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UNITED STATES MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF THE DEVELOPING
WORLD: A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE ONE
CAMPAIGN'S INTERNET WEB SITE

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Communication Studies

by
Lindsey Marie Haussamen

December 2008

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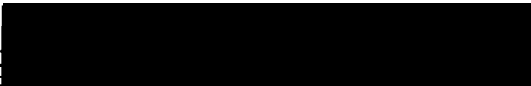
A Thesis
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December 2008

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this research was to examine how the One organization's Web site either supports or rejects established literature that concludes that U.S. media contains negative representations of the developing world. This thesis offers a semiotic critique of the One organization's *Home, About, Issues, and FAQs* Web site pages' visual and verbal portrayals of people in Africa, and how these portrayals establish or counteract cultural imperialism. The visual and verbal representations portrayed on One's Web site are a mixture of positive and negative representations. Many of the messages follow the all too frequently witnessed depictions of negativity; however, there are a few messages that convey positive representations of the situations facing the developing world. While the four Web pages under critical examination did display a select few positive representations of the developing nations of Africa, the overall finding is that One's portrayal of the developing world supports the general conclusion of negative portrayals in U.S. media.

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Thank you to my family. Without your love and support I would have given up on school a long time ago, but you all kept me going and helped me see the future possibilities that await me. Thank you most of all for instilling in me a passion for the larger world around me. Whether you all realize it or not, you helped me out of my bubble and showed me that there is much more to life than my immediate surroundings, and that there is much to be explored and discovered from other people and cultures around the world.

My deepest gratitude goes out to my love and best friend, without whom graduate school and this project would have remained a future dream of mine. You have been with me from the beginning and have seen me through all the ups and downs of my work. Thank you for always sticking by my side and giving me the support and encouragement I needed to see this through to the end.

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CHAPTER ONE

DOMINANCE OF UNITED STATES MEDIA

Introduction

Interest in international affairs has increased greatly in recent years (Ritzer, 2004). More and more events that happen in and with other countries are receiving attention and action around the world. The globe has become an interdependent network for trading, business, travel, and importing and exporting goods and ideas. Because of this, when events occur in one part of the world, no matter how far away, it has some global impact. For instance, "Saddam Hussein's death sentence was celebrated by some as justice deserved or even divine, but denounced by others as a political ploy before critical US mid-term congressional elections" (*The Times of India*, 2006, para. 1). Every aspect of Hussein's capture and trial was followed very closely by many people around the world. News coverage of stories such as this has become the norm in the U.S., and has come to be expected by anxious audiences. What may not be so expected is how two years after his capture, Hussein still had the power to influence politics in the U.S. with his death sentence. For instance,

critics accused President Bush of strategically scheduling Hussein's hanging two days before midterm elections in order to gain support for Republican control of Congress (*The Times of India*, 2006). It seems as if anything is possible nowadays through the media, which is why studying the media remains so important.

There are two basic types of media: mainstream media and alternative or social media. Albert (1997) stated this about mainstream media: it "aims to maximize profit or sells an elite audience to advertisers for its main source of revenue...always structured...to help reinforce society's defining hierarchical social relationships...controlled by...major social institutions" (p. 2). These institutions include corporations and religious and political organizations. Alternative media, on the other hand, "sees itself as part of a project to establish new ways of organizing media and social activity and it is committed to furthering these as a whole, and not just its own preservation" (Albert, 1997, p. 3).

Alternative media does not exist solely to gain monetary profit, and as such is not influenced by corporate sponsorship or other social institutions. In this thesis,

when media is discussed, it is in reference to mainstream media unless identified as alternative media.

With global media networks in place today, such as NewsCorp, Time Warner, and Viacom, news, entertainment, and culture from all around the world is accessible even to those people living in the most remote areas. Thus, with such extant proliferation it is important to ask, "Who has control of these networks?" For the past 40 years, there has been a debate over which country dominates worldwide media, and the consensus seems to be that the Western world holds control where media are concerned, especially the U.S. (Thussu, 2000). In this respect, the United States is everywhere. Americans can virtually go anywhere in the world and still be surrounded by the familiarity of media from home (Stevenson, 1996). Whether it is movies, television shows, news coverage, music, or the latest fashion trends, United States popular culture can be found in most places throughout the world, primarily exported through the media. Although goods, culture, and media are exported out of this country, it is important to realize that comparatively not much is imported from other nations and cultures. When cultural products, such as media, are introduced in the U.S., they are not exact cultural

replicas, but rather hybrid representations that place the original creators into a subordinate state of "otherness" while allowing the U.S. to become more desirable and exotic (Moorti, 2006). For example, the television show *American Idol* produces American music stars, but was created in Britain, where those stars are rarely remembered. In terms of news, the U.S. imports stories of disaster and crisis from the developing world on a regular basis. Irrespective of their nonfiction realness, even these news genres can be manipulated to create representations.

For several decades the Western world and developing nations have been debating the issue of media control. For instance, in the 1970s developing countries called for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) that would regulate the global information system and redistribute control evenly around the world (Thussu, 2000). Developing countries were unhappy with the existing order, complaining that it created a model of dependence where the developing world was heavily reliant on other countries for information, technology, and other materials (Stevenson, 1996). The Western world's monopoly, particularly the United States, dispenses a powerful and influential portrayal and perception of virtually every

country around the globe. As a result, the concern is that the developing world is being exploited and misrepresented by those in control (Thussu, 2000). The representation of other countries, especially the developing world, is not always objective and accurate, but there is a need to determine how exactly these nations and people are being portrayed, and why these representations are taking place. This kind of power emanating from one country is important to explore in terms of mediated portrayals of other countries.

Statement of the Problem

Past research has conclusively shown that most all U.S. media coverage of developing countries is negative (Celeste, 2005; Larson, 1979; Markham, 1961; Morales, 1982; Ovsiovitch, 1993). Negative representations are those that center on crisis and conflict, focusing on natural disasters, political corruption, and disease and famine. While it is good to recognize that this kind of disparity exists throughout the world, it is even better to understand how such inequality exists, and, if other ways of communicating life in the developing world are successful, how the United States of America can accomplish

helping other parts of the world without exploiting suffering. The U.S.-based organization selected for this research directs its nonprofit fund raising efforts to a part of the world that is plagued by disease, poverty, and adversity, and at a cursory glance, directs its efforts without exploitation. It seems that the U.S. only rescues people when there is a political crisis or a natural disaster, and that the media only centers their attention on these negative stories as well. There are, however, many other more constructive stories on which the U.S. media can focus. Positive representations can focus on the rebuilding process that occurs after destruction, successful advances in political structures, and healthy happy people, which is what the organization selected for this research appears to do.

The problem this research seeks to address is U.S. dominance in media made possible because of conglomeration and deregulation by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) during the 1990s, which put control of media networks in the hands of a few select companies and people. The issue of cultural imperialism is present because of the dominance created from such narrow control. U.S. media power influences representations of other cultures and

people. Imperialist ideology, as perpetuated by the media, places one country (in this case the United States) at the center of everything, and all others on the periphery. So, the United States conveys representations of others (either positive or negative depending on the U.S. interests) in order to keep those countries and cultures in a subordinate role while remaining on the top.

It is important to look at how charities actually go about helping the developing world because their strategies influence perceptions and actions concerning those people and cultures, especially U.S.-based nonprofit organizations. Analysis of their representations can offer insight into how campaigns may portray other countries and can indicate what motivates people to join their cause. Entirely negative portrayals can give the impression that crisis and disaster are all that the developing world experiences, without any joy or uplifting occurrences. If pain and suffering are all these countries experience, then nonprofit organizations, such as the One campaign, face a difficult obstacle in trying to gain support for what is seemingly a hopeless cause.

One is significant because at a cursory glance, their Web site can be labeled as positive rather than negative

representation of the developing world because it does not show pain, suffering, and malnutrition. In representing the positive experiences of developing nations, nonprofit campaigns such as this can show those people interested in helping their cause the outcome of their support and the difference that is being made through their time, money, and encouragement.

Suffering and pain have their place in conveying the desperation and need of these countries and people and moving people to take action; however, without seeing the outcome of their action, an overabundance of negative stories and images has the potential to turn people away from a cause. This is why portraying the human side of a situation, both the negative reality and the prospective positive results of support, is so important.

Literature Review

The preceding review of the literature illustrates that United States media have a tendency to convey negative and exploitative messages about the developing world and its people and cultures. This is accomplished through pictures and images as well as labels and wording utilized to describe the people, places, and situations in these

parts of the world. United States media have great power and influence because of the status of the U.S. as a Superpower as well as a leader in the communication industry. Despite the potential positive aspects of media, the negative representations seem to dominate the media coverage of the developing world.

Language: Verbal and Visual

Representations in the media, particularly Web sites, occur both verbally and visually. Words are powerful representations and can be used to convey an explicit meaning. For instance, labels are placed on groups to categorize them, and many times are used derogatorily towards people who are seen as inferior. Visual representations act in a similar fashion. For example, pictures and images capture real life people, places, and situations; however, they can be manipulated to depict a crafted message.

The "Other" in Western Media. In terms of verbal portrayals, labels are common descriptors of people and Jandt and Tanno (2001) explored the notion of the "Other" as a label for those living on the outskirts of society that have been classified negatively by outsiders, and how those people are reclassifying themselves through their own

inside research. They call this liberating process "Decoding Domination" and "Encoding Self-Determination" (Jandt & Tanno, p. 119). The authors explored the process that led those in the minority groups of society, whom they term the "Others" (Jandt & Tanno, p. 120), to progress from the objects of research to the researchers themselves. They did this by investigating historically marginalized groups in terms of gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. Based on Derrida's concept of *différance* (Derrida, 1978), Jandt and Tanno showed how these groups are outcast because they are defined as *not* part of the majority group... "women as Other because she is *not man*... homosexuals... as Other because they are *not heterosexual*... Latinos as Other because they are *not white*" (p. 123, emphasis in original). The use of the word *not* implies insubordination of the Other group because it places them outside the norm, and has caused those people to give into the outsider definition of who they are and are not. The concept of the Other is also evident in U.S. media coverage of foreign countries.

The developing world is frequently given the label of "Other" because it is mostly described through the eyes of those outside its own nation or culture. Huang and Leung

(2005) discussed how media coverage of the SARS outbreak influenced public views and opinions. They looked specifically at China and Vietnam, determining that China had mostly negative media coverage, and Vietnam was more positive. The authors contended that this difference was due to the way in which the SARS outbreak was handled by each country's government and how the media portrayed this. They concluded that media coverage was much more positive when the government was more upfront about what was happening instead of attempting to hide something. In order to fully understand these international situations, it is important to have local reporters on the scene; however, this does not always happen. With so much influence over what gets distributed around the world, the United States has immense power over who sees what, and how it is seen, whether or not it is experienced first hand by those reporting it.

Lent (1977) addressed the state of foreign countries in U.S. news by highlighting the lack of local reporters covering the news in foreign countries. Pillai (2000) noted that most reporters in developing countries are American and European, not natives in the countries being covered. This is not a new trend in news coverage. This means people in the developing world are being subjected to

representation by outsiders. Lent (1977) pinpointed the decreasing number of adequately trained correspondents abroad as cause of the poor state of foreign news coverage in U.S. media. Ricchiardi (2006) described "parachute journalism" as a term used when journalists are rushed to the scene as soon as a story happens. This practice, along with cutbacks in the news industry, causes local reporters in foreign countries to become rare. This means that American journalists have to rush to a foreign country to report the story. This lack of native reporters shows how those countries are framed by outsiders as cultures and people defined as "Other."

Altheide (1984) explored the widely held belief that Western media, and more specifically U.S. media, is dominant worldwide. He believed that this powerful position created specific consequences, such as journalists' inability to create original and independent stories instead of reproducing the dominant ideology, tending to only cover those stories that support the status quo. This type of coverage can lead to uneducated, tainted, and biased views about foreign countries and their inhabitants. If this is how the news in developing nations is handled by those in control, the ideals and beliefs held by the ones

in power are passed on to audiences. This is especially true for U.S. media's portrayal of the developing world, and is evident in the name, "Third World," assigned to this part of the world.

Defining "Third World". The phrases "Third World" and "underdeveloped" are losing momentum in terms of describing people and countries around the world. They are, however, still utilized, and therefore, it is important to understand the history behind their meaning. Thussu (2000) detailed the history of the term "Third World" by stating:

The phrase 'Third World' itself was a product of the Cold War, said to have been coined by French economic historian Alfred Sauvy in 1952, when the world was divided between the capitalist First World, led by the United States and the communist Second World with its centre in Moscow. The 'Third World' was the mass of countries remaining outside these two blocs. (p. 39)

So, this phrase was associated with leftovers, meaning that this part of the world was not seen as important, much less as important as other parts of the world.

Zachariah (1992) claimed that while the countries comprising the First and Second worlds have changed over the years, for instance Russia, Poland, and Hungary, those

countries that make up the Third World, such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America, have remained constant, helping the term gain popularity. He believed this phrase had outlived its usefulness for three reasons. The first reason was major changes in the world that have made this concept obsolete. These changes include weakening in the U.S. economy and the disappearance of the Soviet Union as a Superpower. The next reason the term "Third World" was no longer useful was because it encompassed too many diverse countries and cultures. Zachariah stated that the last and most important reason why this phrase was no longer applicable was because it was no longer used under the original definition. "The phrase has come to mean 'third rate' and 'third class'" (Zachariah, p. 552). Hence, "Third World" is no longer used as a name given to part of the world, rather it is used to divide the world into leaders and subordinates, and as a tool for those in power to discriminate against countries and cultures.

The terms "Third World" and "underdeveloped," have commonly been used to describe those countries that do not meet the ideological standards of "First World" countries, such as the United States. They are derogatory and demeaning, because they imply that the countries and people

they refer to are not as good, as modern, or as civilized. Their negative connotations have long been accepted, especially by U.S. media, and therefore, many Americans themselves. While it is recognized that these labels are stereotypical, discriminatory, and old-fashioned, they are still predominately used by scholars and by media¹.

Although "Third World" and "underdeveloped" are still dominant labels, a new phrase is beginning to become not only more recognized, but also more utilized around the world. The term "developing nation" is gaining acknowledgment as a substitute to describe what used to be regarded as the Third World, but it has not completely replaced it yet, and its definition is still along the same line as Third World and underdeveloped. "Developing" implies that there is more work to be done to bring these countries up to standards that would place them in the "developed" category. While there continues to be some progression in language surrounding this part of the world, there is also still prejudice and discrimination towards the people and cultures that live there. Attempting to remain culturally sensitive and respectful, the remainder of this thesis uses the term "developing world."

Media Power

As with language such as self/other, First world/Third world/developing world, media can be used to verbally and visually convey negative and/or positive messages about its content including people, places, and events. Although the tendency of U.S. media may be to portray the developing world with negative words and images, there is the opportunity for media to show positive representations of the developing world as well; however, a positive take on the developing world is often ignored.

Media's Negative Portrayal of the Developing World. In terms of media, negative usually means coverage is centered on crisis and conflict, a state that is conveyed as all too permanent in the developing world (Silverstein, 1993). Lent (1977) stated that foreign news in U.S. newspapers focuses on crises, "the bizarre or outlandish or the East-West struggle" (Lent, p. 47). Hence, the most interest in U.S. media seems to be focused on issues of emergency and disaster, and because of this it remains important to explore why this interest may be so strong. According to Maslow (1971), feeling special through one's social relationships is part of human nature and basic needs. If something is bad or going wrong, there is the need for a

hero, or a savior, and someone must come along and save the day. When things are going fine, there is no need for help and no need for saving. So, when there is crisis and conflict in a developing country, there is a need for outside help, usually from a big Superpower country, such as the United States. Therefore, when disaster strikes, it is cause for the U.S. not only to feel special, but also to take action. This is evident in recent years with examples such as the 2004 tsunami that devastated Asia, or the 2008 earthquake in China, in which the United States came to the rescue of the suffering people those crises impacted.

Lichter (1982) examined journalists' attitudes in regard to the United States relationship with developing countries. The author surveyed reporters in top news agencies, asking them questions regarding positive and negative statements about the developing world. Overall, Lichter found that journalists challenge the status quo by producing social change and being sympathetic to the people and stories they cover. Although much of the news U.S. audiences receive about developing countries might seem sympathetic, it is still centered on conflict and crisis. He concluded that because reporters relate to those they are covering, negative stories on the developing world can

not be attributed to those reporting the news. So, the negativity does not always come from the journalists themselves. It is important to realize the news U.S. audiences receive does not begin and end with the journalists covering the stories. There is a complex system that stories must travel through in order to reach their intended audience. The process of gatekeeping is where "countless messages are reduced to the few we are offered in our daily newspapers and television news programs" (Shoemaker, 1996, p. 79); those who decide what messages are reported to the public are known as media gatekeepers.

Langton (1991) claimed that photographers employ their own biases in the pictures they take, the angles they use, and their working environment. He also argued that newspaper editors further those biases by running certain pictures with their stories. Three fourths of the front page photos from other countries are "sensational" (Langton, p. 102). The story editing, its placement within the newspaper, newscast, or magazine, and what picture, story, or other features are chosen to accompany it all have influences and biases attached to them. Framing is often intertwined with the personal ethics of those organizing the frames. Wilson (2006) discussed his own

journalistic ethics in the context of Israel's offensive on Lebanon. He disagreed with others who called for a balance of coverage. Wilson believed only one party was to blame, and the published pictures should portray that; however, this does not agree with the ideology of Israel as an innocent victim, and therefore may not be how the story is conveyed to the public. So, while the reporters themselves may or may not have strong biases about the news they are covering, the story is not finished with them and their views. The stories begin with the person in charge of that medium who tells the journalists what news to report on, and continues through this gatekeeping system.

Industry Control. The world of media is vast yet tightly controlled. Today's trend is to send many messages that come from fewer sources (Shoemaker, 1996). The big media moguls are taking control by getting involved in the media world, making a lot of money, and in turn they keep investing and buying out other media companies. An example of this is the 2000 Time Warner/AOL merger.

With dominating positions in the music, publishing, news, entertainment, cable and Internet industries, the combined company, called AOL Time Warner, will boast unrivaled assets among other media and online

companies. The merger, the largest deal in history, combines the nation's top internet service provider with the world's top media conglomerate. (Johnson, 2000, para 2-3)

The people in charge of such companies are the ones who have the ultimate say in what news gets covered. They run the companies, make many of the decisions, and pass the power down the long line of managers, editors, copy editors, design editors, all the way to the journalists. This process begins at the top, where just a few select people run these global enterprises.

What gets covered in media also depends on sponsorship. The bottom line is money, and when sponsors give money to media companies, there is a certain pressure and obligation to run what those people approve of in order to continue the sponsorship. For example, if one watches *American Idol*, it is quite obvious that Ford and Coca Cola are major sponsors because of their many commercials during the program. Additionally, the judges drink from Coca Cola cups on each show and the Ford music videos are shown each week. On an episode of *American Idol*, a former *Idol* contestant mentioned wanting a Porsche, to which the host, Ryan Seacrest, responded "That's a no no on this show"

(Seacrest, 2007). This demonstrates the control exuded to keep sponsors appeased and supportive of programming and content in media.

Rupert Murdoch serves as another example of media ownership and control. Murdoch began his venture in the United States by buying the *San Antonio Express News*. He has since added to his company the *National Star*, the *New York Post*, 20th Century Fox, Fox Broadcasting Company, Fox News Channel, and he has acquired a 34 percent stake in Hughes Electronics, operator of the largest American satellite TV system, DirecTV (McPhail, 2006; Thussu, 2000). All of these companies comprise part of one of the world's largest news conglomerates, News Corporation, created in 1980 by Murdoch. This corporation has huge control over American media, and up until 2004, its base was located in Australia (McPhail, 2006; Thussu, 2000). Despite its location, News Corporation exudes Western, and more specifically, U.S. values and lifestyles through shows such as *American Idol*.

"A curious and often ignored element in the globalization issue is how much of it is non-American, even though it exudes a 'Made in U.S.A.' feel" (Stevenson, 1996, p. 189). Of the "big five" Hollywood studios, three are

owned by foreign corporations (Stevenson, 1996, p. 189). Even though much of the media around the world is not made in the United States, it still conveys their values and ideals. This just shows how powerful and influential U.S. media reach around the globe.

Implications of United States Media Power. As evidenced in the above literature review, many scholars have the same opinion that U.S. media portray the developing world negatively and only during times of hardships and disasters (Altheide, 1984; Celeste, 2005; Larson, 1979; Lent, 1977; Lichter, 1982; Markham, 1961; Morales, 1982, Ovsiovitch, 1993; Robinson, 2000; Silverstein, 1993). Therefore, because a primary source of news and information resides in U.S. media, a common public opinion most likely encompasses these same characteristics--that the developing world is a bad place full of crises. Although more and more Americans are traveling the world and visiting other nations and cultures (61,509,000 in 2004 according to International Travel: 1990 to 2004), many more stay within the United States (1,827,400,000 in 2004 according to Domestic Travel by U.S. Resident Households: 1998-2004). Typically, international travel is expensive and time consuming, and with low paying full-time jobs,

combined with bills that continually accumulate, taking the time and money to travel abroad is not possible for a vast majority of Americans. A negative view of the developing world could result in a common public perception, not developed from primary knowledge, but rather from a secondary source that is almost always some form of media.

Larson (1984) argued that television was the single greatest factor in shaping the public's opinion, especially on foreign issues. For the most part, the media are the only source of information on the developing world that Americans possess. Hence, media are the main influence in shaping perceptions of the international world. "The media's daily reports alert us to the latest events and changes in the larger world beyond our reach. Consequently, most of our world is a second-hand reality created by the news organization" (McCombs & Bell, 1996, p. 93). The stories U.S. people see and hear from developing countries have to originate from a source. Sometimes it may be one person who was fortunate enough to travel to one of those countries, and comes back with stories to share with others. Personal experience can be very influential, especially if the source telling the story is reliable and credible. One's individual story can have a great impact on

a small group and mobilize them into an action that keeps growing with more and more people becoming involved, and when the action gets big enough, the media typically take interest and the story gets covered. The popular nonprofit organization Invisible Children began this way. Another way a story gets started is when a big event happens in the developing world, such as the wars in the Middle East or political uprisings in South America. The stories that get the most attention are political conflicts, natural disasters, and other crises because they not only gain the attention of the American public, but also the American government (Silverstein, 1993).

Silverstein (1993) explored the idea that the developing world does not exist in U.S. media until our government decides that it does, usually because of a conflict occurring in that country. He argued that these countries only remain in the spotlight until the crisis is over, disappearing until another one arises. This reaffirms the idea that U.S. news media are only interested in the bad news, which includes disaster or anything that threatens the United States. Robinson (2000) tested the "CNN effect" (media's influence during times of humanitarian crisis) by examining two examples:

intervention on the part of the U.S. in Bosnia in 1995 and then again in Kosovo in 1999. Robinson used the policy-median interaction model, which is dependent on uncertainty in policy, and coverage of people's suffering in influential media. Because of potential public backlash, he claimed it is almost impossible for government not to intervene in humanitarian crises. So, media cover crises because it is what is newsworthy and will support the status quo of U.S. dominance and power, and because if they do not cover it, the public may get angry because the crises that obviously need outside help from a big Superpower are being ignored by those who could be helping.

The Positive Side of Media Messages. Despite the argument that mainstream media only portray the negative side of developing countries (Altheide, 1984; Celeste, 2005; Larson, 1979; Lent, 1977; Markham, 1961; Morales, 1982, Ovsiovitch, 1993; Silverstein, 1993), there are positive attributes in U.S. news coverage in alternative and social media as well (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992). For instance, there is the option for differences to be expressed, and this leaves room for opposition so everyone has the potential to be heard. People can make their own Web site or have a personal blog

to voice their views and opinions for everyone to see. The internet allows for self expression through social spaces such as *MySpace*, *Facebook*, and *Live Journal*. These are all tools that people can use for any purpose with minimal regulation. Thus, while the dominant Western countries are the ones in control of the global network, there is room for new people, nations, and cultures to infiltrate the system and introduce their own unique perceptions. Although it may seem like a monopoly right now, the possibility for change is present, and with access to the proper resources such as money, technology, and influence, power and control could easily switch hands. The problem is that access to the right tools, such as internet availability, technological knowledge, and distribution ability, is not as available to everyone, especially those in the developing world. This leaves those without access vulnerable to outside interpretation by those who have power and control over representation of others. The United States is the leading entity in global media, and utilizes that power to convey harmful and exploitative messages about the developing world through derogatory labels and manipulative pictures.

Cultural Imperialism as a Theoretical Perspective

The term imperialism was "coined in the nineteenth century and introduced into English by critics of Louis Napoleon...By an 'imperialist' regime these critics meant one in which a great deal of power is held by the central authority with...corresponding decline of liberty"

(Morgenbesser, 1973, pp. 3-4). Cultural imperialism is the theoretical premise of this research because it offers an explanation of the United States domination of communications and its ability and drive to portray the developing world the way it does. Schiller (1976) defined cultural imperialism as:

the sum of the processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating center of the system. (p. 9)

This theory provides a framework to examine if or how imperialism occurs through a Web site's visual and verbal language about the developing world.

The Dominant West

The United States of America views itself as the best country and people in the world; therefore, they have no problem communicating that status to the rest of the world. Mumby (1989) argued that the key connection between communication and power is ideology. He contended that meaning is derived through the complex interaction of power relationships that are evident in most all social settings, and while the dominant reading of something is easy to come by, there are always alternative interpretations that one can get out of the same thing. United States media uses its power to convey a message that crisis gains attention, and because of U.S. standing in the world, it is implicit that this is the dominant opinion even if other views exist.

One reason negative perceptions of developing nations exist might be because the U.S. views itself as the best, most important and central Superpower in the world. This leads to an imperialist attitude that manifests itself in actions that have an impact all around the globe. The impact, however, is not always a positive one. In many cases, the United States intervenes in the developing world when politics, economy, and other issues of interest to them start to go bad according to the United States of

America's definition. These countries do not always have to ask for help, because the U.S. often times takes it upon itself to decide when help is needed, and what kind of help is going to be given. This creates a monopoly of ideas, one where the U.S. dominates and those in developing countries are overlooked and silenced. A world where every voice is not heard is a world of inequality. The United States of America and Americans may not agree with the values and beliefs of other nations, but who is to say that all those other nations agree with the values and beliefs of the U.S.? This does not stop the U.S. from believing that their way of life is the best and should be followed by everyone. Like Mumby (1989) argued, meaning is up to interpretation, and the common understanding of something is dominated by those with control and power. With the United States in control, their ideas and views are the ones that are conveyed and heard around the world.

Although this research focuses on the theory of cultural imperialism, it is important to note the importance of Galtung's ideas of structural imperialism as well. Galtung (1971) recognized two realities in the world with his theory of structural imperialism. The first was that there is abundant inequality in the world, and second

was that this inequality is resistant to change. He recognized five types of imperialism, and all of them illustrate one thing: domination by one nation. These dominant countries are in control of the entire decision-making process, and all of its aspects. This allows the center to have great control and domination over the periphery. It is no surprise that the U.S. is the center of the center. Out of all the nations in the First World, the United States is the Superpower of all Superpowers. Even with all the countries in the center community of the Western world, the United States forces all others to the margins, and encompasses the very center of it all imposing its cultural values and beliefs on the rest of the world.

Morgenbesser (1973) argued that a country is imperialistic when it is:

the dominant one in a region...it assumes that it is entitled to certain spheres of influence in that region...it is prepared to offer economic and military benefits to countries in that region...and it assumes that the weaker countries in that region cannot enter into alliances with its potential enemies. (p. 35)

He also claimed that a nation is ideologically imperialistic when it is:

militarily and economically the dominant power of all those willing to abide by a certain ideology...it is willing to assume major military burdens for this particular group...and it is willing to provide benefits for those willing to abide by this ideology.

(Morgenbesser, p.37)

In the case where the country is willing to intimidate those who do not accept the ideology, Morgenbesser posited they are a coercive imperialist power, and this is the distinction between using imperialism for good or for bad. He concluded that the United States is a dominant imperial power, and as an imperialistic power they need an ideology. Yet it is difficult to form an ideology around imperialism, because when one nation conveys the idea that another nation can be pushed to the fringes of society and be dominated by those in power, nothing stops them from believing that it is also acceptable for anyone and everyone to become part of the periphery, even their own people.

Imperialism allows understanding into how the United States remains at the center of everything by driving all other countries and cultures to the outskirts of society. This can be accomplished through political, economic, and

deeper structural forces; however, imposing cultural principles and attitudes on others seems to be the prevalent strategy behind United States dominance. The cultural imperialism argument came with the realization that poor developing nations were at risk for diminishing heritages because of the expansion of modern technology coming from power centers such as the United States in the industrial world. Communications around the world turned from public service broadcasting to mainly commercial material, signaling the disappearance of the developing world into capitalist "emerging markets" (Schiller, 2000, p. 98) for the Western world.

Schiller (2000) claimed that there is indeed a new information order--one that perpetuates inequality for the vast majority while encouraging enormous profit for the minority. This deviates from the original goals of equality and fair distribution for all. United States dominated global capitalism, Schiller argued, is in a state where the entertainment, communications and information industries have attained supremacy, and as a result a new form of cultural imperialism surfaced where the dominant West, mainly the United States, has exercised control over the rest of the world. Flew (2007) contended that the rise of

multi national corporations is a modern day form of imperialism because they force what used to be independent post-colonial states into dependency on the flow of global capital.

Fernandez (1979) stated that "one of the key theoretical questions regarding contemporary imperialism has been the evaluation of the effects of international monopoly capitalism on the economies of Third World countries" (p. 38). Fernandez aimed to show how capitalism develops different characteristics under the oppression of imperialism. He claimed that "imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism" (p. 38). While the basic intention of capitalism eased people's fear of hunger, imperialism has in fact caused that very fear to resurface, especially for those in the developing world. According to this argument, any type of imperialist state in a nation causes that nation to become fearful. For developing nations, that may be the fear of losing their culture to the dominant one, it may be fear of negative portrayal to the rest of the world, it may be fear that if certain conditions are not met food and shelter will be taken. The basic necessities that developing countries depend on that are provided by others can be taken away whenever the provider decides to make

them disappear. This can cause a constant state of fear when the nation is trying to comply with demands, no matter how degrading or insufferable they may seem, in order to receive what the imperialist nation has to offer.

Ironically, while capitalism may have given individuals in the developing countries hope of self-sufficiency and freedom, they still live in poor nations ruled by the imperialist dominant outsiders.

Because of this dependence on international resources, the West has secured not only financial and political preeminence, but cultural supremacy as well. Western dominance gave way to the NWICO debate discussed earlier in the literature review, and this debate was where the term "cultural imperialism" was first utilized. This phrase and idea has been so widely used since the 1970s that Stevenson (1996) has argued that "it now can mean virtually anything or nothing at all" (p. 188). Despite this claim, Stevenson said that Western dominance does not seem to be slowing, as evidenced by Western-led news, popular culture, communication technology, and English as the global language.

With all this power and control, it can be expected that the U.S. would use that to its advantage, especially

in those parts of the world that are in need of the most help from outsiders. The United States is quick to respond to tragedy and disaster in the developing world, but help comes with many strings attached. The promise of aid is often contingent on conditions such as access to resources, following a set of rules even if it does not agree with the nation's culture, including changes to politics, customs, daily life, and even sometimes military occupation of the country. Thus, the developing countries must agree to such conditions in order to receive whatever help is needed.

Far more costly has been the unwillingness of the U.S. leadership to allow other nations and peoples the freedom to pursue different directions in their economic and social life. American policy and actions have for the last half a century repeatedly frustrated initiatives for a better and more diverse world. It is an awesome indictment. (Schiller, 1970, pp. 45-46)

This is the struggle between the haves and the have-nots, and this is where cultural imperialism starts.

Petras (1999) argued that Non-Governmental Organizations in the developing world actually serve imperialism by putting and keeping regimes in place that reinforce the status quo instead of advocating change. He

stated everything an NGO does is in accordance with its funders and evaluators. This means that project designs, implementation, and outcomes are based on "guidelines and priorities of the imperial centers and their institutions" (Petras, p. 433). If funding comes from those in power, and certain rules have to be followed in order to keep money coming in, NGOs are forced to abide by such regulations. This is one way that the imperialist structure is kept in place by those attempting to help. Their help does not come without a price, however, and many of the organizations that try to act in the interests of the people in the developing world are subject to the demands of money and whatever it takes to keep funding for their programs. This permits cultural imperialism to thrive because those in power are controlling every aspect of the system allowing the imperialists to remain front and center with their own imposing values and beliefs.

Examples of United States Imperialism. There are many ways that the United States utilizes cultural imperialism around the world. In nations ruled by imperialist entities, the flow of information comes into the developing world mainly through the United States, and is especially applicable to news media. Everything these people and

cultures read, see, and hear about themselves through U.S. media is from the outsider's perspective. This is one way the United States employs cultural imperialism in order to force its values and beliefs on the rest of the world. Not all scholars agree that cultural imperialism still exists in today's world. With many hybrid cultures around the globe, Barker (2008) argued that "global cultural flows are less in terms of domination and more as forms of cultural hybridity" (p. 161). This idea is addressed more in the following section on globalization and resistance; however, the following examples support those scholars who believe that cultural imperialism is still thriving in today's world.

United States media can be seen as imposing American culture and way of life on other countries and cultures through its portrayals and representations of those people. This idea was examined by Ono and Buescher (2001) during their study of the 1995 Disney film *Pocahontas*. This research examined the commodification of Pocahontas in the movie's products, advertising, and discourse. The authors concluded that Disney successfully placed the Native American girl in a Western capitalist role through the movie and advertising products surrounding *Pocahontas*.

According to Ono and Buescher's argument, the story was not historically accurate, nor was the main character portrayed as the young 13-year-old Native American girl that she truly was, rather a light skinned sexual seductress that appealed to Western kids and adults alike. Disney successfully altered the historical figure of Pocahontas to make her character into a commodity that would sell throughout the Western world (Ono & Buescher, 2001). In this way, the United States changed another culture to reflect what their culture believed to be important and successful.

Not all Western language is aimed at recreating a foreign figure or object in order to sell it in the Western world. Said (1978) argued that cultural discourse about Arabs, Islam, and the Middle East is mainly produced by England, France, and the United States, generating a great divide between the East and West. There is an already coded language surrounding the "Orient" (Said, 1978), which positions these places and people into a foreign category of "them," and fails to recognize that they are countries and cultures just like the West and in part of the same world as the rest of "us." Said stated that because Oriental discourse places these countries and people in

another category, it is ultimately defining them as an inferior culture to the rest that do not fall under the label of the Orient. This demonstrates the ability of the United States to label other countries and cultures to suit their own definition of what is culturally acceptable and what is substandard.

Mohanty (1984) examined a similar phenomenon in Western feminist discourse about women in the developing world. The author argued that placing all women in an overarching gender category, which assumes that all women are the same regardless of race, ethnicity, or class, forces women in the developing world into an especially oppressive environment that assigns women as subordinate as well as belonging to the "third world" (Mohanty, 1984, p. 6) which is seen as ignorant and poor. Mohanty suggested that not only is this Western discourse enacted oppression of developing world women, but it also implies that the Western woman is educated, modern, and in control. Although the researcher was not advocating against generalization and categorization, she was cautioning for "careful, historically specific complex generalizations" (Mohanty, 1984, p. 18).

It is difficult to suggest change regarding an imperialist entity because of the ideology that accompanies it. When imperialism exists, whether it is structural imperialism having to do with the political, economic, and business structures between countries, or cultural imperialism with its value and belief systems, the central power has the ability to control all relations between people and cultures and to force all other structures and systems to the margins of society. This is what occurs through U.S. mainstream media in its representations of the developing world. American values and beliefs penetrate the stories and images that are conveyed to the American public. Despite what the developing world believes about itself--its people, cultures, and situations, their perspective is not the one communicated to the rest of the world. Rather an outside imperialistic view of their experiences, way of life, and need is expressed by the dominant power who believes they can represent a world they do not live in better than its own people.

CHAPTER TWO

WEB SITES, NONPROFITS, AND SEMIOTICS

Most of the previous research exploring media portrayals of the developing world examines media content about the developing world from newspapers and television. For instance, Celeste (2005) looked at the portrayal of Cubans and Haitians in the *New York Times*. Larson (1979) studied the CBS network and all their stories over a four year period. Others have explored foreign news in U.S. daily newspapers (Markham, 1961), six years of television coverage about Latin America (Morales, 1982), and the *New York Times*, *Time* magazine, and the CBS evening news (Ovsiovitch, 1993). These are popular media to study because they are daily sources of news; therefore, the most news coverage comes through newspapers and television. Because of this, newspapers and television news have been studied at great length (see e.g., Celeste, 2005; Larson, 1979; Markham, 1961; Morales, 1982; Ovsiovitch, 1993); however, this current study sought to expand such research by examining internet Web sites, which are a newer form of media and a very popular technique not only used to reach audiences but also used by audience members.

Semiotically analyzing the One campaign's internet Web site uncovers hidden messages of denotation, connotation and societal myths that are present throughout their Web pages. This type of examination explores visual and verbal messages used by a campaign that seeks to enlighten Americans about the situation facing Africa. It is important to discover if an organization dedicated to helping the developing world is actually doing so by using positive representations or if they are doing more damage to Africa and its people by adding to the already abundant negative representations of the developing world. Popular representations of the developing world exist and thrive because globalization has allowed the media to be controlled by a few like-minded Superpowers. This enables the dominant ideology to continue spreading through mass media; however, there is opposition that exists in order to express views other than the leading ideology.

Globalization and Resistance

The world is composed of many diverse countries and cultures that each has its own beliefs and lifestyles. Globalization can be seen as a homogenizing phenomenon that has the potential to create a global society. This means that all cultures would become a hybrid of what they were

before globalization mixed with the dominant globalizing force, mainly the United States. While some countries and people are open to this phenomenon and welcome the change, others are resistant to giving up their own individual identities and cultures. Mixing ways of life can also be a form of resistance to both of those parent cultures. People do not necessarily need to conform to traditional or modern customs. Creating a hybrid between the dominant culture and the subordinate culture can be a form of liberation in the fact that one is not conforming to either tradition or modernity. Much of the time resistance occurs with hybridization rather than localization; however, there are many forms of alternative media that resist traditional media, the internet is the most prevalent opposition to mainstream media. United States regulation of the World Wide Web is virtually nonexistent because it is not subject to the Federal Communications Commission perimeters such as television and radio. The internet is not part of a conglomeration, its material is not subject to control from owners and sponsors--it is a form of media that is open to any and all prospective posters.

Traditional media, such as television, radio, and magazines, are structured by the FCC, sponsorship, and

money. The United States internet has the potential to be an alternative media because it is not FCC regulated, with the exception of child pornography. This medium does not fear boycotts, sponsor values and beliefs, or major monetary issues. Furthermore, the internet provides great diversity in the sources providing its content, and therefore, has the ability to serve as a functional alternative to traditional media.

A study conducted by Ferguson and Perse (2000) explored the use of the World Wide Web as a functional alternative to television. Utilizing a uses and gratification theory framework with computer savvy students, the researchers discovered that their respondents mainly used the internet for entertainment, social information, and on occasion for relaxation. The internet was found to have a similar function to television, especially when used as a diversion tactic; however, Ferguson and Perse also found that using the World Wide Web may not be as relaxing as watching television. Reasons for this included the time it takes to browse the internet, which may be related to the student sample that may not necessarily have spare time to browse internet sites, and using the internet for passing time and relaxation takes

some effort, while using television in the same way most likely does not take much attention. Thus, Ferguson and Perse's research found that the World Wide Web is only a functional alternative to television depending on the user's reason for accessing the internet.

Focusing on Arab Americans, Muhtaseb and Frey (2008) discovered that seeking information was the most common motive for internet use among this group, followed by interpersonal motives. The researchers showed that for Arab Americans, the internet is a functional alternative to all other media because it aims to fill human needs that mainstream media does not. They also found that this cultural group saw U.S. media as portraying them negatively. This did not sway their internet use because they browsed mainly foreign sites; however, they were turned off by mainstream media because of their negative portrayal, and felt the way to avoid these misrepresentations was to avoid U.S. media altogether.

Carroll (2003) examined the culture clash between blogs and traditional journalism. He stated that blogs are cost efficient and more effective with today's media savvy audience that sees journalism as a discussion. Therefore, blogs should be embraced as a new and upcoming method of

communication with an audience; however, the journalism community has been slow to embrace this new medium. He argued that traditional journalism is not adapting to blogs because they are perceived as untrustworthy and biased forms of news. It has been suggested that by combining the new technology of blogs with the customary schemas in print media, old media can better adapt and thrive in today's world. Blogs are a resistance to conventional print media because they use the internet to reach their audience, and allow a diverse array of voices to be heard. They are something that is not and cannot yet be regulated and controlled by corporate media. While blogs are one form of resistance, there are many specific examples of opposition to traditional media.

Examples of Alternative Media. *The Free Press* was an underground paper that existed for 25 years as part of the anti-war movement in the 1970s (The Free Press Web site, *About* page, para. 1). It provided a voice for college students at Ohio State University during this time, and has grown into a quarterly publication that honors community activism and community-based journalism (The Free Press Web site, *About* page, para. 1 & 4). A more contemporary form of underground press can be found on the internet. *Iraq Body*

Count is a Web site dedicated to documenting the violent civilian deaths of Iraqis killed since the U.S. invasion in 2003 (Iraq Body Count Web site, *Home* page). They collect data from media reports, hospital and morgue records, and NGO and official records to produce their count (Iraq Body Count Web site, *Home* page). This is another media source that provides the public with information that mainstream media will not divulge. *Youtube* is another source that shows public happenings that are not reported in conventional media. For example, one can go to this site and watch the execution of Daniel Pearl and the hanging of Saddam Hussein. Anything can be posted on *Youtube* by anyone. Although this may not be considered a credible source of news, it is a source of opposition to conventional media because there are no restrictions to what is shown and who can participate in this media.

Indymedia is another form of resistance to media oligopoly that exists solely online. This Web site promotes democracy by allowing first-hand knowledge from citizens themselves instead of government and corporate regulated opinions.

By having citizen-activists write the content of the site and by erasing organizational authorship,

Indymedia exemplifies democratic processes even while it is hopelessly ensnarled within postmodern culture's mesmerizing complexities, mimicking and poking fun at corporate media's conventions but rejecting them in favor of its own local content. (Stengrim, 2005, p. 294)

Indymedia portrays itself as a collection of media outlets designed to bring people radical and passionate, yet accurate descriptions of the truth (Independent Media Center Web site, *About* page). *Indymedia* refers to its people as "alternative globalization activists" (Independent Media Center Web site, *FAQs* page, para. 4), because they are against corporatization of society and culture. As stated on their Web site, Independent Media Centers provide updated reports, pictures, and voice and video recordings of footage that is currently happening (Independent Media Center Web site, *About* page). This allows people to have a democratic position in news media by presenting their own views on what is happening in the world.

The only problem with *Indymedia* and other similar Web sites is that access is dependent on availability and computer literacy--something that more and more people are

gaining access to, but still not everyone around the world possesses at this time. Because of this limited access, some parts of the world have a difficult time accessing alternative media. So, while many people have the opportunity to resist the mainstream, others are limited to what big media corporations bring their way. There are, however, other entities, such as nonprofit organizations, that work to convey their representations around the world.

Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofit organizations are charitable groups that aim to help people in need. These agencies do not set out with the goal of making money, but rather with the goal of providing services to those who do not have certain necessities. Many times these organizations require money to function, to supply services and materials, and to simply operate to accomplish their missions. Sometimes money is needed to give specific services such as medical attention, food, and clothing to people in need.

Since money is a necessity for nonprofits, fundraising must occur. Many nonprofits rely on marketing campaigns to raise needed funds, and so these campaigns must reach the masses in order to raise enough money to sustain the agency and to provide services. As with any organization,

nonprofits can make appeals through logical arguments, providing sound reasoning for their appeals. Although words can be very effective in conveying a message, pictures are equally, if not more, effective. Pictures are universal in that they can be more easily understood by people and have the ability to evoke more emotion because of this. Many nonprofits utilize pictures in order to evoke emotion and move people to give money, time, or resources in response to their feelings toward the images they see regarding unfortunate situations.

Research on Nonprofits on the Internet

Many nonprofit organizations exist on the internet (see, e.g. the American Cancer Society, the American Diabetes Association, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the YMCA, and the American Red Cross to name just a few). This is a relatively cheap and effective way to reach an audience and convey a message; however, with no regulation on what can be published on the World Wide Web, it is important to look at not only what attracts an audience to a Web site, but also what makes material on the internet credible. The following section reviews past research on Web sites, including research on production, Web building, and successful Web sites; however, this thesis critically

examined the representations and ideology behind the portrayals on a particular Web site.

It is important to look at what makes a Web site credible in order to understand how that site may be received by its audience. Long and Chiagouris (2006) conducted a study aimed at exploring the factors that contribute to perceptions of Web sites of nonprofit organizations. Consumer reactions were evaluated by the researchers to explore the connection between the credibility of a Web site and the consumer's attitude about the site. The most important credibility measure found was the design of the site. It was strongly recommended by the authors to test site designs using test groups in order to determine what arrangement makes sense to the audience and if the site is easy to browse for information. These two factors were discovered to give a higher degree of credibility to a Web site.

How and why Web sites are used is also significant in understanding features an audience looks for in an appealing site. Franck and Noble (2007) examined information needs and views of youth on health issues by gathering reactions to the Children First for Health Web site. The majority of respondents, secondary school

children age 11-18, said they use the internet to retrieve health information. The authors revealed that kids found the content relevant and the real life story section most appealing, even though some said it was negative. Some of the stories were complicated and dealt with difficult situations, but according to the study, the kids were still drawn to this section because they could relate to the people and their real life accounts. The authors discovered that the site designers needed to display up to date information as well as contemporary style and design so as to keep the audience engaged and receiving the organization's messages about healthcare.

Factors to consider in site design when targeting a multicultural audience is also an important subject to explore. Kang and Mastin (2008) researched how to account for differences in tourism Web sites as a public relations tool by utilizing a framework of cultural dimensions. They discovered that how (verbal and visual) messages are sent is just as significant as the factual information provided. It is important to examine how target audiences are accustomed to using communication tools in order to properly convey a message. One essential finding by Kang and Mastin was the need to decide whether to direct

messages to the audience from the country's perspective or from the foreign visitor's perspective.

Designing a Web site that reaches a diverse audience with different levels of interest might be necessary for an organization attempting to reach a broad audience. Kleine (2005) examined the impact and potential of Fairtrade internet campaigns in Germany. One major finding was that Web sites need to be user-friendly for all visitors regardless of their level of commitment to the site. Some visitors may simply want information, while others might want to buy something online, and because of this, Web sites must reach out to all of them. Branding is also important to make the organization's message apparent and recognizable. The author made it clear that one must take into account an "organization's online presence and its relationship with the offline sphere" (Kleine, p. 81). The offline sphere includes donors, partners, and viewers.

When Lewiecki, Rudolph, Kiebzak, Chavez, and Thorpe (2006) aimed to build and evaluate measurement tools to establish the Web site quality for osteoporosis patients, they developed quality indicator categories that included content, credibility, navigability, currency, and readability. Separate evaluation tools were determined for

healthcare professionals and for patients. The authors observed significant variability in Web site quality. More search engine matches and specific URL suffixes were significantly associated with higher-quality scores for the Web sites. The authors believed that because many patients use the internet to gather information on health related issues, a tool for evaluating medical Web sites may be valuable in assisting patients select better informational Web sites, and may encourage improvement in the information quality on internet Web sites.

Reaching out to donors and advocates through online communication is a significant and effective way for charitable groups to network. Hart (2006) believed that, for nonprofit organizations, the internet represents a unique and cost-effective opportunity to develop and strengthen relationships with those in their communities. As "ePhilanthropy" (Hart, 2006) has materialized, nonprofit organizations have taken advantage of consistent e-mail communication directing people to the organization's structured Web site. This has become central to the success of nonprofit organizations. Hart cautioned that charitable groups should utilize the internet primarily as a communication tool and then as a tool for fundraising. He

believed that success will come from building and enhancing relationships instead of from technology alone.

In relation to television, film, newspaper, and magazines, the internet's portrayal of the developing world is a relatively new and virtually unexplored medium in Communication Studies. As mentioned, much of the research conducted about media and the developing world examines newspapers and television (Celeste, 2005; Langton, 1991; Larson, 1979; Larson, 1984; Markham, 1961; Morales, 1982, Ovsiovitch, 1993; Pillai, 2000; Ricchiardi, 2006; Wilson, 2006). The internet can provide an alternative medium that many people have access to and that have worldwide distribution. This thesis was designed to add to the research conducted on Web sites' messages regarding developing countries and cultures, and include a new element to the abundantly researched topic of "Third World" representation in newspapers and television.

Examining One

While there is a great deal of research examining effectiveness of advertising campaigns by global nonprofit organizations, this study explored the messages that are sent to a particular nonprofit organization's audience members. In order to understand the messages the Web site

is conveying, it is important to know the background of the organization.

The One campaign and the Debt AIDS Trade Africa (DATA) organization Web sites detail the history of the One organization. Bono in collaboration with Bobby Shriver and other global activists joined together in 2002 to create an organization called Debt AIDS Trade Africa. DATA focuses its efforts on fighting AIDS and extreme poverty in Africa through public consciousness and cooperation between government and policy leaders from several countries around the world.

In 2004, alongside 11 other organizations (Bread for the World, CARE, DATA, International Medical Corps, International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps, Oxfam America, Plan USA, Save the Children US, World Concern, and World Vision) (One Web site, *FAQs page, Who is behind One?* section, para. 1), the One campaign was launched to create a movement that sought to actively engage Americans in the fight against global AIDS and extreme poverty. Through One, Americans from a variety of diverse backgrounds are seeking to influence policy by asking the U.S. government to contribute more effort and resources to this imperative fight. The Web sites go on to discuss EDUN, a clothing

company that focuses on high quality fashion that comes from ethical sources. EDUN came about in 2005 through the work of Ali Hewson, Bono and designer Rogan Gregory in an effort to help the developing world have access to increased trade opportunities and long-term employment. EDUN's fundamental belief is that we should all "have respect for and investment in the people and places where its clothing is made" (DATA Web site, *Partners* page, para. 8). The DATA Web site goes on to explain that in 2006, Bono, again with the help of Bobby Shriver, joined with leaders in the business industry to initiate (RED), an organization dedicated to fighting the battle against AIDS in Africa by appealing to private citizens. (RED) products raise money as well as awareness for the Global Fund. A portion of the proceeds from each (RED) item sold is directly invested into AIDS programs for women and children in Africa. Between DATA, One, EDUN and (RED) there is a way for every individual in America to get involved in the fight against AIDS and extreme poverty. Whether it is by writing to Congresspeople, wearing One's white wristband, buying a (RED) product, or learning more about the issues and spreading the word throughout one's community networks, there is an opportunity for everyone to make a difference.

As described on their Web site, the One campaign is a continually growing movement with over 2 million people and more than 100 leading U.S. relief, humanitarian, and advocacy organizations collaborating against AIDS and poverty-related issues. Two and a half million people in the American public have signed the One declaration and millions of people around the world are sporting the white One wristband in support (One Web site, *FAQs* page, *Who supports One?* section, para. 1). The organization's funding is supplied through private and public foundations, sales of merchandise, and non-tax deductible donations (One Web site, *FAQs* page, *How is One funded?* section, para. 1). Due to the lack of funding from religious or political groups and corporations, One has the potential to be alternative media. If the One campaign actually portrays the developing world in a more positive light, resistant to the abundantly negative norm in U.S. media, One may just fall into the category of alternative media. By raising their voices and asking the U.S. government to do more in the fight to save millions of lives in the poorest parts of the world, Americans are activating the effort to handle critical issues. "One believes that allocating an additional 1% of the U.S. budget toward providing basic needs like health,

education, clean water, and food would transform the futures and hopes of an entire generation in the world's poorest countries" (DATA Web site, *DATA Partners* section, para. 12).

The One Web site describes itself as "a movement designed to rally Americans to fight the global war against AIDS and extreme poverty as One" (One Web site, *About* page, para. 1). It simply asks for one voice, one vote, one more person to lend their effort in the movement. Just one person lending their support to the petition asking for debt forgiveness and additional aid can add up to millions of people lobbying for change. It is important to note here that although the One Web site contains an abundant amount of literature about the developing world and developing nations, its main focus is in Africa. While their goal may be to advocate for countries and people throughout the world, their main efforts at this point in the campaign are directed to only one part of the developing world. Therefore, when addressing developing nations, the reality is that those nations are solely on the African continent.

The organization's Web site details not only its goals and purposes, but also the issues facing Africa and the need for an organization such as theirs. One partners with

a long list of other nonprofit organizations advocating for a better life for those who are suffering in Africa, all of which are given links to their home pages on One's Web site. One also has a *FAQs* page on their internet site that answers many relevant and common questions that people may ask of the organization. The site also details how an individual or a group can get involved in their movement, either by taking action by signing the declaration, getting involved in local community events, or visiting their online store. It is also important to note that as of July 2008 the One Web site had focused attention on the upcoming U.S. Presidential election and each candidate's stance on global poverty and aid.

Because One is a nonprofit organization, solely available on the internet, that explicitly targets Americans and portrays developing world people, it serves as an ideal text to examine for this research. Specifically, the texts under examination include One's *Home page*, *About page*, *Issues page*, and *FAQs page* captured on August 1, 2008 (see Appendix A, B, C, & D). Each Web page under study was captured to enable the researcher and readers to have the actual data used for this thesis. These four pages are significant because of the verbal and visual

messages presented on them. The *Home* page includes eye-catching pictures and advertisements, while the other three pages provide detailed text explaining the purpose and goals of the organization, as well as answers to commonly asked questions. While the *Home* page would be the most visited page on the Web site, the *About* page, *Issues* page, and *FAQs* page are also significant for visitors gathering information about One. Because of their ability to communicate about the organization and the developing world, it was important to examine the representations on all four pages and their significance in the larger picture of U.S. media representations of the developing world.

Research Questions

Because of the U.S. media's immense power to portray other countries and their people, it is important to look at how the U.S. represents the developing world. Based on the aforementioned statement of the problem and accompanying literature review, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How does the One Web site visually represent the "Other"?

RQ2: How does the One Web site verbally represent the "Other"?

RQ3: How might these portrayals affirm or negate cultural imperialism?

In order to answer these questions, I used semiotics to conduct an in-depth, critical examination of the One Web site's *Home*, *About*, *Issues*, and *FAQs* pages.

Method: Semiotic Analysis

Semiotics was used to examine how this nonprofit Web site depicts the developing world. Semiotics "teaches us that reality is a system of signs. Studying semiotics can assist us to become more aware of reality as a construction and of the roles played by ourselves and others in constructing it" (Chandler, 2007, *Introduction* section, para. 25). This method helped answer the research questions by exposing how the One Web site creates representations of the developing world through a system of carefully constructed signs.

Contributors of the Semiotic Method

"The name semiotics derives from the ancient Greek word semeion, which means 'sign.' Semiotics is a way of analyzing meanings by looking at the signs which

communicate meanings" (Bignell, 1997, p. 1). Semiotics was developed in order to understand how language works, but has been applied to other forms of communication as well (Bignell, 1997). Modern semiotic analysis has its origins with Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (Berger, 1998; Bignell, 1997; Eco, 1979; Silverman, 1983). Both researchers had major contributions to the field of semiotics, but differed in their conceptions of signs and representation.

Saussure is said to be the founder of structuralism (Barker, 2008) because his concern was not with language performance but rather the structures of language. He explored the process by which cultural meaning is produced. According to Saussure, a signifying system is composed of a series of signs that are examined in terms of their individual parts. The components of a sign include a signifier and the signified. Saussure also explored cultural codes, or how "signs are commonly organized into a sequence that generates meaning through the cultural conventions of their usage within a particular context" (Barker, 2008, p. 77). Barker used the example of traffic lights and their colors to illustrate this concept. He said the color red is meaningful in this context only in

relation to green and yellow. These signs are organized into codes that generate meaning. Therefore, traffic lights arrange the color red to signify the concept of stop and the color green to signify the concept of go. "All cultural practices depend on meanings generated by signs" (Barker, 2008, p. 78).

Pierce (1991) stated that semiotics involves the work of three subjects, which include a sign, its object, and its interpretant. He believed that our world was almost exclusively composed of signs. "Whatever we do can be seen as a message, or...a sign" (Berger, 1998, p. 4). Pierce also brought to the field of semiotics three different dimensions of signs, which include the iconic, the indexical, and the symbolic (Bignell, 1997). He explained that iconic signs carry some quality of the thing they stand for, an indexical sign is physically connected with its object meaning it indicates that something has existed or occurred, and a symbolic sign arbitrarily stand for something through a process of consensus.

Berger (1998) was another scholar who studied semiotics, and stated that codes inform almost every aspect of human existence. He believed that codes serve as a useful concept for analyzing media. Berger applied

semiotics to television, and said that in this medium it is more important to explore aspects that function as signs instead of those carrying signs. Things such as camera angles, editing techniques, lighting, use of color, music, and sound effects are all signifiers that help audiences interpret things they see and hear. "Television is a highly complex medium that uses verbal language, visual images, and sound to generate impressions and ideas in people" (Berger, p. 31). These same concepts that Berger applied to a semiotic analysis can also be applied to the internet because these two media share many similarities within style and content, especially through verbal and visual language.

Derrida also contributed to the field of semiotics with his own ideas about signs. He argued that from the moment meaning is created within language, humans only process things in terms of signs (Derrida, 1978). "We cannot think about knowledge, truth and culture without signs" (Barker, 2008, p. 83). Derrida's concept of *différance* states that meaning is never fixed because words can have multiple meanings. He believed that a "supplement adds to and substitutes meanings" (Barker, p. 85), and this is why meaning is inherently unstable and constantly

changing. Barker (2008) illustrated the concept of *différance* with the example of a dog. He said that a dog is a dog because it is not any other kind of animal (cat, wolf, bird, etc...). It is through the knowledge of what something is not that people understand what something is.

Eco (1979) added many ideas and concepts to semiotics, but one contribution is especially salient. He claimed there were two types of signs that are outside of a communicational definition, and those were "physical events coming from a natural source, and...human behavior not intentionally emitted by its senders" (Eco, p. 16). A sign exists every time a group decides to recognize something as a vehicle for something else. An event can be a sign vehicle of its cause and/or effect if one of these is not actually apparent. Eco illustrated this concept by saying that smoke is only an indexical sign of fire if the fire itself cannot be seen. Eco's other concept is that which involves human behavior. A person can perform an act that is seen by others as a signaling device. This can be accomplished through gestures and these behaviors can signify something even though the sender does not mean to use them in that capacity.

Employing Semiotics

In order to explore nonprofit Web sites' verbal and visual representations of the developing world, a semiotic analysis of One was conducted. Critics employ semiotics to analyze signs and symbols that are used to construct and understand meaning (Chandler, 2007). Signs and symbols are often seen in the form of words, images, sounds, gestures, and objects. Because this method is concerned with meaning-making, it was used to examine the representations of a nonprofit organization in order to investigate messages throughout their internet campaign. This is significant because semiotics is an approach applied to "anything that can be seen as signifying something, or to everything that has meaning in a culture" (Chandler, 2007, *D.I.Y. semiotic analysis* section, para. 1). An examination of verbal and visual signs was utilized for an in-depth assessment in order to deconstruct an organization that at a cursory glance seems to rely heavily on positive depictions. In order to utilize semiotics to guide this study, it is important to understand how this method has been used by other scholars in different ways. This method has been applied to a broad range of topics including flags, golf scorecards, magazines, and advertising.

Hundley (2004) used semiotics to analyze citizens' arguments surrounding the Georgia state flag and the Confederate flag. Her article explored how different interpretations of a shared sign existed within the same culture. There was a symbolic argument from proponents of the racial flag because of their family heritage and history with those who participated in the Civil War. Opponents of the same flag argued with indexical interpretations of racism and hatred. A syntagmatic examination revealed that there were political reasons for the racial sign which included protesting desegregation and advocating for white supremacy. Hundley argued that since signs are arbitrary, proponents of the racially charged flag could possibly choose another symbol to represent these same ideals in a less racist fashion.

Another application of semiotics analyzed the language on golf scorecards (Hundley, 2004). Using signs and symbols as a guide, Hundley (2004) discovered that these scorecards support the dominant hegemonic ideology that golf is a man's game based on ability, whereas women who play golf are evaluated based on gender instead of skill. "This semiotic analysis exposes how people in positions of power reinforce or reproduce sexist discourse in golf" (Hundley,

p. 45). While males get to choose their own location to tee off from, this location is designated to women and junior golfers in spite of individual aptitude. The author stated that this leads to the operationalization rather than elimination of gender discrimination in golf.

Bezemer and Kress (2008) explored how written uses and forms have changed over the years, and they believe this calls for a more semiotic approach to analyzing such texts. "Writing is being displaced by image as the central mode for representation" (Bezemer & Kress, 2008, p. 166), and because of this, semiotics supplies the tools necessary to examine such symbols. Television, newspaper, and internet stories do not typically garner attention unless there is a flashy picture accompanying them. Words alone do not have the same effect anymore. Audiences have come to expect books, newspapers, and magazines with pictures in them. With new technology, images are abundant in most all forms of media, and examining them is extremely important because of their prevalence in every day life and every day communication.

Parasecoli (2005) explored connections between food, images of masculinity, and body image as portrayed in male fitness magazines. He attempted to decipher what he

believed to be a complex code created by frequent references to food and eating. These, Parasecoli saw as constituting a conversation about masculinities that utilize images, words, metaphors and signs. His semiotic analysis uncovered themes that emerged from these magazines. He concluded that men are supposed to be seen as eaters, and should not get involved in the chores of cooking. Food is not meant to be an indulgence; it is merely to sustain a healthy and beautiful body. A male's body is his domain, and a fit body shows off a man's control over that domain. The images and words in advertising can send a very strong message to people about the way they should look, act, and behave. Semiotics is a valuable method of study because it brings to light hidden messages that people consume everyday through media.

It is also important to research more specific communication that is not as common in every day encounters. For instance, Marschall (2004) investigated three visual campaigns that target awareness of HIV and AIDS in South Africa. These three campaigns included murals, print portfolios, billboards, and crafts. Each medium is seen as conveying a message to its audience; however, the message may be viewed differently by the

artist (encoder) and by the viewer (decoder). Because the messages may shift and change according to the person it is attached to, representations are polysemous and can appeal to many diverse crowds. Examining various meanings of messages can enlighten viewers and creators to the various significance their signs and symbols hold.

Mick (1986) discussed the basic perspectives of semiotics and explored ways in which consumer researchers can apply semiotics to the marketplace and consumer life. In general, semiotics is a method used to analyze signs and symbols that construct meaning, which is at the center of consumer behavior (Mick, 1986). Mick provides insight into how humans create, use, and abuse symbols to influence their own lives and the world around them. This is useful for marketers to explore because it explains audience interpretation of advertisers' messages.

Giarelli (2006) employed semiotics to analyze how visual pictures represented the costs and rewards of cloning and stem cell research. Images from local and national syndicated sources and Web sites published between 2001 and 2004 were analyzed. Regardless of year of publication, Giarelli found that stem cell research was portrayed positively, while cloning was represented

negatively through these themes: "embryonic stem cell researchers value...life, cloning will lead to the mass production of evil, cloning creates monsters" (p. 127). This may have caused much more emphasis on stem cell research because it was portrayed more favorably than cloning. Regardless, it is important to explore portrayals and representations to find out what messages are being sent.

Semiotics can be applied in a variety of ways. These include intextuality, paradigms and syntagms, and encoding and decoding to name a few. Although all of these are powerful and useful ways to conduct a semiotic analysis, the tools that were used for this study include rhetorical tropes and denotation, connotation, and myth. These were chosen due to their significance in relation to the Web site being explored in this thesis. Tropes are a form of figurative language that help people interpret meaning and create imagery with implications beyond any literal meaning (Chandler, 2007). "Once we employ a trope, our utterance becomes part of a much larger system of associations which is beyond our control (Chandler, 2007, *Rhetorical tropes* section, para. 4). Chandler (2007) stated that figurative language functions as part of a maintenance system that

determines the reality of a culture, therefore, it was necessary to explore the One Web site's verbal and visual metaphors in order to uncover how countries and people are figuratively represented within the U.S. cultural system. Denotation is the literal meaning of an image or word, whereas connotation is the social and personal associations of signs and symbols (Chandler, 2007). Both of these terms involve the use of codes, and therefore, it was important to examine the denotative and connotative messages on the One Web site in order to expose the codes being used by this organization. Chandler described myths as being "the dominant ideologies of our time" and argued that "the orders of signification called denotation and connotation combine to produce ideology" (Chandler, 2007, *Denotation, Connotation, and Myth* section, para. 11). Utilizing societal myths in a semiotic analysis attempts to analyze the ways in which codes function in texts, with the objective of revealing how certain attitudes and beliefs are maintained while others are concealed (Chandler, 2007). It is important to explore societal myths that are conveyed on One's Web site to discover what values, attitudes and beliefs about the developing world are being portrayed by this organization.

The goal of this research was to semiotically examine how the Web site of the One organization either supports previous conclusions of negative representations in U.S. media of the developing world, or breaks the mold with more positive representations of this part of the world. Taking a cultural imperialism perspective, the following two chapters offer semiotic critique of the One organization's *Home*, *About*, *Issues*, and *FAQs* Web site pages visual and verbal portrayals of people in Africa.

CHAPTER THREE

VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD

A primary goal of this study was to explore visual representations of the developing world on the One organization's Web site. Although the pictures utilized do not show disease, death, and suffering, they still convey the message that Africa is inferior and subordinate to the dominating United States. Despite the few positive pictures that show happy and excited volunteers giving their time to the organization, One conveys an ultimately negative representation of the reliant "black" continent of Africa in need of a saving by an outside red, "white," and blue superior culture such as the United States.

Pictures and Images

The One Web site is unique in that it does not rely heavily on visual representation--the site itself has much more text to it than images or pictures.

In being less reliant than writing on symbolic signs, film, television and photography suggest less of an obvious gap between the signifier and its signified, which make them seem to offer 'reflections of

reality'. But photography does not reproduce its object: it 'abstracts from, and mediates, the actual'. (Chandler, 2007, *Modality and Representation* section, para. 17)

Although there are some pictures and images throughout the pages of interest, three (*About*, *Issues*, and *FAQs*) out of the four pages examined are far more text-heavy. A look at the predominant symbols used throughout the One campaign is necessary to establish messages conveyed on all four pages of interest. Photographs of celebrities, volunteers, and a few images of African people are utilized throughout these Web pages, and are significant because of what is seen in the pictures as well as what is missing from these images. The shape of a circle and colors also play an important role in how One communicates its message to the audience, and gives insight into what message they are attempting to express.

The Use of Color

Although there are not many pictures or images utilized throughout One's Web site, the colors used on each page are extremely significant. Black, white, red, and blue are the only colors employed on the site. Given the connotation and denotation surrounding the combination of

black and white, and red, white, and blue, these colors play an integral part in the message that is being conveyed to One's audience members.

White and Black. The main symbol in the four pages examined in this study of the One campaign is the white wristband, and it is significant for two reasons. First, the color white, and second, the circular shape are both present on all pages of interest on One's internet site. Each indicates several meanings that are apparent throughout this Web site. The significance of the circle will be analyzed more in the following section, while the color white is addressed in this section.

In Western culture, white is generally used in weddings for the bride; the virgin being given into a sacred bond. It is also the color of angels; heavenly, wholesome, and representing good over evil. Priests often wear white robes as a symbol of rightness with God. It is also a sign of perfection and of safety. When used in this way, the good white can be seen as several different metaphors. For example, white list--list of good or acceptable items; white as the driven snow--pure, clean, and innocent; white elephant--rare and valuable; white

knight--someone who comes to another person's rescue, someone perceived as being good, and noble.

Although there are many pictures that rotate through on the four web pages in this study, the majority of those images show volunteers and celebrities of light skin color. While there are some people of color in these images, the vast majority of people are "white"--a girl in front of a blank screen with a serious look and modeling the white bracelet; a group of friends showing support at a One event by holding up their index finger; a spokesman behind a podium speaking at a One rally; one of the founders of the organization rallying the crowd and launching the campaign. In all of these photographs, the people shown are light skinned. There is one picture that appears on the Web site that shows a table of brochures and wristbands. The brochures picture what the audience can assume is a black African child on the front. This single picture is the only one where color is predominant in the people shown instead of white. Despite a few celebrity supporters and volunteers, and the two token African representatives that appear throughout these pages, the vast majority of people pictured have light skin tone.

White is not truly a color, but rather the absence of all color. Humans can have the tendency to see others in terms of color, and in particular black and white. When humans see all colors, shades and variations instead of divisions of race, this unifies all people on an equal level; meaning that everyone has the same basic human rights to life, health, and happiness. Without social divisions to separate groups, people can be motivated to fight to give others the same rights that they themselves enjoy without regard to gender, age, race, color, nationality, or location in the world. Unfortunately, the One Web site conveys an obvious distinction between black and white, which separates not only the people but the developing world from the developed world as well.

In the absence of color, all people can truly come together as One; however, when the color white is utilized in contrast with black, there is an automatic connotation that there is conflict between the two. While the use of the color white can mean equality for all people, in contrast with the color black, especially when used on a Web page outlining problems in the predominately "black" continent of Africa and asking the predominately "white" country of the United States to help resolve those

problems, there is the assumption that black and white are clashing with each other. Used in this way, the color white loses its uniting power and simply heightens the struggle between the two. This positions the United States in a central role while Africa remains in a secondary one.

Red, White, and Blue. White is used as the key color throughout the four pages examined for this study, and as discussed in the previous section, black is the second most utilized color. Two other colors are highlighted on the *Home, About, Issues, and FAQs* pages and given the significance of the "white" culture in this campaign, red and blue support the notion of the United States playing a primary role in the fight against AIDS and extreme poverty.

All page titles, such as *About, Issues, and FAQs*, appear in the color red, while links to other important pages are shown in the color blue. Words that have an emphasis also appear in a color other than the standard black and gray text. For example, the *About* page has a line that states, "Add your signature to the ONE Declaration" (One Web site, *About* page). The word "your" appears in red giving extra emphasis to the fact that the campaign is reaching out to each individual browser, stressing that every person's voice and action counts. The Web site is

also emphasizing the fact that each individual can come together to create a larger group of people advocating for the same goal. This is illustrated on the *Home* page with the declaration "We Believe, We Recognize, We Commit" (One Web site, *Home* page), where the word "we" appears in blue on each line.

The colors red and blue in combination with white give the four pages a purely American look and feel. These colors might not denote any meaning, and it can be argued that they were just a simple combination of colors chosen for the Web site; however, the connotation behind the use of red, white, and blue boasts the authority of the United States on a site that is supposed to be dedicated to helping a group of developing nations. Instead of accomplishing this, the use of color throughout these pages only serves to highlight the fact that the U.S. is front and center even when attempting to help others.

A Circle

In addition to the use of particular colors, the shape of a circle is also a prominent sign in the four Web pages explored in this study. It is used on each page, as well as on their wristband and t-shirts which are main signs that someone is a supporter of the movement.

One common meaning of a circle is unity and solidarity as in "circle of friends" or a "sewing circle." This shows that one person can become part of a community of supporters. The movement is not about a single person, a single vote, or a single voice; it is about one person, one vote, one voice contributing to the larger whole. The One campaign is about bringing Americans together in unison about the issues of AIDS and extreme poverty. It is creating a cohesive unit of Americans that can stand up for their beliefs and accomplish a goal as One group.

The circle also represents wholeness. So, in bringing this symbol into a campaign that impacts East and West, black and white, brother and sister, parent and child, it shows these are issues that affect humanity as one unit. As a whole we should care about and be willing to help any part of the whole that is suffering, because ultimately their pain is everyone's pain. AIDS and extreme poverty are not isolated to Africa or other developing nations; they are problems that involve each and every one of us as members of the human race. If the United States of America and Americans do not help, the circle could be broken and humanity could lose the solidarity that makes it One.

This is a very powerful and effective trope in joining people together in a global fight against a severe injustice. It succeeds in placing all countries, cultures, and people on the same level, in the same situations, and part of the same world. In this sense, a circle is a very positive representation of humanity and unity; however, at the same time, the connotation is that if Americans do not contribute to this fight for humanity, and save the other parts of the circle, the human race will suffer as a result of their inaction. Yet again, this places the United States and Americans in the dominant position--one of control and power over other cultures and people.

Photographs

The pictures of people on the One campaign's internet pages show volunteers who appear happy to be supporting the cause, or celebrities that are very somber looking while promoting a serious cause. United States media is filled with tragedy, hardship, and suffering, but this is not what the pictures on One's Web site market to its audience. In fact, the only pictures of African people shown on their internet Web site are in a single snapshot of a child's face on a picture within a picture and in videos where the

predominant pictures are of One volunteers and celebrity promoters.

Celebrities. Celebrities are known for being flashy and showing off their stardom with materiel goods such as jewelry, brand name clothes, and other accessories. While stars tend to live very elaborate lives, they are simplified in the photographs on One's internet Web site. While a select few still wear a cross around their neck or a pair of sunglasses, as is a signature of celebrity singer Bono, the vast majority of the celebrities are only displaying One's white wristband. There are no shiny gold and diamond earrings, bracelets, or necklaces, and no colorful designer dresses and suits are present either. The video pictures of the celebrity supporters on the *Home* page lack any colors other than black and white. The black and white pictures with minimal to no excessive garnishing down play the status of these celebrities by placing them at an equal level with everyone else. Without their flashy clothing and accessories, the stars convey they are just another voice supporting One's cause. Although the audience still knows that these are celebrities and can be swayed by that fact, the stars simplification makes them seem more

real and grounded just like the audience members themselves.

The lack of color in the celebrity photographs can represent the lack of choice to take action for the audience and the pictures of the celebrities offer a different representation of the issue than the rest of the images. These photos are completely black and white with no color present at all. No one in these images is smiling or showing any happiness or contentment at all. All of the famous people in these pictures have very serious expressions on their faces, conveying the gravity of the issue to the audience. There are no flashy props or colors taking away from the message; there is simply a celebrity in front of a screen.

The only visible prop in each frame with the stars is the white wristband or a One t-shirt that symbolizes the campaign. The implied message here is that AIDS and extreme poverty are a severe problem, and that lending one's support to the One campaign, as these celebrities have done, can be the solution to the problem. Although this is a serious problem, and the celebrities help convey that message, the focus of the campaign is not on celebrity endorsements, but rather on conveying the importance of

individual voice through words. There is one main distinction between the images of celebrities and volunteers on the One Web site. While the pictures of the stars lack any color and show very serious people, the photos of the volunteers exude a great deal of color in parts of clothing and background, and the people in them are smiling and seem enthusiastic about what they are doing.

Volunteers. In the majority of pictures used on the *Home, About, Issues, and FAQs* pages, colors are not primary but rather the photos are mostly in black and white. None of these pictures are solely black and white; however, black and white are still the two most utilized colors. For example, the video section on the *Home* page shows white screens as backgrounds or black and white video clips; the *FAQs* page shows a girl in front of a gray screen wearing a white shirt and white bracelet; people in the pictures are generally wearing black and white suits or black and white One t-shirts. Although there is blue sky in the background, a brown table, or some different colored shirts, the predominant colors are still black and white.

While the celebrities convey the impending devastation and need in Africa, the volunteers seem to be representing

the exciting and fun rewards of getting involved in the One campaign. Showing both the necessity for action and the result of helping through the One organization is a potentially powerful tactic in recruiting and retaining volunteers and supporters of this cause. This allows interested people to see why they should get involved as well as what they can receive out of involvement in the fight against injustice in Africa.

The absence of color in many of the photographs illustrates the connotation of what the campaign says is a one-sided issue, or what can also be seen as a black and white issue. This simply means there is not a gray area when it comes to the issues of AIDS and extreme poverty. The message is saying you (each member of its audience) can and must sign the declaration, voice your opinion, vote to make a difference, and support the movement. The real point of this campaign is that it is not asking for money. There is no *Donate Now* button on the *Home* page and every other page on the site. There is still a place on the Web site to give money, but users can only access it if they first show an interest in supporting the movement by purchasing a t-shirt or a wristband. This is not an issue of money, where people can go back and forth between having or not

having money to give, or being sure or not being sure that one supports giving money to Africa. Because it is a one-sided issue of fighting for human rights in Africa, rights that most all Americans enjoy on a daily basis without having to fight for them, the battle against AIDS and extreme poverty is one that anyone and everyone can easily give their voice. So, this semiotic analysis of the visual messages finds that while the stars convey the gravity of the situation One is attempting to solve, the volunteers are showing the personal satisfaction each person receives from joining One's cause.

African Survivors/Victims. The One campaign employs very little imagery on its Web site; however, there are several pictures throughout the *Home* page. Although not used abundantly on the internet Web site of the One campaign, except in one photograph and through links to video advertisements, children are utilized as a picture of what AIDS and extreme poverty look like. The main tagline on these videos states, "Every three seconds, a child dies, from AIDS and extreme poverty" (One internet *Home* page, *Video* section, video 6). Starving children with bloated bellies, orphaned children whose parents have died from disease, the image of a child dying every three seconds

from these two causes; these images denote the outcome of AIDS and poverty. Although pictures such as this are not shown on the Web pages, the implication that accompanies pictures such as this is that children are the victims of such hardships. The picture of a child shown on One's Web site does not express a healthy happy child. He is not smiling like the volunteers are, and does not exude health by holding a water bottle or other possessions like the photos of the volunteers show. Children affected by situations of disease, death, and scarcity imply very severe circumstances.

Children are wholesome, pure, and blameless. They are innocent bystanders of the war against disease and poverty, and they have done nothing to deserve the punishment they are receiving. They also represent what someone is saving by joining the movement. The myth of the U.S. being the knight in shining armor that rescues these children from a life of sickness and death is implied through these images. The color white as worn on a wristband, by Americans who are fighting for the children shown in these videos, signifies a right and just savior; maybe only one person, but part of the whole country that is waging the war against such injustices.

As evidenced by the black and white pictures, there is only one option in the fight against this global atrocity. They also show that black and white can come together in the fight against AIDS and poverty; however, the contrast is more prevalent than the collectivity. This contrast is illuminated even more by the fact that white is the dominate color throughout the Web site (as mentioned earlier in this analysis), used mainly as the background color on each page, which can be related to the assumption that the United States is the dominant country that will ultimately save Africa and its future from hardship.

Although these few images of African children convey a message of need and dependence, the Web site still portrays a positive picture of the developing world through one video link as well as what images they are not producing on their Web site. Many nonprofits use pictures of disease, death and suffering to promote their cause (see e.g. Doctors Without Borders, World Vision, Unicef, Invisible Children); however, One does not show the people of Africa in a negative light. The one picture of a child used on One's *Issues* page may not show a happy smiling child; however, it simply displays the child's face and not his bulging belly, bare feet, or teary eyes. One's attempt not

to exploit the people the organization is trying to help comes across in the absence of negative images such as these. The organization also conveys a positive message for the people of Africa by displaying a video that shows how Africans are attempting to help themselves become more independent.

The idea of Africa becoming autonomous is illustrated in a video link that shows an African woman producing t-shirts for the One campaign. Although she is still reliant on the American consumer to buy her product, she is contributing to her own self-existence and not fully relying on charity from an outside source. This is conveying a positive representation that One does not expect Africa to remain dependent and underprivileged forever, but rather communicates an optimistic future for the struggling continent. Unfortunately this message does not continue to be expressed throughout the rest of the Web pages of interest in this study.

Semiotic Visual Conclusions

The visual representations portrayed on One's Web site as evidenced in the *Home*, *About*, *Issues*, and *FAQs* pages are a mixture of positive and negative representations. While

many of the messages follow the all too popular mold of negativity, there are a few messages, both what is seen and not shown, that convey a more positive representation of the situations facing the developing world.

The lack of exploitative photos of children that seem to be so dominating in nonprofit campaigns, and the one message of self-sufficiency seen with the women making a living by producing t-shirts are effective tropes that signal the start of a positive image of Africa and the developing world. The way the campaign utilizes celebrities and volunteers can also be seen in an encouraging light. Although the celebrity supporters appear very serious and somber, the fact that they are not flashy and superior looking lessens the gap between the two worlds. It serves to place all people on equal ground by not showing the literal severity of the situation in Africa compared to the glamour of Hollywood celebrities, but rather allowing the audience to envision a connotation of prosperity and autonomy for the developing world. Despite these few hopeful representations, the overall message conveyed through One's visual representations does not contain any message of optimism.

Through their visual representations, One not only conveys the societal myth that the United States is the savior of the developing world, but also that Africa is constantly in need of saving by an outside entity. One represents Africa and the developing world as a "black" dependent subsidiary people and culture that relies on the red, "white," and blue superior country of the United States to come and save them from disease and death. The use of a circle can symbolize unity and humanity; however, in conjunction with the other visual images that position the U.S. front and center and Africa at the bottom, the circle loses this primary meaning and once again displays the power and control of the United States. This works to keep the developing world in the devastating position of third rate and reliant on others by casting them in a negative light to the rest of the world.

These findings suggest that the pictures and images on One's Web site convey a negative portrayal of the developing world, one in which the "white" Caucasian world (i.e., the United States) plays dominant savior and the "black" world (Africa) plays poor subordinate. This dominance is not just regarding the sheer number of negative versus positive images, but rather the placement

and prominence of each. The few positive messages regarding the developing world are presented through links on the pages of study and through messages that are not present on the pages, whereas the negative messages are front and center on each of the four pages and conveyed multiple times.

CHAPTER FOUR

VERBAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD

In conjunction with examining visual signs, another goal of this study was to explore the verbal representations of the developing world that appear on the One organization's Web site. Although pictures are very effective forms of communication and convey emotional messages, words are just as significant because they too can lead to images, thoughts, and actions about and towards the cultures and people in the developing world. Despite the positive message of self-reliance that appears once on the Web site, and the uniting way the campaign uses the word "one," the rest of the representations conveyed by the wording describes Africa as a dependent and disadvantaged place in need of saving, and through "we" statements suggests that the United States is the rescuer Africa needs in order to survive and thrive. This implies the same message as the visual images--Africa is a poor continent in need of aid and assistance from the generous and charitable United States.

Words

The One Web site is extremely text-heavy as it utilizes words as the primary form of representation rather than pictures and images. Despite the abundance of images on the *Home* page, the other three pages of interest provide between 5 and 35 paragraphs of information explaining what the organization is about, what issues the organization strives to address, and offers answers to common questions from its audience members. For instance, the *About* page consists of approximately 90% words and paragraphs of information, while only one picture and one image make up the other 10%. The *Issues* page also contains approximately 90% wording, and two pictures and one image for the remaining 10%. The *FAQs* page contains much more text and consists of approximately 95% words, while two pictures and one image make up the final 5% of the page.

The words analyzed in this study were selected for their significance in the overall campaign, and their amount of use throughout all four pages of interest. Expressive words such as "devastation," "inadequate," "deteriorating," and "world's poorest" were employed on all text-heavy pages, explaining the situation in Africa to the readers. These are significant because they show how the

U.S. based nonprofit organization One portrays the developing world of Africa to its American audience. Accompanying the depictions of Africa were "we" statements and descriptions that talk about saving Africa. This type of wording positions the United States as savior and rescuer of Africa. This message of unity is expressed through the use of the word "one." The organization is able to reach the American audience and solicit their involvement and support by assembling them as one group of people striving to reach one goal. The word "one" succeeds in unifying its audience members under a single cause.

The Word "One"

Structural metaphors are those overarching metaphors that allow people to form one concept in terms of another. The word "one" can be seen as a metaphor for gathering people together against the issue of basic human rights for those in the developing world, mainly Africa. One: the denotation of the word is that of single, individual, or alone; however, its connotations are much farther reaching. "One" is the primary word used to describe the entire campaign, and it promotes the idea that a single person--you, can join the fight to abolish AIDS and extreme poverty around the globe.

In explaining their mission, this is how One's Web site states the goals of the organization:

The ONE Campaign is an effort by Americans to rally Americans - one by one - to fight the emergency of global AIDS and extreme poverty. ONE is students and ministers, punk rockers and NASCAR moms, Americans of all beliefs and every walk of life, united to help make poverty history. The ONE Campaign derives its name from the belief that allocating an additional one percent of the U.S. budget toward providing basic needs like health, education, clean water and food would transform the futures and hopes of an entire generation in the world's poorest countries. (One Web site, *About* page, para. 1)

The objective of the entire campaign is to get Americans, one by one, to lend their support, in the form of a voice, a vote, or even volunteerism. One stresses that the movement cannot be run without each individual that signs on and supports the cause. One person, one voice, one vote, one goal is equal to all of the U.S. fighting for all of humanity. Although this message from One would have their audience believe otherwise, it is not a single vote, a single voice that changes public policy alone. The way to

bring about change is through a single person in unison with millions of others. Only then will that One voice or One vote accomplish as large a task as ending AIDS and extreme poverty.

One can seem like a small and insignificant number; however, this campaign is changing that view by placing such an emphasis on not only the word, but the meaning behind the word. The movement is seeking to encourage the leaders of the United States to not only forgive international debt, but also to give 1% more of its budget to the world's poorest countries. Many people probably imagine one percent of something and think little of it, but if one considers that the total U.S. budget for 2007 was almost three trillion dollars (Budget of the United States Government, 2007, Main page, *Fiscal Year 2007 Budget* section), 1% may look a whole lot bigger. This is a great deal of money, and what started as a meager one percent, turned into \$30 billion. Imagine those figures in terms of people; what starts out as one person voicing an opinion or a desire can quickly turn into millions of Americans fighting for a cause. When the entire population of the United States is supporting an issue and urging something to be done, it is rather difficult for the U.S. government

not to pay attention and take action. So, one person can start a cause, and turn it into two and a half million people supporting a movement, and \$30 billion a year being dedicated to eliminating two major causes of suffering and death in Africa and other developing nations around the globe. By using the simple word "one" the organization suggests that it is the single one that makes up the larger One that accomplishes such profound changes.

Thus, the simple word "one" has great significance in this campaign and is an extremely effective trope because it unites individual Americans as a group in the movement to abolish disease and death in the developing world. There can be no One without all the individual ones that form it in the first place. The One campaign is placing the importance of the entire movement on each individual that encompasses the whole group. It is a fight that each individual can join, but that has to be fought together with millions of other people. By placing such importance on individuals, the One campaign gives significance to each person affected by AIDS and poverty, making it a fight for people and not just an insurmountable goal to change the world.

Saving Africa

During the time of analysis (Summer 2008), the One Home page was focused mainly on the 2008 Presidential election. This was very fitting because voting and influencing political policy is the main objective of the One campaign; therefore, it is important to know what each Presidential candidate proposes to do about global issues such as AIDS and extreme poverty.

A prominent collection of wording appears in the middle of the Home page. The first word the browser comes across is an encouraging and brightly colored victory for the fight against AIDS and other disease with the availability of funding for this cause. This is significant because it immediately conveys to the viewer the positive outcome of taking the suggested action in the instructions that follow. The next group of words in the sequence are essential because they not only emanate the importance of voicing one's opinion in the election by voting, but they also place responsibility on each individual reading the page by stating, "Find out candidates' plans to fight global poverty" (One Web site, Home page). This statement is leaving it up to the audience to investigate the position of the Democratic and Republican Presidential

candidates on the issue of global poverty. It is not advocating for one contender or party over the other, but letting each person discover what they believe by making each candidate's position accessible to the viewers. The final section is reiterating the importance of voting in the Presidential election by using the tagline, "Making global poverty a priority in the 2008 election" (One Web site, *Home page*). This again places a responsibility in the hands of the audience by stressing that their vote and voice will make this global issue a priority to the next American president--the leader of the country who can save Africa from injustices.

This grouping of words expresses the primary goal of the One campaign. In doing so, the organization is conveying to the viewers that they, the American public, are the ones who can and will make global issues a priority and eventually gain victory. While this can be considered a positive message to literally get Americans out and voting for a larger purpose, it also represents the connotation that a victory in global issues relies on the American public's action. Once again this reinforces the popular myth that the United States is at the top rescuing the societies and people underneath the great U.S. Superpower.

This kind of boastfulness is essential, however, in enlisting Americans to start the metaphoric war against poverty and disease. Winning against such injustices would mean freedom and joy for everyone, especially the children, and winning the war comes as a result of the American public voting and influencing politics. This idea is evident in One's plea for the American public to petition its elected officials. By signing the petition asking both Republican and Democratic candidates to include in their platform an anti-poverty agenda, this document is reinforcing the idea that the U.S. and its leaders can "Prevent and treat HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria...provide access to quality primary education...double our poverty-focused development assistance...ensure access to clean water, basic sanitation and sufficient food supplies" (One Web site, Home page). The wording used here is conveying the power of the United States to supply Africans with better lives, and once again play savior to those less fortunate.

Despite several negative connotations, there is one point in this petition that addresses Africa in a more positive light. While recognizing that help is needed by an outside entity, the petition also states that one goal is

to "promote trade and investment with Africa and other developing nations to spur long-term economic growth and eventual self-sufficiency" (One Web site, Home page). Not only does the wording include the phrase "developing nation," which as discussed in chapter 1 is a drastic improvement from using terms such as "Third World" and "underdeveloped," but it is also allowing for the possibility and setting up a goal for Africa and other developing nations to become self-reliant and sufficient on their own, even if it is a result of some outside assistance to move that process along. This positive message, however, is only one in the midst of many negative messages conveyed throughout these four Web pages.

Describing Africa

The phrases used throughout the *About* and *Issues* pages on the One Web site imply that Africa is facing problems beyond their control--issues that need outside help in order to be resolved. Because One is a campaign that targets Americans, the implication is that the United States and Americans need to step in and save Africa.

The *About* and *Issues* pages aim to inform visitors of the problems facing Africa today and about what the One campaign is doing to help alleviate these struggles. The

organization explains in great detail the situation-- poverty, disease, and every day crises that Africans are fighting against. In describing these circumstances and situations, the Web site utilizes strong words that marginalize Africa and its people instead of empowering them. For instance, repeatedly Africa is referred to as one of the "poorest countries" (One Web site, *About* page, para. 1 & 4), "the poorest region of the world," "a poor country," and "world's poorest" (One Web site, *Issues* page, para. 1, 2, & 8). Strong words and phrases such as "devastation," "repaying debt," "unpayable debts," "rapidly deteriorating," "inadequate health systems," and "goes to bed hungry" (One Web site, *Issues* page, para. 2, 5, & 12) are used throughout the pages to describe the conditions in Africa. Wording like this contributes to the negative representations by adding labels to the harmful pictures that are already so prevalent in U.S. media.

The way the *About* and *Issues* pages of the One campaign's Web site represent Africa is overwhelmingly negative. The words and phrases used to describe African people and countries denote only hardships and problems. This may be because they are pages dedicated to outlining the issues that they feel the rest of the world needs to be

aware of and how their organization is helping; however, the way One does this implies Africa is merely a poor country in need of rescuing by all-powerful Americans.

The negative language about Africa utilized on the *About* and *Issues* pages of the One Web site is continued on the *FAQs* page. In answering the imperative questions about the organization, campaign, cause, and issues, the words continually portray a state of emergency, poverty, and debt. Describing African people in such devastating and negative ways is clearly evident in this analysis and simultaneously One's Web pages emphasize the overshadowing power and importance of the United States.

"We" Statements: Boasting American Power

In addition to the "one" language and saving and describing Africa, the One Web site is full of "we" statements. These statements provide specific instructions on how the outlined problems and situation can be resolved. Because the One Web site targets any and all Americans, Web browsers can assume that these statements are directed toward Americans.

The *Home* and *FAQs* pages state as the declaration of the One organization that:

We believe we can beat: AIDS, starvation, extreme poverty...We recognize that ONE billion people live on less than ONE dollar a day...We commit ourselves - one person, one voice, one vote at a time - to make a better, safer world for all. (One Web site, *Home and FAQs* page)

Through this statement the One campaign and Americans pledge by signing this declaration that they recognize the situation that faces the people of Africa, and they will commit to speaking out and taking action to overcome that devastation. This not only unites Americans as one force to save Africa, but it also situates Africans in an outside category because they are not part of the American "we," so they must be different, outsiders, "others." As discussed in chapter 1, this is a marginalizing label that subordinates one group to another.

The *About* page describes Americans part in saving Africa by stating "we are raising awareness...we are asking our leaders to do more," and this goal "may seem lofty, but it is within our reach," if we "mobilize people from all 50 states" (One Web site, *About* page, para. 1, 2 & 3). Although there are people in Africa that can raise awareness and petition leaders to help their situation, the

best solution seems to be for people from across the United States to mobilize each other and their leaders to solve the problems that face Africa. The answer is not on the continent that needs assistance but in a foreign land by an outside culture. It is the United States job to rescue and Africa's job to be rescued because of their label as an outside group to the dominant "we" group.

The *Issues* page is divided into twelve sections, each one focusing on a major problem or concern facing Africa and Africans. Eight out of these twelve sections contain "we" statements such as "we've made efforts to relieve them of these unpayable debts," and "we need to address hunger by..." (One Web site, *Issues* page, para. 7 & 10). The "we" the Web site is referring to is the United States who is beacons as the savior that must come to rescue another poor nation and its people. This is made clear when the proposed solution for each issue of concern in Africa involves action on the part of an outside entity.

The *FAQs* page states that as Americans "We can help transform the futures and hopes of an entire generation in the poorest countries...We can help...We can provide...We can save" (One Web site, *FAQs* page, para. 7); and "We can...make poverty history" (One Web site, *FAQs* page, para.

13). This is placing huge social, economic, and medical change in the hands of one country, and the United States believes it is the country that can rise to the challenge and eradicate sickness and poverty. Although this goal has not been met yet by any means, One states that "We are gaining momentum all the time, and helping save lives and rebuild futures in Africa and around the world with every victory" (One Web site, *FAQs* page, para. 13).

Expressing the need in Africa is not the sole purpose of One. They continue to boast the greatness of the U.S. by saying "Development assistance reflects the best American tradition of helping others help themselves, compassion and generosity" (One Web site, *FAQs* page, para. 17); however boasting to an American audience seems futile because:

A national survey...found that 86 percent of Americans...believe it is important for the United States to put forward 'a new effort to work together with other countries to help the poorest people in the world overcome AIDS and extreme poverty'. (One Web site, *FAQs* page, para. 29)

Americans seem to already know their country's influence and ability; however, One seems to believe it necessary to build up the United States and Americans as much as

possible in its appeal, not only representing the U.S. in positive terms but representing Africa negatively as well.

The *FAQs* page poses questions such as "Why does development assistance matter?" In response to this, U.S. charity and generosity are boasted about, claiming that with the help of the U.S., poor countries such as Africa have a fighting chance at a hopeful future. Without such opportunity, an unsafe world of fear and despair is further cultivated, where U.S. homeland and economic security are in danger. Situations of tremendous crisis, such as poverty, "breeds hopelessness, desperation, hatred, anger and encourages the spread of radicalism," and "become breeding grounds for extremism and terrorism" (One Web site, *FAQs* page, *Is fighting poverty part of the War on Terror?* section, para. 1). In providing more succor, the U.S. is not only creating hope and future for the people of Africa, they are also ensuring national security by using preventative measures against a possible terrorist threat. This is just another way to encourage people to join for reasons of guaranteeing their own safety against potential outside harm, and putting their own country (the United States) above the rest.

In answering the question of "Isn't our government doing more than anyone else? Don't Americans give more than other countries?" One continues demonstrating U.S. dominance by responding that current U.S. funding is not enough to ensure economic prosperity or a strong enough national security for Americans. Even though the United States gave 22 billion dollars in funding in 2006, other countries such as Canada and Britain gave much more than that (One Web site, *FAQs page, Isn't our government doing more than anyone else? Don't Americans give more than other countries?* section, para. 1). More aid is necessary in order to make the U.S. the world leader in "saving millions of lives and restoring stability for the poorest people in Africa and around the world" (One Web site, *FAQs page, Isn't our government doing more than anyone else? Don't Americans give more than other countries?* section, para. 2). This emphasizes the United States' need to be dominant over not only the developing world, but over every other nation providing these countries and people assistance as well.

Semiotic Verbal Conclusions

The verbal representations support the societal myth that not only is Africa a poor nation in need of major outside support, but also that the United States is the only nation that can provide adequate supplies to build a future for Africa as well as a secure country for themselves. When describing their organization's role in aiding the situation in Africa, One states "The ONE Campaign is organized and operated exclusively for charitable...purposes" (One Web site, *About* page, para. 3). The connotation is that this campaign is targeting generous and giving Americans to help those who are less fortunate than they are. Despite the appearance of one positive statement about Africa's envisioned autonomy, the remainder of the text serves as a trope that appoints the U.S. as the savior of the developing world. Although the word "one" can be extremely successful at bringing together a nation of people to fight the injustices in Africa, in combination with the boastful "we" statements and harmful language surrounding the developing world and Africa, the text on One's Web site ultimately portrays Africa and the rest of the developing world in an immensely negative light.

CHAPTER FIVE

AFFIRMING CULTURAL IMPERIALISM AND THE

SEARCH FOR A MORE POSITIVE APPROACH

This study sought to discover how the developing world was visually and verbally represented on the One campaign's internet Web site, and how these portrayals establish or counteract cultural imperialism. While the four Web pages under critical examination did display a select few positive representations of the developing nation of Africa, the overall finding is that One's portrayal of the developing world supports the general conclusion of negative portrayals in U.S. media.

The first research question asked in this study was "How does the One Web site visually represent the 'Other'?" As evidenced in chapters 3, the societal myth conveyed throughout this Web site is that Africa is a poor country in need of rescuing by the United States. This message is portrayed through the overpowering use of the color white in contrast with black, and the use of red and blue supporting the dominant white.

In answering the second research question, "How does the One Web site verbally represent the 'Other'?", chapter

4 uncovered that the rhetorical trope describes Africa in negative terms, calling it essentially an impoverished and diseased continent. When phrases such as "world's most vulnerable people" and "poorest region of the world" (One Web site, *Issues* page, para. 4, 7, & 9) are the only ones used to convey messages about this location, the audience is encouraged only to have those images in mind.

As also reported in chapter 4, the words denote a picture of people who have nothing and are sick and diseased. The connotation of these words illicit typical stock images of babies with bulging stomachs and adults whose rib cages are visible, all with looks of despair on their faces. Because of these illustrations and their implied meanings of poverty, disease, and anguish, the connotation is that these people need help that they cannot attain on their own. Therefore, outside help must come in to save Africa and its people. As indicated in the four Web pages under study in this semiotic analysis, the country implied throughout the One campaign to come to the rescue is the United States.

This is a damaging representation for Africa and its people because it is stating that only a world of pain and suffering exists for this part of the world. Other than the

few appearances of the phrase "developing nations" throughout the site, one reference to Africa becoming self-sufficient, and the absence of exploitative photos of children, there are no positive representations of the continent or the people, and therefore, with the use of contrasting black and white, superior red, white and blue, "we" statements and damaging descriptions of Africa and its people, negative visual imagery and verbal text is predominantly all Americans see and know in this Web site. This suggests that Americans are encouraged to possess more biased and unrepresentative views about other people and cultures.

The One campaign conveys a positive message to its U.S. audience; however, this optimistic communication does not incorporate the culture or people of Africa. Instead the positive messages pertain to the United States' involvement in the movement to end AIDS and poverty in the developing world. Such messages include the use of the color white and a circle to unite Americans in One's campaign, simplifying celebrity supporters to help the audience relate to them and the cause, and showing encouraging volunteers that are happy to be supporting the cause. Although these messages may be uniting for the

American audience, they advance selfishness by promoting supporters to ask themselves "What's in it for me?" Realistically volunteers and other followers may not necessarily focus on the beneficial outcome for Africa and its people, but rather what they are gaining from contributing to this organization. This mentality places all of the focus on the U.S. and Americans and continues to be derogatory and harmful towards their African counterparts. While this type of communication may be necessary to gain support, it only serves to encourage cultural imperialism by building up the U.S. ego as savior and rescuer while marginalizing Africa as the one that needs to be saved from hardships and injustices.

While these visual and verbal representations were examined separately in the analysis of the One campaign's Web site, together they combine to create significant messages as well. The use of a circle and the word "one" serves as a strong uniting factor for the audience members who are seeking to help others. It brings them together as part of the whole that incorporates everyone in the world as part of the human race. This can be a powerful tool when recruiting volunteers and donations for a cause; however, when viewed in the context of representing the developing

world, these portrayals serve as a tool to build the U.S. up as the ultimate savior of everyone else. Viewing the color use and derogatory wording throughout One's Web pages reinforces this idea as well. The visual in conjunction with the verbal exemplifies the United States of America as redeemer of the rest of the world, especially those in developing nations.

When people browse a Web site, however, they do not always examine both visual and verbal messages. While the two are connected, many people are often more drawn to pictures and images that catch their eye right away instead of words and text that take much more time and attention to read. At first glance, the images, or lack of images, can seem to be a positive representation of the developing world. This can be confusing when looking at these pictures along with the negative wording on each page. It is common, however, for browsers to move right over the words and focus only on the pictures, which in and of themselves, do not give the entire message of the One campaign or their representations of the developing world.

It is important to note here the use of the terms "developing world" and "developing nations" by the One campaign. As stated earlier, the One campaign claims to

advocate for developing nations, grouping all of these countries and people together under one label. "Developing nation" or "developing world" can refer to many diverse populations around the world, not simply those in Africa. One does not always specify that its focus is on the continent of Africa, but rather lumps all of these "Others" in one marginalizing group despite the many differences between their locations, cultures, and situations. One also fails to recognize that Africa is a vast continent compiled of many diverse countries and cultures. There is no distinction made between these countries on the part of One either, which is highly problematic from the researcher's perspective.

The semiotic analysis of One, however, did not consist merely of negative images and language, but rather a mixture of both negative and positive portrayals were evident in this study. This is definitely a step in the right direction and a drastic change from what previous research has found to be solely negative representations of developing nations. Unfortunately, One did not fulfill its potential of presenting alternative portrayals of the "Other", but rather the organization illustrated the same depictions as mainstream media. Without the restraints of

sponsorship oversight and input, One had the opportunity to be different and offer alternate messages to educate and inform people, yet their Web site had not exercised this potential as of this research. This, however, implies that there is still room for change, but what type of change is necessary? This is a difficult question to answer because it depends on who the benefactor of such change is envisioned to be and what the goals of the organization that is creating these representations are.

Implications

There is a place for tactics and strategies utilizing realistic and sometimes negative portrayals. Showing the human suffering in the developing world to those who do not live there and have never experienced it may be the only way to inform outside people and move them to action. There is also a guilt factor that can influence wealthy and privileged Americans to become involved in organizations and causes that help those who are less fortunate. Because of its extant proliferation, some world wide involvement is required to end AIDS and extreme poverty, or at least lessen its effects.

Because the One organization appeared to be different and positive compared to other nonprofit Web sites aimed to help people in developing nations, it was selected as the text to examine. Hence, the purpose of this study was to explore One's representations of the developing world and understand the organization's contribution or opposition to cultural imperialism. So, while some positive messages may have appeared throughout the analysis, the majority of messages dealing directly with Africa and its people did not exude this same optimistic feeling. Therefore, answering the third research question in this study, "How might these portrayals affirm or negate cultural imperialism?" One successfully affirms cultural imperialism because this nonprofit organization purported an intrusive approach toward an outside entity by forcing its values and beliefs about the developing world on its audience.

If an organization, such as One, is dedicated to raising awareness and changing U.S. policy regarding a developing nation, then their target audience is the American consumer who will typically devour heart-wrenching stories of pain and suffering. One, however, does not exploit the people of Africa by showing devastatingly negative pictures of their hardships. Instead they convey

the gravity of the situation through their wording explaining the circumstance in Africa and by utilizing influential celebrities in order to make their point. While One employs a mixture of positive and negative representations, reaching a balance between the two can be an extremely fine line.

The developing world is in need of some assistance in order to become independent and self-reliant. So, showing people what life is like in Africa and the issues that they are trying to overcome gives others an understanding to know not only what they are helping with, but also the lives of other people and cultures. Although realistic images and descriptions are valuable and essential, positive representations can go a long way as well. It is not only effective to show people what the cause is, but also what they will receive from giving to it and the outcome of their support. Without this part of the equation, the cause may seem hopeless and pointless to support; however, if the positive outcome and potential solution is shown, for example happy and healthy African people, others may be more willing to provide time, money, and effort to an organization and the developing nations will receive much needed assistance.

The reality of U.S. media portrayal of the developing world is that crisis and disaster gain the most attention and support, so these images and words are utilized much more than anything else. If all the people in developing nations see themselves in negative and belittling portrayals, they may actually start to believe these messages. This can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy that keeps the developing world in a dependent position that they cannot leave behind. They may give in to the stereotypes of being third rate, poor, dependent, and tragic, giving the U.S. the power to influence ideas and opinions about the developing world held by outsiders and by those countries themselves. They may also become less self-sufficient and self-reliant knowing that the U.S. will do for them what they cannot do alone. However, if they see uplifting portrayals of the positive aspects of their world and the potential lives they hope to obtain, that is more likely to be what they strive for and what others help them become. So, if the real motivation to giving foreign aid to these countries is to help them become self-sufficient, then more positive representations could help this process by providing resources and encouragement.

While both positive and negative representations are needed to gain public support and funding, for the benefit of developing world people and cultures, more optimistic depictions would be more representative when used in conjunction with the negative realistic depictions. Although One showed evidence of both forms of representation, negative visual and verbal depictions are still dominant in this very American Web site. There is still more research needed in order to determine if U.S. media in general is becoming more positive in its portrayal of the developing world, or if it is stuck in the same pattern as detailed in previous research.

Limitations

A limitation of this research was that it only examined one nonprofit Web site. There are thousands of nonprofit Web sites that can be studied in the same way as this study sought to do with One. The study of more nonprofit Web sites may be valuable research; however, exploring one of these nonprofit Web sites also gave valuable insight into the depth of visual and verbal representations of the developing world by a single U.S. nonprofit organization.

Another major limitation was the Web site under study. The internet is a constantly shifting medium that can change at any moment. So, while the units of analysis were four pages of a non-profit organization's Web site, the actual data under examination will not remain the same. This means that the actual symbols and signs studied might not be on the Web sites for others to see in the future. Nevertheless, it was still important to analyze the Web sites so that trends can be identified whether those remain constant or not.

There were also limitations with the employed method. Semiotics is a method that leaves the analysis up to the critic's interpretation, and there are usually many different ways to read and critique a particular text. Fiske (1986) argued that a text, especially a mediated text, must be polysemic in order to reach all individual audience members and their own cultural needs. This is what Eco (1979) called an open text, or a text that does not close off meanings and interpretations but rather allows several to surface. Eco also argued that there were closed texts which focus attention on only one interpretation forcing all resistant meanings aside. Although there are multiple ways to read a text, Fiske suggested that there is

a dominant ideology that is woven throughout a text that defines meanings by a subculture's relation to that dominant ideology. This allows for many meanings to surface within a certain structure. So although semiotic analysis reveals specific messages they are not necessarily the only communication within a text, even though they may be the dominant one.

We must first identify the semiotic excesses of the text, those potential meanings that escape the control of the producers of the dominant culture. This will enable us to identify where and how members of subordinate subcultures can use these semiotic opportunities to generate meanings for *them*. (Fiske, 1986, p. 405, emphasis in original)

Condit (1989) asserted that taking an approach to semiotic meaning that enables audience members to take away their own meaning entails placing all the power in those individuals and not giving any credit to mass media sources. She argued that an audience is neither completely resistant nor accepting of mass media, but rather a combination of both.

The audience's variability is a consequence of the fact that humans, in their inherent character as

audiences are inevitably situated in a communication system, of which they are a part, and hence have some influence within, but by which they are also influenced. (Condit, 1989, p. 120, emphasis in original)

Although semiotics may often uncover the meaning of the dominant culture within a text, it is a method that allows the researcher particular insight and focus into decoding signs and symbols that others might not see. It may even uncover dominant and subordinate meanings at the same time. Either way, the hope is that this research will lead to a conversation with other scholars, web authors, and organizations about verbal and visual representations on Web sites such as One's and others like it.

The theoretical approach regarding cultural imperialism also created some boundaries to this research. This study may not recognize the possibility of resistance when one culture or country takes over the center and pushes others to the periphery. The underlying assumption is that when the U.S. communicates a message, their audience absorbs it without questioning or opposing what is being conveyed. Despite the United States' dominance, there is resistance to Western and U.S. media around the world.

Although it was not thoroughly addressed in this research, because this study focused on what appeared to be a more positive representation of the developing world by U.S. media, it is important to recognize that opposition to Western representations can and does exist.

Resistance to Cultural Imperialism

Chadha and Kavoori (2000) argued that Western dominance in media control has been successfully challenged because of the emergence of many developing nations as major producers of audiovisual content, and the restriction of the import of Western media in Asian countries through gate-keeping policies, audience preference for local programming, and provision of culturally proximate media. Flew (2007) discussed both liberal access, where people can use transnational media without regulation or restriction, and also controlled access, which limits accessibility through government and industry regulation on content. Because of this tightly controlled access in Asia, these countries have been able to hinder Western media imperialism and perpetuate local programming.

One key aspect here is audience preference for local programs over foreign ones. La Pastina and Straubhaar (2005) discussed cultural proximity and how similarities in

language, customs, and location can make media flow better between cultures, whereas differences in these things can cause programs to fail in other cultures than those in which they were produced. These authors also explored genre proximity, and how certain media genres such as the drama have an easier time being understood by diverse cultures. On the other hand, jokes and satire are not things that translate well from one culture to another, so the comedy genre may not move as well from culture to culture. These are generalizations, and of course there are exceptions to every rule; however, culture plays an important role in media flow between people and places.

Flew (2007) also examined global media cultures and different ways to think about culture: "culture as lived and shared experience, culture as mediated symbolic communication, culture as resource, and culture as policy discourse" (p. 138). These are all ways to individually categorize culture, but each of these understandings of culture can and do intersect. When examining culture and citizenship, there is a sense of common culture among people of the same community as well as a need to accept diversity within groups. Flew said that multiculturalism emerged partly due to the need for nations to become

globally competitive; therefore, tolerance and a vision of a unified world are necessities to achieve global success. Because of multiculturalism, our cultures are becoming more hybridized. "Hybridity has proved to be increasingly central to understandings of the relationship between global media, culture and identity" (Flew, p. 162). Chuang (2000) believed that the world culture is marked by diversity, while at the same time a "third culture," or a unified world culture has also emerged from the intersection of many diversified local cultures. She believed that we have a mixture of varied cultural forms which is both local and global. "Glocalization captures the dynamics of the local in the global and the global in the local" (Chuang, p. 29). She also stated that these two concepts are not always in opposition to each other, but instead can peacefully coexist.

McMillin (2001) talked about the importance of localizing the global through hybrid television programming in India. The author argued that networks are an important product of globalization because they accommodate globalization mainly through local industry and audiences. One example of how this is accomplished is when programs prompt audiences to laugh at their own tradition while at

the same time recognizing that they are not limited by national boundaries because they belong to a world citizenship. McMillin stated that in this way, hybrid programming confines some of the tension that goes on between the local, national, and global sectors. The main strategy in hybrid programming is to take what is global and think about it in local terms (McMillin, 2001). That helps sell the product to the audience and makes it much more successful.

Rao (2007) argued in contrast to this idea, stating that India's large film industry is being infiltrated by Western culture. The films that brought in the most money featured Western themes, locations, actors, and singers (Rao, 2007). The author argued that there are not many films that do well in both rural and urban areas in Indian as well as overseas. Here a local twist would not work for all of India's population, because while the urban areas relate well with Westernized films, the rural areas do not relate at all to their story lines. Because of this, Bollywood films do not target the entire country. Instead, Rao stated, they create an elite upper middle class audience that is not representative of much of the population of India. Iwabuchi (2002) argued along these

same lines stating, "It is not temporally proximate enough to evoke a nostalgic longing for a (different) Asian modernity" (p. 569).

Gross, McMurray, and Swedenburg (1996) examined identities of Arabs living in France. The authors looked at how foreigners living abroad fit into another culture, and how they keep their own identities and cultures alive. Although these foreigners experienced racism, the authors said that for the most part they did not think about moving back to a home they knew nothing of. They would much rather create a livable zone within French society where they can integrate without assimilating (Gross, McMurray, and Swedenburg, 1996). "They seek to negotiate integration on their own terms, maintaining their right to be different" (Gross, McMurray, & Swedenburg, p. 206). Many of the participants interviewed for their research expressed that they felt they needed to adapt to the society they lived in while maintaining their uniqueness from the local culture. The authors stated that this was commonly done through their noise and smell, or music and food.

It has been argued that the U.S. has become even more culturally imperialist through its control over global mass media, forcing its beliefs and values on others through

representation and portrayal of certain situations and circumstances over others. There have also been arguments that the United States is not completely in control because of people's ability to resist the messages being conveyed by this Superpower. While it is enticing to think that Western imperialism is over, given the dominance of the U.S. as a world Superpower, it is also unrealistic. The United States may not be as culturally imperialistic as they once were; however, they still have an enormous amount of power within world communication systems which allows them freedom to convey any message they see fit. What other countries and cultures choose to do with those messages is the topic for more research.

Despite the limitations detailed above, this study added another piece to the puzzle addressing the U.S. media representation of the developing world in nonprofit Web sites. This research is an area in Communication Studies that is virtually undiscovered, and will hopefully add to an already immense conversation about media and begin a conversation on a new and upcoming communication system used worldwide.

Future Research

As stated earlier, this research only focused on One's visual and verbal portrayals of Africa. Although other prevalent messages may have appeared on the *Home*, *About*, *Issues*, and *FAQs* pages of the Web site that might have proven negative or positive for one reason or another, they were not the focus of this particular study. Further research could produce a more thorough investigation of One's internet Web site. This may include examining all of One's web pages, pamphlets and brochures, merchandise, and volunteer interviews.

Furthermore, this research did not explore the issues of marketing methods and how effective messages are conveyed and received by an audience. Hence, future research may take marketing strategies, audience reaction, and organizational intent into account and explore how effective One's portrayals are to their intended audience. Franck and Noble (2007) gathered reactions to an internet health Web page examining users understanding and interpretation of the site. This can provide understanding into what the intended and interpreted message is, and what these messages accomplish with their audience members. Arab Americans' views of perceived U.S. public opinion was

sought by Muhtaseb and Frey (2008) in a study to determine how those individuals felt about others' ideas about issues that were significant to them. Studies such as these that examine how groups that are represented by outsiders perceive those foreign portrayals are significant indicators of how a message is received. They may also uncover whether people in developing nations focus on foreign representations of themselves and what they internalize about those portrayals.

This study only directed its efforts towards one non profit organization. There are thousands of organizations that seek to help these parts of the world, and a comparison with other sites that advocate for the developing world would provide insight into similarities and differences in representation across this medium. Langton (1991) conducted a study of photo coverage of developing nations in four U.S. newspapers, and Larson (1979) compared foreign news coverage on network television. A comparative study such as these within the medium of Web sites may uncover more positive representations in U.S. media of developing nations. It may also add to the abundant research that concludes U.S. media is negative when covering the developing world; however,

only more research will reveal if U.S. media is continuing in a consistent direction or changing paths in its coverage of the developing world.

A longitudinal study of some of these nonprofit Web sites can also be useful in examining whether or not representations of the developing world are improving, staying the same, or falling more and more into the realm of negative portrayals. Celeste (2005) examined *New York Times* articles over a 10 year span analyzing representations of Cubans and Haitians. Such longitudinal analyses of nonprofit Web sites, whether several or just one, could provide insight into changing trends of U.S. media portrayals of the developing world.

APPENDIX A

ONE'S INTERNET *HOME* PAGE

ONE

THE CAMPAIGN TO MAKE POVERTY HISTORY

HOME ABOUT ONE TAKE ACTION BLOG ISSUES PARTNERS STORE



Ask the Democratic and Republican parties to add an anti-poverty agenda to their 2008 platforms

[SIGN THE PETITION >](#)

We Believe
We Recognize
We Commit

ACT NOW. ADD your name to ONE.

E-mail:

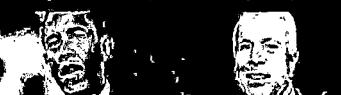
Postal:

[Submit >](#)

[Why Add your Name?](#) [Privacy policy](#)

VICTORY!
Billions of dollars in AIDS, TB and malaria funding finally unstuck.

Find out candidates' plans to fight global poverty



ONE VOTE08 Making global poverty a priority in the 2008 election.

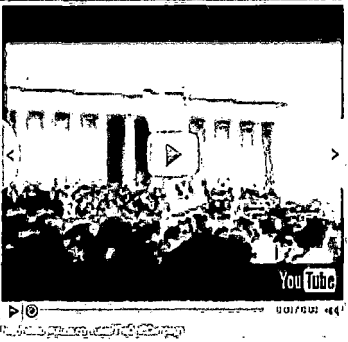
THE ONE BLOG





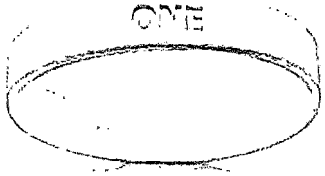
A Bhutanese Family Comes to Washington
Last Monday, we (The International Rescue Committee's Washington DC resettlement office) welcomed our most recent arrival - a Bhutanese...

Sweet Work Sweeney in PA!
This Monday the 4th, I began our August "crunch" to meet with our respective Congressman and Senators while they...

Swinging By Ros-Lehtinen's Office
On Sunday Miami ONE Members in Miami met with Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen to thank her for her leadership in...

[See All >](#)



VOLUNTEER

[Sign the ONE Declaration](#) | [Become a volunteer](#) | [Get the volunteer toolkit](#) | [Find a ONE event](#)

LOCAL GROUPS

[Start a group](#) | [See all](#)

Connect with people who are making the difference.

[ONERedlands](#)
87 members

[ONE SanJose](#)
53 members

[DenverONE](#)
260 members

[kansasforONE](#)
69 members

[ONEFortSmith](#)
23 members

[ONE Reno](#)
17 members

[ONECincinnati](#)
56 members

[ONERoanoke](#)
23 members

[ONEBirmingham](#)
134 members

[ONEsanmarcos](#)
39 members

[ONEFortCollins](#)
69 members

[onepensacola](#)
29 members

NETWORKS



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APPENDIX B

ONE'S INTERNET *ABOUT* PAGE



- HOME
- ABOUT ONE
- TAKE ACTION
- BLOG
- ISSUES
- PARTNERS
- STORE

About the Campaign

About ONE

ONE is Americans of all beliefs and every walk of life - united as ONE - to help make poverty history. We are a campaign of over 2.4 million people and growing from all 50 states and over 100 of America's most well-known and respected non-profit, advocacy and humanitarian organizations. As ONE, we are raising public awareness about the issues of global poverty, hunger, disease and efforts to fight such problems in the world's poorest countries. As ONE, we are asking our leaders to do more to fight the emergency of global AIDS and extreme poverty. ONE believes that allocating more of the U.S. budget toward providing basic needs like health, education, clean water and food would transform the futures and hopes of an entire generation in the world's poorest countries.

ONE is nonpartisan; there's only one side in the fight against global AIDS and extreme poverty. Working on the ground in communities, colleges and churches across the United States, ONE members both educate and ask America's leaders to increase efforts to fight global AIDS and extreme poverty, from the U.S. budget and presidential elections to specific legislation on debt cancellation, increasing effective international assistance, making trade fair, and fighting corruption. Everyone can join the fight. The goal of ending poverty may seem lofty, but it is within our reach if we take action together as one. You can start now by joining ONE and pledging your voice to the fight against extreme poverty and global AIDS.

Sign up to be a ONE member

E-mail*

Zip/Postal Code*

ONE VOICE. ONE VOTE | [Add your signature to the ONE Declaration](#) ▶

About The ONE Campaign

The ONE Campaign seeks to raise public awareness about the issues of global poverty, hunger, disease and efforts to fight such problems in developing countries. In furtherance of these purposes, the ONE Campaign will:

- Mobilize people from all 50 states and America's leading non-profit, advocacy and humanitarian organizations to expand awareness of these issues
- Publish educational information about the impact of overseas development assistance and reformation of unfair international trade regimes on global poverty, hunger and disease
- Raise awareness about and promote the framework of the Millennium Development Goals to eradicate poverty and improve public health and education

The ONE Campaign is organized and operated exclusively for charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

*Partners

TAKE ACTION

- [Sign the Declaration](#)
- [Tell a Friend About ONE](#)
- [Wear a Wristband or T-shirt](#)
- [Join ONE on Facebook/MySpace](#)
- [Sign up as a ONE Volunteer](#)
- [Check out the Volunteer Toolkit](#)
- [Find a ONE Event Near You](#)

More Actions

PHOTOS



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PODCAST

ONE CAST
Listen to the one.org Podcast.

Annette_Tillman_PEPFAR
undefined

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About ONE Action

ONE Action seeks to raise public awareness about the issues of global poverty, hunger and disease and to ask our leaders to do more to fight these problems in developing countries. ONE Action - with the support of individuals and other advocacy organizations - will advocate for an increase in the United States federal budget in overseas development assistance including increased funding for the prevention and treatment of diseases in developing countries, implementation of debt relief for poor countries and promotion of more equitable international trade regimes. ONE believes that allocating more of the U.S. budget toward providing basic needs like health, education, clean water and food would transform the futures and hopes of an entire generation in the world's poorest countries.

ONE Action will also seek to increase efforts to fight global AIDS and extreme poverty by advocating for legislation on debt cancellation, increasing effective international assistance, making trade fair, and fighting corruption.

ONE Action is organized and operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare within the meaning of Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

[*Legislative Priorities](#)

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APPENDIX C

ONE'S INTERNET *ISSUES* PAGE



- HOME
- ABOUT ONE
- TAKE ACTION
- BLOG
- ISSUES
- PARTNERS
- STORE

Issues

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The Millennium Development Goals set a framework for how the world could see the end of extreme poverty. In September, 2000, The United States joined with 188 nations to affirm a set of international development goals in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) reflect an understanding of the devastation caused by global hunger and poverty and aim for a world that is free of such suffering. They have galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest by 2015. Our leaders committed to these goals and it is up to us, as Americans and ONE supporters, to make sure that America keeps its promises to the world's most vulnerable people.

[More](#) | [Get PDF](#)

HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria

More than 38 million people around the world are infected by HIV/AIDS, 25 million in Africa alone. Left untreated, AIDS leads to an early death for people in their most productive years who are needed to raise crops and families, teach school and care for the sick. For more information about global AIDS click here.

[More](#) | [Get PDF](#)

More and Better Aid

International assistance saves lives, directly helping and empowering individuals to help themselves. Increasing international assistance by an amount equal to just ONE percent of the U.S. budget will:

- Reduce by half the number of people in the world who suffer from hunger.
- Provide free access to primary education for 77 million out-of-school children.
- Provide access to clean water to 450 million people and basic sanitation to 700 million people.
- Prevent 5.4 million young children from dying of poverty-related illnesses each year.
- Save 16,000 lives a day by fighting HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

[More](#) | [Get PDF](#)



Richard Stearns of World Vision helped launch ONE at a rally in Philadelphia...

TAKE ACTION

- [Sign the Declaration](#)
- [Tell a Friend About ONE](#)
- [Wear a Wristband or T-shirt](#)
- [Join ONE on Facebook/MySpace](#)
- [Sign up as a ONE Volunteer](#)
- [Check out the Volunteer Toolkit](#)
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PHOTOS



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PODCAST

ONE CAST

Listen to the [one.org](#) Podcast.

Annette_Tillman_PEPFAR
undefined



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Education for All

Parents in Malawi know just as well as parents in Missouri that education is crucial to their children's future. But around the world, 72 million children do not go to grade school because their parents cannot afford fees, books or uniforms for all their children. For more information about getting children into school click here.

[More](#) | [Get PDF](#)

Clean Water & Sanitation

ONE person in seven has no access to clean water for drinking, cooking or washing. In addition to spreading disease, this has multiple negative effects -- girls growing up in villages without water are far less likely to attend school because they're too busy spending hours walking to and from the nearest water source. For more information about clean water click here.

[More](#) | [Get PDF](#)

Trade Justice

As much as people in poor countries appreciate development assistance, no one wants to rely on a handout -- they want to trade their way out of poverty -- but international rules make it difficult. A fair trade system would give people in poor countries the chance to earn their way out of poverty by participating in the world economy. For more information about trade rules click here.

[More](#) | [Get PDF](#)

Debt Cancellation

Every year Sub-Saharan Africa, the poorest region of the world, spends \$14.5 billion dollars repaying debts to the world's richest countries and international institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Though we've made efforts to relieve them of these unpayable debts, many poor countries still spend more each year on debt than on health care or education. For more information about debt cancellation click [here](#).

[More](#) | [Get PDF](#)

Maternal and Child Health

Health systems in poor countries around the world are rapidly deteriorating, and in some cases, have failed entirely. Young children and pregnant women bear the brunt of these inadequate health systems. Every year, 10 million children die before their fifth birthday, nearly all of them from preventable causes. Each year, more than 500,000 mothers die from complications during child birth. There are affordable technologies and interventions in existence that would prevent nearly all of these deaths.

[More](#) | [Get PDF](#)

Corruption

While corruption is harmful to all governments, losing resources to corrupt leaders is particularly devastating in poor countries where every dollar lost results in one less child in school or one less well dug to provide clean water. Approaches like America's Millennium Challenge which direct assistance to honest governments are the most effective, as is channeling assistance through private (and faith-based) relief and development agencies. For more information about fighting corruption in the poorest countries click [here](#).

[More](#)

Food

Around the world, ONE person in seven goes to bed hungry each night. We need to address hunger not just by giving food, but helping farmers in poor countries grow better crops and helping countries build farm-to-market roads so farmers can supply distant cities. For more information about hunger click [here](#).

[More](#)

Orphans

18 million children have already lost one or both parents to AIDS, 12 million of them are in Africa alone. Unless more is done, there will be 25 million of these children around the world by 2010. We have the opportunity to help. For more information about orphans, [click here](#).

[More](#)

Housing

The world is experiencing a global housing crisis. Nearly 1 billion people live in substandard housing without clean water or adequate sanitation, including more than 14 million refugees and internally displaced people living in tents or other temporary shelters. An increasing number of these people are urban slum dwellers, and every week more than a million people are born in, or move to cities in the developing world. If no serious action is taken, the United Nations reports that the number of slum dwellers worldwide will rise over the next 30 years to nearly 2 billion. For more information about housing conditions around the world, [click here](#).

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APPENDIX D
ONE'S INTERNET *FAQS* PAGE



FAQ's

About ONE

[What is ONE?](#)

[What is The ONE Declaration?](#)

[What does ONE aim to do?](#)

[Who supports ONE?](#)

[Why does development assistance matter?](#)

[Why ONE percent?](#)

[Who is behind ONE?](#)

[I already give to some of these organizations, so why should I join ONE?](#)

[What does the white band mean?](#)

[Can ONE person really make a difference?](#)

[What can I do to get involved with ONE?](#)

[How is ONE related to international agreements like the Millennium Development Goals?](#)

[Isn't our government doing more than anyone else? Don't Americans give more than other countries?](#)

[Is fighting poverty part of the War on Terror?](#)

[Why use celebrity spokespersons?](#)

[Why was the 2005 G8 Summit so important? What happened there?](#)

[Why is ONE in my city/state/region?](#)

[What can I do locally?](#)

[Why is the faith community supporting ONE?](#)

[Is ONE a partisan coalition?](#)

[Does ONE work on domestic concerns as well as international issues?](#)

Volunteer and Career Opportunities

[Can I volunteer for ONE?](#)

[Can I intern for ONE?](#)

[How do I apply for a job to work at the ONE Campaign?](#)

Donations and Fundraising

[How is ONE funded?](#)

[Can ONE fund me?](#)

TAKE ACTION

- [Sign the Declaration](#)
- [Tell a Friend About ONE](#)
- [Wear a Wristband or T-shirt](#)
- [Join ONE on Facebook/MySpace](#)
- [Sign up as a ONE Volunteer](#)
- [Check out the Volunteer Toolkit](#)
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Miscellaneous

[What if I am a company or corporation that would like to get involved?](#)

[Wait! I still have a question. How can I contact ONE?](#)



The campaign was launched at a rally in Philadelphia with the help of U2's Bono

ONE VOICE. ONE NOTE. [Add your signature to The One Declaration →](#)

About ONE

What is ONE?

ONE is Americans of all beliefs and every walk of life – united as ONE – to help make poverty history. We are a campaign of over 2.4 million people and growing from all 50 states and over 100 of America's most well-known and respected non-profit, advocacy and humanitarian organizations. As ONE, we are asking our leaders to do more to fight the emergency of global AIDS and extreme poverty. ONE believes that allocating more of the U.S. budget toward providing basic needs like health, education, clean water and food would transform the futures and hopes of an entire generation in the world's poorest countries.

ONE is nonpartisan; there's only one side in the fight against global AIDS and extreme poverty. Working on the ground in communities, colleges and churches across the United States, ONE members ask America's leaders to increase efforts to fight global AIDS and extreme poverty, from the U.S. budget and presidential elections to specific legislation on debt cancellation, increasing effective international assistance, making trade fair, and fighting corruption. Everyone can join the fight at ONE.org.

What is The ONE Declaration?

"*WE BELIEVE* that in the best American tradition of helping others help themselves, now is the time to join with other countries in a historic pact for compassion and justice to help the poorest people of the world overcome AIDS and extreme poverty.

WE RECOGNIZE that a pact including such measures as fair trade, debt relief, fighting corruption and directing additional support for basic needs - education, health, clean water, food, and care for orphans - would transform the futures and hopes of an entire generation in the poorest countries, at a cost equal to just one percent more of the US budget.

WE COMMIT ourselves - one person, one voice, one vote at a time - to make a better, safer world for all."

What does ONE aim to do?

ONE aims to help Americans raise their voice as ONE against the emergency of AIDS and extreme poverty, so that decision makers will do more to save millions of lives in the poorest countries.

Who supports ONE?

ONE is a broad movement of Americans from every state and walk of life – more than 2 million people have lent their voices to ONE by visiting ONE.org and signing the ONE Declaration. More than 3 million Americans are also wearing white bands as a show of support for ending extreme poverty and global AIDS. ONE is Americans spreading the word in churches, coffee shops, on television, college campuses and the Internet.

Why does development assistance matter?

Americans have always been a generous people – look at the outpouring of support for the victims of the tsunami, Katrina and 9/11. Yet, most Americans are surprised to learn that only 1.2% of the federal budget is allocated for the international affairs budget, and less than half of that is spent on fighting AIDS and poverty around the world. Surveys show people think we spend over 15%.

By directing more of the U.S. budget to provide for the most basic needs – and fighting the corruption that wastes precious resources – we can help transform the futures and hopes of an entire generation in the poorest countries. By increasing effective development assistance, we can help enroll 77 million children into grade school; we can help provide water to almost 450 million people around the globe; we can save almost 5.4 million young children from dying of diseases that could be prevented with low-cost measures like vaccinations or a well for clean water.

ONE believes in a new partnership with the world's poorest countries, where increased assistance flows toward improved governance and initiatives with proven track records. Effective development assistance builds goodwill, hope and opportunity in nations where extreme poverty caused desperation, hate and hopelessness to fester. Development assistance increases our homeland security, economic security and builds a better, safer world.

Who is behind ONE?

ONE is a coalition of over 2 million people and over 100 non-profit, advocacy and humanitarian organizations. ONE was founded by 11 of America's most well-known and respected aid groups: Bread for the World, CARE, DATA, International Medical Corps, International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps, Oxfam America, Plan USA, Save the Children US, World Concern, and World Vision. For the complete list of all coalition partners, please visit [our partners page](#).

ONE is supported by Americans from every state and all ages, religions and walks of life, including such notable people as: Brad Pitt, Tom Hanks, Pat Robertson, Kate Hudson, pastor and author of the *Purpose Driven Life* Rick Warren, Jamie Foxx, Jars of Clay, Penelope Cruz, Dave Matthews, Salma Hayek, George Clooney, Bill Gates and many, many others.

I already give to some of these organizations, so why should I join ONE?

By joining ONE, you show our leaders that you want to do more to respond to the emergency of AIDS and extreme poverty. ONE aims to bring the voices of every American together with ONE message and ONE purpose: to make poverty history. ONE is asking for your voice to help our elected leaders live up to their commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and do our share to make poverty history.

What does the white band mean?

From the heartland to Hollywood, Americans are wearing white bands in support of ONE. Over three million Americans and millions of people around the world are wearing the white band, the international symbol of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty. You might be a teacher, doctor or mother. You might wear it to school, church or a concert. Whenever and wherever you wear a ONE white band, without even saying a word, you are making the statement that you want more and better international assistance, debt cancellation and trade reform, and that you want to be part of a movement that is calling for America to join as ONE against this emergency.

Can ONE person really make a difference?

Over 2 million people have signed the ONE Declaration – and all have signed as a direct result of being asked by ONE friend, family member, neighbor or colleague. All of us have a tremendous opportunity to take action and influence those closest to us by learning and talking about these issues. From Dr. King to Nelson Mandela, history shows us that big changes start with small actions. Together as ONE, we can start to make poverty history. ONE and the people and groups behind it have already campaigned effectively to increase assistance for treating AIDS and for the relief of the poorest countries' massive debts. We are gaining momentum all the time, and helping save lives and rebuild futures in Africa and around the world with every victory.

What can I do to get involved with ONE?

Start by signing the ONE Declaration and lending your voice to the fight against global AIDS and extreme poverty. Next, tell your friends by sending an e-mail encouraging the people you know to get involved at ONE.org. You can also join millions of Americans and wear the white band. Wearing a white band is something YOU can do, today, in your neighborhood. You can also get involved with ONE locally. ONE volunteers are active across America and are ready to help you use your voice in your community and beyond. Go to ONE.org to find out the latest actions – such as writing to the President or your Member of Congress.

How is ONE related to international agreements like the Millennium Development Goals?

ONE is a U.S.-based campaign linked to the international effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. The Millennium Development Goals set a framework for how nations can work together to end extreme poverty. In September 2000, The United States joined 188 other nations to affirm a set of international development goals in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) reflect an understanding of the devastation that global hunger and poverty cause, and aim for a world that is free of such suffering.

The MDGs have galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest people by 2015. Our leaders committed to these goals and it is up to us, as Americans and ONE supporters, to make sure that America keeps its promises to the world's most vulnerable people. As ONE, we are asking our elected leaders to keep America's promise by increasing effective poverty-focused development assistance, canceling debt, and making trade fair so that the world can achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Isn't our government doing more than anyone else? Don't Americans give more than other countries?

In 2006, total U.S. funding for foreign assistance was \$22 billion. Twenty-two billion dollars sounds like a lot of money, but it represents only 1.2% of the federal budget. That's 1.2% to fund essential development and humanitarian programs that foster *economic prosperity, strengthen our national security and reinforce our commitment to humanitarian values.*

Development assistance reflects the best American tradition of helping others help themselves, compassion and generosity. In dollars spent, the United States contributes more than any other donor country. However, we spend just 0.17% of our national wealth on aid, the lowest proportionally among all donor nations except Greece. Canada spends almost twice the percent of their national wealth than we do, and Britain spends three times as much. Since major donor countries made a commitment to spend 0.7% of their national wealth on foreign assistance annually by 2015, we all have a long way to go to honor this commitment. Americans could lead the world in saving millions of lives and restoring stability for the poorest people in Africa and around the world.

Is fighting poverty part of the War on Terror?

Effective international assistance is national security, not charity. Poverty in the developing world is a serious global security threat, because poverty breeds hopelessness, desperation, hatred, anger and encourages the spread of radicalism. Failed states are countries in crisis, where people lack the tools they need to survive (access to clean water, food and life-saving medications). These countries often become breeding grounds for extremism and terrorism.

After World War II, President Truman and General Marshall took a little of our money to build a world that had more friends and fewer enemies. Today, U.S. assistance to the poorest people in the world is just as vital to our foreign policy, and to the future of millions of people. Americans giving our fair share may just be the best money we ever spent.

Why use celebrity spokespersons?

Everyone does what they can – whether it's getting our issues on TV or wearing the white band. From Hollywood to the heartland, Americans are joining the fight against global AIDS and extreme poverty. Celebrities get media attention, attention they can uniquely focus on issues which wouldn't get enough attention otherwise – like the AIDS emergency in Africa. Due to the generous cooperation of some of the biggest names in music, movies, politics and religion, ONE is able to reach and mobilize Americans in an unprecedented manner, across all cultural divides.

Why was the 2005 G8 Summit so important? What happened there?

On July 6-8th, the Group of Eight (G8) industrialized nations met in Scotland to discuss the major social, political and economic conditions that contribute to poverty.

However, before they met, something unusual happened. Across the world, ten Live8 concerts were held. At Live 8, 1 million people stood in Philadelphia – joining with the 3.8 billion people around the world who turned up, tuned in or logged on – to show they were also determined to change the world. ONE and the Live8 concerts sent President Bush to the G8 on a wave of support for doing more to fight AIDS and extreme poverty.

But that's not all Americans did. Over 500,000 Americans also signed a letter to President Bush, asking that he support four bold commitments at the G8 summit: more and better international assistance, 100% debt cancellation, trade reform and renewed efforts to fight corruption in the world's poorest countries.

At the G8 Summit in Scotland, the G8 leaders reached an unprecedented agreement: \$50 billion more a year in international assistance per year by 2010; AIDS drugs to all those who need it, and care for all AIDS orphans; Primary schools for ALL children by 2015; a commitment to protect 85% of vulnerable Africans against malaria; and 100% debt cancellation up to 40 of the world's poorest countries. These promises, if kept, are a historic opportunity to fight global AIDS and extreme poverty and save millions of lives. As ONE, we'll need to keep up the positive pressure and make sure our leaders keep these promises.

Why is ONE in my city/state/region?

ONE is working in communities across the country, creating a nationwide constituency of Americans interested in and knowledgeable about the issues of global AIDS and extreme poverty. ONE believes that Americans working at the local level can beat extreme poverty and AIDS globally. From Des Moines to Chicago to Portland, you may have met a ONE organizer in your community, handing out flyers, asking for ONE Declaration signatures and urging you to act locally to create change internationally.

What can I do locally?

Get involved immediately! [Take Action](#). Ask your friends to join the campaign, volunteer in your neighborhood, wear a ONE white band and ask friends to wear a white band. Visiting ONE.org is the best way to get plugged in locally to this unprecedented national and international effort.

Why is the faith community supporting ONE?

From concert venues to church halls to voting booths, the voices of faith communities are stronger and more relevant than ever in America. With compassion and commitment, religious leaders have both guided their congregations to and been spokespersons for taking action in the fight against AIDS and poverty in Africa. In every scripture, regardless of religion or faith, there is direction to help "the least of these" among us. The emergency of global AIDS and poverty calls out to all of our hearts, and these faith leaders believe that God has charged us all with ensuring dignity for our neighbors.

Is ONE a partisan coalition?

ONE is a campaign in which Americans do not have to take a side – there is only ONE side in the fight against global AIDS and extreme poverty. ONE believes that millions of Americans agree that we can reach across political divides to do something extraordinary, together. It is in the best American tradition of helping others help themselves, as well as in America's long term self-interest, to beat AIDS and poverty.

Americans are united across the political spectrum on these issues. A national survey conducted by ONE after the 2004 presidential election found that 86 percent of Americans – regardless of party affiliation – believe it is important for the United States to put forward "a new effort to work together with other countries to help the poorest people in the world overcome AIDS and extreme poverty."

Does ONE work on domestic concerns as well as international issues?

There is a humanitarian emergency in Africa and around the world that is unlike anything we have seen in the United States in 100 years. ONE partner organizations are at the forefront of fighting poverty, hunger and HIV/AIDS – both at home and abroad. From South Africa to the rural American south, we are all united in our shared work to end AIDS and extreme poverty.

Volunteer and Career Opportunities

Can I volunteer for ONE?

If you would like to volunteer, please see [Take Action](#) and find [your local ONE group](#) to find out how you can become involved in the campaign in your area.

Can I intern for ONE?

If you would like to intern, please see [Internship Application](#) to find out more information.

How do I apply for a job to work at the ONE Campaign?

Please see [Employment Opportunities](#) for a list of openings and information on how to apply.

Donations and Fundraising

How is ONE funded?

The ONE Campaign is funded through private and public foundations. ONE Action is funded through sales of merchandise and non-tax deductible donations.

Can ONE fund me?

ONE is an advocacy organization, and as such, doesn't provide funding for development projects or facilitate trips, grants or scholarships.

Miscellaneous

What if I am a company or corporation that would like to get involved?

Please see our [Contact Us](#) page and go to the corporate contact us form.

Wait! I still have a question. How can I contact ONE?

Please see the [Contact Us](#) page to find out the best way to reach the department you need.

[HOME](#)

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

[PRESS/BLOGGERS](#)

[FAQ](#)

[PRIVACY](#)

[CAREERS](#)

[CONTACT](#)

FOOTNOTES

¹ The following are all examples of academia and media that utilize the term "Third World": *Third World Quarterly* and *Third World Studies* are both academic journals; *NY Times* article, "Gift to Teach Business to Third World Women", from 3/06/08; TWN- Third World Network Web site; Third World Press Web site; Friends of the Third World Web site; Buchanan, B. J., *State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America*, 2006.

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