

MEDIA AGENDA SETTING AND FRAMING EFFECTS ON PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF
AND POLICY TOWARDS OPIOID ABUSE

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Introduction

On June 17, 1971, President Richard Nixon declared drug abuse to be “America’s public enemy number one.”¹ Nixon had campaigned and won the presidency on a ‘law-and-order’ approach and drug abuse, specifically the abuse of heroin, was a way for him to make good on his promises. Surprisingly, though, Nixon also proposed another approach to drug abuse beyond law-and-order in his special message to Congress. He proposed the establishment of an executive office known as the Special Action Office of Drug Abuse Prevention, which would be tasked with “all major Federal drug abuse prevention, education, treatment, rehabilitation, training, and research programs.”² The announcement was a welcome step for a country defined by predominantly punitive measures towards drug abuse in previous decades. But interdiction and ‘tough-on-crime’ approaches more consistent with ‘law-and-order,’ not treatment and prevention, would receive the bulk of funding, manpower, and media attention under the Nixon Administration. What followed Nixon’s press conference was an ongoing saga, marked by mass hysteria, mass incarceration, mass military, ‘supply-side’ operations in Latin America, and mass expansions of law enforcement and laws related to drug possession and abuse, that have become the hallmarks of a chapter in American history known as the “War on Drugs.”¹

Heroin was the preeminent drug claiming the attention of the Nixon administration. Before heightened heroin abuse under Nixon, opioids, a class of drugs including heroin, morphine, opium, and prescription pills among others, that attach to receptors in the brain and block pain and can create calming, euphoric effects, had a long history in the United States. But

¹ Nixon, Richard. 1971. Special Message to the Congress on Drug Abuse Prevention and Control. *Federal Register*, n. 203, p. 739-749.

² Ibid.

in spite of the consistency of some form of opioid abuse in the United States, the model profile and demographics of the typical opioid user changed dramatically. And what followed changes in the model profile of the typical opioid user was media coverage directed towards those users. The media helped to promote the hysteria and fear of heroin in the late 1960s and early 1970s and for the decades to follow. Media sensationalism and construction of the drug issue, specifically through agenda setting and framing measures, helped to distort a less alarming reality and to thereby misguide public perceptions and spur lasting changes in public policy.

Nixon's successors amplified a stance that stressed punishment over treatment. The defining features of the 'War on Drugs' exploded during the presidencies of President Ronald Reagan and President George H.W. Bush in the 1980s and early 1990s. President Bill Clinton, facing a new wave of heroin abuse and a new opioid threat in prescription pills, operated with tactics similar to his Republican predecessors. From Nixon to Clinton, the media covered the 'War on Drugs' extensively; drug issues were front-page news. The media helped to sway public opinions and public policy, and was frequently used as a tool by the White House to disseminate their messages to the public. Today, as the United States faces another opioid crisis, the media's influence on public perceptions of opioid abuse and on public policy intended to curb the pernicious effects of drugs during the 'War on Drugs' period of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, helps to elucidate its powerful role in our democracy.

History

18th Century - 1914

Opioids have been present in the United States since the days of colonial America. American physicians in the 18th century employed opium for a variety of therapeutic uses

including as a way to dull pain, alleviate coughing, and even to treat diseases like malaria or smallpox.³ During the Revolutionary War, physicians on both sides of the battlefield regularly used opium to treat sick and wounded soldiers. Though some physicians worried about the sources of their supply of opium and other analgesic opioids, nothing in the medical literature at the time suggests that opium addiction was a widespread problem.⁴ Opium remained a staple in the physician's office in the first half of the nineteenth century and by 1834, opium was "the single most widely prescribed item in the material medica."⁵ Sometime during the 1830s, however, opioid addiction, not just its dosing and treatment, came to be discussed in the medical literature. Physicians were growing concerned about the increasing rates of addiction.

It was not until the time period between 1860 and 1880, though, that opioid use had become truly prevalent enough to be perceived as a crisis. The hypodermic syringe, which was brought to America in 1856 and had been successfully marketed to almost all physicians by 1881, contributed to rising rates of addiction.⁶ Morphine, the principal alkaloid of opium, soon emerged as a popular therapeutic opiate decades after having been introduced in 1817. This was a novel and quick way for patients to feel the effects of the drug to ease chronic pain and mood. Drug historian David Courtwright notes "a syringe of morphine was, in a very real sense, a magic wand...doctors and patients alike were tempted to overuse."⁷

The Civil War also partially contributed to the rising addiction rates to iatrogenic opium and morphine in the latter part of the 19th century, though more debate surrounds the exact

³ Courtwright, David T. 2001. *Dark Paradise: A History of Opiate Addiction in America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 43.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 47.

influence of the Civil War. Hypodermic syringes had yet to become too popular during the time of the Civil War, and surveys from Michigan (1878), Chicago (1880), and Iowa (1885) predominantly reported addicts were female.⁸ Nevertheless, soldiers had access to a surplus of opium pills and powders during the war. Furthermore when the war ended, sick and wounded veterans were administered opiates for their injuries. After 1900, “there were fewer and fewer surviving veterans, addicted or not,” which “coincides exactly with the decline in per capita imports of opium and morphine,” suggesting that Civil War-related addiction had at least some influence on the high rates of addiction in the late 19th century.⁹

As morphine addiction spread throughout the country so too did warnings about its dangers. Numerous books, journal articles, and speeches cautioned physicians that morphine should be used sparingly and fully avoided with chronic illnesses.¹⁰ Patients’ self-administration using the hypodermic syringe, which had grown in popularity, was also denounced. But American physicians, due to a combination of medical ignorance and laziness in the office, often failed to heed this advice.¹¹ Greed also played a factor in the continued negligent administration of morphine. Many addicts hailed from the upper class. Doctors could simply use a little morphine to court them, get them hooked, and keep them coming back to their offices.¹²

In fact, demographics of typical opium or morphine addicts at this time help to explain physicians’ over-administration of opioids, as well as society’s softened perceptions of addiction. By the late 19th century, two-thirds of opioid addicts were either middle- or upper class white

⁸ Ibid., 36.

⁹ Ibid., 55.

¹⁰ Ibid., 52.

¹¹ Ibid., 50.

¹² Ibid., 50.

women. Widespread addiction among well to do white women during the late 19th century was a byproduct of two factors. One, opioid prescriptions were frequently given to women for menstrual and menopausal pain. Two, women at this time sought some sort of euphoria to satiate their boredom. The most common occupation of addicted females was that of homemaker. Society generally viewed addiction among these women and the embattled war veterans sympathetically. Doctors would usually continue to prescribe opioids to these patients.¹³

Though white women and veterans made up the greater portion of addicts in the 19th century, many of the first laws restricting opioid use targeted an entirely different demographic: the Chinese immigrant.¹⁴ Chinese workers had first come to the United States in masses in the 1850s, when the discovery of gold in California drew people from all parts of the world. Chinese workers were often given the most dangerous jobs. To relieve the pain and stress of abnormally hard workloads in poor working conditions, Chinese laborers turned to opium smoking, a habit that they had brought over from China.¹⁵

White opium smokers, drawn to the “underworld” of Chinese opium dens filled with prostitution, gambling, and crime, slowly emerged in the 1870s. Media coverage responded in kind, reporting that the Chinese “yellow fiends” would force white women into their underworld opium dens where they would fall prey to the drug.¹⁶ Media sensationalism, in conjunction with

¹³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Center for Abuse Treatment. 2005. *Medication-Assisted Treatment For Opioid Addiction in Opioid Treatment Programs*. Washington, D.C.: Department of Health and Human Services. 12.

¹⁴ Hoffman, John. P. 1990. “The Historical Shift in the Perception of Opiates: From Medicine to Social Menace.” *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* (January-March), 59.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 60.

the economic anxiety that Chinese migrants had stirred in white Californian workers, helped usher in laws that specifically prohibited the traditionally Chinese practice of smoking opium.¹⁷

By the turn of the century, opioid addiction as a whole began to be viewed more seriously, and iatrogenic addiction was decreasing.¹⁸ The public came to perceive opium smoking to be linked to immigrants, criminality, and danger. Campaigns that tied opioids to viceful Chinese immigrants and vulnerable white women certainly helped. The decline in opium smoking, always more of a socially constructed threat than a real one, was nonetheless a partial result of legislation that had greatly reduced the number of Chinese immigrants coming into the country.¹⁹ The decreasing rates of addiction were also supplemented by the deaths of many civil war veterans, some of whom had been addicted to opioids or morphine after the war, at the turn of the century. The doctor's office also saw change. Doctors were becoming more cautious in prescribing the same amount of opioids and morphine that they had done with disabled war veterans and white women in decades prior.²⁰ The changing tide in addiction rates and stricter perceptions of addiction were further buoyed by the emergence and promotion of new and effective alternatives to opioids. Aspirin, for instance, helped to curb potential addictions.²¹

Congress also sharpened its focus on validating prescriptions and preventing pill refills. The Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 required the contents of drugs to be listed on their labels and also established the Food and Drug Administration.²² The Smoking Opium Exclusion Act of 1909, which banned the importation of opium prepared for smoking and carried with it harsh

¹⁷ Ibid., 61-62.

¹⁸ Department of Health and Human Services, *Medication-Assisted Treatment*, 12.

¹⁹ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 84.

²⁰ Department of Health and Human Services, *Medication-Assisted Treatment*, 12.

²¹ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 94.

²² Department of Health and Human Services, *Medication-Assisted Treatment*, 12.

penalties, furthered the new standing of opioids as a social menace.²³ By the time the Harrison Narcotics Act came about in 1914, opium smoking had fallen out of favor due to a mix of public perceptions, medical alternatives, and the rising costs of addiction.²⁴

1914 – 1930

Though addiction to morphine, opium, and other opiates had declined sharply at the turn of the century, a new form of opioid abuse soon emerged in the United States: heroin. Heroin's ascension from cough suppressant to nationwide abuse in the 1920s and 1930s is partially a result of untruths surrounding general opioid addiction that were continually espoused and endorsed by politicians between 1910 and 1920. Congressional reports on opioid addiction led to legislation that would materialize their dubious findings. The unsound legislative chain of events left a "deep and lasting misimpression" on opioid use and addiction in the twentieth century and beyond.²⁵ The most salient consequences of such misimpressions included the cultivation of the heroin black market and the promotion of the culture of fear and stigmatization that surrounded addiction.

Heroin was first introduced in the United States in 1898 by Bayer Pharmaceuticals as a cough suppressant.²⁶ While heroin did produce iatrogenic addictions like its companions, opium and morphine, it had relatively low rates of iatrogenic addiction compared to the opium and morphine addictions of the previous century.²⁷ In lieu of iatrogenic addiction, though, was a

²³ Hoffman, *Perception of Opiates*, 9.

²⁴ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 82, 100.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 85.; Schneider, Eric C. 2008. *Smack: Heroin and the American City*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 6.

²⁷ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 85.

growing type of “pleasure-seeking” addiction to heroin, one that spread throughout the country with new types of users.²⁸

In contrast to opium smoking, which had become riskier and more expensive due to legislation like the Smoking Opium Exclusion Act, and had been effectively stigmatized by the public, heroin offered a promising alternative. It was cheaper than cocaine, more readily available than many other drugs, did not require the use of a hypodermic syringe, and alleviated any and all bad feelings.²⁹ As Courtwright notes in *One Hundred Years of Heroin*, “by 1912, heroin-related admissions to Philadelphia and New York hospitals were rising rapidly.”³⁰ By 1916, some opium smokers were reported to have made the switch to heroin.³¹ Opium had become scarcer and more expensive; smugglers had turned their sights to heroin.³²

The increasing rates of heroin addiction in the 1920s and 1930s can be traced back to strict drug prohibition laws in the earlier part of the century. In 1909, the United States sent Dr. Hamilton Wright, a prominent anti-opium advocate, to represent the United States at the Shanghai Opium Commission, a conference consisting of 13 nations to discuss the world’s growing narcotics problem.³³ Though the conference condemned opium smoking, curbed British opium trade, and achieved stricter international control, Wright wanted the United States to take further measures at home.³⁴ He communicated American sentiments to lead the crusade against

²⁸ Ibid., 121, 130.

²⁹ Courtwright, David. 2002. “The Roads to H,” in *One Hundred Years of Heroin*, ed. David Musto. Westport, CT: Auburn House, 7.

³⁰ Musto. *One Hundred Years of Heroin*, XVI.

³¹ Courtwright, “The Roads to H,” in *One Hundred Years of Heroin*, ed. David Musto, 6.

³² Ibid., 10-11.

³³ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 28.

³⁴ Ibid., 100.

opioids in order to augment the political and economic capital necessary to assume moral and diplomatic leadership on the world stage.³⁵

In order to achieve this vision, Wright based his *Report on the International Opium Commission* for the United States Congress on a disingenuous rendering of current opium consumption. The *Report* was supposed to serve as ammunition for the passage of the Foster Anti-Narcotic Bill. In order to obtain votes for the Foster Bill from the negro-phobic southern congressmen, Wright wrote of a grim, racially fueled drug scene in the United States.³⁶ Wright linked drug abuse to blacks in the South, which he argued “is often the direct incentive to the crime of rape by the negroes of the South and other sections of the country.”³⁷ Wright also manipulated data, to create the appearance of profound and increasing opium use, even though it had in fact fallen substantially.³⁸ Though erroneous, these figures persisted. They appeared in various medical journals, a *New York Times* article entitled “Uncle Sam is the worst Drug Fiend in the World” and even in a presidential message.³⁹ Wright’s claims of higher addiction were more appropriate in the opium and morphine-prevalent 1880s and 1890s, but by 1910 when the rate of addiction had declined and conservatism in administering opioids had grown, Wright used the stigmatization and misrepresentation that had come to surround opioid addiction for political gain.

³⁵ Hoffman, *Perception of Opiates*, 8-9.

³⁶ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 28, 29.

³⁷ Streatfield, Dominic. 2002. *Cocaine: An Unauthorized Biography*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 145.

³⁸ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 29.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

Though the Foster Bill never passed, the Harrison Narcotics Act (1914) essentially “a watered-down version of the Foster Bill,” did.⁴⁰ The Harrison Narcotics Act (1914) was the “earliest significant Federal attempt to place strict control on opioids and other substances.”⁴¹ Although it went largely unnoticed at the time, perhaps owing to the existing belief held by prominent newspapers, doctors, and policymakers that connected drugs with insanity, crime, and people of foreign origin or of low class, the Harrison Act had enormous consequences for opioid addiction, punishment, and treatment in the country.⁴² The provisions of the Harrison Act required narcotics manufacturers, physicians, and pharmacists to register and be licensed, pay a nominal tax to the U.S. Treasury (the agency responsible for enforcing the Harrison Act), and keep records of their transactions for inspection.⁴³

The Harrison Act and court rulings like *Webb v. United States* in 1919 helped to promulgate the already existing black market for narcotics. Heroin especially spread on the black market in the 1920s and 1930s. Heroin’s compactness, potency, and longer shelf life made it the “illicit opiate par excellence” for smugglers.⁴⁴ The rise of heroin’s price on the black market also increased the level of crime among its addicted users.⁴⁵ Legislation did not help stem the black market. In 1924, Congress effectively outlawed domestic use of heroin, but the results were insignificant, if not detrimental, in stemming the spread of the drug.⁴⁶ Addicts were undeterred.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Department of Health and Human Services, *Medication-Assisted Treatment*, 14.

⁴² Musto, David. 1999. *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 65

⁴³ Department of Health and Human Services, *Medication-Assisted Treatment*, 14.; Courtwright, David. 2001. “Drugs, Illicit.” In *The Oxford Companion to United States History*, ed. Paul Boyer. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 196.

⁴⁴ Courtwright, “The Roads to H,” in *One Hundred Years of Heroin*, ed. David Musto, 6.

⁴⁵ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 144.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 104-105.

By the 1930s, the widening pool of heroin users began to move away from sniffing heroin to intravenous use - injecting heroin was the quickest and most euphoric way of getting a fix, and it was a convenient way to compensate for the declining purity of street heroin.⁴⁷

The provisions of the Harrison Act were ambiguous on maintenance, that is, whether doctors were permitted to prescribe opioids to persons with addictions to maintain their addictions.⁴⁸ In 1919, the U.S Supreme Court ruled in favor of an anti-maintenance interpretation of the Harrison Act in a five-to-four decision in *Webb v. United States*. In response to the Harrison Act and then the *Webb* ruling, several municipalities had established narcotic clinics to provide addicts with a legal way to maintain their addictions.⁴⁹ The clinics, which “dispensed limited doses of heroin or morphine on a regular basis at relatively low to active addicts” were largely successful in curbing their criminal behavior and in offering an alternative to the burgeoning sale of heroin on the black market.⁵⁰ Despite the successes and relative progressiveness of these clinics, the prevailing attitude was that these clinics were failures, bankrupt of any morality because they allowed addicts to continue to use substances. By 1922, the government had succeeded in shutting down almost all of these clinics.⁵¹ Through this ruling and through media coverage that had cast maintenance clinics in a negative light, “any legitimate

⁴⁷ Ibid., 107.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 119, 142.; Department of Health and Human Services, *Medication-Assisted Treatment*, 14-15; Courtwright. “Drugs, Illicit,” in *Oxford Companion* ed. Paul Boyer, 196.

⁴⁹ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 11; Johnson, Bruce D., and Andrew Golub, “Generational Trends in Heroin Use and Injection in New York City,” in *One Hundred Years of Heroin* ed. David Musto, 96.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 11-12.; Ibid., 96.

⁵¹ Ibid., 11.; Ibid., 10, 96.

role for the general medical profession in medication-assisted treatment for Americans who had drug addictions” effectively ended until well into the 1960s.⁵²

The stereotypes of typical heroin addicts at this time also deviated sharply from that of the ‘old-fashioned morphine addict.’ Whereas morphine addicts were more often older or female and had become addicted due to a chronic condition, heroin addicts were rude young men in their 20s who hailed from a criminal underclass in the cities. Scores of European immigrants in the early 20th century had changed the composition of the heroin addict. Many were portrayed as working-class boys of European descent whose urban gang had gotten him hooked in his earlier years.⁵³ They used drugs solely for pleasure, unlike the veterans and white female addicts of the previous century who were thought to abuse opiates solely for iatrogenic reasons. As opioid use came to be associated with these young, degenerate urbanites, the public knew only about the immoral and pleasure-seeking addict of the criminal underworld. Addicts lining up to register for a clinic in New York City, for instance, “were frequently harassed by sightseeing buses, replete with gawking tourists.”⁵⁴ At the same time that stricter laws and disdainful perceptions towards opioid users emerged at the turn of the century, illegal drug use had started to appear in films that reinforced the hysteria, perversion, and a need for more punitive measures to combat addiction. Films like *For His Son* (1912) and *Broken Blossoms* (1919), for example, depicted cocaine addiction and opium dens with white women.⁵⁵

⁵² Department of Health and Human Services, *Medication-Assisted Treatment*, 14.

⁵³ Department of Health and Human Services, *Medication-Assisted Treatment*, 13.

⁵⁴ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 123.

⁵⁵ Boyd, Susan. 2010. “Reefer Madness and Beyond.” In *Popular Culture, Crime, and Social Control*, ed. Mathieu Deflem. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 6

1930 – 1964

The Federal Bureau of Narcotics was established in 1930 to control the illicit narcotics traffic in the United States.⁵⁶ Harry J. Anslinger oversaw the FBN from 1930 to 1962. Anslinger was a drug hardliner who favored stricter drug control legislation. Anslinger, a skilled bureaucrat, played upon public fear and used the media and Congress in order to achieve his agenda.⁵⁷ A stickler for controlling the supply of heroin, Anslinger gave “half-truths and fabrications” to undermine maintenance treatment.⁵⁸

The public had already been conditioned to be fearful of the dubious role of outsiders in fueling the narcotics problem of years past, and Anslinger continued to sensationalize the foreign influence, blurring the line “between fact and fiction when discussing the international sources of the nation’s drug problems.”⁵⁹ In the 1930s, Anslinger targeted China and Japan for the domestic narcotics problem. Far Eastern governments at the time were grappling with how to combat their own opium problems.⁶⁰ Though the Manchurian Crisis of 1931-1933 initially pressed the United States to take a more delicate and diplomatic approach, Anslinger did not operate under such constrictions. On behalf of the FBN, Anslinger would break from his intelligence sources and instead inform American newspapers that Japan had crippled Manchuria with their liberal opium regulation.⁶¹ Through the press and through his own memos, Anslinger compared Japan, which he alleged freely distributed opium, to American programs that sought to alleviate addiction

⁵⁶ Kinder, Douglas Clark., and William O. Walker III. 1986. “Stable Force in a Storm: Harry J. Anslinger and United States Narcotic Foreign Policy, 1930-1962.” *The Journal of American History* (March), 908; Courtwright, “Drugs, Illicit,” in *Oxford Companion* ed. Paul Boyer. 196.

⁵⁷ Kinder and Walker III, “Stable Force in a Storm,” 912, 927.

⁵⁸ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 84.

⁵⁹ Kinder and Walker III, “Stable Force in a Storm,” 912.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 913.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

through maintenance.⁶² Anslinger's continued demonization of the Japanese and oversight of the Chinese role in the opium problem, frequently communicated through the media, played on the general anti-Japanese hysteria and reflected the "yellow peril" at the time.

Anslinger used similar tactics to tap into the public's fears of a foreign influence in the 1950s. In the early years of the Cold War, Anslinger and high-ranking FBN agents accused communist nations of propagating the illicit narcotics trade.⁶³ As the Korean War dragged on, Anslinger reported to newspapers and popular magazines that Communist China and North Korea were complicit in narcotic sales to the United States.⁶⁴ The *New York Times* ran three front-page headlines on Anslinger's accusations of China and North Korea.⁶⁵ Just as he had in the 1930s, Anslinger misrepresented data to the media in order to help sell the public on the goals of the FBN.⁶⁶ The FBN's tenuous and vague "linkage of foreign sources of narcotics with domestic drug abuse" during a period in which the public was fearful of foreigners also contributed to stringent legislation passed by Congress.⁶⁷ Congress enacted the Boggs Act in 1951 and the Narcotic Control Act in 1956, both of which instituted longer mandatory sentences and proposed the death penalty for the sale of heroin to minors,⁶⁸ even though they "were enacted *after* the peak of the postwar heroin epidemic that inspired them."⁶⁹

Anslinger also used the media to convince the public on the dangers of marijuana. Though "most Americans in the 1930s were unfamiliar with marijuana" and recreational

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., 924.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 925.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 926.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 925-926.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 924.

⁶⁸ Ibid.; Courtwright, "Drugs, Illicit," in *Oxford Companion* ed. Paul Boyer, 196.

⁶⁹ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 156.

marijuana use was scarce, Anslinger embarked on a concerted campaign to convince the public otherwise.⁷⁰ Anslinger and the FBN aided in the production of *Reefer Madness*, a cult classic that depicted marijuana as a major threat to the white, middle-class, nuclear family. Under Anslinger, the FBN supported other films like *Reefer Madness* that exaggerated the dangers of marijuana. Anslinger was ultimately successful in his crusade to criminalize marijuana. In 1937, the Marijuana Tax Act, the purpose of which was to arrest users for tax evasion, added a national ban on marijuana and instituted a tax on marijuana possession.⁷¹

Though heroin addiction had thrived in the 1920s and 1930s, nonmedical addiction began to dwindle in the 1940s. Millions of young men were being drafted into the army for World War II and heroin had become even more expensive on the black market, due in part to the war's suffocation of opium smuggling routes.⁷² After World War II, however, heroin reemerged. This time, heroin originated in France.⁷³ The French used an opium and morphine base from Turkey and Lebanon to produce the heroin they then shipped off to New York City. In spite of an increase in federal narcotics arrests, officials found it increasingly difficult to cut off the supply of heroin.⁷⁴

Heroin use was an urban problem; it was concentrated in big cities like New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Detroit. Rarely did areas in the Western United States see addiction to any substances other than to marijuana.⁷⁵ Though addiction was still concentrated in the cities,

⁷⁰ Boyd, "Reefer Madness," in *Popular Culture*, 7.

⁷¹ Baum, Dan. 1997. *Smoke and Mirrors: The War on Drugs and the Politics of Failure*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 22; Courtwright, "Drugs, Illicit," in *Oxford Companion* ed. Paul Boyer, 196.

⁷² Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 147.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 148

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 149.

the demographics of opioid addicts were markedly different. African-American and Hispanic groups were increasingly abusing heroin. The European immigrants who had been the addicts in years past had left major cities after the war, and minorities, specifically African-Americans and Hispanics had filled the void.⁷⁶ Two other demographic changes further impacted the changing racial face of nonmedical addiction. The young, white, European urbanites who had been addicted from the 1910s to the 1930s and who were now entering their forties or fifties in the 1950s, “were approaching the end of their addiction careers.”⁷⁷ The Chinese opium addicts at the turn of the century were also made irrelevant by old age.⁷⁸ Many of the heroin addicts were teenagers and the “model addict was that of a young black man.”⁷⁹

With heroin addiction on the rise again, the news media was there to inform the public of its devastating effects. *Life* magazine depicted an 18-year-old displaying his needle marks.⁸⁰ Films like *Teenage Devil Dolls* (1955) and *High School Confidential* (1958) portrayed all-American high school girls corrupted by heroin. In *Teenage Devil Dolls*, a shady Mexican man is the one to hook the main character, Cassandra, on heroin.⁸¹ Frank Sinatra even played the role of a young man addicted to heroin in *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955).⁸² Heroin users were predominantly poor African Americans or Latinos at this time, but the most popular works depicted them as white and middle class.⁸³ The media’s sensationalism of adolescent drug use also inflated concerns. Articles from *The New York World Telegram and Sun* in 1950 made

⁷⁶ Department of Health and Human Services, *Medication-Assisted Treatment*, 13.

⁷⁷ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 150.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁸¹ Boyd, “Reefer Madness,” in *Popular Culture*, 12.

⁸² Boyd, “Reefer Madness,” in *Popular Culture*, 13.

⁸³ Schneider, *SMACK*, 57.

sensationalist claims to warn readers of increasing adolescent drug use and garnered so much attention that the New York City Mayor and State Attorney General ordered investigations into the problems outlined in the newspaper.⁸⁴ Heroin had also gained popularity on the backs of a counterculture movement. Heroin offered an alternative, fantasized lifestyle, one of “jazz, sex, and drugs.” Heroin, always popular in the jazz halls, was now used by almost 40% of jazz musicians. “Heroin,” Courtwright writes, “was hip by association.”⁸⁵

Heroin remained a major talking point in the 1960s, but in this decade, a different approach took hold. The Kennedy administration eliminated the mandatory minimum sentences for minor dealing and possession and also called for stricter federal control of prescription drugs, an area the FBN had consciously avoided in its pursuit of punishments and international duties.⁸⁶ Civil commitment, a process in which those addicted to substances or “in imminent danger of becoming addicted,” could enter rehabilitation centers before having committed or being convicted of a crime, was also instituted.⁸⁷ Though the civil commitment legislation was progressive at the time, it proved to be a failure. The programs proved to be expensive and many addicts who had enrolled soon dropped out.⁸⁸ But the most consequential idea to emerge from the 1960s was that of methadone maintenance.⁸⁹

President Richard Nixon took note of the methadone push that had begun in the early 1960s. Under Nixon, the U.S. federal government entered new vistas - both progressive and punitive. From the Nixon administration to the Clinton administration, the War On Drugs had

⁸⁴ Schneider, *SMACK*, 59.

⁸⁵ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 153.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁸⁷ Department of Health and Human Services, *Medication-Assisted Treatment*, 15.

⁸⁸ Department of Health and Human Services, *Medication-Assisted Treatment*, 15-16.

⁸⁹ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 163.

powerful allies in the White House and in the media. The mass media, which had already weighed in on the opioid landscape for decades, assumed an even more prominent stature beginning with the Nixon administration. Through its all-encompassing influence, drug abuse was “public enemy number one” not only in the eyes of many White House administrations but it came to be seen that way by the public too.

Agenda-Setting

An agenda, as defined by James Dearing and Everett M. Rogers, is “a set of issues that are communicated in a hierarchy of importance at a point in time.”⁹⁰ According to the agenda-setting process, issues to which the media devote the highest exposure become the issues that the public think about, consider to be the most important, and ultimately form public opinion around.⁹¹ Agenda-setting helps answer the question, “Why do some issues receive more attention - by the public, the media, policymakers - than others?” The influence of the media’s agenda on the public’s agenda is well-established and has been long-studied by political scientists and researchers.

In 1922, Walter Lippmann hypothesized the relationship between the news media agenda and the public agenda in *Public Opinion* (1922) and three years later, *The Phantom Public* (1925). Lippman noted that the media help shape the public’s notions of the world around them,

⁹⁰ Dearing, James W., and Everett M. Rogers. 1996. *Agenda-Setting*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc, 2.

⁹¹ Iyengar, Shanto, and Donald R. Kinder. [1987] 2010. *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 16; McCombs, Maxwell. 2000. “The Agenda-Setting Role of the Mass Media in the Shaping of Public Opinion.”; Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 2.; Volders, Stefan. July 2013. “Agenda-Setting Theory in Political Discourse on Twitter,” 9.

which for most citizens is “out of reach, out of sight, out of mind.”⁹² Private citizens are both too preoccupied with their own private affairs and unable to see public affairs that are “for the most part invisible.”⁹³ Thus, they depend on the media for their knowledge of these public affairs.⁹⁴

In his hypothesizing about the agenda-setting function of the mass media in 1963, Bernard Cohen famously observed that the press “may not be successful much of the time in telling people *what to think*, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers *what to think about*.”⁹⁵ In 1964, the political scientists Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton identified the status-conferral function of the mass media in which issues and policies are raised when they receive attention in the mass media.⁹⁶ The status-conferral function stipulates that whichever policies, people, and group receive the media’s attention is thereby legitimized and regarded as important in the eyes of the public.

Agenda-setting to earlier theorists like Lippman, Cohen, Lazarsfeld and Merton, though, was still a theoretical idea. It was not until 1972 that Dr. Max McCombs and Dr. Donald Shaw provided an empirical background to the agenda-setting theory, which has since formed the basis for the powers of the media to influence the public’s agenda even still today.⁹⁷ In their seminal study, McCombs and Shaw sought to determine the agenda-setting role of the mass media by

⁹² McCombs, “The Agenda-Setting Role,” 2. Erbring, Lutz., Goldenberg, Edie N., and Arthur H. Miller. 1980. “Front-Page News and Real-World Cues: A New Look at Agenda-Setting by the Media.” *American Journal of Political Science* (February), 17; Puglisi, Riccardo. 2007. “The Political Role of Mass Media in an Agenda-Setting Framework: Theory and Evidence.” Ph.D.diss. University of London, 21.

⁹³ Iyanger and Kinder, *News That Matters*, 16.

⁹⁴ Kinder, Donald R. 1988. “Communication and Opinion” *Annual Review of Political Science* (June), 167.

⁹⁵ Find Cohen (1963) article

⁹⁶ Lazarsfeld, Paul F. and Robert K. Merton. 1948. “Mass Communication, Popular Taste, and Social Action,” 235.

⁹⁷ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 12.

comparing the issues that Chapel Hill voters in the 1968 American presidential campaign perceived as most important with the content of the mass media that these voters used during the campaign.⁹⁸ McCombs and Shaw found a strong correlation between what voters thought the most important issues of the election were and the coverage that these issues received in the local and national media that they relied on. Since McCombs and Shaw first referred to this process as agenda-setting in their study, a large majority of the more than 400 subsequent studies on agenda-setting have supported the impact of the media agenda on the public agenda.⁹⁹

Ray Funkhouser found that the issues of the 1960s that were viewed as most important on the media's agenda and the public's agenda were very highly correlated. In addition to supporting McCombs and Shaw's claim made in their experiment one year prior, Funkhouser also investigated the role of real-world indicators in agenda-setting in this experiment. Funkhouser concluded, "The news media did not give a very accurate picture of what was going on in the nation during the sixties."¹⁰⁰ As Dearing and Rogers note, "American involvement in Vietnam peaked in 1968, but media coverage had peaked 2 years earlier in 1966,"¹⁰¹ and years of similar research has mainly supported Funkhouser's original claim about the unimportance of real-world indicators in setting the media agenda.

In the context of this thesis, real-world indicators for the "War on Drugs issue" failed to account for the rise of the issue on the media and the public agenda. Though the number of drug-related deaths actually decreased during the 1980s, numerous polls sponsored by Gallup,

⁹⁸ McCombs, Maxwell E., and Donald L. Shaw. 1972. "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* (Summer), 177.

⁹⁹ Delwiche, Aaron. 2005. "Agenda-setting, opinion leadership, and the world of Web logs." December 5. Volders (9), maybe somewhere in D and R (?)

¹⁰⁰ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 12.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 91.

the *New York Times*, and CBS News found that the public consistently ranked the drug issue as the most important problem facing the nation. The federal government under President Reagan aided the hysteria by providing billions for education programs about drug abuse and anti-drug law enforcement. After 1989, however, the drug issue quickly dropped down the public agenda, as other issues like the Gulf War began to emerge. By January 1992, only 4% of the U.S. public felt that drugs were the biggest problem facing the nation.¹⁰²

Experiments conducted by Iyanger and Kinder that compared the American public's preoccupation with issues with the attention given to these issues by television news coverage, though, revealed differences in the effects of real-world conditions on what Americans found to be the most pressing problems. In their inflation experiments, for instance, actual conditions had no direct impact on public opinion. But in their unemployment experiment, they found that as unemployment worsened, Americans found it to be among the nation's biggest issues, regardless of trends in television news coverage.¹⁰³ "Past studies suggest that the drug issue is an "unobtrusive issue," one in which the public "learns of the problem largely through the media rather than direct experience."¹⁰⁴

Funkhouser, along with McCombs and Shaw, helped lay the groundwork for the theory that the press's agenda leads the public's agenda, a theory strengthened later by more sophisticated analyses like that of MacKuen and Iyanger and Kinder. MacKuen presumed that "agenda-setting effects should be observed and estimated over time, as problems appear and

¹⁰² Ibid., 22.

¹⁰³ Iyanger and Kinder, *News That Matters*, 52-53.

¹⁰⁴ Johnson, Thomas J., and Wayne Wanta. 1996. "Influence Dealers: A Path Analysis Model of Agenda Building During Richard Nixon's War on Drugs." *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* (Spring), 182.

disappear, and as network news coverage shifts accordingly.”¹⁰⁵ In their agenda-setting experiments that measured television news coverage of issues and public polling over a certain time frame, Iyanger and Kinder presumed the same ideas as Funkhouser and MacKuen. They concluded that changes in the “public’s political preoccupations” could be partially traced to changes in attention devoted to issues by television news coverage.¹⁰⁶ When the news media focuses on a problem, agenda-setting effects take hold as the public’s attention follows. When the news media shifts its focus so too does the public.

Agenda-setting, in this sense, allows for some issues to become more salient than others and thereby influences audiences when they are forming their opinions. Salience refers to how important and memorable an audience perceives an issue on the agenda to be.¹⁰⁷ McCombs relates how two major forms of media - newspapers and television news - cue the public on which issues are most salient. Newspapers have lead stories on page one and large headlines. Television news communicate the degree of salience among certain issues through their own lead stories and the length of time it devotes to a story.¹⁰⁸

As the media agenda has been shown to be correlated with the public’s agenda, the interests of policy makers and political elites, reporters and media elites, and the public compete in order to have their own interests represented. Linsky notes that the agenda-setting process is “the result of the interplay of various currents, including but not limited to the intent of both

¹⁰⁵ Iyanger and Kinder, *News That Matters*, 26-27

¹⁰⁶ Iyanger and Kinder, *News That Matters*, 26-27.

¹⁰⁷ Enteman, Robert M. 1993. “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm.” *Journal of Communication* (December), 53; McCombs, “The Agenda-Setting Role,” 8.; Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 8.

¹⁰⁸ McCombs, “The Agenda-Setting Role,” 1.

journalists and officials.”¹⁰⁹ The agenda-setting process, moreover, can theoretically be thought of as a zero-sum game. The public can only absorb so many issues; an issue that climbs up the public agenda naturally moves another off. Brosius & Kepplinger found that respondents in national surveys could only communicate an average four or five issues when asked to name as many issues as they wished.¹¹⁰ Iyanger and Kinder suggested that the public focus on the news of today and soon forget the news of last month.¹¹¹

While research has noted that not all issues impact the public agenda equally, public concern regarding the drug issue has been found to be highly susceptible to media influence.¹¹² Edelman wrote that it is common to blame “victims of social misfortune for their own troubles; portraying the poor, sufferers from emotional and mental distress, or drug abusers as dangerous people whose moral inadequacies make them responsible for their own problems.”¹¹³ Katherine Beckett found that the politicization of the crime and drug issue, often tied together, was heavily constructed by the mass media and state actors during the Reagan administration and ultimately influenced public opinion.¹¹⁴ And Shoemaker, Wanta, and Leggett (1989) found that from 1972 to 1987, the more media coverage given to the drug issue, the more the public came to view

¹⁰⁹ Linsky, Martin. 1986. *Impact: How the Press Affects Federal Policymaking*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 89.

¹¹⁰ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 66.

¹¹¹ Iyanger and Kinder, *News That Matters*, 33.

¹¹² Brownstein, Henry H. 1991. “The Media and the Construction of Random Drug Violence.” *Social Justice* (Winter) 85-103.; Beckett, Katherine. 1994. “Setting the Public Agenda: ‘Street Crime’ and Drug Use in American Politics.” *Social Problems* (August).; Johnson and Wanta, “Influence Dealers.”; 183. Iyanger and Kinder, *News That Matters*.

¹¹³ Edelman, Murray. 1988. *Constructing the Political Spectacle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 79.

¹¹⁴ Beckett, Katherine. 1994. “Setting the Public Agenda: ‘Street Crime’ and Drug Use in American Politics.” *Social Problems* (August).

drugs as “the most important problem facing America today.”¹¹⁵ It is important to note, as Johnson and Wanta do, that the Shoemaker experiment, though certainly impactful, did not account for presidential influence.¹¹⁶

Agenda-setting is therefore also a process by which media and political elites can capitalize on the public’s vulnerability in information gathering. Edelman suggests that, “To hear or read the news is to live intermittently in a world one does not touch in daily life; and not to read it ordinarily makes little difference with the important exception that the mind does not then focus on the realities news stories construct.”¹¹⁷ Shoemaker and Vos expanded this thought with their gatekeeping theory, which suggests that the ‘gatekeepers’ of information - media and political elites capable of setting agendas - construct an individual’s reality according to their own personal worldviews.¹¹⁸ As the media partially rely on experts and public officials for information to publish, there is a natural representation of both public officials and media interests on the agenda.¹¹⁹

The U.S. President, along with the New York Times, is a powerful force in setting the media agenda. The U.S. President is able to put an issue on the media agenda simply by addressing it.¹²⁰ Likewise, the President can for political purposes, at his own peril, seek to delay addressing an issue simply by ignoring it. Research has substantiated that the President can influence the media agenda in a variety of ways, such as through political appointments, going

¹¹⁵ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 22.

¹¹⁶ Johnson and Wanta, “Influence Dealers,” 183.

¹¹⁷ Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle*, 35.

¹¹⁸ Chin-Fook, Lianne., and Heather Simmonds. 2011. “Redefining Gatekeeping Theory for a Digital Generation.” *McMaster Journal of Communication*, 7.

¹¹⁹ Linsky, *Impact*, 82-83, 89

¹²⁰ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 33, 75.

public, and commanding congressional attention through rhetoric.¹²¹ The White House is also capable of directly using the media to tailor the agenda closer to its interests. Richard Nixon would orchestrate media events to sell television producers and radio owners on the severity of the drug problem, and Nancy Reagan used the power of television to promote her Just Say No campaign.¹²²

In that same vein, the White House is able to work with the media to imprint its influence on the agenda through what is known as the “entertainment-education strategy.” Dearing and Rogers describe the entertainment-education strategy as “the placing of subtle education messages in entertainment programs rather than lecturing or preaching about an educational point.”¹²³ One benefit of this approach is that a large and targeted audience is more easily reached. For example, as head of the FBN, Harry Anslinger regularly supported films that played on stereotypes and exaggerated the dangers of drugs. The Nixon administration convinced “at least twenty television programs” to include at least one episode with an anti-drug theme.¹²⁴ And the Clinton administration poured \$2 billion into a media campaign which specifically sought to educate young people about drug use through the “Internet, television, radio and newspapers.”¹²⁵

Human interest stories are a similar way that the media is able to set the agenda for policymakers and the public through entertainment-style approaches.¹²⁶ For example, the hyperfocus of the media on the “private lives” of celebrities and on their concerns about certain

¹²¹ Whitford, Andrew B., and Jeff Yates. 2003. “Policy Signals and Executive Governance: Presidential Rhetoric in the War on Drugs.” *The Journal of Politics* (November), 996-997.

¹²² Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 21; Johnson and Wanta, “Influence Dealers,” 184-185.

¹²³ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 26.

¹²⁴ Johnson and Wanta, “Influence Dealers,” 185.

¹²⁵ Moses, Catherine. 2004. “The Making of Drug Policy in the George H.W. Bush and William J. Clinton Administrations: The Pursuit of Failure.” Ph.D.diss. University of Georgia, 146, 160.

¹²⁶ Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle*, 99.

issues helps influence the public view of the severity of an issue on the news agenda as well as their own. The drug-related deaths of prominent figures like Len Bias and Janis Joplin in the 1980s had a strong impact on the national agenda at the time.¹²⁷ Media coverage of crack cocaine increased sharply and persisted on the media agenda in 1986 after Bias's death. During the 1990s, a new trend dubbed "heroin chic" emerged in the worlds of fashion and pop culture. The trend, which critics claimed glamorized heroin, became so prominent that President Clinton spoke out against it.¹²⁸

Although the White House employs its own tactics to try to control the agenda, the media plays a large role in guiding policy makers on what issues they should address. Oftentimes officials will accept the agenda-setting power of the press because it might signal what issues are on the public's minds.¹²⁹ The media also not only sets the agenda, but amplifies it by devoting more attention to issues that they put on the agenda.¹³⁰ Media attention and policymaking enter complex feedback systems in which an effect of a policy can lead to more public and media attention, which in turn can lead to more policymaking.¹³¹ Jonas and Wolfe found that the increase in police activity towards crime and justice issues in the mid-1980s subsequently increased the attention that the media and public gave to police activity and the crime and justice

¹²⁷ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 21.

¹²⁸ Denham, Bryan E. 2008. "Folk Devil, News Icons, and the Construction of Moral Panics." *Journalism Studies*, 952.

¹²⁹ Linsky, *Impact*, 90

¹³⁰ Baumgartner, Frank R., Jones, Bryan D., and Michelle Wolfe. 2013. "A Failure to Communicate: Agenda Setting in Media and Policy Studies." *Political Communication* (May), 179; Baumgartner, Frank R., and Bryan D. Jones. 1993. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.; Linsky, *Impact*.

¹³¹ Baumgartner, Jones, and Wolfe, "A Failure to Communicate," 178-197.

issues, which then in turn led to more policymaking.¹³² This cycle between policymakers and the media and the public's attention continued even after the crime rate had stopped increasing. The agenda-setting power of the media, in short, "is omnipresent and central in the world of policymaking."¹³³

Framing

To garner support for their policies, political elites must persuade the public to agree with their points of view. The tactics and rhetoric that political elites use in order to convince the public inevitably is filtered through the mass media.¹³⁴ The media acts as an important lens through which the public becomes informed about an issue and attaches importance to that issue. The media also serves as a simple tool for the busy public to use in order to comprehend public policy.¹³⁵

Both political and media elites employ framework in order to communicate the aspects of a problem they deem to be most salient, and, therefore, most worthy of the public's consideration

¹³⁶ Salience, as mentioned in the prior section, measures how important and memorable an

¹³² Jones, Bryan D., and Michelle Wolfe. 2010. "Public policy and the mass media: An information processing approach." In *Public policy and the media: The interplay of mass communication and political decision making*, eds. S. Koch-Baumgarten and K. Voltmer. New York: Routledge. 17-43.

¹³³ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 76.

¹³⁴ McCombs, Maxwell E., and Donald L. Shaw. 1972. "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* (Summer), 176; Linsky, *Impact*, 10.

¹³⁵ Kinder, Donald R., and Thomas E. Nelson. 1996. "Issue Frames and Group-Centrism in American Public Opinion." *The Journal of Politics* (November), 1056; Enteman, Robert M. 1993. "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm." *Journal of Communication* (December), 56.

¹³⁶ Enteman, "Framing," 52.; Kinder and Nelson, "Issue Frames and Group-Centrism," 1074.; Druckman, James N., and Nelson, Kjersten R. 2003. "Framing and Deliberation: How Citizens' Conversations Limit Elite Influence." *American Journal of Political Science* (October), 740

audience perceives an issue to be.¹³⁷ Increasing the salience of a specific aspect of an issue enhances the likelihood that citizens will internalize and consider that specific aspect when formulating an opinion.¹³⁸ As framing highlights certain aspects of whatever issue is being communicated, a frame will inevitably direct attention away from other aspects of that issue.¹³⁹ Thus, frames can be thought of as *constructing* an issue¹⁴⁰ - frames define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and finally, suggest remedies.¹⁴¹

Elites invent the frame and the mass media communicates it to citizens through a variety of channels, such as television news programs, newspapers, talk shows, and radio.¹⁴² The media is a “site on which various social groups, institutions and ideologies struggle over the definition and construction of social reality.”¹⁴³ It serves as the ubiquitous arena in which public issues are contested and in which advocates “attempt to impose their own meaning on the issue.”¹⁴⁴ The individual or group whose frame dominates is rewarded with control over public opinion on that issue. Furthermore, most people are “awash in ignorance” of politics and especially ignorant of policy.¹⁴⁵ Framing offers a way for elites to capitalize on the poorly informed public, simplify complex issues to the public in whatever way they see fit, and heavily influence the public’s

¹³⁷ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 76.; Enteman, “Framing,” 2.; McCombs, “The Agenda-Setting Role,” 8.

¹³⁸ Enteman, “Framing,” 53.; Kinder, Nelson, “Issue Frames and Group-Centrism,” 1058.

¹³⁹ Enteman, “Framing,” 54.

¹⁴⁰ Kinder, Nelson, “Issue Frames and Group-Centrism,” 1057.

¹⁴¹ Enteman, “Framing,” 52.

¹⁴² Kinder, Nelson, “Issue Frames and Group-Centrism,” 1057.

¹⁴³ Gamson, William A., and Modigliani Andre. 1989. “Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach.” *American Journal of Sociology* (July), 3.

¹⁴⁴ Kinder, Nelson, “Issue Frames and Group-Centrism,” 1057. Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 2.

¹⁴⁵ Bullock, John G. 2011. “Elite Influence on Public Opinion in an Informed Electorate.” *The American Political Science Review* (August), 496.

response to their communications.¹⁴⁶ Most people conform readily to the wishes of authority figures even when those wishes are extreme.¹⁴⁷ Politicians thus jockey with journalists and other politicians to communicate their own news frames.¹⁴⁸

The media, though, possesses unique framing powers, in the sense that it not only serves as the arena for public discourse, but also contributes its own frames by pulling information from other sources and adding symbolic devices, like visual images, metaphors, or catch phrases, that in themselves carry frames.¹⁴⁹ Media discourse both reflects and contributes to the creation of an issue culture.¹⁵⁰ Media frames help organize the world for both journalists and their audiences.¹⁵¹

Television is one form of media where news framing is particularly impactful. Television news is authoritative news. Americans view television news without ambiguity, equivocation or uncertainty.¹⁵² P.H. Weaver said “There is hardly an aspect of the scripting, casting, and staging of a television news program that is not designed to convey an impression of authority and omniscience. This can be seen most strikingly in the role of the anchorman - Walter Cronkite is the exemplar - who is positively god-like: he summons forth men, events, and images at will; he speaks in tones of utter certainty; he is the person with whom all things begin and end.”¹⁵³ In 1985, as the War on Drugs entered its peak, various national surveys revealed that Americans

¹⁴⁶ Kinder, Nelson, “Issue Frames and Group-Centrism,” 1057. *Nukes* (3)

¹⁴⁷ Bullock, “Elite Influence,” 496.

¹⁴⁸ Enteman, “Framing,” 54. Linsky, *Impact*, 36.; Schon (book(29))

¹⁴⁹ Gamson and Modigliani, “Media Discourse and Public Opinion,” 3.; Clawson, Rosalee A., Nelson, Thomas E., and Zoe M. Oxley. 1997. “Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance. *The American Political Science Review* (September), 1041.

¹⁵⁰ Gamson and Modigliani, “Media Discourse and Public Opinion,” 3.. Enteman, “Framing,” 53.

¹⁵¹ Gamson and Modigliani, “Media Discourse and Public Opinion,” 3.

¹⁵² Iyanger and Kinder, *News That Matters*, 126.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 126.

believed by a wide margin that television -- not magazines, radio, or newspapers - provided the most intelligent, complete, and impartial news coverage.¹⁵⁴

Television has unique conventions starkly different to those in print news. Stuart Eizenstat, an advisor to President Carter commented that television conventions force reporters to “focus on conflict, on personality, on the veneer of the story rather than the substance of it.”¹⁵⁵ Television journalists are forced by the constraints of the medium and the conventions of the news program to present information in very tight packages.¹⁵⁶ Television therefore presents new challenges to political and media elites alike. As “television demands succinctness in a complex world,” the frames used on air become more impactful.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, television allows government officials to reach millions of people at one time with the same message. Television news is also reliant on visual images, which makes for a more intense and emotional form of media than print.¹⁵⁸

Television news framing also augments a phenomenon known as priming, which Iyanger and Kinder defined as follows: “By calling attention to some matters while ignoring others, television news influences the standards by which governments, presidents, policies, and candidates for public office are judged. Priming refers to changes in the standards that people use to make political evaluations.”¹⁵⁹ In other words, how prominent an issue is made out to be in the news determines people’s political evaluations.¹⁶⁰ In one study conducted by Iyanger and Kinder,

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 126.

¹⁵⁵ Linsky, *Impact*, 64-65.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 64.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 62-63.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 60-61.

¹⁵⁹ Iyanger and Kinder, *News That Matters*, 63.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

viewers who were primed by television news stories focusing on national defense consequently judged the president largely by the attention he paid to national defense.¹⁶¹

Research has shown that framing is positively correlated with formulating public opinion. Participants who watched a news piece on a Ku Klux Klan framed as a free speech rally, for instance, expressed more tolerance for the Klan than did participants who watched a piece framed as a public order story.¹⁶² In another study, whites' opinions on affirmative action were more closely tied to their racial attitudes when affirmative action was framed as an undeserved advantage for blacks rather than as reverse discrimination for whites.¹⁶³

Frames are further able to guide opinion just as much by what they omit as by what they include. As frames by definition select which aspects of an issue are most salient and worthy of attention, they inevitably omit or focus less on other aspects of the larger issue being communicated.¹⁶⁴ Kahneman and Tversky's 'Asian disease' experiment, in which the researchers presented different scenarios and frames of the effect of a deadly disease to participants, demonstrates the impact of a frame's omissions of potential problems, explanations, and recommendations on an audience formulating its opinion.¹⁶⁵ The fact that frames omit bits of information also has broader implications for audience interpretations of an issue. As Edelman

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 63-65, 114.

¹⁶² Clawson, Rosalee A., Nelson, Thomas E., and Zoe M. Oxley. 1997. "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance." *The American Political Science Review* (September): 567-583.

¹⁶³ Nelson and Oxley, "Issue Framing Effects," 1042.

¹⁶⁴ Enteman, "Framing," 54.; Kinder, Nelson, "Issue Frames and Group-Centrism."; Druckman and Nelson, "Framing and Deliberation."

¹⁶⁵ Enteman, "Framing," 54.

notes, the “social world...is a kaleidoscope of potential realities, any of which can be readily evoked by altering the ways in which observations are framed and categorized.”¹⁶⁶

That frames omit certain aspects or information of an issue also leaves a lasting influence on audiences’ interpretations of what is most salient. Lau, Smith and Fiske touch on the implications of such omission-induced interpretations, finding that “when voters are aware of only one interpretation about the consequences of a policy proposal...and that interpretation is at least marginally accepted, most voters will simply accept the assertions of that interpretation,” so long as that interpretation “fit the entry conditions of some basic political schema.”¹⁶⁷ Similarly, Linsky wrote that “if the press characterizes a policy option one way early on in the decision-making process, it is very difficult for officials to turn that image around to their preferred perspective.”¹⁶⁸ Further Enteman writes that “Once a term is widely accepted to use another is to risk that target audiences will perceive the communicator as lacking credibility...”¹⁶⁹

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The media circus and political headaches that surrounded the news of the White House’s development of the enhanced radiation (ER) warhead, which *Washington Post* journalist Walter Pincus incited with a news story in 1977, demonstrates how pervasive frames can be when they harp on certain aspects or buzzwords. In the *Post*, Pincus reported on the Carter administration’s covert development of a “clean” nuclear warhead, most memorably writing that the bomb “kills people and leaves buildings standing.”¹⁷⁰ The Pincus story spurred policy changes, like Senator

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Fiske, Susan T., Lau, Richard R., and Richard A. Smith. 1991. “Political Beliefs, Policy Interpretations, and Political Persuasion.” *The Journal of Politics* (August), 648-649.

¹⁶⁸ Linsky, *Impact*, 94.

¹⁶⁹ Enteman, “Framing,” 55.

¹⁷⁰ Linsky, *Impact*, 22.

Mark Hatfield's (R-OR) subsequent amendment to eliminate funding for ER weapons. It also shaped responses from the White House, which at first tried to distance itself from the bill but soon felt compelled to begin a media campaign one month later. The buildup in coverage and media attention culminated in President Carter's decision to cancel the ER warhead ten months later, a decision that was leaked in the *New York Times* before Carter announced his decision. Pincus' early characterization of the ER warhead as a bomb that "kills people and leaves buildings standing" rang throughout print and television news media during those ten months. It had not taken long for Pincus' frame, which ran contrary to that of the Carter administration, to dominate. Then Secretary of Defense Harold Brown lamented, "the story...cast ER weapons in the worst possible light...neglecting to say that the 'people' were Soviet tank crews and the 'property' was the houses in Germany that would fall on civilians and kill them if the property was destroyed."¹⁷¹

Framing's effects on public opinion are also significant because of the studied relationship between public opinion and policy making. As Linsky writes, "effective policymakers must be aware of the opinions of various groups and individuals as well as of the public as a whole, and they must be able to communicate their views to these constituencies. That is just as it ought to be; democracy demands that those wielding public power be subjected to continuing and close scrutiny."¹⁷² A vast body of research corroborates Linsky's claim that public opinion has a significant impact on policy making. In studying whether the presidential rhetoric of U.S. Presidents beginning with President Eisenhower and ending with President Clinton aligned with public opinion, Rottinghaus found that presidential policy statements

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 23.

¹⁷² Ibid., 11.

matched with majority public opinion 70% of the time.¹⁷³ Erikson, Wright, & McIver analyzed more than 142,000 telephone survey responses over 12 years and concluded that “public opinion is the dominant influence on policy making in the American states.”¹⁷⁴ In Walter Pincus’s first report on the ER warhead mentioned earlier in this section, media framing proved to be tumultuous and influential on policy. As Zbigniew Brzezinski, then President Carter’s national security advisor, put it, “The *Post* article touched off a political explosion that reverberated throughout the United States and Europe.”¹⁷⁵ Though there are debates about its degree, public opinion does affect policy making in our democracy.¹⁷⁶

Nixon

The culture in the 1960s was chaotic. Racial tensions were high. Television news were frequently broadcasting African American riots in city streets. Street crime was also on the rise, and the nation’s crime rate had doubled between 1960 and 1968.¹⁷⁷ Though a variety of factors, such as baby boomers growing up and becoming young men, provided some grounds for an explanation, statistics depicting an increasing lawlessness among black men overshadowed them on the airwaves, the newspapers, and in Washington; and heroin addiction, specifically the profile of the model addict - black and concentrated in urban areas, stuck out.¹⁷⁸ Heroin had become something of an epidemic again by the late 1960s.¹⁷⁹ Dr. Robert Dupont, America’s

¹⁷³ Rottinghaus, Brandon. 2006. “Rethinking Presidential Responsiveness: The Public Presidency and Rhetorical Congruency, 1953–2001.” *The Journal of Politics* (August): 720-732.

¹⁷⁴ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 73.

¹⁷⁵ Linsky, *Impact*, 22.

¹⁷⁶ Burstein, Paul. 2003. “The Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy: A Review and an Agenda.” *Political Research Quarterly* (March), 29; Iyanger and Kinder. *News That Matters*, 121.

¹⁷⁷ Schneider, *SMACK*, 165.

¹⁷⁸ Baum. *Smoke and Mirrors*, 4.

¹⁷⁹ Courtwright, “The Roads to H,” in *One Hundred Years of Heroin* ed. David Musto, 6.

national “drug czar” from 1973-1977, reflected that in Washington D.C., “the modern heroin epidemic began in...1966 and reached its peak in 1971.”¹⁸⁰ By the end of the 1960s in New York City, the number of known heroin users had doubled.¹⁸¹ Heroin deaths, arrests and seizures shot up during the decade, as did the petty crime and mugging associated with addicts.¹⁸²

Few men were as aware of the country’s disillusion and frustration with heroin addiction and the problems that came with it than Richard Nixon. In an op-ed published in *Reader’s Digest* in 1967, one year prior to his entering the Oval Office, Nixon wrote that “Our opinion leaders have gone too far in promoting the doctrine that when a law is broken, society, not the criminal, is to blame,” and pledged “immediate and decisive force.”¹⁸³ The media, already having laid much of the groundwork for the public fear of the drug problem in the previous decade, pushed that agenda to new heights, buoying Nixon’s vision and political capital in the process. Nixon recognized the power of the media, and frequently worked with journalists, reporters, and producers to embed heroin addiction and drug-related crime into the public agenda. Nixon’s impending War on Drugs, it seemed, could not have come at a better time.

Nixon and his administration recognized the power that television had on the public. During the course of his campaign in early 1968, Nixon flaunted his recognition of how exploitable the public’s crime fears were in a letter to Dwight Eisenhower that read, “I have found great audience response to this [law and order] theme in all parts of the country, including areas like New Hampshire where there is virtually no race problem and relatively little crime.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 67.

¹⁸¹ Schneider, *SMACK*, 165.

¹⁸² Baum. *Smoke and Mirrors*, 4.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 9.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., somewhere. (Baum)

Nixon campaigned on this idea and addressed heroin addiction, which he referred to as America's "Public Enemy Number One" in one campaign speech, through a staunch law and order frame.¹⁸⁵ Nixon was not wrong about rising heroin addiction and crime rates, since the two often went hand in hand in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The rise of heroin supply, addiction and related crime in Washington, D.C., dubbed America's "crime capital" at the time, peaked simultaneously between 1966 and 1969.¹⁸⁶ In 1971, 52 percent of all criminal cases in the Los Angeles County Superior Court system were drug-related, and it was estimated that more than half of all inmates in New York City's jails were heroin addicts. And statements like those from Sgt. Larry Gallu of the Phoenix Police Department, that estimated "somewhere between 65% and 80% of all burglaries" were committed by heroin addicts, reaffirmed Nixon's rhetoric on the direct relationship between heroin and crime.¹⁸⁷

Nixon won the Presidency with the help of the staunch law and order vision towards heroin addiction and street crime that he had laid out. Now, he had to keep his promise. To win over the power and the focus of the news media, Nixon would orchestrate events that showed the dangers of the drug menace before television producers.¹⁸⁸ One such rehearsal was a demonstration of German shepherds sniffing out marijuana in mail pouches.¹⁸⁹ Egil "Bud" Krogh and John Ehrlichman, close narcotics advisors to the president, expanded the use of television to further push the drug issue into the public's line of vision. They worked with the producers of the most popular TV shows in the early 1970s, such as *Mission Impossible*, *Hawaii Five-O*, and

¹⁸⁵ Bellis, David J. 1981. *Heroin and Politicians: The Failure of Public Policy to Control Addiction in America*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 21.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 22.

¹⁸⁸ Johnson and Wanta, "Influence Dealers," 183.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

Andy Griffith, to implement anti drug messaging in their programs.¹⁹⁰ They were particularly interested, though, in targeting television programming to reflect teenage drug use, and “by the summer of 1970, villainous drug pushers and drug-abusing teens were driving the plots of *General Hospital*, *Mannix*, *Mod Squad* and *Love American Style*.”¹⁹¹ Ehrlichman even acknowledged Nixon’s political motivation in scaring white voters with the idea that their children could soon become heroin abusers: “Narcotics repression is a sexy political issue. Parents are worried about their kids using heroin, and parents are voters. This is why the Nixon White House became involved [in fighting heroin].”¹⁹² But in stark contrast to this concerted effort, a three-year survey of a diverse sample of 2,200 high school boys conducted by Lloyd Johnston, a graduate student at the University of Michigan Institute of Social Research, dispelled the popular conception of a teenage drug epidemic. Though the mass media had communicated that “most” high school kids used drugs and had frequently conflated marijuana use and heroin use into a unified, loud issue, Johnston’s 1969 survey found that 80% had never smoked marijuana, and at least 90% of the sample of highschool boys had neither tried heroin nor cocaine.¹⁹³ Public opinion polls in the early 1970s also suggested that only 6 percent of young people had ever tried heroin.¹⁹⁴ Dr. Johnston also conducted another statistical survey in 1975 twhichhat concluded that not even 1 percent of school-aged youth had tried heroin during the period from 1973-1975.

¹⁹⁰ Baum. *Smoke and Mirrors*, 4.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid., 32.; Bellis. *Heroin and Politicians*, 23.

¹⁹³ Baum. *Smoke and Mirrors*, 8, 27.

¹⁹⁴ Johnson and Wanta, “Influence Dealers,” 183.

Another issue inspired Nixon's huge focus on heroin addiction: the belief that heroin addiction had spread to "epidemic" proportions among American troops stationed overseas in Vietnam. The public was first made aware of a drug issue in Vietnam when John Steinbeck IV published "The Importance of Being Stoned in Vietnam" in the *Washingtonian* magazine.¹⁹⁵ Steinbeck's outsized claims, such as "up to 75 percent of soldiers in Vietnam got high regularly," were later found to be overdramatized by Steinbeck's own admission.¹⁹⁶ Nonetheless, his figures were frequently cited by journalists sensationalizing the consequences of the drug issue in Vietnam veterans. Steinbeck's article gave rise to what Jeremy Kuzmarov dubs "the myth of the addicted army" - the popular idea held by the public and the president that heroin use was of epidemic proportions among Vietnam troops without ever accounting for the social conditions overseas that might have encouraged drug use.

The mass media were the main propagators, peddling stories that exaggerated or sensationalized the impact of drugs on American soldiers in Vietnam or the prospect of addicted veterans coming home. Headlines from the *Washington Post* in 1969, for instance, were entitled: "Turn On, Tune In and Fire Away" and "GIs Deep into Drugs." One *New York Times* profile of Robert Parkinson in August 1970 insinuated that it was drugs, rather than other psychological or social factors, that were causing the army to collapse upon itself and soldiers to frag their own men.¹⁹⁷ The media also often framed drugs as a sinister foreign agent, invoking similar "lurid metaphors and orientalist stereotypes" that were "reminiscent of the worst anti drug campaigns

¹⁹⁵ Kuzmarov, Jeremy. 2009. *The Myth of the Addicted Army: Vietnam and the Modern War on Drugs*. University of Massachusetts Press.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

of the past.”¹⁹⁸ *Reader’s Digest* even compared a Vietnamese opium den visited by American GIs to “a Nazi death camp.”¹⁹⁹

One article entitled “G.I. Heroin Addiction Epidemic in Vietnam” was splashed across the May 16, 1971 front page of the *New York Times* and inspired a litany of related stories warning of the Vietnam heroin epidemic and returning addicted soldiers.²⁰⁰ In June, one month after the *Times* story was published, a Gallup poll found that the number of Americans who viewed drug addiction as the third largest problem facing the country had doubled since March of that year. The sensational stories continued as American troops began to return home. In *Newsweek*, columnist Stewart Alsop attributed the drug-related demise of New York City to the return of addicted veterans and a *Time* piece in June 1971 attributed a rising crime rate to the return of addiction veterans.²⁰¹

On television, the major networks broadcasted almost “daily reports on drugs through the 1970s, blaming them for the military’s breakdown and the onset of a domestic crime wave.”²⁰² One television special called “Heroes and Heroin” aired on ABC News on August 21, 1971 and was funded by the Department of Defense and endorsed by the White House. The television special had racial undertones and depicted drugs as commonplace, pervasive, and crippling to the American army.

The public responded to the media bombardment of the drug issue accordingly. Drug abuse had not registered as one of the most important problems facing the country in the Gallup

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁰⁰ Weimer, Daniel. 2003. “Drugs-as-a-Disease: Heroin, Metaphors, and Identity in Nixon’s Drug War, 262.

²⁰¹ Kuzmarov, *Myth of the Addicted Army*, 45.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 46.

polls conducted during Nixon's first years in office.²⁰³ But throughout the 1970s, public concern rose steadily. In June 1971, more than 50 percent of Americans viewed the drug issue, along with lawlessness and crime, as one of the top three problems facing the country. A month later, a majority of respondents said drugs were the largest issue, despite most admitting to having no direct experiences with drug abuse.²⁰⁴ These sentiments held steady across various regions of the United States. Drug abuse peaked in polls of national concern in early 1973, yet fell off the list entirely by early 1974.²⁰⁵

In reality, addiction among Vietnam veterans was a significantly smaller problem than it had been made out to be.²⁰⁶ Though it is true that many soldiers were in fact using heroin, which was widely available in Vietnam,²⁰⁷ the media took great lengths to tie drug use to maniacal outbursts or breakdowns in military efforts that led to the war's failure. Furthermore, though half of the Army's enlisted men in Vietnam had tried heroin by 1971, they had low relapse rates upon returning to the United States, signaling that usage was heavily tied to the stressful conditions in the war.²⁰⁸ Veterans also got off heroin without methadone or any other kind of intervention. One set of interviews with veterans in 1973 found that less than 10 percent had even used drugs when they returned to the United States, and less than 1 percent addicted to opioids.²⁰⁹ Returning veterans also rarely got into trouble as had been projected; fewer than 0.5% of returning veterans committed any crimes.²¹⁰

²⁰³ Johnson and Wanta, "Influence Dealers," 182.

²⁰⁴ Kuzmarov, *Myth of the Addicted Army*, 47.

²⁰⁵ Johnson and Wanta, "Influence Dealers," 182.

²⁰⁶ Kuzmarov, *Myth of the Addicted Army*, 34.

²⁰⁷ Schneider, *SMACK*, 163.

²⁰⁸ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 168-169.

²⁰⁹ Kuzmarov, *Myth of the Addicted Army*, 34.; Schneider, *SMACK*, 160.

²¹⁰ Kuzmarov, *Myth of the Addicted Army*, 45.

Still, the mostly unfounded media outcry and the public hysteria over the drug issue had a profound effect on policy making at the time. For example, Senator Thomas Dodd, inspired by a CBS clip of an American soldier in Vietnam smoking marijuana out of the barrel of his rifle, staged a day of hearings about drug use.²¹¹ At the peak of a media scare in 1971, the U.S. Army Research Office conducted a comprehensive drug usage survey of 36,000 GIs. This led to mandatory, well publicized, urinalysis tests for soldiers leaving Vietnam. Back at the White House, Egil Krogh wrote in a private memorandum in late 1971 that “The newspaper, magazines, and TV have all elaborated the current drug condition. The public is becoming convinced that there is a major problem and we need to take more concerted action.”²¹²

Perhaps the most notable policy change that arose by virtue of the rising rates of addiction and crime issue in the late 1960s, and was ignited in the face of the Vietnam problem in the early 1970s, was the Nixon administration’s decision to reverse fifty years of policy by rekindling methadone maintenance clinics in the United States in the early 1970s.²¹³ In the decade prior, Vincent Dole and Marie Nyswander had pioneered methadone maintenance.²¹⁴ They found that methadone could be administered to addicts in order to abate cravings for heroin but keep addicts functioning. The successes of their experiments, though overly optimistic owing to patient demographics and dosing levels unrepresentative of those of city clinics,²¹⁵ made waves in the mayors’ offices in large cities before the Nixon administration began a federal methadone maintenance push. New York City Mayor John Lindsay had opened the city’s first

²¹¹ Baum. *Smoke and Mirrors*, 39.

²¹² Kuzmarov, *Myth of the Addicted Army*, 108.

²¹³ Massing, Michael. 1998. *The Fix*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

²¹⁴ Baum. *Smoke and Mirrors*, 27.; Schneider, *SMACK*, 166.

²¹⁵ Bellis. *Heroin and Politicians*, 102.

voluntary methadone maintenance clinic in 1969 and New York City officials partially credited the expansion of its methadone program for the city's first decline in its crime rate in 1972, a feat that had not been accomplished for a number of years.²¹⁶ In Illinois, Dr. Jerome Jaffe, who would later head the Nixon administration's Special Action Office for Drug Abuse Prevention (SAODAP) as the nation's first "drug czar," opened fifteen methadone clinics that were frequently met with long lines.²¹⁷ While methadone maintenance did not receive the majority of funding when Nixon increased the overall treatment budget from \$28 to \$300 million, funding nevertheless increased substantially.²¹⁸ The number of patients in methadone programs grew from 9,000 in 1971 to 73,000 in 1973. Nixon also helped to establish close to 2,000 rehabilitation programs and pushed the Veterans Administration to open almost 30 new drug addiction programs in the largest cities in the country.²¹⁹ Treatment funding also went to abstinence and therapeutic communities like Narcotics Anonymous, where addicts entered community support networks or faith-based, "cold turkey" programs.²²⁰

At the same time as the Nixon administration was allaying public fears and media coverage of drug use by teens and addicted veterans through the expansion of methadone maintenance, it also happened to be increasing funding on the law and order promises that helped deliver Richard Nixon the presidency. On June 17, 1971, Nixon formally declared a "war on drugs" in the same address that he announced the creation of SAODAP under

²¹⁶ Schneider, *SMACK*, 166.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 168.

²¹⁸ Department of Health and Human Services, *Medication-Assisted Treatment*, 38.; Kuzmarov, *Myth of the Addicted Army*, 110.; Schneider, *SMACK*, 171.

²¹⁹ Kuzmarov, *Myth of the Addicted Army*, 108.; Schneider, *SMACK*, 165.

²²⁰ Schneider, *SMACK*, 169, 172, 174.

methadone-proponent Dr. Jerome Jaffe.²²¹ Under Nixon, Congress ultimately appropriated \$1 billion to fund a variety of drug programs.²²² Funding, however, for the enforcement budget for narcotics increased from \$65 million in 1969 to \$719 million by 1974.²²³ Funding increased dramatically at the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, an agency formerly known as the FBN and the precursor to the Drug Enforcement Agency.²²⁴ Similarly, Congress passed a White House proposal to expand the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.²²⁵ But under Nixon, the LEAA lacked organization and leadership in the state and local agencies with which it worked and funded. Instead, it spent its increased funds on equipment like riot control gear in a questionable effort to curb heroin addiction and street crime.²²⁶ In his 1972 State of the Union Address, Nixon established the Office of Drug Abuse Law Enforcement (ODALE), further expanding law enforcement and its powers in American communities. ODALE agents utilized “no-knock” provisions to make raids of suspected heroin dealers, raids which sometimes resulted in the death of innocent people.²²⁷

In spite of Nixon’s dramatic increases in funding for the law enforcement carrying out his “war on drugs,” drug rates for marijuana and heroin remained static in the early 1970s, only to increase after Nixon left office.²²⁸ Moreover, though heroin addicts constituted only about one-quarter of one percentage of the population in 1972, popular estimates from various media

²²¹ Jaffe, Jerome H., “One Bite of the Apple: Establishing the Special Action Office for Drug Abuse Prevention,” in *One Hundred Years of Heroin* ed. David Musto, 44.

²²² Bellis. *Heroin and Politicians*, 27.; Schneider, *SMACK*, 165.

²²³ Kuzmarov, *Myth of the Addicted Army*, 113.

²²⁴ Baum. *Smoke and Mirrors*, 9.; Kuzmarov, *Myth of the Addicted Army*, 112.

²²⁵ Baum. *Smoke and Mirrors*, 45.

²²⁶ Bellis. *Heroin and Politicians*, 31.

²²⁷ Bellis. *Heroin and Politicians*, 30-31.

²²⁸ Kuzmarov, *Myth of the Addicted Army*, 119.

and policymakers often severely overstated figures regarding crimes committed by drug addicts. Bellis notes that in 1972, there was a 4 percent *decrease* in serious crime nationwide, “...the first such decline in 17 years.”²²⁹

Nixon took credit for the lowering of heroin addiction and drug related crimes during his reelection campaign. In one 1972 campaign speech, Nixon bragged that he had “brought the frightening spread of drug abuse, crime and anarchy to a standstill” and that the nation had “turned the corner on drug abuse.” Long-term efforts by both Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon to crack down on heroin-producing laboratories in France did partially affect the supply of heroin in the country.²³⁰ It was estimated that “anywhere from two-thirds to 80 percent of the heroin arriving in the United States during the postwar period” came from Turkey and was processed in French laboratories.²³¹ Some of Nixon’s policies, such as the expansion of methadone maintenance clinics and the increase in demand-side funding, had somewhat helped to alleviate crime during his presidency and did offer treatments options for addicts.²³² But as Courtwright notes, “methadone maintenance never emerged as a coherent national response to heroin addiction.”²³³ Though the efficacy of methadone maintenance has its own doubters, funding and attention for treatment programs as a whole was nonetheless dwarfed by the massive expansion of drug law enforcement.²³⁴ By 1973 serious crime had actually started to rise once again, and 1974 saw “the largest increase in fifty years.”²³⁵ After the short-lived drops in heroin

²²⁹ Bellis. *Heroin and Politicians*, 71.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 70. Schneider, *SMACK*, 182.

²³¹ Schneider, *SMACK*, 182.

²³² Bellis. *Heroin and Politicians*, 71.

²³³ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 173.

²³⁴ Bellis. *Heroin and Politicians*, 78-79.

²³⁵ *Ibid*

addiction and drug-related crime, heroin was starting to flood in from Mexico.²³⁶ In May 1975, Nixon's successor, President Gerald Ford stated in an address to Congress: "Recent evidence suggests an increase in the availability and use of dangerous drugs in spite of the creation of special federal agencies and massive federal funding during the past six years."²³⁷

Nonetheless, as crime rose, as Mexican heroin began to pour into the United States, and "in the midst of the Nixon self-congratulation," opinion polls showed that "the heroin issue had moved to the back burner of public concern."²³⁸ By early 1974, the drug issue had fallen off entirely as revealed by a Gallup poll which asked, "what do you think is the most important problem facing America today," a poll where it had been a frequent top issue in years prior. The mass media had certainly helped stoke public fears and set policy making in their role portraying the heroin and drug crime problem. They frequently communicated the issues to the public in a variety of ways: conflating marijuana and heroin usage, sensationalizing heroin abuse among Vietnam veterans to captivate the public, and allowing the Nixon administration's requests to filter into television programming. Despite this, evidence suggests that although heroin abuse was certainly a problem in the United States, the issues associated with it were far less severe as was reported, and that the media's coverage was at times overblown. Still, the drug issue remained high on opinion polls that asked what issues the public feared most in the early 1970s, when the "war on drugs" was officially declared.

²³⁶ Schneider, *SMACK*, 183.

²³⁷ Bellis. *Heroin and Politicians*, 81.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 78.

Reagan

“The most striking feature of the Reagan drug war, apart from its scale and cost” Courtwright notes, “is how modest a role opiates played in bringing it about.”²³⁹ Marijuana and cocaine were indeed the focal points of the Reagan administration’s expansion of drug law enforcement, imprisonment, and messaging to the American public, as the consumption and coverage of both drugs increased during the 1980s. But opioids still lurked in the Reagan administration's peripherals. Perceptions of opioid addiction and policies determined to curb or treat opioid addiction were still impacted by the coverage of the mass media in the 1980s. The media again helped to fuel the nation’s fear of drugs, and the Reagan administration worked through the media, but with greater emphasis on law enforcement and on punishment than the Nixon administration had.

The heroin problem that the media had forgotten, that the public had ceased caring about, and that Nixon had triumphantly claimed victory over, continued to gradually grow in a number of ways in the 1970s, such as in drug potency, crimes associated with heroin addiction, and demand for addiction treatment.²⁴⁰ Heroin epidemics also sprung up in Asia and in Europe during the mid-1970s. President Ford emphasized drug law enforcement to pushback on the supply of heroin. In the late 1970s, heroin supply and use in the United States had declined. Supply-side efforts under the Carter administration had also found some success.²⁴¹ But as was the case in the early 1970s with Nixon’s assault on Turkish and French opioids, the benefits of the supply side assault again proved to be temporary. By the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the nation was soon

²³⁹ Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 161.

²⁴⁰ Bellis. *Heroin and Politicians*, 81.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 83. Massing, *The Fix*, 154.

faced with yet another heroin epidemic.²⁴² In the midst of the epidemic in 1981, Ronald Reagan became the next President of the United States, a victory underpinned partially by perceptions that President Carter was “soft” on the drug issue because he advocated for treatment and decriminalization, even though he continued support for an international drug war.²⁴³

As Reagan took office, the heroin problem looked dire. Heroin had been flooding into the country, this time from a new source known as the “Golden Crescent,” an area of Southwest Asia that included Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan.²⁴⁴ In Afghanistan, the rise in opium production coincided with the CIA’s backing of opium- and poppy-producing Afghans who were fighting the arrival of Communist Russia.²⁴⁵ In the fight against Communism, the CIA was abetting the production of heroin. Afghanistan and Pakistan produced an estimated 1,000 metric tons of opium in 1979. Mexico was estimated to have only produced 10 tons in 1979.²⁴⁶

Cities like Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., and New York were hit hard by the massive influx of heroin. Chicago police officers at the time expected a 10 percent rise in heroin addicts owing to Golden Crescent heroin.²⁴⁷ In New York, admissions to drug treatment programs were up 26 percent in 1980.²⁴⁸ New York Governor Hugh Carey stated, “by the early 1980s the number of heroin users had increased by 50 percent over what it had been a decade earlier.”²⁴⁹ In 1979, the Carter administration sent \$10 million in emergency treatment funds to

²⁴² Massing, *The Fix*, 153.; Schneider, *SMACK*, 183.

²⁴³ Kuzmarov, *Myth of the Addicted Army*, 168.

²⁴⁴ Bellis, *Heroin and Politicians*, 85.; Massing, *The Fix*, 153.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 85-86.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 86.

²⁴⁹ Schneider, *SMACK*, 188.

the hurting cities, where the treatment centers that had been neglected for the past four years were now becoming overrun with users.²⁵⁰

Ronald Reagan responded to the problem with his 1981 budget. The administration boosted drug enforcement funding by 20 percent while cutting the treatment budget by 25 percent. Factoring in for inflation of the period, the government's spending on treatment was less than a quarter of what it had been in 1974.²⁵¹ Perhaps even more central to the drug issue, though, was First Lady Nancy Reagan. As First Lady, Nancy Reagan was looking for a cause and a cause, and she was committed to making that an issue related to drug abuse and kids.²⁵² She would frequently visit schools, prevention programs, and treatment centers to promote anti drug efforts.²⁵³ She also worked with the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to implement national anti drug programs like the sweeping "Just Say No" campaign.²⁵⁴

Initially the public did not seem to share Reagan administration concerns about the influx of heroin supply and the rise in addiction during the early 1980s. One month before Nancy Reagan visited a drug program facility in Florida on February 15, 1982,²⁵⁵ drug abuse did not even register on Gallup's poll asking "what is the most important problem facing this country," in spite of an eight-issue list, a 3 percent cutoff and multiple responses.²⁵⁶ In fact, drug abuse had not made the list of problems on the Gallup poll since July 1978.²⁵⁷ The attention to drugs by the

²⁵⁰ Massing, *The Fix*, 154.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 161.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 157.; Baum. *Smoke and Mirrors*, 141.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 163.

²⁵⁴ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 21.; Kuzmarov, *Myth of the Addicted Army*, 173.

²⁵⁵ Massing, *The Fix*, 162.

²⁵⁶ Beniger, James Ralph. 1984. *Trafficking in Drug Users: Professional exchange networks in the control of deviance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 5.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

media during the heroin epidemic of the late 1970s and early 1980s was minimal compared to the media's coverage of the crack cocaine boom in the mid-1980s. One study by Johnson and Wanta found that President Reagan was more influenced by media in 1985 than he was in 1982.

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Sometime after 1982 the heroin boom had begun to die out. National figures from 1986 suggested that the number of heroin users stabilized after 1982.²⁵⁹ Young people were turning away from heroin. They no longer viewed heroin as an expression of “punk coolness” as they had earlier. Figures showed that heroin addicts were getting older and were increasingly turning to treatment programs.²⁶⁰ Knowledge about AIDS and the needle's role in the disease was one impetus for the shift.²⁶¹ Studies have found that AIDS climbed near the top of the national media agenda in the early fall of 1985 and a few months later, 95% of U.S. adults were aware of AIDS and how it was spread.²⁶² The decline in heroin figures, however, coincided with a surge in crack and powdered cocaine.²⁶³ Cocaine, once known as a drug reserved for the upper classes, had become much cheaper by the mid-1980s, when the American market experienced a surplus in Colombian supply.²⁶⁴ The growing cocaine issue was exacerbated by the fact that most treatment programs could offer only a heroin substitute, not a cocaine substitute to addicts.²⁶⁵

²⁵⁸ Johnson and Wanta, “Influence Dealers,” 182.

²⁵⁹ Peter Kerr, “Growth in Heroin Use Ending as City Users Turn To Crack,” *New York Times*, 13 September, 1986.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.; Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 15.; Schneider, *SMACK*, 192.

²⁶² Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 15.

²⁶³ Massing, *The Fix*, 168-169.

²⁶⁴ Schneider, *SMACK*, 192-193.

²⁶⁵ Kerr, “Growth in Heroin Use Ending,” *New York Times*.

A frenzy of media coverage followed the rise in cocaine supply and abuse. As the Nixon administration had done fifteen years prior, the Reagan administration enlisted the help of major television networks to launch a series of ads condemning drug use to target young people.²⁶⁶ Reagan also prodded prime-time television programs like *Punky Brewster* and *Different Strokes* to adopt anti-drug themes.²⁶⁷ By late 1985, Nancy Reagan's image had shifted due to her anti-drug stance - she had now surpassed the president in popularity polls herself.²⁶⁸ The media frenzy over drugs increased even more as the abuse of crack cocaine, a cheaper alternative preferred by African-Americans living in the cities, increased. On November 29, 1985, the *New York Times* ran a front-page article headlined, "A New Purified Form of Cocaine Causes Alarm as Abuse Increases."²⁶⁹ The cocaine-induced deaths of public figures like Len Bias on June 19, 1986, a basketball star and the second overall pick of the Boston Celtics that year, further accentuated the cocaine problem in the media. Media coverage of crack cocaine increased sharply following Bias's death. One prominent example was a CBS special entitled "48 Hours on Crack Street" that drew in 15 million viewers.²⁷⁰ Public education programs like the NIDA's "Just Say No" and "Cocaine, The Big Lie" campaigns also shaped the media and the public agendas. Shortly after Bias's death, 13% of American adults said that drugs were the nation's most important problem, up from 3% in April of that year.²⁷¹ The DEA internally viewed the intense media coverage with caution, issuing a private report that year that blamed "the media for 'distorting the public perception of crack,' which it characterized as a 'secondary rather than

²⁶⁶ Kuzmarov, *Myth of the Addicted Army*, 174.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 174.

²⁶⁸ Massing, *The Fix*, 175.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 177.

²⁷⁰ Baum. *Smoke and Mirrors*, 232.; Kuzmarov, *Myth of the Addicted Army*, 174.

²⁷¹ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 21.

primary problem in most areas.”²⁷² This story, though, was hardly covered, and as Baum explains, “neither CBS nor ABC reported it, the *New York Times* ignored it altogether, and the *Washington Post* buried a small item on page 18.”²⁷³

The heightened media coverage of the drug problem in the mid-1980s coincided with the increasing importance that the public placed on the drug issue. By the middle of the decade, public opinion polls showed that a majority of Americans thought drugs and crime were the most pressing issues facing the country.²⁷⁴ Lloyd Johnston, however, had found that overall drug use had actually declined between 1981 and 1986, the same years “in which NIDA undertook its public information campaign and in which mass media coverage of drugs increased.”²⁷⁵ Further, the number of drug-related deaths per year had actually decreased during the 1980s.²⁷⁶ Still, cocaine use among youths, especially in increasingly dangerous forms such as crack cocaine and “speedballs” - a mix of heroin and cocaine, had risen. Johnston makes the case that the seriousness of the cocaine issue justified the intense media coverage in the mid-1980s.²⁷⁷

In response, policymakers put greater emphasis on drug law enforcement. On July 15, 1986, the Reagan administration announced that it was sending troops to Bolivia to attack its local coca labs.²⁷⁸ Within days, the press declared “Blast Furnace a bust.”²⁷⁹ In the wake of Bias’s death, Congress also passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, which added twenty-nine

²⁷² Ibid., 235.; Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Kuzmarov, *Myth of the Addicted Army*, 166.

²⁷⁵ Shoemaker, Pamela J. 1989. *Communication Campaigns About Drugs: Government, Media, and the Public*. New York: Routledge, 4.

²⁷⁶ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 21.

²⁷⁷ Shoemaker, *Communication Campaigns*, 4.

²⁷⁸ Massing, *The Fix*, 182.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 183.

mandatory minimums, twenty-six of which involved drugs.²⁸⁰ That same year, the \$1.7 billion bill, most of which was dedicated to supply-side programs, was passed by Congress.²⁸¹ The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 promoted a similar theme, especially targeting crack cocaine. Under the 1988 Anti-Drug Abuse Act, possession of five grams of crack cocaine would carry a five year minimum sentence, the same sentence as possession of five hundred grams of powdered cocaine.²⁸² Funding to address the drug problem under the Reagan Administration was also increased to Nancy Reagan-promoted campaigns such as “Just Say No” and “Cocaine, the Big Lie” and to drug-education programs like “D.A.R.E.” All told, from 1981 to 1987, federal funding for anti drug law enforcement tripled from \$1 billion to \$3 billion.²⁸³

In some respects, the White House crusades and the media hysteria during the Reagan Drug War had succeeded in stemming drug use. In 1980, 33.7 percent of American high school seniors had said “they had smoked marijuana in the past month,” but by 1988, that number had dropped to 18 percent.²⁸⁴ Among middle-class adults, “the Reagan years were marked not only by a sharp fall off in drug use in both cocaine and marijuana, but also in alcohol.²⁸⁵ Other factors were at play beyond federal policies. The media storm surrounding drug use became even more intensive after celebrity deaths like that of Len Bias and helped to educate or scare the public. Consumption trends declined after Bias’s death in 1986.²⁸⁶ Similarly, parent groups across the

²⁸⁰ Baum. *Smoke and Mirrors*, 228.

²⁸¹ Massing, *The Fix*, 184; Edward Walsh, “\$1.7 Billion Drug Bill Sweeps House, Senate,” *Washington Post*, 18 October, 1986.

²⁸² U.S. Congress. House Committee on Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs. 1988. *Anti-Drug Abuse Act*. 100th Cong.

²⁸³ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 21.

²⁸⁴ Massing, *The Fix*, 189.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 189-190.

country pushed for their communities to shun drugs. But such successes, often predicated upon hysteria or false conceptions about drug use, were short lived and led to steep tradeoffs. For instance, incarceration rates and prison funds exploded during these years. 1986 marked the first year that the United States had more black people than white people in prison, in spite of the country being 84 percent white and 12 percent black.²⁸⁷ Huge amounts of money had also been spent by the Reagan administration in enforcement and prison. Spending on police and prisons rose almost 600 percent during the Reagan years, despite the fact that all crime, except murder, had either dropped or stayed flat.²⁸⁸ While the numbers of people abusing drugs was dropping, hard-core drug users had increased substantially during the Reagan Presidency, repudiating the popular “gateway theory.”²⁸⁹ Also, heroin use, which had receded in the mid-1980s, was re-emerging as a major problem in the 1990s.²⁹⁰

H.W. Bush

The rise of heroin in the 1990s, after a period of inattention during the crack cocaine and marijuana scares of the 1980s, can be traced to a few factors. Crack cocaine “burned out some of its users,” and some turned to heroin to combat crack’s overstimulation.²⁹¹ Purer forms of heroin from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Colombia were once again coming to the United States; users who shunned needles after the HIV/AIDS epidemic could now smoke or snort heroin with similar effect.²⁹² The increase in purity that led to more smokable and snortable heroin also ushered in new users beyond the typical inner city hardcore user. And the Reagan

²⁸⁷ Baum. *Smoke and Mirrors*, 233.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 260.

²⁸⁹ Massing, *The Fix*, 190.

²⁹⁰ Schneider, *SMACK*, 195.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

administration's decision to slash the federal treatment budget certainly did not help preparations for the reemergence of heroin.²⁹³

By September 1989, 54 percent of the public ranked drugs as the number one problem facing America, up from 13 percent three years prior,²⁹⁴ and at one point during George H.W. Bush's Presidency, 68 percent of Americans believed that drugs were the greatest problem facing the nation.²⁹⁵ Strangely, despite President Bush's escalation of Reagan's drug war tactics and rhetoric, the drug issue dropped down the public agenda after 1989.²⁹⁶ Other issues arose during the Bush Presidency and got the attention of the media.²⁹⁷ Furthermore, the press was beginning to become disillusioned with the continued war on drugs, regularly attacking the Bush administration's "anti-drug strategy."²⁹⁸ Even during the Bush years, when Americans gradually became less concerned with drugs, the lens of the Bush administration continued to frame the drug issue to the media through law and order and enforcement.²⁹⁹

In his inaugural address, George H.W. Bush called upon all of society to stand up to the drug problem, saying, "The most obvious [issue] now is drugs...This scourge will stop!"³⁰⁰ Bush seemed to suggest that the Reagan drug policy had failed, and more needed to be done. Bush was literal about the "war" part of the "war on drugs" metaphor.³⁰¹ He declared war on drugs and also on groups of Americans who he believed were the perpetrators, such as residents of public

²⁹³ Massing, *The Fix*, 189.

²⁹⁴ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 21-22.

²⁹⁵ Moses, "The Making of Drug Policy," 62.

²⁹⁶ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 22.

²⁹⁷ Baum. *Smoke and Mirrors*, 304.

²⁹⁸ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 22.; Elwood, William N. 1994. *Rhetoric in the War on Drugs: The Triumphs and Tragedies of Public Relations*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 68.

²⁹⁹ Moses, "The Making of Drug Policy," 77.

³⁰⁰ Massing, *The Fix*, 191.; Moses, "The Making of Drug Policy," 40.

³⁰¹ Elwood, *Rhetoric in the War on Drugs*, 27.

housing projects, people who lived in urban areas, foreigners, and an “evil Other who could be ‘everyone.’”³⁰² To carry out that war, Bush relied on heavy law enforcement policies as well as foreign interdiction.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), established by Congress at the end of 1988, centralized the many federal agencies tasked with fighting the drug war and served as the Executive Branch’s arm to deal with drug policies.³⁰³ Bush appointed William Bennett as ‘drug czar’ to head the ONDCP.³⁰⁴ Crack was still an issue given much attention by the media and the government. Though the media frequently covered the increase in hard-core drug use through publications such as *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, Bennett and the ONDCP had a different focus. The ONDCP stated that their focus was not directed necessarily towards hard core addicts, but was focused on the drug threat to those in the suburbs and to young people, even though casual drug use was falling, and high school seniors who had reported to have used cocaine in 1988, declined from 6.7 percent in 1985 to 3.4% in 1988.³⁰⁵

Bennett defended the merits of focusing efforts on the casual drug user. In a report from September 1989, Bennett wrote that the drug problem was a “crisis of national character,” and provided a foundation to justify continued focus on the casual drug user and continued penalties, “including ‘dramatically increasing’ the number of drug arrests and rapidly expanding the nation’s prison system.”³⁰⁶ In fact, federal spending on law enforcement and treatment both increased in the 21 months that Bennett headed the ONDCP, with the largest single source of

³⁰² Ibid., 86-88.

³⁰³ Massing, *The Fix*, 191.

³⁰⁴ PBS. 1995-2004. “Thirty Years of America’s Drug War: a Chronology.”

³⁰⁵ Massing, *The Fix*, 198-199.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 201.

funding going to the federal prison system.³⁰⁷ Bush also adopted an even more aggressive supply-side interdiction approach to the drug problem than his predecessor, Ronald Reagan, had.

Bennett also worked closely with the media to promote the Bush Administration's drug policy.³⁰⁸ When in July, 1990, the House Appropriation Committee cut over \$230 million from President Bush's proposed budgeting towards treatment, education, and prevention programs, Bennett circumvented Congress and went straight to the press with his condemnation. Two days later, Congress restored funding, largely because of the fuss that Bennett had made in the media.³⁰⁹ Treatment funding, however, still remained less than one-third of the budget.³¹⁰ Bennett's use of the media helped keep the drug issue front and center in the media though much of his approach towards addressing the nation's drug problem was based on moral, rather than quantitative grounds.³¹¹ The media was also used to help promote the idea that the 'other' and specific groups of Americans were the drug enemy. This was communicated especially through the Partnership for a Drug-Free America (PDFA). In a speech that George H.W. Bush delivered to the nation on September 5, 1989, he described the public service announcements of PDFA as one "generating educational messages worth a million dollars every day for the next three years, a billion dollars worth of advertising all to promote the anti-drug message."³¹² Storytelling in the mold of "human interest stories" and visual metaphors were heavily relied upon in PDFA messages to discourage drug use. But PDFA messages rarely portrayed white Americans as

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Moses, "The Making of Drug Policy," 246.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 237.

³¹⁰ PBS. 1995-2004. "Thirty Years of America's Drug War: a Chronology."

³¹¹ Moses, "The Making of Drug Policy," 179.

³¹² Bush, George H.W. 1989. Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate Transmitting the National Drug Control Strategy Report. *Federal Register*. p. 1137-1140.

having drug problems. In his analysis of PDFFA messages, Elwood found that “with two exceptions, white men appear in the collection only as concerned about drugs because their employees or loved ones are involved with illicit substances”³¹³ and that people of color were regularly cast as enemies and ‘others’ in the drug war problem.

Another theme of the drug issue pushed during the Bush years was related to the moral bankruptcy of addicts who did not seek treatment. In his September drug speech, Bush remarked, “Many people who need treatment won’t seek it on their own.”³¹⁴ News reports and public service announcements like those by the PDFFA added weight to the thought that drug addiction was only an urban problem where moral lapses prevented treatment-seeking.³¹⁵ Meanwhile, chronic drug users in the United States had been dropping at a relatively steady rate both before and during the Bush presidency. In 1985, there were estimated to be over 23 million drug users; by 1988, 15 million; and by 1992, 12 million.³¹⁶ Heroin users followed a similar trend. In 1989, approximately 1.34 million people were chronic heroin users, but by 1992 that number had dropped to 955,000.³¹⁷ But while the public may have shifted their attention away from the the drug issue beginning in the 1990s, heroin was still increasingly available during the Bush years. As Moses relates, the availability of heroin increased because, “the cost per milligram of heroin fell, and the purity rose between 1989 and 1992.”³¹⁸

The media, for the most part, was disillusioned by the Bush administration’s anti-drug strategy. In a televised speech delivered on September 5, 1989, Bush held up a bag of crack

³¹³ Elwood, *Rhetoric in the War on Drugs*, 82, 101.

³¹⁴ Bush, National Drug Control Strategy Report, *Federal Register*.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 104.

³¹⁶ Moses, “The Making of Drug Policy,” 76.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 78.

cocaine, saying, “This - this is crack cocaine, seized a few days ago by Drug Enforcement agents in a park just across the street from the White House.”³¹⁹ But seventeen days later the *Washington Post* published a front page article that exposed the Bush Administration’s orchestration of the drug buy for the purposes of the speech.³²⁰ The press was beginning to view Bush’s drug war as public relations posturing, while government scandals made the media more suspicious of punitive government policies.³²¹ Media reports questioned Bush’s drug policy, such as the small size of the drug treatment budget compared to the large-scale budget for law enforcement and the size of the funds for interdiction efforts. Bush’s character in context of the drug issue was also questioned. The media rebuked Bush’s usage of ‘war’ in resolving the drug problem, and the phrase “War on Drugs” in news stories was found to have declined by 32 percent in major print media between 1989 and 1992.³²² Another contributing factor to the press’s disillusion with the drug problem and with Bush’s approach was that other issues were making it onto the media agenda. The impending Gulf War became the focus and the drug issue shranked in the news media accordingly. Baum found that “in 1989, 244 stories about the country’s drug problems appeared in mainstream magazines. In 1990, 219. In 1991, 138, and in 1992, 111.”³²³

Clinton

By the next presidential election in 1992, public interest in the drug problem had faded significantly.³²⁴ Greater concern was placed on the economy and on unemployment.³²⁵ In his

³¹⁹ Baum. *Smoke and Mirrors*, 288.

³²⁰ Ibid., 228.; Elwood, *Rhetoric in the War on Drugs*, 71.

³²¹ Ibid., 295.

³²² Elwood, *Rhetoric in the War on Drugs*, 78.

³²³ Baum. *Smoke and Mirrors*, 304.

³²⁴ Moses, “The Making of Drug Policy,” 74.

inauguration speech, President Bill Clinton made no mention of drugs, and did little to combat the “drug issue” during the early months of his administration. As the 1990s progressed, however, heroin increasingly came back into public view. Heroin trafficking originating in Colombia and passing through a porous U.S.-Mexican border met increased demands in the United States.³²⁶ Domestically, a new media- and fashion-driven trend known as ‘heroin chic’ which critics accused of glamorizing heroin, appeared in movies, music, culture, and news accounts. Along with heroin, another opioid was on the horizon: prescription pills. Direct-to-Consumer Pharmaceutical Advertising (DTCPA) ballooned in the 1990s. The Clinton administration, increasingly accused of ‘dropping the ball’ on the drug issue by prominent policymakers in the media,³²⁷ met the heroin threat with continued interdiction efforts, with implementation of another sweeping anti-drug media campaign, and with law enforcement efforts to assuage the public’s fears. One area that found little advancement in spite of regular praise from the Oval Office: treatment and prevention programs. New research in the 1990s showed the merits of treatment and prevention programs in combating drug abuse, but both Congress and the news media gave more attention to ‘fighting’ the drug issue through interdiction, military, and law enforcement efforts.

Interdiction efforts to curb heroin trafficking into the United States during the 1990s were far from successful. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) had resulted in an enormous increase in legitimate trade across the U.S.-Mexican border, but it also resulted in an

³²⁵ Gallup Polling. “1984-2004: What do you think is the most important problem facing the country?” Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics.

³²⁶ Moses, “The Making of Drug Policy,” 124.

³²⁷ Ibid., 221.

enormous increase in smuggled narcotics.³²⁸ The sheer volume of daily vehicular traffic across the border made search and regulation efforts for concealed narcotics difficult.³²⁹ In Texas, an increase in drug-related violence along the Texas-Mexico border led officials to believe that heroin use was on the rise.³³⁰ In 1998, Jane Maxwell, research chief for the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, said “It’s a worldwide phenomenon. We’re awash in heroin. There’s more heroin than we’ve ever seen”³³¹ Another sign of the increase was that heroin prices over the 1990s had generally moved downward, signifying that the supply of the drug was rising.³³² The White House was frustrated with its failing interdiction efforts to stem the heroin trafficking along the border. In a confidential memo made public by the press, Francis Kinney, director of strategic planning for the Office of National Drug Control Policy, wrote “Our current interdiction efforts almost completely failed to achieve our purpose of reducing the flow of cocaine, heroin and methamphetamines across the (southwest) border.”³³³ The greatest amounts of heroin were in fact seized in the late 1980s and early 1990s under George H.W. Bush’s Presidency.³³⁴

Part of the reason for the increase in heroin trafficking across the border was the Clinton Administration’s own doing. NAFTA, of course, opened the border to an explosion of both

³²⁸ PBS. 1995-2004. “Thirty Years of America’s Drug War: a Chronology.”

³²⁹ Pinkerton, James, “Drug traffickers piggybacking on NAFTA’s success Heroin, pot being hidden among growing amount of cargo crossing border,” *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, 8 March 1998.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Shannon, Kelly, “NAFTA’s increased truck traffic is cited for rise of heroin in U.S. // NAFTA blamed for rise in heroin,” *Austin American Statesman*, 3 January 1998.

³³² Moses, “The Making of Drug Policy,” 119.; Ibid.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Denham, Bryan E. 2008. “Folk Devils, News Icons, and the Construction of Moral Panics.” *Journalism Studies*: 954.

legitimate trade and the added prospect of illicit narcotic trafficking, but interdiction and military efforts in Latin America also contributed to the problem. Interdiction and military efforts started by President Bush and continued by President Clinton found success in eliminating large, well-organized Mexican cartels. In June 1991, Pablo Escobar, the head of the Medellin Cartel, surrendered, and later died in a shootout on December 2, 1993.³³⁵ Colombia and the United States also cracked down on the Cali Cartel, which had taken over the market share held by the Medellin Cartel and had begun to increase their trafficking in heroin as Pablo Escobar and other heads of cartels got in trouble.³³⁶ But breaking up the larger cartels, like the Medellin and Cali, unwittingly “spawned as many as 40 medium-sized trafficking organizations and thousands of ‘mom and pop’ operations.”³³⁷ The newer cartels lowered the street price of heroin and greatly increased its purity. The high purity of heroin during the 1990s meant that needles or injection were not needed to get high; heroin could be inhaled or smoked. It further meant that smaller quantities of heroin could be trafficked, making smuggling easier and interdiction efforts more difficult.³³⁸

The ‘heroin chic’ trend of the 1990s in the media put more pressure on the government to fight heroin. The term, heroin chic, had been coined by media like *New York Times* journalist Amy M. Spindler.³³⁹ Fashion characterized heroin chic using models who were unkempt and extremely skinny, almost emaciated.³⁴⁰ Fashion labels like Helmut Lang and Prada were

³³⁵ Moses, “The Making of Drug Policy,” 121.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 121-122.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 123.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 124

³³⁹ Arnold, Rebecca. 1999. “Heroin Chic.” *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture*: 281.

³⁴⁰ Arnold, “Heroin Chic.”

influenced by the revival of ‘punk’ and the hopelessness, darkness, and grunginess that came with it. Their ad campaigns were plastered across youth and style magazines.³⁴¹ The anger and despair of ‘heroin chic’ was also encapsulated in music. Nirvana’s lead singer Kurt Cobain, who struggled with heroin addiction, was an icon to a generation that felt displaced from the mainstream.³⁴² Films also portrayed heroin use in ways that critics lamented glamorized and understated its dangers. Films like *Rush*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Basketball Diaries*, and *Trainspotting* all brought heroin back into the vogue, implying that heroin use was chic among those who shunned the guidelines of mainstream society.³⁴³ Dr. Robert Millman from the narcotics treatment program at NYU Medical Center stated the new perception of heroin in the 1990s, “It used to be we would associate heroin use with poor people, losers, people who were going to get AIDS. Middle class people didn’t want to get near it. Now, it has attained a certain chic, that’s true. It has acquired an aura of romance, excitement and darkness.”³⁴⁴ And federal figures had revealed that teenage drug use dramatically increased between 1992 and 1995.³⁴⁵

The heroin chic trend in all facets of culture during the 1990s seeped into more traditional media news agencies to create a ‘moral panic’ - something that is presented as a threat through media self-servingly using stereotyping and emotionalizing, as well as continually dwelling on past events that are related to the threat, in their news accounts and coverage.³⁴⁶ In a moral panic, icons are often inserted into stories to point to a larger societal threat, and “the more deviant

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Ibid., 287.

³⁴³ Denham, “Folk Devils,” 949.

³⁴⁴ Arnold, “Heroin Chic,” 284.

³⁴⁵ Harden, Blaine, “Dole Chides Hollywood, President on Drug Issue,” *Washington Post*, 19 September 1996.; Nagourney, Adam, “Attacking Drugs, Dole Takes on Entertainment Industry,” *New York Times*, 19 September 1996.

³⁴⁶ Denham, “Folk Devils,” 946-47.

people or events are, the more likely they are to be included in media content and the more likely they are to be stereotyped.”³⁴⁷ Kurt Cobain, for instance, appeared in “the news and throughout popular culture long after his death.”³⁴⁸ The minutiae of his personal life and his addictions were pored over by the media and sections of the public.³⁴⁹ Bryan Denham found that in 1996, nearly one in every two articles that addressed heroin use also referred to a celebrity associated with the opiate. Comparatively, in 1988 and 1989, at the height of the “war” on drugs, just 7.4 percent of 136 reports and 11.7 percent of 154 articles mentioned a celebrity.³⁵⁰ In the fashion world, widely dispersed Calvin Klein advertisements frequently showed the heroin chic through very skinny and sullen-looking models like Kate Moss. Calvin Klein’s use of heroin chic in their advertising subsequently led to an FBI investigation into the company, a story to which the media “fascinated by its own repulsion,” was drawn.³⁵¹

As heroin chic spread in the media and in pop culture and as funding for interdiction efforts increased, policymakers were taking note. At a press conference in May 1997, President Clinton addressed heroin chic, saying “The glorification of heroin is not creative, it’s destructive. It’s not beautiful, it’s ugly. This is not about art, it’s about life and death. And glorifying death is not good for any society.”³⁵² The White House had already taken steps to combat the glamorization of heroin use. In 1996, the Partnership for a Drug-Free America (PDFA) announced a campaign specifically to combat the use of heroin among adolescents and young

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 947-948.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 948.

³⁴⁹ Arnold, “Heroin Chic,” 289.

³⁵⁰ Denham, “Folk Devils,” 957.

³⁵¹ Arnold, “Heroin Chic,” 291.

³⁵² Ibid., 279.

adults.³⁵³ In September of that same year, Congress conducted hearings for potential heroin legislation. And in the 1996 presidential election, heroin became a talking point. Republican Presidential Candidate Bob Dole lashed out at Hollywood for glamorizing heroin use in films like *Pulp Fiction* and the recently released *Trainspotting*.³⁵⁴ Dole was also one of the policymakers to slam President Clinton for showing “moral confusion” on the drug issue.³⁵⁵

In 1998, the Clinton administration’s new Drug Czar, General Barry McCaffery, sought to fully utilize the power of the media to convince young people to reject drugs and to change public perceptions of drug use.³⁵⁶ The Clinton administration initiated a \$2 billion media campaign, known as the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, through a wide range of media platforms, such as television, Internet, radio, and newspapers.³⁵⁷ The campaign raised awareness and support for drug prevention and treatment. By 2000, youth drug rates had stabilized and even showed signs of falling, a figure that led President Clinton to tout the successes of the media program: “If you're a teenager or a parent it is nearly impossible to avoid seeing or hearing our anti-drug messages on television or radio several times a month ...[It] appears to be working even better than we thought.”³⁵⁸

McCaffery also increased interdiction efforts in Latin America during his tenure as drug czar.³⁵⁹ The public seemed to fall in line with more punitive, militarized measures. One poll in 1995 showed that 85 percent of Americans believed that “stopping the flow of drugs” was a

³⁵³ Denham, “Folk Devils,” 951.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Harden, “Dole Chides Hollywood, President,” *Washington Post*; Nagourney, “Dole Takes on Entertainment,” *New York Times*.

³⁵⁶ Moses, “The Making of Drug Policy,” 220.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 159, 275.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 275.

³⁵⁹ Massing, *The Fix*, 222.

“very important” foreign policy goal.³⁶⁰ Though McCaffery did increase the federal block grant for treatment by \$143 million in his 1999 budget, the large majority of funds and manpower during his years as the nation’s drug czar were earmarked for foreign interdiction and militarization.³⁶¹

In spite of the messaging of the media campaign, and in spite of growing research in the mid-to-late 1990s touting the benefits of treatment for drug addiction,³⁶² there was little support for treatment and prevention programs, especially in Congress. Publicly supporting the media campaign allowed policy makers to posture that they were combating teenage drug use and “protecting our children.” Teenagers who were perceived to be at risk of falling victim to the drug menace had parents who were voters.³⁶³ Treatment for hard-core drug users, not surprisingly then, made little headway in Congress.³⁶⁴ Under the leadership of Lee Brown in 1993, the ONDCP proposed a one-year increase of \$355 million for treatment specifically for hard-core users.³⁶⁵ But shortly before President Clinton prepared to release the strategy scheduled for February 9, 1994, Lloyd Johnston and the University of Michigan released its annual high school survey, which showed the first increase in marijuana use among teenagers in fourteen years. The media seized on this. On its front page on February 1, 1994, the *New York Times* declared “STUDY FINDS MARIJUANA USE IS UP IN HIGH SCHOOLS” and charged that President Clinton had “scarcely mentioned drugs as President.” Another part of the survey that showed that only 0.2 percent of high schoolers surveyed had used heroin was conveniently

³⁶⁰ Moses, “The Making of Drug Policy,” 223.

³⁶¹ Massing, *The Fix*, 224.

³⁶² Ibid., 222-223.; Moses, “The Making of Drug Policy,” 156.

³⁶³ Moses, “The Making of Drug Policy,” 290.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 300.

³⁶⁵ Massing, *The Fix*, 211.

ignored.³⁶⁶ As this news unfolded in the media, crime was noted to have become the “year’s anti-incumbent issue,” according to a “much-echoed analysis in the *Washington Post*” by William Schneider.³⁶⁷ Treatment like that proposed by Lee Brown, on the other hand, was “seen as squishy. Pushing it was seen as making the president vulnerable on crime.”³⁶⁸ In his appearances before Congress that were intended to promote his drug treatment proposal, Lee Brown “was treated like a human punching bag”³⁶⁹, and “that spring [his] name would barely appear in *The Washington Post*.” As far as the media was concerned, “the decrepit state of the nation’s treatment facilities, the existence of long-waiting lists, the frequency with which addicts seeking help were turned back onto the street all this was old news.”³⁷⁰ Congress ultimately approved only \$57 million in new funds for treatment, none of which were intended for the ignored hard-core drug users who typically lived in the inner cities.

Another form of opioid addiction gained prominence in the United States in the 1990s as a result of lax oversight of the Food & Drug Administration - addiction to prescription painkillers. The expansion of direct-to-consumer pharmaceutical advertising (DTCPA), which Lee Ventola defines as “an effort (usually via popular media) made by a pharmaceutical company to promote its prescription products directly to patients,”³⁷¹ was one impetus for the spread of prescription pills. DTCPA first increased in the 1980s, and in response in 1985, the FDA stated that the “only types of DTCPA that pharmaceutical companies could broadcast on

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 219.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 215.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 216.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 217.

³⁷¹ Ventola, Lee. 2011. “Direct-to-Consumer Pharmaceutical Advertising: Toxic or Therapeutic.” *Pharmacy and Therapeutics*. October, 1.

the radio and television to reminder, or, help-seeking, ads, which do not make product claims.”³⁷²

In 1997, however, the FDA relaxed its rules on pharmaceutical companies’ DTCPA. These companies could now tell viewers to get additional information for their products by providing viewers with 1-800 numbers, websites or print ads, the consequence of which were more detailed and specific drug ads. But even before the 1997 FDA relaxation of DTCPA rules, spending on DTCPA had been increasing. In 1980, total spending on DTCPA was \$12 million while in 1990, it was up to \$47 million. Spending on DTCPA continued to rise, from roughly \$360 million in 1995 to roughly \$1.3 billion in 1998.³⁷³

One year before the relaxation of DTCPA rules in 1997, the FDA had approved Purdue Pharma’s OxyContin for sale. According to a National Institute on Drug Abuse study, the number of opioid prescriptions dispensed by American retail pharmacies had increased by 2 or 3 million a year until 1995. Between 1995 and 1996 it had increased by 7 million, and between 1996 and 1998 by 11 million.³⁷⁴ In 1998, Purdue Pharma circulated 15,000 copies of a video called “I Got My Life Back,” which followed patients who had successfully treated their chronic pain with OxyCodone, to promote the pill.³⁷⁵ The following year in 1999, the overall number of opioid painkiller prescriptions had increased by 11 million.³⁷⁶ The increase in opioid painkiller

³⁷² Ibid., 2.

³⁷³ Donohue, Julie. “A History of Drug Advertising: The Evolving Role of Consumers and Consumer Protection.” *The Milbank Quarterly* (December).

³⁷⁴ Moghe, Sonia. 2016. “Opioid History: From ‘wonder drug’ to abuse epidemic.” October 14. <http://www.cnn.com/2016/05/12/health/opioid-addiction-history/index.html>.; Volkow, Nora D. 2014. “America’s Addiction to Opioids: Heroin and Prescription Drug Abuse.” Presented at the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, Washington, D.C.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.; United States General Accounting Office. 2003. Prescription Drugs: OxyContin Abuse and Diversion and Efforts to Address the Problem. Washington, D.C.: General Accounting Office.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.; Volkow, “America’s Addiction to Opioids,” Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control.

prescriptions in the 1990s had also been helped by shifting attitudes in the treatment of pain. The influential American Pain Society had supported a campaign to consider pain “the fifth vital sign” in 1995.³⁷⁷ The 70s and 80s concerns of opioid abuse stemming from doctors’ offices had abated in the 1990s. Now, “people started talking about pain as the fifth vital sign” and “there was a real push to do a better job of treating pain.”³⁷⁸

Conclusion

Opioids have been present in the United States since the country’s beginnings. Opium was succeeded by morphine; morphine was succeeded by heroin; and heroin, though still a widely abused opioid, has in recent times some of its mantle to prescription painkillers. Following the progression of opioid abuse in the United States also provides insight into ways in which the media covers opioid abuse, its users, and the policies that try to eradicate drug abuse.

Opioid abuse during the War on Drugs was an issue worth addressing by the media and the government. There were periods in which teenagers during the discussed presidency were increasingly consuming opioids and in which drug-related crimes increased. Policymakers do listen to public concern and media media attention, but is has also been the construction, exacerbation, and exaggeration of the drug issue at times generated by the media that has helped to push along public fears and policy responses.

The exact extent of the media’s agenda setting and framing effects are still heavily contested, but consensus does exist that the media do play a large role in helping to determine public opinion and policy making. Many people relied, and continue to rely, heavily on the

³⁷⁷ Glod, Susan A. 2017. “The Other Victims of the Opioid Epidemic.” *New England Journal of Medicine*. June 1. <http://www.nejm.org/doi/pdf/10.1056/NEJMp1702188>.

³⁷⁸ Moghe, “Opioid History: From ‘wonder drug’ to abuse epidemic,” *CNN*.

media for information about drugs. As the media became more attentive, more intense, and more ubiquitous in American homes during the immense ‘War on Drugs’ of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, the public focused more about the drug issue and the havoc it might wreck on society. The media – through television, print, and through acting as a conduit for the White House to disseminate its own agenda to the masses – helped to guide the public perception of drugs and to steer public policies affecting drug abuse.

As we enter the throws of yet another opioid epidemic today, this one more specifically caused by both heroin and prescription painkillers, consider the media coverage of the issue. The history outlined in this paper has shown that the media responds differently to drug users and to issues that are perceived to be more threatening. Ultimately, the media impacts both the public’s values and attention and policymaking. In the latter half of the 20th century, these powers of the media helped to usher in a more punitive and less treatment and preventive based approach to drug abuse.

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