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TOWARD A GLOBAL ORGANIZATIONAL PUBLIC SPHERE: NON-
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZING AND DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY IN A
POSTMODERN WORLD

by

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A DISSERTATION

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Under the Supervision of Professor Damien S. Pfister

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TOWARD A GLOBAL ORGANIZATIONAL PUBLIC SPHERE: NON-
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZING AND DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY IN A
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University of Nebraska, 2013

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This dissertation refigures Jürgen Habermas’s public sphere theory for the contemporary world in which organizations are key actors. I develop a concept of the “global organizational public sphere” to explore the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in narrowing the democratic legitimacy gap currently prevailing in the international arena. A case study of the NGO, the Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), gauges the extent to which WEDO (and, by extension, NGOs) serves as a global intermediary that performs the double task of translating needs from the grassroots to global institutions and adapting international policies to local communities. Three problematics structure my analysis: (1) the problematic of voice; (2) the problematic of rationality; and (3) the problematic of the organization and society. Interpreted both as problematics of organizational communication and problematics of rhetorical translation that are amplified in global civil society, each problematic reveals the promise and tensions of the global organizational public sphere. This project illuminates implications for organizational rhetoric, transnational feminist organizing, and the role of communication in mediating the crisis of legitimacy. Insights generated from this dissertation suggest that the

participation of NGOs strengthens legitimacy in global governance systems. Specifically, NGOs comprise the necessary informal processes of opinion formation that generate acceptable standards of legitimacy in the eyes of citizens, even if it is not the same type that is conferred upon nation-states through elected bodies.

DEDICATION

To cosmopolitan citizens who organize for social justice:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

-Margaret Mead

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Toward a Global Organizational Public Sphere

The onerous task of representing the interests of diverse stakeholders has been and continues to be a concern for organizations in democratic societies. This complex and political process is further complicated in an increasingly global civil society devoid of democratic institutions. As the contemporary world simultaneously comes together and pulls apart, it orients our attention to recent changes that have occurred in the relationships among organizations, states, and citizens (Falk, 1999). Today, the compression of time and space has resulted in a deterritorialization of governance that poses new challenges to public deliberation and democratic decision-making. These challenges might be refigured as questions for critical exploration: What is the role of organizations in a global public sphere? How do organizations mediate between local groups of people and international decision-making bodies? How can organizations effectively galvanize public attention to global issues and convert loosely linked individuals to active, politicized publics? Such questions highlight the problem of representation in a global era and are particularly relevant as top-down processes of globalization widen the legitimacy gap in the international arena.

Historically, only national public spheres have been able to successfully generate democratic legitimacy, or acceptance by citizens that decisions made on their behalf are sensible, fair, and for the civic good. This is because the concept of the public sphere as a space for the communicative generation of public opinion and a means for political efficacy assumes interlocutors are members of a bounded political community (Bohman, 2007; Fraser, 2007). A product of modernity, the traditional public sphere is a concept

informed by a Westphalian sociopolitical imaginary. Since the modern (or liberal) public sphere correlates with a sovereign power, its relevancy beyond the context of the nation-state is an open question.

John Dewey (1927) considered the effects of changing spatial conditions on democratic practices when he asked, “How can a public be organized when literally it does not stay in one place?” (p. 140). Dewey’s question foreshadows the story of globalization in and through which spatial and temporal challenges are further exacerbated by the contemporary digital media milieu. Today, “global events can –via telecommunication, digital computers, audiovisual media, rocketry and the like—occur almost simultaneously anywhere and everywhere in the world” (Scholte, 1996, p. 45). As the world becomes entwined in a global grid of organizations, scholars must re-conceptualize the public sphere in light of the current “postnational constellation” (Habermas, 2001).

Within a postnational constellation, national governments have ceded some decision-making authority to international and transnational organizations. Consequently, these organizations have accrued a significant amount of power and authority to impose rules and obligations on citizens across the globe, yet citizens have little recourse to shape or challenge these decisions. This type of top-down decision-making constitutes “globalization from above.” It involves little public dialogue and lacks democratic measures, such as voting or media scrutiny, to ensure accountability among those actors who speak for and about citizens. As a result, international and transnational organizations “exhibit a major ‘democratic deficit’ and have little public legitimacy in the eyes of citizens” (Kymlicka, 2002, p. 312). But international governance is not going

away. In fact, in many ways, such systems are vital to solving global problems that require transnational cooperation. The task at hand, then, does not involve reverting back to a conventional, state-centered, “realist” approach to global politics, but finding new ways for these organizations to generate legitimacy in a postmodern world.

Although *individual* citizens, using discussion and debate as methods to guide judgment, animated the modern public sphere, the contemporary public sphere is populated by complex, interlaced *organizations* drawing upon a range of communicative modes to shape decision-making. Recognizing the central and critical role organizations play in international governance requires a modification of traditional public sphere theory: scholars of global civil society must begin theorizing what I call the “global organizational public sphere” to highlight the critical role of non-governmental forms of organizing in contemporary society.

In the global organizational public sphere, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provide a mediating layer between international and transnational institutions, such as the United Nations and the World Bank, and the grassroots. NGOs are therefore vital actors in international decision-making. In this dissertation, I explore how NGOs serve as global intermediaries that close the democratic legitimacy gap now prevailing in the global arena. The extent to which NGOs are successful in accomplishing their various objectives depends in part on their ability to translate the needs of the world’s historically marginalized and under-represented citizens to powerful decision-making bodies. This project seeks to show how, in a global arena largely dominated by corporations and neoliberal international financial institutions, NGOs can challenge exclusionary global governance practices.

To make this case, I build upon extant critiques of the liberal public sphere and analyze a prominent NGO, the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO). WEDO's global public advocacy shifts away from dominant forms of representation, approaching global civil society as a site of ongoing negotiation. NGOs like WEDO are increasingly faced with the double task of translating needs from the grassroots to global institutions and adapting international policies to local communities. My case study of WEDO illuminates this process and draws out the promise and tensions of the global organizational public sphere. In addition, I demonstrate that addressing the challenges to public deliberation and democratic decision-making in a global era necessitates recognition of the inherently rhetorical nature of organizations and the inherently organizational nature of rhetoric (Cralle, 1990). I take a perspective grounded in "organizational rhetoric" because it reveals the processes, prospects, and challenges of transnationalizing the public sphere and affecting global social change.

The balance of this introductory chapter tells an abbreviated story of how the top-down process of globalization spurred systems of international governance lacking legitimacy. The threat to democratic decision-making in a global era is, however, being met with "globalization from below," the "collective responses from labor, environmental, and feminist groups" to global inequities exacerbated by top-down globalization (Moghadam, 2005, p. 30). The story of globalization and attendant hegemonic systems of international governance begins in the years following the Second World War.

Globalization, Communication, and the Reconfiguration of World Power

Globalization is a contested notion. What is it? What caused it? What are its benefits and drawbacks? Globalization has become a keyword to register the rapid political, economic, and cultural changes that are taking place in society today. Defined generally, globalization is the “widening, deepening, and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life” (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt & Perraton, 1999, p. 5). It is a process that leads to the “intensification of worldwide social relations which link distinct localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (Giddens, 1990, p. 86). Globalization is a shorthand way of describing the connectedness of contemporary society.

A variety of academic disciplines have analyzed globalization through their respective “terministic screens” (Burke, 1966). Political scientists conceptualize it as a primarily political phenomenon, debating issues of nation-state sovereignty and the exercise of power over citizens and territories. Economists view it mainly as an economic phenomenon, highlighting how the linking of markets into a global network introduces new challenges and opportunities for the exchange of goods and services. Sociologists and cultural anthropologists view globalization as a predominantly cultural phenomenon, focusing on symbolic exchange through media and cultural performances.

This dissertation draws upon another terministic screen—communication—to explore the communicative dimensions of globalization. Cynthia Stohl (2005) emphasizes the communicative infrastructure of this new era, claiming that globalization is intersubjectively constructed and continually evolving as “individuals, groups, and organizations struggle to survive and compete across the world stage” (p. 242).

Globalization is created and maintained through a complex network of communication media:

The globalization process lies in the empirically ascertainable scale, density, and stability of regional-global relationship networks and their self definition through the mass media, as well as of social spaces and of image flows ... a world horizon characterized by multiplicity and non-integration which opens out when it is produced and preserved in communication and action (Beck, 2000, p. 12).

Like most communication phenomena, globalization is a political process. It is “uneven and heterogeneous in its workings and effects ... [and in its] complex and uneven productions of new forms, planes, and configurations of power” (Shome & Hegde, 2002, p. 174). These new, globalized cultural and institutional formations invite critical investigation by communication scholars.

Contemporary configurations of power are largely byproducts of the international governance system that emerged after World War II (e.g. “the golden age of capitalism”). Following the Second World War, governments sought to secure peace and prosperity through international economic cooperation. Led by the United States and the United Kingdom, the 1944 Bretton Woods conference sought to establish a world market in which goods and capital moved freely. Global institutions would regulate international trade to ensure fairness. Seeking to prevent a return to the detrimental economic nationalism of the 1930s, delegates at Bretton Woods agreed to a new international economic regime giving nation-state governments a “greater role in the economy, subject to international rules, in a compromise between domestic autonomy and international

norms” (Peet, 2003, p. 36). The new regime would appeal to the consent and cooperation of its member states, but also bind them legally.

The agreement reached at Bretton Woods created procedures for regulating monetary relations among independent nation-states by creating three regulatory institutions: (1) the International Monetary Fund (IMF), (2) the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), known today as the World Bank, and (3) the International Trade Organization (ITO), which came into being as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and eventually evolved into the World Trade Organization (WTO). Today, the Bretton Woods institutions continue to portray themselves as neutral bodies that oversee international economic cooperation. Although the Bretton Woods institutions strengthened international ties between some nation-states, their development formalized Western dominance over the global system.

The Bretton Woods agreement was made possible by three conditions: (1) concentrated power in which a small number of states in North America and Western Europe made decisions for the world system; (2) common interests shared by powerful states, primarily their belief in capitalism and classical liberalism; and (3) the new willingness and ability of the United States to assume a global leadership role (Spero, 1985). Richard Peet’s (2003) account of how the Bretton Woods regime led to the development of a hegemonic world order dominated by the United States is instructive (and worth quoting at length):

The IMF was not formed as a democratic institution in anything like the sense of inter-country equality. It was primarily an American invention, with British collaboration, consciously designed to foster one particular

perspective on the development of global economic relations. It was located in Washington to place it within a policy-making system dominated by the U.S. Treasury, and to prevent policies not in the U.S. national interest from being adopted, or perhaps even discussed. From the beginning, an expert-led discourse prevailed that ensured the domination of the Western economic intellect, to the point that many 'member countries' had little idea what they were accepting when they ratified the Bretton Woods Articles of Agreement. Although Bretton Woods resulted from American and British planning and cooperation, the USA dominated the conference and directed it according to its national interests. The U.S.A. emerged from Bretton Woods as an unchallenged hegemonic world power ... Yet rather than being revealed for what it was, U.S. domination could be clothed in the raiments of 'international consultation and collaboration' because of the apparently international nature of the conference. Thus the considerable abilities of the Bretton Woods Institutions to direct and control the global economy that developed over the next half-century were, to a great degree, extensions of American political-economic power.

Globalization, then, evolved in tandem with the institutionalization and circulation of neoliberalism. Although the Bretton Woods institutions purport to follow economic consensus and neutral assessments of what would be best for the global economy, these actors in fact import a range of ideological assumptions that are often not critically interrogated. Proponents of neoliberal globalization maintain that it leads to greater

freedom and that trade liberalization and deregulation will better living and working conditions throughout the world (Friedman, 2000). Their arguments typically presume that the privatization of most goods and services, the control of inflation, and the specialization of national economies promote overall prosperity (Krugman, 2002).

However, critics argue that neoliberal globalization leads to “an increasing division between the rich and poor, increasing economic insecurity and stress for even the ‘new middle’ classes, and an intensification of the division of labor” (Fairclough, 2006, p. 5). Neoliberal globalization promotes “free” rather than “fair” trade, decries state regulation, and tends to privilege the profit interests of global corporations over the working poor (Aune, 2001). Since most global corporations operate along non-democratic lines, they function effectively as totalitarian organizations whose economic policies can exacerbate already considerable income differentials (McChesney, 1999). The domination of totalitarian organizations in the global organizational public sphere increases poverty throughout certain parts of the world (Eltanaway, 2008; Millen, Irwin, & Kim, 2000).

Neoliberal ideology promotes the restructuring of social relations in accordance with the demands of unrestrained global capitalism (Bourdieu, 1998). In other words, neoliberalism applies economic logic beyond economic domains, treating social relations as it would markets. Robert Dahl (2000) explains that unrestrained market capitalism threatens democracy because “economic actors motivated by self-interest have little incentive for taking the good of others into account; on the contrary, they have powerful incentives for ignoring the good of others if by doing so they themselves stand to gain” (p. 174). By privileging economic (and self-) interests above all others, neoliberal

ideology neglects civic, social, and environmental concerns. As such, neoliberalism is not necessarily conducive to facilitating participatory democracy informed by a strong sense of social justice.

One reason that globalization processes spark so many discontents is that the Bretton Woods institutions are largely insulated from democratic pressure. Membership in the Bretton Woods Committee is by invitation only. Members are unelected and largely unaccountable to the citizens whose lives, jobs, health, and safety their decisions affect. Within each of the Bretton Woods institutions, executive directors and boards of governors are appointed. Smaller member nations typically lack power to defy larger, more influential ones. These institutions task bureaucrats with developing policy that is, to a large extent, influenced by lobbies and subject to little media and public scrutiny. Simply put, the Bretton Woods institutions wield an alarming amount of decision-making power over ordinary citizens.

The Bretton Woods regime is a quintessential example of globalization from above through which top-down global power seeks to maintain and widen its control. Because globalization is an intrinsically communicative phenomenon, economic exclusion is a result of communicative processes that justify the imposition of Western cultural practices across the globe. Such processes invite critics to explore culture as a “site of struggle through which the social order is maintained, challenged, produced, and reproduced, in the performance of various social relations of equity and inequity” (Shome & Hegde, 2002). The rhetoric of globalization permeates cultures and creates certain truths that “become the taken-for-granted knowledge base within a social system” (Papa, Singhal & Papa, 2006, p. 78). In other words, Western economic and cultural hegemony

results from the normativization of dominant discourses that are formed by institutions of power, produced by experts, and eventually accepted as conventional wisdom by citizens (Foucault, 1972; 1983).

Of course, the story of globalization is not merely one of neoliberal domination. Where there is power, there is resistance, and a range of collective social movements, such as anti-corporate and environmental movements, have mobilized to counter globalization from above. Social movements effect “large-scale, collective changes in the domains of state policy, corporate practice, social structure, cultural norms, and daily lived experience” (Ganesh, Zoller & Cheney, 2005, p. 177). They are a prominent example of macro-level resistance to institutional power and control (Fleming, 2005; Fleming & Spicer, 2003). Many social movements engage in globalization from below, a process that offers visions and strategies for globalization on behalf of the world’s economically and socially marginalized groups. Globalization from below combats the hegemonic systems constituting globalization from above by organizing instead for “democratic and autonomous standing in respect to the various forms by which global power further seeks to extend its dominion” (Appadurai, 2000, p. 3). One prominent example of globalization from below, and the focus of this dissertation, can be found in the work of transnational feminist networks.

The Rise of Transnational Feminist Networking

Animated by the spirit of the 1960s and 1970s, the transnational feminist resistance movement arose in response to the routine exclusion of women’s contributions from global governance processes (Dempsey, Parker & Krone, 2011; Escobar, 1995). Transnational feminist organizing incites social mobilization that operates independently

of “the actions of corporate capital and the nation-state system (and its international affiliates and guarantors)” (Appadurai, 2000, p. 3). Transnational feminist organizing combats patriarchal, exclusionary norms and practices associated with top-down globalization.

Transnational feminist networks (TFNs) posit globalization as a gendered process, the effects of which are often most harmful to women and other vulnerable populations across the world. In response to these detrimental effects, TFNs organize to affect large-scale social change, assisting disempowered groups to manage, resist, and transform tensions associated with globalization from above (Deetz, 1992; Papa, Auwal & Singhal, 1995; Trethewey, 1999). TFNs engage in collaboration and advocacy among women at the transnational level to combat forms of local domination and oppression. These organizations focus on “identifying concerns and issues that exist on a global scale, inviting collaborative activism, and the more regional or national forces that contextualize such issues affecting approaches to their solution” (Scott, 2009, p. 5).

Sociologist Valentine M. Moghadam (2005) describes three basic objectives of TFNs: (1) to create, activate, or join global networks to mobilize pressure from outside states (p. 13); (2) to participate in multilateral and intergovernmental political arenas (p. 14); and (3) to act and agitate within states to enhance public awareness and participation (p. 14). These objectives center on the premise that the effects of globalization link different women to similar justice claims:

Neoliberal globalization has engendered circumstances of justice in which the benefits and burdens of globalization are systematically unfairly distributed between genders, between the global South and North, as well

as among nations. This creates a situation in which the justice claims of women across borders overlap (Kang, 2008, p. 342).

TFNs garner public attention and develop solutions to these overlapping justice claims.

This process involves accurately representing, persuasively translating, and effectively circulating the interests of disempowered citizens to powerful decision-making bodies in a position to help, and then subsequently adapting global policies to local communities.

This is no easy task. How can we ensure that international and transnational organizations are actually representing the needs of the base? How do the grassroots learn about what is happening at the top? I explore the process of mediating between local groups of citizens and global institutions through a case study of one NGO, WEDO.

The Women's Environment and Development Organization

The mission of the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) is to "achieve a healthy and peaceful planet, with social, political, economic, and environmental justice for all through the empowerment of women, in all their diversity, and their equal participation with men in decision-making from grassroots to global arenas" (WEDO, 1999). Based in New York, the international organization represents the interests of women, children, and the poor, including those in developing nations. WEDO was founded in 1991 under the leadership of women's rights activist and former United States Congressperson Bella Abzug. Philosopher and environmentalist, Vandana Shiva, describes how a "visionary group of women" organized to form WEDO:

WEDO grew out of friendship. Bella was mainly a peace activist, and I had been in the ecology movement since the days of the Chipko Movement in the 1970s. As we met at the U.N. Conferences over the

years, it became clear that women's voices were missing in the sustainability agenda, even though at the grassroots level, women were leading the struggle to protect forests and rivers, biodiversity, and land. To bring together the diversity of women from across the world working on ecological issues, we organized a public hearing in Miami, [the Women's World Congress for a Healthy Planet], and WEDO was [formally] established after that (WEDO, 2012c).

In the years after WEDO's official establishment, the organization gained influence in creating a course for development that integrates social, environmental, and economic concerns. At the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, WEDO engaged in strategic and collaborative lobbying to influence official talks. Shortly thereafter, UNCED outcome documents began including specific gender equality issues and recommendations for increasing women's participation in decision-making (WEDO, 2012c). For example, Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration states: "Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development" (UN, 1992).

The following year, in 1993, WEDO achieved a pledge for gender balance in the U.N. Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Around the same time, WEDO became a key convener of the Women's Major Group. In 1994, WEDO organized the Women's Caucus at the U.N.'s International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, which committed member governments to a twenty-year plan for increasing investment in women's reproductive and sexual health, extending primary education to all children, and extending secondary education for girls (UN, 1992).

WEDO's participation in international conferences, its lobbying, and its engagement in policy dialogues and policy-making helped the organization to become a powerful advocate for underrepresented groups (Moghadam, 2005).

Today, WEDO advocates an alternative "feminist economics" to accomplish its three interlinked goals: (1) women's empowerment, (2) sustainable development, and (3) global governance through which it seeks

to ensure that women's rights; social, economic and environmental justice; and sustainable development principles-as well as the linkages between them-are at the heart of global and national policies, programs and practices (WEDO, 2013a).

WEDO's coordinated political action, alliance-building, production and dissemination of research on women's rights and environmental issues, and local and regional advocacy efforts are aimed at creating "a just world that promotes and protects human rights, gender equality, and the integrity of the environment" (WEDO, 2013a).

In 2012, WEDO celebrated its twentieth year of transnational feminist advocacy, which coincided with the 20th anniversary of the historic 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). In June of 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) took place once again in Brazil. The "Rio+20" conference hosted more than 45,000 participants from governments, the private sector, and NGOs who discussed implementing an institutional framework for sustainable development wherein economic, social, and environmental concerns are balanced. WEDO dedicates itself to developing a pathway for women to lead the way in sustainable development decision-making.

WEDO used the occasion of Rio+20 to launch one of its newest publications, *Celebrating Momentum and Milestones: A WEDO History of Women's Organizing Toward a Healthy and Peaceful Planet*, which offers a timeline of significant moments through two decades of activism. Former WEDO Executive Director, Cate Owren, describes the publication as a celebration of the organization's achievements and a reminder of the work that has yet to be done:

Women's history is not told enough. The women's movement--under-resourced as it tends to be, stretching to deal with countless urgent issues--seldom has the opportunity to document its efforts. But to honor twenty years of ideas, action, and impact, we decided there was no better way than to tell our story--and it's a great one--to capture the spirit of our founding, to inspire the next twenty years ahead (WEDO, 2012b)

The case of WEDO illuminates the tension-filled process of globalization and how it organizes different citizens around shared goals. WEDO's more than twenty-year history of advocacy is instrumental in placing gender equality and environmental justice on the international agenda. I chose WEDO from a large pool of worthy TFNs to investigate how the organization balances its expressed goal of achieving transparent, accountable, and effective global governance with the need to recognize the dangers of representing the interests of others. This Western feminist organization speaks for women all over the world, including those in the global Southern hemisphere. It brings together multiple stakeholders to deliberate issues and seeks to translate their interests to international institutions and back again without replicating top-down organization. WEDO potentially models a successful mediating role between the local and the global.

As such, I can use the case of WEDO to gauge the success with which NGOs might serve as global intermediaries.

A critical perspective on the “communicative labor” of NGOs challenges the tendency to treat them as authentic representatives of pre-formed constituencies. As Sarah Dempsey (2009) notes:

NGO representations are a product of *communicative labor*, a term describing forms of work primarily oriented around representing and speaking on the behalf of marginalized groups. Particularly within transnational contexts, communicative labor is structured by the historical and geographical advantages of imperialism, colonialism, and capitalism. When NGO representations are taken as transparent reflections of local stakeholders, the problematic conditions of their formation are easily obscured (p. 329).

When groups are unable to represent themselves in the global arena, international NGOs like WEDO play a significant role in publicizing and marketing social problems and solutions. The discourses NGOs produce significantly impact the different communities they represent, but these discourses are often uninitiated and uncontrolled by local interests.

For this reason, critics must guard against the naïve conception of NGOs as apolitical, authentic representatives of “the grassroots.” Following Dempsey (2009), I recognize that NGOs of all stripes are “less likely to have to account for their own position and relative power in relation to those they represent” (p. 341). Critical attention to these organizations can yield insights into how richer conceptualizations of

communicative labor might assist them in achieving democratic legitimacy. In the following section, I refigure public sphere theory to account for the emergence of the global organizational public sphere.

1.2 Critiquing, Extending, and Organizing Habermas's Theory

Jürgen Habermas's renowned theory of the bourgeois public sphere identifies how citizens influenced their newly-formed democratic institutions. Through deliberation in public spaces, such as salons and coffee houses, citizens developed public opinion circulated by the press and on which elected representatives based their decisions.

Habermas (1962) explains:

The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor (p. 27).

A response to aristocratic control and undemocratic representation, the public sphere was a space for citizens to come together to talk about their collective public life.

The type of talk that ensued in the public sphere generated what Habermas calls "critical publicity" by facilitating participation in "relatively unrestricted communication" and assisting citizens in gaining influence in political decision-making (Bohman, 2000, p. 14). Citizens used the "medium of talk" (Fraser, 1997, p. 70) to gain voice and transform political power. For Habermas, democracy develops and is sustained in this type of "rational-critical" debate among free and equal citizens. Through critical publicity (which

assumes norms of accessibility, reason, and transparency), the bourgeois public and affiliated press monitored governing bodies and exposed illegitimate exercises of power. This process offered citizens a way of checking undemocratic modes of decision-making.

Of course, “citizens” in the modern context were middle and upper-class men. The bourgeois (or liberal) public sphere therefore connected the state with the needs of very particular members of society. Exclusionary in practice, the public sphere has been critiqued from a variety of perspectives, nearly all of which draw attention to the deficiencies of classical liberalism. Still, many public sphere theory critics and extenders, like me, recognize the concept as a democratic ideal for which to strive. While alternative theories and nomenclature, such as “counterpublics” or “subaltern counterpublics,” are also used to represent the types of marginalized and underrepresented voices I showcase in this study, I extend terminology associated with public sphere theory because I conceptualize the public sphere as a dynamic process that can be modified rather than a static space. Unlike critics who argue that the exclusion of women and other historically marginalized groups necessarily constitutes the public sphere, I see it as capable of transforming itself to become more inclusive.

For the purposes of this dissertation, public sphere theory lays the necessary groundwork for theorizing a postmodern sociopolitical imaginary that moves beyond the parochial concept of the liberal nation-state. While citizens who used the press as a means to mediate between the *demos* and decision-making institutions animated the modern public sphere, a postmodern world looks to organizations, not individuals, to achieve critical publicity. To make this case, I articulate two strains of critique: (1) feminist challenges to the liberal public sphere, and (2) cosmopolitan challenges to the

liberal public sphere. I now develop these critiques as ways to correct for the public sphere's deficiencies while preserving its most democratic ideals.

Feminist Challenges to the Liberal Public Sphere

Broadly, feminist critiques of the liberal public sphere highlight the exclusionary nature of classical liberalism and the ways in which it conceals male domination.

Habermas identifies three institutional criteria for the public sphere: (1) the bracketing of status, (2) the domain of common concern, and (3) inclusivity. Each of these invites feminist critique.

First, to participate in public sphere deliberation, citizens are to bracket inequalities of status (as though that were possible, even in the best of circumstances). Even if meeting this condition *was* possible, the setting aside of differences can mask hegemonic domination by majority groups and ideologies (Fraser, 2007). Feminist challenges to this first criterion for the public sphere emphasize how the bracketing of status marginalizes the interests of those who are different. Iris Marion Young (1990) articulates it thusly:

The ideal of impartiality in moral theory expresses a logic of identity that seeks to reduce differences to unity. The stances of detachment and dispassion that supposedly produce impartiality are attained only by abstracting from the particularities of situation, feeling, affiliation, and point of view. These particularities still operate, however, in the actual context of action ... It is, moreover, an impossible ideal, because the particularities of context and affiliation cannot and should not be removed from moral reasoning. Finally, the ideal of impartiality serves ideological

functions. It masks the ways in which the particular perspectives of dominant groups claim universality, and helps justify hierarchical decision making structures (p. 97)

In short, the bracketing of status (and the attendant privileging of commonality and consensus in the public sphere) disadvantages citizens whose social belongings differ from those of the majority group.

Second, the notion of a domain of common concern draws sharp lines between appropriate topics for discussion in public and private realms. The public-private divide rationalized the exclusion of bourgeois women from civic life. Since the modernist sociopolitical imaginary equates publicity with masculinity and privacy with femininity, the liberal public sphere poses a double-bind for women. Carol Pateman (1995) argues that the public sphere, constituted by individualism, reason, impartial law, and citizenship, “gains its meaning and significance only in contrast with, and in opposition to, the private world of particularity, natural subjection, inequality, emotion, love, partiality—and women and femininity” (p. 6). Historically, the public-private divide relegates the discussion of so-called “women’s issues” to intimate arenas.

The partition between public and private spheres devalues the household as a site of labor, privileges masculine norms of thinking and speaking, and can sequester harm that may occur to women in the private sphere from public scrutiny (Fraser, 1985; Pateman, 1989). Feminist critics point out that in fact there are no natural, *a priori* boundaries between private issues and those within the public domain of common concern. Scholars of global civil society must therefore theorize a public sphere in which “no persons, actions, or aspects of a person’s life should be forced into privacy” and “no

social institutions or practices should be excluded *a priori* from being a proper subject for public discussions and expression” (Young, 1990, p. 120).

To combat oppression in a postmodern world, then, any discursive model of the public sphere should reconsider “private, non-public, and non-political issues as matters of public concern, as issues of justice, as sites of power which need discursive legitimation” (Benhabib, 1992, p. 100). The gradual (and ongoing, I think) erosion of the public-private divide can be attributed in large part to feminist social movements that demonstrate the permeable nature of public and private spheres (e.g. “the personal is political”). By politicizing previously “nonpolitical” issues, these social movements call on citizens to re-think the domain of common concern and broaden the reach of social justice.

Last and perhaps most obviously, the public sphere’s condition of inclusivity merits scrutiny. Despite the useful fiction of inclusivity, the liberal public sphere was in fact constituted by a number of significant exclusions. Participation in public talk was denied on the bases of gender, race, and class. Liberal norms are said to denigrate minority social groups by defining them as “other” to the dominant group (Plumwood, 1993). In many ways, the public sphere provided a training ground in which bourgeois men, who saw themselves as a universal class, prepared and asserted their authority to govern and portrayed those who were different as deficient in civic capacities (Fraser, 1992; Pateman, 1995).

Marginalized groups formed what some scholars term “subaltern counterpublics” to circulate counter-discourses that combat the hegemonic domination occurring in the public sphere. Feminist and postmodern critiques of the liberal public sphere emphasize a

shift toward multiplicity that is especially important in a postmodern world where “the ideal of participatory parity is better achieved by a multiplicity of publics than by a single public” (Fraser, 1992, p. 127). To realize its condition of inclusivity, any re-theorization of the public sphere should recognize concurrent multiple and counter publics (Hauser, 1997; Warner, 2002).

In sum, Habermas’s three institutional criteria for the liberal public sphere are widely challenged by feminist critics who seek to build upon, rather than abandon, the “indispensable resource” that is public sphere theory (Fraser, 1992). By identifying its limitations, critics can offer theoretical extensions that correct for its many pitfalls, perhaps the most significant of which is its impoverished conception of citizenship.

In his classic critique of liberal democratic theory, Benjamin Barber (1984) argues that “thin democracy” is a lingering consequence of a model of liberalism that leaves little space for active citizenship:

Thin democracy yields neither the pleasures of participation nor the fellowship of civic association, neither the autonomy and self-governance of continuous political activity nor the enlarging mutuality of shared public goods—of mutual deliberation, decision, and work. Oblivious to the essential human interdependency that underlies all political life, thin democratic politics is at best a politics of static interest, never a politics of transformation; a politics of bargaining and exchange, never a politics of invention and creation; and a politics that conceives of women and men at their worst (in order to protect them from themselves), never at their potential best (to help them become better than they are) (p. 25).

Rooted in radical individualism, citizenship in the liberal democratic frame preserves individual rights. Liberal democracy depends heavily on the idea of private property held by individuals and corporate persons (Barber, 1984). For Barber, while liberal democracy may secure private life for some citizens, it makes a public life in which all might participate nearly impossible by wedding itself to social structures defined by inequality.

Liberal notions of justice favor the redistribution of resources, lacking measures that would prevent the dominant culture from rendering certain citizens inferior, socially marginal, or invisible (Young, 1990; 1997; 2000). Conversely, a feminist democratic politics might re-envision citizenship as a relationship and a dialogic process that is grounded in a distribution, not of resources, but of recognition. A feminist democratic politics sees citizenship as a means to actualize an “ethic of care” for others. Absent a national grounding for citizenship, we shift from a parochial politics of location to a feminist “politics of relation” (Carrillo Rowe, 2008) that offers a more inclusive alternative to liberalism’s thin democracy.

Strong democracy is constituted by a participatory politics in which “citizenship is not a condition of participation but one of participation’s richest fruits” (Barber, 1984, p. 212). By offering a model of democracy that thickens liberalism’s strengths and remedies many of its weaknesses, Barber reclaims the overlooked role of citizenship in local, regional, national, and global public cultures. Politics, as a way of living, promotes community in which “individual members are transformed, through their participation in common seeing and common work, into citizens, autonomous persons whom participation endows with a capacity for common vision” (Barber, 1984, p. 232). In this sense, citizenship requires a multitude of voices and gives all people the power to speak,

to decide, and to act. Citizenship is found “not in caverns of private solitude” but in communication through which diverse people discover the “consolation of a common humanity” (Barber, 1984, p. 311). Citizenship in a strong democratic community thus depends on communication and organization.

Barber’s theory of strong democracy eschews a strictly liberal conceptualization of democracy, providing a useful framework for re-envisioning citizenship outside of the modern era. In a postmodern world, citizenship might be understood as a community of diverse members organized around shared goals. From this perspective, citizenship, as I discuss in the next section, entails a move from national public spheres toward global ones—a shift away from liberalism toward cosmopolitanism.

Cosmopolitan Challenges to the Liberal Public Sphere

Since traditional public sphere theory correlates publics with modern territorial nation-states, the emergence of community across national borders today raises questions about the future of the public sphere. Consider how the following two representative anecdotes illustrate a new type of global participatory politics:

- **The 2003 Global Anti-war Demonstrations**

On February 15, 2003, millions of citizens from dozens of countries throughout the world initiated mass political demonstrations protesting the looming U.S. American invasion of Iraq and subsequent war. Coordinated by networks of social movement organizations, these international protests were unprecedented in terms of both size and organization. While ultimately ineffective at stopping the 2003 U.S. American invasion of Iraq, the global demonstrations showed how citizens opposed to militarism united together to exercise a collective voice. On that day, the second superpower that is world

public opinion (Tyler, 2003) could not be ignored, exemplifying how the grassroots can challenge institutional power by organizing across boundaries and borders.

- **The “Occupy” and Arab Spring Movements**

In September of 2011, hundreds of U.S. American citizens began the occupation of New York City’s Wall Street financial district. Frustrated with increasing economic and social inequality, and directed against corporate greed, the Occupy Movement began as a grassroots response to the United States sub-prime mortgage and global financial crises. It became an international protest movement. “Occupy” was inspired by the Arab Spring, a wave of democratic demonstrations across the Arab world beginning in December of 2010.

These disparate movements organized their protests internally and communicated with external publics through the use of digital media, which shape intercultural communication by: (1) producing new public fora capable of (2) hosting rich, multimodal “spaces” of contact on (3) a scale of many-to-many communication that (4) challenges traditional modes of representation (Pfister & Soliz, 2011). The creation of these new “spaces” and “(re)conceptualizations of intercultural encounters” (Pfister & Soliz, 2011, p. 249) facilitate interaction between diverse groups. Within these spaces, citizens across the globe are transcending the modernist sociopolitical imaginary. The Occupy Movement and the Arab Spring re-imagine abstract strangers as fellow citizens, which is perhaps the first step in turning “the other” into a real human being from whom we can learn through encounters with difference (Appiah, 2006). The 2003 global anti-war demonstrations and the “Occupy” and Arab Spring social movements illustrate the presence of a global public sphere, a defining characteristic of which is its fleetingness.

Coordinated, collective action is difficult, if not impossible, to sustain over long distances and periods of time. But NGOs can make political action at the global level less fleeting by providing an institutional basis for it.

A global public sphere brings with it new opportunities and problems for democracy. It has become increasingly difficult to imagine that any meaningful deliberation, decision-making, or far-reaching social action will continue to take place solely at the micro-level, inviting global citizens to consider the promise of meso scale deliberative decision-making. Today's social movements no longer rely on solidarity rooted exclusively in face-to-face interaction. Contemporary collective action arises as an "aggregation of atomized behaviors" (Melucci, 1996, p. 23). The rapid diffusion of digital information technologies promotes communication across time and space, providing global social movements with innovative ways of engaging widespread members (Bennett, 2003). The emergence of a global public sphere (Falk, 2005; Habermas, 2001) engenders new social movements engaged with issues that affect geographically and culturally distant publics (Archibugi, 2004).

Because this type of global participatory politics does not fully compute in the Westphalian frame, an increasing number of scholars are drawing on theories of cosmopolitanism as a potentially fruitful explanatory framework. Cosmopolitanism has been theorized by philosophers like Cicero, Kant, and Hegel to modern-day interpreters, like Rawls, Habermas, and Derrida (Fine and Smith, 2003). The concept refers to the shift away from national public spheres toward international ones. This process might be thought of as "transnationalizing" the public sphere and thickening liberalism's democratic principles, such as deliberative decision-making, in a global context

(Archibugi & Held, 1995; Held, 1995; Falk, 1995; Habermas, 1998). Cosmopolitan critics of the liberal public sphere reject its notion of citizenship grounded exclusively in nation-state membership. Instead, they theorize a democratic politics that emphasizes a community of diverse citizens who share goals and similar justice claims. For example, transnational feminist networks like WEDO embody a cosmopolitan ethic that imagines citizens who are united, not by their physical location, but by a shared world vision.

Despite the emergence of a global public sphere, there exists no transnational institution with any real, binding authority. How, then, might democratic legitimacy be established? At least part of the answer to this question is organizations, and NGOs, in particular. In the “global organizational public sphere,” organizations have begun replacing individuals in facilitating deliberative legitimation processes. The role of non-governmental actors in contemporary society cues a larger theoretical dispute that this dissertation attempts to sort out. On one side of the debate, some say international and transnational organizations cannot generate democratic legitimacy. From this perspective, since only national spheres have been able to create legitimacy, international organizations would have to be restructured to include greater mechanisms of accountability. On the other side of the debate, there is optimism about the possibility of international and transnational institutions in facilitating legitimacy. I turn now to a brief summation of this dispute to show how a communication perspective mediates it.

In an argument for what he calls “transnational democracy,” James Bohman (2007) emphasizes a necessary transition from singular to plural subject, from *demos* to *demoi*:

Transnational democracy is that set of institutions by which individuals are empowered as free and equal citizens to form and change the terms of their common life together, including democracy itself ... It is reflexive and consists of procedures by which its rules and practices are made subject to the deliberation of citizens themselves ... It is an ideal of self-determination, in that the terms and boundaries of democracy are made by citizens themselves and not others (p. 2).

In other words, freedom is an essential circumstance for democracy in a global context.

For citizens to achieve “nondomination” to rule themselves, they must satisfy two conditions: (1) developing democratic institutions that are reflexive (e.g. those which allow for citizens to change/reform their democratic institutions, practices, and their notion of democracy itself), and (2) participating in deliberation that is de-centered and non-hierarchical (Bohman, 2004, p. 8). Satisfying these conditions entails agency to “address others and be addressed as members of publics” (Bohman, 2004, p. 8). The type of top-down global power that is evident in unelected institutions like the Bretton Woods regime threatens this agency. For this reason, national spheres generate legitimacy through elected representative bodies.

International institutions are incapable of achieving this type of democratic legitimacy. Even if a world government could be created to address problems of universal scope, opportunities available to citizens to participate in decision-making would be severely diminished. Many skeptics view international institutions as “bureaucratic bargaining systems” that are useful mostly to their rulers (Dahl, 1999). Though he is less skeptical than some, Bohman is doubtful about the ability of international and

transnational organizations to satisfy his conditions of freedom. In his view, as these organizations are currently structured, decisions they make are unlikely to achieve legitimacy in the eyes of citizens.

Habermas (2001), on the other hand, is optimistic about the possibility of international and transnational institutions creating legitimacy even if it is not the same type that is conferred upon nation-states through elected bodies. For Habermas, NGOs serve as crucial global actors whose participation in global deliberation can assist transnational decision-making bodies, such as the European Union (E.U.), in achieving acceptable standards of legitimacy:

The institutionalized participation of non-governmental organizations in the deliberations of international negotiating systems would strengthen the legitimacy of the procedure insofar as mid-level transnational decision-processes could then be rendered transparent for national public spheres, and thus be reconnected with decision-making procedures at the grassroots level (p. 111).

In other words, NGOs comprise the necessary “informal processes of opinion formation that take place outside of formal democratic institutions and within many associations of civil society” (Fine & Smith, 2003, p. 11). NGOs, in Habermas’s view, can ensure some level of democratic legitimacy in decision-making at the international level.

As a proud member of the Habermas camp in this particular theoretical dispute, I explore NGOs as global intermediaries that link citizens to global governance. If they can perform this task in an effective, meaningful way, they can narrow the legitimacy gap that prevails in the international arena. My case study of WEDO centers communication

in this process because issues of critical publicity and legitimacy, and the related tasks of representation and translation in a global era, are intrinsically communicative issues.

Communication scholars are uniquely situated to contribute to conversations about how citizens can satisfy conditions for global participatory politics. A communication-centered approach to global social problems fosters socially responsive understandings of communication and demonstrates its central role in everyday life practices (Shotter, 1984). This approach facilitates participation among actors who have long been denied access to deliberative and decision-making spheres. Through the terministic screen of communication, then, this dissertation intervenes in a theoretical dispute that has long been dominated by academics from a variety of other disciplines. A robust theory of the global organizational public sphere will come from adopting a communication and, more specifically, an “organizational rhetoric” perspective, for which I argue in the following chapter. An organizational rhetoric perspective integrates and strengthens key concepts and theories from the fields of organizational communication and rhetoric. The synthesis of perspectives is especially useful for drawing out the promise and tensions of the global organizational public sphere.

CHAPTER 2: “ORGANIZATIONAL RHETORIC” AS A LENS

2.1 A Brief History of Rhetoric

Throughout history and within any given period of time, the definition and meaning of “rhetoric” varies widely. The earliest theories of rhetoric are linked to the Western, liberal tradition and continue to inform the discipline today. From the 1920s through the 1940s, the classical approach to rhetoric in the United States treated rhetorical theory largely as an exercise in intellectual history (Lucaites & Condit, 1999). In the 1960s, as citizens’ dissatisfaction with the classical model of “the good man, skilled in speaking” became increasingly clear, rhetorical theorists began problematizing and extending classical assumptions about the scope and functions of rhetoric to account for changing cultural conditions. For instance, grassroots social movements of the time, such as the civil rights movement and women’s liberation movement highlighted the classical model’s ineffectiveness for oppositional, marginalized social groups.

Its historically narrow scope makes it so that, for some people, the word “rhetoric” has negative connotations. Citizens often view rhetoric pejoratively, as a synonym for trickery or a substitute for real critical thought and analysis (Foss, Foss & Trapp, 1991; Heath, 2009). The reason for this skepticism dates back more than 2,400 years to classical Greece. This chapter begins with a critique of the classical rhetorical tradition as the basis for rhetorical theory. I contrast traditional rhetoric with feminist rhetorical approaches that are more sensitive to our changing world. Contemporary culture positions “organizational rhetoric” as a system of rhetoric capable of robustly updating the rhetorical tradition. I conclude this chapter by introducing readers to the problematics of organizational communication that structure my case study.

Classical Rhetoric and Feminist Re-theorizations

Plato's *Republic* described a classical view of the perfect society: one of enlightened rule by a knower (or a few knowers) of "truth." For Plato, truth was constant and it was to be protected by the "philosopher-king" through any means necessary, including deception. Rhetoric, if it was to be used at all, was to be primarily a means for suppressing dissent and maintaining a stable society in which the unruly masses were controlled by elites. Throughout the ages, this use of rhetoric has provided a template for totalitarian rule in the name of absolute truth (Popper, 1944).

An alternative, ancient view of rhetoric posits truth as a relative notion. Plato's intellectual rivals, the Sophists, believed that even if absolute truth did exist, human beings are incapable of communicating it to one another because language is intrinsically imperfect. From this perspective, rather than using rhetoric to control society through the suppression of competing ideas, rhetoric is a faculty for deliberation over matters of uncertainty among everyday citizens. The ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle, saw rhetoric as a practical art that could be used for both good and bad. Like his mentor, Plato, Aristotle feared the power of rhetoric to mislead the public by making bad ideas seem like good ones. Unlike his mentor, though, Aristotle believed strongly in the power of rhetoric to function as the "ethical branch of politics" and help citizens reach sound decisions for society (Aristotle, 1962).

Charles Conrad (2011) identifies two important lessons to take away from classical era ideas about rhetoric: (1) rhetoric and its use inherently involve issues of power and social control, and (2) rhetoric inherently involves issues of truth and claims to knowledge. Conrad's observations inform many of my assumptions about rhetoric.

Certainly, rhetoric was and can be used to dominate people, ensuring that social elites maintain their power over citizens. At the same time, though, rhetoric can serve as a means to articulate multiple voices. As an art of negotiation, rhetoric reflects “the interests of multiple stakeholders in a democratic process” (Conrad, 2011, p. 14). For rhetoric to reflect the interests of multiple stakeholders in a global organizational public sphere, we must rethink traditional rhetoric as the basis for rhetorical theory. Traditional rhetorical theory is too limiting because it privileges the individualistic, the agonistic, and the local. Without modification, it has limited utility in a world where global, collaborative organizations are key actors.

Modifications of Aristotle’s (1982) definition of rhetoric as “the faculty of discerning the possible means of persuasion in each particular case” are common. For decades, scholars have pushed at its bounds from a variety of perspectives, drawing attention to the flexible nature of rhetoric. One hope of this dissertation is to dynamically update the rhetorical tradition to account for new cultural formations and move away from traditional rhetoric grounded in consensus, conversion, and competition. The traditional model assumes a reverence for the system that is usually antithetical to organized social movements operating outside of the dominant system. Since Aristotle’s time, “academic rhetorics have been for the most part instruments of established society, presupposing the ‘goods’ of order, civility, reason, decorum, and civil and theocratic law” (Scott & Smith, 1969, p. 7). Since traditional rhetoric, steeped in commonplaces, or shared knowledge, relies on dominant ideologies, it can function in hegemonic ways.

In classical and modern rhetoric, for instance, commonplaces generated topics and arguments for speeches given by, for, and about men who shared and sought to uphold

limited cultural values and perceptions. With consensus as *telos*, or its end goal, traditional rhetoric is inclined to frame dissensus as not adhering to norms of civility and thus outside of the purview of rhetorical action. But, as instances of civil disobedience throughout history demonstrate, the strength of social movements often lies in their power to disrupt conventional thought and norms. Consensus in traditional rhetoric, like consensus in the liberal public sphere, depends upon procedural rationality that “serves as an exclusionary and impoverished normative ideal that shuns much of the richness and turbulence of the sense-making process” (DeLuca 2009, p. 21). This type of rationality has long been used to marginalize women and other groups.

To create consensus, traditional rhetoric assumes conversion as its primary goal—one that Sally Miller Gearhart (1979) argues must be transformed. In her view, the intent to persuade others is a violent act. Many feminist scholars following Gearhart argue that the “conversion model” of rhetoric reflects a patriarchal bias in the value it accords to changing and thereby dominating others (Foss & Griffin, 1995). Indeed, conversion privileges contestation through which a rhetor attempts to elevate one perspective above others. In the classical sense, rhetoric is about “winning,” a combative impulse that, according to I.A. Richards (1936), can “put us in mental blinkers and make us take another man’s [sic] words in the ways in which we can down him with the least trouble” (p. 25). The combative impulse among arguers to “win” battles against their adversaries is a major pitfall of the classical rhetorical tradition.

In his essay *Arguers as Lovers*, Wayne Brockriede (1972) uses a sexual metaphor to explore three stances rhetors may take in relation to one another. The stances indicate both the perils and promise of rhetoric. The first, characterized by the chilling metaphor

of “rape,” describes arguers who conquer others by force. Rapists fail to attribute human capacities to their coarguers. The second is “seduction.” Seducers operate through charm or deceit, limiting their coarguers’ distinctively human power “to choose with an understanding of the consequences and implications of available options” (p. 5). The third stance, however, is characterized by “love,” which avoids the combative impulse long associated with traditional rhetoric, moving us from dogma toward dialogue in our rhetorical transactions. Lovers, according to Brockriede, differ radically from rapists and seducers in their intentions:

Whereas the rapist and seducer seek to establish a position of superior power, the lover wants power parity. Whereas the rapist and seducer argue against an adversary or opponent, the lover argues with his peer and is willing to risk his very self in his attempt to establish a bilateral relationship. Put another way, the lover-arguer cares enough about what he is arguing about to feel the tensions of risking his self, but he cares enough about his coarguers to avoid the fanaticism that might induce him to commit rape or seduction (p. 5, gendered language in original).

Drawing on Brockriede’s conceptualization of arguers as lovers acknowledges the promise of rhetoric to facilitate responsible public deliberation without becoming overly reliant on its historical preoccupation with competition. Unlike Gearhart, I do not believe that persuasion is intrinsically violent. There are many instances in which seeking change in others is a necessary interactional goal. In these cases, arguers can engage in “invitational rhetoric,” wherein participants remain open not only to the possibility of changing others, but also to the possibility of being changed (Foss & Griffin, 1995).

Rhetoric can thus be grounded not only in an aim to persuade but to articulate a perspective for others to consider and to engage in dialogue through which we too may be transformed (Richards, 1936). Such rhetoric is oriented toward collaborative growth, rather than competition.

One example of this type of new rhetoric can be found in feminist rhetorics. Feminist rhetorical theory re-envisioned traditional rhetoric and its constructs to extend sites of rhetoric beyond the narrowly-defined public spheres of political debate, law, religion, and public ceremony, occupied in the classical era overwhelmingly by privileged white males. While traditional rhetoric was an art of advantage, feminist rhetorics are rooted in an ethic of care, affectivity, and collaboration. Instead of privileging commonality and consensus over difference and dissensus, feminist rhetorics balance these fluid relations. In doing so, feminist rhetorics develop common bonds among citizens through the recognition of and appreciation for difference. A feminist rhetorical approach is more sensitive to a world of pluralism in which there exists a multitude of voices and interests.

Feminist rhetorical analysis is used to expose and help ameliorate relationships of domination and inequality in society. Since feminist rhetorics are constituted by pluralism, feminist rhetorical theory and analysis mean different things and serve different purposes for different scholars. For me, the label “feminist” brings with it an invitation to understand, a presumption that humans have agency to act and affect change, an appreciation for difference, and a concern for broadening the range of voices in global public discourse. Feminist rhetorical analysis draws attention to how liberal models of citizenship are rhetorical constructions—imagined subject positions that are

decidedly masculine but re-imaginable from a feminist standpoint interrelating sex/uality, race, and class oppression. Re-imagining citizenship along feminist lines is a first-step toward transforming relationships so that the alienation, competition, and dehumanization that so often characterize human interaction can be replaced with feelings of intimacy, mutuality, and camaraderie (hooks, 1989). This re-imagination highlights the creative and emancipatory potential of communication.

Given the critique of rhetoric that I have lodged here, how do I conceptualize it for the purposes of this dissertation? How can I register rhetoric's traditional linkage with deliberation while eschewing, on feminist grounds, the hyperagonistic conversion that liberal models of citizenship rely upon? Gordon Mitchell and Kelly Happe's (2001, p. 377) definition of rhetoric as a "practical art of vetting viewpoints through deliberation" and a medium for the negotiation of diverse perspectives foregrounds rhetoric's invitational potentiality in ways useful to this project. Though these authors' vision of rhetoric is not explicitly feminist, the consideration and negotiation of diverse perspectives is a feminist process that, in contemporary civil society, embodies part of a non-liberal, cosmopolitan ethic.

As many feminist scholars argue, agency in a new rhetoric can be grounded in an effort to seriously consider the perspectives of others. For me, Mitchell and Happe's definition of rhetoric complements assumptions shared by feminist and non-feminist rhetoricians alike that, through communication with others, interlocutors develop and refine their own values and beliefs. The promise of rhetoric, then, is in its transformative potential. When it is constituted by dialogue through which citizens collaboratively

develop arguments for the social good, rhetoric sustains democracy and can affect large-scale social change.

2.2 The “Fourth Great System of Rhetoric”

Douglas Ehninger’s (1968) classic study of the “three great systems of rhetoric” posited three distinct rhetorical-cultural formations and affiliated models of rhetorical practice: (1) the [classical] grammatical system of the Ancient Greeks focused primarily on the speech act or message; (2) the psychological system of the British empiricists examined the speech-listener relationship; and (3) the social, or sociological, system of the 20th century, concerned with understanding and improving human relations. Systems of rhetoric evolve to account for changing cultural conditions—what was useful for the Greeks is only partially useful for the moderns, and less so for contemporary rhetoricians.

Extending Ehninger’s suggestion that systems of rhetoric offer “an organized, consistent, coherent, way of talking about practical discourse” (p. 131), Richard Crable (1990) later observed that contemporary discourse is produced by organizations, not individuals. Organizational rhetoric, Crable notes, is the “fourth great system” of rhetoric. Organizational rhetoric builds on the traditional concerns of the other three systems while emphasizing the ontological nature of contemporary rhetors as “essentially organizational beings” (p. 118). Organizational rhetoric, as a lens, recognizes that individuals negotiate public rhetoric as representatives of organizations. Today’s rhetors “speak for, or represent, certain—sometimes multiple, overlapping, or complementary—organized interests” (Crable, 1990, p. 120). Especially in the global organizational public sphere, organizations very often play the role historically assigned to an individual rhetor.

As organizations replace single persons as key figures in society (Heath, 2009), scholars can look to organizational rhetoric as a useful paradigm. This lens overlaps with feminist critiques of traditional rhetorical theory and those offered by critical organizational theorists. An organizational rhetoric perspective moves us from individual rhetoric to organizational rhetoric grounded in collaboration, from agonistic to cooperative forms of rhetorical invention, and from rhetoric rooted in face-to-face interaction to global forms of communication. The synthesis corrects for the shortcomings in the stand-alone theories of either organizational communication or the rhetorical tradition.

Just as we understand many of today's rhetors to be organizations, organizations must be understood as rhetorical enterprises. Viewing rhetoric organizationally and organizations rhetorically extends Chester Barnard's (1939) definition of formal organization as "a system of consciously coordinated activities or forces of two or more persons" (p. 73). When apprehended rhetorically, organizations maintain a system of communication, communicating a common purpose, and securing the essential contributions of members (Barnard, 1939). In fact, organizations are constituted by many of the key terms of Kenneth Burke's rhetoric of identification, such as hierarchy, order, mystery, and "transcendence" of the individuals who associate with them (Cheney & McMillan, 1990).

Operating under the assumption that organizations are intrinsically rhetorical enterprises, George Cheney and Jill McMillan (1990) argue that it is vital to explore how "the pervasiveness of organizational rhetoric has begun to affect contemporary understandings of persuasion" (p. 93). Rhetorical motivation is implicated by various

aspects of organizing, requiring critical investigation of how basic structural elements of discourse are complicated when applied to messages produced by collectivities. Because we inevitably encounter rhetoric when studying organizations, many communication scholars, myself included, have taken a rhetorical turn in organizational studies (Redding & Tompkins, 1987). As Cheney and McMillan (1990, p. 94) note:

The adoption of a rhetorical perspective is necessitated by the expanding influences of organizations and organizational activities. Such a point of view allows us to apply, modify, and elaborate concepts that address directly the centrality of persuasion in human experience for the understanding of our increasingly organized society.

An organizational ethic encourages reliance on the collective, rather than on the individual subject (Denhardt, 1981), usefully de-emphasizing the Westocentric conception of the lone citizen. A fusion of rhetorical and organizational communication perspectives explains how organizations are both supplementing and supplanting individual power and have become for many people a primary resource for voice and identity (Cheney & McMillan, 1990). As such, organizations are and will continue to be key players in contemporary global society.

The Problematics of Organizational Communication

In contrast to the rhetorical tradition, with a two and a half millennia history, organizational communication is a relatively young subfield of the Communication discipline that emerged in the mid-twentieth century. Today, organizational communication research is characterized by broad theoretical and methodological scope. This was not always the case. Organizational communication research once formed

around functional concerns about “effective” managerial communication in organizations. Classical theorists viewed organization as a mechanism, envisioning effective organizations as well-built machines. Social science researchers adopted theories of communication as a variable that operated in patterned, predictable ways. They conceptualized organizations as naturally existing objects that could be described and controlled (Deetz, 2005).

In the early 1980s, Linda Putnam argued for an alternative to functionalism that might shift organizational communication research toward the interpretive paradigm. An interpretive approach to the study of organizing emphasizes meaning-centered understandings of communication and is rooted in the belief that organizations are socially constructed. This paradigm shift laid the foundation for critical organizational communication research as scholars began to acknowledge that knowledge formation is always political. Critical organizational communication scholars identify dominant power relations ingrained in macro-level social, political, and economic systems that shape the social construction of reality (Mumby, 2000). Critical organizational communication scholars call for attention to historically excluded voices and engage in research that aids in the development of more just, democratic societies (Cheney, 1995; Deetz, 1992).

Drawing on the earlier work of Mumby and Stohl (1996), Dennis Mumby (2001) develops four central problematics that provide a research agenda for the organizational communication field: (1) the problematic of *voice* refers to the monolithic managerial voice that has historically dominated organizations, (2) the problematic of *rationality* refers to the domination of technical rationality, evident, for example, in cost-benefit analysis in organizational deliberation, (3) the problematic of *organization* refers to the

dominant conception that the relationship between communication and organization involves the linear transmission of information along stable organizational channels, and (4) the problematic of *the organization-society relationship* refers to the commonplace view of organizations as separate and distinct from society. Each problematic gets its impetus from a critical orientation.

This study focuses on three of the four problematics that be extended even further from an organizational rhetoric perspective. Specifically, I devote three case study analysis chapters to the problematics: one chapter on insights related to voice, one chapter on insights related to rationality, and the final chapter on insights related to “the organization and society.” Rather than duplicating much existing organizational communication literature that sufficiently problematizes “organization,” my final chapter highlights the larger organization- society relationship because WEDO illuminates the blurring of boundaries between organizations and global civil society.

Moreover, globalization adds a wrinkle to the problematics that invites further critical exploration. International and transnational organizations occupy a strange place in the global arena. Take the United Nations (U.N.), for example: it is a deliberating body whose American members are often very far removed from the local events they deliberate about, and who are appointed, rather than elected. When the U.N. issues resolutions condemning Israeli aggression or rebuking Iran for failing to curb its uranium enrichment, as it did in September of 2012, it acts as what many citizens see as a “paper tiger” that lacks any real, binding authority.

The strange place occupied by international and transnational organizations, such as the U.N., raises important questions related to the problematics: How do international

decision-making bodies decide which voices to integrate into deliberation? How do these organizations weigh different cultural values against “rational” economic analyses? Finally, how does the development of the global organizational public sphere illuminate a new relationship between organizations and democratic societies? In the global organizational public sphere, the problematics can be interpreted as problems of translation that are amplified in a global organizational setting. The problematics therefore structure my analysis of WEDO. In the next section, I describe my method of analysis.

2.3 Method of Analysis

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore how NGOs serve as a mediating layer between citizens and international institutions, thereby fulfilling a critical role in achieving democratic legitimacy in the global organizational public sphere. I have two basic goals for this study. First, I want to demonstrate what is gained by merging theoretical perspectives and ideas from the fields of organizational communication and rhetoric. By adopting an organizational rhetoric perspective, and developing the concept of the “global organizational public sphere,” I update one of the most treasured terms in the rhetorical lexicon to account for today’s cultural conditions. Modern organizations, such as debating societies, literary circles, and various civic groups, were always part of public sphere activities, but these organizations were grounded in Westphalian ideas that are insufficient in capturing the difficulty of scale in global democracy. A theory of the global organizational public sphere generates a more meaningful understanding of the vital role of NGOs in global civil society. This role is largely a rhetorical one that

involves facilitating public deliberation and democratic decision-making on a global scale.

In addition to a theoretical contribution, I hope that my analysis of globalization from below in the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) yields valuable insights into the prospects and challenges of transnational feminist organizing. Transnational feminist organizing, like all forms of international organizing, faces the tension of particularism and universalism (Fairclough, 2006). Since TFNs organize in opposition to what they perceive as male-dominated, centralized, and hierarchical movements, they resist excesses of power and relations characterized by domination (Moghadam, 2005). Given this goal, the case of WEDO sheds light on how NGOs can navigate local autonomy and global solidarity without replicating the traditional model of top-down organization.

The overarching research question guiding my project is: How does WEDO mediate between the local and the global? This central query sparks a number of other related questions: What are the rhetorical practices in which WEDO engages to influence public deliberation and democratic decision-making? How does WEDO navigate the three problematics? How can an organizational rhetoric perspective, and more specifically, a feminist, global organizational rhetoric perspective, illuminate this process? How does this process signal a shift from the modernist sociopolitical imaginary?

My case study explores these questions, demonstrates how NGOs function rhetorically in global civil society, yields insights into how NGOs generate democratic legitimacy, and identifies the promise of the global organizational public sphere. Again,

because each of the problematics of organizational communication is at the heart of translating local needs to global institutions and back again, they structure my analysis. To follow, I offer an overview of the procedures for conducting my case study. First, I provide readers with a sense of this study's textual data. Then, I discuss how I draw on methods associated with rhetorical analysis and critical discourse analysis to generate an in-depth account of this case.

Case Study Research and Data

Case study research focuses on understanding the dynamics present in spatial-temporal settings, such as an organization (Eisenhardt, 1989). Through the case study method, I am able to compare the normative to the empirical and build theory by critically examining a case that provides "exemplary instances of the phenomenon being studied" (Yin, 2003, p. 10). The case of WEDO will draw insights for gauging the extent to which NGOs in the global organizational public sphere are successful global intermediaries that garner support among citizens and appeal to international institutions for help. My case analysis is guided by two overarching questions: What arguments does WEDO make about the conventional configurations of voice, rationality, and the organization and society? What alternatives does WEDO propose to conventional configurations of voice, rationality, and the organization and society? Answering these questions will shed light on WEDO's critique of current global governance processes and the effectiveness of its proposed alternatives.

Because case study research relies on multiple forms of data to develop an in-depth account of a particular case (Creswell, 2007; Eisenhardt, 1989; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009), I draw on the rich archival resources hosted by WEDO's website that features its

newsletters, dating from January 1996 to January 2013, published reports, factsheets, interviews, and various policy statements and initiatives. Eliminating many of the spatial and temporal obstacles to archival research, WEDO indexes this content in an online library that contains hundreds of documents and files dating back to 1995. WEDO's online library is both a convenient and rich source of information about the organization and its public advocacy work.

Critically Analyzing Texts

Critical textual analysis can illuminate how WEDO apprehends the problematics. My method of textual analysis is informed by three key assumptions. First, language shapes the social world and plays a powerful role in constructing reality. The constitutive effects of discourse are evident in the reconfiguration of global power and changing international relations. For instance, the term "globalization" has taken on a life of its own, inviting critics to investigate its messages, motivations, movements, and mobilizations. Examining the rhetorical moves and investments of key global actors can help us understand the basic elements of globalization and its influence in social, cultural, economic, and political life. Attention to language is useful for these processes. Critically investigating discourses helps us understand (and improve) the ways individuals, organizations, and societies organize and are organized by language. Discourse simultaneously enables and constrains social and political practices. However, since communication so easily becomes taken-for-granted, it is doubly important to examine the implications of language use.

Second, texts preserve the discourses that shape and reflect culture. Texts have a recursive impact on shaping emerging cultural formations. For this reason, they contain

insights into macrocontexts, such as those political and social structures that shape communication. Texts, furthermore, constitute publics (Warner, 2002). They are not merely incidental byproducts of culture—they create and reflect culture. In other words, meanings and values are embedded in texts, so critical scholars can use them to make sense of the larger, historical context in which communication takes place. In organizational studies, in particular, the written record is a particularly powerful social text. Documents function as a “paper trail” left by events and processes. According to Lindlof (1995), documents indicate what an organization produces, how it certifies certain activities, categorizes events or people, codifies procedures and policies, instructs a readership, explains actions, and tracks its own activities. Critically examining WEDO’s documents and other scholarly and news articles written about the organization will shed light on the salient organizational themes of this case.

Finally, because texts shape and are shaped by dynamic cultures, critics can operate with a fair amount of latitude in their investigations of how social texts bear on larger society. Critical textual analysis is a methodologically promiscuous process because communication criticism “isn’t a single framework, but a family of perspectives that share in common the analytic task of communication criticism” (Baxter & Babbie, 2003, p. 354). Given the overlap between qualitative approaches to communication and the humanistic approaches found in rhetorical criticism, I draw on both approaches. While some distinguish between them, both methodological frameworks critically investigate discourse via texts in order to understand its various functions. I am less concerned with adhering to strict methodological vernaculars and procedures associated with either the social science or humanistic tradition than I am with drawing on their

many overlapping tenets to more holistically illuminate my data. In determining the best way to study WEDO, I decided to employ an interdisciplinary approach that showcases the synergy I see between rhetorical analysis and discourse analysis as forms of intensive textual analysis that sensitize me to how language is socially constructed and constructing. In other words, a meld of approaches arose organically to fit this study.

The goal of criticism as it pertains to this case study is to broaden our understanding of organizational rhetorics, thus expanding our repertoire to act and to improve organizational communication practice vis-à-vis the problematics. I adopt an approach to communication criticism that fits nicely within the case study method and which regards discourse analysis as a form of communication (rhetorical) criticism. Just as this study hybridizes theoretical insights from organizational communication and rhetoric, it also integrates methodological processes from both fields. Specifically, my data analysis first identifies terms that cluster around the problematics in WEDO texts. Then, drawing on some of the most relevant features of critical textual analysis, I explore questions to probe each cluster of terms that surround the problematics. To follow, I elaborate on my method of textual analysis.

Exploring Rhetoric and Discourse in the Global Organizational Public Sphere

Rhetoric functions to provide an orientation for citizens and offers them assistance in adjusting to it (Burke, 1931). The rhetorical tradition is credited with generating a range of methods of analysis to investigate how words shape attitudes. As a critic, I am sensitized to the rhetorical figures that mark organizational and public discourse. Though the problematics do not explicitly announce themselves in WEDO's newsletters and policy reports, my critical orientation toward language helps me to

identify clusters of terms and instances where the problematics recur throughout WEDO's texts in figurative language and metaphors. Kenneth Burke (1941) explains the idea behind this method:

Now, the work of every writer [rhetor] contains a set of implicit equations. He [sic] uses 'association clusters.' And you may, by examining his work, find 'what goes with what' in these clusters—what kinds of acts and images and personalities and situations go with his notions of heroism, villainy, consolation, despair, etc. (p. 20)

By identifying terms that cluster around key words, critics can discover a range of equations made by a rhetor, intentionally or unintentionally. Even if a rhetor is “perfectly conscious of the act of writing, conscious of selecting a certain kind of imagery to reinforce a certain kind of mood, etc., he [sic] cannot possibly be conscious of the interrelationships among all these equations” (Burke, 1941, p. 20). Through this approach, I can identify how language is used in WEDO texts and discover, interpret, and render judgments about the organization's rhetorical associations, motivations, and strategies for creating identification among subjects (Burke, 1969a; 1966; 1941).

What terms cluster around the subjects of voice, rationality, and the organization and society in WEDO's rhetoric? In combing through hundreds of pages of texts in WEDO's online library, I identified clusters associated with each problematic to guide my reading of the organization's documents. Within and across WEDO texts, the terms that cluster around the problematic of voice are: *local* and *global*. These two umbrella terms encompass sub-themes of equality/equity, empowerment, exclusion, and participation. The terms that surround the problematic of rationality are: *experience(s)*,

expertise, and *knowledge*. Finally, the terms that cluster around the problematic of the organization and society are: *civil society* and *collaboration*. The clusters function as sensitizing frames through which to explore how WEDO's rhetoric focuses attention on and translates the problematics. Oftentimes, these terms function as what Richard Weaver calls "god terms," which represent the ideal for a rhetor and "devil terms," which represent ultimate evil. A rhetorical (cluster) framework orients me to recurrent terms and their associations in WEDO's rhetoric.

A subsequent step in my data analysis entails critically analyzing the discourses associated with the clusters. Here, I draw on discourse analysis, which has no unitary theoretical framework. The many types of discourse analysis are typically theoretically and analytically diverse (van Dijk, 1998). I chose Norman Fairclough's (2003; 2006) approach to critical discourse analysis (CDA), which emphasizes the centrality of language as both socially shaped and shaping, because it is viewed by many scholars as the most developed theory and method for communication research (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2006). A critical analysis of discourses in the global organizational public sphere orients me to coding practices that are useful in an organizational context. Like rhetorical approaches, this approach is politically committed to social change and involves engagement in "emancipatory critique" or "critical language awareness" to uncover the role of language in maintaining and transforming power relations (Fairclough, 1989; 1992; 1993). Taken together, these approaches are animated by an emancipatory spirit that supports the feminist paradigm through which I interpret my data.

Aspects of Textual Analysis

Fairclough (2003) offers three aspects of textual analysis that are especially relevant to my research inquiries: (1) markers of intertextuality, (2) markers of discourse(s), and (3) markers of styles. Attention to each of these aspects yields insights into the functions of the specific terms that cluster around the problematics. First, the intertextuality of a text is the presence within it of “other texts and a set of voices which are potentially relevant and potentially incorporated into the text” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 47). Intertextuality highlights difference by bringing other voices into a text, rather than reducing difference by assuming a common ground. Intertextuality is a marker of a text’s “dialogicality,” an aspect of Bakhtin’s (1981) dialogical theory of language. Dialogical texts might be thought of as those which reflect an “invitational” organizational rhetoric because they avoid authoritative and absolute language, relying instead on the use of words and discourses that Fairclough describes as relativized, de-privileged, and aware of competing definitions for the same things. I draw on this concept to explore the following questions: Which voices are included and excluded from WEDO texts? To whom are voices attributed, either specifically or non-specifically? Are voices attributed directly or are they indirectly reported?

Second, in the context of textual analysis, discourse(s) are different ways of representing aspects of the world. For instance, neoliberal political discourse differs in how it represents social events, social structures, and social practices from Marxist or Socialist political discourses. I draw on this second aspect of textual analysis to answer questions like: What discourses are drawn upon in WEDO texts and how are they presented in relation to one another? What features characterize the discourses in WEDO texts (e.g. semantic relations between words, collocations, metaphors, assumptions, etc.)?

Briefly, *semantic relations* are meaning relations between words and longer expressions, between elements of clauses, between clauses and between sentences, and over larger stretches of texts (Allan, 2001; Lyons; 1977).

For example, the coherence of the Bretton Woods regime's argument that its policies promote "fairness" in the global market is dependent upon a semantic relationship of hyponymy between "trade liberalization" and "fairness." From the neoliberal perspective, to liberalize trade is to establish a fair system. Such meaning relations are unique to certain discourses. Next, *collocations* can be thought of as the company a word keeps (Firth, 1957). Collocations are a pattern of co-occurrence between words—a predictable combination, such as "achieving women's empowerment," which, throughout this case study, is a more predictable combination of words than "achieving men's empowerment" or "achieving children's empowerment." *Metaphors* represent or symbolize something in the terms of something else; the metaphor of "the grassroots" permeates popular discussions about globalization, for instance. Finally, *assumptions* describe the implicit meanings of texts. I investigate three types of assumptions in my analysis: (1) *existential assumptions*, which refer to assumptions about what exists, (2) *propositional assumptions*, or assumptions about suggested alternatives to what exists, and (3) *value assumptions*, which Fairclough (2006) describes as assumptions about what is desirable or undesirable (or good or bad).

Finally, Fairclough's concept of "styles," or ways of being, also informs my method of data analysis. Styles are linked to identification, and attention to styles in texts can show us how people identify themselves and are identified by others. This aspect of textual analysis is characterized by two features: (1) *modality* and (2) *evaluation*. First,

the modality of a clause or sentence is the relationship it sets up between the author(s) of a text and representations, or what the authors commit themselves to in terms of truth or necessity. Modality involves the many ways in which attitudes can be expressed toward the “pure” reference-and-prediction content of an utterance, signaling factuality, degrees of certainty, vagueness, possibility, and necessity (Verschueren, 1999). For example, words such as “may” or “possibly” are intermediates between categorical assertion and denial. The use of these types of words registers varying degrees of truth or necessity. Next, evaluation refers to the aspects of meaning in texts that pertain to values. The statement, “Women’s rights are human rights.” is an explicit evaluative statement. Texts may very well contain directly stated values, but typically, values are assumed and must be discovered through investigation into a text’s evaluative assumptions about the desirability and undesirability of something (Fairclough, 2003; 2006). The marker of “styles” and its features of *modality* and *evaluation* help me answer questions like: What styles are drawn upon in WEDO texts? What do authors commit themselves to in terms of truths, or “epistemic modalities”? What do authors commit themselves to in terms of obligation and necessity, or “denotic modalities”?

To summarize, in this chapter, I hope to have familiarized readers with the basic goals of this study as well as the paradigmatic and methodological assumptions that inform my analysis. For me, an interdisciplinary theoretical and analytical approach that showcases the interactional nature of rhetorical and discourse theory arose organically a way to critically explore the organizational rhetoric of WEDO. To investigate how WEDO functions as an intermediary in the global organizational public sphere, I draw on textual data analysis that is informed by an organizational rhetoric perspective and

interpreted through a critical feminist lens. The following three chapters present the insights of my analysis as they pertain to the problematics of: (1) voice, (2) rationality, and (3) the organization and society.

CHAPTER 3: VOICE

3.1 Introduction: The Problematic of Voice

Who gets to speak for an organization? Within any given organization, whose voices are more powerful? Which voices are privileged? Which voices are suppressed? These questions illuminate the problematic of voice and the ways in which it is simultaneously enabled and constrained by a variety of organizational forms and discursive structures. The case of WEDO raises its own set of questions about voice: How does WEDO apprehend the problematic of voice in mediating between the world's most disempowered citizens and powerful, global institutions to assist citizens in gaining social, economic, and political power? What are the steps WEDO takes to include the voices of those citizens who have long been excluded from deliberative decision-making processes? What challenges does WEDO face when translating voices both upwards to the transnational scale and downwards to the grassroots?

Voice in organizational contexts manifests itself in the ability of an individual or group to participate in ongoing dialogue, or open communication in which all individuals may speak and be heard. Unfortunately, dialogue is oftentimes more the exception than the rule. In many organizations, a monolithic voice still prevails. This is, in part, because classical theoretical assumptions about who is able to speak tend to privilege discourses produced by "experts." As such, the voices of experts (e.g. managers, executives, chairpersons, directors) have historically been valued more highly than other organizational stakeholders.

The privileging of expert voice in Western society is a byproduct of late modernity during which the impassioned talk of bourgeois public culture eventually gave

way to “objective” scientific inquiry and technical forms of reasoning. Feminist critics warn against adopting a narrow conceptualization of expertise, drawing our attention to the ways in which women and other historically disempowered groups have long been excluded from processes of knowledge production. Avoiding the technocratic impulse to elevate the judgments of experts above those of citizens requires us to adopt a pluralistic sense of voice, exploring encounters between “experts” and “non-experts” as co-constructed processes. Doing so helps accomplish the critical scholar’s goal to expand the range of organizational voices heard (Mumby, 2001).

In addition to being one of the four problematics of organizational communication, voice is a metaphor for communication that fuses rhetorical, critical, and feminist theoretical traditions. Specifically, the metaphor of voice posits communication as the expression or suppression of voice, which accounts for the social and political processes that produce and reproduce meanings, identities, and power relationships that marginalize and silence various individuals and groups (Putnam & Boys, 2006; Putnam, Phillips & Chapman, 1996). The voice metaphor helps scholars critically examine processes of speaking, listening, and being heard in a variety of contexts—in the case of this dissertation, in the global organizational public sphere.

When rhetoricians speak of voice, they may be referring either to its literal or figurative dimensions. Eric King Watts (2001) argues that voice is “not reducible to the subject’s agency, nor does it reflect a limitless range of signification” (p. 180). Rather, voice in rhetorical studies is best understood as “the enunciation and the acknowledgment of the obligation and anxieties of living in community with others” (Watts, 2001, p. 180). Voice is a trope that signifies agency among individuals to act as a collective public. In

this sense, the study of voice necessarily requires that we explore the social commitments speech entails. I recognize the constitutive potential of language in this study by treating discourse as an aspect of social practices. This rich conceptualization of voice, as a process through which citizens constitute themselves as deliberating agents in civil society, fits well within this organizational study and embodies a feminist ethic of recognition:

Rhetorical 'voice' is not a unitary thing that inhabits texts of persons either singly or collectively. It is itself a happening that is invigorated by a public awareness of the ethical and emotional concerns of discourse. Saying that persons or groups have 'voice' does not offer it as a unidirectional, primordial and autonomous projection out of the body, nor does it become a semiotic project. Rather, speakers can be endowed with 'voice' as a function of a public acknowledgment of the ethics of speaking and the emotions of others. This recognition is often intertextual and mediated. 'Voice,' then, is the sound of specific experiential encounters in civic life (Watts, 2001, p. 185).

In conceptualizing voice this way, I attend to the significant role organization plays in the construction of our organizational identities, our civic identities, and our perception of larger democratic society. Moreover, this rich conceptualization of voice can help broaden the range of voices heard and overcome the suppression of voice in organizations.

The many barriers to voice are evidenced by the extent to which the voices of the grassroots are suppressed in favor of those international institutions that comprise the

Bretton Woods regime. While they certainly have made progress in accessing public decision-making fora, historically marginalized groups still lack influence in global governance. How can NGOs like WEDO thrive in a global arena dominated by expert voices? NGOs like WEDO continue to face challenges creating space in which the disenfranchised act collectively to gain voice in global public discourse. These challenges include deciding who can speak for local communities, and once someone does speak for a group of citizens, how to best translate their needs to global decision-making bodies. Throughout this complex process, organizations should exercise great care to maintain fidelity to the people they claim to serve. How do they do this? How can they do this better? What happens when different voices clash?

Problems like these pertaining to voice implicate the relationship among communication, ethics, and democracy (Mumby, 2001). Because our social locations are constituted by discourses of multiple forms of difference (e.g. class, race, gender) and some locations “are attended by privilege and others by marginalization,” (Dow, 1997, p. 247), our social locations have political consequences. To transform unequal social locations throughout the world, NGOs like WEDO, in effect, speak for citizens with limited access to the public sphere, relaying their interests to global institutions. As such, voice can be interpreted as a problem of translation facing NGOs in the global organizational public sphere.

I explore voice both as a problematic of organizational communication and as a rhetorical problem of translation since mediating between citizens and international institutions entails the thorny act of speaking for others. Nonprofit organizations are therefore political actors insofar as they “produce and circulate images of social problems

and their solutions, assign praise and blame, and represent the concerns of groups with limited access to the public sphere” (Dempsey, 2011, p. 149). As these organizations become “increasingly important sites in which critical decisions about social problems are made” (Dempsey, 2011, p. 149), they invite careful scrutiny by citizens and researchers.

Such “intermediary organizations,” as they are known in organizational communication literature, link democratic citizens to governments, and operate independently of and within the space between at least two parties to provide “distinct value beyond what the parties alone would be able to develop or amass by themselves” (Honig, 2004, p. 67). They facilitate exchange relationships between actors on a continuous basis (Sasson, 2008), directly influence states, and organize around a collective ideology (Caragata, 1999). The case of WEDO highlights the role of intermediary organizations in amplifying voice to effect global social change, the “dialectical process of struggle between competing poles of communicative action” (Papa, Singhal & Papa, 2006, p. 49). Social change encompasses tensions, paradoxes, and contradictions (Ashcraft, 2000; Ashcraft & Trethewey, 2004; Harter & Krone, 2001; Stohl & Cheney, 2001). How did WEDO come to develop its vision for affecting social change and amplifying voice in the global arena?

In this chapter, I trace WEDO’s early discourses as they pertain to the problematic of voice to illuminate an evolution in its rhetoric over the organization’s twenty-two year history. How has WEDO’s rhetoric changed since its inception? How did the organization apprehend the problematic of voice then and now? Through critical attention to some of WEDO’s earliest archived literature surrounding the 1995 U.N.’s Fourth

World Conference on Women (FWCW), I make the case that its rhetoric evolved alongside feminist waves, apprehending the problematic of voice accordingly. Whereas WEDO's rhetoric was once undergirded by a Western accounting discourse that privileged liberal themes of commonality and consensus, its later discourse reflects the politics of difference that drives third-wave feminism. WEDO's rhetorical evolution is evident when one compares and contrasts its current campaign discourses to its discourse surrounding the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference. WEDO's early approach to voice in the global organizational public sphere, apparent in rhetorical activity surrounding the FWCW, articulates a second-wave feminist vision that reflects the perspectives of white, middle-class, heterosexual women who are defined primarily as oppressed victims of patriarchy. Consequently, WEDO's 1990s-era organizational rhetoric fell into some rhetorical traps that later, as third-wave feminism emerges, are less evident.

On the Way to Beijing: WEDO's Early Vision for Amplifying Voice

In September of 1995, the FWCW adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to advance goals of equality, development, and peace for women. The declaration acknowledges "the voices of all women everywhere" and recognizes the persisting obstacles to gender equality that are "exacerbated by the increasing poverty that is affecting the lives of the majority of the world's people, in particular women and children, with origins in both the national and international domains" (UN, 1995). International press and more than 40,000 women traveled to Beijing to participate in the parallel NGO Forum, and to witness member governments dedicate themselves to "enhancing further the advancement and empowerment of women all over the world" (UN, 1995).

In her statement to delegates, WEDO co-founder Bella Abzug (1995a) warned governments that organizations like WEDO will hold them accountable for commitments made in Beijing, saying that upon the end of the conference, “we will still be looking at our governments—closely, critically, urgently and hopefully—to ensure that you hold to and make real the commitments entered into here.” Indeed, WEDO followed up by assisting the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in drafting documents for various reviews and appraisals of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In September of 1996, WEDO released a one-year anniversary report tracking progress in implementing the Beijing agenda. WEDO distributed its report, which also describes the organization’s initiatives for tracking the World Bank, at the 1996 Association for Women in Development (AWID) conference, and issued it to all member states, U.N. agencies, and the press. WEDO also used its report as a discussion tool at various workshops, including one on the subject, “Holding Governments and International Agencies Accountable to Their Promises: Monitoring and Advocacy Strategies for Advancing Women’s Agendas.” WEDO’s work surrounding the 1995 Beijing Women’s Conference is an example of the TFN’s early public advocacy and, in many ways, WEDO’s introduction to the world. The following two sections of this chapter identify two major traps that are evident in WEDO’s early discourse (e.g. its 1990s-era discourse leading up to and immediately following the FWCW): (1) the privileging of expert voice, and (2) the passivation of local voice.

3.2 Privileging Expert Voice in Early WEDO Discourse: Who Is Able to Speak

In representing “sometimes distant groups” (Dempsey, 2009), non-profit actors like WEDO mobilize discourses that carry a situated set of politics and forms of power.

Given that WEDO was founded by prominent leaders of the 1970s U.S.-feminist social movement, it is perhaps unsurprising that its early politics reflect the privileging of expert voice and the preoccupation with accountability and representation found almost exclusively in Western cultures (Power, 1997). Liberal feminism “assumes an ahistorical, universal unity between women based on a generalized notion of their subordination” (Mohanty, 1991, p. 344). Second-wave liberal feminists, like those who founded WEDO, are widely criticized for conflating diverse women within their movement and constructing women’s needs as universal needs that can be met under Western feminist leadership.

In WEDO’s early organizational rhetoric, “expert” voices, such as those of its founders, chairs, and official delegates prevail; trumping and, to a large extent, excluding the voices of women and communities outside of the Western hemisphere. WEDO’s 1990s-era texts lack intertextuality, which indicates the “dialogicality” of discourse (Fairclough, 2006). Dialogical texts resist hegemony, the attempted universalization of particulars (Laclau, 1996), by including others’ voices and attributing quotes. For the most part, voice in early WEDO texts is attributed non-specifically to “women” whose voices are indirectly reported and overwhelmingly represented from the standpoint of WEDO’s liberal feminist experts.

One of Bella Abzug’s remarks during a press conference prior to the start of the 1995 Beijing Women’s Conference is representative of the lack of intertextuality in early WEDO discourse:

This, the largest conference in U.N. history, is compelling evidence that the time has come to scale the great wall around women everywhere. The

decade of women from 1975 to 85 gave birth to the global women's movement. At each prior three world conferences on women, I learned a tremendous amount from our sisters in the developing countries. My deep respect and admiration for these women led me to establish the Women's Environment and Development Organization, and to organize the Women's Caucus in the United Nations procedures for the Earth Summit, the International Conference for Population and Development, the Social Summit, and now Beijing. And as I have accompanied thousands of women and I've joined their collective efforts for real political, social, and economic justice, I have watched new generations of activists come into their own, including our own Third World women here in this country—real powerful women who understand that we are there and we are coming back because we are going to give leadership to the politics of transformation.

If, as Burke (1984, p. 232-233) argues, a rhetor's associations offer us "a survey of the hills and valleys" of a rhetor's mind, we might understand WEDO's early approach to voice as a consequence of its limited rhetorical action in a liberal frame. So-called "Third World" feminists who denounce liberal feminism's tendency to universalize the experiences of women frequently lodge this critique against American feminist organizations.

Many postcolonial feminists argue that Western feminist discourses are incongruent with the needs of women in the non-Western world. In an argument against an assumption that characterizes much Western feminist discourse: women as "an already

constituted, coherent group with identical interests and desires, regardless of class, ethnic or racial location or contradictions” (p. 337), Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1991) cautions U.S. feminists against the rhetorical framing of women as “sisters in struggle”:

... women are characterized as a singular group on the basis of shared oppression. What binds women together is a sociological notion of the “sameness” of their oppression. It is at this point that an elision takes place between “women” as a discursively constructed group and “women” as material subjects of their own history. Thus, the discursively consensual homogeneity of “women” as a group is mistaken for the historically specific material reality of groups of women. This results in an assumption of women as an always-ready constituted group. One which has been labeled “powerless,” “exploited,” “sexually harassed,” etc., by feminist, scientific, economic, legal, and sociological discourses (p. 337-338).

For Mohanty, instead of defining the female subject to gender identity, women are better understood as socio-economic political groups that exist in particular contexts. It should not be presumed that all women share the same goals, or that different women conceptualize the goals they do share in the same way, or that actualizing the goals women do share is necessarily accomplished by the same means.

Expert rhetoric that reifies women as a stable subject can uphold, rather than combat, systems of gender and sex oppression. While WEDO’s early approach to global public advocacy, aimed at transitioning away from male-dominated decision-making, signaled a step in the right direction, it also masked some important differences between the citizens WEDO represents. Surely, women’s needs and interests vary according to

their different social belongings, making WEDO's second-wave feminist discourse throughout its early years especially problematic. The privileging of expert voice in early WEDO discourse is evident in its romanticization of the *global*, the first term clustering around the problematic of voice in WEDO texts.

WEDO's liberal feminist experts' treatment of women as "sisters in struggle" reflects a salient tension in its rhetoric between the universal and the particular. Thus, themes of the *global* and the *local* (the other term clustering around the problematic of voice in WEDO texts) prevail in early WEDO discourse. Following Fairclough, I attend to the movement between the global "space-time" of experts and the local "space-time" of citizens that recurs in WEDO's organizational rhetoric. I will elaborate on the term *local* in the following section. Here, I want to focus on how WEDO's discourse surrounding the FWCW romanticizes the global, read in most contexts as a god term that functions in early WEDO discourse in at least three ways: (1) to indicate WEDO's goal of "global governance" through which it seeks to balance a key tension NGOs face between legitimacy and accountability (Ganesh, 2003); (2) to mark WEDO and other international women's movement organizations as global representatives of local women in global governance fora; and (3) to signify universal needs among women as a common subject. I discuss these three functions in turn.

First, accountability in organizational communication literature broadly refers to "the willingness and ability of an organization to answer relevant stakeholder questions" (Dempsey, 2007, p. 313). Because NGOs are boundary spanning and boundary making organizations that incite cooperation across various borders (Harter & Krone, 2001), identifying who counts as a relevant stakeholder in globalized contexts is difficult. Rather

than a guiding assumption that social problems are best diagnosed and addressed by those stakeholders who are directly affected by these problems, WEDO is guided in its early years by an assumption that voice in global public discourse is achieved through increased accountability among global representatives like itself to local stakeholders.

Calls for increased accountability in international contexts may be only “superficially empowering,” oftentimes producing and circulating discourses of accounting that “serve the easily quantified expectations of funders rather than the heterogeneous and at times conflicting needs of community stakeholders” (Dempsey, 2007, p. 315). Moreover, enacting accountability may result in superficial rituals of verification instead of careful self-evaluation in organizations (Ashcraft, 2001; Dempsey, 2007; Power, 1997). By operating in a Western accounting frame, in its early years, WEDO limited the purview of its rhetorical action to global fora, such as international conferences, working mostly apart from the citizens it represents.

While some of its 1990’s-era texts include indirect and some direct references to the interrelated nature of the local and the global, these texts mostly sharpen the boundaries between the two spatial imaginaries, emphasizing the need for global entities to be more accountable to local women. For instance, in a report featured in WEDO’s newsletter *News & Views* entitled, *Women Transform the Mainstream*, WEDO calls for global entities to consider the conflicting interests and interpretations between “official organizations and agencies and local community groups.” WEDO’s demand reflects its larger assumption that local and global interests are oppositional and that action within either space occurs separately of each other. In this sense, WEDO oversees local forms of activism, but participates in global ones. As such, local community stakeholders

implement global decisions at the grassroots level but do not necessarily shape these decisions in a meaningful way.

Western accounting discourses frame citizens who lack access to the public sphere as reliant on NGOs for representation in global governance processes. As Abzug's statement to FWCW delegates demonstrates, WEDO is thought to be responsible for monitoring global entities and holding them accountable to local stakeholders. In this frame, the "local" and the "global" are largely understood as mutually exclusive, fixed spaces (Freeman, 2001) rather than contingent on one another and mutually re-produced. This perspective does little to transcend dominant power relations or overcome barriers to voice so that citizens can gain access to public fora in which they might begin speaking for themselves. Worse, reifying dichotomous and hierarchical power structures can create new barriers to voice in the global organizational public sphere by cementing a top-down organizational model in which global social elites speak for locals.

This barrier to the meaningful articulation and translation of voice highlights what Linda Alcoff (1992) calls the "problem of speaking for others." She explains:

The practice of speaking for others is often born of a desire for mastery, to privilege oneself as the one who more correctly understands the truth about another's situation or as one who can champion a just cause and thus achieve glory and praise. And the effect of the practice of speaking for others is often, though not always, erasure and reinscription of sexual, national, and other kinds of hierarchies (Alcoff, 1992, p. 29).

Even well intended NGOs, like individual rhetors, are driven by a variety of assumptions and conflicting interests that create tensions associated with issues of

accountability and representation. This is not to say that I think the hope of translation in the global organizational public sphere is always a false one. It is to say, however, that translation is a complex, political, and consequential process, particularly in global governance wherein unelected civil society organizations often speak for citizens who lack access to the public sphere. To ethically represent these citizens, NGOs should exhibit an awareness of their existence in a “tension-filled relationship with those they represent” (Dempsey, 2009, p. 330-331). Awareness of the “problem of speaking for others” is therefore a pre-condition for ethically being able to do so. Unfortunately, WEDO did not always exhibit such awareness.

To achieve its goal of making global governance more accountable to citizens, early WEDO rhetoric also employs the god term *global* to mark itself and other international women’s movement organizations as authentic representatives of local women. This, the second function of the romanticization of the global, is evident in WEDO discourse surrounding the *180 Days and 180 Ways* campaign leading up to the FWCW. In the six months between its participation in the 1995 World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen and the 1995 U.N. FWCW, WEDO launched its *180 Days and 180 Ways* campaign to garner public support for the goals of the Beijing Platform. The campaign informed women of their rights already protected under national and international law and sought to hold governments accountable in areas of financial and institutional support for “women’s empowerment.” Through the initiative, WEDO kept women’s issues at the forefront in the months preceding the FWCW to ensure the necessary resources to implement recommendations made in Beijing. WEDO’s discourse surrounding the *180 Days and 180 Ways* campaign names a situation: there are 180 days

before the 1995 U.N.'s FWCW and at least 180 ways to support the cause. WEDO does more than name a situation, though—it instructs audiences to act, leading them toward a course of action to draw local attention to the global issues WEDO would negotiate on their behalf.

Campaign documents, such as press releases and interviews, urge citizens around the world to use the time between conferences to link the “possibilities opened up by government agreements at these and other U.N. conferences to the everyday realities of women’s lives” (WEDO, 1995). WEDO refers to September 6th of that year as “a day of solidarity for women’s equality and equity all over the world,” and invites citizens to participate in events occurring at the NGO Forum to “advance women’s movements for equality, development, and peace at national and community levels” (WEDO, 1995). WEDO’s *180 Days and 180 Ways* campaign literature is undergirded by themes of “solidarity,” “equality,” and “equity,” which foreground the liberal spirit that unites WEDO’s members.

As several official documents published throughout the 1990s illustrate, WEDO drew on largely Western orientations to representation. In describing her hopes for the Beijing Women’s Conference, Director of the New York-based U.N. Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Noeleen Heyzer (1995) told the press, “We cannot allow Beijing to pass without a commitment to real resources. [The *180 Days and 180 Ways* campaign can help] come up with strategies as to how we will obtain these kinds of commitments so that Beijing is a pledging conference.” Likewise, Secretary-General of the Beijing conference, Gertrude Mongella (1995), touted the *180 Days and 180 Ways* campaign, arguing that the FWCW marked the “time to put the right amount of money in the right

places – into women’s equality. We have sufficiently diagnosed, studied, and put together data on women’s suffering. Now it is time for action.” Bella Abzug (1995b) concurred, articulating WEDO’s campaign message thusly: “We’re not going to Beijing to beg or to ask—we’re going to present our bill—and we expect it to be paid.”

Importantly, Abzug’s analogy and its *180 Days and 180 Ways* campaign discourse reflect a broader assumption that is evident throughout the organization’s early years of public advocacy: “development” is synonymous with “economic development,” which, from a neoliberal perspective, is thought to serve as an equalizer for women who are adversely affected by international economic policies (Mohanty, 1991). Operating within the confines of the dominant rhetoric of neoliberal globalization, WEDO’s campaign equates “equality” for women with (re)distributive justice, proposing mostly economic solutions to complex socio-economic, political, and cultural problems.

In centering representation on securing the financial resources to implement global decisions at the local level, WEDO representatives fail to question whether or not these decisions actually and adequately address the complex and perhaps conflicting interests of the grassroots. The *180 Days and 180 Ways* campaign reproduces a unidirectional communication model that is not conducive to dialogic interchange among local communities and their representatives. Instead, the campaign (like most of WEDO’s early initiatives) privileges the implementation of pre-formed solutions developed in global decision-making bodies.

In general, WEDO’s *180 Days and 180 Ways* campaign documents reveal a neoliberal discourse characterized by Western feminist assumptions about representation. Take, for instance, Heyzer’s (1995) statement, “We cannot allow Beijing to pass without

a commitment to real resources.” This statement illustrates the use of implicit evaluation in WEDO texts, signaling a value assumption. Readers see how the risk of allowing the conference to pass “without a commitment to real resources” denotes what is undesirable for WEDO. What is desirable is for WEDO representatives to obtain commitments to resources on behalf of local groups. Value systems and associated assumptions belong to particular discourses (Fairclough, 2003; 2006). WEDO’s *180 Days and 180 Ways* campaign promotes a neoliberal economic and political discourse that assumes that justice is grounded in the (re)distribution of resources. Redistribution in the economic sphere is just one dimension of justice. It is vital—especially in a globalized context—to incorporate other dimensions, such as recognition in the socio-cultural sphere and representation in the political sphere (Fraser, 2004; 2014).

Since early WEDO rhetoric frames the organization as a global representative of women, its oldest initiatives rarely feature the voices of women articulating their own needs. Rather, women’s needs and WEDO’s larger campaign messages are articulated by its organizational experts—in the above example, by the then Director of UNIFEM, Secretary-General of the FWCW, and WEDO’s co-founder. WEDO’s participation in the FWCW occurred mostly apart from citizens. Its *180 Days and 180 Ways* campaign discourse is representative of how, throughout its early years of public advocacy, WEDO’s “expert” style of organizational rhetoric univocally articulated the interests of others—interests it framed as shared by all women across scales of social difference.

The final function of the god term *global* in early WEDO texts signifies universal needs among women as a common subject. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, second-wave liberal feminism is widely criticized for conflating diverse women

within its movement. WEDO falls victim to this rhetorical trap throughout the 1990s, predicating most of its arguments on the existence of “women” as an ideological subject with the same basic problems and needs. Its early rhetoric positions WEDO as an authority on these problems that can offer solutions on behalf of women everywhere. In this way, WEDO’s early organizational rhetoric operates much like traditional rhetoric grounded in commonality and consensus.

For instance, attention to markers of discourses in early WEDO texts reveals at least two of its existential assumptions: (1) globalization has led to a commonly experienced type of inequality among women throughout the world, and (2) women are united through the material reality of having been routinely excluded from systems of international governance. The organization’s propositional assumptions, or those assumptions about suggested alternatives to what exists, include WEDO’s assumption that women’s empowerment and political, social, and economic justice are goals that can be met through its leadership. Consider how another one of Abzug’s (1995a) statements to delegates at the FWCW reflects a second-wave feminist desire to construct a common vision and a common voice among the world’s “women”:

Change is not about simply mainstreaming women. It’s not about women joining the polluted stream. It’s about cleaning the stream, changing stagnant pools into fresh, flowing waters. Our struggle is about resisting the slide into a morass of anarchy, violence, intolerance, inequality and injustice. Our struggle is about reversing the trends of social, economic, and ecological crisis. For women in the struggle of equality, there are many paths to the mountain top. Our struggle is about creating sustainable

lives and attainable dreams. Our struggle is about creating violence-free families; and then violence-free streets; then violence-free borders. For us to realize our dreams, we must keep our heads in the clouds and our feet on the ground.

The presentation of “women” as a coherent collective that can overcome its shared struggle by embarking upon a common course of action led by WEDO privileges the voices of WEDO’s neoliberal feminist founders and inscribes its audiences with a largely neoliberal ideology.

By addressing a particular audience, a rhetor also constructs and reifies it—and thereby excludes other audiences. Maurice Charland’s (1987) theory of constitutive rhetoric argues that the subject position one embodies is a rhetorical effect. Drawing on Burke’s (1969b) “identificatory principle,” which asserts that because human beings are “symbol using animals,” our being is significantly constituted in our symbolicity, Charland cautions us against accepting the givenness of an audience, or subject. Rather, Charland suggests considering their constitution in rhetoric and the “textual nature of social being” (Charland, 1987, p. 137). Doing so illuminates what Louis Althusser (1969) calls “interpellation,” the process of inscribing subjects into ideology:

I shall then suggest that ideology “acts” or “functions” in such a way that it “recruits” subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or “transforms” the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by the very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace every day police (or other) hailing: “Hey, you there!” (p. 174)

Interpellation is significant to rhetoric because, according to Charland, “the acknowledgment of an address entails an acceptance of an imputed self-understanding which can form the basis for an appeal” (p. 138). The process of interpellation occurs rhetorically but not through persuasion in the usual sense because “one must be part of the audience of a rhetorical situation in which persuasion could occur” (Charland, 1987, p. 138). In other words, audiences do not exist outside of discourse that operates simultaneously to reveal and make audiences real. The rhetoric that reveals and makes WEDO’s audiences real throughout the 1990s is a second-wave feminist rhetoric.

To recap, in this section, I argued that WEDO’s discourse surrounding the FWCW romanticizes the global by: (1) indicating WEDO’s goal of “global governance” through which it balances legitimacy and accountability, (2) marking WEDO and other international women’s movement organizations as authentic representatives of local women, and (3) signifying universal needs among women as a common (global) subject. Taken together, these functions help WEDO articulate a second-wave feminist vision. As a result, WEDO’s 1990s-era organizational rhetoric fell into the trap of privileging expert voice. The flipside of fetishizing expert voice at the global level is, as I discuss in the next section, the passivation of local voice.

3.3 Passivating *Local* Voice in Early WEDO Discourse: How Others are Spoken Of

Politics “begins with rhetoric: what is being said, who is saying it, and for whom” (Wander, 1996, p. 15). WEDO’s early discourse exhibits an orientation to social difference that brackets difference and focuses on solidarity among women. This approach to social difference is evident in the universal class-based politics of an earlier time. WEDO’s earliest literature implicitly and explicitly projects certain particulars as

universals, relying on expert voice, rather than on the voices of others to articulate their own experiences. In accordance with Western accounting discourse, this type of discourse “passivates” social actors by portraying them as subject to the action of others (Fairclough, 2003). Discourses that consistently passivate certain social actors imply that they are incapable of agency (Halliday, 1994; Van Leeuwen, 1996) and therefore have significant social implications.

WEDO’s second-wave liberal feminist discourse “passivates” local voices in at least two ways: (1) by reifying the local-global dichotomy, which in turn, cements a linear “transmission model” of communication in which experts speak for non-experts, and (2) by erasing heterogeneity at the local level. The term *local*, like *global*, clusters around the problematic of voice in WEDO texts and prevails in its early documents. In these texts, the term local mostly signifies the grassroots communities WEDO represents in global governance systems. I begin with a discussion of the reification of the local-global dichotomy in WEDO’s early discourse.

Reifying the Local-Global Dichotomy

The use of the terms *local* and *global* in WEDO’s early texts oversimplifies many of the geographical, organizational, and representational dimensions of each. Most of its 1990s-era documents indicate a modernist sociopolitical imaginary that views “the local” in contrast to “the global.” These texts cement a linear transmission model of communication and translation in which experts speak for non-experts. WEDO’s dichotomous framing of the local and the global in its early discourse posits encounters between the organization and the women it represents as processes through which WEDO *transmits* rather than *transforms* voice. Rather than presenting interchanges between

“local” women and their “global” representatives as co-constructed processes, local women are overwhelmingly presented in early WEDO texts as beneficiaries of its expertise.

For instance, another of Heyzer’s statements at the FWCW describes WEDO as “the first to teach us what a caucus is, how to lobby and how not to be afraid” (WEDO, 2012c). While it certainly is true that WEDO’s experts share valuable information with non-experts who organize at international conferences, a dialogical approach to voice in the global organizational public sphere would see voice as the development of mutually decided solutions to problems. It would indicate bi-directional information sharing and circulation among experts and citizens, and it would frame NGOs and citizens as co-learners. Throughout its early texts, there is a marked absence of dialogicality at WEDO.

The reification of the local-global dichotomy in WEDO’s early discourse passivates local voices through an expert style. The aspect of “styles” is characterized by two features: (1) modality, and (2) evaluation. Modality in early WEDO texts illuminates the relationships between author(s) and representations, or what author(s) commit themselves to in terms of truth (epistemic modality) and what author(s) commit themselves to in terms of obligation (denotic modality). WEDO’s larger epistemic modality is evident in an assertion it makes in a 1996 report *Beyond Promises: Governments in Motion One Year After the Beijing Women’s Conference*: “Women around the world are determined to hold governments to their promises and see that they fulfill their bargains” (WEDO, 1996). This assertion expresses WEDO’s commitment to truth: women (represented by WEDO) are determined to hold governments accountable to their promises. The organization’s commitment to truth is partly predicated on its

assumption that it represents the voices of local women. Assertions like this are common in WEDO's early rhetoric, which often refers to the need for global actors to understand "local cultures," to address how "local populations" are overwhelmed by environmental changes, and to deal with the problems of "local communities" (WEDO, 1998). The expert style exhibited in WEDO's early rhetoric is commonly associated with Western feminism.

Likewise, denotic modality is evident in a subsequent demand WEDO makes in the same report: "Governments must make it a practice to share information about progress and problems in implementing the Platform nationally and globally" (WEDO, 1996). WEDO's demand illustrates its commitment to act (e.g. to monitor) national governments as they move from promises to implementations. WEDO's commitment to action, like its commitment to truth, centers greater accountability as a means to expand voice in global public discourse. The demand is undergirded by an assumption that if and when governments make information available, it is WEDO's job to relay this information to local women. In general, WEDO's 1996 report, like other 1990s-era documents, reifies a top-down transmission model of communication and translation.

Evaluation in WEDO texts illuminates the explicit or implicit ways author(s) commit themselves to values. Early WEDO texts contain many explicit and implicit evaluative statements, both types of which are undergirded by "expert" values that are spread through discourse that prescribes, modalizes, and proscribes commitments in a Westphalian frame. In its capacity as a representative of local women, WEDO's ties to field advisors with local knowledge that is grounded in a local context are assumed to qualify its experts to speak for "the grassroots." Taken together, modality and evaluation

in early WEDO texts constitute a style of organizational rhetoric that reifies liberal dualisms. This type of thinking is also evident in the way WEDO's early rhetoric erases heterogeneity at the local level.

Erasing Heterogeneity at the Local Level

Another way WEDO's second-wave liberal feminist discourse "passivates" local voices is to erase heterogeneity at the local level. In framing itself as an expert actor in the global organizational public sphere, WEDO's early texts "background" other social actors in representations of events. When other social actors are included in its early texts, WEDO overwhelmingly addresses them impersonally and generically as "women and girls," "Third World women," or "the poor." Because styles, or ways of being, are intrinsically linked to identification, this feature of textual analysis helps us understand how WEDO identifies itself and others. Its earliest campaign literature reveals that, in general, WEDO portrays itself as a leader of and an authority in the global women's movement. "Local" citizens are therefore understood as in need of its representation. In representing local women's needs, however, WEDO actually perpetuates a hierarchy of scale.

Today's preoccupation with increasing organizational accountability to "local" stakeholders introduces what Dempsey (2007) calls a "tyranny of accountability." To explain this phenomenon, she develops the concept of bounded voice, "a dynamic organizational process in which opportunities for voice are strategically and provisionally limited to particular forums" (Dempsey, 2007, p. 322) as a tactic for managing competing demands for accountability. Dempsey's concept of bounded voice is helpful in illuminating how problems related to voice and accountability are further magnified in

globalized contexts that require global governance. The concept of bounded voice also illustrates how the ambiguous nature of spatial imaginaries, such as the “grassroots,” complicates the process of inventing and maintaining various modes of accountability in non-governmental forms of organizing.

Ideally, NGOs like WEDO would function in the global organizational public sphere not to represent others indefinitely but to facilitate the development of conditions in which citizens actively participate in politics. Assuming for a moment that NGOs could, in fact, act as authentic representatives of the grassroots begs the question: What constitutes an authentic representative in a globalized context? Surely, a sense of “local knowledge” alone will not do the trick, especially when one considers that the local, like any other spatial imaginary, is constituted by social, cultural, and political difference. In its early representations, WEDO erases much of this difference.

The erasing of politics in local contexts is especially evident in WEDO’s FWCW literature that includes reports from attendees. One such report by Jo Freeman (1996) discusses the “Grassroots Tent” at Beijing in which meetings “led by women from different regions” took place. The “Grassroots Tent” was sponsored by Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS International), a global network of indigenous women’s organizations. Here, WEDO’s representation of the grassroots’ activities (e.g. meetings “led by women from different countries”) nominalizes, or abstracts from these particular events. Generalization can suppress difference and obfuscate agency, particularly in governmental discourses (Lemke, 1995). Freeman’s report, like most of WEDO’s FWCW documents, fails to question whether the meetings led by “the grassroots” incorporated peripheral perspectives or disagreement on

issues among “local” women. The “Grassroots Tent” itself is a metaphor rooted in the notion of fixed, hierarchical power relations that can drown out peripheral voices.

FWCW texts like this one generally support the presentation of an undifferentiated “local” voice.

In her discussion of the grassroots as a “moralizing social metaphor,” Dempsey (2009) argues that the “seductiveness of a grassroots discourse” disguises how “local social arrangements are as deeply gendered, classed, and raced as other scales” (p. 331). Interestingly, Dempsey discusses a similar romanticization of the *local* in contemporary environmental NGOs—suggesting that some of these organizations may have since moved from the privileging of one spatial imaginary to the equally problematic privileging of another (e.g. romanticizing the global throughout the 1990s and now romanticizing the local). Either discourse is rooted in an implied hierarchy that fixes the “local” and the “global” in opposition to one another (Dempsey, 2009; Freeman, 2001). Putting my findings in conversation with Dempsey’s analysis illustrates the need for NGOs to resist an overreliance on place-based discourses, exploring instead the local and global as interlinked concepts that are embedded in political circumstances.

WEDO’s early texts are characterized by a passivating discourse that is insufficient at capturing dissensus and disagreement on various local issues. WEDO’s idea of a “local” voice, grounded in consensus, typically results from hierarchies (e.g. social elites advising global NGOs on behalf of local communities)—hierarchies that WEDO either overlooks or ignores. Simply put, the presentation of a unified “local” voice throughout its 1990s-era campaign documents raises questions about the extent to

which WEDO's early years of public advocacy actually broadened the range of voices in the global organizational public sphere.

In sum, in this section, I discussed the second major trap that is evident in WEDO's early discourse: the passivation of local voice. I argued that WEDO's second-wave liberal feminist discourse "passivates" local voices by: (1) reifying the local-global dichotomy that concretizes a linear transmission model of communication, and (2) erasing heterogeneity at the local level. I turn now to a discussion of the ways in which WEDO's organizational rhetoric evolved alongside the emergence of third-wave feminism.

3.4 Engaging Third-Wave Feminist Voices in Contemporary WEDO Discourse

Whereas WEDO's early approach to voice in the global organizational public sphere articulated a second-wave feminist vision, its contemporary discourse reflects a third-wave feminist orientation to voice that integrates politics of recognition, dialogue, and difference. To make this case, I begin by tracking a subtle shift in WEDO's post-Beijing rhetoric. While not without its flaws, WEDO's contemporary organizational rhetoric is more sensitive to the voices of grassroots citizens and indigenous populations. The organization is thus better positioned today to amplify and expand the range of voices in global public discourse. What changed (and stayed the same) between the 1995 U.N. FWCW and now? How do changing cultural conditions influence a shift in WEDO's approach to voice?

When Bella Abzug passed away in March of 1998, she was honored as a champion of the "world's women" (WEDO, 2012c). In his statement at her U.N. tribute, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said this of Abzug:

Bella Abzug ... was here first and foremost to ensure that women are not confined to the kitchen table, but are present at every table—the table that deals with economics, the table that copes with globalization, the table where peace negotiations take place.

Abzug's fans and foes alike recognize her major role in shaping the U.S.-feminist social movement and in charting a new course for development at the end of the 20th century. But what were useful tactics in the U.S.-feminist movement were only partially useful at Beijing, and less so today. Contemporary WEDO discourse is shifting away from the mostly neoliberal feminist theory on which they drew under Abzug's leadership.

There is perhaps no better example of increasing global opposition to neoliberalism and a first successful mobilization of “globalization from below” than the 1999 “Battle in Seattle.” WEDO was there, joining more than 50,000 protesters at the failed WTO Ministerial Meeting in Seattle, Washington. WEDO documentation recalls the event as one that evidences how the global force of corporations is being met by “the global force of ordinary people” (WEDO 2012c). Former WEDO President Jocelyn Dow (2000) remembers the different citizens who constituted that force:

From the Raging Grannies with their battle cry, to the sweatshop workers, to the hundreds who marched in single file, mouths taped, eyes and ears covered, across the street from the robo-cop police of Seattle. We mobilized on our own and we joined marches organized by men. Our message: ‘We are present and we are resisting this madness!’

WEDO's participation in the collective resistance efforts in Seattle established a Gender and Trade Network to research existing gender and trade relations, to form gender and

trade networks to advocate for social change, and to strengthen women's inclusion in economic issues. The "Battle in Seattle" marks an approaching turning point in its organizational rhetoric wherein WEDO would re-evaluate itself in light of the new millennium's challenges.

Its 2003 manifesto *Women Challenging Power in a New Global Context: the WEDO Manifesto* reviews the global economic and political changes of the past decade and "reframes priorities in light of the major forces shaping the world." In it, WEDO states:

The same pernicious forces that are causing so much insecurity in the world have given rise to global and local movements seeking alternatives to war, neoliberalism, environmental devastation, gender and racial oppression, and social and economic inequalities. Women are agents of change and have made enormous contributions to social movements worldwide. Organizations pushing for peace and justice cannot succeed without women's active participation and leadership (WEDO, 2003, p. 5).

WEDO's manifesto codifies a new discourse necessary to reflect a global era in which citizens are increasingly successful at challenging global power and prompting change in their democratic institutions. In "reframing its priorities" in light of globalization, WEDO adapted its role for a new context, signaling a shift in its organizational subjectivity. Rather than a global representative of a "voiceless" grassroots, in contemporary discourse, WEDO frames itself as a facilitator of dialogic participation in the global organizational public sphere. Its manifesto states:

WEDO will promote gender-balanced participation at all levels of decision-making, with the aim of including women's concerns and perspectives in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policy as an essential component of democratic governance. We will also use CEDAW—the most comprehensive, legally-binding women's rights treaty to advance women's participation in decision-making.

Of course, to some extent WEDO espoused dialogic values from its inception. But because its values were overwhelmingly undergirded by second-wave liberal feminism, its initial approach to voice was insufficient at satisfying conditions of communicative freedom (Bohman, 2004). Does WEDO's current approach to voice satisfy these conditions? In what ways does WEDO's contemporary discourse reflect a move toward engaging a new type of feminist politics?

Exactly what third-wave feminism is and when it emerged are hotly contested issues. The movement, which can seem to some like a “confusing hodgepodge of personal anecdotes and individualistic claims,” makes at least three tactical moves: (1) foregrounding personal narratives that illustrate an intersectional and multiperspectival version of feminism; (2) embracing multivocality over synthesis and action over theoretical justification; and (3) emphasizing an inclusive and nonjudgmental approach that refuses to police the boundaries of the feminist political (Snyder, 1998, p. 175). These moves correspond to the response to the second-wave's collapse of the category of “women,” the rise of postmodernity, and the divisiveness of the so-called “sex wars” (Snyder, 1998). Third wave-feminism is characterized by a “politics of difference” (Shugart, Waggoner & Hallstein, 2001) inasmuch as it rejects one-dimensional signifiers,

such as race, nationality, and binary gender, in favor of embracing one's multiple social belongings. As Rebecca Walker (1995, p. xxxiii) argues, third-wave feminists have difficulty

using theories that compartmentalize and divide according to race and gender and all those other signifiers. For us, the lines between Us and Them are often blurred, and as a result we find ourselves seeking to create identities that accommodate ambiguity and our multiple positionalities.

The "politics of difference" that drives third-wave feminism manifests in contradictions and paradoxes pertaining to one's many subject positions. Today, WEDO's organizational rhetoric inscribes audiences into a global subjectivity that recuperates difference in public deliberation.

WEDO's contemporary discourse eschews the strictly modernist sociopolitical imaginary on which it once relied, revealing instead a post-bureaucratic approach to organizing. While post-bureaucratic organizing presents its own set of challenges, such as tyrannies of "structurelessness" (Ashcraft, 2006; Freeman, 1972), it seems better suited than bureaucracies to facilitate dialogic participation among citizens in a global era. WEDO's third-wave feminist discourse engages three types of politics that were less evident in its early discourse: (1) a politics of recognition, (2) a politics of dialogue, and (3) a politics of difference.

Its third-wave feminist politics is evident in WEDO's contemporary texts, or those published reports, factsheets, interviews, and various policy statements and initiatives published after the release of its 2003 manifesto. I treat WEDO texts published after 2003 as "contemporary" because they exhibit a qualitative difference from those

published before its re-prioritization of goals for the new millennium. Its manifesto signals a place at which to begin distinguishing between WEDO's "earlier" and "current" approaches to voice.

One of WEDO's contemporary campaigns that promotes dialogue among diverse social actors is the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP). The Principles, which I detail below, are informed by "real-life" business practices in a global arena that currently is dominated by corporations, making the WEP especially useful for illuminating an ongoing struggle in the global organizational public sphere about who is able to speak. Through critical analysis of WEP texts and some other contemporary campaign documents, I explain how WEDO's organizational rhetoric developed over time to contest the dominant conception of voice and to enhance openness and inclusion in its deliberative decision-making processes.

In 2012, seventeen years after the 1995 U.N. FWCW, WEDO joined the board of the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP), a set of principles for business offering guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, the marketplace, and their respective communities. An international multi-stakeholder consultation process, the WEP is a collaboration between UNIFEM and the U.N. Global Compact. The partnership initiative is based on the idea that "empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors and throughout all levels of economic activity is essential" to:

- Build strong economies;
- Establish more stable and just societies;
- Achieve internationally agreed goals for development, sustainability, and human rights;

- Improve quality of life for women, men, families, and communities; and
- Propel businesses' operations and goals (U.N. Global Compact, 2010).

To accomplish these goals, UNIFEM, the U.N. Global Compact, and partners like WEDO provide a set of considerations to “help the private sector focus on key elements integral to promoting gender equality” (U.N. Global Compact, 2010). The considerations are to be used as a targeted “gender lens” through which to inspire and intensify efforts for women’s participation at all decision-making levels.

There are seven principles to empower women: (1) Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality; (2) Treat all women and men fairly at work—respect and support human rights and non-discrimination; (3) Ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all women and men workers; (4) Promote education, training, and professional development for women; (5) Implement enterprise development, supply chain, and marketing practices that empower women; (6) Promote equality through community issues and advocacy; and (7) Measure and publicly report progress to achieve gender equality. On the surface, one might read the Principles as aligning with the neoliberal business model and thus assume that this initiative is not very different from earlier initiatives that favor liberalism’s (re)distribution of resources. But WEDO’s discourse surrounding the WEP reveals an orientation toward transforming, rather than transmitting, voice in the global business environment. This orientation is evident in WEDO’s engagement in a new feminist politics—the first of which engages recognition.

Engaging a Politics of Recognition

WEDO’s early treatment of “development” as “economic development” proposed mostly economic solutions to complex problems, thereby operating inside the dominant

rhetoric of neoliberal globalization. Its later initiatives, however, center social inclusion and visibility as a means to amplify voice in global public discourse. Based on a human rights framework adopted by 189 countries at the 2000 Millennium Declaration, the WEP invites businesses all over the world to work in close association with their peers, governments, NGOs, and the U.N. to “respect and protect the human rights of women, men, and children” (U.N. Global Compact, 2010). Its literature asserts:

While much has been accomplished through the integration of principles and actions on corporate responsibility, diversity and inclusion, the full participation of women throughout the private sector—from the CEO’s office to the factory floor to the supply chain—remains unfulfilled (U.N. Global Compact, 2010).

In positing women’s inclusion in economic life across all sectors as a force that drives development and an interest that benefits all stakeholders, the WEP offers a model for development that operates outside of an exclusively liberal framework. Since liberalism’s theory of justice is grounded in a (re)distribution of resources, it assumes that women are a coherent group prior to their entry into various development processes. Liberal economic theory exemplifies universalization on the basis of economic reductionism (Mohanty, 1991). By contrast, WEDO’s contemporary orientation to voice seeks to re-appropriate recognition in addition to resources.

For instance, the WEP urges the development of a global business environment that invites into it a

... broad spectrum of actors, collaborators, contributors, and innovators, to open opportunities for women and men; and enable the interactive

participation of governments, international financial institutions, the private sector, investors, non-governmental organizations, academia, and professional organizations to work together (U.N. Global Compact, 2010).

Its WEP discourse indicates a shift at WEDO toward a feminist democratic politics that prevents the dominant culture from rendering certain citizens inferior, socially marginal, or invisible (Young, 1990; 1997; 2000). Unlike WEDO's *180 Days and 180 Ways* campaign discourse that made cross-cultural comparisons between women in different "developing" nations possible and unproblematic (Mohanty, 1991), the WEP draws on discourses that move away from liberalism's individual subjectivity (e.g. a common "women's" subjectivity) toward one that understands the subject is constituted through their multiple belongings (Carrillo Rowe, 2008).

The WEP and other contemporary WEDO initiatives orient citizens toward a politics of recognition. Because identity politics has long overemphasized location, its attendant discourses are insufficient at capturing how the self is intrinsically tied to and formed through our relationships with others. WEDO's early rhetoric mostly maintained liberalism's theories and discourses of distributive justice, but contemporary WEDO rhetoric operates outside of an exclusively location-based frame. Today, WEDO emphasizes how our belongings enable and constrain the possibilities for creating new subjectivities. As such, WEDO's contemporary discourses more meaningfully facilitate collective action across diverse positionalities. Its contemporary discourses implicate postmodern citizenship. As I discussed in Chapter 1, re-envisioning citizenship from a feminist standpoint invites us to center relation over location and, rather than re-appropriate resources, actualize an "ethic of care" for others. WEDO's rhetoric moves

toward a recognition-based model of justice that might reclaim the role of participatory citizenship in democratic societies. Participatory citizenship engenders and requires inclusive dialogue to which I now turn my attention.

Engaging a Politics of Dialogue

Extending upon the works of Gadamer (1980; 1975) and Habermas (1987; 1984; 1980; 1979; 1975), Stan Deetz and Jennifer Simpson (2004) conceptualize “dialogue” as a politically responsive constructionist theory of communication that fosters collaborative decision-making that enhances creativity and commitment. Dialogue creates opportunities for “interlocutors to make specific contributions to mutually determined problems” (Deetz & Simpson, 2004, p. 8). In dialogic interactions, participants resist notions of a fixed subjectivity and closure, opening themselves up to opportunities to be mutually involved in shaping new understandings of their world. Because dialogic models oriented toward commonality and consensus favor the dominant position of institutional privilege, they inhibit the disruption of self that is central to dialogue (Deetz & Simpson, 2004). To achieve self-transformation, social actors must encounter radical difference, which I discuss in detail later in the following section. Dialogue reclaims and takes seriously the demand of “otherness.” Communication in its dialogic form is a productive rather than re-productive process that is grounded in response to specific political circumstances (Deetz & Simpson, 2004).

WEDO’s post-bureaucratic discourse differs from the discourse associated with traditional, vertically-integrated organizations in part because it recognizes the transformative potential of dialogue. WEDO’s evolution in its orientation to voice is reminiscent of Papa, Singhal, and Papa’s (2006) discussion of the dialectic between

dialogue and dissemination in social change processes. Dissemination refers to the “intentional process of information transmission from a source to one or many individuals,” (Papa, Singhal & Papa, 2006, p. 158), but a dialogic process has at its core the presence of full-bodied multivocality in which “human relationships are co-created, co-regulated, and co-modified” (p. 159). Inherent in this process is a goal among interlocutors to transform voice.

WEDO’s participation in the annual Women’s Empowerment Principles events is an example of its move toward dialogue. Aimed not at developing prescriptive “solutions” or securing resources to implement them, the most recent WEP event sought to gather input from a variety of stakeholders, including companies that have signed the CEO Statement of Support for the WEP, businesses, and citizens. WEDO reports that it welcomed the “opportunity to give input to these important institutions, highlighting our experiences and the experiences of our colleagues, partners, and global network of women leaders and activists” and to “discuss how corporate behavior and practices are being transformed to align with the WEPs” (WEDO, 2012d). A sort of international forum for voice, the WEP event showcases WEDO’s post-Beijing orientation toward facilitating dialogic participation, rather than more accountable representation, in the global organizational public sphere.

Dialogue can result in positive consequences for organizations because it is one of the richest activities that human beings can engage in. It is the thing that gives meaning to life, it’s the sharing of humanity, it’s creating something. And there is this magical thing in an organization, or in a team, or a group, where you get unrestricted interaction, unrestricted dialogue,

and this synergy happening that results in more productivity, and satisfaction, and seemingly magical levels of output from a team (Evered & Tannenbaum, 1992, p. 48).

Dialogue has numerous implications for organizational communication: it facilitates openness to others' voices; it helps us recognize that our views are partial and changing; it promotes mutual respect among interlocutors and the right for all to speak; and it helps cultivate the practical communication skill of speaking and listening from experience (Eisenberg, Goodall, & Trethewey, 2010). WEDO's engagement in a politics of dialogue suggests that, while dialogue may be rare in contemporary organizations, some level of dialogue is possible. Since dialogue demands "otherness," I now discuss difference in WEDO's contemporary discourse.

Engaging a Politics of Difference

As difference becomes more pronounced in contemporary society (Benhabib, 1996; Fraser, 1998), NGOs must facilitate deliberative decision-making in which citizens recognize, be open to, and accept difference. Self-transformation requires that social actors encounter radical difference (Deetz and Simpson, 2004). Whereas WEDO's early discourse functioned to erase important differences among women, critical attention to its WEP initiative illustrates WEDO's willingness to collaborate with a variety of different social actors in the global organizational public sphere to accomplish its various goals.

The WEP itself is an inter-organizational collaboration, a promising strategy for addressing global social problems and leveraging shared means for greater social impact (Eisenberg & Eschenfelder, 2009; Frumkin, 2002). Such collaborative endeavors require organizations to meaningfully engage difference—negotiating tensions, working well

within them, and balancing power in and among various stakeholders (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson & Allen, 2001). These stakeholders include citizens who lack access to the public sphere. How does WEDO treat difference today? What are the implications of WEDO's current treatment of difference for the problematic of voice?

Today, WEDO does not frame itself exclusively as a leader of the global women's movement or authentic representative of "local" women across the world. Rather, its contemporary discourse positions WEDO as a partner and co-facilitator of dialogue among different women (and women's organizations) toward the end of reaching mutually decided and beneficial decisions. In this sense, WEDO's contemporary rhetoric has evolved from that which exhibits a monolithic "expert" style. Thus, contemporary WEDO discourse generally avoids many of the traps of second-wave feminist discourse. This rhetorical shift is evident in most of WEDO's contemporary texts in which it adopts participative and post-bureaucratic styles of discourse.

For instance, in its capacity as official facilitator of the U.N. Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) Women's Group, WEDO engages a wide range of different organizations. Documentation announcing WEDO's recommendations for new facilitators for the 2008 CSD explains that facilitators like itself "coordinate with a larger group of organizations engaged in the Women's Major Group" (WEDO, 2007, p. 3). Together, these organizations partake in events, such as the *Four Days of Dialogue*, which create "space for learning and exchange between the participants" (WEDO, 2011e, p. 3). Initiatives reflect WEDO's increased awareness that, as power differentials influence social interaction at all levels, NGOs must be cognizant of how difficult it is for

voices to avoid the disembodied forces of hegemony. In recognizing difference, WEDO strikes a better balance between dialogue and dissemination.

Rather than “passivating” social actors in its representation of events, social actors are increasingly portrayed in WEDO texts as agents of change in an increasingly networked global era. In terms of modality, for instance, contemporary WEDO texts illuminate a new relationship between author(s) and representations regarding truth and obligation. Whereas the organization’s earlier commitment was to act on behalf of women as an ideological subject, monitor governments, and increase accountability, now WEDO’s commitments center on the truth that different women require different representation. WEDO’s “intersectional approach to examine human rights recognizes that categories of discrimination may overlap” and citizens suffer exclusions on a variety of bases (Tsaklanganos, 2001). The organization’s commitment to an intersectional approach to social and economic justice is evident in its newsletter article entitled, *Women at the Intersection of Race, Class, and Gender*. The author states:

Despite clear inequalities in women’s situations and experiences throughout the world, the system of international human rights protections treats all women as a homogenous mass and ignores their diverse experiences. The category women recognizes only gender identity and overlooks race, class, ethnicity, national origin, age and culture, thus ignoring women who endure multiple subordinations (Tsaklanganos, 2012, p. 5)

WEDO’s obligation, then, is not merely to oversee the implementation of global decisions but to assist different women in shaping these decisions to overcome specific

subordinations. While some contemporary WEDO texts still lack specifically attributed voices and direct reporting via quotations, they are, overall, more dialogical than early WEDO texts.

One reason for the increased intertextuality of contemporary WEDO texts is that today's communication technologies enable knowledge-sharing between WEDO and its partners across space. WEDO's online library archives a broad spectrum of publicly available information. For instance, WEP documents include progress reports developed by local advisors in a network of sub-regional, country, and liaison offices. The archival resources hosted by UNIFEM, the U.N. Global Compact, and WEDO's websites link to and circulate one another's WEP documents. These documents include news articles on the implications of the WEP featured in the international media. Circulating news articles from media outlets in the United States, Europe, Central Asia, and the Arab States broadens the range of voices in WEDO and its partners' texts.

The broader range of information archived and circulated by international and transnational organizations today brings other voices into organizational discourse, albeit somewhat abstractly. Of course, this type of communication and information sharing raises new questions for critics about global media gatekeeping, which local actors are elected to speak to the media, and the extent to which these actors understand and actually represent stakeholder interests. It is therefore important to remember that, even when WEDO and its partners include in their initiatives the voices of other actors, these voices are also representations. Nonetheless, WEDO's contemporary representations include voices from a wider range of different citizens across the world instead of limiting voices to those of its own experts in its own official documents.

In addition, WEDO's contemporary campaign literature is more explicit about openness to value differences. WEP documents, for example, conceptualize difference as a positive energy toward creativity and invention that are realized differently in specific cultural and business contexts. The Principles are presented as contextual, even evolving:

The Principles help tailor existing policies and programmes—or establish needed new ones—to realize women's empowerment. The Principles also reflect the interests of governments and civil society and support interactions among stakeholders as achieving gender equality requires the participation of all actors (U.N. Global Compact, 2010).

Instead of articulating universal rules for all businesses to follow, the WEP recognizes that participation in the initiative manifests itself differently throughout the world. As such, WEP documentation describes how different cultures tailor the Principles to their lives.

For example, to establish leadership that promotes gender equality (Principle 1), an international mining group headquartered in the United Kingdom commissioned a resource guide on engaging women and community groups as a policy directive. An East Asian apparel manufacturer implemented an integrated approach to women's leadership through programs recognizing female employee's accomplishments and supporting their advancement in the company through various education and training initiatives (U.N. Global Compact, 2010).

Likewise, to ensure the health, safety and well-being of its workers (Principle 3), a Kenyan communications company offers free on-site daycare and an in-house physician, as well as medical coverage including both pre- and post-natal care.

Companies in Spain offer domestic violence job placement services tailored to their needs to ease transition to the workplace. To improve its commitment to creating and maintaining a safe work environment, an apparel manufacturer in Sri Lanka developed targeted policies and programs, such as special care for pregnant employees and systematic risk assessments and monitoring of its plants and equipment (U.N. Global Compact, 2010).

WEDO's propositional assumptions still include the assumption that women are united through the material reality of having been routinely excluded from systems of international governance. But, rather than ameliorating global injustice through its Western feminist leadership, WEDO pursues dialogue through which culturally, socially, and politically different women might build a unifying political force. Seeing difference as a resource draws on Jacques Derrida's notion of "différance" and Jean-Francois Lyotard's notion of "le différend" to resist Enlightenment-type universalism and simplistic, single-category descriptions of individuals, their many group memberships, and their values, interests, and beliefs. Instead of reducing the many to one identity, thinking of representation pluralistically "leaves them in their plurality without requiring their collection into a common identity" (Young, 2000, p. 127). Today, WEDO's existential assumptions counter the detrimental effects of globalization through the forging of alliances across multiple and complex lines of difference (Carrillo Rowe, 2008; Mohanty, 2003). In doing so, WEDO's current campaign discourses reflect a new way of theorizing pluralistic representation.

In summary, in this section I discussed how WEDO's third-wave feminist discourse engages a politics of: (1) recognition, (2) dialogue, and (3) difference. I argued

that, today, WEDO's rhetoric is characterized by an appreciation for difference rather than a goal of consensus. WEDO's contemporary discourse avoids many of the traps of second-wave feminism that conflates all women within its movement. Through critical attention to its contemporary campaign discourse, namely the WEP partnership initiative, I tracked a shift from a strictly modernist sociopolitical imaginary on which WEDO once relied. Its current approach to voice in the global organizational public sphere more meaningfully facilitates dialogue and participation.

CHAPTER 4: RATIONALITY

4.1 Introduction: The Problematic of Rationality

Technical rationality, or instrumental knowledge, is “an orientation that privileges a concern with prediction, control, and teleological forms of behavior” (Mumby & Stohl, 1996, p. 59). Like expert voice, technical rationality is a characteristic of classical management approaches to organizations that share the underlying metaphor of organizations as efficient machines. From the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century, organizations in the Western world functioned like micro-empires, extensions of national governments that expanded trade, offered citizens employment, and contributed to economic and social development (Rose, 1989). During this time, organizations became characterized by a strict division of labor and hierarchy that Karl Marx (1883) later demonstrated replicates class lines. The classical theory of organization favors a top-down approach that assumes knowledge should be produced and used by managers (e.g. experts) to control subordinates, who are conceptualized in this frame as passive receptors of information.

From this era came Frederick Taylor’s (1913) *The Principles of Scientific Management*, which offered a management-oriented and production-centered view of organizations and communication. Taylor’s work emphasizes logic, order, and hierarchy in organizational processes and assumes a clear distinction between managers, who *think*, and subordinates, who *work*. The technical rationality that informs the scientific management approach fails to account for human motivations in communicating and organizing. Instead, it is oriented only toward reducing waste and inefficiency in organizations. Taylor suggests that managers increase organizational efficiency by

rewarding members for material output that is measured through logical means, such as cost-benefit analysis, or the process of weighing the monetary costs of a decision or policy against its potential benefits. Such a narrow view of efficiency constrains organizational members, limits creativity, and encourages passive adherence to organizational procedures, as well as blind obedience to organizational power. An organizational rhetoric perspective brings with it three critiques of technical rationality: (1) a critique of the prioritization placed on efficiency, (2) a critique of the overreliance on technical, or instrumental, reason, and (3) a critique of liberalism's individualist conception of invention. I turn now to an overview of these three critiques.

An organizational rhetoric perspective acknowledges values beyond efficiency

Kenneth Burke's (1968) critique of efficiency is a welcome antidote to classical management theory. For most people, an idea is valued for the labor it spares, but for Burke, the value of our inventions resides in the amount of labor they cost. Burke's conception of invention reconsiders the commonplace understanding of knowledge production, positing it as a potentially dangerous consequence of technical rationality. In prizing efficiency above other values, we tend to reduce creative and complex acts to those that are detached from purpose. In this reduction, Burke notes that purpose and creativity become commodities, spawning barbarism that manifests itself in values tied to the practices associated with capitalism—namely efficiency and productivity. Burke (1968) argues:

Efficiency breeds but the necessity of more efficiency. It requires not only a mounting expenditure of eternal vigilance, but a nicety of adjustment whereby the eternally vigilant are also the authoritative. But above all, one

must accept the undeniable fact that technological efficiency has become too much like psychological inefficiency ... “Efficiency” was required to develop the machine. “Inefficiency” is required as the counter-principle to prevent the machine from becoming too imperious and forcing us into social complexities which require exceptional delicacy of adjustment. (p. 120)

Burke’s argument aligns well with critiques of technical rationality offered by critical organizational communication scholars. Moreover, it demonstrates how instrumental reason often leads citizens to believe that complex problems require not critical consideration, but more efficient management.

In *Toward a Rational Society*, Habermas (1970) argues that technocracy functions as an ideology that masks the value-laden nature of expertise and upholds the capitalist status quo. By turning public issues into problems for technical experts, social elites maintain their power over citizens. It is vital, then, to balance expert and lay knowledge in public deliberation because “if the discourse of experts is not coupled with democratic opinion and will-formation, then the experts’ perceptions of problems will prevail at the citizens’ expense” (Habermas, 1996, p. 351). In the global organizational public sphere, NGOs are tasked with balancing local and global rationalities.

Communication is a creative, human process, not a routine, machine-driven process. Organizations can demonstrate high levels of productivity, but may also be oppressive to members and the environment (Deetz, 1979). Such negative consequences of rational efficiency invite us to question the singular notion of rationality that is informed primarily by what Burke (1968) calls Western culture’s “contemporary

economic ambitiousness” (p. 121). Instead, we might explore practical and emancipatory rationalities that are better suited to explain human behavior “in terms of its collective attempts to make sense of and structure the world in a meaningful way” (Mumby & Stohl, 1996, p. 59).

What happens when rational measures of efficiency undermine different cultural values? Are there better ways for organizations to calculate costs and evaluate benefits? What are the limitations of instrumental reason and technical forms of rationality in the context of the global organizational public sphere? How can international and transnational organizations move away from the dominant conceptualization of rationality toward a communicative rationality that is more sensitive to a pluralistic world? Thinking through these questions from an organizational rhetoric perspective can help us develop more socially sophisticated and nuanced responses to them.

An organizational rhetoric perspective acknowledges communicative rationalities

Rhetoricians have long drawn attention to the problematic of rationality, attempting to balance expert and layperson rationalities in deliberative and decision-making processes. One consequence of modernity has been the gradual elevation of scientific values that trump other ways of knowing. In a postmodern world, experts certainly do and should play an important and valuable role. But because rationality is interlinked with Westocentric domination of the global arena, the value of local knowledge in global governance must also be recognized through the incorporation of rationality that is based in communication. Communicative rationality develops through public argument and therefore provides an alternative to social domination by specialists in the global organizational public sphere. Communicative rationality accounts for the

importance of individual and social relations in organizational and civic life.

Organizations that work from the premise of communicative rationality can destabilize the liberal tradition's overreliance on technical rationality in public deliberation. By rejecting instrumental reason and its accompanying antiquated procedural models of deliberation (Dryzek, 2006), for example, NGOs like WEDO might better facilitate citizen-generated, reflexive deliberative decision-making in the international arena.

To incorporate communicative rationality in the global organizational public sphere also requires that we re-think the role of emotion in rhetoric. As I alluded to in the previous chapter, critical publicity in the liberal frame is achieved through the public use of "reason." Conversely, privacy protected the intimate sphere in which more "emotional" communication took place. Traditionally, the public and private spheres, and their associated norms of reason and emotion, privilege the rationality and communicative norms of privileged white men. As feminist social movements began challenging the dominant conception of rationality, however, the role of emotion in public deliberation began to change. Emotion is inseparable from rhetoric and these feminist social movements showed that, rather than impeding deliberation, emotion in argument is a valuable means for focusing citizens' attention on important issues (Marcus, 2002). Reflecting a shift from the modernist sociopolitical imaginary, feminist re-theorizations of the role of emotion in rhetoric challenge Habermas's idea of rational-critical debate.

An organizational rhetoric perspective acknowledges collaborative invention

Another one of the problems of the rhetorical tradition as it has been received through modern political history is its overly individualistic sense of invention, or the

generation of novel ideas and arguments. Western thought often emphasizes the “Platonic view” of invention as a solitary act whereby a lone agent, after a touch of introspection, pulls brilliance out of nowhere. In this study, though, I draw on a contrasting classical view of invention offered by the Sophists, who emphasized interchange with others as the stimulant for invention. An organizational rhetoric perspective recognizes that invention is a social act. Karen Burke LeFevre’s (1987) argument that the Platonic view of invention fails to acknowledge its collaborative nature informs my argument that, to account for the dialectical relationship of the individual with society and culture, invention is best understood as a collaborative process. According to LeFevre, the inventing “self” is socially influenced. Human agents always act dialectically—in their interconnections with others and the socioculture, and the inventor always requires the presence of an “other,” which might be conceived of as either the rhetor as “internalized other” or a perceived audience of “actual others.”

By understanding invention as a social act, an organizational rhetoric perspective combats classical organizational notions of organizations as receptors, rather than generators, of information, and is better suited to understand collaborative deliberation and decision-making among global citizens. Thus, whereas technical rationality, in which a particular procedure is privileged, operates in a paradigm where interaction is meaningless, communicative (and rhetorical) rationalities emphasizes how knowledge is co-constructed through language and interaction. When one sees invention as a social act then one more fully appreciates multiple rationalities. Through this lens, I investigate how NGOs are rethinking the dominant conceptualization of rationality to form “a culture

of voluntary sharing of knowledge, effective knowledge circulation, and constant mutual instruction” (Ober, 2005, p. 36) and direct members toward shared goals.

4.2 Re-Conceptualizing Rationality in WEDO’s Climate Change Initiative

Having been founded specifically to influence the 1992 Earth Summit, sustainable development is a cornerstone of WEDO’s mandate (WEDO, 2013d). Today, WEDO continues to engage in “strategic advocacy at critical global sustainable development fora” (WEDO, 2013d) that centers climate change as an urgent issue on the global agenda. Climate change is a “top priority for WEDO’s advocacy, capacity building, information sharing, and other efforts to link gender equality and sustainable development” (WEDO, 2013d). A central way WEDO pursues its larger mission of sustainable development, its climate change initiative is one of WEDO’s most prominent initiatives. It focuses attention on a wide range of environmental issues, including biodiversity and urbanization. WEDO provides the public with information about pertinent climate change news, invites members to share their perspectives on the issue in its online forum, and helps create, distribute, and archive key climate change documents, such as the 2008 Manila Declaration, the 2009 Nordic Summit Declaration, and the 2009 Monrovia Call for Action.

WEDO’s climate change initiative sheds light on a central tension in deliberative global politics: the negotiation of expert and lay claims to knowledge. As private and technical modes of reasoning overpower deliberative rhetoric, spaces in which to translate technical discourse into language citizens can understand are vanishing (Goodnight, 1999). NGOs, as mediators between citizens and experts, can fill this gap. How? This chapter explores how WEDO reconfigures the problematic of rationality

through critical attention to its climate change initiative. I argue that WEDO cultivates public expertise on sustainable development, creating discursive openings for citizens to reclaim their authority to deliberate alongside experts about issues that directly affect their communities.

Expertise, Ordinary Language, and Dialogic Translation

Liberalism's heavy reliance on technical rationality is problematic in the global organizational public sphere, defined by a complex grid of global organizations and its attendant expert-dominated discourses. The modernist divide between "rational" discourse conducted by experts and the impassioned talk of everyone else leaves us with a model of public deliberation that, today, is neither feasible nor advisable. Habermas's (1970) critique of technocracy, centered on the sometimes debilitating effects of advancements in science and technology, raises two questions that are relevant to my analysis of the problematic of rationality: (1) "How is it possible to translate technically exploitable knowledge into the practical consciousness of the social life-world?" and (2) "How can the power of technical control be brought within the range of the consensus of acting and transacting citizens?"

Habermas is very clear about the answer to his second question: Experts should answer to citizens. The value of this orientation to decision-making is that citizens are perhaps better situated than experts to weigh the costs of decisions outside of strictly instrumental considerations, such as cost-benefit analyses. But merely giving all citizens a seat at the table will not necessarily result in meaningful decision-making either. In cases where citizens lack knowledge, experience, or perspective, they may be ill-equipped to make informed decisions. The issue of climate change is a good example.

Climate science relies on highly technical knowledge resulting from intricate data on carbon cycles, climate impacts, and greenhouse gases that is likely not immediately understood by those outside of the scientific discipline.

Addressing his first question, Habermas (1970) argues that such issues “must be decided, interests realized, interpretations found—through both action and transaction structured through ordinary language” (p. 56). Technical and public communication meet and are negotiated in “translation stations” where experts’ “specialized code” is turned into ordinary language that citizens understand and can subsequently evaluate (Habermas, 1970, p. 70). NGOs like WEDO translate between experts and citizens. As such, NGOs can strengthen the legitimacy of global deliberation by rendering mid-level transnational decisions transparent for national spheres and connecting decision-making procedures at the grassroots level (Habermas, 2001). To effectively perform this task, NGOs must first overcome a key obstacle to translation.

In response to increasing demand among citizens for involvement in global environmental policymaking, democratic institutions have begun incorporating citizen participation in deliberation and decision-making. For instance, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) hold public hearings in which citizens relay their concerns to environmental experts. More often than not, though, experts dominate these venues, making it nearly impossible for citizens to understand, counter, or even judge the arguments that occur there (Fisher, 1987). Such elitist fora that position experts as knowers who instruct a naive citizenry reify a linear transmission model of communication and concretize top-down organizational processes that widen the legitimacy gap. As Stephen Turner (2003) notes:

The standard models imply that experts can persuade one another, and can persuade non-experts, while non-experts cannot persuade experts. The non-expert can at most supply information, which becomes meaningful for the expert only when translated into expert terms, which the non-expert cannot do, but the expert can. There is, in short, a ‘discursive asymmetry.’ Experts possess the grounds and means of mutual persuasion; non-experts do not. (p. 48).

For Turner, the notion of authority is the fundamental problem facing translation, the results of which “do not have common sense *credibility*” because “the grounds for the claim cannot be expressed in common terms” (p. 50). Because technical language loses a large part of its claim to authority when it is translated into ordinary language, traditional institutional responses to rationality clashes have been unable to overcome the problem of authority.

NGOs might offer an alternative to traditional “translation stations” that fail to promote meaningful dialogue between experts and citizens. For instance, WEDO locates its field advisors in grassroots contexts so that local groups can shape its environmental policy recommendations. These local venues, though fraught with their own tensions and unique challenges, are perhaps more conducive to dialogue than governmental agencies’ public hearings. The Global Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) campaign is one example of how WEDO facilitates dialogic interchange between experts and citizens. GEAR organizes meetings with member groups like WEDO, citizens, local activists, and policy experts whose collaborative efforts it says are more effective at reframing the global development agenda than either side’s efforts would be on their own (WEDO,

2013d). These meetings bring together a broad group of stakeholders to develop strategies for women to take a more prominent advocacy role in negotiations at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and in the development of a new Green Climate Fund (GCF).

The network that comprises GEAR replaces the traditional translation model with one grounded in a more participatory notion of democracy than conventional liberal-democratic processes allow (Beck, 1991; Cooke, 2000). Participatory democracy rejects technical rationality's assumption that "knowledge that can be 'generalized' and applied to any situation is always of higher value" than citizens' knowledge (Bocking, 2004, p. 173). Participatory democracy refutes claims to objectivity that "imply a hierarchy where scientists have a more central role in environmental decision-making than other stakeholders" (Larson, 2007, p. 952). It posits that citizens, acting alongside experts (who are also part of civil society), should partake in environmental decision-making. Reflecting a democratic spirit that recognizes women's personal experiences as a valuable type of expertise (Foss & Foss, 1994), WEDO demands that the Post-2015 Development Agenda framework

be developed with the full participation and leadership of women.

Women's organizations and social justice groups working for gender equality, human rights, and women's empowerment should be fully supported to meaningfully engage at all levels of consultation. Grassroots women leaders from community-based organizations are key stakeholders in the development of a Post-2015 Development Agenda and should be

enabled to negotiate for their own development priorities throughout this process.

WEDO's Post-2015 Development Agenda includes the recommendations not only of experts but of diverse groups and women's coalitions.

WEDO assists citizens in deliberating about technical issues like climate science by mediating between expert and lay discourses. The next three sections of this chapter are divided by the three terms that cluster around the problematic of rationality in WEDO's climate change documents: (1) *experience(s)*, (2) *expertise*, and (3) *knowledge*. Unlike the data generated in my analysis of the problematic of voice, the data pertaining to the problematic of rationality does not lend itself well to tracking a shift in organizational rhetoric over time. Having developed alongside feminist waves, WEDO's approach to voice is influenced by changing cultural conditions. Rationality in WEDO's rhetoric is best explored through a particular initiative that showcases how it functions as a global intermediary. Whereas my analysis of voice offered a diachronic investigation, my analysis of rationality engages in synchronic analysis of related terms. Notably, there is a subtle distinction between the "expert voice" discussed in the previous chapter and the "expert rationality" I discuss in this chapter. Specifically, expert voice refers more broadly to global voices, such as those of WEDO's founders, in comparison to the "local" voices of citizens WEDO represents. In this chapter, expert rationality refers more to technical or instrumental forms of knowledge.

After analyzing dozens of WEDO's climate change texts, I developed three broad categories indicating three areas where WEDO performs a mediating function. The first deals with texts in which WEDO articulates the implications of climate change,

particularly those impacts for women and other minority social groups across the world. The second addresses mitigation, or those efforts among governmental agencies and other organizations to circulate information and ameliorate the detrimental effects of climate change. The final category describes WEDO texts geared toward training that builds capacity to design and implement gender-responsive climate change programs. The three categories align with the three terms clustering around the problematic of rationality in WEDO texts.

4.3 Refining *Experience(s)*: Mediating Bureaucracy and Creativity to Focus Attention on Climate Change Impacts

Climate change is not felt equally across the globe, making some individuals, communities, and nations particularly sensitive to its impacts. WEDO (2013d) describes the threat climate change poses to women as an especially vulnerable population:

Experts agree that climate change threatens to set back development efforts by decades, placing least developed countries and already-vulnerable populations in an even more precarious position. Yet a critical aspect of climate change has remained on the outskirts—gender. Women, as the majority of the world’s poor, are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

At this point readers may be wondering if WEDO’s claim that “women” are especially vulnerable to climate change replicates its early discourse that identifies “women” as a stable subject. The answer is no. How does WEDO’s climate change discourse avoid my earlier critique? The difference, I suggest, is the difference between a *series*, “an ensemble each of whose members is determined in alterity by the others” (Sartre, 1976,

p. 828) and a *group*, a collection of persons that recognize themselves and one another in unified relation with one another (Sartre, 1976; Young, 1994).

In *Critique of Dialectical Reason* Jean-Paul Sartre (1976) uses a well-known analogy to describe how series are formed in relationship to material objects: Imagine a group of people waiting for a bus. These people are united as bus riders—with shared interests in seeing the bus arrive and depart on time and avoiding bus overcrowding, for example. The material reality of waiting for a bus is possibly the only thing that links these otherwise dissimilar individuals. They might become a group if they organize around the issue of rising bus fares, but until they do so, they remain a series. Drawing on Sartre's concept, Young (1994) articulates gender as a serial relationship to conceptualize a social collective for political purposes without erasing important individual differences. She argues that women are organized around gendered loci as a result of their material realities, such as menstruation and pregnancy. The many complicated social norms that accompany the material realities of being women structure the idea of women (Young, 1994; 2000).

Whereas WEDO's early rhetoric conceptualized women as a united group, its contemporary climate change discourse implicitly frames *gender* as a serial relationship. Today, WEDO pursues a "new gender architecture" at the U.N. (WEDO, 2013e), moving away from simplistic understandings of sex and gender that can reify stereotypes related to each. A feminist approach like the one WEDO currently employs is concerned not with the emancipation of women alone but with "the emancipation of all subjects from unnecessarily constraining gender stereotypes" (Bruner, 1996, p. 9). The recognition that gender subjectivities are simultaneously enabling and constraining (Simons, 1995)

reflects more sophisticated assumptions about feminism that combat modernity's naïve essentialism.

Climate change is a material reality that organizes social identity. WEDO focuses attention to this reality for women as a series in a variety of ways. In 2007, the organization partnered with the IUCN, UNDP, and UNEP to launch the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA) at the UNFCCC conference in Bali. The alliance is comprised of more than 50 U.N. agencies, IGOs, and NGOs who collaborate to bring attention to the impacts of climate change on women. That same year, WEDO launched the *Women Demand Action on Climate Change* campaign to “mobilize support for a progressive U.S. foreign policy position on climate change and related issues” (WEDO, 2012c). In 2008, WEDO partnered with organizations in Bangladesh, Ghana, and Senegal to publish case studies on gender and climate change. Authors Irene Dankelman, Khurshid Alam, Wahida Bashir Ahmed, Yacine Diagne Gueye, Naureen Fatema and Rose Mensah-Kutin (2008) explain:

Women's responsibility in the family makes them more vulnerable to environmental change, which is exacerbated by the impact of climate change. They are being affected in their multiple roles as food producers and providers, as guardians of health, caregivers, and economic actors. As access to basic needs and natural resources, such as shelter, food, fertile land, water and fuel, becomes hampered, women's workload increases. Poor families, many of which are headed by females, often live in more precarious situations, on low lands, along dangerous riverbanks, or on steep slopes (p. 10).

This framing highlights the disempowering and unnecessarily constraining material effects of climate change on women.

WEDO's climate change initiative receives attention in regional, national, and international decision-making bodies. On April 2, 2009, U.S. Congressional Resolution H.R. 98 was introduced recognizing the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women. Two years later, on November 3, 2011, U.S. Congressperson Barbara Lee (D-CA) introduced another congressional resolution to publicize the economic, agricultural, and health-related hardships women face as a result of disparate climate change impacts. In her official statement on her website, Lee (2011) says:

The direct and indirect effects of climate change continue to have a disproportionate impact on marginalized women, including refugees and displaced persons, sexual minorities, religious and ethnic minorities, adolescent girls, women and girls with disabilities and those who are HIV positive. While women are bearing the brunt of climate change's effects, they are often underrepresented in the development of climate change adaptation policy. This is unacceptable.

WEDO's climate change initiative successfully garners attention to the disproportionate impacts of global climate change. Its success is due in part to WEDO's refined conception of *experience(s)*, the first term clustering around the problematic of rationality in WEDO texts. WEDO's appeals to audiences' different *experience(s)* exhibit a nuanced apprehension of rationality. WEDO adapts its rhetoric for different audiences by mediating at least two types of appeals: (1) bureaucratic appeals that function as a type

of “insider” strategy, and (2) creative appeals that function as a type of “outsider” strategy. I discuss each type of appeal in turn.

Appeals to Bureaucracy

For most people, the term “bureaucracy” conjures up images of red tape, waste, and corruption. Historically, bureaucracy might be viewed as an over-correction for the “particularism” of early twentieth century organizations characterized by job instability and harsh working conditions wherein managers frequently used child labor and hired and fired employees on arbitrary grounds. Particularism presented an ideological conflict in the U.S.:

On one hand, democracy stressed liberty and equality for all. On the other hand, large masses of workers and nonsalaried personnel had to submit to apparently arbitrary authority, backed up by local and national police forces and legal powers, for ten to twelve hours a day, six days a week” (Perrow, 1986, p. 53).

This conflict between ideology and practice gave rise to “universalism,” or the idea of treating all employees equally according to their ability. An advocate for universalism, Max Weber once saw in the bureaucratic organization an antidote to the detrimental effects of particularism. From this perspective, bureaucracy’s impersonal, uniform rules and procedures could promote fairness in modern organizations.

Weber was the first to systematically articulate the characteristics of bureaucracy that include a fixed division of labor, authority that is based on a set of general rules rather than personal allegiance, and a “rational” and impersonal institution whose employees maintain a rigid separation of their personal and work lives. Later, as he

observed bureaucracy's increased reliance on technical rationality, Weber argued that bureaucracy can serve as a subtle but powerful form of domination, particularly in capitalist systems. Weber acknowledged the advances that accompanied the rationalization of modern society, but like Burke and Habermas, he feared how many of the features of technical rationality curtail human freedom and drive creativity from society. His renowned metaphor of the "iron cage" describes the notion of an inevitable, highly-rational and oppressive bureaucracy from which citizens cannot escape.

Can post-bureaucratic approaches to organizing free us from Weber's iron cage? As I discussed in the previous chapter, WEDO, like many TFNs, adopts participative and post-bureaucratic discourses. At the same time, though, WEDO operates within a bureaucratized frame. The organization, which itself tends to centralize leadership and formalize member roles and hierarchies (e.g. directors, managers, program coordinators, policy advisors), employs moderately institutionalized rhetoric. This is especially true for those times when WEDO engages global institutions, such as the U.N. and the World Bank. Rather than identifying whether WEDO's climate change discourse is more bureaucratic or more post-bureaucratic, though, I explore how WEDO purposefully engages in both modes of rhetoric—adapting to the experience(s) of its audiences and to the demands of its constantly changing speech situation.

The "contemporary economic ambitiousness" that drives Western culture's overreliance on technical efficiency is persistent. For this reason, WEDO works within the formal boundaries of organizational power to affect change. While TFNs are criticized for participating within the U.N. system, WEDO sees its participation in U.N. international conferences as one strategy for achieving its goals. As Moghadam (2005)

argues, “given the increasing importance of problematic institutions at the global level, social movement organizations and advocacy networks have no choice but to engage with multilateral institutions” (p. 129). She further explains that the U.N., in particular, provides a platform and “sympathetic environment for critics of global inequalities and injustices” (p. 129). WEDO board member Rosalind Petchesky (2000) elaborates:

We need democratic, accountable institutions of global governance in the face of globalization and enfeebled, complicit national governments. In this respect, the U.N. system is all we have. Thus we must work both inside and outside the system, and that means being more strategic about how we divide our time and members to make our presence felt in a wider range of international forums.

The extent to which WEDO and other TFNs are affecting real change by working within the system remains to be seen, as the policy changes made at the World Bank and WTO, for example, are seen by some merely as “lip service” to gender issues. Nonetheless, an “insider” strategy has yielded some environmental policy successes:

New institutional processes present challenges in assessing the benefits of participation, but in some cases they also present an opportunity to contribute to the design of the participatory process. For example, when the World Bank proposed the creation of the World Commission on Dams (WCD) to review the Bank’s involvement in large dam projects around the world, the Bank worked together with civil society groups, the dam industry and some government representatives to determine a process for

the Commission. In the end, civil society groups were pleased with how the WCD process was designed and how it unfolded (Carbert, 2004, p. 3). Thus, as one strategy for affecting change, engagement inside of global institutions can compel their attention to issues of accountability and participation (Moghadam, 2005).

When appealing to global rationality, WEDO's climate change initiative employs what I call a "bureaucracy-friendly" discourse undergirded by the spirit of global capitalism. This discourse is not inconsistent with those used in management-oriented and production-centered organizations. Consider how a capitalist politics that might sway "free-market" oriented governments is evident in one of WEDO's blog entries authored by OxFam Climate Change Policy Adviser, Tim Gore (2012):

This increased confidence in attributing climate change to specific impacts on people's lives, and on the bottom lines of businesses and entire countries, means weather extremes like Sandy should now be treated as major opportunities to leverage political action on climate change.

Gore uses the extreme weather event of super storm Sandy to urge climate action by framing climate change crises as "bad for business." Gore's approach of appealing to economic incentives reflects WEDO's bureaucratic discourse that frames sustainability largely in terms of ecological stress on economic endeavors.

Its bureaucratic discourse is further evident in the statement of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee on Gender and Climate Change, adopted at the 44th session of CEDAW in 2009, which states that environmental issues open up "new financing, business and employment opportunities" for women but that "gender inequalities persist in these sectors" (CEDAW, 2009).

Following Fairclough, discourse represents some particular part of the world from a particular perspective. CEDAW's identification of the "new financing, business and employment opportunities" resulting from environmental issues connects economic processes and change, representing each in terms of neoliberal discourse. By making it the business of global institutions to address persisting gender inequalities, CEDAW legitimates the capitalist politics that drives global governance.

Similarly, the Women's Caucus Declaration (2000) explains that members like WEDO are concerned that the WTO's system leads to global inequality, and that "while some women may gain from the opening up of trade, we firmly believe that the trade policies should ensure equality and equity, and people-centered sustainable development." Attention to markers of discourses in the Declaration reveals that the Women's Caucus hybridizes a neoliberal economic discourse with a discourse oriented to people's wellbeing. Still, the Women's Caucus operates largely in the framework of global governance. In affirming the benefits of market liberalization for "some women," the Women's Caucus recognizes that market liberalization is potentially beneficial in some contexts. The assertion that policy must "ensure equality and equity, and people-centered sustainable development" assumes that it is indeed possible to develop global trade policy that ensures equal, equitable, and people-centered sustainable development.

Many of WEDO's partnership initiatives exhibit the capitalist values associated with its "bureaucracy-friendly" climate change discourse. The WEP discussed in the previous chapter, for example, employs the motto "Equality Means Business" and invites financial institutions and corporations to help develop what its partners say will be a more progressive global economic agenda. Attention to the feature of evaluation reveals

implicit value assumptions associated with the idea that “Equality Means Business.” The WEP motto, like many of WEDO’s evaluative statements geared toward appealing to global, bureaucratic rationality, triggers at least two positive evaluations: (1) that business (and, by extension, capitalism) is desirable, and (2) that equality is good for business. The motto also triggers a negative evaluation: that “unequal” practices threaten business (and, by extension, capitalism).

Global rationality’s general position is that capitalist values are not oxymoronically related to social change. Professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics, Robert Falkner, received a warm response from audiences when he furthered this line of thinking at a 2012 WEDO-sponsored debate, arguing:

International negotiations are not going anywhere fast, and the locus of action is at the national and regional levels. After all, effective climate policy happens at the national level where commitments reflect societies’ priorities and preferences and a broader range of stakeholders, such as businesses, can participate actively. More support should be channeled to developing countries to help them develop climate change legislation (WEDO, 2012e).

Such arguments for the inclusion of businesses and intergovernmental actors in climate change action represent WEDO’s bureaucratic appeals that are necessary partly because much of its funding comes from external sources, such as international development agencies and other influential foundations. In this sense, WEDO is bounded by its donors’ expectations and requirements (Moghadam, 2005).

It is important to note that the “eco-friendly” global capitalist politics that characterizes a large part of WEDO’s bureaucratic discourse of climate change is said by some scholars to mask the inherent tensions between Western capitalism and local environmental ethics (Shiva, 1991). Postcolonial critics challenge the very concept of “sustainable development,” calling it a Western creation designed to deflect blame for environmental degradation from the Western world and its unsustainable consumption patterns (Banerjee, 2003; Munshi & Kurien, 2005). While I think this critique merits serious consideration, my focus here is on WEDO’s use of different discourses in response to different rhetorical situations.

Working in the formal boundaries of organizational power is one of WEDO’s strategies, but is not its only strategy. Its climate change initiative also attempts to affect change from outside the formal boundaries of organizational power, drawing attention to how rational measures of organizational efficiency can undermine social change. I turn now to how WEDO focuses attention on climate change impacts with creative appeals.

Appeals to Creativity

WEDO’s bureaucratic appeals align with the conventional (and dominant) wisdom on sustainable development that is typically professed by global institutions. I first explicate a central critique of the conventional understanding of sustainable development before discussing WEDO’s appeals to creativity so that I can show how WEDO’s creative appeals respond to this critique. David Korten (1996) distinguishes between conventional and “emergent alternative” renditions of sustainable development. To develop alternative discourses of sustainability, Shiv Ganesh (2007) argues that activists must “develop critical watchdog roles for activists and local communities

regarding issues of economic and environmental justice, social inequities and grassroots democracy” (p. 387). Following Korten, Ganesh presents three assumptive bases that underlie conventional prescriptions. To follow, I briefly summarize these assumptions.

The first assumption of conventional sustainable development discourse is found in “its invocation of the metaphor of a single human family,” (Ganesh, 2007, p. 382) behind which lies latent conservatism. The unified vision of humanity evident in sustainable development discourse often invokes “nature” as a fragile femininity requiring protection (Shiva, 1989; 1991). Ganesh explains that “sustainable development discourse urges the family of humanity to care for and work together in the race to save the planet makes it an unreservedly masculinist, patriarchal discourse with a conservative and predominantly heterosexist view of family” (p. 383). Such discourse invites co-optation by extreme religious organizations that pursue sustainable development with a return to “traditional family values” (Ganesh, 2007).

The second assumption of sustainable development is “its advocacy of environmental care as a goal that is achievable within the parameters of current economic growth” (Ganesh, 2007, p. 382). This is the type of framing WEDO uses in its appeals to global rationality, leading to the final assumption that invokes neoliberal understandings of the relationship among states, markets, and civil society. Neoliberal prescriptions for global social problems entail what Ganesh describes as “the relinquishing of overt government control and responsibility in civil domains” (p. 386). Consequently, NGOs are positioned as central mobilizers in the global arena. For Ganesh, this positioning is limiting because it allows for neoliberal markets to expand and for states to relieve themselves from social responsibilities. Worse, this positioning can create privileged

networks of national and regional NGOs (Henderson, 2002). Nevertheless, the positioning of NGOs as central actors in global civil society highlights their importance.

There is good reason for working outside the system. Because the U.N. conference process narrows down issues through preparatory meetings, the discussions that occur there are typically circumscribed to remaining issues. NGOs rarely set the topic agenda. Policy discussions in global bureaucracies are often limited to “soft” issues because as Jem Bendell (2004) notes:

If one group’s proposals on a specific issue are less threatening to established centres of power than another group’s proposals, the former will receive less resistance and gain more support from those centres of power. Consequently, the success of one civil society group in getting its objectives on the agenda can have the effect of marginalizing other equally valid agendas (p. 50).

To avoid having their agendas circumscribed, or worse—co-opted—by global institutions, many TFNs employ an “outsider” strategy that allows for them to be proactive rather than reactive. When WEDO is among friendly audiences, it need not employ bureaucratic appeals necessary when engaging the U.N. or World Bank. WEDO’s “outsider” strategy is evident in its newsletters addressed to likeminded members and in documents produced for its workshops with other TFNs and activists. In these cases, WEDO adapts its rhetoric to the experience(s) of an activist audience, engendering a rhetorical situation in which to create “emergent alternative” renditions of sustainable development (Ganesh, 2007; Korten, 1996).

WEDO's creative climate change rhetoric proposes alternate ways for international financial institutions to calculate costs and evaluate benefits that are informed by a sense of social justice. Its rhetoric invites audiences to consider an approach to development that might help the world's neediest groups. Several key climate change publications incorporate discourse that highlights the injustice of disproportionate climate change effects:

The world's poor suffer from erratic weather and its disruptions because they live in substandard housing in marginal land subject to drought or flood, or in crowded urban areas lacking essential services—and women are the majority of the world's poor. Discrimination means women worldwide are the first to lose their homes and their jobs after weather-related disasters, and the last to receive credit, technical help and education on energy and resource conservation (WEDO, 2013c).

WEDO signifies its epistemic modality, or what is true, by identifying women as “the majority of the world's poor” who suffer more than other groups and are uniquely discriminated against as a result of climate change. Its truth is predicated, not on the type of dominant wisdom professed by global institutions but on an assumption that the neoliberal privileging of economic interests above all others is undesirable (e.g. evaluation). WEDO's creative appeals undermine neoliberalism's application of economic logic to social domains, arguing that social relations must not be re-structured in accordance with global capitalism.

Another document featured in WEDO's climate change archive is an open letter to U.S. President Barack Obama “from the world's poorest countries.” The letter, which I

quote at length, is authored by Pa Ousman Jarju, Chair of the Least Developed Countries group at the U.N. climate change negotiations. It orients friendly audiences to the plight of the poor:

Countries from Gambia and Haiti, to Malawi and Bangladesh need the “predictable and adequate” funding promised in Copenhagen so that they can take simple steps to protect their citizens. This means moving drinking water and irrigation wells away from coasts, where saltwater is intruding into aquifers; it includes developing drought-resistant crops and helping small farmers in fragile, semi-arid regions survive. We have to prepare roads and cities, villages and farms for floods, hurricanes and heat waves. We need to equip people with the weather prediction, early warning systems and emergency response that citizens of the developed countries take for granted. There is simply no longer time or cause for wealthy countries to continue to stall in taking real action to fulfill the promises they have made. Having the wealthy nations reduce their greenhouse gas emissions steeply is fundamental, but helping the poorest of us cope with its impacts is an immediate necessity... (WEDO, 2012f).

Documents like these showcase how WEDO appeals integrate communicative rationality to develop convincing arguments that people matter as much as (or perhaps even more than) bottom lines. These arguments forward an alternate approach to sustainable development “based on principles of human rights and environmental justice for present and future generations” (WEDO, 2013f). WEDO texts characterized by creative rhetorical appeals that exhibit creative invention and offer audiences novel ways

of thinking about development are undergirded by a propositional assumption that better alternatives to neoliberal capitalism exist.

The creative appeals evident in WEDO's climate change discourse exhibit a recognition-based approach to sustainable development that is reminiscent of economist and Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen's (1999; 1997; 1957) body of work challenging conventional neoliberal economy theories. Sen puts peoples' well-being, rather than the accumulation of national wealth, at the center of development. A people-centered approach to development sees individual freedom as a social commitment. In this frame, individual freedom is: (1) a central value in any appraisal of society, and (2) an integral product of social arrangements," (Sen, 1999, p. 53). Such a discourse has at its core what Habermas calls "emancipatory knowledge" which transforms inequality in society and fosters participatory democracy.

In sum, in this section, I explored how WEDO's climate change initiative garners attention to the impacts of climate change on women. WEDO's success is partly due to its refined conception of *experience(s)*, the first term clustering around the problematic of rationality in WEDO texts. WEDO's rhetoric mediates two types of appeals: (1) bureaucratic appeals, and (2) creative appeals. To follow, I discuss the second term that clusters around the problematic of rationality in WEDO texts.

4.4 Refining *Expertise*: Mediating Reason and Emotion to Mitigate Climate Change Effects

Throughout her life, Professor Joe Marie "Judie" Roy of Haiti has been interested in politics. When she decided to run as the first female candidate for President of Haiti in 2006, she says she knew she would lose. She did not have sufficient resources for the

campaign. After her defeat, Judie began working for the Ministry of Environment with a primary mandate of mainstreaming gender equality into its policies and programs. Her work there led Judie to the UNFCCC process where she currently works on policy recommendations to mitigate climate change effects. In Haiti, these effects are evident in the loss of life, environmental degradation, and political instability caused by extreme weather events like hurricanes and floods. Judie's story is featured in one of WEDO's Delegate Profiles:

Like many Haitians, Joe Marie "Judie" Roy knows better than most the challenges faced in a country devastated by natural disaster. The catastrophic 2010 earthquake took the lives of thousands of individuals and uprooted the everyday lives of millions more. The physical and mental shock of such an event shook the small country to its core and, as Judie says, "almost broke my spirit completely." "We lost so much," says Judie, "our people, our infrastructure, and some of our strongest advocates" (WEDO, 2011a)

In the face of such devastating loss, Judie's determination to serve the Haitian people was strengthened. Since the earthquake, Judie keeps "working to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change on all human beings, especially women" (WEDO, 2011a).

Judie's story is one of many stories featured in WEDO's archives that demonstrate how WEDO integrates emotional appeals into its organizational rhetoric. WEDO's expert delegates, like Judie, frequently direct attention to climate change mitigation needs through emotional expressiveness rather than by appealing exclusively to the type of reason that was necessary to legitimize self-governance in modernity. In

moving beyond the types of appeals that privilege reason over passion and objectivity over subjectivity, WEDO acknowledges that expertise is partial. In this sense, experts, like everyone else, are, as Burke might say, situated in a scene with a purpose. In the case of WEDO, one of its purposes is to facilitate the development of care for others to whom we might not directly relate.

Emotion plays a vital role in the process of uniting strangers across difference.

George E. Marcus (2002) explains:

Getting people to share in the concerns of others, to take an interest in a problem, crisis, or issue that is not part of their intimate lives, depends on making a specific connection between the observed grievance and one's emotional response. Seeing a spectacle and making sense of it, however important that understanding is, are not by themselves sufficient to recruit people to a cause. They must feel a connection (p. 86).

For Marcus, emotion processes “precede conscious awareness, shape what we pay attention to and how we pay attention” (p. 60). In other words, reason and emotion are inseparable.

In this section, I explore how WEDO's organizational rhetoric draws on a sophisticated notion of *expertise*, the second term clustering around the problematic of rationality in WEDO texts. Treating expertise as a social construct, WEDO acknowledges the affective dimensions of rhetoric in ways that are useful for recuperating emotion in the global organizational public sphere. Its climate change mitigation discourse mediates reason and emotion, challenging the norms and processes of rational-critical debate. To

follow, I elaborate on the concept of rational-critical debate introduced in Chapter 1 to remind readers why emotion in rhetoric has historically been undervalued.

Beyond Rational-Critical Debate

The deliberative turn “represents a renewed concern with the authenticity of democracy: the degree to which democratic control is substantive rather than symbolic, and engaged by competent citizens” (Dryzek, 2000, p. 1). Because the modernist sociopolitical imaginary prefers that emotion be exorcised from deliberative processes, the “reasonable” language of experts tends to hold more sway than the language of “emotional” citizens in deliberative processes. Emotions in this frame are thought of as too subjective to be argued about in public. Rational-critical deliberation thus privileges neutral, universal, and dispassionate expression over emotive language (Young, 2000). However, as the inseparable nature of reason and emotion becomes increasingly clear to postmodern citizens, we realize that:

Deliberation cannot be restricted to the purely rational or cognitive because to do so is to exclude many of those directly affected by the policy decisions that may flow from deliberation. This does not mean that ‘rational argument’ should be replaced with a slanging match, but it does mean that the tendency to avoid engaging in issues because they are too emotionally charged, or to rule the emotional content of experience as outside the remit of public deliberation, cannot be acceptable (Barnes, 2008, p. 473).

Historically undervalued, emotional rhetoric in debate can nonetheless generate affective connections necessary for collective action, especially among cosmopolitan citizens (Bohman, 2007; 1998).

Emotion is doubly important in the global organizational public sphere wherein NGOs encourage participation in deliberative decision-making on issues that do not always directly affect citizens. In such cases, emotion can facilitate identification among strangers and promote dialogue that leads to “empathy with the other and a broadened sense of people’s own interests through an egalitarian, open-minded, and reciprocal process of reasoned argumentation” (Mendelberg, 2002, p. 153). Negotiating solutions for the social good requires that citizens learn about and respect views and opinions that may be contrary to their own (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; Pearce & Littlejohn, 1997). Empathy, therefore, should be one of global deliberative democracy’s top criteria.

A WEDO report from El Salvador on heavy rains and landslides that recently ravaged parts of Central America, killing dozens of people and displacing hundreds of refugees exhibits an attempt to generate affective connections among citizens. Author Marta Benavides (2011) explains that for many El Salvadorans, the suffering is

more of what we already have. Thus, we can only expect more tragedies to be suffered by those who already suffer the difficult situation today, for the colonial legacy of impoverishment is such that thousands have been forced to live in hundreds of years in very vulnerable conditions, in the low areas, near the rivers, the coast, or in ravines.

The report reveals WEDO’s epistemic modality: It is those already-vulnerable populations who suffer the most from global climate change. Importantly, the report links

the El Salvadoran peoples' suffering to hundreds of years of environmental exploitation at the hands of an ideology grounded in what Benadvides describes as the "prioritization of market and money." Since language is a type of social structure that defines what is possible (Fairclough, 2003; 2006), WEDO's ability to convincingly make this connection depends in part on its effective use of emotional language. For instance, climate science experts mostly fail to convincingly link global climate change to neoliberal policies and practices. Their highly technical, convoluted language lends itself well to dismissal, even ridicule, by climate change deniers, global corporations, and conservative pundits and political organizations.

It is perhaps more difficult for citizens to ignore the connection between global climate change and neoliberalism when we feel an affective identification with others who suffer its impacts. This idea reflects the first of three WEDO assumptions about emotion evident in its climate change mitigation discourse: Emotion matters to both the formation and the breaking down of social solidarities (Ahmed, 2004). Since WEDO tries to stimulate globalization from below by organizing different women around similar justice claims, I focus on the role of its emotional rhetoric in developing solidarity across difference. Consider how the same report encourages sympathy among different nations in the Global South and the Global North that results from

a cultural practice of exclusion, of keeping people in poverty and ignorance, in dependency, to be cheap hand labor, a culture that maintains the corruption of those who in any way have been in power, and who make sure that not even a basic law for the prevention and mitigation of disasters is approved, least implemented, even as a large network of

communities have been pressing hard for years for that. What is very clear is that is the people who live in situation of impoverishment are the most affected, and of those, the women and indigenous groups, the children and youth, the elderly ... We are mindful of the fact that our sisters and brothers of Mexico, of Guatemala, of Honduras and Nicaragua, are suffering as much as we are, and the same is true as we know of Thailand, of Bali, and of so many nations ... (Benavides, 2011).

WEDO's discourse posits that the material conditions of colonial legacies unify groups who share them. Texts can inculcate, sustain, or change ideologies (Eagleton, 1991; Fairclough; 2003; Larrain, 1979; van Dijk, 1998). WEDO's report, like many of its key climate change documents, functions to unify groups around a shared understanding of the flawed logic of neoliberal globalization. In evoking passion about the human suffering that results from the dominant ideology, WEDO's emotion-friendly discourse promotes collective action to transform it.

WEDO's climate change mitigation discourse exhibits a second assumption: Emotions inform our political and moral judgments (Marcus, Neuman & MacKuen, 2002; Nussbaum, 2001). As Martha Nussbaum (2001) argues, understanding the relationships between emotions and social good informs a politics that supports "human flourishing" (p. 3). WEDO's assumption that emotion is a valuable means for changing judgments is evident in a WEDO op-ed piece entitled *CSW: Thoughts from a U.N. System Non-believer*. In it, Guatemalan citizen and activist, Norma Maldonado (2013a), describes her journey toward affective identification with others that influenced a shift in her attitude about whether or not women can effect change from within the U.N. system.

Maldonado describes her initial skepticism upon reading the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

They sounded so far away, like written wishes by someone on another planet – either very naïve or very smart – to convince the world that with those goals we could achieve justice in the development of families, girls, kids of all ages, youth. But they were written within the U.N. system. I decided there was no way I could participate in anything related to that (Maldonado, 2013a).

Later, in 2009, Maldonado found herself in Copenhagen deliberating with activists and experts from various NGOs. Eventually, Maldonado came to see engagement in the U.N. process as a way of sharing her knowledge and experiences as a woman from the Global South and learning from the experiences of others. Her reflections on her time spent laughing with, talking to, and discovering her own and others' "heart and soul" in "the bars, cafes and delis" in New York City reveal a powerful sentimentality that is present in most WEDO climate change mitigation texts.

The "sentimental" style that characterizes WEDO's climate change mitigation discourse is undergirded by a feminist ethic of care. It creates mutuality and symmetry between actors who are co-involved in social events. This type of representation in texts develops what Fairclough calls "public space dialogue," or space in which citizens engage in open communication about issues of social concern. As was the case for Maldonado, dialogue influences a shift in our attitudes by asking us to imagine the world as another sees it. A dialogic process employs the type of "invitational rhetoric" introduced in Chapter 2 that is oriented toward collaborative growth. It encourages

engagement in empathic deliberation and debate. Emotional organizational rhetoric challenges conventional wisdom about keeping emotion out of politics, adopting instead a perspective similar to Marcus's (2002) that care serves a positive function in organizational, public life. As such, "sentimental citizens" (and experts) engage in empathic deliberation and exercise more meaningful political action.

This idea segues nicely into a final assumption evident in WEDO's climate change mitigation discourse: Emotions are powerful motivators for civic participation and thus are crucial to sustaining political action (Clarke, Hoggett & Thompson, 2006). WEDO's assumption that emotions motivate and sustain action is especially evident in its experts' participation in public demonstrations alongside ordinary citizens. The 1999 "Battle in Seattle" mentioned in the previous chapter is a prime example. WEDO's participation in such events shows that organizations are emotion-laden environments. The fact that organizing is a highly emotional process (Weick, 1995) may seem obvious, but emotion in organizations, like emotion in rhetoric, has historically been undervalued.

As I alluded to at the beginning of this chapter, the privileging of rationality over emotionality in organizations is a byproduct of Western culture's tendency toward dualisms (Ashcraft; 2000; Putnam & Mumby, 1993). Most Western organizations reify the mind-heart dichotomy and operate within Herbert Simon's (1982) narrow construct of "bounded rationality." In this frame, organizations devalue affect, treat emotional expressiveness as inappropriate, and consider organizational decisions based on emotion irrational. For this reason, organizational members often engage in "emotional labor" to manage emotions so that they are appropriate for situations, roles, or expected behaviors.

In their post-structuralist feminist reading of Simon's construct, Putnam and Mumby (1993) introduce an alternative mode of organizing called "bounded emotionality" in which "nurturance, caring, community, supportiveness, and interrelatedness are fused with individual responsibility to shape organizational experiences" (p. 474). Bounded emotionality demonstrates the importance of affect in organizational decision-making. The concept challenges the dominant patriarchal assumptions underlying technical rationality that views impersonal and bureaucratic norms as *the* organizational norm. From a bounded emotionality perspective, we might understand WEDO's participation alongside citizens in public demonstrations as a way of enacting the feminist ethic of care exhibited in its climate change mitigation discourse.

For instance, WEDO spent Earth Day of 2012 at the 12th Forum for the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) where its experts "took to the streets" alongside several Turkish women's organizations for a march in Istanbul. A WEDO press release anticipated the event as

a gathering of thousands of feminist activists from around the world ...
[the event] is a space for engaging in transformative dialogue on progress, challenges, opportunities and next steps for the women's movement
(Burns, 2012).

This short description reveals the epistemic truth for WEDO that dialogue is "transformative." This truth is predicated on the assumption that empathic deliberation can unite strangers across difference—creating a space wherein different women converge on a scene to develop a plan for their collective "next steps." Additionally, the press release shows us what its authors commit themselves to in terms of obligation (e.g.

denotic modality): WEDO will facilitate dialogue between experts and citizens. By doing so, WEDO implicitly commits itself to incorporating diverse rationalities and emotions into its public advocacy.

Similarly, in June of 2013, WEDO participated in a protest of the Rockaway and Spectra pipelines, two controversial natural gas delivery systems for New York City. WEDO's experts marched alongside citizens in City Hall Park, chanting, "Hey New York City! We want renewable energy!" and "Pipelines beware: You're not welcome here!" WEDO's news archive and public blog feature commentaries, photographs, and videos of the event that depict impassioned political action by experts and citizens alike. Its participation in public events like this one, which are motivated partly by passion, reveals how WEDO operates outside of a "bounded rationality" construct.

WEDO's "bounded emotionality" mode is characterized by a broader sense of community and a new relationship between citizens and organizational experts. Whereas its early "expert" style of rhetoric is characterized by explicit evaluative statements and totalizing statements of fact, today, WEDO's experts more appropriately understand themselves as what Frank Fischer (2002) calls "specialized citizens." WEDO's "sentimental" style of rhetoric relies on assumptions that are developed in and through dialogic interactions with ordinary citizens. Indeed, its key climate change mitigation documents reveal that WEDO's decision-making is not characterized by "value neutral" methodologies and modes. Rather, WEDO recuperates emotion in its rhetoric by inviting citizens' participation into its deliberative decision-making.

In sum, in this section, I argued that WEDO's organizational rhetoric draws on a sophisticated notion of *expertise*, the second term clustering around the problematic of

rationality in WEDO texts. WEDO integrates affect into its rhetoric that recuperates emotion in the global organizational public sphere. Its climate change mitigation discourse mediates reason and emotion. By doing so, the organization moves away from rational-critical debate toward empathic organizational deliberation grounded in affective connections. In the following section, I discuss the final tem clustering around the problematic of rationality in WEDO texts.

4.5 Refining *Knowledge*: Mediating Technical and Experiential Know-how to Cultivate Public Expertise on Sustainable Development

As a member of the Global Gender and Climate Change Alliance (GGCA), WEDO builds capacity at all levels to “design and implement gender-responsive climate change policies, strategies, and programmes” (WEDO, 2013g). Toward that end, it partakes in global trainings, frequently partnering with UNIFEM regional offices to produce assessments of gender and climate change programs throughout the world. As part of its training, WEDO uses the GGCA’s (2009) *Training Manual on Gender and Climate Change*—the introduction of which highlights a key challenge facing climate change policy makers:

In recent years, the main decision-makers involved in climate change initiatives, programmes, and policy development, have acknowledged that they don’t know enough about the links between gender equality and climate change. One of the primary challenges faced by an institution or government in addressing gender equality is isolation from other similar efforts and lack of experience. For example, in 2006, U.N. survey of environmental ministries, governments, cited lack of capacity and

understanding on the topic of gender and environment, and specifically on gender and climate change, as a reason for not incorporating gender into their work (p. 13).

To increase knowledge about the linkages between gender and climate change, trainers should use “language that policymakers and climate scientists can understand” (GGCA, 2009, p. 13). As Cass Sunstein (2010) notes, “agencies should communicate with the public in a way that is clear, simple, meaningful, and jargon-free” (p. 3). This orientation to language is reminiscent of Habermas’s (1970) argument that translating technical knowledge into the public sphere demands the use of ordinary language. By training climate change trainers, WEDO serves as a “translation station” in the global organizational public sphere that bridges “expert” and “lay” discourses. How effectively does WEDO perform this task? Does it model a successful case of translation between experts and citizens?

In this section, I explore the final mediating function WEDO performs: mediating technical and experiential *knowledge*, the final term clustering around the problematic of rationality in WEDO texts. The organization’s climate change training discourse exhibits a refined conceptualization of knowledge that is grounded, not in technical rationality alone, but also in citizens’ experiential knowledge. WEDO’s more sophisticated understanding of knowledge cultivates a type of public expertise on sustainable development that can: (1) counter technocratic decision-making, and (2) (re)empower citizens who traditionally are excluded from deliberative decision-making processes. I first discuss the rise of technical expertise in the public sphere to show how social movements challenge elitist notions of knowledge (Foucault, 1972).

Modernity introduced a troubling paradox: As the importance of citizenship grew in the public arena, so too did the power of corporations and governmental organizations directed by managerial and technical knowledge (Fischer, 2002). Deetz (1992) calls the seeping of corporate ideology and technical knowledge into the everyday lives of citizens the “corporate colonization of the lifeworld.” He explains:

With such institutional domination in place, every other institution subsidizes or pays its dues for the integration given by the corporate structure, and by doing so reduces its own institutional role. The state developed for public good interprets that as the need for order and economic growth. The family that provided values and identity transforms that to emotional support and standard of living. The educational institution fostering autonomy and critical thought trains for occupational success (Deetz, 1992, p. 17).

Given the corporate colonization of our everyday lives, the prospect of global democracy is uncertain.

The postmodern world is characterized by ubiquitous global power and even greater social and technical complexity wherein experts are largely detached from citizens. Since “expert knowledge,” or knowledge that results from qualified individuals’ technical practices, training, and experience (Booker & McNamara, 2004) is generally thought of as “more objective and therefore more accurate than the subjective knowledge of lay persons” (Caron-Flinterman, Broerse & Bunders, 2005, p. 2576), experts are granted asymmetrical power in environmental decision-making. Consequently, expert actors perform “a more technocratic form of decision-making, far more elitist than

democratic” (Fischer, 2002, p. 7). Deliberations with experts, such as those institutional responses from the UNDP and UNEP mentioned earlier in this chapter, tend to further alienate citizens whose access to and agency in decision-making fora are already limited.

Foucault (1979; 1972; 1983) asserts that institutions exercise power by regulating and constraining knowledge-making, production, and consumption through a system of rules and practices. He further argues that by understanding how power is exercised, we can resist and transform unequal power relations. One way of confronting elitist forms of knowledge in the public sphere is through social movements, which, as Foucault explains

... are an opposition to the effects of power which are linked with knowledge, competence, and qualification: struggles against the privileges of knowledge. But they are also an opposition against secrecy, deformation and mystifying representations imposed on people... What is questioned is the way in which knowledge circulates and functions, its relations to power (as quoted in Plotke, 1995, p. 116).

A key actor in the women’s and environmental movements, WEDO challenges the elitism of technical rationality in the global organizational public sphere by consulting with local stakeholders on issues that typically are relegated to the technical sphere. In recognizing that ordinary citizens have valuable knowledge to contribute to climate change deliberations, WEDO demonstrates an appreciation for different rationalities. The case of WEDO sheds light on how NGOs, as part of the global social justice movement, can bring experts and non-experts together to deliberate issues without technical discourses automatically winning out.

In general, WEDO's climate change training materials emphasize an alternative environmental perspective that is based largely in experiential knowledge, or truth learned from personal experience (Borkman, 1976). By incorporating experiential knowledge in its climate change training discourse, WEDO reclaims the key role of local stakeholders in environmental decision-making. The incorporation of experiential knowledge cultivates expertise among the public that eschews elitism in decision-making for a currently dominated by technocrats. Fischer (2002) explains that insofar as many social problems originate in a local context, citizens' understandings of problems are crucial to effectively identify and define them. Moreover, searching for solutions is "an important factor in building the legitimacy required to implement policy effectively" (Fischer, 2002, p. 217). Without citizens' input, climate change and environmental policy interventions will be unsuccessful.

Following the GGCA, WEDO implements "full and effective participation of women of indigenous and local communities in all activities in the programme of work" (GGCA, 2009) that accounts for the need to:

Build on the basis of their knowledge; strengthen their access to biological diversity; strengthen their capacity on matters pertaining to the conservation, maintenance, and protection of biological diversity; promote the exchange of experiences and knowledge; and promote culturally appropriate and gender specific ways in which to document and preserve women's knowledge of biological diversity (p. 60)

WEDO's goal to implement "full and effective" citizen participation reveals its value assumption that indigenous and local communities make important contributions to

environmental policy deliberations. Through its meetings with local conservationist leaders, public workshops and trainings on climate change, and projects that employ community-based participatory research methods, WEDO resists the elevation of expert knowledge. Instead, WEDO assumes that experts and citizens must work together to co-construct a more meaningful understanding of the linkages between gender and climate change.

Recognizing the important role women play in “distributing information and knowledge that “improve the livelihood of local women and their communities,” WEDO lists “recognizing and nurturing women’s expertise” as one of its climate change initiative goals (den Besten, 2011). The organization’s climate change training discourse reflects a spirit of public collaboration which occurs “when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem are engaged in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain” (Belsten, 1996, p. 37).

WEDO’s participatory and collaborative style of training discourse undermines the hierarchical model of communication in which technical information is thought to flow down from experts to non-experts. WEDO embraces networked, interactive processes of information exchange during which its professional trainers also learn from those citizens they train. For instance, WEDO documentation recalls how focus group discussions with female and male Indian farmers about changes they have observed over the years in rainfall patterns and hotter temperatures yielded insights that GGCA trainers like WEDO are using to develop

a methodology for exploring the gender dimensions of coping with climate change impacts as well as to map new knowledge on how livelihoods are adjusted and how new coping strategies are developed for food security (Lambrou & Piana, 2006, p. 140).

An “expert” style of rhetoric is typically characterized by explicit evaluative statements, statements of fact, and “value neutral” methodologies and modes (Fairclough, 2006). By contrast, most of WEDO’s key climate change documents employ participative and collaborative rhetoric. Its modes and methodologies are aimed, not at scientific proof or verification, but at contextual understanding that helps “build up a pool of trainers in different regions and countries” (GGCA, 2009, p. 14). WEDO’s vision for climate science is re-structured in accordance with what Fischer (2002) argues is a more “reflexive approach to science” (p. 68). Within and across its training documents, WEDO seeks “inclusive dialogue” in spaces it says are overwhelmingly “dominated by technical discussion” (WEDO, 2013h). Its climate change training texts are marked by strong dialogicality and intertextuality, invoking themes of dialogism and participatory deliberation and instruction. In general, these texts bridge technical and lay discourses.

The 2013 GGCA-sponsored discussion with UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Christiana Figueres, is a recent example of WEDO facilitating dialogue in which expert and citizens’ discourses were bridged to develop a shared understanding of the linkages between gender and climate change. The dialogue was streamed live on the GGCA and WEDO’s websites, and included questions from citizens submitted through the social media website Twitter. Citizens contributed suggestions for tailoring effective climate change policies, strategies, and programs to specific audiences. These types of events

allow citizens with internet access to contribute to climate change deliberations alongside experts. By incorporating citizens' experiential knowledge in its climate change training discourse, WEDO engages in bi-directional information sharing and circulation.

What are the implications of WEDO's refined conceptualization of knowledge for the problematic of rationality? By cultivating public expertise on sustainable development, WEDO can: (1) counter technocratic decision-making, and (2) (re)empower citizens who traditionally are excluded from deliberative decision-making processes. First, dialogic deliberation can produce "public expertise" that counters "monolithic, technocratic decision-making" (Kinsella, 2004, p. 85). As William Kinsella (2004) argues:

The ideal form of public expertise is technical competency acquired and used directly by affected citizens. Such competency need not, and cannot, replace the more specialized knowledge of technical or policy professionals, but it can provide members of the public with an adequate foundation for genuine dialogue with these specialists.

Putting citizens in touch with experts provides the public with a foundation for engaging climate science issues. Likewise, these deliberations offer experts an opportunity to learn from the experiential knowledge of citizens from whom they are otherwise mostly divorced. In exploring encounters between "experts" and "non-experts" as co-constructed processes, WEDO's climate change training discourse avoids the technocratic impulse to elevate technical knowledge above experiential knowledge. In this way, WEDO's participatory approach envisions a new relationship between experts and citizens that strengthens the legitimacy of global deliberative decision-making.

Finally, unlike elitist, technocratic forms of decision-making, public, collaborative approaches emphasize “process more than results” (Katz & Miller, 1996, p. 134). These approaches foster participation that helps disempowered citizens manage, resist, and transform tensions associated with globalization from above. By inviting citizens to participate alongside specialists in making decisions that directly affect their communities, WEDO cultivates public expertise that potentially (re)empowers disempowered citizens. Powerlessness results from a lack of participation and a reliance on hierarchy in the global organizational public sphere. According to Young (1990), the powerless are those “over whom power is exercised without their exercising it; the powerless are situated so that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them” (p. 56). Powerless citizens lack opportunities to develop and exercise skills, they use little creativity or judgment in their work, and they generally have no technical expertise or authority (Young, 1990).

The cultivation of public expertise engenders the development and exercise of skills by marginalized and “powerless” citizens. This deterritorialization of knowledge potentially corrects for repressive, technical communication that prevails in the global arena. It enables broader participation in deliberative decision-making, new modes of citizenship, and the reciprocal exchange of information (Levy, 1997). As Pierre Levy (1997), argues, the breakdown of geographic constraints on communication, a declining loyalty of individuals to organized social groups, and the diminished power of nation-states to command their citizens’ exclusive loyalty produces a space in which communities are developing to share information across borders and boundaries. The way

knowledge in these new communities circulates and functions might create a new, more hopeful relationship to power.

To summarize, in this section, I explored the final mediating function WEDO performs in its climate change initiative: mediating technical and experiential *knowledge*, the final term clustering around the problematic of rationality in WEDO texts. WEDO's climate change training discourse exhibits a refined conceptualization of knowledge that incorporates local citizens' experiential knowledge. Its sophisticated understanding of knowledge cultivates public expertise on sustainable development that can: (1) counter technocratic decision-making, and (2) (re)empower citizens who traditionally are excluded from deliberative decision-making processes.

CHAPTER 5: “THE ORGANIZATION AND SOCIETY”

5.1 Introduction: “The Organization and Society”

This, my final case study analysis chapter, presents findings generated from my investigation of “the organization and society.” In it, I explore a number of questions: In what ways do NGOs like WEDO contribute to the development of more just, democratic societies? How can NGOs serve as institutional bases for global civic participation? How might NGOs generate legitimacy that historically only national spheres have been able to achieve? The case of WEDO demonstrates the blurring of “boundaries” between organizations and society and can thus yield insights into the role of NGOs in shifting us toward a postmodern sociopolitical imaginary. I begin by introducing readers to the problematic of the organization-society relationship. Working from the problematic, this analysis investigates the relationship between WEDO, citizens, and other global civil society actors.

The Problematic of the Organization-Society Relationship

In the liberal tradition, individual citizens are presumed to have equal status, rights, and responsibilities so that inequality arising from contexts, such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexuality, ability, and class, are irrelevant to their citizenship status (Roche, 1987). This frame envisions citizens as strangers among each other (Yuval-Davis, 1997) and promotes autonomy and self-reliance rather than relationships between citizens and their civic communities. The liberal model presupposes citizenship that is constituted by a culturally homogenous, insular group. In doing so, it fails to account for how dialogue among different individuals reflects and contributes to the

development of one's multifaceted identities, ambivalent moral commitments, and shifting political allegiances.

Within the liberal context, organizations are traditionally understood as separate and distinct from society. As such, organizations are thought to be mostly exempt from democratic principles that guide behavior in other societal spheres (Mumby & Stohl, 1996). The traditional view of the organization-society relationship does not account for "organization" and "organizing" outside of the context of the early modern era. To understand the dynamics of globalization, it is vital to reconsider the relationship between citizens, organizations, and the larger environments in which they operate. We now recognize that the boundaries between an organization and society are permeable and perhaps even indistinct (Mumby, 2001). For this reason, globalization challenges liberal norms and traditional approaches to communicating and organizing.

In the global organizational public sphere, stakeholders are no longer physically confined to any one organizational site, making it important to explore how organizing processes are influenced by connections that transcend various boundaries (Stohl, 1995). As Mumby and Stohl note:

We are concerned with how networks of relationships and identifications permeate, constrain, and facilitate organizational experience, and recognize that ties among group members are enacted within spatial, social, and temporal disjunctures that cannot be reconciled easily.

Alliances resemble affinities and webs of connectedness rather than stable and discrete subcultures (p. 64).

Globalization fractures the facile understanding of organizations as separate of society, in part by encouraging WEDO to envision itself as constituting a network of change agents alongside other transnational feminist networks (TFNs), international and transnational organizations, and non-governmental actors. In contrast to traditional organizations, WEDO (and many other global NGOs) are formed on the basis of collaboration across organizational and national boundaries, drawing attention to the translation function NGOs perform in contemporary society. Today's transnational feminist organizations rely heavily on advanced communication and digital information technologies to coordinate their actions across time and space. These NGOs emphasize cooperative work, non-proximate organizational alliances, and strong links between activities and individuals across organizations.

WEDO collaborates with “a range of stakeholders” including government, U.N., and non-governmental actors to pursue its goals. The organization works in concert with “partners, from local to global levels, on nearly every continent and many islands scattered in between” (WEDO, 2013a). Its operation “across regional and national stakeholders, networks, and governments” helps WEDO develop initiatives supported by a coalition of organizations who mobilize around a shared agenda (WEDO, 2013a). In contrast to the top-down organizational model that subtly reifies centralized power ideology, WEDO's lateral communication processes suggest an alternative model of organizing. WEDO invites multiple stakeholders to converge on global social problems and develop collaborative solutions. Its collaborative approach to organizing civil society actors undermines the dominant assumption of organizational and public culture as separate, unitary structures.

Today, individuals develop multilayered identities that correspond to the globalization of economic and sociopolitical forces and the reconfiguration of political power (Held, 1995). As such, a cosmopolitan ethic becomes the basis for political participation in global civil society. In a global organizational public sphere, NGOs facilitate much of this participation. The flexible and emergent communication networks that comprise international and transnational organizations (Monge & Fulk, 1999) help develop international public law that is central to a just political order (Habermas, 2001). Organizations and NGOs, in particular, are increasingly viewed as sites of democratic forms of participation and deliberative decision-making (Cheney, 1995; Deetz, 1992; Stohl, 1995).

Despite the critical role of organizations in facilitating political participation in global civil society, the theoretical dispute over how to generate democratic legitimacy at the international level largely overlooks organizations, focusing instead on either micro- or macro- spaces of public deliberation. I begin by briefly overviewing the historical privileging of face-to-face deliberation. Because the modern era's primary modes of communication are less useful today, a new theory of digitally mediated deliberation has begun replacing the traditional model. I suggest that both approaches overlook the crucial role of NGOs in global civil society.

Face-to-face Deliberation, Media of Mass Communication, and the Space Between

In her renowned work *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt (1958) discusses the "space of appearance" in which interlocutors mutually recognize one another and engage in concerted communication. She argues that this space "disappears not only with the dispersal of men [sic] ... but with the disappearance or arrest of the activities [of

speech] themselves” (Arendt, 1958, p. 199). Because Habermas’s theory of communicative action is grounded in Arendt’s work, it assumes that the “space of appearance” exists mostly in citizens’ face-to-face interactions. In fact, more recently, Habermas (2006) argues that contemporary public deliberation is impeded by a “lack of face-to-face interaction between present participants in a shared practice of collective decision-making” (p. 414). In other words, to a large extent, Habermas still privileges the type of communication and deliberation that took place in bourgeois salons and coffee houses.

While the reality of an exclusively face-to-face “space of appearance” may have been realistic for classical Greece and modern public culture, it is less true and less feasible in the global organizational public sphere given issues of scale. Even in bourgeois public culture, the modern press can be said to have supplanted face-to-face communication. As it becomes increasingly difficult to imagine citizens deliberating exclusively through face-to-face communication, many scholars argue that the decentralized deliberation that takes place in cyberspace extends the public sphere. Douglas Kellner (1998) maintains that the internet produces “new public spheres and spaces for information, debate, and participation that contain the potential to invigorate democracy and to increase the dissemination of critical and progressive ideas” (p. 172).

I am not as doubtful as Habermas about the potential for meaningful digitally mediated public deliberation. At the same time, I am not quite as optimistic as Kellner and other new media theorists about the promise of what is commonly called “E-democracy,” or online public deliberation and decision-making, to develop solutions to contemporary global problems. This is because online public deliberation faces a number

of significant obstacles, including increasing colonization of cyberspace by state and corporate interests, a deficit of reflexivity, a lack of respectful listening to others, the difficulty of verifying identity claims and information put forward, the exclusion of many from online political fora, and the domination of discourse by certain individuals and groups (Dahlberg, 2001).

Moreover, the leap theorists make from micro to macro approaches to political participation in a postmodern world neglects the space within, where NGOs connect citizens to global decision-making bodies. In moving beyond the modernist nation-state, institutions look to a less demanding basis of legitimacy in the organizational forms of an international negotiation system (Held, 1995). NGOs can make such a system's deliberative and decision-making processes more accessible to a multitude of publics and reorient cosmopolitan citizens toward what Young (1996) calls "communicative deliberative democracy." One possible way of actualizing communicative deliberative democracy is through transparent, accountable, and effective global governance (WEDO, 2013i).

WEDO's Global Governance Initiative

WEDO (2013i) explains that, since its founding, the organization has believed in the potential of, and indeed the necessity for, good global governance. The United Nations has played – and still must play – a strong role in facilitating governments' agreements and holding them accountable to their commitments. As a result of decades of multi-level, multi-stakeholder action, global legal frameworks for the promotion of human rights, gender equality and environmental sustainability exist.

These frameworks provide tools for officials, practitioners and activists to draft and implement sustainable national-level policies, programs and practices. Focused on the interlinkages and interdependence of its priority issues, WEDO works to uphold existing legal frameworks and support governments, civil society partners and U.N. agencies alike in turning words into action. Civil society access to and participation in global decision-making fora is a critical part of good global governance. From U.N. processes at headquarters, to meaningful engagement and partnership with country offices, WEDO supports information-sharing between and engagement of non-governmental voices.

Toward these ends, WEDO champions what it describes as the critical role of civil society in inspiring “collaboration, innovation, and solutions to global problems.” One of WEDO’s three interlinked goals, global governance centers the metapolitical question of representation at the international and transnational level. WEDO’s global governance initiative showcases the problematic of the organization and society in an increasingly interconnected world. As was the case for the problematic of rationality, my exploration of the organization and society engages in synchronic analysis. This problematic is best understood through attention to a particular initiative that demonstrates how, in functioning as a global intermediary, WEDO connects ordinary citizens to global civil society and global governance processes.

In the balance of this chapter, I present the insights generated from my critical investigation of texts related to WEDO’s global governance initiative. In the following two sections, I show how WEDO’s global governance discourse treats *civil society*, the

first term clustering around the problematic of the organization and society in WEDO texts, as a site of contestation. Rather than limiting its understanding of civil society as a fixed entity or space, WEDO conceptualizes civil society as fluid and ongoing, engendering the re-imagination of globalization as a bottom-up process. Imagination plays a key role in globalization because it is partly through imagination that citizens are disciplined and controlled by powerful interests. Imagination “is also the faculty through which collective patterns of dissent and new designs for collective life emerge” (Appadurai, 2000, p. 6). In other words, as surely as globalization from above colonizes the minds of citizens, the imagination as a social force can decolonize citizens and transform dominant power relations. I argue that WEDO’s approach to civil society helps it evade rhetorical traps associated with either extreme liberalism or extreme postmodernism. Its global governance discourse counters: (1) Western liberalism’s overreliance on commonality and consensus by expressing appreciation for difference, and (2) postmodernity’s moral relativism through a commitment to the development and implementation of global norms. I begin by discussing how WEDO draws on difference as a resource in global civil society.

5.2 Drawing on Difference as a Resource in Global *Civil Society*

Difference is created, reinforced, rewarded, punished, and transformed in both organizational and social/civic life (Conrad & Haynes, 2001; Eisenberg, Goodall, & Trethewey, 2010). While classical liberal theories of organizational and citizen identity assume a fixed, unitary, and essential self, one of the assumptions guiding this analysis is that our identities as either organizational members or citizens are imagined subject positions that are re-imaginable from a feminist standpoint. This feminist standpoint

emphasizes an intersectional approach to identity politics that recognizes the negotiation of multiple, fluid, and even contradictory identities. It accounts for how we simultaneously experience privilege and oppression, domination and subordination. Following feminist organizational communication theorists and feminist rhetorical theorists who argue that gender-based differences have historically been used as justification to exclude women from organizational, public life, I assume that the divide between public and private spheres has lingering effects that are evident in organizations and society.

While Mumby (2000) did not include “difference” as one of the four problematics of organizational communication, difference is a crucial focal point in much critical organizational communication literature and a recurring theme across chapters in this dissertation. To this point, I have shown how WEDO approaches difference by oscillating between liberal and third-wave feminist approaches to identity. For instance, WEDO’s liberal feminist orientation, which, as I argued in Chapter 3, is less prominent today than in its early years, seeks to change institutional policies and effect equality in global governance. This is the “insider” strategy I referred to earlier. At the same time, WEDO’s more “radical,” third-wave feminist orientation reflects a goal to re-imagine, dismantle, and replace these same structures with a feminist model (e.g. the use of an “outsider” approach to effect change). The case of WEDO demonstrates the dialectical relationship between the ideal of global citizenship and the need to accommodate difference in contemporary society. An organizational rhetoric perspective contributes to this discussion by showing how WEDO’s approaches differ depending on its audience. In

other words, as WEDO's interactional goals and audiences shift, so too does its rhetoric of difference.

WEDO's ability to adapt its rhetoric for different audiences is important for ensuring diverse and legitimate civil society participation. At the 2010 UNFCCC, for example, WEDO submitted a joint intervention on civil society participation in international conferences, arguing that its participation provides "legitimacy to this process that would not otherwise be there" (Rosemberg, 2010), and offering recommendations to ensure transparent involvement in global governance processes. In this sense, civil society participation by NGOs prevents dominant cultures and perspectives from marginalizing the interests of those who are different. Difference in the global organizational public sphere is a valuable resource and a necessity for achieving legitimation. A postmodern world values difference and dissensus alongside consensus in public deliberation. In reframing dissensus as a resource, rather than a symptom of decay, citizens gain a richer understanding of contemporary public argument and resistance processes (Phillips, 1996).

Earlier chapters of this dissertation showed how WEDO's organizational rhetoric exhibits an appreciation for difference by incorporating different voices and different rationalities. The following section of this chapter shows how WEDO apprehends difference in the context of the organization and society. Specifically, I argue that WEDO counters Western liberalism's overreliance on commonality and consensus in at least two ways: (1) by highlighting the gendered nature of organizations, and (2) by centering typically peripheral issues. To follow, I discuss how WEDO highlights the gendered nature of organizations, inviting civil society actors to re-think difference as a resource.

Highlighting the Gendered Nature of (Civil Society) Organizations

Ashcraft (2005) argues that liberalism's public-private divide leads to a variety of organizational consequences, including: exclusion and control of women in the public sphere; denial of women's domestic work as legitimate and their labor as valuable; devaluation of feminized labor in the public sphere; reduction of men's work in domestic work and family life; and construction of conflicts between work and family as a private rather than public or social issue (pp. 153-154). She develops four frames of identity that are relevant to discussions of difference in contemporary organizations: (1) Gender Differences at Work, (2) Gender Identity as Organizational Performance, (3) Gendered Organizations, and (4) Gender Narratives in Popular Culture (Ashcraft, 2004). These four frames represent the broader areas of literature combining the interrelated foci of gender, discourse, and organization. Ashcraft's third frame: "Gendered Organizations" stems from sociologist Joan Acker's argument that organizations are not neutral backdrops but gendered structures that reflect and reify patriarchy.

Acker (1990) explains that "advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine" (p. 146). Consequently, organizational members' roles and bodies also become gendered. Similar to how only men's bodies fulfilled the requirements for occupying the bourgeois public sphere (Landes, 1996), in an organizational context, the type of technical (managerial) rationality I discussed in Chapter 4 creates a preference for the male worker whose life operates around a full-time job (Acker, 1990). Women who historically have been tasked with domestic work in the private sphere therefore find it difficult to embody the "ideal"

worker (Ashcraft, 1999). Notably, some critical organizational communication scholars extend Acker's work on gendered organizations to show how organizations are also intrinsically "raced" and "classed" (Allen, 2003; Ashcraft & Allen, 2003). Though I think such extensions are vital for more holistically understanding how we negotiate our multiple identities, since WEDO speaks of difference primarily in terms of gender, gender-based differences are in the forefront of this chapter.

Two campaigns that are particularly useful for showing how WEDO's global governance discourse highlights the gendered nature of organizations are the GEAR campaign and the *50/50 Campaign*. The discourses surrounding the campaigns assume difference is a resource in global civil society. Here, I re-reference WEDO's participation in the GEAR campaign mentioned in the previous chapter because GEAR's model of deliberative and participative democracy emphasizes gender-based differences in civil society representation.

In 2010, GEAR celebrated the U.N. General Assembly resolution to establish "U.N. Women," the new gender equality entity at the U.N. The birth of U.N. Women came after four years of advocacy, prompting WEDO to assert: "This move has been sought by women's organizations and other civil society organizations around the world since the U.N. established a System-Wide Coherence Panel for U.N. Reform in 2006" (WEDO, 2010). U.N. Women is aimed at ameliorating some of the lasting effects of the public-private divide that are evident in women's continued exclusion from global governance organizations. In its literature on the creation of U.N. Women, WEDO states:

Particularly notable in the resolution are the paragraphs regarding the importance of civil society participation in the new entity. The body must

have increased operational presence at the country level including engagement with women's groups and other civil society organizations invested in gender equality and the empowerment of women (WEDO, 2010).

In accordance with Fairclough, intertextuality “opens up difference” by bringing other voices into a text. Even “monological” texts like this one center difference insofar as all texts are addressed, all texts have particular audiences in mind, and all texts anticipate differences between their author(s) and their audiences. In this statement, WEDO's call for U.N. Women to engage with “women's groups and other civil society organizations” indicates its orientation to difference: WEDO is open to and accepting of difference, viewing it as a way to empower citizens in global civil society. Interestingly, this statement is representative of most WEDO texts archived as part of its global governance initiative that are monologic inasmuch as they tend to lack directly attributed voices, but also exhibit a participative style—often asserting the need to invite a broader range of social actors into global public deliberation.

WEDO documentation advocates for four major elements that are considered critical to the resolution's implementation in particular and to the achievement of good global governance in general: (1) Meaningful, systematic and diverse civil society participation at all levels; (2) Strong, country-level operational capacity and universal coverage; (3) Ambitious funding with stable and predictable resources; and (4) Strong leadership at the top with an Under Secretary-General who combines a global vision with gender equality expertise on the ground (WEDO, 2010). Texts can exhibit a variety of orientations to difference. Whereas WEDO's early orientation to difference involved

bracketing or overcoming difference, its contemporary global governance texts are characterized by a desire for “diverse civil society participation at all levels.” WEDO assumes that participation by a broad range of civil society actors is important for ensuring legitimate global governance. This is because “when political dialogue aims at solving collective problems, it justly requires a plurality of perspectives, speaking styles, and ways of expressing the particularity of social situation as well as the general applicability of principles” (Young, 1996, p. 132). As such, WEDO’s global governance discourse reveals that the organization encourages pluralistic political participation in a global era.

The creation of U.N. Women, according to WEDO’s Rachel Harris (2010), is a first step toward “building a United Nations that really works for women.” Harris’s assertion that the new gender equality entity at the U.N is not a solution but an initial step in an ongoing process reflects WEDO’s broader global governance discourse that treats civil society as a contested site. This treatment is also evident in WEDO’s engagement in workshops at U.N. conventions meant to facilitate “interactive dialogue” and to provide “space to begin to define the parameters” of various global governance issues (WEDO, 2011b). In thinking about the U.N. system and its entities like U.N. Women as ongoing negotiations instead of fixed systems, WEDO combats the dominant frame in which organizational space is viewed as more or less contained. By framing civil society as a space its diverse inhabitants use and understand symbolically (Lefebvre, 1991), WEDO re-imagines globalization as a bottom-up process that is shaped at least in part by transnational feminist actors.

In addition to WEDO's participation in the GEAR campaign, the *50/50 Campaign*, aimed at "boosting women's representation in political decision-making positions and supporting women's effective leadership once they have been elected" (WEDO, 2013k), is another way of highlighting the gendered nature of civil society organizations. WEDO explains the need for more women in decision-making organizations:

Today, women's representation in parliaments, now averaging worldwide at 18.2 percent, is the highest it has ever been. Twenty-two countries spanning all regions have reached at least 30 percent of women representatives in national parliaments, with Rwanda topping the list with 56.3 percent! But the reality remains that across the world, barriers to women's entry and influence in politics are plentiful (WEDO, 2013k).

WEDO's *50/50 Campaign* documents draw widespread attention to the gender imbalance in decision-making bodies. These documents reflect WEDO's commitment to advancing women's civil society participation. The above WEDO assertion is representative of its larger *50/50 Campaign* discourse, revealing three of its existential assumptions: (1) Women have historically been excluded from organizational, public life; (2) The historical exclusion of women from organizational, public life has lingering consequences; and (3) While advances have been made, barriers to women's active public, political participation still exist.

WEDO's *50/50 Campaign* discourse is also undergirded by two value assumptions: (1) Historical and continued exclusion of women from politics and political decision-making bodies is bad, and (2) Increasing women's representation in political

positions is desirable. WEDO's value assumptions lead to its propositional assumption (and the overarching goal of the *50/50 Campaign*): "Boosting women's representation in political decision-making positions and supporting women's effective leadership" (WEDO, 2013k) can remedy some of the lingering effects of the public-private divide—not the least of which is the development and reification of gendered organizations.

In sum, both the GEAR campaign and the *50/50 Campaign* highlight the gendered nature of organizations in general and of global decision-making bodies in particular. WEDO's global governance discourse treats difference as a resource for creating a new politics for the 21st century. This politics is more sensitive to the various needs of diverse groups of women and thus more legitimate in the eyes of citizens. Of course, the mere inclusion of more women in global governance systems will not ensure gender equality, but including a broader range of women in decision-making can help in translating their needs and perhaps the needs of other traditionally excluded groups. When difference is reflected in global decision-making organizations, these organizations might achieve more careful translation of various interests and more insightful representation of diverse stakeholders. As Carol Gould (1996) argues, the most viable mechanism for the representation of difference is increased participation at all levels in a polity. The hope for increased participation at all levels leads to the second way WEDO counters Western liberalism's overreliance on commonality: by centering typically peripheral issues in the global organizational public sphere.

Centering Peripheral Issues

Another way WEDO counters liberalism's overreliance on commonality and consensus is by centering peripheral issues, making marginal citizens and their interests

visible in global public discourse. The circulation of peripheral discourses can protect different citizens whose voices, interests, and needs are outside of the mainstream.

Discourses from the periphery warn us against top-down systems that have lost touch with citizens (Habermas, 1996). WEDO's global governance discourse connects marginal groups to global decision-making bodies to which they would otherwise likely have little or no access. Habermas (1996) explains that communication that occurs on the margins of society

is characterized by a consciousness of crisis, a heightened public attention, an intensified search for solutions, in short, by *problematization*. In cases in which perceptions of problems and problem situations have taken a conflictual turn, the attention span of the citizenry enlarges, indeed in such a way that controversies in the broader public sphere primarily ignite around the normative aspects of the problems most at issue (p. 357).

The “problematization” of social issues from the periphery is vital in order to prevent global power from completely dominating public deliberation. In other words, the inclusion of typically disempowered citizens keeps top-down voices and interests from eroding public deliberation. In offering a forum in which peripheral citizens deliberate matters of uncertainty in the global arena, WEDO functions as what Habermas (1996, p. 351) calls a “creative layer.” This layer converts local issues into global ones and provides citizens on the margins of society with the structural translation capacities they tend to lack.

As a sort of creative layer in the global organizational public sphere, then, the case of WEDO illuminates the interpenetration of the local and the global. The case sheds

light on how NGOs that engage in globalization from below blur the boundaries between themselves and democratic society. WEDO's global governance initiative provides assurance that citizens can actually exercise their voices as the relationship between organizations and society becomes rearticulated. It is guided by an assumption that women must have "official, recognized space at decision-making tables, at all levels and across sectors, and particularly on sustainable development issues" (WEDO, 2013l).

WEDO elaborates:

Simply put: women have a right to participate in all decisions that impact their lives, just as men do. For equitable and sustainable policy-making and programming that reflects the real needs and expertise of the global community, women's direct participation and leadership is integral – and that includes women as diverse experts, stakeholders, and rights holders amongst civil society (WEDO, 2013l).

WEDO's approach to civil society participation exhibits a pluralistic take on the public sphere that emphasizes diversity and inclusion.

For example, during the 57th Session on the U.N. CSW (CSW57), WEDO hosted a side event on "Violence-Ecologies-Livelihoods: Feminists Confronting Unsustainable Development" that offered women from around the world a forum for sharing their stories of struggle and resistance to unsustainable economic activities. During the event, participants from Guatemala, Colombia, Kazakhstan, Japan, and Fiji discussed the current "unsustainable production and consumption practices emerging from a capitalist model" (WEDO, 2013f). WEDO texts on this and other similar events reflect the organization's approach to civil society participation that empowers difference by

including stakeholders who “represent countries that are far apart from each other, present vast differences in their social and cultural lives, share a different history, [and] speak different languages” (WEDO, 2013f). The CSW57 parallel forum is a prime example of how WEDO’s global governance initiative centers peripheral citizens and interests and brings indigenous women’s stories into global public discourse.

Consider how, in translating and circulating the following three women’s insights on the impacts of unsustainable development policies on their local communities, WEDO amplifies typically marginal voices, interests, and needs:

- Norma Maldonado (2013b) of NGO Tierra Verde explains the plight of many indigenous Guatemalan women:

Indigenous women in Guatemala have to walk from two to four hours each day to get drinking water, and there is no time to think about education or participate in any public processes... I have to support my mom and myself and get up each night at 3 a.m. in order to collect water, because there is no pressure in the water pipes as all the water is being used up by the industry... the mining industries use tons of cubic meters of water per minute, leaving the women and children on the verge of dying.

- Iris Alvarez (2013) of the Global Forest Coalition in Columbia identifies some of the harmful effects of large-scale agrofuel production on the livelihoods of rural and indigenous women in Columbia:

Impacts coming from land use change are displacing entire communities with detrimental effects on women as they are confronted with direct and

indirect violence of companies that try to grab their lands. This ‘green land grabbing’ is a major cause of violations of their social, environmental, and human rights.

- Elina Doszhanova (2013) with the Social Eco-Fund NGO makes an affective appeal for a new approach to sustainable development that considers the interests of indigenous groups of women around the world and, more specifically, where she works in Kazakhstan:

The global processes tackling global economic development have not yet improved the lives of Kazakh indigenous women and there is little hope that this CSW57 decisions will bring much improvement in the livelihoods of impoverished Kazakh women surviving in the poorest parts of the country. We are proud to be a nation with much wealth underground, but we’d rather have it stay untouched and undeveloped... We need to recognize that the issues of gender equity and economic sustainability closely relate to environmental issues, and thus we have to ensure sustainable development that is based on principles of human rights and environmental justice for present and future generations.

Stories like these “portray how unsustainable economic activities are impacting the lives of women across the world, and making it impossible for them to have access to and enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth by Forums such as the CSW” (WEDO 2013f). WEDO cites such stories as reason the U.N. should affirm “State commitments to gender normative frameworks and women’s human rights to end violence against women and girls, and move into a strong Post 2015 Development Agenda and SDGs process that

is transformative, enabling the lives of all women and girls,” (WEDO, 2013f). Most rhetorical genres of governance have a predictable tendency to represent events through generalization and abstraction (Fairclough, 2006). By contrast, many of WEDO’s global governance documents include narratives like those of Maldonado, Alvarez, and Doszhanova’s which, as readers can see, are specifically attributed and directly reported. WEDO’s global governance discourse is dialogical inasmuch as it invites otherwise marginal actors and types of communication into organizational and public deliberation.

WEDO’s global governance discourse extends and thickens conceptualizations of the public sphere, making it more broadly inclusive in terms of both substance and style. Liberalism’s narrow conception of the democratic process “in which [interlocutors] are all supposed to leave behind their particular experience and interests” (Young, 1996, p. 126) devalues the social relations and modes of communication like storytelling that are evident in WEDO’s global governance discourse. Such communication, as Young (1996) maintains, is based in practical and emancipatory communicative rationality developed in public argument. These modes of communication move citizens from rational-critical argumentation to a new, more meaningful communicative confrontation. In this sense, NGOs, as sites of global participatory politics, bestride the intersections of the local and the global (and the private and public). By providing a deliberative space in which different citizens discuss historically “nonpolitical” issues via modes of communication that are largely outside of the liberal model of argumentation, WEDO tempers assumptions about majority rule, the domain of common concern, and consensus. Moreover, it provides an institutional basis for translating local ideas to an international platform.

In summary, in this section, I identified two ways WEDO counters Western liberalism's overreliance on commonality and consensus: (1) by highlighting the gendered nature of organizations, and (2) by centering typically peripheral issues. Rhetorical traps associated with extreme liberalism are not the only traps WEDO attempts to steer clear of in the global organizational public sphere. In the final section of this chapter, I explain how WEDO counters postmodernity's moral relativism through a commitment to the development and implementation of global norms.

5.3 Developing and Implementing Global Norms in *Civil Society*

WEDO's re-imagining of globalization not only as a top-down process driven by global capitalism, but as a process that is shaped by transnational feminist civil society actors emphasizes *collaboration*, the other term clustering around the problematic of the organization and society in WEDO texts. Its Partner Policy describes the importance of collaboration to WEDO:

WEDO views strong and diverse partnerships as integral to meeting its mission. It allies with women's organizations and networks; environmental, developmental, and human rights organizations; governments; and intergovernmental organizations, including the United Nations to achieve its goals. WEDO's expertise is in high-level advocacy in international arenas, building bridges among a range of stakeholders—especially the tripartite of government, U.N., and nongovernmental actors. WEDO believes in good partnering to advance its own knowledge, capacity and objectives as well as to contribute to those of others' and of

the wider women’s environmental and development movements of which it is part (WEDO, 2013j).

In its collaborations with a “global network of diverse women’s organizations,” WEDO pushes for a “transformative agenda” on the global decision-making stage (WEDO, 2013i). WEDO describes women as a “major group” that have been recognized in a number of important global governance processes, including many that WEDO helped create. For instance, the outcomes of the 1992 Earth Summit “established a major groups system that recognized women as among nine key constituencies, and this legacy has translated into women’s official spaces in, among others, climate change and biodiversity policymaking spaces” (WEDO, 2013l). Currently, WEDO partners with the Women’s Major Groups in the following processes:

- UNFCCC—“Together with GenderCC, LIFE, WECF, Energia and others, WEDO is a founding member of the Women and Gender Constituency” (WEDO, 2013l).
- Rio+20 and its follow-up—“WEDO is one of four steering committee members of this Women’s Major Group for Sustainable Development, along with WECF, DAWN and Global Forest Coalition” (WEDO, 2013l).
- CBD—“WEDO convenes and facilitates the Women’s Caucus at the major meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity” (WEDO, 2013l).

WEDO is also a member of the women’s major group to UNEP and joins women’s organization allies to “establish a women’s coalition around the post-2015 development framework” that is “anchored by gender equality and sustainable development” (WEDO, 2013l). WEDO supports women’s organizing in a number of other “offshoots” of the UNFCCC, Rio+20, and CBD processes. The organization also “holds the Alternate seat

for women and gender civil society representation at the meetings of the Climate Investment Funds (CIFs)” (WEDO, 2013l).

WEDO’s approach to global civil society participation assumes and explicitly states that collaboration is necessary for addressing contemporary global problems which, as Stohl (2005) observes: (1) cannot be addressed successfully by individuals acting alone; (2) will not be solved unilaterally, bilaterally, or even regionally; (3) require cooperation from organizations across several sectors of society; and (4) about which information is no longer within the purview of any one individual, group, or organization. Thus, at the same time WEDO’s global governance discourse draws on difference as a resource in civil society, it also creates circumstances where civil society actors collaborate to achieve a shared vision and common goals.

This section explores how WEDO’s conceptualization of civil society helps the organization evade rhetorical traps associated with extreme postmodernism. WEDO’s global governance discourse exhibits a collaborative style that guards against postmodernity’s moral relativism through a commitment to the development and implementation of global norms. The case of WEDO demonstrates that achieving shared goals in global civil society requires upholding some of the historical legacy of liberalism, including respect for the rule of law, for value pluralism, and for constitutional guarantees (Benhabib, 1996). I begin with a brief overview of postmodernist social theory to demonstrate for readers why I think its assumptions are helpful for reclaiming the tensions and contradictions of organizational and social life. In its extreme, however, postmodernism becomes characterized by a relativistic and agonistic politics that is detrimental for citizens trying to negotiate a civic life together.

The era of postmodernity is characterized by a rejection of the modernist notion that “rational” solutions to organizational, social problems are possible. In a postmodern frame, the world is “too complex, too unstable, and too fragmented to be adequately explained by any grand narrative or totalizing theory” (Conrad & Haynes, 2001, p. 65). Postmodern discourses deny realist claims about the world (Fairclough, 2006; Jones, 1992; Parker, 1992). Like many feminist critics, postmodern critics of the liberal public sphere generally object to Habermas’s overemphasis on reason and consensus, as well as his overwhelmingly negative view of power, which can hinder the ability to see both power’s fluid nature and its potential positivity (Benhabib, 1990; Lyotard, 1984). Postmodernists emphasize the situated knowledge of human understanding, dissensus, and the unstable nature of power and domination.

Deetz (2001) highlights seven themes associated with a postmodern or, as he prefers, “dialogic” line of thinking:

- (1) *the centrality of discourse*, emphasizing language as systems of distinctions that are central to social construction processes;
- (2) *fragmented identities*, demonstrating the problem of an autonomous, self-determining individual as the origin of meaning;
- (3) *the critique of the philosophy of presence*, focusing on object indeterminacy and the constructed nature of people and reality;
- (4) *the loss of foundations and master narratives*, arguing against integrative meta-narratives and large-scale theoretical systems such as Marxism or functionalism;
- (5) *the knowledge/power connection*, examining the roles of claims of expertise and truth in systems of domination;
- (6) *hyperreality*, emphasizing the fluid

and hyperreal nature of the contemporary world and role of mass media and information technologies; and (7) *research as resistance and indeterminacy*, stressing research as important to change processes and providing voice to that which is lost or covered up in everyday life (p. 31).

Each of these seven themes impacts conceptions of quality communication and decision-making. For me, these themes offer strong justification for postmodern or “dialogic” theorizing wherein the goal is not to find answers or generate solutions, but to reclaim the intrinsic, suppressed tensions that constitute organizational and social life. Indeed, a postmodern spirit animates much of my own thinking and many parts of this dissertation, particularly as it relates to fostering a newfound appreciation for difference and dialogue in the global organizational public sphere. But the postmodern orientation to social problems and social actors can create difficulties in organizing political action.

Deetz (2001) uses the particularly relevant example of gender to explain this difficulty. By treating gender as a social construct, one can demonstrate how dominant discourse in contemporary organizations marginalizes women and their experiences. Ridding society of gender ascriptions and identities can provide opportunities for women. But accomplishing this task requires women to organize around a relatively “fixed” identity. The dilemma is intensified regarding women’s experiences because if their experiences arise out of essential difference, they cannot be denied as valid and important, but “to make the essentialist argument of distinct female experiences denies social constructionism and can easily be used to further stigmatize women as ‘other’ in a society where men have more resources” (Deetz, 2001, p. 33). This example illuminates how the postmodern conception of fluid conflictual identity and reality is helpful for

demonstrating the tensions embedded within our various subject positions as well as the harm in presenting women or men as a common subject, but also how the conception can leave social actors feeling helpless to effect change.

Thus, a major criticism of postmodernist social theory is that it lacks a theory of agency (Best, 1994; Ritzer, 1997). As philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari note, in questioning conventional assumptions about certainty, identity, and truth, deconstruction functions to *destroy*, but never to *create* an alternative vision (Coles, 1991), or to offer practical guidance for influencing positive change in organizational, public life (Giddens, 1990; Habermas, 1991). Moreover, because postmodernist theory rejects the notion of a universal truth, it can spawn moral relativism wherein no objective morality is thought to exist. From this perspective, because one can be neither right nor wrong, citizens should accept the behaviors of others, even when we perceive these behaviors to be immoral.

But what about those cases where societal gender stratification results in legal frameworks that discriminate against certain groups? Are discriminatory laws, regulations, and policies simply realities of a postmodern world? Are sexist practices just different ways of constructing relationships and identities? In places like North Africa, for example, where many women are treated as second-class citizens, should we accept such treatment as cultural customs of kinship-ordered agrarian systems and religious institutions? I certainly do not think so. In fact, some practices and ideas should be devalued, challenged, and outright rejected (Lozano-Reich & Cloud, 2009). Oppressive contexts call for radical material change and demand intervention by civil society actors. For this reason, citizens and their global governance representatives like WEDO are

acting collectively to develop and implement global norms that are protected under the law.

Barber (1996) describes democratic politics as practical, not speculative. It is a “system of conduct concerned with what we *will* together and *do* together and how we agree on what we will do” (Barber, 1996, p. 348). To the extent that democratic politics demands action, citizens will be called upon to “make common decisions, choose common conduct, and create or express common values in the practical domain of our lives in an ever-changing context of conflicts of interest and competitions for power” (Barber, 1996, p. 350). In the global organizational public sphere, politics is necessarily pragmatic. For this reason, WEDO eschews postmodernity’s ennui that is unhelpful for encouraging active democratic politics, adopting instead an action-centered approach to politics that directs members toward solutions for global social problems. WEDO is a political actor, less concerned with postmodern thought than it is with effecting material change. Its organizational rhetoric, like all rhetoric, is simultaneously enabling and constraining, operating at times to combat modernity’s naïve essentialism, and at other times drawing on a “strategic essentialism” that Spivak (1987) argues can be advantageous for achieving certain goals.

In the previous section of this chapter, I used one of WEDO’s news reports on the creation of U.N. women to show how the GEAR campaign and its members like WEDO demonstrate an appreciation for difference that can counter liberalism’s overreliance on commonality. A statement made by Charlotte Bunch (2010) of the Center for Women’s Global Leadership (CWGL) in the same report exhibits how WEDO’s global governance discourse also exhibits a commitment to securing global human rights:

We have high expectations for this new agency to be a solid foundation for advancing the human rights of women as central to global policy efforts to reduce poverty and move toward greater realization of peace and democracy in the world.

Bunch elaborates, saying that “the coalition of women’s groups and other social justice, human rights, and development organizations that played a pivotal role in this effort” will work to ensure U.N. Women’s success. Implicit in the existential assumption that “women’s rights are human rights” is the idea that, instead of jettisoning liberalism altogether, global governance should uphold its democratic ideals. WEDO’s commitment to truth (e.g. epistemic modality) is reflected in the assertion that “advancing the human rights of women” moves the world “toward greater realization of peace and democracy.” In other words, as a new normative vision, good global governance ensures the human rights of women and other historically disempowered groups.

WEDO’s global governance model is based on a de-centralized and pluralistic civil society model that extends citizenship rights to all people. Such a model does not discourage agreement per se. After all, would it be a bad thing for a group to reach a consensus that sexism is detrimental to both women and men and must be stopped, or that racism is wrong and should not be tolerated? Agreement in these situations and many others is not necessarily a bad thing. Like dissensus, then, consensus is a component of public deliberation. We should be careful not to replace the historical overemphasis on commonality and consensus with a new overemphasis on agonistic politics that keeps citizens from ever reaching a representative consensus through which to speak truth to top-down global powers and extend the reach of human rights. As Benhabib (1996)

argues, the issue is striking the right balance between “the legacy of liberalism and the conflictual and contestatory nature of all democratic politics” (p. 9).

Still, global governance is a controversial idea. For those who view globalization as the newest form of imperialism, a predatory and exploitative world order, global governance is akin to the spread of neo-imperial capitalist hegemony (Hardt & Negri, 2001). From this perspective, the global norms WEDO and its civil society partners develop and seek to implement are perceived as anti-democratic (Coronil, 2000; Dirlik, 2000). Benhabib’s (2007a; 2007b) concept of “democratic iterations” through which citizens interpret, create, and recreate global norms in local contexts to fit their lives is relevant to this discussion. The concept of democratic iterations explains how WEDO and other civil society organizations negotiate tensions between global norms and local contexts. For Benhabib, human rights are moral principles that must be embedded in a system of legal norms to protect the exercise of communicative freedom to which all people are entitled.

Drawing on Arendt’s idea of human beings’ “right to have rights,” Benhabib (2008) explains that every human being is entitled to be acknowledged as a generalized and concrete other. She uses an example to explain these standpoints: If I recognize you as being entitled to rights only because you are like me, then I am denying your fundamental individuality. If I refuse to recognize you as being entitled to your rights because you are different from me, then I am denying our common humanity. From the standpoint of the generalized and concrete other, all citizens are entitled to the same rights one would want for oneself. Accepting Benhabib’s premise, global governance

might be understood not as a means for spreading imperialism but as a way of ensuring citizens' "right to have rights" across multiple forms of difference.

Moghadam's (2009) transnational feminist case study work explores how TFNs create democratic iterations. She argues that feminist ideas are migrating across borders, and that international conferences and treaties, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and CEDAW, create tools that women tailor to their specific contexts:

The integration of north and south in the global circuits of capital and the construction of a transnational public sphere in opposition to the dark side of globalization has meant that feminism is not "Western" but global. The struggle for women's citizenship is a global phenomenon—indeed, one of the defining features of the era of globalization—and domestic struggles often find support, legitimacy, or inspiration in transnational ideas, movements, and organizations (Moghadam, 2009, p. 271).

Adopting the view that global norms strengthen democracies throughout the world, WEDO's global governance initiative builds on liberalism's laws and constitutional guarantees from a feminist perspective. The initiative is based on an assumption that the subject/subjectivity is formed in communicative action, it highlights how critical publicity, while constrained, is linked to democracy, and it approaches reason as reflexive—thereby operating outside of an exclusively technical rationality. In this way, WEDO's global governance initiative models a potentially successful way of building on liberalism's democratic ideals. The initiative centers agency in the global organizational public sphere. WEDO organizes citizens against moral relativism that is just as harmful to women and other vulnerable populations as neoliberalism. In its

capacity as a global intermediary, WEDO encourages citizens to deliberate mutually decided issues, to reach understandings they can live with, and then to act collectively to effect change. This is the essence of globalization from below.

Within and across its contemporary global governance and civil society participation documents, WEDO makes reference to—but does not exhibit an overreliance on—developing a shared world vision. Rather than reaching consensus through coercive or exclusionary means, WEDO embarks on a course of action decided and undertaken by different stakeholders for the common good. An example of WEDO's goal for developing a “global framework that builds on different inputs” illustrates how the organization does this. A series of civil society meetings and events took place throughout and shortly after the month of May in 2013. Reports issued during these meetings raise concerns for WEDO about how to achieve coherence in the Post-Rio+20 and Post-2015 processes. WEDO documents reveal a belief that it is dangerous for civil society to remain on two trajectories that could be understood as “siloes poverty and sustainability tracks” (Blomstrom, 2013).

The U.N. Sustainable Development Platform (2013b) states that there is “broad agreement that the two processes should be closely linked and should ultimately converge in one global development agenda beyond 2015 with sustainable development at its core.” WEDO texts explicitly express a concern that the U.N. agreement could be overlooked or ignored by some member states and civil society groups. WEDO argues that a “two track world” reifies the historical separation in addressing poverty and sustainable development. In the dominant frame, these issues are viewed as incompatible or unrelated to one another (Blomstrom, 2013). Advocating for a change in this

perception, WEDO urges dialogic deliberation through which diverse stakeholders can come to an agreement that such issues are multi-dimensional and interlinked. In this case, convergence and a unifying framework offer a more holistic understanding of the interrelatedness of various social problems. WEDO contends:

Civil Society is taking a proactive role in the coherence of the 2 agendas, recognizing that working together and understanding common goals will bring more power to the voices of the marginalized, the rights holders, the people on the ground (Blomstrom, 2013).

WEDO's collaborative style of global governance discourse is undergirded by a commitment to developing and implementing a normative set of procedures for deliberation over matters of mutual concern. Once decided, WEDO argues that citizens' decisions should be protected under the law.

There are many implications of WEDO's global governance discourse for the problematic of the organization and society. WEDO's global governance discourse overwhelmingly defends a model of a de-centered public sphere. It extends liberal ideals to historically underrepresented groups. WEDO's deliberative decision-making model incorporates features of practical rationality that center communication in creating, sustaining, and transforming democracy. Unlike consensus in the liberal public sphere that depends upon procedural rationality, WEDO's approach to collaborative sense-making and deliberative decision-making is grounded in dialogic deliberation and debate.

As such, the case of WEDO demonstrates that communication plays a vital role in the process of re-establishing the autonomy of the lifeworld. WEDO and its civil society partners contest the conceptualization of civil society as a fixed space wherein top-down

globalization is destined to become the new world order. Communicative deliberative democracy engenders the creation of global norms that are reiterated in local contexts. WEDO models a successful mediating role between the local and the global, incorporating communicative rationality in its deliberation and decision-making that recovers conflict “as an essential precursor to a new consensus and the perpetual critique of each new consensus as interaction continues” (Deetz, 2001, p. 30). Communication corrects for the public sphere’s historical deficiencies, allowing for citizens to collectively redefine democracy and its conditions. By approaching consensus as a constantly (re)negotiated temporary condition, citizens and civil society organizations are well-positioned to guard against extreme neoliberal ideology and extreme postmodern relativism, neither of which is conducive to facilitating democracy informed by a strong sense of social justice.

In summary, in this section, I showed how WEDO counters postmodernity’s moral relativism through a commitment to the development and implementation of global norms in *civil society*, the first term clustering around the problematic of the organization and society in WEDO texts. WEDO’s conceptualization of civil society as a site of contestation engenders the re-imagination of globalization as a bottom-up process that is shaped by transnational feminist *collaboration*, the final term clustering around the problematic of the organization and society in WEDO texts. WEDO’s global governance discourse exhibits a collaborative style that is geared toward collective political action.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Project Summary

My purpose for this project was to show how NGOs serve as a mediating layer between citizens and international institutions, thereby fulfilling a critical role in achieving democratic legitimacy at the international and transnational level. The larger research question that guided my project was: How does WEDO mediate between the local and the global? I explored this central query and many others through critical attention to how WEDO apprehends three central problematics of organizational communication: (1) voice, (2) rationality, and (3) the organization and society. Globalization adds a wrinkle to each of the problematics, inviting critical investigation into how issues related to voice, rationality, and the organization and society are further complicated in a new, globalized world.

Through a case study of WEDO, I drew insights to gauge the extent to which WEDO (and, by extension, NGOs) is a successful global intermediary. I analyzed WEDO's official discourses found in the organization's newsletters, published reports, factsheets, interviews, and various policy statements and initiatives. My interdisciplinary methodological approach showcases the synergy between rhetorical analysis and discourse analysis as forms of intensive textual analysis. I first identified terms that cluster around the problematics in WEDO texts. The terms that cluster around the problematic of voice are: *local* and *global*. The terms that surround the problematic of rationality are: *experience(s)*, *expertise*, and *knowledge*. The terms that cluster around the problematic of the organization and society are: *civil society* and *collaboration*. After identifying the clusters, I drew on relevant features of critical textual analysis to probe

each cluster of terms. The problematics structure my three case study analysis chapters that I briefly review below.

Chapter 3, *Voice*, traces WEDO's early discourses to illuminate an evolution in its rhetoric pertaining to voice over time. WEDO's rhetoric evolved alongside feminist waves, apprehending the problematic of voice accordingly. Whereas its early organizational rhetoric is undergirded by a Western accounting discourse that privileges liberal feminist voice, WEDO's later discourse reflects a politics of difference that drives third-wave feminism. I identified two rhetorical traps that WEDO's 1990s-era organizational rhetoric falls into: (1) the privileging of expert (e.g. *global*) voice, and (2) the passivation of *local* voice. Later, as third-wave feminism emerges, these traps are less evident in WEDO's rhetoric.

Chapter 4, *Rationality*, explores how WEDO's climate change initiative re-conceptualizes the problematic of rationality. To gauge WEDO's success at performing its mediating function in the global organizational public sphere, I identified three mediating functions WEDO's climate change initiative performs. WEDO's climate change discourse exhibits a refined conceptualization of: (1) *experience(s)*, mediating bureaucracy and creativity to focus attention to climate change impacts; (2) *expertise*, mediating reason and emotion to mitigate climate change effects; and (3) *knowledge*, mediating technical and experiential know-how to cultivate public expertise on sustainable development.

Chapter 5, "The Organization and Society," investigates NGOs as sites that elucidate the promise and threat of democracy in an increasingly connected, postmodern world. Through attention to WEDO's global governance initiative, I argued that its

conceptualization of *civil society* helps the organization evade rhetorical traps associated with either extreme liberalism or extreme postmodernism by countering: (1) Western liberalism's overreliance on commonality and consensus, and (2) postmodernity's moral relativism. WEDO's global governance discourse exhibits an appreciation for difference as well as a commitment to *collaboration* through which to develop and implement global norms.

6.2 Interpretations and Broader Implications

In Chapter 4, I briefly touched on Max Weber's contributions to our understandings about how purposive-rationality in organizations influenced the "modernization of the lifeworld" (Habermas, 1990, p. 2). Here, I want to re-reference Weber's work and consider the extent to which his thesis is true in the global organizational public sphere. In general, Weber's work depicts

the development of modern *societies* from the viewpoint of rationalization. The new structures of society were marked by the differentiation of the two functionally intermeshing systems that had taken shape around the organizational cores of the capitalist enterprise and the bureaucratic state apparatus. Weber understood this process as the institutionalization of purposive-rational economic and administrative action. To the degree that everyday life was affected by this cultural and societal rationalization, traditional forms of life—which in the early modern period were differentiated primarily according to one's trade—were dissolved (Habermas, 1990, pp. 1-2).

In a postmodern world characterized by increasingly de-centralized forms of organizing and communicating, social movement NGOs, like WEDO, seek to re-establish the autonomy of the lifeworld and reclaim citizens' ways of life. NGOs, as a mediating layer between people and top-down global power, can help keep this form of control from entirely eroding our most cherished social institutions.

Habermas's public sphere theory identifies how citizens influenced their newly-formed democratic institutions through talk that generated "critical publicity" and helped expose illegitimate exercises of power. This process counterbalanced undemocratic modes of decision-making in the modern era. Similarly, this dissertation hopes to have illuminated the vital role of organizations in contemporary global civil society. NGOs in particular are helping citizens gain influence in global decision-making. Through their participation, civil society actors challenge illegitimate exercises of top-down global power, such as that exhibited in the Bretton Woods institutions and various global corporations. By supplementing communication and translation in the global organizational public sphere, NGOs connect citizens to government.

To follow, I briefly sketch out some interpretations and broader implications of this dissertation's findings. I show how my case study analysis of WEDO contributes: (1) a communication-centered approach to the Bohman-Habermas debate over democratic legitimacy, at the center of which is the issue of (2) translation from the grassroots to the transnational scale engendered by (3) transnational feminist organizing that is understood through (4) an organizational rhetoric perspective on the global organizational public sphere. I touch on each contribution in turn.

A Communication-centered Approach to the Crisis of Legitimacy

What do the insights generated from this dissertation mean for the larger theoretical dispute about how to achieve democratic legitimacy in our increasingly interconnected world? Readers will remember that, at the beginning of this dissertation, I explained why James Bohman doubts that international and transnational organizations can achieve democratic legitimacy. Historically, only national spheres have been able to do so. Bohman's approach to legitimacy is largely procedural. By contrast, Habermas argues that NGOs can help transnational decision-making bodies achieve acceptable standards of legitimacy. In Habermas's view, the institutionalized participation of NGOs strengthens the legitimacy of international decision-making systems, such as the E.U., by making their procedures and processes known to national publics and reconnecting them at the local level. NGOs, from this perspective, are central to ameliorating the "crisis of legitimacy" in a global order (Clark, 2003).

My case study of WEDO shows how NGOs constitute the necessary informal processes of opinion formation in many associations of civil society (Fine & Smith, 2003). Insights generated from my analysis favor Habermas's perspective, suggesting that NGOs like WEDO link citizens to global governance and can thus narrow the legitimacy gap. A communication perspective on the issue emphasizes that deliberation, representation, and translation are inherently communicative matters. By exploring NGOs as global intermediaries that perform the double task of translating needs from the grassroots to global institutions and adapting international policies to local communities, this dissertation offers a missing communicative dimension at the heart of this vexing debate. By intervening in a dispute long dominated by other academic disciplines, I hope

this study helps recuperate the vital, yet overlooked role of communication in globalization processes.

Translating the Problematics Upwards and Downwards

This study's findings implicate the process of translation in a global era. As the case of WEDO shows, many NGOs represent citizens with limited access to the public sphere. In their capacity as global intermediaries, NGOs translate concerns related to the problematics. For instance, in speaking for citizens at international conferences, WEDO and other NGOs translate voices with an appreciation for intertextuality and multivocality. In facilitating dialogue between citizens and technical policy experts, these organizations translate rationalities with an appreciation for emotionality. In working across borders and boundaries toward the end of accountable global governance, civil society organizations mediate spaces of public deliberation. Their primary task of translation between the local and the global makes it apparent that NGOs are inseparable and indistinct from society.

My study highlights the challenges NGOs face when translating citizens' interests both upwards to the transnational scale and downwards to the grassroots. This process implicates each problematic. First, when they translate voices, WEDO and other NGOs run the risk of reifying (or making worse) the many barriers to voice in global public discourse. Unfortunately, today, the voices of the grassroots are largely suppressed in favor of international institutions. While many NGOs work to broaden the range of voices in organizational and public deliberative decision-making, the global organizational public sphere is dominated by expert voices. In many cases, NGOs, too, are dominated by expert voices. My analysis of the problematic of voice illustrates how

even well-intended representatives like WEDO can passivate local voices and romanticize global ones (or vice versa). NGOs must therefore exercise great care when engaging in the political act of representing and translating the voices of others.

Specifically, NGOs should facilitate dialogic participation among citizens in a global era. WEDO's third-wave feminist discourse reveals that it engages a politics of recognition, dialogue, and difference that allows for more meaningful representation and translation of voices. Following WEDO's model, NGOs must ensure their texts are "dialogical" and include potentially relevant voices. Like WEDO, NGOs can employ an "invitational" organizational rhetoric to avoid authoritative and absolute language. Organizational discourse that is relativized, de-privileged, and aware of competing definitions for the same things is better positioned to avoid passivating voice.

Next, my analysis of rationality shows that translating between rationalities, like translating between voices, is a complicated and political task. The postmodern world is characterized by social and technical complexity wherein expert (technical) rationality is generally thought of as superior to the subjective knowledge of laypeople. As such, experts have been granted asymmetrical power in global decision-making. WEDO and other NGOs are confronting elitist forms of rationality that, as Foucault warns, enable many institutions to exercise oppressive power. Social movement NGOs oppose the effects of top-down power that are linked with technical rationality. To do so effectively, these organizations must incorporate communicative rationality into their deliberative decision-making processes. The case of WEDO shows that this incorporation can help NGOs effect small but meaningful changes in policy, practice, and lived experience.

Finally, the challenges associated with mediating public deliberation between local and global civil society actors include working well within tensions pertaining to difference, which is a central problematic in the global organizational public sphere. The insights generated from my dissertation reveal that rhetors can exhibit a variety of orientations to difference—from bracketing or suppressing difference to overcoming difference to accentuating difference from an agonistic political lens. NGOs should approach difference without privileging either extreme modern or extreme postmodern approaches to identity politics.

My analysis of the organization and society reveals that WEDO reframes difference and dissensus as a resource in public argument. The case of WEDO therefore sheds light on how civil society organizations provide an institutional basis for translating peripheral issues to a global platform, engendering political participation by diverse and historically marginal social actors. WEDO's approach to difference tempers liberalism's overreliance on commonality and consensus. At the same time, it reveals how most TFNs eschew moral relativism by developing and implementing global norms that protect citizens from the detrimental effects of globalization from above. In contemporary society, NGOs balance the reality of and need for global governance with the goal of transforming global governance's harmful exclusions.

Transnational Feminist Organizing

For NGOs to perform the task of translation without replicating the traditional model of top-down organization, more NGOs might adopt a transnational feminist approach to organizing. Unlike traditional, vertically-integrated organizations, transnational feminist organizing offsets undemocratic modes of organizational

deliberation and decision-making. Certainly, these organizations, like all organizations, are imperfect. Still, the case of WEDO suggests that such alternative ways of organizing offer a promising way to link citizens to global politics. Transnational feminist organizing is a hopeful way of addressing global social problems, centering collaboration over competition, and leveraging shared means for greater social impact.

Transnational feminist social movements like WEDO potentially model a successful mediating role between the local and the global. They organize around socioeconomic and political issues to affect social justice. Their objectives are generally centered on the premise that the effects of top-down globalization link different women to similar justice claims. In this way, a transnational feminist approach to organizing loosens traditional notions of citizenship. The re-imagination of citizenship from a feminist standpoint moves us from a politics of location to a politics of relation. A feminist democratic politics is more sensitive to (and I think more effective in) a pluralistic world. For instance, a feminist conception of justice moves toward a redistribution of recognition that prevents the dominant culture from relegating certain citizens and interests to the periphery. A feminist democratic politics organizes citizenship not by physical location but through an ethic of care for others, especially those who have historically been rendered socially marginal. As such, transnational feminist politics engenders the development of an alternative to liberalism's thin democracy.

Undergirded by a cosmopolitan ethic, transnational feminist organizing facilitates political action outside of the dominant Westphalian frame of citizenship. Today's cultural formations invite civil society organizations to consider this approach to

collective action. To resist patriarchal and exclusionary global governance practices, NGOs can employ a type of transnational feminist organizational rhetoric that extends sites of rhetoric beyond narrowly-defined spheres. By doing so, social movement NGOs thicken liberalism's democratic principles in a global context and re-imagine citizenship as an epistemic community wherein members are united by a shared world vision.

An Organizational Rhetoric Perspective on the Global Organizational Public Sphere

In this study, the processes, prospects, and challenges of “transnationalizing” the public sphere from a feminist perspective are revealed through an organizational rhetoric lens that understands that contemporary discourse is produced by organizations, not individuals. Organizational rhetoric is not a traditional stump speech but, like any speech given by an individual rhetor, organizational rhetoric is strategic and attempts to change public attitudes. Viewing rhetoric organizationally and organizations rhetorically offers a more holistic view of global civil society. I hope that this study shows that organizations are powerful actors in contemporary society that produce consequential rhetoric. As such, there is good reason for studying organizational rhetoric. Organizational rhetoric as a lens elucidates how different organizations use different rhetorics depending on their audiences and goals. Critical attention to organizational rhetoric helps citizens learn how organizations use rhetoric responsibly and develop strategies for dealing with organizations that use rhetoric irresponsibly.

From an organizational rhetoric perspective, and more specifically, a feminist, global organizational rhetoric perspective, I developed a theory of the “global organizational public sphere” that critiques, extends, and “organizes” Habermas's renowned theory. Global organizational public sphere theory posits a postmodern

sociopolitical imaginary that moves beyond the parochial concept of the modern nation-state. The theory accounts for the reality that, today, citizens mostly look to organizations to achieve critical publicity that individuals can no longer achieve on their own. A concept of the global organizational public sphere, then, is apt for scholars of global civil society wherein organizations are replacing individuals as key actors.

Having begun theorizing the global organizational public sphere, this dissertation will inform a variety of future projects. Beginning from this conceptual framework, I would like to investigate the complexities of alliance building in international and transnational organizations that advocate for historically disempowered citizens. Additionally, I will explore issues of accountability in global social movement organizations. Finally, the concept of the global organizational public sphere will help me to critically analyze the negotiation of difference in transnational feminist organizations. Critical exploration of these ideas is necessary to account for contemporary social change processes.

In summary, this dissertation contributes: (1) a communication-centered approach to the Bohman-Habermas debate over democratic legitimacy, at the center of which is the issue of (2) translation from the grassroots to the transnational scale engendered by (3) transnational feminist organizing that is understood through (4) an organizational rhetoric perspective on the global organizational public sphere. These four contributions reflect my two-fold goal for this project. First, I wanted to make a theoretical contribution, updating public sphere theory to account for today's cultural formations. In a global organizational public sphere, NGOs play a vital, largely rhetorical role in connecting global civil society actors across scale. In addition to making a theoretical contribution, I

wanted to draw critical insights into how the prominent NGO, WEDO, navigates the tension of particularism and universalism without replicating top-down organizational models. Since WEDO and other TFNs organize in opposition to male-dominated, centralized, and hierarchical movements, these organizations are thought to desire to resist power relations characterized by domination. The insights generated from a case study of WEDO illuminate how NGOs can effect globalization from below as well as the various tensions and problems they face when attempting to do so.

6.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

I conclude this dissertation with a discussion of the limitations of my project and suggestions for future research. There are at least three major limitations of this study: (1) its reliance on archival data; (2) its focus on a Western NGO through a Western paradigm; and (3) its investigation of a single case. I discuss each limitation and the ways in which my own and others' future research might correct for them before concluding this dissertation.

Limitations of Archival Data

At this point, I would like to ask that readers pause for a moment and think of an organization with which they have been or are currently affiliated. Does the action undertaken by this organization and its members always match the rhetoric it espouses? Do organizational leaders and other members of this organization always adhere to its mission or goal statement? Most readers will assuredly answer "no" to this question. For this reason, there are limitations to studying official organizational rhetoric.

Effective critical analysis of official archival materials entails acknowledging their limitations. Critics like me are obligated to note that official texts can obscure

discourses and might very well differ from what actually occurs “on the ground” at any given organization. In Chapter 3, *Voice*, for instance, I argued that WEDO’s early organizational rhetoric was undergirded by an “expert style” of discourse that trumped—and even excluded— other voices. In this sense, its official discourses of equality and empowerment do not align with WEDO’s early practices. It is therefore important for organizational rhetoric studies to explore how organizational discourses translate on the ground. Doing so would offer an understanding of the effects of official organizational rhetoric on audiences, which, while important, was not the focus of this study.

As I argued in the method section of this dissertation, this study draws on archival resources hosted by WEDO’s website for good reason. Certainly, there are benefits of critical textual analysis. Language shapes the social world, and textual analysis helps us understand and improve the ways individuals, organizations, and societies organize and are organized by language. Texts preserve the discourses that shape and reflect culture. Especially in organizational studies, the written record is a powerful social text. Organizational documents can illuminate an organization’s different attitudes, strategies, and motivations. Indeed, official organizational discourses and rhetorics can reveal interesting and important insights.

As a valuable follow up to the insights yielded from critical textual analysis, researchers might engage in ethnographic analysis to explore the extent to which organizational rhetoric informs organizational action. As a second phase in this dissertation project and a future line of research, I would be interested in employing an ethnographic approach to the study of WEDO (and other TFNs). This approach might incorporate participant observation and qualitative interviewing to supplement the textual

data I gathered for my dissertation. Observing WEDO in a “natural habitat” and interviewing members both in its official headquarters and in the field would illuminate how the organization’s rhetoric does and does not inform its various practices. A mixed methodological approach to my case study that incorporates fieldwork and interview data would strengthen the contributions of this project.

Limitations of a Western Organization and Perspective

Extant research on transnational feminist networking tends to privilege the study of Western, professionalized NGOs. Like previous research, in this study, I too, have privileged a Western feminist, English-speaking, professionalized organization. WEDO texts, though increasingly dialogical, are still mostly created by Western authors for Western audiences. Moreover, my own perspective is that of a Western, educated, feminist critic. The data analyzed in this study reflect my particular perspective and certainly would be interpreted differently by one coming from another point of view. Consequently, this study is limited to the extent that it reflects the biases of someone whose personal investments in globalization from below depart in some ways from those activists “on the ground” or those critics who can directly identify with citizens on the periphery.

On the other hand, since this dissertation is informed by a politics of relation, I think the insights generated from my analysis are important to social change processes, providing, as Deetz might say, voice to that which is lost or hidden in everyday life. In this particular case, my research stresses the value of a cosmopolitan and feminist ethic of care. Such an ethic can transcend location, engendering re-imaginings of citizenship and identification with others throughout the world. Still, non-Western perspectives on

transnational feminist practices would be valuable. Future research should include more diverse perspectives on these matters.

Limitations of a Single Case Study

A final significant limitation of this study is that I investigated just one case. A single case study explores one case in great depth and is different from multiple or collective case studies in which a number of cases are studied for the understandings they provide into a broader category of similar cases (Stake, 1995) While I think the case of WEDO is especially interesting and nuanced, the study of another or additional cases might yield different, complementary, or contradictory insights. For this reason, future research should include sharp analysis of several cases so as to make cross-case comparisons, explore shared and unique themes and tensions, and shed a broader light on the ability of NGOs to function as global intermediaries.

It is my hope that the limitations of this study are minimal in comparison to its potential contributions. I began this, my conclusion chapter, by reminding readers of this study's purpose to show how NGOs serve as a mediating layer between citizens and international institutions. The case of WEDO illuminates this process, demonstrating how NGOs fulfill a critical role in achieving democratic legitimacy in a global era. My analysis of the problematics of voice, rationality, and the organization and society reveals how globalization complicates tasks of achieving critical publicity and legitimacy, as well as how it fractures current conceptualizations of representation and translation. Certainly, communication scholars are uniquely situated to contribute to conversations about how citizens, with the help of NGOs, can satisfy conditions for global participatory politics. I look forward to being part of this important conversation.

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