

“JOIN IN A NATIONAL CRUSADE”: RHETORICAL SIMILARITIES IN RONALD
REAGAN’S EDUCATION AND DRUG POLICIES

by

EILEEN MONTALVO

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Major Professor
Dr. Todd Goodson

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Abstract

This study analyzes the power of rhetorical forms from a historical perspective. Ronald Reagan's presidency (1981-1989) will serve as the historical time period used for analysis. By looking at President Ronald Reagan's "War on Drugs," this study provides historical research on the legislative initiatives leading up to this war, as well as on the various aspects of Reagan's drug policies. In addition, this study also outlines concurrent educational policies respectively. This background information provides a foundation for examining the role of education within the "War on Drugs," as well as how rhetorical similarities between Reagan's drug and education policies are indicative of his administration's larger aims and beliefs.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my mom and dad, who have been a constant source of support and inspiration in my life.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study

For educators, the power of political rhetoric cannot be underestimated, given that educational policies are usually presented to the American people through filtered speeches, campaign sound bites, etc. It is critical for educators to differentiate between the actual policy and the political rhetoric used to describe it in order to foresee the potential consequences for schools, and its constituents. Moreover, educators must also examine how politicians incorporate education into other political agendas, and to what avail.

Furthermore, as teachers, our goal is to empower students to think critically about the issues that influence their lives—to not only comprehend texts, but to understand how the construction of these pieces influences how they think and act. Teaching rhetorical analysis is a crucial component in helping students gain a more holistic understanding of self and their role and stance within society. In addition, given the political climate of teaching, educators must also be aware of the rhetorical forms used by politicians to persuade them to support legislative measures whose outcomes could be questionable.

As educators, it is important that we view political agendas, specifically the policies that propel them, with a critical eye, understanding both their intended and unintended consequences. Indeed, the United States has a long history of policies aimed at maintaining social order and creating a sense of equality for all. However, many of these policies tend to be responses toward imbedded fears in society that have less to do with reality and more to do with the incorrigible perceptions that manifest themselves in the forms of prejudice. Moreover, the prejudicial

sentiments behind much of this legislation has translated into inequitable punitive outcomes for some of the most marginalized groups in society—racial and ethnic minorities. The history of drug and educational policies in the United States demonstrates the paradoxical nature of legislative rhetoric and the actual outcomes of their various reforms on these various groups.

This has demonstrated itself to be the case with Reagan’s drug and education policies. Given that Reagan is known as the “Great Communicator” due to his ability to convey his administration’s aims through the use of the “simple word,” his presidency seemed to be a fitting choice for analyzing the power of rhetoric both conveying a political agenda as well as examining the effect of that rhetoric on the American people (Great, 2001). In 1986, President Ronald Reagan’s declared the “War on Drugs”—a war that relied heavily on strong rhetoric in order to propel its agenda (Whitford, 2003, p.998; Keel, 2008). The War on Drugs has not ended. It has continued to resonate within all subsequent Presidential agendas and with significant support from American citizens. Yet, it seems that the United States is not likely to succeed given the immense costs, as well as the high incarcerations rates; “hundreds of thousands of Americans would be locked up for drug offenses” upon Reagan’s declaration of war on drugs in the United States (Wallace-Wells, p.90, 2007). That said the War on Drugs is the epitome of successful rhetoric—a rhetoric that is highly dependent on a perception that is too strong for reality to overcome.

Similarly, Reagan’s educational policies were far more successful in rhetoric than in actual practice. These policies, which stemmed predominantly from the desire to reduce the national deficit, and deregulate social welfare programs, did more to destabilize poor urban school districts, as opposed to helping them improve the quality of their education. Yet, with the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, a document created by the National Commission on Excellence

in Education (NCEE), Americans were left, once again, doubting not only the quality of education in public schools, but also the very future of the United States. Given that Reagan's rhetoric pertaining to education and drug policy was so effective despite their respective consequences, the purpose of this study is to examine the how Reagan's rhetorical style in his speeches pertaining to education and drug policy framed Americans' role in the war on drugs thematically, as well as to analyze how these themes resonate in education and drug policies.

Ultimately, the power of his rhetoric is due greatly to his ability to not only invoke fear of the dangers of drugs, but also in his ability to simultaneously convince Americans that they were the solution to America's problem—that through their role as educators, they could prevent, and eventually eradicate, drug use. His speeches provide specific examples of actions taken by everyday Americans in the fight against drug use—examples that serve to not only inspire the American people, but also to provide proof that victory was on the horizon. Thus, education in Reagan's war on drugs became the link between a drug policy with relatively little support for preventative measures, and the American people. It was used as a persuasive element to convince the American people that the war on drugs was indeed not a futile cause. This, in turn, diverted Americans from the realities of the situation—increases in institutionalized discriminatory practices which led to growing incarceration rates amongst African Americans and women, as well as no substantial change in crime rates (Gross, 2008, p.68; ACLU; Girlfriend Problem, 2005) (Refer to Appendix A: Table 1.1; Appendix B: Table 1.2; Appendix C: Table 1.3).

Thus, this study analyzes the power of Ronald Reagan's rhetoric from a historical perspective in order to better understand the convergence of his education and drug policy agendas. By looking at President Ronald Reagan's "War on Drugs," this study provides historical research on the legislative initiatives leading up to this war, as well as on the various

aspects of Reagan's drug policies. In addition, this study also outlines concurrent educational policies respectively. This background information provides a foundation for examining the role of education within the "War on Drugs," as well as how rhetorical similarities between Reagan's drug and education policies are indicative of his administration's larger aims and beliefs.

Description of Study

This study will focus on the years of the Reagan presidency 1981-1989, the years in which Reagan formalized and declared a new era in the war on drugs—a war that finds its origins within the Nixon administration (Wallace-Wells, p.90, 2007). In order to analyze the rhetorical nature of his drug and educational policies, I will research both primary and secondary documents involving drug legislation, concurrent educational initiatives in public education, and social education programs concerning Reagan's drug policies. These initiatives will serve as the historical framework for interpreting the rhetoric used in Reagan's speeches pertaining to drug and education policies. The significance of these rhetorical patterns will be viewed in context to the following factors:

- Incarceration rates by for each of these years in proportion to the population.
- Increase or decrease of drug use among various demographics.
- Expenditures

Overview of the Issues

Ronald Reagan's own declaration of war against drug use stems from a long history of America's own paradoxical, and often discriminatory, beliefs relating to a citizen's right to use drugs. Similarly, Reagan's educational policies reflected not only his administration's need to balance a growing national deficit, but also the views of Americans created out of generations upon generations of fear—whether it be fear of the cultural demise due to new cultures entering American schools, or the fear the America's position in the world was threatened by the pulls of

Communism. The following overview provides a historical synopsis of drug and education policies that preceded Reagan's presidency in order to provide context for further analysis.

Historical Overview of Drug Policies in the United States prior to Reagan's War on Drugs

Before the 1870's, there were no laws in the United States banning the use of drugs. As a matter of fact, drugs such as opium and cocaine were frequently prescribed by doctors at a time when they "were forced to resort to treating the symptoms, rather than the causes, of disease" – both cocaine and opium were hailed as "virtual panacea" for their anesthetic properties (Foster, 1996, p.547-548). After cocaine's arrival to the United States in the 1870's, it was revered for its ability to not only "cure" ailments such as hay fever, but also for its potency in "curing" sexual problems, "opium and alcohol addiction," and lifting the overall mood of the individuals that used it (Foster, 1996, p.548). Medicines laced with morphine, a derivative of opium, "claimed to cure... anything from 'nerves' to marital problems" (Casey, 1978).

Not only were opium and cocaine readily available through doctors, but Americans of all social classes could easily gain access to these pain-relief drugs through various patent medicines—medicines that could be purchased legally at any pharmacy by anyone (Boucher, 1991, p. 74; Casey, 1978). Due to both the convenience and availability of both cocaine and opium, a new age of drug addiction surfaced—an age whose key users were everyday, upstanding American citizens. Ironically, it was the keeper of the American home, "women—housewives and mothers," who were the prominent users of opium (Casey, 1978; Susman, 1975, p.17). Used as a remedy for "female troubles" such as menstrual cramps and menopause, many women became addicted to the opiate laced drugs prescribed by doctors. Moreover, given that it was not deemed proper for women to drink alcohol, women quickly gravitated to opium given its medicinal use, and recreational advantages (Casey, 1978).

However, it was the not deep rooted addiction of everyday Americans that spurred legislatures to criminalize drugs. The following words, uttered by President Benjamin Harrison at the 1900 Ecumenical Missionary Conference, were republished in a Congressional document entitled “Protection of Native Races Against Intoxicants” just a year later. President Harrison’s words provide some insight as to the nature of drug legislation:

The men who, like Paul, have gone to heathen lands with the message, “We seek not yours, but you,” have been hindered by those who, coming after, have reversed the message. Rum and other corrupting agencies come in with our boasted civilization, and the feeble races wither before the hot breath of the white man’s vices. The great nations have combined to suppress the slave trade. Is it too much to ask that they shall combine to prevent the sale of spirits to men who, less than our children, have acquired the habits of self-restraint? If we must have “consumers,” let us give them an innocent diet (S.Rep. No. 200, 1901, p.7).

This statement exemplifies the general perception of drug use, in this case alcohol, at the turn of the century in the United States. The abuse of “intoxicants” whether it be liquor, opium, or cocaine, was seen as a problem associated with the “feeble races” of American society—racial minorities that did not have, in the eyes of the majority, the ability to control and regulate their behaviors when under the influence of drugs. Moreover, as Kathleen Auerhahn notes in her article “The Split Labor Market and the Origins of the Antidrug Legislation in the United States,” subsequent laws against the use of “opium, cocaine, alcohol, and marijuana” were a result of “moral panics” which were used to ensure that the “class interests” of the elite were not hindered by the interests of “lower-paid labor groups” (Auerhahn, 1999, p.411).

The first anti-drug laws were waged against opium smoking exclusively in San Francisco in 1874 as a response to the fear that many whites harbored against the new Chinese immigrants, predominantly male, brought to the United States in order to provide cheap labor for the construction of the railroads (Auerhahn, 1999, p.417). Growing xenophobia, compounded by the perceived notion of the Chinese as an “economic threat” to the existing labor workforce, helped fuel an “ideology that portrayed the Chinese as a force of complete evil, determined to corrupt white women and children with the noxious, yet seductive, practice of opium smoking” (Auerhahn, 1999, p. 419). Cocaine would meet a similar fate as opium—its restriction was not due to legitimate health concerns, but rather to a growing fear of its use by minorities, in the case of cocaine, Southern black males. A growing belief amongst white southerners that cocaine made “blacks more resistant to .32 caliber bullets, increased their lustful urges for white women..., [and] made rebellion against white oppression more likely” lead to the ultimate criminalization of the drug (Auerhahn, 1999, p.424).

This prejudicial initiative to outlaw certain drugs, as well as their particular uses, was echoed approximately 36 years after the initial passing of the anti-opium law of San Francisco in Document No. 377 presented to the 61st Congress entitled “Opium Problem. Message from the President of the United States” published in 1910. In this extensive document, the use, sale, and importation of opium, as well as cocaine, were examined:

On the other hand, by permitting the importation of opium prepared for smoking into this country under the dutiable schedules or at times upon the free list, this Government had for half a century unwittingly encouraged the use of this form of opium to the great detriment of Chinese immigrants and to the growing danger not only of the criminal and defective classes, but of the higher ranks of society....It is the unanimous opinion of

every state and municipal body having to do with the enforcement of state and municipal antipoison acts that the misuse of cocaine is a direct incentive to crime...

In the report of the President's House Commission, 1909, Senate document No.644, this question of the misuse of cocaine has been partially discussed and brought to the attention of the Government. But there is a phase of it that has not received due attention; that is the encouragement of the use of the drug among the humbler ranks of the negro population of the South. It has been stated on very high authority that the use of cocaine by negroes of the South is one of the most elusive and troublesome questions which confront the enforcement of the law in most of the Southern States (S.Rep. No. 377, 1910, p.2, 49).

This document makes a direct correlation between the use of opium and Chinese immigrants, as well as between cocaine and Southern blacks. Furthermore, it also implies that the need for harsher regulations on the opium and cocaine trade is imminent given its growing effect on the "higher ranks of society" (S.Rep. No. 377, 1910, p.51).

Just four years later, the Harrison Narcotics Tax Act, noted as "the single most important piece of drug legislation ever enacted in the United States," passed through Congress (Keel, 2008). Ratified by the 63rd Congress, this piece of legislation introduced the first national regulation of narcotics. Moreover, it required that "any persons who produce, import, manufacture, compound, deal in, dispense, sell, distribute, or give away" any form of opium or cocaine to register with the "collectors of revenue" as well as to "impose a special tax" on these individuals (Harrison Act, 1914). It is important to note that the actual legislation did not outlaw the use of opiates and cocaine. However, the interpretation of certain parts of the act indirectly criminalized the use of these drugs. Since doctors were only allowed to prescribe these drugs "in

the course of his professional practice,” any person using either drug for purposes other than a medically prescribed one, was susceptible to punishment by law (Keel, 2008). Thus with the implementation of the Harrison Narcotics Tax Act, “a criminal class that had not existed previously” emerged, making not only the seller of these drugs criminals, but also criminalizing its users for the first time in American history on a national scale (Keel, 2008; King, 1953, p.737).

The implications of the legislation had far reaching consequences, given that it served as the catalyst for subsequent drug legislations and policies. Most notably, the Harrison Act would eventually evolve into the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970, which not only called for strict regulation of controlled substances, as did the Harrison Act, but also required that all drugs be placed into “five schedules” which were determined by “the basis of their potential abuse, accepted medical use, and accepted safety under medical supervision” (Keel, 2008). This schedule is still used today, and provides the foundation for the war President Ronald Reagan eventually declares against drugs.

Historical Overview of Educational Reform and Policy in the United States (late 1800s on)

Whereas it appeareth that however certain forms of government are better calculated than others to protect individuals in the free exercise of their natural rights, and are at the same time themselves better guarded against degeneracy, yet experience hath shown...those entrusted with power have, in time, and by slow operations, perverted it into tyranny; and it is believed that the most effectual means of preventing this would be, to illuminate, as far as practicable, the minds of the people at large, and more especially to give them knowledge of those facts...they may be enabled to know ambition under all its shapes,

and prompt to exert their natural powers to defeat its purposes... (Honeywell, 2007, p.199).

Within Section I of “A Bill For The More General Diffusion of Knowledge,” Thomas Jefferson makes a compelling argument for providing public education. Jefferson argues that a populous uneducated is a populous that will fall victim to “tyranny,” and thus is doomed to a life without true democracy (Honeywell, 2007, p.199). Furthermore, the role of public education was not merely to teach content, but rather to “improve the citizens’ moral and civic virtues and enable them to know and exercise their rights and duties” (Urban, 2004, p. 71). Within this context, education plays a significant role in propelling the overall well-being of the state, and thus education is an agent of change for political measures.

During the 1800 and early 1900s, the role of education as a political agent focused predominantly in one area of American society—the need for homogenizing various ethnic and racial groups as quickly as possible. The Civilization Fund Act, ratified in 1819, was one such measure. Under the provisions of this act, the “U.S. government [granted] aid [to] missionary educators in their quest to Christianize and civilize Native Americans” (Urban, 2004, p.163). This act was one of many political initiatives that served as a “grand experiment in standardization,” and furthered the concept of “Americanization” in which the customs and beliefs of Native American tribes were transcribed with customs perceived as “civilized” by the majority (Lomawaima, 2002, p.282). The end result has been one of “Native American genocide” (Lomawaima, 2002, p.282).

The heavily political agenda of “Americanization” was also implemented at the turn of the 19th century due to growing xenophobia—a deep rooted fear of the various ethnic immigrant groups that were emigrating to the United States at the turn of the 20th Century. These

immigrants were from “southern and eastern” Europe, and therefore did not share the same customs, and traditions from preceding European immigrants (Urban, 2004, p.211). Ellwood Cubberly, an “administrative progressive” of the time, described these immigrants as “largely illiterate, docile,...and almost wholly without the Anglo-Saxon conceptions of righteousness, liberty, law, order, public decency, and government” (Urban, 2004, p.211). It was this resounding fear held by the “Protestant middle and upper classes” that spurred the “political support for...compulsory attendance laws” (Urban, 2007, p.171). These laws were seen as a way of not only keeping immigrant children from wandering the streets of their communities, but also as a way of ensuring that they were properly assimilated into the mainstream culture, thus resigning their foreign customs.

However, assimilation and Americanization were not the only political initiatives that were propelled through schools. In the 1950s the civil rights movement managed to gain momentum for its plight through the legislations affecting education after years of legal battles. *Brown v. Board of Education* is perhaps the quintessential symbol for the civil rights movement in the United States. In 1954, the Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown* declared that racial segregation in public schools provided inequitable educational opportunities for students, and thus deemed it an illegal practice—a decision that was met with hostility from angry white Americans that refused to implement the necessary means for integration (Urban, 2007, p.299). Nonetheless, *Brown* served as a beacon of hope for African Americans who inherited a legacy of oppression from the very courts and bureaucracy that now granted them the a sense of equality.

Yet, the implications of *Brown v. Board of Education* were farther reaching than simply affecting domestic policy. In addition to affecting domestic change, *Brown* also served as a prominent tool in maintaining international political clout. Derrick Bell, a prominent critical race

theorist, notes “that civil rights advances for blacks always coincided with changing economic conditions and the self-interest of elite whites” (Delgado, 2001, p.18). *Brown* happened to coincide with a new burgeoning war, the Cold War, which held the United States as a key figure against communism. Moreover, the United States found itself in an international struggle “for the loyalties of the uncommitted Third World, much of which was black, brown, or Asian” (Delgado, 2001, p.19). *Brown*, as well as other civil rights initiatives, provided the United States with an opportunity to “soften its stance toward domestic minorities,” and simultaneously soften its image abroad, thus serving as a means of propelling its international agendas (Delgado, 2001, p.18-19).

It wasn't until *Sputnik*, however, that the United States utilized education as an explicit component in fighting an international political threat—communism. The launch of *Sputnik*, “the world’s first space satellite,” by the Soviet Union spurred fears of communist dominance among Americans (Urban, 2007, p.294). The October 27th launch of *Sputnik* marked “a threat to the nation’s security” – a threat that, in the minds of many Americans, was due to the inferiority of the educational system in America (Marsh, 2007, p.52-53). In particular, the need for improvement in the areas of mathematics and science seemed pivotal in the minds of many Americans if the United States was to reduce the looming communist threat posed by the Soviet Union. This resonating sentiment fueled the production of “curricular packages” that “were designed to be “teacherproof,” diminishing the professional stance of the teacher, and standardizing the curriculum to hypothetically ensure that all students were receiving the same education (Marsh, 2007, p.54-55). While teachers were not particularly receptive to these curricular packages, nor did these packages have any long-term impact, they did mark a

movement within education towards standardization and accountability, and away from progressive pedagogy.

However, the perception that Sputnik was a direct result of a superior education system seems to be based more on paranoia, than actual truth. In 1959, Dr. Demitri B. Shimkin wrote an article entitled “Soviet-U.S. Education” for the *Science News Letter*. Within this article, Shimkin noted that while “Soviet training and tests are oriented toward meeting specified performance standards,” and that their educational system “gives far more formal content... in mathematics and physics,” the overall quality of education in chemistry and biology did “not seem as good” (Shimkin, 1959, p.234). In addition, while he conceded that “the average Soviet high school graduate knows more facts and handles mathematics better than the average” American graduate, it was questionable whether Soviet graduates “reach[ed] the substantive, creative, and motivational levels” exhibited by graduates from America’s best schools (Shimkin, 1959, p.234).

Given his findings, Shimkin offered the following insight:

Above all, I would urge that evaluations of American education be kept clear of narrow consideration of military technology or a race in numbers with the Soviet Union. The Sputnik and allied developments represent the payoff of a long-continuing effort by men who were trained, not in today’s narrow formalism but in the 1920’s, when Dewey’s philosophy was strongly influencing Soviet practice (Shimkin, 1959, p.235).

This suggests that Sputnik was the result of progressive ideas and teaching—not of standardization and “teacherproof” curricula. Nonetheless, Sputnik marked the end of progressive pedagogy in public education as a new era of standardized testing and accountability took hold of educational reform.

Significance of Study

According to Paulo Freire, “education is politics”—politics exist in the interactions between teacher and student, in the explicit and hidden curricula emphasized in the school setting, in the imposed hierarchy used to govern the daily practices of students and faculty members (McLaren, 1993, p.27-28). The intricate relationship between education and politics, however, reaches farther than pedagogy. It is critical that we not only look at politics as they exist within educational institutions, but that we also look at education within the realm of policy and law—how exactly is education used as a political agent in larger social contexts? Ronald Reagan’s War on Drugs provides a historical glimpse of the convergence of two social institutions, education and criminality, and enables future researchers and policy makers to understand the implications of using educational institutions as a means of fulfilling domestic political agendas.

In addition, Ronald Reagan’s War on Drugs also provides the opportunity to see how hegemony is propelled through political rhetoric. According to Peter McLaren’s *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education*, the process of hegemony is not created through forceful tactics, but rather:

...through consensual social practices, social forms, and social structures produced in specific sites such as the church, the state, the school, the mass media, the political system, and the family (McLaren, 2007, p.203).

Reagan’s speeches serve as examples of “social practices” that persuade Americans to believe that the agendas set forth by his administration are for the benefit of the people; yet his speeches offer false hope given the consequences of his policies on the people they were intended to protect. The process of hegemony that results from the persuasive nature of his speeches thus creates support among the American people for policies that may not be in their best interest.

Research Questions

1. How are the themes explicated in his speeches evoked within Reagan's policies?
2. What similarities exist in the Reagan's rhetoric pertaining to education and to his rhetoric pertaining to drug policy?

Limitations of Study

This study has certain limitations that must be addressed in order to understand its contributions to current research and scholarship. These limitations are:

- This study focuses on one administration, the Reagan years, therefore provides only a snapshot of a much larger movement in the United States.
- Causation cannot be concluded, meaning that this study cannot determine whether or not role of education in the "War of Drugs" had a direct effect on incarceration rates, increase in drug trafficking, drug use, etc.
- This study focuses on illicit drugs—it does not focus on drugs with legal restrictions such as tobacco and alcohol.

Definition of Terms

Figurative Language: For the purposes of this study, figurative language refers to any language that is consistent with a "figure of speech," or "that departs from the accepted literal sense or from the normal order of words..." (Baldick, 2004, p.97).

Rhetoric: For the purposes of this study, rhetoric is defined as "the deliberate exploitation of eloquence for the most persuasive effect in public speaking or in writing" (Baldick, 2004, p.217).

Theme: For the purposes of this study, theme is defined as "a salient abstract idea that emerges from a literary work's treatment of its subject-matter" (Baldwick, 2004, p.258).

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

...Reaganism is not merely an aberration that will disappear with the end of the Reagan presidency, it is an important force in the nation's life that cries out for explanation.

Reaganism in one form or another will persist for years to come, and it seems essential for Americans to begin thinking about what the Reagan experience means (Dallek, 1984, p.vii)

As this excerpt from Robert Dallek's Preface to *Ronald Reagan: The Politics of Symbolism* suggests, the Reagan presidency was not a moment of time without ramifications—it was an experience (Dallek, 1984, p.vii). This “experience” could be defined in terms of memorable rhetoric, a sense of gusto and bravado that Reagan evoked in his numerous speeches invoking patriotism and self-reliance. Dallek provides this understanding of Reaganism:

...Reaganism is a return to old-fashioned Republicanism—large tax cuts for the rich, less government help for the poor, weaker enforcement of civil rights, fewer controls on industry, less protection for the environment, and emotional rhetoric on the virtues of hard work, family, religion, individualism, and patriotism./.../ The record of his administration on each of these issues is at odds with his rhetoric (Dallek, 1984, p. vii-viii).

Yet, as President Reagan's death confirmed, the power of his rhetoric far outweighed the consequences of this policies within the American collective psyche.

In order to examine the role of education in Ronald Reagan's rhetoric pertaining to his “war on drugs,” the following facets of his administration's policies must be explicated: educational policies, drug policies, and their respective social outcomes. Understanding these

various policies, as well as their outcomes, will allow for further historical analysis of the culmination of these two entities.

Educational Policy Under Reagan's Administration (1981-1989)

President Reagan's educational policies were reflective of two key concepts central to his administrative goals: "reduce the federal deficit, . . . as well as deregulate a wide range of federal social welfare programs" (States', 2006, p.45). In order to reduce the federal deficit, Reagan depended heavily on significantly reducing budgets in programs such as "food stamps, Medicaid, housing subsidies, unemployment compensation, urban mass transit, student loans, and welfare"—all social programs that most impacted poor and minority communities (Baptiste, 2005, p.29-30). Under Reagan's presidency, the budget for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which "was the main government supporter of subsidized housing for the poor" was "cut by three-quarters" (Baptiste, 2005, p.29). Moreover, as the number of people living below the poverty line increased from "24.5 million in 1978 to 32.5 million in 1988," the number of homeless persons within the United States also rose significantly "to 600,000 on any given night and 1.2 million over the course of a year;" approximately 25% of these homeless were veterans (Baptiste, 2005, p.29-30).

These various policies aimed at cutting funding for social welfare programs were rhetorically framed within the context of returning control to local agencies, therefore reducing the role of big government, and simultaneously promoting "individual liberty" (States', 2006, p.45; Urban, 2007, p.342). In "Coolidge and Reagan: The Rhetorical Influence of Silent Cal on the Great Communicator," Colleen J. Shogan notes that Reagan's rhetoric very much promoted American citizens as "everyday heroes," while simultaneously suggesting that individual citizens should assume responsibility "of improving society" (Shogan, 2006, p.220). This rhetoric resonated with "working and middle-class Americans who believed that economic

wealth...[was] within their individual reach...” even though they were not the main beneficiaries of Reagan’s domestic policies (Urban, 2007, p343).

According to “Federal Education Policy and the States, 1945-2004: A Brief Synopsis,” “Reagan’s top priority in education was to scale back federal categorical aid programs” in order to achieve his established administrative goals (States’, 2006, p.45). In 1981, Congress passed the Educational Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA), which reduced “twenty-nine smaller categorical programs into block grants to the states,” and effectively cut “federal aid to schools by more than \$1 billion, ..., in its first year (1982-1983),” as well as allocate for future budget cuts (States’, 2006, p.45). Block grants were lump sums allocated to each state based on “a pupil-weighting formula that allowed states with more pupils in high-cost or heavily weighted programs—programs for low-income or non-English-speaking or disabled pupils” (States’, 2006, p.46). One of the pitfalls of this form of funding lied in the fact that the states could allocate funds as they saw fit—not necessarily to towards the demographics for which the funding was initially intended. Under this oversight, “most state agencies felt intense political pressure to direct more aid to suburban areas (where voting rates and tax paying were higher),” thus providing less financial support for urban areas, and negatively impacting students from poor and/or minority backgrounds (States’, 2006, p.47).

Reagan’s desire for decentralization of education was also echoed in his belief that the federal Department of Education, which was created under his predecessor President Carter in 1979, should be dissolved (Urban, 2007, p.345). For many conservatives, the Department of Education was “an intrusive educational bureaucracy that told communities what to do and how to do it” (Karaagac, 2001, p.253). For Reagan, demonstrating opposition to the Department of Education allowed him to garner support from these “cultural conservatives” as well as

“attack...interfering Washington bureaucrats...[and] liberal ideologues who forced a permissive social agenda on hardworking taxpayers” (Karaagac, 2001, p.253). While the Department of Education was never dismantled, Reagan aimed to diminish its power by “cut[ting] the staff and scaled back the mandate” as well as “cutting funding” (Karaagac, 2001, p.253).

While educational policy was not a major priority for Reagan and his administration, education (as evidenced through his advocacy for the dismantling of the Department of Education) was a strong political tool by which Reagan was able to connect with his Republican constituents. In addition to his opposition to the Department of Education, Reagan was an advocate for school prayer in public schools (Clabaugh, 2004, p.257). William Bennett, who was secretary of education under Reagan’s second term, denounced public education as “amoral if not immoral” (Urban, 2007, p.347). This sentiment also resonated in the Reagan’s rhetoric towards school prayer:

I know one thing I'm sure most of us agree on: God, source of all knowledge, should never have been expelled from our children's classrooms. The great majority of our people support voluntary prayer in schools. During the last decade, we've seen people's commitment to religious liberty expressed by the establishment of thousands of new religious schools. These schools were built by the sacrifices of parents determined to provide a quality education for their children in an environment that permits traditional values to flourish (Reagan, Jan.30, 1984).

This excerpt, from Reagan’s “Address to the National Religious Broadcasters” in 1984, not only exemplifies his discontent with the secular nature of public education, but also reiterates the concept of individual rights.

Moreover, this speech further advocates for parents' right to choose an educational system that reflects their values. Reagan supported "federal tuition tax credits for parents" that chose private education for their children (Clabaugh, 2004, p.257). These tax credits, however, were more of a condemnation of public education, than a stance for parents' rights. Within Reagan's administration, there were many that believed that "almost all private services...[were]... superior to secular public education and other public services" (Urban, 2007, p.348). In essence, allowing parents to use tax credits, and vouchers to partially pay for private education would both allow for "a free market system" model to be applied for education, as well as allow for tax revenue to be used to subsidize private education (Urban, 2007, p.349).

Yet the most damning attack against public education came in the form of a study conducted by researchers appointed by Reagan himself—*A Nation at Risk*. *A Nation at Risk* came two years after Terrel H. Bell, Reagan's Secretary of Education, "created the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) in August 1981" (Marsh, 2007, p.57). Despite the fact that Reagan vowed to abolish the Department of Education, which happened to be the very institution that created this report, he fully embraced *A Nation at Risk* as a means of "portraying himself as an educational reformer" (Marsh, 2007, p.57).

A Nation at Risk noted that "the once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation" was being threatened not only by global competition, but also from the "mediocrity" consuming "the educational foundations of our society" (National, 1983, p.7). The report cited certain indicators that suggested that the educational system in the United States was at risk of a continuing fall. Some of these indicators included "23 million American adults [were]...functionally illiterate;" aptitude tests, such as the SAT's, indicated a

progressive drop in scores since Sputnik; and 4-year college enrollment in mathematics remedial increased by 72 percent “from 1975 to 1980” (National, 1983, p.9-10).

A Nation at Risk went one step further by suggesting that one of the key factors in the decline of educational achievement was the quality of teachers within public schools. This critique was in line with Reagan’s general displeasure with teachers’ “traditional support given...to Democrats” (Marsh, 2007, p.57). The report noted that “too many teachers are being drawn from the bottom quarter of graduating high school and college students,” and that of the newly employed teachers in mathematics, science, and English, half were not qualified (National, 1983, p.20). Moreover, *A Nation at Risk*, criticized teacher colleges for being “weighted heavily with courses in ‘educational methods’ at the expense of courses in subjects to be taught” (National, 1983, p.20).

Given the grim picture presented of public education, *A Nation at Risk* did offer recommendations that could be implemented by at the state and local level. These recommendations fell under five categories: Content; Standards and Expectations; Time; Teaching; and Leadership and Fiscal Responsibility. The report called for higher graduation requirements based on the “Five New Basics”: English, mathematics, science, social studies, and computer science (National, 1983, p.22). In addition, students intending to attend college should take two years of foreign language as well. *A Nation at Risk* also called for the use of standardized tests in order to “certify the student’s credentials; identify the need for remedial intervention, and identify the opportunity for advanced or accelerated work” (National, 1983, p.24) It is important to note that while the tests were to be a “part of a nationwide...system of State and local standardized tests,” it was not to be done on the Federal level, suggesting that each state would choose its own standardized tests, and would subsequently assume the majority

of the fiscal responsibility (National, 1983, p.24). As a matter of fact, *A Nation at Risk* states that while the "...the Federal Government has *the primary responsibility* to identify the national interest in education," it is responsibility of "State and local officials, including school board members, governors, and legislators," to "finance[e] and govern[...] the schools, in addition to "incorporate the reforms ...propose[d] in their educational policies and fiscal planning" (Nation, 1983, p.27). These assertions were very much in line with Reagan's general approach to education—education was important for the well-being of the country, but ultimately it was the responsibility of individual states to implement and pay for educational measures.

Immediately after the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, "the frequency of...exams [given] increased," and this seemed "to lead to improved test scores" (States', 2006, p.50). However, the effects of *A Nation at Risk* were far more complex than simply "raising standards." Since funding under ECIA provided funding to schools based on "need," usually reflected in low test scores, schools that demonstrated an increase in test scores were apt to lose important financial aid (States', 2006, p.50). However, in addition to this oversight, the Reagan administration also "made schools' continuing eligibility for aid contingent on rising test scores," thus insuring that regardless of how well or poorly students did on these standardized tests, schools would inevitably lose federal funding (States', 2006, p.49-50).

In addition to seeing a loss of federal funds, schools were seeing an increase in student dropout rates. In Boston, dropout rates "exceeded 40 percent of all students" in 1984, which begged the question if the high-stakes attached to standardized testing was actually encouraging "push-out" of students deemed not capable of passing these tests (States', 2006, p. 50-51). In "Fallout From the Testing Explosion: How 100 Million Standardized Exams Undermine Equity and Excellence in America's Public Schools," the National Center for Fair and Open Testing

(FairTest) found that students that were held back due to failing standardized tests, which were “often unreliable, invalid and biased,” were “more likely to become high school dropouts (Neill, 1989, p.31).

The FairTest’s research found that from 1986 to 1987, “at least 93 to 105 million standardized tests or test batteries” were given to “39.8 million elementary and secondary public school students” (Neill, 1989, p.7). Moreover, it questioned not only the validity and reliability of these various tests, but also the inherent bias within standardized tests. For example, FairTest noted that:

middle class whites are more apt to be trained, simply through cultural immersion, to respond to questions removed from any specific context and to repeat information that test-taker knows the questioner already possess (Neill, 1989, p.12).

This bias then had further effect by disproportionately placing racial and ethnic minority students into “special education and remedial programs” (Neill, 1989, p.30). Thus, not only did the study find that testing “cause[d] irreparable harm” to students, it was also “destructive to the educational process,” and to true educational reform (Neill, 1989, p. 34).

One area of education where the Reagan administration did not cut funding was to the Head Start program. Studies had shown that the Head Start program was relatively successful in helping poor and minority children prepare academically prior to entering Kindergarten. Given that Head Start “was not housed within the Department of Education,” Reagan could easily support it as not only an educational measure, but also as “an antipoverty program for poor and minority children” (Urban, 2007, p.346). In addition, this allowed the Reagan administration to defend themselves against critics that suggested that his policies were more advantageous to the

wealthy (Urban, 2007, p.346). In “Why Head Start Avoided the Reagan Budget Ax,” published in 1981, Dennis Murphy notes one additional advantage for the Reagan Administration supporting Head Start:

Further, there is some indirect evidence that Head Start may help to create an environment within which family members of Head Start children achieve greater independence from publicly supported programs (Murphy, 1981).

Thus the Head Start program served as a measure to offset the major fiscal cuts in other social welfare programs.

Drug Policy Under Reagan’s Administration (1981-1989)

While Ronald Reagan’s policies towards education predominantly promoted state and local control and responsibility, his drug policies were nothing short of a full-fledged proclamation of an international war—one in which the supremacy of the United States’ military, law enforcement, and political clout would be assured on an international scale. Yet, both his educational and drug policies had one key factor in common—they both served as harsh criticisms of the “liberal” agenda of his predecessor President Carter—an agenda that Reagan’s administration deemed to be defeatist and “permissive.” On February 19, 1984, *The New York Times* published the following report:

President Reagan urged Congress today to pass a package of anticrime legislation, saying, “The liberal approach of coddling criminals didn’t work and never will.”

The President added, in a paid political broadcast: “Nothing in our Constitution gives dangerous criminals a right to prey on innocent, law-abiding people. I would hope the members of the House could remember this and bring up our bill for consideration without further delay (Campaign, 1984, p.34).

Presidents Reagan's statements in this excerpt make two assertions. First, they assert that the crime legislation fostered during the Carter administration, was not only ineffective towards reducing criminal activity, but also enabled criminal behavior. Secondly, they assert that his administration's bill would protect "innocent, law-abiding people" from criminal behavior, suggesting that American citizens were in danger, but no longer under his leadership. Indeed, this critique against Carter's anti-crime policies also extended to his drug policies—policies that were deemed "permissive" due to their emphasis on treatment and decriminalization (National Strategy, 1984 ; Keel, 2008).

In this section, the following aspects of Reagan's War on Drugs will be examined: the *1984 National Strategy for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking*, and the "Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986." In addition, it is also important to discuss the Iran-Contra scandal given its impact on Reagan's states goals for his drug legislation.

Reagan's 1984 National Strategy for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking

On September 27, 1984, President Reagan delivered a message to Congress pertaining to the *1984 National Strategy for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking*. In this message, Reagan states:

I am pleased with the progress in raising public awareness of drug abuse problems and in strengthening our efforts to reduce the supply of illicit drugs, both domestic and international. Most important is the widespread recognition that the situation is not hopeless; that drug abuse can be conquered. Our citizens have begun numerous grassroots efforts which are likely to accomplish far more in preventing drug abuse than the Federal government, working alone, could hope to achieve (Reagan, Sept. 27, 1984).

Reagan's words are indeed representative of the *1984 National Strategy* set forth by the Reagan administration. The comprehensive strategy focused on five main areas: "drug abuse prevention," "drug law enforcement," "international cooperation to control narcotics," "medical detoxification and treatment," and "research"—all of which heavily depended on international, federal, and local support in order to be implemented (National Strategy, 1984, p.7).

The areas of "drug abuse prevention," "medical detoxification and treatment," and "research" are framed within the report as the primary responsibility of state/local governments. For example, the *1984 National Strategy* notes that "parents and parent groups are especially effective in preventing" drug use amongst minors, as well as the fact that "the President and the First Lady [had] actively participated in numerous drug abuse prevention and education activities"—all indicative of the importance of local agencies to promote a "drug free" community (National Strategy, 1984, p.34). In addition, the *1984 National Strategy* cited that the key roles of the federal government through the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) were: to sponsor "research surveys, such as the National High School Senior Survey;" to "develop[...]" and "disseminat[e] educational and media materials" on the consequences of drug use; to "work with private sector sponsors" to develop drug awareness materials; to "provid[e] technical assistance related to prevention planning and implementation..." and to "communicate" the "most effective prevention approaches to the public and private sector" (National Strategy, 1984, p.39). Other federal agencies such as the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), as well as ACTION endorsed similar measures in aiding in spreading awareness of drug abuse (National Strategy, 1984, p.38-40). Ultimately, the responsibility of implementing these measures, as well as financing them, was mostly left to local governments and the public sector.

While the *1984 National Strategy* firmly asserted the notion that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” it also acknowledged the fact “that detoxification and treatment of individual drug users” was critical in gaining momentum in the War on Drugs (National Strategy, 1984, p.85). However the *1984 National Strategy* also states the following:

The 1984 Strategy does not attempt to dictate a national priority for drug abuse treatment programs. Consistent with the overall strategy, each region or locality must determine the relative need for the various types of treatment and make appropriate decisions regarding the allocation of available resources (National Strategy, 1984, p.85).

This clearly places rehabilitation measures, as well as financial responsibility, on local governments. Block grants were given to states, much like the grants provided for education (discussed in the previous section), that allowed states the “flexibility to decide the most appropriate use of the available Federal funding” (National Strategy, 1984, p.85). Nonetheless, the *1984 National Strategy* did provide guidelines that “the treatment strategy” should contain. These guidelines were: “recognizing the existence” of already established “drug treatment programs;” “continuing the evolution of” successful drug treatment programs “by encouraging the states to allocate an appropriate level of funding...;” “integrating drug treatment services into the general health and mental health care system;” “encouraging private industry, religious groups, private organizations, and state agencies to...support treatment programs;” and “promoting drug-free treatment programs” (National Strategy, 1984, p.86).

According to the strategy, the federal role in aiding these measures was “providing information and guidance” to local agencies “based on the results of biomedical, clinical and epidemiological research” in order to improve “treatment efforts (National Strategy, 1984, p.86). The Alcohol Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA) was the federal

government branch responsible for conducting research on the following areas: “drug and alcohol use, the consequences of drug and alcohol abuse, the population groups most at risk, changing patterns and trends, and the geographic distributions of drug and alcohol problems” (National Strategy, 1984, p.99). However, the *1984 National Strategy* noted that given to “the change to Federal block grants,” it was no longer “mandatory” to gather research pertaining to “treatment services..., client characteristics,” or whether these treatments were effective (National Strategy, 1984, p.99). This fact suggests that the primary purpose of research dealt with tracking drug use, not necessarily rehabilitation.

Furthermore, the strategy also highlighted one other significant change; this change, however, emphasized the role of morality as a key component in the War on Drugs. The *1984 National Strategy* asserted that a critical change in approaching this War was the “elimination of the moral confusion” associated with previous administrations (National Strategy, 1984, p.31). By establishing “that drug abuse is clearly wrong,” the strategy effectively emphasized incarceration over prevention and treatment (National Strategy, 1984, p.31). This notion is further enforced by simply looking at the allocation of Federal funds towards law enforcement versus treatment and prevention. For example, in 1984, the federal outlay for drug prevention and treatment totaled 229.5 million dollars, compared to 1210.3 million dollars for drug law enforcement measures (National Strategy, 1984, p.122-123).

Indeed, the role of drug law enforcement, both nationally and internationally, was the most significant portion of Reagan’s strategy. According the *1984 National Strategy*, Federal drug law enforcement “expanded...to the highest level in U.S history” under the Reagan Administration, seeing “a 75 percent increase since 1981” in funding (National Strategy, 1984, p.45). The Strategy also outlined the key objectives for drug law enforcement: “aggressive

investigation and prosecution of the full range of criminal activities associated with drug trafficking...with emphasis on a full-scale attack on the financial aspects of drug trafficking;” “strong, coordinated anti-smuggling activities;” “elimination of the production of illicit drugs, including...cannabis (marijuana);” “reducing the diversion of legitimate drugs to illicit uses;” “improving collection, analysis and dissemination of accurate and timely intelligence concerning illicit drug production and...trafficking;” “swift and just punishment of individuals involved in drug trafficking and related criminal activities;” “improving cooperation and coordination among [all levels of agencies];” and “full involvement of [agencies] in contributing to drug abuse awareness and prevention” (National Strategy, 1984, p.46). These objectives focused predominantly on reducing the use and sale of illicit drugs through the gathering of intelligence and prosecution of all criminal activities associated with these drugs.

These objectives, however, could not be executed without coordination and cooperation of Federal, State, and local agencies. Under the *1984 National Strategy*, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) would serve as the “central leadership,” coordinating and gathering information from other agencies, which included: “14,000 state and local law enforcement agencies” as well as the “Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U.S Customs Service, United States Coast Guard (USCG), Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), U.S. Border Patrol of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), U.S. Marshals Service, U.S. intelligence community agencies, and U.S. Armed Forces” (National Strategy, 1984, p. 48-51). All of these agencies were responsible for contributing by providing intelligence, enforcing drug laws, etc.

It is important to note that prior to 1981, the U.S. Armed Forces were not allowed to engage directly in civilian law, which would have included drug law enforcement. However,

under “legislation enacted in December 1981,” the role of the U.S. Armed Forces was expanded to allow for “military resources” to be used by civilian agencies provided “that such support [did] not adversely affect military readiness” (National Strategy, 1984, p.53). The *1984 National Strategy* noted that this legislation thus allowed for “Navy and Air Force radar aircraft...to detect drug traffickers offshore” (National Strategy, 1984, p.53). The use of the military ultimately did more than simply providing resources to civilian agencies—it effectively solidified Reagan’s agenda as a full-fledged war—one in which all resources would be exhausted.

This war, however, was not a civil war per se—it was a war fought internationally with ramifications that extended beyond American borders. According to the *1984 National Strategy*, the main purpose of the U.S. international narcotics control program focused predominantly on reducing the “cultivation, production, and refining of illicit drugs” in foreign countries, and the U.S. government was willing to provide assistance in these endeavors (National Strategy, 1984, p.68). In addition, the strategy emphasized the need to control the “financial aspects” of international drug trafficking through heavy involvement of both international and national banking entities (National Strategy, 1984, p.68). In order to fulfill its agenda on an international level, the strategy called for the establishment of diplomatic relationships with other nations. Most notably, the *1984 National Strategy* noted “treaties...being negotiated with Colombia and Italy” as well as with “Panama, Jamaica, and the Netherlands Antilles” (National Strategy, 1984, p.67). The strategy also cited crop control as the nation’s “highest priority” in the War on Drugs, and thus cited their support of “chemical eradication” efforts in Latin American countries such as Mexico, Colombia, Belize, and Peru, among others (National Strategy, 1984, p.74). In addition, the *1984 National Strategy* outlined its aims in curbing the production and trafficking of narcotics, in particular opium, Southeast and Southwest Asian countries; however, the strategy

also states that “the United States [was] in no position to engage in productive bilateral efforts with Afghanistan and Iran,” suggestive of the political climate that would eventually culminate into the Iran-Contra Scandal (National Strategy, 1984, p.79).

The 1984 National Strategy for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking established Reagan’s key goals and measures in the War on Drugs. In order to reduce the demand, production, and trafficking of illicit drugs, the strategy put forth by Reagan’s administration focused predominantly on drug law enforcement and international diplomatic measures in order to meet these goals. The promotion of drug use prevention and treatment was essentially left to the financial discretion of State and local authorities. Ultimately, the *1984 Strategy* would depend heavily on punitive measures in the war on drugs.

Reagan’s “Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986”

On October 27, 1986, President Reagan signed the “Anti-Abuse Act of 1986,” a piece of legislation that would continue the tough love mindset set forth by the *1984 National Strategy for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking*. On this same day, President Reagan addressed the American people from the White House’s East Room. Within this speech, Reagan traced the drug problem to “past unwillingness to recognize and confront [the] . . . problem” – an allusion to his predecessor Jimmy Carter’s policies (Reagan, Oct. 27, 1986). In addition, Reagan evoked the role of the individual in this war when he states the following:

The American people want their government to get tough and to go on the offensive. And that’s exactly what we intend, with more ferocity than ever before. But as I’ve states on previous occasions, we would be fooling ourselves if we thought that new money for new government programs alone will solve the problem.// Let’s not forget that in America people solve problems, and no national crusade has ever succeeded without human

interest. So, at the same time that government sends a long, loud, clear message, I ask each American to be strong in your intolerance of illegal drug use and firm in your commitment to a drug-free America (Reagan, Oct, 27, 1986).

The message was clear: Americans must each do their part to reduce the demand of illicit drugs. The actual provisions of the “Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986” also set one other clear message to the American people: if Americans chose to sell or use illicit drugs, the penalties would be far graver than ever before.

The “Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986” is best known for its implementation of a “mandatory minimum sentence” for not only drug trafficking, but also for drug possession. In the article “Frontline: Drug Laws and Snitching—A Primer,” the “Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986,” Eric E. Sterling, who was “counsel to the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary from 1979 to 1989,” provided the following table outlining the Anti-drug Abuse Act’s minimum sentences for illicit drug possession:

Table 2.1

Mandatory minimum sentences for first time drug offenders:

Type of drug	Five Year Sentence Without Parole	Ten Year Sentence Without Parole
LSD	1 gram	10 grams
Marijuana	100 plants/ 100 kilos	1000 plants/ 1000 kilos
Crack Cocaine	5 grams	50 grams
Powder Cocaine	500 grams	5 kilos
Heroin	100 grams	1 kilo
Methamphetamine	10 grams	100 grams
PCP	10 grams	100 grams

Source: Recreated from Sterling, E. E. (1999). *Drug Laws and Snitching: A Primer*. Retrieved December 21, 2008, from Public Broadcasting Station: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/snitch/primer/>

These minimum sentences were set to ensure that judges, regardless of experience or jurisdiction, sentenced drug offenders in the same manner, thus eliminating bias within the system. Moreover, the purpose of minimum sentencing “was to encourage the government to prosecute high level drug offenders;” however minimum sentencing did more to incarcerate “low level offenders” than to deter large cartels (Sterling, 1999). In essence, by eliminating judicial discretion, judges could no longer consider “mitigating factors, . . . such as the offender’s degree of culpability and amenability to treatment or rehabilitation” (Gross, 2008, p.65).

The effects of minimum sentencing were felt immediately. According to “Mandatory Sentencing: Tipping the Scales of Justice,” drug offenders prior to the mandatory minimum sentencing established by the Anti-Abuse Act of 1986 “(on average) received prison sentences of 22 months” (Gross, 2008, p.65). After the Anti-Abuse Act of 1986 passed, that increased to 66 months (Gross, 2008, p.65). Moreover, despite the intent of removing judicial bias from sentencing, the Anti-Abuse Act of 1986 disproportionately targeted African Americans. After the passing of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, “law enforcement focused its efforts on crack offenses,” which ultimately lead to “a dramatic shift . . . in the incarceration trends for African Americans, relative to the rest of the nation” (American, 2006). This focus was further exacerbated by “the 100-to-1 disparity between crack and powder cocaine”—a disparity in sentencing with “no rational medical reason,” yet is indicative of an inherent bias in the system which disproportionately targets African Americans and the poor, given crack cocaine’s “relative low cost” and therefore accessibility (American, 2006). By 2006, when the ACLU published its findings in a report entitled “Cracks in the System: Twenty Years of the Unjust Federal Crack Cocaine Law,” “15 percent of the country’s drug users” were African American; yet, African Americans comprised “37 percent of those arrested for drug violations, 59 percent of those

convicted, and 74 percent of those sentenced to prison for a drug offense” (American, 2006). In addition, the study also found that despite the fact that “66 percent of crack users are white or Hispanic,” African Americans comprised “80 percent of the defendants sentenced for crack offenses” (American, 2006). Prior to the passing the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, “the average federal drug sentence for African Americans was 11 percent higher than for whites;” after 1986 that figure increased to 49 percent.

In addition to disproportionately targeting African Americans, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 also disproportionately affected women. Due to this Act, “the number of women in prison for drug law violations increased by more than 420% between 1986 and 1996” (Gross, 2008, p.68). According to the ACLU report entitled “‘Girlfriend Problem’ Harms Women and Children, Impacted Families Call Mandatory Sentences Unfair and Destructive,” this sharp increase in incarceration rates among women was due to a phenomenon known as the “girlfriend problem” (Girlfriend Problem, 2005). Given that the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 did not differentiate between levels of involvement in drug cases, women, usually the significant others of drug offenders with little to no involvement in drug trafficking operations, faced the same penalties “for the entire quantity of drugs charged in connection with the conspiracy” (Girlfriend Problem, 2005). As a result of this stipulation, 70% of the women in American prisons are “low-level and non-violent offenders” (Gross, 2008, p.68).

Ironically, the one facet of American society that the law was trying to target was the very group that benefited the most from the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986—“high-level drug offenders” (Gross, 2008, p.67). One key way to avoid the mandatory minimum sentencing established by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 was to provide the government with

“information leading to the arrest and prosecution of another criminal.” In exchange for their “substantial assistance,” drug offenders could receive any of the following:

avoiding prosecution altogether, a reduced charge (with no ‘mandatory minimum’), a reduction of the ‘mandatory minimum’ sentence, a flat fee, a percentage of confiscated money resulting from the information, special services or preferential treatment if already incarcerated, or negotiated lenience for someone else (Gross, 2008, p.67).

“High-level drug offenders” have more information to offer than those working beneath them; thus they are able to “‘pick and choose’ what information they give,” thus reducing the negative impact on their overall operations (Gross, 2008, p.67).

Reagan signed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, with little resistance from Congress, as a measure towards “a drug-free generation” (FAMM, 2009; Gonzalez). Moreover, Reagan also noted that this piece of legislation was “not intended as a means of filling our jails with drug users,” but rather to “identify” drug users and provide “them the support they need to live right” (Reagan, Oct. 27, 1986). Nonetheless, the institutionalized discriminatory nature of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 would eventually be acknowledged, not only by the ACLU, but also by politicians that, years later, expressed regret for their involvement in the passing of this legislation—a piece of legislation whose detrimental consequences are still felt today in the judicial system. On February 12, 2008, *US Fed News* reported that Senator Joseph Biden “urged his colleagues to support his legislation, S.1711, the “Drug Sentencing Reform & Cocaine Kingpin Trafficking Act,” an act which would effectively “eliminate” the 100-to-1 sentencing discrepancy he had originally advocated in 1986 (Sen. Biden Legislation, 2008). Senator Joseph Biden states that while their “intentions were good,...much of [their] information was bad,” even

equating this information to myths that they were all too eager to believe in the face of the “newest drug on the street” (Sen. Biden Legislation, 2008).

Eric Sterling, who in 1986 was the “chief counsel to the House subcommittee on crime,” also expressed extreme regret in retrospect. According to “Drug War Lost in Battle of ’86,” Sterling noted that “bad timing” played a critical role in propelling the hysteria of crack cocaine. Lens Bias, just two days after “the Boston Celtics had made [him] their No.1 draft pick” died of a cocaine overdose; this event in turn not only served as a cautionary tale, but also spurred the fury to pass this bill by both Republicans and Democrats. In addition, Sterling commented that the bill was “put together in a couple of days” without “hearings, [or consultation with] judges or prosecutors;” the bill, according to Sterling, “was all driven by politics” (Gonzalez, 1999).

On December 11, 2007, “the U.S. Sentencing Commission voted unanimously” to give inmates that were sentenced under the minimum sentencing guidelines of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 the opportunity to appeal for a shorter sentence; this move would effectively allow “3,800 prisoners to petition for an early release’ within the following year, and 19,500 prisoners would ultimately be able to “petition the courts to reduce their sentences,” despite the Bush administration’s opposition due to fears that “inmates would clog the courts with appeals for reductions” (Fears, 2007, p.A01).

Iran-Contra Scandal and Its Connection to Reagan’s War on Drugs

1986 not only marked a turning point in Reagan’s “War on Drugs”—it also marked the beginning of what would be the almost undoing of the Reagan administration, the Iran-Contra scandal. The Iran-Contra scandal was the convergence of two separate operations within the Reagan Administration through the illegal transference of funds from one endeavor to the other. The first of these operations was essentially an “arms-for-hostages” agreement between the

Reagan administration and Iran—a country which Reagan deplored as a “confederation of terrorist states” (Byrne, 1993, p.xviii). While one of Reagan’s campaign promises was “never [to] negotiate with terrorists,” in 1985, negotiations with the Iranian government were underway to begin “the first arms shipment” (Wolf; Byrne, 1993, p.xviii). Between August 20, 1985, and October 28, 1986, President Reagan authorized the sale of “2,004 TOW antitank and eighteen HAWK antiaircraft missiles, plus 240 HAWK spare parts” to the Iranian government, despite never having filed a “Presidential Finding to Congress,” before using the CIA in the transference of funds and arms (Byrne, 1993, p.xviii-xviii). In exchange for the sale of weapons, Iran was able to facilitate the release of three of the seven American hostages “held by Iranian terrorists in Lebanon”; unfortunately, these terrorists were able to seize three more hostages soon after, followed by four more (Wolf; Byrne, 1993, p.xviii).

The arms-for-hostages scheme, however, did not become public on its own—the fallout originated with another brewing scandal in Central America involving Reagan’s unwavering support of Contra rebels’ fight against the Communist, “Cuban-backed Sandinista” government in Nicaragua (Wolf). Reagan equated the Contras to the “Founding Fathers” of the United States in their fight against the Sandinistas, and thus provided financial support, as well as CIA resources, albeit through evasive measures given that the 1982 Boland Amendment made it illegal for the United States to involve itself in “overthrow[ing] the Sandinistas” (Wolf; Byrne, 1993, p.xvii). Money generated from the Iran weapons sale made its way to the Contras by way of a private “bank account in Switzerland controlled by [Lt.Col.] Oliver North,” who was a “National Security council staffmember,” as well as “his two main private-sector operations managers, Richard Secord and Albert Hakim (Byrne, 1993, p.xv, p.xix). Ultimately, \$3.8 million

of the \$16 million in profits generated from the arms sale would be “diverted to the Contra resupply operations” (Byrne, 1993, p.xix).

For Reagan, who had denounced Carter’s permissive attitudes and moral relativity, the Iran-Contra scandal had the potential to destroy his public image as a social conservative, not to mention his presidency. In addition to highlighting the unethical actions taken by his administration, the Iran-Contra scandal further highlighted the role of drug trafficking in connection to Contra operations. This, in turn, undermined the very policies that he was advocating in his “War on Drugs.” Reagan had often criticized the Sandinista government for its “role in drug trafficking,” yet the links between the Contras and drug trafficking were making headlines even before the Iran-Contra fallout (U.S. Concedes; Tran, 1986). On April 17, 1986, the Associated Press reported in an article entitled “U.S. Concedes Contras Linked to Drugs, But Denies Leadership Involved” that the Reagan administration acknowledged the fact that “individual Nicaraguan Contras may have engaged in activity with drug traffickers,” but maintained that there was no evidence incriminating Contra leadership, specifically the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO), which was “the rebels’ CIA-supported political umbrella group” (U.S. Concedes). Just a week after this concession, *The Guardian*, a London newspaper, reported that a Nicaraguan Contra leader was “arrested on suspicion of drug smuggling in Costa Rica,” an allegation which further drew the connection between the Contras and drug trafficking.

After the Iran-Contra scandal, however, suspicions of Contra involvement in drug trafficking became the focal points of Congressional investigations. On May 18, 1988, the Associated Press reported that “the Reagan administration may have sanctioned and in some cases recruited convicted drug traffickers in its secret effort to aid the Nicaraguan Contras” according to the findings of the house crime subcommittee (McHugh, 1988). On April 13, 1989,

the “Senate Foreign Affairs subcommittee on terrorism, narcotics and international operations” released its findings pertaining the funding of the Contras, and found that “the Reagan administration undermined its own war on drugs, as it ‘delayed, halted or interfered’ with operations that jeopardized support for its policy in Central America” (Margasak, 1989). The report also concluded that “the government looked the other way...when law enforcement agencies learned that drug traffickers were protected and aided by some U.S.-supported Nicaraguan Contras...” (Margasak, 1989).

Ultimately, the Tower Commission, a committee “appointed by President Reagan on December 1, 1986,” found that “ultimate responsibility for the events in the Iran-contra affair must rest with the President” (Byrnes, 1993, p.xx; Iran-Contra Report, 1987). However, the committee stopped short of investigating areas that could lead to impeachment due to the senators “concluding that ‘the country didn’t need another Watergate’” (Byrnes, 1993, p.xx). Yet despite the scandal, Reagan’s popularity amongst the American people once again rebounded, and he exited his presidency with “the highest approval rating of any president since Franklin D. Roosevelt” (Wolf).

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework for Study

The aim of this research is to examine how Reagan rhetorical style, as analyzed in his speeches pertaining to education and drug policy, is evoked within his administration's education and drug policies. This study is based on the premise that overarching rhetorical similarities within these texts are indicative of larger philosophical aims implied within them. Given this premise, the interpretation of both primary and secondary sources will stem predominantly from discourse theory through the use of rhetorical analysis.

Discourse Theory

Discourse theory has its roots in the theoretical paradigms of social theorists such as Max, and Weber. However, discourse theorists attempt to go beyond looking at society as an institution "in which all identity is reduced to a class essence" by "put[ting] forward an alternative conceptual framework built around the primacy of political concepts and logics such as hegemony, antagonism, and dislocation" (Howarth, 2000, p. 6). According to *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis*, a key assumption of discourse theory is that "all objects and actions are meaningful, and that their meaning is conferred by historically specific systems of rules" (Howarth, 2000, p.2). Thus, "discourses are concrete systems of social relations and practices that are intrinsically *political*, as their formation is an act of radical institution" which establish barriers "between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'" (Howarth, 2000, p.4). Through the application of discourse theory, Reagan's rhetoric will be examined in the context of larger "political concepts," as well as the opposing, and thus antagonistic, forces that help define the aims and goals of that rhetoric.

For the purposes of this study, discourse analysis will serve as the primary form of gathering and interpreting data given that discourse analysis is the “practice of analyzing empirical raw materials and information as discursive forms” (Howarth, 2000, p.4). These “discursive forms” may include “speeches, reports, ...historical events, interviews, policies,” etc., (Howarth, 2000, p.4). The discursive forms will focus on 11 speeches delivered by Reagan from 1983-1988 for initial determination and analysis of themes, as well as two key publications from the Reagan administration: *A Nation at Risk* and the *1984 National Strategy for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking*. Given that the ultimate goal of this study is to how Reagan rhetorical style in his speeches pertaining to education and drug policy is reflected in these two texts, the speeches used focus predominantly on drug-prevention education. The speeches analyzed are: “Remarks on Signing the National Drug Abuse Education Week Proclamation,” November 1, 1983; “Remarks on Signing the National Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Week Proclamation,” September 21, 1984; “Proclamation 5404—National Drug Abuse Week, 1985,” November 5, 1985; “Radio Address to the Nation on Education and Drug Abuse;” September 6, 1986; “Remarks at a White House Ceremony for the Elementary School Recognition Program Honorees;” September 12, 1986; “Remarks Announcing the Campaign Against Drug Abuse and a Question-and-Answer Session with Reporters;” August 4, 1986 (Question-and-Answer portion was not analyzed); “Remarks at the National Conference on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention in Arlington, Virginia;” August 6, 1986; “Messages to the Congress Transmitting Proposed Legislation to Combat Drug Abuse and Trafficking;” September 15, 1986; “Proclamation 5537—National Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Week and National Drug Abuse Education Day, 1986;” October 6, 1986; and “Remarks at a

White House Kickoff Ceremony for National Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Week;”
October 6, 1986.

Rhetorical Analysis

Rhetorical analysis of a text is rooted in the practice of “close reading” (Shea, 2008, p.35). Rhetorical analysis begins with “develop[ing] an understanding of a text that is based first on the words themselves and then on the larger ideas those words suggest” (Shea, 2008, p.35). In doing so, one would note the decisions a writer makes pertaining to diction, tone and syntax to convey a particular meaning. Furthermore, when analyzing a text for rhetorical purpose and effect, it is also important to “consider[...] the interaction of subject, speaker, and audience” in creating meaning (Shea, 2008, p.36).

While rhetorical analysis can take on many forms depending on purpose, *The Language of Composition: Reading, Writing, Rhetoric* provides one framework that is particularly useful in analyzing a variety of texts. *The Language of Composition* provides a framework for analysis which consists of deriving important quotations, summarizing the meaning of the passages quoted, determining the rhetorical strategy or style element used, and explicating the effect or function of that particular rhetorical strategy in conveying the overall meaning of the text (Shea, 2008, p.44-45). This framework, in conjunction with the practice of annotating the text, allows for a thorough understanding of the rhetorical effectiveness and impact of a text. This information can then be used to write about the rhetorical analysis of the piece. Writing about rhetorical analysis requires taking the information gathered through a close reading and using the “small details—the language itself—to support your interpretation” (Shea, 2008, p.35).

Application of Discourse Theory to Reagan’s Drug Education Speeches

Identifying and Defining of Themes

In order to establish a baseline of common political themes represented in Reagan’s rhetoric, speeches will serve as the initial discursive form analyzed. Unlike legislative policies, which have a limited audience, speeches are written with a much broader audience in mind—in the case of presidential speeches, the American people. Moreover, this fact implies that the larger aims of the administration must be evoked not in formal, technical language, but in broad inspirational themes, which leave overarching impressions rather than specificities on the audience. In addition, unlike interviews in which the president reacts to posed questions, speeches allow for an uninterrupted platform in which a message can be carefully crafted, albeit by several speechwriters, to create a particular impression on the audience.

The speeches were chosen because they met two main criteria. All the speeches identified above were written with the American people as their key audience. Some of the speeches, such as “Remarks at the National Conference on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention in Arlington, Virginia,” were delivered to specific groups; however, the message was one that resonated with a sense of American ingenuity and citizenship. In addition, all of the speeches chosen pertained to education as it related to drug policy. This is critical because it establishes that education is a key component within the war on drugs. Moreover, given that these speeches were aimed at the American people, these speeches define for Americans what the role of education within the war on drugs should be, and who should be responsible for its proper implementation.

Identification of Themes as Forms of Rhetorical Persuasion

After the speeches were chosen, the speeches were analyzed for theme development. Phrases that evoked similar themes were highlighted in the same color. For example, terms such as “battle,” “fight,” and “crusade” are used in reference to the government’s goal of drug

eradication within the United States, and thus effectively equates the drug problem with militaristic action. Hence, these terms evoke the theme of “war,” despite the fact that none of the eleven speeches analyzed ever used the word “war” when referring to the drug problem. Using this method of theme identification, five themes recurred within all eleven speeches analyzed: optimism through moral right; fear; personal and collective responsibility; American values—patriotism and freedom; and war.

In Chapter 4, these themes are explicated to show how they not only articulate the assumed values of American society, but also how these themes persuade Americans that this is a war that they must fight. In addition, these themes are applied to two legislative measures put forth by Reagan’s administration: *A Nation at Risk*, and the *1984 National Strategy for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking*. Moreover, Chapters 4 and 5 will examine in what ways Americans are encouraged to participate in the war against drugs, and how their participation affects other aspects of Reagan’s war on drugs.

CHAPTER 4 - FINDINGS

Ronald Reagan's drug policies, as highlighted in the 1984 National Strategy and the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act, focused predominantly on punitive measures as a means of combating drug use in the United States. That said the role of education in Reagan's drug war was substantial, albeit underfunded comparatively. Education was used as the predominant form of drug prevention.

One key educational measure that started in the 1980s as a means of reducing drug use among children was the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E) program. The D.A.R.E program began in Los Angeles under the direction of Daryl Gates, who became discouraged at the amount of students buying drugs from undercover police officers in schools, with no signs of affecting the overall drug problem amongst teens (Bovard, 1994). The program's aim is to build trust amongst students and law enforcement in order to stop drug use and trafficking in their communities. However, the teaching materials used by police officers, which emphasized "the Three R's: Recognize, Resist, and Report," have been criticized for turning children into informants, most notably against their parents (Bovard, 1994). While the D.A.R.E program has remained fairly popular, a study conducted by researchers at the University of Kentucky, entitled "Project DARE: No Effects at 10-Year Follow-Up," found the program to be relatively ineffective in "preventing or reducing substance use" (Lynam, 1999, p.593).

However, the role of education extends beyond preventing drug use. The concept of education in combating drug use also serves a rhetorical function-- to involve the American people by promoting individual responsibility and action. The "Just Say No" campaign is a prime example of the power of rhetoric as a form of education. In "Questions of Public Will and

Private Action: the Power of the Negative in the Reagan's "Just Say No" Morality Campaign"

Susan Mackey-Kallis and Dan F. Hahn's note:

Several scholars in various disciplines have pointed to an erosion of involvement in the public sphere and a concurrent increase in the use of the language of individualism and privatism in public discourse./.../

Reducing social problems to the level of individual action forces us to take the blame for enormous social problems on ourselves (Mackey-Kallis, 1991, p.1).

While assuming personal responsibility is critical, campaigns such as "Just Say No," tend to simplify larger social issues in such a way that distorts it, and thus offers no long-term solution. Thus, while education is represented as the solution to the drug problem—and the responsibility of the American people—it more accurately serves the rhetorical function of making the other aspects of Reagan's drug policies more palpable to Americans.

Optimism through the Moral Right

On November 1, 1983, President Reagan addressed "members of Congress...their spouses, and representatives of parent groups" at the White House where he officially signed the first "National Drug Abuse Week" proclamation. Within this proclamation, President Reagan states:

I call on all Americans to join the battle against drug abuse to protect our children so that we ensure a healthy and productive generation of Americans as our contribution to the future (Reagan, Nov. 1, 1983).

A certain ethos is expressed within this statement—that it is the duty of each American to work towards a common good, the future of America. This statement also evokes a sense of optimism

and autonomy in suggesting that a drug free future is not a futile goal, but rather one that can be reached if each American does his/her part.

Indeed, providing hope is the essence of evoking a sense of optimism towards the war on drugs. Reagan is able to achieve this in two key ways. First, Reagan discusses in his speeches the progress that has already been made. In “Remarks on Signing the National Drug Abuse Education Week Proclamation (November 1, 1983), Reagan states that “America’s children are getting help” in eliminating thoughts of drug use from their minds. He also cites specific examples of independent, non-government funded program, such as the Chemical People Project, and citizens that have “dedicated themselves” to both this project and other endeavors in order to reach and education citizens about the dangers of drugs. In his “Proclamation 5123—National Drug Abuse Education Week, 1983 (November 1, 1983),” Reagan also notes the “Federal, State, and local governments” efforts that have “reduced the supply of illegal drug” filtering into the United States (Reagan, Nov. 1, 1983).

Reagan cites specific examples of what has been done in order to eradicate the use of drugs in all of the speeches chosen for analysis. For example, in his “Remarks on Signing the National Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Week Proclamation (September, 21, 1984), Reagan discusses Nancy Reagan’s travels across the country in which she “seek[s] every opportunity to promote an antidrug, proachievement generation” (Reagan, Sept. 21, 1984). In addition, in several of his speeches, Reagan cites the use of law enforcement and corporations in reducing the availability of drugs, as well as the increase in arrests and confiscations pertaining to drug use and trade (Reagan Proclamation 5404, Nov. 5, 1985; Reagan, Aug. 4, 1986; Reagan, Sept.15, 1986). Reagan’s use of specific examples of the success of the drug war suggests to the

American people that the actions taken are not only effective, but also that their involvement is a main component in eradicating drug use, thus evoking a sense that that war is worth fighting.

In addition to citing the progress that has already been made in fighting drug use, Reagan also uses language that suggests a drug-free future is near. For example, in his “Proclamation 5404—National Drug Abuse Education Week, 1985,” Reagan notes that:

By heightening awareness, we can gather the moral strength to do what is right and channel it into effective measures against this menace (Reagan Proclamation 5404, Nov. 5, 1985).

This statement suggests that through education, or “heightening awareness,” Americans have the opportunity to not only gain “moral strength,” but ultimately do what is needed to eradicate drug use. It appeals to what Americans can do for a better future. In his “Proclamation 5537—National Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Week and National Drug Abuse Education Day, 1986,” Reagan’s statement “We can win. We must win. With God’s help and a united people, we shall win,” suggests that the war is not over, but that the Americans collectively will be the victors of the drug war (Reagan, Oct. 6, 1986). Furthermore, his speeches suggest that the future of America is dependent on educating the populous on the dangers of drug use. For example, in “Proclamation 5404—National Drug Abuse Week, 1985,” Reagan states:

Today, we hold the key to creating a drug-free society: prevention of drug abuse through awareness and education (Reagan, Nov. 5, 1985).

This statement identifies education as a critical component, indeed the “key,” to eliminating drug use in the United States; however, the implication is that while the solution is there, Americans still need to do their part in fulfilling this measure, and thus eradicate drug use. Nonetheless, this

statement suggests that a drug-free future is not only within reach, but plausible with American resourcefulness.

All of the 11 speeches used for analysis evoked a sense of optimism by looking towards the future—suggesting both that the measures taken, as well as the future, are aligned with winning the war on drugs. Thus the theme of “optimism through the moral right” can be defined as rhetoric that appeals to reaching success in eliminating drug use in the United States, and in the process, also establishes clear boundaries between Americans and the perceived enemy. In his speeches, terms such as “progress,” “proachievement generation,” and “unique American spirit” evoke a sense that eradicating drug use is not futile—that there is reason to believe that it will happen due to American ingenuity and resilience.

Fear

Reagan begins his “Proclamation 5123—National Drug Abuse Education Week, 1983” as follows:

Drug abuse in the United States continues to be a major threat to the future of our Nation. Millions of our citizens are risking their health and their future by abusing drugs. The effects are clearly demonstrated by the tragic reports in daily news accounts of innocent people killed by drunk drivers, death by overdose, drug-related murders, drug smuggling, and other public outrages. Less obvious, but more pervasive, are the individual tragedies which destroy a person or family and which may cause loss a job, interruption of schooling, and a reduction in our Nation’s productivity (Reagan Proclamation 5123, Nov. 1, 1983).

This passage equates drug use with death—the literal death of individuals due to overdoses; murders; and drunk drivers, and the figurative death of the family, as well as the individual’s role

within society as his/ her overall well-being deteriorates. By beginning his proclamation with such images, it evokes a certain fear amongst Americans that drug use is not a passing fad, but rather a national threat.

In fact, images of fear are as prevalent in the 11 speeches used for analysis as images of optimism, suggesting that while Americans should be optimistic about the future, they cannot afford to be lackadaisical when it comes to drug use. Reagan uses fear in two key ways in his speeches. First, Reagan uses fear figuratively as a means of vilifying the drugs themselves. For example, in his “Proclamation 5537—National Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Week and National Drug Abuse Education Day, 1986,” Reagan states that:

Drug use is a veritable plague that enslaves its victims, saps their health, turns their dreams to dust, and endangers their lives and the lives of others (Reagan Proclamation 5537, Oct. 6, 1986).

By equating drug use to a plague, Reagan suggests that the drug use cannot be controlled by Americans, but rather that drug use is a personified villain that overtakes and controls Americans. Moreover, the term “enslaves” has connotative weight, evoking images of human suffering at the hands of an oppressor; thus, Reagan evokes fear that while Americans will no longer experience slavery at the hands of a fellow human being, they could easily become slaves to drugs.

Most notably, however, are the stark, descriptive images that Reagan uses in order to provoke a sense of fear within Americans. For example, in his “Remarks on Signing the National Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Week Proclamation (Sept. 21, 1984),” Reagan notes the “stories of heartbreak, . . . and the broken dreams and families and lost lives” that First Lady Nancy Reagan witnessed on her travels across the country talking to people about drug use

Reagan, Sept. 21, 1984). He also cites the fact that “one-fourth of [America’s] young people continue to abuse drugs or alcohol,” and that “thousands of teenagers” die annually due to drunk driving accidents. Moreover, Reagan identifies the victims of drug use in several of his speeches, noting that drugs claim the lives of “promising young athletes,” an allusion to Len Bias who had died two months before from a cocaine overdose, as well as the lives of “the poor, the middle class, the rich and the famous; hundreds, even thousands, per year—dead” at the hands of drug use (Reagan, August 6, 1986; Reagan, August 4, 1986). These references to death help solidify Reagan’s point that drug use is not, as he states, “a private matter,” but rather “an insidious evil” that must be stopped.

Reagan’s appeal to fear creates a legitimate threat that American must approach with trepidation and urgency. Terms such as “insurmountable problem,” “destructive of life’s potential,” and “deeply disruptive and corrosive evil” suggests that drug use is a legitimate enemy—one that warrants a deep fear, and thus reaction, from American citizens. Moreover, terms such as “deeply disruptive and corrosive evil” personify drug use, thus creating a legitimate enemy. Thus fear is a critical component in Reagan’s rhetoric because it gives a purpose for action in the war on drugs.

Personal and Collective Responsibility

The purpose of Reagan’s rhetoric is not to only persuade Americans that this is a war that needs to be fought, but also that the solution to the drug problem lies within their grasp. Moreover, Reagan’s rhetoric suggests that while the federal government is responsible for funding law enforcement, incarceration, etc., the role of the American people is to fix the problem itself through prevention of drug use and trade. Reagan emphasizes the role of the American people in three ways. First, Reagan cites specific examples of how everyday

Americans have been working together towards eradicating drug use and trafficking. For example, in his “Proclamation 5404—National Drug Abuse Education Week, 1985, Reagan states that Americans “have developed a sense of responsibility, collectively and individually” in doing their part in the war on drugs (Reagan Proclamation 5404, Nov. 5, 1985). This statement implies that Americans had previously not has a sense of personal responsibility, and that the progress that has been made is due to their ability to accept responsibility for the drug problem. Within this proclamation Reagan credits parents for promoting healthy behaviors towards drugs, as well as promoting individual responsibility:

Parents have banded together, and young people are receiving strong support for behavior That is anti-drug, pro-achievement, and that recognizes individual responsibility. These efforts are creating an environment that nurtures our Nation’s greatest asset—our children (Reagan Proclamation 5404, Nov. 5, 1985).

Not only does this statement emphasize the importance of individuals assuming responsibility, but it also suggests that parents had not banded together in the past, and hence the exasperation of a drug epidemic.

In all of the 11 speeches analyzed, Reagan cites examples of Americans that do their part in eliminating the drug problem. In addition to parents, Reagan notes that corporations, schools, local governments, public organizations, citizen volunteers, churches, health care professionals, and celebrities have done their part in eradicating the drug problem through education, as well as the media (Reagan, Sept.6, 1986; Reagan Proclamation 5123, Nov. 1, 1983; Reagan, Sept. 12, 1986; Reagan Proclamation 5537, Oct. 6, 1986 ; Proclamation 5404, Nov. 5, 1985 ; Reagan, Sept. 21, 1984; Reagan, Oct. 6, 1986). By citing the role of ordinary people in the fight against

drugs, Reagan is able to demonstrate that through individual actions, Americans can significantly benefit the well-being of the collective whole.

In addition to citing examples of ordinary Americans, Reagan also cites programs that promote a drug-free America. In his “Remarks Announcing the Campaign Against Drug Abuse and a Question-and-Answer Session With Reporters (Aug. 4, 1986), Reagan states:

And finally, yet first and foremost, we will get the message to the potential user that drug use will no longer be tolerated; that they must learn to “just say no.” Nancy spoke those words in Oakland, California, just a few years ago, and today there are now more than 10,000 Just Say No clubs among our young people all across America (Reagan, Aug. 4, 1986).

The Just Say No Campaign, which began “in response to First Lady Nancy Reagan's campaign against drug use,” emphasized how staying away from drugs was as easy as just saying no (Just, 2008). In essence, the “Just Say No” campaign promoted the notion that individuals have control over the drug-problem as it pertains to their lives, and therefore they are in the best position to prevent, and ultimately eradicate drug use in America.

Not only does Reagan cite examples of Americans working towards a drug-free America, he directly calls to Americans to take action if they have not done so already, thus appealing to their ethos and morals. For example, in his “Remarks at the National Conference on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention in Arlington, Virginia (Aug.6, 1986), Reagan states:

The use of illegal drugs and abuse of alcohol can no longer be shrugged off as somebody else's business. Today it's everybody's business—every man, woman, and child who loves his country, community, and family. It's time to stand up and be counted, and this

you are doing. So, it's a pleasure to be here with individuals who are doing just that
(Reagan, Aug. 6, 1986).

Reagan's words call for Americans to take action against drug use and trafficking, thus appealing to their ethical responsibility to the community at large. In his "Radio Address to the Nation on Education and Drug Abuse," Reagan's call for action extends to schools, which he believes to be the best place to for "all Americans to stand up, get involved, and do something about drugs" (Reagan, Sept. 6, 1986). The role of schools in promoting action through prevention is also evident in his "Remarks at a White House Ceremony for the Elementary School Recognition Program Honorees (Sept. 12, 1986)." Within his remarks, Reagan calls for:

teachers across America to take the pledge to take no drugs themselves and to do the best they can to keep all drugs out of schools (Reagan, Sept, 12, 1986).

He then argues that this is what "we owe our children," thus appealing to the morals and ethics of teachers and schools to solve the drug problems they face. Reagan calls for action from all Americans, and in doing so defines the role that Americans are to have in the war on drugs (Reagan, Oct. 6, 1986; Reagan, Sept. 15, 1986; Reagan, Sept. 21, 1984; Reagan Proclamation 5404, Nov. 5, 1986; Reagan, Proclamation 5537, Oct. 6, 1986; Reagan, Sept. 6, 1986; Reagan, Aug. 6, 1986; Reagan, Sept. 12, 1986).

Reagan also appealed to personal and collective responsibility by minimizing the role of the federal government, at least rhetorically. Despite the fact that the majority of funds were distributed to federal endeavors, such as incarceration and law enforcement, Reagan's rhetoric suggests that the role of the individual is the most significant portion of the war on drugs. For example, in his "Remarks on Signing the National Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Week Proclamation (Sept.21, 1984)," Reagan states:

The Federal Government will redouble its efforts to stop drug trafficking, punishing drug traffickers, and increase international cooperation to control narcotics. But ultimately, victory can only come from the dedication and commitment of private industry, public organizations, local government, and citizen volunteers. We need to get more people involved, particularly in prevention programs. And we'll be calling on the American people to help us (Reagan, Sept. 21, 1984).

While this statement defines the role of the Federal Government in controlling drug trafficking, it places the burden of eliminating drug use on individuals by suggesting that they are the determining variable in whether the war is won or lost. Thus, by deemphasizing the role of the Federal Government, Reagan stresses individual responsibility to fulfilling the missions of the war on drugs.

Reagan's appeal to personal and collective responsibility resonates in all of the 11 speeches analyzed, evoking not only a sense of autonomy, but also creating the impression of small government. Phrases such as "concerned parents...banding together," "dedication and commitment of private industry, public organizations, local government, and citizen volunteers," "peer pressure," and "America is mobilizing" evoke a sense of personal responsibility, as well as ethical responsibility to fellow Americans. In addition, Reagan notes specific examples such as "Chemical People Project," in order to further explicate this theme.

American Values: Patriotism and Freedom

Reagan not only appeals to individual responsibility, but also to Americans' sense of patriotic duty. For example, in his "Remarks at the National Conference on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention in Arlington, Virginia (Aug.6, 1986)," Reagan evokes patriotism when he states:

When it comes to curing this plague that ravages our land and infects our loved ones, there are no Democrats or Republicans, just Americans (Reagan, Aug. 6, 1986).

By suggesting that Americans, and not party affiliations, will solve the drug problem, Reagan makes an appeal to the larger principles of nationalism, and rejects the notion that the drug problem can be solved through bipartisan means. Reagan evokes a similar sentiment earlier in his speech when he states:

One doesn't have to be a conservative to appreciate that the vitality and resilience of America flows from the strength of the American family (Reagan, Aug. 6, 1986).

This statement also suggests that there are certain values that transcend political rhetoric. By stating that "one doesn't have to be a conservative to appreciate" American values and the American family, Reagan implies that conservatives, and not liberals, are the ones that conventionally hold this value, thus highlighting bipartisanship.

Reagan also uses phrases that relate American identity with freedom, and hence free will. For example in his "Remarks at the National Conference on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention in Arlington, Virginia (Aug.6, 1986)", Reagan states:

Well, we must determine how we, as free people, will conduct our lives, what our standards are, what behavior we will and will not tolerate. The time has come to decide on this issue and act, each of us (Reagan, Aug. 6, 1986).

This statement not only identifies Americans as "free people," but it also suggests that they are responsible of using their freewill, for the sake of the common good—for defining the parameters by which society functions.

"Freedom and patriotism" is defined as rhetoric that urges a sense of patriotic duty. While similar to "Optimism through moral right," this theme is more specifically defined by how

nationalistic language is used to emphasize democratic ideals. Phrases such as “liberty from the enslavement of drug addiction,” “fundamental principles of the United States and Western civilization,” and “do something for your country” suggest that the eradication of drug use is linked to democratic principles as well as patriotic duty.

War

While Nixon is credited for declaring the “war on drugs,” no president is more closely connected with this war than Ronald Reagan. Reagan’s *1984 National Strategy* sanctioned the use of U.S. Armed Forces in drug law enforcement efforts—an act that would have been illegal prior to his administration. This measure, in turn, turned a figurative “war” of differing ideologies into a full-fledged war with military, as well as financial, support.

Reagan’s declaration of war, however, was not done so before Congress; rather, it was a war declared in front of the American people. Reagan’s speeches served as accessible avenue by which Reagan could figuratively frame his drug policies within the context of military action. Thus Reagan’s rhetoric pertaining to his administration’s drug policies as a “war” functions in two key ways. First, by using militaristic language, Reagan effectively frames America’s drug problem as the enemy, and the American people as the soldiers that must actively fight against drug use. For example, in Reagan’s “Remarks at a White House Kickoff Ceremony for National Abuse Education and Prevention Week (Oct. 6, 1986),” he states:

All of you who have stood at the frontlines in our fight against drug abuse for the past several years have watched our numbers growing./.../ The will of the American people is being heard. We will not longer watch as illegal drugs infiltrate our schools, invade our factories, and terrorize our citizens. We will no longer tolerate this insidious evil threatening our values and undercutting our institutions (Reagan, Oct. 6, 1986).

Reagan figuratively defines Americans as soldiers standing “at the frontlines in our fight against drug abuse...,” thus suggesting that the role of Americans is not only active, but critical in the eradication of drug use, and in preserving the American values that drug use threatens.

Furthermore, by stating that drugs “infiltrate,...[and] invade” American institutions, and thus “terrorize” American citizens, Reagan is also defining drugs as the enemy that the American people must fight against.

By framing Americans’ role in Reagan’s drug policies within this context places Americans as heroes fighting against a solidified and personified evil. However, as in any war, Reagan’s use of “war” also has its own casualties. In his “Remarks at the National Conference on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention in Arlington, Virginia (Aug. 6, 1986),” he states:

On the casualty list you’ll find the poor, the middle class, the rich and the famous; hundreds, even thousands, per year—dead. Who has not felt the heartache of hearing the news of a friend or family member, someone who had so much to live for but is now gone forever? Who has not felt the frustration of watching helplessly as loved ones or dear friends slide to personal ruin? Len Bias and Don Rogers, gifted athletes who had so much more to achieve, are only two of the most recent fatalities. One doesn’t have to be a conservative to appreciate that the vitality and resilience of America flows from the strength of the American family (Reagan, Aug. 6, 1986).

This passage defines everyday Americans as the casualties of the drug war, and thus as fallen victims. By doing so, Reagan essentially gives Americans a reason for fighting in the war on drugs—to save American lives and to preserve American values through “the vitality and resilience [that] flows from the strength of the American family.”

In addition to defining American citizens' role in Reagan's drug policies, equating drug eradication with a war suggests that much like a war that has a definitive end, drug eradication in the United States can also be won, and subsequently come to an end. In Reagan's "Proclamation 5404—National Drug Abuse Education Week, 1985," he states:

Throughout America, parents, educators, law enforcement officials, and other community leaders are proving that the fight against drugs can be won./.../ Most important, Americans have changed their attitudes towards both drugs and drug users. Negative attitudes have been replaced with understanding, and drug abuse is seen for what it really is: destructive of life's potential and a tragic waste of health and opportunity (Reagan Proclamation, Nov. 5, 1985).

By defining the drug war as a "fight [that] can be won," Reagan is suggesting that the drug war will eventually end, with Americans as victors. It also suggests that a change in attitude "towards both drugs and drug users" is all that is needed in order to eradicate drug use, and win the war.

It is important to note that in all of the eleven speeches analyzed, the term "war" is only used once in his "Remarks on Signing the National Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Week Proclamation" (Reagan, Sept. 21, 1984). Rather, the terms "fight," and more notably "crusade," are used in reference to the war on drugs. The use of the term "crusade" elevates the drug war to a mission with religious and moral implications. Reagan notes this important distinction in his "Remarks Announcing the Campaign Against Drug Abuse and a Question-and-Answer Session With Reporters (Aug. 4, 1986)":

But I want you to know that our announcements will deal not just with what government will do, but what all of us will do—and must do. For the key to our antidrug strategy—my very reason for being here this afternoon—is not to announce another short-term

government offensive, but to call instead for a national crusade against drugs, a sustained, relentless effort to rid America of this scourge—by mobilizing every segment of our society against drug abuse (Reagan, Aug. 4, 1986).

Reagan’s use of the term “crusade” is critical given its religious connotations. This passage suggests that fighting drugs is not just another enemy, but rather one that will destroy the assumed moral and religious values of American society. Thus, Americans are not simply fighting for their country—they are also fighting for their faith and values.

“War” refers to any rhetoric that utilizes terms associated with military action. It is important to note that in all of the above speeches the actual word “war” only occurs three times, and of these the word “war” is only used once in direct reference to a war waged against drugs. Rather, terms such as “battle,” “fight,” and most notably “crusade” are used in reference to a waged war against drugs. Given the religious connotation of the term “crusade,” Reagan essentially correlates the eradication of drug use as a religious mission. Other terms such as “casualty,” “invade,” “terrorize,” “frontlines,” and “national mobilization” also evokes the sense that Americans are to engage themselves as soldiers in the war on drugs.

Research Questions

Given that Reagan’s speeches are directed towards the American people, his rhetoric is full of symbolic language that encompasses the larger aims of his administration, yet stops short of providing specific information about his administration’s policies. Nonetheless, the themes that are evoked within his speeches are central to persuading the American people that his aims are truly worthwhile. Reagan’s policies pertaining to education and drugs were also written for the American people; however, given that their purpose is to provide legislative direction, the language tends to be more concrete in its delivery.

For educators, the implications of this type of political rhetoric are significant, given that educational policies are usually presented to the American people through filtered speeches, campaign sound bites, etc., and that this filter could have a deep impact on the teachers' everyday practices. In addition, analyzing Reagan's rhetorical strategies as they apply to both his speeches and policies could provide educators with a historical perspective on how hegemony manifests itself through education. In order to shed some light on these issues, the following questions will be answered: How are the themes explicated in his speeches evoked within Reagan's policies? Using these themes as a basis for comparison, what are the similarities between Reagan's rhetoric pertaining to education and drug policies? *A Nation at Risk* as well as the *1984 National Strategy for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking* will serve as the texts used to answer these two points of inquiry.

Optimism Through Moral Right

Reagan's speeches evoked a sense of optimism by not only noting what progress has already been made in the war on drugs, but also by suggesting that the hope of a better future lies within the will of the American people. Reagan's drug policy, the *1984 National Strategy for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking*, also evokes a sense of optimism by suggesting that the 1980s have ushered in a new era of drug awareness and proactive attitudes. For example, the *1984 National Strategy* states:

Ending a long period of discouragement and lack of decisiveness, the early 1980s have brought a dramatic change: a less defeatist attitude, a belief that destruction of young minds and bodies through deliberate ingestion of drugs for non-medical reasons is dangerous and wrong. Most importantly, people are beginning to accept that drug use is not inevitable; that by learning and working together, and setting standards and

expectations regarding behavior, we can made a real difference... we can make a better future for America (National Strategy, 1984, p.3).

This passage suggests that a drug war is not a waste of time or resources given that the solution lies within “learning and working together, and setting standards and expectations regarding behavior.” Thus, this policy evokes a sense of optimism in the belief that drug use is “not inevitable,” and can easily be defeated. Moreover, this passage also suggests that a sense of moral righteousness has to be a key factor in winning the war on drugs, and thus “setting standards and expectation regarding behavior” are necessary.

Similarly, *A Nation at Risk*, perhaps the most well-known publication pertaining to education to stem from Reagan’s administration, also evokes a sense of optimism by promoting the notion that the future of our country is dependent on American ingenuity, and that Americans are now in the position to be proactive towards achieving higher standards in education. For example, in *A Nation at Risk*, it states:

We have heard the voices of high school and college students, school board members, and teachers; of leaders of industry, minority groups, and higher education; of parents and State officials. We could hear the hope evident in their commitment to quality education and in their descriptions of outstanding programs and schools (National, 1983, p.12).

This passage notes the commitment of various facets of American society to ensure the highest quality of education possible for students. Furthermore, this passage evokes optimism by suggests that “the hope evident in their commitment to quality education” resonates in the research conducted by the committee.

It is important to note that given the nature of these documents, the theme of “optimism through the moral right” is not as prevalent as in Reagan’s speeches. Nonetheless, both speeches set a contrast between what current problems exist within both the drug war and education in the United States, and a resounding hope that abounds amongst the American people to finally take action. Thus, while neither document evokes this theme as the primary form of persuasive appeal, both documents use it to create a cautionary sense of hope.

Fear

Evoking fear within Americans is a key component of justifying the respective arguments proposed in *A Nation at Risk*, and the *1984 National Strategy*. In both of these documents, fear serves the similar function of justifying why action is needed. For example, in *A Nation at Risk* it states:

Our society and its educational institutions seem to have lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling, and of the high expectations and disciplined effort needed to attain them. This report, the result of 18 months of study, seeks to generate reform of our educational system in fundamental ways and to renew the Nation’s commitment to schools and colleges of high quality throughout the length and breadth of our land (National, 1983, p.7).

This passage evokes both fear and purpose. The first sentence of this paragraph highlights the fact that the American people have lost sight of the “purpose of schooling,” as well as the high standards “needed to attain them.” Thus, as the passage notes, the purpose of *A Nation at Risk* is to urge and help Americans reform their schools.

The *1984 National Strategy* also uses fear as a means of justifying action. For example, the “Introduction” states:

Over the past two decades, the use of illegal drugs in the United States spread at an unprecedented rate and reached into every segment of our society. The drug-oriented youth culture was foreign to most of our adult population. ... [W]e can make a better future for America. This is what the 1984 Strategy for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking is about (National Strategy, 1984, p.3).

Much like *A Nation at Risk*, the *1984 National Strategy* uses fear to introduce the purpose of not only the policy, but also the purpose of the American people. This passage provokes fear by highlighting that drugs are taking over American society. This fear then serves as the justification for the need of a national strategy to solve the problem with the help of the help and support of the American people.

Unlike Reagan’s speeches, which predominantly used figurative language to provoke fear amongst Americans, both of these documents rely more heavily on statistical information to create a similar effect. *A Nation at Risk*, for example, lists thirteen “indicators of...risk” that suggest that American schools are failing. Some of these indicators are: “...23 million American adults are functionally illiterate by the simplest tests of everyday reading, writing, and comprehension; average achievement of high school students on most standardized tests is now lower than 26 years ago when Sputnik was launched; [and] the College Board’s Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) demonstrate a virtually unbroken decline from 1963 to 1980. Average verbal scores fell over 50 points and average mathematics scores dropped nearly 40 points” (National, 1983, p.9-10). Thus, these indicators provide factual information that supports their claim that schools, and thus the nation, are “at risk.”

The *1984 National Strategy* also depends on statistics as a means of generating a fear of the repercussions of not implementing the strategy. *The 1984 National Strategy* notes:

There is reason for concern. More than 20 million Americans use marijuana at least once a month. One out of 18 high school seniors use marijuana daily. Over four million people, half of whom are between the ages of 18 and 25, are current users of cocaine.

The millions of Americans who use illicit drugs are suffering more severe consequences because of higher potency in most types of drugs, more dangerous methods of drug use, and choosing to use more than one drug simultaneously. It is not unexpected that more dangerous drug-taking habits result in dramatic increases in medical emergencies and deaths (National Strategy, 1984, p.3).

These statistics, stating that millions of Americans are using cocaine and marijuana, serve to create a sense of fear among Americans. In addition, indicating that the use of these drugs have dire consequences that could lead to “dramatic increases in medical emergencies and deaths,” provides further support for needing to implement the national strategy.

Both documents use fear as a means of generating support for their respective calls to action. While Reagan’s speeches depended heavily on figurative language to create a sense of fear, these policies rely more on statistical information to generate a similar result. The use of statistics is indicative to the formal tone of the documents, and the need to appeal to not only the emotions of Americans, but also to their sense of logical reasoning. Thus fear surfaces as a means of creating a sense of urgency by depicting a dire image of the current situation.

Personal and Collective Responsibility

In both *A Nation at Risk* and the *1984 National Strategy*, the concept of personal and collective responsibility is critical not only to evoking a sense of autonomy amongst the

American people, but also to establish fiscal responsibility for certain aspects of their respective policies. *A Nation at Risk*, for example, establishes in its opening passage a sense of autonomy:

All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost. This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interest but also the progress of society itself (National, 1983, p.7).

This passage places personal responsibility on children and their abilities to capitalize on the educational opportunities afforded to them. Thus, this opening statement immediately establishes that any educational measures suggested within *A Nation at Risk* is ultimately successful if the American people do their part to make the most of the opportunities at their disposal.

As a matter of fact, this sentiment, according to *A Nation at Risk*, is a central component of reforming education in the United States. In the section entitled “The Public’s Commitment,” it states that “of all the tools at hand, the public’s support for education is the most powerful” (National, 1983, p.15). To support this claim, *A Nation at Risk* cites “the most recent (1982) Gallup Poll” which found that “people are steadfast in their belief that education is the major foundation for the future strength of the country” (National, 1983, p. 15-16). Thus, the American people are the key factor in determining the future fate of United States, and ultimately the key to fixing the educational system.

The Commission responsible for *A Nation at Risk* does more than merely suggest that Americans are responsible for fixing the educational system; in their recommendations, they state that these recommendations were created so that “the American people can begin to act now” (National, 1983, p.21). These recommendations emphasize the “Five New Basics” which

consist of: English, mathematics, science, social studies, and computer science” (National, 1983, p.22-23). It also encouraged for higher, more competitive teachers’ salaries in conjunction to recommending that the school day be extended to seven hours, “as well as a 200- to 220-day school year,” among other recommendations to reform schools (National, 1983, p.25-26).

However, *A Nation at Risk* does more than outline the changes that Americans should make to American schools—it also outlines who is fiscally responsible. In the section entitled

“Recommendation E: Leadership and Fiscal Support,” it states:

State and local officials, including school board members, governors, and legislators, have the primary responsibility for financing and governing the schools, and should incorporate the reforms we propose in their educational policies and fiscal planning (National, 1983, p.27).

According to this recommendation, the majority of the financial responsibility for implementing the Committee’s recommendations are placed upon local governments, and hence the people within that community. In contrast, the Federal government’s role is defined as having “the primary responsibility to identify the national interest in education” (National, 1983, p.27).

While it does state that the Federal government “should also help fund and support [these] efforts,” the primary responsibility is still rooted at the local level. Thus, *A Nation at Risk* effectively gives the American people a sense of autonomy and power since they are the ones that determine the success of educational reform, they also bear the majority of the fiscal responsibility in promoting “the national interest in education.”

The *1984 National Strategy* also makes an appeal to personal and collective responsibility by evoking individual autonomy, and allocating fiscal responsibility on local

governments. Much like *A Nation at Risk*, the *1984 National Strategy* builds autonomy within the American people as a means of fixing a national problem; in the case of the *1984 National Strategy*, that problem is illegal drug abuse and trafficking. For example, the *1984 National Strategy* states:

Our experience over the past decade proves that, regardless of the amount of Federal resources available, the success of the national drug abuse prevention effort ultimately depends on the dedication and the commitment of private industry, public organizations and citizen volunteers (National Strategy, 1984, p.6).

In this passage, a similar claim is made to that of *A Nation at Risk*: success for Federal government measures is determined by the will and cooperation of the American people. This sentiment is critical to establishing a sense of individual autonomy because it speaks to America's sense of democracy and self-governing. This passage also gives the ultimate success of the Strategy to the American people, and subsequently the final responsibility for the Strategy's outcomes.

The *1984 National Strategy* also establishes what role the American people, whether in the private sector or through citizen volunteers, will assume within their fight against drug abuse and trafficking. Most notably, the Strategy defines this role within the realm of "drug abuse prevention":

The old adage, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," is an obvious truth in the fight against drug and alcohol abuse. ... During the past three years, prevention has come to the forefront as the essential element in the long-range goal of eliminating drug abuse. Private industry, professional and civic organizations, and private citizens banding together in action-oriented groups, such as nationwide parents organizations, have

invested their time and resources in preventing drug abuse (National Strategy, 1984, p.31).

Even though “prevention has come to the forefront as the essential element in the long-range goal of eliminating drug abuse,” the fiscal responsibility assumed by the Federal government is minimal compared to the responsibility assumed by local governments and the private sector. The *1984 National Strategy* notes that of the \$1.4 billion in funding for drug abuse treatment during 1984, the Federal government was responsible for “providing \$302 million (21 percent),” while the “state and local government” spent \$802 million (52 percent), “and the private sector” accounted for \$308 million (22 percent) (National Strategy, 1984, p.87). Thus, similar to *A Nation at Risk*, the *1984 National Strategy* establishes responsibility for the outcomes of its legislative measures on the American people, as well as the fiscal responsibility for states key elements within the policy.

Both *A Nation at Risk* and the *1984 National Strategy* depend on Americans assuming personal and collective responsibility in order to implement key components of their respective plans. Furthermore, by rhetorically suggesting that Americans have autonomy over both education and drug policies, these pieces effectively place a significant portion of the fiscal responsibility on local governments, as well as the private citizens and industry. Thus, these plans urge change, but at minimal expense of the Federal government.

American Values—Patriotism and Freedom

Reagan’s speeches relied heavily on the use of figurative language to evoke the notions patriotism and freedom. Similarly *A Nation at Risk* uses descriptive language to evoke nationalistic sentiments. It is important to note that while the *1984 National Strategy* also appeals to patriotism, it does so by quoting Reagan’s remarks. Nonetheless, in both *A Nation at Risk* and

the *1984 National Strategy*, evoking a sense of patriotic duty is central to justifying why their respective legislative measures are necessary.

A key example of this begins with the first sentence of *A Nation at Risk*, which echoes the same resounding message of its title: “Our Nation is at risk.” The simplicity, and straightforward nature of this declarative sentence sets an ominous tone that is further explicated within the passage:

This report is concerned with only one of the many causes and dimensions of the problem, but it is the one that undergirds American prosperity, security, and civility. We report to the American people that while we can take justifiable pride in what our schools and colleges have historically accomplished and contributed to the United States and the well-being of its people, the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people (National, 1983, p.7).

As this passage indicates, education is the foundation that reinforces American society. Phrases such as “future as a Nation and as a people;” and “American prosperity, security, and civility” emphasize the importance of education as it pertains to the values, needs, and future of the Nation. This appeal to national pride and ingenuity strengthens the argument that the state of education cannot be ignored.

The concept of nationalism as motivation to take action in reforming education is further highlighted in the following passage:

Another dimension of the public’s support offers the prospect of constructive reform. The best term to characterize it may simply be the honorable word “patriotism” (National, 1983, p.16).

This passage suggests that the public's support for reforming schools is in of itself a patriotic act, one that must exist in order to "nutur[e] the Nation's intellectual capital" (National, 1983, p.16). Furthermore, the Commission notes "that education is the common bond of a pluralistic society" and that it helps the United States create relations with "other cultures around the globe" (National, 1983, p.16). Thus, through the promotion of nationalistic sentiments, the Commission is able to strengthen the justification for reforming education.

The *1984 National Strategy* also appeals to a collective patriotic identity as a means of justifying why the measures outlined within it are necessary to prevent drug abuse and trafficking; however, the *1984 National Strategy* does this by quoting President Reagan's words pertaining to the duty of the American people. For example, as a means of summarizing the role of the American people in doing their part in the drug war, the Strategy states:

President Reagan has called on "all Americans to join the battle against drug abuse to protect our children so that we ensure a healthy and productive generation of Americans as our contribution for the future" (National Strategy, 1984, p.32).

Through Reagan's words, the *1984 National Strategy* is able to appeal to the patriotic duty of all Americans to "ensure a healthy and productive generation...as [their] contribution for the future" (National Strategy, 1984, p.32). Thus, the implementation of the *1984 National Strategy* is critical in fulfilling this duty.

Both *A Nation at Risk* and the *1984 National Strategy* appeal to American values and patriotic duty as a means of establishing the importance of their respective measures. In both pieces evoke this theme by suggesting that all Americans have a critical role in propelling the best interests of the Nation as a whole. Furthermore, while neither text use appeals to patriotism

as the key component of presenting their respective policies, their use of these appeals is central to defining a common goal for all Americans.

War

Out of the five themes represented in Reagan's speeches, the usage of the theme of "war" bears no similarity between *A Nation at Risk* and the *1984 National Strategy*. In *A Nation at Risk*, the theme of "war" is evoked through figurative language equating the status of education with declared war. For example, the Commission states:

If an unfriendly power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves (National, 1983, p.7).

This passage likens the performance of American schools with "an act of war"—one that we have imposed upon ourselves. The passage develops this metaphor stating that Americans have "been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament" due to the fact that Americans have "dismantled essential support systems" which were responsible for spurring "the gains in student achievement made in the wake of the Sputnik challenge" (National, 1983, p.7). By equating education to war, this metaphor establishes the need for Americans to take action. In addition, by alluding to Sputnik, the need for educational reform is connected to a nationalistic need to establish the United States as a technologically and scientifically advanced society for other Nations to emulate.

Ironically, the "war" that Reagan declares in his speeches, a "crusade" against drug use and trafficking, is not referred to in the *1984 National Strategy*. References to the eradication of drug use and production within the Strategy are concrete, and lack the figurative phrases Reagan uses in his speeches. Nonetheless, the *1984 National Strategy* does establish the legal use of

military resources and personnel to “furnish[...] information and equipment support to civilian law enforcement agencies, providing that such support does not adversely affect military readiness” (National Strategy, 1984, p.53). Through this provision, for example, allows for the use of the Navy and Air Force to “fly[...] surveillance missions to detect drug traffickers offshore in support of the Coast Guard and Customs Service” (National Strategy, 1984, p.53). Thus, this provision elevates Reagan’s crusade against drugs from mere rhetoric to a cause worthy of military action.

CHAPTER 5 - Interpretation of Findings

Significance of Findings

Applying rhetorical analysis, a framework most commonly applied to the humanities, to the realm of social sciences, allows researchers to not only look at how political speeches are constructed, but also how these speeches reflect the political ideologies that guide political practice. When applying rhetorical analysis and discourse theory to Reagan's speeches pertaining to education in his war on drugs, the themes evoked reveal not only forms of persuasive appeals to energize Americans, but also integral elements of his drug policies—elements that while rhetorically successful, proved to have negative consequences for some of the most marginalized groups in the United States.

For example, in his “Remarks at the National Conference on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention in Arlington, Virginia (Aug. 6, 1986),” Reagan states:

A few days ago I called on all Americans not simply to support a government antidrug effort but to be an active part of a crusade against drugs (Reagan, Aug. 6, 1986).

Indeed, in the 11 speeches used in this study, the term “crusade,” not “war,” was the predominant term used to describe Reagan's drug policies. The term “crusade” framed the war on drugs in religious terms, making it a war fought for God and the moral right, not for the sake of political gain. This rhetoric appealed to the values of not only his constituents, social conservatives, but also to Americans that related to the general notions of American values, and to the “strength of the American family.” In fact, this speech was delivered between the time that two polls were taken in June of 1986 and October of 1986 showing that Reagan's approval ratings remained consistent at 67%, the same approval rating he had when he entered office (Cosgrove-Mather, 2004). This suggests that Americans believed in Reagan's actions as well as his words.

However, it is the role of the American people in this crusade that not only defines Reagan's rhetoric, but also provides momentum and support for the other aspects of Reagan's drug policies. The role of the American people in the war on drugs is prevention. Prevention, in turn, is defined in his speeches as well as in *The 1984 National Strategy for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking*, as education. Thus, if according to Reagan's speeches, Americans are the most important component in the war on drugs, and they are to prevent drug use, then the suggestion is that education is the most critical component in Reagan's drug war. Reagan suggests that only they can stop drug use—that is they simply say “no,” the drug problem will fix itself. For example, in his “Remarks at a White House Kickoff Ceremony for National Drug Abuse Education and Prevention Week (Oct. 6, 1986),” Reagan states:

I'm calling on each American to seek every opportunity to educate yourself and others about drug abuse, to be strong in your intolerance of illegal drug use, and firm in your commitment to a drug-free America. We must show our intolerance of illegal drugs. And it's only by being tough that we can be compassionate, that we can reach out to the user and force him to quit using. It's only by being tough that we can say to the potential user: Do not ever start (Reagan, Oct.6, 1986).

This excerpt defines the role of Americans as educators, and that through their collective efforts, they can prevent and eradicate drug use, and thus end the war on drugs.

As a matter of fact, in all of the eleven speeches used in this study, the role of Americans in the war on drugs is defined in terms of prevention by providing and funding services that will teach other Americans, regardless of age, to simply say “No” to drug use. By appealing to Americans' sense of personal and collective responsibility, Reagan's appeal to Americans as educators served two distinct purposes. First, Reagan gave Americans a tangible and important

role in the war on drug—they were the educators of other Americans, preventing and eradicating drug use. Thus, as educators, Americans, and not the government, controlled the future of their communities in the face of the omnipresent evil of drug use. Secondly, by encouraging Americans to take control and assume responsibility as educators, Reagan could effectively lessen the amount of financial support that the federal government gave local governments to fight the war on drugs, while simultaneously asserting the fact that the American people's aims at prevention and treatment were indeed the solution. Indicative of this aim is the fact that 4/5's of Reagan's federal budget for drug eradication efforts were allocated to enforcement, while only 1/5 of the budget was allocated for treatment (Keel, 2008).

Ultimately, while Reagan's rhetoric defined his "crusade" as a battle against the spread of drug use fought through the American people's ability to educate, and thus prevent drug use, it was a war fought through incarceration—through a notion of "tough love" disproportionately aimed at the poor, minorities, and women. The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 proved to be a highly discriminatory, resulting in a 420% increase in incarceration rates for women between 1986 and 1996, despite having little to no involvement in drug operations; and in "74% of those sentenced to prison for drug violations" being African American, despite they only constituted 15% of drug users in the country (Gross, 2008, p.68; American, 2006; Girlfriend Problem, 2005). Furthermore, the poor were also disproportionately affected by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, given the 100-to-1 disparity between crack, and powder cocaine, allowing for longer incarceration time for crack, which is significantly cheaper than powder cocaine, and thus more prevalent amongst poor communities.

Pedagogical Implications

In Jonathan Kozol's "The Human Cost of an Illiterate Society," a chapter from his book *Illiterate Society*, he quotes one of America's founding fathers, James Madison:

A people who mean to be their own governors... must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives. A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both (Kozol, 2003, p.371).

As this quote suggests, a true democracy is dependent on a populous that is informed about the political issues that affect their lives. However, being informed is not enough. Reagan's speeches provide viable information for the American people pertaining to drug use in America.

Nonetheless, simply being informed is not sufficient—the ability to interpret the rhetorical aims of that information is critical to making truly informed decisions. Thus, being an informed citizen also requires Americans to understand how they are persuaded to act, and to what avail. Reagan's speeches were highly effective, not because they informed thoroughly, but rather because they appealed to American's sense of fear, patriotic duty, and personal responsibility in ultimately winning the war on drugs. These themes spoke to America's sense of collective values, and thus played a significant role in propelling a war that, in reality, generated detrimental consequences for some of the most marginalized groups of American society.

If the role of schools is to prepare students to be informed and productive citizens, then teaching students the skills necessary to critically interpret the various rhetorical modes used to persuade them to support policies that may or may not be in their best interest. According to Paulo Freire, in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:

True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity. False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the "rejects of life," to extend

their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so that these hands—whether of individuals or entire peoples—need be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world (Freire, 2000, p.45).

As this passage suggests, the role of education is not to “constrain the fearful” so that they cannot take action on their own, but rather to empower them to “work” towards productive change. Developing rhetorical analysis skills empowers students to “work” —to assume a larger role in the political process because they are able to foresee potential discrepancies between political rhetoric and political action.

Teaching rhetorical analysis requires teachers to depart from a “banking concept” of education, in which teachers “deposit” or inform students without regard to their creative output and interpretation (Freire, 2000, p.72.). This system of teaching reinforces the notion that there is one correct way to internalize information—that knowledge is only attained from authority, and can only be retained through memorization (Freire, 2000, p.71-73). Rather, teaching rhetorical analysis requires students to take a more active approach in gaining knowledge, not only in the classroom, but also in their endeavors outside of the school setting.

The process of teaching rhetorical analysis may differ from teacher to teacher, but certain components must be present. First, students must find issues that are important to them, their communities, families, cultures, etc. This requires a level of exploration that is not conducive to the traditional form of “banking” education. Teachers can allow for this by giving students broad themes for inquiry, and allowing them to derive from these themes more specific topics that they feel passionately about. Teachers may also have to help guide students as they come to define

what matters to them most. For some students, the task of defining what is meaningful to them is difficult; however, with help from a teacher, these students can begin to articulate their beliefs.

In addition, students need to engage with various discursive forms, such as speeches, advertisements, propaganda, and legal documents, in order to derive a more holistic understanding of the issue at stake. For example, given that Reagan's speeches were not given in isolation, it is important to also understand the policies, events, etc. that motivated his speeches. This understanding, thus allows for thorough analysis of themes as they evolve within the texts. Thus, by looking at various discursive forms, students are able to analyze the rhetoric in context.

A third component of rhetorical analysis is the generating of themes that are common among the various discursive forms. In this research, for instance, I defined five central themes that evolved within the selected Reagan speeches. Teachers and students can focus on identifying two themes that are central to the author's argument, and then see how those themes are used to influence the audience. This is critical because the power of rhetoric is contingent on the values, beliefs, and perspectives of the people it is intended to persuade. From these themes, students need to come to an understanding of how the author develops themes in order to persuade, a fourth component of rhetorical analysis. In addition to understanding how these themes appeal to the audience's sense of emotion (pathos), reasoning (logos), and ethics (ethos), students need to deconstruct the author's argument, as well as derive its overall validity in context to other discursive forms.

Table 5.4 offers suggestions of activities, used separately or as one cumulative project, that can be used to help secondary students become proficient in analyzing rhetoric. These activities can be adapted for any content area, but lend themselves to the humanities:

Table 5.1

Activity Suggestions

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Rhetorical Analysis</u> <u>Component Emphasized</u>
<p><u>I-Search Paper:</u> Students complete I-search papers based on themes related to a particular unit. I-search papers ask students to reflect on what they already know about their topic of interest, as well as on the process of gaining new knowledge pertaining to it (metacognition). The final portion of an I-search paper is for them to present the new body of information that they found. This activity helps students not only determine what topics are of interest to them, but also what aspects of that topic spur their curiosity, and thus students can begin to define issues that are meaningful to them. The following web resource provides valuable information on I-search papers.</p> <p>http://depts.gallaudet.edu/englishworks/writing/formatsheet.html</p>	Defining Issues of Importance
<p><u>Primary Source Round-Up:</u> There are several companies that sell primary source kits, such as “Teacher Create Materials” provide teachers with replicas of primary sources to use for instructional purposes. “Primary Source Round-Up” requires students to create one of these “kits” by simply collecting as many primary sources related to a particular topic or issue as possible, and having them create actual kits that other students can peruse. This activity requires students to not only conduct research, but also to look at the various discursive forms used to represent that issue. Teachers can require that students collect a certain number of resources that cover any given number of discursive types (i.e. speeches, advertisements, pamphlets, etc.)</p>	Engaging with Various Discursive Types
<p><u>I Can Connect Activity:</u> Give students a list of 20-40 theme words that they can use to apply to a particular text. Then give each student an article at random. Have each student apply, and</p>	Theme Exploration

<p>explain how the article evokes 2-3 of the themes on the list.</p> <p>After the students have done this step, have them write a reflective response as to how one of those themes relates to their own life. Highlight to the students that even though they may not directly relate to the article, they can relate to the issue on a thematic level. If the students had completed the “Primary Source Round-up,” students could do the same activity with a kit created by a fellow student.</p>	
<p><u>Um, Not Exactly: Fallacies in Persuasive Texts:</u></p> <p>Have students analyze a text for two key purposes—the persuasive techniques used, and the fallacies in the argument. The first part asks students to look at how the persuasive text is constructed, and in what ways it is effective. Students look at persuasive techniques such as bandwagon, and glittering generalities, as well as to the use of persuasive appeals (logos, pathos, ethos). The second part asks students to identify the fallacies within the argument. The students use this information to write a comprehensive critique of the argument. If the topic is related to the prior activities, students can use the articles collected in the “Primary Source Round-Up” in defending their critique. In addition, students can use other resources to help form their argument.</p> <p>Extension: Students can then use these same techniques to write a speech, advertisement, etc. arguing the opposing viewpoint. Their challenge is to avoid the fallacies made in the original text.</p>	<p>Modes of Persuasion and Validity of Argument</p>

Implications for Future Research

Analyzing the rhetoric used in political discourses enables researchers to gain further insight into how politicians manipulate language in order to gain momentum for their policies. Moreover, rhetorical analysis, when used as a teaching tool, serves the larger educational role of empowering students to read, and think critically. Rhetorical analysis, however, provides a limited view of the political process used to generate public policy. Thus the rhetorical analysis of Reagan's education and drug policy speeches conducted in this study could serve as a catalyst for further research within the realm of education and drug policy.

While this study focused on the rhetoric used in Reagan's speeches during his presidency, the rhetoric used by other presidents pertaining to drug and education policy could highlight similarities and differences within their respective agendas. Thus, examining how changes in rhetorical patterns over several presidencies correlate to changes in drug policies could provide telling insights into how rhetoric is used to propel those agendas. Furthermore, these findings could be correlated to their respective outcomes to see if the policies promoted by presidential rhetoric yields results in reducing drug use, recidivism rates, etc.

In addition, further investigation on how drug policy affects school climate, curriculum, etc. would provide another perspective on how education is used within drug policy. For educators, this area of research is critical due to the numerous mandates placed upon public schools, without the necessary research to show that these initiatives are truly effective. Furthermore, conducting research into the most effective drug education programs adopted by public schools would give educators a better idea as to how their funds should be invested to ensure that the agendas that they are promoting truly serve their students.

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Appendix A -

Table 5.1
 Characteristics of jail inmates
 United States, 1983, 1989

	1983	1989
Number of jail inmates	223,552	395, 554
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	92.9%	90.5%
Female	7.1	9.5
<u>Race, Hispanic Origin</u>		
White, non-Hispanic	46.4	38.6
Black, non-Hispanic	37.5	41.7
Hispanic	14.3	17.4
Other ¹	1.8	2.3

Source: Adapted from U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Profile of Jail Inmates, 1996*, Special Report NCJ-164620 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, April 1998), p.3 Table adapted by SOURCEBOOK staff.

¹ Includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and other racial groups.

Appendix B -

Table 5.2

Crimes and Crime Rates by Type of Offense: 1980 to 1989

Item and year	Violent Crime				
	Total	Murder ¹	Forcible Rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault
Number of offenses (1,000):					
1980.....	1,345	23	83	566	673
1985.....	1,328	19	88	498	723
1987.....	1,484	20	91	518	855
1988.....	1,566	21	92	543	910
1989.....	1,646	22	95	578	952

Source: Adapted from U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States*, annual. See also <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/02cius.htm> (released 27 October 2003).

¹ Includes nonnegligent manslaughter.

Appendix C -

Table 5.3

Federal prison population, and number and percent sentenced for drug offenses

United States, 1980-1989

	Total sentenced and unsentenced population	Sentence population		
		Total	Drug Offenses	
			Number	Percent of total
1980	24, 252	19,023	4,749	24.9%
1981	26,195	19,765	5,076	25.6
1982	28,133	20,938	5,518	26.3
1983	30,214	26,027	7,201	27.6
1984	32,317	27,622	8,152	29.5
1985	36, 042	27, 623	9,491	34.3
1986	37,542	30,104	11,344	37.7
1987	41,609	33,246	13,897	41.8
1988	41,342	33,758	15,087	44.7
1989	47,568	37,758	18,852	49.9

Note: These data represent inmates housed in Federal Bureau of Prisons facilities; inmates housed in contract facilities are not included.

Source: Adapted from U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons [Online]. Available: <http://www.bop.gov/fact0598.html> [June 4, 2001].