Both a telephone number and a Web address were provided so

viewers could retrieve more information about No Child Left Behind and the performance of schools in their area (Williams, 2004c) (see Appendix 1 for a transcript of the advertisement). The Department of Education never requested or received any proof that the single advertisement ran with the frequency dictated by the contract. Another departure from the original plan for the campaign was the May 2004 cancellation of Williams' radio program (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005).

Expected Outcomes

Modern propaganda may be sent through any and all available outlets, and this campaign employed—or at least intended to employ—a variety of media: television, radio, print, Web, and personal contact. This multi-layered approach is typical of current propaganda strategies and attempted to create a flow of information from one media source to another.

According to Jowett and O'Donnell (1999), propaganda "attempts to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist" (p. 1). Messages in this campaign seemed consistent with the goal of the source organization—to maintain the legitimacy of the Department of Education. Information presented was one-sided and represents the No Child Left Behind Act in a positive light. Even the public service announcement-style advertisement made claims such as "Thanks to No Child Left Behind… all across our country, communities are making progress in reforming their schools" (Williams, 2004c). Statements like this were important in light of the differentiation between propaganda and mere persuasion. Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) believed, "Persuasion is interactive and attempts to satisfy the needs of both the persuader

and the persuadee" (p. 1). While propaganda is a form of persuasion, not all persuasion is propaganda. Persuasion is based on discourse and dialogue; propaganda is intended to be one-sided (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999; Pratkanis & Aronson, 1997).

7. Special Techniques to Maximize Effect

According to Jowett and O'Donnell (1999), "Messages have greater impact when they are in line with existing opinions, beliefs, and dispositions" (p. 290). Armstrong Williams was a conservative commentator (Williams, 2005); the solicitation contract stated specifically that Williams was selected because of his "strong emphasis on moral striving and rededication to the family" (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). It makes sense that his audience would also be conservative, and therefore likely to be more receptive to messages supporting a Republican education reform law.

Williams had also commented positively on the No Child Left Behind Act before the contract was established (Williams, 2002b). He had an established record of endorsing the program. He was also a successful African American—Williams was CEO of his own company, host of a syndicated television and radio program, author of a syndicated column, and regular guest at high-profile political and entertainment events (Williams, 2005). Williams was a logical choice as a spokesperson for a program designed to close the "achievement gap" for minorities (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Williams also presented himself as an opinion leader among the group America's Black Forum (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005). This role was integral to the portion of the contract stating that Williams would use his

contacts within this group to encourage others in the media to comment on No Child Left Behind.

These three techniques—predisposition, testimonial and opinion leaders—seem relatively clear-cut and easy to identify. There were other classic propaganda techniques, as outlined by Lee and Lee (1939), hinted at throughout the campaign. On several occasions, Williams referred to the No Child Left Behind Act as a "new civil rights movement" (Williams, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2004a), a use of the transfer technique. The naming of the Act itself and its "four pillars" could be considered an example of glittering generalities. "No Child Left Behind" was a grand title, and the Department of Education's Web site attached to each of the pillars a slightly more emotion-evoking adjective: "*Stronger* Accountability for Results, *More Freedom* for States, *Encouraging Proven* Educational Methods, *More Choices* for Parents" (emphasis added) (U.S. Department of Education, 2005a). The site itself also could be considered card stacking. There was an index, frequently asked questions, fact sheets, speeches, press releases, tool-kits, and more all linked from the entry page. Despite claims that children were, in fact, being left behind as schools struggled to incorporate the new law, press releases and speeches continued to make claims such as the one Rod Paige issued in the advertisement used in the campaign: "Thanks to No Child Left Behind, I am proud to report that all across the our country, communities are making progress in reforming their schools" (Williams, 2004c). This could be a bandwagon technique appeal to those in districts which had not yet made progress according to the law's standards.

Expected Outcomes

Propaganda employs a variety of methods to influence the audience (see Chapter II, *History in the United States* and Chapter III *Special Techniques* for more). There were at least three easily recognized established techniques and categories of appeals at work in this campaign. First was the audience's predisposition. A conservative audience was targeted for messages about education reform established by a conservative administration; the hope being that an audience with a predisposition for conservative views would be more accepting of a conservative policy. Second was testimonial, where an influential person was selected to testify to the quality or legitimacy of the propaganda object. In this case, Armstrong Williams, as a successful high-profile African American, was selected for a campaign geared towards an African American audience. Finally was the use of opinion leaders. This referred to Williams' attempts to have other media spokespeople comment on No Child Left Behind. Williams billed himself as an opinion leader among the group, America's Black Forum (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005). He used the role as an opinion leader to encourage others to do as he was doing.

8. Audience Reaction to Various Techniques

The goal of the campaign was to disseminate messages about the No Child Left Behind Act to minority and disadvantaged communities, however there seemed to be no clearly articulated measurable objectives related to this goal (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005). Unfortunately, there were no pre-measures in place to allow for comparisons in changes in behavior or attitude of the

audience. There were, however, more general data available on the level of attention the law was receiving at various points in time and the public's knowledge level and opinion of the Act itself.

The blog search engine, *IceRocket*, was used to compile data on the number of blog entries during the year preceding the campaign, the year of the campaign, and the year following. Similarly, the *New York Times* archive available through the database *ProQuest Direct*, was used to compile monthly counts of articles published in the *New York Times* on the No Child Left Behind Act. (see Table 4.1, Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 for data)

Although the Act had been proposed nearly two years prior and had been in law for a year, both the formal and informal coverage of the Act was almost nonexistent in the 12 months prior to the campaign's initiation. During that period of time, there was a total of only 13 blog entries and four *New York Times* articles, with three of those occurring in November. Coverage built during the year of the minority outreach campaign. Blogging peaked in October, the month preceding the Presidential election. The number of blog entries remained consistent until the discovery of the campaign when blogging on the topic exploded and continued to grow to a height of 2880 entries in September 2005. During the campaign, *New York Times* coverage peaked in March 2004 with nine articles published. Coverage dropped to zero in May, but resumed in the months preceding the election. *The New York Times* saw a notable increase in coverage after the campaign's discovery with 65 stories in the following year, a 35% increase over the coverage appearing during the campaign. However, this increase was slight when

compared to the 3042% increase in the number of blog entries (IceRocket, 2006; ProQuest Direct, 2005).

Table 4.1

Number of Blog Entries and *New York Times* Articles Published by Month

Note: Tables are divided into the year preceding the campaign, the year of the campaign and the year following the campaign.

Date	Blog Entries	NYT Articles
Dec-2002	0	1
Jan-2003*	0	0
Feb-2003	1	0
Mar-2003	3	0
Apr-2003	1	0
May-2003	0	0
Jun-2003	0	0
Jul-2003	1	0
Aug-2003	1	0
Sep-2003	2	0
Oct-2003	3	0
Nov-2003	1	3

Date	Blog Entries	NYT Articles
Dec-2003	4	3
Jan-2004	19	8
Feb-2004	23	5
Mar-2004	28	9
Apr-2004	11	3
May-2004	23	0
Jun-2004	18	1
Jul-2004	20	2
Aug-2004	53	4
Sep-2004	99	4
Oct-2004	103	6
Nov-2004	77	3

Date	Blog Entries	NYT Articles
Dec-2004	96	0
Jan-2005**	469	10
Feb-2005	992	5
Mar-2005	959	2
Apr-2005	997	14
May-2005	718	6
Jun-2005	267	3
Jul-2005	568	6
Aug-2005	2276	2
Sep-2005	2880	6
Oct-2005	2650	3
Nov-2005	2149	8

* One year anniversary of bill's passage on January 8, 2002

** Campaign becomes public on January 7, 2005

Figure 4.1

Number of Blog Entries Published by Month

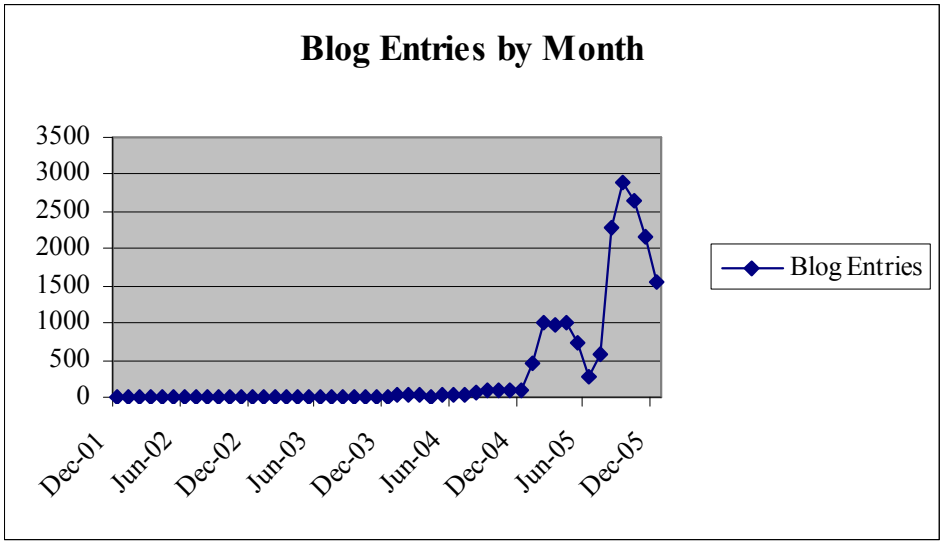
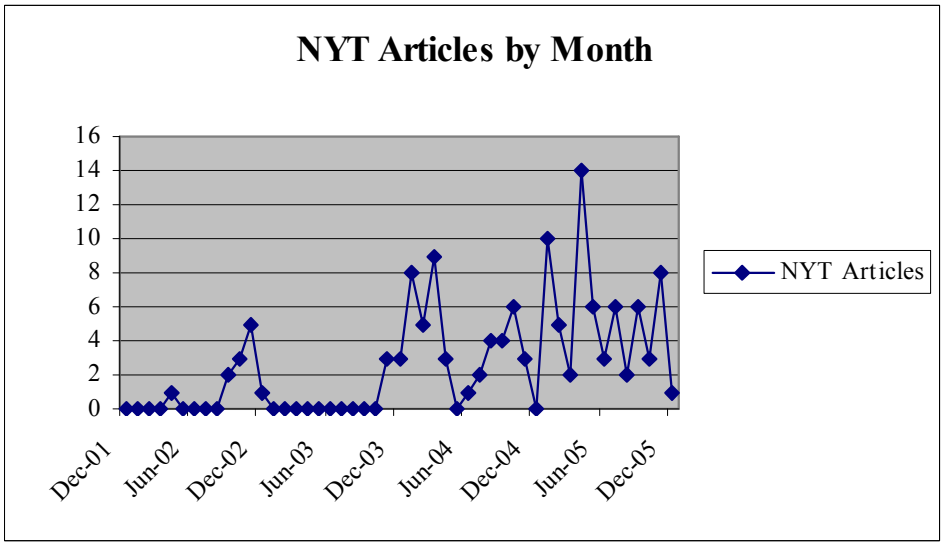


Figure 4.2

Number of *New York Times* Articles Published by Month



Opinion poll data was also available that provided a snapshot of the public's general knowledge level and opinions of the No Child Left Behind Act. Each summer, the Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public School is conducted. *The 35th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public School* was published in 2003, and it focused on the No Child Left Behind Act. Subsequent years continued this focus. The 35th poll collected data from May 28 to June 18 of 2003—the summer prior to the launch of the campaign. The 36th poll collected data from May 28 to June 18, 2004—the middle of the campaign—and the 37th poll collected data from June 9 to June 26 2005—the summer after the campaign's completion and discovery. The samples consisted of 1,011, 1003 and 1,001 individuals, respectively (Rose & Gallup, 2003, 2004, 2005). According to Rose and Gallup (2003), each survey employed "an unclustered, directory-assisted, random-digit telephone sample, based on a proportionate stratified sampling design" (p. 52).

Opinion poll data focusing only on the target audience was not available; the *Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll* represented the racial and economic makeup of the country as a whole. While it may not be ideally focused, it did give a general view of the changing knowledge level and opinions held by the general public concerning the No Child Left Behind Act.

When asked "How much, if anything, would you say you know about the No Child Left Behind Act—the federal education bill that was passed by Congress in 2001—a great deal, a fair amount, very little, or nothing at all?" 76% responded with "very little" or "nothing at all" in the summer prior to the campaign. The percentage dropped to

68% by mid-campaign, and 59% in the summer after the campaign's conclusion. Perhaps even more noteworthy were the statistics on opinions of the Act. When asked "From what you know or have heard or read about the No Child Left Behind Act, do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the act -or don't you know enough about it to say?" 69% told surveyors that they did not know enough about the Act to form an opinion about it in 2003. This dropped to 55% in 2004 and 45% in 2005. While knowledge of the Act did increase over time, opinions of the No Child Left Behind Act seemed to stay evenly split with "very favorable" and "somewhat favorable" only slightly ahead of "somewhat unfavorable" and "very unfavorable" each year. In 2003, it was 18% versus 13%, then 24% versus 20% in 2004, and 28% versus 27% in 2005 (see Table 4.2 for details) (Rose & Gallup, 2003, 2004, 2005).

Together data from these two questions over the course of three years showed how knowledge and attitudes changed, but the change could not be attributed to the campaign; there were far too many other factors involved.

Table 4.2

Gallup Survey Data

"How much, if anything, would you say you know about the No Child Left Behind Act -the federal education bill that was passed by Congress in 2001- a great deal, a fair amount, very little, or nothing at all?"

	National Totals		
	2003	**2004**	**2005**
A great deal plus a fair amount	24	31	40
A great deal	6	7	8
A fair amount	18	24	32
Very little	40	40	43
Nothing at all	36	28	16
Very little plus nothing at all	76	68	59
Don't know	0	1	1

"From what you know or have heard or read about the No Child Left Behind Act, do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the act -or don't you know enough about it to say?"

	National Totals		
	2003	**2004**	**2005**
Very favorable plus somewhat favorable	18	24	28
Very favorable	5	7	7
Somewhat favorable	13	17	21
Somewhat unfavorable	7	12	15
Very unfavorable	6	8	12
Somewhat unfavorable plus very unfavorable	13	20	27
Don't know enough to say	69	55	45
Don't know	0	1	0

Expected Outcomes

The purpose of a propaganda campaign was to achieve acceptance of the ideology. A successful propaganda campaign will result in this reaction by the target audience (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999). The data showed that both formal and informal coverage of the No Child Left Behind Act increased over the duration of the campaign and continued after. The general public's knowledge of the program also increased over this timeframe (although opinions did not necessarily improve or worsen). However, none of these results could be attributed to the campaign itself. It was far more likely that the discovery of the contractual arrangement for the campaign and the resulting controversy did more to raise the profile of the Act than the campaign itself did.

Analysis of this point did not necessarily support or oppose arguments that the campaign was an example of propaganda. Instead it highlighted the key flaw in campaign: failure to create measurable objective and take adequate pre-measures by which to judge a change in the audience. Contributing factors to the campaign's success or failure will be discussed further in the section 10. Effects and Evaluation of this chapter.

9. Counterpropaganda

Throughout the timeframe of the campaign, December 2003 to December 2004, there were many reports of contrary mainstream messages in the media. The primary sources of most of these opposing messages were public school teachers, the organizations that represent them and the state legislatures. According to Dillion (2004), by March 2004, "legislation or resolutions that call[ed] on Congress to amend or repeal

the law, prohibit spending state money to carry it out, or otherwise criticize the law [had] been passed by one or both legislative chambers in at least 12 states." The following summer, the National Education Association held its annual meeting. The gathering kicked off with a folk musician singing No Child Left Behind protest songs. In fact, at least four CDs have been produced with compilations of songs bashing the Act; most of the songs from these albums were submitted and performed by teachers (Toppo, 2004). In late-October, just weeks before elections, the National Education Association joined with MoveOn.org and the Campaign for America's Future to organize nearly 4,000 "house parties." According to Perlstein (2004), the purpose of the events was to gather people at various locations across the country to "call on Congress to increase school funding and in general to speak up on national education issues."

Expected Outcomes

The counterpropaganda efforts were secondary and not the focus of this research; what was important was its existence. Because the United States has an independent media, one would expect counterpropaganda to exist for a propaganda campaign, especially one originating from a government agency (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999). This was certainly the case here. Protests, both in-person and via petitions, were organized; legislation was proposed and passed by multiple states. Teachers and school officials were particularly vocal in this counter movement and the state governments—if not the Federal government—seemed to listen.

10. Effects and Evaluation

The purpose of the minority outreach campaign was ultimately to maintain the legitimacy of the U.S. Department of Education; under this broad purpose, the campaign's primary goal was to communicate messages about the No Child Left Behind Act to African American communities. The campaign was completed just a year ago, and it was difficult to say in such a short timeframe what kind of long-term impact the campaign would have on the Department's perceived legitimacy. Unfortunately, there were no pre-measures in place with which to compare a change in the targeted audience's attitudes, beliefs or behavior. This would be an ideal indicator of success. The goal of communicating messages to the African American community also was not quantified. How many audience members did they intend to reach? Did they want to improve opinions of specific tenets of the Act or only increase the knowledge level of the Act within this community? There were indicators from the general public—opinion polls, news media coverage and blog entries—that suggested that knowledge of the Act did increase over the course the campaign. However these changes could not be attributed to the campaign itself. The Department of Education conducted a review of this campaign and agreed with this conclusion. While the Director of Office of Public Affairs pointed to an increase in visits to the No Child Left Behind Web site as a sign of success, others within the Department felt this indicator could not be contributed to the campaign (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005).

There were both indicators of success and failure at this point. The No Child Left Behind Act was a cornerstone legislation for the Bush administration and one that was touted as a victory for education throughout the 2004 election campaign (Toppo, 2004,

2005), an election that resulted in another win for Bush. On the other hand, even though the Act was passed before the minority outreach campaign began, a dozen states had passed legislation or resolutions attempting to block or otherwise undermine the law (Dillon, 2004).

The previous points of the framework provided a prediction of the campaign's potential for success or failure. The campaign did an excellent job of taking into account the socio-historic context of the times; according to Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) this is vital to the success of any campaign. Not only did the campaign take into account the emotions and patriotism of post-September 11th America, it also played to the established myth of the American Dream. Also, the propagandist's structure was ideal for a successful campaign; it was, as Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) put it, "a strong, centralized, decision-making authority that produces a consistent message throughout its structure" (p. 284).

While the U.S. Department of Education did have a clearly articulated ideology, the goals of the campaign lacked measurable objectives. If it is ultimately a success, it will be hard to prove so without appropriate baseline measurements with which to compare change. In addition, there was also a lapse in the completion of the campaign as it was outlined in contract documents. Each of the two contracts called for production of two television and two radio advertisements for a total of eight. Only one ad was produced and it did not meet the specifications of the contract. The radio advertisement was the audio track of the television ad. So while the Department of Education paid for the production of eight advertisements, they only received one—one that was comprised of public service announcement footage shot prior to the initiation of the contract. The

Department also received no verification that any of the advertisements ran with the frequency scheduled and was unaware that Williams' radio show ceased airing in May of 2004, only half way through the campaign.

Expected Outcomes

Because most propaganda goals are long-term in nature it can be difficult to completely evaluate a campaign unless a substantial amount of time has passed. The success—or failure—of a propaganda campaign will likely be attributed to factors examined in the previous points (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999). As illustrated with the case study, the framework allows for discussion of the ultimate outcomes of the campaign long before they come to fruition. Only time will tell if the campaign was a success or failure; perhaps it will be a little of both. Regardless of the outcome, analysis from the 10-point framework will aid a discussion of the reasons behind it.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Summary of Methodology and Findings

The methodology was a qualitative case study. It employed Jowett and O'Donnell's (1999) established framework for analyzing a propaganda campaign and focused on the 2004 minority outreach campaign of the U.S. Department of Education to promote the No Child Left Behind Act.

The framework consisted of 10 points, which each examined a different aspect of the campaign—1) ideology and purpose, 2) context, 3) identification of the propagandist, 4) propaganda organization structure, 5) audience, 6) media utilized, 7) techniques used, 8) audience reaction, 9) counter-propaganda and 10) effects and evaluation (Jowett, 1997; Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999). According to the framework's creators, the key strength of the method was that it took into consideration the social climate in which the campaign was designed, executed and received. While this methodology lacked the support of quantitative figures and statistics, it was an excellent means to compile a thorough and comprehensive analysis of this long-term campaign. The methodology was discussed further in Chapter III.

The first point in the framework was ideology and purpose, which was described for the Department of Education and the No Child Left Behind Act in the *U.S. Department of Education Strategic Plan 2002-2007*. The plan stated that the mission of the Department was "to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational

excellence throughout the nation" (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. i) and refered to No Child Left Behind as the Department's "North Star" (p. v). When comparing the first point of the framework to expected outcomes for a propaganda campaign it is the purpose that is most important. The purpose of a propaganda campaign is to achieve acceptance of the ideology (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999); in this situation, the purpose was realized through an attempt to maintain the source's legitimacy.

The second point in the framework was the socio-historic context in which the campaign occurred. This campaign did an excellent job of accounting for and incorporating the social climate of the times. Not only did the Department of Education manage to tie the campaign to the September 11th attacks—an event that can not be ignored when considering the social context of the early 21st century United States—it also played into the myth of the American Dream. According to Jowett and O'Donnell (1999), the socio-historical context also includes any existing power struggles. It should be noted that the No Child Left Behind minority outreach campaign took place during the year preceding the 2004 Presidential election; it concluded just a month after the election. With Bush declaring the No Child Left Behind Act a "cornerstone" of his administration (U.S. Department of Education, 2005a), one could see why it would be integral to maintain the legitimacy of this program during this time frame.

Analysis for the third point of the framework fit quite well with the expectations of a propaganda campaign. Here Armstrong Williams was an agent for the propagandist source institution—the U.S. Department of Education. The source had at least partially concealed its larger purpose, and the propaganda agent was a "front" for the true source. While secrecy is not required, it is very typical of propaganda campaigns (Jowett &

O'Donnell, 1999). The role the President may have played in the campaign remains unknown at this time.

The fourth point was the structure of the propagandist organization. The Department of Education was headed by the Secretary of Education, who reported to the President of the United States. The Department of Education listed six goals in its *2002-2007 Strategic Plan;* the means proposed for achieving each of these goals was the implementation of the No Child Left Behind program (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The Graham Williams Group was co-founded and then led by Armstrong Williams. It was self-described as "an international public relations and media firm" (Williams, 2005). The fact that the campaign originated with the Department of Education fit well with expectations of propaganda which usually originates from "a strong, centralized, decision-making authority that produces a consistent message throughout its structure" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 284).

Analysis of point five in the framework—target audience—had two possible interpretations. First, it may have represented a weakness of the campaign, if the audience who was targeted was not the audience who actually received the message. Contract documents claimed the target audience was minority and disadvantaged communities (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005); the Right Side productions was selected as an appropriate vehicle because it was believed to be a conduit to the intended audience (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). However, the programs had a high percentage of minority viewers, but they were certainly not disadvantaged (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005). The second, more likely, interpretation was the Department was disingenuous in its

claims and rather than targeting those impacted by the law, instead targeted exactly the audience they reached, affluent minorities. These people had the potential to act as opinion leaders in the minority communities and had more political power making them better positioned to help the administration. Neither interpretation reflects well on the Department of Education.

A propaganda audience is most often a mass audience such as this one. Propaganda is directed at those who are most likely to further the propagandist's goals if the campaign is successful. If the goal of the campaign was to maintain the perceived legitimacy of the Department of Education, then it follows that a propaganda campaign for No Child Left Behind, at least a successful one, would be targeted at the group that can best further this goal. The actual targeted audience—as opposed to the stated targeted audience—could play the greatest role in propping up the Department's legitimacy in the situation. Affluent minorities could better serve the goal due to their substantially greater political and social influence.

According to Jowett and O'Donnell (1999), the distribution system itself may be used to identify a receptive audience. That was exactly what was attempted here, although depending on the interpretation accepted this may or may not have been executed well. The intent of the campaign, regardless of the interpretation accepted, resembles the expectations of a propaganda campaign.

Point six was media utilization techniques. Modern propaganda may be sent through any and all available outlets, and this campaign employed a variety of media: television, radio, print, Web, and personal contact. The multi-layered approach is typical of current propaganda strategies and attempted to create a flow of information from one

media source to another. The messages in this campaign seemed consistent with the goal of the source organization—to maintain the legitimacy of the Department of Education. Information presented was one-sided and represented the No Child Left Behind Act in a positive light.

The seventh point focused on the special techniques used to maximize the effect on the audience. Propaganda employs a variety of methods of influence, and there were at least three easily recognized established techniques and categories of appeals at work in this campaign: predisposition, testimonial and opinion leaders. A conservative audience was targeted for messages about education reform established by a conservative administration; the hope being that an audience with a predisposition for conservative views would be more accepting of a conservative policy. Armstrong Williams, as a successful high-profile African American, was selected for a campaign geared towards an African American audience. The use of opinion leaders referred to Williams' attempts to have other media spokespeople comment on No Child Left Behind.

Point eight of the framework was audience reaction to various techniques. Unfortunately, there were no pre-measures in place to allow for comparisons in changes in behavior or attitude of the audience. The data shows that both formal—*New York Times* articles—and informal—blogging—coverage of the No Child Left Behind Act increased over the duration of the campaign and continued after. (See Table 4.1, Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 for details.) The general public's knowledge of the program also increased over this timeframe, although opinions did not necessarily improve or worsen (see Table 4.2 for details). However, none of these results could be attributed to the campaign itself. It was far more likely that the discovery of the contractual arrangement

for the campaign and the resulting controversy did more to raise the profile of the Act than the campaign itself did. Analysis of this point did not necessarily support or oppose arguments that the campaign was an example of propaganda. Instead it highlighted the key flaw in campaign: failure to create measured objectives.

Point nine in the framework examined counterpropaganda efforts. While an in-depth look at the counterpropaganda was not the focus, knowledge of its existence was important. Because the United States has an independent media, one would expect counterpropaganda to exist for a propaganda campaign, especially one originating from a government agency (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999). This was certainly the case here. Throughout the timeframe of the campaign, December 2003 to December 2004, there were many contrary mainstream messages in the media. The primary sources of these opposing messages were public school teachers, the organizations that represent them and the state legislatures. Protests, both in-person and via petitions, were organized; legislation was proposed and passed by multiple states (Dillon, 2004). Teachers and school officials were particularly vocal in this counter movement and the state governments—if not the Federal government—seemed to listen.

The final point of the framework was concerned with the effects and evaluation of the campaign. The purpose of the minority outreach campaign ultimately was to maintain the legitimacy of the U.S. Department of Education; under this broad purpose, the campaign's primary goal was to communicate messages about the No Child Left Behind Act to African American communities. The campaign was completed just a year ago, and it was difficult to say in such a short timeframe what kind of long-term impact the campaign had the Department's perceived legitimacy. The lack of baseline data made it

particularly hard to judge changes in the targeted audience's attitudes, beliefs or behavior. The goal of communicating messages to the African American community also was not quantified.

There were both indicators of success and failure at this point. The No Child Left Behind Act was a cornerstone legislation for the Bush administration and one that was touted as a victory for education throughout the 2004 election campaign (Toppo, 2004, 2005), an election that resulted in another win for Bush. On the other hand, even though the Act was passed before the minority outreach campaign began, a dozen states had passed legislation or resolutions attempting to block or otherwise undermine the law (Dillon, 2004).

The previous points of the framework provided a prediction of the campaign's potential for success or failure. The campaign did an excellent job of taking into account the socio-historic context of the times; according to Jowett and O'Donnell (1999) this is key to a successful campaign. Not only did the campaign take into account the emotions and patriotism of post-September 11th America, it also played to the established myth of the American Dream. Also, the propagandist's structure was ideal for a successful campaign; it was "a strong, centralized, decision-making authority that produces a consistent message throughout its structure" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 284).

While the U.S. Department of Education did have a clearly articulated ideology, a major weakness of the campaign was the lack of measurable objectives. If it was ultimately a success, it will be hard to prove so without appropriate baseline measurements with which to compare change.

Support for Arguments of Propaganda

RQ1: Does the case study's fit with expectations of propaganda support or oppose arguments the campaign is an example of propaganda?

The purpose of this study was to provide a thorough and comprehensive examination of the Department of Education/Williams campaign. This was accomplished by subjecting it to Jowett and O'Donnell's (1999) 10-point propaganda framework. The framework was based on a composite of accepted definitions of propaganda. The expected outcomes provided by Jowett and O'Donnell outlined characteristic of propaganda. Based on how closely the campaign met the framework's expectations of propaganda, the findings from this research seemed to support arguments that the U.S. Department of Education's minority outreach campaign was an example of propaganda.

Every single point did not necessarily support arguments for the campaign being propaganda. A few only contributed to the broader understanding of the campaign as a whole. The points that did contribute to arguments about propaganda each provided at least some support for the idea that the Department of Education's minority outreach campaign promoting the No Child Left Behind Act was an example of a propaganda campaign.

Identification of the propagandist and structure of the organization were the first points directly supporting to the argument of the propaganda nature of the campaign. Analysis of these two points fit well with the expectation of a propaganda campaign. The ultimate source of the campaign's message was the U.S. Department of Education. As with ideal propaganda conditions, the entity was a "strong centralized decision making

authority that produces a consistent message throughout its structure" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p. 284). Armstrong Williams was an agent for the propaganda source. The use of a propaganda agent can—and did in this situation—work to conceal the true source of the message. Secrecy is typical of propaganda and begins to move the campaign out the ream of white propaganda and toward the gray.

Another possible source of deception was the claim concerning the target audience. The stated target audience—disadvantaged minorities—was not the audience reached. It appeared the Department of Education either made a huge oversight by ignoring market data concerning the audience or they were attempting to conceal their actual audience. Either interpretation supported arguments of propaganda. The audience targeted was a mass audience who could further the propagandist's goal. The delivery vehicle also was selected specifically because of its established audience. According to Jowett and O'Donnell (1999), these are all traits of propaganda.

The media utilization techniques intended for the campaigned also reflected characteristics of propaganda which utilizes any and all media available and attempts to create a flow of information from one medium to another. The campaign planned to employ a variety of media: print, television, radio, Web, and face-to-face contacts. Although, these aspects of the campaign were not executed as planned, the intentions of the plan match those of a propaganda campaign.

The mere existence of a counterpropaganda movement and propaganda techniques used to maximize effect also supported a propaganda argument. Although the identification of specific propaganda techniques was not the sole focus of this research, there were three established propaganda techniques easily identified: predisposition,

testimonial and opinion leaders. A more thorough analysis, focusing solely on this aspect of the framework could quite possibly yield even more support. The techniques of modern propaganda are so well established it would be hard to find an outreach campaign that did not employ at least one.

The 10-point analysis also helped illustrate how this campaign crossed the line from persuasion into propaganda. Persuasion is a give and take process; it takes into consideration both the needs of the sender and the receiver of the message. Propaganda may be a subset of persuasion, but not all persuasion is necessarily propaganda. Persuasion is based on discourse and dialogue; propaganda is intended to be a one-way flow of information from the sender to the receiver. The goal of propaganda is no longer one of mutual education; it is simply to disseminate a point of view (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999; Pratkanis & Aronson, 1997). Information presented in this campaign was one-sided and represented the No Child Left Behind Act in a positive light. The paid advertisement, which was the foundation of the agreement, illustrated this perfectly. Even though the ad was created in a public service announcement-like style, it made claims such as "Thanks to No Child Left Behind… all across our country, communities are making progress in reforming their schools" (Williams, 2004c). It also provided a phone number and Web site address to retrieve more information about the Act, but it did not in any way solicit feedback concerning public schools, the No Child Left Behind Act or the U.S. Department of Education. In fact, the Department's Web site was an example of how the propagandist organization maintains a consistent message throughout its structure. All of this was important in light of the differentiation between propaganda and mere persuasion.

Ethics is the Issue

Accusations were by legislators and the media that the contract between Williams and the Department of Education potentially violated three laws. First was the Anti-Lobbying Act which barred the spending of any Congressional appropriation on "personal service, advertisement, telegram, telephone, letter, printed or written matter, or other device" to attempted to effect policy ("Anti-Lobbying Act," 1948). Second, the Anti-Deficiency Act forbid any spending by officials which was not expressly authorized by Congress ("Anti-Deficiency Act," 1974). Finally, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004 stated "no part of any appropriation contained in this or any other Act shall be used for publicity or propaganda purposes within the United States not heretofore authorized by Congress" ("Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004," 2004).

The case study may have supported arguments that the minority outreach campaign was actually propaganda, but that was likely not the real issue. That was not why the campaign was so controversial. White propaganda was defined by Nelson (1996) as "Forms of propaganda in which the source of the message is correctly identified and what is said also tends to be truthful" (p. 274). If this had described the minority outreach campaign, there would be no controversy. What people took issue with was the ethical nature of the situation.

In the Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Education's final report on the contract (2005) it was noted that the Deputy General Counsel felt that a weak argument that the campaign violated the Consolidated Appropriations Act existed, but the Office of the Inspector General found "no violations of pertinent contract law"

and “no evidence of any ethical violations in the formation of the Ketchum contract and the Graham Williams Group work requests” (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005, p. 1). However, contractual loopholes were used in constructing the contracts and while the Department claimed there were no ethical violations they did admit that several aspects of the campaign were questionable in nature or examples of “poor judgment.”

The Department’s Office of Public Affairs completed a formal competition process when awarding Ketchum the media relations contract for the comprehensive long-range plan. It was after this that the Department decided to include the minority outreach campaign as a component of the No Child Left Behind communications plan. The Department selected the Graham Williams Group for this component and instructed Ketchum to subcontract with the firm for the work. In the words of the Inspector General, this “gave the appearance of circumventing competition in contracting” (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005, p. 5). While this did not explicitly violate contract law, it was noncompliant with the subcontracting terms of the contract with Ketchum. The Inspector General noted that this was a factor in later problems with the campaign.

The Inspector General accepted the Department’s argument that money was only exchanged for the advertising portion of the contract. The itemized budget only contained figures for the production and placement of advertising, but the contract also listed as deliverables: favorable commentary on Williams’ productions, airtime for Department officials to appear as guests on the programs, and Williams to using his contacts to encourage others in the media to comment on No Child Left Behind (U.S. Department of

Education, 2003). Invoices paid by the Department of Education were vague, so it could not be certain what services exactly the invoices covered. The Inspector General said this "provid[ed] the appearance the Department was buying more than just advertising" (U.S. Department of Education Office of the Inspector General, 2005). At the midpoint of the campaign when it was decided to extend the contract another six months, officials within the Department expressed concerns with Williams' conflict acting as public relations practitioner and commentator, as well as with other weaknesses of the campaign. It was, however, decided to continue.

The Inspector General's (2005) report concluded:

> While the Department did not explicitly violate any significant laws or regulations relevant to the formation of the Ketchum contract or GWG work requests, they did make a series of bad management decisions, including the failure to share critical information with decision makers, and exercised poor judgment and oversight (p. 18).

The campaign represented the expenditure of $252,931 of taxpayers' money. This appeared to be an example of misuse of public funds, and that was perhaps the worse ethical violation of the case. (A complete discussion of ethical violations follows in the section called Emerging Guidelines.)

Emerging Guidelines

RQ2: What aspects of this analysis can be applied to similar government contracts, and what aspects are unique only to this case?

The use of Jowett and O'Donnell's 10-point analysis will yield different results for every case to which it is applied. The specifics of the case—the way in which it incorporated the socio historic context, the counterpropaganda movement, the audience reactions—can not be assumed to be the same for every government outreach campaign. Likewise, just because the framework seemed to support arguments that the minority outreach campaign was an example of propaganda, does not mean it will provide similar support for propaganda arguments concerning other cases. Some campaigns will fit very well into the framework—and therefore into a definition of propaganda—other cases will not. Jowett and O'Donnell's (1999) framework may be an excellent means for analyzing potential propaganda, but the full analysis must be completed for each individual case. That said there is much that can be learned from this case. While each case is different, the mistakes made here could easily be repeated.

RQ3: Do any guidelines for future government public relations contracts emerge?

Little if anything needs to be created in regards to making recommendations for future guidelines. The Public Relations Society of America compiled a code of ethics in 2000 (see Appendix B). My recommendation focuses on a recommitment to this code by public relations as an industry. The code of ethics encapsulates the ideals and practices that will safeguard against repeating some of the ethical mistakes made in the case. If the public relations industry strives to earn and maintain the public's respect and trust it must, as individuals and as a collective, commit to and enforce the ethical standard it has set. The code itself is meaningless if it is merely used as a spin tool for the organization. A community cannot purport to hold dear certain values when it is willing to turn a blind

eye to violations of not just the member of the professional society, but by anyone claiming to represent the industry.

PRSA's code lists six core values for the profession; "These values provide the foundation for the Member Code of Ethics and set the industry standard for the professional practice of public relations" (Public Relations Society of America, 2000). The core values are advocacy, honesty, expertise, independence, loyalty and fairness. Each played some role in the case study.

"ADVOCACY: We serve the public interest by acting as responsible advocates for those we represent. We provide a voice in the marketplace of ideas, facts, and viewpoints to aid informed public debate. HONESTY: We adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth in advancing the interests of those we represent and in communicating with the public" (Public Relations Society of America, 2000). Williams defaulted on his contract with the Department of Education and misrepresented himself to the public during the execution of the campaign. Both of these are serious breaches of honesty and not the actions of a responsible advocate.

"EXPERTISE: We acquire and responsibly use specialized knowledge and experience. We advance the profession through continued professional development, research, and education. We build mutual understanding, credibility, and relationships among a wide array of institutions and audiences" (Public Relations Society of America, 2000). Williams admitted after the discovery of the campaign that he realized people would find it questionable that he reported as a journalist on the same topic he was accepting money as a public relations practitioner to promote (Toppo, 2005). He was not

using his knowledge and experience in PR responsibly. His mistakes damaged the profession's credibility and its relationship with the public.

"INDEPENDENCE: We provide objective counsel to those we represent. We are accountable for our actions" (Public Relations Society of America, 2000). The fact that Williams pitched using his personal role as a journalist as a tool by which to execute the campaign and his productions as the primary communications vehicle of the campaign makes his objectivity in this case questionable. This makes it hard to argue that Williams was acting objectively when providing counsel to his client.

"LOYALTY: We are faithful to those we represent, while honoring our obligation to serve the public interest. FAIRNESS: We deal fairly with clients, employers, competitors, peers, vendors, the media, and the general public. We respect all opinions and support the right of free expression"(Public Relations Society of America, 2000). Williams completed only one of the eight advertisements called for by the contract. He provided no verification that the purchased advertising time was provided, and did not notify the Department of Education when he ceased broadcast of his radio show. This clearly demonstrates a lack of loyalty to his client. When Williams failed to complete the contract and provided no notification or explanation to his client concerning this he was not treating the client fairly. Likewise, when he presented his views concerning No Child Left Behind as independent while accepting money to promote the act, he was being unfair to the general public.

In addition to these core values PRSA's code of ethics provides five provisions, each of which include a definition, intent, guidelines for use, and examples of violations. The case potentially violates three of the five. The first potential violation is of the

provision concerned with "protecting and advancing the free flow of accurate and truthful information [which] is essential to serving the public interest and contributing to informed decision making in a democratic society" (Public Relations Society of America, 2000). Acting as an independent commentator on an issue he was being paid to promote as a public relations practitioner, Williams damaged both the integrity and honesty of communications. Williams' more blatant violations concern the provisions for disclosure and enhancing the profession.

PRSA sees the role of its professionals as serving the public, not just their clients. Open communication is vital in a democratic society and the provision for disclosure of information focuses on the need to give the public all the information needed to make informed decisions. Among other things, "a member shall: be honest and accurate in all communications, reveal the sponsors for causes and interests represented, and avoid deceptive practices" (Public Relations Society of America, 2000). By failing to disclose his business relationship with the Department of Education while acting as an independent commentator on his own programs and media outlets as well as on other news programs Williams is clearly in violation of this provision. Finally, Williams openly acknowledged the poor decision making involved in this campaign (Toppo, 2005). His behavior certainly did not enhance the profession, the last provision in the PRSA code of ethics.

Every public relations practitioner represents the industry as a whole. The irresponsible actions of a few have long-lasting repercussions for the industry and all its practitioners. Shouldn't it be the role of the professional organization to guide its members in being the best professionals they can be? Currently, the only enforcement of

the code takes place when an individual is sanctioned by a government agency or convicted in a court of law for an action which violates the code of ethics. The result of this is the potential barring from membership or expulsion from the society. While more frequent enforcement may be required, it does not have to be so severe in every case. This repercussion may be appropriate for infractions resulting in sanctions or conviction, but there needs to be some recognition of any reported ethical violation. Recognition of ethical violations could be as mild as letter outlining the violation, acknowledging it happened and that it is deemed unacceptable by the organization. Of course, even this level of enforcement requires a mechanism by which practitioners can report violations, the accused can respond or refute the claim, and substantiated violations can be logged.

The Role Public Relations in the Future of Government Policy

RQ4: What role should public relations firms play in promoting government policy?

The Public Relation Society of America (PRSA) officially defines public relations as "help[ing] an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other." The organization focuses on the role of research, long-term systematic approaches, communicating to multiple audiences and evaluation (Public Relations Society of America, 2005). Many definitions are offered by a variety of organizations, but most seem to focus on the obligation to the public and promoting a mutual understanding between the client and the public (Nelson, 1996). Public relations in this idealistic sense will always have a place in the promotion of government policy.

Practically, this case has drawn attention to flaws in the nature of the way the government and public relations work together at times. This may be only one poor example out of hundreds of successful and professionally executed campaigns, but it is the scandals that draw attention. It is a black eye for the public relations industry. In a *PR Week* editorial, Ray Kotcher, CEO of Ketchum, (2005) called this a transformative event in public relations. That is yet to be seen. He called for "an industry-wide review of disclosure and other practices in government contracts." Kotcher said, "We must clarify the rules—for everyone." It is true; this is a perfect opportunity for a reevaluation of best practices and a firm recommitment to an industry-wide code of ethics. The future reputation of public relations could hinge on how the industry's organizations and leaders respond to this and the inevitable repeats to come.

Limitations and Opportunities for Future Study

This event raised concerns over the blurring line between what is and is not acceptable in public relations. The Department of Education/Williams deal will be held up as an example in public relations, the media, and the government alike. This qualitative study provided a broad examination of the controversial campaign. This research should be valuable professionally to public relations practitioners and theorists, as well as journalists and media critics. It also provided helpful background and insight for those debating the legality and ethics of this situation.

The scope of this research was limited in that it covers only the U.S. Department of Education/Armstrong Williams campaign. Although there were other similar cases—the Medicare campaign and the Anti-Drug campaign—and accusations of even more

government arrangements with journalists, the results from this research can only be applied to the specific campaign which it analyzes.

Limitations of this research included the campaign's recent completion and discovery. It was still being debated in the media and the government, and it was not possible yet to judge the long-term effects. The project was also limited by the methodology, qualitative case study. It provided an overview of the campaign, but it did not measure or quantify an aspect of it. Also the advertisement created by Williams in partial fulfillment of the contract could not be secured from an independent archive. Williams' program was aired on smaller cable networks, so it was not available from a major archiving service. The advertisement used in the analysis was downloaded from Williams' Web site after the discovery of the campaign. It could not be known with certainty that the downloaded advertisement was the exact format that originally aired.

The purpose of this particular research was to provide a thorough and comprehensive look at this campaign. Jowett and O'Donnell's (1999) framework provided the means to accomplish this. The research was very broad in nature and could easily be built upon by conducting additional studies to add depth to a particular point in the framework. Surveys or focus groups could be used to compile data on audience reactions to the programs and advertisements used in the campaign. The framework in its entirety could be applied to the counterpropaganda movement to provide a wide-ranging look at the campaign in direct opposition to this one. The research as it was designed also could be revisited at a much later time. One strength of Jowett and O'Donnell's (1999) framework was that it allows for analysis of a campaign that is still in progress or recently completed such as this one. Surely, as time passes more and more information

will become available on the nature and design of this campaign, and the full effects of the campaign will be better known.

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APPENDIX A

TRANSCRIPT OF TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENT

This advertisement was downloaded as part of a segment of "The Right Side with Armstrong Williams." The segment was collected from Armstrong Williams' Web site (Williams, 2004c).

[SECRETARY ROD PAIGE AT DESK, AMERICAN FLAG, BOOKCASE AND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FLAG ARE IN THE BACKGROUND]

[Time: 16:06-16:16 BANNER ON BLUE BACKGROUND READS SECRETARY ROD PAIGE]

Time: 16:06

PAIGE: President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act creates the framework for meaningful change. This law rests on four pillars: accountability for results, local control and flexibility, choices for parents, and research based instructions.

Time: 16:23

PAIGE: Thanks to No Child Left Behind I am proud to report that all across our country, communities are making progress in reforming their schools.

[Time: 16:31-16:41 BANNER ON BLUE BACKGROUND READS “LEARN MORE ABOUT THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND LEGISLATION AT WWW.ED.GOV”]

Time: 16:33

Parents in economically disadvantaged school districts can get information about how well their school is performing about their teachers’ qualifications, and about whether their school is safe.

[Time: 16:41-16:50 BANNER ON BLUE BACKGROUND READS “IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROGRAM CALL US AT 1-800-USA-LEARN]

Time: 16:46

School and teachers will have detailed information about their students achievement so we can adapt our lessons and better serve all of our students. And this year they will find they have more federal funding than ever before, the highest federal support in history.

[Time: 17:00-17:04 “PAID FOR BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION” DISPLAYS IN SMALL WHITE PRINT IN THE LOWER SCREEN]

APPENDIX B

PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF AMERICA CODE OF ETHICS 2000

Preamble

This Code applies to PRSA members. The Code is designed to be a useful guide for PRSA members as they carry out their ethical responsibilities. This document is designed to anticipate and accommodate, by precedent, ethical challenges that may arise. The scenarios outlined in the Code provision are actual examples of misconduct. More will be added as experience with the Code occurs.

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is committed to ethical practices. The level of public trust PRSA members seek, as we serve the public good, means we have taken on a special obligation to operate ethically.

The value of member reputation depends upon the ethical conduct of everyone affiliated with the Public Relations Society of America. Each of us sets an example for each other - as well as other professionals - by our pursuit of excellence with powerful standards of performance, professionalism, and ethical conduct.

Emphasis on enforcement of the Code has been eliminated. But, the PRSA Board of Directors retains the right to bar from membership or expel from the Society any individual who has been or is sanctioned by a government agency or convicted in a court of law of an action that is in violation of this Code.

Ethical practice is the most important obligation of a PRSA member. We view the Member Code of Ethics as a model for other professions, organizations, and professionals.

PRSA Member Statement of Professional Values

This statement presents the core values of PRSA members and, more broadly, of the public relations profession. These values provide the foundation for the Member Code of Ethics and set the industry standard for the professional practice of public relations. These values are the fundamental beliefs that guide our behaviors and decision-making process. We believe our professional values are vital to the integrity of the profession as a whole.

Advocacy

We serve the public interest by acting as responsible advocates for those we represent. We provide a voice in the marketplace of ideas, facts, and viewpoints to aid informed public debate.

Honesty

We adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth in advancing the interests of those we represent and in communicating with the public.

Expertise

We acquire and responsibly use specialized knowledge and experience. We advance the profession through continued professional development, research, and education. We build mutual understanding, credibility, and relationships among a wide array of institutions and audiences.

Independence

We provide objective counsel to those we represent. We are accountable for our actions.

Loyalty

We are faithful to those we represent, while honoring our obligation to serve the public interest.

Fairness

We deal fairly with clients, employers, competitors, peers, vendors, the media, and the general public. We respect all opinions and support the right of free expression.

PRSA Code Provisions

Free Flow of Information

Core Principle: Protecting and advancing the free flow of accurate and truthful information is essential to serving the public interest and contributing to informed decision making in a democratic society.

Intent:

- To maintain the integrity of relationships with the media, government officials, and the public.
- To aid informed decision-making.

Guidelines: A member shall

- Preserve the integrity of the process of communication.
- Be honest and accurate in all communications.

- Act promptly to correct erroneous communications for which the practitioner is responsible.
- Preserve the free flow of unprejudiced information when giving or receiving gifts by ensuring that gifts are nominal, legal, and infrequent.

Examples of Improper Conduct Under this Provision:

- A member representing a ski manufacturer gives a pair of expensive racing skis to a sports magazine columnist, to influence the columnist to write favorable articles about the product.
- A member entertains a government official beyond legal limits and/or in violation of government reporting requirements.

Competition

Core Principle: Promoting healthy and fair competition among professionals preserves an ethical climate while fostering a robust business environment.

Intent:

- To promote respect and fair competition among public relations professionals.
- To serve the public interest by providing the widest choice of practitioner options.

Guidelines: A member shall

- Follow ethical hiring practices designed to respect free and open competition without deliberately undermining a competitor.
- Preserve intellectual property rights in the marketplace.

Examples of Improper Conduct Under This Provision:

- A member employed by a "client organization" shares helpful information with a counseling firm that is competing with others for the organization's business.
- A member spreads malicious and unfounded rumors about a competitor in order to alienate the competitor's clients and employees in a ploy to recruit people and business.

Disclosure of Information

Core Principle: Open communication fosters informed decision making in a democratic society.

Intent:

- To build trust with the public by revealing all information needed for responsible decision making.

Guidelines: A member shall

- Be honest and accurate in all communications.
- Act promptly to correct erroneous communications for which the member is responsible.
- Investigate the truthfulness and accuracy of information released on behalf of those represented.
- Reveal the sponsors for causes and interests represented.
- Disclose financial interest (such as stock ownership) in a client's organization.
- Avoid deceptive practices.

Examples of Improper Conduct Under this Provision:

- Front groups: A member implements "grass roots" campaigns or letter-writing campaigns to legislators on behalf of undisclosed interest groups.
- Lying by omission: A practitioner for a corporation knowingly fails to release financial information, giving a misleading impression of the corporation's performance.
- A member discovers inaccurate information disseminated via a Web site or media kit and does not correct the information.
- A member deceives the public by employing people to pose as volunteers to speak at public hearings and participate in "grass roots" campaigns.

Safeguarding Confidences

Core Principle: Client trust requires appropriate protection of confidential and private information.

Intent:

- To protect the privacy rights of clients, organizations, and individuals by safeguarding confidential information.

Guidelines: A member shall

- Safeguard the confidences and privacy rights of present, former, and prospective clients and employees.
- Protect privileged, confidential, or insider information gained from a client or organization.
- Immediately advise an appropriate authority if a member discovers that confidential information is being divulged by an employee of a client company or organization.

Examples of Improper Conduct Under This Provision:

- A member changes jobs, takes confidential information, and uses that information in the new position to the detriment of the former employer.
- A member intentionally leaks proprietary information to the detriment of some other party.

Enhancing the Profession

Core Principle: Public relations professionals work constantly to strengthen the public's trust in the profession.

- Intent:
- To build respect and credibility with the public for the profession of public relations.
- To improve, adapt and expand professional practices.

Guidelines: A member shall

- Acknowledge that there is an obligation to protect and enhance the profession.
- Keep informed and educated about practices in the profession to ensure ethical conduct.
- Actively pursue personal professional development.
- Decline representation of clients or organizations that urge or require actions contrary to this Code.
- Accurately define what public relations activities can accomplish.
- Counsel subordinates in proper ethical decision making.
- Require that subordinates adhere to the ethical requirements of the Code.

- Report ethical violations, whether committed by PRSA members or not, to the appropriate authority.

Examples of Improper Conduct Under This Provision:

- A PRSA member declares publicly that a product the client sells is safe, without disclosing evidence to the contrary.
- A member initially assigns some questionable client work to a non-member practitioner to avoid the ethical obligation of PRSA membership.

VITA

Bonnie Ann Cain

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: PROPAGANDA ANALYSIS: A CASE STUDY OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S MINORITY OUTREACH CAMPAIGN PROMOTING THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

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Title of Study: PROPAGANDA ANALYSIS: A CASE STUDY OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S MINORITY OUTREACH CAMPAIGN PROMOTING THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

Pages in Study: 116 Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

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Scope and Method of Study: Scope of the study is the U.S. Department of Education's minority outreach campaign to promote the No Child Left Behind Act. The method used is case study employing Jowett and O'Donnell's 10-point propaganda framework.

Findings and Conclusions: This study provides a comprehensive examination of the Department of Education's controversial promotion of the No Child Left Behind Act by employing Jowett and O'Donnell's 10-point propaganda framework. Based on the campaign's fit with expectations of propaganda, findings seem to support arguments the campaign is propaganda. This case study provides a backdrop for discussion of PR's role in promoting policy. Guidelines emerging from this research focus on a recommitment to a professional code of ethics.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Lori Melton McKinnon