Missionaries of Modernization and Managers of Myth: Organizational Legitimacy
in the Field of International Development

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Shawn Michael Wick

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family time with you again. Thank you. I love you.

Dedication

For Jane, Anna, and Alma. Here's to the girls never having to say again, "Dad, when you are finished with your dissertation, we can…" Thank you for your patience. I love you.

In memory of Tim Ortyl, a friend and colleague who was taken from us too soon.

Abstract

  This dissertation investigates legitimacy processes in the field of international

development through an examination of the narrative construction and maintenance of

legitimacy (i.e., legitimacy processes) in one international development organization, the

United State Peace Corps, over the thirty-five year period from 1977 to 2012. The study

builds on research in organizational sociology and development studies in order to

improve our understanding of international development and explain the persistence of

international development organizations. Drawing on an extensive analysis of a wide

range of organizational documents and congressional discourse, I show how the

construction and maintenance of legitimacy is a negotiated, and sometimes contested,

process that involves a wide range of legitimacy claims. In sum, this study demonstrates

the multi-faceted nature of legitimacy, both in terms of the range and types of legitimacy

available, as well as the strategies deployed to establish and maintain organizational

legitimacy over time.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past five decades, Peace Corps Volunteers have served in nearly 140 countries, bringing a wealth of practical assistance to those working to build better lives for themselves and their communities. From the first group of volunteers to arrive in Ghana and Tanzania in August 1961, they have been emissaries of hope and goodwill to the far corners of our world, strengthening the ties of friendship between the people of the United States and those of other countries. Living and working alongside those they serve, volunteers help address changing and complex global needs in education, health and HIV/AIDS, business and information technology, agriculture, environmental protection, and youth development. With each village that now has access to clean water, each young woman who has received an education, and each family empowered to prevent disease because of the service of a Peace Corps Volunteer, President Kennedy's noble vision lives on.

<div align="right">President Barack Obama (2011)</div>

Introduction

On March 1, 2011, the United States Peace Corps celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. To mark this historic event, President Barack Obama released a presidential proclamation that captured much of the pride and sense of accomplishment those affiliated with the Peace Corps felt in recognizing this milestone. The President noted the far reach of the organization, now having sent over 210,000 volunteers to 139 nations, and articulated its perceived impact on the individuals, communities, and countries in which Peace Corps volunteers have served. What began as an idea for a government agency expressed on a whim during a late night speech by President John F. Kennedy in 1961 was now an organization that circled the globe.

The Peace Corps' approach to international assistance, what it refers to as "people-to-people" development, distinguishes the agency from other elements of the U.S. international aid regime. During its five decades of existence, the Peace Corps has sought to address the needs of individuals and communities abroad by sending volunteer citizens for extended periods to live and work with those at the grassroots. Over its history, the agency has had to navigate many challenges, including changes in presidential administrations, fluctuations in Congress, and several significant geopolitical shifts including the end of the Cold War. Despite these challenges, the agency has persisted.

This dissertation seeks to make a contribution to the understanding of organizational persistence in the field of international development by exploring in detail the construction and maintenance of organizational legitimacy at the United States Peace Corps. In conducting this study, it was my intention to use the case of the Peace Corps as a window to investigate a set of more general social processes that contribute to the persistence of organizations working in the field of international development. I therefore intend that the findings from this dissertation will have wider relevance in advancing our understanding of this complex and dynamic field of activity. Before moving on to the questions that animate this project and findings of this study, however, I make explicit the theoretical points of departure for the project.

Organizational Legitimacy

The concept of legitimacy is central to organizational and institutional research. Sociological interest in legitimacy traces back to Weber's analysis of the legitimate types

of authority (1958) and Parson's (1960) research on organizational goals, social values, and legitimate claims to resources. Later work by Meyer and Rowan (1977) established the basic premise that legitimacy enhances organizational persistence and solidified legitimacy as a core concept in the study of organizations and institutionalization. Meyer and Rowan's (1977) influential research examined how legitimacy buffers organizations from external pressures. The authors developed arguments explaining how organizations gain and maintain legitimacy by adhering to institutional expectations through ceremonial enactments of cultural scripts. In short, organizations do not gain and maintain legitimacy simply because they function as rational, bureaucratic organizations, but because they appear to do so.

Common to all sociological studies of legitimacy is the understanding that it is socially constructed. Meyer and Scott (1983) defined organizational legitimacy as the "degree of cultural support for an organization" (p. 201). Building on his three pillars of institutions framework, Scott (1995) later elaborated this definition arguing that organizational legitimacy is defined by, and derives from, consonance with "relevant rules and laws, normative support, or alignment with cultural-cognitive frameworks" (p. 59). Perhaps the most widely-used definition comes from Suchman (1995), who conceptualized legitimacy as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (p. 574). Organizational legitimacy, in short, is multi-faceted and dependent on a wide and varying range of elements. Drawing on an extensive review of organizational and institutional research, Suchman (1995) sought to

bring this complexity into a general framework and, in doing so, identified three types[1] of

legitimacy—pragmatic, moral, and cognitive—each with their own subtypes.

Pragmatic legitimacy is based on a constituent's[2] assessment that a given

organization will directly or indirectly pursue his or her interests. Suchman (1995)

identifies three variants of pragmatic legitimacy: (1) exchange legitimacy derives from

the expected value of a particular organizational policy or activity for a given constituent.

In short, the organization produces outputs that constituents value who, in turn, provide

their support for the organization; (2) influence legitimacy rests not on an exchange for a

specific desired output, but a sense on the part of the constituent that the organization is

being responsive to his or her larger subjectively perceived interests; (3) finally,

dispositional legitimacy relies on the personification of an organization wherein the

constituent grants legitimacy based on the belief that the organization "has our best

interest at heart," "shares our values," or is "honest, trustworthy, decent, or wise"

(Suchman 1995:579). Suchman (1995) adds that dispositional legitimacy can serve to

dampen or delimit the negative effects of organizational failures by converting "positive

evaluations of specific organizational acts into generalized perceptions of organizational

legitimacy" (p. 579).

Second, moral legitimacy[3] is accorded to an organization that reflects socially

desirable norms, standards, and values. It is based on a constituent's normative evaluation

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[1] This typology mirrors Scott's (1995) distinctions between regulatory, normative, and cognitive types of
legitimacy associated with his conceptualization of the three pillars of institutions.
[2] The term *constituent* is used here in a generic sense to refer to the various internal and external audiences,
stakeholders, and constituents (e.g., stockholders, regulators, or politicians) organizations encounter and
rely on for legitimacy.
[3] Deephouse and Suchman (2008) note that Suchman's (1995) category of moral legitimacy is often used
interchangeably with normative legitimacy (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott 1995). However, they argue
that this is problematic because scholars often operationalize normative legitimacy in a narrow way as

or perception that the goals and/or activities of the organization are "right" and "just." Suchman (1995) identifies four variants of moral legitimacy: (1) consequential legitimacy relies on an evaluation of an organization based on criteria and output measures specific to the organization type (e.g., a school is judged relative to other schools based on standard criteria). Organizations operating in fields with clearly defined and measurable outcomes will typically have an easier time generating this type of legitimacy than organizations operating in fields with more ambiguous outcomes; (2) procedural legitimacy accrues to organizations that embrace socially accepted techniques and practices. The use of "proper procedures" demonstrates that the organization is making a "good faith" effort to achieve organizational goals; (3) structural legitimacy derives from an assessment that the organization is valuable because its structural characteristics place it within a category of organizations considered appropriate for the job; (4) finally, personal legitimacy relies on the charisma and reputation of organizational leaders. For example, one could argue that Apple Inc. derived legitimacy through the perceived value of having Steve Jobs as its organizational leader.

Third, cognitive legitimacy rests on taken-for-granted cultural assumptions about the organization. That is, because an organization "makes sense" to a constituent he or she accepts the organization as necessary or inevitable. Suchman (1995) identifies two variants of cognitive legitimacy: (1) comprehensibility refers to the extent to which cultural models exist that simplify environmental complexity and uncertainty and provide constituents with plausible explanations for the existence of an organization and its activities; (2) taken-for-granted legitimacy is achieved when alternatives to an

normative isomorphism through the adoption of the ethics and worldviews of formal professions. Moral legitimacy is intended to refer to congruence with broader social values (Deephouse and Suchman 2008).

organization are beyond consideration. This type of organizational legitimacy

approximates institutionalization wherein it would be difficult for a constituent to

imagine life without the organization. Indeed, Meyer and Scott (1983) argue that a

"completely legitimate organization would be one about which no questions are raised"

(p. 201). Although the surest way for an organization to prevent legitimacy challenges

and persist is to achieve widespread cognitive legitimacy, this is the most difficult type of

legitimacy to acquire because it requires organizational managers to convince

constituents that they are *the singular organization* appropriate for a given task.

In addition to the types of organizational legitimacy above, Black (2008) notes

that legitimacy can differ significantly "across time and space, and between actors,

systems, and contexts" (p. 145). Indeed, different actors' or entities' perceptions of

whether an organization is legitimate may be based on different types of legitimacy

evaluations. For example, one individual might view the international organization *World

Vision* as legitimate because it embodies their religious ideology (a moral evaluation),

while another individual views the organization as legitimate because it advances their

interest of reducing the incidence of AIDS (a pragmatic evaluation). The legitimacy

accorded to the various roles of an organization can also vary (Black 2008; Suchman

1995). An aid organization such as *Médecins Sans Frontières*, for example, "might be

perceived as legitimate in providing humanitarian relief for those affected by civil war

but not in lobbying for regime change" (Edwards and Hulme 1995, cited in Black

2008:145).

In order to survive, organizations must gain and maintain legitimacy by

navigating these complex legitimacy dynamics. This reality presents a key operational

challenge for organizations and their managers. It is to a discussion of how organizational scholars have explained these processes that I now turn.

Gaining, Maintaining, and Repairing: Legitimacy Processes and Strategies

Theoretical approaches to legitimacy differ primarily in the extent to which they see legitimacy as deriving from features of the institutional environment (i.e., structure) or from instrumental action on the part of organizational actors (i.e., agency). Institutional theorists emphasize the ways in which broad structural forces shape legitimacy dynamics (Meyer and Rowan 1977). In short, some scholars theorize that legitimating environments present organizations and their members with taken-for-granted scripts, rules, and classifications (DiMaggio and Powell 1991), which serve as dominant cognitive models that guide organizational structure and behavior (Scott 1994; Meyer and Scott 1994). Meyer and Rowan (1977) argued that, because of institutional pressures, organizations conform to their environments by incorporating accepted structural features and practices into the organization to maintain legitimacy. Although institutional theorists contend that cultural pressures transcend any single organization's purposive control, they do not conceptualize organizations simply as passive recipients of external legitimacy evaluations (Black 2008). Indeed, Meyer and Rowan (1977) demonstrated that organizations can play a role in constructing their own legitimacy claims but, once again, the cultural pressures in a given organizational environment shape and constrain these claims.

In contrast to institutional approaches to legitimacy, scholars working in the strategic-interests tradition place greater emphasis on managerial behavior,

conceptualizing organizations as instrumental actors operating in institutional and organizational environments. Organizations and their managers extract legitimacy from their cultural environments through the manipulation and deployment of symbols in order to gain support (Pfeffer 1981). This perspective imagines managers as strategic actors who, although shaped and constrained by their environments, have the ability to influence the perceptions of others to benefit the organization (Dowling and Pfeffer 1975). Lister (2003) points out, for example, that Northern NGOs have a tendency in organizational discourse to emphasize their close connections with "local" people in the "South" who are "partners" in the development process. Indeed, she shows how some Northern NGOs use references to development "partners" and their assumed wishes strategically in organizational discourse to justify the agency's own plans.[4]

In seeking to reconcile the theoretical differences between institutional and strategic-interests perspectives of organizational legitimacy, Suchman (1995) argues that "real world organizations face both strategic operational challenges and institutional constitutive pressures," thus, one must examine "both the ways in which legitimacy acts like a manipulable resource and the ways in which it acts like a taken-for-granted belief system" (p. 577). To understand how organizations manage legitimacy, then, one must provide an account of the socially constructed cultural system within which the organization is embedded and explain how organizational managers use various strategies to gain, maintain, and repair legitimacy once it is lost (Suchman 1995; Ashforth and Gibbs 1990).

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[4] Lister (2003) argues that, as a consequence of this "issues [are] automatically settled and seen as beyond question if they [can] be claimed to be either for the partner's benefit, or to prevent the partner from encountering problems, whether or not the partner [was] consulted on the issue" (p. 184).

As noted, a key element to understanding legitimacy processes is to account for the cultural system within which an organization is embedded. Questions derive from an examination of the interplay between institutional logics and the legitimacy processes of organizations. Institutional logics, understood as "the belief systems and practices that predominate in an organizational field," provide a framework or metric for determining the legitimacy of an organization and, therefore, shape and constrain the legitimacy strategies available to organizations[5] (Scott 2001:139). What is more, organizations may operate in environments where institutional logics place competing or contradictory pressures on organizations. Consider a *logic of effectiveness*, for example: how does a development organization maintain legitimacy if effectiveness is not demonstrated? In other words, if the logic of effectiveness is central to the legitimacy of development organizations, yet these organizations do little or are unable to demonstrate effectiveness, what other logics mask or render failures and underwhelming outcomes invisible? This is one of several questions addressed in this dissertation.

A related issue is the extent to which the performance of an organization is scrutinized or challenged. Meyer and Rowan (1978) demonstrate that in some instances the legitimacy of an organization is not challenged because it benefits from a logic of confidence. That is, there exists an assumption on the part of constituents that the organization is making a good faith effort to achieve its organizational aims or purpose. In other instances, however, organizations may be subject to close scrutiny. For example, Hirsch and Andrews (1986) argue that over time organizations may have to navigate

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[5] Thornton and Ocasio (1999) define institutional logics as "the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality" (p. 804). This definition, according to Thornton and Ocasio (2008), provides "a link between individual agency and cognition and socially constructed institutional practices and rule structures" (p. 101).

performance or value challenges in order to maintain legitimacy and, therefore, persist. Performance challenges refer to situations where an organization is perceived by relevant constituents as having failed to "deliver the goods" or meet organizational objectives. In contrast, value challenges call the entire organization's existence into question irrespective of its ability to meet organizational objectives (Hirsch and Andrews 1986).

In addition to understanding the broad cultural systems that shape, constrain, and challenge organizations, one must explain how organizations achieve and maintain legitimacy within the system over time. Organizations can attempt to *conform* to legitimacy claims that are made of them. In other words, organizations may look to their institutional environments for socially accepted structures and practices and change accordingly. For example, a company wishing to raise its status in a given industry might restructure itself in a way to resemble the dominant players in that sector. This approach is perhaps the easiest way for an organization to gain legitimacy in that congruence with dominant models, by definition, brings the organization in line with the dictates or desires of established audiences. It should be noted, however, that trouble can arise in instances where an organization only ceremonially conforms to dominant models (Meyer and Rowan 1977).

A second legitimacy strategy available to organizations is to conform *selectively* to legitimacy claims. Here, an organization seeks out an environment that is most favorable to its existing structure and mission and positions itself accordingly. An organization might engage in market research to identify audiences who are most likely to value what the organization has to offer. A third option is for an organization to engage in *informing* actions that utilize various communication strategies and legitimated

vocabularies (Meyer and Rowan 1977) that serve to socially legitimate its goals and activities. For example, an organization can develop and deploy messaging that explains the rationale for specific organizational activity by linking it to established societal values. Finally, organizations can seek to *manipulate* the institutional environment by managing myths, ceremonies, and symbols to create new legitimating beliefs or seek to develop new constituents (Suchman 1995). Here, an organization might develop elaborate accountability mechanisms and publish annual reports that signal to constituents that the organization is engaged in legitimate activities. Each of the legitimacy strategies above can be adapted based on the type of legitimacy under consideration—pragmatic, moral, and cognitive—and whether the organization is seeking to gain, maintain, or repair legitimacy (Suchman 1995).

It should be clear thus far that legitimacy processes are based fundamentally on communication between organizations and their constituents. In engaging in this exchange, organizations present a particular version of reality to audiences and constituents then react by granting or withholding legitimacy. Similar to conversations between two individuals, exchanges between an organization and its constituents is a dynamic process that provides an analytic window into legitimacy processes and strategies, an issue to which I now turn.

Legitimacy and the Organizational Presentation of Self

In explaining interaction among individuals, Goffman (1967) argued that people develop various representations of themselves that they must work to maintain in encounters with others. If an individual is successful at impression management, the

audience is more likely to respond positively, define the individual as a desirable social actor, and accept her "projected definition of the situation" (Sandstrom et al. 2014:142). In instances where an individual fails to maintain a positive impression of herself, there is the possibility that she will lose credibility with her audience (i.e., "lose face") and, consequently, lose support.

Similar to individuals, organizations can be viewed as actors that engage in performances across various settings and before different audiences (Allan and Caillouet 1994). Galaskiewicz (1985), for example, showed how companies engage in impression management by donating to charities in order to enhance their public image. Others have shown how company spokespeople use narrative accounts and impression management tactics to manage legitimacy following controversial events or activities (Elsbach 1994; Elsbach and Sutton 1992). Meyer and Rowan (1977) also drew on Goffman's work in their discussion of decoupling. The authors explained that to maintain legitimacy, organizations must overcome instances where there exists no or limited technical validation of organizational activities. In these situations, legitimacy is maintained when constituents conclude that the organization is working in good faith.

Meyer and Rowan (1977) went on to argue that to maintain impressions, organizations may engage in practices that preserve the formal structure of the organization but do not subject it to close inspection. Scott and Meyer (1991) show, for example, that corporate representatives offer legitimating accounts to make their actions acceptable and understandable to others when they face situations where organizational compliance with the normative expectations of their institutional environment is questioned. Such practices ultimately reinforce "confidence in the myths that rationalize

the organization's existence" and, thereby mitigate potential legitimacy problems (Meyer and Rowan 1977:358). Recent work on organizational legitimacy and institutional logics builds on this research and turns its attention toward issues of framing and the narrative foundations of organizational legitimacy (see Thornton et al. 2012 for a review of this research).

Frames, Narratives, and Legitimacy

As noted, the processes of gaining, maintaining, and repairing legitimacy involve a significant amount of organizational "impression management" (Goffman 1955). And like most cultural processes, the management of legitimacy rests heavily on communication (Suchman 1995). Budget justifications, annual shareholder reports, websites, and monthly newsletters all reflect instances where organizations present themselves to an audience and seek to create an impression. In developing these discourses, organizations frame their activities and construct narratives[6] about their work. Recent research has emphasized the utility of studying legitimacy processes and strategies through the lens of these types of discourse. Of particular interest is how organizations utilize frames and narratives to construct and maintain legitimacy (Thornton et al. 2012; Babb 2009; Phillips and Malhotra 2008).

Goffman (1974) first used the concept of frames to refer to interpretive devices that allow individuals or groups to "locate, perceive, identify, and label" events and occurrences (p. 21). Framing gives meaning, organizes experiences, and guides the

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[6] Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury (2012) define narrative as "a story or account that organizes events and human actions into a whole, thereby attributing significance to individual actions and events according to their effect on the story or account," adding that "narratives help to make sense of events, create legitimacy, and construct identities" (p. 155).

actions of organizations (Snow, Rochford, Worden, and Benford 1986). In sociology, framing has received the most attention from political sociologists and social movement scholars. Snow and Benford (1988), for example, show how sets of beliefs and meanings (i.e., frames) emerge in the formation of social movements that ultimately serve to animate and legitimize movement activity. In a recent study of framing in political discourse, Babb (2009) showed how the U.S. Treasury Department, on behalf of the executive branch, used various rationales as interpretive frames in order to elicit Congressional support for funding multilateral development banks. In this instance, the U.S. Treasury relied on economic, humanitarian, and strategic frames to justify U.S. government expenditures for the banks. Babb (2009) also found, however, that the justifications put forward by the U.S. Treasury were not always successful in garnering congressional support. Thus, Babb (2009) points out that despite concerted attempts to shape debates, "political actors are constrained in the frames that they can apply to a particular issue by real-world evidence, the beliefs and political biases of their audience, and their own ideology and political platform" (p. xiii). In short, frames are context specific and historically situated and, as such, may need to change over time to fit particular political and social realities to be effective.

A frame's existence and efficacy also relies on the creation of effective narratives and stories (Sandstrom et al. 2014). Indeed, narratives are the means through which frames take tangible form. Thornton et al. (2012) explain that narratives "reflect specific organizing practices, their development, and their outcomes" and, thus help to "create legitimacy and construct identities" (p. 155). Moreover, narratives give organizational activity and outcomes meaning by helping "organizational actors make sense of their

successes or failures" (Abolafia 2010:350). In his examination of the creation and maintenance of group culture among social movements, for example, Fine (1995) shows how narratives are used to construct shared meanings about the achievements and challenges of specific social movements. Narratives also serve as a medium through which the actions of groups are interpreted and perceived by those outside of the group (Sandstrom et al. 2014).

Recent work in the sociology of organizations uses narrative as a focal point for studying organizational legitimacy. Indeed, Golant and Sillince (2007) argue that narrative is at the center of the emergence and maintenance of organizational legitimacy. The authors argue that focusing on the role of narrative in the constitution of organizational legitimacy allows scholars to bridge the structure-agency divide that hampers much organizational and institutional research. It is possible through an examination of framing and narratives to better understand how organizational managers instrumentally use language to "signal the appropriateness and effectiveness of organizational activities" to various constituents and show how organizations draw on and are shaped by dominant scripts and logics in their institutional environments (Gloant and Sillince 2008:1152).

Jacobs and Sobieraj (2007) illustrate, for example, how politicians use specific types of narratives during congressional debates to connect the policies they are proposing to their individual requirements for legitimacy and the needs of the public. Similarly, Abolafia (2010) examines narrative construction among central bankers at the Federal Reserve to show how managers make sense of complex operating environments and organizational activities by drawing on available logics. A recent study by Golant

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and Sillince (2007) examines the narrative foundations of organizational legitimacy in the healthcare field. The authors conclude that organizational legitimacy in the healthcare field is dependent on both "the persuasiveness of organizational storytelling and the realization of a taken-for-granted narrative structure" in organizational discourse (p. 1149).

Legitimacy, Development, and the Peace Corps

Research in development studies gives limited treatment to the topic of organizational legitimacy (Lister 2003). Moreover, studies of international development that do take organizational legitimacy into account focus almost exclusively on non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These studies identify a handful of characteristics thought to enhance organizational legitimacy, including: legal compliance (Edwards 1999), representativeness (Hudson 2000; Atack 1999), and consistency between an organization's mission and its actual behavior (Saxby 1996). Moreover, Edwards and Hulme (1995) assert that "performing effectively and accounting transparently are essential components of responsible practice, on which the legitimacy of development intervention ultimately depends" (p. 6). It is not clear, however, the extent to which these technical-functional metrics are actually used to determine the legitimacy of development organizations. What is more, this literature is just beginning to consider the socially constructed, institutional character of organizational legitimacy in the field of international development (Ossewaarde, Nijhof, and Heyse 2008; Lister 2003). An additional shortcoming of this literature is its tendency to rely on cross-sectional designs, which ignore the important historical and temporal dimensions of organizational

legitimacy in the field of international development (Lister 2003). Indeed, we know that the ideas and practices that animate the field of international development have evolved since the advent of the modern development regime and in response to major global political changes, such as the end of the Cold War. As such, we would expect that organizations working in the field have also changed over this period.

This dissertation investigates the issues raised above by asking the following questions: How do development organizations maintain legitimacy? How do development organizations present themselves in different historical periods and political climates? Under what conditions and in what combinations are different legitimacy strategies deployed?

To address these questions, I examine the narrative construction and maintenance of legitimacy (i.e., legitimacy processes) in one international development organization, the United State Peace Corps, from 1977 to 2012. The United States Peace Corps emerged during a lesser-noticed expansion of the post-war development regime. Between 1958 and 1965 nearly every major industrialized nation established a volunteer-based international development program aimed at spreading the message of economic development and demonstrating the "good will" of the West (Hoffman 2001). International volunteer organizations were built, in content and form, on quintessential notions of what was required to "make men modern" (Inkeles and Smith 1976). In short, international development volunteers were dispersed to act as mediators between the "modern" ways of the West and the so-called "backward" ways of the rest. Today, nearly fifty-three years after its establishment by President John F. Kennedy, the Peace Corps continues to send volunteer development workers throughout the world.

Overview of Dissertation

The broad goals of this dissertation are to improve our understanding of international development and explain the persistence of international development organizations through the lens of legitimacy processes and strategies. The study is based on the analysis of data collected through extensive archival research at the National Archives and Peace Corps Headquarters in Washington D.C., and from the Government Records Repository at the University of Minnesota Libraries. In addition, I supplemented my analysis of archival data through in-depth interviews with current Peace Corps administrators and staff at Peace Corps Headquarters in Washington D.C.

The dissertation proceeds with a methodological chapter that details the case selection and research design, followed by three empirical chapters. Chapter Three, *Development as a Virtuous Endeavor* centers on an examination of how discourses of modernization and narratives about the "goodness" of the development effort and the benevolence of the United States and its people are constructed and reconstructed over time. In short, the chapter investigates how ideas and assumptions about development activities and the work of the Peace Corps are viewed and presented through a lens that constructs the aims and activities of the organization as virtuous, centering legitimacy in the context of modernization. In short, shared understandings of the goodness of development and benevolence of the volunteer create myths about the organization and its activities that shield the organization from close scrutiny.

Chapter Four, *Balancing Benevolence and Politics* analyzes the political pressures faced by the Peace Corps and how the organization responds to these pressures over time. Throughout the history of the organization, the agency must engage in a strategic back

and forth with presidential administrations and members of Congress over the aims and activities of the organization. Thus, the chapter examines the nature of these external pressures and investigates how the Peace Corps and its leadership manage legitimacy challenges over time.

Chapter Five, *Managing Accountability* examines how the organization adapts to the rise of the accountability regime in the 1990s and beyond. During this period, all government agencies were facing greater scrutiny. Congress passed the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) in 1993, which mandated that all government agencies develop clear, measurable performance outcomes that they had to report to Congress annually. The GPRA created new political and cultural pressures on the organization to have legitimate, rational processes in place to measure organizational performance. The chapter examines how the organization responded when its legitimacy was, in part, dependent on adherence to Congress through a formal accountability mechanism. I show how Congressional action regarding greater agency accountability led to the coupling of virtuous goals with virtuous procedures. I further show how the shared positive assumptions of the agency and development, in general, discussed in Chapter Three created space for the establishment of an accountability regime that was largely ceremonial in nature.

Finally, Chapter Six, *Conclusion and Closing Thoughts*, briefly reiterates the main conclusions of the study and considers its theoretical implications for understanding legitimacy processes in the field of international development. In addition, I consider the dissertation's limitations and potential avenues for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: CASE SELECTION AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Overview

As noted above, the broad goals of this dissertation are to improve our understanding of international development and explain the persistence of international development organizations through the lens of legitimacy processes and strategies. To address these goals, the research design seeks to achieve three specific objectives: (1) detail the construction and maintenance of organizational legitimacy over historical time, (2) determine the extent to which institutional logics shape and constrain legitimacy processes; and (3) incorporate both interest-based and cultural arguments of organizational legitimacy to explain organizational persistence in the field of international development. The following questions guide my analysis:

> How do development organizations maintain legitimacy? How do development organizations present themselves in different historical periods and political climates? Under what conditions and in what combinations are different legitimacy strategies deployed?

To address the objectives and questions raised above, this project examines the construction and maintenance of legitimacy (i.e., legitimacy processes) in one international development organization, the United State Peace Corps, from 1977 to 2012. The Peace Corps represents an interesting and important theoretical case for understanding legitimacy processes. The Peace Corps emerged as a foreign policy tool in the Cold War, like many other agencies and initiatives. However, the Peace Corps was

the only agency proposed and designed to work at the grassroots level through what the agency refers to as "people-to-people" development. The Peace Corps' distinction from other U.S. foreign policy tools is articulated clearly in the agency's 2001 budget justification:

> Peace Corps volunteers' service differs from the approach taken by other governmental agencies and international development organizations. Volunteers are engaged at the grassroots level, and they are required to speak local languages. A fundamental purpose of their service is to develop a knowledge of the host country and to forge lasting relationships with individuals in their communities (Justification 2001:9).

In short, the U.S. government sees the Peace Corps as a unique tool for development and for advancing U.S. foreign policy objectives. As such, an examination of the agency provides a unique window into how the U.S. government, over time, conceptualizes development and draws on this conceptualization to design development programming and administer U.S. foreign policy abroad. Moreover, although there are many historical studies of the Peace Corps from its founding through the Nixon administration, there exists limited research of the organization from the 1980s to present.

In my analysis, contrasts are drawn between institutional logics that predominate in the field of international development and organizational legitimacy strategies associated with the U.S. Peace Corps. Comparisons are made across periods demarcated by changes in presidential administration, as well as preceding and following events (e.g., end of Cold War or implementation of an accountability regime) that mark significant turning points for the organization.

Data

The data I analyze to address each of the objectives and questions above includes congressional legislative histories and floor debate, sub-committee hearings and witness/agency testimony obtained from the Congressional Record archives. In addition, I examined reports by the Congressional Research Office, Government Accountability Office, and the Office of Management and Budget produced at the request of members of Congress. Such reports cover a range of topics related to the Peace Corps' operations and are intended to serve as a supplement to agency testimony. Data also include a wide range of organizational documents, including Peace Corps annual reports, congressional budget justifications, and agency newsletters produced between 1977 and 2012.[7] Data were collected at the National Archives and Peace Corps Headquarters in Washington D.C., and from the Government Records Repository at the University of Minnesota Libraries. I also examined notable news clippings and commentaries regarding the Peace Corps that were published in the popular press or distributed by think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation. In total, the amount of empirical data consisted of many thousands of pages of archive material. Together, these documents provide a rich source of policy-related discourse and, in the aggregate, offer important information about the policy agendas of Congress and the Peace Corps, frames of meaning used to justify particular policy decisions, and areas of contestation.

In addition, I sought to triangulate my analysis of archival data through in-depth interviews with current Peace Corps administrators and staff at Peace Corps Headquarters

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[7] I also utilized several additional data sources as needed (e.g., training manuals, volunteer newsletters, etc.) to investigate how specific policies resulting from congressional action were or were not translated into volunteer training modules. In short, these materials provided insight into the enactment of organizational and congressional ideals.

in Washington D.C. I interviewed individuals working in development planning, evaluation and assessment, and organizational operations. The purpose of these interviews was to develop a sense for current organizational practices, challenges and constraints facing the organization, and, when possible, organizational change. Although I do not present extensive material from these interviews in the empirical chapters that follow, the information obtained in these interviews reinforced patterns observed in organizational and congressional documents.[8]

Research Design and Methodology

My primary analytic approach for detailing the construction and maintenance of organizational legitimacy is to examine sentiments expressed in organizational narratives and congressional discourse. As a government agency, the Peace Corps must work with Congress each year to obtain appropriations. In doing so, the agency submits to Congress an annual budget justification that outlines it accomplishments and intentions for the coming fiscal year. The budget authorization process plays out in subcommittee hearings and through written exchanges between the agency and members of Congress. Agency representatives and various witnesses are called before relevant subcommittees to present testimony and answer questions posed by committee members. The subcommittee then makes a recommendation to the larger body, which is discussed, debated, and voted on by the full House or Senate.

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[8] It should also be noted that I served as a Peace Corps volunteer from 1998-2001 in the Pacific island nation of Vanuatu. My role as a Peace Corps volunteer was to develop local capacity in vocational educational, with the aim of providing applied training and credentials to school-leaving youth. The over-arching aim of my assignment in Vanuatu was to foster vocational and small-business skills among school-leavers that could be used at the village level and, as a consequence, stem the drift of disaffected youth with marginal levels of education from moving to urban centers.

During subcommittee testimony, Peace Corps representatives try to convince members of congress to authorize and, later, appropriate the operating funds requested by the agency. Typically, the agency testifies regarding the activities and accomplishments of the agency and provides information regarding the intentions of the agency in the coming year. In addition, agency representatives respond to questions posed by committee members during testimony and are typically asked to submit written responses to questions raised subsequent to hearings. All of this material is archived in the Congressional Record.

Congressional hearings, budget justifications, and agency documents represent direct indictors of the policy discourses used by Congress and the Peace Corps and are an ideal analytic window into legitimacy processes. Indeed, Jacobs and Sobieraj (2007), in their recent narrative analysis of U.S. Congressional debate concerning legitimacy in the nonprofit sector, note that "for any given narrative, it is possible to investigate the pragmatic goals the narrator is pursuing, the institutional context in which the story is being told, and the narrative conventions that regulate the talk or writing taking place within that specific institutional context" (p. 6).[9] Here, I use a set of four specific

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[9] Jacobs and Sobieraj (2007) also address an important point regarding institutional factors that influence the production of narratives in congressional policy debates: "While the debates originate as spoken discourse, arguments unfold with the recognition that they will appear in written form, in the Congressional Record. In addition, congressional speakers have the opportunity to supplement the written record of their speeches by inserting various written documents into the records. While the potential audience of these speeches and documents is the American public, most narratives are told under the assumption that other politicians and their aides, as well as specific constituents and interest groups, will consume them in the short term. This gives the congressional speeches a dual quality. On the one hand, because the debates are organized around the central topic of tax policy, the speeches are made in order to support or reject specific tax policies, and tend to refer to nonprofit organizations in terms of how much money they will cost (or save) the Treasury if specific proposals are passed. On the other hand, politicians make their speeches in full recognition that they are participating in the creation of a jointly authored text that will serve as a multivalent document: a policy document for politicians and their aides; a political document for their constituents, their political allies and opponents, and other interest groups; and a historical document for students of politics and political culture" (p. 6). While their example pertains to tax policy for the nonprofit sector, it could easily be applied to debates concerning foreign policy and international development aid.

questions concerning fundamentals of international development as focal points for examining organizational narratives and congressional discourse.[10] The four focal areas include: (1) the conceptualization of rationales for action – *What motivates the organization?*; (2) the construction of understandings about development problems – *Why are organization's services needed?*; (3) the construction of solutions to development problems – *How should the organization respond to perceived needs*?; and (4) how project failures and successes are monitored, reported, and explained – *How does the organization make sense of outcomes?* In my analysis of documents and the various voices represented, I paid particular attention to congruence, contestations and tensions, and silences regarding these focal areas. Moreover, particular attention was given to contrasts concerning how concepts such as development, modernization, and progress were constructed and reconstructed over time.

The project also seeks to address an unresolved question in historical research on the Peace Corps, and international development organizations generally, which pertains to the explanatory power of different periodizations scholars use to explain change in development organizations over time. The thirty-five year period under investigation is selected because it centers on phases of escalation and de-escalation in the Cold War—a period in which foreign assistance was viewed as a central tool of U.S. foreign policy. The time frame also spans five presidential administrations, two of which occur during and three that follow the Cold War. Finally, the temporal starting point for my analysis, the start of the Carter administration in 1977, is significant because it marks a point at which the Peace Corps is facing a crisis of legitimacy and an uncertain future.

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[10] Riessman (1990) explains that, unlike traditional discourse analysis, narrative analysis "identifies longer stretches of talk that take the form of narrative—a discourse organized around time and consequential events in the world created by the narrator" (p. 1195).

To address the issues of periodization and how boundaries of time periods are constructed, my research design draws on the historical-comparative methodological strategy of reiterated problem solving, which attends to both the historical details of cases and the cumulative effect organizational decisions have on later events (Haydu 1998). In this conceptualization, different periods constitute different cases. Haydu (1998) argues that the central puzzle in historical research that spans time periods is to explain how actors (e.g., individuals, organizations, etc.) solved similar problems in different periods. This approach entails investigating "contrasts in how social actors constructed the problem[s] and what solutions appeared to be realistic within each historical context" (p. 33). Here, the central problems are organizational persistence and the maintenance of legitimacy over time.

Limitations and Constraints

As with any study, there are elements of the research design and data-orientated challenges that impact research findings. The data used in this dissertation reflect the public face of Congress and the Peace Corps. In writing annual reports or presenting information in congressional hearings, individuals and organizations are, perhaps, more mindful of the words used and messages sent. Budget justifications, for example, are strategic documents by definition. That is, the intent of such documents is to make a case to an audience, here Congress, that past activities, current performance, and future plans for the organization are legitimate and worthy of support. This is not a problem given the ways in which ideas and arguments are articulated and presented to constituents is a key focal point of this project. What is not reflected in the data and analysis, however, are the

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many internal conversations and debates that likely occur among members of Congress and the private discussions among administrators at Peace Corps headquarters.

It should be noted, however, that at the outset of the study, I made a substantial effort to obtain internal organizational documents, including materials such as committee minutes, internal assessment reports, and planning documents. After a meeting with the current Peace Corps records manager, I learned that internal documents for the years under study were not yet processed or catalogued for placement in the National Archives and would not be for many years to come. In short, the bureaucratic hurdles to obtaining access to contemporary internal organizational documents were insurmountable given the time and resource constraints of this project.

Although the findings presented below are derived from multiple and extensive data sources, it should also be noted that a common critique of discursive and narrative analyses of social phenomena is that it is an inherently interpretive endeavor. As such, it is important to recognize the possibility of alternative interpretations (Phillips and Hardy 2002). However, the objective, as Brown (2000:55) notes, is not "a quest for ultimate truth, but for a plausible, authoritative, and interesting analysis that enriches our understanding of social phenomena" (quoted in Golant and Sillince 2007:1155). Finally, case study research is sometimes critiqued as a method, in particular, for its inability to provide a basis for scientific generalization (Yin 2013). The aim of this dissertation, however, is not of generalization to a population, but to theoretical propositions wherein the overarching goals are to better understand social processes and to expand and generalize theories (Sayer 1992).

Setting Up the Case: A Brief Introduction to the U.S. Peace Corps

On March 1, 1961, President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps by executive order. The order was authorized by Congress on September 22, 1961, with passage of the Peace Corps Act (Public Law 87-293). The broad aim of the Peace Corps Act, as articulated in its Declaration of Purpose was "to promote world peace and friendship" through the realization of three goals. First, the Act sought to "provide for a Peace Corps to help the peoples of interested countries and areas in meeting their needs for skilled manpower." This objective, commonly referred to as the Peace Corps' "First Goal" pertains to the provision of *development assistance*. The second objective of the Peace Corps Act was the promotion of "a better understanding of the American people on the part of peoples served." The so-called "Second Goal" charges the agency with advancing *public diplomacy* and *cultural exchange abroad*. The final objective sought to advance "a better understanding of other peoples on the part of the American people." The aim of the agency's "Third Goal," thus, is to encourage volunteers upon their return to the United States to engage in *cultural exchange at home* by sharing their experiences with others.[11]

The Peace Corps is an independent U.S. government agency that has, since its establishment in 1961, sent over 210,000 volunteers to work in 139 countries around the world. Appendix A includes a list all countries where volunteers have worked. The agency currently works in 76 countries. Volunteers service terms last 27 months, which includes approximately three months of language, culture, and technical training. In total, volunteers have provided over 475,000 thousand years of volunteer development

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[11] Throughout the dissertation, I will refer to these organizational goals in both numeric (i.e., first, second, third) and substantive (i.e., development assistance, public diplomacy, and cultural exchange) format.

assistance to date. The bulk of this work has occurred in rural communities throughout the developing world. Indeed, Peace Corps volunteers are often the only Western development workers that work in remote locations for an extended period of time. Below is a current breakdown of volunteers by region (Justification 2013).

Figure 2.1 Peace Corps Volunteers by Region (2013)
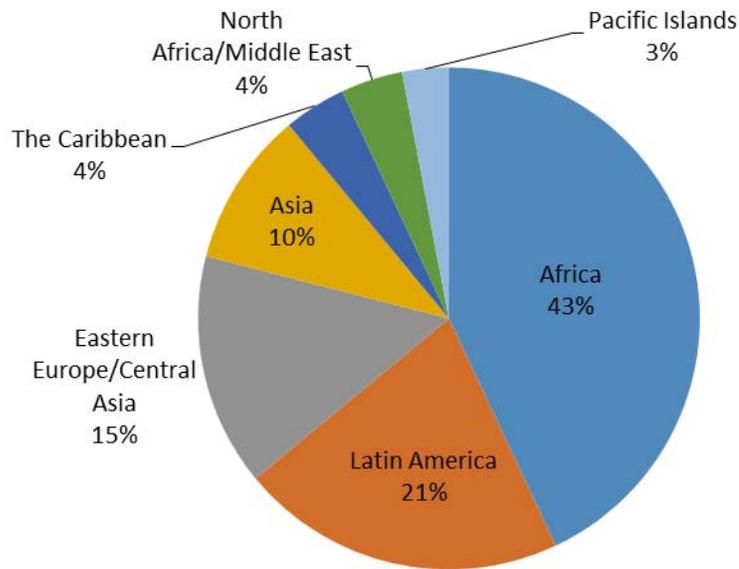
Volunteers work in a range of development sectors, including: education, health, community economic development, environment, youth in development, and agriculture. Typically, volunteers work directly with communities, schools, local governments, non-governmental organizations, and small businesses. Below is a current breakdown of volunteers by development sector (Justification 2013):

Figure 2.2 Peace Corps Volunteers by Development Sector (2013)
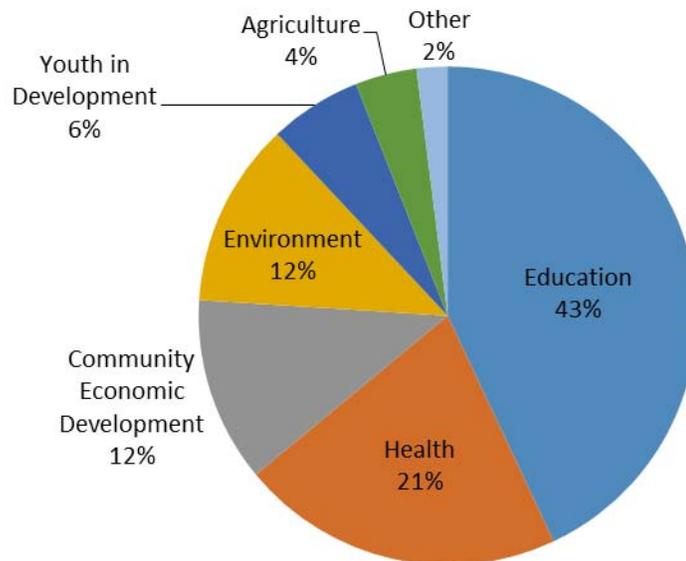
My examination of the Peace Corps picks up in 1977 with the start of the Carter administration. At this point, the agency is facing a crisis of legitimacy and an uncertain future. It is well documented that the Nixon and Ford administrations nearly killed the agency, taking away its autonomy by placing it in the federal umbrella agency ACTION and by sharply cutting its budget. Bolstered by opponents of the Peace Corps in Congress, the Nixon and Ford administrations severely defunded and, by most accounts, demoralized the agency. Historians point to a variety of explanations for the Nixon administration's disdain for the agency, ranging from its association with President Kennedy, who was Nixon's formal political rival, to perceptions of the organization as a liberal bastion and haven for critics of the Vietnam War (Meisler 2011). The historical record shows that Nixon ordered the dismantling of the organization through budget reductions and a stripping away of the organization's autonomy by placing under the

umbrella agency ACTION (Meisler 2011). When Carter assumes the presidency, there is

an open question as to what will happen to the Peace Corps—the agency could die or it

could be resurrected. In short, the Peace Corps is at a point where it has to clarify and

legitimate its purpose and build support for the agency among the administration,

members of Congress, and the public. It is at this historical juncture where my analysis

begins.

CHAPTER THREE: DEVELOPMENT AS A VIRTUOUS ENDEAVOR

"The moral purpose that guides the United States in its foreign affairs has been given a new dimension – The Peace Corps"

Peace Corps News (June 1961)

"Peace Corps has enabled thousands of Americans to help people all over the world become what they ought to be, and has brought the message by their very lives that America is a great country that stands for good values and human progress."

President Bill Clinton (1994)

"The Peace Corps is far more than the sum total of the Volunteers' individual projects. It stands for something special. It is a non-traditional government agency that reflects the most enduring values and ideals of the American people: generosity, civic pride, a strong work ethic, and a commitment to service."

Peace Corps Budget Justification (2000)

Introduction

At its inception, the Peace Corps was portrayed as a virtuous organization, comprised of dedicated Americans committed to bettering the world through the spread of modern values. As the idea for the Peace Corps transitioned into a practical reality, agency administrators needed to achieve two objectives to establish the organization's legitimacy. First, the Peace Corps needed members of Congress to believe in the agency's mission. That is, to be seen as worthwhile and worthy of appropriations, relevant stakeholders needed to buy into the aims and objectives of the organization.

Second, the agency needed to be viewed as an entity qualified and capable of undertaking its congressionally mandated responsibilities of international development assistance and public diplomacy abroad. In the sphere of politics, such objectives are not easily achieved and, perhaps, even harder to maintain over time. Yet, fifty-three years after the Peace Corps' founding, the agency is still sending thousands of volunteers abroad annually to work in a wide range of development sectors.

President Clinton's comment above speaks to this achievement and provides a window into the beliefs—expressed in similar ways by nearly every president, senator, and representative since John F. Kennedy first established the organization in 1961—that undergird valuations of the agency. Although every president and member of congress may have differing views on what specific activities and programmatic foci the agency should emphasize, there is surprising unanimity over time in how the Peace Corps and the work of its volunteers are broadly framed in congressional discourse and organizational narratives. This chapter seeks to better understand the construction of organizational legitimacy by addressing the following questions: To what extent is the legitimacy of the Peace Corps based on shared understandings and assumptions among the agency administrators and members of Congress? What is the nature of these understandings and assumptions? How do they change over time?

As noted, the Congressional Record is replete with positive appraisals of the Peace Corps. Indeed, throughout my reading of congressional hearings, testimony, and agency documents, it became clear that there is a set of shared implicit assumptions about the "goodness" of development and the benevolence of the United States and its citizens, especially those who volunteer, that serve to legitimize the agency and its activities. I

proceed by considering how the symbolism surrounding President Kennedy's establishment of the Peace Corps serves as an anchor point for narratives about the organization. I then show how members of Congress and the agency construct powerful narratives that portray the United States and the Peace Corps as benevolent actors and Peace Corps volunteers as selfless, virtuous development workers. Next, I provide a brief discussion of how the organization, in concert with Congress, narratively construct individuals, communities, and countries abroad as legitimate objects of action. I conclude by arguing that the positive shared assumptions regarding development, in general, and the Peace Corps, specifically, expressed in congressional discourse and organizational narratives establishes a reservoir of legitimacy for the agency that it can draw on as it confronts legitimacy challenges over time.

Establishing a Founding Narrative: The Birth of the Peace Corps

The first debates in the United States Congress concerning the establishment of an international development agency staffed by volunteer citizens occurred as a part of a larger discussion concerning U.S. strategies to combat communism. Building on Truman's famous call for greater U.S. development intervention abroad, Representative Henry Reuss (D-WI) introduced a bill to the House of Representatives in January 1960 seeking funding for a feasibility study to establish a U.S. international volunteer agency called the Point Four Youth Corps. Reuss' bill was later added to a much larger foreign policy bill titled the Mutual Security Act of 1960 that sought to protect U.S. national interests abroad. Building on prevailing congressional Cold War narratives concerning the threat of communism, Representative Robert Chiperfield of Illinois (R) described the

general intent of the Mutual Security Act on the floor of the House this way: "Wholly aside from humanitarian and altruistic motives, the main purpose of the mutual security bill is through military and economic aid to maintain the security of the United States and the free world from Communist aggression and thereby maintain the peace" (quoted in Rice 1985:257). Although a relatively small component of the larger bill, the Point Four Youth Corps was portrayed as a potentially effective tool in the battle of ideas with the Soviet Union.

Around the same time the Mutual Security Act was being ushered through the U.S. House of Representatives, Senator Hubert Humphrey (D-MN) introduced a bill to the Senate calling for the creation of a "Peace Corps," comprised of skilled U.S. citizens that would send "young men to assist the peoples of the underdeveloped areas of the world to combat poverty, disease, illiteracy, and hunger" (Senate S. 3675).[12] Humphrey's proposal aligned with the general ideas of Reuss' Youth Corps. However, while Humphrey's comments on the bill shared some of the concerns regarding the spread of communism in the non-aligned states that was at the center of the Mutual Security Act, the Senator placed greater emphasis in his remarks on the potential transformative effects of American idealism and values abroad. Although it was Senator Humphrey who campaigned on the Peace Corps proposal during his 1960 run for president, it was the Democratic presidential nominee that beat him, Senator John F. Kennedy, who would ultimately make the idea of establishing the U.S. Peace Corps a reality.

In a storied 2:00 a.m. speech at the University of Michigan in October 1960, Senator Kennedy asked the approximately 10,000 students present: "How many of you,

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[12] Senator Humphrey first introduced a version of this bill in 1957.

who are going to be doctors, are willing to spend your days in Ghana? Technicians or

engineers, how many of you are willing to work in the Foreign Service and spend your

lives traveling around the world?"[13] Kennedy's impassioned impromptu speech that early

morning in Michigan caught the attention of and enthused many young voters and,

consequently, his campaign staff. With the support of his former campaign rival,

Kennedy decided to adopt Humphrey's idea for the establishment of a volunteer corps

and made it a point of emphasis in the final weeks of his campaign against Republican

Richard Nixon.

Two weeks following the University of Michigan speech and six days prior to the

election, Senator Kennedy gave a high-profile foreign policy speech in San Francisco

covering a wide range of issues. In the speech, Kennedy lamented that the Soviet Union

and China had "hundreds of men and women, scientists, physicists, teachers, engineers,

doctors, [and] nurses…prepared to spend their lives abroad in the service of world

communism" (Kennedy 1960, quoted in Meisler 2011). Kennedy asserted that the United

States needed to respond to this effort by the communists by sending "ambassadors of

peace" throughout the world. He argued:

> I therefore propose that our inadequate efforts in this area be supplemented by a
> peace corps of talented young men and women, willing and able to serve their
> country in this fashion for three years as an alternative or as a supplement to
> peacetime selective service, well qualified through rigorous standards, well
> trained in the languages, skills, and customs they will need to know (Kennedy
> 1960, quoted in Meisler 2011).

The speech in San Francisco was the first time Kennedy formally proposed the

formation of a citizen volunteer development agency called the Peace Corps. Soon after

he won the presidency, Kennedy asked his staff to begin developing plans for the new

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[13] Source: Peace Corps (http://www.peacecorps.gov/about/history/speech/)

agency and on March 1, 1961, President Kennedy established the Peace Corps by executive order. When Kennedy signed the order, he, like Humphrey, deemphasized the role of the Peace Corps in fighting communism. Indeed, at a news conference immediately following the signing, Kennedy asserted, "Our Peace Corps is not designed as an instrument of diplomacy or propaganda or ideological conflict. It is designed to permit our people to exercise more fully their responsibilities in the great common cause of world development.[14]" Just six months later, on September 22, 1961, Kennedy's executive order was authorized by Congress with the passage of the Peace Corps Act (Public Law 87-293), thus cementing Peace Corps' place in the U.S. foreign policy apparatus. Although the agency's focus on communism remained central to administrative planning and programming in the early years of the Peace Corps (Latham 2000), public perceptions of the Peace Corps centered on notions of charity, sacrifice, and altruism. President Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 only served to bolster these perceptions. Indeed, the Peace Corps became a powerful symbol of Kennedy's legacy, held up to this day by many as one of his greatest singular accomplishments as president.

As will be discussed below, the salience of the Peace Corps' origins story is evident in contemporary congressional discourse and organizational narratives. Indeed, nearly every congressional hearing concerning the Peace Corps over the period under study begins with the chair and members of the subcommittee proclaiming their admiration for the agency and Peace Corps volunteers, typically offering some variant of the sentiment that the agency and volunteers stand for "what is best about America."

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[14] Source: National Archives (http://blogs.archives.gov/prologue/?p=1776)

Members of congress frequently refer to John F. Kennedy and his late night

Michigan speech in ways that present the birth of the organization as a sacred event in the

history of the United States.[15] Kennedy's intentions for the Peace Corps are imagined as

an altruistic effort on the part of the American people to advance global progress and

world peace. Often, the Peace Corps founding narrative is used in congressional

discourse and organizational narratives as a preemptive mechanism to diffuse potential

inter-party disagreements over the aims and activities of the organization, thus

establishing a "common ground" for proceeding with testimony. During congressional

hearings to discuss appropriations for the Peace Corps in 2002, for example, Senator

Chris Dodd (D-CT) began by relaying the Peace Corps origins story for the record. He

then went on to note that, according to Kennedy, the agency and its volunteers were not

meant to reflect "particular Republican or Democratic ideologies," but "American values,

values held in common by all of us as American citizens…to support the development

and betterment of the countries and communities where the Peace Corps volunteers

[serve]" (Hearing 2002:2).

In repeatedly retelling or referencing the Peace Corps founding story and by

invoking President Kennedy's memory, especially his charisma and altruistic intentions

for world peace, members of Congress and the agency invoke a kind personal, as well as

moral, legitimacy that fosters positive valuations of the organization. In short, if the

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[15] It should be noted that perceptions of the Peace Corps were less favorable among conservative politicians in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. The biggest critiques pertained to perceptions about the agency as a haven for individuals who did not support the Vietnam War. Indeed, there were several known instances where Peace Corps volunteers published articles in local newspapers abroad that spoke negatively about U.S. foreign policy and the Vietnam War. Perhaps the most contentious event was when a group of returned volunteers took over a floor at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington D.C. in 1971 and hung a homemade Viet Cong flag out a fourth floor window in protest of the war in Vietnam. The incident received significant attention in the U.S. press and solidified the distaste of the Nixon administration and several congressional members for the agency.

founding ideals and intentions of the agency are considered and treated as a sacred

element of the American character, questioning the agency is tantamount to questioning

the nation itself. It is to the narrative and discursive construction of this national sense of

self that I now turn.

For a Greater Good: The Benevolence of the United States and its Citizens

We begin to see in the Peace Corps origins story above attempts by the Kennedy

administration to construct and maintain legitimacy for the Peace Corps based on

allusions to the uniqueness of the United States and the moral character of its citizens.

At the center of the Peace Corps' founding narrative was a shared belief in the promise

and potential of American values to save the world. The government's strategic interests

in combating communism were imbued with moral justifications that constructed the

United States as a righteous actor on the global stage. Interventions in the lives of

individuals, communities, and countries abroad rested on the presumption that the United

States had material goods, technology, and ideas that recipient countries did not possess

but needed in order to advance. In short, the framing of U.S. development interventions

abroad rested heavily on ideas regarding the moral imperative to *help* others in the

service of advancing *progress* and *modernization*.

Of course, presenting one's activities as being in the service of a broader moral

imperative is not unique to the Peace Corps. Indeed, development interventions are often

portrayed in a way that frames the intervener in a good light. Work by religious missions,

for example, has long been legitimized on the basis that missionaries have a moral

obligation to alleviate both material and spiritual poverty. Interventions by international

organizations such as *Care* or *Save the Children* are typically framed as humanitarian endeavors meant to bring about positive change for individuals and communities. And international organizations such as the World Bank and UNICEF also rely on narratives concerning the positive transformative nature of their work.

To be sure, there are critics of each of the abovementioned entities and the development project broadly, yet, in most instances, international organizations are able to maintain the perception that they are "doing good" in the world. Some argue that development organizations, especially significant players such as the World Bank, are able to use their dominant positions in the field to manufacture positive perceptions because of their ability to control the sense-making and evaluation of their activities (Goldman 2005). Others argue that positive evaluations of development organizations are based on superficial assessments that rely on a logic of confidence (Meyer and Rowan 1977). That is, development organizations are deemed legitimate because they appear to the external environment as though they are engaged in legitimate development activity. A third perspective suggests that development organizations are able to maintain positive perceptions because development and modernization, as abstract ideas, are undergirded by a religious-like faith on the part of development practitioners, the public, and recipients alike that serves to buffer development organizations from closer scrutiny and clouds evaluations of development activity (Rist 1997). As will become clear in subsequent chapters, the Peace Corps' ability to gain and maintain legitimacy rests on a combination of the perspectives above.

At the time of the Peace Corps founding, modernization theory enjoyed widespread legitimacy as *the theory* of development and was advanced as an anecdote to

the spread of communism. If the West, led by the United States, could incorporate the peoples of the world into a system that valued participatory democracy and free-market economics, then communities would be transformed, nations would evolve, and the people of the world would be on track to realize their fullest potential. Moreover, the United States would have won the war of ideas with the Soviet Union. The ideology of modernization was, according to Latham (2000), so thoroughly engrained in U.S. culture that "the United States was *called* to drive other societies toward a modernity most clearly embodied by America itself" (p. 111). The Peace Corps, USAID, and other components of the foreign policy apparatus established in the 1960s were intended to be tangible manifestations of this ideology.

While agencies such as USAID were engaged in macro-level planning and programming aimed at transforming entire economies, the Peace Corps was envisaged as a development tool for grassroots transformation. From the beginning, the agency presented itself as a unique and special element of the U.S. foreign policy apparatus. The Peace Corps' distinction was in its attempt to affect change through long-term, people-to-people development activity. Indeed, in its Second Annual Report to Congress, the agency argued that by its very presence in "Third World" countries, the Peace Corps would "awaken people to the possibilities of progress" (Justification 1962:39). The Peace Corps model sought to facilitate this awakening through development programming that relied on what the agency, historically, and Peace Corps Directors throughout the period under study, referred to as a "self-help" philosophy. This model places a great deal of emphasis on cultural modernization through demonstration. In short, volunteers transmit the "American way of life" in the work that they do and the way they live—the attributes

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of which are fundamentally understood to be precursors of modernization and prerequisites for development. The minutes from an early agency meeting clearly capture a key assumption that undergirded the initial Peace Corps model. In describing the aims of the agency and its potential implications for societies abroad, administrators spoke of Peace Corps volunteers as "free men and women, the products of a free society sent abroad to serve and do their assigned work with such dedication that their hosts will, by this example, be brought to reflection on the nature of the society that produced them" (Latham 2000:109). Such statements reflect an extraordinary belief in the American character and its transformative power. Perhaps even more remarkable is the salience of these types of assertions over the life of the Peace Corps.

It became clear in my analysis that one could pick up the transcript from any congressional hearing on the Peace Corps or any budget justification from the late 1970s through the 2010s and find similar assertions concerning the promise of modernization as exemplified by the demonstration of American values. How do we end poverty? How do we spread democracy? How do we foster the entrepreneurial spirit? How do we protect the environment? How do we stop the spread of AIDS? Fundamentally, the Peace Corps' answer to these questions is to fix development problems through the transference of American culture—knowledge, technology, techniques, dispositions, and attitudes. At the center of descriptions of this process are allusions to the compassion of the American people. Moreover, organizational narratives present the Peace Corps as an essential expression of American values. For example, in its budget justifications and testimony the agency repeatedly makes the argument that the Peace Corps reflects the "most enduring values and ideals of the American people" (Justification 2000:5). The

agency consistently describes itself as having a "large and noble purpose" that embodies

and transmits to those abroad values such as optimism, freedom, opportunity, service,

altruism, generosity, civic pride, and a strong work ethic (Justification 1998). In a

statement that is typical of Peace Corps directors and one that clearly illustrates the

coupling of American values with the presumption of positive development outcomes,

the Reagan-appointed director, Loret Miller Ruppe, asserted to members of Congress in

the organization's 1980 budget request that the agency's "unselfish attitude of helping

others is ingrained in the American structure and serves as a potent force to address many

of the social and economic problems in the United States and the World" (Justification

1980:1). [16]

The sentiments expressed in organizational narratives above are persuasive and

effective, in part, because they align with the normative vision of members of Congress.

Indeed, the effusive language used by Peace Corps administrators is equally matched by

members of Congress from all parties. In a similar way that members of Congress

consistently refer to the organization's founding narrative when framing discussions of

the agency, members are outward in their praise for the agency. For example, during

recent congressional hearings, conservative Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) began his

testimony by plainly asserting, "I am a believer in the Peace Corps. I am a believer in that

Americans engaged internationally is a positive for our country, positive for our future,

and positive for the world" (Hearing 2011:20). During the same hearing, Senator Robert

Menendez (D-NJ) remarked:

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[16] Another example comes from the testimony of Peace Corps Director Paul Coverdell. In describing the triumph of American values in the Cold War, the director asserted: "How ironic it is that the Peace Corps and the Berlin Wall were products of the same era, and yet the wall is now being packaged in small fragments for sale in American department stores while the Peace Corps is stronger and richer than ever and is serving in more countries than at any time in our history" (Hearing 1990:23).

When John F. Kennedy created the Peace Corps, he saw it as more than a quixotic agency of young people on a mission of peace. He saw it as a fulfillment, a fundamental fulfillment of our values as a nation. He sought to encourage a better understanding between Americans from every walk of life and the people and cultures of other nations. [Our] late friend and colleague Ted Kennedy always used to say. "It is always better to send in the Peace Corps than the Marine Corps." Sending in the Marines, albeit necessary on occasion, is never a welcomed option. But sending in the Peace Corps is always a welcomed opportunity for us to extend the hand of freedom and democracy around the world and to show the world the power of our values rather than the value of our power (Hearing 2011:2).

In sum, we see in congressional discourse and organizational narratives a consistency over time in the belief that the Peace Corps is a legitimate embodiment of American values. Moreover, the Peace Corps is understood by the organization and members of Congress as a force of good in the world. This narrative construction, which I will call the *benevolence narrative*, has powerful path-dependent consequences. In later chapters, I will show how the shared positive assumptions associated with this narrative are used as a lens to assess and evaluate the work of the Peace Corps. Next, however, I consider how the benevolence narrative is manifest in discussions of the Peace Corps volunteers themselves.

Missionaries of Modernization: The Self-Sacrificing Volunteer

As noted, general sentiments regarding the exceptional nature of American culture and values, and its potential to transform individuals and communities abroad, permeate congressional discourse and organizational narratives. The United States and its citizens are presented as a generous and giving people. This finding on its own is important for understanding how development interventions abroad are legitimized and justified. Yet there is another dimension to this story.

There is perhaps no clearer distillation of the benevolence narrative than in discussions of the Peace Corps volunteers themselves. In much the same way that religious missionaries are portrayed as selfless individuals "spreading the good news" of the gospel, Peace Corps volunteers are portrayed as self-sacrificing agents of change who, in the service of progress, are catalysts for modernization. In making a point regarding the widespread praise for the Peace Corps and its volunteers abroad, Director Gaddi Vasquez (2002) quoted[17] the President of Kiribati, Mr. Teburoro Tito, during congressional testimony as saying, "This Republic is in love with the Peace Corps. We are in love with them, with their goals, their hard work, and their willingness to live like us" (Hearing 2002:8). This quote is important because it captures the simple, yet powerful way in which the organization consistently presents its volunteers as selfless development workers. The 1998 budget justification notes, for example, that volunteers "share a common spirit of service, dedication, and idealism. For two years, they pursue a life that requires determination, self-motivation, patience, and sacrifice" (Justification 1998:1). This is a narrative that imbues volunteers and the organization with meaning similar to the ways in which U.S. soldiers, despite being engaged in activities very different from Peace Corps volunteers, are cloaked with a sense of honor.[18] In this formulation, Peace Corps volunteers are not only representing American values, but they are doing so in such a way that involves great hardship. This framing reinforces the idea that volunteers and, by extension, the Peace Corps is simply trying to "do good" throughout the world. In their "willingness to live like us," to speak the same language, to

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[17] Quoting the leaders of recipient nations is a common strategy Peace Corps directors use during testimony to make the case that the Peace Corps is loved around the world.

[18] This is akin to way the public or members of Congress can be against the war in Iraq, for example, but not against the soldiers fighting the war. Of course, war-making and international development are not moral equivalents, but the same types of legitimacy processes are at play.

share in cultural exchange, to eat the same foods, and to work in remote locations, Peace Corps volunteers transform individuals and communities that are cut-off from the benefits of modern life into something more, something better. In short, volunteers are helping people at the grassroots overcome the cultural traditions and practices that impede their progress.

We are led to see Peace Corps volunteers as catalysts of change, as a means for spreading a vision for a better tomorrow to the hinterland, and as an effective tool for "making men modern." Organizational narratives and congressional discourse are full of references to the "good work" of volunteers and the positive impacts they can have on the dispositions of people at the grassroots. In each instance, Peace Corps volunteers are depicted as mechanisms through which forward-thinking dispositions can be transmitted. In the 1977 budget justification, for example, the agency quotes a volunteer serving in Nepal who makes the case that the introduction of material and nonmaterial technologies by Peace Corps volunteers is essential because villagers may "lack the conceptual kind of thinking that makes a departure from tradition possible" (Justification 1977:11). In 1979, the agency charges the volunteers with "encouraging individual responsibility" and "fostering self-reliance" among those served (Justification 1979:1). The 1982 justification makes reference to the essential, but "elusive," aspects of development that volunteers advance, including: "raising the consciousness of local people, providing a practical orientation, fostering problem-solving, stimulating ideas, and motivating communities" (Justification 1982:4). In 1985, volunteers are said to be engaged in "motivation development" that will "instill confidence and the concept of self-sufficiency" in those served abroad (Justification 1985:17). Striking an even more explicitly patronizing tone,

the 1998 justification frames the work of volunteers as helping transform mindsets to allow people to "expand their horizons," "lead fuller lives," and "assume more responsibility" for their future (p. 2). In short, as effective "role models of attitudes and possibilities," Peace Corps volunteers are a force for positive change (Justification 2001:6).

Such explicit allusions to progress through the transformation of dispositions is reminiscent of models used by religious missionaries. In effect, volunteers are spreading the "religion of modernization" (Rist 1997). By engaging in a sort of "lifestyle evangelism," Peace Corps volunteers will not only win the trust of the locals, but also accelerate the process of modernization. This notion, that by the example of their lifestyle, volunteers can transform entire communities demonstrates a remarkable confidence in the righteousness of American ideals. This repeatedly expressed belief in the "goodness" of the endeavor, coupled with notions of self-sacrifice on the part of volunteers, is an important lens through which the activities of the organization are understood and evaluated. That is, if one believes so fully in the virtue of Peace Corps volunteers and the mission of the organization, it becomes difficult to critique the agency. Instead, we are left with the general sentiment that *any development is better than no development*. This sentiment, if taken seriously, is a powerful window into sensemaking about organizational activities. In sum, the totality of positive valuations of the aims of the Peace Corps and the volunteers serve as a reservoir of legitimacy that, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Five, buffers the agency from close scrutiny. First, however, I turn to a brief discussion of how the agency constructs its objects of development.

The Narrative Construction of the Development Recipient

In addition to the ideological underpinnings that animate the Peace Corps, the organization also legitimizes its activities through narrative descriptions of country conditions that highlight desperate situations throughout the world. This task is achieved primarily in the annual budget justification country and regional summaries. Regional overviews include summative statements about the state of affairs in a given region regarding levels of poverty and development needs. In addition, the agency provides information regarding sector activity in each region. Perhaps most notable is the way in which descriptions paint a disastrous and perilous picture of life in developing countries. An example from the 1983 budget justification captures this sentiment well. The agency writes:

> The most simple survey of global conditions demonstrates that the potential, and the need, for Peace Corps assistance remains enormous. Climbing fuel prices have impaired development, and have contributed to economic instability in developing nations. The conundrum of overpopulation, malnutrition, and eroding natural resources has resulted in increased starvation and disease, declining forests, and expanding deserts. For the poorest of the world's poor, living is a constant struggle for survival. Unfortunately, most major studies predict that these problems and the toll of human suffering will worsen rather than abate in the near future" (Justification 1983:3).

Such dramatic depictions are followed immediately by explanations for the ways in which the Peace Corps is particularly suited to address such problems, with the agency asserting on an annual basis that the "need for the Peace Corps has never been greater."

An additional element in the narrative construction of the development recipient is the ways in which the agency draws on dominant development foci in legitimating its planning and programming. For example, we see this with the adoption of a Basic Human Needs (BHN) approach to development by the agency in the 1970s. A key metric that is

used to justify country presence during this period is the Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI), a standardized and widely used human development index measured by national literacy levels, infant mortality rates, and life expectancy rates. During the Carter administration, an amendment was added to the Peace Corps Act to reflect the agency's concern with basic needs of the poorest of the poor. Language was added to mandate that all development work done by the Peace Corps should focus "particularly on meeting the basic needs of those living in the poorest areas of such countries" (Public Law 95-331). In 1978, Congress also amended the Peace Corps Act to add a mandated agency focus on Women in Development (WID). And in 1981, the Act was amended with similar language focusing on the inclusion of "disabled people" in development.

Just two years later, in a fairly dramatic shift, Director Loret Ruppe provided a reassessment and reframing in how the agency talked about the individuals, communities, and countries it served, referring to them as potential consumers of American products and exporters of raw materials desired by U.S. companies. In the FY 1983 transmittal letter to Congress, the Director asserted: "Since the Peace Corps was founded twenty years ago, we have witnessed a profound change in our relationship with the developing world. Developing nations now represent the fastest growing customers of U.S. exports and have by far the greatest potential for further growth. We have become more dependent on developing nations for our essential raw materials" (Justification 1983:1). In this period, language regarding agency programming shifted away from the basic human needs discourses of the early 1980s toward an emphasis on programming in small business and the spread of democracy. By the 1990s the agency shifted once again when it began to emphasize programming focused on the environment and sustainability. At

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present, the agency works with individuals and communities in diverse contexts and

emphasizes development work in a range of development sectors, including: education,

health, community economic development, environment, youth in development, and

agriculture. Consistent throughout the programming changes detailed above has been the

delivery method—person-to-person development—a hallmark of the Peace Corps

development model.

Conclusion

Chapter Three sought to unpack the legitimating narratives that emerged at the

time of the Peace Corps' founding as well as their lasting effects. These narratives

represented the organization's presentation of self in a Goffmanian sense, and were

clearly linked to the agency's emergence and success. Indeed, the rise of the Peace Corps

in the 1960s was a triumph of a belief in the promise of modernization as an ideology and

development as an instrument to bring about social, political, and economic change. The

work of the Peace Corps, as set in motion by President Kennedy, was rooted in a myth

that constructed the organization and its volunteers as guardians of the moral cause of

development. That is, the agency's founding myth allowed its originators to construct,

and reformulate over time, narratives that framed the organization in quasi-religious like

terms. Development activities, in general, and the work of the Peace Corps, in particular,

were reduced to culturally salient stories that presented the aims and activities of the

organization as virtuous, charitable, and benevolent.[19] This organizational presentation of

self, relying on claims to moral legitimacy, generated widespread positive valuations of

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[19] This is notable because such narratives are typically the domain of philanthropic and charitable organizations rather than government agencies. The Peace Corps paves the way for this kind of narrative construction and sensemaking in government.

the Peace Corps and its volunteers among constituents and stakeholders that had profound implications for the organization over time.

The success of these narratives rested, in part, on their amplification by members of Congress who consistently lauded the organization for its efforts at affecting change throughout the world. The legitimacy accorded the agency by members of Congress was rooted fundamentally in an assumption that the agency was engaged in a morally righteous endeavor and that the agency was consistently making, at some level, a good faith effort to achieve its objectives. Moreover, the repeated retelling of the origins myth by members of Congress served to maintain the legitimacy of the Peace Corps that was derived from associations of the agency with the charisma and reputation of President Kennedy. In short, the relative agreement between members of Congress and the agency in maintaining the founding myth served as a very potent and durable basis for the legitimacy of the Peace Corps.

The Peace Corps' founding narrative not only animated a wide range of activity, but also, as I will show in Chapter Four, created space for loose coupling and buffered the agency from legitimacy challenges and crises over time. Moreover, I will show how the positive shared assumptions regarding development, in general, and the Peace Corps, specifically, expressed in congressional discourse and organizational narratives established a reservoir of legitimacy for the agency that it could draw on as it confronted legitimacy challenges over time. Finally, I will argue in subsequent chapters that these narratives, which became a core feature of the organization, created powerful path dependencies that, in some instances, prompted potential legitimacy crises amid the changing organizational and political context of subsequent decades.

CHAPTER FOUR: BALANCING BENEVOLENCE AND POLITICS

"To those peoples in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves."

President John F. Kennedy (1961)

"In helping others develop, we help ourselves."

President Ronald Reagan (1985)

"The popularity and success of the Peace Corps as an institution is a testament to the power of an idea that transcends both politics and partisanship."

Director Mark D. Gearan (1999)

Introduction

Despite shared positive assumptions about the aims and work of the Peace Corps, the agency must navigate competing visions of what its activities should look like in practice. In December 1984, as President Ronald Reagan was making preparations for the start of his second term, scholars at the Heritage Foundation, an influential conservative think tank in Washington, D.C., published a scathing critique of the Peace Corps and its Reagan-appointed director, Loret Miller Ruppe. The report (1984), titled "The Peace Corps: Out of Step With Reagan," leveled several accusations against the agency and its director for subverting the Reagan agenda. The foundation began the report by asserting:

President Ronald Reagan in 1981 nominated Loret Miller Ruppe to be director of the Peace Corps, a $100 million-per-year agency with 5,400 paid volunteers and 1,100 full-time employees operating in 60 countries around the world. Now, on the eve of Reagan's second term, the Peace Corps still largely ignores the Reagan Agenda. Not only have the agency and its director snubbed Reagan policy, they have actually fought against it on Capitol Hill. In numerous ways the Peace Corps has been an annoying thorn in Reagan's side, disregarding White House directives, making personnel appointments without proper White House clearance, and dragging its heels on vital foreign policy initiatives. As a result, many opportunities have been missed for extending the Reagan mandate to the Peace Corps (Huber 1984:33).

The Heritage Foundation report illuminates a persistent challenge for the Peace Corps. The agency must negotiate pressures from the administration, members of Congress, and external constituents and critics, while also implementing its congressional mandate as it sees fit. We begin to see that the goodwill accorded the agency discussed in Chapter Three is conditional. That is, stakeholders' feelings regarding the benevolent purpose of the organization are coupled with assessments regarding the extent to which the organization's practices align with different stakeholder's interests. In addition to navigating these domestic pressures, the agency and its leadership must also be mindful of perceptions of the agency among constituents abroad. This chapter seeks to better understand these legitimacy processes by addressing the following questions: How does the Peace Corps maintain legitimacy as it confronts a range of political pressures at home and abroad? How do external pressures challenge the legitimacy of the organization? How does the Peace Corps respond to these pressures over time?

In this chapter, I argue that the Peace Corps had to be responsive to members of Congress and the administration in its attempts at maintaining legitimacy. I make the case that agency directors were forced to manage the political environment and, particularly during Republican administrations, were more explicit about the agency's role in serving

U.S. foreign policy interests. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the mandated purposes of the Peace Corps. Next, I show how the Peace Corps and Congress sought to buffer the agency from the broader U.S. foreign policy apparatus for the purposes of maintaining autonomy, and to avoid perceptions abroad that the agency was an explicit tool to advance U.S. foreign policy interests. I then examine how the interests of the agency, individual members of Congress, and presidents converge and diverge over time. In the end, this chapter complicates the unified story of support for the Peace Corps presented in Chapter Three and raises questions regarding how the organization is ultimately assessed, evaluated, and supported by stakeholders and constituents.

Overview of the Peace Corps' Stated Purpose

The broad aim of the Peace Corps Act, as articulated in its Declaration of Purpose was "to promote world peace and friendship" through the realization of three goals. First, the Act sought to "provide for a Peace Corps to help the peoples of interested countries and areas in meeting their needs for skilled manpower." This objective, commonly referred to as the Peace Corps' "First Goal" pertains to the provision of *development assistance*. The second objective of the Peace Corps Act was the promotion of "a better understanding of the American people on the part of peoples served." The so-called "Second Goal" charges the agency with advancing *public diplomacy* and *cultural exchange abroad*. The final objective sought to advance "a better understanding of other peoples on the part of the American people." The aim of the agency's "Third Goal," thus, is to encourage volunteers upon their return to the United States to engage in *cultural exchange at home* by sharing their experiences with others. Peace Corps' original *three*

goals continue to guide the agency and feature prominently in nearly all printed agency materials. Moreover, the goals are consistently invoked in testimony and discussion of the agency. In short, the three goals serve as broad metrics, codified in U.S. law, by which the work of the Peace Corps is supposed to be organized and judged.

Above all, the First Goal (Development Assistance) guides the activities of the Peace Corps and absorbs the vast majority of the agency's resources.[20] The agency is not in the business of providing material aid or undertaking large-scale projects. Instead, the agency sees itself as a unique and special branch of the U.S. international development effort. Peace Corps' distinctiveness comes from its people-to-people approach to development, of which it sees itself as an exemplar. The agency seeks to transfer skills and change perceptions, attitudes, and worldviews of host-country nationals by living and interacting with locals. The agency takes great pride in the fact that volunteers speak local languages, live under similar conditions, and eat the same food as the people with whom they work. Such integration, according to agency officials, builds legitimacy and trust among those served which, in turn, allows volunteers to be more effective in their development work.

The person-to-person approach used by the Peace Corps is also viewed as a particularly effective means of transmitting American culture[21] to those abroad and

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[20] During congressional testimony in 1978, for example, ACTION Director Sam Brown asserted, "The most important contribution of the Peace Corps in the future must be its impact within the Third World nations in which it serves. Peace Corps is first a development agency; an agency which has and must continue to advance the kinds of village level, grassroots development recognized as being the most effective means of achieving positive and sustaining change for those with the greatest need" (Hearing 1978:58).

[21] Of course, what constitutes "American Culture" and which elements of this culture are emphasized changes over time. Moreover, there are debates among relevant stakeholders over what elements of this culture should and will be emphasized. Despite the value American's generally purport to place on freedom of speech, for example, the agency places some restrictions on volunteer involvement in and commentary about local political issues. Indeed, in recent years the agency has emphasized in its *Core*

dispelling stereotypes of Americans. The Second Goal (Public Diplomacy/Cultural

Exchange Abroad) formally articulates this objective. There are two discernible elements

to this effort. The first, public diplomacy, views Peace Corps volunteers as lay-

ambassadors of the U.S. government or the "face of the American people" to the rest of

the world. The second element, cultural modernization, imagines volunteers as

messengers of the "American way of life" through the work that they do and the way they

live—the attributes of which are understood to be prerequisites for development.

Historically, the Third Goal (Public Diplomacy/Cultural Exchange at Home) has

received minimal attention and funding by the agency and Congress, although agency

officials, agency reports, and some members of Congress lament the "missed

opportunity" for utilizing returned volunteers to educate the American public. In short,

fulfilling the Third Goal is not central to planning and programming at the agency.[22] Over

the period under study, Third Goal initiatives have received a minuscule amount of the

overall agency budget. The most tangible manifestations of the Third Goal are the *World

Wise Schools* program, started in 1989, which partners volunteers who are in the field

with elementary and middle-school classrooms in the states and the *Peace Corps Fellows

Program*, started in 1985, which is comprised of a consortium of graduate schools that

give preferential admissions consideration to returned volunteers for development-related

graduate school programs. As noted, not all of the agency's goals are equally emphasized

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Expectations for Peace Corps Volunteers that volunteers "Recognize that you will be perceived, in your
host country and community, as a representative of the people, cultures, values, and traditions of the United
States of America." Moreover, advances in electronic communication (e.g. blogs) and expanded access to
the internet has increased agency sensitivities regarding what volunteers make public about their service
experience.
[22] Associated with the Third Goal is the *National Returned Peace Corps Association* (NRPCA), a nonprofit
organization of returned volunteers headquartered in Washington, D.C. The NRPCA is often asked to give
congressional testimony on the Third Goal. The association has also made several attempts to be included
in the agency budget and partner with the agency as the official Third Goal outreach arm. To date, these
efforts have been unsuccessful.

in practice. As such, I omit the agency's Third Goal in the discussion below because of its relatively marginal status. In the discussion that follows, we see that the emphasis placed on goals one and two varies over time and across constituents.

The Peace Corps and U.S. Foreign Policy

Debates concerning the role of the Peace Corps in U.S. foreign policy have existed since its establishment in 1961. Where agencies such as USAID are explicit about their role as a tool to advance U.S. interests, the Peace Corps has generally resisted such classification. As such, a fundamental question hangs over the agency: Whose interests should the Peace Corps serve? Volunteers, agency staff and administrators, members of Congress, and presidential administrations come to this question with varying perspectives that ebb and flow over time.

In addressing the use of the Peace Corps as a tool to advance U.S. foreign interests during remarks to the National Advisory Council of the Peace Corps in 1961, President Kennedy's Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, asserted that "to make the Peace Corps an instrument of foreign policy would be to rob it of its contribution to foreign policy." Rusk's comment served as a caution to Congress and agency officials that if the Peace Corps were to be perceived abroad primarily as a tool of the U.S. government, or even more damaging, as an affiliate of the Central Intelligence Agency, then the organization would lose all legitimacy. In short, the strategic benefits that accrue to the United States from sending development volunteers abroad is better left unacknowledged. This tacit nod to the dual role of Peace Corps, that of aid agency and

public diplomacy agency, highlights the fine line the organization and Congress must walk in orchestrating the activities of the organization.

The formal distinction between the Peace Corps and the broader foreign policy apparatus was codified in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, which was amended in 1963 to prevent prohibitions on foreign aid included in the Peace Corps Act to be applied to agency activities in countries that the United States government deemed problematic. This sentiment was reaffirmed during initial appropriations hearings in 1993, when one member of Congress noted that "using them [Peace Corps volunteers] as political leverage" was not appropriate given the agency's "longstanding separation from foreign policy objectives" (Tarnoff 1998). This view was formally affirmed in 1993 when Congress added language to the Peace Corps appropriations bill reasserting the Peace Corps exception for conducting activities in countries where U.S. assistance has been prohibited (Tarnoff 1998). Congress has included similar language in all subsequent Peace Corps appropriations bills. There have been several occasions over the last fifty years where the U.S. government pulled embassy staff or cut various ties with governments abroad, yet the Peace Corps was allowed to continue operating in the country. One of the arguments advanced to support this position is that the Peace Corps is, fundamentally, people-to-people international assistance and not government-to-government assistance. That is, if the U.S. government has an issue with the leaders of another country, the people of that country should not, in these instances, pay the price.

A third issue relates to the autonomy of the Peace Corps relative to the executive branch. Despite formal steps to sequester the agency from the broader U.S. foreign policy apparatus, and numerous examples of agency and congressional calls to maintain the

separation, the historical record shows executive influence and involvement dating back to the agency's founding. Indeed, presidents have always had a hand in shaping the agency and, through the authority to appointment the agency's director, has the power to put in place an individual whose views align with those of the White House. However, this involvement is not spread consistently across all presidential administrations. As will be made clear, Republican administrations, and their appointed agency directors, tend to be far more explicit about the role of the Peace Corps in achieving broader foreign policy objectives.

Under President Nixon, the Peace Corps was placed under the umbrella agency ACTION and was subject to significant budget cuts and interference instigated by members of the administration. Following the decline of the agency during this period, concerned members of Congress and other supportive constituents had heightened sensitivity to the organizational autonomy of the agency. As the agency emerged from the Nixon/Ford era the topic was once again at the fore. The first Peace Corps director, Sergeant Shriver, was asked during testimony in 1978 whether he thought there needed to be insulation from White House influence "so that it will not be manipulated from President to President" (Hearing 1978:12). Shriver responded that indeed there needed to be a separation for the long-term interests of the agency because, as he noted, "for every time that you have a President who is really committed to the Peace Corps, you have a chance of getting one who is really not committed to it" (Hearing 1978:152). These concerns were renewed during the George W. Bush presidency when, following the September 11 attacks, the administration sought to bring all volunteer and service agencies, including the Peace Corps, under the aegis of what the administration called the

Freedom Corps. Unlike Nixon's ACTION agency, however, President Bush's effort to establish the Freedom Corps was not an attempt to directly control the agency. Accordingly, concern on the part of members of Congress and other stakeholders was muted.

An additional consideration with regard to the Peace Corps autonomy is the agency's desire to be viewed first as a development agency and, secondarily, as a public diplomacy agency. At times, agency officials express concern regarding the potential negative consequences to agency effectiveness if constituents abroad see the agency as a tool of foreign influence.[23] The effectiveness of the Peace Corps development model rests on the volunteers' ability to integrate into the communities in which they serve. As such, any policy or practice that undermines the status of the volunteer as benevolent change agent weakens the potential development-related impact of the volunteer. Agency officials emphasize that associations with U.S. foreign policy or intelligence, real or perceived, undercut its ability to deliver effective development assistance. That is, if recipient governments see the Peace Corps first as a tool for the United States to win the favor of populations abroad, and secondarily, as an instrument for development, then a key basis for its legitimacy with constituents abroad will be lost. It became clear in congressional discourse, however, that many in Congress had little interest in the tangible development outcomes (i.e., First Goal) produced by Peace Corps volunteers. Instead, emphasis is placed on the agency's ability to engage in public diplomacy abroad.

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[23] Agency administrators have also consistently argued that perceived affiliations of the Peace Corps with the U.S. foreign policy apparatus would place volunteers in danger by making them potential targets of enemies of the U.S government. Congressional sensitivities to this issue have risen drastically since the attacks of September 11, 2001.

There are numerous examples in agency discourse and congressional testimony where the organization makes explicit its role in U.S. foreign policy in order to justify itself. In other instances, the organization is pressed by members of Congress to justify its actions in terms of benefits to the United States. At times, these exchanges are somewhat veiled and in other instances the veneer of benevolence the agency enjoys is stripped clean and administrators are pressed to justify the agency's actions in purely self-interested terms. Such exchanges reflect the competing and changing conceptualizations of the organization and lay bare tensions inherent in administering a government-run bilateral international development agency. In addition, geopolitical shifts bring out more transparent discussions regarding the strategic placement of volunteers. It is to the interplay between the interests of presidential administrations, agency directors, members of Congress, and a changing geopolitical environment that I now turn.

Cracks in the Veneer

As noted above, volunteers, agency staff and administrators, members of Congress, and presidential administrations approach the question of whose interests should be served by the Peace Corps from varying perspectives that fluctuate over time. Although the separation of the Peace Corps from the broader foreign policy apparatus is codified in law, this line is blurred in practice. The agency and Congress engage in a dance of sorts when foreign policy interests or geopolitical shifts make sending in Peace Corps volunteers an attractive strategic decision.

At the outset of the period under study, however, allusion to the role of the Peace Corps in U.S foreign policy was muted or left unspoken in organizational documents and

congressional discourse. As Carter assumed the presidency, the agency leadership

lamented the "deterioration in program quality that occurred between 1969 and 1977"

and dedicated itself to a "resurgence and rebirth of established Peace Corps principles

and ideals" (Justification 1979:1). The Peace Corps, then embedded in the umbrella

agency ACTION, and under the leadership of ACTION Director Sam Brown and

Director Carolyn Payton, committed itself to the Basic Human Needs approach to

development and sought, in the words of Director Payton, to "cooperate with host

countries in the basically human process of development, working on a human scale and

in a humane way" (Justification 1977:1). Such sentiments aligned closely with the

priorities of the Carter administration. The agency articulated its intention to work closely

with local communities, especially the poor, to design and implement development

programming that was rooted in people-to-people exchanges that fostered "self-help

efforts at the community level" (Justification 1979:14). In many ways, the Carter

administration efforts sought to recapture the altruism of the Peace Corps' effort

espoused in the Kennedy era.

The Carter administration also sought to reaffirm the separation of the agency

from other components of the federal government. Mary King, who replaced Carolyn

Payton as agency Director in 1978, was clear when asked during testimony whether the

agency would depart or not consider sending volunteers to a country whose government's

actions or ideology did not align with the interests of the United States, citing, in this

case, President Carter's philosophy on human rights. Referring to such issues as a

"nettlesome question," Director King stated succinctly, "We [the Peace Corps] do not at

the moment utilize the instrumentalities of any other Federal agency in our analyses and

assessments" (Hearing 1978:33). In short, the view of the Peace Corps as an autonomous agency was reaffirmed.

Despite the efforts of the Carter administration to recapture the altruism of the past and autonomy of the agency, a significant shift occurred in both the approach and tone at the Peace Corps when the Reagan administration took power. The earliest indication of this shift, although modest, came in 1981 when Director Richard Celeste referred to the Peace Corps as "an example of successful international relations" in his transmittal letter to congress (p. 3). Celeste's comment was the first public indication that the Peace Corps was entering a period wherein the agency would be reframed to its constituents more explicitly as a tool for U.S. foreign policy.

This shift took a dramatic turn under the leadership of Celeste's successor, Director Loret Miller Ruppe. Ruppe was adept at framing the work of the Peace Corps in terms of conservative ideals and was explicit about the benefits of Peace Corps volunteers abroad, arguing in her second transmittal letter to Congress that U.S. volunteer service abroad had resulted in an "invaluable" and "incalculable reservoir of goodwill for America," noting that the "need to maintain and add to this reservoir is greater now than ever" (Justification 1983:2).

One of the first changes that that occurred under Director Ruppe's leadership was an initiative to develop a formal partnership with USAID. USAID was known as having an explicit role in advancing U.S. interests abroad. In addition to the Peace Corps' historic aversion to being clearly linked to U.S. government interests, the USAID development model of providing direct material aid to recipients was viewed as in conflict with the Peace Corps development model of people-to-people development.

Indeed, Peace Corps officials long sought to guard the agency against the perception among those served that the agency was one that simply provided material goods. The rationale for this effort was captured well in the testimony of Director Ron Tschetter, who argued several years later that, "Allowing volunteers to either raise funds or use seed funding for demonstration projects diminishes their primary objectives," which, according to the Director, "goes against the agency's basic philosophy of helping others to help themselves" (Hearing 2007:11).

Despite this concern, planners at the Peace Corps and USAID began to see the potential in partnerships between volunteers, who knew the language and culture and live among the people they serve, and the material resources and development expertise of USAID. The partnership, introduced early in the Reagan administration, was codified in a memorandum of understanding between the two agencies in 1983 (Justification 1983). In the arrangement, USAID would provide development expertise, especially in terms of project planning and material inputs, and Peace Corps volunteers would implement USAID sponsored projects in the hinterland.

As the USAID-Peace Corps partnership was getting underway, the administration, through Secretary of State George Schultz, publically reaffirmed the importance of the independence of the Peace Corps in a cable to ambassadors around the world. In the message, Secretary Schultz asserted, "To be effective, the Peace Corps must remain substantially separate from the formal day-to-day conduct and concerns of foreign policy because of its unique people-to-people character" (Hearing 2002:24). The USAID-Peace Corps partnership was the first indication that the longstanding separation of Peace Corps from the broader foreign policy apparatus was about to come to an end.

The shift toward greater coordination between the Peace Corps and other elements of the U.S. foreign policy apparatus intensified in a dramatic way in 1985, following the Heritage Foundation's scathing critique of the agency and Director Ruppe. At the direction of the White House, the Peace Corps began to plan its activities "in full coordination with the Department of State and the Agency for International Development," and presented a budget that, as the agency noted, "affirm[ed] the importance of the Peace Corps not only as a vital component of the overall U.S. approach to international development, but also as an important vehicle of public diplomacy" (p. 1). Despite concerns of the past, such sentiments were echoed by members of Congress. Indeed, the argument that the Peace Corps should be separate from the broader U.S. foreign policy apparatus was met with indignation from members of Congress who argued that the Peace Corps, by minimizing its affiliation with the U.S. government, was failing in its public diplomacy efforts and, hence, wasting taxpayer dollars.

In addition to pressures coming from the Heritage Foundation and similarly critical arguments by members of Congress, the agency was subject to external pressures coming from two influential foreign policy commissions—the Carlucci Commission on Economic and Security Assistance and the Kissinger Commission on Central America. Both commissions sought to articulate the geopolitical dangers facing the United States and articulate a path forward that included leveraging U.S. military and international aid to protect and advance U.S interests abroad. In its 1985 justification, the Peace Corps noted that the proposed budget they were putting forward to Congress had the endorsements of both the Carlucci Commission and the Kissinger Commission.

These endorsements were not simply based on some abstract philosophical alignment between the Commissions and the Peace Corps. Indeed, the coordination of the Peace Corps with the administration's wishes coming out of the Kissinger Commission were quite dramatic. Former Nixon Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, a powerful, well-connected, and experienced voice in foreign policy, argued strongly that U.S. intervention in Central America needed to be more robust in order to push back against what the Commission framed as the exploitation of unrest occurring in Central America by the Soviets and Cubans. In short, the Commission made the argument that Cold War opponents were at the doorstep of the United States and a strong and decisive response was needed. The Peace Corps was advanced as a potentially effective instrument in a broader push into the region. The agency and its volunteers were viewed as effective front-line emissaries who could spread American and modern ideologies throughout the region and serve as an antidote to the communist threat.

Shortly after the publication of the Kissinger report, the Peace Corps vastly expanded its programs throughout Central America, increasing the overall numbers of volunteers in the region substantially in just one year. In justifying this move, the agency used language that presented an emboldened agency announcing its arrival as a player in the foreign affairs community. Because this marks such a dramatic shift in the public face of the organization, I cite text from the agency's justification at length:

> During the past few years, the Peace Corps has experienced a confirmation of its place in the foreign affairs community. Since the Peace Corps' beginning in 1962, it has been an axiom that its programs are not the tools of short-term foreign policy. It has become increasingly clear during the past year, however, that the Peace Corps plays an important role in advancing the long-term international goals of American foreign policy.

Recent reviews of American foreign policy, carried out at the highest level of the Administration, have reaffirmed the value of the Peace Corps as an international agency. The Commission on Security and economic assistance, chaired by Ambassador Frank Carlucci, endorsed the Peace Corps not only for its immediate positive effects on the families and villages in less-developed nations, but also for the enduring human resource development and institution building represented by 23 years of continuous "people-to-people" programing. The Carlucci Commission singled out the over 100,000 returned Volunteers in this country as a potent political constituency, knowledgeable and concerned about foreign affairs.

The National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, chaired by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, has stressed the positive effects that will result from an enhanced Peace Corps presence in Central America. In fact, the Commission recommended a quintupling of the Peace Corps presence in that region.

The recent internal review of U.S. foreign assistance programs conducted as part of the development of the President's 1985 budget, affirmed the importance of Peace Corps activities. Twenty U.S. Ambassadors, responding to a survey representing a geographic cross-section of the developing world, expressed a unanimous perception of the Peace Corps as effective in promoting both developmental and public diplomacy goals in their countries. With this budget request, this Administration is affirming its continued support for the Peace Corps, a support that fully recognizes the importance of the Peace Corps in the international arena (Justification 1985:1).

The declaration above was by far the most forward affirmation of Peace Corps as

a strategic tool to advance U.S foreign policy interests that had appeared in an agency

budget justification to date. In some respects, the organization's foreign policy narrative

above stands in stark contrast to the benevolence narratives discussed in Chapter Three.

Instead of the seemingly altruistic motive of advancing development embedded in the

benevolence narrative, the foreign policy narrative constructs the Peace Corps purely as a

diplomatic tool. The story put forward in this narrative is that the world is becoming more

unstable. Countries are advancing through stages of development but democracy is

fledgling and potential threats to the United States are becoming more real. In this

formulation, Peace Corps volunteers serve as front line ambassadors who, through their

good works, mollify potential hostilities toward the United States. Accordingly, the tangible development effects of volunteer activities (e.g., the First Goal) became secondary.

An additional window into the support of Congress for the Peace Corps is in its allocations to the agency. It is clear during this period that Congress was committed to supporting the Peace Corps through appropriation levels that would allow the agency to act on the foreign policy aspirations articulated above. Figure 3.1 below shows agency budget requests and congressional appropriations by year. Notable here is that while government programs, both domestic and international, were being slashed across the board by the Regan administration, the Peace Corps received congressional appropriations that exceeded its requests. Data presented in the graph show that, in general, the Peace Corps typically receives the funding it requests. And in times when threats to the United States abroad rise, so do the fortunes of the Peace Corps. In sum, if we are to take appropriations as an indicator of congressional support, backing of the agency is evident throughout much of the life of the organization.

Figure 3.1 Peace Corps Budget Requests and Congressional Appropriations by Year, 1977-2012 (in millions)
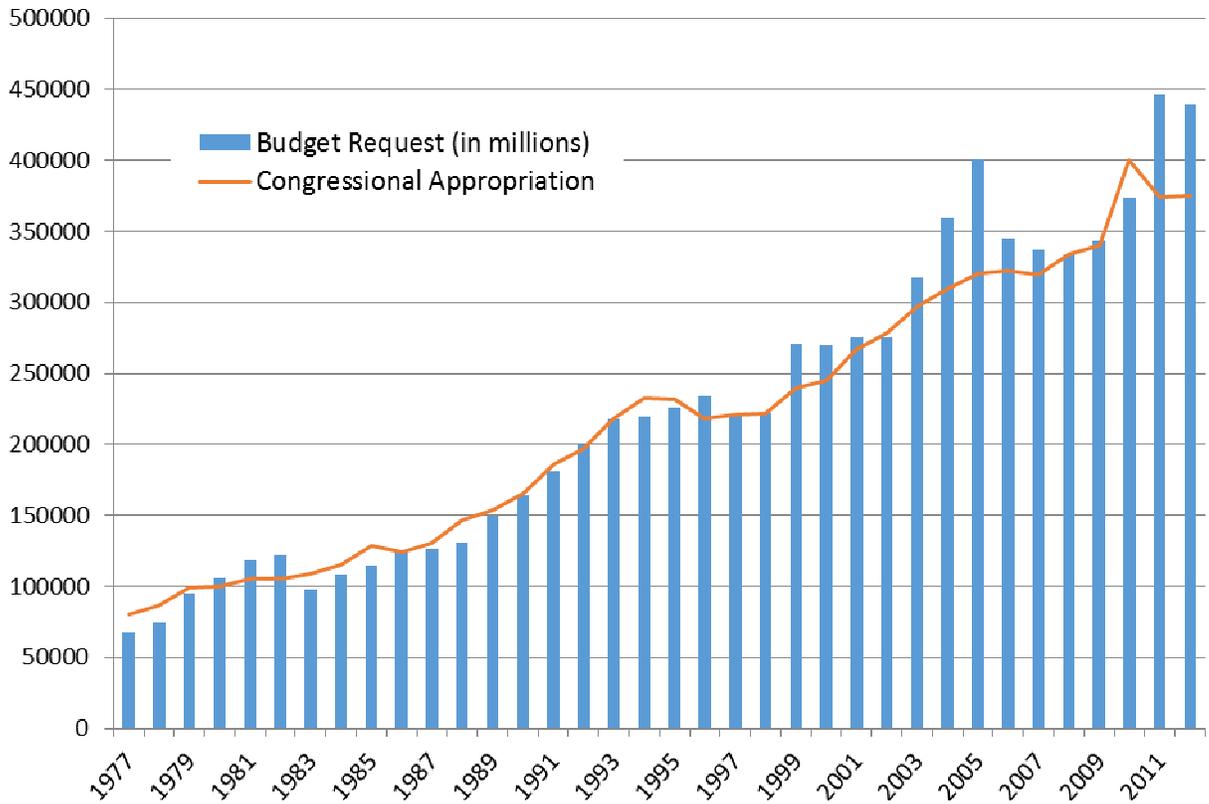
A related issue discussed in nearly every congressional hearing on the Peace Corps is the setting of goals for the total number of volunteers in the field. Reagan and each successive president have called for an increase in the number of volunteers in the field. In 1985, congress amended the Peace Corps Act declaring "that it is the policy of the United States and a purpose of the Peace Corps to maintain, to the maximum extent appropriate and consistent with programmatic and fiscal considerations, a volunteer corps of at least 10,000 individuals" (Peace Corps Act Sec. 2 (b)). Since the Act was amended, the agency has yet to meet this goal. President George W. Bush, in his 2002 State of the Union address, proposed expansion to 14,000 Volunteers (doubling the size of the Peace

Corps at that time, which was 7,000 volunteers). In 2007, then presidential candidate

Barack Obama called for doubling the size of the Peace Corps from 7,800 volunteers to

16,000 by its 50th anniversary in 2011. Obama made similar calls as president. By and

large, agency testimony on this matter is supportive of expansion. However, agency

officials discourage setting an arbitrary number and timeline, favoring instead to grow the

agency through quality programming and host-country need. They fear that sending out

more volunteers without proper site development will hurt the agency's reputation and

lead to dissatisfaction among volunteers.

The sentiments above regarding the role of the Peace Corps in advancing U.S.

foreign policy interests and congressional support though appropriations extend into the

George H. W. Bush presidency, whose first budget provided the biggest year-to-year

jump in funding for the agency in twenty-five years. The Bush administration sought to

rapidly increase the number of countries served in order to "allow Peace Corps to build a

bridge of hope" to additional nations (Justification 1989:1).[24] The administration

portrayed the Peace Corps as a hedge against global instabilities that were thought to

accompany shifts that were occurring in what agency and administration officials saw as

an increasingly interdependent world. The agency noted that in these "times of global

interdependence," the U.S. must recognize that "the problems of countries overseas are

also our problems" (Justification 1989:3).

In 1991, attention shifted to the Soviet Union, where the agency noted that a "new

era is unfolding" that will "challenge our nation as never before" (p. 1). Once again, the

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[24] In testimony to the House National Security Subcommittee, Director Paul Coverdell, explained that he was determined to meet as many requests for Peace Corps volunteers as he could, to work toward achieving what he called, "Maximum Peace Strength," which he defined to members as "the stage at which Peace Corps will play a meaningful role in all countries seeking assistance" (Hearing 1990:27).

agency used rather dramatic language to frame the transformations occurring throughout

the world and reasserted the role of the Peace Corps as a key player in managing these

transitions:

> In the last two years, the political and economic structures of our world have changed dramatically. From Moscow to Managua, communism is out; democracy and free enterprise are in. From Africa to Asia and from Europe to Latin America, dictatorship is in disfavor. From Budapest to Buenos Aires, freedom and opportunity are the watchwords of a new era. [T]he walls have crumbled. The people have voted. The doors of small businesses are swinging open. And now, the real work begins. There are new philosophies, new leaders, new hopes and new dreams. But hopes and dreams can provide only the promise of better days ahead. It will be up to people to improve their own lives, step by step, one day at a time—and Peace Corps is ready to help (Justification 1992:1).

Like the shift into Central America that followed the recommendations of the

Kissinger Commission, the administration and members of Congress decided to move

swiftly into the newly independent states and saw the Peace Corps as key tool in winning

the hearts and minds of the citizens of former Soviet Republics. The agency embarked on

a rapid expansion of programs, starting first in Hungary and Poland. The Peace Corps

entered eleven new countries in 1990, fourteen new countries in 1991, and six more in

1992. In total, the Peace Corps expanded from 65 countries in 1989 to 94 countries in

1992, a 44 percent increase in just four years. Congress moved quickly to equip the Peace

Corps with sufficient resources to support this expansion, transferring an additional tens

of millions of dollars in appropriations annually to the agency from the New Independent

States (NIS) fund, which was established by Congress at the close of the Cold War.

An additional, albeit lesser-noticed, issue came to the fore at the beginning of the

George H.W. Bush presidency. Paul Coverdell, the administration's first appointed

agency director, could not understand why the agency was known and promoted abroad

simply as the *Peace Corps*, instead of the *United States Peace Corps*. In an interview

with the *Washington Post*, Coverdell agued, "I do not believe we should hide the name of the country that has sponsored the wonderful things we have done around the world" (quoted in Meisler 2012:169). Accordingly, Director Coverdell ordered all domestic and international Peace Corps offices to begin using agency logos and printed materials that read "United States Peace Corps." This move was loudly denounced by return volunteer organizations and some members of Congress who argued, once again, that the agency would lose legitimacy if it too explicitly aligned itself with the U.S. government. Director Coverdell's move was quickly abandoned following the election of Bill Clinton.

When Bill Clinton assumed the presidency, organizational narratives concerning the role of the Peace Corps in the U.S. foreign policy apparatus largely receded. There was an explicit shift away from a focus on public diplomacy prominent in the previous Republican administrations toward development activities. The agency began to emphasize programming focused on the environment, HIV/AIDS, and continued programming that sought to spread democracy. However, instead of emphasizing the interests of the United States, the agency noted throughout the Clinton administration that programming should reflect the national development strategies of the countries served and, once again, began to emphasize basic human needs in agency programming (Justification 1995). However, throughout the Clinton administration, Congress continued to transfer supplemental appropriations to the Peace Corps from the NIS fund. In 1998, the Senate Foreign Operations Subcommittee affirmed the continuation of additional NIS fund transfers to the Peace Corps and "strongly encouraged" the agency to "reevaluate volunteer levels in countries to reflect the shifts in U.S. priorities and interests in the post-cold-war environment" (Hearing 1998). Interestingly, the

subcommittee criticized the agency for having too many volunteers in Central America, a hold-over of the Kissinger Commission expansion, and an indication of shifting American interests abroad.

Just as Republican George W. Bush assumed the presidency, agency language shifted once again to a more explicit expression of the benefits to the U.S. of sending volunteers abroad. In February of 2001, after remarking how volunteers embody the all that is good about the United States, Director Mark Schneider (2001) noted that "Volunteers also advance our own country's interests by strengthening the ties of friendship and cross-cultural understanding. Given America's leadership position in the global economy, this domestic dividend has never been more important" (Justification 2001:1). This domestic dividend receives increased attention after the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001.[25]

Shortly after George W. Bush assumed the presidency, U.S. interests abroad shifted once again. Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, greater emphasis was placed on expanding to countries with predominantly Muslim populations. Similar to expansion efforts following the end of the Cold War, the administration sought additional appropriations for the Peace Corps. In his State of the Union address following the September 11 attacks, President Bush asserted: "America needs citizens to extend the compassion of our country to every part of the world. So we will renew the promise of the Peace Corps, double its volunteers over the next five years and ask it to join a new effort to encourage development and education and opportunity in the Islamic world" (Bush 2002).

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[25] Moreover, there is increased attention from outside observers regarding the use of Peace Corps volunteers as an instrument of American "soft power" over this period (Rieffel 2006).

Similar sentiments were expressed in congressional testimony shortly thereafter during senate hearings in 2002 regarding a bill intended to expand and enhance the Peace Corps. Senator Chris Dodd, a sponsor of the bill, argued that "We [the United States] especially need to act in places where there are people unfamiliar or hostile to American values. Now more than ever Peace Corps volunteers play a pivotal role in helping to achieve a greater understanding of America abroad, especially in predominantly Muslim nations" (Hearing 2002:2). During the same hearings, Peace Corps Director Gaddi Vasquez noted that two-thirds of the countries that were being considered for Peace Corps entry were predominantly Muslim countries (Hearing 2002:12). Five years later, Director Ron Tschetter reported during Senate testimony that "over 20 percent of [Peace Corps] volunteers were working in 15 predominantly Muslim countries" (Hearing 2007:5). The emphasis by the agency and members of Congress on expansion into predominately Muslim countries has continued to the present time.

Conclusion

Chapter Four sought to examine the interplay of claims to legitimacy, as well as the complexity of legitimacy processes, between the Peace Corps, Congress, and the White House. Agencies must manage their organizational presentation of self in order to maintain legitimacy as political environments shift. This chapter shows how the Peace Corps changed and adapted to the political realties it faced under different political regimes.

As described in Chapter Three, the Peace Corps' founding narrative became deeply embedded in the organization, which had powerful path-dependent consequences.

While the narrative served as a potent source of legitimacy, it also paved the way for a potential legitimacy crisis in subsequent decades as members of Congress and presidential administrations sought to explicitly use the agency to meet political objectives abroad. These efforts to politicize the organization directly challenged the original founding narrative, undercutting the organization's legitimacy in the eyes of the rank-and-file as well as various external constituencies.

Because the agency depends on the support of Congress for its continued existence, it needed to walk a fine line in managing its desire to maintain autonomy with the immediate need to garner the support of members of Congress. As pressures on the agency to align its work with the strategic interests of the United States began to rise, the organization's leadership had to decide if it would yield to pressures from the administration and members of Congress or seek to maintain legitimacy through the separation of the agency's activities from the U.S. foreign policy apparatus.

Making the Peace Corps an explicit component of U.S foreign policy was, in many ways, antithetical to the agency's founding myth. As discussed above, the Peace Corps was designed to be, at least in appearance, an apolitical and autonomous arm of the U.S. international aid regime at its founding—a separation that was codified in U.S. law. As such, calls for the agency to become more explicitly political created fundamental crises of legitimacy for the agency. Although the instrumental logics guiding members of Congress' desire to use the Peace Corps as a tool of foreign policy made strategic sense, it threatened the reservoir of legitimacy that was built over time by the organization. Indeed, this reservoir of legitimacy was based on qualities—charity and benevolence— that are in many respects fragile and, if not guarded closely, easily tarnished. So while the

Peace Corps' founding myth was clearly a strength for the organization, in this instance, it also made the agency particularly vulnerable.

The external pressures placed on the organization to adapt to political realities were most acute during the Regan presidency. In this period, the agency had to navigate its desire to work in accordance with the foreign policy interests of the White House and members of Congress, while also maintaining its autonomy. The agency's capitulation to the Kissinger Commission laid bare the power of the executive and Congress to influence the activities of the Peace Corps. We see in the case of Director Ruppe, an adept attempt to align the agency's activities with the interests of Congress. In managing its presentation of self to Congress through these pressures, the organization reframed its purpose to align its claims for legitimacy to fit the political demands of the organizational environment. In short, the agency maintained legitimacy through a loose coupling of its legitimacy claims. On the one hand, the Peace Corps shifted some of its resources to countries of strategic interest and expanded its work into sectors such as small business development. By and large, however, the vast majority of Peace Corps volunteers continued the agency's long-standing legacy of trying to meet the basic needs of those served, while fostering a "self-help" philosophy rooted in notions of the transformative potential for individuals and communities abroad.

In sum, this Chapter Four shows how the institutionalization of one set of legitimacy claims and associated narratives preceded emerging foreign policy narratives which, in practice, led to decoupling and produced some reframing of the organization's activities. The demands of the organizational environment placed new pressures on the organization to transform its operations, but the organization's strong founding narrative

impeded radical transformation. Indeed, if there was not such a strong founding narrative, we might have otherwise expected that the Peace Corps would have changed more dramatically. Instead, the agency was able to buffer itself from the effects of competing political pressures. The agency adopted some alternative narratives but, by and large, these narratives were only loosely coupled to organizational activity. In the end, some practices of the organization did change, but the agency was able in large part to buffer itself from drastic shifts by managing a strategic Goffmanian presentation of self and again relying on path dependencies rooted in the organization's founding narrative. In sum, the findings presented above demonstrate that legitimacy processes not only bring about policy-practice decoupling, but also the loose coupling of legitimacy claims themselves.

CHAPTER FIVE: MANAGING ACCOUNTABILITY

How can we on this subcommittee be assured that the Peace Corps is meeting its legislative goals? How do we know that the Peace Corps is providing real and durable benefits for the developing countries and how can we be confident that the volunteers are both personally rewarded and better citizens for their experience?

Rep. Michael Harrington (1979)

Organizations whose ultimate goal is to produce a complex good face the challenge of developing meaningful metrics of accomplishment and clearly establishing the causal efficacy of particular programs or activities.

Bromley and Powell (2012:18)

When asking the question of whether development has happened or not, the answer must be grounded in the faith that it is possible to believe that development can happen. In other words, development cannot be evaluated without making assumptions about those who make development and those who evaluate it. Assumptions involve questions of belief and faith.

Cowan and Shenton (1996:102)

Introduction

In the late 1990s the Peace Corps faced a new set of pressures and potential threats to its legitimacy. Although the agency enjoyed widespread support based, in part, on shared positive assumptions about its activities, as well as self-interested assessments of the agency by its constituents, the agency would not escape widespread calls for greater government accountability. Indeed, recent research suggests that contemporary organizations face increasing and more intense external pressures, especially in terms of

pressures for assessment and accountability, as well as the rise in "audit cultures" that emphasize continual monitoring of organizational activity through performance and outcome measurements (Bromley and Powell 2012; Strathern 2000). The motivation for legitimacy moves organizations to demonstrate that they have in place policies and practices that are understood by the external environment to be in line with what a "legitimate" development agency should be doing. In short, there is an incentive for organizations to appear as though they are engaged in all of the "right" practices in order to garner support. Based on the arguments made in Chapter Three, it is possible, however, that development organizations have greater latitude in this area because of the low bar to which development organizations are held and the built in "logic of confidence" that accompanies activities that are perceived as being charitable. In short, development organizations may have a built in legitimacy buffer because of the nature of their work.

Chapter Five examines how the organization adapted to the rise of the accountability regime in the 1990s and beyond. During this period, all government agencies were facing greater scrutiny. Congress passed the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) in 1993, which mandated that all government agencies develop clear, measurable performance outcomes that they were required to report to Congress annually. In short, the GPRA created new political and cultural pressures on the organization to have legitimate processes in place to demonstrate organizational performance. To examine these issues, I address the following questions: How does the rise of the accountability regime in the 1990s change the Peace Corps? How does the

organization modify its narratives and practices in order to maintain legitimacy under the new regime?

The chapter begins with an examination of evaluation and assessment practices at the Peace Corps prior to the rise of the accountability regime. I then provide a brief overview of the origins and effects of audit cultures for government practices. Next, I detail how the agency responded to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) mandate and framed its activities to Congress. Finally I consider how, after ten years of the GPRA mandate, the Peace Corps begins to align some of its policies, assessments, and practices.

Virtuous Endeavors: Evaluation and Assessment at the Peace Corps (pre-GPRA)

Throughout the history of the Peace Corps, the agency has made various attempts at assessing and evaluating its work. Efforts have included individual evaluations of volunteers, country reviews, and sector studies (e.g., education). However, there has been no comprehensive or longitudinal research done on the effectiveness of Peace Corps volunteers and agency programming to date.[26] Moreover, the evaluations that have been conducted by the agency are limited in scope. Despite the paucity of empirical evidence regarding agency and volunteer effectiveness, organizational narratives and congressional discourse are replete with positive assessments of agency and volunteer activity. These assessments come in a variety of forms.

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[26] Indeed, when collecting data at the National Archives and Peace Corps Headquarters in 2007, I interviewed the agency's head of research, evaluation, and measurement. During the meeting, I inquired about the availability of agency documents pertaining to evaluation, noting that I had only come across a couple such studies in my archival research. She commented that she, too, was surprised to find such a limited amount of systematic evaluation at the agency and indicated she was unsure "what else was out there." She then asked that I forward to her any evaluation reports or materials I came across in the archives.

Anecdotes provide the vast majority of supportive evidence. One category of anecdotal evidence comes in the form of quotations from community members and leaders in recipient countries. A typical example comes from the Peace Corps' 1981 budget justification. The agency quotes Adrian Guzman, identified as a community leader in Fortuna, Costa Rica who says, "In 1964 we had in Fortuna only people and problems. We had no roads, no high school, no health center, no electricity, nothing. So that's why we asked the Peace Corps to send a volunteer. From this organization we have built a new village with new ideas, new roads, a new high school, a health center, electricity, and telephone. We now have new hopes for the lives of our citizens" (Justification 1981:24). In short, the story asks constituents to believe that the presence of Peace Corps volunteers can and has transformed entire communities.

References to individual volunteer projects are a second category of anecdotal evidence frequently used by agency officials. During testimony in 1992, Director Elaine Chao relayed a series of volunteer success stories to members of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs that presented Peace Corps volunteers as sacrificing individuals transforming individual lives and communities throughout the world. Director Chao offered stories about individual volunteers in Bulgaria, Honduras, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Niger, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Sierra Leone, ending her comments by saying, "I mention these not as anecdotes, but as a representative sample of some of the wonderful work that I see our volunteers do throughout the world" (Hearing 1992:55). By effectively narrating the experiences of the volunteers, in the context of shared assumptions about the goodness of progress and development, the agency is able to

project a benevolent and effective identity, one that members of Congress generally accept even in the face of no or very limited empirical evidence.

The agency and members of Congress also frequently cite the demand for volunteers abroad as an indicator of effectiveness. The agency notes in 1984, for example, that "the demand for our services—a vital, tangible measure of the success of our volunteers and programs—continues to greatly outstrip our capacity to supply volunteers" (Justification 1984:1). When Director Loret Ruppe was asked by a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs how she would answer the question, are we satisfied that we [the Peace Corps] are doing a good job [and] that we are making a difference, she indicated that the agency was continually evaluating programs in the field, although these evaluations had been cut back due to budget considerations. Director Ruppe did not provide any findings from said evaluations, referencing instead a rise in requests for volunteers as an indicator of success. Her comment was readily accepted by committee members.

A final indicator of agency success used frequently in congressional discourse and organizational narratives is the continuation of volunteer presence in a given country. That is, a recipient government's desire to continue hosting Peace Corps volunteers is taken as a measure of support for the work that volunteers do. Such a metric for success runs somewhat counter to an informal philosophy of the agency, which is to "work itself out of a job." That is, if the agency is indeed successful at bringing about individual and community development that, rooted in its people-to-people model, results in greater capacity among those served, then there should be a point at which continuation of volunteer assignments in a given location is an indicator of failure rather than success.

This point, however, is left largely unaddressed in congressional discourse and organizational narratives. Indeed, the only example in my analysis of thirty-five years of congressional discourse and organizational narratives came from the president of the National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers during Senate testimony who noted that the Peace Corps had, at that time, been in Ghana and Sierra Leone for 29 years, yet there had not been one summative study of the contributions of Peace Corps volunteers in these countries (Hearing 1990).

Despite the relative paucity of systematic evidence of effectiveness, the agency consistently makes sweeping assertions about its work to Congress in documents and testimony. In 1984, the agency asserts that its "proven record of help remains as strong as ever" (Justification 1994:1). Three years later, the agency's transmittal letter to congress notes that, "Peace Corps has a proven twenty-five year track record of providing assistance through programs which are effective both in terms of impact and cost" (Justification 1987:1). In another justification, the agency asserts, "Their [volunteers] work in more than 100 nations has significantly improved the lives of millions of people" (Justification 1992:1). Yet, consistently, the agency is not able to substantiate such assertions with data other than those mentioned above.

The organization shows that it is aware, at times, that its attempt at providing evidence regarding the effectiveness of volunteers is constrained. This is especially true with regard to development outcomes (i.e., Goal One). In 1977, for example, the agency notes, "The developmental accomplishments of the Peace Corps are not always easily measured. Human development is unquantifiable, and progress is often frustratingly slow" (Justification 1977:10). The agency goes on to assert that volunteers "know they

had a hand, even if only in a small way, in changing how some of the world's most needy people live" (Justification 1977:10). Periodically, the agency administers a questionnaire[27] to collect data directly from volunteers to assess impact. The results include raw counts of indicators such as the number of students taught, fish ponds constructed, and livestock inoculated. The agency also refers to the "more intangible results" of volunteer activities that are said to be "elusive aspects" of Peace Corps development activities (Justification 1982:4). The list of "elusive aspects" reads as characteristics of cultural and psychological modernization, and includes such items as raising the consciousness of local people, providing a practical orientation, fostering problem-solving, stimulating ideas, and motivating communities. The section then concludes: "Even though such achievements cannot be measured, they are an integral part of the Peace Corps' role and relate to the development of the host countries" (Justification 1982:4).

Members of Congress have, periodically, raised concerns over program evaluation at the Peace Corps. During congressional hearings in 1981, members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations took issue with the agency's proposal in its FY 1981 budget to reduce the amount of funds it requested for evaluation. The agency proposed to phase out its internal evaluation staff and rely instead on contractual program evaluation. Committee member Senator Bob Kasten (R-WI) pressed the agency on this point, asking: "How do you justify elimination of evaluation in light of the expressed

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[27] The Peace Corps has surveyed volunteers periodically from 1973-2002 when a biennial survey was instituted. The survey has been conducted annually since 2009. The agency notes in the 1982 budget justification that the volunteer surveys "provide a basis for measuring and evaluating Peace Corps' accomplishments" (Justification 1982:3).

intention of Congress to increase our efforts in this area?" (Hearing 1982:593). The

agency, in a written statement, responded to Senator Kasten's question this way:

> Although we are phasing out our in-house evaluation staff, we are not eliminating
> the "evaluation function". Rather, we are refocusing how we undertake program
> evaluation. We fully realize Congress' interest in program evaluation. However,
> we feel that "interest" has been tempered by the need to adjust Federal spending
> overall. Our choices have not been easy. We have tried to balance the need for
> some evaluation capacity, however reduced, with maintaining effectiveness of our
> on-going program overseas (Hearing 1982:593).

The agency's attempt to maintain evaluation in times of both budget surplus and

constraint has, as noted above, been limited. Indeed, a congressional report titled, "The

Peace Corps: Entering Its Fourth Decade of Service," made the following observations

regarding its analysis of evaluation at the Peace Corps:

> In general, program evaluations at the Peace Corps have been sporadic, uneven,
> sometimes resisted by staff, largely ineffectual and…underfunded. They
> presuppose the existence of up-to-date project plans and applicable criteria,
> management tools often conspicuous by their absence in the agency's field
> operations.
>
> In 1987 an agency task force proposed measures to "reinstitutionalize" evaluation
> with the establishment of a central Evaluation Service as a "field-driven staff unit
> of the Peace Corps director." It was, according to one knowledgeable official, the
> 17th time the agency has attempted to do so. At the present time, only one person
> at headquarters has been assigned full-time to this function, funding has been
> negligible, and it remains to be seen whether this 17th effort will get off the
> ground (GAO 1990:18).

Similar sentiments are expressed in various Government Accountability Office

(GAO) and congressional reports. For example, a sector study of Peace Corps education

programming in 1984 asserted that, "One of the most striking features of the Peace Corps

education sector is how little knowledge exists about what has been achieved after almost

20 years of programming," noting also that "the lack of substantial knowledge is true of

other programming sectors as well" (Landrum 1984:89). A 1986 report commissioned by

the House Select Committee on Hunger, conducted in conjunction with the 25th anniversary of the Peace Corps, claimed that "although over 100,000 volunteers have served in 92 developing countries, systematic evaluation of their periods of service are virtually non-existent. Most of the information available is anecdotal" (Hearing 1986:9). In testimony before the Senate National Security Subcommittee, a representative from the GAO office noted that until recently, the agency had "no central policy for evaluating and monitoring [volunteer] assignments" (Hearing 1990:38).[28]

Despite consistent concerns regarding evaluation and outcomes expressed in GAO and select congressional reports, actual discussion of agency shortcomings is virtually absent in exchanges between the agency and members of Congress. Perhaps it is unsurprising that project or program failures are completely written out of the agency's budget justifications to Congress. After all, these documents are intended to garner support for the organization rather than raise doubts, so there might be an incentive to omit such information. However, it is somewhat surprising that even reports of the organization commissioned by Congress to evaluate agency effectiveness generally do not make their way into hearings.

One exception to this pattern came in the early 1990s when the agency was being pushed by Congress and the White House to rapidly expand into the former Soviet Republics. These programs got off to a rough start because of a lack of planning and preparation on the part of the agency. The House Committees on Government Operations and Foreign Affairs requested a GAO review of programming in this region. The study found that volunteers were sent to sites that were not properly vetted and volunteer

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[28] Starting in the late 1990s the Peace Corps Inspector General's office began to conduct more systematic country financial audits and program evaluations, yet these efforts were also quite irregular.

training, especially language instruction, was not adequate (GAO 1994). In the rush to send volunteers to the region, the GAO said that the Peace Corps did not follow its established procedures for country entry. As a consequence, there was great dissatisfaction among volunteers and a higher than normal rate of early termination.[29] During testimony following the publication of the report, Director Carol Bellamy acknowledged that the programs in the former Soviet Republics were a very difficult challenge, but the agency was taking steps to remedy the situation (Justification 1995:1). One year later, although no specific evidence was provided, the agency reported that activities were generally going well in the post-Soviet Republics and that the region had great potential (Justification 1996:111).

The Rise of the Accountability Regime

 The rise of neoliberal forms of governance have had a profound impact on the practices of government agencies throughout the world. At its core, neoliberal governance "seeks to manage public activities by finding proxies for market mechanisms" (Holmwood 2010:640) in a way that is argued to be a more efficient means to manage public activities and associated resources. So called "audit cultures" make accounting a central organizing principle of organizational activity (Strathern 2000). Advocates of this form of governance argue for the development of quantifiable measures of organizational performance such as targets, outcomes, and objectives. As a consequence, government agencies develop elaborate accountability systems that seek to measure and evaluate organizational activity, with the ultimate goal of bringing about a

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[29] Early termination refers to the ending of a volunteer's term of service prior to the standard twenty-seven month appointment. Of particular concern to the agency are instances when a volunteer terminates her service because of dissatisfaction with placement or preparation for service.

more effective and efficient system. In the early 1990s, the U.S. Congress was swept up

in this turn toward neoliberal forms of governance and accountability. It is to the effects

of this shift in governance on the policies and practices of the Peace Corps that I now

turn.

Virtuous Procedures: Responding to the Government Performance and Results Act

In August 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the Government Performance and

Results Act (GPRA) into law.[30] During the signing, President Clinton remarked that,

"like many big organizations, ours is primarily dominated by considerations of input,

[and] much less about output" (Clinton 1993:10). The GPRA, however, was about to

force all federal agencies to produce evidence that their performance matched the

objectives set for them. In short, these agencies were going to have to demonstrate

outcomes. Moreover, agencies were going to be held accountable for their performance in

a way that had not been enforced in the past.

The passage of the GPRA marked a fairly dramatic shift in how the Peace Corps

measured and documented its work. The GPRA mandated that all government agencies

develop and submit to congress on an annual basis: 1) a five-year strategic plan with

"results-orientated" goals, that needs to be approved by the Office of Management and

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[30] As stated in the Congressional Record (1993), the official purposes of the GPRA are to: (1) improve the confidence of the American people in the capability of the Federal Government, by systematically holding Federal agencies accountable for achieving program results; (2) initiate program performance reform with a series of pilot projects in setting program goals, measuring program performance against those goals, and reporting publicly on their progress; (3) improve Federal program effectiveness and public accountability by promoting a new focus on results, service quality, and customer satisfaction; (4) help Federal managers improve service delivery, by requiring that they plan for meeting program objectives and by providing them with information about program results and service quality; (5) improve congressional decision making by providing more objective information on achieving statutory objectives, and on the relative effectiveness and efficiency of Federal programs and spending; and (6) improve internal management of the Federal Government.

Budget; 2) a performance plan that articulates specific performance goals and measures to verify if the goals are being met; and 3) a performance report detailing the agency's success or failure in meeting its performance targets.

GPRA agency performance plans, referred to as Performance and Accountability Reports (PAR), were required to be submitted to Congress for the first time in the 1999 budget cycle. The Peace Corps submitted its first PAR to Congress in 1998.[31] Reminiscent of elements in the pre-GPRA discussion above, the agency began its first PAR indicating that: "It is important to note that the Peace Corps, its mission, and the work of its Volunteers do not easily lend themselves to GPRA measurements," adding "while it is possible to measure some aspects of the agency's success in providing technical assistance to developing countries, it is less clear how to capture the intangible benefits to host countries and our own nation of the cross-cultural exchanges that are an essential part of Volunteer service" (Justification 1998:205).

However, as a part of the GPRA implementation, the agency articulated specific indictors intended to measure its success in meeting the Peace Corps' Three Goals. The indictors were derived from the agency's FY 1997-2001 strategic plan, which articulated seven[32] general goals for the agency that were broken into *Outcome Goals*.[33] Each

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[31] The Peace Corps effort to respond to the requirements of the GPRA rested, according to agency officials, on an internal assessment system, the Integrated Planning and Budgeting System (IPBS), a system used by the agency for strategic planning purposes that predated the GPRA. In addition, the 1997 budget justification indicates that, for the prior two years, the agency conducted evaluations of all country programs based on a standardized, although unarticulated, set of criteria. The results of these evaluations are not reported in the justification or made public in congressional testimony.

[32] In brief, the first goal pertains to the safety of volunteers, the second to expanding opportunities for Americans to serve abroad, the third is to meet all reasonable country requests for volunteers, the fourth pertains to providing short-term humanitarian assistance, the fifth is to strengthen volunteer training and programming, the sixth pertains to expanding Third Goal initiatives, and the seventh seeks to cut agency costs and improve productivity (Justification 1998:211).

[33] For the purposes of clarity and consistency I adopt the titles for the goals and indictors adopted by the agency in the FY 2003-2008 strategic plan. In earlier plans the equivalent of *Outcome Goals* was referred to as *Performance Goals*, and *Performance Goals* were referred to as *Performance Measures*.

Outcome Goal had a corresponding set of *Performance Indicators*, which were intended to constitute quantifiable measures of agency performance. In its presentation of the 1997-1998 PAR, the agency notes that it "fulfills its mission [i.e., The Three Goals] by making it possible for American citizens to serve as volunteers in developing countries and participate in the development efforts of their host communities" (Justification 1998:207).Conspicuous by their absence in the earliest measures, however, are any tangible performance indicators that approximate what an outside observer would deem to be legitimate measures of development outcomes or impact on host community conditions or perceptions (i.e., Peace Corps' Goals One and Two).

In the first two years of PAR reports (2004 and 2005) based on the FY 2003-2008 strategic plan, the agency takes as indicators of success toward Goal One (Development Assistance): 1) increased numbers of volunteers sent into the field; and 2) a reduction in the number of volunteers who quit before their 27-month term of service is complete (i.e., early termination). The implicit assumption here is simply that having more volunteers in the field results in more "development". Once again, however, there is no discernible attempt to measure actual development impacts or outcomes on the ground. There is also no attempt to measure or report on progress toward Goal Two (Public Diplomacy/Cultural Exchange Abroad) in these reports.

In 2006, the agency revised its FY 2003-2008 strategic plan and put forward what it called a "set of ambitious but achievable performance goals" that included a new combined measure of Goals One and Two (Development Assistance/Public Diplomacy). The new indicator, *transfer skills and understanding*, is measured by a question on the

Close of Service (COS) survey administered to volunteers.[34] The Peace Corps (2006) lists the new *transfer skills and understanding* outcome goal as follows: "Broaden the impact of Volunteers on the lives of men and women in their host communities by transferring tangible skills, as measured by increasing Volunteers reporting in the Peace Corps' close-of-service (COS) survey that they were "adequately" to "exceptionally" effective in transferring knowledge and skills to members of their host community, from 80 percent in FY 2006 to 82 percent by FY 2008." The question on the COS survey reads: "How effective have you been in transferring knowledge and skills to help members of your host community build their capacities?" The response set is a five-point likert scale that includes the following response categories: (1) not at all, (2) minimally, (3) moderately, (4) considerably, or (5) exceptionally. The 2006 PAR also provides data on the total number of individuals (e.g., students, farmers, community members) assisted and service providers (e.g., teachers, health clinic workers, agricultural extension agents) trained by volunteers. These measures are also derived from volunteer self-reports.

It is important to note that despite the fairly dramatic changes in agency assessment procedures described above, congressional testimony regarding the activities and effects of the Peace Corps abroad do not change substantially over this period. Indeed, PAR reports are barely mentioned by members of Congress. In short, the broader narrative the agency tries to tell with its findings—that it is going a great job—is generally validated by members of Congress despite the relatively weak measures or claims of success that are bought to bare.

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[34] The COS survey is simply a questionnaire completed by all volunteers at the end of their 27-month term of service. As noted above, the agency also administers an annual survey of all volunteers.

Accountability, Recoupling, and Narratives Revisited

Approximately ten years after the implementation of the GPRA and after countless attempts at articulating and measuring the impacts of Peace Corps activities and reporting to Congress, the organization experienced another, albeit now familiar, call to reconsider how it accounts for agency performance. In the Peace Corps' 2009 budget justification transmittal letter, Director Ron Tschetter stated plainly, "While there is an intrinsic understanding of the great value the Peace Corps brings to the world, the agency needs to better measure its impact in quantifiable ways" (Justification 2009:vi). To realize this goal, Director Tschetter looked to the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP). The OSIRP, established in 2007, was envisioned as an internal accountability mechanism charged with "enhancing the agency's strategic planning and reporting, evaluation and measurement, and data governance efforts" (Strategic Plan 2008:5).

The OSIRP's first major undertaking was to develop the agency's 2009-2014 strategic plan. In comparison to earlier efforts, this plan was notable for its level of depth and detail. The plan articulated five new strategic goals for the organization that more directly aligned with Peace Corps' Three Goals. In developing the strategic plan, the Peace Corps sought to more clearly and concretely articulate, through what it called a "logic model," how the agency's organizational "activities and processes are linked to its outputs and outcomes, or results and impacts" (Strategic Plan 2008:5). In short, the logic model was a comprehensive roadmap intended to guide the agency's policies and practices. Appendix B includes the agency's rendering of the model.

The 2009 PAR was based on the FY 2009-2014 strategic plan's new and more elaborate set of strategic goals and performance indicators. In particular, the plan was more explicit about the need to measure outcomes for Goals One and Two (Development Assistance/Public Diplomacy). The strategic plan also provided a more comprehensive set of indicators for each goal. For example, Strategic Goal 1—*Enhance the capacity of host country individuals, organizations, and communities to meet their skill needs*—included ten measureable indicators. The agency again, however, relied heavily on volunteer self-reports to demonstrate evidence of achieving outcome goals.

Another major turning point for assessment efforts at the Peace Corps occurred in December 2009, when Congress passed, and President Barack Obama subsequently signed, the Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 111-117). This law included congressional appropriations for several federal departments and agencies, including the Peace Corps, which received its largest year-to-year funding increase in more than a decade. Language was attached to the Peace Corps appropriation that mandated the agency to produce and submit to the Committees on Appropriations "a comprehensive assessment of the current program model of the Peace Corps and a strategy for reforming and improving operations" no later than 180 days after the enactment of the act (Public Law 111-117:123).

In June 2010, just one year before the agency would celebrate its 50th anniversary, Director Aaron Williams delivered the Peace Corps' Comprehensive Agency Assessment report to Congress. In the report's executive summary, the agency began with a very familiar organizational narrative by referencing the legacy of President Kennedy. The

summary continues with language that, too, harkens back to narratives used previously to justify the agency:

> The Peace Corps is still very much in demand from both its host countries and the American public. Presidents and cabinet ministers in dozens of countries credit their start to Peace Corps Volunteers who touched their lives at an early age. Peace Corps Volunteers in 77 host nations are kindling a fire in the leaders of tomorrow. The fact that requests for Volunteers still far exceed the Peace Corps' capacity to place them within its budget is a clear and convincing measure of the Peace Corps' importance to many nations and its impact around the world. Peace Corps Volunteers are America's best and most cost effective grassroots development workers, magnifying the impact of government and donor investments at the community level and ensuring that efforts funded by others are community-owned and sustained. Peace Corps Volunteers are America's best ambassadors, building relationships with strategic partner countries from the ground up in communities across the globe (Peace Corps 2010:1).

In short, despite significant and real efforts to advance assessment and evaluation at the Peace Corps, the dominant sensemaking narratives offered by the agency persist in the absence of solid quantitative measures to support the claims made in these narratives.

Perhaps the most substantive shift in program evaluation coming out of the FY 2009-2014 strategic plan was an ambitious effort to begin conducting country-level studies of effectiveness. This effort began in 2008, when the Peace Corps first piloted in-country field evaluation studies referred to as Host Country Impact Studies. The studies were intended to determine the impact of volunteers in meeting Goals One (Development Assistance) and Two (Public Diplomacy and Cultural Exchange), and were guided by the following research questions: 1) Do host country individuals think Peace Corps volunteers and the community projects on which they work meet locally defined needs?; and 2) Does Peace Corps Volunteers' work increase community members' understanding of Americans? These studies were the first substantive attempt by the agency to incorporate the views of the agency's partners (e.g., host family members, recipients of

services, and counterparts) into its sensemaking about the extent to which the agency is achieving its development and public diplomacy goals. To collect the data, OSIRP hired and trained a local research staff in each country to conduct in-depth interviews with people who lived and worked with Peace Corps volunteers. At this time, the agency has completed and made public 14 Host Country Impact Studies that, on the whole, indicate that frequent and prolonged contact with Peace Corps volunteers does have an impact on the knowledge of the United States and its citizens among those served by the Peace Corps (Radelet 2011). To date, no documents have made available that report detailed findings from the agency's assessment of recipients' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of volunteers as it pertains to Goal One (i.e., development impact). In the future, the agency plans to make this data available and is also currently expanding the impact studies effort to include additional countries. The overarching objective in this effort is, for the first time in the 50-year history of the Peace Corps, to collect systematic, comprehensive data for all countries in which it works that will inform agency programming into the future. In remains to be seen if this attempt will succeed, or like so many of these efforts in the past, simply fade away.

Conclusion

Chapter Five sought to unpack the consequences of rising expectations for evaluation and assessment on the legitimacy of the Peace Corps. As noted above, the practical implications of shared positive assumptions about development and public diplomacy held by members of Congress and agency officials served to erase or minimize failure and shift attention away from the lack of tangible evidence for agency

outcomes. In this sense-making environment anecdotes are taken as legitimate and sufficient evidence, project failures are minimized or erased, and claims of success are readily accepted. With the exception of calls by members of Congress for shifts in the placement of volunteers to better serve the strategic interests of the U.S. government, there are few serious calls for agency accountability in terms of the stated aims (i.e., Three Goals) of the agency in the 1980s and into the 1990s.

Although one might expect that the rise of the accountability regime would undermine the legitimacy of the Peace Corps given its limited attempts and ability to measure impact, the findings above indicate that the agency's legitimacy remained largely intact. This is perhaps due, in part, to the fact that the primary metric for measuring the performance of the agency was transcendental in nature. In other words, there was a deep sense in organizational narratives and congressional discourse that the Peace Corps was engaged in a moral endeavor, wherein any development was better than no development. Accordingly, the agency seemed to escape close scrutiny of its performance with the exception of periodic calls for greater evaluation that, typically, went unheeded. In short, the agency was given wide latitude in its endeavors.

However, in the late 1990s, the agency was subject to new pressures arising from the implementation of an accountability regime put in place by Congress. The Peace Corps faced a mandate to identify outcome goals and develop explicit measures of agency performance. Prior to the implementation of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the agency made only modest attempts at measuring its impact, none of which were comprehensive. With the exception of occasional calls for greater accountability and more systematic evaluations of organizational performance, Congress

largely accepted the limited amount of evidence for organizational effectiveness put forward by the Peace Corps as a legitimate basis for continued support. Whereas the legitimacy derived from the organization's adoption of foreign policy narratives had the potential to undermine the legitimacy of the agency, claims to legitimacy rooted in the accountability regime appeared to be a form that was complimentary to the founding and benevolence narratives. This is likely true, in part, because of the profoundly decoupled nature of agency practices and measures of performance. In the end, legitimacy derived from compliance with the accountability regime served as new basis for organizational legitimacy for the Peace Corps instead of a threat.

For the first ten years of the GPRA, the agency produced data for reporting purposes, yet the data produced were only loosely coupled to the stated aims of the organization and, as such, the agency was allowed to justify its activities is non-concrete ways. However, toward the end of the period under study, we begin to see a closer alignment between the stated aims of the organization, in terms of development outcomes and public diplomacy, and the measurement of these aims, with the advent of the effort by the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning to produce Host Country Impact Studies in 2008. Although all of the data for these reports are not yet available and only a relatively small number of country-level studies have been completed, it is fair to say that this effort represents the most significant attempt by the Peace Corps to measure its impact to date. Moreover, the effort has the potential to spur a degree of recoupling at the Peace Corps not previously observed. We will have to wait to see the extent to which the founding narrative, which has guided the legitimacy claims of the

organization for so long, is eventually displaced by accountability narratives rooted in

evidence of agency effectiveness in the years to come.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND CLOSING THOUGHTS

Conclusion

  This dissertation investigated legitimacy processes in the field of international development by addressing the following questions: How do development organizations maintain legitimacy? How do development organizations present themselves in different historical periods and political climates? Under what conditions and in what combinations are different legitimacy strategies deployed? The study sought to build on research in organizational sociology and development studies, in particular, recent work on the narrative construction of legitimacy. More specifically, I examined the narrative construction and maintenance of legitimacy (i.e., legitimacy processes) in one international development organization, the United State Peace Corps, over the thirty-five year period from 1977 to 2012. This period spanned five different presidential administrations, several significant geopolitical shifts including the end of the Cold War, and numerous shifts in the political make-up of the U.S. Congress. Drawing on an extensive analysis of a wide range of organizational documents and congressional discourse, I show how the construction and maintenance of legitimacy is a negotiated, and sometimes contested, process that involves a wide range of legitimacy claims. In sum, this study demonstrates the multi-faceted nature of legitimacy, both in terms of the range and types of legitimacy available, as well as the strategies deployed to garner and maintain organizational legitimacy.

The findings of my dissertation show how and why the Peace Corps was successful in maintaining legitimacy over time. The Peace Corps' success was due, in part, to the agency's ability to tap into prevailing frames regarding the benevolence of the United States and its citizens as well as its efforts to align organizational narratives and, to some degree, its practices, with the strategic interests of its constituents. Indeed, theoretical approaches to legitimacy differ primarily in the extent to which they see legitimacy as deriving from features of the institutional environment (i.e., structure) or from instrumental action on the part of organizational actors (i.e., agency). Institutional theorists argue that legitimating environments present organizations and their members with taken-for-granted scripts, rules, and classifications (DiMaggio and Powell 1991), which serve as dominant models that guide organizational structure and behavior (Scott 1994; Meyer and Scott 1992). Legitimacy derives from alignment with said models. Scholars working in the strategic-interests tradition argue that organizations and their managers extract legitimacy from their cultural environments through the manipulation and deployment of symbols in order to gain support (Pfeffer 1981). This approach envisages managers as strategic actors who, although constrained by their organizational environments, have the capacity to influence the perceptions of others to benefit the organization (Dowling and Pfeffer 1975). My findings indicate, as Suchman (1995) noted, that, in practice, organizations draw legitimacy from both their institutional environments and through strategic efforts to narrate the intentions and activities of the organization in ways that comport with the interests of its constituents. Few studies have sought to disentangle these differing conceptualizations of legitimacy processes in the

field of international development, yet, in the case of the Peace Corps, we see the importance of this theoretical and conceptual distinction.

My findings indicate that the Peace Corps gained and maintained legitimacy both though its alignment with prevailing cultural scripts, including those associated with modernization and assumptions about the benevolence of the United States, as well as through its strategic attempts to align the interests of the agency with the prevailing foreign policy interests of Congress and the administration by adopting organizational narratives supportive of the expansion of the Peace Corps to strategic locations. In Chapter Three, I argue that the legitimating narratives that arose during the agency's founding are tightly linked to the agency's success throughout the period under study. Rooted in modernization theory and the Kennedy mystique, these early narratives operate as quasi-religious like legitimations of the organization. I show how the work of the Peace Corps and understandings of development more broadly, were reduced to powerful stories that presented the aims and activities of the organization as virtuous, charitable, and benevolent. This organizational presentation of self, which relied on claims to moral legitimacy, generated widespread positive valuations of the Peace Corps and its volunteers among constituents and stakeholders and had powerful path-dependent consequences for the organization.

The legitimacy accorded the agency by its constituents were based, in part, on the assumptions that the agency was engaged in a virtuous endeavor and that the agency was making good faith efforts to achieve its objectives. I argue that these positive valuations of the Peace Corps created a reservoir of legitimacy on which it could draw during times of challenge. In Chapter Four, I argue that the Peace Corps was largely successful in

navigating the challenges it faced, as evidenced by such indicators as the avoidance of legitimacy crises and the support of Congress through annual appropriations. In short, members of Congress afforded the organization moral and pragmatic legitimacy through their provision of resources and by discursively constructing the agency as a legitimate and benevolent component of the U.S. foreign policy regime. This support, however, came at a cost.

At points throughout the period under study, but particularly during the Reagan administration, the Peace Corps faced significant pressure to shift its focus toward meeting the short- and long-term strategic foreign policy interests of the United States. The efforts to politicize the agency by Congress and the administration directly challenged the founding and benevolence narratives, creating a situation where there was a real threat to the agency's legitimacy in the eyes of the rank-and-file as well as various internal and external constituencies. To navigate these pressures, the Peace Corps actively sought to increase its legitimacy through the deployment of foreign policy narratives that aligned with the strategic interests of members of Congress and the Reagan administration. Although this move made short-term strategic sense for agency management with regard to the maintenance of congressional support, the shift represented an abandonment of the organization's explicit founding ideals. In practice, the actual programmatic shifts undertaken during this period affected only a relatively small number of countries and individuals, however, the potential cost to the legitimacy of the organization, especially to its constituencies abroad, was significant. In short, my findings suggest that the shift evident in organizational narratives and congressional

discourse produced some reframing of the Peace Corps' activities, but was only loosely coupled to agency practices.

Chapter Five turned our attention to how the Peace Corps responded to new pressures to maintain organizational legitimacy deriving from the rise of neoliberal governance. Facing a new set of demands for accountability and organizational outcomes, the agency had to develop explicit measures of agency performance and report annual progress to Congress. My analysis shows that prior to this turn toward accountability, the agency and Congress relied heavily on assumptions about the goodness of development and the agency, as detailed in Chapter Three, in its assessments of organizational effectiveness. In short, the Peace Corps enjoyed relatively modest scrutiny with regard to its outcomes prior to the passage of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) in 1993. Indeed the agency relied primarily on anecdotal evidence to support its claims to effectiveness.

The GPRA created new political and cultural pressures on the organization to have legitimate processes in place to demonstrate organizational performance. During calls for greater accountability, government agencies might implement more visible mechanisms for measuring organizational activities and outputs. Organizations that are able to adapt to the new accountability regime are more likely than organizations that appear out of step with institutional expectations to persist. I show in Chapter Five that although the Peace Corps implemented a comprehensive, formal system of evaluation and assessment, it was largely ceremonial in nature and did not create legitimacy crises for the organization. Instead, the accountability regime created an additional means for the Peace Corps to create and maintain legitimacy. In short, compliance with the Act

provided the Peace Corps a new set of legitimacy claims based on legitimated measures of organizational performance that, upon closer scrutiny, were only loosely coupled with the Peace Corps' Three Goals.

I also show, however, that in the most recent iteration of performance indicators and efforts at measuring agency impact by the Peace Corps, there appears to be closer alignment with organizational practices, efforts to measure impact, and presentation of results. In short, we start to see at the end of the period under study, and after ten years of the GPRA, movement toward a recoupling of means and ends at the Peace Corps. This finding aligns with recent institutional research that shows the gap between policy and practice might not be as wide or frequent as once thought (Bromley and Powell 2012). In short, organizations are under increasing pressure to demonstrate effectiveness and provide evidence of outputs under regimes of accountability deriving from the external organizational environment.

In addition to its contributions to debates in the sociology of organizations literature, this dissertation also makes a contribution to the development studies literature. As noted, research in development studies gives limited consideration to the topic of organizational legitimacy and has only recently begun to consider the socially constructed, institutional character of legitimacy (Ossewaarde, Nijhof, and Heyse 2008; Lister 2003). This literature also relies heavily on cross-sectional designs, which ignore important historical and temporal dimensions of the construction and maintenance of organizational legitimacy. The present study sought to address these shortcomings and show how assessments of organizational effectiveness often rely less on evidence of outputs and demonstrated impact on aid recipients than on various legitimacy claims.

Finally, this dissertation also makes a contribution to our historical understanding of the U.S. Peace Corps. There are numerous books and studies that examine various elements of the Peace Corps story. There are, however, no studies to my knowledge that investigate the relationship between the agency, administration, and Congress with regard to the construction and maintenance of organizational legitimacy over time. This window into the Peace Corps reveals a complex set of relationships and dynamics that help students of the Peace Corps better understand its persistence, as well as the ways in which the organization has changed and evolved over time. It is my hope that this study makes a contribution to our understanding of this important development agency.

Limitations, Future Directions, and Closing Thoughts

Despite the contributions of this dissertation noted above, it is important to recognize that the conclusions and theoretical insights rest on the examination of a single case. As noted above, case study research is sometimes critiqued as a method, in particular, for its inability to provide a basis for scientific generalization (Yin 2013). However, the aim of this dissertation from the outset was not of generalization to a population, but to theoretical propositions. In short, my overarching goal in this dissertation was to better understand social processes, in this case, the construction and maintenance of legitimacy over time. A secondary limitation pertains to the data used in this study, which reflect only the public face of Congress and the Peace Corps. For example, in developing annual reports or presenting information in congressional hearings, individuals and organizations are likely more mindful of the words used and messages sent. That is, the intent of such documents is to make a specific case to an

audience, here Congress, that past activities, current performance, and future plans for the organization are legitimate and worthy of support. What is not reflected in the data used for this dissertation are the many internal conversations, tensions, and debates regarding the Peace Corps and its activities. No doubt, such data would tell an equally interesting story to the one presented here.

Of course, for every limitation, there is an accompanying opportunity for a future study. It is clear from my reading of organizational documents from other government agencies and development organizations that concerns regarding the production and presentation of outcomes found at the Peace Corps are shared by organizational administrators. Accordingly, future research could examine the extent to which the patterns of congressional discourse and narrative construction presented above characterize the legitimacy processes of other development organizations.

In addition to a future investigation into the internal documents of the Peace Corps, it might also be fruitful to expand outward to examine how organizational narratives presented in official documents at agency headquarters and to members of Congress are translated in substance and form and communicated to country directors and in-country administrators in Peace Corps countries abroad. Indeed, we might think of the Peace Corps as a sort of multi-national corporation. Above, I have shown how the organization constructs and maintains legitimacy at headquarters, but there are also legitimacy processes that play out in the variety of international contexts within which Peace Corps operates. In each of these locations, the agency must construct and maintain legitimacy with national and local governments, communities, and a wide range of individuals. One wonders, for example, how the legitimacy claims made by agency

administrators during the Reagan era were conveyed to agency staff abroad and, perhaps, actively shielded from local staff and government representatives.

Finally, this dissertation raises important questions about the nature of development practice and evaluations of development activity. It is my hope that this work has helped to clarify the nature of legitimacy processes in the field of international development and their contribution to the persistence and evaluations of development organizations. The finding that development outcomes have been consistently measured in very superficial terms, yet claims of success abound, raises questions about the sensemaking and true impact of development activity. The persistent lack of evidence is, perhaps, not surprising to institutional scholars, but it should certainly raise concern among those interested in advancing the needs of developing countries and communities across the globe.

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Afghanistan	Gabon
Albania	Gambia, The
Anguilla	Georgia
Antigua and Barbuda	Ghana
Argentina	Grenada and Cariacou
Armenia	Guatemala
Azerbaijan	Guinea
Bahrain	Guinea-Bissau
Bangladesh	Guyana
Barbados	Haiti
Belize	Honduras
Benin	Hungary
Bolivia	India
Botswana	Indonesia
Brazil	Iran
Bulgaria	Jamaica
Burkina Faso	Jordan
Burundi	Kazakhstan
Cambodia	Kenya
Cameroon	Kiribati
Cape Verde	Kyrgyz Republic
Central African Republic	Latvia
Chad	Lesotho
Chile	Liberia
China	Lithuania
Colombia	Libya
Comoros	Macedonia, The Republic of
Congo, Democratic Republic of	Madagascar
Congo, Republic of	Malawi
Cook Islands	Malaysia
Costa Rica	Mali
Cote d'Ivoire	Malta
Cyprus	Marshall Islands
Czech Republic	Mauritania
Dominica	Mauritius
Dominican Republic	Mexico
East Timor	Micronesia, Federated States of
Ecuador	Moldova
El Salvador	Mongolia
Equatorial Guinea	Montserrat
Eritrea	Morocco
Estonia	Mozambique
Ethiopia	Namibia
Fiji	Nepal

Nicaragua	Somalia
Niger	South Africa
Nigeria	South Korea
Niue	Sri Lanka
Oman	Sudan
Pakistan	Suriname
Palau, Republic of	Swaziland
Panama	Tanzania
Papua New Guinea	Thailand
Paraguay	Togo
Peru	Tonga
Philippines	Tunisia
Poland	Turkey
Romania	Turkmenistan
Russia	Turks-Caicos
Rwanda	Tuvalu
St. Kitts/Nevis	Uganda
St. Lucia	Ukraine
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Uruguay
Samoa	Uzbekistan
Sao Tome and Principe	Vanuatu
Senegal	Venezuela
Seychelles	Yemen
Sierra Leone	Zambia
Slovak Republic	Zimbabwe
Solomon Islands	

Source: Peace Corps (http://www.peacecorps.gov/about/history/countries/)

Appendix B. Peace Corps Logic Model (Peace Corps 2010)

Peace Corps Goals:

1. To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women;

2. to help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of peoples served;

3. and to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.