

GLOBAL WARMING AND PROPAGANDA ON CABLE NEWS:
A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE CABLE NEWS NETWORK
AND THE FOX NEWS CHANNEL

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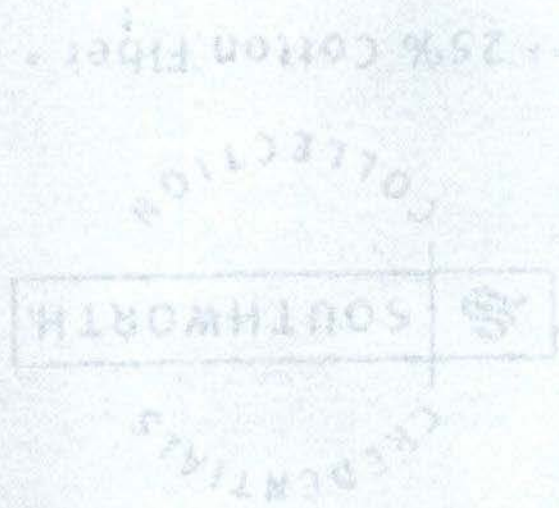
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A THESIS

Presented to the Environmental Studies Program
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Science

June 2005

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An Abstract of the Thesis of

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for the degree of

Master of Science

in the Environmental Studies Program

to be taken

June 2005

Title: GLOBAL WARMING AND PROPAGANDA ON CABLE NEWS: A CONTENT
ANALYSIS OF THE CABLE NEWS NETWORK AND THE FOX NEWS
CHANNEL

Approved: _____

Dr. Tom Bivins

This study performs a content analysis of the Cable News Network (CNN) and the Fox News Channel (FNC) to identify how the two cable news stations covered global warming during prime-time television viewing hours from 1998 through 2004. The study uses a full census of global warming relevant CNN and FNC broadcast transcripts to evaluate if, and how, the stations use propaganda techniques to discuss global warming, how the stations cover global warming, and the frequency of global warming coverage by year. The study finds that FNC uses propaganda techniques, offers skepticism about global warming, and interviews global warming skeptics (compared to global warming advocates), significantly more often than CNN. The study also finds that 2001 contains a significantly higher level of global warming coverage by both CNN and FNC compared to the other years in the 1998 – 2004 time period.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My family has been an invaluable source of inspiration and support. Leia, Reid, Derek, and all of my family, thank you – you continue to be a blessing in my life.

I am very grateful to Dr. Tom Bivins and Dr. Ted Toadvine for their help in revising this manuscript and assisting me in bringing it to completion. I am also thankful for the help that Dr. Anthony Leiserowitz, Dr. Debra Merskin, and Dr. Carl Bybee gave in developing and refining the manuscript. Finally, many thanks to the Environmental Studies Program at the University of Oregon and the Barker Foundation for all the support and generosity that was given.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the most pressing problems facing the world today is the prospect of global warming and its potential impact on the environment and the lives of people and animals throughout the world. So far, governments have been slow to respond and the public has placed little pressure for more action. A key factor in shaping public opinion and the political urgency to take action on issues, with a growing number of viewers turning to 24-hour news stations to receive their information, is media exposure through television news broadcasts. The media serves to educate the public about information, but some media critics have claimed that some 24-hour news stations are bastions of biased information and propaganda. The two leading 24-hour news stations in North America are the Cable News Network (CNN) and the Fox News Channel (FNC). After giving a brief introduction to CNN and FNC, this thesis will examine LexisNexis CNN and FNC transcripts that cover global warming and climate change to identify if, and how much, propaganda is being used by the stations, if station ideology (as rated by journalists on a liberal to conservative scale) correlates to how global warming is presented, and also undertake an exploratory investigation into how the stations describe the impacts of global warming, how global warming advocates and skeptics discuss the issue, and if there are any years that stand out as providing significantly more or less coverage of global warming than others.

CNN

CNN was created in 1980 with Ted Turner's vision to revolutionize televised news with the first 24-hour news broadcast. Originally created under Turner Broadcasting Systems, Inc. (TBS), CNN was a new competitor for the big three networks, ABC, NBC, and CBS, who dominated the viewership for televised news with their evening news segments. Turner had a vision for a 24-hour news broadcast that would deliver breaking news around the clock and allow viewers to be constantly updated about global developments. During the first decade of CNN's broadcast industry leaders often derided it as the "Chicken Noodle News" (Taylor, 1997, pg. 95). However, the underdog CNN saw solid growth through its first few years, inspiring Turner to purchase Omni International, a large complex in downtown Atlanta, for \$30 million in 1985 to facilitate the growth of CNN. The complex was renamed the CNN Center two years later, and would serve as the base of operations for years to come.

One of the most pivotal periods of CNN's growth occurred in 1991, when it proved that it could compete with, and beat, the three major networks in covering a major world event. During the six weeks of Desert Storm, CNN's live coverage of the war resulted in a ratings increase of 1,000 percent and had Americans responding in polls that CNN was their first or second overall choice for the news (Ammon, 2001, pg. 70). As CNN offered live coverage of the initial bombings by American forces on Baghdad, CNN effectively proved to the world that it could offer dynamic, groundbreaking news, and demonstrated a fundamental shift had occurred in the way conflicts would be reported in the future. *Entertainment Weekly* wrote:

Within minutes of the first bomb burst over Baghdad, the Cable News Network achieved total air superiority over the networks and held it until Iraq temporarily shut down the news operations some sixteen hours later. On January 16, the first day of the war, 10.8 million households tuned in to CNN, only 1.6 million short of CBS's score. Actually CNN had an even bigger audience than the reported numbers, because hundreds of stations around the country carried its coverage, including many affiliates who switched from their own networks to feed to CNN's. As Dick Aiken of Britain's ITV Channel put it, 'They cut to Bernie Shaw [CNN's anchor in Iraq] because it was clear that they were getting their heads handed to them.' (Smith, 1991, pg. 6)

CNN fundamentally changed the way that the world could receive news, offering 24-hour coverage in 265 countries by 1994. For the first time, CNN allowed the general public of myriad countries the opportunity to watch their local cable station and receive constantly updated coverage of the world's major events. The CNN effect went beyond the public sphere and influenced how countries engaged in foreign policy. Lawrence Eagleburger, former U.S. Secretary of State, states:

... the whole impact of CNN. We have yet to understand how profoundly it has changed things. The public hears of an event now in real time, before the State Department has had time to think about it. Consequently, we find ourselves reacting before we've had time to think. This is now the way we determine foreign policy – it's driven more by the daily events reported on TV than it used to be. (Ammon, 2001, pp. 69-70)

Noting CNN's major influence in changing the way countries communicated, Taylor (1997) describes CNN as "a common frame of reference for the world's power elite.... A kind of worldwide party line, allowing leaders to conduct a sort of conference call.... (pg. 96)"

In 1996, after Rupert Murdoch had indicated that he was interested in starting a rival 24-hour news station (which eventually became FNC), Time Warner acquired CNN through a friendly merger. The combination of CNN and Time Warner created the world's largest media company, with 1997 revenues of \$24.6 billion. Turner spoke very favorably of the merger, believing that only through Time Warner's massive distribution capacity could CNN manage to compete with new networks such as FNC. CNN would compete fiercely with FNC, with Turner stating that he would "squish Rupert like a bug" (Collins, 2004). However, while FNC gained market share through the hiring of engaging personalities, CNN focused primarily on making its news content more engaging and exciting under the umbrella philosophy that news would be the star. Although CNN has dropped below FNC for viewing popularity, it still maintains a standard as a well respected news entity throughout the world (Collins, 2004).

Ideology of CNN

CNN operates under the banner "the most trusted name in news," and network executives state that CNN is the unsurpassed in delivering quality, unbiased news throughout the world. CNN spokesman Matthew Furman states, "It's obvious that we place the highest premium on being impartial, on providing all sides - not just both sides - but all sides" (Billings Gazette, August 1, 2004).

However, multiple conservative voices have called CNN a liberal news network. Brent Baker, vice-president of the *Media Research Center*, a conservative think tank, stated that CNN “appears to be a liberal network” (Billings Gazette, August 1, 2004). Murdoch, along with multiple conservative politicians, has repeatedly called CNN liberal (Collins, 2004). Even the co-founder of CNN, Reese Schonfeld, indicated that CNN was used by Turner to promote liberal positions:

I think that under Ted Turner, CNN had many liberal positions ... but the difference is that Ted didn't know how to be effective with any of his positions. He never got his message across. And maybe that's because the American people didn't want to hear his message. (Big Story with John Gibson, January 26, 2005)

Despite the claims of a pervasive liberal bias on CNN, there are indications that it has managed to strike a balance between conflicting ideologies and tell all sides of the story. In a 1983 content analysis that compared CNN to the major networks, *The Media Institute* found that CNN outperformed ABC, NBC, and CBS in providing balanced and less sensational coverage. *The Media Institute's* analysis included a survey of CNN personnel and found that they carried a more neo-liberal and conservative paradigm than personnel from the networks; this paradigm included stronger agreement with free-market attitudes and stronger disagreement with government intervention and placing ideas ahead of money. The content analysis indicates that throughout the 1980's, the individuals making the decisions about news content on CNN held values that were more conservative than those held by the three major news networks.

In recent years, CNN has actively sought out ways to increase its appeal with conservative viewers. In the summer of 2001, CNN chief Walter Issacson met with several leading Republican conservatives in Washington D.C. to find out how to bring more conservative viewers to CNN (Collins, 2004). CNN has also engaged in an active campaign to ensure that conservative voices are frequently heard on broadcasts. Eric Alterman writes:

If you wish to include CNN on your list of liberal media – I don't, but many conservatives do – then you had better find a way to explain the near ubiquitous presence of the attack dog Robert Novak, along with those of neocon virtuecrat William Bennet, *National Review's* Kate O'Beirne, *National Review's* Jonah Goldberg, the *Weekly Standard's* David Brooks, and Tucker Carlson. This is to say nothing of the fact that among CNN's most frequent guests Ann Coulter and the anti-American telepreacher Pat Robertson. (Alterman, 2003, pg. 11)

In an insightful investigation into the organizational cultures of CNN and the BBC, Lucy Kung-Shanklemen (2000) finds that CNN rests on a company cultural belief that "news is the most important thing," and that the organization needs to respond aggressively to market shifts and opportunities for growth. This view of the CNN company culture, along with Isaacson's recent initiatives to make CNN more palatable for conservatives, indicate that CNN is an organization that is actively seeking to take advantage of market opportunities by making its

news accessible and appealing to the largest number of people, conservatives and liberals alike.

FNC

Rupert Murdoch, owner of the \$5 billion dollar News Corporation, announced that he would begin the development of FNC in 1996 to give a new voice to cable news. Unlike CNN, which pioneered the 24-hour cable news format, FNC entered a market that was already dominated by CNN and MSNBC. FNC initially had trouble finding distribution, and launched with 17 million subscribers on October 7th, 1996. While FNC had a slow start, it would grow through 2004 to become the most popular cable news network.

Murdoch knew that FNC would have to be something different if it was going to beat out the competition, and hired Roger Ailes as Chairman and CEO of FNC to find a way to do just that. Collins (2004) and Alterman (2003) both point to the hiring of Ailes in 1996 as an indication that FNC would be a conservative-leaning news station. Roger Ailes served as media adviser for Richard Nixon in the late 1960's, aided Reagan during the presidential debates in 1984, created the infamous Willie Horton commercial in the 1988 election, and worked for the Rush Limbaugh television program in 1992. Even while employed for the Rush Limbaugh show, and after publicly stating that he could no longer work as a political consultant, Ailes continued to give advice to Bush for his 1992 reelection campaign. And on October 7th, 2001, well after Ailes was hired by FNC in 1996, he sent a secret memo to President G. W. Bush through Karl Rove containing

political advice on how to respond to the September 11th terrorist attacks (Alterman, 2003).

In 1996, when seeking a way to out compete the other cable news networks, Ailes noted that there was a large segment of conservative Americans who felt disenfranchised by the news content of CNN and the other news networks (Collins, 2004). Ailes felt that these viewers, many of whom got their information from conservative talk radio, would tune in if a more conservative alternative was offered through television:

Somewhere between 65 and 75 percent of the American public believe the media tipped to the left. Now whether it does or it doesn't, if that's what they believe, that leaves a lot of room As long as you continue to let the liberals say what they want but balance it with somebody who doesn't agree with it, you're going to open it up We just broadened the dialogue and broadened the debate. That allowed us to get a foothold because nobody had ever seen that before. The only conservative to ever do television prior to [Fox News] was [columnist] Bob Novak. So there were four hundred liberals and Bob Novak. The public knew that.

(Collins, 2004, pp. 77-78)

While Ailes's comments about Novak being the only conservative prior to FNC are overstated, his statement gives a clear indication that, from the inception of FNC, a company culture was established with the aim of providing content that was more conservative than CNN. Republicans took note of the more conservative tone in FNC and actively leaned on media distributors to carry FNC during its start-up period. This

occurred most notably with New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani strong-arming Time Warner, who at the time was promoting CNN after acquiring it through negotiations with Turner, into carrying FNC on its local New York stations; Time Warner eventually acquiesced and agreed to carry FNC in July, 1997.

As Ailes was developing content, he hired Chet Collier to find the right anchors to give the news. Colliers would take a different approach than CNN to draw the public in. While CNN hired Rick Kaplan in 1997 to find ways to spice up the content of news stories, Collier focused more on finding the right personalities to star as anchors on the news shows (Collins, 2004). Colliers was finding a way to mix lively personalities and entertaining news formats to create shows that would soon be emulated by both CNN and MSNBC. In an interview with Scott Collins, Collier states:

You use the best elements of the entertainment world, and you present news in that package. That's true of any television show. If you do a documentary, a situation comedy, you take the best material you can get and it damn well better be well written.... And you cast it with the best possible people because people watch television because of the individuals they see on the screen. It was always a balance between what is the news and what is entertainment – or entertaining. Of course, the newsies all go crazy when you say that, 'cause essentially you're corrupting a great institution or some bullshit. But you know, you have to get people's attention if you're gonna get any ratings, 'cause you don't want to end up like MSNBC. (Collins, 2004, pg. 142)

The strategy adopted by Ailes and Collier – to focus on broadcasting engaging personalities in an entertaining format – effectively moved FNC to the top of the cable news market. In March, 1999, FNC beat MSNBC in quarterly and primetime ratings and household subscribers. In October, 2000, FNC tied CNN in monthly ratings. In March, 2001, FNC had larger primetime ratings than CNN in the first quarter. In November, 2004, FNC held the top 11 positions for cable news program ratings. As of January, 2005, FNC has 85 million subscribers and is the fastest growing cable news network in history.

Ideology of FNC

FNC advertises itself with the slogans of “Fair and Balanced” and “We Report. You Decide.” Bill Shine, Vice President of FNC production claims that he uses a stopwatch to give equal time to different sides, and states “we try to make sure that everything is fair and is balanced. It’s our slogan, it’s what we live by” (Billings Gazette, August 1, 2004). Additionally, Ailes has stated that while FNC may appear to be more conservative than other news networks, it is only because FNC has found the right way to give balanced and objective coverage of stories while other news stations are influenced by a pervasive liberal bias. (Billings Gazette, August 1, 2004).

While FNC representatives state that they have no bias, critics have noted a conservative tint in FNC’s coverage since its inception (Alterman, 2003; Collins, 2004). They note that in addition to a conservative leaning staff, conservative politicians have lauded FNC and been closely linked throughout its history. During the 2000 Florida election recount Trent Lott stated “If it hadn’t been for Fox, I don’t know what I’d have

done for the news,” and leading Republican politicians such as Newt Gingrich have occasionally hosted special programs on FNC. Additionally, Baker, vice-president of the *Media Research Center*, stated, “many of the prime-time commentators at Fox are conservative and said that some CNN anchors are more fair than others” (Billings Gazette, August 1, 2004).

The contention that FNC has conservative news content was supported by a survey conducted by the PEW Research Center. On May 23, 2004, the PEW Research Center published a survey of news professionals that investigated aspects of their attitudes, opinions and evaluation of news organizations (Pew, 2004). The survey was conducted between March 10th and April 20th of 2004 with 547 reporters, editors and executives participating. The survey found that, in the eyes of news professionals, FNC was an outlier as the most ideologically oriented and conservative news organization in the U.S.

The aggregate results in an unprompted question for each category of respondents had a higher frequency of FNC being a more ideological and a more conservative news channel. This was the most striking with national journalists. 82 percent of national journalists could think of a news organization that is “especially conservative in its coverage (Pew, 2004),” (38 percent could think of a news organization that was “especially liberal”), and of those who stated a news organization with a conservative ideology 69 percent identified FNC. Far beneath FNC was the second most conservative media outlet, the Wall St. Journal,

with an 8 percent rating. The leader for adopting a liberal ideology was the New York Times with a 20 percent rating. FNC's ratings for having an ideological bent dwarfs both the Wall St. Journal and the New York Times (See Table 1).

Table 1: Political Point of View in Daily News Coverage

Can you think of any news orgs. that are especially liberal?			Can you think of any news orgs. that are especially conservative?		
	<u>national</u>	<u>local</u>		<u>national</u>	<u>local</u>
	%	%		%	%
Yes	38	41	Yes	82	63
NY Times	20	17	Fox News	69	42
CNN	2	6	Wall St. Journal	8	11
CBS News	2	5	Wash. Times	9	4
Wash. Post	4	2	Radio (misc. non-NPR)	2	2
NPR	2	2	NY Post	1	1
NBC News	1	3	Other	3	6
ABC News	2	2	No/Don't know	18	37
Other	5	5		100	100
No/Don't know	62	59			
	100	100			

(Adapted from Pew, 2004)

Journalists' assessment of FNC as a conservative news organization correlates with multiple additional findings suggesting a conservative tint in FNC's news coverage. Many columnists and FNC critics point to FNC's coverage of the 2000 elections as evidence of its ideological base (Alterman, 2001, Collins, 2004); for example, FNC was the first news station to prematurely state that Bush had won Florida. Alterman (2001) contends that when conservative politicians are interviewed on FNC they are tossed soft-ball questions while liberal guests are grilled, and that when discussing traditionally liberal issues FNC hosts often take on a more adversarial role than when dealing with conservative issues.

When covering the war in Iraq, FNC appeared to support the White House agenda to build, support, and perpetuate myths to support the administration's policies. In a recent study performed by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (Kull, 2003) individuals who identified FNC as their primary news source were the most likely to believe the incorrect statements that: 1) weapons of mass destruction had been found in Iraq, 2) evidence of links between Iraq and Al Qaeda had been found, and 3) the majority of the world population favors the U.S. going to war in Iraq (this was respectively true for 33 percent, 67 percent, and 35 percent of FNC viewers). 80 percent of the viewers who identified FNC as their primary source of news had at least one of these misperceptions, the highest percentage for any of the news organizations. These results are more significant by the fact that FNC was the primary source of news for the largest percentage of individuals polled (18 percent), and that there was a strong positive correlation between having misperceptions about the war in Iraq and supporting the war in Iraq. In this regard, the programming on FNC was directly responsible for increasing the number of misperceptions individuals had about the war in Iraq and increasing the public's support for the war.

Respondents to the PEW Research Institute survey stated in a 3:1 ratio that news organizations should not adopt a "decidedly ideological point of view" (Pew, 2004). Around 40 percent of the respondents believed that journalists were letting their ideology affect their broadcasts too often. It is clear from the survey that the vast majority of journalists do not support the idea of an ideological bent affecting the content of news broadcasts.

The Roots of “Propaganda”

Before investigating how propaganda may be used by CNN and FNC, it is necessary to give a brief review of how scholars have defined the term and offer the operationalized definition that will be used for this thesis. The term “propaganda” originated with the *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* (Sacred Congregation for propagating the faith), an organization Pope Gregory XV created in the 1622 to spread Catholicism and subdue anti-Catholic behavior (Taithe and Thornton, 2001). Propaganda referred primarily to religious activities until the early 20th century when communication campaigns during WWI defined propaganda as mass communication that involves cognitive manipulation to persuade a population group towards a desired opinion or manner of thinking (Taithe and Thornton, 2001). Contemporary academics have developed conflicting definitions for propaganda that makes it difficult to concretely discuss what is and is not propaganda. Conflicting definitions also make it necessary to assign a specific definition of propaganda for any discussion of its practice. The following section will discuss the implications of different definitions of propaganda and propose one that will make an analysis of news content under a propaganda paradigm most effective.

The Latin root of the word “propaganda” from the *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* is *propagare*, which literally means to propagate. Propagate is generally defined as “to foster growing knowledge of, familiarity with, or acceptance of (as an idea or belief)” (Merriam-Webster, 2004). This differs from dictionary definitions of propaganda, which generally hold that the information is goal-oriented and distributed

for a given purpose. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines propaganda as: “the spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person. Ideas, facts, or allegations spread deliberately to further one's cause or to damage an opposing cause” (Merriam-Webster, 2004). The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines propaganda as:

Any association, systematic scheme, or concerted movement for the propagation of a particular doctrine or practice. The systematic propagation of information or ideas by an interested party, especially in a tendentious way in order to encourage or instill a particular attitude or response. Also, the ideas, doctrines, etc., disseminated thus; the vehicle of such propagation. (Oxford English Dictionary, 2004)

The dictionary definitions of propaganda suggest that the term is different from the simple propagation of information because it includes the need for a specific result. With propaganda, information cannot be spread simply to increase knowledge or familiarity, but must also promote a specific cause, doctrine or practice.

Dictionary definitions shed some light on what propaganda means, but academics and scholars have written multiple definitions over the last century that do not necessarily conform to the *Merriam-Webster* and *Oxford English Dictionaries*. The different definitions often conflict with each other and offer different visions of what propaganda does and does not mean. The early 20th century was the seminal period for contemporary study of propaganda. Harold Lasswell (1969), one of the founding scholars of propaganda, defined the term in the 1930's as: “the management of collective attitudes by

the manipulation of significant symbols” (Thomson, 1999, pg. 1). The Institute of Propaganda Analysis (established 1937) defines propaganda as “the expression of opinion or actions by individuals or groups deliberately designed to influence the opinions or actions of other individuals or groups with reference to determined ends” (Thomson, 1999, pg. 1). Early 20th century scholar Leonard Doob (1949) defined it as “a systematic attempt by an individual or individuals to control the attitudes of groups of individuals through the use of suggestion and consequently control their actions” (Thomson, 1999, pg. 1). Thus, in the early 20th century scholars and institutions defined propaganda in terms of control, manipulation, and systematic actions.

The definitions of propaganda adopted by Lasswell and The Institute of Propaganda Analysis hold that an actor must intentionally engage in persuasive techniques for the communication to be considered propaganda (Thomson, 1999); actions that unintentionally have similar content and effects of propaganda actions are not considered propaganda under their definitions. Many contemporary scholars agree with this definition, such as Jowett and O'Donnel (1986) who define propaganda as “The deliberate and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist” (pg. 6). However, scholars have recently taken issue with the requirement of intent. Thomson (1999) argues that persuasive mass communications campaigns have often arisen without any great master plan or clear deliberation by the actors and offers H.J. Gans (1972) definition of propaganda as an alternative: “each group in society tries to get

its own particular values legitimated by the media and they affect the distribution of wealth, power and prestige by controlling the symbols, myths and information” (pg. 3).

This perspective is supported by Edelstein (1997), who argues that today there is a new kind of propaganda that includes almost all of mass communication. According to Edelstein, propaganda includes “rhetoric [that] sustains or enhances participation in the popular culture” (pg. 5). Under this model, propaganda includes mass movements that arise without any actor deliberately attempting to create change or a mode of thinking in the popular culture. Shanahan (2001) agrees with this perspective as well, arguing that propaganda in America often cannot be pinned down to individuals but arises instead from participatory social groups who often do not have systematic plans for persuasion. Shanahan states that new, broader definitions of propaganda are required because “mass communication technologies [have evolved] toward a distributed, decentralized structure, in which the persuasive force of powerful, centralized distributors of information recedes as individuals are newly empowered to contribute their own message to the global cacophony” (Shanahan, 2001, pp. 1-2).

An additional conflict in definitions of propaganda concerns whether the persuasive appeal must include the manipulation of symbols and the cognitive aspects of the receiver. Aronson and Pratkanis (2001) argue that while propaganda originally only referred to bias, including false statements, in messages the definition has “evolved to mean mass ‘suggestion’ or ‘influence’ through the manipulation of symbols and the psychology of the individual” (pg. 11). Many contemporary scholars hold this point of view. McQuail (2000) defines propaganda as “The process and product of deliberate

attempts to influence collective behavior and opinion by the use of multiple means of communication in ways that are systematic and one-sided It is almost certain to be in some respects misleading or not fully truthful and can be entirely untrue, as with certain kinds of disinformation” (pg. 315). Hitler also considered propaganda to be manipulative, stating: “Its effect for the most part must be aimed at the emotions and only to a very limited degree at the so-called intellect. We must avoid excessive intellectual demands on our public” (Aronson and Pratkanis, 2001, pp. 318-319). Lewis (2001) and Carey (1995) both write of methods that can be used to resist propaganda strictly in terms of how to resist manipulation. Chomsky and Hoffman (1988) also speak of propaganda in terms of manipulation when describing how the media affects public opinion.

However, other scholars have adopted definitions that do not require manipulation. Thomson (1999) defines propaganda as “the use of communication skills of all kinds to achieve attitudinal or behavioural changes among one group of people by another” (pg. 5). Adopting an even broader definition, Taithe and Thornton (1999) define propaganda as “the expression of a secular cosmology, a political grammar of the conscious and unconscious” (pg. 3). While the definitions of Thomson, Taithe and Thornton include manipulative messages in their definition, they also include persuasive appeals that do not attempt to manipulate symbols or the cognitive aspects of the receiver.

The differing views of the necessity for manipulation in the definition of propaganda lead to very different views on its positive and negative aspects. Aronson and Pratkanis hold that the majority of propaganda aims at the peripheral route of

information processing and consists primarily of simplified messages. In great alarm they write:

The consequences for democracy can be dire. As more and more propagandists use simplistic persuasion, the competitive urge to use simpler and simpler persuasion devices increases. As simpler and simpler persuasion devices are used, people become increasingly less informed and sophisticated about civic matters. As the populace becomes less informed, the propagandist must use even more simplistic persuasion devices. The result is an ignorance spiral – a cynical populace bombarded with more and more thoughtless propaganda that they have less and less skill and inclination to process and ability to understand. Adolph Hitler's belief that the masses are ignorant thus becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. (Aronson and Pratkanis, 2001, pp. 355-356)

In contrast, Taithe and Thornton write about the positive aspects of propaganda:

The false dichotomy between truth and propaganda and the absurd opposition between propaganda and the propagation of democracy need to be seriously challenged.... The truth is elsewhere, especially when one considers the need for propaganda.... In an era of new technologies and information warfare and rampant misinformation, ... [we need] more propaganda to counter the nihilism born of conspiracy theories and news saturation. (Taithe and Thornton, 1999, pg. 16)

A final consideration for looking at news content is how the term propaganda is compared to the term education. The news serves an educational function for society, and scholars have different opinions on what kinds of news content should be considered education and propaganda. The rise of Channel One, a news program that offers funds to schools for showing students a 12 minute news show interspersed with two minutes of advertising, has caused some contemporary scholars to reexamine the question of what constitutes propaganda and education in our education system and news broadcasts (Aronson and Pratkanis, 2001). Essentially, all propaganda scholars hold that educational news broadcasts can be a form of propaganda, although their evaluation of specific broadcasts generally rest on their adopted definition of propaganda (e.g. whether they require intent and/or manipulation for propaganda to occur). Max Wertheimer¹ proposes a helpful distinction between propaganda and education, stating that propaganda “manipulates prejudice and emotion to impose the propagandist’s will on others” (Aronson and Pratkanis, 2001, pg. 266), while education encourages “critical thinking” (Aronson and Pratkanis, 2001, pg. 266). Under this definition, Channel One would be considered propaganda unless it also included evaluative activities such as a class discussion that encouraged students to critically examine its messages.

Propaganda Defined

It is clear from the multiple definitions of propaganda that it is a word with a fuzzy definition. For the purposes of this paper, a definition of propaganda will be adopted that is most useful for an investigation of propaganda techniques used by CNN

¹ Aronson and Pratkanis (2001) reference Wertheimer’s statements to:
Luchins, A. A. , & Luchins, E. H. (1978). *Revisiting Wertheimer’s seminars*. (Vol. 1). Lewisburg, PA:
Bucknell University Press, pg. 277.

and FNC when discussing global warming and climate change during prime time television viewing hours. For this paper's analysis there are three questions that must be answered: 1) does a propaganda message need to be intended as such? 2) does a propaganda message need to include manipulation? and 3) how does propaganda in the news differ from education?

In terms of intent, the messages that news broadcasters deliver to audiences can have multiple effects beyond what the broadcaster (or producer) intends. It is the content of the message, regardless of the intent, that dictates how the information is received. Because this analysis is primarily concerned with the existence of propaganda in news broadcasts and its potential for affecting audience perception, the intent of the message source will not be a factor in determining whether or not a message constitutes propaganda. In terms of manipulation, broad definitions of propaganda that do not require manipulation, such as the definition proposed by Thomson (1999), essentially make the term equivalent to persuasion. While this type of definition is not inherently wrong, it invalidates the need to have a specific term such as "propaganda" to describe specific types of persuasive messages and campaigns; thus the term "propaganda" is most useful when it includes the requirement of manipulation. Finally, in terms of education, this analysis acknowledges the important educational function that news broadcasts serve. News can serve to educate; however, if the news is delivered in a biased manner it can effectively manipulate the framing and perceived importance of an issue, which falls under the manipulation definition of propaganda.

Using the areas of intent, manipulation and education, this analysis will borrow from Aronson and Pratkanis (2001) to define propaganda as: “mass suggestion or influence” (pg. 11), regardless of intent, “through the manipulation of symbols and the psychology of the individual” (pg. 11).

CHAPTER TWO

HYPOTHESES

When a news organization, such as FNC, focus primarily on personalities when designing shows, it can create an environment in which using engaging speech and drawing in viewers takes priority over making sure that the news reflects the judgment of the respective experts. Whether intentional or not, the use of engaging personalities can also lead to imprecise language that attracts viewers, but is manipulative. Joe Conason (2003), Peter Hart (2003), and Eric Alterman (2003) have written books containing specific examples of propaganda techniques used by FNC and differentiated FNC from other news networks on this point. Based on the emphasis placed on personalities during the FNC hiring process and the evidence of propaganda found by Conason, Hart, and Alterman, it is expected that:

1) FNC uses propaganda techniques more frequently than CNN when covering global warming during prime time and on Sundays.

Additionally, both the official representatives of FNC and CNN, in addition to professional journalists, believe that CNN is relatively more liberal in its content than FNC, and thus that FNC is relatively more conservative in its coverage than CNN. The Bush Administration, widely considered to be a conservative administration, in addition to conservative spokesmen have generally adopted the perspective that there is a large

amount of uncertainty concerning whether or not global warming is real and happening (Fritz, Keefer, and Nyhan, 2004). Thus, it is expected that:

- 2) FNC anchors are more likely than CNN anchors to emphasize the uncertainty of global warming or state that it is not a problem to be concerned about.
- 3) FNC will have a lower ratio of global warming advocates to skeptics as guests than CNN.

In addition to examining these three critical hypotheses, the study will perform an exploratory investigation into how global warming is described by FNC and CNN. The analysis will investigate the different types of propaganda techniques used by FNC and CNN, where and when CNN and FNC state the impacts of global warming will occur, the arguments that global advocates and skeptics use, and if there are any years that contain significantly different levels of global warming coverage as compared to other years. It is expected that the impacts of global warming will be described as occurring in the future and throughout the world (as opposed to now and affecting the U.S.), under the framing theory that the media influences the public's perception of unobtrusive events and based on findings by Leiserowitz (forthcoming) that Americans perceive global warming as an event that will happen in the general future and will impact individuals in the general world instead of specifically in the U.S. Other than how FNC and CNN each describe the impacts of global warming, there are no predicted results for the exploratory investigations.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate the FNC's and CNN's treatment of global warming and use of propaganda techniques, LexisNexis was used to identify transcripts of news broadcasts from 1998 – 2004 on CNN and FNC that contained the terms "climate change" or "global warming." The transcripts were then limited to those shows that occurred during prime time television hours (between 5 pm and 11 pm on weekdays) and on Sundays. The prime time filter was necessary because FNC's transcripts are only available for shows broadcast during prime time and the weekends; however, it is an effective filter that focuses the study on the transcripts from shows that the majority of cable television news viewers are watching. Transcripts from Sunday shows were also included because their style and content was similar to prime time content and their inclusion allowed for a larger sample size to be used for the study.

The study investigates all transcripts on LexisNexis for FNC and CNN that contain the words "global warming" or "climate change" and occur during prime time hours or on Sunday. In order to be coded, the transcripts needed to pass the threshold of having at least one full sentence devoted to discussing global warming or climate change. If the transcripts did not pass this threshold they were discarded. This filtering process left a total of 79 transcripts for FNC and 106 transcripts for CNN.

A coding sheet was developed (see Appendix 1) to investigate the critical hypotheses, and a research assistant was trained to code for the critical hypotheses. The research assistant and I each coded half of the transcripts for FNC and CNN, and 10 percent of the transcripts were coded by both the research assistant and myself. The intercoder reliability for questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8 (see Appendix 1 for the respective questions) were all above 90 percent. An intercoder reliability test was not performed for question 5; however, the results from this question were not used in the results for this thesis. Also, for the types of propaganda being used by the news organizations, the lead experimenter alone decided how to categorize the different instances of propaganda; thus, an intercoder reliability test was not possible for the types of propaganda used by the anchors on CNN and FNC.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Critical Hypotheses

Propaganda Use on FNC and CNN

In the coded transcripts, FNC had a significantly higher ratio of propaganda than CNN ($p < .05$). FNC used propaganda techniques in 42 percent of their shows, while CNN used propaganda techniques in 25 percent of their shows. The majority of the propaganda techniques used on FNC appeared on The O'Reilly Factor, Hannity and Colmes, and Special Report with Brit Hume. These three shows respectively carried 33 percent, 27 percent, and 18 percent of the transcripts that contained propaganda techniques, making up 78 percent of the shows containing propaganda on FNC. The O'Reilly Factor and Hannity and Colmes also carried high propaganda to non-propaganda show ratios of 11:6 and 3:1, while Special Report with Brit Hume had a relatively lower ratio of 2:7.

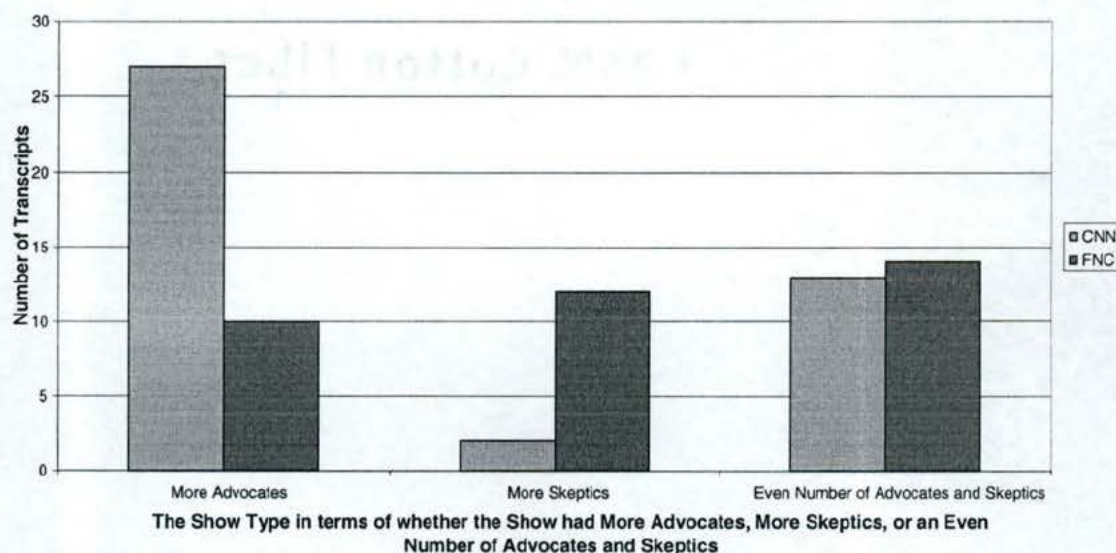
The propaganda techniques were more spread out across the shows on CNN compared to FNC. The highest percentage of CNN's propaganda came from Crossfire, which carried 26 percent of CNN's total propaganda. Crossfire was followed by CNN Sunday, Earth Matters, and World Today which had a respective total of 15 percent, 11 percent, and 11 percent of CNN's shows that contained propaganda techniques. The total of these four shows accounts for 63 percent of the propaganda use on CNN, with the rest

being essentially evenly distributed amongst the other CNN shows. Crossfire had a very high propaganda to non-propaganda ratio, with all seven of its transcripts containing propaganda techniques, while CNN Sunday, Earth Matters and World Today had low ratios of 2:7, 3:14, and 1:6 respectively.

Global Warming Advocates and Skeptics

FNC had a more equal ratio of global warming advocates to global warming skeptics (27:28) compared to CNN (52:21). For the statistical analysis, the transcripts with advocates and skeptics were divided between those that had a larger number of skeptics (*e.g.* either 1 skeptic and no advocates or 2 skeptics and one advocate would be categorized as a transcript with more skeptics), larger number of advocates, and a mixed number of skeptics and advocates. CNN had 28 transcripts with more global warming advocates, two transcripts with more global warming skeptics, and 13 transcripts with an even number of advocates and skeptics (See Graph 1). FNC had 10 transcripts with more advocates, 12 transcripts with more skeptics, and 14 transcripts with an even number of global warming advocates and skeptics (See Graph 1). Using a Chi-square test, the difference was significant ($p < .01$). The difference in expected values occurred mainly from the difference in the news stations number of transcripts with more global warming advocates and more global warming skeptics.

Graph 1: Advocates and Skeptics on CNN and FNC



Scientific Certainty of Global Warming

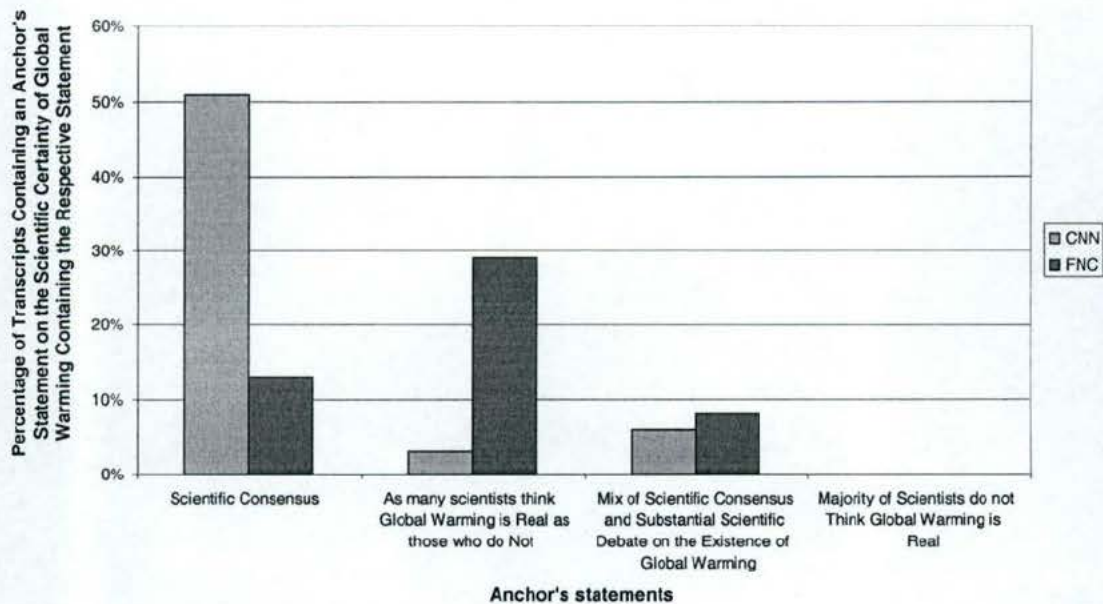
On FNC, the anchor spoke to the scientific certainty of global warming in 30 percent of the transcripts. The anchors stated clearly that there was a scientific consensus that global warming was real and happening in 13 percent of the transcripts, that there were just as many scientists who thought global warming was real as those who did not in 29 percent of the transcripts, never stated that the majority of scientists thought that global warming was not happening, and gave a mixed indication on whether the majority of scientists thought global warming was real and happening or an equal number of scientists did and did not think global warming was real and happening in 8 percent of the transcripts (See Graph 2).

When speaking about the certainty of global warming, the anchor stated that global warming was real and happening in 46 percent of the transcripts, there was too much scientific uncertainty to know if global warming was occurring or not in 29 percent

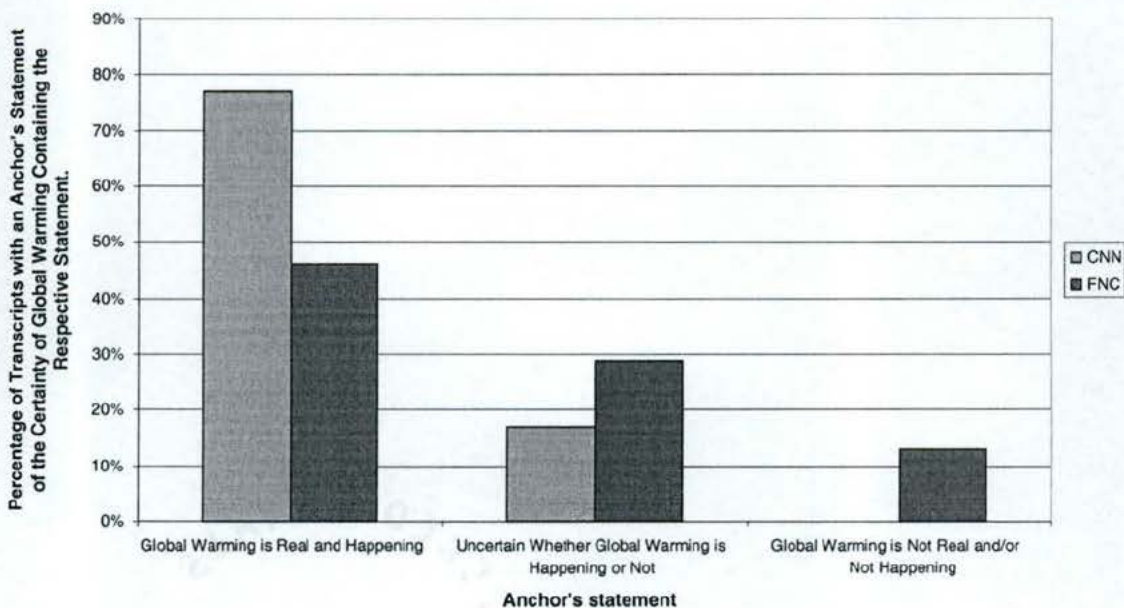
of the transcripts, and that global warming was not real and not happening in 13 percent of the transcripts (See Graph 3).

On CNN, the anchors spoke to the scientific certainty of global warming in 33 percent of the transcripts. When speaking about the certainty of global warming, the anchor stated that global warming was real and happening in 77 percent of the transcripts, that there was too much scientific uncertainty to know if global warming was occurring or not in 17 percent of the transcripts, and never stated that global warming was not real and not happening (See Graph 2). The anchors also stated clearly that there was a scientific consensus that global warming was real and happening in 51 percent of the transcripts, that there were just as many scientists who thought global warming was real as those who did not in 3 percent of the transcripts, never stated that the majority of scientists thought that global warming was not happening, and gave a mixed indication on whether the majority of scientists thought global warming was real and happening or an equal number of scientists did and did not think global warming was real and happening in 6 percent of the transcripts (See Graph 3).

Graph 2: Anchor's Statements on the Scientific Certainty of Global Warming on CNN and FNC



Graph 3: Anchor's Statements on the Certainty of Global Warming on CNN and FNC



Exploratory Investigation

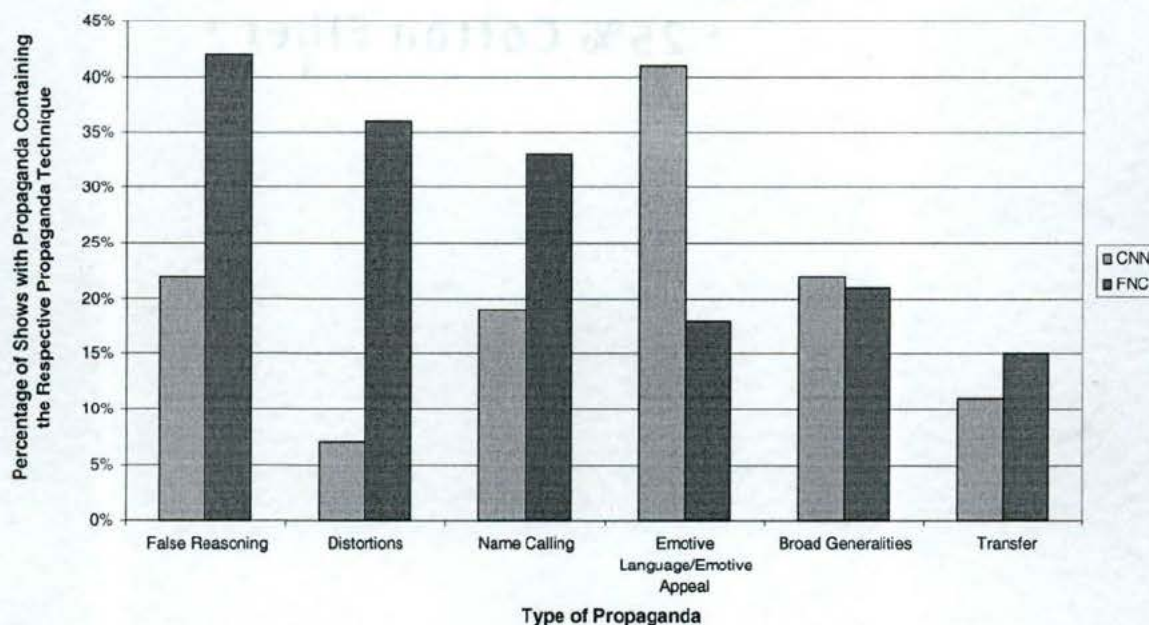
Types of Propaganda Use on FNC and CNN

FNC and CNN had different frequencies of specific techniques² being used when propaganda appeared on the respective shows. On FNC, the three most common propaganda techniques were false reasoning, distortions, and name-calling. These three propaganda techniques occurred respectively in 42 percent, 36 percent, and 33 percent of the FNC transcripts that contained propaganda. FNC transcripts also contained broad generalities, emotive language/emotional appeals, and transfers. These three propaganda techniques occurred respectively in 21 percent, 18 percent, and 15 percent of the FNC transcripts that contained propaganda (See Graph 4).

On CNN, the most common propaganda techniques were emotive language/emotional appeals, false reasoning, broad generalities, and name-calling. These four propaganda techniques occurred respectively in 41 percent, 22 percent, 22 percent, and 19 percent of the CNN transcripts that contained propaganda. The CNN transcripts also included transfers, use of absolutes, card stacking, distortions, contingencies, and the bandwagon technique. These propaganda techniques occurred respectively in 11 percent, 11 percent, 11 percent, 7 percent, 4 percent, and 4 percent of the CNN transcripts that contained propaganda (See Graph 4).

² For a discussion of the different propaganda techniques used for this thesis, please see: Institute for Propaganda Analysis (1939). *The fine art of propaganda*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Graph 4: Frequency of Different Types of Propaganda Techniques in Shows Containing Propaganda on CNN and FNC



Advocates and Skeptics Arguments on CNN and FNC

On FNC, global warming advocates primarily used the three arguments that 1) global warming will have large negative impacts, 2) Bush is bad for the environment, 3) and that there is a scientific consensus that global warming is real. These three arguments respectively occurred in 42 percent, 23 percent, and 15 percent of the shows that included global warming advocates (See Graph 5). Additional arguments were that 1) the Bush Administration has stated global warming is real, 2) the U.S. is the largest emitter of greenhouse gasses, 3) if Europe can take action then America should be able to, 4) biblical morality demands that America take action on global warming, 5) new technology is needed, 6) voluntary measures will not work, and 7) Americans generally support taking action on global warming. These seven arguments each occurred in 3-8 percent of the transcripts containing global warming advocates.

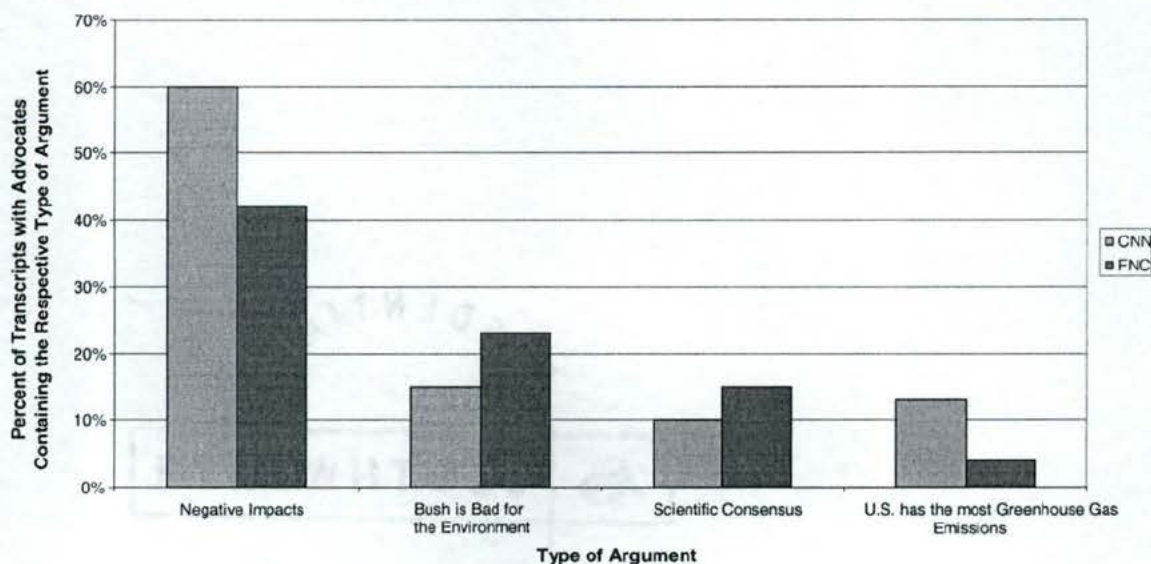
The skeptics on FNC primarily used the four arguments that 1) the scientific data does not support that contention that global warming is occurring outside of what can be considered a natural cycle, 2) taking action to attenuate global warming by reducing greenhouse gas emissions will cripple the American economy, 3) if global warming occurs it will have beneficial effects, and 4) America cannot fight global warming when developing countries are not included in the process. These four arguments respectively occurred in 50 percent, 46 percent, 14 percent, and 11 percent of the transcripts containing global warming skeptics (See Graph 6). The remaining arguments were roughly evenly distributed across the arguments that 1) The administration of Bill Clinton never took any substantive action on global warming, 2) Europe has not taken action to fight global warming, 3) Americans do not care about global warming, and 4) environmentalists are alarmists. These four arguments each occur in 3-7 percent of the transcripts containing global warming skeptics.

On CNN, global warming advocates primarily used the four arguments that 1) global warming will have large negative impacts, 2) the Bush administration is bad for the environment, 3) the U.S. is the largest emitter of greenhouse gasses, and 4) that there is a scientific consensus that global warming is real. These four arguments respectively occurred in 60 percent, 15 percent, 13 percent, and 10 percent of the transcripts containing global warming advocates (See Graph 5). The remaining arguments were the same as those used by global warming advocates on FNC, with the addition of the argument that fighting global warming could improve the economy. These remaining

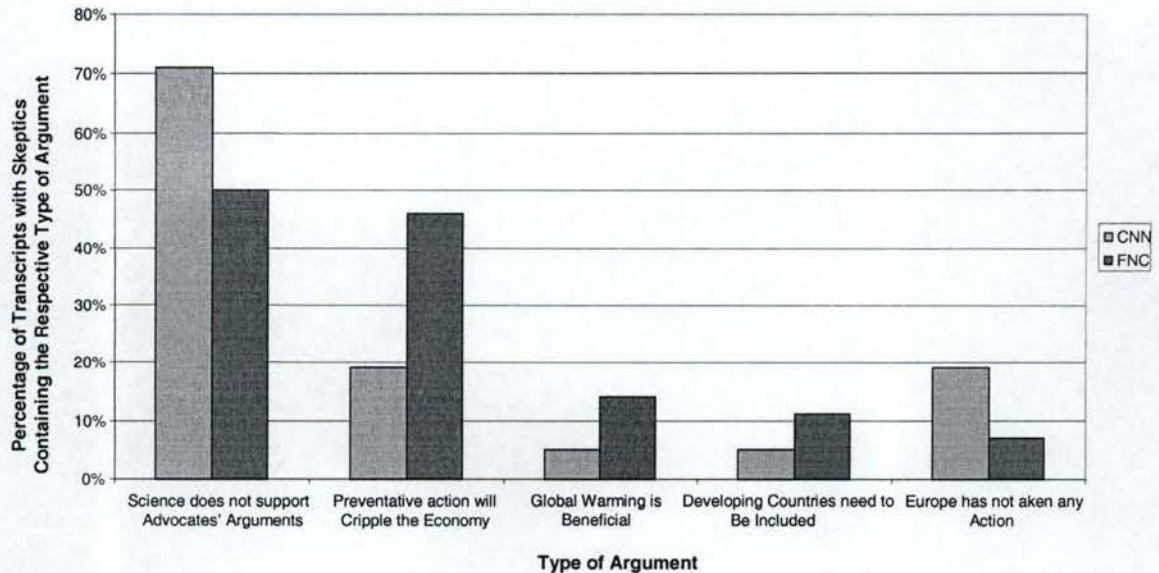
arguments each occurred on 2-6 percent of the CNN transcripts containing global warming advocates.

The global warming skeptics on CNN primarily used the three arguments that 1) the scientific data does not support that contention that global warming is occurring outside of what can be considered a natural cycle, 2) taking action to attenuate global warming by reducing greenhouse gas emissions will cripple the American economy, and 3) that Europe has not taken any action to fight global warming. These three arguments respectively occurred in 71 percent, 19 percent, and 19 percent, of the CNN transcripts containing global warming skeptics (See Graph 6). The remaining arguments used by skeptics on CNN were the same as those used by global warming skeptics that appeared on FNC, with the addition of the argument that other issues are more important than global warming, and each occurred in 5 percent of the CNN transcripts containing global warming skeptics.

Graph 5: Advocates' Arguments on CNN and FNC



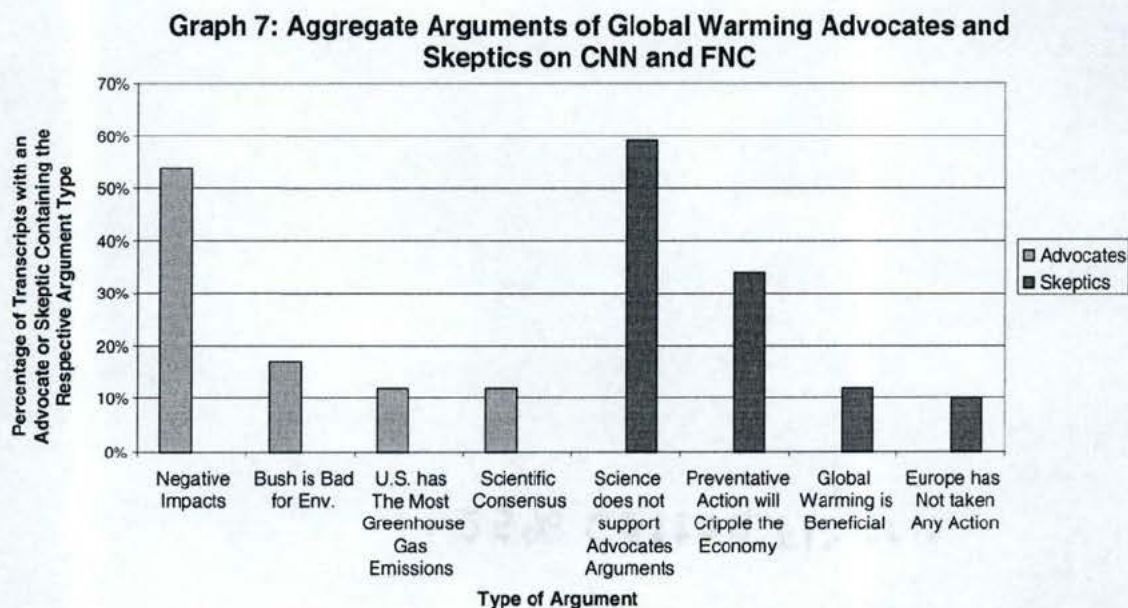
Graph 6: Skeptics' arguments on CNN and FNC



When the arguments given by global warming advocates on FNC and CNN are aggregated, the primary argument given is that global warming will have large negative impacts, which occurs in 54 percent of the transcripts containing global warming advocates. This is followed in frequency by the arguments that 1) the Bush administration is bad for the environment (17 percent of transcripts), 2) the U.S. is the largest emitter of greenhouse gasses (12 percent of transcripts), and that there is a scientific consensus that global warming is real (12 percent of transcripts), (See Graph 7).

For global warming skeptics, the aggregated arguments that appeared on FNC and CNN was primarily that 1) the scientific data does not support that contention that global warming is occurring outside of what can be considered a natural cycle and 2) that taking action to attenuate global warming by reducing greenhouse gas emissions will cripple the American economy. These two arguments occurred respectively in 59 percent and 34 percent of the transcripts containing global warming skeptics. Additionally, global

warming skeptics argue with a lower frequency (although higher than other remaining arguments) that if global warming occurs it will have beneficial effects (12 percent of transcripts) and that because Europe has not taken action to fight global warming the U.S. is not obligated to do so (10 percent of transcripts), (See Graph 7).



Impacts of Global Warming

The portrayal of global warming was investigated by identifying if global warming was portrayed as impacting individual families and communities, local U.S. communities, the U.S. as a whole, people all over the world, or non-human nature. The time frame of the impacts was also investigated by identifying if the impacts were portrayed as occurring now, in the near future (within 10 years), the distant future, or the general future.

On FNC, the impact of global warming all over the world occurred in the highest percentage (36 percent) of FNC's global warming transcripts. This was followed by local

U.S. communities, the U.S. as a whole, non-human nature, and individuals and families. These impacts occurred respectively in 16 percent, 15 percent, 13 percent, and 5 percent of FNC's global warming articles. When the U.S. impacts were aggregated, they occurred in 22 percent of the global warming transcripts (See Graph 8).

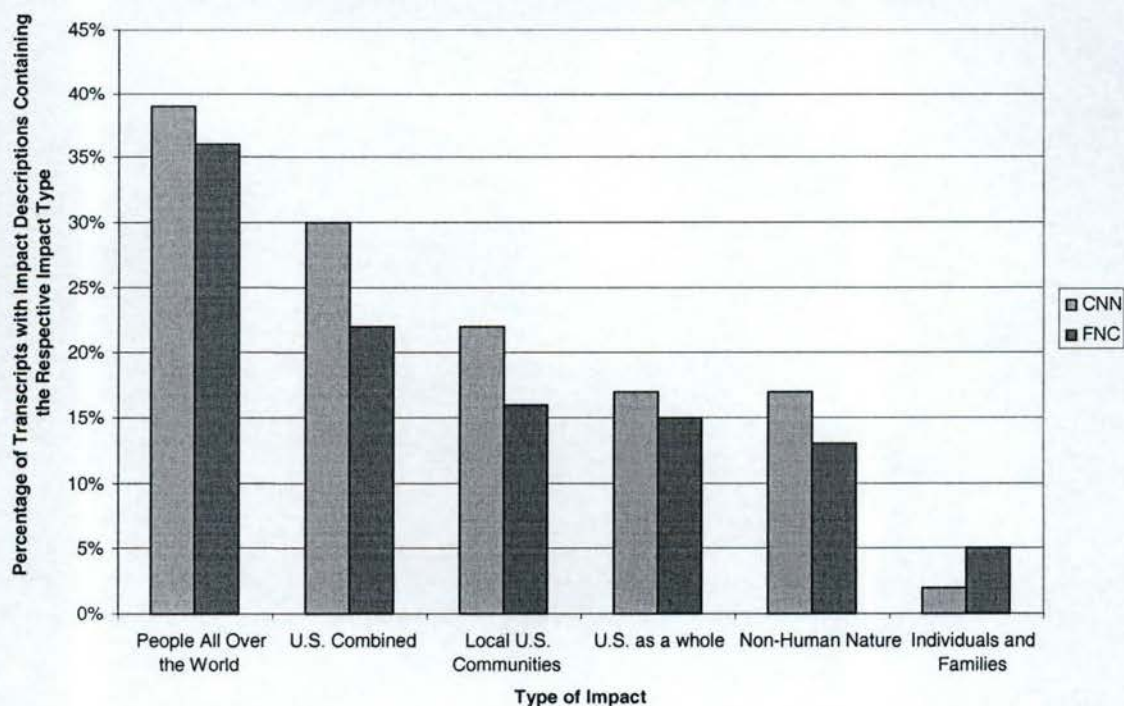
The majority of the transcripts on FNC (62 percent) did not specify when the impacts of global warming were expected to occur. For those that did indicate when global warming was expected to occur, 53 percent indicated impacts were occurring now, 30 percent indicated that impacts will occur in the general future, 17 percent indicated impacts will occur in the distant future, and 17 percent indicated that impacts will occur in the near future. When all future impact indications are aggregated, they occur in 63 percent of the transcripts that indicated when the impacts of global warming are expected to occur (See Graph 9).

On CNN, the impact of global warming all over the world also occurred in the highest percentage (39 percent) of the transcripts. This was followed by local U.S. communities, non-human nature, the U.S. as a whole, and individuals and families. These impacts occurred respectively in 22 percent, 17 percent, 12 percent, and 2 percent of CNN's global warming articles. When the U.S. impacts were aggregated they occurred in 30 percent of the global warming transcripts (See Graph 8).

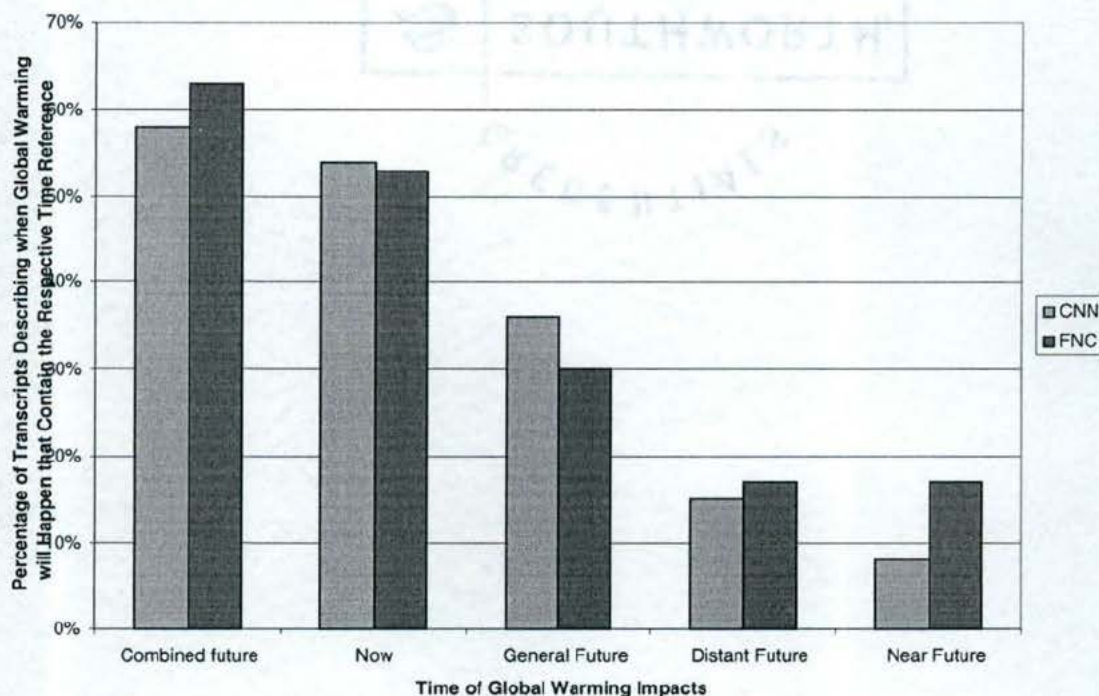
The majority of transcripts on CNN (55 percent) did specify when the impacts of global warming were expected to occur. For those that indicated when the impacts of global warming was expected to occur, 54 percent indicated impacts that were occurring now, 36 percent indicated impacts will occur in the general future, 15 percent indicated

impacts will occur in the distant future, and 8 percent indicated that impacts will occur in the near future. When all future impact indications are aggregated, they occur in 58 percent of the transcripts (See Graph 9).

Graph 8: The Impacts CNN and FNC State Global Warming will Have



Graph 9: When CNN and FNC State Global Warming will Occur

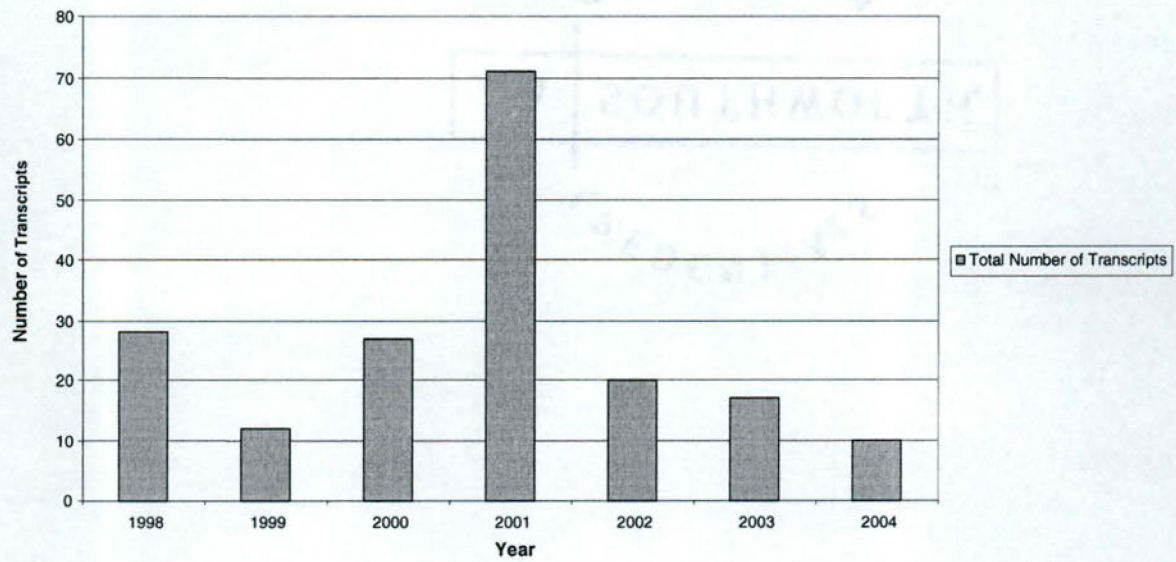


Frequency of Global Warming Coverage

The majority of global warming coverage occurred during 2001. There was not a significant difference of the frequency of coverage by date between FNC and CNN. For the aggregate total of transcripts, 38 percent of the transcripts came from 2001.

Following 2001 in order of frequency was 1998 (15 percent), 2000 (15 percent), 2002 (11 percent), 2003 (9 percent), 1999 (7 percent), and 2004 (5 percent). If the transcripts were evenly distributed across the years, the transcripts from any given year would account for approximately 14 percent of the transcripts (See Graph 10). Using a best fit chi-square test, the coverage from 2001 is significantly different than the six other years ($p < .05$).

Graph 10: Aggregate Frequency of Global Warming Coverage by CNN and FNC



CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This study supports the three critical hypotheses that 1) FNC uses more propaganda techniques than CNN, 2) FNC anchors are more likely than CNN anchors to emphasize the uncertainty of global warming or state that it is not a problem to be concerned about, and 3) FNC has a lower ratio of global warming advocates to skeptics than CNN. The exploratory investigations also provide new data on how the media is talking about global warming and what events cause global warming to receive heightened coverage.

Propaganda

Propaganda techniques were adopted frequently by both CNN and FNC, with FNC using propaganda techniques at a significantly higher frequency than CNN. The techniques used by the news shows were techniques of manipulation that can significantly affect how individuals perceive global warming. While the use of propaganda on CNN was, with the exception of Crossfire, distributed evenly across the different types of shows, on FNC nearly 80 percent of the propaganda techniques occurred during The O'Reilly Factor, Hannity and Colmes, and Special Report with Brit Hume. The results suggest that FNC could significantly reduce the amount of propaganda techniques used on its programming by reforming these three shows. It is also interesting that the propaganda techniques on FNC occurred most often on the

network's two highest rated shows, The O'Reilly Factor and Hannity and Colmes. The results suggest that adopting show formats that encourage the use of propaganda techniques may in fact boost its popularity in the public eye. This suggestion is speculative, but is an area that could be investigated by future research.

The majority of propaganda techniques on CNN and FNC were roughly comparable, although the stations did focus on different areas. Probability tests did not find a significant difference between CNN and FNC for the different types of propaganda used, but this result may arise primarily because the expected frequencies were so low. Using the filter of global warming for propaganda techniques forced the study to be underpowered when looking for differences in the actual types of propaganda techniques used instead of the general use of propaganda. This study does suggest that CNN is more likely to use emotional appeals and FNC is more likely to use false reasoning, distortions, and name-calling. More research that looks specifically at the shows with high propaganda frequencies, and without the subject filter used in this study, will be necessary to investigate this question further.

While the propaganda techniques used on CNN and FNC were similar within their respective types, FNC did have two examples of propaganda that were significantly more manipulative than any other seen. They occurred on March 16, 2003, and July 20, 2003, and offer striking examples of how anchors on news stations can use misinformation and strong labels to manipulate the public perception of specific groups.

On March 16, 2003, Tony Snow delivered the following report during the "Below the Fold" section of "Fox News Sunday":

BODY:

SNOW: Now let's check out some political stories we found this week
Below the Fold.

Hans Blix, the chief U.N. weapons inspector told an MTV News audience this week that he had discovered the chief threat to global peace and stability -- air.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

HANS BLIX, U.N. CHIEF WEAPONS INSPECTOR: Long term, I am more worried about the environmental problems like global warming than about the use of armed force on a large scale.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SNOW: Some bad news for the Swede. The prestigious scientific journal "Nature" has just published two studies that demolish the global-warming hypothesis. One slaps down the claim that carbon dioxide emissions heat up the planet. The other indicates that tree-sitting environmentalists may in fact be eco-terrorists.

The study, repeating a prior claim by noted scientist Ronald Reagan, says that evergreen trees emit more smog-producing nitrogen than all the world's cars, trucks and factories combined.

In the preceding broadcast FNC has effectively manipulated symbols and falsified content to attack Han Blix, environmentalists, and the prospect of global warming being a serious environmental threat. When FNC makes general statements about studies without citing a title or author it is difficult to verify the information provided by the news organization as representative of the publication; however, it appears that FNC falsely claimed that *Nature* published a study that "slaps down the claim that carbon dioxide emissions heat up the planet." A close examination of the March 13, 2003 *Nature* and searches performed through the *Nature* website for this time period (searches were run for articles containing the terms "global warming," "climate change," and "carbon dioxide" for all *Nature* journal articles published in February and March of 2003) have not identified any articles that could be construed as stating that carbon dioxide does not heat up the planet. Additionally, there are multiple articles included in *Nature* during this time period that affirm the link between carbon dioxide and the greenhouse effect. *Nature* magazine has not responded to requests for comment on this issue, but it appears that FNC made this study up. FNC has made no statements correcting this apparent error.

The "Nitrogen" study did appear in the March 13 edition of *Nature*. In the "Under the Fold" report FNC greatly distorts the study. The Study is titled: "Atmospheric science: Ultraviolet light and leaf emission of NO_x" and found in *Nature* 422, 134 (13 March 2003). The study states in the abstract that "our findings suggest that global NO_x emissions from boreal coniferous forests may be comparable to those produced by worldwide industrial and traffic sources." FNC distorts this to claim that the

study: 1) "demolishes the global-warming hypothesis," 2) "suggests that tree-sitting environmentalists may in fact be eco-terrorists," and 3) "demonstrate(s) that evergreen trees emit more smog-producing nitrogen than all the world's cars, trucks and factories combined."

In addition to falsifying and misrepresenting the content of *Nature*, FNC uses highly charged language to describe environmentalists. By using the term "eco-terrorists," FNC links the actions of peaceful environmental protestors to terrorists. The language use also draws a contrast between environmentalists, who are labeled terrorists, and Republican leaders such as Ronald Reagan who are called "respected scientist(s)." Finally, the use of terms such as "slap-down" and "demolish" suggest that *Nature* has effectively demonstrated that activists who believe in global warming are categorically wrong. A reading of *Nature* demonstrates that such an assessment is incorrect. In this case, FNC has falsified one study, misrepresented another, and co-opted the name of a highly respected academic journal to promote the doctrine that global warming does not exist and that environmentalists are terrorists.

A second case of propaganda occurred on July 20, 2003, when the "Fox News Sunday" anchor stated:

And the Chesapeake Climate Action Network in Rockville, Maryland, a coalition of religious and environmental groups, has set out to issue 15,000 tickets in the Washington-Baltimore area to owners of SUVs, accusing them of, quote, "Hurting the climate, hurting endangered species, hurting children."

Given the fact that recent research dismisses all three counts, global-warming phobia has become officially theological.

This case of propaganda is similar to the previous example, in that it is speech from a news program that delivers misinformation and then uses the misinformation to label specific groups. While it is debatable whether the climate can be “hurt” as opposed to changed, the broad scientific consensus is that the climate is changing, and that the expected climate change will adversely affect at-risk species and human populations which includes endangered species and children (IPCC, 2001). The description of scientific findings as “recent research,” with no additional information on what specific research the anchor is referring to, makes it impossible to check their source, validate, or invalidate the claims of the news station. It is also not clear how such research would make the fear of global warming “theological,” or based on principles of religious faith, when there are multiple scientific studies, including the 2001 IPCC report, which give cause for the concerns claimed by the environmental group. While the use of inaccurate information is problematic in news broadcasts, the problem is confounded when the misinformation is then used to criticize environmental groups for not using science as a basis for their claims when the scientific majority supports the respective group’s perspective.

Skeptics, Advocates, and the Certainty of Global Warming

The study found a strong correlation between the ideological leanings (on a liberal to conservative scale) of the news stations (as documented by surveys of journalists and statements from the station founders) and the certainty that anchors and their guests used when describing the likelihood of human-caused global warming to occur. There was a negative correlation between how conservative the station was seen and the likelihood that statements made by the anchor or guests brought on the shows would state the global warming is real and happening.

Part of the reason for this correlation may be that FNC has made clear to its viewers that it intends to give equal weight to advocates and skeptics of global warming. For example, on May 9, 2001, Brit Hume reported that a study performed by the Media Research Center found that between George Bush's inauguration and April 22, 2001, the media covered global warming with 51 stories and mentioned global warming skeptics 7 times. Hume reported that 6 of the stories that mentioned skeptics were run by FNC (the remaining story was on CNN) while ABC, CBS and NBC did not mention skeptics of global warming. While it is important to treat a study performed by the conservative Media Research Center with caution – on its homepage, <http://www.mediaresearch.org>, the Media Research Center declares that it is “America's Media Watchdog: The Leader in Documenting, Exposing and Neutralizing Liberal Media Bias,” the fact that FNC ran this study as a lead story demonstrates an organizational belief in giving voice to global warming skeptics.

In contrast with FNC, CNN anchors have made statements and invited guests that are more in line with the growing scientific consensus (IPCC, 2001) that global warming is a real phenomenon that is occurring in part because of human action. In the interest of providing the public with the most informative and accurate information, the CNN approach appears to be more valid as it gives the public a more accurate depiction of how scientific experts believe global warming is occurring and the impacts it is likely to have.

Arguments of Advocates and Skeptics

The investigation into the arguments of advocates and skeptics provides insight into how the global warming debate is being approached by the different sides. Advocates repeatedly stressed potential catastrophic impacts that global warming may have on the U.S. and the world. After stating the adverse impacts of global warming, they often state the need for U.S. politicians to immediately adopt measures to reduce greenhouse gasses and attenuate global warming. The global warming skeptics' chose to primarily focus on attacking the scientific underpinnings of the statements made by global warming advocates. Global warming skeptics would also often state that any effort the U.S. took to significantly reduce greenhouse gasses would have a catastrophic effect on the U.S. economy.

As a result, viewers are hearing two sides with very different perspectives on the likelihood that global warming will happen, and if it does occur, the impacts that it is likely to have. Viewers are also only receiving information that U.S. action to fight global warming will harm the economy. The global warming skeptics are essentially offering a positive view of America, stating that the U.S. is the greatest nation in the

world, that the scientific community is at best uncertain on whether global warming will occur or not, and that if we take action on this uncertainty to curb greenhouse gasses it will ruin America. Global warming advocates, by contrast, typically focus only on the negative aspects of global warming, and offer no positive vision, with some exceptions regarding the development of renewable energy sources, of how actions taken to fight global warming may actually improve the economy and the quality of life in the U.S. To the best of my knowledge, this study is the first to provide a systematic analysis of the arguments given by global warming advocates and skeptics on news stations, and thus gives both advocates and skeptics information that can be used to investigate how to make their arguments more convincing in the future.

Impacts of Global Warming

Both CNN and FNC spoke of global warming as a phenomenon that was happening now and in the future, and also as an event that carries impacts in the U.S. and throughout the world. It was not expected that the discussion of global warming would be roughly equal both on a now vs. future dimension and on a U.S. vs. World dimension. Research by Leiserowitz (forthcoming) has found that Americans are most likely to view global warming as a phenomenon that will happen in places other than the U.S. and have impacts that will occur at some point in the general future. It was expected that the news organizations would mirror these findings, and speak of global warming as an event that will happen outside of the U.S. and in the future.

Part of the difference may be explained by the fact the study included any reference to global warming effects, including moderate changes in temperature and weather, as a positive reference to impacts of global warming. Leiserowitz has suggested that for his survey results individuals were focused more on large, catastrophic consequences of global warming, and may have not included moderate effects in their responses. It would be beneficial for future research to see if there is a correlation between how news organizations report on the catastrophic impacts of global warming.

Frequency of Global Warming Coverage

The most coverage of global warming occurred during 2001. This was the time period when Bush had withdrawn the U.S. from the Kyoto treaty, and was traveling through Europe to discuss the Kyoto treaty and the anti-ballistic missile treaty. It is likely that global warming received the most coverage during this year because the negotiations over its implementation were a new event with constant developments that the media could report on. Also, the nature of the discussions in Europe briefly paired the issue of global warming with the anti-ballistic missile (ABM) treaty, the other major treaty that the Bush Administration was negotiating with Europe and Russia. This connection resulted in having global warming reported in multiple stories alongside other issues involving international relations, which in turn raised the number of stories carrying substantive coverage of global warming in 2001. There is ample room for future research to investigate how, and when, environmental issues are paired with other national and international issues, such as the ABM treaty, and the impacts that such pairings have on the coverage given to the respective environmental issues.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Under the definition of propaganda adopted for this paper, one that requires the manipulation of symbols and cognitive aspects of the audience and does not require intent, FNC and CNN have both frequently used propaganda techniques when covering global warming. The methods adopted by FNC and CNN are ones that scholars generally hold to be unethical (Aronson and Pratkanis, 2001). Through their news broadcasts, FNC and CNN have used multiple propaganda techniques, including: ad hominem attacks, ad populum commentary, name calling, glittering generalities, false associations, emotive language, absolutes and hasty generalizations. These techniques generally aim at the peripheral route of information processing and limit the audience's deliberative thinking about global warming. When such techniques are used, they usually serve to forcibly persuade the audience's opinions and perceptions of an issue (Aronson and Pratkanis, 2001). The finding that FNC and CNN frequently uses propaganda techniques, with FNC using propaganda techniques significantly more frequently than CNN, when covering global warming is a cause for concern; however, if the public rejects news organizations that adopt propaganda techniques change is possible (Downie Jr. and Kaiser, 2002). As Downie Jr. and Kaiser (2002) write:

In the end, the most important people shaping tomorrow's news won't be the owners or the journalists, but the readers and viewers. As long as they

create a market for good journalism, there will be good journalism. That's the good news. (pg. 266)

In addition to the findings concerning the general propaganda use by CNN and FNC, the study found interesting results for 1) the different types of propaganda techniques used by FNC and CNN, 2) where and when CNN and FNC state the impacts of global warming will occur, 3) the arguments that global advocates and skeptics use, and 4) if there are any years that contain significantly different levels of global warming coverage compared to other years. The findings for the different types of propaganda suggest the need for future research to identify if CNN and FNC are using different propaganda techniques in general, and if these different propaganda techniques have a significant impact on the affinity the public has towards different shows. The findings for when and where the impacts of global warming were described as occurring went against the proposed hypothesis, but this may be a methodological issue in how the term "impact" is operationalized. Future research can identify if the "impact" definition significantly altered the results of this content analysis by using the filter of "catastrophic impacts" when identifying when and where global warming is expected to occur. The arguments used by the skeptics and advocates demonstrated that there is a lively debate occurring over the scientific validity of claims made concerning global warming (more so on FNC than CNN), but that global warming advocates have essentially conceded through their argument strategy that taking action to attenuate global warming will harm the U.S. economy. Finally, the finding that 2001 had a significantly higher level of

coverage for global warming may be because global warming was combined with the general issue of international relations and security issues such as the ABM treaty.

Overall, the study found that there are significant differences in how CNN and FNC cover the issue of global warming. The findings indicate that it is important that the viewing public turn a critical eye towards the information that is given to them by news stations, as different stations offer significantly different types of information and analyses of important public issues such as global warming and climate change.

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