The National Endowment for Democracy:

Theory, Context, and Practice

by

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B.A., Georgia State University, 2009

A thesis submitted to the

Faculty of the Graduate School of the

University of Colorado in partial fulfillment

of the requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts

College of Media, Communication and Information

Department of Media Studies

2015

This thesis entitled:

The National Endowment for Democracy:
Theory, Context, and Practice
written by Albert Jesse Opraseuth
has been approved for the College of Media, Communication and Information
Department of Media Studies

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Date _____

The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we
Find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards
Of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.

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Opraseuth, Albert Jesse (M.A., Media Studies, College of Media, Communication and
Information – Department of Media Studies)

Hey! Look at all this Freedom: Media, Non-governmental Organizations, and Democracy
Promotion.

Thesis directed by Associate Professor Polly McLean

ABSTRACT

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have a unique place in the realm of

development. These organizations present themselves as autonomous collectives acting through

the shared will of civil society in an attempt to make the world a better place. One such

organization is the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The NED has an interesting

relationship with how it functions as a nonprofit. Since its inception the organization has been

shrouded in criticism for the way it functions and distributes the money it gets allocated from the

United States Government. What is investigated in this thesis is the manner in which the NED

utilizes various forms of media to demonstrate the efficacy of its work, to cultivate credibility

and authenticity, and how it provides opportunities for interaction and association through the

public sphere of the digital realm.

This thesis examines the history of the National Endowment for Democracy as well as its

communications programs accessed via the Internet. Findings include the organization's function

as a shadow organization executing the ideological and economic wills of the US government,

the mismanagement of the organizations website and dubious narrative claims, and the visual

representations of democracy utilized, or not utilized, by the organization in comparison to other

media sources.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the intellectual and emotional support of many people. First, I'd like to thank my advisor, Dr. Polly McLean, for her time and effort to read various versions of the proposal for this thesis and helping me sort out the convoluted mess of ideas that swarm in my mind. Next, to my other committee members, Dr. Michael Tracey and Dr. Carew Boulding, I'd like to give special thanks for the knowledge they imparted on my quest to satisfy my intellectual inquiries, and to the time they set aside to read and provide notes for this thesis. I'd also like to extend my thanks to all the other professors, instructors, staff, and fellow graduate students at the University of Colorado at Boulder that have made this such a special experience. I'd like to extended and very sincere thank you to my friends for providing the emotional support necessary to complete this degree program. Finally, I'd like to thank my family for putting up with me and accepting my choices to fulfill my pursuit of greater knowledge.

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INTRODUCTION

The world in which all humanity currently exists has been shaped by the omnipresence of ideology. These ideas construct the current world systems through which humanity functions, and how most people on the planet understand their world—whether consciously or subconsciously. As C. Wright Mills (1967) said, "The first rule in understanding the human conditions is that all men live in second hand worlds. They are aware of much more than they have personally experienced; and their own experience is always indirect" (p. 405). This is important to consider, because history, culture, and ideas has shaped the lives of every single living human on the planet. Now, it is through ideology that discursive arenas have emerged in which various "isms" have been socially constructed and grouped to become the crux of the human experience.

The current digital epoch we exist in is influenced by our society's culture, various discourses, and the ideologies that are prevalent in it. What characterizes this time period is a pervasive and integrated network of digital mechanisms that, for modern and developed nations, creates almost unprecedented access to ideas, and the ready capabilities to disseminate their own. This access and ability to both view and create messages has afforded a select group of digitally privileged societies the ability to promote and educate themselves on the causes that grip at their spirits. The ability to access information is key to the digitally privileged people living in this time, whether or not they are interested in what celebrities are wearing to some gala or event, or if they are interested in supporting the efforts of human rights organizations or providing aide to a country besieged by subversive ideologies.

In this era the medium is just as important as the message, especially when attempting to support a cause. How that information is accessed is just as important as the relevant facts at hand. Moreover, the visual representations of the message are just as important as the message itself, especially for those seeking out information about these organizations via the Internet. Not only does various digital media help spread a message and connect those with similar interests and goals, but it also can hinder its distribution by the way it is presented. Current trends within the digital sphere—such as website design, social media, and multimedia content— makes an organization attempting to garner credibility adhere to certain standards brought on by the evolution of these various mediums. Websites do not look like they did in the late-1990s, social media's prominence has been a relatively new addition to the realm, and the smart phone has made access to the web all the easier.

The digital reality of today offers new methods for organizations to accomplish myriad tasks. Not only can a group provide basic information to the masses, but also it can provide opportunities for association, fundraising prospects, interaction with their target audiences, the opportunity to cultivate credibility, and chances to demonstrate the worth of their work with relative ease. All of these tools create ample fodder to promote or fight against ideological constructs that are pervasive or marginal in society. Democracy can be one such ideology that is being promoted through these various channels.

Democracy is an interesting ideological model to promote via the digital realm. Examining democracy within the context of the Internet presupposes the notion that the realm itself is an open forum that is open to the promotion of democracy. The group that this thesis exams is a non-governmental organization (NGO) whose origins are from the so-called developed world, or the West. NGOs function as autonomous groups not beholden to the policies

or practices of nation-states. However, what should be examined even further are specific

nonprofit organization as independent entities, within a societal context or discursive moment,

and through the various structures that exercise influence on it–whether intentional or not.

The promotion of ideological values, such as democracy, must be thought of in terms of

end goals. There must be a reason for an organization or institution to promote specific ideas to

governments or a groups of people. Moreover, understanding just why this political ideology is

championed by a superpower like the United States (US) is an important aspect to consider when

examining how democracy promotions NGOs fit into the NGO universe as a whole.

How this ideological domination is supposed to be achieved is up to the methods

available. These methods do not just include the organizations' work or the institutions they

function through, but also from media they utilize to convey their various messages. In a global

context domination is achieved through the victorious perpetuation of ideological and

institutional forces. The capitalist world economic system, meaning the current systems of world

trade and commerce, is currently dominating the globalized reality of today, and it is

characterized by the near total hegemonic execution of will within domestic and international

spheres of influence wielded by the US. Immanuel Wallerstein (2004) says that even though we

are in this sort of system the defining feature of the modern world system is the division of labor

constituted with in (p. 23). One aspect of that division of labor is domination through modern

economic corporate colonization, or development.

The modern context of development must be understood to be complex amalgamation of

intertwined institutions and ideologies working in tandem to exert the will of the dominant over

the subservient in the modern world order to properly setup the context and purpose for this

investigation in to the NED. However, this structure has its historical roots and ambitions seeded

within older systems. In fact, the various systems available to the imperialist of the last half of

the 20<sup>th</sup> century have become institutionalized and characterize much of the modern global

system. Which makes the following poem even more relevant:

> *Take up the White Man's burden—*
> *Send forth the best ye breed—*
> *Go, bind your sons to exile*
> *To serve your captives' need*
> *To wait, in heavy harness*
> *On fluttered folk and wild—*
> *Your new-caught sullen peoples*
> *Half devil and half child*
> *Take up the White Man's burden—*
> *In patience to abide*
> *To veil the threat of terror*
> *And check the show of pride*
> *-Rudyard Kipling "The White Man's Burden" (Kipling, 1899)*

Kipling's poem can be a hymn for the righteous to warn against the perils of involvement

and the exploitation of the oppressed, or a psalm-like justification for the intervention and

modernization of those needing assistance to enter the today's globalized world. Either way the

rhetoric can be extremely powerful.

The poem itself was directed toward the US after their victory in the Spanish-American

War ceded them new territories in the Pacific and the imperialist responsibilities now bestowed

upon them through victory (Foster & McChesney, 2003, p. 1). In the more than 100 years since

the publication of this poem the US has been in engaged in a constant, however sometimes

unaware, struggle with its own identity as an imperial force. Moreover, the American Empire has

dominated much of the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The US has economic and security interests all over the world, and the mechanisms

through which it operates are in perpetual motion keeping the institutions and ideological values

of the country as the most powerful and dominant global hegemonic force on the planet. The

burden, or necessity, for the neo-imperialist practices of the country to continue are clear to Foster & McChesney (2003) in their analysis of Kipling's poem as compared to the modern American context. They claim the US is leading the way with "a new phase of imperialism … marked not only by increased conflict between center and periphery—rationalized in the West by veiled and not-so-veiled racism—but also by increased intercapitalist rivalry" (pp. 8–9). Furthermore, they make the comparison that characteristics that classify the modes of 19th and early 20th century imperialism are still prevalent in this modern context: militarism, imperialism, and racism, and not to forget that capitalist societies have historically been identified with all three (pp. 9–10). Basically, warning the contemporary imperialist advocates to offer integration and acceptance, and not to be too engrossed with domination.

Kipling's poem represents a dominant West-oriented perspective on how the imperial powers of the time viewed themselves and the people they colonized. It demonstrates colonial powers taking up the mantle of savior and liberating people from the depths of their own savagery. However, when reflecting on current outreach programs directed at underdeveloped nations, this then begs the question: How do modern institutions disseminating ideologies figure into these older, and oppressive, regimes of previous thought? Moreover, why are contemporary non-government affiliated organizations taking up the mantle of liberating foreign countries? How do these groups garner their legitimacy and for what purposes do they disseminate their messages?

**Statement of the Problem**

The promotion of ideological values characterized much of the latter half of the 20th century, most significantly by the victors of World War II and the two superpowers that formed in the wake of European and Asian rebuilding. The perpetuation and dissemination of ideology

took the guise of conflicts, skirmishes, espionage, and media battles. Through all this, both the

state and non-government affiliated agents and organizations took up the proverbial sword on

both sides to promote and spread messages to those around the world just growing into the

modern globalized reality of today (See Figure 1). Development as a concept, or more

specifically international development is largely related to economic development. However, in

modern times the practice has taken on a more humanistic approach.

The figure shows how the world interacts in various ways through specific spheres of the

modern world order. Globalization has driven the way countries interact at international levels,

which is generally motivated by the world capitalist economy; but this process is influenced by

the institutions associated with it and by the ideologies perpetuated by the relevant discourses
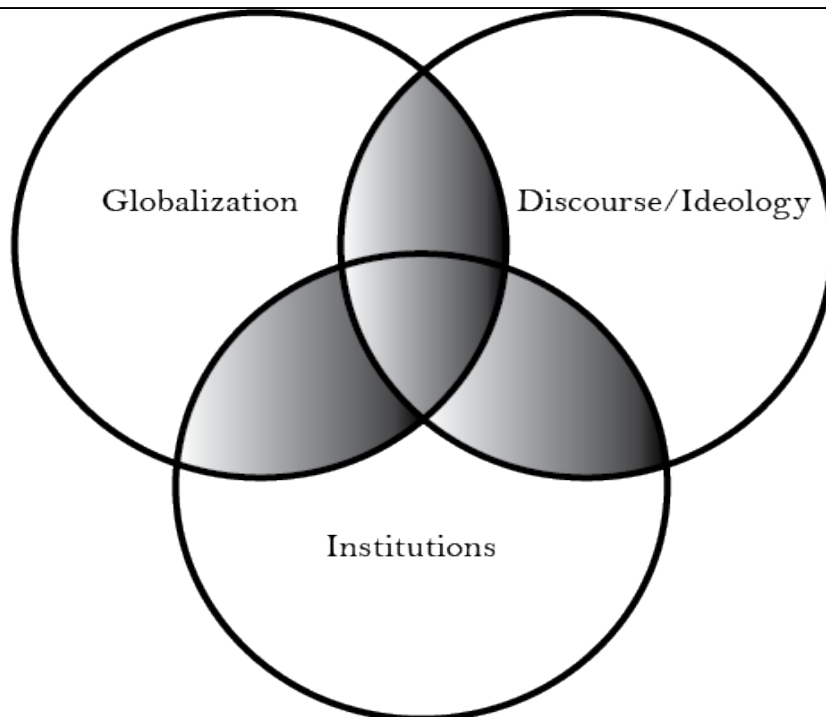


Figure 1: Intersecting Intellectual Spheres of the Modern World Order.

This graphic demonstrates the intersecting spheres of the modern globalized reality in which we exist. Global-ization (post-colonialism) has played an important role in shaping the current world, but has been influenced in conjunction with the prevailing discourses revolving around the promotion of specific ideologies. In turn, vari-ous institutions have arisen to promote various systems and models of global order. These spheres impact each other and have influence on each other. The role media plays within and on these realms is the question at hand.

accompanying them. This has become the primary way in which this author sees how the various nations of the world interact with each other. The realm of development should be analyzed through this lens as well.

The goal of development—whether viewed as method for nefarious gains or a mechanism to create righteous change—is to bring the Global South or non-Westphalian[1] countries into a world dominated by a global economy and other hegemonic socio-cultural mechanisms[2]. However, development is also a function of neo-imperialism, which has deep historical roots in imperialism and colonialism, and expanded due to the perpetuation of neoliberal policies—meaning the policies of the Regan-Thatcher epoch characterized by deregulation and the economic shift to the private sector. Dominant countries attempt to impose their own cultural norms and ideologies to help expand and build these less-developed nations, while seemingly reaping benefits as well. Democracy is one such political ideology that is constantly promoted, and has many different implications on the political economy of world interaction.

Bringing countries of the Global South into the globalized reality of the present so they can prosper in the future is an undertaking that exploded during the epoch of imperialism and continues through the neoliberal policies that have brought us to the current incarnation of development. One such NGO operating by promoting freedom around the world is the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

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[1] Here I'm using Westphalian not in a sense of the classical interpretation of European peace achieved in late 1600s that firmly established the nation-state territory integrity, but in a more modern sense referring to modern world order on how power is concentrated in traditionally Western, or Global North, countries, exerting their will and influence.

[2] In the last year and half I've created an adage based on all the research I've done: "Development is a dirty word, and an even dirtier game to play." However overtly negative this might seem, it should be understood that this concept isn't just a modern interpretation of the role that governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have in helping "underdeveloped" nations into the modern global economic sphere, it's the culmination of a long and ongoing process.

It is problematic to understand the influence a NGO can have on a variety of policies because of the various nature and specifics of their work; which is why its necessary to recognize the discourses, ideologies, and historical contexts through which organizations such as the NED have come into being and why they continue to flourish. The NED itself is also problematic. First, it must be determined how the NED functions as an NGO, and whether or not there is any validity to its portrayal as such. The rest of the is thesis deals with the conundrum of why the NED would want to cultivate any credibility within the American public or why it has any need at all to create any sort of authenticity or legitimacy, and its use, or lack thereof, of the mediums of mass communication to attempt to construct how its perceived by a small population within the public sphere. Essentially, this thesis will examine the theories and context through which the NED operates, and also the practices of the organization within the mass communication realm, specially through the Internet.

Although there has been research on NGOs and the way they function in society, there has been little insight into the way they demonstrate the efficacy of their work through the media, or even if their media practices are successful in cultivating credibility or having influence with society at large.  This thesis investigates the realm of development focused on the promotion of democracy abroad, specifically by the NED. First, it will examine the historical development of NGOs and in particular the NED. It will then focus on how the NED uses various forms of media to implement strategies to demonstrate the efficacy of their work and communicate with their mission. It is paramount to understand the fundamental relationship between NGOs and their use of media to demonstrate the validity of their efforts.

The United Nations (UN) defines NGOs as organizations that function within civil society as a nonprofit group, independently from nations-states or governments, to address

fundamental issues at the local, national, or international level for the greater public good ("Non-governmental organizations," n.d.). NGOs take on a cause and champion it through their work, which takes various forms such as research and analysis, policy recommendations, fieldwork, the creation of infrastructure, education, and other social and economic tasks. These groups seek to foster and create opportunity for change that will benefit those at local, national, and international levels. These organizations, in theory, attempt to promote good in the world. These organizations seek to elevate people out of poverty and to provide countries an opportunity to enter and navigate the globalized world of today.

This investigation into the NED will delve into the relative dearth of research regarding NGOs that distribute finances rather that gathering them by traditional fundraising mechanisms, and how these organizations utilize various media to further their respective causes. Using the NED as the focus of this thesis we will examine the historical context of development and the organization's creation, the various social and cultural theories that influence and shape it, and how it utilizes the media to promote itself and the cause it champions. Doing this provides a unique perspective on an organization that calls itself an NGO—however as this thesis will show –but may be less than genuine in the manner through which it operates, and how such an organization utilizes various forms of media to tell the story of its work.

**Definition of Terms**

In order to proceed with this thesis, and to set the basis for an investigation into the realm of NGOs, especially the NED, a few terms must be clarified and defined. These terms will help guide the discussion and arguments put forth about the nature of the NED and the media programs it chooses to implement. As this thesis will argue, the NED is a quasi-government organization operating under the guise of an NGO, and its attempts to cultivate credibility and

authenticity as an NGO are dependent on the world, and terms, in which they exist. Lexicon can be powerful, so properly defining the terms used throughout this is essential.

Democracy: The dictionary defines democracy as, "a government by the people … in which supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or their elected agents under a free electoral system. (" Dictionary.com," 2014)" However, it should be thought of as the rule of law by those cultivated and created by the culture of their own land, who hold its destiny in their hands through their own voices and choices, thereby attempting to create a country to fit their needs in a manner to prosper within the context of the world. Just how this ideology fits into the current world system is what should be considered, especially if countries are promoting democracy for purposes other than lifting others out of poverty and oppression.

Ideology: The ideas and theories that reflect and shape the values, cultural, and economic systems of a society, or the world, are what this author means when referencing the term ideology. The dictionary defines it as, "the body of doctrine, myth, belief, etc., that guides an individual, social movement, institution, class, or large group (Dictionary.com, 2015)." This definition useful as well, because it makes reference to how ideology can guide the thoughts and beliefs of entire countries and the motives behind the actions they take.

Globalization: This is the process through which international integration is shaped by politics, the economy, and culture. The dictionary defines it as the the processes by which the world is integrated and developed (Dictionary.com, 2015). This process is the international system in which the world economy flourishes by the manufacturing, importation, exportation, and exchange of services between countries throughout the world.

Neoliberalism: Neoliberalism is the term used to describe the resurgence of laissez-faire economic policies of the 1970s and 1980s, especially during Reagan's tenure as president. It is

typically characterized by economic liberalization in the form of further the causes of privatization, fiscal austerity, deregulation, free trade, and reductions in public spending to give the role of the private sector more power in the economy (Boas & Gans-Morse, 2009, pp. 137–161). Meaning, it is predominantly an economic system, and when applied to the context of development it could be interpreted to mean that the foreign policy objectives of the US were to grow business around the world in a manner to exercise free trade. Thus, neoliberalism transformed the democracy agenda of the US and the NGOs involved, such as the NED, as tools to win over the people in a manner that would allow US business to exert its will in a system of its own design: hegemony of the economic system and the world governance system.

Development: In the context of this thesis the term is used to describe global development or international development. Meaning, the word is used to describe the process in which countries, traditionally in the Global South or East bring themselves into the international realm of the world economy and lift themselves out of the poverty perceived by the Global West. It can be thought of as, "efforts to reduce poverty and inequality and improve health, education and job opportunities around the world (Rosenkranz, 2015)." However, it terms of the world economy it can be taken to mean many other things as well, such as, "a country's gross domestic product or its average per-capita income, literacy and maternal survival rates, as well as life expectancy, human rights and political freedoms (Rosenkranz, 2015)."

Colonialism: Simply put, colonialism is, "control by one country over another area and people" ("Colonialism | Definition of colonialism by Merriam-Webster," n.d.). However, words that end in "ism" are often not as simple as a dictionary definition. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy website states that colonialism is more about the process of European intervention, settlement, and political control over the rest of the world, including the Americas, Australia, and

parts of Africa and Asia ("Colonialism (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)," n.d.).

Furthermore, it discusses the differences between colonialism and imperialism and states that

"given the difficulty of consistently distinguishing between the two terms, this entry will use

colonialism as a broad concept that refers to the project of European political domination from

the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries that ended with the national liberation movements of the

1960s" ("Colonialism (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)," n.d.).

Imperialism:  This is another ideology that will be explored in relation to development.

By definition colonialism involves the practice of exerting will or influence, while imperialism

deals with concepts and ideas exercising domination and superiority. Imperialism is defined as,

"A policy of extending a country's power and influence through colonization, use of military

force, or other means" ("Imperialism | Define Imperialism at Dictionary.com," n.d.). The process

of colonization meaning, "European-centered colonial era implies that colonizer and colonized

were geographically separated, usually by seas and oceans" ("Colonialism - Oxford Reference,"

n.d.). Imperialism is important to consider during this epoch, because, as Said (1993) suggests,

imperialism as a broader concept centers on ideas and "system[s] of domination and

subordination organized with an imperial center and a periphery" (p.9).

Postcolonialism: Postcolonialism is a lens that utilizes a discourse analysis method to

investigate the legacy that imperialism and colonialism had on the developing world. As Young

(2003) states, "postcolonialism has developed a body of writing that attempts to shift the

dominant ways in which the relations between Western and non-Western people and their worlds

are viewed" (p.2). He goes further to postulate that the uses for this analytical lens is to

investigate how knowledge about the countries after colonial rule is produced in reference to

their colonial history through social, political, and cultural view points (pp. 2-5). Furthermore, he

states, "postcolonialism seeks to intervene, to force its alternative knowledges into the power structures of the West as well as the non-West. It seeks to change the way people think, and the way they behave, to produce a more just and equitable relation between different people of the world" (p. 7).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The function of this literature review is to provide a foundation of knowledge to dissect, analyze, and provide context to the other sections of this thesis. There are various aspects of intellectual thought one must consider when trying to decipher the role that the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) plays in an international context. This literature review section will communicate the significant lines of thought utilized when trying to set an intellectual foundation for NGO examination. It will take the form of certain subsections of intellectual research, and it will be the foundation as to why organizations like the NED are significant, and provide a theoretical basis for subsequent chapters.

This literature review pulls from various schools of thought and academic disciplines which have had a fundamental influence on how society functions. It pulls from political scientists, media scholars, social and critical thinkers, and economists. Applying all of this knowledge to the realm of NGOs only goes to show why a complex network of critical thought and investigation is necessary to examine the role this organization has in the world.

By providing this base of knowledge we can begin to critically analyze the role that the NED has in international development. Furthermore, it helps us to deconstruct the genuineness of the NED and its authenticity as an NGO. However, most importantly, this foundation of relevant work will help us to understand the authority, influence, and prominence that NGOs have in the world of development.

**Researching the NGO Matrix**

NGO investigation offers various perspectives about the nature and influence that these organizations wield in the world today. For example, the work of Zatepilina-Monacell (2012)

theorizes about the manner in which NGOs can influence and effect public diplomacy abroad.

She uses a case study to analyze the way privately funded NGOs have an impact on the ways that

other countries view the US, and how they can shape the attitudes, perceptions, and opinions of

various international publics. Her findings show that NGOs can influence the way other

countries perceive US foreign policy objectives.

Specifically, Zatepilina-Monachell (2012) studied five different American-based

nonprofit organizations that are considered NGOs and how their work shares, "core American

values, represent specific segments of U.S. society, and have connections to the U.S. power." (p.

475) Furthermore, she states that, "American NGOs take upon themselves the responsibility for

the U.S. identity and want to be recognized both domestically and internationally as agents of the

U.S. identity" (p. 475). Basically, her main findings conclude that NGOs are far better at

influencing and promoting the identity and policies of the US even though there are government

institutions tasked with promoting the US identity, and that NGOs recognize they share the

burden of representing US identity to further their own agenda's as well. Zatepilina-Monachell

(2012) states four ways in which NGOs accept this responsibility: representing US stakeholders

around the world, representing international stakeholders around the world, "highlighting the

autonomy and pluralism of U.S. civil society," and by, "utilizing their freedom of expression to

publicly oppose the U.S. Government on matters concerning U.S. interests" (p. 476).

The work of this scholar is significant in that it establishes a societal basis for the work

and reputation that NGOs have in this current era. Being able to understand that NGOs recognize

they represent the values of their home countries could also be looked at in terms of representing

the ideological constructs that shape that nation. Also, knowing that the work of an NGO, such

as the NED, operating in other countries effects the perception that another country has of the US

is interesting in that it shows the influence these organizations have at an international level.

A paper presented at the International Communication Association conference by Lim & Molleda (2011) suggest that the use of Soft Power to influence foreign publics is very important in the world today, and, furthermore, their work shows the perception of credibility from state versus non-state actors in a transnational public sphere. Additionally, they show whether or not there is a causal relationship present between the perceived credibility and the associated attitudes toward the issues raised by each actor in different countries. These authors provide a unique perspective on the differences between the credibility of the state versus those of NGOs or inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), which is massively important to begin to place significance to non-governmental actors in the international realm, meaning that an NGO such as the NED theoretically wields much more influence with a foreign population than any wing of the State Department.

Gerard Clarke's (1998) work on NGOs and politics in the developing world uses a political science framework to examine overarching political themes from previous NGO studies such as opportunity for association, social movement theories, ideology, the impact of financial structures as an opportunity to explain the proliferation of NGOs. Furthermore, his work is significant because it suggests a correlation between the number of NGOs and the democratization movements of Asia and Latin America. His work offers a number of different discussion topics, but most importantly it sets a tone to further investigate the role that NGOs play in the perpetuation of democracy abroad and the significance they play in toppling authoritarian regimes.

Clarke's (1998) work into the role that NGOs play in democratization has yielded interesting conclusions that deserve to be mentioned. He agrees that NGOs in Africa have more

or less kept the status quo due to competition and the failure to pressure elites and local

government, but he provides instances in Asia (Thailand and the Philippines) and Latin America

(Chile) where NGOs have had a measurable results (p. 46). He concludes that NGOs provide,

"socio-economic assistance to sectors weakened by structural adjustment policies and cutbacks

in government expenditure, by sustaining and aggregating political participation amid the

withering of socialist movements, and by providing direct linkages between governments and

local communities" (p. 50). However, he is unconvinced about their influence in the

democratization movement. He states that the influence of NGOs on the democratization

movements within developing countries is ambiguous at best and that it either leads to a

strengthening of civil society or that it institutionalizes the political process in a manner that is

essentially class-based (pp. 50-51). However, he does deem NGOs as "important political actors,

intermediary institutions that constitute a new layer of civil society, transforming its overall

structure" (p. 52).

This investigation is significant to this study because it sets up an understanding that

NGOs do exert or have influence within a democratization movement. Even though he states the

influence as ambiguous due to other exploration and examples, he does seem to subscribe a great

deal of power and influence to NGOs and the way they have effect on governments and provide

opportunities for association. Recognizing that NGOS such as the NED operate on an

international level and influencing outcomes on local and national levels abroad is very

interesting because it shows real and measurable outcomes.

The NGO Matrix consists of how these organizations interact with the world around

them, how they influence societies, and how they function within the globalized reality of today.

These three selections have shown the role of representation that the organizations take on

(whether voluntarily or involuntarily), the difference in credibility that is cultivated from an NGO versus governmental institutions, and the influence that these organizations have in the democratization process. Understanding that NGOs have influence and are proliferating in greater numbers presents a real opportunity for understanding the way they utilize media to promote their causes within the countries they operate in and back at home to those they are trying to solicit for fundraising, or to demonstrate the worth of their work.

**Why Democracy?**

Establishing the context and rationale for the promotion of democracy is also important in this literature review. There is fundamental necessity for democracy promotion to cultivate various aspects of freedom and opportunities for individuals. Understanding why democracy is a driving force behind these NGOs provides the context to begin to examine the role it plays in how international institutions, organizations, states, and corporations utilized this ideology to achieve their various goals, and, of course, individuals as well.

Democracy as an ideology has been in existence since the classical-era Greeks founded the principal based on the notion that the people had the right to govern themselves. However, not all the world has the luxury to participate in such an endeavor, and this lack of an individual's right to participate in the direction of his or her own destiny has been identified as an obstruction to the adequate implementation of development. We can pontificate over why liberty is an important aspect of self-determination that can help guide a country to betterment, but it is important to emphasize and rationally explain why democracy and freedom are crucial to development.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Paulo Freire (1970) argues that freedom is key to raising the consciousness of oppressed individuals, and he suggests that the oppressed are fearful of

freedom, but that obtaining it would expel their images of bondage and replace it with autonomy and responsibility. He states that education is incredibly important because it leads to consciousness, which then transitions to liberation along with their oppressors (who must also realize that they are oppressors), and thus humanization can occur.

Freire (1970) goes on to assert that education is the primary strategic weapon to change political power and that raising the consciousness of a population means they can take their own destinies in their hands, and states that, "education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world" (p. 34) Education leads to consciousness, which then transitions to liberation along with their oppressors.

In another book, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*, Freire (1998) acknowledges that the foundation for democracy is rooted in the self-determination and control of one's own destiny, and perpetuating this specific ideology can be the spark for consciousness raising. The philosophical rationale for democracy promotion is just as important as perspectives stemming from the political economy or socio-cultural realm, and transcending construction through education can provide opportunity to liberate oneself through humanizing pedagogy. Freire (1998) states, "If I am a pure product of genetic, cultural, or class determination, I have no responsibility for my action in the world … of course, this assumption of responsibility does not mean that we are not conditioned genetically, culturally, and socially. It means that we know ourselves to be *conditioned* but not *determined"* (p. 26). This quote emphasizes the role education plays in democracy. What Freire is stating here is that education is

important to become self-actualized, and thus, once being self-actualized, you can help to foster

righteous change through democracy.

      Nobel Prize Laureate Amartya Sen (1999) is another scholar whose work is paramount in

suggesting that freedom and democracy are integral to development. His work states that

development requires the removal of "unfreedoms" such as poverty, tyranny, poor economic

opportunities and social deprivation (pp. 10-11). This means that only when we can alleviate

these subhuman conditions can development truly flourish. He goes on to declare that political

freedoms in the form of elections and free speech are required to foster public policy aiding in

development and that it in turn helps promote economic freedom and justice. Furthermore, his

five categories (political freedom, economic opportunities, social opportunities, transparency

guarantees, and protective security) to alleviate "unfreedoms" are essential to development in the

fact that they focus on what he calls a "capabilities approach," which focuses on expanding

human freedom (p. 13-34).

      Sen (1999) then makes clear why political freedoms are necessary before economic

freedom can flourish. He states that there are, "extensive interconnections between political

freedoms and the understanding and fulfillment of economic needs" (p. 147). This is making the

correlation that both political and economic needs are intertwined and one affects the other. If

someone cannot use their voice to express what they need to survive and flourish, then they will

continue to be in need. He then asserts that political freedom takes preeminence because of the

direct associations with the basic capabilities of human existence, the instrumental role in

enhancing the voices of the people—whether for support or dissent—and the constructive

elements in conceptualizing the needs of the people (p. 148). The freedom to make money or

harness capital is dependent on that person being able to exercise their rights freely, which is

within the context of the laws that govern them and what they agreed to in the social contract of democracy. Again, if a person cannot use the power of their vote to make changes then they will continue to be oppressed.

Sen (1999) places importance on voting in that it can put pressure on the government if there is a situation of suffering taking place; for example, he states that no democratically elected government has ever consciously let its people starve because they would be voted out of power (151-152). This is an incredibly powerful fact and illustrates just how much power the mass can wield when heard in a collective voice. Politicians are afraid of the voting power of the masses, which keeps them operating with the public's interest in mind. Sen (1999) also states that the open dialogue involved in democracy and voting is constructive in that it allows for dissent to be voiced peacefully and that these debates help to shape the formation of values, and that valuable democracy is a source of both social and economic opportunities, as well as justice (pp. 155–158). Essentially, being able to voice your ideas without the fear of severe, life-ending, repercussions allows for constructive debates that can influence a society or cultural in a beneficial way. Also, those debates can lead toward greater economic opportunities, because then politicians would be made aware to what people need to thrive.

Women as a marginalized group are also an important aspect in political development and democracy. As Melkote and Steeves (2001) have stated, "empowerment requires more than just information delivery and diffusion of innovations. An important focus of development communicators will be to help in the process of empowerment of marginalized invidious groups and organizations" (p. 38). Sen (1999) also writes about the role women play in development. He states that the empowerment of women helps with many factors of unfreedom such as population control and child survival rates, and in the political context women, when given the

same opportunities, are no less effective in using their vote and functioning at high political level (p. 199). Which is true because women hold high offices all around the world and have been instrumental in using their voting power to spark change. He also asserts that it is necessary for women to exercise their agency in obtaining freedom, and the role of women's agency in development studies is one of the most neglected subjects of the discipline (p. 203). Now, there have been many aspects of development literature and programs created with women in mind from various NGOs and even UN programs. For example the UN's Development Program has a subsection that specifically focuses on women's empowerment. It states their goals are to, "integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, and environment and sustainable development" ("Women's Empowerment | UNDP," n.d.). The role of women is still of vital importance in creating functioning democracies and it probably could use a little more attention in of evaluation of programs done in the name of women's empowerment.

The case for democracy as a necessity for freedom and development is just because it accounts for through self-determination and the betterment and growth for all sections of society. For sustainable development to function the voices of the people must be heard. Sen seems to suggest that implementing development strategies that are not advantageous to the will of the people will ultimately fail because their needs are not being met. The ability to take your own destiny in your hands is philosophically important. An NGO championing the cause of democracy takes the core of this argument and champions it. The NED promotes this ideology to advocate for a model of government that aligns with that of the US Government. It is important to see this is deliberate and, historically, serves a purpose. Helping to steer foreign governments toward ideological consensus serves other purposes, as the rest of this review will show.

**Transnational Public Sphere**

Jürgen Habermas's (1991) work on the public sphere helps to lay the groundwork for why NGOs are essential in creating dialogue. Habermas (1991) states that the public sphere is "a network for communicating information and points of view" (p. 360). He argues that through civil society a public sphere is created and that public opinion is created within this sphere (Jürgen Habermas, 1991). Habermas (1991) argues that this public sphere is comprised of members of the bourgeoisie, who assemble form a public body to make their demands and grievances known. The idea that there is an arena though which various discourses can be discussed is paramount, especially when dealing with current international structures and through institutions such as the UN.

Furthermore, Habermas (1974) implies that the public sphere establishes the mechanisms through which a concept like social and political change can flourish. The public sphere can create an environment through which civil society can engage in various discourses also lends to the notion that political participation is exercised through this sphere. Being an instrument for political change has been essential in the progression of democracy promotion. However, others have also theorized about the public sphere and the mechanisms necessary for it to function and thrive on an international scale.

The next step to understanding the way NGOs function as actors on a global stage is Nancy Fraiser's (2007) work updating Habermas' thoughts into the modern globalized reality we exist in today. She is critical of Habermas' theory on the public sphere—but seemingly not in an overtly negative way and theorizes that there is now such a notion as a Transnational Public Sphere not bound by nation-state attributes and perpetuated by the global, capitalist-based,

economy. Her work takes Habermas's groundbreaking theories on the public sphere and the cultivation of public opinion into the modern era.

Fraiser (2007) states that the "discursive arenas" that Habermas established are no longer bound by the nation-state attribute, and that now we should respond to this by paying close attention to transnational public spheres because of the emerging diaspora public spheres, the global public sphere, and a globalized economy. Fraser's (2007)work makes international institutions that function on a global level more important by indicating that the modern public sphere is much more globalized than in Habermas's time. Fraser (2007) also asserts that global, corporate, media has helped to blur the lines between borders, has given power to transnational elites, and that cultural hybridity and hybridization are now modern norms. She also suggests that this same media is not capable of checking "transnational power" and that national languages are not relevant anymore because of the vast amount of immigrants migrating to various parts of the developed world.

These concepts, again, establish the necessary social theory foundation to analyze an international institution such as the NED as a forum through which public opinion can be directed toward for political change. If public opinion can be cultivated on an international level through a transnational public sphere then the promotion of democracy has a setting to act, at least in theory, through the UN and NGOs affiliated with aspects of democracy.

The modern transnational public sphere is utilized through institutions like the UN, inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and by NGOs. The concept of a transnational public sphere is fundamental when analyzing the role these various organizations and institutions play in international political, economical, and social influence. However, during this section of the

literature review it is also necessary to incorporate the role of the Internet as a discursive arena

and a new global public sphere.

A scholar named Zizi Papacharissi (2002) theorizes about the various ways that the

Internet has already made an impact as a new public sphere called the virtual sphere; however,

Papacharissi is also critical of the nature in which new technologies and programs can augment

and divert central aspects. Papacharissi (2002) states the, "virtual sphere does exist in the

tradition of, but radically different, from the public sphere … it is dominated by bourgeois

computer holders, much like the one traced by Habermas consisting of bourgeois property

holders" (p. 21). Meaning that the virtual sphere is dominated by, in a global sense, economic

elites with socially, culturally, and ideologically constructed perspectives in mind already when

they voice their opinions online.

Papacharissi (2002) also states that the virtual sphere, "does not guarantee democratic

and rational discourse," which is because the net is both a private and public space for interaction

between individuals and various collectives (pp. 17-20). Meaning, that it allows for diverse

opinions that may or may not be founded by logic or reason; in fact, these opinions may be

completely illogical and totally based on belief. This is what should be considered when

examining NGOs such as the NED and their presence on the web. The virtual sphere can be a

public sphere that NGOs use to inform the public about their programs. It allows for

interconnectivity and action to take place between people all across the US and the world.

The communication networks that Papacharissi theorizes about are then brought to

include the work of Manuel Castells (2008). Castells states these new technologies have shifted

and emphasized the nature of the public sphere to a global public sphere where world issues can

be raised within the digital realm, across borders through global communication networks.

Castells says, "The aim of the practice of public diplomacy is not to convince but to

communicate, not to declare but to listen. Public diplomacy seeks to build a public sphere in

which diverse voices can be heard in spite of their various origins, distinct values, and often

contradictory interests" (p. 91). This is in reference to the notion that the public transcends the

private, and the new public sphere of the internet allows for organizations such as the NED to

make their voice known to those traversing cyberspace with an interest in democracy promotion.

All this interconnectivity and global communication through the Internet makes reference

to James Bohman's (2004) very idealistic and positive theory of the future of global democracy.

He states a well-informed electorate is able to both consume and disseminate information across

nation-state attributes through diaspora populations around the world[3]. Bohman (2004) advocates

that the public sphere of the internet is now transnational and has the potential to transform,

"democratic institutions  [allowing them to show] the fruitfulness of thinking about cyberspace

in political terms that are related to the support of publicity that it generates" (p. 151). The

Internet as a forum to interact and engage with cosmopolitan democracy could also be applied to

how NGOs demonstrate the efficacy of their work to not only their constituents, but also to

diaspora populations still interested in what is going on in their home countries. Elites being able

to understand the effort being undertaken in their home countries is vital to NGOs

communicating the efforts of their work, not only in an NGOs home country, but to the educated

population abroad that in turn, through the Internet, communicate to those in areas undergoing

international development.

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[3] Although this might be an entirely naïve notion, it does suggest the possibilities that might exist in the future.
However optimistic it might seem not, or totally implausible, it is a reflection of technological capabilities and
learning opportunities more than a dream of a mature and civil society on a whole.

**Notions of Power**

Power is a concept of immense importance, and the way that NGOs involved with the promotion of democracy exercise their authority through various intellectual concepts of power is essential. Understanding the realm of power is essential to establishing that through an international and transnational public sphere these organizations function through. The nature of power is complex; however, analyzing the way through which these organizations exercise and operate within these notions establishes the way they themselves gain authority and authenticity. The Soft Power model is how NGOs exercise their power through a transnational public sphere.

Analysts tend to claim that NGOs act and think differently from the US State Department, and while their work share similarities and the government funds both, the two vary by the methods and programs that they promote around the world (Silver, 2006). This ability of financial guidance helps the US exert its influence over other countries without the use of force, which is just one way Joseph Nye describes soft power and its uses (Nye, 2004). The use of soft power by the US government is crucial to the promotion of democracy, especially during the Cold War and now in a post-9/11 world.

Nye (2004) claims that, at a basic level, power can be defined as the ability to get the outcomes that you want; however, to expand on this, he claims that, "power is the ability to influence the behavior of others to get what you want" (pp. 1-2). Nye (2004) establishes the differences between hard and soft power; he asserts that hard power is rooted in the military and soft power is exercised through appeal and persuasions, not coercion, through various institutions and organizations ( pp. 5–10). A country's soft power rests within three resources: its culture (values and practices that create meaning in a society), its political values (ideological structures

at home and abroad), and it's foreign policies (when they are seen by other countries as being moral and legitimate) (Nye, 2004, pp. 11–15).

Now, this is a very narrow view of the concept of power, but it is coming from someone with vast experience from within the US State Department. This view of the nature of power exercised by the US is directly related to how the country conducts itself and exercises its power and authority through various mechanisms. However, it does the raise the question as to what control does the US have over its soft power, because some of this power is derived from the private sector and not from the state.

Although he goes into depth about the notion of culture, political values, and foreign policy, he also addresses the fact that private institutions and organizations, non-state actors, contribute to the concept of soft power. Nye (2004) states that transnational actors, in the form of NGOs, act as "global conscience" and develop new norms by directly engaging within and with countries to disseminate ideas and have an effect on public perception by creating new transnational political coalitions (pp. 90–91). Furthermore, Nye states, through activities such as election monitoring and being a watchdog they create awareness about injustice, and check the business policies of transnational corporations, by functioning within civil society and through intergovernmental institutions such as the UN (pp. 92–93). Even though Nye does not state it directly we can make the conclusion that NGOs functioning within the US, which most do, derive and utilize soft power through culture, political values, and foreign policy as well, especially those promoting democracy abroad.

The NGOs from the US, such as the NED, associated with the promotion of democracy function within the culture, ideology, and the prevailing discourses from within the nation. Second, even though autonomous in their decision-making, they rarely deviate from the norms

set forth by the state department. It is important to realize that these organizations are still

perpetuating Western hegemonic ideals of world organization and function as an important

aspect of the political economy of certain nations.

The intellectual thought behind the reasoning for democracy is shown through the work

of scholars theorizing about the necessity of democracy for countries to flourish and a cursory

look into the US practice of "soft power." This work provides the context through which NGOs

advocating for democracy can exercise their own agency in promoting ideology. Furthermore, it

emphasizes the necessity of civil society and a transnational public sphere, because for

democracy to flourish the ability to air grievances or concerns on both local and international

levels is paramount.

Power, through most political narratives, deals with NGOs through the lens of the

political economy; essentially how dominant Western hegemonic structures have exercised their

power through the prevailing mechanism throughout the world. Now, although this work is

important, it is important to emphasize the sociological and critical-cultural perspectives as well.

For example, Domhoff  (1967) has characterized power through four networks:

ideological, military, economic, and political. Domhoff (1967) suggests these are the building

blocks of state power, and that that hegemony is essentially ideological consent. Therefore,

NGOs promoting democracy are promoting a dominant ideology that can be utilized to acquire

power in foreign nations. If we think about this in terms of how Mills (1999) thought about the

power, then it is reasonable to suggest that having a mass society strengthens the consolidation of

power through an elite ruling class. The power elite strengthens power by the promotion of

various ideologies through the various discourses they are awash in, and leaders use this to

strengthen the intersecting interests of the elite. By adding more democratic countries into a

globalized reality dominated by Western economic, political, and cultural hegemony these power elite would only stand to profit.

Additionally, NGOs function in a vast bureaucratic structure because of the fundraising mechanisms they participate in and through intergovernmental organizations like the UN and its subsidiaries. If the work of Weber (1946) is applied, then it is reasonable to suggest that NGOs function in bureaucracies with a hierarchical structure with lines of authority within a fixed area—whether the bureaucratic structure of the organization itself or within the countries they work in. Weber's notions of bureaucracy are particularly interesting in terms of how NGOs work within the UN system, and specifically to the UN Department of Public Information, which is tasked to the promotion of their work.

Louis Althusser (1971) pointed out, ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) are the most powerful and influential tool that the state has, or in this sense to keep the status quo and to keep people oppressed. By promoting democracy as an ideology a new ISAs would have to be created that would compete with already established ISAs, which could either be welcomed or shunned. Additionally, Althusser's (1971) notion of how ideology has a material existence is particularly interesting as well, as well that it is rooted in ritual. Democracy as an ideology has the ritual of voting as a way to validate its acceptance, and it is also a way for democratic countries to demonstrate the effectiveness of the ideological apparatuses functioning to create a participatory democracy.

These other concepts, although only briefly listed, provide another line of inquiry and analysis that could be massively useful in determining what sort of power NGOs have. Incorporating these socio-cultural perspectives can help to explain the role that NGOs have promoting democracy in a transnational public sphere. Again, if we acknowledge the fact that we

are socially constructed beings then we must also, in a Foucaultian sense, historicize and

critically analyze the structures that characterize the modern globalized reality that world

functions in today.

However, it should be noted at this point that, besides Nye, thinkers such as Domhoff,

Mills, Althusser, and Weber more or less view the current institutions responsible for executing

modern democracy as a farce or an illusion[4]. Their work points to the deception being created by

ideological influences, subversive institutions, the consolidation of power by the elite, and the

repression of (in a Marxist sense) the base. What is necessary to analyze the role of an NGO such

as the NED is why a superpower such as the US would find it necessary to promote freedom and

democracy around the world. The interests at hand are what is important, however, it does not

negate the work of the other scholars mentioned about the necessity for democracy to flourish to

truly begin sustainable development.

**NGO Influence and Credibility**

The perspective of political scientists and their notions of the functions of NGOs are

significant to consider as well.  The purpose of this section is present the work of influential and

up-and-coming scholars whose work focuses on the legitimacy and influence of non-

governmental organization and the effects of their work on various populations. It will be

important for my thesis to analyze the empirical results from political science as well as its

analysis of credibility structures.

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[4] I'm neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the tone or noted perspectives of these great scholars mentioned in this
section of the literature review. I suppose I'm an idealist at heart, and would like to think that the ability to take
one's own destiny in your hands is a significant thing that shapes our reality more than elites with power, capital,
and often the backing of the state. However, I also know, for example, that the traditional concept of the "American
Dream" isn't the same as what it was 50 years ago, or at least shouldn't be.

The work of Meernik, Aloisi, Sowell, & Nichols (2012) establishes, more or less, that NGOs are participants within the global public sphere and their actions and the rhetoric they use to frame various international players and actions has influence. These scholars (2012) establish that NGOs within the global public sphere use action and rhetoric to frame various international leaders, events, and organizations in ways that have influence (pp. 252-253). This is incredibly significant because it demonstrates the tactics that these organizations use to cultivate common knowledge of their various causes to the transnational public sphere through both traditional and alternative media sources. Furthermore, their conclusions find that NGOs and the rhetoric and practices they can create and give nations prominence on the international stage, and the more NGOs they have working on the same issue in the same area then the less likely they will be accused of committing any violations (pp. 252-253). They also find that NGOs can influence the development of norms and practices within the state, and that the empirical evidence they gathered supports their claims that NGOs working on a local level can successfully pressure international institutions to put pressure on that same local are to promote changes (p. 253).

Carew Boulding (2014) argues that NGOs are an incredibly important channel for political participation in that they can be influential in mobilizing people, and act through the civil societies present in that nation to foster certain outcomes. Furthermore, Boulding (2014) showed that NGOs can influence people within civil society; however, that civil society must also be actively engaged (Boulding, 2014). Moreover, she finds that contact with NGOs in weak democracies leads to political protests, but in stronger democracies it fosters political participation (Boulding, 2014). Either way it shows that the collective consciousness of a group is being raised—given the empirical evidence—and that the mere presence of various NGOs can have profound effects.

Other scholars, such as Bellinger & Arce (2011), have suggested that Latin American grievances were in response to the neoliberal economic policies imposed on them by dominant and more developed nations, and that this angst toward economic liberalization created a strong will for collective activity. This study could be seen as response to the development practices that created many NGOs that operate in Latin America. That will for collective activity provided an opening point more many NGOs to make contact.

Publishing on the notion of credibility NGOs garner, Gourevitch & Lake (2012) state that surveys have suggested that NGOs are trusted to investigate pressing social problems more than governments or business do, and that they have done this by turning to various mechanisms to enhance their credibility in the eyes of their targets, donors, other NGOs, external verifiers and the public. This is done when the virtue perceived by the audience of the NGO is great, the common interests held by the audience and the NGO are synonymous, the costly efforts of the NGO are backed by observable outcomes, the NGO is subject to penalties for misrepresentation, and there are mechanisms for external verification (Gourevitch & Lake, 2012). They state that these reasons are executed by the promoting of bonds around shared values, adopting autonomous governance structures, professionalizing, expending cost effort in other fields, increasing transparency, and by integrating within the NGO community (Gourevitch & Lake, 2012). These are important because they can also provide the backbone for a media relation's strategy directed at donors demonstrating the legitimacy of their operations and the efficacy of their work.

Wendy Wong (2012) then takes this information and expands upon by offering her theory of how NGOs structurally build their credibility. She argues that NGOs have two spaces to their organizational structure: the formal part that is established by the NGO bylaws, statutes and

memoranda of understanding; and the informal that deals with financial implications, how they

run their programs with their targets, and the issues they stand for. Wong (2012) argues that

credibility within their structures is formed through their membership configuration, because

they have to establish common interests with many people like their donors and their board of

director. This means that they have many people they are trying to justify their work and mission

to, and establishes a sort of democratic structure demonstrating their credibility of their work.

She also suggests that centralized agenda-setting within the organization and the influence of

government funding, or lack thereof, help to determine how various NGOs cultivate credibility

(Wong, 2012). These functions seem to be directed at donors because they suggest that the

decision making process is sound, ethical, and not motivated by propaganda or government

influence. It is important take these mechanisms into account when looking at NGOs and how

they send their messages back toward their donors, or how they choose to represent themselves

in the digital sphere.

Carew Boulding (2012) also shows the conundrum that NGOs face by discussing the

dilemmas of information and accountability surrounding them. She argues that this dilemma

creates a number of tradeoffs between what the NGO communicates to be perceived as a high-

quality organization, and that things like a high-quality website does little to help their target

audiences or perceived goals; however, these trade-offs to provide a means to communicate to

donors and attract them to provide funding, thus helping them to achieve their goals. She

concludes that there is a trend in the donor community and in academia to conflate two things

that are very different: the good intentions of NGOs and the effectiveness of NGOs at providing

goods or services in the aid process. This is significant because it illustrates how torn NGOs can

be toward actually doing the job they set out to do and promoting their work to the donors that fund the organization.

These political science studies provides ample support for the influence NGOs have on developing nations with measureable effects and impacts, as well as insight into the real problems of structure and internal bureaucratic struggles these organizations have to deal with. This work provides real data showing that by merely having contact with populations and creating opportunities for association NGOs can fundamentally change the way a population exercises their rights. This collection of work also shows how NGOs are perceived in other counties as well, which is also significant because perception can either hinder or help you in achieving your goals.

**NGOs and the Mass Media**

There has been a dearth in scholarly research analyzing the relationship that NGOs involved in the promotion of democracy have with the media. However, I have found significant work analyzing the manner in which they interact via various media platforms and formats. The relationship between these two institutions creates a fascinating point of view that is disseminated to scattered and niche-oriented publics.

Fenton & Barassi (2011) showed that the rapid use of social media can sometimes can represent a threat for political groups rather than an opportunity for association or political participation because of the manner of how these sites are mediated and monitored. They state, "social media can be complex tools for political engagement and collective action," because they state that the utilization of social media as an opportunity for association presupposes the notion that this political participation is created and disseminated by an actively informed and engaged population (p.190). Furthermore, they state, "there is little concern for the deeper and broader

social and political contexts in which the practice of creative autonomy and individuation takes

place" (p. 191). What can be taken away from this is the realization that with ability to connect to

massive amounts people doesn't necessarily mean that the quality of those listening, sending

messages back, or helping to disseminate an organization's messages are meaningful.

Moreover, Antara Das (2011) produced a quantitative study based on a content analysis

she did for a few chapters of her dissertation in which she concluded that NGOs do not take full-

advantage of social media networks and have failed to incorporate significant aspects of use into

their media campaigns. However, the work of Kim, Yang, & Seo (2009) is interesting because

they found that NGOs used the transnational public sphere of the Internet and social media as the

primary mechanism to promote the images and to attract new fundraising opportunities.

Furthermore, the work of Grayson (2014) suggests that the relationship between NGOs and

photographers has helped to shape the visual way narratives are constructed in the mainstream

media, and how the relationship between the photographers and the organizations can have

symbiotic benefit. Also, Powers (2014) analysis of human rights NGOs found that funding

mechanisms and relative size of the organizations determined the publicity strategy utilized;

however, he also considers just who is targeted: such as political elites versus the targeting of

news media sources, or outlets for fundraising and education.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

The primary focus of this thesis centers on the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The catalyst for doing this is a profound desire to investigate a large NGO tasked with promoting democracy that is based in the US. This investigation will function as an in-depth attempt to analyze the role NGOs play in world in the promotion and cultivation of ideology values. The NED is a large bureaucratic institution that utilizes the soft power of the US and this organization's role in how it operates is something incredibly significant to consider when analyzing the nature of NGOs and how they are supposed to function within a transnational public sphere.

This investigation will be: descriptive, with a centralized and detail focus; particularistic, concentrating on a particular medium (digital presence); heuristic, filled with new meaning and perspective; and inductive, in hopes to discover new relationships (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013, p. 141). As Wimmer & Dominick (2013) have suggested, case studies offer a valuable way to compile, analyze, and draw conclusions about an organizing, group, event, or individual, and in great detail (p. 141). By investigating the NED can be deconstructed and examined in a meaningful and accurate manner; however, it will be necessary to remain aware of the perils of case studies such as bias and broad generalizations.

The research questions proposed in this thesis are centered on gaining a deep understanding into the nature of democracy promotion in digital realm. However, before an analysis of the NED's democracy promotion tactics on the web can be dissected it is necessary to fundamentally understand the history of the organization. After all, it is necessary to understand where the organization has been to understand just where it is headed in term of the digital space it utilizes to promote democracy around the world as nonprofit group.

**RQ 1: How and why does the NED peddle the soft power model to support democratic change?**

      It is important to know where we have been to know where we are going, and it is important in a Foucaultian sense to historicize and understand the ideologies and various discourses that have shaped development today. Meaning, in a post-structuralist sense, it become necessary to deconstruct the history of the organization to understand the context in which the NED was born. Understanding how development has shaped our society and how its historical roots influence the NED are paramount. The manner and time period in which the organization was brought into existence has a great influence on its mission. Ideology and discourse shape our society, and the influence they exert on institutions should be examined to unearth the truths about the organization and how, and why, it functions as it does. These questions about the NED's formation and history can be looked at through the lens of a historical analysis.

      By using a historical analysis we have to acknowledge that there is a certain amount of interpretation involved in historically-based investigations; however, analyzing the movement through the development of political, social, and economic ideas and movements is vital to deconstructing the way development arrived at its current incarnation (Berger, 2014). Furthermore, analyzing development through the defunct and prevailing institutions gives us a better understanding of the big players today. Some of the ideologies and institutions that need to be analyzed here are: colonialism, post-colonialism, internationalism, globalization, USAID, and the US State Department's foreign policy objectives, and to a lesser extent the UN system that engages with NGOs.

      As Berger (2014) suggests, a historical analysis does not recreate an era, but through meticulous research can utilize surviving work, concepts and evidence to generate an accurate portrayal of the period being studied. History can be objective and subjective at the same time, but what is important is that the ideas and events being discussed are done so in a rational and methodical manner free of bias, while acknowledging that interpretation is fundamental in arriving at

justified conclusions. Through a historical analysis approach we can, as Berger (2014) suggests, "[be] accurate, organized, logical, and honest," in our analysis of history (p.194).

This historical analysis will be a qualitative institutional study focused on the NED. However, in order to fully understand the nature of ideological promotion it is necessary to set historical time period parameters. For the purpose of this study it is necessary to include, at least as background, a study of the colonial epoch that first spurned intervention and development on nations of the Global South, or colonized countries. From there a postcolonial research method can be applied and the postwar period after World War II that started the globalization movement. Additionally, analyzing the decade in which the NED was created will be instrumental in identifying the key ideological principles that functioned as a catalyst for its creation.

The purpose for this historical analysis is to view development's triumphs and failures through contextual lenses that allow the prevailing discourses and ideologies of the time to bubble to the surface. As previously state, we have to understand where development has been to fully understand where it is at today and where it is headed. This section will serve as the ideological, discursive, and institutional framework for the last two thesis sections.

Upon completion of the text analysis a greater foundation will be established to begin to exam the digital media practices of the NED. Again, understanding why the NED utilizes a soft power model to promote democracy abroad is key to comprehending the choices it makes about how it demonstrates the efficacy of its work on the web. The message it communicates today reflects the ideologies and discourses that shaped its creation.

**RQ 2: What communicative and media techniques does the NED use to advance its goals or demonstrate the efficacy of its work?**

This question delves into the structure of the organization and the media capabilities of the organization. Finding and analyzing how the organization presents itself to the world is incredibly significant. It is important to realize that the image, or branding, of the organization is inherently

apart of the system that is immersed in. Tackling notions of interlocking directorates and whether or

not they are just a clearing-house that supports other NGOs through financial mechanisms is

important. Analyzing how they demonstrate the efficacy of their work back to the donors, State

Department, and the public is also important. Furthermore, whom it is trying to reach and the ways it

does so are also important to try and discover.

 For this section of my thesis I will do an in-depth analysis of the NED's website. As with any

text analysis, the main focus of it will be to try and decipher meaning from the how the

organization's web presence reflects ideological values, and to interpret the reality in which it exists

within the NGO universe. As Mckee (2003) states, "the word 'text' has post-structuralist implications

for thinking about the production of meaning," and that is what needs to be derived from the analysis

of the website (p. 4). Being able to deconstruct the meaning of the NED's website means we can

analyze the relationship between the organization and those interested in its, its reasoning and

thinking, and provide an analysis of how the organization might view its work and how others also

would.

 There is unique opportunity to fully analyze this NGO's website in a manner that can provide

a deep understanding of role of the content's producers and the how the audience might perceive it,

as Elfriede Fürsich (2009) demonstrated in his paper arguing that media texts provide a distinct

discursive event or moment that allows for various modes encoding and decoding. He suggests that

text analysis are important because they can help to make conclusive judgments about a producer's

intentions and how the audience interprets them, that texts can present distinct discursive moments

for encoding and decoding, and texts can emphasize the context in a convoluted circuit of culture

(Fürsich, 2009, pp. 249 – 250).  Furthermore, Fürsich (2009) notes that text analyses can establish the

ideological potential of a text between production and consumption (p. 249).

 However, it will also be important to take into account the ideological negotiation and the

impact of the computer mediated experience when interpreting the meanings of things on the NED's

website (Fürsich, 2009). Furthermore, taking into the rhetorical aspects present will also be

significant to analyze the narratives attempting to be constructed by the organization via their

website. Things to look for would be: alliteration, antithesis, comparison, definitions, encomium,

metaphors, and synecdoche (Berger, 2014). Furthermore, the text analysis will provide the

opportunity to exam the ethos, pathos, and logos of the organization as we can sift through the

messages it disseminates via its online presence.

As Berger (2014) suggests, texts analyses focusing on rhetoric in the mass media can be

applied to aspects like their intention to persuade the social values and effects of symbolic forms

(whether intentional or not), persuasion techniques similar to dramatic or narrative works, genres,

and the symbolic human interaction utilized (pp. 85-87). The messages that the NED utilizes to

persuade and inform are quite important. The rhetorical tools utilized help to craft the organizations

overall, overarching, narrative and create the image it wants to portray to the rest of the world. A text

analysis can help to analyze whether or not that portrayal is accurate and truthful, but also whether or

not it is successful.

Furthermore, a rhetorical analysis of the visual elements utilized by the organization will also

be key in deciphering the persuasion tactics and messages that the NED tries to utilize. Berger (2014)

suggests looking for the following: the literal level, the textual level, intertextual level, and mythic

level of meanings derived from the images utilized (p. 99). Unlike a semiotic analysis, the analysis of

the images creates a visual narrative of rhetoric or persuasion. Things to consider when analyzing the

images used or not used by the organization in a rhetorical manner are: ambiance, subject, primary

messages, secondary messages, denotated messages, connotated messages, spatiality, lighting, colors,

cultural codes, tone, placement, and the target audience (Berger, 2014, pp. 98 – 99).

Web 2.0 plays a vital role in the visual representation methods and mediums available in the

digital realm. This aspect is important to consider especially since this investigation is focusing on

how the NED utilizes its digital space as a place to inform, engage, and communicate with the world.

The most important aspect for Web 2.0 is a chance for communicators to provide an interactive and engaging experience (O'Reilly, 2007). This is created through what O'Reilly (2007) calls a "Rich User Experience," consisting of dynamic content that is focused on visuals, audio, and user interaction. This concept is important to note because it characterizes many of the most highly visited websites on the net, and is the current model web developers strive to adhere to. How the NED may or may not utilize this concept is important in studying how they utilize its web presence to communicate.

The purpose of this section is find the agreements and contradictions; victories and defeats; truths and lies; but most of all, it is to understand the narratives that the NED is trying to create by utilizing the digital sphere. Understanding the messages that are being sent out to the public need to reflect the ethos of the organization and the ideological mission they are engaged in. However, it will be interesting to see the question marks that arise when analyzing this NGO.

**RQ 3: What are the visual representations of democracy utilized by the NED?**

The visual representation of the success of the work that an NGO embarks on is important to consider. It should be the mission of every organization promoting a cause to demonstrate two things: the problem and overcoming that problem. These narratives are rooted in stereotypes and socially constructed representations of the both the people in the midst of development and how the home countries of these NGOs view these regions and people living there. How NGOs utilize visuals has to be significant, especially since Web 2.0 has been driven visually and even future iterations of the Internet will probably heavily involve the visual. To understand how the NED incorporates visual representation, I will use a semiotic analysis.

To deconstruct the images selected for analysis we must first understand the lens through which the West looks at the East, which was established by the historical analysis. These realities are shaped by ideology and discourses that can be historicized and deconstructed to show the roots of power. The way that development is portrayed visually through the media is also significant and ties

in with the previous content analysis. No matter what both NGOs and the elite media use visuals to

accentuate stories, and the images selected most certainly mean something.

It is important to take into account Edward Said's (1979) notion of Orientalism to begin this

discussion. He states that the West reinforces certain myths and archetypes, or stereotypes, of the

East, and that these are formed through the various historical discourses that have been perpetuated

since the colonial era (Said, 1979). Furthermore, he states that the Orient is a myth constructed

through stereotypes and discourse about a barbaric other that needed to be civilized. There are other

aspects of Said's work that will be explored in the semiotic analysis.

Before we can deconstruct the images in this paper it is important to understand the concept of

encoding and decoding. Stuart Hall (1993) suggest that every message, including visual images, have

a process of creating and dissemination based on the dominant society's ideologies, and that the

creator of the message is trying to play into that. Now, what this thesis focuses on is what Hall would

call the "dominant" or "hegemonic" readings, which, as he state, embody an entire social order

within them as a set of meanings, practices, and beliefs.

Basically we can view semiotics as visual system of meaning making that focuses on the

sign. Moriarty (2005) says that a sign is anything that stands for something else and the meaning of a

sign transfers data or meaning from a source to a receiver; furthermore, using Ferdinand de

Saussure's interpretation of the sign, she states that "the sign is comprised of the signifier, which is

the sound or the image, and the signified, which stands for the concept" (p. 228). This is the basis for

the semiotic analysis.

However, it is also important to realize that there are some things that just attract us to an

image that may not be explained, like Barthes (1981) stated in Camera Lucida. Although Barthes

give credence to the culturally informed reading of the sign with his concept of the stadium, we

should play close attention to the intangibility of the punctum, or an element of the image that draws

us in and makes us see things in ways we haven't seen before. That being said, there are still ways to

deconstruct images in a semiotic manner to help understanding the meanings and messages conveyed by an image. Using a semiotic approach to image analysis can marry the visual aspects of representation with the cultural and social perspectives through which they are decoded in. We can focus on the composition of the image as well as the meaning it attempts to make through a cultural lens.

First, I will pull examples of photographs from major mass media outlets and from other NGOs or democracy promotion institutions and semiotically analyze them. From there I will look at the pictures used in the various articles the NED has on its website. I will use semiotics to analyze these photos and derive meaning from them based on the criteria for a semiotic analysis.

The way that the NED utilizes visual images, whether in video or still form, is worthy of analysis because it adds to the narratives it is trying to create. Images have meaning and are utilized in myriad ways. However, how those images are utilized by organizations claiming to be autonomous and just are important in recognizing the truth behind a group's mission. A semiotic analysis will provide a window into the cultural realm through which the NED attempts to create, support, and justify its mission.

CHAPTER IV

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Entire books have been written on the history of development and it would be intellectual

hubris to attempt to cover all aspects of it. However, it is necessary to understand the origins and

the various incarnations that development has embodied over the course of history before it is

possible to fully understand the concepts of the modern aspects of development. Only after that

base is established can we then apply all that knowledge to understanding how the NED fits into

the NGO universe. So, an overview is required, to not only cover other aspects of political

development, but also analyze the ideologies and discourse that helped construct and identify

each time period's goals for being in another country.

**How we got to where were are**

Development has its roots in colonialism, and it has continued in various forms and under

other synonyms. The concept of development encompasses a multitude of academic disciplines

and has been derived from many different subsections of study and analysis. Melkote and

Steeves (2001) view development as, "improving the living conditions of [a] society" (p. 34). An

even more complex explanation comes from the Oxford Department of International

Development, which says that development is, "the national dimensions of development on the

one hand, and the structural (economic, political, social, conceptual) roots of poverty and power

on the other" ("Research — ODID," n.d.). However, it is even slightly more complex than that,

but at a basic level development should be thought of as powerful nations intervening in weaker

nations political, social and economic structure with the hope of bettering their situations as

perceived through the lenses of the stronger powers[5].

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[5] This is a highly optimistic definition, but I think it's necessary to be hopeful that mankind does have the empathy
and ability to leave the world a better place than they found it. It might be a farcical dream on my behalf, but it is the

To discuss the modern context for development we should start with Colonialism and its counterpart Imperialism at the beginning of the 20th century. The complexities and historical context of colonialism are quite complicated and largely unnecessary for this paper, but perhaps Rudyard Kipling's 1899 poem, "The White Man's Burden," best describes Europe's sentiments and attitudes toward their interventions across the globe at this time. The selection mentioned in the introduction of this thesis provides a good contextual look into how the Global North went about creating colonies. As a reminder, this poem Kipling implies that the onus of bringing the less sophisticated (according to European terms) tribes of the world into a civilized society rests solely on the shoulders of the European powers; however, in doing this they will get no recognition and only hostility from those whom they are trying to uplift (Kipling, 1899). An assumed superiority of culture and societal structure can be visualized through this veil, even though Europeans were in other countries to primarily act in their own economic interests and to garnish prestige.

Colonialism was characterized by liberalism and the quest for empire, and as a process it was in implementation during the Enlightenment. In fact, it has been noted that, "Enlightenment thinkers such as Kant, Smith and Diderot were critical of the barbarity of colonialism and challenged the idea that Europeans had the obligation to 'civilize' the rest of the world" ("Colonialism (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)," n.d.). It is interesting to think that during a time like the Enlightenment when emphasis was being place on an individual's ability to be rational that exploitation and conquest were on the daily agenda. It should be mentioned that the great thinkers of the Enlightenment were elite scholars and their views may or may not have reflected the majority opinion of the time. Colonization also fueled the liberal economic policies

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message that is being put forth by a wealth of other NGOs populating the development sphere. Sure, as I said before there might be instances of nefarious intentions, but the goals of most NGOs seem to be that of helping the underdeveloped word … at least on the surface.

of the day, and in an emerging capitalist world system became integral to the world economy of

that epoch.

In a Marxist sense colonialism is function of capitalism that exploits workers of a

foreign country to the capital gains of the dominant country. In fact Marx also suggested that,

"colonialism [is] a progressive force bringing modernization to a backward feudal society [is]

like a transparent rationalization for foreign domination" ("Colonialism (Stanford Encyclopedia

of Philosophy)," n.d.). In fact he suggests it is an "instrument of wholesale destruction,

dependency and systematic exploitation producing distorted economies, socio-psychological

disorientation, massive poverty and neocolonial dependency" ("Colonialism," n.d.). Whether

intentional or not, it seems that colonialism created a global sphere of exploitation and

subjugation that created massive repercussions in its wake.

This background provides a contextual foundation to view the modern context of

development. The past greatly influences the future, whether as a method to avoid repeats of

catastrophic mistakes or as background to explain the progression of current systems entrenched

in the world system. Ideologies such as imperialism and colonialism shaped the way the world is

structured today. However, this is just providing the setting for the modern context of

development. The modern context for development begins at the conclusion of World War II

with the emergence of the US and Soviet Union as the dominant superpowers of the world.

After World War II the victorious countries, and subsequently the most powerful in the

world, began a new method of development. This time it was rooted in largely economic

principals and was advocated for by a new world body founded on the principles of peace and

prosperity called the UN. The preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which the

UN proclaimed in 1948, states that, "Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the

equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world" ("The Universal Declaration of Human Rights," 1948). However, the UN would endorse and embark on a period of economic stranglehold on underdeveloped nations through the actions of the "Bretton Woods Institutions," which are the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Band (WB).

Analyzing the role of governments and NGOs in advocating for democracy for development is paramount, especially after understanding the historical context of development and the essential need for freedom. Understanding the role of the US and its encouragement of programs of democratic development is also of interest because the US contributes more money to the cause of development than any other nation (Shah, 2012). This is significant because it shows the power that the US has in influencing the role of development, which is done through its exercise of "soft" power.

Analysts tend to claim that NGOs act and think differently from the US State Department, and while their work share similarities and the government funds both, the two vary by the methods and programs that they promote around the world (Silver, 2006). This ability of financial guidance helps the US exert its influence over other countries without the use of force, which is how others describes soft power (Nye, 2004). The use of soft power by the US government is crucial to the promotion of democracy, especially in the context of the Cold War and now in a post-9/11 world.

The US has been engaged in the practice of exercising soft power for quite some time, but it is vital to understand why promoting democracy is a key characteristic of the its foreign policy objectives. Mark Lagon (2011) speaks of the tangible stakes for the US and the world in the spread of democracy—namely, greater peace, prosperity, and pluralism. For the US,

promoting democracy is equated to promoting peace, and is one of the few truly strong findings

in the realm of international relations—most importantly that established democracies never go

to war with one another" (Lagon, 2011). This key fact can be considered one of the main

catalysts for the US advocating for democracies. Furthermore, in terms of democracies granting

more freedom, Lagon (2011) says, "democracy affords all groups equal access to justice—and

equal opportunity to shine as assets in a country's economy. Democracy's support for pluralism

prevents human assets—including religious and ethnic minorities, women, and migrants—from

being squandered." This is putting democracy in the same terms as Amartya Sen did when he

advocated for democracy as a means to grant more freedom to the people.

The US actively engages in the process of promoting democracy. In fact US

representatives have the possibility of working with different multilateral institutions to help

promote democracy, and depending on where they are in world, these intergovernmental

organizations can offer diplomatic opportunities for democracy promotion ("The Stanley

Foundation," n.d.). For example, the African Union and Association of Southeast Asian Nations

have made a much greater emphasis to the perpetuation of prodemocracy norms ("The Stanley

Foundation," n.d.). This illustrates just a few of the ways the US government actively

participates in the promotion and cultivation of democratic societies, and that is not even

mentioning the democracy building that was conducted in the war zones of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is part of the US State

Department and is the chief government agency responsible for the promotion of development.

Moreover, it is the chief organization charged with promoting democracy for the entire US

government. USAID is focused on supporting legitimate, inclusive and effective governments,

helping countries transition to democracy and strengthen democratic institutions, capitalizing on

critical moments to expand freedom and opportunity, and promoting comprehensive

development so that women, minorities and vulnerable populations benefit from growth,

opportunity and the expansion of rights ("Democracy, Human Rights and Governance | U.S.

Agency for International Development," n.d.). Furthermore they have a strategy that helps

dictate policy for democracy, human rights, and governance. The strategy is, "to support the

establishment and consolidation of inclusive and accountable democracies to advance freedom,

dignity and development" ("Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Strategy | U.S. Agency

for International Development," n.d.). Furthermore, USAID recognizes that, "long-term,

sustainable development is closely linked to sound democratic governance and the protection of

human rights," and it views democracy, "not in isolation but as a critical framework in which all

aspects of development must advance together" ("Importance of Democracy, Human Rights, &

Governance to Development | U.S. Agency for International Development," n.d.).

All of the messages and policies coming from USAID demonstrate just how important

they view democracy to building lasting, sustainable, aspects of development. In fact, the stance

of USAID is that democracy is important to lay the groundwork for future development, which

goes along with what Sen said about democracy being the foundation that the rest of freedoms

are built on. USAID's role in the development process is significant, especially in the

distribution of funds to countries and NGOs ("Home | USAID Dollars to Results (Pilot Project),"

n.d.). In fact, Alexandra Silver says, "a plethora of U.S. [NGOs] also exist … with varying

degrees of financial dependency on the government. In recent years, their budgets have increased

dramatically. Their activities include election-monitoring, educating citizens about their rights,

and working with legislators, judges, and the media" (Silver, 2006). It's clear that NGOs are

reliant on funds from the state; however, the implications seem to be that NGOs do much of the "heavy lifting."

Non-governmental organizations are numerous and have a significant impact on the manner and implementation of development projects around the world. From promoting democracy to building infrastructure and from HIV/AIDS prevention to educating women, NGOs deal with a wide range of issues covering development. They work on behalf of donors funding projects, but also on behalf of the ideological structures perpetuated in their home countries. They work in the field to promote democracy by providing a positive examples like America's own democratic system, and by providing technical training programs and exchanging students, scholars, and other representatives ("The Stanley Foundation," n.d.). However, these NGOs do have autonomy and can make decisions for themselves about the implantation process of development programs and this is what separates them from government arms such as USAID.

The NGO that should be mentioned when conversing about the subject of political development is the NED, because of its mission to promote democracy around the world and the manner through which it receives funding. The NED is a private, nonprofit foundation dedicated to growing and strengthening democratic institutions around the world, and every year it grants funding to more than 1,000 NGO projects that are working for democratic goals in more than 90 countries ("About the National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). In addition to funding many projects from various NGOs the NED contributes to the process of communication on political development by holding an annual international forum for democratic studies, maintains the academic journal "Journal of Democracy," and supports the Center for International Media Assistance, which helps reporters covering democracy throughout the world ("Initiatives," n.d.).

The crux of their work is in promoting aspects of democracy around the world through funding. For example, in Afghanistan they helped establish a journalism association called the Badghis Social Journalism Association, which helps to train journalists; funds the Afghanistan Human Rights Organization, which helps to raise awareness of democracy values through radio, legal assistance, family counseling, and creates public services announcements ("Afghanistan | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). These are just some of the things that the NED has done in countries that used aspects of communication to help promote democracy.

These programs and funding recipients only touch on a small aspect of what the NED does. To fully understand the organization we must understand the history and ideological contexts through which it was created in. Analyzing the NED through a postcolonial lens is key in understanding the way the organization functions within the world system today.

Postcolonialism is vital in the search for the truth about an NGO such as the NED. It allows us to reflect on the on knowledge known about the organization and its goals, and then it flips the point of view to the other side. It takes existing knowledge from Western-oriented perspectives and challenges it. Using this lens allows for critical approach to analyze the role the NED plays in the West and in the East. It allows delving into the differences in opinion on various discourses, ideologies, social, cultural, and political frameworks that the NED operates within and compares it to past instances of Western institutions, organizations, or governments exerting their will on foreign soil.

It is important to take into account Said's notion of Orientalism in conjunction with postcolonial though is also important in understanding the NED's place in the NGO universe. Said (1979) states that modern interpretations of the Orient, or the East, should be contextualized in a manner that fall in line with Michelle Foucault's notion on how discourse shapes our reality.

He also theorized that the West reinforces certain myths and archetypes, or stereotypes, of the East, and that these are formed through the various historical discourses that have been perpetuated since the colonial era (Said, 1979). Another broad finding is that he states that the Orient is a myth constructed through stereotypes and discourse about a barbaric other that needed to be civilized (Said, 1979). Furthermore, Said (1979) suggests that the construction of the 'oriental' narrative was done primarily through he power dynamics of political dominance, and that this supremacy produced knowledge based on inequality. Essentially, he suggests that power relationships created the realm through which only the dominant side could have created the prevailing discourses, or write books about (produce) knowledge, about the population being subjugated.

Now, we can take these thoughts and transplant them into the realm of development through the very fact that the prevailing Western ideologies characterize the modern global reality in which we live. Remembering that we are historically informed about the prevailing discourses through which narratives about an ethnicity or region are created and perpetuated is important in how we frame the current narratives surrounding the East.

However, it's also important to contextualize the world system in which we exist in today. Wallerstein (1974) defines the world system as, "a system … with a single division of labor and multiple cultural systems" (p. 390). Wallerstein (2004) then argues that the modern world system began after World War II with the concepts of the core-periphery, dependency theory, the utility of Marx's concept of "Asiatic modes of production," and the notion of "total history" (p. 11). He states that core countries originating from the West control the periphery countries, or east, through a system of economic and military dominance, and that the periphery nations are economically weak and poor thereby are subjected to the will of the core (p.11-12).

Because of this a dependency model arose, meaning that the peripheral countries were, and are,

being dominated by the economic power and models set in place by the core; this is further

exacerbated by the Marx's "Asiatic mode of production," which describes a history of

suppression, slavery, and feudalism in the large, bureaucratic, and autocratic empires that were

born in China, India, and Russia (p. 12-13). This is aspect gives way to the concept of the world

system in that it emphasizes that all aspects of history must be considered when trying to analyze

the way in which the world functions, which is primarily through the modern world-capitalist

system rooted in historical systems such as the world-economy and world-empires.

Empire is something that we should also recognize, because, as Wallerstein (2004) states,

there are two ways in which the core can try increases its status and power: to transform the

world economy into a world-empire, and to obtain hegemony in the world-system (p.57).

Wallerstein's (2004) notion of empire is a single political authority for a world-system, but this

has never been done; however, he notes that three powers have achieved hegemony: the United

Provinces of the Netherlands in the mid-seventieth century, the United Kingdom in the mid-

nineteenth century (the era of imperialism and colonialism), and the US post-World War II (pp.

57-58). He states that in these periods they were able to "establish the rules of the game in the

interstate system, to dominant the world-economy (in production, commerce, and finance), to get

their way politically with minimal use of military force, and to formulate the cultural language

with which one discussed the world" (p.58).

The fact that the US had the power to exert its will and to shape the way various

discourses about the rest of the world were created is of incredible importance. With the world-

system we now in place, with the US as the sole superpower for now, being able to make the

rules is incredibly powerful. However, this is where the concept of "soft power" comes into play.

As previously mentioned in the literature review, these concepts are about winning the hearts and minds of those to whom a nation-state is attempting to exert its will. The NED is an organization that, as the next section will demonstrate, is an odd entity straddling the line between NGO and IGO, seemingly functioning as arm of the US State Department and promoting democracy in a manner that is inconsistent with the crux of that ideology.

**History of the National Endowment for Democracy**

Essentially the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is a soft power organization that promotes the ideological values of the US while advocating for democratic progress around the world. According to the NED's own information about its history the organization was founded on the premise that "American assistance on behalf of democracy efforts abroad would be good both for the US and for those struggling around the world for freedom and self-government," and that, by their own admission, "the model of a non-governmental organization that receives public funding to carry out democracy initiative should be considered by other countries that appreciate the benefits of participating in this significant worldwide movement" ("History | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.).

With origins dating back to Lyndon B. Johnson's administration, the US first started its exploration of the notion to fund democracy building objectives around the world when it was revealed that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was receiving funding to "wage the battle of ideas at international forums," and so Johnson's administration recommended the establishment of a "public-private mechanism" to fund overseas activities openly ("History | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). However, it took until 1983 for the NED to be fully approved and created by an order of congress known as H.R. 2915 ("History | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.).

The National Endowment for Democracy was endowed with the following purpose: to promote democratic institutions through private sector enterprises; assisting in exchanges between private sector groups and democratic factions abroad; promoting non-governmental participation in democratic training initiatives; strengthening the electoral processes abroad in cooperation with indigenous democratic groups; encouraging cooperation between the American private sector and those abroad dedicated to the cultural values, institutions, and organizations of democratic pluralism; and encouraging democratic development consistent with the interests of both the U.S. and the groups receiving assistance ("History | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). The endowment was set up as a nonprofit organization under the Internal Revenue's Service Code 501c (3), meaning that it was not susceptible to federal income taxes ("History | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.).

Additionally, Four institutions were created under the umbrella of the organization to help facilitate the endowment's mission then swiftly followed the NED. Those organizations are: the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and what is now known as the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (the Solidarity Center) ("History | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). These institutions were set up, according to the NED, for three reasons: "first, because of the wide recognition of the parent bodies of these new entities as national institutions with a public character, an important asset for this non-governmental foundation; second, because they represent sectors of political life fundamental to any strong democracy; and third, to insure political balance. The Endowment would serve as the umbrella organization through which these four groups and an expanding number of other private sector groups would receive funding to carry out programs abroad" ("History | National

Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). Furthermore, stipulations were attached to the NED over the

years to make the organization more transparent, such as: the Board of the NED is prohibited

from using funds for partisan political purposes, including funding for national party operations;

the NED must consult with the State Department on any overseas programs it funds prior to the

commencement of their activities; its is required to report to Congress on all grants between

December 31 to February 1 every year; it is required, despite its nongovernmental status, comply

fully with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act; and that all financial transactions

of the Endowment for each fiscal year subject to a possible audit ("History | National

Endowment for Democracy," n.d.).

The organization originally began with a budget of $18.5 million; however, over the year

that budget has expanded to more than $100 million dollars of tax payer money going into the

endowment every year ("History | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). The NED's

Board of Directors, which has the right to review and vote on all projects that it funds, oversees

this funding and, to remain objective, these board members are not appointed to serve by the

Executive Brand (those who are called to serve must also relinquish their Board membership)

("History | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.).

So, as previously stated, the NED is a nonprofit organization whose goal is to promote

democracy around the world. They do so by making more than 1,000 grants a year to support the

projects of other NGO groups operating in more than 90 countries aboard to strengthen

democratic institutions and to further its own democratic goals ("About the National Endowment

for Democracy | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). Today, the NED continues to

operate with a relatively large budget in terms of government programs. For the fiscal year 2013-

2014 the NED operate with an appropriations budget of $117.7 million with a committee

recommendation to up increase the budget in the coming years to well over $135 million ("Committee Reports - 113th Congress (2013-2014) - Senate Report 113-081," n.d.). All this continues in the name of promoting democracy around the world.

**So then what is the NED?**

The creation of the organization was an open attempt to remedy the fact that a covert spying agency was caught using some of its funding in a manner that Congress, the Executive Branch, and the American people deemed less than admirable. So, from the shadows of a CIA program exercising its will to create governments abroad favorable to the US in the name of preserving and promoting democracy the initial discussions of having an open organization dedicated the US government's agenda was born. The origins of the NED seem less than favorable in terms of promoting the various ideologies associated with democracy in a manner befitting the crux of its ethos. This organization, by its own admission, is not based on the autonomy usually associated with that of NGOS. In fact, the very nature of the organization was founded on the premise to serve the will of the American government. Despite its attempts to frame itself as an autonomous organization free from the influence of the government, the NED is in fact a shell organization that funnels money through the four institutions created in its wake to further the American agenda abroad.

Moreover, trying to understand why the US government decided to create this organization is paramount in understanding the NED's place in the world. As previously mentioned, the world-system, in the wake of the World War II has come to be associated with American Hegemony. The US government operated against the other superpower, the Soviet Union, in the wake of European rebuilding in what history has come to call the Cold War. The attributes of the Cold War included military and political tensions between the US and its allies

in NATO against the Soviet Union and its allies in the Warsaw pact. It was "cold" because there was no real large-scale military action between the two sides. However, this war as an ideological struggle characterized by covert operations and proxy wars in nations such as Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iran, Cuba, and a host of other countries involved in the struggle between the competing ideologies of democracy and communism.

In a war that doesn't involve direct military confrontation being able to win the hearts and minds of the people in disputed and targeted areas was massively important. It's the old adage about the "carrot and the stick" and which one should be used to achieve your goals; moreover, being able to convince a nation and its people that you have their best interests at heart is paramount. The soft power model is extremely useful in that it attempts to win the hearts and minds of the world by promoting democracy, in the sense that both Sen and Freire would agree with, as an ideology to lift those in the developing world out of poverty. By functioning within a transnational public sphere the NED can promote its notions of democratic rule of the people to other nations in a manner befitting to the core ethos of the ideology and in conjunction with the cultural sentiments of the American population. Utilizing this public diplomacy method through a supposed nonprofit structure allows for the policies of the organization to, theoretically, go unnoticed and unchallenged.

However, it should also be mentioned again that in conjunction with the Cold War that the US achieved hegemony in the world-system, which as previously stated is a world-economic system based on capitalism, and during the time in which the NED was founded by the Reagan administration neoliberal policies began to dominant the US's domestic and foreign policy objectives.

It was advantageous to the US government to promote ideologies that ushered in a sense

of freedom of will in countries. This was enticing in that it showed that the US was in support of

a government for the people, and in turn usher them into a world system in which they

dominated economically, thus allowing for business to be conducted in a manner that was

friendly to US interests. By posing as an NGO the NED advocates freedom in a manner to help

foster other American interest, just as its CIA precursors, used democracy promotion to create

governments favorable to US interests. As journalist Robert Parry (2014) suggests, the NED is a,

"shadow foreign policy apparatus built by Ronald Reagan for the Cold War survives to this day

as a slush fund that keeps American neocons well fed and still destabilizes target nations."

There has been massive criticism of the NED's activities since its inception. Recently, the

organization was criticized for its role in Ukraine and Venezuela. Parry (2014) studied the

current undertakings of the organization and found that the policies enacted on behalf of the

organization in the Ukraine and Venezuela were consistent with activities that used to be

conducted by the CIA; activities such as sponsoring organizations in direct opposition to

democratically elected leaders that served the political and economic interests of the US. The

NED funded 65 projects with grant recipients gaining tens of thousands of dollars to some

getting well over $200,000 ("Ukraine | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). Parry (2014)

argues that the majority of this money went to fund opposition forces, even though the

government was democratically elected. Not accounting to the level of authenticity of the

election, it should be noted that this "shadow" NGO is thus continuing to create governments

more favorable to US interests. If this were true, and evidence seems to suggest just that, then it

would be quite the Orwellian statement to suggest that the US government providing financial

assistance to the opposition in an attempt to create governments favorable to the US as

promoting real democracy. In fact, it would make a mockery of the heart of democracy.

However, it does show just how powerful NGO contact can be. In this case the NED's

influenced provided real results in the form of political protests in the Ukraine. Although this is a

different continent with a longer history exerting its influence on it, this NGO influence is in line

with the political science findings in the literature review of this thesis. The NEDs work in the

Ukraine did lead to very measureable and visible results of political protests; however, whether

or not the Ukrainian democracy was weak or strong before the NED committed to pouring

money into the country is another topic for another day. However, this influence has other

implications, especially in terms of empire building, not unlike the days when colonialism was in

practice and imperialism dominated how the West sought to exert its dominance on the world.

Through a postcolonialism lens it could be argued that the NED as a democracy

promotion NGO is another form of colonialism, or neocolonialism, that is perpetuated through

the spread of democracy, effectively bastardizing the crux of the ideology—which seems factual.

This only exacerbates the notion that the NGO is anything but genuine. By helping to create

states friendly to the US the NED has effectively placed new implications of empire on the

world, only this time in the name of capitalism with the promotion of freedom as falsehood in an

economic system that fosters economic inequality and cultivating a world system that

systematically exploits the underdeveloped, or periphery, countries.

This neocolonialism is describe by Sartre (2001) as part of the globalization movement

where imperialism and hegemony of the most powerful economic countries use capitalism in the

form of global business and cultural imperialism to influence a country without the use of direct

military or political control. Sartre (2001) describes a world economic system not unlike what

Wallerstein presented, this system is characterized by decolonization that occurred after World

War II in which former colonies obtained independence; however, through the world-economic

system colonization was just reappropriated in the form of large multinational corporations that

continued to exploit these underdeveloped countries for treasure and that the economic control,

now vested through this system, resembles the colonial exploitation and hegemonic power

structures that used to be exerted on these nations.

It is from all of these mechanisms and lines of inquiry where the NED cultivates power.

Through the world-economic system hegemony is created by in an economic manner, but only

when countries can enter that world system, which must be done in line with the ideological and

political notions of power. This world economic system only goes to strengthen the power that

economic elites have. Furthermore, the vast bureaucratic system that the NED engages in

through the four institutions created in its wake helps to launder the money it is endowed with

every year making it difficult to trace back to the organization, which is directly funded from the

US government, and intergovernmental organizations such as the UN's DPI help to promote and

garner credibility to its cause. The soft power model to nongovernment funded entities usually,

according to Nye (2004, p. 93), target transnational corporations to "name and shame," however,

an organization such as the NED attempts to create a political system open to these corporations'

economic interests. The way the NED cultivates and creates its power and credibility is done in a

manner that subverts traditional notions of how NGOs attempt to function within the

transnational public sphere. In a way calling it an NGO and not an intergovernmental

organization might be considered demonstrably fallacious. However, by studying this quasi-

government organization media scholars may gain insight into how an organization can attempt

to cultivate credibility and create authenticity within the new public sphere of the Internet when they are, in fact, not what they claim to be.

What works best for the US in the World System and the NED's promotion of the soft power model is making democracy a veil to hide its capitalist intentions, and, in terms of the credibility this cultivates, is problematic. The NED has had very recent results in effecting civil societies of countries (see Ukraine example above), and it is an actor in the transnational public sphere exerting influence. However, it still must also demonstrate the efficacy of its work, not to a civil society of any nature, but, in fact, to the US government, which is more of a characteristic of an IGO or governmental organization, and because of how the organization earns its income it may be difficult to evaluate a sense of accountability on the NED's part.

What this all boils down to is whether or not we agree with the current world system in general. Does US hegemony in an economic sense really mean the exploitation of the underdeveloped world? If so, then why does the US continue its promotion of democracy through shadow organizations such as the NED? Even though the NED operates as in manner completely different from how most scholars would contend that NGOs should, and do, operate it still has become a powerful force in the realm of NGOs, and especially in democracy promotion. The NED still functions as a democracy promotion NGO under the guise of being an autonomous nonprofit that is not beholden to the will of the US government, however, as this thesis has attempted to show and discuss, that is not always the case and there are those who have investigated and contend that the NED is less than forthcoming about its true agenda.

Now, if the NED operates and functions in the manner discussed in this chapter then its important to investigate how it portrays itself in not only in the transnational public sphere that NGOs operating internationally function within, but also to how they demonstrate the efficacy of

its work and how it communicates within the US through civil society to cultivate its credibility. This should be an arduous task given the fact this organization is probably unknown to a vast majority of the American public. However, within the realm of mass communication this poses an interesting task in analyzing how an NGO with seemingly ulterior motives establishes itself as a just, credible, and wholly independent organization.

CHAPTER V

TEXT ANALYSIS OF THE NED WEBSITE

**Purpose of analyzing the NED's website**

The realm of mass communication has undergone a massive shift in the last 20 years. It

has transitioned from a combination of print and visual mediums such as television into a new

digital epoch where access to information and a wealth of knowledge has become available at the

click of a button via the Internet on a vast array of electronic machines. How and what the

privileged core countries with access to this information and entertainment network should be

vital to how an NGO keeps its funding mechanism going strong. However, in the case of the

NED, which gets the majority of its funding from the US government, how does its presence on

the web contribute to its mission?

The digital realm offers an enormous opportunity for the NED to demonstrate the

efficacy of its work, cultivate its credibility as an NGO, and to connect with those interested in

its mission of furthering democracy's cause. A website can introduce your NGO to the world,

tell it about your organization, introduce its activities, allow for interaction with civil society,

solicit and accept donations, and most importantly add to the reputation of an organization.

However, as we've seen in the previous chapter of this thesis, the NED is not what one would

consider a normal NGO. It teeters on line of NGO and a government institution, and how the

NED communicates its mission to a population with information at its fingertips should be

crucial to its continuation. After all, a simple inquiry on a search engine like Google can yield

thousands of results about an organization, and in the case of the NED not all of them are

favorable.

The purpose for this text analysis is to analyze the different aspects of communication that the NED uses to connect with people online. As Berger (2014) states about mass media, "communication flows from a sender of messages to large number of receivers ... [and] a great deal of the content of the mass media takes the form of texts—narratives or stories" (p.28). So, this makes the NED's website massively important to its communication program, because websites can utilize various mediums to help communicate various messages. Everything from the written word, audio, images, videos, and even methods of user interaction can be utilized on a website. Effectively using various combinations of these mediums can add rich depth to as website and reach a vast number of individuals.

This qualitative text analysis will attempt to deconstruct and analyze the narratives that the NED utilizes through its online presence, and in doing will show how the NED attempts to cultivate credibility and demonstrate the efficacy of its work. However, before we can analyze the tactics of narrative and rhetorical strategies the website itself must be analyzed in a generic manner, meaning it must be objectively analyzed first for its worth as a website within the current digital era we are in.

By looking in depth at the form the NED's website takes we can make informed judgments about its purpose and the meaning it tries to create, and the effect it has on the user and why that matters. After all, a text analysis' primary function is figuring out is gathering information about how people make sense of the world. So, it would be reasonable to suggest that, as a methodology, scholars on a quest to understand the ways in cultures, organizations, and society at large can make sense of who the world in which we all live in by using a qualitative text analysis. Deriving meaning from these texts is the primary goal of this analysis. By using a text analysis methodology consisting of three parts—generic (or descriptive), rhetorical, and

narrative—we can understand the manner in which the NED uses its website to promote the goals and ambition of the organization.

**The NED's website as a Text**

The queries that drive this descriptive analysis of the NED's website deal with the website representing a discursive moment in time. The website is the product of the organization's work to communicate with visitors about the work it does. It does so by encoding messages they will hope to be decoded according to the organization's intent, which then can be thought of as representing the ideological potential of the website to accurately portray the intentions of the NED. Of course an element of persuasion has to be factored in, because the intent of a website advocating for democracy should be to first provide information, and then to persuade and justify the merits of their work. Furthermore, being a digital window into the organization, the website should also provide ample fodder for demonstrating the efficacy of its work by providing examples and evidence, which should lead to opportunities for association and interaction to those whom support the organization and its activities, and thereby functioning as means to cultivate credibility for the organization.

This text analysis uses the NED's website as a Text in an attempt to show the site as a unique discursive moment. However, in the digital realm, which the developed world has access to, the website becomes an essential tool of communication and interaction. The NED's website is a discursive moment in time that can be accessed on the web to gain information, but it also shows the intention of the organization's communication strategy. Those in civil society seeking information and opportunities for association within the democracy movement can access the website and see what the ethos of the NED is, and also its current projects and past success stories.

However, this is a squandered opportunity. A modern Internet audience has come to expect the standards mentioned in the methodology section of this thesis about the attributes of Web 2.0. This foundation of a visually-centered website with opportunity for the incorporation of images, videos, audio, and methods of interaction between users and the site owners has gone largely unnoticed by the NED. Their website still boasts a banner celebrating their 30th anniversary from 2013 (see Figure 2). The majority of the page still seems based in text which makes it antiquated in a world where business sites, social sites, and news and entertainment sites all focus on the characteristics of the web that Web 2.0 accurately predicted would drive the digital revolution. Instead, when examining the landing page (see Figure 2), we are left with very few visually stimulating aspects of the website. The opportunity for a first impression that leaves a mark on a visitor or provides it with enough enticing information to move forward is neglected for a that is actually quite boring. "Boring" might not be the most academically suitable term, but it is very boring.

Figure 2 - Landing page of the NED's website: http://www.ned.org/
Accessed: May 12, 2015

What the landing page does have going for it is a sense of objectivity to remain outside of the partisan spectrum. The colors that dominant the website are beiges, oranges, and greys. Over the last few decades the colors red and blue have come to represent the different political parties: red for republicans and blue for democrats. Part of the mission parameters of the NED were that it was to remain an objective nonpartisan, nongovernmental, organization, and by shying away from the predominant use of the colors the site attempts to portray itself from anyone subliminally associating it with either party.

The NED does put a significant amount of effort into providing links on the website to its initiative programs such as: the World Movement for Democracy, which is a global network of activists, practitioners, scholars, policy makers, and fundraisers working to further democracy around the world ("About | World Movement for Democracy," n.d.); an academic journal called

the Journal of Democracy, which is focused on the theory and practice of democracy ("About the

Journal of Democracy | Journal of Democracy," n.d.); the International Forum for Democratic

Studies, which provides research fellowships programs and hold a yearly conference ("About the

Forum | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.); and the Center for International Media

Assistance, which attempts to improve the effectiveness of media development around the world

("Center for International Media Assistance," n.d.). All of these initiative websites, except the

Forum site, are not part of the NED's actual web address.

Moving on, the NED misses the mark on ways to connect and engage with the users on

the site. It does offer six different ways to translate the site: Farsi, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish,

French, and Russian (see Figure 2). Additionally, it offers a way to sign up for a newsletter, and

toward the end of that particular banner it offers a way to connect with the organization via

social media (see Figure 2). But the NED seems to have put its pursuit of followers on these sites

on the back burner, because its following numbers are relatively minuscule in terms of other

NGOs.

The NED's Facebook page has almost 15,000 likes, meaning that this number of people

have taken the time to find this page and connect with the organization ("National Endowment

for Democracy - Washington, District of Columbia - Organization | Facebook," n.d.). However,

that number is dwarfed in comparison to other NGOs such as Freedom House, which has well

over 76,000 likes ("Freedom House - Washington, District of Columbia - Non-Profit

Organization | Facebook," n.d.). The NED's Twitter following is equally as dismal with 11,000

followers ("NED (@NEDemocracy) | Twitter," n.d.). This number again is dwarfed by Freedom

House, which has approximately 39,500 followers ("Freedom House (@FreedomHouseDC) |

Twitter," n.d.).

These numbers suggest, in line with Das (2011), that NGOs do not take full-advantage of social media networks. The audience of the NED may be different from the NGOs that actively seek promotion, because they might not receive as much federal money, but because of the amount of academic journals and conferences the organization holds, the target audience may be political and intellectual elites. Those actively searching for democracy promotion organizations are probably far less in number and have very specialized interests. It also seems to suggest that the NED's numbers in comparison to other democracy promotion NGOs and that of other social media personalities is quite insignificant. This raises the question of what an NGO does to cultivate credibility and how do they demonstrate the efficacy of its work, because it seems as though the NED is failing to connect to those who might be interested. It may not be the NED's mission to attract too much attention based on the nature of its creation.

Also on the website, down the left side, we can see a beige bar where the website offers very little in the way of interaction or direct opportunities for association. The large visible option to connect is to "Apply For A Grant." This aspect of the organization is its foundation; however, just how much money is directly doled out to organizations applying for grants remains a mystery, especially since a significant portion of the money is devoted to being allocated to the four institutions that were mentioned in the historical analysis section. However, when clicking on the button it brings you a very lengthy, text-based, frequently asked questions site about applying for grants from the NED. Curiously it leads with the statement the page is best viewed with Internet Explorer, which informally has not been true since the late-1990s. Nevertheless, this page also provides an ample opportunity for analysis.

The page with instructions, frequently asked questions, and types of programs sponsored contains an interesting assortment of information. First it states some interesting facts such as

how the NED in 2012, "funded about 1236 projects in 92 countries around the world. Grant amounts vary depending on the size and scope of the projects, but the average grant lasts 12 months and is around $50,000" ("Applying for a NED Grant | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). It further states that the organization only funds NGOs, encourages applications from civic organizations in newly established democracies or in semi-authoritarian countries, and societies and countries undergoing democratic transitions ("Applying for a NED Grant | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). The page provides basic information about applying for grants, in a manner that is rather not engaging and contains very little in any rhetorical value. It presents information, due dates and deadlines, and links to copies of paper work to be completed.

However, what is interesting under the subsection "What Types of Programs NED Supports" is it lists goals such as: promoting human rights; freedom of information and independent media; promoting accountability and transparency; strengthening civil society, the democratic process and institutions, methods of democratic conflict resolution; and to promote civic education, freedom of association, and the strengthening of a broad market-based economy ("Applying for a NED Grant | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.).

What's rhetorically interesting is the simultaneous lack and support of persuasive elements. Overall this page seems like a bureaucratic page providing a wealth of information; however, the section mentioning the type of programs is remarkably vague and filled with puffery and actions that could be argued are the opposite goals of the NED. For example, if the organization is so interested in promoting democracy then why is one of its goals to strengthen a market-based capitalist economy? It is in line with the ideological promotion of the US in that freedom is usually tied not only to democracy but also to capitalism. In fact, as we saw in the

historical analysis, much of the function of the NED was to bring the shadow operations of the CIA into the realm of the NGO. For example, some of the points outlined in this section could read very differently: strengthening the democratic political processes and institutions could just be reduced to giving money to opposition political parties and candidates whose ideological and economic values are in line with the US government; supporting freedom of information and independent media could mean giving money to alternative news networks that run narratives counter to the current administration; or strengthening civil society organizations, promoting the freedom of association, and accountability and transparency means funding organizations with dissenting opinions and opening a violence free manner in which they can challenge the current institutions and regimes.

The way their work is presented on the website offers a very unique insight into how the organization attempts to frame itself as an organization that exemplifies the American spirit of democracy. The lenses through which topics are portrayed is noteworthy in that it references Said's notion in that the consumer of the medium derives meaning. How a topic or attribute is framed gives the attempted cultural and socially constructed framework salience and the audience a way to create understanding or derive meaning. Framing adds the depth and the either subtle or obvious means of communication, whether simple or complex.

Robert Entman surmises that the way an attribute is elevated in the audience's mind is through raising the salience of certain aspects of the piece through words, phrases, images, and presentation style (Entman, 1993). If we subscribe to that notion then it is clear that these methods of framing can also be contextualized, historicized, and analyzed through ideology, discourse, and other sociological methods to derive their purposes and meanings. Furthermore, he suggests that framing allows for, "some aspects of a perceived reality," by making them,

"more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman, 1993). Meaning that by emphasizing certain aspects of a narrative through the viewer's culture and socially constructed reality—which is shaped through ideology and discourse—it can make a story clear and a perception of meaning more salient.

How an issue or story is framed is significant because it is the means by which the consumer helps derive their meaning from. The basic premise is that if you make something more salient in your narrative creation then you are giving the audience that particular aspect to think about. Framing, in its most simplistic manner, can mean the difference from thinking negatively about something or thinking positively about something, or presenting an organization in positive or negative light. Furthermore, by emphasizing certain attributes of a story, let us say for the purposes of this thesis, such as the culture of a foreign land and the perceived oppressive factors can make compassionate storytelling into one of damnation.

How the NED frames itself as an organization operating justly in the digital realm through the transnational public sphere is quite interesting. First, and foremost, portraying itself as an independent NGO is very interesting. On its website it states that it is, "a private, nonprofit foundation dedicated to the growth and strengthening of democratic institutions around the world" ("About the National Endowment for Democracy | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). It is quite a dubious claim that it is a private organization since it derives almost all of its funding through public resources gathered by taxing the American people. However, it does admit this by stating that it gets, "funded largely by the U.S. Congress, the support NED gives to groups abroad sends an important message of solidarity to many

democrats who are working for freedom and human rights, often in obscurity and isolation"

("About the National Endowment for Democracy | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.).

Rhetorically this is fascinating in that its using language to frame the organization as an

autonomous NGO with a righteous cause. By mentioning the causes of human rights and

freedom in tandem, the organization rhetorically attempts to code these two as synonymous.

Furthermore, an international message of solidarity is a powerfully epic notion requiring an

incredible reach to touch those working for freedoms in places that it implies are off the grid.

The implication is that the NED provides assistance to those fighting for liberation from

oppression and the ideals of democracy. However, as was stated in the historical analysis, this is

anything but the case since it has a well-documented history of funding programs that,

ideologically and economically, in some democracies where a standing elected government

exists, and the programs back by the NED could be considered radical or subversive.

This righteous rhetorical language permeates throughout the website. The first sentence

on the page titled "Where we Work" has a similar rhetorical nature that frame the organization as

an autonomous and righteous group. "Democracy belongs to no single nation, but rather it is the

birthright of every person in every nation," leads off this subsection of the website ("Where We

Work | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.).

Furthermore the site claims, "while NED's work around the world is guided by the belief

that freedom is a universal human aspiration, we know that democracy cannot be achieved

through a single election and need not be based upon the model of the United States or any other

particular country … democracy evolves according to the needs and traditions of diverse

political cultures. NED helps strengthen the bond between indigenous democratic movements

abroad and the people of the United States – a bond based on a common commitment to

representative government and freedom as a way of life" ("Where We Work | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.).

Again, the language used to rhetorically construct how the NED wants to be perceived is consistent with the pervious example on a different part of the website. The organization again uses language in a manner that fits into the narrative of it being a righteous, just, and autonomous organization, while simultaneously masking the nature of its programs. By stating the promotion of democracy as a "birthright" it frames itself as an organization charged with not only a mission to promote democracy, but also to promote human rights. Somewhat puzzling and disingenuous about the NED is it does not really state how it fosters the ties to the US people. It implies that by helping other countries achieve the praxis of democracy then it creates ties ideologically with American people, but what it does not mention is its tendency to fund and involve itself with organizations that promote the direct interests of the US government and the economic interests of the hegemonic world-economic system that the US heads.

The narrative the NED is attempting to craft is one of antithesis by creating a binary of democratic systems and the "others." On every page there is encomium that praises democracy. That normally would not be a bad thing[6]. The overarching themes, to be put simply, are: the brand of democracy that the NED promotes is righteous; the organizations the NED funds serve the interest of democracy and not any government, because, it is an autonomous entity; and because of how good, just, and righteous the organization is it can be assumed that what it funds is in line with these ideals. However, as seen in the historical analysis, this is not the case, and the messages sent, and the narratives crafted, by the organization contradict its purpose.

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[6] As previously state, I am not anti-democracy. In fact I think a system of government where the destiny of the people is their own hands is what every society should strive to achieve. However, what I have issue with is a federally funded organization created in the wake of CIA operations being brought to light that promotes democracy in a manner that is subversive and agenda driven.

So, if the narrative that the NED is trying to create is an organization battling against the tyranny of ideologies other than democracy is done in a manner to also frame itself thusly then to whom are these messages directed toward? The answer has to be an audience comprised of information seekers and democracy advocates. In an attempt to cultivate credibility toward the NED those in charge of its communication program have attempted to create a narrative that appeals to an almost mythical perception of the crux of American democracy. The narrative created is speaking to those not only seeking grants, but to those with an interest in the fundamental principles that the US was founded on. This narrative is symbolic and is echoed through the story the NED tells about itself and the work it does.

Another symbolic aspect of the NED's structure is its Board of Directors and Leadership. The NED's President's (Carl Gershamn) biography on the website is flush with plaudits and his resume is quite impressive (numerous positions within the Reagan administration including Senior Counselor to the Untied Nations, lead consultant to the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, scholar at Freedom House, and Executive Direct of Social Democrats USA) ("Meet Our President | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). However, can someone with so many ties to a Presidential Administration awash in neoliberal policies really be the person to lead a supposed NGO that operates outside the political sphere of power, ideology, and economic intentions? It seems obvious that his previous ties might in some manner influence the work carried out through the NGO, but the rest of the Board of Directors poses a more interesting set of questions.

The concept of interlocking directorates is important to consider when analyzing the board membership of the NED. On its website it lists all the members and provides links to biographies about each ("Board | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). An interlocking

directorate is described by Scott (1997) as the practice of members from various corporate board

of directors, or those in highly esteemed positions at corporations, serving on the board of

multiple corporations, and a person who sits on more than one board is called a multiple director.

This practice is lawful and a well-known business practice; however, it does raise questions

about the independence and decisions some companies make in respect to having the interests of

more than corporation's agenda being present in a meeting or vote. The NED does not seem to

hide the fact that multiple members of its board have ties to multinational corporations, or that

some of its members use to hold high positions in the Federal government. However, it should be

noted that some board members come from academia and from other institutions free from

government and corporate influence.

  A few key board members that are worth mention with ties to either government or the

private sector are: John Bohn, Chairmen and CEO of GlobalNet Venture Partners, which is an

"advisory and consulting company focus[ed] on early stage growth venture technology

companies" ("GlobalNet Venture Partners LLC: Private Company Information - Businessweek,"

n.d.); Barry Jackson, Managing Director of The Lindsey Group, which is an, economic advisory

firm focusing on global macroeconomic trends that influence major economies and markets

("The Lindsey Group," n.d.); Marne Levine, Vice President of Global Public Policy at Facebook;

former congressmen Martin Frost and Vin Weber; Elliot Abrams, former deputy assistant to

George W. Bush; Norm Coleman, a former US Senator; and Congresswomen Karen Bass

("Board | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.).

  It is unclear how or why these members were appointed to the board, the transparency of

the reason behind these decisions is lost. However, what is clear is that the board is comprised of

members that have had vast experience within the government or have had very close ties with

previous presidential administrations. Furthermore, it is interesting that there are members of corporations that that have vested economic interests in the world-economic system.

Marne Levine in particular has very interesting position. Not only is Levine in charge of Facebook's Global Public Policy, but she also was the Chief of Staff at the White House National Economic Council for the Obama Administration ("Marne Levine | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). The concept of interlocking directorates at the NED poses some significant problems. Using Levine as an example, it is problematic when an organization operating under the guise of freedom and democracy has members of its board that were once part of, or are still part of, government or multinational corporations. The question with interlocking directorates is of autonomy and truly unbiased decision making. Although, there is no account of voting records, it can easily be inferred that current and former affiliations can influence decision-making. Moreover, these structures are a consolidation of power by the elite, just as Mills described, and further exerts its influence on how development is continued in the world.

The media programs that the NED promotes via its website are the final target of this text analysis. The access and promotion of the media the organization creates is paramount to how a group on the web can uphold credibility, demonstrate the efficacy of its work, and to foster opportunities for association for supporters and the media. The NED utilizes two approaches to do this: a section called Democracy Stories on its website where it provides text, audio, and visual means to tell the stories of its work; and a media relations section of the website entitled "For Reporters."

One of the main reasons for conducting this study about NGOs promoting democracy is to see just how their work may or may not be influencing the media. These organizations are

globally focused and, through fund raising mechanisms, are well equipped to disseminate their information across a wide media spectrum. The concept of agenda setting is paramount in seeing how these organizations attempt to make their agenda salient within the mass media.

McCombs and Shaw's initial work found that at a basic level the media was not as powerful as initially theorized; in fact, their major conclusion was that the media does not tell an audience what to think, but what to think about because of the very fact that they are covering it (M. E. McCombs & Shaw, 1972). How and what the media gives salience to determines how prominent an issue can be within civil society or the public sphere. Furthermore, they theorized that *how* the media discusses things give credence to particular issue, and that by present the subject matter they can help foster discussion in mass society (M. E. McCombs & Shaw, 1972). This is significant in that it can allow for news agencies to promote various discourses and give the population something to think about. Thus, this presents NGOs with an incredible opportunity to make their work known through the media.

McCombs expanded his work further over time with his theory on second-level agenda setting. Basically, second-level agenda setting focuses on attribute salience rather than the issue salience that his initial work emphasized (M. McCombs, 2005). McCombs states that within this second level the media can not only tell us what to think about, but in reality can also tell us how to think about a particular issue (M. McCombs, 2005). Now, this is somewhat similar to framing, but essentially McCombs states that both agenda-setting levels direct attention to the perspectives of communicators and their audiences—in another words the socially constructed worlds in which they live— and how they view topics in the news and the attributes (frames) in the content of a message (M. McCombs, 2005). This is also incredibly important because it shows how media—which is shaped by the culture, ideology, and discourses surrounding it—can

directly influence a population to think about a topic in a certain manner. If NGOs can successfully introduce a topic worthy of getting media to cover it then they can also use second-level agenda setting to determine just how the media informs a population on how to think about that topic.

The NED attempts to gain media attention through its public affairs section of the website known as the "For Reporters" section. This is a highly active section of the NED's website where the Public Affairs Department of the organization posts numerous press releases and provides contact information for reporters that need expert quotes and opinions on development in various countries ("For Reporters | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). This aspect of the website is incredibly important in terms of agenda setting. Because the NED is a nonprofit they fight for coverage with various other groups also promoting democracy. Those groups include other NGOs, the Federal Government, and other IGOs from around the world. Getting the mass media to cover events, programs, and providing assistance to journalists seeking more information is paramount in establishing the credibility of the organization. The Public Affairs is one of the key divisions to also demonstrate the efficacy of the NED's work, and it does so by aiding journalists with a wealth of information and keeping them abreast of the work that the NED does.

The "Democracy Stories" section of the NED's website remains the main method for the organization to demonstrate the efficacy of its work. This section is multimedia rich and offers audio, text, and videos to tell the stories of some of the grant recipients use the money the organization donates ("Democracy Stories | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). The mediums vary from story to story, but they touch on a wide range of topics such as a written story about freedom of speech and interethnic violence in Kyrgyzstan, a video about the

Democratic Voice of Burma using alternative media to speak out against tyranny, a video about

transnational justice in the Balkans, and a story about the Al-Katim Adlan Centre for

Enlightenment and Human Development in Sudan ("Democracy Stories | National Endowment

for Democracy," n.d.).

All these stories touch on the success that the NED has around the world. However, most

of these stories are not very recent. The most current story up on this section of the website is the

Kyrgyzstan story, which is from 2011("Kyrgyzstan: a 'Glimmer of Hope' | National Endowment

for Democracy," n.d.). This means that no new media has been added to the website in quite

some time. This is quite perplexing because the creation of media to demonstrate the efficacy of

the work of the organization should be high atop the priority list for the organization. This leads

one to consider whether or not it views creating such media high on the agenda. If the

organization does not put the effort to create engaging and current media, then does it really care

about showing the world what it does?

**Text Analysis Conclusions and Suggestions**

The NED should actively seek to rebuild their website. A Huffington Post blogger noted

that there are five important reasons for a business to update or redesign its website: technology

gets old quick, "one human year equals at least four Internet years"; your website is old and

outdated, "First impressions count … you only have a few brief seconds to get the user's

attention and to convey enough value to engage them … website design is a direct reflection on

your business image"; you are not getting the results you wanted; business focuses change; and

your website is not mobile friendly, meaning it looks awkward on tablet of smart phone devices

("5 Important Reasons to Redesign Your Website | Ian Mills," n.d.). The NED's site is antiqued

by all these accounts and should be re-designed to actively engage the user. Furthermore, more

attention to the creation of content should be emphasized if the organization would like to more effectively demonstrate the efficacy of its work and cultivate more of a following on social media. However, given the history, ideological, and economic foundation of the organization the real question should be: Does the NED even want or value that sort of attention?

The NED's website does provide a vast amount of information. However, much of that information is text-based and directly contradicts with the notion of Web 2.0 and the current trends in the digital realm. Furthermore, it seems to place little emphasis on social media interaction, which could be construed to mean that the organization cares very little about gaining attention on the web, demonstrating the efficacy of its work, or cultivating any credibility with the vast amounts of people surfing the net who might even have a minor interest in organizations seeking to promote democratic ideologies abroad. Its media program is antiquated and, again, does not align with the attributes of Web 2.0. The Public Affairs Department of the NED seems only interested in creating associations and relationships with the mass media in attempts to promote the work of the organization in a manner that would have been considered adequate a few years ago, but now should be considered antiquated. By having an outdated media system, the NED missed numerous marks in attempting to set the agenda of democracy building in the mainstream media.

Moreover, the narratives and rhetoric employed by the NGO are crafted in manner to persuade information seekers that the organization is autonomous, righteous, and above any influence of the state. However, the narrative the NED employs attempts to frame the organization in manner befitting most NGOs, but the NED is no ordinary NGO. The organization is funded, untraditionally in terms of other nonprofit groups, through an act of congress and does not have to jump through the proverbial hoops of donor mechanism to fuel its agenda. The

narrative of democracy building that the NGO utilizes directly contradicts with the history of the NED, and runs counterintuitive to the criticism it receives.

Within the digital realm it is important to stay up-to-date and to actively seek to improve your platform. The upkeep and maintenance of the NED's website seems to not be a priority; however, it probably should be to an organization that still has to justify its existence to critics of its very essence. Actively engaging citizens within the transnational public sphere via the web is paramount in creating credibility for any group, not just an NGO, and shows the world—via the various media platforms that the Internet allows for—that the organization's communication program is actively seeking to keep interested parties engaged and informed.

Based on the Historical Analysis, the NED's audience may not be the general public at all. It may have little interest in cultivating credibility, establishing authenticity, growing their following within the general public. In fact, other sections seem to be directed toward academic, intellectual, corporate, and political elites. Given the shadowy nature of its inception it may be fair to suggest that the organization would prefer to function with the bare-minimum transparency possible. If that is so, then it seems to function quite differently from organizations promoting the same cause.

CHAPTER VI

SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE IMAGES USED BY THE NED

The visual representations of how NGOs and media organizations promote democracy to demonstrate the efficacy of that work is important considering the fact that one of the main characteristics of Web 2.0 is the emphasis on the visual. Meaning: NGOs promoting democracy have an agenda to help bring the concepts of liberal democracy to the rest of the world, but they need to demonstrate to their supporters through media that their work is indeed having an effect. One way that process occurs is through the visual representations of their work through the mass media, but also how the organization itself utilizes images in conjunction with the web to promote its work or inform the public. This is an attempt to analyze a certain set of photographs, which fits into a broader narrative of bringing democracy to another country, and then to see how an organization such as the NED utilizes these mechanisms to demonstrate the efficacy of its work.

**Basis for Semiotic Analysis**

In order to begin to deconstruct the images selected for analysis we must first understand the lens through which we here in the West look at the rest of the globe. We will be analyzing three photographs taken from various media sources that portray voting in Afghanistan's 2009 election, after which we will analyze the visuals utilized by the NED. It is critical, though, that we recognize that we are analyzing these photographs through the socially constructed reality we as Americans and Westerns were born into. These realities are shaped by ideology and discourses that can be historicized and deconstructed to show the roots of power. However, before we can deconstruct meaning from these visual representations it is necessary to expand upon the initial basis stated in the methodology section of this thesis.

Voting was chosen specifically, because as Althusser (1971) states, ideology has roots in ritual. One of the key rituals to democracy is the act of voting. Seeing how this ideological ritual is portrayed can show a great deal about the nature of the society and its views on the ritual itself and the ideological reinforcement it contributes to. The 2009 Afghanistan election was chosen because of its relativity into the past at this point, and the fact that the US had been engaged in an active progress of democracy building in the wake of the war that occurred in that country following the events of 9/11.

As Said's (1979) notion of Orientalism states: modern interpretations of the Orient, or the East, should be contextualized in a manner that fall in line with Michelle Foucault's notion on how discourse shapes our reality, as mentioned in the methods section. Said (1979) also theorized that the West reinforces certain myths and archetypes, or stereotypes, of the East, and that these are formed through the various historical discourses that have been perpetuated since the colonial era.  Another broad finding is that he states that the Orient is a myth constructed through stereotypes and discourse about a barbaric other that needed to be civilized (Said, 1979). Furthermore, he suggests that the construction of the 'oriental' narrative was done primarily through he power dynamics of political dominance, and that this supremacy produced knowledge based on inequality (Said, 1979). Basically, he was suggesting that power relationships created the realm through which only the dominant side could have created the prevailing discourses, or write books about (produce) knowledge, about the population being subjugated.

Now, we can take these thoughts and transplant them into the realm of development through the very fact that the prevailing Western ideologies characterize the modern global reality in which we live. Remembering that we are historically informed about the prevailing

discourses through which narratives about an ethnicity or region are created and perpetuated is important in how we frame the current narratives surrounding the East.

Before we can deconstruct the images in this paper it is important to revisit the concept of encoding and decoding mentioned in a previous section. This is significant because, as this chapter suggests, making visual meanings from the demonstration of voting efficacy is rooted in these hegemonic meaning makings, and it is how we as the West derive our visual understanding in these representations of something like voting in Afghanistan, or monks marching against tyrannical authoritarian regimes in Burma.

Another one of Hall's (2013) essays on the representation of the "other" is additional scholarship that can help to contextualize how the West views the Muslims of the East, or the "orient" in general. First, Hall asks, "Why is 'difference' such a compelling theme? (p. 215)" That is a really profound question. Why is making something different from you an easier way for you to contextualize and create meaning from then from something similar? This notion is the driving force behind his work into the *Spectacle of the 'Other'*.

Hall (2013) seems to suggest that representing the "other" breaks down into various binaries and myths; for example, he suggests that a concept like heroes and villains can quickly be broken down to race and difference in terms of ethnically representing the other (p. 217). Photos can be read various lenses of discourse, as we will see within the photographs in the next section, and that the "them" and "us" needs the polarizing binaries because, "they are often required to be both things at the same time," or tropes of representation (Hall, 2013, pp. 217–219). Moreover, Hall (2013) states that these representations of "difference" matter because, "it is essential to meaning, and without it, meaning could not exist" (p. 224). This groundwork is

essential in the practice of deconstructing an image based on the cultural and social construction of the analyst, and the binary concept is essential in creating difference.

Hall then talks about commodity racism through the concept of imperialism and colonialism, in a similar fashion to Edward Said. Now, Hall (2013) states that images of racial differences were created from the imperial encounters of the British and French through commodity advertising of the exotic and the "different," and that this created a fantasy display of *things* that were a visual display of *signs* and *symbols* (p. 229). Furthermore, he goes on to state the narratives of "civilization" and "domestication" of the savage world emerged from the advertising of produced which helped to inform a large population of the West about the colonized areas (Hall, 2013, pp. 229–231).

Finally, Hall (2013) investigates stereotyping as a signifying practice.  He states that stereotypes are, " simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized characters about a person, reduce everything about the person to those traits, exaggerate and simply them," which basically reduces, naturalizes, and fixes those differences into the binaries he previously mentioned were so important (pp. 246–247). According to Hall (2013), stereotyping fixes the boundaries and excludes everything that does not belong while at the same time practicing closure and exclusion based on the dominant cultural norms of the population need that oversimplification of representation.

All of Hall's work on the representation of the other through visual means is significant in attempting to deconstruct the meaning of photographs demonstrating how meaning making is created through the visual representations utilized by the West. Understanding that these visual representations are done through the "othering" of an entire region and culture is significant in understanding why these images were chosen and what they might represent to a population only

familiar with stereotypical representations. However, it is important to also understand the

meaning behind these signs and symbols through a semiotics approach.

As Sandra Moriarty (2005) used Saussure's interpretation of the sign to state that the sign

is comprised of the signifier, which is the sound or the image, and the signified, which stands for

the concept, we must also different signs can have even greater meaning; for example, the iconic

sign "resembles by mimesis" (looks like) and the symbolic sign "stands for something else or is

understood through convention" (p. 228-230). This process is another culturally informed

practice that gives meaning to images, however, their interpretations the process of

deconstructing these signs is done through the codes that were created.

Semiotics takes these meanings and deconstructs them through the process of "cracking

the code," as Moriarty (2005) states, and is done by analyzing the meaning of practices,

activities, and other forms that have meaning, or do not have meaning, to Westerners (pp. 238–

239). However, it is also important to realize that there are some things that just attract us to an

image that may not be explained. Barthes (1981) give credence to the culturally informed

reading of the sign with his concept of the *stadium*, we should play close attention to the

intangible of the *punctum*, or an element of the image that draws us in and makes us see things in

ways we haven't seen before. That being said, there are still ways to deconstruct images in a

semiotic manner to help understanding the meanings and messages conveyed by an image.

As Gillian Rose (2012) states, the distinction between the signifier and the signified is

crucial to semiology, and that first stage of semiotic analysis is to identify the, "basic building

blocks of the image: its signs" (p. 113). Rose (2012) also has very interesting approach to

deconstruct humans in a photograph: the representation of the body can be broken down by age,

gender, race, hair, body, size, looks; the representation of manner can be shown through

expression, eye contact, and pose; the representation of activity through touch, body movement,

and positional communication; and by the props and settings (pp. 115–116). By doing this we

can analyze the meaning through the multimodality of semiotic design. Rose (2012) states this is

significant because it reminds us that nothing is purely visual and our meanings are made

through various aspects of social construction, ideological reinforcement, and the prevailing

discourses (pp. 137–140). By using a semiotic approach to image analysis we can marry the

visual aspects of representation with the cultural and social perspectives through which they are

decoded in. We can focus on the composition of the image as well as the meaning it attempts to

make through a cultural lens.

  To further analyze that an image means through a cultural lens we will use the work of

Dana Cloud and her analysis of the ideographs (represented as </>) that help to visually

represent the iconography involved in representing the other. Cloud (2004) states images are

crucial to making and giving meaning to ideographs as well, and represent a concept or

abstraction that, represents collective commitments, and warrants notions of power while guiding

behavior, and is bound to culture. Also, that visual ideographs are more than just recurring iconic

images that shift in meaning depending on context; furthermore, they also index verbal

ideographic slogans, making abstractions such as <clash of civilizations> concrete (Cloud,

2004). She argues that the <clash of civilizations> sets up a binary between the American self

and the Afghan other through notions of the "savage other", the "oppression of women", and the

need for children to be rescued from savageness (Cloud, 2004).

  In particular, what is intriguing is the work she references in concern to gender, which is

significant because a large amount of NGOs function of the basis of women's health, rights, and

freedom. Women make up half of the world's population and, as Said suggested, are often

portrayed differently according to cultures. Cloud states the ideograph <clash of civilizations>

incorporates the role of women as being an object of oppression and victimization; furthermore,

she states that the US uses Afghan women as an object us cultural hegemony in that they fit into

the binary of the other in such a way that, ""taken together, these images encourage viewers to

lament the status of women and to support U.S. intervention" (Cloud, 2004). The role of women

in demonstrating the efficacy of democracy promotion is an interesting one because, although the

traditional portrayals of women of this region and religious identity are portrayed this way, the

way these women are portrayed when demonstrating the efficacy of democracy promotion is

quite different. However, before we address this point we must further investigate the role of

women within the realm of visual representation, because in a cursory investigation prior to the

writing and research of this chapter noticed the credence and attention given to the female gender

on various other NGO websites.

　　Laura Mulvey provides an interesting essay on the female gaze that should also be

considered when analyzing images that promote the efficacy of democracy promotion abroad. In

her essay—which is primarily about the gaze in cinema, but can be directly applied to

photography—she delves into the gaze being masculine and the female form being the object of

that gaze (Mulvey, 1989). She states the act of looking is always masculine and the act of

receiving that look is the role of the female, and that the male gaze is active while the female is

passive (Mulvey, 1989). This can be applied to the photographs promoting democracy in that

they demonstrate the passive female character as the object of the gaze, and the fact that the gaze

comes from a Western perspective informed by Said's concept of Orientalism is significant in

that the active gaze toward the Muslim female is one of her being an object in a broader narrative

about the successful promotion of democracy.

With these theories we will now begin to dissect and deconstruct a few images selected for this look into how the NED incorporates the "success narrative" to demonstrate the efficacy of democracy promotion. It is from these theories that an argument shall put forth: the images used in democracy promotion adhere to the previous concepts mentioned, but at the same time use these notions to transcend these concepts in an attempt to portray democracy being something that frees these people from the bonds of oppression and brings them into a more "civilized" society. This is complicated because on one hand the images play right into the previous notions of how these people are portrayed, but on the other hand attempt to transcend these concepts in a manner that promotes messages of freedom and liberty. In order to demonstrate that democracy promotion is indeed working this aspect of transcendence must occur within the visual. It relies on previous and stereotypical notions of representation and then some element of the photograph must transcend that by breaking with that stereotype or offering us a glimpse into a notion of democracy typically associated with the West.

**Semiotic Analysis of Various Representations of Democratic Freedom**

As previously stated in the literature review Grayson (2014) has stated that NGOs can help to lead media coverage of issues and give them salience by funding professional photographers. However, it should be noted that Grayson (2014) also acknowledges that the, "conditions during all phases of production can influence meaning potentials because these meanings are determined by context of action" (p. 643). Grayson's (2014) own experience as a photographer being funded by and NGO leads to the conclusion that the agenda of an NGO has a profound impact on what the photos taken will be used for, and how those photographs could, and are, used to narratively drive an NGOs mission and purpose for the use of those visuals. This means that Grayson (2014) acknowledges that photographs taken by professional photographers,

instead of the citizen photographers or citizen journalists and amateur photographers, are more

likely to, "be used for a more public relations outcome than hard news," but that this a trade off

for access to areas in the developing world that photographers would be unable to see (pp.642-

644).

How a NGO utilizes the visual to communicate its narrative missions very significant.

Photographers have the power to help frame and shape the meaning making for many news

organizations, and furthermore to help these NGOs create powerful visual narratives on the web

through the current Web 2.0 model that dominants the digital realm. To analyze the significance

of this and its conjunction with how the NED might utilize this to demonstrate the efficacy of its

work, this investigation will focus on the democracy building and institution strengthening in

Afghanistan.

First, and foremost, the United States has actively been involved in nation building since

the end of World War II, and it continues to this day in the post-9/11 epoch. The country has

engaged in two wars, one in Afghanistan and one in Iraq, that have fundamentally shaped foreign

policy for more than a decade. Children have grown up in the country and entered young-

adulthood without ever knowing a period of true peace. Now, despite the war effort the US has

been active in cultivating democracies in these countries, for better or worse, and the media and

NGOs have been active participants in this process. We will attempt to analyze the images used

by the NED to demonstrate the efficacy of the work they do. However, first we will be analyzing

three photographs taken from *The Guardian* and, the governmental organization USAID, these

sources portray voting in Afghanistan's 2009 election. In doing so we can can compare and

contrast how the NED portrays its mission and itself vs how the mainstream media an IGO

demonstrates its success visually. It is critical, though, that we recognize that we are analyzing

these photographs through the socially constructed reality Americans and Westerns are born into. These realities are shaped by ideology and discourses that can be historicized and deconstructed to show the roots of power.

After analyzing how these two organizations utilize the visual, we shall then turn our attention to the manner in which the NED utilizes the visual to narratively tell the story of democracy promotion abroad and demonstrate through a visual narrative the efficacy of their work. The visual counts for much more online than did it even five years ago, how these organizations utilize the visual is of vast importance to how they negotiate the digital realm.

*Picture One*

The first picture for analysis (see Appendix 1) was pulled from the *Guardian*'s website. It seems it was chosen by the editors as a journalistic choice. It is from a series of photographs depicting the Afghanistan elections from 2009 (Whyld, 2009). It was taken by a photographer name Lewis Whyld who works for the Press Association (PA) in the United Kingdom and was distributed via the *Guardian* to a wide range of readers around the world. Please refer to appendix 1 to view this photograph (Whyld, 2009).

The image is of a Muslim man clothed in white and with his head wrapped. His full-grey beard and wrinkles on his face tell us that he is older, and perhaps because of the sharpness and cleanliness of his garments he might be slightly more affluent. He is holding up his right hand with his index finder extended, and that figure has bluish-black ink on it. The beige and square buildings in the background don't really indicate whether we are in a city or countryside, but the it does give us a sense that its in a desert-like climate because of the lack of green around it. Furthermore, the man is well lit and his is staring right into the camera in what seems like a

proud stance while slightly smiling—which was the *punctum* that drew me to the picture in the first place.

This man is the iconic representation of the "other" in every way except one. He directly contrasts with the stylistic and cultural norms of the West; his clothing is foreign and plays directly into the cultural stereotype of dress and appearance that helps to simplify and signify the notion of the Muslim man, perfectly fitting into Hall's notion of the "us" and "them" binary. He is Afghani and thus was socially constructed and ideologically reinforced in the customs of his land. His clothes are different, he looks different, and this appearance and dress directly conform to Cloud's notion of the imagery surrounding the <clash of civilizations>, and is in "savage" attire.

However, the symbol of the ink on the finger is representative of the action of voting. The ink on the figure is itself different from how post-voting is portrayed in the West; however, the ink on the finger is quite similar to the "I Voted" sticker that some states give out in the US after voting on Election Day. The ink on the finger has become a symbol for voting in Afghanistan. It is the point at which the images transcend traditional representations of Muslims in the east and the ideological parameters that have become stereotypical. Furthermore, the man smiling contradicts the traditional Muslim male stereotypes of the "evil other" or "terrorist." This man is happy to be casting a vote in a democracy, just like those in the US. He is actively looking into the camera and demonstrating that he is proud in the fact that he just cast a vote. He has exited the world of the oppressive man and has entered the civilized realm.

This photograph was encoded in way that represents both the traditional representations of the "Orient" but at the same time gives us new meaning because democracy has successfully been brought to this area. He is not darkly lit giving the impression of a nefarious "other" but is

well lit in a manner that makes him seem joyful and filled with pride to embrace the ideologies

of the West and to enter a globalized and peaceful world. All this points to this man transcending

previous conceptions because he is a voter, he has participated in democracy, his destiny is not

determined by oppressive regimes anymore, his consciousness has been raised, and although he

might still look like the other, he is now free.

*Picture Two*

This second picture appeared in a few sources such as Boston.com ("Ballots, bullets and

bombs in Afghanistan - Photos - The Big Picture - Boston.com," 2009.), the NGO watching out

for ethnic Hazara interest in Afghanistan called Hazara People ("The Hazaras of Afghanistan |

Hazara People International Network," 2010)*,* the BBC ("BBC NEWS | South Asia | Afghan

vote failed to learn from past," 2009)  and most importantly on the website of United States

Agency for International Development (USAID) ("Supporting Free and Fair Elections | U.S.

Agency for International Development," n.d.). Please see Appendix 2 for the photograph. Being

on the website of USAID is significant because it's a governmental organization that is in charge

of promoting the goals of US foreign policy abroad. Shah Marai took the picture for AFP and

Getty Images (Marai, 2009). It has been reproduced across various news outlets and NGOs, but

why?

First let us analyze the photo itself. We see woman with her head wrapped in a scarf, the

traditional head wrapping of a Muslim woman, she has dark eyes and dark hair and has her right

hand raised with her index finger extended. As with the first photo, we see her finger cloaked in

ink. The background is dimly lit so that she is the only thing focused on in the image. She is

staring directly into the camera and has a stern, yet powerful, expression on her face. She also

has some makeup on, which is evident by looking at the mascara on her eyes and perhaps the stark contrast of color on her lips.

She is the direct object of the gaze, as Mulvey would say, and the fact that she has makeup on is interesting as well. She is the only object that we can focus on. This Western ideal of beauty shines through as we directly gaze directly upon her. She represents the mysterious "other" woman, who by Western standards might be thought of to be oppressed because with her hijab covering her hair and neck she is adhering to perceived Western notions of religious oppression. However, her makeup directly contradicts this because it makes it seem as though she is accepting of cultural norms that contradict our notions of her oppression. She is allowing us to "pierce the veil" that shrouds Muslim women and by gazing at her we can see she is accepting of Western norms of beauty, such as makeup. She perfectly fits into our "othering" ideas of the oppressed foreign woman, and fits nicely into the <clash of civilizations> ideograph in that this oppression is translated through our Western notions of Orientalism, and is representative of the notion of the iconic, and oppressed, Muslim woman.

However, we see the symbolic representation of voting on her finger and the confident expression on her face. It would be reasonable to argue although she is the object of the gaze, but in fact is not passive in her role. She is actively demonstrating the symbolic pose and gesture of demonstrating that she has voted. Here she transcends the notion of being a passive object of the gaze. She is breaking free of the stereotypical norms of her being an object of oppression because she has voted and removed the shackles of "unfreedom" and there by humanizing herself. She seems as though she is staring directly into the face of those who need to know and is saying, "I voted, my voice has been heard, and I'm showing you that I'm not as you think you know."

It is interesting that this photograph was picked up by so many news outlets, and even more interesting that it still being used by USAID as means of showing the efficacy of democracy promotion. This image was used by an NGO, by a governmental organization, and by various media outlets. It adheres to traditional representations of the Arab woman as the "other" but at the same time presents new visual representations of freedom in a new land, almost attempting to bridge <clash of civilizations> into a new realm of <freedom> or <liberty>. In many ways this is a very safe image and rhetorically tells a simple story of a strong woman in a foreign land exercising her democratic right. In demonstrating the efficacy of democracy promotion she must transcend our traditional notions of how images in that region have been constructed to create various narratives telling a story of an uncivilized land. In this picture we see a transition from oppressed woman in a land of savage oppression into one of where she is making her voice heard and participating in choosing not only her own destiny but that of her country as well.

*Picture Three*

This third photograph was found on the Internet during a random search. The search Boolean search terms used were: "Voting" AND "Democracy" AND "Afghanistan" AND 2009. Behrouz Mehri took this photo for AFP and Getty Images (Mehri, 2009). It was part of a series of photographs that the *Guardian* used in a photographic essay reporting on the election in Afghanistan from 2009 ("Afghanistan goes to polls on election day | World news | The Guardian," 2009). This picture can be found in Appendix 3. This image struck with its *punctum* from a cursory Google search, mostly because of how it represents many of the preconceived notions the West has about women in Muslim world. It was an interesting choice to accompany a story in pictures trying to demonstrate democracy being brought to a foreign area. To attempt to

see if any other organizations used this photo a reverse search based on the author's name and the title provided by *The Guardian* was used in a Google Image search. No further instances of use were found.

The picture is of a woman in a blue burka with one eye showing as she looks toward the camera. The background is black, perhaps marble, which make the color of her clothing even more striking. We can't see her any part of her body, besides her right eye. The patterns on her burka are intricate and decorative. What is fascinating about this image is that it really does not show us much. We see the wall and the woman wrapped up, but nothing about the picture tells us she is in line to vote. Nothing about the picture shows us anything more to draw inferences or meaning from. The image is almost erotic and subversive in a way. All we can see is her eye piercing from behind the veil. It only allows us a glimpse at the is woman, and without the caption—which was "An Afghan burqa-clad woman waits in the queue to vote in a school used as a polling center in Heart (Mehri, 2009)—we would not know that she was waiting in line to vote.

We know it is a woman because of the feminine gaze that is implied through our cultural understanding of the role of the Burka in Muslim religion, which she is adhering to. She is the only object in the photograph and it appears as if our gaze is directly forced upon her. She looks out and seems very meek and almost as if we violating her will by gazing at her because she seems to be taking action to avoid it, but at the same time there seems to almost be angst in her eye, as if she is uncomfortable and trying to avert our gaze, which would also explain why she also appears to be turning away. Curiosity may have got the better of her here. She is a perfect representation of the iconic oppressed Oriental woman. By reading this through a Western hegemonic cultural lens she is adhering to the oppression of her cultural and we are violating

those norms with our gaze. Through that lens the burka could be view as a symbol as well. It could be used as a symbol of cultural oppression that binds the minds and will of these women who desperately need freedom to experience true humanity. She encapsulates the <clash of civilizations> visual ideograph as the oppressed woman, and also the binary "othering" through our cultural understanding that "us" here in the West would not oppress women like "them" in her country. Here, in the West, women are liberated to wear what they want, and the women there are obviously oppressed. Women in the West might view her as being uncomfortable not only in having her picture taken but also in having to wear the clothes of her religion.

However, even though she is represented exactly as our preconceived notions and stereotypes might indicate she is in fact in the process of going to vote. This image is problematic in that it is very interesting for all the wrong reasons. The image is powerful because in many ways she is the sexualized "seductive other" glancing back at you in an attempt to entice you with her eyes. However, in the context of the title and the actuality of her actions her stare could be argued as defiant. Her clothes match the traditional clothing of the oppressed oriental woman of Muslim decent, but her actions run counter: she is voting and she is staring back, allowing our gaze to pierce the veil.

It diverges from the thesis that to represent the efficacy of voting these stereotypes must be transcended. However, indirectly the woman in the photo still offers the viewer an interpretation of rebellion, but that meaning has to be search for slightly harder. Without knowing she was going to vote there would be no way of setting her outside the box of the perceived oppressive state she might be engaged in. This image encapsulates all the fantasy, myth, and stereotyping about women in the region, but apparently it is none of those things because she is in line to vote. She is in line to make her voice heard. But what if we did not know

the caption? Here we have a woman exercising her right to vote, but still clad in the traditional garb of her religion, region, and culturally what gives her identity and meaning. Moreover, this contrast is fascinating because it forces the viewer to confront their socially constructed prejudices and notions of the East.

This picture is interesting in that it shows a very tantalizing image that represents all the visual tropes regarding Arab and Muslim women, but in fact it the woman is engaging in an ideological practice that we do not normally associate with those women or anyone from that region. This image is problematic in that it uses all those methods of visual representation and does not allow her to break free of them, except for a caption. Without that caption we probably would have never known. The caption helps, but we do have that stare. That stare takes this analysis into three levels: the old stereotype (sexual siren/other), the new stereotype (the repressed woman/other), and the challenge to both (voting).

*Summary of Photos*

What is interesting is that the analysis of these three photographs did hold up to the initial motivating factor of this analysis, which was: the efficacy of democracy promotion in visual images has to transcend the traditional stereotypes and cultural constructions in order to be effective. By playing to the West's socially constructed notions of other cultures it provides a base of knowledge to then transcend with a symbol or sign to add additional meaning on top of. These images must adhere to them on a surface level, but there must be something different in order to shift thought from oppression, terrorism, and repression. Whether that was a finger with ink screaming, "Hey! I just voted!" or even just a smile, something had to change to divert from the expectations created through dominant Western hegemonic notions of culture, ideology, and the prevailing discourses surrounding them. Only further investigations into this topic can yield

even more conclusive results in the way visually representing democracy is best done by

transcending the otherness through new symbols contrasting with old icons and stereotypes.

These photos offer just a few ways that images can help narratively and rhetorically

convey powerful messages about democracy. The images studied in this section offer new ways

to look at the methods in which the media can tell stories about the efficacy of democracy

promotion. In fact, it offers ways to code visual images in a manner that transcends traditional

representations while at the same time harnessing those to show change in cultures and societies.

Being able to take the visual image and use it to help information seekers and media outlets tell

the story of the success of promoting democracy abroad should be a key aspect to any NGOs

media relations or public affairs strategy.

A visual analysis of the images utilized by the NED and the way they visually represent

their work would be massively beneficial. Analyzing the role in which the visual plays in

demonstrating the efficacy of the work of the NED is paramount in understanding the way in

which promoting democracy functions within the public sphere, and how it attempts to cultivate

credibility not only with donors, but with the countries in which they operate.

**Images Used by the NED**

This next section is about how the NED utilizes images to demonstrate the efficacy of its

work of promoting democracy in Afghanistan. That is to say it would have been. However, based

on the parameters established to begin this semiotic analysis, the search for images about

Afghanistan and voting yield null results on the NEDs website. That finding in itself is incredibly

significant. Not only does it fall in line with the text analysis findings of the website not adhering

to the tenets of Web 2.0, but aside from adequate looking framed graphics the site is mostly text.

The null results are more significant than if the organization did utilize many different photos to narratively tell website viewers about the work it does.

Throughout the whole website finding photographs with any *punctum* was difficult. Finding pictures to contribute to any part of the site for that matter was also quite puzzling. Searching for any significant details about Afghanistan in general proved just as problematic. According to the main site about Afghanistan on the NED's website, the organization funds (or has funded) 39 different organizations in that country with spending a total of more than $3.7 million ("Afghanistan | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). There are no pictures on this page at all. It is just text listing the organization it has donated to. Furthermore, no links are provided to the websites of any of those organizations.

The organization that received the most money from the NED, totaling approximately $1.3 million, was the Center for International Private Enterprise, which is part of the core funding mission of the NED and one of the organizations set up to get money funneled to in the name of democracy promotion ("Afghanistan | National Endowment for Democracy," n.d.). Meaning that more than one-third of the money that has gone to Afghanistan from the NED has been funneled to a different organization where democracy promotion is not the chief objective. There were no reasonable pictures about voting in Afghanistan.

Links to other stories about Afghanistan also yielded very few results. In fact many of the links to other stories prior to 2009 were dead, or an error messaged appeared stating that the link did not work. This begs the question: If the NED's mission is to promote democracy abroad then why does it have such a difficult time demonstrating any significance to its work on its website, which effectively should be its window in to the global and digital transnational public sphere?

The fact that there are very few pictures on the website in general means one of two things: the organization does not prioritize keeping relevant in the digital realms, or that it simply does not care. The NED is consistently lambasted and criticized for being an open secret or a shadow government entity. It makes no secret about where its funding comes from, and apparently it provides very little justification for what it does. Its communication policy is outdated in world where 140 characters, "Likes", 10-second Vines, videos, and podcasts dominant the digital realm.

The lack of visual media on its website should suggest that the manner in which the organization attempts to cultivate credibility, demonstrate the efficacy of its work, or provide opportunities for association are not targeted users and participants in the digital sphere. Though it publishes academic journals, grants fellowships and research awards, holds conference and lectures, its out reach seems to neglect anyone with a casual interest in democracy promotion. The attention seems to be focused on cultivating relationships with academic, economic, and government elites rather than spreading its message to gather a following within mass society.

The fact of the matter is that either the organization does not care or its leadership does not prioritize any sort of action that would build a following or any credibility to the organization. This null finding is interesting, yet challenging. It is hard to justify a group against all the massive criticism it receives when the manner in which it can use to demonstrate its worth is brushed aside or seemingly thought of as not necessary.

CHATPER VII

CONCLUSION & LIMITAITONS

**Conclusion**

Ideology is just one factor that shapes human existence today. Democracy is the ideology

perpetuated by the current hegemonic power over the world-economic world system, the United

States of America. In conjunction with democracy the US, as the hegemon of the system, also

promotes the tenets of capitalism in the form of globalization and internationalism. However, in

building its economic empire the US has had to resort to using the Soft Power instead of Hard

Power to achieve its goals. In addition, the power it cultivates via its economic, military and

political actions, the US has actively engaged in ideological promotion. Since the end of World

War II policies enacted by the government were set in motion to build nations favorable to US

economic aspirations and security aboard. Although the State Department has its own soft power

promotion vehicle, USAID, through an act of congress an additional entity was created to act as

an autonomous entity actively engaged in the ideological promotion and dissemination of

democracy aboard. That organization is still in existence today and is called the National

Endowment for Democracy.

Democracy is rule by the people for the people. This is the crux of the American dream,

the method of government best suited to the rule of law, the way for the impoverished oppressed

to lift themselves out of shadows and into the light. Scholars such as Freire and Sen both contend

that democracy can bring out the best of the human spirit and can be the best method of

developing a country and its people. Democracy is the ideology of truth, justice, and prosperity.

The NED was supposed to be an organization dedicated to promoting and strengthening

democratic institutions as an autonomous and nonprofit organization. However, it has been

engulfed in the flames of controversy and ridicule ever since its inception.

The NED is a problematic organization. Although one would like to say that they back

and champion an organization fighting for democratic interests around the world, the NED

makes it hard to justify this support. The organization has a history of being a funneling

mechanism to other groups with other interests, some partisan and some purely economic. So,

while advocating for the promotion of democracy free from the will of the American

government, it would seem that this is not the case. As the historical analysis mentioned, the

organization was started because the CIA was caught trying to nation-build on behalf of the

interests of the US government. Its history had a rocky start and the organization has since been

called a shadow NGOs that operates on behalf of the interests of the US government and for

multinational corporations seeking to exercise their will subversively through the modern

globalized reality of today. By calling itself an NGO it attempts to garner the prestige and

credibility that comes with it; however, the NED is anything but an NGO. It functions and

behaves as an entity of the State Department, and should be more transparent about its intentions.

Both the text and semiotic analysis yielded results that suggest—since the NED is a

quasi-government organization—it does not really seem to care, or need to care, about

cultivating any credibility within the traditional NGO realm or with any users in the digital

realm. It basically ignores the tenets of Web 2.0 and concentrates on antiquated methods of

information sharing that targets only the economic and intellectual elite. Its audience is

specialized and may be unconcerned with the the latest digital innovation and trends, but the

organization might also be attempting to fulfill the bare minimum in terms of transparency for a

government organization. The website is widely outdated, they make very little commitment to

connecting and engaging with those interested, and the narratives they construct are mostly text-based, which is problematic considering that most websites today have transitioned to the Web 2.0 model of being visually driven.

The organization, if it indeed desires to cultivate credibility with its critics or simply those interested in democracy promotion, needs to reevaluate its communication strategy and the tactics conducted by its Public Affairs Department. The organization is not taking advantage of the various ways media can help it to establish credibility, demonstrate the efficacy of its work, or provide opportunities for association. The NED has a massive budget as compared to other NGOs because it is federally funded by an act of congress every year, the same way that NASA or the US Army is. Diverting a small amount of its budget to the upkeep and maintenance of its digital presence seems like a reasonable manner to spend funds on the organization that could possible help it to remedy some of the criticism directed toward it.

By doing this the organization could redesign its website and put more of an emphasis on domestic outreach and education. In the realm of social media it could use the visual representations of democracy discussed in this thesis, or even create new ones, to help narratively demonstrate the organization's goals. Ignoring the visual in the current digital epoch is a decision that can only lead to more scrutiny and the organization falling by the technological wayside. However, as previously suggested, if the organization is indeed a shell of an NGO that is more interested in staying in line with what the US government deems appropriate, well, then I suppose it probably does not really matter.

This investigation has provided a unique example into the behavior of one NGO. The NED should not be considered an NGO after analysis, but instead more of an IGO since it gives money to organization oversees as well as domestic ones. It analyzed the media practices of the

NGO and found it lacking. However, this investigation does open up the possibilities for further investigations into democracy promotion NGOs. Future research could center on the funding mechanisms and media relation and creation of programs of other, more independent, NGOs. Even more interesting would be an analysis that would compare how similar images are used by intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, and a state agency like USAID use images to demonstrate that democracy promotion is working. This could possibly be accomplished by a content analysis in conjunction with a more targeted semiotic analysis.

Democracy is more than just ideology referencing a system of government with power centered on the rule of the people, directly or through, fairly elected representatives. It has an ethos to it shrouded in truth, justice, and power to lift a person or country out of the depths of oppression. Everyone on the planet should be so lucky as to have the opportunity to take the destiny of your country in your own hands and make a mark to vote. Ideology has root in ritual, and voting is one to demonstrate the efficacy of democracy. A clean and fair election is away to establish your democracy as credible, and freedom allows for the people to create associations with the practice of democracy and to have their voices heard. Promoting democracy should also be fair, and the interests of the people of that nation should outweigh any vest economic or political interests. However, that would be in a perfect world, and instead in the modern globalized reality of today we have the National Endowment for Democracy.

**Limitations**

The first limitation is that this study is purely qualitative and aimed at deriving meaning from the sources. This methodology leaves room for critics to claim that this investigation was

influenced by biases and idiosyncrasies, however objective the intentions of the research are. It is difficult to make qualitative predictions, and the knowledge produced from this investigation might not be able to generalized or applied to other NGOs. Furthermore, because of dealing with the Internet as a medium for analysis, the lack of quantitative numbers in an era of "Big Data" research might not be as well respected as those doing quantitative data studies, but correlation does not always mean causation, and cause and meaning are what this author thinks are more significant in world where meaning is not always clear and easily arrived at.

The second limitation is that this author operated under the assumption the NED would even consider the cultivation of credibility, demonstrating the efficacy of its work, or providing opportunities for interaction and association as relevant and important goal. It is difficult to know what the intentions are of an organization whose transparency always seems to have some sort of tint to it. Operating under the assumption that every nonprofit would undoubtedly like to draw attention to its work may be dubious here given the nature of the organization studied.

Also, since much of the material and information on the NED's website was text based it would probably have been beneficial to add a quantitative element into this thesis for a more well-rounded approach, specially because the NED listed the amount of money and the names of the organization that the money went to. Being able to trace how much money was being spent and how much transparency the organization was willing to show probably would give a better picture into how much money the organization actually doles out and how much is funneled through to the other four institutions associated with it.

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APPENDIX

*Appendix 1*



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*Appendix 2*



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*Appendix 3*



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