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Protecting the image of a nation: Jim Crow propaganda

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Protecting the Image of a Nation: Jim Crow Propaganda

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Abstract

This project investigates how the United States Information Agency (USIA) functioned as a propaganda machine on behalf of the United States government at the dawn of the Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement. Drawing from literature on propaganda, public relations, and public diplomacy, this thesis connects 20th century American propaganda to its roots in public relations, communication studies, and psychology.

The Civil Rights movement exposed the cultural inertia of white supremacy in America for the world to see while American foreign policy makers sought to crystallize a cultural hegemony fashioned after American political, cultural, and economic systems. Although the cultural and political systems in America were in a state of radical flux as the Cold War and the Civil Rights movements affected one another. Thus, as the voice of America abroad, USIA was pushed to negotiate the psychological and cultural tensions experienced in America for foreign audiences.

Using a discursive constructivist methodology, this study explores how American Cold War propaganda was developed by USIA to tell America's story abroad. By critically examining USIA's actions between 1953-1965 this study explores how USIA framed the image of the American race relations at the nexus of the Cold War and the US Civil Rights Movement. By analyzing propaganda disseminated by USIA regarding civil rights, examining US national security reports, US State Department memos, and supporting national intelligence community documents this project aims to answer the following research questions: RQ 1: How did the USIA frame the American race

relations throughout the Campaign for Truth?, RQ 2: How did USIA bolster US prestige/soft power from 1953-1963?. RQ 3: How did USIA use communication and public relations to effectively mask the ugliness of the Civil Rights Movement?

American propaganda integrated new forms of mass media communications technology with a sophisticated variety of strategies and tactics to manipulate public opinion around the world. Blending traditional message broadcasting with interpersonal forms of advocacy (cultural exchanges) in imaginative campaigns which coopted the Civil Rights Movement to affirm America's strength as a political, moral, and economic leader.

Chapter 1: Image of a Nation: Jim Crow Propaganda

"We must make ourselves known as we really are—not as Communist propaganda pictures us. We must pool our efforts with those of other free peoples in a sustained, intensified program to promote the cause of freedom against the propaganda of slavery. We must make ourselves heard round the world in a Great Campaign of Truth."- President Truman to the American Society of Newspaper Editors (1950)

The quote above captured the ideological motivation spurring political and social tension in the United States during the Cold War era inspiring the "Great Campaign of Truth." A political gamble for cultural hegemony in the geopolitical system. President Truman articulated an implied moral dichotomy between the "freedom" inextricably linked with American democratic capitalism and the "slavery" tethered to Soviet authoritarian communism. In this context, slavery referred to the perceived loss of personal freedom to a totalitarian government dictating how individuals ought to live. Consequently, efforts to control the ideological structure of 20th century modernization accompanied a cultural contest for geopolitical power. This historical period looms in the memory of American citizens as an era marked by nuclear brinkmanship, containment policies, ideological propaganda, and complicated diplomatic engagements between the United States (US) and the Soviet Union (USSR). At the same time, a powerful surge of international decolonization movements facilitated a flux in global power dynamics. This culmination of events catalyzed the development of modern mass media propaganda to influence public opinion in the burgeoning "Free World."

Running parallel to the Cold War, an incendiary Civil Rights Movement spanning approximately 1954-1968 complicates the historical legacy of this period. America's international image was being tainted by international attention to viral news coverage

highlighting violent racial discrimination (Dudziak, 1988, p. 62). Furthermore Dudziak (1988) notes that:

> the focus of American foreign policy at this point was to promote democracy and to 'contain' Communism. However, the international focus on US racial problems signified [that] the image of American democracy was tarnished. (p. 62)

US vulnerability to moral critiques were readily appropriated into Soviet propaganda. According to Hixon (1998) "[t]he propaganda problem in which Americans found themselves most vulnerable in the developing world was racism in the United States," as the Soviets highlighted "discrimination, low pay, unequal justice, and violence against African-Americans" (p. 129). Soviet propaganda campaigns were designed to disrupt the image of the United States government as a global paragon of freedom and equality by brandishing international scrutiny to the Civil Rights Movement.

In fact, just one year after Truman initiated the US Campaign of Truth, the Civil Rights Congress, spearheaded by William L. Patterson and endorsed by Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, submitted a scathing petition to the United Nations subcommittee on human rights titled *We Charge Genocide: The Historic Petition to the United Nations for Relief from a Crime of the United States Government Against the Negro People*. This petition argued that "the object of this genocide, as of all genocide, is the perpetuation of economic and political power by the few through the destruction of political protest by the many" (Civil Rights Congress, 1951, p. 5). Thus, Du Bois' (1900) prophecy that "the world problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line" began to manifest through Cold War geopolitics (Partington, 1977). People of color began leveraging the material conditions of oppression as advocacy tools to shed light upon tyrannical power structures.

Organizing active resistance against racism and white supremacy seized international attention by unveiling generational psychological trauma.

Fear of atomic warfare and nuclear fallout necessitated a "Cold War" to avoid mutually assured destruction by external forces. Although America's domestic racial issue posed a similar threat within. The Cold War between the two great superpowers posed existential questions about how the world should be organized and what moral orders should be followed. The United States responded earnestly to international concerns psychologically through the creation of the Unites States Information Agency (USIA). USIA was created on August 1, 1953, by the President's Reorganization Plan No. 8 (18 F.R. 4542) and Executive Order 10477 to consolidate the US government's information activities into a single program (U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948). Activities formerly carried out by the Department of State's International Information Administration (IIA), Technical Cooperation Administration (TCA), Mutual Security Agency (MSA), and the existing United States Information Service (USIS) were merged into the operations of the new agency. However, USIS maintained its name and became USIA field offices. In a nutshell, almost all of the information related operations of the government were centralized under one organization for wartime efficiency. USIA would be tasked with mediating public perception of American society contrasted with Soviet society.

USIA existed as an independent agency in the executive branch of government that operated under the Department of State's foreign policy guidance. This organization exported American values, culture, and aspirations abroad to cultivate sociological and psychological countermeasures against communist propaganda (Ellul, 1965). American

historian Ibrahim Kendi (2016), noting USIA's peacetime motto to "tell America's story to the world," describes the organization's work as "American foreign public relations" (p. 404). It was driven to identify what "captive people find attractive, boring, theoretical and irritating" in "communist dominated countries" (Perry-Giles, 1994, p. 266). USIA, acting as a public relations agency for the US government, had extensive technical capabilities that it used to manipulate foreign audiences. USIA functioned as a state-sponsored propaganda apparatus which equipped the United States with an instrument to vie for global prestige (Central Intelligence Agency, 1964; Perry-Giles, 1994) and utilized mass communication techniques to captivate the world—in many regards setting the precedent for mass media propaganda in the Information Age.

Problem statement and questions

This project investigates how USIA operated as a Cold War propaganda machine for the US government by critically examining its actions between 1953-1965, and explores how USIA framed the image of the American race relations at the nexus of the Cold War and the US Civil Rights Movement. By investigating content disseminated by USIA regarding civil rights, examining US national security reports, US State Department memos, and supporting national intelligence community documents this project aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1: How did the USIA frame the American race relations throughout the Campaign for Truth?

RQ 2: How did USIA bolster US prestige/soft power from 1953-1963?

RQ 3: How did USIA use communication and public relations to effectively mask the ugliness of the Civil Rights Movement?

It is important to note that the modern study of human communications was sparked after World War I due to advancements in mass media technology and literacy. Subsequently, WWII accelerated the growth of communication disciplines after the world witnessed the creative and destructive power of wartime propaganda (Littlejohn, Foss, & Oetzel, 2017). Consequently, Littlejohn, Foss, & Oetzel (2017) assert that "scholars in the discipline of communication see communication as the organizing element of human life" (p. 6). This project contributes an investigation of American civil rights propaganda from a strategic communications perspective to unpack the human-rights induced crises faced by USIA during the Cold War. History is easily viewed as a series of events marked cleanly on a linear timeline, yet reality is multifaceted, circular and messy. This opening chapter sets the stage for a multilayered historical narrative by first contextualizing the mission and creation of USIA then defining key terms including propaganda, public relations, public diplomacy, and culture.

<u>Setting context</u>

USIA was created in a tumultuous American political environment directed by the Truman Doctrine, which formally declared that the primary goal of US foreign policy was to contain the expansion of the international communist apparatus (Dudziak, 1988). Specifically, the Soviet Union needed to be contained both in terms of 1) territorial expansion beyond the Second World satellite states in eastern Europe and 2) ideological expansion into the "Third World". Though today the term "Third World" is considered a pejorative term its usage during this time was purposeful to signify the relationship between the Western blocs, Soviet blocs and non-aligned powers which were almost exclusively comprised of former European colonies or protectorates in Africa, Asia and

Latin America. Throughout this project the term, "Third World" will be used to signify the symbolic relationships denoted the during time period defined. In regard to halting ideological expansion, Osgood (2006) contends that:

> the term 'containment' is misleading because it connotes passivity and implies a reactionary response to external stimulus. [While] in practice US operations abroad comprised a proactive effort to preserve and extend American power by manipulating political, economic and cultural developments in other societies.
> (p.106)

Extending American power abroad required bolstering American prestige because, according to the Psychological Strategy Board (1953), "the most that a nation can aspire to and should aspire to in international relations is healthy respect" (p. 1481). This respect depends on public perception which is never completely static. Consequently, the Truman doctrine demonized thoughts and ideas perceived to be aligned with communism. In effect, this policy meant that US containment enabled international policing and censorship of liberal movements advocating for social justice reforms (Dudziak, 1988). Thus, reality was projected onto a stark black and white moral framework. In this worldview, the United States was just, noble, and good while the Soviet Union was unjust, ignoble, and evil. This framework created a dangerous pretense that the United States was fundamentally a benevolent power however American race relations made this social logic difficult to sustain.

For example, when USIA was introduced to the public, the organization was portrayed as a hub for objective news-like reporting on information connected to US foreign policy objectives without acknowledging its connection to political warfare. This

distinction allowed USIA's information to be contrasted with propaganda from America's enemies. In other words, Americans told the truth, Soviets told lies, creating an axiom designed to validate the moral legitimacy of American propaganda while vilifying Soviet propaganda (Osgood, 2006, p. 92). Commenting on this subtle distinction, the first director of USIA Theodore Striebert admitted

> although our publicly assigned mission does not explicitly point to our role as a weapon of political warfare, the current conflict of interests between the United States and the Soviet Union, in which each seeks its aims by methods other than the use of armed force, constitutes political warfare... The content of our operations–our message–must serve our special political warfare needs as well as our generalized long-term mission directly and concurrently. (USIA Strategic Principles 1954, as cited in Osgood, 2006, p. 92)

This clandestine aspect of USIA enabled the US to challenge Soviet propaganda by highlighting macro-level disparities contributing to societal inequalities. The Soviet Union questioned American cultural ideologies through its propaganda and diplomacy in the international arena. For instance, in 1946 when the United Nations Commission on Human Rights was established, the Soviet Union used its political clout, garnered from rapid post-war industrial developments, to advocate for the creation of the UN sub-commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. According to State Department officials, "this sub-commission was established on the initiative of the USSR, and there is every indication that that country and others will raise questions concerning our domestic problems in this regard" (Dudziak, 1988, p. 94). The domestic problems which posed the greatest moral and existential threat to US national security

were the appalling conditions of race relations, namely because the US touted itself as "a champion and defender of genuine independence movements and in general a progressive influence" (Foreign Relations of The United States, 1952–1954, Report to the President by the President's Committee on International Information Activities). The US government declared itself an advocate for universal freedom to vie for ideological influence and combat Soviet propaganda. However, this "progressive" aspirational truth was juxtaposed with the harsh reality experienced by African Americans fighting to access the universal freedom and human rights guaranteed by the American constitution. In particular, the 14th amendment explicitly states that

> No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. (U.S. Const. amend. XIV)

Although, despite the letter of the Reconstruction era law, the American reality was much more complicated. Thus, the Cold War forced the US to contextualize the Jim Crow ideology to explain the violence generated by its praxis in society. Furthermore, according to Rotter (2013)

> liberation movements in Africa inevitably confronted Americans with their own racial policies and racial attitudes—the persistence of Jim Crow segregation in the southern states, of violence against African-Americans, or racial discrimination in jobs and housing throughout the country. (p.157)

The US recognized that international appeals to the moral superiority of the American ideology, demonstrated by the freedoms it ostensibly granted to US citizens, reeked of

hypocrisy as "second-class" Black citizens were subjugated to systems of White

supremacy, racial bigotry, and legally sanctioned acts of domestic terrorism (e.g.,

Dudziak, 1988, 2000; Grindy, 2008; Kendi, 2016). The Soviets pushed an offensive

propaganda campaign titled "Hate America" which "simultaneously painted the United

States in the harshest and most unflattering terms possible while presenting the Soviet

Union to the rest of the world as a champion for peaceful coexistence" (Krenn, 2017, p.

82). Soviet propaganda painted the US as an agent of Western imperialism while

affirming the Soviet commitment to supporting liberation movements around the world.

thereby highlighting a humanitarian incentive for brotherhood and unity called for by

communism despite the state's oppressive authoritarianism.

Soviet propagandists used every available opportunity to publicize the US' dismal

race relations around the world. By highlighting the US' faults, the Soviets attempted to

strengthen their prestige to the detriment of the American image. The US president's

committee on international information activities (1953) described the Soviets strengths

in portraying themselves on the global stage saying:

> The foreign communist parties have sought, often with much success, to identify
>
> themselves, according to local conditions, as the working-class party, the anti-
>
> imperialistic party or the anti-discrimination party. The Soviet Union has moved
>
> to exploit discontent through its foreign communist apparatus. Its readiness to
>
> create conditions of anarchy as a preliminary to seizing power is in itself an
>
> important advantage in the conflict. (Report to the President by the President's
>
> Committee on International Information Activities)

The final clause is especially important because it implies more about the US's approach to how the conflict with the Soviet s will play out than it says about the USSR's approach. The text puts a positive spin on an incredibly tense report by identifying the opportunity presented by a threatening circumstance. Basically, noting that despite the damage being done to American prestige by the hands of Soviet propagandists this strength can be exploited as a weakness. As a result, the US identified Soviet appeals for "anarchy" and societal agitation as advantageous for drawing a meaningful contrast with American appeals for gradual reformism and integration. Fortifying an image of prosperity and peace had great public appeal. Von Eschen (2004) highlights that "US officials pursued a self-conscious campaign against worldwide criticism of US racism, striving to build cordial relations with new African and Asian states" (p. 4) because the US government felt that ideological "conflict would be played out in the nonaligned and newly emerging nations of the Middle East, Asia and Africa" (p. 7). To put it bluntly, the US government cared about the opinions and attitudes of Third World subjects because the nations they represented were mineral rich, geographically strategic, and perceived as politically susceptible to Soviet influence. The US wanted to stifle the development of diplomatic relationships between the emerging nations and the USSR to halt the flow of valuable natural resources into enemy possession.

In 1948 Congress sanctioned the U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948, more commonly known as the Smith-Mundt Act which enabled the US State Department to use informational and cultural programming as peacetime instruments of foreign policy. This legislative decision had two primary consequences: (1) it prohibited the domestic dissemination of information materials created for foreign audiences, and

(2) provided a mechanism to communicate with/to audiences outside of the borders of the United States (via broadcasting, face-to-face contacts, exchanges, the publishing of books, magazines, and other media of communication and engagement) (U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948).

The Act was meant "to promote a better understanding of the United States in other countries, and to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries" (U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948). USIA, once established, was equipped with an instrument to promote democratic ideals, bolster goodwill towards the US, and tell "America's story to the world" (Government Accounting Office, 1973, p. 1). This motto frames the United States as a benevolent global benefactor in opposition to hostile tyrannical states and ideas. Although the American ideology had its share of oppressive impulses. These impulses were carried out via violent racial prejudice affirming cultural myths of white supremacy. In this context, USIA's "information campaigns" were tailored to refute Soviet claims of American decadence and moral failure; replacing the operational term "propaganda" with the value-neutral term "information" to avoid negative association with Nazi Germany (Government Accounting Office, 1973). Unfortunately, efforts to scatter American propaganda around the world to influence public opinion often took higher priority than cultivating mutual understanding. Fosler-Lussier (2015) notes that, "the short-term aim of combatting Soviet propaganda about the United States meant that broadcasting the American message to other peoples usually seemed more urgent than developing truly mutual cultural exchange" with Third World subjects (p. 4). Mutual cultural exchange suggests a form of engagement where two or more parties interact with respect for

cultural differences. That said, the US often preferred for its cultural tendencies to encroach upon the cultural heritage of its partners to bolster allegiance to the US by any means necessary. The imbalance in USIA's departmental focus is described in the landmark 1972 study on USIA conducted by the Government Accounting Office which stated:

> 'The Campaign of Truth' launched in 1950 by President Truman as a psychological offensive against propaganda disseminated by the USS.R. appeared to digress from the mission of the overseas information program as set forth in the Smith-Mundt Act. In July 1952, the Advisory Commission on Information described the change in the mission of the overseas information program as a shift from an objective portrayal of the United States to one of 'hard-hitting propaganda' (Government Accounting Office, 1973, p. 16)

Convincing skeptical international publics about the benefits of adopting the American way of life required a strong symbolic element to articulate the strengths offered by American capitalist democracy contrasted with Soviet communist totalitarianism. According to Belmonte (2010), campaigns designed by US intelligence officials propagated a carefully constructed cultural narrative of freedom, progress, and abundance as a means of protecting national security. Narratives of freedom and prosperity were bolstered through propaganda campaigns optimized to engender faith in the American Dream.

American attitudes towards race and racism provoked a profound moral dilemma for the international image of the United States in the mid-50s. USIA endeavored to promote a positive image of a tolerant democratic capitalist nation with benign ambitions

to mold other nations in its image. Yet, the United States practiced Jim Crow segregation and withheld full citizenship from its African-American minority. Hence the world witnessed the hypocrisy of a schizophrenic superpower struggling to interpret a chaotic reality. On the one hand America was a land of opportunity and prosperity yet on the other hand these concepts were foreign to a majority of African-Americans and members of the emerging non-white world watched with suspicion (Krenn, 2017, p.83). Juggling this paradox was a major concern to USIA's efforts to influence global public opinion. Consequently, to vie for global prestige, USIA leveraged all elements attributable to American culture, economic strength, scientific and technological advancements to fight the Soviets in the Cold War.

The battle for hearts and minds of mass publics in Free World countries concerned ideological acquiescence to an American metanarrative being spread with missionary zeal. This battle was fought using culture as an ideological weapon to demonstrate the strength of the United States. In so doing, USIA used popular culture to appeal to foreign audiences as a tool to facilitate American cultural hegemony . The United States wanted to reinforce international allegiance from the globalizing world to ensure favorable access to resources, trade partners, and most importantly to suffocate communism by any means necessary. Thus, USIA used all available symbolic cultural resources afforded to express, explain, and interpret who America was to the world while at the same time counteracting Soviet propaganda. In the process, "African-Americans were utilized as living symbols of America's commitment to equality and civil rights" (Krenn, 2006, p.86). With this intention, the explosive Civil Rights Movement's tenacity as an exercise in popular protest against white supremacy was coopted into an American

myth of glory and perpetual progress. Thus, the modern international image of America was co-created with race relations in mind to develop pragmatic relationships with emerging decolonized nations.

Strategically, crafting images mindful of relevant societal factors aids in conjuring positive impressions within the minds of mass audiences. From USIA's perspective containment meant using propaganda to disseminate narratives about the U.S. across the world which would inculcate favorable impressions of America. It is important to reiterate that propaganda is not inherently based upon lies or half-truths (Ellul, 1961). In fact, former deputy director of USIA Thomas Sorenson (1968) noted, "[t]o propagandize means in many minds to lie, to exaggerate, to manipulate, to subvert. So, the U.S. Government employs a euphemism [information program]" (p.3). For the sake of clarity, Sorenson continues noting:

> good propaganda is truthful, the truth–out of context and unexplained–is not
> always good propaganda. It is not good propaganda to tell the world of racial
> disturbances without, at the same time, reciting the steady if unspectacular
> progress toward an integrated society. (p.5)

In the context of race relations, "good propaganda" required providing the necessary context to see America in a positive light, downplaying racism by emphasizing silver linings connected to race relations and the Civil Rights Movement. Great USIA propaganda leveraged all available channels of expression to curate simplified depictions of reality to help mediate conflicting interpretations of events in an increasingly complicated world. Through repetition, American integration propaganda sought to gain medium to long-term influences over popular belief systems and reinforcing

anticommunist ideologies (Ellul, 1962). This version of reality builds on USIA trend-based logic which contends that progress towards equality for all Americans was forthcoming; African-Americans and international audiences just needed to wait and see. Fortunately, USIA made sure that international audiences would literally see this vision through pamphlets, posters, television, film, and cultural initiatives, often referred to as public diplomacy.

USIA established a vast network of contacts including executives from Hollywood, the Advertising Council, the Museum of Modern Art, and MIT's social science department among other institutions in addition to key artists, athletes, writers, and public intellectuals (Von Eschen, 2004). All of these connections would play a part in a semi-synchronized effort to herald the United States as an exemplary nation for the world to mimic. Countering Soviet peace propaganda compelled a comprehensive assault to reclaim the "good words" for influencing international minds (Sorenson, 1968). Thus, in an innovative series of actions, the American propaganda machine explored alternative cultural and intellectual products from the United States to bolster goodwill towards the United States.

Of course, cultivating a favorable image on the world stage required strategic posturing. USIA recognized that making impactful impressions on the hearts and minds of audiences around the world necessitated sound social scientific research to revolutionize technological processes for influencing public thoughts and perceptions. To accomplish this goal, USIA focused on five core strategic organizational competencies that were applied to its broad strategic effort. According to Cull (2008) these competencies were

1) listening: research, analysis, and the feedback of that information into the policy

– process, 2) advocacy; the creation and dissemination of information materials to

build understanding of policy, issue or facet of life of significance to the actor, 3)

cultural diplomacy; the dissemination of cultural practices as a mechanism to

promote the interests of the actor, 4) exchange diplomacy: the exchange of persons

with another actor for mutual advantage and 5) international broadcasting. (p. xv)

Each of these components were honed to rival the purported $2 billion propaganda

machine that Eisenhower believed Moscow financed (Cull, 2008, p. 126). Congressional

appropriations for USIA during the early post-war years fluctuated drastically between

$86 and $125 million dollars annually as the organization struggled to get consistent

funding. USIA was routinely misunderstood because according to Sorenson (1965),

"[USIA] is reluctant to be explicit about their victories … Thus when the Agency goes to

Congress each year for money, it cannot in open hearings claim many specific

accomplishments" (p. 75). Consequently, programs went underfunded unless they were

connected to psychological warfare against the Soviets. Appeasing hawkish members of

Congress played an instrumental role in fortifying USIA's operational budget (Cull,

2008b). Although the severe lack of comparable funding to the Soviet Union primed

USIA to rapidly innovate cost-efficient influence techniques.

Enhancing America's global image required tact and finesse so as to contextualize

the nation favorably. Yet, disseminating messages praising the merits of democratic

capitalism were complicated by a domestic political and cultural revolution actively

challenging the United States to practice what it preached. USIA's key message about

race emphasized the "great progress" of the "Negro race" toward full participation in

American life (National Security Council, 1955). Although, American democratic

discrimination painted a sordid picture for foreign eyes.

<u>USIA Operations</u>

USIA's propaganda campaigns incorporated research on sociological, psychological, and

cultural trends into their action planning and strategy building, and, after implementing

the campaigns, evaluated the impact generated by their effort. Propagandists and strategic

communications experts tailored content to mold positive stereotypes of America through

the process of telling America's Story to the world. The US was motivated to use culture

to facilitate American hegemony because the battle over words, ideas, and images

demanded popular symbols. Appeals to indirect imperial authority through culture is

subtle and have the potential to affect public opinion via subconscious faculties. This

indirect form of warfare allowed the Cold War to remain primarily on a psychological

level since the conflict needed to be mediated without triggering a nuclear apocalypse.

The acting national security directive (NSC 10/2) was framed as a retaliatory

response to the "vicious covert activities of the USSR and communist China and the

governments, parties and groups dominated by them (hereinafter collectively referred to

as 'International Communism'" (Office of the Historian, n.d., p. 746). As a defense

mechanism, USIA's retaliatory response was to determine how to best craft America's

story. USIA cultural and informational agents were sent around the globe to collect

psychological, political, and cultural information valuable for a general war effort against

communist ideas. Defeating communism required figuring out what images and ideas

motivated people in different cultural contexts. With this intelligence collected, USIA

agents could then create culturally sensitive messages to enhance US prestige. USIA

primarily focused intelligence-gathering efforts on "Free World" or non-Communist audiences. In the beginning, USIA's propaganda expressed the following objectives:

> (1) US aims of uniting and strengthening the Free World and reducing the communist threat without war; (2) exposing and combatting communist colonialism; (3) developing and broadening peaceful uses of atomic energy and (4) seeking to convince other peoples that the US stands and works for peace. (National Security Council, 1955, p. 529)

As such, newsworthy events were exploited to manipulate the image of the United States in ways which supported a narrative of inevitable progress and positive societal development. USIA narratives emphasized positive societal progress to portray an optimistic perspective of American society.

Creating an optimistic view of the United States fit a Cold War imperative outlined in the 1953 Report to the President by the President's Committee on International Information Activities which opens by acknowledging that US policies are informed by the assumption that the Soviets are pursuing "world domination" (President's Committee on International Information Activities, 1953, p. 1795). In a contest where adversaries become ruthless, all becomes fair. Since the Soviets sought domination, the US was justified to retaliate with full strength. Following this logic, USIA adopted a bifurcated framework of the world where either you were with the US or you were against the US. This dichotomy enabled USIA to attribute propaganda to sources other than itself which allowed USIA to act with plausible deniability of political and cultural subversion while implementing the organizational model listed in figure 1 (President's Committee on International Information Activities, 1953, p. 1842).
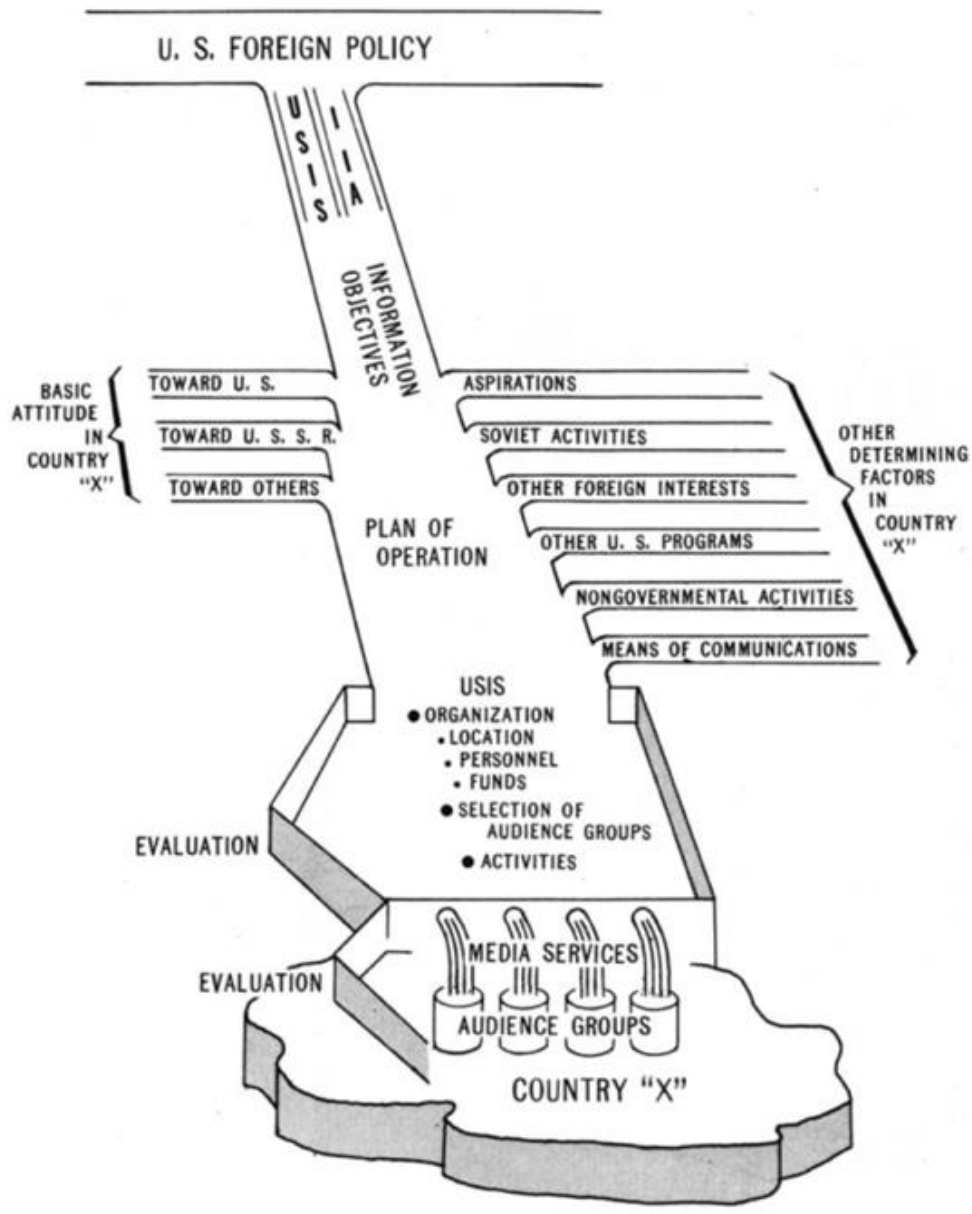
Figure 1. The flow of information into "Country X." *IIA: International Information Administration Program*, Department of State Publication 4939 (1953), 8.

This model of USIA's fieldwork is graphically illustrated to inform foreign information activities. In this figure, a reservoir represents the proposed one-way flow of information to bolster US foreign policy initiatives and cultivate a favorable image of the United States. The audiences in "Country X" are represented as vessels waiting to receive "water" from the US, the water representing the USIA's efforts to mitigate adverse influence from Soviet propaganda. The "flow of information into Country X" implies that in any given targeted country USIA aims to influence individuals through the filtering of key information for designated audience groups via varied media channels. This infographic positions USIA messages as psychological tools wielded to control attitudes, attributions, and stereotypes about the US. Since USIA's information objectives were informed by US national security reports, Communism and socialist ideologies were identified as the primary threat to national security. As a result, USIA was given an effective mandate to create programs and activities that utilized available information on target audiences to influence attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. The figure leaves much to be explained regarding how public opinion was evaluated or how the processes involved in engaging foreign publics. However, it is clear that within the Crusade for Freedom/Campaign for Truth, USIA used all available means to exert influence upon international audiences, especially if this meant that undermining the legitimacy of geopolitical adversaries. Crippling oppositional movements in the Cold War required the total exploitation of mass media and legitimized the use of psychological warfare.

Although a central concern shared especially by non-Western audiences involved American attitudes regarding race relations. In their operations, USIA had to address concerns shared especially by non-Western audiences about American Jim Crow race

relations, relations were exacerbated by the legacy of US government sanctioned slavery in the 19th century, subsequent draconian race laws and policies in the 20th century and complicit stances on 20th century European colonial power structures in Asia and Africa. Ironically, to positively portray the US as a socially progressive society, USIA strategically crafted narratives that emphasized hope for progress in US race relations. Diplomatic historian Dudziak (2000) notes the American government's foreign policy argument articulated that "democracy, not totalitarian forms of government … provided a context that made [racial] reconciliation and redemption possible" (p. 49). This context relied upon narratives stressing progressive policies and attitudes cultivated in American society. Portraying a progressive narrative of peace and diversity became a hallmark of global propaganda in the wake of WWII as geopolitical power dynamics fluctuated dramatically and anticolonial political movements across Asia and Africa usurped western European settler-colonial governance structures. The United States and the USSR both emerged from the war as premier international superpowers. Describing the global political shift during this period, Mabrey III (2009) asserts that:

> The dissolution of colonialist hegemony radically altered the geopolitical world after World War II. New nation states emerged that were once under the yoke of colonial powers. These states no longer relied on or were forced to answer to colonialist powers. The newly formed post-colonial states helped transition the meaning of the Third World away from an excluded internal population toward a nation-state focus. (p. 45)

New nation states catalyzed new political alliances and partnerships. Consequently, with two dominant superpowers contesting for ideological supremacy, sovereign nations in the

Third World were caught in an ideological crossfire. Eastern and Western political blocs vied for strategic geopolitical alliances with new coming states. However, numerous nations in the Third World rallied behind a foreign policy of strategic non-alignment. Fearful of the consequences of one hegemonic power taking control of the fledgling globalized world, the non-aligned movement "aimed to preserve the neutrality and freedom of maneuver of those states disinclined, for practical or moral reasons, to choose sides in the East-West struggle" (McMahon, 2013, p. 6). The trend towards non-alignment was perceived as a threat to US national security and became a primary target of USIA propaganda. Organized political movements with large followings possess the potential to disorganize orderly black and white political structures and sway the world order towards chaos. This framing of reality believed in a monstrous mythologized Soviet Union with ambitions of installing global slavery. Considering the growing importance of the United Nations as the most prestigious forum for multinational congregations to collaborate and express grievances, non-alignment was regarded as a Soviet plot to undermine American authority on the international stage. USIA endeavored to influence the perception of information concerning the US which forced the agency to evaluate the conditions of race relations for nations pursuing non-alignment. Prestige supports the structure of mythologized beliefs and Jim Crow America wanted the non-aligned world to believe in the integrity of its moral leadership. In effect, providing a curated narrative to frame, structure and bias reality.

Defining key terms

What is Propaganda?

Throughout this project I use the term propaganda to describe "the conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses" (Bernays, 1928, p. 37). This conceptualization of propaganda was invented by Edward Bernays, arguably America's foremost propaganda expert. Propaganda is a frequently misunderstood faculty of human civilizations. Often viewed with disdain and regarded with apprehension especially in Western democracies where propaganda is regularly associated with authoritarian regimes, propaganda is a tool which can be used for prosocial and antisocial ends. Propaganda should not be perceived as an inherently evil, rather propaganda should be understood as an intricate device for influencing public opinion. When framed as a sociological tool characteristic of civilizations, holistic discourse understands propaganda as a multifaceted, value-neutral instrument of influence, latent within society. Once the instrument is used it takes on the values of the propagandist. Furthermore, the applications of propaganda are infinite because propaganda is "tied to realities" which are subjectively constructed (Ellul, 1965, p. 20).

For the purposes of this project, mass-media propaganda is defined as a value-neutral instrument designed to "arouse an active and mythical belief" (Ellul, 1965, p.25). Ellul's argument contends that whereas pre-20th century was concerned with installing beliefs, ideas and opinions through orthodoxy, post-20th century propaganda concerns provoking actions through orthopraxy. Alongside innovations in mass media technology, propaganda has also evolved to target the "organized habits of groups" a distinction both subtle and powerful (Bernays, 1928, p. 1). While respecting the significance of attitudes, beliefs, and opinions, modern propaganda leverages technologies of communication to manipulate societal beliefs, biases, and interpretations of reality. Ellul (1965) contends

that propaganda is a sociological phenomenon leveraged by people to create "organized

myths" that "furnish [individuals] with a complete system for explaining the world"

(p.11). Thus, propaganda functions to control which mental frameworks should be used

to understand current and historical events, thereby dominating the narratives that govern

societal action.

There are numerous works dedicated to exploring the innerworkings of

propaganda, according to van Dijk (2006) propaganda is as an instrument of influence

used to persuade audiences to conduct themselves in accordance with the interests of the

propagandist. Ozman & Yazici Yakin (2012) contend that propaganda is "the deliberate

attempt to manipulate the perceptions of the targeted/created audience regarding an idea,

an issue or a group in accordance with the interests of the propagandist through the use of

words, images and speech" (p. 585). Consequently, in the context of psychological

warfare, state propaganda efforts function as discursive expressions of foreign policy"

framing ideas, values, beliefs and attitudes into narratives alongside simplified political

agendas as evidenced by the staunch anti-communism rhetoric of USIA's international

efforts.

Propaganda concerns how reality is understood and attempts to enforce

hegemonic power over narratives despite the supposed value-neutralness described

above. Modern propaganda takes this concern and uses available media channels to

achieve the propagandists goals. This element of propaganda is built upon the

psychological concept of framing which is a fundamental building block for strategic

communication. Connecting psychological triggers associated with particular words,

phrases, and images to optimize message design for strong emotional responses. As a

result, propaganda campaigns conduct primary research about target populations to gauge: 1) what themes/images are salient and 2) how to frame messages for target audiences. Communication scholar Goffman (1974), describes framing as: "the definition of a situation . . . built up in accordance with principles of organization that govern events—at least social ones—and our subjective involvement in them" (p. 10). Subjective webs of meaning help socially construct reality and provide a basis for shared interpretations of events. These shared interpretations become "common sense" and influence the perception of situations. Therefore, propaganda provides context for individuals to understand information through a three-step process, "locate, perceive and label" (Goffman, 1974, p. 21). Once a situation is defined, reference points are identified creating imaginary boundaries around concepts. After socially constructed boundaries are identified by propagandists then messages are crafted to locate specific words, framed in a particular context relative to a specific worldview, and then evaluated to ascribe a moral quality.

In the case of USIA, a psychological war was being waged to imprint a "schemata of interpretation" in the minds of targeted publics (Goffman, 1974, p.15). In other words, a collection of stereotypes is suggested for publics to rely upon to understand and respond to events. Building on Goffman's theory, Hallahan (1999) notes that the framing process "operates by biasing the cognitive processing of information by individuals" (p. 208). Furthermore Hallahan (1999) establishes that:

> *a frame* limits or defines the message's meaning by shaping the inferences that
>
> individuals make about the message. Frames reflect judgments made by message

creators *or framers.* Some frames represent alternative valancing of information.

(p. 207)

In other words, when propagating a positive image of the United States, USIA needed to compile a collection of favorable stereotypes about America. This collection of stereotypes would socially construct a worldview enabling its adopters to make sense of the world. Worldviews influence how individuals and groups interact with others by providing a strategic suggestion for its audiences to take. By outlining organizational goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics, USIA determined what content it wanted its publics to focus on to build a narrative which strategically favored American interests and goals. Ergo, "the mechanism by which ideas are disseminated on a large scale is propaganda, in a broad sense of an organized effort to spread a particular belief or doctrine" (Bernays, 1928, p.48). Determining which information should be presented and where emphasis should be placed both constitute primary challenges to powerful storytelling which is exactly what USIA aimed to accomplish. Developing compelling narratives aimed to influence attitudes and behaviors of target audiences required USIA to fashion key messages, themes, and ideas to tell compelling stories. Hallahan (1999) argues that storytelling is the most complex form of framing and that it functions by "(a) selecting key themes or ideas that are the focus of the message and (b) incorporating a variety of storytelling or narrative techniques that support that theme" (p. 207). Recognizing the challenge of effective storytelling, USIA developed a robust strategic communication hub to build the capacity required to aggregate global information linked to themes, ideas, and narrative techniques (General Accounting Office, 1972, p. 1).

Today, contemporary strategic communication guides from the NATO intelligence community build from USIA's blueprint prioritizing impactful storytelling and aligning terminology used by NATO members (Bliss, Smith, Eaton, & Ridgway, 2013, p. 53). Choosing specialized language helps to reduce ambiguity and minimizes the potential for misunderstandings among NATO agencies. NATO's 2019 strategic communications guide distinguishes stories which are "a temporally, spatially, and causally connected sequence of events") from narratives which describe "morals drawn from stories" (Bolt & Haiden, 2019, p.54). This guide was made in an effort to shift from the descriptive language circulating in NATO discourse to more prescriptive language to justify the narratives generated by NATO members a prime being the Marshall Plan which combined "liberal economic ideals with economic aid and cultural/political appeal of American 'way of life', which stood in stark contrast to planned economy Soviet Communism and political oppression" (p.46). This modern guide to language usage amongst NATO reifies the logic of global peacekeeping through American hegemony and privileges the role of governmental narratives, storytelling and propaganda.

<u>What is Public Relations?</u>

USIA's operations created both overt and opaque propaganda for international audiences and one component of its strategy involved public relations which refers to the conscious effort of an organization to influence the attitudes and behaviors of relevant key publics (Grunig, 1993). This pursuit involves framing information to support organizational goals to support an integral relationship management component. According to communication theorist James Grunig (1993), "modern governments and other international organizations thus find themselves using public relations strategies as

they conduct what political scientists have called public diplomacy" (p. 141). In Grunig's view, public diplomacy utilizes the tools from the public relations toolbox to accommodate US foreign policy initiatives (General Accounting Office, 1972; Sun, 2008).

This thesis ascribes value to Grunig's (1993) four basic models of international public relations; 1) press agentry model geared solely towards generating publicity, 2) public information model which disseminates "relatively objective information" through mass media communication, 3) two-way asymmetrical model which "uses social science research to identify attitudes and to develop messages that appeal to those attitudes which persuade publics to behave as the organization wants" and 4) two-way symmetrical model operates as the most ethical model building upon the other models while using communication to "improve understanding with strategic publics" (p. 144). These models are laid out in an evolutionary hierarchy moving towards two-way symmetrical relationships as the ideal form of public relations. Although Grunig (1993) notes,

> the asymmetrical models can be practiced ethically … practitioners must be able
> to confirm that the organization knows what consequences are best for both the
> organization and the public – and the public does not – and that it is right to
> resolve the conflict by changing the public alone and not the organization. (p.146)

In an ethical asymmetrical model, the organization is assumed to possess better intelligence than the public therefore the organization knows what is best for all parties involved. It important to acknowledge the ethical assumptions made by Grunig (1993) as he exemplifies the orthodoxy in public relations and reflects on the history of the discipline. Furthermore, USIA subscribed to Gruning's assumption that propaganda

follows a similar evolutionary hierarchy adapting to the circumstances of a historical context.

This logic echoes the sentiments of Edward Bernays, the father of modern public relations who headed the National Committee for Adequate US Overseas Information Program, a non-partisan group advocating for an information program that was "a powerful offensive and defensive weapon for our nation and vital to our national strength" (Herrmann, Markiw, & Sullinger, n.d., p.15). Bernays argues that social engineering is a necessity for functional governance in a democratic society which helped inspired the ethos of USIA propaganda operations (Bernays, 1947). Although, Bernays' theories of propaganda possess a profoundly pessimistic bias concerning the decision-making abilities of large groups in democratic societies. Bernays fundamentally assumes that mass publics are stupid, and incapable of processing complicated information due to herd-like primal instincts to react impulsively to signals generated by the movements of large groups. Such is the case especially in large democratic republics where the people are sovereign and public opinion equals political power. In my opinion this notion undervalues the character of human beings and collectives. Entertaining Bernays pessimism ultimately transforms people into objects which should be manipulated and exploited to control an inherent psychological vulnerability. As a result, he articulated the function of public relations as the "engineering of consent" to allow an elite "invisible government" to shape the perception of unintelligent masses thereby enabling a "smoothly functioning society" (Bernays, 1928). In the geopolitical context of the Cold War, US government executives determined that psychological warfare is "not a field of endeavor separable from the main body of diplomatic, economic, and military measures

by which the United States seeks to achieve its national objectives. It is an ingredient of such measures" (Jackson Committee, 1953a, p. 1797). Furthermore, according to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1953 "psychological warfare comprises the planned use of propaganda and related informational measures designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, and behavior of enemy or other foreign groups in such a way as to support the accomplishment of national policies and aims, or a military mission." (Linebarger, 2015, p.315). Consequently, the larger goals of US foreign policy and USIA constituted a complex operation requiring a network of strategic communication activities including public relations. Building trust between nations requires a critical relationship management function and thus USIA assumed responsibility for the information driving diplomacy. Accordingly, propaganda campaigns designed to support foreign policy were mixed interchangeably with advocacy and public relations.

US international relations strategy relied on reports from USIA and Bernays' shepherding bias is laden throughout Cold War American statecraft logic contending that "propaganda should be a flexible instrument of policy. It is a basic misconception to regard it as an independent instrument separate from policy" (Jackson Committee, 1953a, p. 1869). Because in order to create stability USIA needed to protect international audiences from the danger of communism which could manipulate the same psychological vulnerabilities for evil purposes. Thus, initiating a US propaganda machine designed to influence the hearts and minds of international audiences via scientific social engineering. Adapting constantly through audience analysis to optimize propaganda as a mechanism of strategic communication.

What is Public Diplomacy?

Lenczowski (2008) defines public diplomacy as "the art and practice of governments communicating with the people of other countries, [which] is an important component of a comprehensive ideological strategy" (p.17). Lenczowski (2008) further notes how "the US must conduct its public diplomacy with war aims in mind – even though much of the activity will properly have little or nothing to do with war at all" (p. 17). Accordingly, public diplomacy addresses the communications involved in international politics of culture and representation. The exchange of culture and ideas across varied communication mediums fosters community while highlighting a society's poetic, artistic, and cultural contributions to the world. During the Cold War, foreign policy directive NSC 168 addressed US motives for conducting information activities through public diplomacy stating:

> [t]he primary purpose of the information program should be to persuade foreign peoples that it lies in their own interest to take actions which are also consistent with the national objectives of the United States. The goal should be to harmonize wherever possible the personal and national self-interest of foreigners with the national objectives of the United States (President's Committee on International Information Activities, 1953, p.1838).

In 1954, the US State Department began sponsoring the Cultural Presentations Program through the President's Emergency Fund for International Affairs (Fosler-Lussier, 2015). This program initially received $8 million in appropriations from Congress to allow Eisenhower to "meet extraordinary or unusual circumstances arising in the international field" (Eisenhower, 1954). The extraordinary circumstance was a growing need for peacetime propaganda and an information program depended on the curation,

construction, and dissemination of a coherent narrative to frame US domestic and foreign

policy consistently alongside the interests of the foreign audiences being addressed.

Culture was identified as a vehicle that contributes to national narrative-building efforts

because of its mass appeal. According to section 2, point (c) of the congressional

reorganization plan #8 of 1953 which established USIA:

> The Secretary of State shall direct the policy and control the content of a program,
>
> for use abroad, on official United States positions, including interpretations of
>
> current events, identified as official positions by an exclusive descriptive label
>
> (U.S.C.02 Reorganization Plan No. 8 of 1953)

With this one clause from Congress, USIA's interpretations of current events became

matters of fact, if not truth itself. This meant any forms of US propaganda were framed

as declarations of objective truth instead of culturally biased interpretations. Public

diplomacy leverages people-to people exchanges, educational events, and exhibitions as

strategic cultural assets which constitutes forms of "soft power" (Nye, 2004). Power, in

and of itself, becomes political when human organization is concerned (Harris, 1993;

hooks, 1994). Therefore, motivations, intentions, and subsequent consequences linked to

public diplomacy must be regarded with respect to the power-dynamics operating upon

agents engaging in diplomatic systems. Consequently, the narrative-building strategy

used to support USIA public diplomacy initiatives will be investigated to understand

how soft power is leveraged through strategic communication campaigns. USIA

strategies designed to vie for political clout and cultivate favorable relations should be

evaluated within a communicative framework. Hallahan, et al. (2007) discuss the scope

and functions of strategic communication in a post-modern environment and

acknowledge, "[s]trategic communication also includes examining how an organization presents itself in society as a social actor in the creation of public culture and in the discussion of public issues" (p.27). Juxtaposing the dawn of the information age with an American society facing a national identity crisis supplied USIA plenty of work especially regarding race relations.

Contemporary public diplomacy scholars describe how government public diplomacy campaigns have been influenced by theories like soft power, discussing stick-and-carrot incentive strategies to influence international relations (Nye, 2004), international political marketing (Sun, 2008), development communication and nation-building (Dutta-Bergman, 2005). These approaches forward a model of public diplomacy that operates to fulfill a relationship management function. Due to the complexity of international relations, public diplomacy and propaganda cannot be evaluated using traditional political economic calculus. I argue that an approach to examine the value of cultural exchanges facilitated through public diplomacy may be constructively complicated by what Richard & Rudnyckyj (2009) call "affect economy." In their terms, the affect economy paradigm "provide(s) [an] analytical purchase on the connection between economic transformations and affective transactions" (p.58). Language from state department and government officials revolves around the concept of the marketplace of ideas which leverages Capitalist economic reasoning. Such logic encourages a laissez-faire mentality for understanding societal influences on the economic market and business decision-making. However, this same laissez-faire ethos can be extended to belief systems in the socio-political sphere. The thought of ideological domination fueled the terror felt by American and Soviet governments viewing the

other's ideological system as an existential threat. Soft power in this context serves as a social lubricant easing tension between opposing ideological systems.

Critical sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network" (Bourdieu, 1986, pp. 248–249). In my perspective, social capitalization captures the essence of the relationship building strategy facilitated through cultural diplomacy. Cultural ambassadors are often referred to as goodwill ambassadors and I believe that goodwill can be best understood as a form of social capital.

Programs designed to target the "hearts and minds" of foreign audiences interface between systems of narrative logics and affective modes of processing. Effective, public diplomacy advocacy efforts and campaigns are (1) empathetic (2) coherent, (3) possess narrative fidelity, all of which conspire to constructively complicate the image of the United States in a positive way (Adichie, 2009), in addition to being interactive with the cultural frameworks/logics of the intended message recipients.

Thus, while the Cold War was waged to contest words, ideas, and values on the global stage the both the US and the USS.R propagated narratives wherein the opposing nation was a self-interested imperial power which needed to be dismantled (Parry-Giles, 1994). Narratives are created and interpreted through a cultural lens and this fact was a central philosophical tenant for USIA propaganda. Public diplomacy then symbolizes the conscious targeting of international publics in addition to dignitaries to affect international political systems. Consequently, USIA played a vital role in analyzing foreign cultures, values and traditions to enhance strategic communication.

How is Culture Defined?

Culture is an amorphous term with numerous connotations and definitions which are constantly being contested. Thus, this project regards culture as a site of public dispute and examines the use of cultural appeals in USIA propaganda. Former USIA public diplomacy specialist Richard Arendt provides an adept synthesis of culture and diplomacy from the USIA perspective:

> 'Culture' ... denote[s] the complex of factors of mind and values which define a country or group, especially those factors transmitted by the process of intellect, i.e., by ideas. 'Cultural relations' then (and its synonym – at least in the US – 'cultural affairs') means literally the relations between national cultures, those aspects of intellect and education lodged in any society that tend to cross borders and connect with foreign institutions. Cultural relations grow naturally and organically, without government intervention – the transactions of trade and tourism, student flows, communications, book circulation, migration, media access, inter-marriage – millions of daily cross-cultural encounters. If that is correct, cultural diplomacy can only be said to take place when formal diplomats, serving national governments, try to shape and channel this natural flow to advance national interests. (Arendt, 2005 p. 45)

This account provides a helpful context informing of how culture is framed within USIA. In essence, culture can be taken to mean a country's best thoughts and ideas. Furthermore, the concept of culture as described by Arendt connects the concept of cultural exports with the thoughts and values of their creators. Cultural diplomacy functioned as a tool utilized by governments to build strategic relationships with other nation states and foreign citizens by leveraging cultural exports to build connections with

foreign audiences. Cultural exports take numerous forms for USIA including, expositions at world fairs, documentaries, people-to-people exchanges, radio broadcasts, and jazz ambassador tours.

Cultural relations are impacted through social interactions between diplomats, dignitaries, businesses, musicians, artists, students and citizens alike. The exchange between cultural heritages is vital for constructive growth within the international community. In a study researching the communicative mechanisms of public diplomacy, Comer & Bean (2012) argue that engagement with foreign audiences closely resembles persuasive communication aimed at persuading foreign publics to empathize with American policies, rather than being open-ended conversations aimed at giving voice to multiple viewpoints (pp. 216-217). USIA's cultural shows and people-to-people programs facilitated the possibility for open-ended dialogue. Jazz music in particular served as a powerful symbolic representation of American democracy which became emblematic as America's proudest and most distinctive cultural product. As Fosler-Lussier (2015) explains:

> Jazz also gave the State Department a means of shaping perceptions of America's racial problems by programming black, white, and integrated ensembles according to political need. Because the civil rights movement within the United States was drawing attention abroad, the issue of race was nearly omnipresent throughout the planning and execution of the tours. A typical feature of cultural diplomacy is its indirectness. It is difficult to measure any changes in attitude or increases in prestige due specifically to musical performances. Yet calling on African American musicians as cultural diplomats was a more direct strategy.

Because race was omnipresent in critiques of the United States in the foreign

press, sending African Americans abroad offered a rare opportunity for the State

Department to present observable evidence about the achievements of its black

citizens. (p. 19)

Cultural presentation programs enabled jazz artists to symbolically link an American

depiction of universal freedom through rhythms and harmonies when contrasted with the

rigidity of European classical music (Khatiashvili, 2019). Ideas like this transcend

abstraction and provide propaganda with a cultural edge. Marshall Stearns, founder of the

Institute of Jazz Studies, designed the State Departments strategy for presenting jazz

abroad, noted how "a jazz band exemplifies an ideal solution of the increasing conflict

between the individual and the group in modern society" and that jazz therefore

embodied the democratic process in action (Fosler-Lussier, 2015, p. 79). Effectively, jazz

was regarded as a musical style rooted in freedom and openness, consequently, the

cultural presentations program, framed jazz as the face of racially segregated America in

the midst of the Cold War and the swelling Civil Rights Movement. Implicit arguments

designed to progressively bolster post-race narratives were embedded within USIA

propaganda in documentaries, library reading materials, posters, and so on (Krenn, 2017).

These maneuvers bolstered the image of the United States as a progressive integrated

society where conditions for African Americans were lightyears beyond Reconstruction.

<u>Research Area and Critical Orientation</u>

In this study, I use a discursive constructivist methodology to interpret and

explore how American Cold War propaganda was developed by USIA to tell America's

story abroad. The discursive constructivist methodology entails a relativist analytic project positing discourse as

> the medium through which versions of the world are constructed and made urgent or reworked as trivial and irrelevant. For social scientists working with DC the study of discourse becomes the central way of studying mind, social processes, organizations and events as they are continually made live in human affairs (Potter & Hepburn, 2008, p. 1).

American propaganda during the Cold War era integrated new forms of mass media communications technology with a sophisticated variety of strategies and tactics to manipulate public opinion around the world. Blending traditional message broadcasting with interpersonal forms of advocacy (cultural exchanges). Thus, the discursive constructivist approach facilitates an analysis of contextually negotiated cultures, social structures and power relations. Exploring the diffusion of information from USIA helps articulate the paradox between the Jim Crow ideology and the America society espoused international and domestic values while reflecting on the material consequences of Cold War information operations (e.g., psychological warfare, coup d'états). Linking the actions of the USIA with the complex of intelligence gathering agencies operating on behalf of the US executive branch (e.g., CIA, FBI, USIS) complicates the Cold War narrative by acknowledging the explicit propagandistic expressions of US foreign policy. The goal being to agitate the *"clear"* moral and political dichotomy prescribed by the US foreign policy by contesting the production of knowledge.

Telling America's story required sophisticated audience analysis because propaganda leverages subjective meaning-making processes within unique contextual

environments. This notion was expounded by Harvard Political Scientist Joseph Nye's

(2004) "soft power" concept which operates by identifying outcomes generated by public

diplomacy initiatives to establish generic conditions impacting diplomacy. Soft power is

an integral component to Cold War psychological warfare and its study investigates the

invisible forces which exert pressures on public consciousness and reinforce ideologies

and mythologies. Pamment (2014) argues that a singular model of interpreting soft power

must be rejected in order to "question why such institutional ideologies are preferred and

how they find their place within the overarching diplomatic machinery" (p. 54).

Methodologically using Pamment's (2014) interpretative "articulation" theory of

knowledge provides an analytical tool to "understand how profound institutional

pressures serve to discipline, appropriate and rearticulate the ideal categories of public

diplomacy and evaluation to suit pragmatic goals … [and how] the 'zeitgeist' of national

foreign policies utilize soft power and public diplomacy in support of strategic goals, and

within oversight structures" (p. 54). Pamment (2014) notes three strategic benefits to

applying his articulation paradigm,

> (i) encapsulate[s] public diplomacy, soft power and brands as *expressions* of
>
> foreign policy; (ii) communication within a network of interrelated activities such
>
> as other areas of foreign policy; and (iii) the idea that any chosen mode of
>
> communication may be bent or appropriated into being a tool of policy (p. 54).

Approaching this inquiry from a critical orientation enables research that interrogates

systems of control. Following McKerrow (1989), I am investigating control systems to

"unmask or demystify the discourse of power. The aim [being] to understand the

integration of power/knowledge in society [and thereby influence social relations]"

(p.91). Nations are constantly vying for international influence by promoting or contesting popular narratives to describe a complex shared reality and understanding how narratives of the US were supported or challenged will contribute an understanding of the constraints influencing soft power dynamics invoked through public diplomacy. Exploring this research area furthers my professional interests in public diplomacy by examining three multimedia representations of USIA propaganda. First the USIA administered "Unfinished Business" exhibit on race relations at the 1958 World Fair. Second, a 2015 PBS documentary on the Jazz ambassadors to illustrate the context in which the international tours were played. Finally, the 1964 USIA-produced *Nine from Little Rock* documentary.

Consequently, I intend to contribute research analyzing the narrative-building processes employed by the early Cold War American propaganda and foreign policy efforts enacted through USIA. Currently, there is minimal research comparing the narrative building processes used by USIA in communication studies literature. Although, as a postcolonial propaganda scholar I am grappling with the ways in which propaganda is leveraged to crystallize public opinion. Consequently, I believe that the multilayered historical, political and cultural biases informing USIA's propaganda enables an adroit lens for articulating imperial power dynamics between two global superpowers contesting for influence provides rich context for understanding propaganda. The Civil Rights Movement embarrassed the United States' by damaging its image abroad as it incited democratic reforms in the United States. Investigating American Cold War government propaganda as expressions of foreign policy enables a critique of USIA actions as emblematic of the United States' moral and cultural point of view.

Chapter 2: Decolonization across the Third World

"Today this world dwells in a twilight zone between peace and war--a zone we call 'cold war'... Let us talk about the wisdom and skill which we need to prosecute this "cold war" that infects nations around the globe… If we are to prevail in this "cold war" struggle for the minds and wills of humanity, we must do better." -- Dwight D. Eisenhower, October 8, 1952, San Francisco

Beginning in 1953, USIA advanced a preexisting propaganda program installed in 1950 called the "Crusade for Freedom." According to Medhurst (1997), the Crusade for Freedom was a "long-term persuasive campaign that in many ways represent[ed] some of the essential features of Cold War discourse … spanning a period of more than fifteen years, making it one of the longest running campaigns of the Cold War" (p. 646). General Eisenhower informed the American people of The Crusade in an effort to fundraise for a government sponsored organization called Radio Free Europe (RFE) while disguising funding funneled by the CIA (Blum, 2004).

This sponsorship is significant because American Cold War propaganda was synchronized across the US intelligence community, creating a technical propaganda network optimized for disseminating messages to wage psychological warfare. Though Ellul fretted that the American public were largely unaware of the violent ramifications of making democracy the object of American propaganda (1965). Democratic ideals, universal freedom and individual liberties were threatened by subversive ideas from the Soviets. The cultivation of rebellious ideas posed substantial risk to institutions throughout Western liberal democracies. The perceived threat to American political institutions and culture catalyzed the development of a governmental apparatus for psychological warfare which could defend American values and attack threatening institutions. As a result, government propagandists were responsible for interpreting

current events to corroborate an America prisoner's dilemma. According to Medhurst (1997), RFE was disguised when presented to American audiences as a "private, grassroots organization devoted to telling the truth to the captives behind the Iron Curtain" (p. 651). Advertisements created for American audiences described the organization as the invention of patriotic American civilians trying to help spread truthful information to European people. The United States government initiated the world's most advanced propaganda operation to date to exploit the technological value of mass media communications technology, and its potential to control and influence societies. RFE simultaneously broadcasted messages to European audiences identifying itself as an "independent" European information source despite covertly operating on behalf of the US government. RFE marked the beginning of the Crusade for Freedom's psychological operations as the first organized non-military effort to penetrate the Socialist bloc using radio waves. The National Security Council envisioned the battle for hearts and minds as a psychological contest requiring propaganda to socially engineer foreign public opinion. Psychological operations were given euphemisms like public relations, soft power and public diplomacy because each had slightly different connotations. Due to the existential crisis framed by American National Security Council, the Soviet threat "compulsively" warranted "propaganda, economic warfare, direct action, sabotage, subversion and support for guerilla and resistance movements" against any and all forms of Communism worldwide (NSC 68; Marks, 2018, para. 7). The United States saw the existence of the Soviet Union as a threat to "[t]he free society [which] cherishes and protects as fundamental the rights of the minority against the will of a majority, because these rights are the inalienable rights of each and every individual" (NSC 68). In other words, liberal

democracy and capitalism were under siege, provoking a deliberate and aggressive reaction from the United States. As a result, selling the American way of life became the mission of information operations which Ellul would describe as "sociological propaganda" (Ellul, 1965). According to Ellul (1965) American sociological propaganda was designed to integrate other societal collectives into its hegemonic power structure. Specifically, American sociological propaganda would socially engineer world order to match an Imperialist ambition to attain overwhelming influence and control over international affairs by influencing the minds of large target groups to desire allegiance to the United States' authority.

Though RFE was a sibling organization to USIA, their approaches to disseminating information differed even as both conducted radio assaults carrying propaganda of all kinds (music, news, etc.) behind the Iron Curtain to Eastern European countries. USIA's messages were designed to stabilize public support of pro-American political organizations. RFE's messages were designed to destabilize public support of eastern European satellite governments and were not attributed to the United States. According to Medhurst (1997) this campaign provided "(1) a rhetorical response to an interrelated set of exigencies, (2) a strategic discourse that gave practical expression to a newly formulated doctrine of national security and (3) a tactical expression of the long-term strategy for winning the Cold War" (p. 647). Moreover, the psychological operations were primed by the Truman Doctrine which "transformed the US relationship with the USSR from a case-by-case conflict into global confrontation" (Lucas, 1996, p. 282). Accordingly, US propaganda efforts were directed towards fostering a US dominated world. By focusing on the diffusion of capitalist free market economic ideals

throughout the emerging decolonized world in addition to the Soviet satellite states, the US aimed to promote sociological development and modernization based upon conditions favoring American hegemonic power. From the perspective of the United States government, articulating global power into a US-led system was necessary to establish a stable world order post-WWII. If emerging nations did not follow American guidance then they would be susceptible to undue influence from the Soviets pursuing "world domination" thereby leading to violence and disruptions in the international trade of important raw materials, finished goods, political dissonance, among other consequences.

The decision to augment propaganda programs was not made lightly. Eisenhower believed that the US had a moral imperative to conduct psychological warfare to avoid the human and material costs of conventional warfare (Osgood, 2006). Instead of spending $200 million on a single aircraft carrier, numerous psychological operations could be funded for a fraction of the cost (Striebert, 1955, p.557). Thus, psychological warfare enabled the US "to gain a victory without casualties, to win a contest that can quite literally save peace" (Stephen Benedict Papers, Box 4, 8 Oct 52). Contesting Communism pushed USIA's psychological warfare to cultivate a modern "propaganda of integration" to dispel the Soviet inspired "agitation propaganda" (Ellul, 1965). Preserving peace in a global ideological struggle, "the propaganda of integration" is "propaganda of developed nations and characteristic of [their] civilization; in fact, it did not exist before the twentieth century. It is a propaganda of conformity" (Ellul, 1965 p.74). Integration propaganda hones stereotypes and beliefs, manipulating the framing of existing situations (especially crisis) with "aims at stabilizing the social body, at unifying and reinforcing it" (Ellul, 1965, p. 75). Integration propaganda uses objective tone when

reporting on current events to give a normative account of reality for long-term sociological conformity to a status quo. USIA's founding strategic principles articulated the organization's approach to propaganda as a subtle "weapon of political warfare" to counter competing interests from the USSR (Streibert, 1954, p. 1763). Furthermore, USIA's method for influencing public opinion depended upon the perpetuation of "the myth of progress" designed to appeal to the hearts and minds of target audiences. Specifically, USIA details that

> the content of our [USIA] operations—our "message"—must serve our special political warfare needs as well as our generalized long-term mission directly and concurrently … To these ends, a sharply limited number of Global Themes will be developed and will provide the central and authoritative statement of our message for all areas and all media. These themes are not intended to serve as slogans, to be proclaimed as our message, or to be presented primarily as overt or explicit statements. They are statements of the views which we desire to see our audiences hold. In influencing them to hold these views we will most frequently be effective largely through indirection, through allowing the inference to appear as the inevitable conclusion to which audiences are impelled by their own interests, circumstances, and special characteristics. (Streibert, 1954, p. 1771)

Persuasive messages were crafted to optimize the cognitive participation of target audiences. Once USIA created messages which aligned with their global themes the ensuing content was primed to leave lasting impressions upon its audiences. Through indirection, slowly USIA's propaganda messages would hit its target's subconscious faculties to inculcate American cultural assumptions into target public. Aligning with

Bernaysian theories on crowd mentalities, the group subconscious was a malleable mass in need of domination (Bernays, 1928, p.1). Ideally USIA's audiences would recognize their psychological aspirations and desires as strongly aligned with the foreign policy interests of the US. This is important because USIA's propaganda aimed to convince foreign audiences to feel that their desires for modernization, political and cultural freedoms would be fulfilled by aligning with the US. To accomplish this goal, USIA's messages featured narrative elements optimized to cultivate thoughts and strong feelings of anti-Communism into global common sense. In order to accomplish this goal, the first "Global Theme" sought to "Unite the free world in order to reduce the Communist threat without war." (Streibert, 1954, p. 1773). In the beginning of USIA's propaganda campaigns, the "free world" was limited to Asia and Europe, which were "present[ed] as interdependent parts of a whole united in basic interests, to avoid the danger of a two-front psychological war" (Streibert, 1954, p. 1773). USIA was engaged in warfare. The Agency was guided by the idea that American propaganda needs to conquer the minds of the world. USIA emphasized solidarity based upon a framework of shared "legitimate" interests, and values with a "free world entity" to "prevent the growth of neutralist and third-force sentiment" (Streibert, 1954, p. 1773). However, the "free world" took notice of the political reality in the United States where the Civil Rights Movement protested against injustice sustained by the American ideological system. Naturally then USIA's messages of unity forced the organization to craft an American story that would incentivize other nations to join its international coalition against communism. Over time USIA's strategy evolved to accommodate a larger number of "free world" actors as volatile political power structures across the globe disturbed colonial hegemonies. Thus,

the initial "Global Theme" would later be applied throughout European, African, Asian and Latin American contexts. USIA was given a mammoth task to exploit the "myth of perpetual progress" by framing America's story in a context favorable for both foreign and domestic US policies. This era witnessed waves of decolonization and USIA wanted to ensure that the free world understood America's stance on global trends. Though decolonization and civil rights posed different rhetorical problems for USIA. Decolonization posed threats by adding more global actors with whom relationships needed to be articulated. The configuration of international power relations affected ideological morale, valuable markets, resources and cultural prestige. The US wanted to maintain existing alliances with Western European actors while simultaneously building relationships with Third World nations resisting oppression and subjugation. Moreover, America wanted to be the nation that set the global trends and although the US was racially segregated it was attempting to unite the free world against the Soviet Union. American foreign and domestic policies were not coherent on the issue of racism thus the propaganda programs had to juggle mixed messages. On the one hand, USIA fashioned America as a representative of "universal freedom" to influence other nation-states to adopts its cultural values, economic values, political values etc. Highlighting the American values builds upon a key premise of soft power. Although on the other hand, the Civil Rights Movement demonstrated the disparity in the ideological system USIA was exporting. African-American citizens protesting the ills of white supremacy embedded in American culture challenged the status quo by critiquing American values. According to Hayden (2011) "soft power ultimately rests on the assumption that certain qualities can be translated into international influence that do not involve traditional

material components of coercive power behaviors" (p. 35). So, USIA recognized the significance of acknowledging the Civil Rights movement. The trick was to mold the Civil Rights movement into a narrative that could enhance the public perception of American virtues.

US Afro-Asian Foreign Policy

USIA developed content for nations in the Third World while keeping in mind that the US government wanted to maintain "free world" access to the mineral deposits and geographically strategic locations held by the young nations. Free world countries were rhetorically comprised of the First World Western bloc and Third World neutral countries to draw a stark contrast with oppressed countries in the Second World Soviet Bloc. Consequently, USIA prioritized the opinions and attitudes of these subjects as Third World nations began gaining autonomy on the world stage. Cultural diplomacy scholar Von Eschen (2004) acknowledges that "US officials pursued a self-conscious campaign against worldwide criticism of US racism, striving to build cordial relations with new African and Asian states" (p. 4) because the US government felt that ideological "conflict would be played out in the nonaligned and newly emerging nations of the Middle East, Asia and Africa" rather than on the home front (p. 7). As a result, the US waged ideological warfare to bolster prestige on the global stage.

One of the major contingencies threatening US prestige was a trend towards political neutralism (Jackson Committee, 1953b). The 1955 National Intelligence Estimate highlighted the trends threatening an American dominated "Free World" listing "Neutralism" as the chief concern acknowledging,

> One of the most dangerous political trends over the next several years will probably be a further blurring of the lines which have divided the Communist and non-Communist worlds. Many Free World countries embarked on a policy of defensive alliances less because of ideological convictions than because of the danger of general war or [Soviet] Bloc local aggression. The apparent abatement of this danger, if the Bloc persists in a convincing demonstration of peaceful intent, may result in increasing neutralism and a trend toward a greater number of uncommitted states. (Department of State, 1955 p. 144)

This threat assumes that political non-alignment from ideologically diverse countries is an inherently hostile gesture against the American-led Free World. From a strategic foreign policy standpoint, political non-alignment from organized supranational blocs threatened to weaken the American-led global alliance. In other words, if a nation did not align politically with the US then they were inherently opposing the US. Consequently, for USIA, narratives of international relations emphasizing cooperation between ideologically diverse nations were pushed aside in favor of a dual narrative describing a world comprised of either democratic capitalists or totalitarian communists (Department of State, 1955). To illustrate the strategic logic applied to non-aligned nations, the 1953 National Intelligence Estimate report highlighted the following trends:

1) The strategic importance of Tropical Africa arises chiefly from its supply of such materials as uranium, cobalt, diamonds, and columbite; from its location with respect to sea and air lanes in the South Atlantic, Indian Ocean, and Red Sea areas; and from its potential as a site for LOC [Line of Communication], staging, and training facilities.

2) The chief problem in Tropical Africa is that increasing African discontent and demands for self-government, although varying widely in different colonial dependencies, will gradually weaken European control and pose a threat to Western access to Tropical Africa's strategic resources. Over a long period there will almost certainly be an uneven and uneasy transition from colonial to self-rule.

3) Despite the present weakness of the Communists, their influence and numerical strength will increase. As African unrest grows, various African groups are likely to welcome assistance from any quarter. Communist efforts in the long run probably will have greatest effect upon the more advanced Africans—young intellectuals, nationalist activists, and labor group members—to whom Communism might appear as an aid in weakening European control. (US State Department, 1953, National intelligence estimate, p. 72)

Non-European nations were viewed with trepidation in the battle for ideological hegemony over political and cultural systems throughout the free world. The US wants to secure control over the non-European nations since colonial relationships favorable to the US were jeopardized by unrest in the Third World. As a result, USIA crafted narratives about the US that demonstrated moral greatness and economic prosperity to champion progressive American idealism. The typical messages encouraged recipients to think about the success of the American Negro in conjunction with the industrialization of American society. In this tale the American democratic capitalistic system helped downtrodden peoples like the American Negro pursue lasting political, economic and social reforms.

This narrative angle required creating a framework depicting the decline of American racism and white supremacy. Additionally, according to Krenn (1996), American democracy was framed as "a society in [controlled] ferment," and American citizens were to be portrayed as "dynamic, energetic, impatient and restless for change," as well as "committed to a constant, unremitting search for an improved way of life" (p.595). This image illustrated an American society catalyzed by individuals driven towards the pursuit of perpetual progress, wealth, prosperity and opportunity. These pursuits were all supposed to be made available through American constitutional rights. The impetus for change was not limited to government mandates – instead constant demand for change flowing from individuals would transform into democratic coalitions formed to enact the will of the people.

In this narrative, Jim Crow America was absolved of accusations of brutality by framing racial violence as a societal anomaly. Displays of violence were underplayed to suggest that American society was more tolerant than the international media may let on in their reporting. Mass international audiences skeptically watched the conditions of Black Americans as a litmus test to evaluate the strength of the American society. In so doing, global audiences compared American governmental propaganda with the reality described through international news coverage. This argument supported balancing sensational news stories of American social turbulence within a context of progressive growth. This Cold War propaganda strategy effectively aids colorblind, "post-race rhetoric" that deflects societal critiques by way of diversion (Ono, 2010). Displays of violence were regarded as ancient prejudices constantly dwindling in strength. This approach to USIA propaganda accompanied intelligence community forecasts projecting

an international decline in European control and white supremacy if European colonial governments were not able to sufficiently explain the mutually beneficial aspects of colonial relationships. Now the US could position itself as a supporter of independence movements through its acknowledgement that racially based hegemonies were in remission.

Discontentment and faltering European prestige on the world stage gives significance to the framing of the chief problem in the African context furthermore, African appeals for self-governance jeopardized existing corporate and government relations amongst the countries in the Western Free World. This situation resounded across the globe representing a key issue for US relations with Asia and Latin America as well. The threat of Communism justifies the rationale for negatively viewing movements towards self-governance. In a global struggle for power, the intelligence community feared that Africans facing oppression would welcome support from anyone willing to offer such support. Unfortunately for the US, this meant that emerging leaders across Africa might build relationships with the Soviet Union. Since the US and the USSR were opponents in a global clash developing a positive relationship with the Soviet supranational faction would almost undoubtedly stifle existing business and politically organized relationships built between Western powers. The same logic prevailed over US relations with Asia and Latin America. Furthermore, the 1957 National Security Council Report on sub-Saharan Africa supplements the post-race logic at work, by articulating how; "US influence is restricted by the extremely distorted picture Africans have been given concerning the race problem in the United States", the policy guidance continues calling for "emphasiz[ing] US progress in the field of race relations through all available

media" (National Security Council, 1957a). The distorted picture idea suggested that America was not adequately depicted as a progressive society. American was portrayed by the Soviets as a "viciously racist nation, infested with members of the Ku Klux Klan and deserving grave suspicions from people of color" (Krenn, 2006, p.84). Though this image was exaggerated, it held enough truth to encourage cynicism and distrust of America amongst non-European audiences. This is where USIA came into play. By serving as the intermediary for all information activities and US propaganda efforts, USIA worked to put race relations into balance for international audiences with three key aspects to the rhetorical strategy 1) emphasize progress, 2) minimize the harm and 3) frame democracy as redemptive. The new context was meant to suggest that racial disparity in the United States was a minor issue getting better by the day. Moreover, by comparing the societal conditions experienced by the American Negro from the early 1900s to the 1950s, the balanced context suggested that slowly but surely the American democratic system would lead to significant positive gains for race relations. In most cases this meant bolstering a "story of redemption" featuring "democracy as a system of government [that] was the vehicle for national reconciliation" (Dudziak, 2000, p.49). In plain terms, racial disparity needed to be understood within a broader more progressive context. Rearticulating racial violence as a product of social change. For example, in 1957 USIA's strategy for responding to international criticism was described in a memorandum for a staff report for the president:

> As the Soviet propaganda step up their attacks on 'racial terror' in the United
> States following recent developments in Little Rock, USIA media are attempting
> to minimize damage by summarizing anti-integration events on a factual basis,

supplying facts whenever possible to balance adverse sensational items, quoting

editorials and official statements which indicates steady determined progress

toward integration, and informally suggesting to friendly editors possible

constructive treatment. (Dudziak, 2000, p. 142)

In the best-case scenario, emphasizing progress through redemption may be well

intentioned. Although propagating a harmonious image of racial progress to contextualize

Jim Crow America era is disingenuous at best and coercive at worst. Namely, because

minimizing damage generated by monumental events like Little Rock obscures the

structural nature of the problem at hand in favor of highlighting remedies to a few

symptoms of a divisive racial relations.

As the self-proclaimed moral leader of the free world, the US through the

messaging efforts of USIA conveyed convenient truths about the United States through its

work. In order to strengthen the American image abroad, USIA needed to understand the

cultural context it was entering. As a result, the president's Committee on International

Information Activities, informally called the Jackson committee, articulated strategies

used by the Soviets when portraying itself on the global stage,

The foreign communist parties have sought, often with much success, to identify

themselves, according to local conditions, as the working-class party, the anti-

imperialistic party or the anti-discrimination party. The Soviet Union has moved

to exploit discontent through its foreign communist apparatus. Its readiness to

create conditions of anarchy as a preliminary to seizing power is in itself an

important advantage in the conflict. (Report to the President by the President's

Committee on International Information Activities, 1953a, p. 1806)

The foreign communist apparatus loosely refers to left-leaning political parties in foreign countries. Accentuating messages of peaceful intentions, Soviet propagandists wanted to identify with oppressed groups to incite the types of revolutions prophesized by Marx which preceded the development of societal development towards communist utopias and build coalitional strength across the world. Accordingly the Jackson Committee built its assumptions around the premise that the Soviet's real geopolitical motivations were geared towards world domination. USIA content was created to weaken Soviet narratives by refuting the arguments raised with "information" i.e., propaganda to put the record straight while bolstering the American image. Consequently, organized coalitions throughout the Third World that sympathized or embraced socialist political values risked being attacked as anti-American communist movements.

<u>Non-alignment and anticolonial movements</u>

Framing non-alignment as a global threat effectively squashed international non-partisanship. As a result, emerging nations in the Third World were seemingly coerced into a false dichotomy between supporting either Capitalist American Democracy or the Socialist Soviet Union. Political commentary that criticized the United States and government policies designed without the United States consent were framed as threats to US national security. USIA discovered the threats through public opinion polls and focus groups in order to strategically counter harmful messages. Political non-alignment was construed as a Communist movement. As a result, USIA enacted America's foreign policy goals in direct opposition to universal freedom in favor of contingent freedom to support a global structure favoring white supremacy. Meaning that the United States foreign policy sought to prolong an international political system favorable to

exploitative hegemonic relationships. The US wanted to place itself at the head of the world which affected its attitude towards international relations. Since the Soviets rhetorically aligned themselves with politically disenfranchised groups. The US government often conflated nationalism, populism and communism. Movements towards self-governance across the Third World risked the loss of natural resources acquired through Western European colonial exploitation. Commenting on the momentum of African political movements the 1957 National Security Council (NSC) reported that,

> Premature independence would be as harmful to our interests in Africa as would
>
> be a continuation of nineteenth century colonialism, and we must tailor our
>
> policies to the capabilities and needs of each particular area as well as to our over-
>
> all relations with the metropolitan [Western European] power concerned
>
> (National Security Council, 1957a).

So, policy guidance advocated for contingent freedom when considering African interests. Contingent because the US needed to approve of decisions before they were regarded as legitimate. Nineteenth century colonialism needed to be amended for twentieth century conditions. The fear of losing control of valuable resources in Africa was bad enough, however, the fear of losing valuable resources to the Soviet Union was unbearable. Consequently, the end results led to proxy wars fought in Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan to name a few salient conflicts across the Cold War period. USIA's stated objectives, mentioned on page 12, concerned using information activities to build mutually beneficial relationships while dispelling Soviet influence.

Although the leaders of the anticolonial movements throughout the Third World profoundly influenced international relations during the Cold War by advocating for

political non-alignment while reflecting on the operations conducted on behalf of US and Soviet foreign policy. Simultaneously anti-colonial movements inspired a tremendous amount of social activism in the United States from Civil Rights advocates inspiring and being inspired from the appeals to democratic engagement (McMahon, 2013). During the 1950s through the 1960s, the concept of the "Third World" excited many of the leaders pursuing postcolonial relations with the world. The Third World concept aligned a heterogenous group of nations into a coherent bloc which suggested the potential for global solidarity through ideological coalitions against tyranny, racism and white supremacy in any form (Westad, 2013). One of the most notable demonstrations of Third World solidarity occurred at the Bandung Conference of 1955, which brought 29 independent and non-aligned African and Asian countries together to call for "racial solidarity, social justice, and an end to all forms of imperial control" (McMahon, 2013 p. 5). This event was blacklisted by the US State Department due to association with the alarming global trends of "nationalism" and "neutralism" (Walker, 2018) as the US government feared that this conference would feature Afro-Asian leaders lambasting the United States and other Western democracies. Among the countries championing strong trends towards nationalism and neutralism was Britain's Gold Coast colony undergoing dramatic political reformation.

In 1957 the Gold Coast became the first African colony to gain political independence from a European power, ultimately transforming into what is now the Republic of Ghana. This historical moment is significant because under the leadership of anti-colonial advocate, President Kwame Nkrumah, this transfer of political power from a British Commonwealth colony to an independent Republic marked the first of many

experiments for independent African heads of state. In a 1958 speech given in New York City one year after Ghana gained independence, Kwame Nkrumah described the inspiration for Ghanaian non-alignment

> it is not indifference that leads to a policy of non-alignment … it is our belief that international blocs and rivalries exacerbate and do not solve disputes and that we must be free to judge issues on their merits and to look for solutions that are just and peaceful, irrespective of the power involved. We do not wish to be in the position of condoning imperialism or aggression from any quarter (McMahon, 2013, p. 9)

Nkrumah serves as an exemplar for representing the non-alignment movement because his charismatic personality and rhetoric paved the way for his theories on postcolonial and neocolonial international relations. Additionally, Nkrumah wrote extensively and chronicled his experience with USIA's activities describing them as consistent with a "neocolonial project" designed to exploit newly decolonized nations (Nkrumah, 1974). As a proponent of international political non-alignment, Nkrumah feared that the United States had employed psychological warfare on nations practicing political non-alignment from the major political alliances (McMahon, 2013). Hindsight shows that Nkrumah's fears were grounded in the operations of the intelligence community. US propaganda had to tactfully operate with international audiences in a manner optimized to deflate negative attacks from foreign propaganda.

State Department and USIA executives prioritized securing support for foreign policy positions over the cultivation of friendships, noting that "while friendship for the United States may be a useful means of persuasion, it is not in itself a necessary objective

of our propaganda efforts." (USIA, 1953, p.1869). Nkrumah contends that in a world with nuclear weapons, seeking to deter total war, economic and cultural relationships between nations gain greater significance as instruments of control in neocolonial power structures (Nkrumah, 1974). His argument assumes that economic relationships are impacted through trade and sanctions, although prestige and cultural relationships are influenced by public opinion by the biases within information circulating throughout a society (e.g. radio broadcasts, libraries, music). Thus, to vie for advantageous cultural and economic relations, nations will steadily increase their usage of propaganda as a mechanism of foreign political and cultural manipulation, especially in a technologically advanced world with greater ability to disseminate information widely and evaluate public.

Nkrumah contends that hegemonic powers depend upon propaganda as a means of perpetuating existing power structures by exerting pressure via political warfare. For example, if the US didn't favor government it might destabilize it within, back a coup d'état, flood the public of a country with misinformation or disinformation which could corroborate governmental intervention. So if a nation looked too communist in its political maneuvering then that could warrant American intervention. Consequently, political interference through propaganda became a powerful weapons for statecraft. Nkrumah (1965) viewed the United States as "foremost among the neo-colonialists … which has long exercised its power in Latin America [often in defense of American enterprise]" (p.269). In America's case, hostile targets were individuals or groups perceived as anti-American, communist or socialist because they hindered American cultural and political hegemony. In a landmark 1965 book title *Neocolonialism: The Last*

Stage of Imperialism, Nkrumah describes the political economy of Ghana while condemning Western European nations and the US for pursuing "neocolonial" projects. Nkrumah (1974) contends that

> The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from the outside. (p. ix)

In other words, neocolonialism is a socio-political and economic hegemonic device which describes an exploitative phenomenon in which a nation effectively has second-class sovereignty and "is not master of its own destiny" (Nkrumah, 1974, p. x). This phenomenon is reified through the use of psychological warfare to undermine public faith in government or to reinforce control over narratives in the public sphere. This frontline of the Cold War battles for the hearts and minds of the Third World sanctioned open limited warfare and deliberate attempts to coerce public opinion (McMahon, 2013). For example, Nkrumah (1965) illustrates situations within continental Africa in which the United States restricted both countries' diplomatic relationships to control the flow of information noting,

> The American government backs the United States Information Agency through its direct pressures on developing nations. To ensure its agency a complete *monopoly in propaganda*, for instance many agreements for economic co-operation offered by the US include a demand that Americans be granted preferential rights to disseminate information [barring interference from sources deemed as hostile to the US] (p. 250).

Considering that USIA propaganda was devised as weapon for psychological warfare, it bears importance to understand the organizational procedure used to support US national security imperatives. Non-alignment and anti-colonial political movements worked in tandem challenging systems of oppression across the Third World. USIA labored to persuade non-aligned parties to side with the US to prevent them from being manipulated by the Soviets. US foreign policy was frames in an us versus them binary that eliminated the option of political neutrality.

Development of gray activities

Before executing any operations, USIA directors collaborated with the State Departments' Psychological Strategy Board (PSB), which later became the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB), to determine the organizations' strategic priorities guiding overt and overt operations (Operations Coordinating Board, 1954). According to plans from the PSB,

> America's propaganda program was to become the center for a 'psychological warfare offensive' against the Soviet Union. This offensive would exploit all available propaganda channels to explicate the 'meaning and purposes' of presidential 'initiatives' and 'objectives' in a positive manner. (Parry-Giles, 1994, p. 269)

USIA acted in the interests of American foreign policy, which yearned to slow the growth of International Communism ideologically, economically and militarily (Holly & Patterson, (n.d.), p. 476). To optimize message impact, the policy guidance for USIA included a model which determined that majority of USIA messages should be unattributed unless "attribution is an asset" (Jackson Committee, 1953a, p. 1841).

Therefore, USIA content was designed to be unattributed unless absolutely necessary to leverage the American image through its available channels. USIA information was not anonymous but rather it was attributed to sources other than USIA. Following the active National Security Council's directive on covert operations, USIA's role was defined in relation with the CIA (President's Committee on International Information Activities, 1953). The CIA handled explicitly covert propaganda which directly prompted political subversion, insurrection and resistance. These activities would undermine the image of tolerance the US had built therefore they were done in secret. USIA handled overt propaganda which could be attributed to the US government. The Jackson Committee regarded propaganda as a psychological weapon used to bias international audiences towards a cultural narrative of the world favorable to US foreign policy. To achieve this goal, content was segmented based on identified audience groups to send messages through the most appropriate channels. As a result, information activities were broken into three categories of operations to fulfill the directives of the intelligence community. The categories included "white activities", "gray activities" and "black activities" which were labeled on a greyscale to distinguish good from necessary evils.

Some narratives were outwardly approved by the State Department and thus USIA was comfortable acknowledging and claiming them on the international stage. The first category is comprised of *white activities* which were defined as operations that posed no threat to the image of the United States and were therefore boldly attributed directly to the United States. White activities may report on major pieces of US legislation like Brown v. Board of education to demonstrate the American progress in the area of race relations. The second category is comprised of *gray activities* which are unattributed yet

attributable to the US government. In much the same way that news releases are unattributed but nonetheless attributable to the organizations that produce them. These quasi-covert operations operated in a limbo space to create psychological distance between the messages and their governmental origins to appeal to audiences that are more receptive to information that appears to be coming from non-official American sources. The OCB (1954) explains the strategic purposes of unattributed yet attributable information by acknowledging,

> The true source [US Government] is not revealed to the target audience. The activity engaged in plausibly appears to emanate from a non-official American source, or an indigenous, non-hostile source, or there may be no attribution Gray is that information whose content is such that the effect will be increased if the hand of the US Government and in some cases any American participation are not revealed. It is simply a means for the US to present viewpoints which are in the interest of US foreign policy, but which will be acceptable or more acceptable to the intended target audience than will an official government statement. (p. 503)

The distinction between content which gray and white can only be understood after acknowledging the final category of American psychological operations, *black activities.* The last type of psychological operations represented the most deceptive information operations and were defined as follows:

> The activity engaged in appears to emanate from a source (government, party, group, organization, person) usually hostile in nature. The interest of the US Government is concealed and the US Government would deny responsibility. The

content may be partially or completely fabricated, but that which is fabricated is
made to appear credible to the target audience. Black activity is also usually
designed to cause embarrassment to the ostensible source or to force the
ostensible source to take action against its will. (OCB, 1954, p. 503)

Notable failed black operations include the Bay of Pigs and the U-2 "weather plane"
incident during the 1960s. For the most part, USIA ran successful black operations
avoiding messy public missteps, and created an impressive blueprint for modern tactical
propaganda. On the other levels, USIA handled content production to accomplish the
following: "creating and exploiting troublesome problems for International Communism"
fracturing relationships between the USSR its allies, "discrediting the prestige and
ideology of International Communism", destabilizing pro-communist political
organizations in the free world, reducing communist influence around the world,
bolstering the mutual interests between US and other nations to "strengthen the
orientation toward the US", and finally to "develop underground resistance and facilitate
covert and guerrilla operations and ensure availability of those forces in the event of war,
including wherever practicable provisions of a base upon which the military may expand
these forces in time of war within acting theaters of operations as well as provision for
stay-behind assets and escape and evasion facilities" in areas threatened by communism
(Office of the Historian, n.d., p. 746).

These goals provided a path to maturity for the young USIA transforming into a
sophisticated instrument of US foreign policy by defining the parameters between white,
gray and black activities. Values associated with "International Communism" were
subject to brutal attacks designed to delegitimize socialist aspirations. Growth in the

"Free World" was only supported if states pledged allegiance to a permanent US-led

Western coalition. In a psychological framework where the US is heralded as the

protector of universal freedom, justice and truth, enemies to the US are also enemies to

global peace. As a result, international relationships between states sympathetic to

communist values and ideas were intentionally stifled to protect American national

security which will be illustrated in the next section.

Gray activities in the Guatemalan Coup D'etat

In 1953 USIA's first major gray activities involved supporting the CIA's plot to

overthrow the first democratically elected Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz.

President Arbenz passed a revolutionary land reform bill, "Decree 900", which

expropriated and redistributed uncultivated land larger than 223 acres from private

landowners to empower poor land laborers to stimulate the agrarian-economy (Holly, &

Patterson, (n.d.), p. xxvi). This land nationalization effort was Arbenz' flagship campaign

proposal. Once enacted the reform impacted 40% of land owned by the American United

Fruit Company (UFC) which had built a virtual empire across Central America building

roads, railroads, communications infrastructure, and ports to sustain its tropical fruit

value chain. Arbenz's decree stated that impacted property owners would be

compensated with the value self-listed on the company's personal tax forms.

This political move threatened UFC's long-term growth so they called upon

public relations expert Edward Bernays to resolve their issue. On behalf of UFC, Bernays

decided to brand Guatemala as a communist satellite state threatening the stability of the

region. This narrative caught the attention of the State Department and the CIA. By

framing the Guatemalan land reform legislation as the first steps towards a totalitarian

government Bernays' leveraged American anti-communist sentiments to shield the business interests of UFC. Subsequently, the National Security Council State Department's authorized the CIA to conduct a psychological and paramilitary campaign (Osgood, 2006). USIA quickly supported its sister agency with "an aggressive information effort, utilizing all available resources to expose and discredit the Arbenz regime as communist dominated and to dramatize the threat Guatemala posed to the peace and security of the hemisphere" (Osgood, 2006, p. 147). Due to the foreign policy of containment, Guatemala quickly went from a little discussed Central American country an anti-American communist threat 2000 miles from the US southern border. While the CIA prepared to oust Arbenz through a coup d'état, USIA used intelligence gathered by its agents plus information from the CIA and the State Department to turn Latin American public opinion against Arbenz. In the months leading up to the coup USIA "prepared more than 200 articles and scripts for press and radio placement, distributed 27,000 anticommunist cartoons and posters and 100,000 copies of the pamphlet 'Chronology of Communism in Guatemala' throughout Latin America" (Osgood, 2006, p. 147). USIA's grey and white activities allowed the CIA, State Department and Congress to exert economic and diplomatic pressure against Arbenz, subvert and/or defect Army and political leaders from Arbenz' administration and stop the flow of military aid to Guatemala while increasing military aid to its neighbors.

This cross-agency initiative was given the codename "PBSuccess." One of the major propaganda ploys devised by the CIA and publicized by USIA involved deliberately planting a seized cache of Soviet weapons in Guatemala while arranging for extensive publicity of the subsequent discovery (Central Intelligence Agency, 1975). The

fabrication of a faux-Soviet arms delivery was aborted due to a coincidental shipment of Polish weapons. In addition,

> The Agency [USIA] cooperated with a task force during the Guatemalan crisis in selecting documentary material, through the cooperation of the new anti-communist government, which was used in the output of the Agency. At the time of, and subsequent to the Guatemalan Revolution, the Agency sent guidances, books, pamphlets, press and radio commentaries and stories to the field to enable field personnel to understand and then publicize the extent of Moscow ties to the Arbenz regime and elsewhere in Latin America (Operations Coordinating Board, 1955, p.108).

Gray activities were meant to legitimize aggressive black activities in the case that they were uncovered. The Guatemalan example demonstrates just one example of the function the gray activities had during the Cold War. Medhurst (1997) elaborated on the application of US gray activities during the Cold War, acknowledging that

> often the public rhetoric was a public relations front for secret, CIA-assisted missions, sometimes of questionable legal and/or moral probity. Focus on the public rhetoric functioned to divert audience attention from such messy covert actions as Iran, Guatemala, and later, in a spectacular case of public failure, the U-2 affair. (p. 659)

USIA was tasked with curbing neutralism and diminishing the strength of communism which encouraged sharp us-versus-them rhetoric. In this framework, the strength and success of the "free world" depended on the failure of the Soviet Union and any nations that adopted socialist political orientations. Therefore, USIA propaganda staunchly

advocated against Communism to highlight the moral significance of taking sides in a clash of global titans. The US perceived a power vacuum forming in the Third World and responded with psychological warfare when threatened. The US government saw allies and foes, leaving no room for neutrality from sovereign nations (Truman, 1950).

It is in this ambivalent and anxious political climate that USIA developed its propaganda and supported the Guatemalan coup d'etat which resulted in the repeal of Arbenz's land reform bill. As evidenced in this scenario, portraying the US in a positive light required casting adversaries in menacing shadows using national security concerns as the justification for regime changes. USIA distorted the truth in its gray activities during the Guatemalan escapade to support offensive CIA operations. Although USIA's propaganda focused on explaining American race relations were prompted as defensive countermeasures against Soviet agitation propaganda shown to foreign audiences. Consequently, USIA's overt Civil Rights propaganda fell into the white activities category which serves a more defensive role for US foreign policy strategy. Within this context of defensive and offensive information activities supporting American psychological warfare campaigns, the remainder of the project will explore how USIA's overt propaganda was used to address race relations and respond to the Civil Rights Movement. To begin unpacking this component of USIA's activities the next section will address USIA's involvement in the 1958 World Fair.

1958 World Fair/Unfinished Business

In 1954, the US government was invited to participate in the 1958 World Fair. The first since the conclusion of WWII, the event was held in Brussels, Belgium. USIA was involved in thematic planning and exhibition development for the US in the years

leading up to the event. The general theme of the exhibition focused on the "importance of man [sic] in a technological world" encapsulated in the slogan "A World View: A New Humanism" (Cullman, 1958, p. 1). The Eisenhower administration acknowledged a relationship between America's race relations and international diplomacy because domestic and international scrutiny over American racism diminished American prestige. Domestically the Civil Rights movement generated outspoken criticisms of American society and American news coverage was filled with racist statements, racial stereotypes and stories about African-Americans being denied voting rights, access to public facilities and horrific accounts of violence. Then externally, international news coverage picked up the same stories and Soviet propaganda often amplified information which embarrassed the American government. American race relations became a diplomatic issue because in the eyes of the world, the condition of African-Americans signified America's commitment to practicing what it preached as the leader of the "free world" (Osgood, 2006, p.84). Thus, the World Fair provided an opportunity to set the record straight. Gathering some of the best elements of American culture, USIA aimed to curate an impactful memorable experience for Fair attendees. The US wanted audiences to feel as if they had been transported to the US (Krenn, 1996, p. 595) and undertook efforts to utilize the American exhibition as a vehicle to deliver the "American way of life" to European audiences (Krenn, 1996, p.592). This way of life entailed fantastic grocery stores filled with abundant produce, showcasing the industrial factories producing goods for the country, farming prowess, artistic and cultural modernity. Chosen exhibits illustrated automotive ingenuity, models of American homes, voting machines, crafts, a bookshop, a children's museum, fine arts, an American restaurant, in addition to performances of

musicals, dramas, operas, and dance programs would be performed (Krenn, 1996). The

venue served as an excellent opportunity to exhibit the strength of American society by

highlighting cultural prowess, industrial ingenuity and America's "commitment to

equality and justice for all human beings, including its African American citizens" (Krenn,

1996, p.592).

USIA expected stiff competition from the Soviets, considering the USSR's

ongoing "peace offensive" campaign which, according to Castillo (2010), "used

international trade fairs to portray Communism as technologically and economically

advanced. Soviet bloc nations staged 60 foreign exhibitions in 1954, and 170 the

following year" (p. 118). All of these exhibitions gave the USSR platforms to hone their

messaging in international fairs so USIA acknowledged Soviets as seasoned veterans

when it came to leveraging trade fairs as propaganda. Knowing this, USIA and the State

Department understood the world fairs as a battleground upon which ideological wars

were fought. There are minimal constraints for the form which propaganda can take. In

fact, Eisenhower acknowledged the clandestine nature of his activities, noting "the hand of

government must be carefully concealed, and in some cases, I should say, wholly

eliminated" when conducting psychological warfare" (Castillo, 2010, p. 118). This

philosophy manifested into a collaboration between the USIA and the US Advertising

Council to create "People's Capitalism", a countermeasure designed to portray the

American capitalist system as the catalyst for fostering a classless, productive, and

prosperous society (National Security Council, 1957b). Describing the American

economic system in this manner strategically helped refute Marxist-Leninist economic

theories. People's Capitalism was featured prominently throughout the American

presentation at the World Fair to articulate how American society socially benefits from capitalism (New York Times, 1956a). Arguing that American neoliberal ideals motivated entrepreneurship and enabled the United States to cultivate a classless society while shifting away from exploitative models of colonial capitalism. The "people's capitalism" message used numerous facets of the Cold War American culture society including post-war economic prosperity, mass-produced housing developments called Levittown's, and increased corporate stock ownership as signs of economic stability as evidence of a benevolent American capitalistic society (Castillo, 2010). The New York Times articulates the premise of people's capitalism as a propaganda framing of American capitalism as a social equalizer (New York Times, 1956b).

Yet the most provocative aspect of the American exhibit at the 1958 World Fair was its Unfinished Business segment which explicitly highlighted three significant American problem areas which addressed urban slums, soil erosion and quite controversially, segregation (Osgood, 2006, p.284). According to Osgood (2006) fair planners felt that previous silence on the race issue would only play into the hands of Soviet propagandists noting one fair architect who wrote,

> [m]aybe the best way to 'handle' Little Rock is not to ignore it and distract the world with gadgets and appliances, maybe the best way is to try to show the miserable events at Little Rock in the long context of the Negro's rise from slavery and his spectacular recent progress (p.284)

The title, Unfinished Business, was inspired by a quote from Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address which "admitted that America is not yet a perfect society but establish the promise that through faith and hard work the problems of man and his environment

can be overcome." (Culman, 1958, p.14). According to Krenn (2006) "the basic premise

… was to show that the United States was strong enough to admit its problems and second

that it was trying to solve them" (p. 87). In other words, the Unfinished Business exhibit

was designed to courageously tackle the American race problem head-on. Beginning with

the slave trade the exhibit candidly acknowledged the oppressive system which brought

African people to the United States. Fast forwarding to the conditions experienced during

the 50s. Since the world was already abreast on the racial tension in the US this strategy

leveraged the widespread public awareness to challenge existing concerns of attendees.

Featuring magnified newspaper prints to illustrate issues related to "desegregation, urban

slums and soil erosion" (Krenn, 1996, p.597). The exhibit was broken up into three

separate rooms. In room one, attendees were shown photographs, newspaper clippings and

captions which acknowledged the issues. The second room showed graphs, models and

displays describing how progress was being made. The final room illustrated the ultimate

goals of American society in relation to soil erosion, urban slums and segregation (the

three issues highlighted) (Krenn, 2006, p.87). In the wake of a poorly controlled crisis in

Little Rock in 1957, the World Fair provided an opportunity to address American race

relations honestly. In the section on segregation, the caption read "not since the Civil War,

which freed him and made him a citizen, has the Negro made such strides toward full

equality as he is making now . . . As a result, the doom of the American caste system is in

sight." (Krenn, 1996, p.598). On the international stage USIA was comfortable using

mythic narratives of hope and progress to quickly acknowledge domestic problems and

recontextualize them to benefit American prestige. Unfinished Business was an

unvarnished effort to portray the United States in an honest and balanced manner. Owning

up to the strengths and weakness of the nation with powerful vulnerably. Demonstrating

an example of the integrity of a democratic nation reconciling its imperfection and desire

for growth. In addition, charts and photos were used to illustrate the increasing numbers

of blacks enrolled in college and voting. Captions described the progress occurring in the

integration of Southern schools and made mention of the increasing black income. Early

viewings of the unfinished business exhibit by European visitors were praised as "a true

sign of America's greatness." (Culman, 1958, p.14). However, indignation from

conservative American politicians quickly led to the halt of the Unfinished Business

exhibit for "renovations" which would transform the exhibit into a forum on American

public health problems. Thus, the most transparent use of American propaganda was

censored to appease domestic congressional discomfort.

  According to Osgood (2006) the fact that the USIA reported on any social

problems at all was a triumph. Acknowledging problems with race relations, urban

poverty amongst other unfavorable aspects of American life strengthened the credibility of

the agency. Osgood (2006) notes that USIA

> put a positive spin on the negative images of the United States. In order to
>
> maintain its message of progress, the USIA always stressed 'trends' in its
>
> propaganda …US propagandists believed the most effective approach to
>
> controversial issues was to acknowledge their existence so as to assure the world
>
> that the problems were being addressed (p.286).

Yet acknowledging that a problem exists and systematically addressing the causes of said

problems are two different things. Telling half-truths is a dangerous strategy for building

relationships with the world. In the process of emphasizing a one-sided positive version of

reality USIA obscured the negative implications for minority populations in the country. Telling an exclusively progressive story without fully grappling with an honest assessment of reality for the sake of propaganda risks warping reality for systems dependent on strong propaganda. Episodes like the Brussels World Fair would set the tone for the organization as it attempted to reconcile the Little Rock crisis in a later documentary produced in 1964 and various other forms of propaganda created at the behest of US foreign policy interests. The Unfinished Business exhibit demonstrated the potential laden in US propaganda when issues were addressed in earnest.

In regard to the Unfinished Business exhibit, race relations were framed within a historical context stretching back to American chattel slave systems. Within this context the contemporary problems faced by African-Americans were significantly better than those of their ancestors and the conditions were improving on a positive trend towards equality. By leveraging international awareness of dismal race relations USIA bolstered US prestige by highlighting American problems directly to demonstrate the strength of the American system. This logic states that a society that is open enough to acknowledge its own issues and publicly state them to the world is deserving of admiration. In effect, the tragic elements of American race relations were spun into positive attributes of a societal progression aided by the US government. This narrative of American race relations innovated overt propaganda on race relations by using white activities to discuss social ills in a manner that recognizes problems because for USIA knowing is half the battle.

Chapter 3: The Kamikaze Band: USIA's Jazz Ambassadors

Technological advances in mass media were harnessed to influence the perception of American society. In practice, centralizing information activities under one agency allowed USIA to maneuver quickly, optimizing organizational capacities for conducting research, producing content and organizing strategic partnerships to enhance America's image abroad. Through the use of television programming, film and radio, USIA disseminated state-of-the-art cultural programing anywhere the United States had access. In so doing, USIA propagandists leveraged new and old media to frame American race relations in flattering ways. One such method involved sending popular jazz ensembles around the world as goodwill ambassadors. This chapter will explore the strategic value of America's Jazz Ambassadors within the context of USIA's civil rights propaganda to investigate how the United States Government co-opted jazz, the music of Black life, to trumpet American virtues around the world.

To tell the story well we must begin by looking at the 2018 PBS documentary *The Jazz Ambassadors* to reflect on the intersection between the Cold War and Civil Rights. Contributing to the discourse exploring how the United States government used American jazz musicians as cultural ambassadors to challenge racially charged propaganda coming from the Soviet Union and to offset the record of American violence. This documentary compiles archival film footage, photos, radio clips, and iconic performances depicting the Dizzy Gillespie, Dave Brubeck and Louis Armstrong's tours across Africa, Europe, and Asia during the first decade of the Cold War. Consequently, I am examining this text because it chronicles the vital intersection between American civil rights propaganda and the Civil Rights Movement. Several salient images and texts

compiled in the National Archives are not available via online databases , but the film

reviews these resources while collaborating with first person participants and prominent

propaganda scholars studying American Cold War propaganda.

USIA was determined to demonstrate to the world that America had

accomplishments in the fields of economic growth, prosperity, military might, political

strength, moral, and technological advancements. Therefore, from a societal standpoint,

the American way of life was far superior to that of the Soviets. From a strategic

standpoint, USIA hoped that audiences around the world would be persuaded by its

messaging efforts and that those audiences would in turn side with American rather than

Soviet interest. Although Soviet propagandists exploited America's racial insecurity by

contesting narratives of progress and change with images of lynchings, neo-Nazi

aggression, and Ku Klux Klansmen as integral forces within Jim Crow America. The

Soviets pointed to systemic issues within American society using images of Klansmen

and lynchings to demonstrate material evidence of flaws in USIA's progressive logic.

Despite frequent exaggeration referenced throughout Soviet propaganda, the messages

aligned with the information on race relations across various news sources. For example

in reference to the crisis in Little Rock, the Soviet news outlet Izvestia noted, "[r]ight not

behind the façade of the so-called 'American democracy' a tragedy is unfolding which

cannot but arouse ire and indignation in the heart of every honest man" (Dudziak, 2000,

p.121). The article from Izvestia went on to say,

> Fascist thugs of the Ku Klux Klan are organizing a savage hunt for Negro
>
> children because the latter planned to sit in the same classroom with white boys
>
> and girls. National Guard soldiers and policemen armed to the teeth barn Negro

children from entering the schools, threaten them with bayonets and tear gas

bombs and encourage hooligans to engage in violence with impunity (Dudziak,

2000, p.121).

Meanwhile, beginning in the mid-50s, Soviet propagandists championed slogans calling

for "peaceful coexistence" across the globe enabling Soviet propaganda to create a

powerful image of harmony (Cull, 2008, p. 126). This image of harmony framed the

Soviet way of life as a tempting counteroffer to the American racism and anti-

communism.

In the wake of news coverage covering the brutal lynching of a 14-year-old Emmett Till

in Money, Mississippi, reports around the world in August of 1955 showcased the

consequences of whistling at a white woman. The iconic images of Till's open casket

illustrated a horrific level of brutality in the United States. The full acquittal of Till's

murderers a few weeks later only added insult to injury. At the same time, the Civil

Rights Movement's non-violent protest campaigns laid the foundation for the

Montgomery Bus Boycott during which Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white

passenger in December of 1955. The international news coverage of these anti-

segregationist episodes and the protests that followed questioned the ability for American

democracy to uphold justice, especially among African and Asian countries (Von Eschen,

2004). USIA messages advanced an international imperative to believe in the merits of a

"benevolent supremacy" (Borstelmann, 2001, p. 86). In other words, America pursued

ideological hegemony to promote prosperity and sustain international order throughout

the Free World. From the intelligence community's perspective, psychological conflict

constituted a sort of "total warfare". According to Osgood (2004)

> [t]he principle of total war – that wars were no longer fought by armies in the
>
> field, but by the entire nation – erased distinctions between the front line and the
>
> home front and made the mobilization of the masses an indispensable feature of
>
> modern conflict (p.1)

Though in 1955 the US had not technically waged war on any nation. The war of ideas

was a powerful metaphor which dominated thought in the American foreign policy

establishment.

As such, the Soviet threat posed a powerful threat to the American psyche not because

American soldiers were being shipped by the thousands overseas to participate in military

conflict. Rather because the American way of life, its institutions, individualism, liberty

and value system writ large were jeopardized by the organizational structure of another

powerful empire. The United States desired allegiance of all nations to ensure the

collapse of Soviet communism However, for this scheme to work, international public

opinion had to be mobilized into an interwoven global superstructure. In propagandistic

terms this meant that the superpowers needed to regiment the minds of foreign audiences

to favor their vision for world order. Now the major international superpowers embraced

propaganda to enhance prestige and thereby contest the illusions necessary for sustaining

order in society (Ellul, 1962).

Bolstering prestige can be accomplished by cultivating goodwill and friendship.

Although in the grander scheme of USIA directors, a prestigious version of reality could

be stereotyped and exported (Sorenson, 1968). The United States recognized that global

hegemony required constant posturing in front of the 20th century news media. Although legalized discrimination on the grounds of race made the United States appear hypocritical. due to a ludicrously sluggish pace towards its avowed aspirations of freedom and equality for all. The Bus Boycotts generated ripples within a larger torrent of active resistance against the corrupt structure of white supremacy in the United States. Moreover, the event brought Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Black freedom movement into the purview of an international gaze. Mass communications strategies honed by USIA utilized radio waves, books, libraries, and documentaries in addition to forms of cultural content to propagate the notion that The Civil Rights Movement was the symbol of American progress towards its true ideals and aspirations. In this vision, the struggle towards Civil Rights for African-American people was an example of the types of reconciliation and positive gradual development which a democratic capitalist system supposedly facilitates. Despite the fact that the spirit of the law should have already granted them equal rights let alone civil rights in the first place.

Convincing emerging nations across Africa and Asia of America's good intentions and bolstering US prestige inherently posed a challenge that required innovative solutions. Jim Crow America reminded many African and Asian nations of colonialism and imperialism (Dudziak, 2000, p. 58). Legalized segregation complicated efforts to say otherwise. Consequently, as radical mechanism to garner goodwill from mostly non-white audiences, USIA leveraged jazz music as a powerful pop culture weapon in USIA's Cold War arsenal. America's action of sending Black musicians in racially integrated bands around the Third World would demonstrate the progressive

aspect of American society while also emphasizing positive African-Americans contributions.

Sending jazz musicians as a form of cultural diplomacy presented a high risk/high reward dilemma. At the time, in American popular culture jazz was regarded as disreputable genre of music with a negative stigma connected to stereotypes about African American culture, namely promiscuity, drugs, and crime (Von Eschen, 2004). Even more so because Jim Crow society struggled to reconcile its attitudes towards African-Americans who were being treated as second-class citizens. However, Adam Clayton Powell, an African-American congressman from Harlem, lobbied Eisenhower and foreign policy officials convincing them that Jazz presented an optimal instrument for American propaganda which could "radically improve America's image in the non-white countries of the world" (Berkeley, 2018). If the American government sent Black artists abroad, it would strategically showcase a symbolic action signifying tolerance and progress in the field of race relations. Eisenhower signed off on the proposal which initiated the State Departments jazz tours overseas. Symbolically the decision to use jazz as an instrument of American propaganda was savvy for a number of reasons.

First, jazz was extremely popular amongst the youth culture throughout numerous non-white countries and especially in the culturally repressed Eastern European satellite states because the USSR banned the import of Western cultural products (Cull, 2008b). Fosler-Lussier (2015) notes how despite an internal bias toward European classical music, USIA cultural analyses found that:

> In the early years of U.S. cultural presentations, feedback from the field radically changed some of the program's premises. The rapid decolonization of states

formerly ruled by Europeans and elites called attention to the power of the

masses: the State Department no longer regarded elite audiences as the only

people worth reaching. At the same time, the embassies sent word that classical

music simply could not attract the socially and economically heterogeneous

audiences the department had begun to seek. In hopes of connecting with these

audiences, officials added jazz, variety shows, and popular music to the classical

music they preferred. (p. 18)

Furthermore, on the international scene, jazz music was regarded as cool, hip, and fresh.

Quoting a report compiled by USIA from 1958 titled "Report on Activities of the

Cultural Presentation Committee," Cull (2008), a historian of public diplomacy, argued

that jazz was "without equal... in appealing to youth groups abroad." (p. 155). Second,

USIA recognized that first person contact with Americans was a tremendously powerful

tool for influence operations. Third, USIA determined that popular African-Americans

could be solicited to serve as a goodwill ambassadors representing their country and

dispelling unfavorable ideas about America through the symbolic power of voluntary

participation. Consequently, public diplomacy was born as an avenue to enhance

relationships with foreign audiences by facilitating exchanges of people. According to

Cull (2008) the term "public diplomacy" was coined in 1956 to describe "a system of

international communication and intercultural relations that become the subject of an

international actor's policy" (p. xvi). This meant that through using the appeal of artists,

intellectuals, athletes, and significant public figures in America, USIA could expand its

influence operations while maintaining its steady output of information. According to

Von Eschen (2004), USIA's

The Voice of America (VOA) radio broadcasts by Leonard Feather and Willis

Conover helped to lay the groundwork for the emergence of the jazz ambassadors

… Conover's jazz show *Music USA, began in 1955* and continued for more than

three decades (p. 13).

To increase the audience of VOA programming USIA distributed "hundreds of

thousands" of transistor radios throughout the Third World to reach new listeners (USIA

on Radio Distribution as cited in Von Eschen, 2004, p.16). Conover championed jazz

describing the music as "structurally parallel to the American political system"

furthermore that the structure symbolically captured the essence of American freedom.

(Ryan, 1985, p.94). On the Voice of America jazz hour, Conover noted that "jazz

guarantees each musician complete freedom within a framework of cooperation"

(Berkeley, 2018).

USIA began administering the first jazz ambassador tour and decision to use jazz

musicians to promote democratic ideals was controversial to say the least. According to

Von Eschen (2004), "[using jazz for public diplomacy] lacked … support from the

domestic public opinion of the United States as the idea of releasing a governmental

budget to promote black musicians abroad caused reluctance within the most

conservative senators and in addition, segregation was still rampant." (p. 2). The Soviets

were relentless in portraying the Unites States as an industrially prolific yet culturally

inept land of barbarians known for appropriating European culture because it lacked its

own (Osgood, 2004). This argument stung the American ego and despite all odds, due to

Congressman Powell's advocacy, bebop jazz became the perfect remedy for America's

image problems because jazz was truly a unique and modern African-American cultural tradition.

In addition, the combination of black and white artists collaborating together to share jazz music with international audiences became a resonant method of connecting with younger audiences around the world. Building relationships through this form of public diplomacy engendered lasting positive impressions on the people reached. Additionally, the cooperation and comradery displayed between band members personified USIA's progressive American tale. According to Fosler-Lussier (2012) "the outlook of cultural diplomacy changed, aiming less to awe foreign publics than to engage them. In this environment, the success of musical presentations depended on creating meaningful personal contact." (p.55). Developing rich connections with the people of emerging nations was recognized as a vital element of modern world affairs because "the long-range influencing of motivations and attitudes in support of long-term national objectives" constitutes just one category of propaganda used by nations to influence each other (Sorenson, 1965, p. 3). In other words, the US needed to maintain its international reputation with other nations which required bolstering relationships with the people who constituted those nations.

In April of 1955, the first largescale international Afro-Asian "Conference of Non-Aligned Nations" was held in Bandung, Indonesia. The conference stated ambitions to oppose colonialism or neocolonialism by any nation and promote Afro-Asian economic and cultural cooperation (Berkeley, 2018). The United States was not invited and assumed that the conference was an assembly of communist adversaries. Moreover, participation from Americans would have likely only stoked derision and scorning over

the United States' racial problems and complicity regarding European colonial affairs

(Krenn, 2006). Although USIA officers were assigned to the event to collect information.

According to Cull (2008), USIA "turned the conference to modest advantage, largely by

helping prepare sympathetic delegations and their home audiences for the conference

[through briefings from public affairs officers]" (p.126). Although a prudent Adam

Clayton Powell, disregarded the official prohibition on official representation from the

United States and gained entrance as a journalist on behalf of JET Magazine (Berkeley,

2018). During Powell's time at the conference he advocated on behalf of American

democratic capitalism acknowledging the problems faced by minority groups and

defending the claim that democracy is the best model for achieving national

reconciliation. When interviewed about his rationale for going Powell noted

> I do not hope to represent the American viewpoint as we commonly think of it but
>
> as a negro member of the United State Congress. I hope to prove to the peoples of
>
> Asia and Africa that this country has a very large minority of colored peoples
>
> from Puerto Rico, Mexico and Negro people and by that racial link I think that we
>
> can establish a bond between our country and their countries which will guarantee
>
> world peace because no one would dare defy the peoples of Asia Africa and North
>
> America. (Berkeley, 2018)

Representing an African-American perspective he presented a case arguing that the

United States was moving towards Democracy and the America could support an anti-

communist non-aligned movement. Non-alignment was fine so long as it was pursued for

the right reasons. Upon Powell's return to the United States he was applauded by fellow

congressional members and appreciated as a valuable resource with insights into the

sentiments of the global south. Powell had advocated for years to employ African-

Americans in USIA's field staff to "counteract America's deserved reputation for

bigotry" (Cull, 2008, p. 98). Due to the success of Powell's gamble at Bandung and his

subsequent support of Eisenhower's reelection campaign he built enough persuasive clout

to pressure Eisenhower to support his jazz diplomacy initiative. First by employing Dizzy

Gillespie, Powell's friend and the world-famous father of bebop, to support the first of

many State Department sponsored jazz tours throughout nations where the Communist

threat was regarded as imminent. Dizzy had a history of political activism and when

prompted to attend pre-tour political briefings from the State Department before

departing, he noted "I've got 300 years of briefing, I know what they've [the United

States] done to us and I'm not going to make any excuses. If they ask me any questions

I'm going to answer them as honestly as I can" (Berkeley, 2018). Dizzy's band was

tactful yet unapologetic regarding their experiences in the United States. In this spirit in

March of 1956, Gillespie's band embarked on a ten week tour in South Asia, the Middle

East, and the Balkans on the first U.S. State Department jazz tour (Von Eschen, 2006,

p.6). Artists enlisted in cultural presentation programs prioritized the power of friendship

in international relations and viewed the arts as a powerful catalyst for long-term

relationship building (Fosler-Lussier, 2015, p. 21). Dizzy prioritized playing for people

regardless of their status or wealth and rallied against elite nepotistic concerts by giving

tickets to crowds of people for free to foster an organic sort of outreach (Berkeley, 2018).

Cultural exchanges foster a form of public diplomacy that vies for favorable public

opinion through the act of cultivating friendships. Considering the positive implications

of public diplomacy Cherbo (2009) acknowledged,

> There are concerted beliefs that if we are to become better citizens of this
> increasingly interconnected planet we must learn to live together with greater
> understanding, respect, and cooperation; that traditional diplomacy attempts to
> promote U.S. democracy and way of life along with military power are
> increasingly becoming limited tools for creating better international relations; and
> that increased intercultural engagements are crucial, if underutilized, tools in the
> creation of a better and more stable world (p. 285).

This definition of public diplomacy links to USIA's "propaganda of peace" (Sorenson, 1965, p.21). Public diplomacy represents one component of a larger concept of propaganda and when applied, individuals from culturally diverse places are able to recognize a shared humanity that supersedes language, ethnicity and personal histories then cooperation and empathy become viable means of negotiating international relations. The artists involved in public diplomacy efforts approached their role within the Cold War propaganda efforts using a different model of communication from the agents of USIA or the members of the State Department. USIA's public diplomacy initiatives encouraged people to contextualize themselves as one part of a global system interjects them into a part of global consciousness. In recognition of interconnected consciousness, Stepnisky (2005) highlighted that, "[a]s a particular instance of global consciousness, global memory cuts across religious, national, and ethnic boundaries to provide a backdrop for everyday activity that captures the common reality of the shared human experience of global life" (p.1384). Articulating soft power linkages between nations cultivates mutually beneficial relationships. Reflecting on the peace-building power of public diplomacy Pwono (2009) acknowledges that,

Cultural and public diplomacy could contribute to reconciliation in regions of

conflict, bringing people together in particular places where diplomatic relations

are strained or absent, creating opportunities for people-to-people exchanges, and

stimulating cross-border creativity and collaborations. Cultural discourse could

bridge differences and be a platform for peace-building, while cultural forms not

dependent on linguistic requirements could reach out to young people and to

broader sets of audiences (p. 302).

In a historical context when American social progress was stifled by the enactment of

white supremacy, jazz ambassadors played a vital role in international peacemaking and

civil rights advocacy. By performing on behalf of the State Department, these artists

challenged narratives of white supremacy invoking the spirit of the African-American

"Double V" campaigns during WWII, advocating for "victory over aggression, slavery

and tyranny" at home and abroad (Wynn, 2010, p.40).

Dizzy's band needed to quell tension in non-aligned states which inspired the 22-

year-old arranger, Quincy Jones to dub the group as the "Kamikaze Band… because there

was conflict of some kind going on in every place [they] visited" (Jones, 2008, para. 3).

This was especially apparent when the band was unexpectedly flown into Athens, Greece

to diffuse massive youth anti-American protests culminated in a stoning of the USIA's

local outpost. Tension in Greece swelled after America refused to "back a move in the

UN to free the island of Cyprus from British rule" (Berkeley, 2018). Almost immediately

Dizzy's band was scheduled to play a matinee event for Greek youth and soon headlines

from Athens proclaimed the "Students drop rocks and roll with Diz" (Berkeley, 2018).

The engagement happening on an interpersonal level created the conditions for a special

affective resonance to enhance goodwill towards America. Cultivating long-term

relationships through cultural exchanges was generating positive feedback for USIA and

the State Department although the news was received universally well. It cost

approximately $84 thousand to send Dizzy's band around the world and southern

democrats and conservative members of congress bemoaned the expenditures allocated

for sending jazz music overseas as unrepresentative of the United States. Despite, the

confusion on behalf of some members of congress stifling the development of cultural

diplomacy the State Department and USIA were convinced to continue and the success of

the tour enabled hundreds of subsequent programs including artists like Louis Armstrong,

Dave Brubeck, Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington and many more.

  While jazz diplomacy was not the first effort in USIA's cultural offensive against

the Soviets it did mark a shift in the tide of warfare. During the first three years of

operations USIA relied on fighting fire with fire, creating press releases, dropping

leaflets, form planes and using radio broadcast to win hearts and minds. However, the

Soviets could mimic all of these tactics. Yet, the Soviets built their image around

European classical styles of art, architecture, dance and music. Consequently, the Soviets

could not claim jazz or any of the content constituting American modernism. Utilizing

an African American cultural product in the midst of the Civil Rights movement

reinforced the myth of progress. Detracting from the strength of Soviet criticisms against

race by leveraging creative and positive attributes of Black culture to gain prestige for

America.

Chapter 4: The Nine from Little Rock

In the Cold War propaganda offensive, ideological dominance was the object

sought by both the US and the USSR's information agencies. Winning hearts and minds

became a cliché for cultural imperialism. Information technology facilitated the rapid

proliferation of techniques for spreading American values around the world. As a result,

USIA used every available means of communication to sell American democracy to the

world in order to convince international audiences that American democratic capitalism

was the remedy to oppression and exploitation and a catalyst for upward mobility. These

ideas were signified with symbols of freedom, liberty and justice. However, the Civil

Rights movement publicly exposed racial oppression, harassment, and brutality within

American society, as non-violent protests around the country became sites of racist

violence. This fact forced USIA to develop innovative techniques to explain American

racism to international audiences. Ironically, USIA spun Civil Rights crises into

American success stories, which rationalized American racism. Pro-segregationist

attitudes and white resistance to integration were cast in the shadow of a progressive

mythos where racial prejudices were akin to a disease in remission. While African-

Americans organized and engaged in the Civil Rights Movement to fight for

representation as legitimate citizens in their own country, USIA exploited salient symbols

from the Civil Rights movement to diminish dissonance spurred by international news

coverage. A capital example of USIA's prowess in softening the image of American

social blunders is evident in the Agency's 1964 film *Nine from Little Rock.*

Consequently, this chapter examines *Nine from Little Rock* to articulate the how symbols

of the Civil Rights movement from the Little Rock crisis were co-opted into USIA's films on American race relations.

The film was commissioned in 1963 by George Stevens Jr., the head of the USIA. The intent for the film was outlined in a memo dated September 1, 1964, which according to Amidon intended to demonstrate "America's commitment to the individual and justice under the law and did document the role of the federal government in upholding the law protecting minorities, following the Supreme Court decree declaring racial segregation in public school education to be unconstitutional" (Amidon, & Kovac, 2015, para. 2). According to Amidon & Kovac (2015) "USIA's target audiences were international youth programs and universities that followed concerns in the US" (para. 2). Considering the stated purpose of the film, it bears importance to reflect on the historical details of the Little Rock crisis.

First of all, the Little Rock crisis was the first Civil Rights event that received international televisual attention. According to Branch (1988) "the first prolonged duration and the military drama of the siege made Little Rock the first on site news extravaganza of the modern television era" (p.223). For twenty days the world saw video news coverage of armed guardsmen preventing the nine Black kids from entering Central High while also creating barriers around belligerent segregationists. The three-week spectacle gave international reporters ample time to reach Little Rock, providing sensational exposes on America's racial prejudices as international viewers watched the ugliness of segregationists staunchly standing their moral ground behind the pickets day in and day out. According to Krenn (2017), "pictures of terrified African-American schoolchildren cowering beneath a withering fire of insults spit and thrown objects was

splashed all over the front pages of American newspapers – and the foreign media" (p.

118). Stories favoring Soviet propaganda basically wrote themselves as the United States

struggled to justify its white supremacy. On September 4, 1957, nine African-American

students attempted to enroll in Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. However,

Arkansas' governor Orval Faubus proclaimed a state of emergency summoning the

Arkansas National Guard to safeguard segregation. As the nine kids approached the

towering high school in the beginning of September, armed national guardsmen

brandished rifles with bayonets to prevent the students from entering the public school.

This turn of events contradicted the supreme court's edict from the Brown vs. Board

decision in 1954. USIA boldly publicized the apparent successes of Brown vs. Board a

few years prior, which gave the pretense that school desegregation would be a smooth,

peaceful process across the US. Consequently, Faubus' "prayerful" decision to uphold

school segregation dumbfounded international audiences (Dudziak, 2000, p. 116). Thus,

school desegrgation catapulted to a significant issue capturing the attention of global

media (Dudziak, 2000). Weeks of news images displaying militias barring nine Black

kids from successfully integrating Central High School in Arkansas impacted a wide

audience as television technology enabled international audiences to feel connected to

news stories like never before. As the world witnessed the prejudices of white supremacy

unfold in real time, the Civil Rights Movement gained strength, momentum, and

credibility while America's image as a tolerant and civil society began to decay.

Eisenhower was unable to persuade governor Faubus to integrate Central High in Little

Rock. In response he deployed the 101st Airborne Division of the U.S. Army to protect

nine African-American teenagers trying to go to school. According to Schewnck (1999)

"throughout September 1957, overseas audiences were appalled by the photographs and newsreel images of angry whites verbally and physically intimidating African Americans" (p.289). Consequently, the publicity of the segregationist terrorism and human rights injustices, the name "Little Rock" became synonymous with American racism (Sorenson, 1968, p. 102).

After a few years had passed,USIA decided to revisit the Little Rock crisis to put the memory into a repackaged narrative for international audiences. By 1964, when the *Nine from Little Rock* film was released, the USIA was producing a staggering amount of media contents around the world. In a news release prepared from the remarks by USIA's first and only African-American director, Carl T. Rowan, the agency boasted of its capacity to produce 200 hours of television programming annually for stations in 80 countries, creating movies in 52 languages, reaching 750 million people a year, 85 magazines, 20 newspapers and the 10,000 words that go out daily on a wireless file to 111 posts abroad, 735,000 prints and 220,000 copy negatives, distributing 20 million pamphlets, 10 million books a year and producing a comic strip that was alleged to be the most widely read feature in the world (Rowan, n.d.). Although, as noted by Rowan, "none of these statistics means anything until we know also what it is that USIA is saying through these media." (Rowan, n.d., p. 26). Visual argumentation could reach literate and illiterate audiences alike, which boosted the appeal of the new mass mediums of TV and film. According to Cull (2008), *Nine from Little Rock* "became one of the most successful USIA (?) films. It was seen by audiences in ninety-seven countries in seventeen languages. In April 1965 it won the Academy Award for best documentary short" (p. 235). According to Schwenck-Borrell, (2004), "the film's main propagandistic

purpose was to portray how the strengths of American society lessened African-Americans motivation to become radicalized, even if they suffered from the society's racist practices" (p.192). By analyzing this text this chapter investigates how publicly successful USIA propaganda films depict American racism, federal responses to racial integration, American public opinion regarding Little Rock, and the context in which Little Rock needs to be evaluated. Given the salience of the crisis in Arkansas it is appropriate to investigate the production from USIA since the film was made with seven years of hindsight.

USIA faced the challenge of telling a nuanced and complex account of America's story which went beyond repetitive positive superlatives. Rowan's account, which attempted to take a "rose-colored-glasses approach," ultimately proved ineffective at molding global opinion because USIA was operating under the pretenses of wartime rhetoric (Rowan, n.d., p. 28). The battle for ideological prominence led the third director of the Agency, Carl T. Rowan to note that

> [f]or as long as I can foresee, our country will be involved in an all-out
> ideological struggle. In this contest of impressions and misimpressions, of
> distortions both deliberate and accidental, USIA must be the restorer of focus, the
> provider of the perspective without which our policies and our purpose can never
> be understood. (Rowan, n.d.), p. 28).

Propaganda is an instrument which can be used by any individual or group. The trick to effectively making an impact when engaging propaganda techniques requires manipulating information to conform into a favorable narrative that supports the legitimacy of the propagandist (Bernays, 1928). In this case, USIA employed film

technology to visually portray American weaknesses as strengths to the world. In this manner, American international prestige could be sustained or enhanced to the detriment of Soviet communism. According to Dudziak (2000),

> In addressing civil rights reform from 1946 through the mid-1960s, the federal government engaged in a sustained effort to tell a particular story about race in American democracy: the story of progress, story of the triumph of good over evil comma the story of US moral superiority. The lesson of this story was always that American democracy was a form of government that made the achievement of social justice possible, in that Democratic Change, however slow and gradual, was superior to dictatorial imposition. The story of race in America, used to compare democracy and communism, became an important Cold War narrative. (p.13).

USIA's films dedicated to Civil Rights prior to the *Nine from Little Rock,* focused on African-American celebrities to flaunt the positive accomplishments of a few to indicate the potential opportunities afforded to the Black community more generally. Civil Rights was not directly addressed in USIA films until 1963 (under Kennedy's presidency), instead a natural positive progressive trend was strongly implied. The argument basically leveraged the talent, skills and intellect of a few famous African-Americans to symbolize the progress America was making in regard to race relations.

Drawing strength from the Civil Rights movement, the Black Power Movement advocated for human rights, freedom, and equitable treatment to further prosocial ideals fueling an aggressive liberation struggle. The politicization of black life in America was supported by a cultural revolution of sorts whereby black artists and intellectuals were

breaking down racist stereotypes that had been haunting the American psyche for years. USIA told a progressive story emphasizing the impact of gradualist appeals to social change which had benefitted African-Americans post-slavery. In this context, slavery is regarded as a blemish on the American record—however, through a process of reconciliation and soul-searching, the United States were doing everything in its power to reverse the injustices which built its cultural empire.

Many of the films produced by USIA were created by USIA field agents who collaborated with individuals in the local context in which they worked around the world. However, *Nine from Little Rock* broke away from that model instead contracting Charles Guggenheim, a renowned film director and producer, to create a powerful story focused on desegregation efforts in Little Rock, Arkansas. Guggenheim's film "presented racism as a local issue being addressed by a benevolent federal government … [concluding] that no one knew exactly how many victories there had been for the cause of civil rights, but Little Rock had produced nine." (Cull, 2008b, p. 235). In 1963, Terrence Roberts, Thelma Mothershed, Elizabeth Eckford, Ernest Green, Carlotta Walls, Melba Pattillo, Minnijean Brown, and Gloria Ray, the teenagers that constituted the Little Rock nine were emerging adults and USIA decided to follow up with them to illustrate how ordinary African-Americans were processing race relations and the Civil Rights movement in the US. As noted by Schwenck-Borrell (2004)

> for the first time, a USIA film would focus not on 'star' African-Americans, such as singer Marian Anderson, diplomat Ralph Bunche, or Olympic track medalist Wilma Rudolph, but on African-Americans who had become famous because of their role in integrating American society (p.187).

The film served as a human-interest story around the Little Rock Nine which brilliantly

leveraged the interest in the school integration crisis just six years prior while addressing

foreign audiences concerned by racial violence and protest in the US (Cull, 2008b). In

this sense the film addresses the present via the past, by following up on the Little Rock

Nine to see where they are in the present and using their stories as a foil for American

progress at large. Furthermore, this film would help provide context to international

audiences regarding how the lives of the Little Rock Nine had evolved since 1957 and to

capture reflections on their traumatic experiences from six years prior. Considering that

the Little Rock Nine broke the color barrier at the previously all-white Central High this

story demonstrated the normalcy of American public-school desegregation and reinforced

the positive progressive trend. According to Schwenck-Borrell (2004),

> during the first few months of the school integration crisis, foreign and domestic
>
> press tracked the progress of the Little Rock Nine, who appeared in films,
>
> photographs and interviews to be thoughtful and courageous teenagers. The Little
>
> Rock Nine's struggles to achieve their individual goals, despite the nation's
>
> racism, spoke to the difficulties emerging and non-aligned nations experienced as
>
> they sought political autonomy. (p.182)

This narrative was of great interest to the anticolonial world and USIA aimed to herald

the US as a beacon of hope. Telling a story where the United States systematically filters

out prejudices and injustices according to the public opinion of its citizens. In effect the

Civil Rights Movement demonstrated how enacting organized dissent enabled the

American government to respond to the political interests of the majority of its

constituents.

The USIA coopted the Civil Rights movement in order to tell a persuasive story to its audiences in the developing world. Their narrative situated the civil rights movement within a frame of "perpetual progress." This narrative became the pillar of USIA's rhetorical strategy for combating the spread of Soviet sponsored communism and other forms of socialism.

The Nine from Little Rock: Textual Analysis

The film opens with a suspenseful drumroll. Soon afterwards, the viewer's eyes are greeted by an ominous black and white scene displaying the shadow of a moving man. As the camera pans out to follow the movement of the shadow the scene opens up revealing the iconic fortress-like silhouette of Central High school. After a quick title credits sequence, a handsomely suited Jefferson Thomas, one of the Little Rock Nine, emerges from the shadow. As he overlooks the school, which undoubtedly played a significant role in his life and within the broader Civil Rights Movement Thomas is indicated to be the narrator of the film speaking pensively as he reminisces about the significance of not only the school but also his time there. Thomas notes

> Perhaps it is best for those today to look where they are going and not where they have been. But when you're a dark man in a country where the Negro is demanding more and more an equal chance, you have the right to look back to discover if you are really moving forward, or if the world is just moving beneath your feet. (Guggenheim, 1964)

These lines invite the audience to consider the Civil Rights movement within a broader historical context. African-American citizens have demanded equality for a long time and the only way to determine how much progress has been made is to take a step back to

reflect. In this case, the audience is briefly transported back to 1957 to address the racial

tension which made Little Rock famous. In the background, a contemplative Thomas

teleports away from his aloof and reserved suit leaving behind a cool and calm demeanor

for an agitated and desperate look on his face as he sprints at full speed on Central High's

outdoor running track. Thomas breaks away around the track and begins to smile

indicating a positive trend is beginning. While acknowledging the details of the state

sanctioned segregationist military actions, the visuals show news reels displaying crowds

of frenzied white supremacists sneering and harassing the black teenagers as they were

rejected from Central High day-in and day-out. Thomas proceeds by noting that:

> Hatred is easier to organize than understanding. And there was a minority in our
>
> state who found it to their advantage to bring hate to Little Rock in 1957. While
>
> we watched, the white children went to school, and we stood outside. We had
>
> been taught in school that we were a nation under law. And the law said
>
> segregation was wrong. Now, we waited to see if our laws had meaning or were
>
> just words in a book or idle talk in a classroom (Guggenheim, 1964).

Segregation is framed as a legal issue separate from a moral dilemma. Despite the huge

psychological connection between morality and the legal system, the film emphasizes the

Federal government's integrity in following the law regardless of moral codes. The issue

of Civil Rights was a contentious topic in America because the nation was culturally

dismantling white supremacist influence impacting laws in the US. USIA was telling

America's story and contextualizing the nation's biases and stereotypes. Reminding the

audience that the United States is a nation under law in this context suggests that the legal

code is only crystallized public opinion in a democratic society. This means that cultural

and moral codes populating public opinion in the US are subject to change alongside swings in culture, attitudes and stereotypes. The hatred of white supremacy is framed as a bigoted vocal minority in Little Rock. In so doing, the zealous crowd of white supremacists was cast as a social anomaly for Americans during this time period. Telling the story in this way undermines the American cultural connection to segregation by casting American racist stereotypes of African-Americans as influential within a small minority of delusional people instead of acknowledging a deeper connection. By framing the law and federal government as doing their duty to uphold the constitution the USIA film tells the story of progress and process. The supreme court does its job mediating the law and the federal government enforces the law. Over time the system corrects itself. As a result of the situation in Little Rock, the strength of the American constitution was put to the test and the Federal government responded on the side of the law, protecting African-American citizens so that they could attend public school in a racially integrated fashion. Thomas continues,

> On September 27, 1957, President Eisenhower sent 1,000 men of the United
> States Army to carry out the law. The Supreme Court of the United States had
> said the entire strength of a nation may be used to enforce in any part of the land
> the security of all rights entrusted by the Constitution. And that included my
> rights and the rights of eight other Negro Americans who wanted to go to Central
> High School in Little Rock, Arkansas (Guggenheim, 1964).

Running gallantly, American paratroopers from the 101st airborne division stormed into Little Rock to protect the constitution. The tone shifts dramatically from a brooding score to a glorious chorus of horns to accompany the cheerful hero in this situation, the Federal

government which used US military power to support truth, justice and the American way. Despite the novelty of the situation and the daring of the Little Rock Nine braving the tenacity of racial bigotry, Eisenhower's begrudging decision to call in the troops is praised as a valiant decision. National guard patrol wagons escorted the Little Rock Nine to their new public school thus ending the memory of the crisis in 1957 to feature the progress achieved in the following seven years. A brief mention is given to the inevitability of misunderstanding and grief over changing social conventions. Thomas makes the argument that "in a town of 100,000 there were many who didn't like what was happening. But as we looked at the soldier, we knew there must be millions of others who thought we represented something important" (Guggenheim, 1964). This rhetorical framing obscures the racial prejudice internationally understood to be a deeply American ideology.

Suddenly a bell tolls and seven years rapidly pass allowing the audience to shadow six of the nine students as they share their career status, aspirations and hopes for the future. Seven of the Little Rock nine are asked to share personal details about the colleges they attended and the lessons they learned along the way after leaving Central High. For instance, Minnijean describes how she learned about the way the world works through her university experience noting

> The things I have learned here have helped me to come to terms with myself. For the first time in my life, I have begun to understand why some Americans act the way they do. I know now, some Americans have a fear of the Negro, a fear borne of a way of life that has been dead in this country since the end of slavery. That's what the mob in Little Rock was afraid of—that the Negro, who had done so

much with no chance, might do so much more with an equal one (Guggenheim,

1964).

In this way the influence of white supremacy is indirectly acknowledged as a residual

legacy of American chattel slavery although the implication is that the biases and cultural

stereotypes of an older time were long gone. Furthermore, the fear of African-Americans

in this sense is limited to the consequences of equal opportunity instead of the biological

or psychological stigmas pervading within the American ideological system. However,

this fear of Black people and the preservation of an existing status quo subjugating

minorities was washed away to welcome images of a multicultural picnic featuring young

college students spending quality time together drinking Coca-Cola. Surely, this image

was more indicative of the conditions of race-relations in America. A multicultural

melting pot where problems exist but communities are naturally progressing towards

greater tolerance and understanding. This framing doesn't acknowledge the role of social

agitation undergone by the Little Rock Nine or the wider Civil Rights movement. Instead

the law decided the moral attitudes of its citizenry.

Intermittently, as the film revealed the 1964 lives of some of the Little Rock Nine,

the audience follows Jefferson as he wanders the halls of his alma mater as one of a

growing minority of Black students in the hallway. This visual of increased African-

American presence in Central High precedes a transition acknowledging how all but one

of the Nine attended predominately white colleges. Elizabeth Eckford then takes the

helm describing how integration impacted her life saying

If it hadn't been for that morning in September 1957, I could have gone into law

or education and not thought much about it. I was frightened that morning. But I

learned a great deal about people—not only about the people who were there, but about the people who were not there, like the politician who encouraged the mob, like the thousands who suffered with me and wrote to me to tell me so. While I waited, I heard brave voices speak out against intolerance. And I saw grown men turn their heads in shame from a camera (Guggenheim, 1964).

Choosing not to mention Governor Faubus or any of the other segregationist advocates encouraging the mobs gathering in front of Central High deflects the criticism against the state officials taking matters into their own hands. In addition, the pro-segregationist sentiments and attitudes are juxtaposed as a minority perspective contesting against a stronger majority thus the will of the people is framed to be against the against white supremacist policies. This articulation helps demonstrate to the international audiences that when push comes to shove Americans were going to follow the law and do the right thing. "Pockets of discrimination" existed across the US which public opinions was shifting to eliminate segregation through a "quiet revolution taking place in America" (Guggenheim, 1964).

As the film winds down, Jefferson Thomas is brought in to reflect on his personal growth since high school and as he reflects on his accomplishments he stares into Central High's trophy showcase driving home the achievements which he alludes to in his closing statements. Thomas notes,

[t]his spring, I take an exam to become a certified public accountant. That means I'm supposed to be qualified to keep track of profits and losses. I'm not sure I know enough yet to say what all this adds up to. I haven't counted all the victories since that first day we went to school here. But I know there's been at least nine.

In Little Rock, there's a slow bridge taking shape over that chasm of intolerance

and ignorance. It's a bridge that's going to be built by us and by our children.

Before it's finished, we're going to have our problems. But if Little Rock taught

nothing more, it taught all Americans that problems can make us better, much

better (Guggenheim, 1964).

With this witty note the film wraps up leaving the audience feeling hopeful and excited

for the future. This documentary posed a positive framework to understand the

developments made by African-Americans seven years after the crisis in Little Rock.

Each of the Little Rock Nine worked to combat intolerance and racism. Encouraging

audiences to reflect on the importance of addressing problems directly in order to make

society better. The film is not optimistic about the progress of the Little Rock community

or the broader American society. However, viewers are encouraged to understand the

Little Rock Nine as models of the typical stories experienced by African-Americans at

this time considering they constitute the subject of the film. Ending on a positive note, the

cameras take a few last wide-sweeping views of Central High before revealing a bigger

skyline with the Arkansas State Capitol building looming in the background, suggesting a

symbolic link to progressive power of the American democratic system.

Discussion/Analysis

Guggenheim's documentary was filmed in black and white and ran for twenty

minutes, emphasizing the dignity of the students hurled into the center of a national

integration crisis. The film glosses over the incendiary remarks made by the Arkansas

governor Faubus at the time and neglects to indict the state government's participation in

obstructing progress in Civil Rights. This is because racial prejudice was framed as a

societal anomaly held by lone wolves or small groups on a local level. This articulation of

the race relations shifts the blame from a macro societal or systemic issue to a micro

individual level. In other words, the tree is not poisoned but instead there a just few bad

apples in the mix.

The issue is that USIA had a tremendous platform reaching up to 750 million

people at this time and the Agency used its platform to tell an uncritical human-interest

story. The Nine from Little Rock does not tell anybody anything really about the state of

affairs in the United States in regard to these students in particular or in regard to race

relations more broadly, which is what this film is designed to discuss in the first

place. This film was not successful in addressing the Little Rock crisis at all. The

decision to discuss ordinary African-American citizens impacted by the Civil Rights

movement was a positive step in sharing American culture with the world. The discussion

of the Little Rock crisis was sparse and would have required a fresh memory of the

details of the Little Rock crisis to evaluate the progress achieved in the seven-year time

gap. Moreover, the film never directly addressed any of the film reel content shown

throughout. Instead the powerful clips taken in 1957 are reserved as B-roll footage which

are only used to tangentially connect with USIA's optimistic future-oriented vision of the

US.

As a work of civil rights propaganda, the film does not address deeper questions

held by international audiences. The dialog throughout the film possesses a few

sentimental and impactful moments scattered between vague messages and allusions to

American racism. USIA operated as an autonomous organ of the US government

constrained by the public opinion of the nation when creating its content for international

audiences. The need to contextualize American culture broadly to explain American cultural biases, stereotypes, attitudes, and political which aligned in the careful manner in which biases are addressed in the Nine from Little Rock. The agency needed to tell a balanced story to the world to demonstrate humility and recognition of American social issues, although the film finishes feeling like a missed opportunity. A strange tension exists in the film where the concept of racism is alluded to heavily yet explicitly avoided. This directorial choice concealed the racialized motives of the segregationist groups alluded to in the film while projected the Federal government's response heroic without explaining the significance of its action. Rather the federal government's response is cast as heroic because in principle it affirmed its constitution.

USIA was constrained to tell America's story to the world in a manner that weaponized American democracy as an ideology, demonizing other places, spaces, and people if they choose not to organize themselves identically to the U.S as evidenced by the support of coups across the Third World (Cull, 2008). In the *Nine from Little Rock*., civil rights issues were addressed superficially by tokenizing the Little Rock Nine instead of Black celebrities who usually constitute the characters in USIA films. The Civil Rights movement disturbed the American status quo and notified all parties paying attention that the US needed to modernize its attitudes towards people of color and mend some of its generational trauma linked to race, class, and gender. USIA had the reach, resources and autonomy to create meaningful content to help build mutually beneficial relationships with international publics. However, *Nine from Little Rock* neglected to address systemic issues in the US in nuanced manner.

In the *Nine from Little Rock*, major historical elements of the narrative are individualized framing the Civil Rights Movement as a story of individual successes. This rhetorical choice folds the collective action of activists and social justice coalitions into the dominant ideology of American individualism. The film illustrates a bizarre relationship between the Little Rock Nine as they revisit the school which traumatized them as teenagers in order to help USIA tell a positive progressive story to international audiences. In this way USIA could rearticulate the story of the Little Rock Nine in a suitable way to sustain a positive image of American progress. The result is an awkward film that gives a shallow examination of American racism, federal responses to discrimination, and pleas for Civil Rights. Furthermore, the film appears to contain the voices of the Little Rock Nine who are visually featured throughout. However, the voices in the film were actually dubbed by voice actors because the USIA and Guggenheim were concerned that the Arkansas' accent would be challenging for international audiences to understand (Schwenck, 1999).

By factoring in the details of the Little Rock crisis USIA's documentary presented a feel-good progressive story to encourage international audiences, especially students, to pursue quiet revolutions in thought as opposed to aggressive or militant appeals to equality. Although the *Nine from Little Rock* was perceived as generally positive by international audiences, the film left a wide area for improved engagement with its own subject matter and subsequently with its target audiences.

Chapter 5: The Propaganda Paradox: Key Takeaways on USIA's Integration
Propaganda

The purpose of this discursive analysis was to illuminate how the USIA

functioned as a propaganda machine on behalf of the United States government at the

dawn of the Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement. Drawing from literature on

propaganda, public relations, and public diplomacy, this thesis connects 20th century

American propaganda to its roots in public relations, communication studies, and

psychology. Two revolutionary cultural upwellings met at a historical juncture. The Civil

Rights movement exposed the cultural inertia of white supremacy in America for the

world to see while American foreign policy makers sought to crystallize a cultural

hegemony fashioned after American political, cultural, and economic systems. Although

the cultural and political systems in America were in a state of radical flux as the Cold

War and the Civil Rights movements affected one another. Thus, as the voice of America

abroad, USIA was pushed to negotiate the psychological and cultural tensions

experienced in America for foreign audiences. This intersection inspired me to consider

how American governmental propaganda articulated race relations to foreign audiences.

Analyzing the Unfinished Business exhibit at the Brussels World Fair in 1958, the

PBS Jazz Ambassadors documentary, and the Nine from Little Rock film as propaganda

discourse provided insights into the structural elements of mass-mediated industrial

propaganda. These texts demonstrate how USIA's peacetime propaganda co-opted and

weaponized the Civil Rights Movement developing a "large-scale and sophisticated

counterpropaganda program in which African-Americans were utilized as living symbols

of America's commitment to equality and civil rights" (Krenn, 2006, p. 86). The

American way of life had to adjust its implicit biases, cultural stereotypes, and attitudes formed around the concept of race to envision a new image of the American Dream. Now African-Americans had a prominent role in symbolically defending the image of America. This new addition to the American cultural epic sought to bolster America's claim for leadership over the free world.

The sheer existence of communism was perceived to threaten world peace, order, stability, and perhaps most scarily, People's Capitalism. The dialectical tension generated by the two dominant Cold War political forces posed a problem to be solved by American ingenuity. As a result, USIA innovated in the field of propaganda science developing industrial social engineering techniques alongside technological infrastructure to spread the American gospel far and wide. Moreover, USIA cultivated the means to scientifically monitor, evaluate, and exploit public opinion to support American foreign policy positions. USIA's Cold War initiative sought cultural hegemony. As such, USIA used its propaganda to manipulate the hearts and minds of mass international audiences to undermine public faith in its imperial ideological rival. As a component of a larger psychological strategy USIA's civil rights propaganda productions were defensive, cohesion-oriented, and optimized to protect the image of America from Soviet propaganda.

USIA rejected the notion that America was the monstrosity depicted by the Soviets or as mischaracterized in the foreign press (Cull, 2008b). In response, USIA heralded the merits of the American Dream by endorsing democratic capitalism as fundamentally the best economic and political structure available to humanity from its individualistic political orientation. With this assumption in mind, USIA appealed to

other nations to give power and legitimacy to US cultural and political hegemony in order to cultivate an American-led capitalist globalization mission.

In regard to Civil Rights, the USIA sang a tune of hopefulness and patience, combined these two virtues would undergird the American industrial process towards progress. In this case this meant civil rights for African-American citizens although the broader messages bolstered the legitimacy of the American exceptionalism in the realms of political and cultural systems. Frameworks used to soften the image of the United States throughout the campaign for truth functioned as a defensive propaganda strategy for the American government as international audiences experienced psychological dissonance from the images of brutality from the international press and the generally optimistic propaganda USIA produced on Civil Rights. Following is a discussion of the major findings and conclusions drawn from this research project, my recommendations for American citizens and foreign policy analyses, in addition to a final reflection on this study.

<u>Major Findings</u>

First, the methodology and techniques of USIA's Civil Rights propaganda build upon Bernays' theories on propaganda, especially the engineering of consent. The US strived to attain an imperial legitimacy via the consent of the international publics. By portraying itself as a benevolent power seeking to bring order to the world, the USIA affirmed America's strength as a political, moral, and economic leader. Crystallizing public opinion required softening America's image as a racist, beneficiary of European colonialism. Given USIA's function as a weapon for psychological warfare, Bernays' perspective on effective propaganda is invaluable given his tenure contributions

advancing the evolution of USIA's psychological techniques (Bernays, 1928). To be abundantly clear, public relations from a Bernaysian perspective is simply applied psychology. Bernays took Freud's theories of psychoanalysis and applied them to manipulate public opinion across social, cultural and political contexts, usually for American private corporations and also for the American government during wartime. Democratic republics place sovereignty in their citizens which means that governmental power springs from public opinion. Bernays viewed this aspect of American democracy to be worrisome because of his belief that large crowds are irrational, docile, and in need of intelligent manipulation (Bernays, 1928). As a result, American propagandists building on Bernays' work scientifically engineer public consent by targeting psychological vulnerabilities linked to subconscious prejudices, attitudes, desires, aspirations, dreams, and hopes. Strengthening faith in the American democratic capitalist system required USIA to convince international publics that America's intentions and reputation were good and that the Soviets intentions and reputation were evil. Leveraging race in the Civil Rights propaganda helped manage the impressions foreign publics had of the American image. African-American people, cultural traditions, and existence broadly were all framed as symbolic of the strength of the American system. If former chattel could achieve equality in the American society then American system must truly exemplary.

Civil rights became a theme USIA used to engender consensus-building as a form of defensive propaganda. For USIA to sell the American dream to international audiences, race-relations were addressed optimistically within a context beginning with slavery to demonstrate the progress attained by African-Americans since. This strategy was employed in the Unfinished Business exhibit and in the Nine from Little Rock.

When asked about race-relations, the jazz ambassadors didn't measure their progress against the backdrop of chattel slavery, instead they earnestly described the conditions experienced at that time holistically. The premise of this rhetorical decision encourages foreign audiences to respect American humility, appreciate the courage required to acknowledge the country's problems and incites faith in the American system to solve its issues. This argument is geared toward bolstering American prestige amongst foreign audiences evaluating American cultural and political institutions.

Second, USIA's Civil Rights propaganda relied heavily on a progressive mythos structure. USIA needed to procure the co-operation of non-aligned nations and reinforce relationships with friendly international powers. National government propaganda showing democracy shifting towards a society devoid of racial injustice appeases global opinion and satisfied the "myth of progress" (Ellul, 1965, p.42). This progressive mythos used positive images of African-Americans to create a comforting image of linear progression in American life. Despite the problems and issues faced in America, USIA's Civil Rights propaganda made sure to help foreign audiences envision prosperity in Black American life by transforming tragedy into triumph. In the Nine from Little Rock, Eisenhower is likened to a Civil Rights hero calling in the National Guard to enforce integration. Throughout the cases examined in previous chapters, emphasis is placed on the inevitability of social strife and the strength of the American society to withstand social adversity. Interestingly, the sources of frustration, rage, and angst experienced by African-Americans is barely touched upon in lieu of a happier story in its messaging efforts.

Civil Rights propaganda focused on cultural innovation and the narratives told about American race relations were positioned alongside cultural discourse on music, art, architecture, engineering, consumer goods and design. All of these things comprised elements of American culture and were contrasted against the USSR's traditional Eurasian cultural roots. American culture was cast as progressive, modern, and fresh while Soviet culture was primitive by comparison. This cold war construct manifested in the advancement of modernism as an American cultural trait (Castillo, 2010). Championing the developments in consumer goods, industrial advancements, and jazz music helped USIA juxtapose the old-world cultural traditions of the USSR with flourishing cultural innovations produced in America. At the beginning of the Cold War, Soviet propaganda bashed the US for its racial inequality alongside perceived lack of cultural ingenuity, USIA retaliated to these claims by coopting symbols from Civil Rights Movement to promote a positive image of the US.

Third, winning hearts and minds is most impactful with international audiences and perhaps best achieved with critical discourse especially when the issues at hand address complex problems that require global solutions. In all of the propaganda texts examined throughout there was a general trepidation surrounding how to address American racism and the propaganda which resulted featured pleasantries without acknowledging structural issues. Honest self-reflections through American propaganda may result in the development of mutually beneficial relationships. The Unfinished Business showcase came the closest to telling a holistic story of America's racial history. Unfortunately, the exhibit was shut down prematurely because it was regarded as too offensive to southern congressmen (Cull, 2008b). Although its commentary on race-

relations shared an honest depiction of race relations which audiences found brave and admirable. Bolstering strategic relationships between nations benefits from humility and critical self-reflection. The jazz ambassadors and the Unfinished Business exhibit showed that authenticity is a valuable soft-power asset which can be cultivated with great success.

<u>Implications</u>

During 1953-1965 USIA built an impressive American propaganda machine that, in addition to its global reach, also made frequent use of state-of-the-art media, mass-media technology, and psychological research. Although in my view, USIA was limited by its unwillingness to share self-critical stories to its audiences. Instead USIA's mission as an apparatus for psychological warfare favored spinning positive tales far and wide. Furthermore, modern public diplomacy or propaganda should be shared with American citizens to limit adverse congressional coercion. In the case of the Brussels World fair, congressmen leveraged their power to coerce USIA to be less critical of American issues in exchange for better appropriations (Sorenson, 1968). Giving citizens the choice to see how their country is portraying itself to foreign countries is a valuable asset in the globalized world. Citizens want to have the ability to know what their government is doing with taxpayer funds and the transparency allows public diplomacy or propaganda agencies to involve more of the American public into American public diplomacy. The resulting content can be used to engage dialogically with a variety of people. Citizens engaging with propaganda from their home-countries add meaningful transparency into government operations while opening a space for critical discussion.

Next, American public diplomacy should beware the dangers of propagating false binaries to attain soft power credibility. The Cold War dichotomies created a

hyperpolarized version of reality where everything was simplified into a binary world. However, oversimplifying reality in this way poses medium to long-term threats to societal growth by obscuring how citizens are able to process complex relationships between groups, states, nations or otherwise. Finally, a note of warning, the term Cold War exists to denote a type of conflict which avoids traditional military conflicts like that of WWII where the material conditions of a hot war signifying boots on the ground, artillery amongst other things. However, the Cold War blurred the lines between peace and war creating complex motivations for USIA's efforts to control foreign public opinion in its favor. This resulted in the use of jazz ambassadors to destabilize political tension in Greece and the clandestine gray activities which destabilized the 1954 Guatemalan government (Sorenson, 1968). Both of these cases demonstrate that propaganda is a powerful tool which can be applied to strongly affect political and cultural structures to achieve a desired end. Thus, when artificial binary lines are drawn to demonize others through propaganda, the propanda needs to be investigated. Wars fought over ideological differences, cultural differences or ethnic differences need to be critically investigated because no matter the category of war there are always casualties some of which may be prevented by social vigilance.

This project has explored USIA's manipulation of messaging to cover civil rights abuses, but the Soviet Union has a long and rich history of suppressing minorities as well. In a war of messaging and counter-messaging, future research should examine how Russia managed their reputation amidst their own human rights abuses while attacking US propaganda. Furthermore, there are offensive modes of propaganda as well which USIA engaged in outside of the production for Civil Rights propaganda which adds

different layers of complexity to the understanding of American mass-media propaganda

which should be explored in detail. In a conflict that lasted almost four decades there are

ample angles and contexts to be explored which will constitute my next steps as a

researcher of American mass-media propaganda.

Final Reflection

  Investigating American Cold War government propaganda as expressions of

foreign policy drove my critique of USIA actions as emblematic of the United States'

moral and cultural point of view. The tools and techniques employed by USIA leveraged

propaganda studies to express foreign policy persuasively with foreign publics. In

addition to governments, businesses, social movements, advocates of all colors and

creeds have access to the tools required to galvanize major social change in prosocial and

antisocial ways. As a result, I believe that it is imperative that people are brought into a

broader dialogue on propaganda's role in modern society. USIA was successful because

it was a centralized and highly resourced organizational effort designed to affect the

hearts and minds of millions. Its function played a key public relations role for the US

government during the Cold War giving the Agency the position to share information,

news, art, literature and culture with the world. Championing cultural diplomacy during

the Cold War was a powerful way for the US to project soft power abroad and to begin

dialogue to bridge cultural and ideological chasms between nations. When creating

propaganda it is important to recognize that it is not necessary to omit harsh realities

because acknowledgement of issues in society is a crucial step for healing and building

relationships with others. Telling nuanced stories with the world poses the risk of

misinterpretation however the payoff garners greater respect, admiration in addition to cultivating the conditions for dialogic international relations to be sustained long-term.

The age of American empire is alive and well in the 21st century. Though the Soviet Union collapsed almost three decades ago the threat of new cold wars loom large. However, the stage has changed dramatically, now through the proliferation of machine learning algorithms, social media technology, artificial intelligence and computer drones designed to spread discord, the technological and industrial media economies are primed to capitalize on the outrage of international audiences. The actors involved are far more complex today than during the 20th century Cold War. During that time period the only entities with enough capital to reach millions of people were major governments and extremely large corporation. Today anyone with access to social media can reach millions of people with viral content consequently, in 21st century informational warfare between major powers (China, Russia, US, India, etc.) and terrorist organizations threaten the societal stability. Though there are many unknowns about the future of propaganda and informational warfare, there is ample that scholars can learn by looking back at the lessons from the first cold war to apply in practice moving forward.

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Note: National Archives II is located in College Park, Maryland. Record group (RG) 59

    is the U.S. Department of State. RG 306 is the U.S. Information Agency