

**“TRANSFORMING CANNONS INTO CULTURAL CURRENCY”:  
The Fulbright Foreign Student Program and the  
Transmission of the American Creed Abroad**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to demonstrate how the Fulbright Foreign Student Program has transmitted the values of the American Creed—the normative values that underpin U.S. hegemony—to foreign individuals by encouraging, funding, and facilitating academic experiences in U.S. universities since 1946. It builds on constructivist attempts to understand the role of ideas in international relations, particularly in relation to U.S. foreign policy and hegemony. The thesis argues that the exchanges under the auspices of the Fulbright Program constitute a “transmission belt” or socialization mechanism for the values of the American Creed—individualism, democracy, equality, and capitalism—among young foreign intellectual elites, many of whom go on to have careers in their home countries where they put those values into practice. The first empirical section analyzes essays in *The Fulbright Difference* written by alumni of the Fulbright Foreign Student Program, coding and categorizing their responses according to the values of the American Creed that they invoke. The second empirical section explores a single case in depth: that of renowned Bangladeshi economist Muhammad Yunus—founder of the Grameen Bank, pioneer of the concept of microcredit, and winner of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize—who was a Fulbright Scholar at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, in the mid-1960s. His memoirs, speeches, and publications demonstrate how his experiences in the U.S. shaped his beliefs in the power and freedom of the individual, in democracy, in equality, and in free-market capitalism, and how those beliefs in turn shaped the Grameen Bank as an institution that upholds and furthers these values.

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## INTRODUCTION

“Of all the examples in recent history of beating swords into plowshares, of having some benefit come to humanity out of the destruction of war, I think that this program in its results will be among the most preeminent.”

—President John F. Kennedy,  
on the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fulbright Program in August 1961



In a recent handbook on public diplomacy, Giles Scott-Smith argues that “exchanges, however educational and ‘apolitical’ they may be presented, inescapably operate within the broader political environment of international affairs.”<sup>1</sup> Yet although some argue that “the informal networks established from...[exchanges] have major political import,” educational exchange programs have been “written out of the documentation of diplomacy and its conduct in the public realm.”<sup>2</sup> There are several reasons for this. First, defining and measuring the political outcomes of diffuse interpersonal exchanges is a difficult task. Even in cases where an individual who participated in an exchange has had direct influence on policy—domestic or foreign—it is difficult to attribute a particular foreign policy decision to that individual’s educational exchange experience. Second, the reach and impact of educational exchange programs may appear insignificant in the context of international relations. In comparison to government military and foreign affairs budgets, the hundreds of millions of dollars spent on grants and scholarships annually

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<sup>1</sup> Giles Scott-Smith, “Exchange Programs and Public Diplomacy,” in *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, edited by Nancy Snow and Philip M. Taylor (New York: Routledge, 2009), 50.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

are a mere drop in the bucket. Similarly, the hundreds of thousands of individuals who have studied abroad through such programs over the past decades represent a trivial fraction of the human population.

While the money governments spend on educational exchange programs may be relatively low, they may be costly in a different way. Each individual exchange carries the risk of unintended political consequences. After Senator J. William Fulbright drafted and pushed through the amendment to the Surplus Property Act of 1944 that authorized the use of foreign currency acquired from the sale of U.S. surplus war property abroad for student exchanges, Senator Kenneth McKellar alluded to this very danger, claiming that “he would have killed the bill instantly if he had grasped its contents. ‘I don’t want our impressionable American youths to be infected with foreign isms,’”<sup>3</sup> he asserted. Similarly, though U.S. Congressman may not wish to admit it, the experience of studying in the United States may not always convince foreigners of the superiority of American values—in fact, it may do the opposite. For Sayyid Qutb, the experience of studying educational administration in the United States in the late 1940s—though not with Fulbright funding—triggered a rejection of Western values. Shocked by the materialism, racism, and sexual openness that he witnessed, Qutb returned to his native Egypt and became a founding member of the Islamist group the Muslim Brotherhood, which plotted to assassinate Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser in the early 1950s. Though the numbers involved in such exchange programs may seem unimpressive, this small example shows that their impact cannot be measured or evaluated by numbers alone. Instead, their impact is

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<sup>3</sup> J. William Fulbright, “International Education and the Hope for a Better World” (speech, Reykjavik, Iceland, February 22, 1967), 29, <http://scipio.uark.edu/cdm/ref/collection/Fulbright/id/149>.

nuanced and profound, characterized by the diffusion or rejection of ideas and the transformation of individual identities.

Indeed, narratives of self-discovery and individual achievement form the bulk of the evidence for the impact of the Fulbright Program on foreign relations. Narratives of the transformative power of exchange experiences, exemplified by the mantra “Fulbright changed my life,”<sup>4</sup> seem to carry persuasive power in environments where the continued funding and reputation of the Fulbright program are at stake. This suggests that U.S. State Department officials and Congressmen regard such outcomes as evidence of a worthwhile return on the government’s investment. Materials published by the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board cite the number of Fulbright alumni who have gone into positions of political influence in their home countries as an indicator of the program’s success. Aside from the prestige and sense of achievement that those in such prominent positions confer on the program, there is a hope that these individuals carry an admiration for American ideas and values as well as important personal relationships with Americans with them into office. Indeed, in formulating his concept of “soft power,” Joseph Nye argues that international students studying in the U.S. “return home with a greater appreciation of American values and institutions,” and many of them “eventually wind up in positions where they can affect policy outcomes that are important to Americans.”<sup>5</sup> In the Senate hearings on fiscal year 2012 appropriations for the State Department, Senator Patrick Leahy framed the Fulbright scholarships as an investment in the long-term national interest in similar terms. “You don’t necessarily get your return that year, or 20 years, or 30 years,” he said. “But it’s like Fulbright scholarships. I find so

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. State Department official, personal communication with the author, September 10, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2004), 45.

many times in other parts of the world, you find that the finance minister, or the deputy defense minister, or others had studied, or members of their families had studied here, and they have personal ties.”<sup>6</sup>

*Fulbright Exchanges as a Transmission Belt for “American” Values*

Many works in international relations focus on the roles of US-founded international institutions like the UN, IMF, World Bank, and WTO in transmitting and embedding a neoliberal order in the post-war world. However, as Ted Hopf argues:

Hegemonic orders are also reproduced through the myriad interactions that occur among states and their citizens in cultural, educational, and informational sites. Beyond both economic and security institutions are institutions that are not so tailored to specific functions, but do systemically cultivate hegemonic ideas in their participants. I have in mind here university and graduate education, cultural productions, media-scapes, tourism, and other structures of ideational exchange and contact.<sup>7</sup>

In fact, Hopf singles out universities and graduate schools as among the most important institutions in propagating hegemonic ideas.<sup>8</sup>

This thesis will attempt to demonstrate how the Fulbright Foreign Student Program has transmitted the values of the American Creed—that is, the normative values that underpin U.S. hegemony—to foreign individuals by encouraging, funding, and facilitating academic experiences in U.S. universities. It builds on constructivist attempts to understand the role of ideas in international relations, particularly in

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Senate, 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, “State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2012: Hearing Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate on S. 1601” (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2012), 87.

<sup>7</sup> Ted Hopf, “Common-Sense Constructivism and Hegemony in World Politics,” *International Organization* 67, no. 2 (April 2013): 321.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 330.

relation to U.S. foreign policy and hegemony. I argue that the exchanges under the auspices of the Fulbright Program constitute a “transmission belt” or socialization mechanism for the values of the American Creed—individualism, democracy, equality, and capitalism—among young foreign intellectual elites, many of whom go on to have careers in their home countries where they put those values into practice. I cannot demonstrate that these individual exchanges directly influenced the environment for U.S. foreign policy. I will try to show, however, that giving promising foreign students the means and time to experience directly the individual freedom embodied in U.S. social and political life, and particularly in the U.S. higher education system, has been an effective means of transmitting the aforementioned values that constitute the American Creed.

The thesis is organized as follows. The first chapter gives an overview of the Fulbright Program’s history and objectives in the context of U.S. foreign policy. Next, the second chapter provides the theoretical basis for analyzing Fulbright exchanges as a socialization mechanism for the values associated with the American Creed, drawing from international relations scholarship on the nature of American identity and the role of ideas in maintaining hegemony as well as constructivist accounts of socialization in institutions. The following two chapters are case studies. The first empirical section examines *The Fulbright Difference*, a 1993 compilation of personal essays written by Fulbright alumni responding to a prompt from the book’s editors to reflect on “changes in their ‘habits of heart and mind’”<sup>9</sup> as a result of the Fulbright program. As editor Richard Arndt writes, “every essay by its very presence in this

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<sup>9</sup> Richard T. Arndt, “Introduction,” in *The Fulbright Difference*, ed. Richard T. Arndt and David Lee Rubin (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 4.

volume attributes these life-changes specifically to the Fulbright process.”<sup>10</sup> I perform content analysis on those essays in the volume written by alumni of the Fulbright Foreign Student Program, coding and categorizing their responses according to the values of the American Creed that they invoke. The second empirical section explores a single case in depth. Renowned Bangladeshi economist Muhammad Yunus—founder of the Grameen Bank, pioneer of the concept of microcredit, and winner of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize—was a Fulbright Scholar at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, from 1965 to 1966 and completed his Ph.D. in Economics at Vanderbilt in 1969.<sup>11</sup> His memoirs, speeches, and publications demonstrate how his experiences in the U.S. shaped his beliefs in the power and freedom of the individual, in democracy, in equality, and in free-market capitalism, and how those beliefs in turn shaped the Grameen Bank as an institution that upholds and furthers these values.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>11</sup> Yunus financed the remaining years of his Ph.D. program with Vanderbilt research and teaching fellowships.

# CHAPTER 1

## THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM: CONTEXTUALIZING ACADEMIC EXCHANGE

*From Dream to Reality: The Beginnings of the Fulbright Program*

Senator J. William Fulbright's Oxford tutor, Ronald B. McCallum, once claimed that his former student was "responsible for the largest and most significant movement of scholars across the earth since the Fall of Constantinople in 1453."<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the Fulbright Program, established in 1946, is "the flagship educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government," boasting over 325,000 alumni—almost 123,000 from the U.S. and over 202,000 from other countries.<sup>13</sup> In 2013, the program distributed roughly 8,000 grants totaling over \$320 million<sup>14</sup> to foreign students and scholars to study, teach, and conduct research in the United States and to American students and scholars to pursue similar academic endeavors abroad.<sup>15</sup> Although Fulbright grant recipients today represent a small proportion of those engaged in educational exchange between the U.S. and the rest of the world,<sup>16</sup> the Fulbright Program remains a cornerstone of U.S. education and foreign policy,

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<sup>12</sup> Ronald B. McCallum, quoted in Leonard R. Sussman, *The Culture of Freedom: The Small World of Fulbright Scholars* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1992), 41.

<sup>13</sup> Institute of International Education, "History," *Fulbright U.S. Student Program*, <http://us.fulbrightonline.org/about/history>.

<sup>14</sup> Of which over \$240 million came from Congressional appropriation and approximately \$80 million came from foreign governments. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Fulbright Fact Sheet," [http://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/fulbright\\_fact\\_sheet\\_2.pdf](http://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/fulbright_fact_sheet_2.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Institute of International Education, "History," *Fulbright U.S. Student Program*, <http://us.fulbrightonline.org/about/history>.

<sup>16</sup> A record high of 819,644 international students attended U.S. institutions of higher education in 2012-2013, an increase of 7.2% over the previous academic year, while 283,332 U.S. students studied abroad in 2011-2012, an increase of 3.4% over the previous academic year. Institute of International Education, "Open Doors 2013: Fast Facts," <http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data>.

perceived as “essential to advancing freedom, peace and international cooperation” and as a “blue-chip investment.”<sup>17</sup>

Senator J. William Fulbright’s experience studying at Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship in 1925, which he recalled as “almost like a dream,”<sup>18</sup> inspired him to start an educational exchange program. “I was looking for potential political leaders,” he later said. “I was in politics and the inspiration came from World War II, and the nuclear bombings. The idea was how to avoid war in the future.”<sup>19</sup> But although Fulbright viewed international educational exchange as “the vital mortar to seal the bricks of world order”<sup>20</sup> and as “a way to reinforce what the United Nations should ultimately be about,”<sup>21</sup> he believed it was “quite improbable, virtually impossible, to obtain any appropriations for such a cultural purpose”<sup>22</sup> in 1946.

There was some precedent for U.S. government involvement in international educational exchange. In 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt and Congress agreed to reduce the Qing dynasty’s Boxer Rebellion indemnity under the condition that the funds would be used to establish Tsinghua University and fund Chinese students to study in the United States. Following World War I, the liquidation of Belgian relief surpluses led to the founding of the Belgian-American Educational Foundation, which funded student exchanges between the U.S. and Belgium.<sup>23</sup> Neither of these programs relied on Congressional appropriations for funding. Fulbright similarly

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<sup>17</sup> Anita McBride, “Letter from the Chair,” in J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, *2010-2011 Annual Report—Celebrating Fulbright at 65: A Gift to the World* (Washington DC: U.S. Department of State, 2011), 4.

<sup>18</sup> J. William Fulbright, “Fulbright on Fulbright,” in Leonard R. Sussman, *The Culture of Freedom: The Small World of Fulbright Scholars* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1992), 53.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>20</sup> J. William Fulbright, *The Price of Empire* (London: Fourth Estate, 1989), 199.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>23</sup> Harry P. Jeffrey, “Legislative Origins of the Fulbright Program,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 491 (May 1987): 40.

skirted the issue of Congressional appropriation by proposing an amendment to the Surplus Property Act of 1944 that authorized the Secretary of State to work with foreign governments to put the foreign currency or credits acquired through the sale of U.S. surplus war property and material in those foreign countries toward “the promotion of international good will through the exchange of students in the fields of education, culture, and science.”<sup>24</sup> A March 1946 editorial in the *Christian Science Monitor* described the plan as “transform[ing] cannons into cultural currency.”<sup>25</sup> Despite these words of praise, Fulbright realized that his proposal was potentially controversial, and so he cleared the bill with the Senate majority and minority leaders and “presented the proposal as a routine measure under the unanimous consent calendar,” ensuring that the bill was passed without a roll call vote at a time when the proposal’s primary potential opponent, Senator Kenneth McKellar, was off the floor.<sup>26</sup>

The Fulbright Program, then, was not, as Fulbright himself acknowledged, “born of one of those ‘great debates’ on which the United States Senate prides itself.”<sup>27</sup> By 1961, however, the funds from the sale of surplus war supplies were running out, and the exchanges could not continue without additional funding. The Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961 “consolidated and expanded the educational exchange programs of the United States” and remains the law governing these programs today.<sup>28</sup> Thus, it was not until fifteen years after its first exchanges took place that the Fulbright Program received the majority of its funding through Congressional

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<sup>24</sup> U.S. Senate, 79<sup>th</sup> Congress, “S. 1636, A Bill to Amend the Surplus Property Act of 1944,” (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Jeffrey, “Legislative Origins of the Fulbright Program,” 45.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

appropriation,<sup>29</sup> as well as “full recognition by the Congress of the importance of a more comprehensive program of educational and cultural activities as a component of our foreign relations.”<sup>30</sup> The Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Program institutionalized by the Fulbright-Hays Act aimed:

to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations, and the contributions being made toward a peaceful and more fruitful life for people throughout the world; to promote international cooperation for educational and cultural advancement; and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic, and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world.<sup>31</sup>

Fulbright believed that his goal of furthering the humanizing of international relations could not be achieved if his international educational exchange program were “treated as a conventional instrument of a nation’s foreign policy” or “as a propaganda program designed to ‘improve the image’ of a country to cast its current policies in a favorable light.”<sup>32</sup> His idea, rather, was to “enable...people to make their own judgments about America and themselves.”<sup>33</sup> Armed with these judgments and the experiences that generated them, students would return home to “influence political matters through the intelligent leadership of the important countries.”<sup>34</sup> In an interview at the end of the Cold War, Fulbright gave a real-life example of the kind of political influence he envisioned his exchange program cultivating:

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<sup>29</sup> The earlier Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 had authorized Congressional appropriation of funds for foreign students to study once they were in the United States; previously, because financing was limited to foreign currencies, Fulbright grants to foreign students only covered the costs of transportation to the United States. Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> John F. Kennedy, “Remarks Upon Signing the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act,” (speech, Washington, DC, September 21, 1961), online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=8343>.

<sup>31</sup> “Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Program,” Title 22 U.S. Code, Sec. 33, 1961.

<sup>32</sup> Fulbright, “International Education and the Hope for a Better World,” 39.

<sup>33</sup> Fulbright, “Fulbright on Fulbright,” 56.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 57.

Take Alexander Yakovlev, adviser to Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union. Yakovlev had a scholarship [at Columbia University in 1959]. There's no doubt he has had an influence on Mr. Gorbachev. That influence is that the United States, while it challenges and sounds pretty ominous, and even attacks little countries like Grenada ... I'm sure Yakovlev tells Gorbachev, "Oh, yeah, they look big but they're not going to attack us. They may be stupid, but they're not that stupid; so you can afford to cut down and change our approach." Which I think is a substantial reason why Gorbachev changed the approach in our relationship. I think that's a very concrete result of Mr. Yakovlev's influence. He's one of the few people who can say to Gorbachev, "Look, I've lived in that country. They're a peculiar people. They're very conceited and they talk big, but they're not going to attack you."<sup>35</sup>

### *The Organization of the Fulbright Program*

Several countries sponsor programs that promote their language, society, and culture abroad—France's Alliance Française, Germany's Goethe Institut, Spain's Instituto Cervantes, and China's Confucius Institutes come to mind—but aside from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), almost none sponsor *bilateral* exchange programs like Fulbright. Although this thesis explores just one side of this exchange, bidirectional exchange is a defining characteristic of the Fulbright Program. Since 1948, when the first educational exchange agreements between the U.S. and countries like the United Kingdom, France, and Italy were signed, grantee selection in many countries has been conducted by special binational commissions of about ten members, half of them Americans and half of them citizens of the country in which the commission is based. As of 1990, there were 45 active binational Fulbright commissions throughout the world. Funding, too, is bilateral: though the U.S. Congress appropriates the bulk of annual Fulbright resources, foreign governments,

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 54.

particularly those of strong postwar allies like Germany and Japan, share the cost of the program—in fact, their contributions often exceed the amount that the U.S. designates for Fulbright exchanges to and from their countries each year.

The administrative structure of a program<sup>36</sup> that operates in so many different countries and with such a unique purpose in the U.S. foreign policy bureaucracy is understandably diffuse and complex. Since 1959, primary responsibility for administering the program has fallen to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). Although ECA originally was and currently is part of the U.S. Department of State, the bureau merged with the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) when President Jimmy Carter reorganized USIA in 1978, only to move back into the State Department with the closure of USIA in 1999.<sup>37</sup> The policy-making body of the Fulbright Program within ECA, the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (FFSB), consists of presidential appointees who grant final approval to all successful applicants. Finally, the Institute of International Education (IIE), a private, nonprofit organization, helps grantees apply for placements in programs at U.S. colleges and universities, secure additional financial aid from those institutions, and obtain visas to study in the U.S.<sup>38</sup> As the cost of higher education has risen in the past decades, the

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<sup>36</sup> The Fulbright Program now encompasses several different programs, including the U.S. Scholar Program, which sends U.S. professors and professionals abroad to conduct research for up to a year; the Visiting Scholar Program, which sponsors foreign professors and professionals to conduct research in U.S. universities for up to a year; the Classroom Teacher Exchange Program, in which teachers from two different countries exchange teaching positions for a semester or academic year; and the Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program, which supports young teachers from other countries as they strengthen their English proficiency and work as teaching assistants in their native language on a U.S. university campus; among others. The original program, which persists today, consists of the U.S. Student Program, which sponsors research projects (as well as English teaching positions) abroad for U.S. university graduates, and the Foreign Student Program, which sponsors research projects and/or additional degrees in the U.S. for foreign university graduates. This thesis focuses solely on the latter.

<sup>37</sup> For more on this, see Chapter 23, “Paved with Good Intentions: Carter’s Reorganization,” in Richard T. Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings: American Cultural Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century* (Dulles: Potomac Books, 2005), 499-519.

<sup>38</sup> Leonard R. Sussman, *The Culture of Freedom: The Small World of Fulbright Scholars* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1992), 41.

Fulbright Program has become increasingly dependent on U.S. universities for supplemental funding, especially when foreign students wish to extend their period of study in the U.S. beyond the first year, which many do. Many universities “waive tuition fees, wholly or in part, for foreign students [on a Fulbright grant]. They provide housing without charge or at low cost and, in many cases, stipends for student teaching or other purposes.”<sup>39</sup>

In the process of applying for a Fulbright Foreign Student grant, foreign university graduates usually devise a research project or identify a graduate-level degree program they wish to pursue in the United States. They submit their project proposals and applications to their country’s binational commission, or if there is no binational commission in their country, directly to the U.S. embassy. If they are selected in their home country and their selection is approved by the FFSB, IIE helps them apply to their program of choice and secure additional funding, as described above. Although the Fulbright Foreign Student Program may be granted for as little as six months of research and study at U.S. universities, most recipients stay for at least a year, and many renew their grants in order to pursue doctorates at their institutions, as Muhammad Yunus and others mentioned in this thesis did.



In the Congressional hearings on the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Dr. Walter H. C. Laves, the chairman of the Department of Government at Indiana University, presented the findings of his seven-month study

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 108.

of the U.S. government's educational exchange programs. Commissioned by the U.S. Advisory Commission on Educational Exchanges, Laves's study suggests that these programs provide "a necessary ingredient for economic and political growth"<sup>40</sup> in developing countries and that such growth is critical for U.S. foreign policy. Educational exchanges, Laves argues, strengthen the academic and technical resources of developing countries, building the local foundations for sustainable economic development and thus for a thriving global free market system that promotes the economic welfare of the U.S.<sup>41</sup> Eventually, the U.S. will no longer need to "prime economic pumps around the world."<sup>42</sup> Instead, the pumps will prime themselves. Similarly, through educational and cultural programs, developing countries also learn how to "develop viable political systems and democratic systems."<sup>43</sup> American expertise and cooperation, Laves testifies, will make it "possible for them to see a way out of their present apparent dilemma by some route other than resort to communism."<sup>44</sup>

The next chapter suggests how the Fulbright Program might help create the conditions for the changes Laves identifies by socializing foreign grantees to the values that underpin American society and identity.

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<sup>40</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, 87<sup>th</sup> Congress, "Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on State Department Organization and Foreign Operations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives on H.R. 5203 and H.R. 5204" (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961), 161.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 2

### A TRANSMISSION BELT FOR IDEAS: AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

At its core, this thesis argues that the Fulbright Program may be seen as a socialization mechanism for ideas, specifically the values of the American Creed. In what follows, I attempt to operationalize Hopf's claim that the interactions between states and individuals that occur within educational institutions and "structures of ideational exchange and contact," like the Fulbright Program, reproduce hegemonic orders by "cultivat[ing] hegemonic ideas in their participants."<sup>45</sup> To this end, this chapter first surveys arguments about the role of ideas in maintaining hegemony and about the connection between the spread of democracy and U.S. national security to suggest why the socialization of foreigners to the values of the American Creed—individualism, democracy, equality, and capitalism—through the Fulbright Program might matter for U.S. foreign policy. Following that, this chapter uses constructivist literature on socialization in international relations to build a conceptual framework for thinking about how the Fulbright Foreign Student Program might socialize grantees to the normative beliefs inherent in the American Creed. In this way, this chapter develops both the theoretical foundations and methodology for the argument advanced in this thesis.

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<sup>45</sup> Hopf, "Common-Sense Constructivism and Hegemony in World Politics," 321.

Why might transmitting the values of the American Creed to foreigners be an objective of U.S. foreign policy? This section addresses this question, first identifying the normative content of the American Creed before considering the spread of democratic ideals as an aim of U.S. foreign policy. Finally, it connects these threads to make a case for examining the normative persuasion—or socialization—of foreign elites through educational exchange as a means of furthering and maintaining U.S. hegemony.

### What is the American Creed?

The origins of the values of the American Creed can be traced back to the moment in 1776 when Thomas Jefferson penned the words now enshrined in the Declaration of Independence: “that all men are created equal,” and that they have the rights to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Though, as Samuel Huntington acknowledges, Americans have no monopoly over the “political principles of liberty, equality, democracy, individualism, human rights, the rule of law, and private property embodied in the American Creed,”<sup>46</sup> these ideas are “so widely adhered to by so many people”<sup>47</sup> in the United States that they have come to be “identified as a key element of American identity and often as the only significant determinant of that identity.”<sup>48</sup> Coined by Swedish Nobel Laureate economist Gunnar Myrdal in 1944, the concept

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<sup>46</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We? America's Great Debate* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 46.

<sup>47</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 15.

<sup>48</sup> Huntington, *Who Are We?*, 67.

of the American Creed, then, is simultaneously unique to the U.S.—in that its principles define American identity and political institutions—and universal—in that “its principles are applicable to all human societies.”<sup>49</sup>

There is general agreement among scholars on the basic values of the American Creed: individualism, democracy, equality, and liberty. The four values that I identify with the Creed in this thesis, however, are slightly different: individualism, democracy, equality, and capitalism. This is not to ignore the importance of liberty to the Creed. Instead, I contend that liberty, or freedom, in fact underlies all the other values and thus is accounted for in them. Individualism, the belief in the importance and independence of the individual, depends on the rights that protect individual freedoms. Democracy, the belief that legitimate authority derives from the consent of the governed, is premised on free elections and thus the rights to freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. Equality, the belief that all people should enjoy the same rights, focuses on the equal distribution of individual freedoms. Finally, capitalism, the belief that an economic system should be based on private ownership of the means of production and motivated by the goal of making profits, is premised on the individual freedom to conduct business in free markets without state interference.<sup>50</sup> The inclusion of capitalism and free markets in the Creed is important for the purposes of the argument made here, since capitalism, along with democracy, is a conceptual model that the U.S. has attempted to promote and export abroad in the postwar era.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>50</sup> Yuen Foong Khong, “The American Tributary System,” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 6 (2013): 34.

## U.S. Foreign Policy and Hegemony: Exporting Democracy and Free Markets

Tony Smith argues in *America's Mission* that the driving objective of U.S. foreign policy in the twentieth century has been, “in Woodrow Wilson’s words, ‘to make the world safe for democracy.’”<sup>51</sup> Smith chronicles the democratizing “mission” of U.S. foreign policy from its origins in Jefferson’s writings—Jefferson was the first to argue that America could participate fully only in a peaceful world order made up of democracies<sup>52</sup>—through Wilson’s drafting of the Fourteen Points and the post-World War I creation of the League of Nations, both of which were premised on an international community consisting of self-determined, democratic states.<sup>53</sup> Since Wilson’s presidency, Smith writes, “the most consistent tradition in American foreign policy...has been the belief that the nation’s security is best protected by the expansion of democracy worldwide.”<sup>54</sup> The U.S.-led spread of democracy abroad accelerated in the period following World War II, which witnessed the occupation of Germany and Japan and their conversion from fascist empires to stable democracies as well as the gradual global dismantling of centuries of colonialism.<sup>55</sup> And the democratizing mission of U.S. foreign policy has meant more than simply transmitting the models for democratic political institutions. The spread of free markets, too, has been intertwined with and implicit in efforts to create the social, political, and economic conditions for democracy to take hold and thrive abroad.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Tony Smith, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>56</sup> Michael Mandelbaum, *The Ideas That Conquered the World: Peace, Democracy, and Free Markets in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2002), 1.

Again, the U.S. has never been the only source or representative of the values associated with the American Creed. Rather, the argument made here is that U.S. leaders and policymakers are unique in connecting the spread of democratic values abroad to U.S. national security; in a world made up of democracies, Americans presumably need not fear ideational threats or physical attacks from anti-democratic forces abroad.<sup>57</sup> As a result, the transmission of such values has become an important objective of U.S. foreign policy and a key means of maintaining U.S. leadership and hegemony in the postwar era.

In a recent article, Yuen Foong Khong applies the framework of the tributary state to U.S. hegemony, arguing that one of the “tributes” America expects in return for its leadership and its provision of military security and economic advantages is “that others emulate its political forms and ideas.”<sup>58</sup> Those nations that observe “liberal democratic norms and practices,” he shows, are those permitted to enter the “inner circle” of U.S. tributaries.<sup>59</sup> By thus incentivizing adoption of the values of the American Creed, the U.S. promotes the spread of democracy abroad and enhances its national security.

At the same time, by adopting the values of the American Creed, nations signal their acceptance of U.S. hegemony. To the extent that these values suggest U.S. benevolence, they legitimate U.S. hegemony and even obscure the power hierarchy and domination inherent in the concept of hegemony. Building on Antonio Gramsci’s argument that hegemony depends on the consent of the dominated, Robert Cox writes that a hegemonic state must “found and protect a world order

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<sup>57</sup> Khong, “The American Tributary System,” 30-31.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

which [is] universal in conception, i.e., not an order in which one state directly exploits others but an order which most other states...could find compatible with their interests.”<sup>60</sup> This describes the values of the American Creed well: although they are fundamental to American national identity, they are values that benefit not just Americans, but arguably all individuals, regardless of nationality. Thus, the spread of these values facilitates the generation of consent among those individuals and states to the practices of U.S. hegemony. The more these values become taken for granted—that is, believed to be correct or valid without questioning—the stronger U.S. hegemonic power becomes.<sup>61</sup>

The primary means through which the U.S. promotes its democratic values abroad is by setting an example at home. Henry Nau argues that, even as the American preponderance of military and economic power declines, the U.S.

can maintain its leadership by being more of a global pope than a global power, supporting basic political values of individual freedom and economic initiative throughout the world less by its military legions than by its diplomacy and domestic example.<sup>62</sup>

Writing at the end of the Cold War, Nau suggests that the U.S. has a unique responsibility to inspire societies previously under Soviet control and in the developing world to adopt the values associated with the American Creed.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Robert W. Cox, “Gramsci, Hegemony, and International Relations: An Essay in Method (1983),” in Robert W. Cox, with Timothy J. Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 136. Although Cox focuses on the role of economic ideas in generating the consent of the dominated, Hopf helpfully expands his argument to include ideas “about the good life, justice, political or social order, religion, values, norms, family relations, [and] gender”—like the values I associate here with the American Creed—that are normally excluded from discussions about hegemony (Hopf, “Common-Sense Constructivism and Hegemony in World Politics,” 321).

<sup>61</sup> Hopf, “Common-Sense Constructivism and Hegemony in World Politics,” 321.

<sup>62</sup> Henry R. Nau, *The Myth of America’s Decline: Leading the World Economy into the 1990s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 11.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

But aside from acting as a distant example of liberal democracy, how does the U.S. transmit the values of the American Creed to individuals abroad? G. John Ikenberry and Charles Kupchan grapple directly with this question in an article about socialization and hegemony. In line with Gramsci, Cox, and Hopf, they argue that hegemony depends on “elites in secondary states [who] buy into and internalize norms that are articulated by the hegemon and therefore pursue policies consistent with the hegemon’s notion of international order.”<sup>64</sup> They posit three mechanisms through which socialization may occur: normative persuasion, external inducement, and internal reconstruction.<sup>65</sup> Although they outline how elites may be socialized through normative persuasion—by “transnational learning through various forms of direct contact with elites in these states, including contact via diplomatic channels, cultural exchanges, and foreign study”<sup>66</sup>—none of their cases involves a test of educational foreign exchange programs as means of socializing elites to the hegemon’s values. As a result, Ikenberry and Kupchan conclude that “socialization comes about principally through external inducements or internal reconstruction and that normative persuasion is insufficient to drive the socialization process.”<sup>67</sup>

This thesis contests the claim that normative persuasion is insufficient to drive the socialization process. It makes a first attempt to fill the gap in the literature on normative persuasion and hegemony by exploring the role of an educational foreign exchange program—the Fulbright Foreign Student Program—in socializing elites to the values that create consent for U.S. hegemony—that is, the values of the American

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<sup>64</sup> G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, “Socialization and Hegemonic Power,” *International Organization* 44, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 283.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 290.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 290.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 314.

Creed. The following section suggests a framework for thinking about how the Fulbright Program might act as socialization mechanism for these values.

### *Operationalizing the Fulbright Program as a Socialization Mechanism*

This thesis builds on the constructivist claim that social interaction changes actors' preferences and, thus, their behavior.<sup>68</sup> In his book analyzing the mechanisms underlying China's socialization to realpolitik norms within international institutions, Alastair Iain Johnston contends that after social interaction, actors whose behavior previously diverged may converge "because of endogenous change in the normative characteristics and identities of the actors, or because of social identity-based, nonmaterial desires to conform."<sup>69</sup> In other words, individuals may change their beliefs either because their interactions with others convince them of the correctness of those beliefs or because they want to take on a certain identity that corresponds with those beliefs. As their beliefs change to conform to those of others, individuals may change their behavior to conform to that of others, too. Adapting Johnston's approach, I suggest that young foreign educational elites are socialized in certain values of the American Creed—that is, they internalize the normative beliefs of individualism, democracy, equality, and capitalism embodied in American society—as

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<sup>68</sup> A few key examples: Alexander Wendt argues that states' identities and interests under anarchy are not given, but are instead constructed through social interaction. See Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 391-425. Martha Finnemore argues that international institutions shape states' interests by socializing them to accept new norms, values, and perceptions of interest. See Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996). Thomas Risse argues that the processes of argumentation, deliberation, and persuasion are types of social interaction through which actors develop mutually shared norms and identities to guide behavior. See Thomas Risse, "'Let's Argue!': Communicative Action in World Politics," *International Organization* 54, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 1-39.

<sup>69</sup> Alastair Iain Johnston, *Social States: China in International Relations, 1980-2000* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), xiv.

a result of their participation in research and academic study at U.S. institutions of higher education through the Fulbright Foreign Student Program.

### Looking for the Presence and Effects of Socialization

#### **Defining the Effects of Socialization**

In order to test for the presence of socialization, Johnston argues, we must think about how to define, measure, and isolate its effects. Three aspects must be defined.

First, we must identify the properties of the social environment where interaction takes place. This means specifying “the norms and associated behaviors that actors in the environment are supposed to adopt and ideally, internalize.”<sup>70</sup> In the case of the Fulbright Program, the norms that are meant to be transmitted to foreign grantees—the actors—from their interactions within U.S. universities and American society in general—the social environment—are the ideas and values associated with the American Creed: individualism, democracy, equality, and capitalism.

Second, we must identify the qualities of the individuals<sup>71</sup> interacting in the social environment and consider how those qualities might slow or speed the process of socialization.<sup>72</sup> Foreign students selected to participate in the Fulbright Program voluntarily apply for grants to study in the U.S., sometimes for the express purpose of

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>71</sup> While it may seem strange for an IR thesis to examine the socialization of individuals rather than that of states, there are compelling reasons for taking the individual as the unit of socialization. In fact, Johnston argues that a constructivist approach that posits the mutual constitution of social structures and individual agents' identities demands a focus on the individual. Moreover, state agents, not states as actors themselves, participate in institutions. A focus on individuals also avoids theoretical problems associated with the aggregation of preferences and behavior. See *ibid.*, 27-28.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 27.

pursuing research on questions related to U.S. society or history. Thus, they generally exhibit an interest in the United States and its culture that might predispose them to the values of the American Creed and possibly propel the socialization process. Foreign Fulbrighters are also relatively young—generally in their twenties—and therefore are likely to be more impressionable or at least more receptive to new ideas. In addition, foreign Fulbrighters are, for the most part, educated elites. Foreign students applying for a Fulbright grant must have obtained a bachelor’s degree prior to studying in the U.S. Moreover, the competitive application process selects for high achievers with academic and leadership potential. Finally, most foreign Fulbrighters have little to no exposure to the U.S. before receiving their grants. In this study, only one foreign grantee had traveled to the U.S. prior to his Fulbright experience.<sup>73</sup>

Third, we must identify the ways in which these newly socialized individuals might have an impact on the broader social environment, especially in a policy context.<sup>74</sup> This thesis seeks to tell the first part of the socialization story; it explores what, how, and why the values of the American Creed are transmitted to foreign Fulbrighters. It does not focus in any depth on the second part of the socialization story; that is, it stops short of demonstrating that these values, once transmitted, have an impact on the accomplishment of U.S. foreign policy objectives. Nevertheless, I suggest four ways in which foreign Fulbright alumni might favorably influence the environment for U.S. foreign policy through their behavior: through Fulbrighters’ continued participation in U.S. institutions or organizations, through Fulbrighters’

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<sup>73</sup> Swede Gunnar Adler-Karlsson attended Camp Rising Sun, a Fulbright-sponsored program that brought together around 50 boys ages 15-16, half Americans and half foreigners, to live together for a summer in an international community. See Gunnar Adler-Karlsson, “Fulbright Kicks,” in *The Fulbright Difference*, ed. Richard Arndt and David Lee Rubin (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1993), 195.

<sup>74</sup> Johnston, *Social States*, 27.

publication of research on issues relating to the U.S., through Fulbrighters' creation of new institutions or fields of study in their home countries based on U.S. models or values, and through Fulbrighters' participation in diplomacy or other policy areas of their home governments.<sup>75</sup>

### **Measuring and Isolating the Effects of Socialization**

Next, we must turn to the question of measuring and isolating the effects of the socialization process. If the experience of studying at a U.S. university through the Fulbright Program socializes foreign individuals to adopt the values associated with the American Creed, what observable implications of the socialization process should we expect to find?<sup>76</sup> Since there is no way to get inside the heads of individuals to discover changes in their preferences, we must examine, as Johnston puts it, "some phenomenon external to their cognition, e.g., a speech act, a gesture, a decision."<sup>77</sup>

Ideally, we could compare the content of such phenomena from before and after the individual's interaction with the new social environment. If socialization has occurred, we should observe that after interaction with the social environment, the individual's values change to coincide with the prevailing norms of that social

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<sup>75</sup> There is a rich literature in IR on the role of ideas that suggests how the values of the American Creed might influence policy through the actions of Fulbright alumni who have adopted them. Goldstein and Keohane, along with the other authors in their volume, argue that the principled or causal beliefs inherent in ideas influence policy by providing road maps for strategic action or by becoming embedded in political institutions. See Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework," in *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, ed. Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 3-30. Alexander George's "operational code" combines political leaders' instrumental and philosophical beliefs about political action in order to understand how individual perceptions may influence foreign policy decision-making. See Alexander L. George, "The 'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision Making," *International Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (June 1969): 190-222.

<sup>76</sup> On testing hypotheses with respect to observable implications, see Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 11-12.

<sup>77</sup> Johnston, *Social States*, 12.

environment.<sup>78</sup> In this case, the written reflections of foreign Fulbright alumni serve as external indicators of their cognition in relation to their experiences studying in the U.S. If, in fact, the experience of studying at a U.S. university through the Fulbright Program socializes foreign individuals to internalize the values associated with the American Creed, we should observe statements about the Fulbright experience that suggest that these individuals' normative beliefs now coincide with the four creedal values: individualism, democracy, equality, and capitalism.

Of course, variation in the degree of internalization of these values across individual cases is to be expected. Foreign Fulbrighters are exposed to different U.S. university environments and therefore to different “configuration[s] of social pressures”; similarly, Fulbrighters have different national identities and other personal characteristics prior to entering the U.S. university environment that may influence how they receive and interpret their experiences.<sup>79</sup>

This leads to the issue of how to test for the effects of socialization. Which cases should we select? In making his argument for selecting China as a case to test his framework on socialization to counter-realpolitik norms via international institutions, Johnston specifies two conditions for an ideal test case. First, he argues, the state should be one where the “predominant...ideology prior to involvement in institutions is at a maximum distance from that of the institutions.”<sup>80</sup> Second, the state should be a “novice” inexperienced in the norms of the institution.<sup>81</sup> In novices, Johnston argues, the effects of socialization should be greatest and most obvious, since novices are most likely to experience “‘primacy effects,’ where early experience

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., xx.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

and information will have out-of-proportionate effects on inferences drawn from later experiences and information.”<sup>82</sup> Thus, novices constitute “most likely” cases for theory testing.

If we apply Johnston’s test case criteria for states to my argument about individuals, an ideal “most likely” test case should be (1) an individual from a state where the prevailing values were communitarian (as opposed to individualistic), authoritarian (as opposed to democratic), hierarchical or discriminatory (as opposed to egalitarian), and socialist or communist (as opposed to capitalist); and (2) an individual who had little to no exposure to the United States and its educational institutions prior to studying on a Fulbright grant.<sup>83</sup>

Several of the examples chosen here meet these “ideal” criteria. Two Fulbrighters in this study—Maria Regina Tavares da Silva from Portugal and Carmen Varela from Spain—grew up under dictatorships that only became democracies after they returned home from their Fulbright experiences. Similarly, when Bangladeshi Muhammad Yunus traveled to the U.S. to pursue a Ph.D. in Economics at Vanderbilt University on a Fulbright grant in 1965, he and his present-day countrymen had only ever lived under British colonial or Pakistani authoritarian control. It was not until the civil war began in 1971, while Yunus was teaching economics in Tennessee after his Fulbright experience, that Bangladesh claimed independence and took its first fragile steps toward democracy. Even so, as a majority Islamic country, communitarian

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>83</sup> A reasonable reader might argue that these individuals already accepted the values of the American Creed before they set foot in the United States. While this may be true for some foreign Fulbright grantees, we can assume that those alumni who connect the creedal values to specific novel or surprising experiences during their time in the U.S. or who draw explicit contrasts between their home countries and the U.S. when discussing a creedal value in their essays accepted these values as a result of interaction with their American social environment.

values and gender discrimination were prevalent in Bangladesh both before and after Yunus' Fulbright experience.

Furthermore, even for those Fulbrighters who came from budding postwar European democracies, the values associated with the American Creed were not necessarily deeply ingrained prior to their Fulbright experiences. In addition, all except one of the individuals<sup>84</sup> had little to no direct exposure to the United States prior to studying in the U.S. on a Fulbright grant. In the context of U.S. higher education institutions, they were all novices.

#### How Socialization Works: The Mechanism of Persuasion

This study, like many constructivist accounts, is a correlational analysis designed to be a first, imperfect, attempt to demonstrate, in a systematic way, that some Fulbright grantees have imbibed certain normative values of the American Creed through their immersion in American society, particularly in U.S. institutions of higher education. This socialization, in turn, may have significant ramifications for U.S. foreign policy, though demonstrating such effects is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Still, it would be insufficient, as Alexander Wendt notes, to simply “point to the existence of cultural norms and corresponding behavior, without showing how norms get inside actors’ heads to motivate actions.”<sup>85</sup> Johnston addresses this problem in his work. While some policymakers advocate a diplomatic strategy of “engaging” China in order to change China’s preferences such that its leaders will

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<sup>84</sup> See footnote 39 above.

<sup>85</sup> Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 134.

favor maintaining the status quo, they fail to specify how exactly the process of socialization that such an engagement strategy implies works.<sup>86</sup> To remedy this, Johnston develops and tests three microprocesses of socialization—mimicking, social inference, and persuasion—to suggest “how precisely actors are exposed to, receive, process, and then act upon the normative arguments that predominate in particular social environments.”<sup>87</sup> Of these three, the microprocess or mechanism relevant to this argument is persuasion, as noted previously in the discussion of Ikenberry and Kupchan’s work.

Persuasion occurs when an individual, especially a novice, engages in a process of cognition in which he or she actively compares a newly received norm, value, or causal understanding to preexisting beliefs and, upon active evaluation, finds the new norm, value, or causal understanding more convincing. As a result, the individual changes his or her beliefs to correspond to the new norm, value, or causal understanding.<sup>88</sup> At this point, the individual has internalized the value and believes it is “correct and ought to be operative in their own behavior.”<sup>89</sup> It is crucial that this entire process occurs “in the absence of overtly material or mental coercion.”<sup>90</sup> In other words, the individual must willingly accept and internalize the new concept.

Johnston identifies three main ways in which an individual may be persuaded. First, an individual may “engage in a high-intensity process of cognition, reflection, and argument about the content of new information.”<sup>91</sup> Because the process of cognition involves connecting new ideas to preexisting beliefs, cognition is more

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<sup>86</sup> Johnston, *Social States*, xvi-xvii.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 and 155.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

likely to happen in an environment “where there is [a lot] of new information that cues linkages to other attitudes and interests.”<sup>92</sup> The more often the environment triggers this process of cognition, the more likely persuasion will occur. For this reason, the amount of time an individual spends interacting in a new social environment is a critical variable in the persuasion process. The longer an individual spends in that environment, the more likely he or she will be persuaded to adopt the environment’s norms, values, and causal understandings.

Second, an individual may be persuaded by his or her “relationship to the persuader.”<sup>93</sup> In essence, the individual examines his or her relationship to the persuader in order to evaluate the persuader’s authoritativeness and thereby determine the credibility and validity of the persuader’s ideas.<sup>94</sup> The most convincing persuaders are culturally recognized authorities like doctors or scientists. Other convincing persuaders are those who appear socially or intellectually attractive; as a result of their attractiveness, others like and trust them. Persuaders will become more liked and trusted as individuals have more contact with them—in other words, as they become more familiar with each other.<sup>95</sup> In fact, Johnston argues, “familiarity and iterated face-to-face social interaction”<sup>96</sup> are crucial to assessing the degree of knowledge and trustworthiness of the persuader.<sup>97</sup>

Third, an individual may be persuaded as a result of his or her own personal qualities, including his or her cognitive processing abilities and the strength of his or

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 156-157.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 158.

her existing attitudes.<sup>98</sup> The individual's personal cognitive qualities in particular act as a filter through which the individual evaluates the new norms, values, and causal understandings of the environment as well as the authoritativeness of the persuader.<sup>99</sup>

Persuasion as a socialization mechanism is a combination of all three of the processes described above. From this brief sketch of how persuasion works, we can identify two relevant scenarios in which persuasion should be especially likely to occur. First, persuasion should be more likely to occur when the individual has few “prior, ingrained” beliefs “that are inconsistent with” the norms, values, and causal understandings of the new social environment.<sup>100</sup> Second, persuasion should be more likely to occur when the individual “is exposed to” new norms, values, and causal understandings “repeatedly over time.”<sup>101</sup> It is significant, then, that the Fulbright Program immerses foreign grantees in the U.S. environment for at least six months, but usually not less than a year, and that many grantees renew their funding for several years to pursue graduate degrees at U.S. universities.



This chapter has established the theoretical foundations and outlined the methodology for this constructivist-based exploration of the socialization of foreign Fulbrighters to the creedal values central to American identity. First, building on Samuel Huntington's discussion of the American Creed, this chapter outlined the four values—individualism, democracy, equality, and capitalism—that foreign

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 157.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

Fulbrighters may absorb from their interactions within U.S. institutions of higher education and American society. Following that, this chapter drew on the writings of Tony Smith, Yuen Foong Khong, and G. John Ikenberry and Charles Kupchan to examine the export of democracy and free markets—and the ideas that underlie them—as an objective of postwar U.S. foreign policy and as a means of maintaining U.S. hegemony. Finally, this chapter adapted Alastair Iain Johnston’s framework for exploring China’s socialization to counter-realpolitik norms via international institutions to the task of exploring foreign Fulbrighters’ socialization to the values of the American Creed via exposure to American society.

In the small-N case studies in Chapter 3 and the single case study in Chapter 4, I use the analytical framework developed in this chapter to examine the extent to which foreign Fulbright alumni have been socialized or persuaded by their Fulbright experiences in the U.S. to adhere to the values of the American Creed.

### CHAPTER 3

## THE FULBRIGHT DIFFERENCE: TESTING THE FRAMEWORK

The aim of the Fulbright Foreign Student Program, as Senator Fulbright himself described it, is to influence international politics in ways congenial to U.S. foreign policy (and, by extension, U.S. hegemony) through the education of foreign individuals in the United States. The somewhat immodest assumption behind this objective is that direct and free exposure to the American educational system and American ideals will convince foreigners that the values underlying U.S. society are not only better than the alternatives, but are in fact universal. As Leonard Sussman writes in his 1992 study of the Fulbright Program, *The Culture of Freedom*, the structure and purpose of the Fulbright Program reflects four principles: “American faith in direct exposure between peoples as a means of dispelling misconceptions, education as the principal bridge of contact, freedom of inquiry, and private participation and initiative.”<sup>102</sup> The experience of studying in U.S. universities that encourage questioning and personal initiative *shows*, not just tells, foreign grantees the value that constitutes the “fundamental commitment of the Fulbright process...and the American sociopolitical ethic”: the “value of the individual in society.”<sup>103</sup> The Fulbright Program hopes to “advanc[e] American national interests by attracting, not exploiting, but demonstrating mutuality in meeting the objectives and interests of individual citizens—Americans and others—as well as their governments.”<sup>104</sup> Through empowering individuals by example, the Fulbright experience cultivates the

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<sup>102</sup> Sussman, *The Culture of Freedom*, 26.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 5

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

conditions for “intelligent minds...[to] enlarge the possibilities for individuals to improve the condition of the many.”<sup>105</sup> Sussman succinctly summarizes this argument:

The reciprocal exchange of ideas across national borders can lead to greater security and human progress. Toward this end, the principal focus of the Fulbright program has been and should be the enhancement of the individual intellect. Fulbright exchange cannot realistically be based on the export of American systems or institutions, just as the current “U.S. democracy initiative” cannot expect to transfer American political forms to other cultures. Rather, in both cases the American experience—its diverse scholarship and its democratic institutions—provides a model that scholars or government leaders elsewhere can draw upon to develop their own cultural and governmental institutions. But the prime focus remains: the intellectual empowerment of individuals, foreign and American; empowerment of scholars by interacting, one with the other.<sup>106</sup>

Though there is no way to measure directly the influence that alumni have had on international politics as a result of their Fulbright experience, it is possible to measure the extent to which the Fulbright experience succeeded in transmitting the values of the American Creed—especially the underlying value of individual freedom—to foreign intellectual elites. Transmission of these values, after all, is the implicit mechanism underpinning the program’s desired effect: that it will “favorably influence the environment within which U.S. foreign policy is carried out,” as a 1973 report on exchanges issued by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs states.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>107</sup> Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. State Department, “The CU Program Concept,” October 1, 1973, 1, quoted in Giles Scott-Smith, *Networks of Empire: The US State Department’s Foreign Leader Program in the Netherlands, France, and Britain* (Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2008), 35.

This chapter examines ten essays in which alumni of the Fulbright Foreign Student Program reflect on their experiences studying and living in the United States, all selected from the 1993 compilation *The Fulbright Difference*.<sup>108</sup> The essays were written in response to a call for contributions from Fulbright alumni on the following question: “if in fact the Fulbright experience changed lives, how did it achieve that end and what were the results?”<sup>109</sup> In assessing their reflections “one by one, to discover what changes were wrought, and what these changes produce,”<sup>110</sup> I identify the presence of the values of the American Creed in their accounts. In this way, I show how disparate experiences in different places in the U.S. and at different times across the postwar period successfully impart the same, constant values that define U.S. society and identity.

*Content Analysis: The Values of the American Creed in Alumni Essays*

This chapter employs content analysis, which Ole Holsti defines as “any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages.”<sup>111</sup> Although content analysis usually relies on frequency counts of attributes within content units, a nonfrequency technique will be used here. I am interested in *how many* Fulbright foreign student alumni discussed the values of the American Creed, such as “individualism” or “democracy,” in reflecting on their

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<sup>108</sup> Though the book contains over 40 such reflection essays from alumni of the Fulbright Program in general, I have selected only those written by alumni of the Fulbright *Foreign Student* Program in order to examine the transmission of U.S. hegemonic ideas to foreign students who studied and conducted research in the U.S. on Fulbright grants.

<sup>109</sup> Richard T. Arndt and David Lee Rubin, eds., *The Fulbright Difference* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996), xii.

<sup>110</sup> Sussman, *The Culture of Freedom*, 78.

<sup>111</sup> Ole R. Holsti, “Content Analysis,” in *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1968), 601.

academic experience in the U.S., not *how often* such concepts were mentioned in total across all of their accounts. Thus, the material is coded based on the absence or presence of the attribute—in this case, one of the values of the American Creed—in each content unit, or essay, instead of the frequency at which that attribute appears across content units.

As Holsti argues, content analysis aims to be objective, systematic, and general in its approach. Objective analysis is conducted according to “explicitly formulated rules” so that other researchers might be able to replicate the initial researcher’s results.<sup>112</sup> Table 3.1 provides a list of the phrases and themes coded as indicating the presence of each value examined here. While categorizing the discussion of racism as indicating the presence of the value of equality seems counter-intuitive, there are a few examples in which alumni expressed surprise at the persistence of racism in the U.S. Their critiques imply that such discrimination appeared incongruous with the U.S. ideals of diversity, tolerance, and equality.

**Table 3.1: Phrases and Themes Coded as Values of the American Creed**

<b>Value</b>	<b>Phrases or Themes Indicating Presence of Value</b>
Individualism	“value of the individual,” “empowerment,” “freedom”
Democracy	“democracy,” “democratic values”
Equality	“equality,” “racism,” “power/role of women,” “civil rights,” “diversity,” “tolerance,” “melting pot”
Capitalism	“capitalism” “free markets,” “free market economy”

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 598.

Systematic analysis ensures that the materials included or excluded in the study are selected “according to consistently applied criteria”<sup>113</sup> in order to avoid selection bias. The ten essays written by alumni of the Fulbright Foreign Student Program who studied or conducted research in U.S. universities on Fulbright grants were selected from *The Fulbright Difference* compilation.<sup>114</sup> An important implication of my selection process is that the essays are not evenly distributed across the decades of the Fulbright Program’s operation; most of the alumni in the selected essays studied in the U.S. during the 1950s and 1960s.

Some brief notes about a few anomalous choices: One otherwise pertinent essay in the volume was eliminated from consideration, since the author did not study in the U.S. on a Fulbright grant, but rather on funds from the French government. Another essay was excluded because its author, though a foreigner in the U.S. on a Fulbright grant, taught high school English and Social Studies and thus participated in a different aspect of the Fulbright Program from the one considered here. Finally, one essay included in the study differs from the others in that two Fulbright alumni jointly wrote it: one, a foreign student who studied in New York, and the other, a U.S. student who studied in France. They have been married since meeting during their Fulbright experiences. The study includes only the sections of the essay written by the foreign spouse who studied in the U.S. on a Fulbright grant.

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> The rest of the essays in the volume were excluded from the study on this basis, since most of them were written by alumni of the Fulbright U.S. Student Program who pursued educational experiences in other countries on Fulbright grants. While their experiences may constitute interesting material for a future research project, my study is focused on examining the propensity and mechanism for Fulbright-sponsored educational experiences in U.S. universities to transmit the values of the American Creed to foreign students.

Finally, the aim of generality requires the findings to have “theoretical relevance.”<sup>115</sup> As much as possible, mere description or other interesting but irrelevant memories related to the Fulbright experience have been excluded. Rather, the following sections identify and analyze excerpts from the essays that persuasively convey the presence and importance of the four values of the American Creed—individualism, democracy, equality, and capitalism—in Fulbrighters’ reflections on their experiences in the U.S. This method constitutes a factor analysis of sorts: within each of the content units, I mine for the common factors along selected dimensions.

The results of the content analysis appear in Table 3.2. Interestingly, the values of individualism and democracy appear in eight out of the ten accounts. Half of the alumni—comprising all of those who studied in the U.S. during the 1960s and 1970s, during and after the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S.—allude to the value of equality in their essays. But only three out of the ten alumni write about capitalism in reflecting on their Fulbright experiences—though, notably, two of those three studied business and economics on their grants.

**Table 3.2: Values of the American Creed in Foreign Student Alumni Essays**

<b>Value</b>	<b>Percentage of Essays Mentioning Value</b>
Individualism	80%
Democracy	80%
Equality	50%
Capitalism	30%

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<sup>115</sup> Holsti, “Content Analysis,” 598.

*A Closer Look: How Were the Values of the American Creed Transmitted?*

The appearance of the values of the American Creed in a majority of alumni accounts of their Fulbright experiences is insufficient to suggest a mechanism through which the Fulbright Program might transmit these values. For insight into how the experience of studying at a U.S. university through the Fulbright Program instills confidence in the American model and the values on which that model is founded, we must turn to the narratives themselves.

Individualism

Seven of the ten foreign student alumni remark on the sense of freedom and independence their experience in America gave them. Anna Maria Martellone, a Fulbrighter from Italy who studied Italian immigrant communities in Boston at Radcliffe College starting in 1954, writes of “feeling much more free and happy than [she] had been at home.”<sup>116</sup> She absorbed “this sense of generalized freedom” from her immediate social and academic environment, which allowed her to learn and grow “in a new and freer ambiance.”<sup>117</sup> Several other grantees note a similar feeling of individual freedom; some attribute this freedom, at least partially, to the structure of the Fulbright Program and its deliberate attempts to separate the politics of the moment from the conduct of the exchanges. Tiziano Bonazzi, another Italian who researched early Massachusetts and Puritan political thought on his Fulbright-funded

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<sup>116</sup> Anna Maria Martellone, “American Encounters, Brief and Otherwise,” in *The Fulbright Difference*, ed. Richard T. Arndt and David Lee Rubin (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 104.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

experience at the University of Rochester in the 1960s, notes that he and other Fulbrighters “were free to work in new ways and from perspectives that were novel in Italy.”<sup>118</sup> The Fulbright Program’s “open-ended politics,” he writes, “put Italian grantees directly in touch with American society...and gave them the possibility of reacting freely, negatively if necessary, to their perceptions of a diverse and complex society.”<sup>119</sup>

In a university environment free from political pressures and infused with the spirit of academic inquiry and exploration, foreign students discover the value American society places on individual freedom of choice and judgment. In his account, Darshan Singh Maini, an Indian Fulbrighter who researched and wrote a book on author Henry James during his Fulbright experience starting in 1969, contrasts the sense of academic freedom in the U.S. to his educational experiences back home. “In striking contrast to the fussiness, the red-tape and the clutter of things in our Indian Universities, which sadly continue to be the poor cousins of the British family,” he writes, “the American system is quiet, efficient, non-interfering; it allows the scholar as much freedom and choice as he can take, and it leaves lots of room for improvisation and innovation. ... It is this type of academic culture that one seeks to create on returning home.”<sup>120</sup>

Other foreign Fulbright grantees write as witnesses of the fundamental American belief in the importance and value of the individual, which reinforced the sense of individual freedom they felt during their experiences. Herman Liebaers, a

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<sup>118</sup> Tiziano Bonazzi, “The Beginnings of American History in Italy,” in *The Fulbright Difference*, ed. Richard T. Arndt and David Lee Rubin (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 158.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>120</sup> Darshan Singh Maini, “The Fulbright Moment: Voyages Through Values,” in *The Fulbright Difference*, ed. Richard T. Arndt and David Lee Rubin (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 243.

young librarian at the Royal Library of Belgium who traveled across the United States in 1950 visiting a hundred libraries, recounts how the nature of individuals in the U.S. “struck” him:

Something about individuals and institutions in the U.S. struck me as well during my first visit: the number of memorial names I found everywhere, on buildings, in parks, halls, museums, universities, hospitals and like institutions. One conclusion was that individuals were more important than institutions. Another was that responsible citizens who became public figures were important actors in shaping the social image of the U.S. A thread of individuals runs through my American experience.<sup>121</sup>

For Maria Regina Tavares da Silva, a Portuguese Fulbrighter who studied American literature and community development at Grailsville College in Ohio beginning in 1962, and Carmen Varela, a Spanish Fulbrighter who studied clinical psychology at the University of California-Los Angeles beginning in 1977, this emphasis on individual freedom and initiative was even more startling. Both had grown up under dictatorships where censorship and oppression reigned. Tavares da Silva “was surprised at the originality, the sense of independence of American youth, different from what we were used to in Europe.”<sup>122</sup> Varela, too, remembers going “virtually overnight from a rural to a technologically advanced society, from an oral to a sophisticated information-based culture, from a leveling and censor-ridden community to one in which individual development and expression were everything.”<sup>123</sup> Portugal’s revolution came in 1974, and Spain’s came in 1978. By then, both Fulbrighters had returned from the U.S., armed with a new perspective of what freedom meant and what individuals could accomplish.

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<sup>121</sup> Herman Liebaers, “Three Centuries After the Mayflower,” in *The Fulbright Difference*, ed. Richard T. Arndt and David Lee Rubin (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 72.

<sup>122</sup> Maria Regina Tavares da Silva, “Learning Equality and Democracy,” in *The Fulbright Difference*, ed. Richard T. Arndt and David Lee Rubin (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 209.

<sup>123</sup> Carmen Varela, “Of Crosses and Crossings,” in *The Fulbright Difference*, ed. Richard T. Arndt and David Lee Rubin (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 265.

Deborah Christie, a British Fulbrighter who studied neuropsychology at Northeast Ohio Medical University beginning in 1984, summarizes the transformational effect of exposure to American individualism best. “I learned I was capable and that brought me confidence. To use language I learned in the U.S.,” Christie writes, “‘I was empowered,’ bringing to reality what my parents tried to teach me—that I could do anything I wanted if I tried hard enough.”<sup>124</sup> Christie realizes that there are two seemingly contradictory components of such individualism: it entails, on the one hand, freedom, and on the other, responsibility. “In the U.S.,” she reflects, “I was given responsibility and I was expected to accept it and take it on my own.”<sup>125</sup> As a result, she notes, everything she has done in Britain since her return “flow[s] from good habits contracted in Rootstown: a commitment to teaching, an independence of mind and initiative.”<sup>126</sup> In one passage, Christie does more than connect her individual empowerment to the Fulbright experience. She implies that her experience of empowerment in the U.S. made her push back against the customs, lack of initiative, and rigid hierarchy she noticed upon her return to Britain:

...this discovery of self was engendered and nurtured during my time as a Fulbrighter. Back home in Britain, the experience has left an indelible mark upon me. Afterwards I no longer wanted to play the game, do as I was told. I no longer wanted to read the text of a chapter from the reading list and call it a lecture. I no longer wanted to be treated like a second-class citizen because I was not on the faculty.<sup>127</sup>

This example makes clear how difficult and ultimately inaccurate it is to analyze each of the hegemonic values separately, as I have done here. Individualism, to be sure, demands both democracy and equality.

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<sup>124</sup> Deborah Christie, “Notes from Rootstown,” in *The Fulbright Difference*, ed. Richard T. Arndt and David Lee Rubin (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 340.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 345.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 346-347.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 341.

## Democracy

Out of all the values examined here, American democracy made the deepest impression on these Fulbrighters, who experienced academic, social, and political life at U.S. universities amid Cold War East-West tensions and the Civil Rights Movement. Several reference Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence in their essays. Finnish Fulbrighter Per-Erik Lönnfors recalls attending one of John F. Kennedy's campaign speeches, which left him "euphoric about the American system of democracy and its free press."<sup>128</sup> By the end of his Fulbright year in 1961, Lönnfors, who had studied journalism at the University of Syracuse, "was full of idealistic and ultimately naïve admiration for American democracy" and the individual liberties it guaranteed—in fact, he did not have "the slightest self-doubt on the subject."<sup>129</sup> Despite witnessing in 1954 the disheartening spectacle of McCarthyism and the damage it did to the American image, the Belgian Liebaers felt that his Fulbright experience, too, instilled him with "unlimited confidence in the democratic values of American life."<sup>130</sup>

Two Fulbrighters recall memories of democracy in action. Christie, the British Fulbrighter, mentions the democratic "atmosphere" at her medical school in the mid-1980s, noting that discussions and decisions involved "not just faculty but graduate students and technicians. Everyone had a voice and a contribution to make, and these were all heard and acted upon."<sup>131</sup> Martellone, one of the Italian Fulbrighters,

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<sup>128</sup> Per-Erik Lönnfors, "A Brief Essay on Truth," in *The Fulbright Difference*, ed. Richard T. Arndt and David Lee Rubin (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 182.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>130</sup> Liebaers, "Three Centuries After the Mayflower," 68.

<sup>131</sup> Christie, "Notes from Rootstown," 344.

describes a vivid scene of small-town democracy from her Fulbright orientation at Bard College in New York. In the summer of 1954, she spent a week with a young family in Rhinebeck, New York, who she remembers were

Republican, conservative, optimistic, naïve and uninformed in some ways, but democratic and advanced in others. He was an elected town official, so one night we went to a town meeting about trees. One group wanted to cut some down, the others were incensed at the thought. There was talk of raising money for a new fire-engine. To me it was pure fascination: the participants were informed, interested, tolerant, amazingly free of ideological bias, down-to-earth, practical—in sum, civilized.<sup>132</sup>

Clearly, such simple, everyday experiences have the power to communicate the value and virtue of democracy. Building this kind of unimpeded individual interaction with ordinary Americans was a crucial and deliberate component of the Fulbright Program's design. As Bonazzi, the other Italian Fulbrighter and pioneer of the study of U.S. history in Italy, notes, U.S. cultural diplomacy in the Cold War was "guided by a single notion: the superiority of American-style democracy and its no-nonsense, practical approach to life."<sup>133</sup> The superiority of U.S.-style democracy seems natural to Americans, who perceive "their version of democracy less as a local way of handling the issues of governance than as a universal solution."<sup>134</sup> Although Bonazzi and his countrymen accepted American democracy, he remembers finding the guiding premise of U.S. cultural diplomacy strange at first:

To us, it seemed a peculiar ideology, whose main premise was that free and direct intercourse with American culture could not fail to convince honest, rational aliens to accept and spread its main tenets. This was the ideology of the Fulbright Program, at least as viewed from the Italian peninsula. [...] And I also believe that this has been the reason for the Fulbright impact and success in countries like Italy.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Martellone, "American Encounters, Brief and Otherwise," 103-104.

<sup>133</sup> Bonazzi, "The Beginnings of American History in Italy," 152.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 152-153.

This guiding ideology of the Fulbright Program also appears compelling in the cases of Portuguese Fulbrighter Tavares da Silva and Spanish Fulbrighter Varela, both of whom, as previously mentioned, grew up under dictatorships. Tavares da Silva was studying in the U.S. during the 1963 March on Washington led by Martin Luther King. For her, a student of American literature, witnessing the Civil Rights Movement at its peak brought American democracy to life:

The idealism of youth, the experience of living through the rapid transformation of a closed society into a much broader and multi-faceted reality—this gave these American myths and the values they contained a special significance and relevance. The dream of freedom, the dream of equality, the dream of democracy as expressed in them remain today the most powerful memories of my American days.<sup>136</sup>

In this “atmosphere of questioning and change,” Tavares da Silva saw the foundation of U.S. democracy, “a new celebration of the basic principles that had shaped America.”<sup>137</sup>

Varela, too, became enamored with democracy, which she refers to as the “greatest idea”<sup>138</sup> of politics. Yet she describes her first encounters with democracy at UCLA as bewildering. While the rules of life in a dictatorship are straightforward—“the boss says sex is bad or church-going is good”—the values of democracy make decisions murkier—“sex and church-going may be good or bad, depending on the circumstances.”<sup>139</sup> The fusion of individual freedom and the Protestant ethic astonished her. At the time, she writes, “it was incomprehensible that a person could dress like a hippie, act with unthinkable freedom, yet work harder than I had ever

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<sup>136</sup> Tavares da Silva, “Learning Equality and Democracy,” 210.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> Varela, “Of Crosses and Crossings,” 268.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

seen anyone work.”<sup>140</sup> Varela describes the process of putting these ideas into action and truly “discovering democracy” as equally difficult:

It does not come easily, learning complex responses like respect, flexibility, willingness to negotiate, taking responsibility for your own behavior, and thinking creatively about how to make things better. My passion for freedom was enormous but my ability to use it and to adapt was slow.<sup>141</sup>

In spite of the challenges of adapting to its freedoms, its responsibilities, and its imperfections, American democracy and its discovery were central, enduring themes for almost all Fulbrighters in the sample.

### Equality

At the same time as it inspired grantees’ admiration of American democracy, the Fulbright experience did not shield these grantees from seeing where the U.S. fell short of its ideals. Fulbrighters who studied in the U.S. before the Civil Rights Movement were surprised to see that the sense of individual empowerment they experienced did not extend to all Americans. Italian Fulbrighter Martellone, who in the mid-1950s researched Italian immigrant communities in Boston, “had no experience with the tensions of religion and race” before coming to the U.S. “Without my Jewish friends,” she recalls, “I would have paid no attention to these distinctions, but each of them carried a chip on the shoulder.”<sup>142</sup> Yet her Jewish friends were not exactly tolerant, either. Martellone remembers feeling “taken aback when [her] hyper-sensitive Jewish friend referred to [their] Mexican colleague as a

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 273.

<sup>142</sup> Martellone, “American Encounters, Brief and Otherwise,” 108.

‘greaser.’”<sup>143</sup> Knowledge of these tensions raised questions about American identity, for “America after all was the land of consensus, the famous ‘melting pot’”—and that implied equality.<sup>144</sup>

In a similar vein, Gunnar Adler-Karlsson, a Swedish Fulbrighter who spent six months at Harvard and six months at Berkeley from 1961 to 1962, describes a vivid memory of blatant racial discrimination on a trip to Florida in the early 1960s. He and his wife “were duly shocked by the obvious racism: [their] part of the beach was closed to blacks. A life-guard explained...that they were not permitted because the water would be polluted if a ‘nigger’ went into it.”<sup>145</sup>

But several of the Fulbrighters noticed the social shifts that were taking place around them from the 1960s onward. For some, the push toward gender equality in particular was apparent in everyday personal interactions. Finnish Fulbrighter Lönnfors relates his surprise at discovering “the power of American women” in 1960 through an anecdote:

One day a woman asked a professor to open a window because it was too warm. He interrupted his lecture to do as he was asked. Was it because of a profound understanding of the employer-employee relationship? Or was it the position women had acquired during the pioneer years when they were in scarce supply? In Europe the situation was unthinkable.<sup>146</sup>

Spanish Fulbrighter Varela, who studied in the U.S. 17 years later, similarly contrasts the role of women in American society with their role in Spanish society. The initiative expected of women in the U.S. was unusual to her, and her “passiveness puzzled everyone.” She remembers that “the nurses looked at [her] curiously and

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Adler-Karlsson, “Fulbright Kicks,” 201.

<sup>146</sup> Lönnfors, “A Brief Essay on Truth,” 181.

asked [her] about Spain; they laughed at the severe restrictions on women's behavior."<sup>147</sup>

Others witnessed rather than felt the campaign for equal rights unfolding. In describing the at-times traumatic and violent protests staged on Harvard's campus during 1969, Indian Fulbrighter Maini writes, "It was American youth's hour of truth, a politics of passion and pity and perversity. It was the time when the horror of the racial question in America had begun, only begun, to register with white youth. 'Black is beautiful' was posted all over America."<sup>148</sup> In spite of its casualties, this historic moment of societal awakening inspired Fulbrighters in its attempt to fulfill the promises of the core American ideals of democracy and individualism. Portuguese Fulbrighter Tavares da Silva, whose studies in Ohio revolved around the "issue of equality in the status and role of women,"<sup>149</sup> describes the struggle for equality in similar terms: "It was a time of struggle of civil rights, against racism and oppression, the time of the great marches for freedom and equality."<sup>150</sup> The Civil Rights Movement in 1962 and 1963 defined her Fulbright experience. She recalls watching the March on Washington in August 1963 on television and connecting Martin Luther King's words to the American Creed and U.S. history:

Even today I can hear the tones of Martin Luther King's voice...and his speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Here again were the old myths of freedom and equality, the utopian dream waiting to be fulfilled, the ideas enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, not yet realized, but certain some day to be.

Racism was the most visible and dramatic issue, but the turmoil of the sixties went deeper. It amounted to a complete review of American values. [...] Everything was open to question, from politics to morals, from habits and traditions to basic ideals.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Varela, "Of Crosses and Crossings," 272.

<sup>148</sup> Maini, "The Fulbright Moment: Voyages Through Values," 244.

<sup>149</sup> Tavares da Silva, "Learning Equality and Democracy," 211.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

Tavares da Silva found inspiration for Portugal's future from this movement to guarantee equal freedom and equal rights for all Americans. She remembers drawing parallels between President John F. Kennedy's words and the problems facing Portugal as the country began to transition from dictatorship to democracy: "We too were poised at a New Frontier, we too had problems but opportunities, we too needed reality in our idealism, we too had to fight poverty and marginalization, to build equal opportunities and genuine freedom for all."<sup>152</sup> Upon her return to Portugal, Tavares da Silva helped establish the government's Commission on the Status of Women and eventually was put in charge of the government's Commission for Equality and Women's Rights. Since her Fulbright experience, she has represented Portugal at United Nations conferences on women's rights and has served as President of both the Council of Europe's Committee for Equality between Men and Women and the European Commission's Committee for Equality of Opportunity between Men and Women. Tavares da Silva's year studying on a Fulbright in Ohio "helped nurture and build" her interest in defending "the concept of equal rights and opportunities as an absolute and basic requirement of democracy."<sup>153</sup> For her, "the opportunity to witness the rebirth of the equal rights tradition, later expanded into human rights, to see it in the historical context of the progress of social democracy and the application of its principles to the situation of women...was a privilege" that had a "transforming impact" on her career—and on her country.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 210.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 213.

## Capitalism

In comparison to individualism, democracy, and equality, capitalism and the concept of the free-market economy were less prominent in Fulbrighters' accounts of their experiences. Those who mention these notions studied business, economics, and U.S. history, suggesting that the influence of capitalism on American society may be less visible or obvious to those foreign student Fulbrighters studying subjects unrelated to economics. Nevertheless, it had an impact on French Fulbrighter Gerard Dietemann, who studied cost accounting, also known as management accounting, in 1951 and 1952 while pursuing an MBA at the University of Syracuse. Dietemann credits his experience studying this subject with "creat[ing his] career and [his] continuing professional preoccupation."<sup>155</sup> Indeed, he asserts that his "exposure to the principles and applications of management accounting [during his Fulbright experience] remains one of the most important experiences of [his] professional life."<sup>156</sup> The application-oriented subject of management accounting was born out of the practical needs of businesses competing in a free-market economy like the United States'. In contrast, Dietemann remembers,

In France during the very early fifties, business education was highly theoretical and still very much tied to France's closed, protectionist economy. No practical applications of accounting were taught, in part because national conditions, lack of world competitive pressures on French industry, and the French franc's continuing devaluation created a business ambiance in which most cost-accounting applications seemed irrelevant.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Gerard Dietemann, "Marriage, Fulbright Style," in *The Fulbright Difference*, ed. Richard T. Arndt and David Lee Rubin (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 81.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

Dietemann's passion for management accounting inspired him to apply his knowledge to the problems of former Soviet bloc countries adjusting their economies to fit the capitalist rather than the socialist model in the early 1990s. "At present, in retirement," he writes, "I am at work on an article about managerial accounting designed for use in Eastern Europe, which, like France in 1950, is converting to a free economy and in need of a tool for examining its progress and increasing its efficiency."<sup>158</sup>

Dietemann is not the only Fulbrighter to comment on the unique role that the U.S. and its capitalist expertise have played in helping other countries adopt a free-market system. In tracing the historical development of the subject of American Studies in his home country,<sup>159</sup> Italian Fulbrighter Bonazzi describes Italy's transition to a free-market economy in the postwar period as an acceptance of the American economic model. In the late 1940s, Bonazzi writes, Italians realized that "the glaring differences between Europe and America could be explained as consequence of the lead taken by modern America in the main processes of the contemporary world—capitalism, democracy, secularization."<sup>160</sup> As a result, "they soon accepted the idea that economic reconstruction and prosperity in post-war Italy could only be based on a free-market economy."<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Another aspect of the Fulbright Program was fostering and sometimes sponsoring the development of American Studies as an academic subject within foreign universities. One way in which the program accomplished this goal was by funding the studies and research of foreign scholars of U.S. history and society—like Tiziano Bonazzi and Anna Maria Martellone, both Italian Fulbright scholars whose experiences are addressed here—in the United States. These students, armed with Ph.D.'s and research experience in the U.S. academic environment, often returned home to start departments or research programs relating to the study of the U.S.

<sup>160</sup> Bonazzi, "The Beginnings of American History in Italy," 155.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 151.

In contrast, Swedish Fulbrighter and economist Adler-Karlsson recalls specific instances from his experience that convey a more nuanced, critical perspective of the American model of free-market capitalism. He begins by asserting that his father, the “local wholesaler of bananas” in a city in southern Sweden, “was the representative of American capitalist imperialism” in his province.<sup>162</sup> Later, he describes witnessing, on a trip to Mexico during his Fulbright experience, a scene that reminded him of his father’s banana wholesale business:

There I saw the only free market I ever found in all my life. It was an open area in which about 5000 Indians tried to sell simple shoes to another 5000 Indians selling bananas. Remembering my childhood and the economic basis of my early education, I see why this market has always remained with me. In the Spring of 1991 I used it in a series of lectures in Moscow and Poland, where far too many people believe even today in the saving power of something they call “the free market.” In reality, markets are rarely free; they are regulated by law or manipulated by cartels. In Merida I glimpsed Adam Smith’s original 1776 conception of this potent idea.<sup>163</sup>

Though Adler-Karlsson’s words suggest a lack of enthusiasm for the not-exactly-free nature of the “free market” Americans so energetically promote, the concept of the purer free market as he witnessed it during his Fulbright travels undoubtedly made an impression on him. In a similar anecdote, Adler-Karlsson shows disdain for the economic inequality he witnessed while studying at Berkeley in San Francisco during the second half of his Fulbright year. At the same time, however, he admits, upon reflection, that the U.S. capitalist economy and its underlying faith in individual freedom and hard work have some positive implications for even the poorest immigrants. He writes:

...[W]e were depressed by the visible and outrageous poverty. Nothing like it in Sweden. Germany just after the War, that was as close as I could come. Today I understand more. A country with a liberal immigration policy, which permits poor immigrants to fend for themselves on the labor market, may do

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<sup>162</sup> Adler-Karlsson, “Fulbright Kicks,” 194.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

a lot of good for its poor neighbors. It may in fact help them more than a nation like Sweden, which gives more in foreign aid but refuses to take poor immigrants into an unregulated labor market. Sweden keeps poverty outside its borders. The U.S. generously permits it to come in and get to work.<sup>164</sup>

Barely a third of the Fulbright alumni in the sample mentioned the free market or capitalism in their essays. For those who approached their Fulbright encounters from an economist's perspective, though, practical academic work and casual impressions of the U.S. capitalist, free-market model were defining and memorable aspects of their Fulbright experience.

### Critiques of American Reality

One of the most intriguing and impressive aspects of the Fulbrighters' accounts lies in the presence of critiques of American society and politics. Fulbrighters who conducted their research in the U.S. in the mid-1950s recall feeling dismay in the face of McCarthyism's discrimination against liberal intellectuals. During his second visit to the U.S. in 1954, Belgian librarian Liebaers remembers noticing "the damage being done to the American image by the campaign of Senator Joseph McCarthy against so-called un-American activities. ...[N]ight after night, I witnessed the immoral TV shows staged by the famous Senator and his associates."<sup>165</sup> Italian historian Martellone, who studied at Radcliffe College in 1954, describes her frustration at discovering that the crusade against Communist influence made America, with its reputation for freedom and equality, seem hypocritical. "The land of freedom made free entrance difficult, in an arbitrary and discriminatory way," she

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>165</sup> Liebaers, "Three Centuries After the Mayflower," 68.

writes. “The exclusion of anyone even faintly ‘tainted’ with Communism brought to the fore the harsh reality young Europeans found hard to accept: a world divided into two blocs.”<sup>166</sup> Indeed, she questions why Americans, so steeped in democratic values, had failed to reject McCarthy and his campaign: “Why did American students not protest?” she asks.<sup>167</sup>

Nevertheless, as the previous sections suggest, McCarthy’s short-lived campaign and its painful fallout neither outweighed nor negated Liebaers’s and Martellone’s enthusiasm for American democracy. In fact, Liebaers specifically mentions the inspiration and open-mindedness of Senator Fulbright as a source of his strength of belief in such values. “In my mind the contrast between the two Senators, McCarthy and Fulbright, was a beacon of hope, and I retain my faith in healthy American self-criticism,” he writes after recalling the personal experience of an American friend who suffered under McCarthyism.<sup>168</sup> In the end, then, “these sad [memories did] not diminish [his] unlimited confidence in the democratic values of American life.”<sup>169</sup>

Swedish economist Adler-Karlsson and Indian Henry James scholar Maini mention different criticisms of U.S. society, focusing specifically on inequality and violence. Adler-Karlsson’s first publication, “*Functional Socialism*, a defense of the Swedish ‘middle way,’ built on a then-new analysis of the concept of ownership,” incorporated many of his “doubts about the U.S. system, the fruit of [his] Fulbright-Berkeley experience.”<sup>170</sup> Although he was “not happy with certain brutal social-

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<sup>166</sup> Martellone, “American Encounters, Brief and Otherwise,” 101.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>168</sup> Liebaers, “Three Centuries After the Mayflower,” 68.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> Adler-Karlsson, “Fulbright Kicks,” 204.

darwinistic aspects of the U.S. system, [his] book was even more a hefty critique of the Soviet system....”<sup>171</sup> As the previous section suggests, Adler-Karlsson eventually reevaluated some of his negative opinions about the U.S. system,<sup>172</sup> but even at the end of his Fulbright experience in 1962, he still expressed a definite preference for democracy and capitalism over socialism.

Similarly, Maini comments on the “many distressing features of the American scene—street violence, rape, drugs, murder, muggings, prostitution and the destitute homeless—all of which the media magnify enough to frighten any visitor on arrival.”<sup>173</sup> But he is careful to note that these qualities, while disturbing and worthy of criticism, are integral to understanding American reality. More importantly, he adds, the presence of violence, poverty, and other social ills does not invalidate the democratic values that define American society. Violence, Maini writes,

is there in the very composition and being of America, as deep as the urge for absolute freedom and justice. The contraries however do not cancel out the dream of America but instead create a dialectic of accommodation and responsibility. One has to see all that from within to be able to understand.<sup>174</sup>

The power of the Fulbright experience lies in its ability and promise to give foreign student grantees exposure to American reality, unfiltered. By encouraging open and critical reactions to America’s blemishes instead of attempting to conceal them, the Fulbright Program shows rather than tells grantees the true diversity and freedom that its democratic system engenders. Adler-Karlsson, who describes the Fulbright Program “as a systematic attempt to provide...kicks”<sup>175</sup>—that is, random but influential experiences that cause lasting behavioral changes, inspire the renewed

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid. For more detail on the “social-darwinistic aspects of the U.S. system” that Adler-Karlsson is referring to, see page 54 in this chapter.

<sup>172</sup> See page 54.

<sup>173</sup> Maini, “The Fulbright Moment: Voyages Through Values,” 244.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Adler-Karlsson, “Fulbright Kicks,” 196.

cultivation of personal talents, or provide a new life purpose—summarizes “the most useful kick of [his] Fulbright year”<sup>176</sup> this way:

My own conviction, after thirty years of Cold War studies, is that the U.S. ‘won’ largely because it invariably promoted, as with the Fulbright Program, the western values of open societies and mutual understanding, at least to the extent possible. In the long run, these values are more efficient weapons than secret and devious actions by CIA or the Star Warriors. Given patience, sheer truth can make the walls of both Jericho and Berlin come tumbling down.<sup>177</sup>

*The Power of Individuals: The Values of the American Creed and their Impact Post-Fulbright*

The story of the impact of the Fulbright experience on these individuals cannot end without a discussion of what they went on to do after completing their Fulbright grants. Did they, as Senator Fulbright wished, go on to “influence political matters through the intelligent leadership of...[their] countries”?<sup>178</sup>

I do not attempt to tease out all of the possible ways in which the Fulbright alumni highlighted in this analysis may have influenced political matters in their home countries. Instead, I have identified a few common ways in which these alumni either have continued the connection to the United States that they forged during their Fulbright experience or have positioned themselves to have an impact on policy.

Five of the sampled Fulbright alumni continued to participate in American institutions<sup>179</sup> as well as intergovernmental organizations following their Fulbright experience. In the 1970s, Liebaers, the Belgian librarian, served as a staff member and, later, as the only non-American board member and director of the prestigious Council on Library Resources, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit organization that aims

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Fulbright, “Fulbright on Fulbright,” 57.

<sup>179</sup> Fulbright associations in the home countries of alumni do not count as U.S. institutions here.

to enhance libraries' ability to advance knowledge. Liebaers eventually established a European equivalent organization—the European Foundation for Library Cooperation.<sup>180</sup> Upon marrying an American Fulbrighter, Dietemann decided to remain in the U.S. instead of returning to France. He applied his cost accounting and foreign language skills in upper-middle management positions at several U.S. corporations, including Corning Glass, Colgate-Palmolive, and The Carrier Corporation.<sup>181</sup> After her Fulbright experience, Martellone taught Italian at Smith College for ten years, earning “tenure, an Associate Professorship, the bi-annual direction of Smith’s year-abroad program in Italy, and a Green Card”<sup>182</sup> before returning to Italy to become a professor of U.S. history at the University of Florence.<sup>183</sup> In the late 1970s, Swedish Fulbrighter Gunnar Adler-Karlsson joined the New York-based think tank the Council on Foreign Relations as a member of the “1980s Project,” for which he co-wrote a book entitled *Reducing Global Inequities*.<sup>184</sup> Finally, as previously mentioned, Portuguese Fulbrighter Tavares da Silva consults on women’s issues at the United Nations and represented Portugal at the first two UN-organized world conferences on women in Mexico City in 1975 and Copenhagen in 1980.

Four of the Fulbright alumni published research on U.S. history or issues. In 1973, Martellone authored a book on the history of the Italian immigrant community in Boston using research conducted during her Fulbright experience.<sup>185</sup> Similarly, Martellone’s fellow countryman Bonazzi published a book in 1970 about the research

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<sup>180</sup> Liebaers, “Three Centuries After the Mayflower,” 71.

<sup>181</sup> Dietemann, “Marriage, Fulbright Style,” 81.

<sup>182</sup> Martellone, “American Encounters, Brief and Otherwise,” 108.

<sup>183</sup> International Forum for U.S. Studies, “Fellow Biographies,” [http://ips.illinois.edu/ifuss/fellow\\_bios.html](http://ips.illinois.edu/ifuss/fellow_bios.html).

<sup>184</sup> Gunnar Adler-Karlsson, “The Creator GAK,” *Capri Philosophical Park*, <http://www.philosophicalpark.org>.

<sup>185</sup> International Forum for U.S. Studies, “Fellow Biographies,” [http://ips.illinois.edu/ifuss/fellow\\_bios.html](http://ips.illinois.edu/ifuss/fellow_bios.html).

he conducted on American Puritan theology and politics on his Fulbright grant.<sup>186</sup> Swedish Fulbrighter Adler-Karlsson's most influential book, *Western Economic Warfare 1947-67*, published in 1968, was inspired by a fortuitous dinner in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1961. Gunnar Myrdal, the social scientist and former Swedish Minister of Trade who "coined the concept of the American Creed" and whom Adler-Karlsson had met in Sweden prior to his Fulbright grant, encouraged him to "write the first serious study on a rather secret side of the Cold War, the U.S.-led attempts to break the back of the Soviet economy under the guise of a 'strategic' embargo policy."<sup>187</sup> Finally, in 1988, Indian Fulbrighter Maini published "the fruit of [his] Harvard year, [his] book *Henry James: The Indirect Vision*," building on research he had done in the Harvard libraries where Henry James' papers and manuscripts are preserved.<sup>188</sup>

Four of the Fulbright alumni helped shape an institution or academic field at home based on U.S. models or ideas. During his time at the Belgian Royal Library, Liebaers helped establish three national studies centers based on American themes and approaches. One, the National Center for the History of the Sciences, evolved directly from Liebaers Fulbright experience, when he met the founder of the discipline of history of science, Belgian scholar and Harvard professor George Sarton.<sup>189</sup> The Italian Fulbrighters were "pioneers in forcing their university system to open a niche for serious teaching and research in American history."<sup>190</sup> While Martellone served as president of the Institute of North American Studies in

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<sup>186</sup> Bonazzi, "The Beginnings of American History in Italy," 162.

<sup>187</sup> Adler-Karlsson, "Fulbright Kicks," 199.

<sup>188</sup> Maini, "The Fulbright Moment: Voyages Through Values," 246.

<sup>189</sup> Liebaers, "Three Centuries After the Mayflower," 69.

<sup>190</sup> Arndt, "Introduction," 99.

Florence, Bonazzi founded the Inter-University Center of Euro-American History and Politics and served as president of the Italian Association for North American Studies. Inspired by his Fulbright experience, Adler-Karlsson established a philosophical institute and philosophical park on the island of Capri.<sup>191</sup> The park, filled with sixty quotations from major Western philosophers, was designed as a place for visitors to “meditate upon Western wisdom.”<sup>192</sup>

Finally, three of the Fulbright alumni held positions in their home governments. Having already served as director general of the Royal Library in Belgium and as president of the International Federation of Library Associations, Liebaers became a main advisor to King Baudouin I of Belgium in 1975.<sup>193</sup> In this capacity, he helped organize and twice accompanied the King and Queen on private visits to the U.S. On one such visit, Liebaers remembers,

When the King and Queen were dinner guests of Yale President Kingman Brewster and watched him join in a performance of the Whiffenpoofs, Yale’s legendary singing group, they saw a basic difference between professors in the U.S. and on the continent. That evening provided a better explanation than all those I had tried over the years.<sup>194</sup>

Finnish Fulbrighter Lönnfors asserts that his “monumental belief in the blessings of press freedom” has stayed with him not only in his journalistic pursuits, but also during “seven [years] of diplomacy in Stockholm and Washington.”<sup>195</sup> Finally, Portuguese Fulbrighter Tavares da Silva, as previously mentioned, has “preside[d] over [her] government’s Commission for Equality and Women’s Rights, in the Prime Minister’s office...designing a global national policy on equality.”<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Adler-Karlsson, “Fulbright Kicks,” 200-201.

<sup>192</sup> Gunnar Adler-Karlsson, “Why a Park?” *Capri Philosophical Park*, <http://www.philosophicalpark.org>.

<sup>193</sup> Liebaers, “Three Centuries After the Mayflower,” 74.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-75.

<sup>195</sup> Lönnfors, “A Brief Essay on Truth,” 183.

<sup>196</sup> Tavares da Silva, “Learning Equality and Democracy,” 214.

These examples show the diversity and breadth of the Fulbright program and the paths its alumni choose to take. While just a portion of alumni position themselves to have the kind of direct impact on politics that Senator Fulbright imagined, the majority of them pursue careers at least partially inspired by their experiences in the United States.



By employing the technique of content analysis to examine ten essays written by foreign Fulbright alumni, this chapter has presented evidence that these alumni refer to the values associated with the American Creed in connection to their Fulbright experiences. In particular, a majority of alumni allude to the values of individualism and democracy in discussing their impressions of American society, suggesting that these values were particularly salient to foreign Fulbrighters exposed to the U.S. for the first time. Though the findings of a small-N study like this one are difficult to generalize, these results provide preliminary support for the argument that direct interaction with the U.S. university environment and American society in general socializes foreign Fulbright grantees to the values of the American Creed. In addition, the political careers and activities that some of these foreign Fulbright alumni pursued upon returning to their home countries point to the influence of internalized values of the American Creed on foreign Fulbrighters' behavior and suggest ways in which foreign Fulbright alumni might favorably influence the environment for U.S. foreign policy.

## CHAPTER 4

### MUHAMMAD YUNUS AND THE GRAMEEN BANK: A CASE STUDY

In the previous chapter, a small-N study uncovered the presence of the values of the American Creed in brief alumni reflections on the Fulbright experience, suggesting that the Fulbright Foreign Student Program acts as a socialization mechanism for these values. This chapter delves deeper into a single case study to explore the impact of the Fulbright experience on the beliefs and behavior of one prominent Fulbright alumnus, Bangladeshi economist Muhammad Yunus.

One of just a handful of individuals to win the Nobel Peace Prize, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the Congressional Gold Medal,<sup>197</sup> Yunus is known around the world as the founder of the Grameen Bank and the preeminent pioneer of using microcredit as a means to combat poverty. In 1965, armed with a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in economics from the University of Dhaka, Yunus accepted a Fulbright grant to study in the United States. Just twenty-five years old, he left a profitable packaging and printing business and a position teaching economics at Chittagong College to pursue a doctorate in economics at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. Before beginning his studies at Vanderbilt, he spent the summer at the University of Colorado at Boulder, where he found students and professors friendlier and women more liberated than those back home.<sup>198</sup> After earning his Ph.D. in Economics from Vanderbilt University in 1969, Yunus married

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<sup>197</sup> The others are Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Elie Weisel, and Norman Borlaug. David Bornstein, "Beyond Profit: A Talk With Muhammad Yunus," *The New York Times*, April 17, 2013, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/04/17/beyond-profit-a-talk-with-muhammad-yunus>.

<sup>198</sup> Muhammad Yunus, with Alan Jolis, *Banker to the Poor: Micro-lending and the Battle against World Poverty* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2007), 16-18.

Russian-American graduate student Vera Forostenko and moved to Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where he accepted a position teaching economics at Middle Tennessee State University. Yunus was teaching there in March 1971 when Bangladesh declared its independence from Pakistan.<sup>199</sup> He devoted much of his time over the following nine months to organizing the lobbying efforts of the Bengali community in America, personally spearheading the campaign to convince U.S. Congressmen to stop U.S. military aid to Pakistan.<sup>200</sup>

After Bangladesh won its war of independence in December 1971, Yunus decided he would return home the following year to contribute to the process of nation building.<sup>201</sup> After a brief stint in the Bangladeshi civil service, Yunus became chair of Chittagong University's Economics Department. It was in the university's neighboring village of Jobra that Yunus began the teaching and learning experiment that would eventually become the Grameen Bank. Shocked at the abject poverty and starvation he witnessed just outside the university's gates in the wake of the 1974 famine, he became frustrated that the abstract economic theories he taught seemed to ignore the reality of poor, landless villagers' lives.<sup>202</sup> In 1976, he surveyed the community and discovered that many of these villagers were indebted to moneylenders who charged unfair, exorbitant prices for raw materials. Though self-employed making items like bamboo stools, these villagers did not profit from their work because they could not afford to purchase the necessary supplies. After calculating that it would take just \$27 to help 42 people escape the clutches of the

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 19-20.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 21-28.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 35, 48.

moneylenders, Yunus decided to lend the money to the villagers—interest-free—to be repaid after they sold their goods.<sup>203</sup>

The concept of microcredit—offering loans “with no collateral to support income-generating businesses aimed at lifting the poor out of poverty”<sup>204</sup>—was born. Since 1978, Yunus’s Grameen Bank—named after the Bengali word *gram*, or village<sup>205</sup>—has successfully extended microcredit loans totaling over six billion dollars to more than eight million rural Bangladeshi borrowers, 96% of whom are women.<sup>206</sup> Typically, loans are extended for a year at an interest rate of 20 percent—a relatively low rate for high-risk, collateral-free loans—and are paid back in weekly installments.<sup>207</sup> The impact of these loans is impressive—internal Grameen Bank studies show that 64% “of borrowers who have been with the bank for five years or more have crossed the poverty line.”<sup>208</sup> Funded over the years by various foreign and international aid organizations, including the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Ford Foundation, and the Norwegian and Swedish international development agencies,<sup>209</sup> the Grameen Bank is currently financially self-sufficient and has not accepted donor money since 1995.<sup>210</sup> The Grameen-based microcredit approach to poverty alleviation has garnered international attention and has been adapted successfully in over fifty countries, including the United States.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 45-50.

<sup>204</sup> Muhammad Yunus, with Karl Weber, *Creating a World Without Poverty: Social Business and the Future of Capitalism* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2007), 68.

<sup>205</sup> David Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream: The Story of the Grameen Bank* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 20.

<sup>206</sup> Bornstein, “Beyond Profit.”

<sup>207</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 68.

<sup>208</sup> Yunus, *Creating a World Without Poverty*, 52.

<sup>209</sup> Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 175-178.

<sup>210</sup> Yunus, *Creating a World Without Poverty*, 51.

<sup>211</sup> Aminur Rahman, *Women and Microcredit in Rural Bangladesh: An Anthropological Study of Grameen Bank Lending* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 12-13.

In a manner similar to the previous chapter, this chapter examines Yunus's memoir, *Banker to the Poor*, as well as his speeches and other publications for evidence that his Fulbright experience in the U.S. shaped his beliefs in the power and freedom of the individual, in democracy, in equality, and in free-market capitalism. More importantly, I argue that the values of the American Creed that Yunus absorbed from his exposure to America shaped the Grameen Bank as an institution that upholds and furthers individual freedom and initiative, democratic governance structures, equal rights and access to opportunities for the poor and for women, and the fundamental principles of free-market capitalism.

### *Individualism*

Through his Fulbright experience, Yunus “learned to enjoy the personal freedom of the United States.”<sup>212</sup> This newfound freedom to pursue his dreams and express his thoughts contrasted with his experience growing up in Bangladesh, where elders exerted more control over his decisions. In an interview with journalist David Bornstein, who authored a book, entitled *The Price of a Dream*, chronicling the development of the Grameen Bank, Yunus remembered the impact his Fulbright experience had on his sense of individual freedom:

There, my life changed completely. In the United States, I realized that people could do their own thing. That was a fantastic revelation. And people could say whatever they felt. In Bangladesh, you try to fit into the slot people design for you.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 18.

<sup>213</sup> Muhammad Yunus, quoted in David Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 65.

Yunus sensed the importance of individuals in American society even in his ordinary, day-to-day interactions with others. The warmth, respect, and personal attention he noticed from those working in the service industry contrasted with the treatment he was accustomed to back home:

I will never forget the first time I entered a restaurant in Boulder to have the waitress say, “Hi, my name is Cheryl,” and offer me a big smile and a glass of water with lots of ice in it. No one in my country or in South Asia would ever treat a stranger so openly and forthrightly.<sup>214</sup>

But the freedom of inquiry inherent in the university environment, and especially in Romanian professor Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen’s classes, made the deepest impression on him. Although Yunus had studied statistics for three years in Bangladesh, he failed to truly understand it until his first statistics course at Vanderbilt, taught by Professor Georgescu-Roegen.<sup>215</sup> By encouraging students “to understand the underlying concepts that drive [formulas] to work”<sup>216</sup> instead of requiring them to memorize formulas, Professor Georgescu-Roegen made statistics appear simple and elegant. Even more important, for the first time, Yunus found himself in a learning environment where questioning teachers and thinking independently was encouraged.<sup>217</sup> In Bangladesh, Yunus remembered, students showed respect for their teachers by bowing to them and silently listening—never talking—to them.<sup>218</sup> Through his relationship with Professor Georgescu-Roegen, Yunus saw that a teacher could—and should—not just inform students, but also empower them.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 18.

<sup>215</sup> Alex Counts, *Small Loans, Big Dreams: How Nobel Prize Winner Muhammad Yunus and Microfinance are Changing the World* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 32.

<sup>216</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 19.

<sup>217</sup> Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 133.

<sup>218</sup> Yunus, quoted in Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 32.

<sup>219</sup> Counts, *Small Loans, Big Dreams*, 33.

When he began teaching economics at Chittagong University upon his return to Bangladesh in 1972, Yunus worked to empower his students by advocating a hands-on approach to learning. Through the university's Rural Development Project, which he founded, Yunus encouraged his students to get their hands dirty by doing fieldwork, conducting experiments, and coming up with creative solutions to everyday problems in the nearby village of Jobra.<sup>220</sup> The fieldwork Yunus and his students conducted in Jobra sowed the seeds for the Grameen Bank. By teaching his students “how to understand the life of one single poor person,”<sup>221</sup> Yunus not only empowered his students, but also discovered a way to empower poor individuals—by providing small amounts of credit for self-employment. Because it gives individuals the means, as Bornstein eloquently puts it, “to move beyond the circumstances of [their] births,”<sup>222</sup> credit is an important but often overlooked tool for ensuring individual freedom.

Because credit for self-employment enables individuals to experience freedom, Yunus—drawing on the concept of human rights, a notion that is both universal and arguably embedded in American identity and U.S. foreign policy<sup>223</sup>—argues that it should be “recognized as a fundamental human right...that plays a critical role in attaining all other human rights.”<sup>224</sup> The state has an obligation to “create conditions under which its citizens can fulfill the needs expressed in the human rights system—

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<sup>220</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 37.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.

<sup>222</sup> Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, preface.

<sup>223</sup> Khong suggests that the U.S. State Department's practice, since 1975, of issuing annual Human Rights reports documenting violations of human rights in foreign regimes is part of furthering the U.S. foreign policy mission of promoting democracy. See Khong, “The American Tributary System,” 26-27.

<sup>224</sup> Muhammad Yunus, “The Poor as the Engine of Development,” *The Washington Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (Autumn 1987): 145.

including the right to work, to food, to education, to shelter, [and] to health.”<sup>225</sup> But poverty denies individuals these rights—in particular, Yunus notes, the inalienable right to “the pursuit of happiness” that Thomas Jefferson so famously articulated.<sup>226</sup>

But Yunus’s understanding of the role of credit in facilitating individual freedom goes beyond simply fulfilling basic human rights. Yunus’s faith in the power of credit for self-employment also suggests his belief in individual potential. In his 1998 Sydney Peace Prize acceptance speech, Yunus connects these two facets of individualism—the value of individual freedom and the belief in the creativity of individuals—to the meaning of peace:

In the human context, peace should mean recognition of the unlimited potential buried in each and every human being, and commitment to help each other unleash the creativity in every single human being. It should mean establishment of all human rights for all people, including the inalienable right to explore one’s own potential to its highest limit. It should mean social justice, freedom of action for individuals, and for self-governing communities, and for nations, within the framework of upholding the rights of others.<sup>227</sup>

What differentiates the Grameen Bank from other banking institutions and development organizations is its belief in “the individual in need as the agent of change.”<sup>228</sup> While other organizations may view themselves as helping the poor, Grameen Bank perceives itself as enabling the poor to help themselves. It starts, Yunus writes, from the premise that “all human beings have an innate skill”<sup>229</sup> and therefore that “all human beings are potential entrepreneurs.”<sup>230</sup> The only difference

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<sup>225</sup> Muhammad Yunus, “Credit for Self-Employment: A Fundamental Human Right,” in *The Grameen Reader: Training Materials for the International Replication of the Grameen Bank Financial System for Reduction of Rural Poverty*, ed. David S. Gibbons (Dhaka: Grameen Bank, 1992), 71.

<sup>226</sup> Yunus, *Creating a World Without Poverty*, 213.

<sup>227</sup> Muhammad Yunus, “Peace is Freedom from Poverty: 1998 Sydney Peace Prize Lecture” (Sydney: Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, 1999), 7.

<sup>228</sup> Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 215.

<sup>229</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 140.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

is that some individuals “get the opportunity to express this talent,”<sup>231</sup> while others do not. But “with financial resources at his disposal, an individual is free to build his own fate with his own labor,”<sup>232</sup> using his own skills and talents to earn money, a tool that will allow him to further “explore [his] own potential.”<sup>233</sup> By extending small amounts of credit to poor individuals, the Grameen Bank enables those individuals to use their own initiative and creativity to improve their situation. In a sense, then, the Grameen Bank’s offer of microcredit is an offer of individual freedom.

The offer of individual freedom implicit in the offer of microcredit is reinforced by Grameen Bank policies that foster borrowers’ sense of individual empowerment. Grameen Bank workers do not give a potential borrower an idea for a business, but instead “work to convince her that she can come up with an idea for a business of her own” so that she can, as Yunus puts it, “feel important.”<sup>234</sup> In addition, as part of the loan-making process, Grameen Bank workers teach a new, illiterate borrower to write her name, an act that Yunus argues “produces an enormous sense of pride in the newly empowered borrower” by showing her that she can “overcome a hurdle that she once considered insurmountable.”<sup>235</sup> These simple gestures help build poor individuals’ sense of self-sufficiency. In doing so, the bank encourages a quality that, as Bornstein notes, “speaks to something at the core of the American ideal: what Ralph Waldo Emerson called ‘the heroism and grandeur which belong to acts of self-reliance.’”<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Yunus, “The Poor as the Engine of Development,” 143.

<sup>233</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 140.

<sup>234</sup> Yunus, *Creating a World Without Poverty*, 13.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>236</sup> Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 25.

Clearly, the themes of individual freedom and individual empowerment that underpin the Grameen Bank's approach to poverty alleviation are a consequence of Yunus's personal philosophy, specifically his conviction that "nothing can match the spirit of a free human being."<sup>237</sup> In his book *Creating a World Without Poverty*, Yunus succinctly describes his belief in individualism:

I am a firm believer in personal freedom. Each individual person on this planet is packed with limitless capabilities. An ideal society should create an enabling environment around each individual so that all of his or her creative energies can be unleashed to the very fullest. A maximum of personal freedom is vital to the creation of such an enabling environment.<sup>238</sup>

### *Democracy*

Yunus arrived in Nashville in the fall of 1965, just a few months after President Lyndon B. Johnson made the decision to commit more ground troops in Vietnam. Student protests against the war were cropping up on university campuses across the United States. Yunus remembers joining in "antiwar rallies and protest marches" to voice his opposition to the war, though he "tried to keep an open mind and not merely...spout what was fashionable or veer into groupthink."<sup>239</sup> Yunus sums up the atmosphere of rebellion in a few words: "Flower children, Woodstock, the Vietnam War—don't trust anybody over thirty."<sup>240</sup> In spite of his opposition to the war, Yunus retained his "positive opinions about the United States."<sup>241</sup> More importantly, the student protests taught him a lesson—that youth can change their

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<sup>237</sup> Yunus, "The Poor as the Engine of Development," 143.

<sup>238</sup> Yunus, *Creating a World Without Poverty*, 211-212.

<sup>239</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 17.

<sup>240</sup> Yunus, quoted in Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 32.

<sup>241</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 17.

society through non-violent, democratic means.<sup>242</sup> Democracy, Yunus realized, “empowers individual citizens” and guarantees them the individual freedoms and free markets they need in order to “live productive lives.”<sup>243</sup> For that reason, he argues, “Democracy is the best political framework to unleash the creative energy of the people, particularly the young.”<sup>244</sup>

This realization laid the foundation for the structure and governance of the Grameen Bank. From the beginning, Yunus insisted that the borrowers themselves own the majority of the bank’s shares and make up the majority of the bank’s board of directors, thereby giving them a direct stake and say in the bank’s success. Although the ownership ratio was initially reversed—Bangladesh’s then-finance minister, A. M. A. Muhith, received cabinet approval only for a bank in which the government owned 60% of the shares and the borrowers owned 40%<sup>245</sup>—today, the borrowers own over 94% of the bank’s shares.<sup>246</sup> Yunus also discouraged hierarchy within the organization and encouraged criticisms and new ideas from his employees. As long as they work to further the bank’s objectives, bank workers are urged to “give their opinions and suggestions for improvements in [Grameen Bank] procedures.”<sup>247</sup> In fact, workers may send their complaints and ideas directly to Yunus—a policy that runs counter to the norms of Bangladeshi institutions.<sup>248</sup>

Another experience in the U.S. showed Yunus the inner workings of American democracy. When news of the Bangladeshi independence movement reached

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<sup>242</sup> Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 32.

<sup>243</sup> Yunus, *Creating a World Without Poverty*, 200.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 120.

<sup>246</sup> Yunus, *Creating a World Without Poverty*, 30.

<sup>247</sup> Muhammad Yunus, “Grameen Bank: As I See It,” in *The Grameen Reader: Training Materials for the International Replication of the Grameen Bank Financial System for Reduction of Poverty*, ed. David S. Gibbons (Dhaka: Grameen Bank, 1992), 110-111.

<sup>248</sup> Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream* 133.

Tennessee in March 1971,<sup>249</sup> Yunus contacted the handful of Bengalis in the Tennessee area and suggested that they form a lobbying organization called the Bangladesh Citizens' Committee.<sup>250</sup> Elected as the organization's secretary and spokesperson, Yunus arranged interviews with local television stations and newspapers and urged his fellow citizens of Tennessee to "write to [their] congressional representatives and senators immediately to stop military aid to Pakistan" and help put an end to the "genocide in Bangladesh."<sup>251</sup> Yunus then traveled to Washington, DC, to take part in an organized protest on Capitol Hill.<sup>252</sup> The demonstration, he recalls, "worked like magic."<sup>253</sup> U.S. Congressmen and their aides took notice of the protesters' demands, and television reporters asked the protesters for interviews.<sup>254</sup>

Inspired by his brush with democratic civic engagement, Yunus became even more politically involved. He took over publishing of the *Bangladesh Newsletter* for the Bangladesh Defense League to keep Bengalis in the West updated on the progress of Bangladesh's struggle for independence.<sup>255</sup> At the same time, he took charge of the Bangladesh Information Center, an organization he helped set up in Washington, DC, to facilitate lobbying in the Senate and House of Representatives.<sup>256</sup> With the help of fellow Bengali Fulbrighter Muzammel Huq—who later became a senior manager of

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<sup>249</sup> Although Yunus was no longer studying on a Fulbright grant at this time, he was still living and teaching in the U.S., and it is unlikely that he would (or could) have done so if not for his Fulbright grant. Either way, the aim here is to assess the extent to which exposure to U.S. institutions and society socializes individual Fulbrighters to the values of the American Creed, and Yunus's experiences lobbying U.S. citizens and Congressmen to stop military aid to Pakistan in 1971 tell an important part of his socialization story.

<sup>250</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 21.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*

the Grameen Bank—Yunus conducted research to discover the best strategies to convince Congressmen to support their campaign:

We worked on each individual congressman, to find out his or her background, what issues he voted for, who was his most effective staffer, how to enter his mind, should we try a hard or soft sell...I don't know how much impact we had, but military aid was stopped.<sup>257</sup>

Bangladesh won its independence in December 1971, and Yunus returned home in June 1972 to help turn Bangladesh into a democratic nation that guaranteed its citizens free and fair elections and freedom from poverty.<sup>258</sup> But the devastating 1974 famine threatened those dreams. Remembering “how aggressively U.S. intellectuals spoke out on controversial social, political, and economic matters,” Yunus successfully petitioned the vice chancellor of Chittagong University, a man named Abdul Fazal who was a close friend of Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, to sign and issue a press release Yunus had drafted “criticizing the government’s role in creating and prolonging the crisis.”<sup>259</sup> The statement encouraged other universities and public institutions to call for the leadership to take responsibility for the famine.<sup>260</sup>

But this was not enough for Yunus. “The poor,” he writes, “must have a chance to participate in decision-making that affects their lives” through involvement in “democratic institutions for local self-government.”<sup>261</sup> To this end, the Grameen Bank has helped expand democracy in Bangladesh by empowering rural borrowers, raising their awareness about voting procedures and encouraging them to vote in local and national elections. 100% of Grameen Bank borrowers and their family members

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<sup>257</sup> Yunus, quoted in Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 121.

<sup>258</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 28.

<sup>259</sup> Counts, *Small Loans, Big Dreams*, 45.

<sup>260</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 35-36.

<sup>261</sup> Yunus, *Creating a World Without Poverty*, 116.

voted in the 1991 and 1996 elections in Bangladesh.<sup>262</sup> At 73%, the overall voter turnout in the 1996 election shattered previous voter participation records; even more surprising, the number of female voters surpassed the number of male voters.<sup>263</sup>

But the most surprising news of all came in 1997, when more than 4,000 Grameen Bank borrowers and their family members were elected to local government bodies.<sup>264</sup> The bank had encouraged its borrowers to vote, but the borrowers themselves were the ones who took the initiative to run. In his 1998 Sydney Peace Prize acceptance speech, Yunus recalls the experience of speaking to those borrowers who were elected to local government positions:

When I asked them: “Why did you run for election, I thought you would be voting?” They replied: “It is a big task to find people we can trust, we couldn’t find any—so we debated and debated and we said we can trust each other, why don’t we run? So that’s what happened, we ran, and we got elected.” And this time it was convenient because for the first time in local bodies, women were directly elected by the workers.<sup>265</sup>

One of the fundamental goals of the Grameen Bank, then, is to help solidify Bangladeshi democracy by fully enfranchising the poor. Yunus sees “participation in the political process” and “participation in economic process[es]” as “two sides of the same coin.”<sup>266</sup> Neither can be realized without the other. Only “genuine democratic government” at the national and local levels can protect the human rights of the poor and thereby enable them to participate in the economy.<sup>267</sup> Ultimately, Yunus writes, “The more democratic a government is, the better chance the people at the bottom have.”<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Yunus, “Peace is Freedom from Poverty,” 6.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> Yunus, “The Poor as the Engine of Development,” 140.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

## *Equality*

When Yunus arrived on the University of Colorado at Boulder campus in 1965, one of the first things he noticed was the striking contrast between the liberation of female students in the United States and the segregation of female students in Bangladesh. At Chittagong College, where Yunus had taught economics before accepting the Fulbright grant to study in the U.S., less than a quarter of his students were women. Often “confined to the Women’s Common Room, which was off-limits to male students,”<sup>269</sup> these female students could not participate in student politics or most other school activities. As a result, they were so shy that “when it was time for class, they would huddle in a group just outside the Teachers’ Common Room and then follow [Yunus] to class, clutching their books and looking down at their feet so as to avoid the stares of the boys.”<sup>270</sup> Yunus, too, was shy in front of women and “tried to ignore them entirely.”<sup>271</sup> In America, he found, this was difficult to do. He remembers feeling a mixture of dismay and fascination upon discovering that “girls would sit on the [university campus] lawn with their shoes off, sunning themselves and laughing.”<sup>272</sup> Although this made him “nervous,” Yunus “still loved to sit in the Student Center, watching the students come and go, chatting, flirting, eating, wearing their crazy clothes.”<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 16.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*

His experience at Vanderbilt University, in the southern United States, exposed Yunus to a less inclusive and egalitarian vision of American society. There were fewer foreigners on the Vanderbilt campus than there had been in Boulder, and—more shocking to Yunus—Vanderbilt had only begun the process of desegregation a few years prior.<sup>274</sup> “Even the tiny restaurant I frequented, the Campus Grill,” Yunus remembers, “had been ‘For Whites Only’ six months earlier.”<sup>275</sup> Yunus carried these two impressions of America in his mind—a vibrant, free America based on gender equality, and a depressing, restricted America mired in prejudice. He knew which one he preferred.

Instilled with a belief in equal rights, Yunus was motivated to combat the patterns and practices of discrimination he saw in Bangladesh. When Yunus began his work with the poor villagers of Jobra in 1976, he realized that the banking system excluded the poor, thus “impos[ing] a financial apartheid.”<sup>276</sup> Inspired by the student movements for equal rights and against the Vietnam War that he had witnessed during his Fulbright experience in the late 1960s, Yunus conceived of Grameen as a “counterculture”<sup>277</sup> that represented a “revolutionary...shift in thinking.”<sup>278</sup> While financial institutions asked whether the poor were credit-worthy and excluded them from the financial system because they lacked collateral, Yunus “reversed the question[, instead asking,] ‘Are the banks people-worthy?’”<sup>279</sup> He created the Grameen Bank in response to the need to create a people-worthy bank.

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>277</sup> Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 107-108.

<sup>278</sup> Yunus, *Creating a World Without Poverty*, 49.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

In his book *Creating a World Without Poverty*, Yunus explicitly compares a system that openly discriminates against the poor to one that discriminates based on race, suggesting their equivalent immorality:

None of us likes the idea of apartheid. We object when we hear about such a system in any form, anywhere. We all understand that no one should suffer because he or she happened to be born in a certain race, class, or economic condition. But our financial institutions have created a worldwide system of apartheid without anyone being horrified by it.<sup>280</sup>

Most significantly, Yunus describes the Grameen Bank's simple yet radical concept of microlending as the antidote to institutionalized discrimination and inequality perpetuated by the global financial system:

At Grameen Bank, we challenged the financial apartheid. We dared to give the poorest people bank credit. We included destitute women who had never in their lives even touched any money. We defied the rules.

As Yunus notes, conventional banking policies not only discriminate against the poor, but also “discriminate against women.”<sup>281</sup> In contrast, the Grameen Bank has focused on giving credit and attention to poor women from the beginning.<sup>282</sup> Yunus was adamant about reaching the poorest of the poor, and that meant reaching Bangladesh's landless women.<sup>283</sup> In the process of helping these women escape poverty, Yunus hoped that the Grameen Bank could also empower them. Yunus remembers the amount of support and reassurance it took to convince skeptical, downtrodden women that they could use small Grameen loans and their own abilities to generate income:

When we first went to poor women in the villages to offer them credit, they were afraid to take any money and said they would have no idea how to put it to use. These women had many skills, but they had accumulated so much fear and insecurity through years of exposure to repressive social attitudes

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Yunus, “Grameen Bank: As I See It,” 116.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 140.

that they didn't even know it. By offering a lot of encouragement and by holding up a few successful examples before them, we were able to gradually peel off those layers of fear. Soon the women realized that they had enough skill to use money to make money.<sup>284</sup>

Since then, World Bank researchers<sup>285</sup> and independent scholars have examined the effect of Grameen Bank programs on women's status in rural Bangladesh. In her study *In Quest of Empowerment*, American-trained Bangladeshi sociologist Aion Nahar Mizon finds that women's participation in the Grameen Bank has a significant impact on women's decision-making influence within the household. While the income generated from Grameen Bank credit helps women develop financial resources that increase their control over household decisions, the practice of participating in the bank's group-based lending structure<sup>286</sup> helps them develop knowledge, networks, and communication skills that make them more effective negotiators.<sup>287</sup> "In Bangladesh, where structural and cultural factors have hindered women from realizing their earning and household decision-making potential," Mizan writes, "Grameen Bank's contributions may be regarded as revolutionary."<sup>288</sup>

Bornstein's interviews with Grameen Bank workers support these conclusions. Maheen Sultan, a former field manager for the bank, describes the obvious difference in self-esteem between new borrowers and borrowers who have been with the bank for four or five years:

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<sup>284</sup> Yunus, *Creating a World Without Poverty*, 114.

<sup>285</sup> See Counts, *Small Loans, Big Dreams*, 25-26.

<sup>286</sup> Women must form groups of five before they are approved for loans. Once a group is formed, loans are distributed in three rounds. First, two women in the group are extended loans. Once they have paid their loan installments on time for six weeks, another two women in the group are granted loans. After those women have paid their loan installments on time for six weeks, the last woman receives her loan. The group system creates social pressure and instills a sense of accountability in borrowers to ensure timely repayment of loans. See Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 62-64.

<sup>287</sup> Aion Nahar Mizan, *In Quest of Empowerment: The Grameen Bank Impact on Women's Power and Status* (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 1994), 122-123.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*

When you see women who have just joined the bank, they go around the outskirts and avoid people. But once they've been borrowing money for a long time and they're sure of themselves, they walk through the center of the village greeting people.<sup>289</sup>

This newfound sense of confidence and empowerment is evident in the home, too. According to Sultan, a Grameen Bank borrower expresses her opinion more frequently, and her husband does not disagree with her as often. A husband's respect for and pride in what his wife has accomplished because of the Grameen Bank's microloans transforms their relationship.<sup>290</sup>

Not everyone has been impressed with the Grameen Bank's practice of lending to women. When the percentage of female borrowers increased from 25 to 40 percent between 1978 and 1983, a Bangladesh Bank official sent Yunus a letter asking him to explain why such a high percentage of Grameen Bank borrowers were women. "I'll be happy to explain the reasons for the high percentage of women borrowers," Yunus responded.<sup>291</sup> But he continued:

Before that, I would like to know if the central bank ever sent any letter to any other bank asking for explanations why they have a high percentage of male borrowers. In the case the central bank did not do so, I don't see any reason why it should make an exception in our case.<sup>292</sup>

After that, the central bank left Yunus alone.

Not surprisingly, the Grameen Bank's countercultural philosophy of equality and tolerance of diversity even extends to its employees, who come from different socio-economic backgrounds and espouse a variety of political and religious convictions.<sup>293</sup> Promotion is based on an individual's character, creativity, and industriousness—in other words, his or her merit—instead of his or her background

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<sup>289</sup> Maheen Sultan, quoted in Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 144.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Yunus, quoted in Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 140.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Yunus, "Grameen Bank: As I See It," 111.

or wealth.<sup>294</sup> Yunus knows that in an environment where innovation is rewarded, “freedom, tolerance, diversity, and curiosity” are celebrated.<sup>295</sup>

### *Capitalism*

Before traveling to the U.S. on his Fulbright, Yunus, though not a socialist like most of his Bengali university friends, found Marxist economic theory compelling.<sup>296</sup> In the U.S., however, Yunus witnessed firsthand “how the market liberates the individual and allows people to be free to make powerful choices.”<sup>297</sup> But he remained frustrated with the economic inequality that capitalism perpetuated and exacerbated by allowing wealth to accumulate in the hands of the powerful. Professor Georgescu-Roegen, his mentor at Vanderbilt, showed Yunus that it was possible to fuse Marxism’s concern for social inequities and injustices with the individual freedom that capitalist economics promised.<sup>298</sup> Upon his return to Bangladesh, Yunus put this hybrid economic philosophy to work in creating the Grameen Bank, an institution that he describes as a “socially conscious capitalist enterprise.”<sup>299</sup>

In many of his speeches and writings, Yunus applauds free-market capitalism for its ability to stimulate creativity and reduce waste. In particular, he believes in the two core principles of capitalism: profit maximization and free market competition. While profit maximization “ensure[s] the optimal use of resources,”<sup>300</sup> free market

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<sup>294</sup> Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 25-26.

<sup>295</sup> Yunus, “Grameen Bank: As I See It,” 113.

<sup>296</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 203.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

<sup>299</sup> Yunus, quoted in Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 26.

<sup>300</sup> Muhammad Yunus, “Does the Capitalist System Have to be the Handmaiden of the Rich?” (speech, Taipei, Taiwan, June 1994), [www.tdf.it/english/gree\\_frf.htm](http://www.tdf.it/english/gree_frf.htm).

competition “is the driving force for all innovation, technological change, and improved management.”<sup>301</sup> For this reason, Yunus supports the global expansion of free markets and free trade. In fact, he argues, “globalization, as a general business principle, can bring more benefits to the poor than any alternative.”<sup>302</sup> The challenge is to enable the impoverished to participate in free markets—in other words, to convert free markets from “architects of decadence for a small elite” into “sources of inspiration and freedom” (not to mention profit) for everyone.<sup>303</sup>

Yunus describes the Grameen Bank’s approach to fighting poverty as bringing the “power of the free market and the power of capital in the marketplace”<sup>304</sup> to “the world’s most neglected people—the very poor.”<sup>305</sup> Instead of “mov[ing] the villagers to the capitalists,” Bornstein writes, Yunus decided to “move the capital to the villagers.”<sup>306</sup> This approach, in contrast to the approach taken by many foreign aid and domestic government welfare programs, empowers individuals, promotes productivity, and increases profits. Yunus notes, with more than a hint of irony, that foreign aid from developed countries often goes against the logic of free market capitalism. Instead, foreign aid “expands government spending,” bankrolling unwieldy, corrupt bureaucracies at the expense of efficiency and results.<sup>307</sup> Similarly, Yunus criticizes unemployment benefits for the “able-bodied poor,” noting that government handouts destroy individuals’ initiative and self-confidence.<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 206.

<sup>302</sup> Yunus, *Creating a World Without Poverty*, 5.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>304</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 146.

<sup>305</sup> Yunus, *Creating a World Without Poverty*, 6.

<sup>306</sup> Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 24.

<sup>307</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 146.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 205. See also Yunus, *Creating a World Without Poverty*, 115.

And so, the Grameen Bank is, deliberately and undeniably, a “capitalist institution”<sup>309</sup> that is, in Yunus’s words, “gung-ho to maximize profits.”<sup>310</sup> But to call the Grameen Bank a capitalist institution does not mean that Yunus finds no fault with existing capitalist theories of economic development. Taught by Professor Georgescu-Roegen to focus on understanding the underlying mechanisms of complex problems like poverty, Yunus has developed a few critiques of mainstream economic theory based on his observation of “the microlevel reality of poor people in Third World countries,” a perspective that Western economists tend to neglect.<sup>311</sup> First, he argues, economists fail to take into account the importance of informal self-employment in developing economies. Instead, he contends, microeconomics

views individual human beings as either consumers or laborers and essentially ignores their potential as self-employed individuals. This theoretical dichotomy between entrepreneurs and laborers disregards the creativity and ingenuity of each human being and considers widespread self-employment in Third World countries as a symptom of underdevelopment.<sup>312</sup>

Second, Yunus argues, economists have underestimated the “social power of credit,”<sup>313</sup> and by extension, the injustice of denying credit to the poor. While mainstream economics perceives credit “merely as a means with which to lubricate the wheels of trade, commerce, and industry,” in reality, credit is a critical means of generating the financial resources necessary for social mobility.<sup>314</sup> Thus, “when credit institutions and banks make rules that favor a distinct section of the population,” Yunus argues, “that section increases both its economic and social status.”<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> Yunus, quoted in Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 342.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

<sup>311</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 149.

<sup>312</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 150.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

This realization about the power of credit, of course, is what has made Yunus's grand experiment in microlending, the Grameen Bank, so successful in combating poverty and so admired around the world. By enabling poor individuals excluded from the conventional banking system to participate in free markets, Yunus's simple gift of credit has empowered the poor to unleash their individual creativity and take responsibility for governing and improving their own lives.

One final anecdote will wrap up this discussion. In 1977, Yunus invited Bangladesh's then-finance secretary A. M. A. Muhith, who was skeptical about the success of the budding Grameen Bank Project, to visit a bank branch in the district of Tangail. He remembers meeting a woman who sold cow's milk, a woman who sold firewood, a woman who raised chickens, and a woman who sold sweets. Though he could see that the villagers were working hard, he wondered whether there was any demand for these goods and services. When he asked one of the women who bought her wares, she responded, "Anyone, but often another member."<sup>316</sup> Muhith was amazed:

They had become *each other's* customers. And then I saw: This was pure Adam Smith in action. It was creating wealth, and at the same time, creating the market for that wealth. That was my conversion to Grameen. Afterward, I never questioned the soundness of its philosophy.<sup>317</sup>



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<sup>316</sup> Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 128.

<sup>317</sup> A. M. A. Muhith, quoted in Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream*, 128, emphasis in original.

In analyzing Muhammad Yunus’s writings in detail, this chapter has identified passages that link Yunus’s Fulbright experience to all four of the values associated with the American Creed. In doing so, this chapter builds on the preceding chapter and provides further support for the argument that direct exposure to the U.S. university environment and American society in general socializes foreign Fulbright grantees to the values of the American Creed. More importantly, this chapter also examined excerpts from Yunus’s writings that suggest the influence of the internalized values of the American Creed on the creation and development of Yunus’s brainchild, the Grameen Bank. The impact of the values of individualism, democracy, equality, and capitalism on Yunus’s thinking is clear in the mission and practices of the Grameen Bank: by enabling poor individuals ineligible for conventional loans to develop small businesses and participate in free markets, the Grameen Bank’s extension of microcredit empowers the poor to realize their potential and become more involved in making important decisions that affect their lives on the local level. Though Yunus is arguably an outlier—he is one of just 53 Fulbright alumni awarded the Nobel Prize<sup>318</sup>—his creation of the Grameen Bank nevertheless provides a more in-depth example of how the process of socializing foreign Fulbright alumni to the values of the American Creed might favorably influence the environment for U.S. foreign policy. Certainly, Yunus’s achievements call to mind Senator Fulbright’s original purpose for the scholarship program—to “influence political matters through the intelligent leadership of...[foreign] countries.”<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “53 Fulbright Alumni Awarded the Nobel Prize,” [http://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/fulbright\\_notable\\_alumni-2014\\_0.pdf](http://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/fulbright_notable_alumni-2014_0.pdf).

<sup>319</sup> Fulbright, “Fulbright on Fulbright,” 57.

## CONCLUSION

In his introduction to *The Fulbright Difference*, Richard T. Arndt mentions a few commonalities among the Fulbright alumni essays he edited for the compilation. He notes that several authors, though they do not explicitly say so, hint at their impressions of American democracy. “Clearly,” he concludes, the Fulbright Program has “worked its wondrous, overarching though often accidental purpose of *displaying*—not preaching—the U.S. style of democracy.”<sup>320</sup> Arndt also remarks that many authors “learned that individual actions can make a difference” through their Fulbright experience and suggests that the lesson of the individual’s impact “reinforced [the authors’] commitment to helping humankind.”<sup>321</sup>

In a similar vein, this thesis has attempted to systematically identify, classify, and analyze the values foreign individuals have absorbed from their Fulbright experiences in the United States. The evidence that the Fulbrighters in this analysis internalized some of the values of the American Creed—especially the values of individualism and democracy—through their interactions within U.S. universities and American society is clear and consistent. Though it is difficult to generalize from this preliminary, limited study conducted on a small sample of Fulbright alumni, these findings suggest the plausibility of the argument explored in this thesis—that the Fulbright Foreign Student Program facilitates the socialization of young foreign individuals to the values of the American Creed by enabling them to gain direct, unrestricted exposure to the U.S. university environment and American society in general. In addition, the findings suggest that foreign Fulbright alumni might

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<sup>320</sup> Arndt, “Introduction,” 9.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

favorably influence the environment for U.S. foreign policy and hegemony not only by assuming political leadership positions in their home countries, but also by promoting the study of the U.S. in foreign countries or by creating institutions inspired by American models or the values of the American Creed. In particular, this study traces the values of individualism, democracy, equality, and capitalism that are embedded in the concept of microcredit and in the practices of the Grameen Bank back to founder Muhammad Yunus's Fulbright experience at Vanderbilt University in the mid-1960s.

This initial exploration has laid the groundwork for future studies of the Fulbright Program. Several questions about the program and its effects remain unanswered. Ikenberry and Kupchan suggest that ideas, once absorbed by foreign elites, may take on a life of their own, combining with prior attitudes and characteristics to “produce orientations and policies that are at odds with the hegemon’s aspirations.”<sup>322</sup> How exactly do the values of the American Creed, once internalized by foreign Fulbrighters, combine with preexisting norms and personality traits to change those individuals’ behavior? How exactly do foreign Fulbrighters’ actions facilitate the realization of U.S. foreign policy objectives? The answers to these questions—and arguably many more—will help shed light on the Fulbright Program’s role in furthering U.S. foreign policy goals and U.S. hegemony.

Naturally, these avenues of inquiry circle around the issue of the Fulbright Program’s relevance in today’s world. Does the Fulbright Program actually have a measurable, positive impact on the accomplishment of U.S. foreign policy objectives? If not, why should the government continue to fund it? This thesis finds clues hinting

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<sup>322</sup> Ikenberry and Kupchan, “Socialization and Hegemonic Power,” 294.

at the Fulbright Program's impact on U.S. foreign policy in the program's successful transmission of the values of individualism, democracy, equality, and capitalism to foreign individuals. Nevertheless, the gap between an individual's values and his or her behavior is large—and the gap between individual behavior and a nation's foreign policy objectives is even larger.

But there is a reason why—to paraphrase one of the Fulbrighters quoted in this thesis—a thread of individuals runs through this work. As Arndt reminds us:

If the Fulbright Program has meant anything in its [six] decades, it has meant the fulfillment of individuals, in a context of freedom, through study and learning: and it has meant the implicit commitment of many of these participants to share this richness with others, towards the end of helping build democracies of trust wherever they can.<sup>323</sup>

As demonstrated here, the central value underpinning the American Creed—and the Fulbright Program—is individual freedom. If we cannot even find the impact of the Fulbright Program in individuals, then, arguably, there is no reason to search for it anywhere else. This study, preliminary and limited as it is, suggests that there *is* reason to look for evidence of the Fulbright Program's influence elsewhere.

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<sup>323</sup> Ibid., 9.

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