The House that Propaganda Built: Historicizing the Democracy Promotion Efforts and Measurement Tools of Freedom House

Emily A. Zerndt

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Democracy promotion has been an overt objective of American foreign policy ever since Woodrow Wilson declared it the goal of WWI. This dissertation examines the influence of Freedom House on those policy decisions as well as academia. Freedom House was created in 1941 with the “quiet encouragement” of both Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt to combat the pervasive isolationism in the United States. Erected as the Western counterpoint to the Braunhaus, the Nazi propaganda center, Freedom House has distinctly political origins. Over the course of its institutional life, Freedom House has evolved from keeping a “balance sheet” on the level of democracy across the globe to being a major manufacturer of statistics aimed at measuring its practice. Using archival documents, this dissertation traces the development of those scores, which were first published in the Comparative Survey of Freedom in 1973. Findings reveal that the creation of the Comparative Survey involved the opinions of only two men and resulted in a fuzzy, inexplicit ranking system disguised as objective and scientific merely because it involved sets of numeric values. Conceived by Freedom House Executive Director Leonard Sussman and carried out by political scientist Raymond Gastil primarily behind closed doors,
these scores are now the most widely used indicators of democracy. During the pivotal time period surrounding the creation of the Comparative Survey, this dissertation finds that a dramatic shift occurred in the concept of democracy that Freedom House promoted. This change was accompanied by a decrease in the transparency of the organization’s reporting, and a determined campaign on the part of Executive Director Leonard Sussman urging the United States government to use the Comparative Survey in foreign policy decision-making. By 2013 over 88 percent of its nearly $32 million budget came from the U.S. government, despite Freedom House’s insistence that it is an independent organization. Ultimately, this dissertation serves as a reminder to historicize such tools, rather than see them as independent entities. As is the case with the Freedom House Survey, these seemingly objective numeric indicators have a long, obscured history that, given the power they wield, should be brought to light.
THE HOUSE THAT PROPAGANDA BUILT:
HISTORICIZING THE DEMOCRACY
PROMOTION EFFORTS AND
MEASUREMENT TOOLS
OF FREEDOM HOUSE

by

Emily A. Zerndt

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Doctoral Committee:

Emily Hauptmann, Ph.D., Chair
Jacinda Swanson, Ph.D.
Priscilla Lambert, Ph.D.
Ido Oren, Ph.D.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

[D]emocracy has become a commodity that can be exported. Promoting democratization or defending human rights are privileged channels for the exportation of political technologies, economic recipes, or juridical models. No longer providing the basis for the critique of power, *they have become the main language of global power* [emphasis added] (Guilhot 2005: 8).

The United States is the principal purveyor of such [democratization] expertise. According to some estimates, $700 million are invested every year in this field…A real market, all the more competitive since it actually represents a tight and specialized niche, has developed around the profitable business of exporting democracy and the rule of law…Its practitioners are, increasingly, professionals. They act on the basis of technical specialization, not civic commitment. They fly to faraway places and deliver expertise; they build and cultivate international networks of contacts; *they write good-looking annual reports* [emphasis added] (Guilhot 2005: 2-3).

ARGUMENT OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation is a critical history of Freedom House, a New York based organization that publishes annual scores measuring the level of democracy in each country around the world. Using archival documents housed in the Mudd Manuscript Library at Princeton, I trace the development of these scores. First published in 1973 as the Comparative Survey of Freedom, these measures rank countries as “free,” “partly free,” or “not free” depending on where they fall on a scale of 1 to 7 (respectively) along two dimensions – political rights and civil liberties.¹ Today this Survey is the most widely used indicator of democracy, by both academics and the U.S. government alike.

¹ See https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world.
The prominence of the scores can be at least partly attributed to the institution’s claims that both these measures and Freedom House itself are independent and objective. These claims run counter to distinctly political origins of Freedom House which was established in 1941 as the Western counterpoint to the Braunhaus, the Nazi propaganda center. Freedom House was also created with the “quiet encouragement” of both Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt in order to combat the pervasive isolationism in the United States. Early programs sponsored by the organization included the highly inflammatory propaganda radio program “Our Secret Weapon – the Truth,” and rallies at Madison Square Garden. Posters advertising these rallies showcased Mickey Mouse proclaiming, “It’s fun to be free.”

So how does an organization like Freedom House, part of the American propaganda machine of World War II, come to wield such power over academic studies of democracy and aid allocation decisions of the United States government? The answer to this puzzle lies in the replacement of the Balance Sheet of Freedom with the Comparative Survey in 1973 and the pivotal time period during which Leonard Sussman became the organization’s second Executive Director.

Following the end of World War II, the members of Freedom House decided to continue on as an institution, dedicated to promoting democracy across the globe. In 1955 the organization began creating yearly Balance Sheets of Freedom, pamphlets that were devoted to a discussion of the net gains and losses for freedom that year (much in the same manner as an accounting balance sheet). These reports devoted a lengthy discussion to the status of freedom in the United States (by exploring civil

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2 See Freedom House’s own depiction of its origins here: [https://freedomhouse.org/content/our-history](https://freedomhouse.org/content/our-history).
rights issues, for example) and also criticized both American foreign policy and the policies of the nation’s democratic allies. Pamphlets published by the organization during this time and the workshops it hosted provide evidence that Freedom House saw itself as a platform for discussion about what democracy entails (which it saw as an open-ended question) and how best to promote human rights abroad.

These characteristics of Freedom House began to disappear in 1967 – the year that its first and only Executive Director, George Field, retired and was replaced by Leonard Sussman. Though he had planned to stay on with the organization in a less formal capacity, George Field abruptly severed all ties with Freedom House in 1970 over disagreements between himself and Sussman regarding the future direction of the organization. Field remained so upset about the course he saw Freedom House take under Sussman’s leadership that he wrote about it until he was nearly 90 years old. The last of these memos is titled “The End of a Dream.”

Meanwhile, Leonard Sussman sought to replace the “anecdotal” Balance Sheets of Freedom with a Comparative Survey of Freedom, the ranking system described above. Conceived by Leonard Sussman and carried out by political scientist Raymond Gastil primarily behind closed doors, these scores are now the most widely used indicators of democracy. This dissertation reveals that the creation of the Comparative Survey involved the opinions of only two men and resulted in a fuzzy, inexplicit ranking system disguised as objective and scientific merely because it involved sets of numeric values. In fact, in a personal letter from 1978, Gastil wrote that “…our work is quantitative only in the sense that numbers are used to designate points along continua. The categories would as well be labeled A to G as

3 This memo was written in 1988, with an addendum written in 1990.
In reflecting on his creation of the Survey in 1990 Gastil would also claim that the rankings were based on his “hunches and impressions.” This differs markedly from the statement made by the newest Executive Director of Freedom House just after his appointment in January of last year. When asked about the scores in a press release he stated that “[t]he research reports published by Freedom House are state of the art. They’re objective, sophisticated and subtle, in the sense that they look at changes in freedoms through a particularly powerful lens. They are the benchmarks for a large number of institutions around the world.” Despite this claim, the opacity and vagueness of the Gastil/Sussman scores has not fundamentally changed – these issues continue to persist.

During the pivotal time period surrounding the creation of the Comparative Survey, this dissertation also finds that a dramatic shift occurred in the concept of democracy that Freedom House promoted. This change was accompanied by a decrease in the transparency of the organization’s reporting, and a determined campaign on the part of Executive Director Leonard Sussman urging the United States government to use the Comparative Survey in foreign policy decision-making. By 2013, annual funding for Freedom House reached nearly $32 million. Over eighty-eight percent of its budget that year came from the U.S. State Department and the United States Agency for International Development, despite Freedom House’s insistence that it is an independent organization. In fact, Freedom House does its best to obfuscate the origins and magnitude of its government funding. In the annual

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4 Letter, Gastil to Mr. Kenneth A. Switzer, September 7, 1978, Freedom House Collection, box 41, folder 1, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
6 See https://freedomhouse.org/article/mark-p-lagon-become-president-freedom-house.
financial reports released by the organization, both government and private funds are lumped together into one category, labeled “Grants and Contributions.” The 990 Forms Freedom House is required to file each year with the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization require further breakdown of these numbers, revealing that over 28 of the nearly $32 million budget in 2013 was comprised of “government grants.” In addition, the Freedom House financial reports made available via the organization’s website only list contributors according to three categories: those contributing $1,000 - $5,000; $5,000 - $10,000; and “Contributors Over $10,000.” When examining these financial reports, then, it appears that a great number of individuals and foundations make substantial contributions to Freedom House, lending the organization an air of independence. In reality, however, the 990 Forms filed by Freedom House make clear that the organization’s funds are overwhelmingly from U.S. government sources. I will later show that Freedom House expends a great deal of energy trying to counter accusations that it is essentially a de facto arm of the U.S. government, which is evidence that the organization sees such an association as problematic.

Ultimately, this dissertation serves as a reminder to historicize social science indicators, rather than see them as independent entities. This aim of this project is not to provide suggestions for improving Freedom House scores, nor do I attempt to offer an alternative measure of democracy based on a set of normative criteria. Instead, the purpose of this work is to make scholars who use these particular measures aware of

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7 See Freedom House financial reports from 2001 – 2015 on the organization’s website here: https://freedomhouse.org/content/freedom-house-annual-reports.
9 See https://freedomhouse.org/content/freedom-house-annual-reports.
their history, and to urge those using scores of any kind to do likewise. In historicizing the Comparative Survey I am trying to understand the history of a tool that is used so often and presented as ahistorical and reveal what is at stake in the development of a tool that wields such power. First, however, it is worth examining both the academic and governmental influence of the Freedom House Comparative Survey. Illustrating the degree of power these scores exert demonstrates the importance of this dissertation.

THE INFLUENCE OF FREEDOM HOUSE

While the prominence of the Annual Survey conducted by Freedom House in academia is generally accepted, some solid evidence of the importance of these measures is worth providing. In academic social science, one common indicator used to assess the impact of a work is the Social Sciences Citation Index. One feature of this tool allows researchers to see how many times a specific work has been cited by others within a particular time period, as well as providing one with links to aforementioned papers. Those works that are cited a great deal, such as Anthony Downs’ *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957), are often said to be cornerstones of the field. The same applies to the yearly measures of worldwide democracy produced by Freedom House. For example, the organization’s Annual Survey, *Freedom in the World*, was cited 820 times during the year 2009 alone. In 1978

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10 See [http://thomsonreuters.com/products_services/science/science_products/a-z/social_sciences_citation_index/](http://thomsonreuters.com/products_services/science/science_products/a-z/social_sciences_citation_index/).
11 This search was performed in the Social Sciences Citation Index using the cited work search tool (Free* World*). This figure includes various years of the Annual Survey (for example, if an author used the Comparative Survey from 1989 in a work published in 2009 that would be included in the cited references for that year).
(the year the Survey was first published in book form), however, the Comparative Survey was only cited 52 times.\textsuperscript{12} That is to say, the reliance of academics on this Survey when doing scholarly work has dramatically increased over time, as illustrated by the number of times the scores are now cited in published works. These figures not only show the prominence of the measures within academia, but also indicate their increasing use in the field over time.

Another way of measuring the influence of works within the discipline of political science is to note their presence on the comprehensive examination readings lists of the top Ph.D. programs in the nation. The works that appear on such lists are generally seen as canonical in various subfields of political science; that is, one must be familiar with them and able to discuss their arguments as part of the process of being awarded a Ph.D. in political science. According to the 2009 U.S. News & World Report, the comparative politics Ph.D. program at Princeton University ranked second in the country.\textsuperscript{13} While generalizations cannot be made from this one particular case, and I do not provide a survey of all the top programs in the country, Princeton’s comprehensive reading is a useful illustrative example of the influence of Freedom House on academia.\textsuperscript{14} Princeton’s 2010 general examination reading list in

\textsuperscript{12} While Freedom House had been publishing the Comparative Survey since 1973, when it officially replaced the Balance Sheet of Freedom, it only appeared in the NGO’s bimonthly \textit{Freedom at Issue} until the introduction of the annual volume \textit{Freedom in the World} dedicated solely to the Survey results in 1978. For a brief history of the Survey see Gastil (1990).

\textsuperscript{13} See the full report here http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-humanities-schools/comparative-politics-rankings, which allows one to view political science Ph.D. programs by subfield. The highest ranked comparative politics program in the U.S. is located at Harvard, though the institution’s comparative comprehensive examination reading list was not available online, see http://www.gov.harvard.edu/graduate-program/program-overview/requirements-students-admitted-fall-2010-and-later. Both Harvard and Princeton are included in the three-way tie with for the top political science program (in general) in the country, see http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-humanities-schools/political-science-rankings.

\textsuperscript{14} Many other indicators of the organization’s influence are also included in this introduction.
comparative politics is divided into sections, one of which is devoted to “Democratization.” This subfield’s list includes references to 17 different articles and books, 13 of which were written after 1978 (when the Comparative Survey first became available in annual edition form), and of those, 8 cite the democracy measures created by Freedom House. That is to say, 61.5% of the literature listed in the democratization subfield of Princeton University’s Ph.D. comparative politics comprehensive examination reading list written after 1978 relies in some way on Freedom House’s Comparative Survey. This figure reveals the degree to which Freedom House exerts its influence upon the academic field of political science in the United States.

In addition, two of the most authoritative figures in the fields of comparative politics and democratization studies in particular have attested to the authority of the Comparative Survey of Freedom. Both Larry Diamond (2015) and Ronald Inglehart (2005, 2011) have recently stated that Freedom House scores are “widely used in both academic research and policy assessments” and are “the most widely used indicator of democratic freedom,” respectively. The fact that these two men, considered heavy weights in the discipline, publicly recognize the hegemonic status of the scores lends further support to my claim.

Academics are not alone in paying attention to Freedom House scores. They are also given a great deal of weight by the U.S. government. One way to gauge the influence of the information produced by Freedom House on the state of democracy throughout the world is simply to examine the frequency with which prominent

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See http://www.princeton.edu/politics/tools/search/index.xml?search_type=site&submit=search&query=reading+list&submit=Search in order to access the reading list in PDF form.
members of the organization are called to testify before Congressional committees on matters of international importance. For example, in 2011 alone, former Freedom House Executive Director David J. Kramer testified before Congress on four separate occasions. Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Kramer addressed the state of democracy and freedom in Eastern Europe, as well as speculation surrounding human rights abuses in Belarus. Twice in 2012 he also advised the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on U.S.-Russian relations and foreign policy options, as well as those involving Belarus. On May 6, 2014, Kramer was one of five individuals who spoke before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations at a hearing titled “Ukraine – Countering Russian Intervention and Supporting a Democratic State.” The other testimonials came from high-ranking representatives of the Department of State, Department of Treasury, Department of Defense, and the Center for Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies at Georgetown University. It should also be mentioned that prior to holding the position of Executive Director at Freedom House, Kramer worked for the State Department for many years.

16 The title of “Executive Director,” as of 2014, seems to now be used interchangeably with “President” in Freedom House official press releases. See https://freedomhouse.org/article/mark-p-lagon-become-president-freedom-house.
17 See http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/search/?q=david%20kramer&realm=hearings.
18 See http://www.foreign.senate.gov/search/?q=kramer&as_sitesearch=&x=0&y=0.
19 Two of whom had doctorates (the implication being that Freedom House officials are as well versed in democratization policies as academics who study the issue)
21 It is worth noting that David J. Kramer is not an anomaly with regard to the governmental influence of Freedom House leadership. Executive Directors of Freedom House have been testifying before Congress for quite some time. As early as 1976 Sussman testified before the Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance and Economic Policy of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. This fact was a point of pride for Sussman, one he often reminded those he corresponded with of (Correspondence, Leonard Sussman, Freedom House Collection, box 40, folder 12, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library).
preceding his position at Freedom House, Kramer served as Assistant Secretary of
State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor following his nomination by
President George W. Bush. David J. Kramer resigned as Executive Director of
Freedom House in October of 2014, and was replaced by Mark P. Lagon in January
of 2015. While Lagon is definitely more representative of academia than past
Executive Directors (he holds a Ph.D. in Government from Georgetown), he has a
history of government service as well. Lagon is a former Deputy Assistant Secretary
of State, and directed the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons
between 2007 and 2009. By mid-July of 2015, Lagon made his first appearance
before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, giving a report on the state of
human rights worldwide. In his testimony Lagon made the case that “our [US
national] strategic and economic interests are inextricably linked with the protection
and promotion of human rights.” The aforementioned instances of Freedom House
“experts” testifying before Congress is only partially indicative of the influence of the
organization on the U.S. government more broadly. Oftentimes in such
Congressional proceedings and governmental reports the results of the Freedom
House Comparative Survey are relied upon when making foreign policy and aid
decisions, without calling upon anyone from the NGO to testify.

23 See https://freedomhouse.org/article/mark-p-lagon-become-president-freedom-house.
25 Freedom House is also often mentioned in passing in Congressional Resolutions. See, for example,
S.Res.372 – “A resolution recognizing the importance of the United States-Egypt relationship, and
urging the Government of Egypt to protect civil liberties and cease intimidation and prosecution of
civil society workers and democracy activists, and for other purposes” from the 112th Congress (2011-
2012). Introduced by Senator John Kerry, the Resolution also “[p]raises the work of U.S. democracy
promotion organizations such as…Freedom House.” See
An article\textsuperscript{26} published by National Public Radio on May 16, 2016 showcases both the scope of Freedom House’s influence in United States aid allocation decisions and the unflinching acceptance of the organization’s independence and credibility. The piece, titled “You Can Have Our Millions – But First You Must Pass Our Test,” discusses the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), created by Congress in 2004 as a “U.S. foreign aid agency” that delivers “large-scale grants” to countries.\textsuperscript{27} Aid is given to those countries “committed to good governance, economic freedom and investments in their citizens.”\textsuperscript{28} However, “[t]o be selected for aid that can help reduce poverty, countries are evaluated by a scorecard drawn from third party data gathered by groups like Freedom House, the World Bank and UNICEF” [emphasis added] (Silver 2016). So, although more than eighty-eight percent of Freedom House’s $32 million budget in 2013 came from the United States government, the organization’s status as a separate entity is unquestioningly accepted. And the annual reports created by Freedom House, funded primarily by the U.S. government, are then in turn used to decide which countries will receive financial aid from that government. The magnitude of this influence can be seen in the scale of grants distributed via the Millennium Challenge Corporation. “So far [as of May 2016], MCC has signed compacts with 32 countries and handed out $11 billion. The average compact is around $350 million” [emphasis added] (Silver 2016). This

\url{https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/senate-resolution/372?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22%5C%22freedom%5C%22%5D%7D&resultIndex=1}.

\textsuperscript{26} Silver, Marc. “You Can Have Our Millions – But First You Must Pass Our Test,” \textit{NPR}, May 16, 2016. \url{http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoyda/2016/05/16/473105166/you-can-have-our-millions-but-first-you-have-to-pass-our-test}

\textsuperscript{27} See the MCC’s website here: \url{https://www.mcc.gov/about}.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
example is but one indication of the power wielded by Freedom House extends far beyond academic work and has major foreign policy implications.

The close relationship between Freedom House and the U.S. government is not something peculiar to recent times but can be clearly traced back to its origins. Many of the members of Freedom House, particularly its Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and Executive Directors, have had ties to the U.S. government. Former director Kramer, whose governmental connections were briefly addressed above, is simply one in a long line of Freedom House Executive Directors of whom this was also true. For instance, Jennifer Windsor, who served in this position from 2001-2010, worked for the United States Agency for International Development from 1991-2000\(^{29}\) (a State Department funded organization which also provides project funding to Freedom House itself). In the late 1980s Windsor worked on foreign affairs issues for a number of members of the U.S. Congress.\(^{30}\) The Executive Director from 1997-2001 was James Denton, a former Navy officer who specialized in anti-submarine warfare and had been involved in special operations.\(^{31}\)

The close association between Freedom House and the U.S. government is perhaps best illustrated by the life and career of Leo Cherne. A member of Freedom House since 1946, Leo Cherne quickly became a part of its Executive Committee ten months later; by 1952 he was its Chairman.\(^{32}\) Active in Freedom House until his death in 1999, Leo Cherne played many roles, including that of 

\[\ldots a \text{ behind-the-scenes power broker, a thoughtful advisor to nine presidents, a flamboyant economic futurist, a playboy closely connected with the nation’s} \]

\(^{30}\) See [http://explore.georgetown.edu/people/jlw2/](http://explore.georgetown.edu/people/jlw2/).
\(^{32}\) See Smith 2002.
rich and famous, a high-level fundraiser for humanitarian causes, a master spy in the employ of an American intelligence service, a highly successful businessman, and a powerful conservative Cold Warrior (Smith 2002: xi).

Leo Cherne served on the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board under both Reagan and Bush, and is one of the few non-CIA employees to receive the agency’s Director’s Medal. Perhaps one of Cherne’s greatest personal achievements, which also reveals his level of government involvement, was his receipt of the Presidential Medal of Freedom by Ronald Reagan in 1984. Reagan’s words to Cherne during this ceremony are particularly noteworthy.

In addition to being a humanitarian, Leo has been an economist, political scientist, sculptor, and advisor to presidents for over 40 years. His extraordinary service to his country and to mankind are inspiring and deserving of recognition from his fellow citizens…Although he has never held elected office, Leo Cherne has had more influence on governmental policy than many members in Congress. Since the late 1930s, Leo Cherne has stepped forward and with brilliance, energy and moral passion to help this nation overcome countless challenges.

The sheer number of times the Comparative Survey is cited by academics each year, including by those whose works are featured on the required reading lists of prestigious universities, illustrates the influence of Freedom House in academia. The political authority of the organization is revealed by the frequency with which members of Freedom House are called upon to testify before Congress as democracy experts (based on their knowledge of the Comparative Survey). This organization not only wields incredible power when it comes to defining democracy in a particular

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33 See http://www.freedomhouse.org/article/when-help-becomes-problem for a short biography of Cherne published by Freedom House, as well as ibid. p. 171. While Cherne was never formally associated with the CIA, he worked closely with the organization’s director for operations during his time with the PFIAB, and “Cherne [also] mentored many CIA officers engaged in economic intelligence and technology” (Smith 2002: 169).


35 Although important, I do not address the use of Freedom House scores by the media in its presentation of world affairs in this project.
way, but also demonstrates how political forces shape how democracy is defined and measured.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 explains this project’s position within the field of political science. I show there how this dissertation contributes to subfields beyond critical international relations, including political theory, comparative politics, and American foreign policy as well as the history of the discipline itself. How political scientists think about democracy, theorize the concept and study its practice, are all influenced by these scores; therefore, this project has important implications for many of the subfields above. The scores themselves are also briefly explained in Chapter 1. I draw significantly on the attempts of others to historicize democracy, democracy promotion and organizations similar to Freedom House (Chester 1995; Robinson 1996; Oren 2003; Guilhot 2005), the relationship between propaganda and democratic societies (Steele 1985; Sproule 1997; Snow 2014), and twentieth century U.S. political history (particularly between 1914 and 1945) (Chadwin 1970; Doenecke 2000; Olson 2013). Because Freedom House was established as a manufacturer of propaganda within a democracy, works describing the theoretical and practical tensions between the two are important for this dissertation. And understanding the setting in which Freedom House began to operate in this capacity, particularly the political and social climate in the U.S. during World War II, are imperative for understanding the organization’s origins.
Chapter 2 explores the historical origins of Freedom House as an organization. Though the institution officially formed in October of 1941, its roots can be traced back to two antecedent groups aimed at American intervention in the Second World War – the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies (CDAAA) and the Fight for Freedom (FFF) Committee. I explore the political climate in the United States during this time period, as well as the role of propaganda in the war effort. The distinctly political origins of Freedom House, best illustrated by an examination of its earliest members’ close associations with the Administration, the CIA, and each other, are also addressed in this chapter.

Chapter 3 highlights the changing way in which Freedom House presented itself to the public between its creation in 1941 and 1981. During this period, a dramatic shift occurs in what Freedom House claims its purpose to be and the conception of democracy the organization advances. As its government funding increased during this era, the public statements of Freedom House became less critical of the policies of the U.S. government. Whereas publications from the late 1940s advocated social and economic aspects of democracy, such as the detrimental effect of high economic inequality on political equality, by the 1980s Freedom House merely echoed the neoconservatism of the White House, focusing on increasing national security at all costs.36 By 1981, for example, the organization had become very defensive of American foreign policy. At this point in time the organization even goes so far as to state that sometimes undemocratic regimes should be supported

36 See in particular pamphlets published by the organization in 1945 and 1981, respectively (Exhibit 15, Willkie Memorial Building Lawsuit 1985, “Our Secret Weapon” – Legal Files, George Field Collection, box 6, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library) and (Freedom House Collection, box 75, folder 13, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library).
if doing so aligns with the national interest. During this time period, American
national interest, as represented in the country’s foreign policy, reflected the major
tenets of neoconservatism.

I recognize that the interests of the United States government are not
monolithic. The Executive Branch may reflect the views of different political party
than that of the majority of the Legislative Branch. Different Presidents, even those
of the same party, may pursue different agendas. For example, one Democratic
President may be particularly aggressive when it comes to enacting environmental
regulations. And governmental interests in these various arenas can change over
time, particularly following an election. In this specific period, Freedom House
publications became increasingly aligned with how the neoconservative movement
understood U.S. interests. Adherents of neoconservatism felt a militarized country
consumed by anti-Communism could best carry out these national interests.37 I use
pamphlets, memos, statements of purpose, articles from the organization’s journal
*Freedom at Issue*, reports, and conferences held by Freedom House to illustrate these
changes in the institution over time.38 Also, as of the 1970s Freedom House as an
institution no longer engages in discussions regarding what democracy entails as it
had in conferences and pamphlets in the past. Instead, a rigid, procedural definition
of democracy has been adopted, stripped of the socioeconomic components it once
contained, and Freedom House is now the purveyor of this concept rather than a
platform for its theoretical discussion. It is this pretense of objectivity combined with

37 For a detailed discussion of the rise of neoconservatism and its relationship with the democracy
promotion movement, see Guilhot (2005).
38 While some Annual Reports (in which the organization’s activities for the year are summarized) are
available online through Freedom House’s website, these only go back to the year 2001 (see
https://freedomhouse.org/content/freedom-house-annual-reports).
the lack of transparency that I am criticizing in the post-1967 Freedom House. I do not offer an alternative definition of the concept as a solution. Instead, Chapter 3 attempts to illustrate the larger trends and changes that occurred at the institution over time, one of which is the organization’s promotion of different conceptions of democracy. These trends are the principal focus of this work.

The Balance Sheets of Freedom, the organization’s early attempts to document what it considered to be gains and losses for global freedom each year, are discussed in Chapter 4. Here I focus on the Balance Sheets published between 1953 and 1967, during George Field’s tenure as Executive Director. Unlike their successor, the Comparative Survey of Freedom, I argue that these Balance Sheets were the result of a more transparent process that involved a greater number of individuals’ input. These reports also discuss the status of freedom in the domestic arena at length (regarding the Civil Rights movement, for example), and are critical of both American foreign policy (disapproval of covert intelligence efforts, the turning away of refugees, etc.) and the country’s democratic Allies. These distinctive characteristics of the Balance Sheets of Freedom are absent from the later Comparative Surveys. After the introduction of the Comparative Survey in 1973 Freedom House also began to conflate the concepts of freedom and democracy, which were presented as distinctly different in the earlier Balance Sheets. While some concern with American national security is present in these Balance Sheets, the organization does not attempt to hide these concerns, nor does it present its work as objective. The reporting of Freedom House during this era is a key illustration of

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39 For a more detailed discussion of the elasticity of the concept of democracy over time see Oren 2003.
how the institution, and the way in which it presented itself, were different during George Field’s tenure as Executive Director as compared to Sussman’s.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to a discussion of the creation of the Comparative Survey of Freedom, which replaced the annual Balance Sheets in 1973. The brainchild of Leonard Sussman, and the creation of political scientist Raymond Gastil, the fame of the Survey has increased significantly since it was first published. Chapter 5 focuses on the period between 1967 (the year Field retired) and 1978. The Comparative Survey was first published in 1973; prior to that year, Freedom House continued to disseminate their annual reports in the form of the Balance Sheet.

However, I argue in this chapter that the tone of the Balance Sheets produced during Sussman’s tenure shifted to a much more nationalistic one. That is, the publications of Freedom House during this time period became more concerned with the national security of the United States than the promotion of democracy abroad, and any criticisms of the U.S. government vanished from their reporting. These increasingly less critical Balance Sheets were then replaced entirely by the Comparative Survey, a vague, numeric-scoring system based on a dubious process involving the opinions of only two men. I argue that this new method of producing reports on the state of freedom in the world – one conceived by Sussman and carried out by Gastil primarily behind closed doors – resulted in the creation of a fuzzy, inexplicit ranking system disguised as objective and scientific merely because it involved sets of numeric values. These scores are both subjective and non-quantitative, and yet their presentation as non-ideological and scientific has sanctioned their use by academics and government officials. This use in turn perpetuates Freedom House’s image as

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40 I explore this at length in Chapter 5, based on an array of commentary by Gastil.
reliable authority. The unscientific methods used to arrive at these scores are also substantiated by the very words of Gastil himself, written after he left Freedom House in the late 1980s. In addition, I use archival material to demonstrate Sussman’s determined campaign to increase the use of the Comparative Survey by the United States government.

Chapter 6 examines issues of funding and transparency at Freedom House. At the outset I discuss the long-standing feud between Executive Director George Field and his successor, Leonard Sussman. I focus this discussion around the claims made by Field in his memoranda, the last of which he wrote at 85, which are housed in his own personal collection at Princeton University. The first two, “To Complete the Record” and “To Complete the Record – Part II,” were written in 1970 and 1985, respectively. His last, “The End of a Dream,” was written in 1988, with a brief addendum from September of 1990. While I am unable to settle the debate between these two men, it is important to discuss the claims made by George Field and attempt to substantiate what he wrote about the changing nature of Freedom House during this time. Field believed that (1) Freedom House funds were increasing exponentially, (2) these funds constituted a conflict of interest, (3) the organization’s financial transparency was vanishing, and (4) all of these trends could be attributed to Sussman. These claims are best illustrated by the increasing association between Freedom House and the United States government during this time period – namely due to an influx of funds. I also chart more recent Freedom House revenues from the U.S. government, which peaked at 96.3% of the organization’s overall funds in 2010.

41 The first of these memos was distributed to the members of the Board of Freedom House, the remainder were simply written to add to Field’s archival collection.
In addition, the organization obscures the fact that these funds emanate from the government, as well as the scale of these funds. This chapter also addresses the association between Freedom House and the U.S. government by examining various accusations made regarding the organization’s CIA connections. Beginning as early as a *New York Times* article published in 1976 and as recently as a Robert Parry piece from January of 2015, claims of Freedom House CIA connections have persisted. One individual in particular, Leo Cherne, was implicated in both of these claims. Cherne’s connections to Freedom House, the International Rescue Committee (a WWII era organization dedicated to extracting refugees from Europe), and the CIA are also discussed in this chapter, as they relate to the network of governmental funding that dramatically increased during this time period. While Cherne is but one individual, I focus on him because I believe his career path illustrates the overlapping associations of the elite leadership of such organizations and because there are many similarities between the International Rescue Committee and Freedom House.

My concluding remarks address the implications of this dissertation for those within academic political science as well as those outside academia who rely on the Freedom House Comparative Survey. Given the widespread use of these scores, the ramifications of this project are nothing short of huge. Beyond being a simple cautionary tale against the uncritical use of this particular measure, however, this project serves as a reminder to historicize such tools, rather than see them as independent entities. These indicators are not independent at all; they are attached to an institution and a political ideology that is reflected in the choice of concepts and their corresponding measurement. The ideological aspects of these indicators then in
turn become embedded in the work of academics who rely upon them. As is the case with the Freedom House Survey, these seemingly objective numeric scores have a long, obscured history that should be brought to light, particularly given the power they wield. The claims I make here are both significant and substantial; they counter conventional wisdom that Freedom House scores are useful, objective and should continue to be– widely used without question. Earlier in this introduction, I referred to the many scholarly works in the post-1978 “Democratization” portion of Princeton’s Comparative Politics Ph.D. examination reading list that cite the Comparative Survey. Some of these canonical works include Huntington’s *The Third Wave* (1991); Przeworski et. al.’s *Democracy and Development* (2000); Boix’s *Democracy and Redistribution* (2003); and Bunce’s 2000 article “Comparative Democratization.” Diamond’s latest work, *In Search of Democracy* (2015), relies on Freedom House data as well. I also examine changes in the organization’s overall purpose and character over time. Furthermore, the developments I discuss simply cannot be known without access to the archival materials I had the opportunity to examine. What I discovered within these documents has changed my sense of Freedom House as an organization and underscores the importance of these findings, especially given the sheer magnitude of Freedom House’s influence in the social sciences and policymaking.
CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHODS:
FREEDOM HOUSE SCORES, DEMOCRACY PROMOTION
AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the literature relevant to this dissertation as well as the archival research methods I employed in order to carry out this study. Although my findings have implications for comparativists, this is certainly not a traditional comparative project. Nor does it fall squarely into the field of political theory. The most appropriate label for this work is critical international relations. This dissertation builds on the literature in this area to which Robinson (1996), Oren (2003) and Guilhot (2005) have all made contributions. These texts are discussed under the subheading devoted to “Historicizing Democracy Promotion and Organizations” in this chapter’s literature review. In particular, both Robinson (1996) and Guilhot (2005) examine the democracy promotion policies of the United States, and are therefore also important studies of American foreign policy, another subfield to which my work contributes. Ultimately, I believe this research is applicable to studies within many subfields of political science, including political theory, comparative democratization, critical international relations, American foreign policy, and philosophy of social science. My work, like other critical international relations literature, “does not take institutions and social and power relations for granted but calls them into question by concerning itself with their origins and how and whether they might be in the process of changing. It is directed towards an appraisal of the
very framework for action…” (Cox 1981: 129). Additionally, this dissertation contributes to political theory because it focuses on how democracy has been conceptualized in particular way, and “[p]olitical theory is the study of the concepts and principles that people use to describe, explain, and evaluate political events and institutions.”

Tracing the historical origins of both Freedom House and the Comparative Survey also contributes to philosophy of social science literature because this process illustrates that “…scientists take sides on philosophical questions [often] without realizing it, by their choice of scientific questions to address and methods to employ. The philosophy of science may be able to vindicate those choices. At the least, it can reveal to scientists that they have made choices, that they have taken sides on philosophical issues…” (Rosenberg 2008: 4). I believe that the ability of this project to speak to a large cross section of political science, as well as to other disciplines (particularly history), is one of its greatest strengths and a testament to the importance of my findings.

The following is meant to serve as both the framework for my argument as well as to discuss briefly what it does not address. For example, although it is important to include the various ways in which the methodology of the Comparative Survey has been criticized, I confine my discussion of this particular aspect of to this chapter. While I acknowledge that this body of work exists, the ultimate aim of my dissertation is not to critique the particular definition of democracy advocated by Freedom House; nor do I provide a better, alternative measure of the concept based on some normative criteria. Instead, this dissertation attempts to historicize the

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42 As in the Introduction I defer to a leading university’s understanding of what a major subfield of political science entails, again using Princeton. See https://www.princeton.edu/politics/fields/political-theory/.
Comparative Survey and argues for the importance of these findings for all those who would use the scores.

**FREEDOM IN THE WORLD: THE ANNUAL SURVEY**

In 1973 the Comparative Survey of Freedom replaced the Balance Sheet of Freedom as the organization’s annual report on the status of democracy worldwide. According to one of its principal architects, this shift was aimed at making the findings of Freedom House more scientific in nature and less “anecdotal” (Sussman 2002: 61). In describing the Survey in this section, I draw heavily on Freedom House’s own depiction of its history and methodology, accessible via the organization’s website.

The survey was developed and later headed by Raymond Gastil, a political science Ph.D. from Harvard who was at the University of Washington in Seattle at the time. The survey “continued to be produced by Gastil until 1989, when a larger team of in-house survey analysts was established. In the mid-1990s, the expansion of Freedom in the World’s country and territory narratives demanded the hiring of outside analysts.”

The survey, which is still published annually and is widely read, now assesses the “level” of democracy in 195 countries and 14 territories. These countries are rated on a scale of 1 to 7, with the interval between 1 and 2.5 being categorized as “Free,” those between 3 and 5 as “Partly Free,” and those above 5.5 as “Not Free.”

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43 I disagree with this assessment of the Balance Sheet of Freedom later on – this is Sussman’s particular terminology.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
This determination is made based on two scales – one for civil liberties and the other for political rights. The organization publicly refers to the process by which it arrives at these “numerical ratings” as its “methodology,” which it claims is based on the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*

Freedom House defines political rights as those that “enable people to participate freely in the political process.” This category thus includes dimensions such as suffrage, the presence of competitive political parties, the absence of electoral fraud, the ability to join political associations, and governmental accountability. Civil liberties refer to the presence of “the freedoms of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy without interference from the state.” For example, one of the items on Freedom House’s “checklist” in order to determine the prevalence of civil liberties in a country is to assess whether or not individuals are free to practice their religious beliefs both publicly and privately without undue interference or harassment from the government.

**METHODOLOGICAL LITERATURE ON FREEDOM HOUSE SCORES**

While much of the literature in political science discussing the scores produced by Freedom House’s Annual Survey appears to be critical, it focuses primarily on their methodological rather than ideological components. These works (Bollen 1990, 2000; Coppedge 2002, 2011; Munck 2002, 2009) all try to point out the

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47 Ibid.
50 Despite these criticisms the Comparative Survey is still the most widely used indicator of democracy. Larry Diamond (2015) discusses this discrepancy at length.
methodological shortcomings of Freedom House’s datasets, and each offer some sort of “solution” to the problem. Therefore, much of the academic work on Freedom House is concerned with how inferences are drawn from data. That is, it looks closely at the validity of those measures, analyzing whether or not these measures actually measure what they claim to be measuring – whether or not phenomena are conceptualized “correctly.” This, however, differs immensely from a study of how and why a particular concept of democracy came to dominate the way in which we study and think about democracy itself. The literature thus seems to be more concerned with whether or not the creators of these datasets are utilizing concepts that are “logically structured” and with specific “levels of abstraction” than with the particular “take” on democracy they portray (Bollen 2000; Coppedge 2011; Munck 2009). Rather than addressing the core issue, then, this literature often unhelpfully recommends combining different parts of various measures, or suggests splitting indicators into various parts. For example, rather than simply measuring the formal representation of citizens by whether or not universal suffrage exists, one might have different measures for female and male suffrage (Coppedge et al. 2011). In addition, although much of this work begins in a highly critical tone of the organization, it later actually endorses Freedom House’s use of procedural conceptions of democracy. The

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51 The criticisms offered by these authors vary; however, the majority of them are aimed at the procedures by which Freedom House arrives at these scores (rather than the data itself). For example, while some (Coppedge et. al. 2011) question the precision with which “democracy” (used interchangeably with “freedom”) is defined by Freedom House, what the authors primarily take exception with is procedural. Seen as exceptionally problematic is the simple combining of the two indices used by Freedom House (political rights and civil liberties) into one numeric rating – a “questionable aggregation technique” (Coppedge et. al. 2011: 249).

52 In Designing Social Inquiry (1994) (which is considered to be one of the most important guides for conducting sound, social scientific work among quantitative scholars), King, Keohane and Verba claim that “[v]alidity refers to measuring what we think we are measuring” (25).

53 When concepts are measured they are often simplified. Quantitative scholars refer to the degree to which they are simplified as the level of abstraction. In other words, some “gap between concept and indicator is inevitable in much social science work” (King, Keohane and Verba 1994: 111).
utility of these scores for researchers is defended on the grounds that “developing minimalist measures of democracy yields some important general methodological lessons, and the minimalist measures themselves serve as a building block in developing broader measures” (Munck 2009: xiv). Therefore, truly critical work regarding Freedom House is nearly absent from the literature. A single article (Giannone 2010) critically delves into the ideological nature of the scores, although it focuses on the connection between neoliberal theory and Freedom House (arguing that the scores reflect this particular political paradigm). This dissertation is the first work to critically examine the internal discourse that led to the adoption and eventual hegemonic status of the scores themselves.

HISTORICIZING DEMOCRACY PROMOTION AND ORGANIZATIONS

The body of literature that I found particularly helpful when thinking about how to carry out this project deals with historicizing democracy promotion and organizations similar to Freedom House. Robinson (1996) and Guilhot (2005) address the democratization policies of the United States and the professional networks devoted to their promotion, respectively. Understanding the historical and political context in which these policies are created and these institutions operate is key to placing the practices of Freedom House within this larger democracy promotion movement. Oren (2003) is useful for understanding the specific relationship between political science as a discipline and democracy promotion. Roelofs (2003) broadly examines the historical relationship between foundations and the implementation of public policy, while Parmar (2004) discusses the influence of a
particular institution (the Council on Foreign Relations) on American foreign policy. In addition to this literature, I discuss Chester’s (1995) work on the International Rescue Committee (an organization whose historical origins, leadership and purpose are all somewhat similar to that of Freedom House) and its role in what he calls “the covert network.” I examine Chester’s (1995) book in Chapter 6 because of the many parallels that exist between the IRC and Freedom House regarding their relationships with the U.S. government and intelligence community, particularly with regard to their finances.

Democracy promotion has long been an important goal of American foreign policy. One could certainly trace its origin as far back as the Monroe Doctrine, closely linked to the idea of Manifest Destiny. This idea “of a chosen people on the march” is an important precursor to the modern notion that American democracy, the model for newly transitioning countries, should be exported across the globe (Keylor 2001: 22). Many Presidents have taken up this cause – perhaps none more famously than the political scientist Woodrow Wilson with his Fourteen Points and emphasis on the right of peoples to self-determination.54 Today, the focus on democratic institutional design in academia (where numerous graduate classes are now offered based on this subject alone), as well as in both governmental and non-governmental organizations, is widespread. Each of these sectors has sent experts into countries to “train” foreign political parties on the democratic rules of the game, and the U.S. government frequently ties important foreign aid decisions to the “level” of

54 While self-determination is not equivalent to democracy itself, it has long been associated with the necessary conditions for its existence (i.e. suffrage) among adherents to a procedural definition. A point of irony should be noted, however, that Wilson’s rhetoric abroad was far different than the domestic reality of this era – women were denied the right to vote until 1920 and “…382 black Americans were lynched in the period 1914-1920” (Paterson 2010: 88).
democracy obtained by a country (Robinson 1996; Guilhot 2005). However, many have pointed to a number of problems associated with this practice: the alignment of U.S. aid for democratization with its own strategic national interests; the imposition of a particular set of beliefs on other nations; as well as the American practice of discrediting elected groups it deems inimical to its interests by labeling them as anti-democratic.

Perhaps recognizing the vague and contested qualities of democracy, many academics have insisted that the concept be defined along a continuum (see Lipset 1959; Dahl 1956, 1971; Huntington 1968, 1991, 1993; Lijphart 1999). And some have argued in favor of the use of procedural conceptions both for practical and methodological reasons. That is to say, using a procedural conception of democracy enables one to structure measures that are easier to observe (the checklist used by Freedom House to determine the presence of political rights and civil liberties exemplifies this). Some claim that attaining a minimal, thin level of democracy is all that can realistically be expected, particularly from democratizing countries still in transition. Others simply state that focusing on a procedural definition is all that can practically be done when it comes to actually measuring components of the phenomenon and using those to develop general laws, test theories, etc. (see in particular Bollen 1990, 2000; Munck 2002, 2009; Coppedge 2002, 2011). I argue that using and promoting a thin conception of democracy, as Freedom House does, enables that conception to be more easily co-opted and malleable to national interests.

55 In fact, Benjamin Barber argues that a thin conception of democracy is “one whose democratic values are prudential and thus provisional, operational, and conditional — means to exclusively individualistic and private ends. From this precarious foundation, no firm theory of citizenship, participation, public goods, or civic virtue can be expected to arise” (Barber 2003: 4).
Satisfying a checklist of institutional requirements does not necessarily guarantee the presence of democracy, particularly if obstacles prevent one from exercising these formal political rights. Referring to voting rights, for example, scholars have pointed out that “…voting equality is only a minimal condition of political equality” (Young 2000: 6). That is to say, being able to vote does not necessarily grant one political equality as “there tends to be a reinforcing circle between social and economic inequality and political inequality that enables the powerful to use formally democratic processes to perpetuate injustice or preserve privilege” (Young 2000: 17). Further, thin conceptions of democracy obfuscate that “[e]ven the supposedly most democratic societies in the world most of the time are largely ‘plebiscite’ democracies: candidates take vague stands on a few issues; citizens endorse one or the others, and then have little relation to the policy process until the next election” (Young 2000: 5). Some scholars, therefore, push “…to have a more expansive, less formalistic notion of what a democratic regime is” (Wedeen 2008: 219). However, these alternative definitions are consigned to the margins both academically (particularly to the realm of political theory) and politically. Instead, the U.S. government uses the procedural definition, as reflected in the Freedom House scores, in aid allocation decisions.

Promotion of a particular brand of democracy as a part of American foreign policy wields ideological power. The advancement of this conception by American academics and organizations alike, particularly those involved with important international forums such as the United Nations, further embeds this particular

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56 This refers to the procedural conception of democracy, as exemplified by the actual checklist Freedom House uses to determine to what extent the concept is realized in various countries.
definition in the global democracy promotion network. When academics and
democratization experts, including Freedom House officials, are consulted on and
approve of democracy promotion strategies in American foreign policy, these
strategies gain an air of legitimacy and objectivity.

There has been a close ‘fit’ in the post-World War II period between US
foreign policy and the mainstream academic community. In particular,
modernization and political culture/development theorists provided
intellectual guidelines and legitimization for foreign policy, and also
contributed important theoretical and practical elements – including
developing a new generation of democratization theory – to the development
of the new political intervention (Robinson 1996: 42).

Robinson (1996) argues that democracy promotion provides a seemingly
ideologically neutral banner under which the United States has carried out a foreign
policy aimed at maintaining and perpetuating its own interests abroad. Specifically,
he examines relations between the United States and the Third World in the 1980s
and 1990s, and the manner in which specific U.S. policies and the global economic
system have disadvantaged the latter.

Using an approach to critical theory informed by Gramsci’s concept of
hegemony, Robinson illustrates how democracy promotion is linked to “consensual
domination” globally (Robinson 1996: 6). In place of its prior support for
dictatorships in the Third World that were amenable to its interests, the policy of the
United States government has now become one of “democracy promotion.”

Robinson’s discussion of the rise of neo-conservatism, and the movement’s success in
pursuing what it deemed American national interests abroad under the banner of
democracy promotion, is essential to this dissertation. In chapters 5 and 6, I argue
that the changes that took place at Freedom House under Executive Director Leonard
Sussman in the 1970s (which were cemented into the public image and prescriptions of the organization by 1981) are reflective of this larger political context in the U.S. at the time. Democratization has lent American foreign policy a seemingly humanitarian air, and has allowed the U.S. to maintain “control of the world’s resources, labor, and surpluses,” while substituting the coercive means for doing so with more consensual ones (Robinson 1996: 16). Robinson asserts that “[b]ehind this shift is a change in the salient form of social control exercised in a transnational setting, from coercive to consensual means of domination within a highly stratified international system, in which the U.S. plays a leadership role as the dominant world power” (Robinson 1996: 318). Robinson attributes some of this shift in American foreign policy to globalization and the accompanying increase in social interactions between people that often leads to a re-imagining of political structures. The United States, becoming aware of the impetus for political change created by globalization, purposefully began to execute a foreign policy centered on democracy promotion in order “to gain influence over and try to shape their [democratic movements’] outcomes in such a way as to preempt more radical political change, to preserve the social order and international relations of asymmetry” (Robinson 1996: 318-319).

The logic behind Robinson’s claim here is that globalization produces “highly fluid social relations, ‘stirs’ masses of people to rebel against authoritarian forms of political authority, and thus calls forth new political structures to mediate social relations within and between nations in the world system” (Robinson 1996: 318). Radical political systems are those that would threaten the interests of the elite – the class of individuals that currently benefits from the neoliberal global structure. The
United States, Robinson argues, honed in on the push for change globalization produced among the populace in Third World countries in the 1980s, and refocused American foreign policy under the guise of democracy promotion. These policies, however, would actually be focused on maintaining the inequality of the current world order. In an examination of four case studies (Nicaragua, Haiti, Chile and the Philippines), Robinson illustrates how interventions on the part of the United States have actually stunted the process of democratization in Third World countries. In limiting and controlling movements toward more democratic governments in these regions, the United States has been able to ward off attempts to promote dramatic changes within Third World governments that would threaten the interests of the “transnational elite” (Robinson 1996: 319).

According to Guilhot, democratization experts are part of this transnational elite, acting as “key regulatory actors of globalization” (2005: 7). Democracy promotion has become professionalized and distinctly associated with American ideals. The advancement of democratization “no longer provid[es] the basis for the critique of power…[but has] become the main language of global power” (Guilhot 2005: 8). Democratization rhetoric and policies are another means by which developed countries exercise economic and political power over developing ones. The ability of American political scientists to advocate a specific conception of democracy as the appropriate goal for countries across the globe has allowed these “double agents” (to use Guilhot’s striking term) to promote distinctly ideological goals under the guise of scientific objectivity. The use of numerical scores presented

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57 I use the concept of power in various ways in this dissertation. Ultimately I argue that Freedom House scores wield power in a number of different, yet equally important ways.
as objective findings has extreme ramifications, as “…numbers have often been an agency for acting on people, exercising power over them…Where power is not exercised blatantly, it acts instead secretly, insidiously” (Porter 1995: 77).59 Freedom House scores thus represent a source of information provided by “experts” that is used by the media, academia and government institutions, at the same time as such information is both funded and approved by “primary sources and agents of power” (Chomsky 1988: 2). Using a numerical form cloaks the subjectivity of measures by protecting them from charges that they are ideological.61

Guilhot’s (2005) The Democracy Makers makes a compelling argument regarding the way in which democracy promotion became the dominant discourse in international relations. The author draws special attention to the role of “democracy makers” in this process – those academics and human rights activists who have become “professionals” whose expertise is sought after and are gainfully employed by the democratization industry. Freedom House officials, and in fact the scores themselves, are often cited and called upon to lend legitimacy to American foreign policy decisions, and are therefore an important part of this professional

58 Porter is here referring specifically to Foucault’s criticism of the use of numbers in the social sciences. Foucault argues that “[n]umbers turn people into objects to be manipulated” (Porter 1995: 77).
59 Porter is not discussing Freedom House scores here, though his comments apply. Instead, he is addressing the way in which numbers dehumanize people. Numbers have been used throughout history by social scientists and others in order to learn about people whom these researchers would often rather not see as people (Porter uses prostitutes as just one example), and representing them as numbers accomplishes this. Numbers can also come to exercise power over individuals by establishing bureaucratic norms, when those who deviate from them are stigmatized (Porter 1995: 77-78). In general, however, Porter’s work is not a polemic against the use of numbers. Ultimately, he delivers a rather mixed evaluation of the rise of quantification, which he argues was primarily driven by “a strategy of impersonality” (Porter 1995: xi).
60 In Manufacturing Consent (1988) Chomsky is specifically referring to the power exercised by wealth and income over media content.
61 This also closely correlates with Porter’s depiction of the field of accounting, in which “professional judgment[s]” must be made to appear synonymous with objectivity (92).
democratization network. In particular, Guilhot is interested in the manner by which a discourse that was often used to challenge dominant regimes is now used in order to legitimize them. Whereas radical political movements once used the language of democratization to protest the rule of the global elite, this language is now used to suppress such movements. While Guilhot’s book focuses on the National Endowment for Democracy and the World Bank as specific contributors and partners in this deliberate development, many of his broader arguments are applicable to my critical study of Freedom House.

The work is largely about the process by which democracy came to be more than just an international norm, but something to which everyone is entitled, “a universal right” (Guilhot 2005: 2). In order to understand the institutionalization of democracy along these lines, Guilhot explores the role of those who both promote and protect the concept. This group, however, has branched out from the traditional advocates (such as human rights activists, dissidents and NGOs) to include “think tanks, philanthropic foundations, state administrations, international organizations such as the United Nations or the World Bank, private consulting firms, professional associations, activists, lawyers and, last but not least, academic scholars” (Guilhot 2005: 2). All are important actors whose contributions have helped to build a dominant democratization discourse – one associated with a particular set of concepts and language. Powerful networks of democracy promotion experts have been created as a result. In this way NGOs contribute to the establishment and the enforcement of global standards. In the field of political and civil liberties or economic corruption,

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62 My use of discourse here refers to “the languages, the concepts, the strategies, [and] the outlooks” of the democracy promotion movement (Guilhot 2005: 3).
such standards already exist and are in part policed through the ‘rating’ practices of Freedom House or Transparency International, two NGOs which rank countries according to their record in these fields and which have managed to achieve international credibility. Every year, the publication of their rankings makes it to the headlines of the most important newspapers (Guilhot 2005: 4).

Guilhot concludes that democracy networks have therefore become used as instruments of control by the dominant global powers, particularly by the U.S. government. In fact, “[t]he success of this agenda lies precisely in its ambivalence, that is, in its capacity to lend itself to different interpretations and to accommodate different strategies, whether those of genuinely concerned activists and dissidents, or those of State Department planners” (Guilhot 2005: 9). Therefore, what has been seen by many to be a newly developed kind of scientific expertise is in fact a construct used to maintain and perpetuate the power of global “organized interests” (Guilhot 2005: 7).

Important to Guilhot’s analysis, however, is his refusal to see democracy promotion as a monolithic entity. Instead, he sees it as a sort of battleground on which the meaning of important concepts is contested. Beyond a very basic understanding of the concepts of democracy and human rights,

their scope is ill-defined and their boundaries are not clear-cut. It is in these hazy areas that struggles to extend or to limit the rights falling under the ‘human rights’ label take place, or the conflicts around what ‘democracy promotion’ abroad should include. This is what undermines their pretense to universality, namely that their applicability is in part determined by circumstantial, social, or political factors (Guilhot 2005: 20).

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63 Guilhot notes, however, that “[t]his is not to say that NGOs are subservient to the needs or the interests of developed countries, that they are the Trojan horses of neoliberal globalization, or that they have been simply co-opted… But, overall, NGOs as such have become key regulatory actors of globalization, on equal footing with financial institution[s] or international organization[s]… The NGO ‘format’ has become a specific modality of the exercise of power” (Guilhot 2005: 7).
The idea that democracy’s meaning (particularly among academics) can and has changed as a result of historical and political processes and actors is essential to my dissertation. Ultimately, Guilhot points out, articulating what is meant by a concept such as democracy both lends legitimacy to certain strategies and actors (whether they be policies, institutions, tools of measurement, etc.) while delegitimizing others. In the case of democracy, is the concept “…only a matter of promoting free and fair elections? Is a democratic system only a procedure for the peaceful resolution of political conflicts (Przeworski) or does it include some form of active participation of the citizens?” (Guilhot 2005: 20). The result of this conflict over meaning culminates in the production of hegemonic concepts that “have the form of universality but, at the same time, they lend themselves to being instrumentalized by particular interests and national security objectives” (Guilhot 2005: 20).

In much the same vein, Ido Oren’s work critically examines the process by which the meaning of democracy has been historically contested. In Our Enemies and US (2003), Oren argues that it is imperative to examine the way in which the meaning of concepts used by political scientists has been shaped by historical forces. In this work Oren argues that the conception of democracy within American political science has changed over time as U.S. interests and alliances shift. Oren illustrates the changing portrayals of America’s enemies by political scientists over time, comparing their coverage before and after entering into conflict. Beginning with Imperial Germany and ending with the Soviet Union, Oren demonstrates the distinctly American narrative guiding the theoretical frameworks used in political science. Oren shows that while political scientists during the pre-WW I era regarded
Imperial Germany as a case (albeit not an equal one) from which Americans could learn, today textbooks present that period in the country’s history as autocratic (Oren 2003: 23-27). The perception of Germany’s government during that time, as well as the way in which American democracy and its most exemplary traits were viewed, changed as a result of World War I. As a result, “the favorable image of Germany was fully discredited, and the dichotomy between ‘autocratic’ Germany and ‘democratic’ America sharpened” (Oren 2003: 43-44). Concepts central to American political science are therefore malleable in that they are directly affected by historical circumstance. Given the fact that the concepts used by political scientists are reconfigured over time in response to distinctly different contexts, their presentation as “neutral” and “scientific,” and corresponding fixity in datasets is particularly problematic (the assumption behind this sort of analysis being that one is comparing variations in the same concept over time). Oren’s argument therefore provides an important framework for the argument made in this dissertation against viewing Freedom House scores as independent of the political and historical context in which they were created. His ability to demonstrate that the concepts used by political scientists can and do change over time and as a result of these circumstances is critical to my argument that the Comparative Survey is neither neutral or ahistorical.

Using POLITY scores for pre-1914 Germany as an example, Oren demonstrates

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64 American political scientists during this era praised Germany because “it offered a positive model of national reunion and consolidation, as well as a model of a strong, conservative presidency, insulated from the whims of the masses” (Oren 2003: 33).
65 The Polity IV dataset is another popular tool used to measure global democracy. The current version “covers all major, independent states in the global system over the period 1800-2014.” The dataset “captures this regime authority spectrum on a 21-point scale ranging from -10 (hereditary monarchy) to +10 (consolidated democracy).” See the project’s description of its methodology here: [http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html](http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html).
…the role played by data sets in objectifying concepts that were originally rooted in a particular interpretation of political development. POLITY data are used widely today in comparative political research on the causes and effects of democracy, issues that have no obvious connection to the history of U.S. foreign relations. Those using the data set usually take its regime type categories as given; they display scant awareness of the origins of these categories and of the historical interpretation embodied in them, an interpretation that happens to associate the trappings of democracy with America’s enemies and the substance of democracy with America’s allies. Thus, POLITY is a mechanism by which, to borrow Antonio Gramsci’s terms, ‘traces’ of the historical process of U.S.-German relations are ‘deposited’ into contemporary political research ‘without leaving an inventory’ (Oren 2003: 25).

Datasets, including POLITY and the Comparative Survey of Freedom, which present concepts such as democracy as value-neutral and not historically contingent, and therefore obscure the changing socially specific meanings attached to them. Roelofs’ (2003) work builds on examining the social, political and historical context in which organizations function and knowledge is created, and is therefore similarly useful for my research. In particular, she explores the influence of philanthropic foundations on public policy. Although many foundations are formed with progressive goals in mind, Roelofs finds that their impact is mitigated by the dominance of a neoliberal ideology. Her intention in the work is “to reveal the power [of foundations] that has been largely obscured both in popular account of our society and in the more specialized political science literature” (Roelofs 2003: 197). In her documentation of the reach and influence of foundations, the author defines power as “the source of important [policy] decisions” (Roelofs 2003: 198). Roelofs’ purpose, much like my own in examining Freedom House, is not to “demonize”

66 For Roelofs, neoliberalism “entails the privatization of most government functions, deregulation of business, abolition of subsidies and welfare, and availability of all assets (land, TV stations, national newspapers, etc.) for purchase by any corporation, regardless of nationality” (Roelofs 2003: 161).
foundations, but to unmask their power, a force that is “understated by most researchers and by the foundations themselves” (x-xi).67

In the year 2000, foundations gave nearly $27.6 billion (Roelofs 2003: 19). Roelofs ultimately finds that foundations act in the interests of their elite trustees, board members, and “their investments” (Roelofs 2003: 198).68 Rather than acting in the interests of democracy, then, the liberal foundations serve to promote the hegemony of capitalism and to quiet “dissent against capitalist democracy” (Roelofs 2003: 199). The individuals who direct the actions of said foundations are part of a complex web of overlapping membership in influential organizations, similar to the leadership of Freedom House. These individuals “are simultaneously or serially corporate directors, trustees of universities, foundations, and charities, and top government officials” (Roelofs 2003: 198).

Like foundations, “non-profit” groups like Freedom House “provide an institutional basis for the hegemonic function – “they act to promote consent” to capitalist democracy (Roelofs 2003: 198). They appear distant from their corporate [or in the case of Freedom House, governmental] origins and support, so they may claim a neutral image” (Roelofs 2003: 2). This work is useful for understanding the role organizations (be they foundations or Freedom House) play in controlling the dissemination of ideas and in wielding power through the decisions they make.


67 Roelofs is arguing that researchers often overlook the influence of foundations because foundations purposefully try to “obscure themselves” and “hide their hands” (Roelofs 2003: 198, 197).
68 These elites, according to Roelofs, are drawn “from government, business, foundations, think tanks, academia, and the media,” whose interests align with the promotion of “capitalist democracy” (Roelofs 2003: 198, 199).
(CFR, in the U.S.) and the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA, in the U.K.), and their influence on foreign policy in the period between 1939 and 1945. Both the CFR and the RIIA, formed at a Parisian conference in 1919, have come to wield incredible influence with respect to the formulation of foreign policy in their respective governments. The power held by both has generated “a feeling that somehow such concentrations of elites and experts – minorities in society – in, what are meant to be, democratic and egalitarian social orders, subvert the power of the people…The argument is that, despite regular elections and changes of government, certain elites seem to remain close to the principle centres [sic] of decision-making” (Parmar 2004: 5). While these elites exert a great deal of influence over policy decisions, public opinion is still important (although Parmar argues this is truer of the United States than of the United Kingdom), and their ability to shape popular opinion is therefore also critical. In a fashion similar to that undertaken in this dissertation, Parmar explores the influence of elites via these institutions on a democratic society by examining their “membership, leadership, world-view and activities” during World War II69 (Parmar 2004: 5).

Ultimately, Parmar finds that both the Council on Foreign Relations and Chatham House (the RIIA) played a major role in the post-WWII transitions that occurred in their respective countries, and that this role was determined by their leadership. That is to say, “conviction-led men (and a small number of women), with a vision of world order and the willingness and ability to act” shaped their countries’ foreign policy and the structure of the new world order following the end of the

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69 The author considers this era to have been “the making of the two organisations [sic]” (Parmar 2004: 6).
Second World War (Parmar 2004: 6). Like the other critical works discussed here that historicize democracy promotion and the organizations aimed at this goal, Parmar operates from a Gramscian framework regarding the use of consent and popular opinion in maintaining systems of power. The author does consider competing theoretical conceptions, however, and tests different explanations for the historical development and influence of each organization throughout the work.

Using extensive archival analysis to study the two organizations, Parmar finds that both the CFR and the RIIA played important roles between 1919 and 1945 “in educating and mobilizing important sections of the population in assisting officials who make foreign policy” (216). The influence of the Council on Foreign Relations and Chatham House within their respective countries, and in building the relationship between those countries, was determined by both to be “the best means for either protecting and maintaining a global role (Britain) or rising to globalism (USA)” (222).

Parmar’s study has important implications for the critical history of Freedom House I present here. Particularly useful is the author’s assertion that “[k]nowledge, knowledge institutions and intellectuals…must be analysed within the context of the ‘establishment’ or establishments, rather than as independent or ‘free-floating’ forces” (Parmar 2004: 222). Knowledge must be viewed as the outcome of a particular historical context, and its ability to influence the operation and direction of

70 The different theories of power Parmar examines are: pluralism, corporatism, instrumental Marxism, statism, and Gramscian theory (Parmar 2004: 10-19). The author ultimately finds Gramscian theory to have the greatest explanatory power in this case (Parmar 2004: 221). This is because “Chatham House and the CFR were strategic elites or as Gramsci calls them, ‘the active minorities, the elites, the avant-gardes…’ who formed public opinion because they constituted ‘a centre of formation, of irradiation, of dissemination, of persuasion…’. Their role was to act on the basis of ‘current reality’ and construct public and elite opinion supportive of state policies (Gill, 1990, p. 122)” (Parmar 2004: 220).
strategic political power should be studied with this context in mind. Parmar’s approach and emphasis on the importance of historicizing institutions and the “expert” knowledge they produce is essential for my approach to examining Freedom House. Like the Council on Foreign Relations and Chatham House, Freedom House is staffed by elite who, though unelected, have enormous sway over the direction American foreign policy. The contextualization of its formation, and the way in which it creates politically and historically contingent knowledge that wields power both within the government and academia, has important implications for the study of democracy.

Much like Parmar, Chester (1995) traces the history of an elite-run organization with close ties to its home government. This organization is The International Rescue Committee (IRC), formed in 1942 in order to provide relief to the refugees of World War II. Though commonly viewed as an independent organization operating for purely humanitarian reasons, Chester presents it as an important part of what he terms “the covert network.” Chester describes the positioning of the International Rescue Committee within that network, and its relationship with the Central Intelligence Agency. Chester argues that during the Cold War in particular, the IRC was involved in “helping the U.S. intelligence community to implement a variety of clandestine operations designed to destabilize the Soviet Union and its dependent allies. With the end of the Cold War, the Committee continues to operate in close conformity with the policy mandates of U.S. foreign policy” (Chester 1995: 1).
Chester’s analysis of the IRC provided an important framework for this dissertation. *Covert Network* (1995) is based in part on extensive archival research from more than twenty collections. Chester historicizes the IRC while also taking into account the political landscape in which it has operated. My dissertation examines the development of Freedom House, and the way its public image has also changed to reflect the political climate in which it operates (especially with regard to the rise of neoconservatism). The changes at both the IRC and Freedom House are also closely linked to the motivations of their elite leadership, individuals whose examination is critical to the telling of both organizations’ stories. As there is a dearth of information published on the history of Freedom House, Chester’s work serves both as a model for this project and broadens my evidentiary base.

In addition to the manner in which Chester actually carries out this type of work, *Covert Network* is also useful to this project because of the number of similarities between the IRC and Freedom House. First, both are outgrowths of the American political scene during World War II. Both were the result of mergers between organizations with various roles in supporting American intervention in the conflict. Secondly, some overlap exists in the elite leadership of both organizations. One individual, Leo Cherne, former member of Freedom House’s Executive Committee and chair of the IRC, provides an excellent example of an important elite in both organizations with close ties to the CIA. Additionally, while both organizations had modest financial beginnings they now operate on massive budgets. By 1995\textsuperscript{71} the IRC had a budget of more than $90 million, while Freedom House’s annual revenues peaked in 2011 at more than $45 million. Lastly, both the IRC and

\textsuperscript{71} At the time of Chester’s account.
Freedom House claim to be independent despite long-standing accusations regarding their involvement with the CIA. I return to these issues at length in Chapter 6. Due to the similarities between the IRC and Freedom House, as well as Chester’s method for historicizing the former, the *Covert Network* (1995) was essential to the development of this project.

Many of these scholars (Robinson; Oren; Guilhot; Roelofs; Parmar)\(^72\) have approached historicizing the democracy promotion movement and the organizations associated with that movement from a theoretical framework informed by Gramsci’s concept of hegemony. This framework alerts each author to the role of power and the advancement of particular interests in both international relations and the functioning of institutions, and is opposed to the view that the state and organizations operating within it are neutral.\(^73\) The interpretation of political history in each of these works, often coupled with archival research, reveals a multitude of reasons to be critical of the motives and means of the democracy promotion movement and its agents.

My work follows a similar path. This project views knowledge as constructed from a particular point of view, one influenced by the historical, political and national context in which it is formed. As a result of this belief, I was able to critically examine the creation of Freedom House, as well as the Comparative Survey. Rather than seeing them as ahistorical and apolitical (as is so often the case with the Comparative Survey in particular), this dissertation characterizes the changes each has undergone as the outcome of specific circumstances. I rely on my interpretation

\(^{72}\) While Chester (1995) never labels what he’s doing as being informed by a Gramscian analysis of power relations, one could easily make the case that his work falls in line with this approach (as taken by the other scholars mentioned here).

\(^{73}\) While it is important to note that many of the authors on whom I heavily rely operate from a Gramscian framework, I do not conduct a ground-up Gramscian analysis in this dissertation.
of a range of archival sources to illustrate that there are a number of reasons to repudiate Freedom House’s presentation of what it is and what it does. The historical role of Freedom House in the production of wartime propaganda, what the man who created the Survey had to say about how he did so, and the close relationship between its leadership and the government\(^\text{74}\) (coupled with the dramatic increase in funding from that government over time), are a few bases for the criticism I present here. I have historicized a key organization in a movement that has become central to American foreign policy, one that none of the other works I cite here discuss at any length. As a result, I arrive at an alternative view of this influential institution.

**PROPAGANDA AND DEMOCRACY**

As I learned more about the origins of Freedom House, it became apparent that I would have to at least briefly discuss literature regarding the relationship between propaganda\(^\text{75}\) and democracy. Because Freedom House was erected as the Western counterpoint to the *Braunhaus*, the Nazi German propaganda center, addressing this topic seemed necessary.

The work by Richard Steele (1985) is particularly relevant, as it concerns the relationship between propaganda and democracy during the time period in which Freedom House’s antecedent organizations operated and merged together, between 1933 and 1941. He focuses on President Roosevelt’s use of the media during this time period to build support for interventionism. In order to counter the isolationist

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\(^{74}\) In either official or unofficial capacities (the latter of which often involved work on the part of Freedom House members in the intelligence community).

\(^{75}\) Although there are many definitions of “propaganda,” the more value-neutral refer to it as the “management of public opinion” (Steele 1985: 4).
cause, the “warhaws” worked the media for Roosevelt, “[t]aking advantage of extensive contacts among leading journalists” in order to insert “interventionist-slanted material in the nation’s newspapers” (Steele 1985: 78). The President used these groups as well as the media to advance his agenda. During press conferences, Roosevelt, “[l]ike any competent teacher…was also adept at directing his ‘students’ along lines of inquiry he wished to pursue while avoiding issues he through better left unexplored” (Steele 1985: 37). The Administration also developed an important relationship with the film industry during this period, and government officials, as a result of the industry’s cooperation, dictated what information the public was exposed to in newsreels. Hollywood produced a tremendous number of war films during this time period, during which “[p]ropaganda was extensive but not excessively intrusive. Rather, it blended into the film fare to which Americans had become accustomed and as a result was generally accepted (and presumably absorbed) even by audiences suspicious of propaganda” (Steele 1985: 163). These relationships were an intricate web, which Freedom House was a part of, and required Roosevelt to undertake a “President-as-propagandist” role (Steele 1985: 171).

Sproule’s (1997) work is an extensive study of the evolving relationship between propaganda and democracy in America. While propaganda now carries a negative connotation, at one time its practitioners unabashedly defended their work. There has long been a conversation regarding “how a society aspiring to democracy may balance the right to persuade with the right of the public to free choice” (Sproule 1997: 271). The progressive muckrakers in the early 1900’s laid the foundation for propaganda critics with their attack on the influence of powerful institutions on public
opinion. Not until the First World War, however, was propaganda widely used. Shortly after American entry into the war President Woodrow Wilson appointed George Creel, a journalist and fellow internationalist, to head up the Committee on Public Information (CPI), also referred to as the Creel Committee. The CPI was responsible for the distribution of over 50 million pamphlets during the war (Sproule 1997: 10). Ultimately, however, the efforts of the Creel Committee created intense anti-German sentiment among the American public. Negative connotations then came to be associated with the word propaganda. Prior to this point in time, however, many (see Bernays 1928; Merriam 1925, 1931; Lasswell 1927, 1930; Mead 1917, 1934) had defended the use of propaganda in democratic society, claiming that it was necessary to provide social cohesion and had an educative effect on the populace (Sproule 1997: 66). This debate is one that has continued in American history, and which Sproule dubs “democracy’s propaganda problem” (Sproule 1997: 271).

Another study of the role of propaganda in democratic societies is an edited volume by Nancy Snow (2014), to which many authors (including Sproule) contributed. The authors vary in their area of interest in propaganda, ranging from its dispersal in a now digital age, its use in entertainment, and the continued debate over what constitutes “good” and “bad” propaganda particularly with regard to American democracy. All of the authors, agree, however, that “the United States is a major purveyor of propaganda” across the globe (Snow 2014: 1). These

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76 While almost all entertainment can be thought of as propaganda if one adheres to the definition of propaganda as “a ‘deliberate, systematic attempt’ to…‘achieve a response,’” this particular piece focuses on the WWII films aimed at encouraging American involvement in the conflict (see Jowett in Snow 2014: 168).

77 This volume is dedicated to a discussion of the various modes by which American propaganda is dispersed: the U.S. government, media, etc.
conversations were generally useful throughout this project, in particular the work’s exploration of American wartime propaganda (Lee 2014).

This literature proved vital to understanding the role of Freedom House, an organization dedicated to democracy promotion yet founded in order to disseminate pro-war propaganda. Whether or not these are contradictory or compatible has spurred a long-standing debate on the proper role of mass persuasion in a democratic society.

TWENTIETH CENTURY U.S. POLITICAL HISTORY

Crucial for understanding the political climate in which Freedom House formed (and that in turn prompted its creation) is the historical literature detailing American debate over entry into World War II. Freedom House was formed by two organizations (the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies (CDAAA) and the Fight for Freedom (FFF) committee)\textsuperscript{78} dedicated to the Allied cause, albeit to differing extents. Some of the individuals who led the fight against isolationism in the United States were also influential within Freedom House, as well as in other organizations and formal governmental capacities. This history sheds light on the original purpose for which Freedom House was created.

The efforts of private citizens who favored American intervention in the Second World War are well documented in Chadwin’s (1970) \textit{The Warhawks}. This work focuses on the time period prior to Pearl Harbor, after which public debate about whether or not the United States should become involved in the conflict all but vanished. The specific subject of this book is the Century Group, dubbed the

\textsuperscript{78} Both of these organizations are extensively discussed in Chapter 2.
“warhawks,” which was the predecessor of the Fight For Freedom Committee (which would later merge with the CDAAA to become Freedom House). The prominent individuals in the Century Group were among the first to express public support for an all-out declaration of war against Germany, and did so via a written plea called “A Summons to Speak Out.” Written in the living room of a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, names of 30 influential citizens were later affixed to the 1940 “Summons.” Chadwin (1970) also documents the relationship between the Century Group (so named due to their regular meetings at the Century Association club in New York) and the Roosevelt administration, detailing their efforts on its behalf. Initially formed with the intention to drum up American support for Roosevelt’s policies aiming at aiding the Allies, the group saw the successful passage of the Lend-Lease Act. As a result, the American Navy would transfer destroyers to the British, and the (now) Fight For Freedom’s cause was well under way.

Doenecke (2000) focuses on those who opposed the efforts of the Fight For Freedom (FFF) committee and the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies (CDAAA). Isolationists in America challenged “the ever-increasing efforts of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to intervene on the side of the Allies” (Doenecke 2000: ix). Following the American entry into World War II, those who had supported neutrality were denounced as Nazi sympathizers, and isolationists as a whole were looked down upon. Doenecke, however, documents the history of the anti-war movement, arguing that as late as September of 1938 the vast majority of Americans still opposed involvement in the conflict, and isolationists controlled Congress well into 1939 (Doenecke 2000: 1). Influential individuals and members of the press
ardently opposed President Roosevelt’s interventionist efforts. The various sects of this movement, and their various reasons for opposing the war, are addressed in this work.

Olson’s (2013) *Those Angry Days* also documents the political climate in the United States between 1939 and 1941 (a time frame identical to the one Doenecke focuses on). In particular, she examines in depth the “fight” over American entry into World War II. The side favoring intervention was led by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the isolationist movement was led by “arguably the only person in America who equaled him in fame,” Charles Lindbergh (Olson 2013: xiii). The focus in this work is on these two individuals, as proxies for what the author describes as “a brutal, no-holds-barred battle for the soul of the nation” (Olson 2013: xvi). The story behind these two efforts, and the role of private individuals in mobilizing the American public for their respective causes, is crucial for understanding the climate in which Freedom House operated in its early years.

**METHODS AND SOURCES**

In the following section I detail my general methodological approach – interpretive research. Here I examine the historical origin and many different uses of this methodology among a number of social scientists. I provide a more detailed explanation of the particular interpretive methods used in the archival research that grounds this project as well as my personal experiences with the collections I draw on in this work in Appendix A.
The Interpretive Approach to Research

I belong to a fairly large community of scholars employing interpretive methods in their research (Adcock 2014; Frisch and Kelly 2003; Hill 1993; Hauptmann 2012; Lustick 1996; Oren 2003; Prior 2003; Thies 2002; Trachtenberg 2006; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006). The 2006 book *Interpretation and Method*, edited by Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, showcases the many different types of interpretive research in use across a number of fields in the social sciences. Before discussing the various ways in which these methods can be utilized in order to produce sound, rigorous, exciting scholarly contributions, I will first briefly introduce the concept of interpretation.

Among some social scientists there is increasing interest in studying the historical circumstances in which methodologies themselves have developed. That is to say, these scholars are concerned with challenging what is frequently the norm in many fields in the social sciences, that “…research methods are often taught and learned as if they were tools and techniques alone,” absent historical context (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006: xi). Instead, these scholars are determined “not to take ‘methods’ as if they themselves were ahistorical, acontextual, and thereby ‘neutral’ and any sense” (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006: 204).

These social scientists are interpretivists, and the research methods they use can be traced to the work of philosophers during the late 19th century, and more specifically, to a shift termed “the interpretive turn” (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006: xi). The works of these philosophers were characterized by “an overarching appreciation for the centrality of meaning in human life in all its aspects and a
reflexivity on scientific practices related to meaning making and knowledge claims" (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006: xii). This approach began to influence American thought in the twentieth century. Generally, then, the “interpretive turn” was a move “toward a rehumanized, contextualized set of practices” (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006: xii).

Interpretivists focus “…attention on knowledge claims and knowledge production, highlighting the varied ways in which context (historical, institutional, organizational, and cultural) structures what scholars claim to know and how others react to those claims” (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006: 204). Scholars who employ these methods are often concerned with human actions related to meaning making activities, and are sometimes only able to discern these actions through the use of texts. Interpretivists believe “that ‘meaning’ is not self-evident but, instead, a complex interaction of sensory stimuli and meaning making by human actors” (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006: 205). Those engaged in archival research in particular often attempt “…to follow a document through its social trajectory – to examine how it is manufactured or produced in specific contexts of thought and deed” (Prior 2000: 10). This type of research, therefore, often involves piecing together a narrative of sorts. A “[n]arrative is a particular kind of schema, one which configures stipulated events into an order that corresponds to a story (with the beginning, middle, and other attributes of a story)” (Lustick 1996: 613). Another way to describe this work is as an “historical investigation informed by social scientific perspectives” (Hill 1993: 3). One therefore employs “…the historicist understanding of history as a continuous process of qualitative change shaped largely
by human actors” (Oren 2006: 218). This involves reconstructing events so as to see how people in the past saw them. When reading old texts, in particular, interpretivists ask themselves, “[w]ho said what to whom under what circumstances and with what purpose[?]” (Thies 2002: 357).

In many ways, interpretivist research largely involves the best sleuthing: finding logical contradictions and evidentiary gaps in the dominant narrative; critically assessing the credibility of sources as a function of the perspective and power positions of their producers; and understanding that constructing a cumulative case will more likely convince readers than a single proverbial smoking gun (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006: 207).

While engaged in these investigations, interpretivists remind themselves that “[i]n our search for facts we must always remember that their meaning is never objectively obvious – facts never speak for themselves” (Thies 2002: 353). Generally, therefore, interpretive research, “...in rendering tacit knowledge explicit, makes silenced discourses speak, there by engaging questions of power” (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006: xxi).

What is of particular importance to this project is the use interpretive research makes of the concept of reflexivity. “The term reflexivity derives from the Latin word reflexus – bent backwards – and in social theory it generally refers to the turning of science back upon itself” (Oren 2006: 221). For Oren’s work, like my own, this reflexivity involves subjecting supposedly ahistorical and neutral artifacts (whether they be concepts, analytical categories or tools of measurement) to scrutiny (Oren 2006: 221). Many political scientists’ work focuses “…on how to develop or choose the most appropriate analytical constructs for grasping political processes, not on analyzing how these constructs themselves may be products of political
processes…stop[ping] short of investigating how past politics may have left their marks upon the ostensibly neutral concept employed by political researchers” (Oren 2006: 221-222). One example involves the scholarship devoted to historicizing the Correlates of War (COW) project (Singer 1965; Haber, Kennedy and Krasner 1997). Ultimately, some interpretivists have argued, “data are ‘made’ rather than collected. However, once these datasets become the standard for quantitative analysis in the discipline they seem to take on an air of objectivity and neutrality, as we forget that the facts included in the dataset are based on historians’ interpretations” (Thies 2002: 354).79

A reflexive political science is one that attempts to account for, and uncover, “...the power behind dominant narratives” (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006: 207). To some extent, interpretivists recognize the partial, historically contingent nature of knowledge and knowledge production, including the formation of core concepts in the social sciences and the tools used to measure them. Rather than being objective, then, interpretivists see these tools as human creations that reflect a particular historical context. Studying them with this approach, which is best described as an “orientation of the mind,” “…can yield insights that are counterintuitive and non-conventional from the standpoint of the discipline’s mainstream approach” (Oren 2006: 219, 226).

All this must be accomplished while one keeps in mind that the researcher herself must be reflexive. That is to say, “…if one asks how knowledge claims are

79 It is important to note that “interpretive researchers reject the assumption of the superiority of quantitative data over other forms of data… They do not reject quantitative data per se. Instead, they take an interpretive perspective on numbers: that communities choose to count particular phenomena reveals much about what communities value and the problems that are, or are not, recognized as central to their identities and concerns” (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea: xix).
generated, the role of the researcher – her own a priori knowledge, the filter of his own consciousness – in interpreting observational, conversational, and documentary evidence becomes paramount” (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006: 3). The researcher is also operating under a set of specific historical circumstances, and in order to take this into account, a different methodological approach is necessary. One example of such an approach is “Oren’s analysis [in the Yanow and Schwartz-Shea text] [which] offers yet another reason to be skeptical of the value of decontextualized and de-historicized databanks” (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006: 205).

The interpretive approach differs from that employed by positivists, either qualitative or quantitative. Unlike the scholars who adhere to these traditions, …it is accepted interpretive methodological practice not to begin such a study with a formal hypothesis that is then ‘tested’ against field ‘realities.’ Researchers in interpretive modes more commonly begin their work with what might be called informed ‘hunches’ or puzzles or a sense of tension between expectations and prior observations, grounded in the research literature and, not atypically, in some prior knowledge of the study setting. Understanding and concepts are allowed (indeed, expected) to emerge from the data as the research progresses (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006: xvi).

These “puzzles” therefore inform interpretivist research, though one engaged in said research may not have a research question in the more familiar positivist sense. Much of this stems from the fact that the “data” of the interpretivist is dramatically different from the data with which quantitative methodological approaches are concerned. For an interpretive researcher, “…the data of such studies are not the people themselves, or the events and conversations and settings and acts, or even the documents, but rather the researcher's views of these, as encapsulated in

80 Some scholars make the case that the split among methods in the social sciences has become “a tripartite division among quantitative, positivist-qualitative, and traditional qualitative methods” (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea: xviii).
her notes. ‘Data,’ in this approach, are not things given (datum, data, from the Latin ‘to give’), but things observed and made sense of, interpreted” (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006: xix).

Although interpretive methods differ dramatically from those used by positivist quantitative and qualitative scholars, there are ways, nonetheless, in which they can be used to produce rigorous, sound, “good” research. Firstly, interpretivists reject the notion that such methodology is necessarily more vulnerable to problems of selection bias.

One needs to know the character of one's evidence and in what ways one wants to marshal it before one picks up one’s tools – lest, wielding a hammer always and only, one renders the world the proverbial nail; and one's presuppositions, known tacitly or explicitly, and theoretical framing incline one toward evidentiary sources of a certain character. In other words, what will constitute acceptable and persuasive ‘proof’ is rendered by the type of evidence and its manipulation with appropriate tools (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006: 211).

Some selectivity in interpretive research is obviously necessary, particularly given the nature of archival materials. “Sometimes the argument is that historical analysis is necessarily selective and is therefore subjective and unscientific. But as one philosopher points out, it is ‘wholly mistaken to hold that history is selective and science not. In truth the sciences are much more rigorous and explicit in selecting the facts or aspects of fact which concern them than history ever is’” (Trachtenberg 2006: 15).

Ultimately, though, “there is no universal procedure for deciding which text to analyze; ultimately, it is incumbent upon the analyst to justify her selection in terms of its relevance to the substantive problem at hand and its potential for producing fresh insights into the problem” (Oren 2006: 223). Some level of judgment is
unavoidably involved in the selection of materials for a research project of this nature. However, as long as a researcher explains the choices made over the course of her investigation, and is able to do so convincingly, the resulting research gains credibility.

Additionally, interpretivists (particularly those working with documents) use “explicit triage” to further avoid accusations of selection bias. This technique involves the research project being “supplemented by discursive footnotes that alert the reader to alternate versions and briefly explain the reasoning that led to the rejection of these accounts” (Lustick 1996: 616). In this way scholars are able to draw attention to, recognize, and provide justification for rejecting differing accounts of the phenomena under study. In this dissertation, I consistently attempt to justify my choices of primary and secondary source materials. I also try to demonstrate that my work is sound by directing attention to alternative versions of the arguments I make throughout this dissertation.

Scholars who conduct archival research have a few common threads of advice for those engaging in similar work. Firstly, it is recommended that one acquaint oneself with the finding aid of the collection of interest. This can often be done online, and these finding aids are often able to “provide a somewhat detailed index to the contents of the collection to determine if they have materials that can aid your research” (Frisch & Kelly 2003: 222). Sometimes, however, these finding aids are not very detailed. In addition to this problem, once one arrives at the archives one is often confronted with an enormous amount of material to sift through (which is often quite haphazardly arranged). Given the amount of material in an archival collection,
“it would seem as though one more searching for a needle in a haystack” (Frisch & Kelly 2003: 221). If one is lucky, however, and has done at least some groundwork before arriving at the archives, one may be able to find at least a few “golden nuggets” that prove instrumental in the course of one’s research (Frisch & Kelly 2003: 222). “Indeed, the most rewarding, even exciting, moments in analyzing old texts involve precisely such encounters with ideas and categories that prompt the analyst to wonder: ‘Did they really think that?’” (Oren 2006: 224). I discuss my personal experience with the collections I studied when conducting my dissertation research, as well as my own uncovering of a few “golden nuggets,” in an appendix to this chapter.

**CONCLUSION**

The ultimate aim of this dissertation is to implant Freedom House, a highly influential institution, and its primary tool of measurement, the Comparative Survey, into the historical context in which both were created. I do not provide normative criteria to criticize the definition of democracy promoted by Freedom House, nor do I suggest an alternative measure. Instead, this dissertation serves as an important warning against the uncritical adoption and use of such measures. What I do criticize is the tendency to view Freedom House scores (and other indicators) as ahistorical, independent, objective entities. Although Freedom House claims that its scores are quantitative and scientific, my findings reveal that this was never the case. However, these claims are powerful in the social sciences discipline, and the ability of Freedom
House to present itself and the Survey in this way have lent both tremendous influence in academia and American foreign policy.

The literature covered in this chapter is essential to these arguments, extending beyond the assertions made therein to include the methodologies employed by these authors to do so. Oren’s (2003) argument that the concepts and categories used by political scientists can and do change over time in response to the political climate and current global posturing of the United States provides the groundwork for my argument that Freedom House scores are not insulated from the context in which they have been created. This claim is closely related to Robinson’s (1996) discussion of the rise of neoconservatism in the United States and its particular impact on the country’s foreign policies. The co-opting and professionalization of democracy promotion (Guilhot 2005) places Freedom House scores, the careers of those who advocate these scores, and their use in aid allocation decisions into the larger system of “global governance” of which they are a part.

My dissertation tells the story of Freedom House’s rise to power within this global democracy promotion network. A key part of this story is the obscured history of Freedom House as a chief architect of propaganda during World War II. The distinctly political origins of the institution, and its own blatant acknowledgement of its role as counterpart to the Nazi propaganda machine, contrasts sharply with its current projected image as independent, objective purveyor of the standards of democratic governance. The story of this contradiction begins in 1941.
CHAPTER III

THE (FREEDOM) HOUSE THAT PROPAGANDA BUILT: ORIGINS AND ANTECEDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Figure 1. “It’s Fun to be Free!”

81 The Walt Disney cover of the pamphlet produced for the “It’s Fun to Be Free” rally organized by Fight for Freedom (FFF) and held at Madison Square Garden. Pamphlet, Fight for Freedom (FFF), October 5, 1941, Freedom House Collection, box 75, folder 13, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
This chapter is dedicated to a discussion of the history of Freedom House, its original purpose, and the organizations that preceded it. The highly political origins of the organization, stemming from its connection to the government and wartime propaganda, are often overlooked when Freedom House is discussed today. It is clear, however, that the prominent Americans who were responsible for the creation of both Freedom House and its antecedent organizations, were highly involved in the business of psychological warfare\textsuperscript{82} – all in the name of democracy.

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of the history of propaganda in the United States. This section specifically focuses on the involvement of social scientists in wartime propaganda projects, particularly those directly connected to the U.S. government. Understanding the way in which many academics thought about propaganda, and actually participated in its production in important ways, underscores the environment in which Freedom House was operating in its early years. The relationship between democracy and propaganda is also highlighted here. A number of the social scientists involved in disseminating wartime propaganda actually believed that what they were doing advanced the cause of democracy, and were not afraid to say so. This discussion grounds the origins of Freedom House in a

\textsuperscript{82} This term refers to wartime propaganda aimed at garnering support for the war and undermining the morale of the enemy. In May of 1943 the Psychological Warfare Branch of the armed forces (which came to be known as the Psychological Warfare Division of the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces) was established for these purposes (Sproule 1997: 188). This particular use of propaganda represented a “transformation whereby \textit{propaganda’s} meaning shifted from manipulation by domestic elites to defense of the realm through command decisions [which] was reflected in the subjects chosen for study and in the terminologies employed. Beginning in 1941, \textit{propaganda}, the muckraker’s signifier, underwent a series of metamorphoses whereby the term first was replaced by \textit{morale} and later by \textit{psychological warfare}. By 1948, \textit{persuasion, communications, and information} were the favored locutions for what formerly had been called \textit{propaganda}” (Sproule 1997: 217).
particular political context, and places what it was doing in the larger landscape of the time. That is to say, practices that one might consider antithetical to democracy (such as the manipulation of information distributed to the public) were actually quite common during this time period among even the most prominent scholars of the day.

I then examine the organizations that would come together to form Freedom House – the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies (CDAAA) and the Fight for Freedom (FFF) committee. The activities of these organizations, and later of Freedom House (particularly the events surrounding its presentation of the annual Freedom House Award) highlight their role in wartime propaganda in the name of democracy. The elite leadership of these organizations, many of whom would come to play important roles in Freedom House, held various positions in wartime propaganda institutions. The links between the U.S. government during this era and “educational” organizations like Freedom House aimed at influencing public opinion often at the behest of and in concert with the Administration, sharply contradict the image of itself Freedom House tries to project today. Therefore, this chapter is an important part of the larger argument I make in this dissertation: Freedom House is not an organization that is independent from the U.S. government, and it never truly was.

THE SOCIAL SCIENCES, U.S. WARTIME PROPAGANDA AND DEMOCRACY

Propaganda in the service of democracy promotion was not a by-product of the American debate over entry into World War II. The use of this particular rhetoric to boost civilian morale pre-dates the conflict. During the Great War President
Woodrow Wilson’s Committee on Public Information (CPI) [see Figure 2], headed by journalist George Creel, conducted a campaign based on “Wilson’s new view of the war as Right versus Wrong” that helped “impart a manic quality to wartime opinion” (Sproule 1997: 10). Divided between a domestic and foreign office, many within the CPI believed their work provided social cohesion during a time of great change in America. These workers “…saw their appointment as an ideal opportunity to promote an ideology of American democracy at a time when America itself was undergoing significant social transformations” (Taylor 2003: 184). In order to carry out this mission, however, the CPI had to convince Americans that World War I posed an immediate threat to them, despite the fact that it was happening over 4,000 miles away. The Committee did this by making the discussion regarding the war about freedom and democracy. The goal of the CPI was “…to warn Americans that their enemy was a regime, not a people, an ideology rather than an army, and that if such an autocratic regime triumphed, democracy everywhere would be endangered” (Taylor 2003: 184).

The Creel Committee was wildly successful in its propagandist efforts, largely due to its distribution of more than 75 million pamphlets during the War and its use of “Four Minute Men” whose short speeches, poems and songs, based on the CPI’s information, were given throughout the United States by 75,000 individuals (Lamonica 2011: 456). The campaign was also supplemented by slogans such as “HALT THE HUN!” on posters and trolley cars, as well as a “liaison with the commercial movie studios” and the dissemination of war news summaries by the office to “some 12,000 newspapers in gallery form, ready for printing” (Sproule
“It [the CPI] was total propaganda for total war” (Snow 2014: 128). Every possible avenue for distributing propaganda was explored.

The anti-German fervor whipped up by the organization, however, resulted “in the burning of German books, the ostracizing and beating of German immigrants, and a lynching” (Lamonica 2011: 456). Even those who had approved of the CPI initially, and even worked for it, began to believe that the Committee “had gone overboard, whipping up hysteria, suppressing First Amendment rights to protest, providing a misleading picture of the management of the war, demonizing the enemy with false information, and, generally, being anti-democratic…As a result, ‘propaganda’ became a semi-dirty word” (Lee 2014: 100-101).

Figure 2. The Committee on Public Information (CPI)83

Committee on Public Information (CPI) / Creel Committee (April 1917 – June 1919)

- Domestic
- Foreign
  - Foreign Press Bureau
  - Wireless & Cables Service
  - Foreign Film Service

It was only after the First World War, and an examination by critics84 of Creel and the CPI, that “propaganda came to denote self-interested social influence

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83 The information used to create this figure is drawn from Snow 2010: 80-81.
generally, rather than merely deceit by outsiders” (Sproule 1997: 51). Originating from the Latin *propagare*, meaning “to propagate,” the term propaganda, prior to this era, was associated with the dissemination of information to the masses in a neutral fashion (Marlin 2014: 184). During this time propaganda was seen “as an enterprise whose consequences might seem horrid – or innocuous, or even beneficial, depending on its authors and their aim (and the perceiver’s point of view)” (Bernays 1928: 11). For a time after the war, however, mass persuasion was thought of as undemocratic and something the public should guard against. But after 1940 Americans opposed to fascism would challenge this idea.

Many (Bernays 1928; Lasswell86 1927, 1930; Mead 1917, 1934; Merriam87 1925, 1931) argued even before this point that propaganda was an important tool required for democracy to function. According to its defenders, “[t]he conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society” (Bernays 1928: 37). In particular, propaganda enhanced social cohesion in a time of crisis. The dissemination of new ideas had an educative effect necessary for political participation on the part of the

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84 The progressive muckrakers in the early 1900’s laid the foundation for propaganda critics with their attack on the influence of powerful institutions on public opinion. After the First World War there was an anti-propaganda movement, which even included some former wartime practitioners (Walter Lippmann, Will Irwin). They argued that “opinion control was antithetical to free choice regardless of its seeming indispensability in moving a great modern republic to decisive action” (Sproule 1997: 22).
85 Bernays was a proprietor of propaganda himself, however. That being said, he saw the work of the Creel Committee somewhat differently – as paving the way for propagandists. “The great Allied campaign to celebrate (or sell) Democracy, etc., was a venture so successful, and, it seemed, so noble, that it suddenly legitimized such propagandists, who, once the war had ended, went right to work massaging or exciting various publics on behalf of entities like General Motors, Procter & Gamble, John D. Rockefeller, General Electric” (Bernays 1928: 12).
86 Harold Lasswell was a political scientist, and the “more famous pupil” of Charles Merriam (Sproule 1997: 67).
87 See Ido Oren’s (2003) lengthy treatment of Charles Merriam in Our Enemies and US. Of particular interest is Oren’s discussion of Merriam’s admiration for the propaganda machines of the Bolsheviks and Fascists, and his regard for Hitler as “the embodiment of the ideal propagandist: a gifted orator, a clever manipulator of symbols, and an effective spiritual healer” (Oren 2003: 62).
populace, and produced a better democracy (Sproule 1997: 66). Mead, referring to conscientious objectors during the First World War, wrote that

> [h]ere, as in other cases of governmental compulsion that run counter to individual judgment, the remedy lies in the freedom to influence public opinion so as to change what the judgment of the individual condemns. The minority’s right is the right of propaganda, not the right of refusal to obey the ordinances which have the authority of the state behind them… (Mead 1917: 8).

Adherents to the view that propaganda bettered democracies by providing social cohesion believed that “[p]olitical unity was not something to be left to chance or to uncoordinated effort, but instead would come through appropriate measures implemented by such agencies as the schools, press, political parties, and ‘the special patriotic organizations’” (Sproule 1997: 66).

One prominent social scientist, Harold Lasswell, believed in the use of propaganda in a democracy in order to remedy its defects. In this way, propagandists could manipulate public opinion in a way that was beneficial to the citizens of a democracy. “This regard for men in the mass rests upon no democratic dogmatism about men being the best judges of their own interests. The modern propagandist, like the modern psychologist, recognizes that men are often poor judges of their own interests” (Lasswell 1934: 24). In Lasswell’s view, “[d]emocracy has proclaimed the dictatorship of palaver, and the technique of dictating to the dictator is named propaganda” (Lasswell 1927: 631).

Others rejected the negative connotations associated with “propaganda” based on the argument that educated citizens were free to make up their own minds regarding the information they chose to believe. In this school of thought, “…both practitioners and communication scientists justified their work on the basis of
people’s ability to select advantageously from among competing propaganda” (Sproule 1997: 92).

Still others argued that the real danger lay in what was criticized about the activities of the CPI during WWI – an absence of source citations. Ivy L. Lee, for example, was quoted as saying “[A]ll I can do is to give you my interpretation of the facts…The essential evil of propaganda is failure to disclose the source of information’” (Sproule 1997: 55).

Although their justifications differed, each of these pro-propaganda arguments convinced many that it could serve a moral, democratic purpose. In a manner much influenced by Merriam, Lasswell had defined propaganda as “the technique of influencing human action by the manipulation of representations. These representations may be spoken, written, pictorial or musical form” (Lasswell 1934: 13). The manipulation of those symbols came to be seen by many as essential for proper civic training (Sproule 1997: 67). Thus, propaganda analysts and critics came to be seen, in the light of events in Europe during the late 1930s and early 1940s, as overly skeptical and too hesitant to condemn Fascism. Anti-propaganda reformists were replaced by those who believed such efforts were necessary in order to “steady the civilian mind” (Sproule 1997: 180). This shift in the view of many social scientists represented a broader change in the discipline itself. Charles Merriam and Harold Lasswell, and others who shared their perspective,

created political meaning and a national context for the scholarly enterprise of political science…[As a result,] political science would enter democratic politics not just as an academic field but as a part of an entirely new tradition of political thinking and of counsel to the democratic state (Seidelman 1993: 313).

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88 Refer to the critics mentioned in Footnote #87.
The pro-propaganda turn, then, was the result of a determined campaign on the part of prominent elites and social scientists and the propaganda organizations to which they belonged. In 1939, for example, the Rockefeller Foundation held a series of meetings to which it invited communication scholars in an attempt “to consolidate public opinion in the United States in favor of war against Germany” (Simpson 1994: 23). Harold Lasswell was very influential at these meetings, and over the next two years won support for a theory that seemed to resolve the conflict between the democratic values that are said to guide U.S. society, on the one hand, and the manipulation and deceit that often lay at the heart of projects intended to engineer mass consent, on the other. Briefly, the elite of U.S. society (“those who have money to support research,” as Lasswell bluntly put it) should systemically manipulate mass sentiment in order to preserve democracy from threats posed by authoritarian societies such as Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union (Simpson 1994: 23).

The adoption of this mindset among the American elite in the late 1930s paved the way for the organizations that would eventually become Freedom House.

**ANTECEDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

A number of interventionist organizations sprung up during the late 1930s and early 1940s, in an attempt to muster support for American involvement in World War II among its citizens. Although some disagreed regarding the proper extent of U.S. involvement, they all faced a formidable opponent in staunch isolationism. A great deal of the American public was initially opposed to the war for a variety of reasons. The First World War had left many disillusioned, and this sentiment was fueled by “…American nationalism and distrust of Europeans” (Cole 1953: 9). For these and other reasons, a powerful isolationist movement took hold in the United States,
primarily represented by the group America First. While Pearl Harbor effectively ended the existence of America First and any domestic disagreement about America’s role in the conflict, as of December 1941 America First had grown to include 450 chapters nationwide and its total membership “…was around 800,000 to 850,000” (Cole 1953: 30). Initially formed in September of 1940 by R. Douglas Stuart, Jr., “the son of the first vice-president of Quaker Oats Company” who was also political scientist from Princeton and later law student at Yale, the organization grew to include many prominent members (Cole 1953: 10). On the opposite side of this national debate stood a number of organizations dedicated to American intervention. Two of these organizations, The Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies (CDAAA) and Fight for Freedom (FFF), would later merge to become Freedom House.

**The Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies (CDAAA)**

One of the earliest groups to promote some measure of aid to the Allied forces during WWII was the Non-Partisan Committee for Peace through the Revision of the Neutrality Law (Cole 1953; Laurie 1996). The committee was essentially a lobbying group, headed by the editor of the *Emporia Gazette*, Republican William Allen White. The Non-partisan Committee for Peace through the Revision of the Neutrality Law was a short-lived, albeit “influential ad hoc body” formed to back Roosevelt’s move to provide aid to the Allies (Doenecke 2000: 60). “Roosevelt and his aides…encouraged Clark Eichelberger and William Allen White…to publicize the

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89 Based in the city in the state of Kansas whose name it still bears.
case for repeal” (Dallek 1979: 203). Formed in September\textsuperscript{90} of 1939, the Committee “became inactive” after Congress lifted the embargo in November that same year (Cole 1953: 7). After achieving said purpose, however, the group, which supported all aid to the allies short of entering the war, formed the CDAAA. The organization was publicly established in May of 1940, and White headed its national chapter. Officially, the CDAAA “advocated any measure to aid the Allies through the provision of weapons, money, and moral and diplomatic support” (Laurie 1996: 37). Initial organization attempts prompted “…650 prominent Americans to join and form local committee chapters. Around 600 such groups eventually existed nationwide, their estimated membership totaling between 6,000 and 20,000 people” (Roberts 2011: 509). Many of these were inspired by White’s leadership, and his widespread popularity amongst Americans due to his homespun depictions of the “everyman” in his writings.

The CDAAA was the largest of the interventionist groups formed prior to American entry into WWII, and “membership of the committee was a who’s who of the nation’s political, social, and economic elite…. [including] future Secretary of War Henry Stimson, future Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, serving and past governors of New York, Maine, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Kansas, and Florida, university presidents James B. Conant of Harvard, Charles Seymour of Yale, Frank Kingdon of Newark, and Frank P. Graham of North Carolina, Archibald MacLeish, librarian of Congress, and Rabbi Steven Wise” (Laurie 1996: 38).

\textsuperscript{90} While some authors (in particular see Cole 1953: 7) simply state that the Non-partisan Committee for Peace through the Revision of the Neutrality Law was formed in the “fall” of 1939, David Keith Adams (1967: 118) lists the precise month of its formation as September.
And, “[t]hough there was no official connection, the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies was something of an unofficial public relations organization for President Roosevelt’s foreign policies. White and other leaders of the Committee frequently consulted with the President, his Cabinet members and other Administration leaders” (Cole 1953: 7). This close association has been noted by a number of historians. In fact, many “measures that CDA[AA] representatives proposed to the government – for example, increased American naval protection for convoys bound for Britain, enhanced material aid, and extended wartime protective zones – often originated within the administration” (Roberts 2011: 509).91

While White’s presence on the CDAAA and his leadership were arguably what made it so influential and successful (in fact, many simply referred to the Committee as the White Committee), disagreements within the ranks would eventually lead to his resignation. The origins of those conflicts can be traced back to the first propaganda piece funded by the CDAAA, a newspaper advertisement written by Robert Sherwood titled “Stop Hitler Now!” Appearing throughout the country as early as June 10, 1940, the strong language of the ad troubled White. Public criticism aimed at the CDAAA led White to defend his organization with the statement, “‘If I was making a motto for the Committee To Defend America by Aiding the Allies, it would be ‘The Yanks Are Not Coming’” (Olson 2013: 321). After his statement was

91 Though this work of Roberts’ is merely an entry in the Encyclopedia of Media and Propaganda in Wartime America (2011), it relies upon a 1999 article from The Historian that was the result of extensive archival research by Lise Namikas. This piece claims that “[i]nternationalism, as it was expressed by the CDA[AA], could not have been so prominent in 1940 without the support of the Roosevelt administration. Roosevelt and some of his leading officials, including Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, and Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, frequently provided the CDA[AA] with guidelines regarding those policies on which the administration wanted the CDA[AA] to concentrate its efforts. The administration then used these so-called public ideas to claim it was responding to public opinion” (Namikas 1999: 849).
published throughout the country, White defended himself by saying that he saw aid to the Allies as the only method of remaining out of the war, and that saving American lives was his primary concern. His protests were to no avail. Many within the CDAAA were shocked to hear White say that he would remain committed to this position even if the British were to fall under German control. The upheaval caused by his comments, and his growing distance from the majority of those in the group he had created, led to White’s quiet resignation on January 1, 1941 (Olson 2013: 322).

**Fight for Freedom (FFF)**

A number of American interventionists felt that White’s Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies did not go far enough. Fight for Freedom (FFF) started out as the Century Group, named after the New York social club at which its members first starting meeting in 1940. The Century Group first announced its views to America with the publication of “A Summons to Speak Out” after the blitzkrieg of May 1940. This historic statement was the first public call for all-out involvement in the war. It stated that “[t]he frontier of our national interest is now on the Somme. Therefore all disposable air, naval and military resources of the United States should be made at once to help maintain our common front…The United States should immediately give official recognition to the fact and to the logic of the situation – by declaring that a state of war exists between this country and Germany. Only in this constitutional manner can the energies be massed which are indispensable to the successful prosecution of a program of defense” (Levenstein 1965: 10).
Therefore, unlike the CDAAA, which eventually became part of Freedom House as well, FFF advocated a full-out engagement in war against the Axis powers from the start. Many from the CDAAA’s “White Committee” who had grown tired of the organization’s moderate position as German military successes mounted flocked to the FFF Committee. Established officially on April 19, 1941, FFF, headed by Herbert Agar, a WWI veteran and editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal, espoused more extreme views than its predecessor, The Century Group. Both organizations were made up of influential people. The latter had been formed by 30 individuals in the New York living room of the Council on Foreign Relations’ Francis Pickens Miller, and listed among FFF’s growing membership were “Wendell Willkie, Greenville Clark, Lewis Douglas, members of the Rockefeller family…presidents of Harvard, Mount Holyoke, and Smith…[and] the writers Maxwell Anderson, Edna Ferber, George S. Kaufman, Moss Hart, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Dorothy Parker” (Olson 2013: 323). It would later include many in Hollywood as well, including “…Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Humphrey Bogart, Helen Hayes, Burgess Meredith, Melvyn Douglas, and Edward G. Robinson” (Olson 2013: 361). Instead of the Century Club, FFF often met at the restaurant “21” in Manhattan. Its owner, Mac Kriendler, an original member of FFF as well as of Freedom House, was said to have instituted a policy by which “known isolationists were barred from the restaurant” (Olson 2013: 323).

Much like the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, the Fight for Freedom Committee enjoyed a close relationship with the Administration. By 1941, “the group’s New York office was in contact several times a day with
presidential advisers Steve Early and Gen. Edwin M. (Pa) Watson, and members such as Robert Sherwood, one of Roosevelt’s speechwriters, had daily direct access to the White House” (Laurie 1996: 41). This overlap was not limited to the American government. FFF members also “…undoubtedly enjoyed close ties with representatives of the New York-based British Information Service, the intelligence organization British Security Coordination, and Britain’s Washington embassy” (Roberts 2011: 515). These associations, and the public ridicule members spat at the CDAAA, led to an organization that was “zealously anti-isolationist” and furiously produced propaganda pieces to incite support for the war among Americans (Laurie 1996: 40). FFF wrote speeches, distributed positions, and held rallies to this effect. Walt Disney designed the flyer for one such rally, held in 1941. The cover of that flyer appears at the outset of this chapter. Another propaganda piece created by Disney, a 1943 animated short titled “Der Fuhrer’s Face,” even won the Academy Award in its category that year. FFF members also funded the more radical Friends of Democracy interventionist group’s campaign labeling Charles Lindbergh a Nazi (Olson 2013: 325). One particular FFF rally, held in close proximity to an event held

92 The Walt Disney Studio was heavily involved in the production of propaganda materials during World War II. Their role, which has been well documented, extended beyond pamphlets and posters to include animated shorts. Some of the better-known films include “Education for Death: The Making of the Nazi” (1943) and “Commando Duck: Donald Duck Against the Japanese” (1944); which can be viewed here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I14WDZCnz-w, and here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWAf3dQxAfQ, respectively. The former features the bedtime stories the Studio claimed were taught to German children, including Sleeping Beauty, in which the prince (Hitler) saves the slumbering princess (Germany) from the wicked witch (democracy). For further discussion of Walt Disney’s government work during this era see: Richard Shale, Donald Duck Joins Up: The Walt Disney Studio During World War II (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982); and John Baxter, Disney During World War II: How the Walt Disney Studio Contributed to Victory in the War (New York: Disney Editions, 2014).

93 Friends of Democracy, headed by the Unitarian Reverend Leon Birkhead from Kansas City, “hired freelance journalists and investigators to infiltrate right-wing extremist groups and antiwar organizations and observe and publicize their activities” (Olson 2013: 324). In 1941 the group was responsible for the anti-America First exposé pamphlet titled “The Nazi Transmission Belt,” which received a lot of national attention (Olson 2013: 324-5).
by the isolationist group America First, “dissolved into a nasty fight” (Olson 2013: 326). Not surprisingly, the staunchly committed members of the Fight for Freedom Committee believed that democratic propaganda still had a role to play even after Pearl Harbor ended the debate over the extent of American involvement in the war and they voted to join Freedom House.

Figure 3. Freedom House Forerunner Organizations

| Non-partisan Committee for Peace through the Revision of the Neutrality Law (Sept.–Nov. 1939) |
| The Century Group → Fight for Freedom (FFF) + CDAAA = Freedom House |
| (June 1940) (April 1941) (May 1940) (October 1941) |

LEADERSHIP AND KEY PLAYERS

The overlap between membership in these early antecedent organizations, as well as the involvement of those members in official capacities within the Administration of the era, is noteworthy for a number of reasons. Firstly, the political origins of Freedom House, including its close ties to the Roosevelt Administration in particular, clashes quite considerably with the organization’s current staunch assertion of its independence from the U.S. government. Secondly, the large-scale

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94 See Appendix B for various Tables of Organization Membership.
dissemination of information by the organization (particularly during wartime) that had been manipulated by a handful of elites seems rather antithetical to what Freedom House claims its primary purpose is – the furtherance of democracy. And lastly, a few well-connected elites running an organization dedicated to the promotion of democracy seems to be actually quite undemocratic. That is to say, the concentration of power in the hands of a few individuals runs counter to the democratic principle of mass participation in decision-making. These elite men95 knew one another – they ran in the same circles. Deals were struck during meetings behind closed doors, and their respective parts were played out in front of their audience – the American public. In the early days of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, when the organization was lobbying for the passage of the Lend Lease Act, Roosevelt is said to have whispered to its members prior to a press conference, “Give me hell” (Sussman 2002: 13). What Roosevelt meant was for the representatives of the CDAAA to question him publicly and fervently challenge American neutrality, a policy he secretly sought to overturn with the Lend Lease Act, but felt he could not publicly endorse while seeking re-election.

The very political nature of these antecedent organizations, and the leaders who ensured they acted as de facto arms of the Administration, tells a grossly different story of the roots of an “independent” Freedom House. The individuals I focus on to illustrate this story are: Walter Allen White (head of the CDAAA); Herbert Agar (member of the Century Group and the first president of Freedom House); Robert Sherwood (playwright, propagandist, and CDAAA member);

95 This language is purposeful. For the most part, men played the substantive, formative roles in each of these organizations.
Archibald MacLeish (influential in both the government and Freedom House); and George Field (Executive Director of Freedom House from 1941 to 1967). They are crucial to understanding the time period in which Freedom House was formed, and in which its antecedent organizations operated. These elites, working together via their various, often conflicting institutional positions, manipulated mass opinion in the name of democracy.

**William Allen White**

The founder of the lobbyist group the Non-partisan Committee for Peace through the Revision of the Neutrality Law, which later evolved into the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies (CDAAA), started out opposed to intervention in European affairs. He had publicly endorsed a series of legislative efforts dedicated to American neutrality, “…and had even advocated an embargo on all trade with belligerents” (Langer & Gleason 1952: 486). The beginning of World War II in Europe changed White’s position on American neutrality but he held fast to the belief that providing aid to the Allies was the best way for his country to avoid the conflict. The purpose of the CDAAA then, formed in May of 1940, was to “crystallize or channel public opinion,” and as such the organization’s membership was composed of a large number of newspaper editors (Langer & Gleason 1952: 487).

White found widespread support for his political ideas, primarily because of the respect for his name and his advice throughout the nation. In fact, “[f]rom William McKinley on, most U.S. presidents had done the same [sought White’s
counsel]” (Olson 2013: 87). White became famous almost over night as a result of a scathing editorial he wrote, “What’s the Matter with Kansas.” The editorial was the result of an 1896 street argument White had with a local populist, who supported William Jennings Bryan while White defended William McKinley. While White did not officially publish the piece, “it somehow made its way to Chicago and New York,” and was distributed by the Republican national chairman as a part of McKinley’s presidential campaign. As a result, “[w]hen White returned home from his vacation in Colorado, he found himself famous.” While he spent most of his time in Emporia, the small Kansas town from which he ran the Emporia Gazette, White’s popularity throughout America grew as a result of his stories about the everyday man. White’s “…writings were akin to the paintings of Norman Rockwell, depicting innately decent people who eschew conflict and come together for the common good” (Olson 2013: 87). Having won America’s favor, and a Pulitzer, White, who was in his early 70’s when the war broke out, had become “a biographer, political kingmaker, novelist, writer of articles and short stories for The Saturday Evening Post and other major national magazines, and an outspoken enemy of the Ku Klux Klan” (Olson 2013: 87).

After successful lobbying and the passage of the Lend-Lease Act, White came to disagree with the more vehement interventionists in CDAAA. White was criticized for his moderate position by many prominent Americans, including CDAAA members of the organization’s New York chapter, as well as Herbert Agar

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96 See the full editorial here: [http://projects.vassar.edu/1896/whatthematter.html](http://projects.vassar.edu/1896/whatthematter.html)
97 William Allen White Biography. The University of Kansas. [http://www2.ku.edu/~jschool/school/waw/bio/waw/WAWhitebio.html](http://www2.ku.edu/~jschool/school/waw/bio/waw/WAWhitebio.html)
98 Ibid.
of the Century Group / Fight for Freedom Committee. These disagreements led to a meeting of the National Committee in late 1940, before which New York members of the CDAAA appeared, including the future Executive Director of Freedom House George Field. The more moderate members of CDAAA tried to persuade the New York chapter to remain with the organization, but George Field and Herbert Bayard Swope expressed the group’s intention to join the FFF Committee. As a result of this internal debate, and his growing unease with the increasing enthusiasm for the total commitment of America to the conflict, White “resigned gracefully” as national chairman of the CDAAA on January 1, 1941 (Levenstein 1965: 11; Olson 2013: 322). Despite his initial support for a group arguably devoted to mass persuasion efforts, White seemed disturbed by the rise of sophisticated and institutionalized wartime propaganda. On March 14, 1941 (shortly after his resignation from the CDAAA) White wrote a critical letter to Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, who was heavily involved in psychological warfare\textsuperscript{99} conducted by the Committee on National Morale. White warned Knox: “‘beware of psychologists’”\textsuperscript{100} (Laurie 1996: 59)

\textbf{Herbert Agar}

Agar was the first president of Freedom House, but he was also associated with the causes of its predecessor organizations. As a member of the Century Group, present at its first meeting, and later as president of the Fight for Freedom Committee,

\textsuperscript{99} Many psychologists were involved in wartime propaganda, or psychological warfare. “The phrase ‘psychological warfare’ is reported to have first entered English in 1941 as a translated mutation of the Nazi term Weltanschauungskrieg (literally, worldview warfare), meaning the purportedly scientific application of propaganda, terror, and state pressure as a means of securing an ideological victory over one’s enemies” (Simpson 1994: 24).

\textsuperscript{100} Knox and White corresponded a few times in March of 1941 – this quote is drawn from a letter White wrote in response to earlier communications from Knox.
Agar was an outspoken advocate of American entry into World War II (Langer & Gleason 1952; Cole 1953; Levenstein 1965; Olson 2013). Because of this staunch position, Agar was often publicly critical of White’s CDAAA, mockingly asking of the group’s title, “If our country needed defending, why did we not defend her, instead of asking the French and British to do the job?” (Cited in Olson 2013: 145).

Herbert Agar began life in affluence. The son of a well-to-do lawyer in New York, Agar attended both Columbia and Princeton. He received a Ph.D. in literature from Princeton, yet served in the Navy during the First World War as “an ordinary seamen” (Olson 2013: 144). After the war Agar made his way through the ranks of the Louisville Courier-Journal after serving as the paper’s London correspondent, and became its editor in 1940 (Chadwin 1970: 53). Although he was well respected, and had even won a Pulitzer Prize for his historical work on the presidency in The People’s Choice, his strong interventionist stance caused something of an uproar in Louisville – then considered solid isolationist territory and comprised of many

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101 While the Courier-Journal was “then considered one of the best newspapers in the country,” Louisville was also one of eight locations in which the Council on Foreign Relations chose to set up regional committees (Olson 2013: 144). Herbert Agar was a member of one such committee – the Louisville Committee on Foreign Relations. The Council on Foreign Relations received funding for these projects from the Carnegie Foundation in 1937. These regional committees were formed “to promote serious discussion of international affairs by leading citizens in widely separated communities in the United States. The Council provided its members the opportunity to hear the views of foreign policy experts from the U.S. and abroad.” Allen Dulles, who later became Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, was one of many guest speakers who appeared before the Louisville Committee. In addition to sending these speakers, and “[i]n order to [have the Louisville Committee] better understand the Council’s objectives and the committee’s desires, the Council invited representatives of the committees to visit the Council on May 15, 1939 at the Council’s headquarters at 45 East 65th St., in New York, to discuss these matters. The meeting with the officers and directors for the Council concluded that the committees were enthusiastic and valued their connection with the Council; wanted to continue their relationship; asked for further financial assistance until they were more firmly established; and recommended the formation of more committees.” Therefore, in addition to his work at the Courier-Journal, Agar’s membership in this organization may be another explanation for his move to Louisville. For more on the history of the Louisville Committee on Foreign Relations, which still exists today, see http://www.louisvillecommittee.org/history_contd.php.

German-Americans. However, “[a]s soon as he took charge, the newspaper became one of a tiny handful of papers in the country demanding that the United States go to war to save Britain” (Olson 2013: 144).

Agar found his niche in The Century Group, and has been characterized as its “most combative journalist-activist…who had taken an unofficial leave from the Louisville Courier-Journal, with the blessing of his publisher, to promote the cause of the war” (Olson 2013: 144). This group of course later became the Fight for Freedom Committee, whose true purpose, according to Agar, was “…to agitate for an open declaration of war against Germany and Italy’” (Laurie 1996: 40). The group dissolved after voting to join Freedom House in late 1941, along with the remainder of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies. Agar became the first President of Freedom House, and along with Wendell Willkie, spoke at the dedication of the organization’s first building (Levenstein 1965: 25). Although Agar took a leave of absence from Freedom House in order to serve as a Lieutenant Commander in the Navy during the war for which he had so vehemently campaigned, he accomplished much as the organization’s first president. Described by many as having “a magnetic platform style…he could be simple and direct, reaching the hearts and minds of his audience. In the early months of Freedom House’s existence, he brought to it a recognized reputation and considerable influence” (Levenstein 1965: 54).

Because of his personality and ability to sway hearts and minds, Agar spoke on many occasions on behalf of the newly formed Freedom House. On April 30th in 1942, as president of Freedom House, Herbert Agar addressed the country from
Mitchel Field.\textsuperscript{103} His speech, entitled “What We Fight For,” was one installation in a six-part series produced by CBS to boost morale at Army camps throughout America. The series, “What Are We Fighting For?” claimed in its introduction that such a program was necessary as “the best soldiers in the world are the ones who know what they’re fighting for.”\textsuperscript{104} As a representative of Freedom House, Agar defended America’s entry into the war, claiming that such action was imperative regardless of the events at Pearl Harbor. In keeping with the organization’s agenda of promoting democracy via propaganda, Agar sought to convince the public that World War II was a war of ideals, and to convey the magnitude of the conflict over these ideals.

The American people had taught themselves painfully and against the grain that this war was not an old-fashioned war for land or money, not a war of imperialism, not a war of limited objectives, not a little war inside a civilization, in which it is possible to be neutral, because no matter who wins the civilization can go on. We had taught ourselves, and I think we have a right to feel we did a good job in teaching ourselves, that this is a war of unlimited objectives, a war of neck or nothing, a war against civilization itself, a war in which nobody can be a neutral because the fate of all people everywhere is being decided. We taught ourselves that what is taking place is a worldwide civil war. And people who want to be neutral in a worldwide civil war aren’t any too bright, because all they’re doing is handing their fate over to somebody else to decide whether or not they are to have a chance to have a future…”

Agar goes on to explain that WWII was the result of the Axis powers’ revolt against civilization – civilization being a community of shared values and rules governing behaviors and interactions. And more specifically, that community shares a common “…affirmation about the meaning of life…And in the case of our Western civilization it [that affirmation] is good. The affirmation is that all men are created equal in the

\textsuperscript{103} Located on Long Island in New York, Mitchel Field (named for former New York City Mayor John Purroy Mitchel) served as an aviation training base between 1917 and 1961, and is now a part of the Cradle of Aviation Museum http://www.cradleofaviation.org/history/air_fields/mitchel_field.html.

\textsuperscript{104} See “WWII Era Audio Recordings” https://archive.org/details/WhatAreWeFightingFor_496.
eyes of God. That all men have something of the divine spark in them, and that this thing that we have in common, all of us, is far more important than anything which separates man from his neighbor.”105 This is what Agar claimed the Axis powers were seeking to destroy.

Herbert Agar spent most of his life writing about democracy, both its advantages and pitfalls106 as a political system. Agar’s works included: The People’s Choice: A Study in Democracy (1933); Land of the Free (1935); Pursuit of Happiness: The Story of American Democracy (1938); A Time for Greatness (1942); The Price of Union107 (1950); and The Perils of Democracy (1965). His ideas were seen by many at that time and for years to come as the embodiment of the ideals for which Freedom House stood (Levenstein 1965).

Robert Sherwood

The conversion story of this American playwright is similar to that of William A. White. Having fought in the First World War, and suffering serious injuries to both legs, he became a pacifist. However, Sherwood, “[l]ike many peace proponents appalled by the inhumanity of Italian and German fascism…moved away from his post-World War I pacifism to embracing intervention and then, much to his chagrin, another war” (Alonso 2007: 4).

105 Herbert Agar, “What We Fight For,” April 30, 1942, Mitchell Field, https://archive.org/details/WhatAreWeFightingFor_496
106 In his earliest of these works, The People’s Choice (1933), for which he won the Pulitzer, Agar “concluded that America’s leadership had been, with few exceptions, in the hands of incompetent and inexperienced mediocrities for the past century. According to Agar, the golden age of American politics had ended in 1829, when an intelligent, principled, and well-bred elite had been supplanted by Jacksonian democracy” (Chadwin 1970: 53). Ultimately, then, it appears that Agar thought democracy’s pitfalls were that it was sometimes too democratic and too unfriendly to elites like himself.
107 Drafts of which were read and commented on by Robert Sherwood (see below).
Sherwood joined the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies in May of 1940, after an invitation from William Allen White himself. While the group initially consisted of only 53 members, at the end of its first month of existence that number had ballooned to 300 (Alonso 2007: 214). One of Sherwood’s first actions as a member of the CDAAA was to bring to White an idea for an advertisement that he felt would inspire Americans and rally them to the cause of the Allies. As Germany invaded France, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands during May of that year, Sherwood felt an extreme sense of urgency. Sherwood also thought that the CDAAA’s position was too “passive…to capture people’s attention about the immediate danger to England” (Alonso 2007: 214). Therefore, he worked furiously on the project day and night, and, with the approval of White, came up with an advertisement titled “Stop Hitler Now!” John Wharton, a lawyer, investor and member of the board of directors of the Playwrights’ Company started by Sherwood, was so impressed with the project that “…he took it upon himself to raise most of the $24,000 needed for advertising costs” so that it could run in as many newspapers around the country as possible (Alonso 2007: 214).

The ad first ran on June 10, 1940, the same day Italy declared war on Great Britain and France (Alonso 2007: 214). It began with large black lettering reading “Stop Hitler Now!” In fairly large print underneath the text portion of the piece was

While White initially approved of the idea behind Sherwood’s advertisement, the two later came to disagree about its tone. The CDAAA received a number of letters from citizens who found it offensive, and White urged Sherwood to cut the line (if the ad were to run again) which labeled anyone who thought the Nazis would wait for the U.S. to prepare its forces (which would take considerable time and should therefore begin now) before attacking an “imbecile and traitor” (Alonso 2007: 214-215; “Stop Hitler Now!” ad). This rift is indicative of the larger one that was brewing in the CDAAA at the time over the extent of American involvement in the conflict, and Sherwood (whom White had initially invited to join the Committee) joined the Century Group instead, finding their beliefs more in line with his own (Laurie 1996: 81).
the announcement that the ad was the work of, and therefore represented the views of, the CDAAA. Couched in terms of democracy promotion, this alarmist propaganda piece informed American citizens that “[h]owever different the dictatorships may be, racially,\(^{109}\) they all agree on one primary objective: ‘Democracy must be wiped from the face of the earth.’”\(^{110}\) The advertisement goes on to argue, in an appeal to those isolationists still reeling from WWI, that “[t]here is nothing shameful in our desire to stay out of war, to save our youth from the dive bombers and the flame throwing tanks in the unutterable hell of modern warfare. But is there not an evidence of suicidal insanity in our failure to help those who now stand between us and the creators of this hell?”\(^{111}\) Sherwood’s association with the CDAAA was relatively short lived, however, as he “…later found the philosophy of Francis P. Miller’s Century Group, the forerunner of the Fight for Freedom Committee, more to his liking, joining that group in April 1941” (Laurie 1996: 81). He and White disagreed over the proper extent of Allied aid, with Sherwood and much of the rest of the CDAAA New York chapter committing to all-out war.

Based on this advertisement and a July 1940 *New York Times* article he wrote, Sherwood captured the attention of President Roosevelt. FDR sought him out, and after Sherwood wrote a popular Columbus Day address for the President in October 1940, he became an official speechwriter for the White House (Laurie 1996: 82).\(^{112}\)

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\(^{109}\) This line refers to the fictional “world ruled by Nazis, with ‘spheres of influence’ assigned to their totalitarian allies,” which the advertisements’ authors imagined would be the result of a German victory if America did nothing to help the Allies (see “Stop Hitler Now!” ad).

\(^{110}\) “Stop Hitler Now!” Taken from the *New York Post* version of the CDAAA ad, June 10, 1940, written by Sherwood.

\(^{111}\) Ibid.

\(^{112}\) Sherwood actually considered traveling to Canada and enlisting, his determination to the Allied cause was so great, but his health problems prevented him from doing so. Instead, he joined interventionist groups and gave speeches, and came to the conclusion that “he would reach Franklin
This association with President Roosevelt would develop into a lifelong friendship.
Sherwood had long supported intervention in private. This stance, combined with
Sherwood’s admiration for President Roosevelt, furthered the writer’s dedication to
the cause. The closeness between these two men would lead Sherwood to become
heavily involved in democratic propaganda during the war. It was Roosevelt who put
forward the then speechwriter’s name for leader of the FIS (Foreign Information
Service) in 1941.113 “The president was convinced of his writing talents and of his
suitability for propaganda work, later writing Gen. Douglas McArthur that ‘my old
friend, Robert Sherwood…was largely responsible for the organization of our
psychological warfare activities in this war’” (Laurie 1996: 82).

Sherwood was officially appointed as the head of the Foreign Information
Service in the summer of 1941. “By January 1942 Sherwood had recruited 260
people for the FIS and had made requests for funds to employ 928 more” (Laurie
1996: 83). He did not recruit, however, “people from the foreign service, the
military, the civil service, and individuals with elite academic, legal, financial, and
business credentials. Instead he hired the foreign correspondents who had written of
Nazi propaganda successes in Europe, other film and print media people, and
writers…Thus the FIS came to include a significant number of people who possessed

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113 Sherwood continued to write speeches and fireside chats for the President throughout this time
period as well, which he did free of charge. In some fashion, Sherwood worked for the government (or
the necessary literary and communications skills to produce and project American propaganda abroad” (Laurie 1996: 83).

Roosevelt approved of Sherwood’s methods and his particular take on wartime mass persuasion. After the consolidation of many wartime agencies, including the FIS, Sherwood conducted propaganda work as director of the overseas branch of the newly created Office of War Information. It was in this capacity that he developed the Voice of America radio network (Alonso 2007: 4). While Sherwood was initially sought out by the Administration because, as a playwright, his abilities as a “master wordsmith” were imperative for American propaganda efforts, he climbed high into the ranks of government service (Alonso 2007: 4). His appointment to these positions would prove to be controversial, though, and Sherwood became known for “his idealism, liberalism, simple patriotism, and, to some critics,114 astoundingly naïve view of America’s position in the world” (Laurie 1996: 79).

After the war Sherwood gave up his role in government service and devoted his next project as a writer to his recently deceased friend, President Roosevelt. Based on the papers of Roosevelt’s former political advisor Harry Hopkins, who had also died, Sherwood produced the Pulitzer and Bancroft winning “historical biography” *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, “a book that to this day is cited in almost every work on Roosevelt, Hopkins, the New Deal, or World War II” (Alonso 2007: 267, 4).

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114 These charges are mentioned in a letter from Sherwood to Donovan written on June 16, 1941 (Laurie 1996: 79; 258). Although no specific critics are mentioned, it is clear that there was a great deal of infighting between the State Department, Army and Navy during this time period. Each agency believed it was best suited to create and carry out the American propaganda campaign, and all were working on it (Alonso 2007: 242-243). Sherwood also did receive some criticism from his family regarding his new role as head of the FIS. His sister teasingly referred to him as ‘Goebbels’” (Alonso 2007: 238).
Archibald MacLeish

I chose to include Archibald MacLeish in this section because of his work in producing government propaganda and his status as an important figurehead in Freedom House. While he held many influential roles, particularly during the war, MacLeish was important to Freedom House because he “appreciated the important role social scientific techniques might play in educating the public” (Steele 1985: 94). He worked closely with both President Roosevelt and Robert Sherwood, collaborating with the latter to form the “Bureau of Propaganda for American Democracy” (Alonso 2007: 220). MacLeish went so far as to reach out to political scientist Harold Lasswell to ask, “what needed to be done to create an effective morale-building program” (Steele 1985: 94). His work in monitoring, informing, and manipulating public opinion for both the government and Freedom House, makes him a fine example of the type of men who held powerful positions in democracy promotion organizations during this period.

Archibald MacLeish was the librarian of Congress during the outbreak of WWII. His role in the antecedent organizations of Freedom House, as well as Freedom House itself, stemmed in large part from his interest in democratic propaganda. In fact, Roosevelt later appointed him as director of the Office of Facts and Figures (OFF). The agency’s primary role was “…to coordinate domestic radio broadcasts and provide the media with information on government departments,

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115 Harold Lasswell headed the War Communication Division at the Library of Congress, which was one of “six main U.S. centers of psychological warfare and related studies during the conflict. Dozens of prominent social scientists participated in the war through these organizations, in some cases serving in two or more groups in the course of the conflict” (Simpson 1994: 26).
programs, and defense matters. In reality it was the domestic propaganda agency that President Roosevelt had always hesitated to create…” (Laurie 1996: 64). Although the OFF lasted a brief nine months, it attracted a number of prominent individuals who were drawn to MacLeish’s ideological arguments. He believed that the OFF was merely involved in “the dissemination of accurate facts and figures,” and because this was something entirely different than what he saw the Nazis doing, was in fact not propaganda at all. Instead, MacLeish saw his role as the defender “of liberal democracy and civilization,” and “the conflict as a moral crusade, a simple contest of good against evil” (Laurie 1996: 65). The functions performed by the OFF (as well as other agencies) were eventually undertaken by the newly created Office of War Information (OWI), “a name coined by MacLeish” (Laurie 1996: 100). Due to their common interests and work for the OWI, MacLeish and Sherwood were close friends. In a personal letter the latter wrote in 1940, Sherwood claimed that he and MacLeish were working together “…to form a ‘Bureau of Propaganda for American Democracy, an attempt to appetite the psychological and spiritual mobilization of the people’ toward intervention as a form of self-defense” (Alonso 2007: 220).

MacLeish was also influential in the ranks of Freedom House, both during the war and afterwards. Initially, he was approached by Freedom House’s “educational director” Dr. William Agar, who enlisted the aid of influential writers to create books, speeches, pamphlets, articles, broadcasts, and “manifestos” for public consumption (Levenstein 1965: 28). The organization sought out MacLeish because of his prior experience in “educating” public opinion. He was either present or an important speaker at nearly every annual Freedom House engagement. MacLeish spoke on
behalf of the organization, as its representative, primarily at its inaugural dinners and Freedom Award ceremonies, which were attended by the political and social elite as well as the press. He was the keynote speaker at the ten-year celebration of the organization in 1951. MacLeish’s address at the decennial was dedicated to the memory of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and entitled “A Declaration of Freedom.” Read in the presence of Eleanor Roosevelt, honorary chairman of Freedom House since its inception, the declaration was “…signed by a number of world-renowned philosophers, statesmen, educators, and authors” (Levenstein 1965: 201). MacLeish, a well-connected government propagandist, continued to represent Freedom House at major events well into the 1960s (Levenstein 1965).

George Field

Considering the prominence and duration of the role he would play in the formation of Freedom House, as well as the establishment of its headquarters, George Field’s name is often strangely absent from many texts discussing this period in the organization’s history. Even in the organization’s chronicles of its own history, Freedom’s Advocate (1965), Field is first mentioned simply as follows: “The New York organization was placed in charge of George Field, a young man who had grown up in the city, who knew the temper of its people from contacts with a spectrum that included educators, publicists, union leaders, actors, and business executives” (Levenstein 1965: 8). While he often spoke for Freedom House (in

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116 Eleanor Roosevelt is explicitly referred to as being a “chairman” of the organization, both in the history of Freedom House as written by Levenstein & Agar (1965: 27), as well as the “Freedom House: A History” section of its current website here: https://freedomhouse.org/content/freedom-house-history#VeiOVflViko
1946, for example, he articulated the organization’s views in a letter to the *New York Post*, it’s clear Field also held a lot of sway over its daily activities as “…a veteran administrator widely respected for his sure judgment in handling the problems of voluntary associations” (Levenstein 1965: 27).

George Field was Executive Director\(^{117}\) of Freedom House from its inception in October of 1941 until 1967, when he retired. While he remained involved in a lesser capacity for a several of years, he severed all ties with the organization in 1970. One will not find George Field listed in the indices of many texts depicting the pivotal era in history during which Freedom House and its predecessors were created. This is particularly striking, given the magnitude of his position in what has become a major player in democracy promotion and American foreign policy. In fact, one has difficulty ascertaining much information at all about his background. One of the most informative pieces regarding the story of Field’s life is his obituary.

Upon his passing at the age of 101 in 2006, *The New York Times* labeled him “Defender of Human Rights” for his work at Freedom House. Prior to his time at the organization, however, George Field’s interests were somewhat scattered.\(^{118}\) Born in Manhattan on December 20, 1904, Field left the High School of Commerce before graduating. Like many of the other interventionists who were highly influential in the promotion of American involvement in WWII, Field’s personal politics also tell a story of conversion. At 16 years old Field wrote an impassioned letter to the then

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\(^{117}\) As of 2014 the titles of “Executive Director” and “President” of Freedom House are used synonymously. During this time period, however, it appears that the Executive Director was largely responsible for the day-to-day activities of the organization and its overall direction. The scope of the responsibilities of the Executive Director are discussed in greater detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

\(^{118}\) This depiction of Field’s career path is drawn from his obituary, written by Robert D. McFadden of *The New York Times* who won the Pulitzer for his spot news reporting in 1996. See [http://www.pulitzer.org/finalists/robert-d-mcfadden](http://www.pulitzer.org/finalists/robert-d-mcfadden).
imprisoned socialist leader and presidential candidate Eugene Debs, who had been sentenced based on his speeches condemning American participation in the First World War. Field wrote to Debs in order to ensure him that “[w]e, of the future generation, are educating ourselves and are preparing to continue the good work which you have thus far so nobly accomplished.” However, Field “later abandoned socialist ideals.”

George Field didn’t find his “calling” in life until nearly 40, when he joined the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies. Prior to that time he had held positions as a copywriter in advertising, publicity, radio station program director, and politics, the latter of which included work on Fiorello La Guardia’s City Hall campaign in 1934.

When the CDAAA became largely defunct after Pearl Harbor, Field joined Freedom House, along with members of the FFF Committee. In fact, he was largely responsible for the establishment of the first Freedom House building – “America’s answer to Hitler’s Braunhaus in Munich” (Levenstein 1965: 21). The idea of Freedom House as a physical space, in which all organizations dedicated to its principal objectives could gather, was Field’s solution to the logistical question of merging various groups in 1941. During a meeting at Herbert Agar’s home, Field “casually” asked, “Why bother at all with mergers of organizations? Why not get a building, name it Freedom House, and put them all in it? Then you’ll get the results

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120 Ibid.
121 Ibid. His obituary uses this specific terminology, citing Field’s numerous jobs “before finding his calling in middle age.”
122 Ibid.
you want without all the problems of negotiating?” (Levenstein 1965: 20). Later, Field would make it his personal mission to create a Willkie Memorial Building following Willkie’s death, to serve “as a center which would keep American attention fixed on the road to permanent peace and freedom” (Levenstein 1965: 83). The establishment of this building, and its pledge to house kindred organizations rent-free,\(^{123}\) was an accomplishment of which Field felt extremely proud for the remainder of his life.

**EARLY ACTIVITIES**

The early activities of Freedom House and its antecedent organization, CDAAA and FFF, covered a wide range of propaganda techniques. These included rallies, petitions, speeches, pamphlets, and radio broadcasts. “Freedom Rallies,” as they were often called, were held at Madison Square Garden, Manhattan Center, Town Hall in New York, Carnegie Hall and Manhattan-Brighton Beach (Field 1970: 1). Propaganda materials that had been distributed by all the interventionist organization of the era, starting with the CDAAA, included cartoons, Christmas cards, mailings, flyers, musical scores, newsletters, pamphlets, petitions, postcards, press releases, radio transcripts, speeches and stickers.\(^{124}\) Song contests dedicated to the cause of American intervention were even held in an effort to drum up support for the war.\(^{125}\) Perhaps the most stylized of all these propaganda activities, however, was

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\(^{123}\) Provided that these organizations (initially including the NAACP, Anti-Defamation League, Public Education Association, Citizens Housing and Planning Council, etc.) “contribute to the essential maintenance fund” (Levenstein 1965: 83).

\(^{124}\) The Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies finding aid at Princeton University’s Mudd Manuscript Library; see [http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC011/c0654](http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC011/c0654).

\(^{125}\) [http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC011/c0665](http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC011/c0665)
the radio program sponsored by Freedom House titled “Our Secret Weapon – The Truth.”


Rex Stout was a prominent war propagandist for Freedom House during World War II. Stout, a member of Fight for Freedom before belonging to Freedom House, was well known for his detective stories, particularly those centered on the character Nero Wolfe. He began publishing novels starring this character in the mid-1930s, and Nero Wolfe had his radio debut in 1943.126 These programs inspired a fellow member of Freedom House, Sue Taylor White, to come up with a wartime radio bulletin that the organization could sponsor. The program would be dedicated to battling the propaganda put out by the Axis powers, and as Freedom House was created to be a democratic counterpoint to the Nazi propaganda machine of the *Braunhaus*, Sue Taylor White saw it as an excellent way to fulfill its organizational goals. The radio program would disseminate the ideas of Freedom House to the public and as a result boost American morale and support for what the organization saw as the ideological causes championed by the war effort. Fortunately for Freedom House, Sue Taylor White happened to be the wife of Paul White, the Director of CBS News, and so convinced him to feature the program starred in and largely written by Rex Stout.

Between August of 1942 and October of 1943, 62 episodes of the 15-minute radio program “Our Secret Weapon – the Truth” were aired on CBS (Dunning 1998).

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Aimed at debunking Axis propaganda and “lies,” each segment was comprised of readings of German, Italian and Japanese broadcasts (in full, extremely racist language using the mock accents associated with each power), which were then followed by Stout’s comments. Linguists employed by CBS would listen to Axis propaganda each week, bringing to Stout what they deemed to be the most useful or most outrageous claims made by those powers. The report given to Stout was “…typed into a weekly log of about 30,000 words. Stout would read this, select up to 150 items he found most interesting, and give them to Sue Taylor White (who had given up a job writing soap operas to do war work) for researching. The most entertaining lies, as well as those lending themselves to what Time called Stout’s ‘lunch-counter sarcasm,’ were used on the air. The lies were read rapid-fire by an announcer, often in mock German or Japanese accents, and were just as quickly countered by Stout…..” (Dunning 1998: 529). An excerpt from the first broadcast on August 30, 1942 follows.

GERMAN ANNOUNCER: I recently came across a copy of the American weekly LIFE. The front page of which proudly sported a photo of an American cavalryman, standing by his horse, in all the magnificence of his war kit.

STOUT: Well he went on for fifteen minutes, sneering not only at the cavalryman but at the whole darn army and its equipment. It was a terrific indictment. Our soldiers, he said, are a bunch of softies. They wear doe skinned gloves, they chew gum, they insist on eating three times a day, they manicure their nails, their planes and tanks and guns are a joke, if they ever come face to face with a hard bitten German solider they’ll drop everything and run. Then he came to his climax.

GERMAN ANNOUNCER: But whatever sense of admiration could have been aroused in our envious breasts by the picture of the American cavalryman, it was unfortunately qualified by the fact that the hand held the reins of a bit. And one branch of the bit was noticeably bent. Now, wouldn’t it have been better for the
trooper to be gloveless, and that his lily white hand should run all the risks of exposure, but that the bit should be of stronger quality?

STOUT: No comments are needed, but I’ll make three. First, don’t look at recent copies of \textit{LIFE} magazine for it, it was back in April 1941. Second, not the branch of the bit, the shank. Third, the shank was not bent at all, it was merely made with the regulation curve of all cavalry bits. There, I nailed that dastardly lie. Here’s another remark about our army, more of it, coming from Berlin on August 17\textsuperscript{th} beamed at us:

GERMAN ANNOUNCER: And now that it is becoming fashionable in America to disgrace the military uniform by recruiting soldiers from among the jailbirds, the logical step seems to be first to make Al Capone chief of the General Staff of the United States Army, and then to place him in command of all the armed forces of the United Nations.

STOUT: Our soldiers seem to be a bunch of softies and a gang of jailbirds at the same time, quite a trick. Still more about our army, beamed at us the same day, August 17\textsuperscript{th}, an hour earlier than the one you just heard.

GERMAN ANNOUNCER: The English people are relying on Americans to set up that second front in Europe. I can’t see any purpose in American soldiers loafing about their camps and wanting to be entertained in English homes and dashing around chasing English girls. One has to think of the English fathers and mothers who are worried about their daughters’ virtue.

STOUT: So there emerges the authentic and fascinating picture of the typical American soldier. A jailbird pantywaist with doe-skinned gloves on his lily-white manicured hands, chewing an enormous wad of gum, pursuing English girls all over the countryside. When he catches one I suppose he puts a bridle on her with a bent bit. Well, if that is what the German army has been led to expect, somebody’s going to be surprised some day, and it won’t be me.\footnote{See “Our Secret Weapon – The Truth” aired on August 30, 1942 [length 14:36] at \url{https://archive.org/details/1942RadioNews} (audio file #63).}

The sarcasm and inflammatory language of Rex Stout’s program proved to be immensely popular, and was one of Freedom House’s most successful (albeit most blatant) propaganda tools. Interestingly, in later work on the history of Freedom House (published by the organization), Rex Stout’s program is referred to “propaganda analysis” rather than being itself propaganda (Sussman 2002: 22). In his brief discussion of the program, which was “published for use in army camps,”
Leonard Sussman, George Field’s successor as Executive Director, dignifies Stout’s work (Sussman 2002: 22). In discussing the history of Freedom House in 2002, Sussman clearly did not feel moved to disown the radio program, even though it was obviously a type of propaganda, not “propaganda analysis” as he would claim (Sussman 2002: 22). In defense of “Our Secret Weapon,” Sussman actually cites the program’s praise from the Office of War Information (OWI) – “the principal U.S. domestic propaganda agency” (Simpson 1994: 43). The director of the OWI, Elmer Roper, wrote to Freedom House in 1942 and “particularly commended ‘your new radio series, ‘Our Secret Weapon,’ in which Rex Stout exposes Axis lies and propaganda’” (Sussman 2002: 20). Although it is fairly easy to uncover that Freedom House was created to counter Hitler’s Braunhaus (see Sussman’s 2002 work cited above), the organization’s leadership deflects the charge that it was engaged in propaganda even when using the words of a major propagandist to do so. Instead, Freedom House’s work to promote democracy is seen as being entirely different than that of the Braunhaus – an “ideological source of tyranny.”

The Annual Freedom Award

As a “tribute to greatness” in the area of freedom promotion, in 1943 Freedom House began selecting an individual each year to receive an honor it called the Freedom Award (Levenstein 1965: 61). The recipients of this award have been described as “…men of courage who did not count noses before taking a position; instead, they took a position and let their logic and eloquence shape the vote when it was ultimately taken in the form of political decisions. Freedom House, believing

Table 1. Freedom Award Recipients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>FREEDOM AWARD RECIPIENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Walter Lippmann</td>
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<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Sumner Welles</td>
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<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Dwight D. Eisenhower</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Bernard M. Baruch</td>
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<td>1947</td>
<td>George C. Marshall</td>
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<td>1948</td>
<td>Arthur H. Vandenberg</td>
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<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Lucius D. Clay</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>David E. Lilienthal</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Dean Acheson</td>
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<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Paul G. Hoffman</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alberto Gainza Paz</td>
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<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>James B. Conant</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matthew B. Ridgeway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>UN Soldiers in Korea</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(accepted by Dag Hammarskjold)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Edward R. Murrow</td>
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<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Winston Churchill</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Ramon Magsaysay</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Luis Munoz Marin</td>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Hungarian Freedom Fighters</td>
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<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>The Arkansas Gazette</td>
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<td>1959</td>
<td>Paul-Henri Spaak</td>
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<td>1960</td>
<td>Alan Paton</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Willy Brandt</td>
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<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Jean Monnet</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Medgar W. Evers (posthumously)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Harry S. Truman</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Lyndon B. Johnson</td>
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<td>1967</td>
<td>Roy Wilkins</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Pablo Casals</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Milovan Djilas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Earl Warren</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>15 Soviet Dissenters</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Dong-A Ilbo, S. Korea</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Responsible Journalists of Vietnam</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Cushrow R. Irani, The Statesman, India</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

129 Adapted from (Sussman 2002: 23).
that a nation which received the benefits of their courage owed them a public expression of gratitude, somewhat presumptuously undertook to speak for America, and accorded them the accolade of what has since become the annual Freedom Award” (Levenstein 1965: 60). These Freedom House awards constitute a kind of propaganda in and of themselves. The organization invites political and social elite and the press to the events at which these awards are announced. The keynote speaker articulates what Freedom House sees as the goals of democracy promotion efforts and how it defines democracy itself. The selection of a recipient also reveals what sort of work Freedom House deems as an important advancement of the cause of democracy. For example, of all the possibilities available, Freedom House chose Walter Lippmann as the first recipient of this award. Lippmann was a communication specialist who served as “chief leaflet writer and editor of a U.S. propaganda unit” during the First World War (Simpson 1994: 16). Freedom House, itself an agent of democratic propaganda, granted its annual award to a key propagandist. These choices and corresponding awards allowed the organization to firmly establish itself as a key player in the democracy promotion effort and also disseminate information to the public about this effort. The annual dinners at which these awards were given continued throughout the late 1990s, and were also a chance for Freedom House to invite speakers the organization also felt embodied its ideals (Sussman 2002: 23).
THE FREEDOM HOUSE BUILDING

The buildings from which Freedom House has operated have served a propaganda function as well. The first such building was dedicated on January 22, 1942. Located at 32 East 51st Street in New York, the five-story building was decorated by European war refugees. This décor itself was propaganda:

The theme of the art was the sacrifices necessary for the achievement and maintenance of freedom. A mural by Joep Nicolas, a Dutch artist, depicted the enslaved peoples of Europe tearing off their bonds. In the spiral stairwell between the first and second floors were the words of a Polish revolutionary song. Between the second and third floors were the notes of the ‘Hymn to Joy’ from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, the theme of which is human brotherhood. In one of the conference rooms, a mural displayed the symbols of Nazi culture – a leather-thonged [sic] whip and a hangman’s rope (Levenstein 1965: 25).

This physical space was filled with visual democracy propaganda tools (although they are referred to by Levenstein (1965), closely associated with Freedom House and its members, as “art” in his account of the organization’s history).

Freedom House moved to a larger building (provided rent-free for a period of two years by Robert Lehman of Lehman Brothers130) in 1944. Needing yet another larger space, the organization sought a new building, one that George Field proposed be dedicated to Wendell Willkie, who had recently died. In October of 1945 the Wendell Willkie Memorial Building, located at 20 West 40th Street, was dedicated. This was to be the base of both Freedom House operations as well as a physical space in which all organizations dedicated to democracy promotion (in whatever capacity) could gather. The dedication of the nine-story building was attended by “distinguished Americans [who] paid tribute to Wendell Willkie, as thousands of

130 For more information on the famous New York financier, see this brief family history drawn from the Harvard Business School archives: http://www.library.hbs.edu/hc/lehman/history.html.
New Yorkers jammed the street between Fifth Avenue and the Avenue of the Americas” (Levenstein 1965: 85). Willkie’s popularity, and his politics, served an important propaganda purpose for Freedom House.

In 1943, just a year before his untimely death, Wendell Willkie published *One World*. This novel was based on his travels during the war, during which he traveled 31,000 miles and “…crossed the equator twice” (Willkie 1943: 1). Willkie felt that Americans, either as a result of the war or by choice (possibly a slight to the isolationist movement prior to it), had little knowledge of the rest of the world and its inhabitants. Because of this and his belief in the growing interdependence of the world, Willkie felt it necessary “…to set down as dispassionately as possible some of my observations and – perhaps not quite so dispassionately – the conclusions I have drawn from them” (Willkie 1943: ix).

In drawing these conclusions, Willkie points to the role of the public in each country as being key to a bright new world order. He dismisses the idea that only leaders and experts in political, economic and military matters are fit to make “suggestions about the conduct of war,” and that some discussions should be subject to censorship (Willkie 1943: 168). Beyond the interaction between government and governed, Willkie clearly articulates his belief in democratic proceedings internationally as well. He points to the need for global agreement on a common purpose, which will guide all countries in matters after the war. Woodrow Wilson attempted to outline these common purposes in his Fourteen Points following the First World War, the last of which called for the formation of a “general association

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131 Despite the fact that Willkie ran against Roosevelt as the Republican candidate for the presidency the two were actually quite closely ideologically on a number of issues.
of nations.”132 However, the absence of a true commitment to these principles on the part of both the U.S. and its allies led to the demise of the first such association, the League of Nations (Willkie 1943: 165). Although many details must be decided after the peace is won, Willkie believes, the principles for which the war is fought must be firmly decided on prior to its end. Thus, Willkie was deeply committed to the idea of the United Nations, stating that “[w]hile we fight, we must develop a mechanism of working together that will survive after the fighting is over” (Willkie 1943: 177).

These ideas were among those that served to inspire Freedom House, of which Willkie was originally a member. In 1945 George Field came up with the idea for a Willkie Memorial Building as a base for Freedom House’s operations. Upon its public dedication, visitors “…found themselves walking through a door over which a plaque read: ‘Freedom House – Dedicated to Wendell L. Willkie – We Carry On in the Spirit of His Service to All Men and One World.’ On one wall of the lobby, in large stainless steel letters, could be read words spoken by Willkie to students at Duke University [in 1943]: ‘We must establish beyond any doubt the equality of man’” (Levenstein 1965: 85). Willkie’s commitment to global cooperation and the promotion of shared democratic values heavily influenced Freedom House and his “one world” concept133 inspired the creation of its building.

132 http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/wilson14.asp
133 This concept refers to Willkie’s belief “that only an international authority could avoid a repetition [of the devastation of World War II]” (Levenstein 1965: 79).
Table 2. Organizations Housed in the Willkie Memorial Building

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATIONS HOUSED IN THE WILLKIE MEMORIAL BUILDING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(at its dedication in October 1945)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The NAACP</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Anti-Defamation League</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Council of B’nai B’rith</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Education Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizens Housing and Planning Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>World University Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Council for Nationalities Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inter-American Association for Democracy and Freedom</td>
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<tr>
<td>The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION

Freedom House has clearly been ideological and closely associated with the United States government since its inception, and remains so to this day. What has changed is the organization’s presentation of itself. Instead of presenting what it does as propaganda for the sake of democracy, Freedom House promotes its work as non-ideological, non-partisan, non-governmental and scientific. A review of its history makes it clear that Freedom House did not always present itself this way. At its outset, the organization made its political and ideological orientation explicit. The history of Freedom House is important to examine because during this early time period the organization dramatically differed from its current version. Its ideological

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134 (Levenstein 1965: 84-85).
135 This organization, dedicated to furthering cooperation between the United States and Latin America, existed between 1950 and 1983. See http://rutgersscholar.rutgers.edu/volume02/ronpeer/ronpeer.htm. The IADF operated solely from an office in New York, with funds “from anti-Communist labor groups based in New York, including small contributions from the Free Trade Union Committee that might have been contaminated by CIA dollars. But its largest and most stable funding source became the Venezuelan governments of Rómulo Betancourt and Raúl Leoni of Acción Democrática…The IADF was not, in other words, yet another CIA front” (Iber 2015: 98).
purpose, and its ownership of that purpose, which in its early years was seen neither as a blight on its record nor something that inhibited its ability to pursue its goals, contrasts sharply with the way in which Freedom House presents itself today. When it was first formed, the purpose of Freedom House, the reason for its very existence, was to carry out an ideological agenda through propaganda. Its leaders clearly stated this, along with underscoring that its founding was the Allied response to the Nazi 
Brazilhaus.

Beginning in the 1970s, with the introduction of the Comparative Survey of Freedom, however, Freedom House begins to portray its work as objective and scientific. I discuss the public image of Freedom House over time in Chapter 3 and the creation of the Survey in Chapter 5, both of which illustrate these larger changes at the organization. Freedom House’s presentation of itself as an organization independent of the United States government is blatantly untrue, and therefore problematic. And while Freedom House has always been associated with the US government, as is evidenced throughout this chapter, this association has increased dramatically in size and scope over time. The sheer influx of financial support from the U.S government, addressed in Chapter 6, is one facet of the current affiliation between the two. The use of Freedom House’s Comparative Survey by the U.S. government in its aid allocation decisions is another example of this close relationship. The subsuming of an ideological agenda under the guise of objective science is the order of the day for the current Freedom House.
CHAPTER IV

THE PUBLIC IMAGE OF FREEDOM HOUSE: 
CHANGES IN PURPOSE AND CONCEPTION OF DEMOCRACY 
(1941 – 1981)

[d]emocracy and freedom cannot be put into one definition, acceptable to any substantial section of the people who think about such things. Rather than try to bind many viewpoints together in a single formulation, it is more profitable to discuss the conditions for freedom, its problems and its methods for dealing with those problems.

– Freedom House 1959 Workshop in Democracy (p. 21).

…it is the function of nongovernmental organizations such as Freedom House to assess the level of political rights and civil liberties in each country, and state our judgments freely. Our role is not only to keep the human rights flame burning brightly, but to advocate the slow but sure strategy of building free institutions.


INTRODUCTION

This chapter is devoted to a discussion of the change in the administration and focus of Freedom House exemplified by the differences in its public statements over the years. While documents produced for public consumption can vary from those internal to the organization (or correspondence between its members), they are still useful for tracking and identifying larger trends and attitude shifts over time. That is to say, the way in which Freedom House consciously chose to present itself to the public, and the manner in which this image changed over time, are just as crucial for understanding larger institutional changes as more private documents are. This chapter draws on a variety of material produced from 1941 to 1981, including particular articles, pamphlets, memos, and statements of purpose, reports, and
conferences held by Freedom House. I chose the end point of 1981 because, as I argue in this and successive chapters, the changes that gradually began at Freedom House after the introduction of the Comparative Survey of Freedom in 1973 are firmly in place by 1981. What I explore in more detail in later chapters helps me define the early 1980s as a non-arbitrary endpoint. To a certain extent selectivity in interpretive research is necessary, particularly with the regard to archival materials. Some level of judgment is unavoidably involved in the selection of materials for a research project of this nature. However, I draw on enough material produced by Freedom House over the course of 1941 – 1981 to effectively identify the changing way in which the organization presented itself to the public. Each of these types of material was chosen as they each debate and discuss in some detail what the organization saw as its key principles (the manner in which “democracy” and “freedom” were defined, for example), and/or explain from the point of view of Freedom House “what we do” and “who we are.” The documents examined in this chapter, combined with those used as evidence in Chapters 4 and 5, allow me to illustrate trends over time in Freedom House’s rhetoric.

A number of important shifts take place in these statements. First and foremost, by the time the Annual Report of 1981 was published, the concern with promoting U.S. national security and interest trumped all other principles, including freedom and democracy. In fact, Freedom House began to advise the public (and it would appear the U.S. government itself), that compromise on these latter principles

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136 I discuss this at length in “The Interpretive Approach to Research” section in Chapter 1.
137 These refer specifically to the sub-headings of a 1950 pamphlet produced by Freedom House. Pamphlet, “This is Freedom House,” 1950, George Field Collection, box 3, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
may be pragmatic in order to attain greater international influence. That is to say, by 1981 Freedom House had abandoned its earlier concept of linkage politics\textsuperscript{138} – tying international aid and diplomatic action to the level of human rights another country maintains – in favor of fostering relationships between the United States and other countries based on necessity. Building and maintaining a strong economic system and military are closely correlated with the furtherance of U.S. global power, and were therefore also strongly advocated in the organization’s later publications.

These concerns are also reflected in the disappearance of internationalism in the organization’s publications by 1981. Whereas one of the primary principles promoted by Freedom House through the late 1960s was global cooperation and diplomatic action through organizations such as the United Nations, these ideas later began to vanish from its agenda in the 1970s and completely disappeared by 1981. Instead, the 1981 Annual Report advised unilateral action based on national interest, and the organization no longer covered the United Nations.

The organization’s conception of freedom and democratic rights also underwent specific changes in the 1970s. A much more procedural definition of democracy was adopted, and by 1981 all substantive considerations were not only dropped from the debate but rejected outright. In particular, the 1981 Report advanced the idea that government interference in various arenas of American life (economic, etc.) in an attempt to redress discrimination is both faulty and dangerous. In direct opposition to its earlier statements (those of the 1940s in particular),

\textsuperscript{138} This term can refer to a wide variety of arrangements, all of which tie international cooperation in one arena of diplomacy (be that military, economic, political, environmental, etc.) to cooperation in another. Kissinger’s \textit{Diplomacy} (1994) speaks to this concept, and its use by the Nixon administration, at great length.
Freedom House specifically differentiated between what it saw as “equality of opportunity” and “equality of outcome,” and any discussion of extra-institutional attempts to enable full democratic participation on the part of all citizens vanished. That is to say, unlike the Freedom House of the 1940s, after the 1970s the organization does not consider economic equality to be linked in any way to political equality, and therefore urges the U.S. government to refrain from intervening in the economy. Social programs designed to favor the disadvantaged are seen by 1981 as impediments to individual freedom, while in 1941 they were seen as key components of domestic democracy promotion.

The idea of Freedom House as a platform for democratic debate disappeared entirely by 1981 as well. Whereas the organization saw its earlier role as one in which it launched new ideas and discussions about human freedom – including debates about what it meant to be free, not patenting one particular meaning – the public image it promoted began to change in the 1970s. Instead, Freedom House started to advocate specific governmental actions (such as unilateral, as opposed to multilateral, action abroad) aimed at promoting American national interest above all else. Through the 1960s the organization expressed its unequivocal belief that discussion itself was of the greatest importance when it came to key issues, rather than arriving at a definitive answer or concept. However, this questioning, discursive element of earlier Freedom House publications and conferences disappeared entirely by 1981.

Each of these new concerns starkly contradicts the early writings of Freedom House in the period from the 1940s through the late 1960s, and is reflective of a trend
that began in the 1970s. Prior to this time period Freedom House was committed to an open dialogue regarding democracy, which included criticisms directed at the domestic and international policies of the U.S. government. This chapter therefore examines the manner in which Freedom House moved away from addressing domestic issues (they, along with most others, became subservient to the promotion of U.S. national interest) as well as the specific way in which it reformulated the concept of democracy itself into a distinctly American one.

Starting in the 1970s, the goals of Freedom House became clearly intertwined with those of U.S. neoconservative foreign policy makers. This began gradually around the time the Comparative Survey was introduced in 1973 and became a permanent fixture of the organization’s agenda by 1981. Not only did these goals include a staunch devotion to the principles of free trade, but also the justification of U.S. support for governments that violated human rights in order to secure national interests – key tenets of the neoconservative movement. As Chapter 6 discusses in greater detail, the organization’s change in tone coincided with its increasing reliance on funding from agencies of the U.S. government.

**FREEDOM HOUSE MATERIAL CREATED FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION**

In this chapter I rely on a range of material Freedom House produced for public consumption between the years of 1941 and 1981. This includes memos, pamphlets, Freedom House reports on workshops it held, articles published in its own journal, and its Annual Reports. A chronological list detailing the documents I draw on here can be found in an appendix to this chapter. While I did come across many of
these materials in the archives, it is important to note that they were all published. These materials, however, can be just as meaningful as internal documents in identifying changes and trends in the way an organization intentionally attempts to portray itself and its purpose to the public.

The memos I cite in this chapter all appear to have been initial drafts of material meant for publication, much like the organization’s pamphlets. Freedom House produced pamphlets somewhat sporadically throughout the years, oftentimes in response to what the organization perceived as a new crisis (two examples being the disagreement over American involvement in World War II, and later Vietnam). Other times, it seems these pamphlets were produced simply to inform the public about Freedom House. They might include general information about the purpose of Freedom House or summarize the proceedings of workshops the organization held. These pamphlets can therefore also be viewed as a form of educative propaganda, aimed at increasing the institutional prestige of Freedom House.

The published articles I draw on in this chapter were featured in the journal of Freedom House. *Freedom at Issue*, the organization’s flagship journal, was a bimonthly publication that first appeared in April of 1970. This journal “was the main platform from which Freedom House addressed public policy questions and publicized its opinions…and [it] provided the organization with a means to reach the public and policy making community” (Sussman 2002: 63). The last issue appeared in November/December 1990, and from 1991 to 1997 the journal was published under a new name – *Freedom Review*. 
The final type of material I draw on in this chapter are the annual reports of Freedom House. These reports, which the organization continues to produce, are aimed at informing the public of Freedom House activities during the previous year. They also include the organization’s general opinions on international events as well as some cursory information on the organization’s finances and major contributors.\footnote{In Chapter 6 I argue that Freedom House obscures its financial information in these reports, based on evidence I present from the 990 Forms the organization files each year.}


Each of these statements of purpose represents an attempt on the part of the institution to inform public opinion. That is to say, these published materials about the function and role of Freedom House within society, as well as the issues they chose to alert the public to, were purposeful decisions on the part of the organization. These statements exemplify the way in which Freedom House attempted to direct, manipulate, and form public opinion on both world affairs and democracy over the years. The memos, pamphlets, articles and reports included in this chapter illustrate the changing nature of the way in which Freedom House chose to present itself to the public. While the façade presented to a mass audience may differ from the actual motivations that drive an institution, the purposeful crafting and production of these statements is helpful for tracking changes in the way Freedom House presented itself over the years. Much in the same way that Freedom House changed the language it used to describe its reporting on global democracy (which it began to label “objective” in the 1970s), how the organization described itself changed over the
years as well. Both stories are critical to understanding how Freedom House became the institution that it is today.

THE DAWN OF FREEDOM HOUSE: STATED PURPOSES OF THE 1940S

During the 1940s, the first decade of Freedom House’s existence, a number of themes recur in its publications, pamphlets and memos regarding the purposes of the organization and its worldviews. First, it is clear that Freedom House saw its role as one of advocacy, and as a platform for discussion, rather than one committed to clearly defining concepts such as democracy. Second, although the organization did not see itself as a primary source for knowledge production and concept formation, it seems obvious that what it had in mind when it promoted global democratic freedoms was a much more substantive conception of democracy than what it adheres to today. And lastly, the commitment to promoting cooperation among countries particularly through the United Nations was prevalent in all its writings. A multilateral approach to international politics, centered on diplomacy, was one the organization steadily advocated during its first two decades. Many of these themes disappeared from the publications of Freedom House after the late 1960s, but were at center stage during this formative era.

Up until 1945 and the end of World War II, the purpose of Freedom House was clear – it acted to ramp up support for the conflict among the American public and, once the country was engaged in the war, to counteract the anti-democratic propaganda of the Nazis. After the war’s end, however, Freedom House “…faced the
question of whether or not we should continue as an organization,” but continued on in order to act as “…a meeting place and a center of concerted thought…”

Freedom House saw itself as an advocate for democratic practices, and this view is reflected in many of the documents it produced during this time. Ultimately, the organization saw itself as a meeting place and a platform for important discussions. In that vein, its writings from early 1942 made it clear that “…Freedom House offers its facilities to all the many groups – representing all races and all the United Nations – which are working for freedom.” In fact, this seems to have been its only real guiding principle in its earliest years. The organization explicitly declares at multiple times during its first few decades of existence that it “…[Freedom House] has no ‘plan.’ It is committed only to the dogma that freedom has become indivisible.”

During this time period Freedom House was dedicated to ensuring that the public perceived the organization as dedicated to advancing democratic interests in a number of areas without a particular agenda about how to do so.

In line with this advocacy role, Freedom House was dedicated in the 1940s to promoting international cooperation among nations. As early as January of 1942, the organization was making public prescriptions for post-war diplomacy. It warned that

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140 Pamphlet, “Freedom and Responsibility” by Harry Gideonse, 1949, p. 1, Freedom House Collection, box 30, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
141 Memo, “Freedom House has two main purposes,” 1942, Freedom House Collection, box 30, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
142 The use of the term “indivisible” here seems to refer to the view of Freedom House that all organizations working toward a goal of freedom (in whatever aspect) should unite. The document specifically mentions that “[t]he house [Freedom House] will thus become a symbol of the unity of men of good will, all across our suffering globe” (ibid). And, historically, Freedom House served as a physical location for organizations such as the NAACP, etc. to meet and work.
143 Ibid.
“...in planning for peace, in planning the high politics of the future, governments can do no more than lay down general principles. When the war is over the principles will prove meaningless (as they did after the last war) unless the free peoples of the world read meaning into them.”

Freedom House recognized the need for an international governmental organization dedicated to the actual implementation of these democratic principles, beyond nations simply espousing them. Beyond fostering internationalism, then, the organization too was concerned with a deeper level of cooperation – a global, cultural shift focused on universal human rights. Ultimately, through this dialogue, and “[t]hrough discussion and debate they [global citizens] must decide how much trouble they are willing to take for the sake of the ideals they profess.”

During this era Freedom House presented itself as a platform from which individuals could discuss the important issues of the day. The organization did not attempt to arrive at concrete conceptions of democracy, and often presented conflicting viewpoints on major issues via various speakers at their events. These trends were characteristic of the early organization, but disappeared when the first Comparative Survey in 1973 laid out an explicit definition of democracy that was no longer up for discussion.

Another unique attribute of Freedom House during this time period was its devotion to a more substantive conception of democracy. The following is an excerpt from a 1945 pamphlet describing the organization’s principles:

144 Memo, “Principles of Freedom House,” January 21, 1942, Freedom House Collection, box 30, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
145 Ibid.
146 The Comparative Survey and the definition of democracy it outlined and claimed to be measuring are discussed at length in Chapter 5.
Freedom House has always advocated the formation of a United Nations organization with the power to put down aggressors and prevent war; an organization, furthermore, which is based on law and equal justice to every nation and every individual. This, in turn, predicates an international bill of human rights founded on the four freedoms147 and recognized by all. **It means a serious attempt to use the world’s resources and adjust world trade for the benefit of all.** It requires that the peoples of the separate nations learn to know and trust each other. For only thus will they come to see that their national self interest in preserving peace coincides with the mutual interest of all people as inhabitants of one world.

Freedom House also believes that no nation can play an important part in shaping a democratic world order if it does not itself practice the principles of democracy. This is as true of the United States as of any other nation. **So the elimination of all forms of discrimination and the establishment of social and economic as well as political democracy for all our people are prerequisites to an enduring world order.**

Because of this belief, Freedom House has set itself the dual task of fighting against bias, discrimination and all other fascist tendencies at home while, at the same time, promoting the positive aim of international economic and political cooperation to assure peace.148

This pamphlet clearly illustrates that the Freedom House of 1945 believed social and economic equality were inextricably linked with political equality, and disadvantages in the former areas of life would impede one’s ability to fully participate in the democratic political process. The assertion that democratic rights include socioeconomic components vanished from Freedom House’s publications in later years. The excerpt from Freedom House’s 1945 pamphlet above is much more leftist, anti-monopoly and anti-corporate wealth than later statements made by the organization, starting in the 1970s. The 1945 pamphlet cited above goes on to

147 The “four freedoms” referred to here are most likely those first outlined by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt during his State of the Union Address on January 6, 1941. These freedoms included the freedom of speech and worship, as well as freedom from want and fear, and “gave hope in the following years to a war-weary people because they knew they were fighting for freedom” (see [http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/fourfreedoms](http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/fourfreedoms)). The closeness between the concept used by Freedom House and FDR’s speech is probably not coincidental, given the heavy involvement of the Roosevelt’s in the organization’s formation.

148 Pamphlet, 1945, George Field Collection, box 6, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
include a list of goals for domestic policy, such as ensuring the general welfare of all Americans which “takes precedence over all special, sectional, group or private interests...[and can be achieved by] recognizing that all enterprise exists primarily to serve the people”\textsuperscript{149} and reducing economic inequality.\textsuperscript{150} Here the idea that economic and social dimensions of equality are necessary so that citizens could have access to procedural rights and fully exercise them seems to have been a widely held view at Freedom House in the 1940s. This commitment to exploring various avenues to promote what it held to be universal human freedoms using international forums is characteristic of Freedom House in its youth.

**“THIS IS FREEDOM HOUSE” IN THE 1950S**

A pamphlet published by the organization in 1950\textsuperscript{151} titled “This is Freedom House” clearly illustrates its then guiding principles and purpose. The publication is broken down into a number of important sections, including ones entitled “Why It [Freedom House] Was Organized,” “What It Does,” as well as “What It Does Not Do.”\textsuperscript{152} This early handout created by Freedom House exemplifies what the organization saw as its role in the promotion of democracy during that time. On the international scene Freedom House served as both an intermediary through which others could act and a mouthpiece for democracy. In the domestic arena Freedom

\textsuperscript{149} The context of this quote implies that Freedom House is here referring to large corporations as the “special, sectional, group or private interests” which can thwart democracy.

\textsuperscript{150} Pamphlet, 1945, George Field Collection, box 6, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

\textsuperscript{151} The publication year was determined via its context, including its repeated referrals to “June 25th,” its lengthy address to President Truman, and an in-depth discussion of his remarks regarding the North Korean invasion of South Korea. Pamphlet, “This is Freedom House,” 1950, p. 4-8, George Field Collection, box 3, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid.
House saw itself as a gadfly to the American public’s democratic conscience. These goals and purposes are very different from the ones espoused by Freedom House today.

In the section dedicated to a discussion of the creation of Freedom House, the organization draws attention to the necessity of international cooperation for lasting global peace. Ultimately, “…it [FH] believes that freedom from war must come through a strengthened United Nations with powers of world law.”\textsuperscript{153} This focus on global governance, and internationalism in general, is characteristic of Freedom House during this era.

In this pamphlet Freedom House asserts that it merely serves as a conduit through which other associations dedicated to democracy promotion can act. Another claim made in this section is that Freedom House did not in 1950, nor at its outset, ever have a specific and particular agenda that it sought to promote. “Freedom House, at its inception, never had a ‘plan.’ It has none today. It is committed only to the dogma that freedom has become indivisible.”\textsuperscript{154} Its function is to act as a coordinator, a clearing house, a meeting place.”\textsuperscript{155} This differs markedly from the role played by Freedom House today as one of the most definitive sources on democracy across the globe. Through the Comparative Survey of Freedom, Freedom House judges whether or not countries are free. The organization is no longer merely a platform for discussion, or a meeting place for other groups dedicated to democracy.

\textsuperscript{153} Pamphlet, “This is Freedom House,” 1950, p.1, George Field Collection, box 3, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
\textsuperscript{154} Refer to Footnote #142.
\textsuperscript{155} Pamphlet, “This is Freedom House,” 1950, p.1, George Field Collection, box 3, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
promotion. Freedom House now clearly has very specific institutional goals – it is no longer merely a conduit without an agenda.

Freedom House published a report stemming from its sponsorship of a “Workshop in Democracy” in May of 1959, and this document is key to understanding both what the organization saw as its role in America and how it viewed democracy. Written by Gerald L. Steibel, one of the Board members of the organization, the pamphlet details a workshop, which was attended by 105 graduate students from 34 different countries and led by 7 different speakers (pamphlet introduction, unnumbered page). Spanning twenty-pages, the pamphlet, although labeled as a report on the workshop’s proceedings, is clearly indeed for distribution to the public (not merely as an internal record for Freedom House). The workshop’s “…purpose was to provide the visiting students an opportunity to explore with representative Americans common concerns about democracy and freedom; to ask questions; and to express their own reactions to their experiences in this country.” The speakers were gathered from various organizations and included academics, the then Secretary of State of New York, and the current Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union. Featured prominently in the report was one

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156 Pamphlet, “Workshop in Democracy” by Gerald L. Steibel, May 1959, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
157 These speakers included: Dr. Harry D. Gideonse (President of both Brooklyn College and Freedom House), Dr. George N. Shuster (President of Hunter College), Professor Hans Kohn (City College), Caroline Simon (New York Secretary of State), Patrick Murphy Malin (American Civil Liberties Union Executive Director), George B. Ford (Reverend and Honorary Chairman of Freedom House), and Dean Harry J. Carman (Freedom House Board Chairman). See ibid (p. 3).
158 It is not clear how widely these were distributed, however.
159 Pamphlet, “Workshop in Democracy” by Gerald L. Steibel, May 1959, introduction, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
academic in particular – Dr. Harry Gideonese, current President of both Brooklyn College and Freedom House.¹⁶⁰

A number of important themes about democracy in general, democracy promotion and the role of Freedom House regarding both topics, were revealed during this workshop. First, as late as 1959, Freedom House opposed what is now referred to as institutional design and programs aimed at achieving this goal. That is to say, Freedom House did not believe that politicians could act as architects structuring, creating and exporting institutions for use in other countries. During this era, Freedom House saw this manner of democracy promotion abroad as foolhardy. Currently, institutional design is a large concern of many democracy promotion efforts and is studied by a great deal of academics. Entire courses are dedicated to the subject.¹⁶¹ Generally, institutional design is understood within the field of political science to mean the intentional shaping of institutions (broadly understood)¹⁶² in order to effect some social change (Goodin ed. 1996). In 1959 Freedom House explicitly stated that “[w]e are not interested in telling you about ideas that we think

¹⁶⁰ Harry Gideonese was born in the Netherlands, but moved to the United States when he was very young. An economist by training, Gideonese taught courses on the subject at Barnard College, Colombia, Rutgers and the University of Chicago before becoming President of Brooklyn College. Later, Gideonese became Chancellor of the New School for Social Research. He died in March of 1985. http://www.nytimes.com/1985/03/14/nyregion/dr-harry-d-gideonese-dead-ex-head-of-brooklyn-college.html.

¹⁶¹ One of the core graduate courses in the field of comparative politics at Western Michigan University is indeed titled “Democratization and Institutional Design.” This is just one example of a larger trend in the discipline. The Ph.D. comprehensive examination reading list in comparative politics at Princeton (mentioned in the introduction) identifies one of the major “sections” of the subfield with which students must be familiar as “Political Regimes and Democratization” (see the list here: https://www.princeton.edu/politics/about/file-repository/public/Comparative-Politics-Readings-List-2010.pdf). For an examination of the return to this focus on institutions in political science, see B. Guy Peters’ (1999) Institutional Theory in Political Science: The 'New Institutionalism.'

¹⁶² Goodin explains the wide range of institutions in greater detail here (Goodin 1996: 22).
are ready and in a shape to be directly taken over anywhere else in the world.” As reported, each of the speakers echoed this sentiment, and “always stopped short of suggesting that what they were offering were models to be adopted.” The idea that systems of government are unique to various countries, regions and cultures was often mentioned at the workshop, and the general consensus among the speakers featured was that “[y]ou cannot inherit freedom in a law or in a statute as you inherit your father’s house; no freedom is meaningful to any generation until it has again for itself reconquered that freedom in terms of its own conduct and experience.”

Taking into account the unique experiences and traditions of different peoples should not lead one to believe that the Freedom House of the 1950s advocated an extreme form of relativism, but merely that this belief made the organization and many of its members skeptical about the prospects for institutional design. Freedom House’s prescriptions for other nations and democracy promotion in general took much more of a case study approach during this time, and did not offer institutional design / or “one size fits all” solutions. Regarding the exporting of democracy, the workshop’s leaders expressed the clear belief that “[t]here is no possible way by which the United States…in aligning itself with other nations abroad can so affect the internal complexion of the other nations that it resembles the United States’ own

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163 Pamphlet, “Workshop in Democracy” by Gerald L. Steibel, May 1959, p. 1, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

164 Ibid.

165 Pamphlet, “Workshop in Democracy” by Gerald L. Steibel, May 1959, p. 2, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

166 The assumption behind the theory of institutional design being that institutions can and should be “imported” and suitably adapted from more or less remote points in time or space. Institutional designs are typically copies, and they are frequently advocated as such” (Offe 1996: 210-211).
inner complexion.” Not only should American democracy not be exported, but the workshop discussed its various flaws, and cited instead international legislative acts and laws (such as The Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948) as the basis for models other countries could follow to some degree. “The American democracy cannot be transplanted as an organism to other places… each people must work out for itself and in its own tradition the applications of freedom” [emphasis added].

Importantly, this workshop illustrated the questioning nature of Freedom House during these earlier decades. Rather than seeing its purpose as the production of a particular kind of knowledge, or having the authority to disseminate information about the proper form of democratic government, Freedom House saw its importance as fostering conversation among citizens. Along these lines, the pamphlet summarized the conclusions of the 1959 workshop as follows:

The day’s proceedings moved through many areas and touched problems of many kinds because democracy cannot be talked about in a neat or narrow framework. Nor did the end of the meeting leave anyone with the feeling that all of the questions, the doubts and disagreements, had been laid to rest. What had been accomplished could be expressed within the formula that free and informed discussion leads to clarification, but that clarification is an unending process. Democracy had been subjected to a searching examination for seven hours and everyone who had participated in the discussion understood a little better what it was about, including the points at which the conflicts and divergences existed.

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167 Pamphlet, “Workshop in Democracy” by Gerald L. Steibel, May 1959, p. 16, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
168 Pamphlet, “Workshop in Democracy” by Gerald L. Steibel, May 1959, p. 21, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
169 Ibid.
In fact, the various speakers chosen to lead the workshop even disagreed on issues as fundamental as the role of nationalism in a democracy and how legislation should be used to combat discrimination. The fact that such disagreements were voiced at all is an indicator of the openness that marked this era of Freedom House. This dialogue itself is very particular to this time period, and continued as late as 1959.

Participants in this workshop also discussed domestic challenges to the full practice of American democracy. Characteristic of this era of the organization, policies of the U.S. government and the attitudes and behaviors of its citizenry were open to criticism. “We have enough difficulties with the basic concepts of a free society in the United States not to feel preachy about them.” McCarthy’s assault on American democracy was also later discussed, and his political downfall (via the hearings of the bi-partisan Watkins Committee) prompted the workshop’s speakers to draw this “...lesson of significance: treat the danger to democracy in a democratic way always; this is always our best hope.” Freedom House used the example of McCarthy’s censure as one in which proper democratic protocol prevailed and justice was done, without an “uprising.”

The primary purpose of the workshop was seen as “an evaluation of the American experience,” and one of the important conclusions

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170 At this time, Freedom House believed that “[d]emocracy and freedom cannot be put into one definition...[and are] always being reapplied and reinterpreted” (1959: 21). However, the organization still asserted that “[d]emocracy is better thought about in terms of freedom, because freedom represents the essence of what people want” (1959: 21).
171 Pamphlet, “Workshop in Democracy” by Gerald L. Steibel, May 1959, p. 1, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
172 Pamphlet, “Workshop in Democracy” by Gerald L. Steibel, May 1959, p. 13, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
173 Pamphlet, “Workshop in Democracy” by Gerald L. Steibel, May 1959, p. 12, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
arrived at was the “[t]he American democracy contains its full share of (anti-
democratic) faults.”

Another particular aspect of American life that was open for debate at the
workshop in 1959 that stands in sharp contrast to many of the organization’s later
writings (particularly following the introduction of the Comparative Survey in 1973)
is the treatment of the country’s economic system and the citizenry’s view of it.
“Americans, as well as others tend to over-simplify their economic beliefs…We, in
this country, he [Dr. Gideonese] remarked, emphasize the individual, whereas
Western Europeans emphasize the state and collective elements. But in fact, both
systems rely upon both individual initiative and that which derives from the state.”

The section goes on to state that “such designations of ‘free enterprise’ and
‘socialism’ are out of date. We, in America, believe that the state must have certain
powers in the economic sphere, just as we give it political powers.”

The pamphlet denies, then, that the American economy is entirely free from intervention by the
state. Because of this, the stark dichotomy between a U.S. system of “free enterprise”
and Soviet “socialism” is an erroneous one. The inclusion of this discussion is
interesting, and implies that Freedom House officials in the 1950s did not see the
United States as nearly the free trade system that many citizens now believe it to be.

At a time in history when the majority of people shied away from discussing what

Collection, box 126, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University
Library.
175 Pamphlet, “Workshop in Democracy” by Gerald L. Steibel, May 1959, p. 6, Freedom House
Collection, box 126, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University
Library.
Collection, box 126, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University
Library.
they deemed to be more “socialist” economic systems, and in fact saw them as being very un-American, this workshop actively debated the merits of politicizing economic policy and recognizing the U.S. system for what it was, shortcomings and all. In some ways (going as far back as President Lincoln’s National Banking Act), “the government [has long] been into the business of making economic policy, but Americans don’t like to face this fact. So it is harder for us to understand ourselves and to understand why others do not understand us.”

The workshop also advocated a more substantive and fluid conception of democracy, one that extended beyond formal institutions and rules (such as voting rights) and beyond the political sphere (to encompass social and economic components). “Democracy knows very well that here on earth there will never – and I underline the word “never” – be perfect order, nor a perfect humanity, nor a perfect state. Nothing is more undemocratic than any utopianism of that kind. But democracy means that men can improve things.”

The workshop also discussed the existence of “bogus voting rights” - another implication that democratic practices entail much more than formal rules. This discussion illustrates Freedom House’s recognition of the tensions between democratic values and calls attention to those tensions. The organization clearly asserts that democracy is the best possible of all systems because of the freedom that it grants (or at least theoretically should grant) to all individuals – even if that freedom does not necessarily guarantee individual

177 Ibid.
178 Pamphlet, “Workshop in Democracy” by Gerald L. Steibel, May 1959, p. 11, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
179 With regard to the Soviet Union.
180 Pamphlet, “Workshop in Democracy” by Gerald L. Steibel, May 1959, p. 13, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
happiness. Along with the recognition of a more substantive conception of democratic rights, Freedom House at this time seemed to have a real appreciation for an understanding of the tension that often exists between different democratic values. For example, “[f]reedom and equality are both values, but their relationship is often one of ‘tension with one another.’ You can have them together in some measure but…[this requires] an honest intellectual and moral effort to face the fact that basic values beyond a certain point are not complementary, but are antagonistic.”  

At this time there existed real, theoretical contestation in the discussion sponsored by Freedom House that recognized the tension among these different values. “The values of freedom, when translated into the working and living habits of democratic systems, tend to divide into claims of the individual, and claims of the community.”  

Freedom is therefore always being reapplied and reinterpreted, because within the swiftly changing conditions of modern life, the two sets of claims can never be finally stabilized and permanently adjusted to each other.” Rather than viewing concepts as being one among many items on a checklist that, if achieved, will ensure one is living in a democracy, Freedom House saw an intellectual exploration of the tensions that could exist in these systems as more worthwhile. At that time, the organization insisted that “[d]emocracy and freedom cannot be put into one definition,” and time would be better spent discussing these concepts rather than attempting to satisfy a

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181 Pamphlet, “Workshop in Democracy” by Gerald L. Steibel, May 1959, p. 6, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
182 This mention of the claims of the individual versus that of the community seems similar to Freedom House’s earlier argument in this pamphlet regarding the tension between freedom and equality – in which the organization seems to imply that unbridled individual freedom can lead to increased inequality (p. 6).
183 Pamphlet, “Workshop in Democracy” by Gerald L. Steibel, May 1959, p. 21, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
variety of opinions on their meaning. This implies that, in 1959, Freedom House saw the merit of many definitions of democracy, and emphasized its role as a platform for the discussion of those definitions. The organization did not, then, see itself as the authoritative purveyor of democracy’s meaning. The workshop also often referred to freedom / democracy as an “experiment” or “experience” or “exercise,” something which can be neither neatly defined nor transplanted. However, with the introduction of the Comparative Survey in 1973, Freedom House set forth a clear definition of democracy – doing precisely that which it said was futile and counterproductive just 14 years prior. That definition has since become authoritative in both academia and American foreign policy.

A “STATEMENT OF PURPOSE” IN THE 1960S

A pamphlet from the mid-1960s titled “Freedom House: where Americans of diverse viewpoints unite to strengthen our free society” opens to reveal a large centerfold presenting “A Statement of Purpose” for the organization. During this period, the organization stresses the challenges of meeting the evolving needs of America’s diverse citizenry, including a multifaceted conception of their rights; the ability of American institutions to adapt to these changing demands of these

184 Ibid.
185 I was again able to determine the approximate date of this pamphlet via its content, as it was not clearly marked anywhere. In addition to its content, I used the pamphlet’s position in George Field Collection (where I found it) to determine when it was created. Finding the pamphlet here suggested to me that it was likely to have been published during his tenure as Executive Director. Also, the pamphlet contains references to the “Annual Balance Sheet of Freedom.” Pamphlet, “Freedom House: where Americans of diverse viewpoints unite to strengthen our free society,” 1960s, p. 1, George Field Collection, box 3, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. By 1972 Freedom House had shifted to calling their Balance Sheets “Surveys” (although Gastil did not publish the first true Comparative Survey until the following year).
186 Pamphlet, “Freedom House: where Americans of diverse viewpoints unite to strengthen our free society,” 1960s, p. 2, George Field Collection, box 3, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
citizens in order to survive; and the universality of human rights and freedoms. Consistent with the organization’s statements in the past, Freedom House clearly portrays its role here as encouraging communication among citizens, as well as between them and their representatives. The organization was also just as staunchly committed to promoting democratic freedoms within American borders as outside of them.

This pamphlet produced by Freedom House during the mid-1960s emphasizes the need for democratic institutions to be able to adapt to changing circumstances, and the changing needs of the state’s constituents. It focuses largely on newly evolving means of communication, as well as the role of the US government in improving communication among diverse social groups, and the full incorporation of those different groups into every arena of citizenship, economic as well as political. That is to say, this pamphlet clearly indicates that minority groups must be incorporated into the economy in order to “assure their full participation in our free society.” At this time Freedom House believed it an assault on American democracy when “equal opportunity is denied” among “the poor and the minority groups…in the nation’s prospering economy.”

Addressing the needs of the American people, as well as the introduction of “modern communications,” meant that “…the advocates of freedom must find new ways to maintain and extend democratic institutions.” Freedom House during this era shows real concern over whether or not traditional “democratic institutions” in the U.S. will be able to accommodate a growing, diverse populace. The many changes

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187 Ibid.
188 Ibid.
189 Ibid.
occurring during the 1960s also include “…the technological revolution, the population explosion, and the urban crisis.”\footnote{Ibid.} Up until the 1970s, one of Freedom House’s defining characteristics is its earnest, active questioning – no topic is beyond discussion for the institution. In the various publications of the organization up through the late 1960s, Freedom House claims that no subject is excluded from the debate – including the effectiveness of American democratic institutions and their ability to survive present circumstances, especially given the fact “…that [they] were originally conceived in an agricultural and pioneering era. If democracy is to prevail it must keep pace with the changing environment.”\footnote{Ibid.} The fact that the organization at least publicly expresses commitment to discussing all social issues is characteristic of this era.

This pamphlet is particularly concerned with America’s ability to evolve in response to changing times. Part of the organization’s role, as it sees it during this time, is entwined with its belief that “[e]very effort must be made to analyze the deficiencies of democratic society, to propose constructive solutions, and to press vigorously for their implementation.”\footnote{Ibid.} During this time period Freedom House also publicly recognized that the foresight of the founders was limited, and questioned whether or not their ideas were even applicable to current crises facing the American people. The organization also questioned the ability of American institutions to handle domestic obstacles to the full democratic participation of all people. While the pamphlet certainly does not advocate or prescribe an overthrow of the system, questioning it at such a basic level is not uncommon for Freedom House at this time.
In line with fostering such dialogue, the pamphlet states that “[o]ur institutions, being the products of history and men, are not infallible. The avenues of innovation must be kept open. This requires the exploration of the weaknesses in our institutions, the areas in which injustice persists, in which freedom in flouted, and equal opportunity denied.”193 This pamphlet illustrates the organization’s tendency to comment on domestic politics as late as the mid-1960s, whereas domestic politics in general are little discussed by Freedom House a short twenty years later.

In addition to commenting on the domestic arena, Freedom House also promoted a more substantive conception of democratic rights during this time period. One continues to see this notion in the aforementioned pamphlet. One of the primary tenets of democratic society the pamphlet embraces, included even in its title, is that America draws its strength from the diversity of its citizens. Among these citizens, “…rival social groups accept each other’s right to exist, acknowledge a common morality, and permit society to function on the basis of a balance struck among the divergent forces.”194

The “balance struck,” however, falls short of providing individuals with meaningful freedoms if it arrives only at procedural means for including citizens in the democratic process. The pamphlet also mentions the extension of rights into the economic arena, and the incorporation of minority groups into the economy. Freedom House here recognizes that “[l]egislative goals alone cannot assure their [minority groups’] full participation in our free society. The basic problem, a failure in human relations, requires the altering of fundamental attitudes through improved

193 Ibid.
194 Ibid.
communication – between the races, between various civil rights groups, between individual citizens and government, between ethnic minorities and American society as a whole.”195 The organization believed that racism, and its social and legal traditions that denied minorities equal opportunity in the economy, were detrimental to American democracy. Thus, even as late as the 1960s, then, Freedom House publicly recognized the necessity of moving beyond purely institutional reforms in order to achieve full democratic inclusion. While later conceptions of democratic rights focus on checklists and procedural reforms to combat oppression, racism and injustice, Freedom House at one time recognized that these formal changes would not be enough to combat these problems without a more substantive, cultural approach to full participation, and a changing of “attitudes.”196

Another memo from the mid-1960s197 illustrates at least the public commitment on the part of the organization to the promotion of universal human rights. Entitled “Freedom House in Brief,” and containing “A Fact Sheet On What It Is and What It Does,” the write-up illustrates what the organization saw as its mission during this era. Ultimately, Freedom House believes its role is to draw public attention to “…many major controversies concerning threats to freedom.”198 The memo lists these threats (both past and present) as: Hitler; Communism; McCarthyism; and Civil Rights.199 During this era, Freedom House saw its role as a

195 Ibid.
196 Ibid.
197 Memo, “Freedom House in Brief,” 1964, Freedom House Collection, box 30, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. The memo on Freedom House letterhead is believed to be circa late 1964, based on its mention of the 25th anniversary gala dinner to be held on April 13th, 1965.
198 Memo, “Freedom House in Brief,” 1964, p. 2, Freedom House Collection, box 30, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
199 Ibid.
catalyst for discussion among Americans. By the 1970s, however, the organization would begin acting as authority on democratic issues, even before Congress.

The recurring theme of the memo, however, is a strong public commitment to promoting freedom across the globe and for all peoples – without any stipulation that this promotion be based on what is in the best interest of the United States. Freedom House identifies itself as “a non-profit, non-partisan organization…[h]olding that human rights and fundamental freedoms for all men are prerequisites for world peace and progress.”

Freedom House claims to promote democracy in a number of ways, “…studying problems concerning freedom…producing and publishing reports on public questions, holding conferences…” etc., all of which are aimed at fostering public dialogue on what it sees as the challenges to democratic systems as well as their “shortcomings.”

The organization’s self-proclaimed role as a launching platform from which important questions could be propelled into public dialogue, one dedicated to a universal conception of human rights, was still evident in late 1964.

**FREEDOM AT ISSUE IN THE 1970S**

After the introduction of the Comparative Survey in 1973, a gradual shift in the way Freedom House presented itself to the public began to occur. The trend toward a Freedom House more closely aligned with foreign policy makers is best illustrated by examining the articles the organization selected for publication in its flagship journal, *Freedom at Issue*. Though these articles were not all written by

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200 Memo, “Freedom House in Brief,” 1964, p. 1, Freedom House Collection, box 30, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

201 Memo, “Freedom House in Brief,” 1964, p. 1-2, Freedom House Collection, box 30, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
Freedom House Board members, their distribution via this journal implies at least some level of their endorsement by the organization.

One of the 1972 volumes of *Freedom at Issue* focused on American foreign policy, and the journal’s introductory article discussed charges leveled again the U.S. in this regard. While the article moves toward a defense of American actions abroad, the authors do recognize that “[t]hese assertions [that American foreign policy be reexamined] deserve serious in depth discussion. Most thoughtful individuals would agree that some element of ‘truth’ is contained within each of them. The critical questions are the extent and the implications of that ‘truth’” (Scalapino & Seabury 1972: 2). At this point in time, then, the organization is still willing to at least entertain accusations of wrongdoing on the part of American foreign policy makers and the intelligence community. However, when discussing the assertion that “the United States has been guilty of an arrogance of power,” the authors ultimately conclude that “[r]arely in history has a nation dominant in power and wealth been so restrained in the use of that power, so limited in its basic objectives, so internationalist in its goals” (Scalapino & Seabury 1972: 3). While Freedom House is at least willing to discuss the abuse of power on the part of the U.S. government abroad in 1972, the organization is already beginning to trend toward the less critical tone it would fully adopt by 1981.

In the wake of Watergate, Freedom House spent a great deal of time discussing the fallout of the scandal. The first issue of the organization’s journal in 1974 addressed the effect of Watergate on the public trust in America. While the author of one particular article in this issue, Philip van Slyck (then secretary of
Freedom House), generally condemned the actions of the White House, he also made some allowance for them. “It was not the novelty of any specific offense, but the extraordinary scope and apparent intent of the conspiracy, which endangered American freedoms. Some degree of campaign corruption has always been recognized as one of the prices of human frailty – deplorable but containable” (van Slyck 1974: 11). The way in which van Slyck casually attributes some degree of this type of behavior to human nature is indicative of the increasing sympathy on the part of Freedom House of governmental action the organization would have more strongly condemned in the past.202

The March-April 1976 publication of Freedom at Issue was devoted entirely to a discussion about the role of intelligence in democratic societies. All of the articles featured in this edition ultimately defend covert action on the part of democratic governments. In previous years, the views featured in Freedom House publications often disagreed on key issues (such as how one should define democracy). Not only do these articles all come to the same conclusion, one of them is even written by a high-ranking CIA officer (Arthur Lester Jacobs). These articles illustrate Freedom House’s newfound hesitation to publicly criticize the actions of the U.S. government, a stance that would become permanent by 1981.

The first of these 1976 articles discussing the place of intelligence argues that secrecy is necessary due to the impressionable nature of the citizenry in a democracy. In making foreign policy decisions, the author Sidney Hook argues, “…there is a great danger to the national interest – today even to national survival – in deferring to

202 Examples of the organization’s earlier stronger condemnation of executive branch conduct are given in the chapter dedicated to the Balance Sheets of Freedom – Chapter 4.
the vagaries of public opinion that tend to swing pendularly from one extreme to another” (Hook 1976: 3). Too much input from citizens, whose views are ever changing and malleable, can actually endanger a country. This view is dramatically different from the ideas espoused by the organization in earlier decades, in which it was committed to the principle of transparency in democracies. By 1976, however, Freedom House claims that there are exceptions to democratic “rules,” but “this [exception] does not destroy the validity and binding character of that rule...the bad is preferable to what is worse - when these are the only alternatives” (Hook 1976: 5).

The author illustrates this type of exception with regard to the promotion of one of the key tenets of democracy – self-determination – abroad. “If we espouse ‘the right to self-determination’ as we should, that will not mean that in any and every circumstance of international affairs, we should support it, regardless of other moral values involved, any more than we should always tell the truth about everything to everyone, or give alms in any and every circumstance” (Hook 1976: 5). These statements differ markedly from the organization’s commitment in previous years to the universal application of democratic freedoms.

This 1976 Freedom at Issue on covert intelligence also features the transcript of Leo Cherne’s\textsuperscript{203} testimony before the House Select Committee on Intelligence on December 11, 1975. In it, Cherne echoes the sentiments of Hook cited above – there are exceptions to democratic norms. Additionally, Cherne chastises those who are critical of covert action, individuals he claims are incapable of seeing the bigger democratic picture. He states that “[t]hose who on a priori grounds condemn an action without regard for its consequences in preserving the structure of democratic

\textsuperscript{203} I discuss Leo Cherne at length in Chapter 6.
freedoms are guilty at the very least of blatant hypocrisy” (Cherne 1976: 7). Cherne argues for the utility of trade-offs between secrecy and democracy in certain situations. “It is sometimes necessary to burn a house, or to permit it to burn, in order to save a village” (Cherne 1976: 7). Just over two months later Cherne would be one of three men appointed by President Ford to the Intelligence Oversight Board.

Lastly, this March-April 1976 edition features an article by Arthur Lester Jacobs, a senior CIA officer. Not surprisingly, the CIA officer ultimately concludes that “secrecy is not sinister of itself nor is it incompatible with democratic government” (Jacobs 1976: 17). Jacobs not only claims that covert action is a necessary and “appropriate function of government,” but also reassures readers that “[t]he potential for abuse or misuse of covert action is minimal..[and] [i]t provides no real threat to the constitutional structure of our government or the rights of its citizenry” (Jacobs 1976: 19). The fact that Freedom House by 1976 is actually featuring the writings of a CIA officer in its flagship publication is evidence of its increasing association with the intelligence community, a trend that would continue in the future.

A HORSE OF A DIFFERENT COLOR: 
THE FREEDOM HOUSE OF THE 1980S

The changes that began in the 1970s became embedded in the image and rhetoric of Freedom House by the early 1980s. In fact, the Annual Report published

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204 The journal says that Arthur Lester Jacobs “was an attorney, civil engineer, tax-division assistant to the Attorney General and member of Treasury’s Excess Profits Tax Council before becoming a career senior official in the Central Intelligence Agency. During 19 years in the CIA he monitored some of its most sensitive operations in this country and abroad, and negotiated with foreign senior officials, including the chief of state” (March/April 1976: 13).
by Freedom House in 1981 drew a starkly different picture of the organization’s goals and principles compared to the material of its first three decades. A number of important shifts had become solidified by 1981: an increased focus on national security, little discussion of domestic politics, the use of a more procedural conception of democracy and democratic rights, the promotion of the tenets of institutional design and an absence of internationalism. The dramatic change in what Freedom House saw as its role, its beliefs, as well as its prescriptions for achieving these goals, illustrate its increasing alignment with the agenda and interests of U.S. foreign policy makers and intelligence agencies. All this constituted a dramatic deviation from its prior rhetoric.

At its outset, the Report appears to simply reiterate many of the past claims made by the organization. There is an initial emphasis on “the right to choose” being central to “[t]he cause of freedom,” as well as the role of Freedom House in “mobilizing public support for democracy.” The report also reiterated the claim that Freedom House is a non-partisan organization, composed of members and contributors from various political ideologies and sectors of the economy. Lastly, the Report echoed the publications of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s in claiming that the

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205 This definition of freedom offered in the 1981 Report is fairly vague, but is much more individualistic than its predecessors. “The cause of freedom – the right to choose – is the cause of the human individual. To preserve individuality in a world of institutionalized oppression, freedom must be actively supported and its opposite clearly identified” (cover page). Additionally, it seems that freedom is now best defined by identifying its opposite, and here is where the strong anti-Communist beliefs of neoconservatism come into play.
206 Annual Report, 1981, cover page, Freedom House Collection, box 75, folder 13, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
role of Freedom House is to “provide a platform” for those involved in the fight for freedom.\textsuperscript{207}

As one reads further into this Annual Report, however, it becomes clear that the characteristics that first began to appear in the 1970s had become permanent features of the organization by this time. By 1981 Freedom House bore little resemblance to itself during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. The first and perhaps one of the most prominent differences is the organization’s almost obsessive concern with U.S. national security (believed by neoconservatives to be best accomplished via militarization), to the point that it believed many of its major principles can and should be compromised in its name. The organization’s prior overriding commitment to the advancement of democracy and human rights in all countries would now be qualified by this compromise – one in which American interests take precedence over all others. Freedom House referred to this compromise as “…the democratic dilemma. As a nation we support human freedom in a world in which many governments, including some of our allies, violate human rights. We must acknowledge that all of us, as individuals or as a nation, sometimes face ethical problems requiring our making a choice among evils.”\textsuperscript{208} While earlier Freedom House reports were often unabashedly critical even of U.S. allies, these criticisms began to wane in the 1970s, and by 1981 had completely vanished. The Report not only refused to criticize Western countries with whom the United States had traditionally had a close relationship, but also recognized the importance of

\textsuperscript{207} Annual Report, 1981, p. 3, Freedom House Collection, box 75, folder 13, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
\textsuperscript{208} Annual Report, 1981, p. 9, Freedom House Collection, box 75, folder 13, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
sometimes dealing with countries ranked as partly free or even unfree on Freedom House’s own scales of political rights and civil liberties in order to advance the U.S. national interest. Ultimately, the organization noted, “[h]uman rights is one of several factors in the formulation of foreign policy. National security, perforce, is a major component” (1981: 8). The most effective way to promote freedom in the long run, the Report claimed, is to increase American power cross the globe. This might mean, however, that “[w]e may have to support a partly free regime today to prevent a more totalitarian take-over tomorrow. It may be necessary to abide short-term violations of human rights in order to avoid long-term, irreversible denials of human rights” (1981: 8-9). These statements are in direct contradiction to the principles so strongly espoused by the organization during the first few decades of its existence, and to which it clung so unwaveringly. The Freedom House of the 1940s in particular, formed in order to rally popular support for American involvement in World War II, would never have issued some of the statements contained in this Report recommending America “…assist authoritarian countries in order to strengthen our national security” (1981: 8). This full transition to a blatant, public concern with increasing American political, military and economic global hegemony (to which democracy and global human rights were now secondary) represents a real shift in the mission publicly espoused by Freedom House.

Stemming from this concern with the promotion of national security first and foremost, is the idea that domestic politics were now of lesser consequence to Freedom House’s mission. In fact, it seems that everything included within the Annual Report was framed by U.S. national interest (achieved by being the military
and economic hegemon) and discussed in relation to it. Struggles within the U.S. and obstacles to democratic practices at home were only superficially mentioned. The need to address domestic politics only came up when solutions to these problems might lend the U.S. greater power and influence abroad. For example, the Report emphasized that “[a] strong American economy and sustained national will are preconditions for firm foreign policies” (1981: 4).

Domestic policies and concerns were largely subsumed by the promotion of national interest and security abroad. “Foreign policy influences the domestic scene and vice versa,” the Report stated, noting that “[t]he higher cost of national security restricts domestic programs” (1981: 8). The Report argued that cuts to domestic welfare programs would need to be made in order to increase U.S. military strength, and that this was something Freedom House believed citizens should fully support. Beyond this support, the Report emphasized unity among the American public in the realm of domestic politics regarding the decisions of the Administration. The Report ultimately concluded that the claims made by “particular economic, racial or religious groups within the United States” should be “subordinated” to the tough decisions that would need to be made with regard to national security and the spending needed to maintain it (1981: 8). Rather than arguing for a complex system equipped to handle a democratic dialogue of differences, Freedom House advocated fostering a unified “national spirit,” a sort of assimilatory, patriotic concept to which the Report often referred (1981: 3, 5-6, 9). Ultimately, these calls for a new type of national unity should take precedence over all other concerns, and the organization advised that “[the Administration] should act in terms of America’s long-term national interests,
recognizing that complex foreign problems require sophisticated mix of U.S. policies, and that the particular interests of domestic constituencies ought to be subordinated” (1981: 8).

In order for the United States to be secure, Freedom House argued, its military and economic might should be increased. This theme appears throughout the Annual Report. The organization did attempt to frame its push for the country to pursue its national interest within the agenda of democracy promotion more generally, by claiming that the “…advocacy of human rights abroad [is] ultimately dependent upon America’s power and prestige…America must be secure if we are to strengthen our free society and become an effective advocate of freedom among nations” (1981: cover). However, it is clear that democracy promotion was secondary to the furthering of American economic and military interests in particular. The Report is at times a blatant push for free trade, and urged citizens to do their part by being productive in order to strengthen the economy (1981: 5). That is to say, “citizens themselves must do more to strengthen the economic system,” as the role of government in the economy should be diminished (1981: 6). Freedom House called for unity among the populace during this time, as “[e]conomic stringencies at home and sacrifices to sustain rebuilding America’s defense strength” would be required (1981: 5). Interestingly, Report also called attention to the need for citizens to “…compromise more disputes outside government” (1981: 6). Again, American interest was placed far above a commitment to advocating democracy abroad or in practices at home. Institutional and other program cutbacks, as well as placing the

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209 The pamphlet is not particularly detailed in how U.S. economic might should be increased, only that the economy must be made “strong and productive” in order to ensure the nation’s security (1981: 5).
appeals of particular interest groups (whether they be religious, racial, etc.) aside in
the name of unity and increased national production in order to increase American
global power are the cornerstones of this Report.

The advancement of U.S. interest, therefore, was now central to what
Freedom House saw as the message it must communicate to the public, but it seems
this Report also served as a bit of advice to governmental officials as well. Rather
than emphasize internationalism in American foreign policy decisions, a cornerstone
of the rhetoric of the organization in the first three decades of its operation, global
cooperation was now only advised when it suited and/or was required by the

America’s past, the Report argued, was characterized by the use of linkage
politics. That is to say, America’s “…pragmatic need for international relationships
in the interest of national security clashed with our rigid approach to human rights”
(1981: 8). Rather than avoid relationships with countries whose policies do not align
with the principles Freedom House once so strongly promoted, the Report suggested
that “American strength will be enhanced by evoking our concern for human freedom
in new and more effective ways” (1981: 8). Any and all global cooperation should
only be sought out when it is in the best interests of the U.S. This is in direct
contradiction to the internationalist spirit of previous Freedom House prescriptions
for American foreign policy decisions. In this same vein, no mention whatsoever is
made of the United Nations. Ultimately, the Annual Report prescribed unilateral
action on the part of the U.S., and the avoidance of cooperative agreements and
international arrangements that are not clearly in the U.S.’s national interest.
In contrast to its public statements in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, the 1981 Annual Report of Freedom House advocates institutional design as a tool of democracy promotion. Whereas pamphlets, publications and conferences up until the late 1960s illustrate a clear skepticism about the effectiveness and viability of promoting institutional design, by the early 1980s Freedom House had come to see its role as “…to advocate the slow but sure strategy of building free institutions” (1981: 8). This adherence to the tenets of institutional design, that one can build and replicate institutions conducive to democratization in one country modeled on those in another, is the complete opposite of claims Freedom House made as late as 1959: “The American democracy cannot be transplanted as an organism to other places” (1981: 21). However, from this pamphlet it seems that institutional design was only to be prescribed when it suited the interests of the United States to do so.

Along with these distinctive shifts in the organization’s goals, purpose and prescriptions that began in the 1970s, the core principles it sought to promote changed as well. Its conception of democracy and the democratic rights of citizens were defined in a much more procedural manner. There is a clear push in this Report to define democracy primarily by describing what the concept does not entail. Ultimately, “freedom must be actively supported and its opposite clearly identified” (cover). Instead of celebrating diversity and difference as key elements of democracy, as the organization had done prior to the introduction of the Comparative Survey, by 1981 Freedom House emphasized the importance national unity. This new conception of democracy also signaled a clear rejection of any economic component to the political rights and civil liberties Freedom House measures.
Any characteristics deemed divisive in U.S. domestic politics should be removed from public life in order to further the new national spirit called for by the Annual Report. “It will not suffice, however, just to remove generators of national disunity. To build ‘one nation indivisible’ we must concentrate on the unifiers” (1981: 6). In order to accomplish this goal, one which calls for the exclusion of citizens not in the country’s political “center” from participation, the Annual Report claimed that “[n]ational policies and programs, and the rhetoric that supports them, should represent the aspirations of most Americans who occupy the broad center of the domestic political spectrum…the center must indeed hold” (1981: 6). Again, a diversity of political opinions and views, as well as any appeal to the system from particular interest groups that might by this American “center” be considered too extreme, should be excluded from policy considerations.

Freedom House focused on defining democracy during this era by emphasizing what it is not – and the key characteristics of democracy’s opposite are clearly drawn from the enemy of America at that time – the Soviet Union. The Report took issue with “…the specious claim that ‘socialist’ and other dictatorships best deliver human ‘needs’ – food, clothing, housing, jobs – while democratic countries offer ‘only’ political rights. Rights and liberties are the key to all of society. Given these freedoms, the citizens can choose priorities: more food now, better housing later, or even circuses first” (1981: 8). Rather than an engaged, intellectual discussion of the merits of differing systems, or what sorts of rights are more central to a democracy, the 1981 Report places formal, procedural political “rights and

\[210\] However, it seems apparent from the content of the Report that the main concern of Freedom House stems from the political left in America, not the right.
liberties” (such as the right to vote) above those involved in a more substantive conception of freedom (which would include the aforementioned social and economic “human needs” of food and employment). Unlike its earlier publications, the central tenet of democracy is now seen as equality of opportunity, coupled with free markets. Whereas the Freedom House of the 1940s saw a real need to address socioeconomic obstacles that hindered citizens from being able to effectively use the political rights granted them by the Constitution, by the 1980s the organization stated that “we reject governmental regulations to assure predetermined equality of results” (1981: 4). In fact, “[i]nsisting on numerical goals to assure fair representation by race, sex or religion is a faulted means to a worthy end – in employment, education or political conventions” (1981: 6).

Not only did the focus of Freedom House’s democracy promotion shift toward the pursuit of U.S. national interest, but any substantive conception of citizens’ rights was clearly rejected. The 1981 Annual Report called for a reduction in governmental regulation of the economy,211 a dismissal of diverse claims and interests placed on the system, increased economic output on the part of each American, and emphasized free market principles. The free market, in fact, is now seen as a cornerstone of democratic systems, and the claim of Freedom House in 1945 that economic rights (involving the reduction of economic inequality in particular) are imperative to the participation of the entire populace in the political realm has not only vanished but is forcefully rejected. Those who would espouse these ideas (in particular, the claim that socialist countries better meet the economic needs of their citizenry, and that

211 Many places in this pamphlet seem to refer to affirmative action programs as synonymous with government oversight in the economy: “we reject governmental regulations to assure predetermined equality of results” (1981: 4).
these needs are a cornerstone of freedom) are now labeled by the organization as “[t]he denigrators of free society – whether in the Soviet bloc or the developing world – whether they oppose or tolerate economic enterprise – [who] are exponents of despair” (1981: 8). The rejection of these assumptions, along with “real economic freedom,” now identifies those opposed to democracy (1981: 8). Unfortunately, the Freedom House of 1941 would then have to belong to this list of democracy’s enemies.

This report is marked by an overall absence of the inquisitive, open dialogue that characterized so many of the publications, conferences and pamphlets of Freedom House in the 1940s through the late 1960s. Conferences and workshops put on by the organization in the past often ended with more questions than answers, something its most prominent officials saw as productive in its own right. The push to nail down concepts by producing checklists to measure and compare them, and by the conscious choice to exclude some rights and include others in what could and should be properly considered democratic governments, was absent during the earlier years. The exclusion of economic and social rights from Freedom House’s conception of democracy, and the actual attempt itself to lay out a universally applicable, concrete definition of the concept, are major ways in which the character of the organization and the contents of its publications changed in the 1970s and 1980s. The idea of Freedom House as a platform for the open discussion of important events began to disappear in the 1970s, and had completely vanished by 1981. Perhaps there was no longer room for debate. In any event, both Freedom House’s

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212 Here “real economic freedom” is exemplified by American capitalism, and Freedom House defines the concept by contrasting it to the economic system of the Soviet Union (1981: 8).
unwavering commitment to democracy promotion and its function as a forum for the discussion of domestic politics, was subsumed by the pursuit of American national interest at all costs. Perhaps a genuine commitment to both democracy promotion and American foreign policy presented two incompatible goals for the organization.

CONCLUSION

While the material Freedom House produced for public consumption in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s did contain some nationalist sentiments (Freedom House has always had some sort of affiliation with the United States government, as discussed in Chapter 2), the statements of these early years reflected a much lower level of involvement between the two. The unquestioning allegiance to both the foreign and domestic policies of the U.S. government, which gradually seeps into Freedom House’s agenda in the 1970s, became cemented into the organization’s views by 1981.

These materials reveal that prior to the 1970s, key concepts were discussed and debated and were not seen as having solidified definitions. Instead, workshops sponsored by Freedom House, attended by prominent academics and high-ranking officials within the organization itself, were centered around questioning what it meant to be free, to be a democratic nation, etc. As the materials I examine in this chapter were produced by Freedom House for public consumption, what is significant here is that it was somehow important during this time period for the organization to portray to the public that it believed the concepts of freedom and democracy both had
a multitude of possible meanings and their definitions were fluid – that they could and should be debated and change over time.

The public promotion of a fluid, context-sensitive conception of democracy is at odds with the view promoted by Freedom House today. Earlier public discussions of the validity and usefulness of the U.S political system to other countries were centered on freedom of choice, with the caveat that Freedom House did not advocate institutional design, nor believe in the likelihood of a successful transplanting of the political institutions of one country into another. Being unable to arrive at a conclusion regarding the proper form or application of any of these vital concepts was apparently quite in line with how Freedom House wanted to portray itself publicly during this time period. What was more important than conclusive consensus was the discussion itself. In that sense, the organization told the public that it was a source of information and, more importantly, a catalyst for discussion amongst citizens themselves. The idea, however, that democracy as a political system was unique in each situation or geographic region, and the belief that it involved more than a simple laundry list of formal procedural elements was characteristic only of the early years of Freedom House. In 1981 the organization publicly pronounced that the conception of democracy was no longer up for debate, and the definition it promoted was considerably flattened from earlier versions. The 1981 Annual Report illustrates that the changes that began in the 1970s later became embedded in the organization’s public image. The articles Freedom House published in its own journal during the 1970s show an increasing alignment with the intelligence community and U.S. foreign policy makers. A financial aspect of this relationship would also develop, and
is discussed at length in Chapter 6. After the 1970s Freedom House also no longer chose to publicly criticize American foreign policy, or focus on domestic issues. This trend is best illustrated by changes that took place in the organization’s annual reports on the status of global freedom, which are discussed in the following two chapters.
CHAPTER V

THE BALANCE SHEET OF FREEDOM DURING FIELD’S TENURE:
1953 – 1967

INTRODUCTION

In 1953 Freedom House began publishing reports called Balance Sheets of Freedom. These annual reports summarized the major international and domestic events of the previous year that the organization believed represented gains and losses for global freedom (see Figure 4). The Balance Sheets of Freedom were generally published in January, and covered the events of the previous year. The 1962 Balance Sheet of Freedom, for example, was released to the public on January 21, 1963. In this chapter I examine these Balance Sheets and argue that the reporting of Freedom House during this era was more open and transparent, particularly in comparison to Comparative Surveys that replaced them in 1973.

This argument hinges on the presence of three characteristics in the Balance Sheets produced during the 1950s and early 1960s, which disappear with the introduction of the Comparative Survey. First, the Balance Sheets focused heavily on what Freedom House saw as domestic stumbling blocks to a fuller practice of American democracy. Secondly, these Balance Sheets were critical of both American foreign policy and particular individuals within the U.S. government. And lastly, these Balance Sheets illustrated a willingness on the part of Freedom House during this era to point out flaws in the domestic policies of American allies abroad. While these Balance Sheets did exhibit some nationalism, including a desire on the part of
Freedom House for the U.S. to play a key leadership role in international relations, these sentiments were mild compared to those expressed in the Comparative Survey. As the reporting of Freedom House in the 1970s became more closely tied to the promotion of U.S. national interest (represented by the aims of the neoconservative movement), these criticisms of American foreign policy also disappeared.

Unlike their successor, the Comparative Survey, these Balance Sheets paid attention to U.S. domestic issues and criticized all policies Freedom House deemed inconsistent with democracy. Also unlike the Comparative Survey, which was produced by a single person, these reports were a collective product of the organization’s Public Affairs Committee, trustees, directors, officers and other members as well. This meant that the suggestions of various people, roughly 50, with different political opinions were more likely to be incorporated into the final draft of the Balance Sheets. While these Balance Sheets were often presented as an “Annual Report by the Public Affairs Committee of Freedom House,” memos and correspondence make it clear that the comments of many other individuals beyond this committee were included in these reports. That is to say, numerous people read early versions of these reports, and the advice of regional experts was solicited in order to ensure their accuracy. This process, a form of internal peer-review during which revisions were made and differing opinions could be offered, seems to have stopped with the introduction of the Comparative Survey. Ultimately, the

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213 This is the exact subtitle of the 1966 Balance Sheet. Balance Sheet of Freedom, 1966. Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 6, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
transparency and collective nature of these earlier reports vanished in 1973 when they were replaced with a set of scores created by only a single person.  

The argument that these reports were the result of a more open process is based on my analysis of the Balance Sheets of Freedom for the following years:

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214 Balance Sheet of Freedom, 1969, p. 26, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 6, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

215 The creation of the Comparative Survey is discussed in the following chapter.
1955, 1959, 1960 and 1962-67. Again, although some nationalism was present in these reports, during this era of Freedom House the organization took ownership of that stance. In other words, at this time Freedom House did not claim that its reporting was objective or scientific. In addition, these reports were characterized by criticisms of U.S. government policy both at home and abroad when accounting “gains” and “losses” for global freedom.

**PRODUCTION OF THE BALANCE SHEETS DURING THIS ERA**

The Balance Sheets published during George Field’s tenure as Executive Director of Freedom House were created under the direction of the entire Public Affairs Committee. While this committee was only comprised of eleven individuals in 1967, the Balance Sheets reflected the input of roughly 50 members of Freedom House, including trustees, officers, other members, and experts. Members received early versions of the yearly report and were asked for their comments prior to its dissemination. These Balance Sheets also listed the name of each person who sat on the Public Affairs Committee, as well as those of the organization’s trustees and officers. Ultimately, these reports were distributed to both the public at large and members of Freedom House who contributed financially to the organization. While the 1955 Balance Sheet of Freedom was published as “A Release by the Officers and

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216 Of the 15 Balance Sheets produced between 1953 and 1967, 9 of them (60%) are thoroughly discussed in this chapter, giving one a full and accurate accounting. This selection is based on their availability in the archival material assessed. While the other Balance Sheet years may be available in the archive somewhere, I have been unable to locate them anywhere else.

217 The source of Freedom House’s funds during this era was primarily through small donations made by private individuals. Some early lists of these individuals can be found in archival material from the George Field Collection housed at Princeton. It is also worth noting that Freedom House’s budget during this time never exceeded $40,000 annually. The changing source of these funds, as well as the accompanying dramatic change in their amount, is discussed at length in Chapter 6.
Directors of Freedom House,” later reports were expressly presented as creations of the Public Affairs Committee of Freedom House, though it is clear that many individuals outside this committee were asked for their thoughts on the content of these reports.

During this time period, the Board was also very involved in the production of the Balance Sheet, and Executive Director George Field sent out early versions many of its members. Not only were the final reports subject to their approval, but preliminary lists of topics to be covered by those reports were also sent to members. In a memorandum to Freedom House officers from October of 1959, George Field assured members that he “…would welcome comments and suggestions on any of the above topics for inclusion in the final report, and if I do not hear to the contrary, I will assume this proposal meets with the approval of the officers subject to further evaluation when the draft has been written.”

Field’s invitation for the commentary of members seems to have been more than an empty formality. There is evidence that suggestions and input from Board members actually translated into changes within the final Balance Sheets produced. This occurred right up until the end of Field’s tenure, as illustrated by the minutes of a Board meeting held on December 14th, 1966 at the 21 Club in New York City.

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219 Memo, George Field to Freedom House Officers, October 1959, Freedom House Collection, box 27, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
When the subject of the annual report came up, the following conversation took place, during which Board members disagreed both with parts of the Balance Sheet and each other:

Judge Rivers was critical of the summary on Civil Rights,221 expressing his concern at what he felt was a lack of proper perspective on the present status of the struggle. Stewart Richardson declared that we were in a period of assimilation and should wait to find out how things will turn out before stating that there has been a setback in the Civil Rights struggle. Colonel Miller suggested that the setback had been in the mood of the people, rather than in the actual status of the Negro. John Richardson joined the consensus and expressed the belief that the text on the whole was very good, but that ‘it leaned a bit in the direction of a negative attitude on what is happening.’

In discussing the foreign affairs section, a number of members called attention to the seriousness of the growth of nationalism and the deterioration of NATO,222 not adequately reported in the Balance Sheet.

In evaluating the role of youth today, Mr. Roper said that this is the most energetic generation we have had. Young people should question institutions. Miss Riley agreed and indicated it would be dreadful if we were to put ourselves in the position of ‘labeling’ the youth of this country. Mr. Cherne called attention to the fact that we are talking about a minority group, which has been given a majority status by newspapers and other media.223

It was finally concluded that the Executive Director would take all of these comments into consideration and then “supervise the necessary revisions.” In fact all of these suggestions are represented, to some degree, in the final Balance Sheet for 1966. Rather than being referred to as a “setback,” the report announced that there had been “a halt in the forward progress of the Civil Rights movement.”224 An entire page (out

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221 During this time period Freedom House reports devoted a lot of discussion to the Civil Rights Movement, the advancement of which the organization believed was vital to American democracy. This concern is discussed at length later in this chapter.

222 This refers to the Balance Sheet’s assertion that “French troop withdrawal from the NATO command left a gaping whole in the coordinated defense of the West” (1966: 1).

223 Board meeting minutes, December 14, 1966, p. 2, Freedom House Collection, box 1, folder 24, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

224 The term “halt” was also used on the second page of the report with regard to the status of the Civil Rights movement. Balance Sheet of Freedom, 1966, p. 1, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 6, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
of 16 total) was dedicated to a discussion of NATO, and the emergence of “ultra-nationalist feelings” was mentioned throughout the report.\(^{225}\) Finally, the report concluded that student protests of American involvement in Vietnam were in “the tradition that youth must dissent from the judgment of its elders – a normal and healthy outlet for exuberance and concern for the future.”\(^{226}\)

While the Board of Freedom House suggested topics to be covered and ultimately approved these Balance Sheets, the reports were largely the result of outside expertise. Field, referring to an outline of topics he believed the most meaningful for the status of global freedom, stated that “…each of these areas should be carefully analyzed by experts and that the final results of this study should be prepared as a report to be issued in the name of the Board of Directors of Freedom House later this year.”\(^{227}\) In addition, under George Field’s leadership these experts were invited to Board meetings and actually participated in discussing these topics. For example, prior to a Freedom House Trustees meeting on May 10, 1966, “preparatory notes” were sent out to the entire Board. These notes included a list of topics to be discussed, which centered on American foreign policy in Asia, as well as comments sent in advance by Board members who were unable to attend the meeting. While one of these absent individuals, a Mr. Linowitz, was included in the list of trustees in the published Balance Sheet of 1966, the other individual, a General Marshall, was not. This provides further evidence that a multitude of opinions were

\(^{225}\) However, the most concentrated discussion of nationalism in the Balance Sheet of 1966 occurs on p. 9-11.

\(^{226}\) Balance Sheet of Freedom, 1966, p. 7, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 6, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

\(^{227}\) Memo, Field to Freedom House Officers, October 14, 1955, Freedom House Collection, box 27, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
taken into consideration when creating Balance Sheets during this era, beyond those individuals formally recognized as members of the Public Affairs Committee, trustees and officers. This preparatory notice also announced that “[t]wo persons exceptionally well informed on the questions before the Board” would be present at the meeting.228 These experts were both academics – “Frank Trager,229 Professor of International Affairs at New York University and an expert on South-East Asia…[and] Professor John P. Roche230 of Brandeis University, a leading liberal scholar who maintains his independence while generally supporting the American position in Vietnam.”231 What this meant was that the Balance Sheets of Freedom House were subject to a long line of commentary and input before final approval, not only from experts on the subject matter at hand, but from all of the officers and directors of the organization. In 1955, this latter group was comprised of 48 individuals.232 The variety and number of individuals consulted prior to the publication of Freedom House’s annual reports during this entire period resulted in a process marked by oversight and transparency. This process would later vanish with the introduction of the Comparative Survey.

228 “Preparatory Notes – Freedom House Trustees Meeting, May 10, 1966,” p. 1, Freedom House Collection, box 1, folder 24, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
231 Ibid.
232 Balance Sheet of Freedom, 1955, p. 3, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 6, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
DOMESTIC OBSTACLES FACING AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

Each Balance Sheet of Freedom during this period devoted significant attention to domestic issues within the United States. Freedom House believed that these topics were important for two reasons. First, the organization’s members were genuinely concerned with the internal matters that they believed caused the American system to fall short of many democratic ideals. However, they were also concerned with the international leadership role of the United States, particularly with regard to democracy promotion. That is, Freedom House felt that international doubts about the level of democracy within America would compromise the nation’s ability to lead globally. This section illustrates which domestic issues Freedom House identified as being detrimental to American democracy during this time period, and why. It is also important to note that Freedom House viewed these events not only from the perspective of an organization committed to democratic principles, but also out of concern for America’s international reputation. This concern, however, is overtly expressed in the Balance Sheets – these reports did not claim to be objective. Instead, Freedom House presented the Balance Sheets as the “collective judgment” of the organization’s members, meant to inform both the American public as well as government officials.

The type of domestic issues that the Balance Sheets addressed varied widely; therefore, the analysis in this section is broken down by topic. Not surprisingly, given the historic civil rights era in which they were written, a substantial portion of

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233 George Field characterized the Balance Sheets in this way in a February 14, 1963 response he wrote to a critical letter from one of Freedom House’s members. Freedom House Collection, box 27, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
Table 3. Breakdown of Balance Sheet Content by Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>International</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>25.50%</td>
<td>74.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>25.50%</td>
<td>74.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>30.06%</td>
<td>69.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>40.21%</td>
<td>59.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>30.09%</td>
<td>69.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>49.73%</td>
<td>50.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>26.68%</td>
<td>73.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>29.61%</td>
<td>70.39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

these reports discussed what they called “race relations.” However, these Balance Sheets also covered a number of other obstacles to domestic democracy, including labor relations, housing, and political representation. These Balance Sheets were also concerned with American “economic and cultural freedoms.” This consideration is interesting given that an economic component of democracy is absent from the later Comparative Survey. These early concerns not only illustrate that during this period

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234 Percentages in both the Domestic and International columns were calculated by dividing the number of lines of text dedicated to that particular subject matter in each Balance Sheet by the sum of lines dedicated to both. Therefore, this calculation is not based upon the total number of lines in each Balance Sheet in its entirety – it does not include the introduction and conclusion, for example.
235 Balance Sheet of Freedom, 1959, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 6, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
236 Ibid.
the organization was working with a much more complex and substantive conception of democracy, but that Freedom House was also willing to scrutinize the practices of the United States. These Balance Sheets make it clear that at this time Freedom House believed that socioeconomic inequality was a significant barrier to full political participation, and therefore problematic for American democracy.

**Civil Rights**

The entire final section of the Balance Sheet of 1955 addressed the racially motivated murder of a young African American adolescent in the South – Emmett Till. This issue is one of only three covered by this particular Balance Sheet, which illustrates the organization’s considerable focus on promoting democratic principles domestically as well as internationally during this time period. In this 1955 report, Freedom House linked the promotion of democratic freedoms at home with those abroad. The organization believed that “a serious obstacle to winning the confidence of two-thirds of the world’s people who are non-white is racial discrimination in our

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237 It is worth noting that some scholars (in particular see Mary L. Dudziak’s (2000) *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*) claim that America’s concern with civil rights during the Cold War was part of the effort to combat what Communists often pointed out as one of the country’s weaknesses. Although there is some disagreement regarding the exact period of time during which the Cold War took place, there is a general consensus around the era between 1945 and 1991. For my purposes here I treat it as beginning after the end of World War II in 1945, and believe it had certainly begun by the time Churchill made his now-famous “Iron Curtain” Speech in Missouri in 1946 (although he used the term prior to this date in 1945 correspondence between himself and President Truman). The start of the Cold War was solidified by the enactment of what is now known as the Truman Doctrine in 1947. That being said, Freedom House documents prior to this period (the earliest I found is dated June 8, 1942) show regard for civil rights issues. In a 1942 pamphlet titled “FREEDOM HOUSE: What We Are, and What We Have Done,” the organization claimed to be attempting to educate the public regarding the plight of African Americans. “The educational work in and from Freedom House has emphasized the vexed problems concerning the Negro and organized labor. On the Negro question, we launched City-Wide Harlem Week with an important meeting, broadcasts and newspaper publicity” (see *The Brooklyn Eagle* edition from May 25, 1942, page 12, which dates Harlem Week as being in May of 1942; here: http://bklyn.newspapers.com/image/53596514/).
country, [and] every violent event reflecting race hate strikes at our capacity to unite
the forces of freedom.”\textsuperscript{238} The report called the Mississippi trial of Emmett Till’s two
white assailants, who were quickly and unanimously found “not-guilty” by an all-
white jury, “a mockery of justice…[which] heavily weights the debit side of the
balance sheet of freedom for 1955.”\textsuperscript{239} While the section of the Balance Sheet
dedicated solely to domestic issues may have only constituted one-third of the report,
this focus is quite substantial when compared with the absence of such a discussion
from the Comparative Survey. During the Balance Sheet era Freedom House clearly
believed that these domestic issues had important implications for global freedom as
well – particularly with regard to the reputation of the United States overseas.

The Balance Sheet of the previous year had pointed to many domestic issues
in order to make the case that 1954 was, contrary to 1955, a banner year for freedom.
“The year 1954 was a memorable one for freedom due largely to the Supreme Court
desegregation decision and the deflation of Senator McCarthy’s influence on the
methods of investigation and the general tone of the Republic.”\textsuperscript{240} The few advances
in freedom that occurred during 1955 hinged on domestic events as well, and further
illustrate the organization’s focus on internal issues during this time period. The 1955
Balance Sheet cited the Supreme Court’s rulings against segregation and
corresponding Presidential executive orders as boons for American democracy.
However, the 1955 report was also critical of U.S. domestic policy, claiming that
these developments were “offset by the failure of both parties to make a single

\textsuperscript{238} Balance Sheet of Freedom, 1955, p. 4, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 6, Department of
Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
\textsuperscript{239} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{240} Ibid.
legislative contribution” to the civil rights cause.\textsuperscript{241} Therefore, the Freedom House Balance Sheets of this era were characterized by their lengthy discussion and criticism of U.S. governmental policy at home, while also emphasizing the organization’s non-partisan and independent status.

In a manner consistent with the reporting of Freedom House during this time period, the Balance Sheet of 1959 paid special attention to U.S. domestic issues. While 1959 witnessed many advances in race relations within the United States, particularly with regard to the integration of public schools, the organization was quick to note that “…democracy’s house was far from in order.”\textsuperscript{242} That year the state Supreme Court struck down segregationist laws in Virginia; voters in Arkansas ousted school board members who supported racist policies; and mixed marriage bans were lifted in Idaho (1959: 2). These advances in “race relations,” however, were marred by a number of events. Alabama Governor John Patterson strongly supported segregation and thwarted attempts to enforce \textit{Brown v. Board of Education}. That same year an African American prisoner who had been forcibly removed from jail by a mob was lynched (1959: 3). No one in that mob was arraigned because the “prosecutor, judge and grand jury refused to consider indictments despite the most detailed evidence gathered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation” (1959: 3).

The Balance Sheet of 1959 also recognized racial tensions between other groups, but noted advancements among these communities as well. The election of the first Asian American Congressman, a representative of Hawaii, was documented in the Balance Sheet as democratic progress (1959: 3). Conversely, Freedom House

\textsuperscript{241} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{242} Balance Sheet of Freedom, 1959, p. 2, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 6, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
acknowledged that African Americans were not the only victims of discrimination, nor was discrimination restricted to the American South. In New York City African Americans were barred from entering the Forest Hills Tennis Club, and the state of New York approved the anti-Semitic employment policy of the Arabian-American Oil Company (1959: 3). While both cases were later resolved in New York, these and other instances served as “a sober reminder that freedom is still far out of balance for large sectors of Americans” (1959: 3). The organization’s focus on these domestic obstacles to democracy illustrates Freedom House’s commitment to American as well as global freedom during this time period.

In 1960 Freedom House again paid close attention to domestic obstacles to freedom in the Balance Sheet’s description of matters related to democracy. The organization’s coverage of these issues accounted for a major portion of the Annual Report, despite its admission that the year was marked by monumental setbacks for international freedom stemming from the Cold War. And although these Cold War events were listed and examined first in the Balance Sheet, significant discussion was still dedicated to exposing America’s internal democratic shortcomings. In fact, the section of the 1960 Balance Sheet titled “On the Home Front” is roughly equal in size to the previous one, “At the United Nations,” measuring 77 and 70 lines, respectively.243 Issues then plaguing American democracy therefore constituted one of the three major categories covered by the Balance Sheet of 1960.

243 Balance Sheet of Freedom, 1960, p. 2-3. Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 6, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
Freedom House recognized 1962 as a net gain for American freedom, and called the year “impressive” (P3C2).\textsuperscript{244} Although the Report expressed disappointment with some internal incidents during the year, it cited steps toward the advancement of civil rights as evidence of democratic progress. One such step was addressed in the Balance Sheet under the subheading “Mississippi.” The struggle to desegregate schools within the state due to entrenched racism represented a blow to domestic freedom during 1962. The federal government’s response, however, reflected a commitment to racial equality that Freedom House saw as a redeeming move for democracy and a sign that the country was slowly but surely moving in the right direction.

That it should prove necessary to send Federal troops into any state to protect the constitutional rights of an American citizen eight years after the Supreme Court decision on desegregation in education is a sorry commentary. But that it was done by the President and the Attorney General with firmness after exhausting every means of keeping the responsibility of law and order a local responsibility is a credit to the nation (1962: 3).

Again, during this era Freedom House viewed the struggle for civil rights in the country through a particular lens – one that focused on the nation’s inability to achieve universal democratic freedoms at home as detrimental to its reputation abroad. This concern for America’s international standing stemmed from the organization’s belief that the nation needed to provide leadership for democratic movements worldwide. Accordingly, the Balance Sheet discussed the way in which foreign presses covered American segregation issues, and ultimately concluded that

\textsuperscript{244} This shorthand citation (P3C2) refers to page 3, column 2 of the Balance Sheet of 1962. Balance Sheet of Freedom, 1962. Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 6, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
these events “left little doubt in the minds of the reasonable majority”\textsuperscript{245} that the efforts to block programs are doomed to failure and that the extremist minority threatens to undermine the structure of law and order, endangering in the process the economic and cultural growth of the whole Southern region” (1962: P4C2).

The Balance Sheet of 1962 saw increased integration in America’s armed forces as another sign of democratic progress. Again, the domestic analysis contained in the Balance Sheet made the important distinction between democratic rhetoric and American realities. “Although the armed services are better integrated than almost any other group in American life, there are still gaps between principle and practice” (1962: P4C2). This section on integration discussed the President’s appointment of an \textit{Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunity in the Armed Forces} and the actions taken to combat discrimination in both housing and education. The Balance Sheet focused in particular on the segregation of school children whose parents were stationed on Southern bases. If these schools failed to integrate students, the report claimed, they stood to lose “…Federal support amounting to more than $12 million” (1962: P5C1).

The final section devoted to domestic issues in the Balance Sheet of 1962 was critical of both the slow speed at which school integration had occurred as well as the United States Supreme Court (1962: P5C1). The report’s criticism targeted specific “Deep South” states, including Alabama, Mississippi and South Carolina. The Balance Sheet provided statistics\textsuperscript{246} as evidence of the “glacial pace” at which

\textsuperscript{245} This sentence is preceded by “At home,” which implies that Freedom House was here referring to the “reasonable majority” of Americans (1962: P4C2).

\textsuperscript{246} “Between November 1961 and November 1962 the number of desegregated school districts inched up from 897 to 972, and the number of Negroes in schools with whites increased from 7.3 to 7.8 per
desegregation had progressed, and remarked that “the phrase ‘with all deliberate speed’ from the Supreme Court decision of May 1954 has become an understandable source of cynicism to many Negro [original language] leaders…[and] to all who seek freedom’s full realization” (1962: P5C1). The resultant frustration, and rise in extremist groups on both sides of the issue, landed America’s internal events on the negative side of the Balance Sheet for 1962.

The Balance Sheet of 1963 declared two events as the most important for the current state of global freedom: the Cold War, and the Civil Rights Movement. The brief synopsis provided in the introduction of the annual report for this year is crucially important for illustrating the emphasis placed on domestic events during this period in Freedom House’s history. Here minority civil rights at home are seen as just as important to the progress of democracy as the entirety of the Cold War.

In a similar fashion as previous years, the 1963 Balance Sheet also covered domestic obstacles to American democracy at length, particularly with regard to African American political equality.247 Even though President Kennedy was assassinated during the year on which the Balance Sheet reported, almost twice as much of the report was dedicated to the state of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States compared to the coverage of the new administration. During this period Freedom House clearly saw calling attention to the obstacles preventing Americans from fully exercising their rights as a key part of the organization’s purpose and mission.

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247 While the majority of this discussion centered on the group’s general inclusion in the political process, during this time period Freedom House discussed socioeconomic rights as important precursors for political participation as well.
The content of this Balance Sheet also illustrates how Freedom House then thought about democratic rights. For example, the organization saw civil rights demonstrations as exemplary models of the democratic process. “The participation of a broad spectrum of American people – men and women of all races, creeds and classes – was another illustration of the strength-in-diversity that characterizes a pluralistic society” (1963: P4C1). At this time, Freedom House clearly believed that both the concept of pluralism and the rights of minorities were important for a well-functioning American democracy.

Balance Sheets during this era also recognized the importance of informal as well as formal methods of ending racial discrimination in the United States. The 1963 report stated that these reforms required that “religious institutions, professional societies, corporations, trade unions” change discriminatory policies, and that economic opportunities, primarily in the form of employment, be provided for the disenfranchised (1963: P4C1). These suggestions are evidence of Freedom House’s belief during this time period that political equality entailed more than the formal extension of procedural political rights. No sector of society, including the economy, was excluded from consideration in the organization’s annual discussion of democratic freedoms. While the 1963 Balance Sheet acknowledged the importance of Congressional legislation for ending discrimination, it also argued that underlying institutional and cultural conditions in America needed to be addressed. Freedom House’s assertion that socioeconomic inequality hindered political equality is a

248 While during this time period Freedom House focused primarily on the rights of African Americans, it is evident that the organization was concerned about the exclusion of any “races, creeds and classes” (1963: P4C1).
claim characteristic of this era of Freedom House and its reporting; it would disappear with the introduction of the Comparative Survey.\textsuperscript{249}

The Balance Sheets throughout this time period discuss and define democratic rights in a similar manner. Even during the urban unrest of the late 1960s stemming from racial discrimination, Freedom House’s reports clearly distinguished between legitimate “dissent and protest” and “violence and turmoil” (1967: 4). Freedom House saw the actions it deemed mere violence as equally detrimental to American democracy as the discrimination that had inspired them.\textsuperscript{250}

**Economic Freedoms and Labor Relations**

An entire section of the Balance Sheet of 1959 was dedicated to discussion of “Economic and Cultural Freedoms” (3). During this time period, Freedom House paid real attention to the tension between different types of freedom, rather than advocating one particular definition. The organization also recognized the trade-offs made when attempting to choose between these often competing types of freedom within democratic societies.

Two other issues at home raised the question of how conflicting freedoms could be balanced fairly. In labor affairs, the right to organize and to strike was dramatically reaffirmed when the steel and dock workers laid down their tools in October. These traditional rights ran against the claims of the community for its welfare and security, and posed once again the ancient problem of where to draw the line. The Taft-Hartley Act procedures sent both groups of workers back to their jobs in November, but this satisfied no one. Prospects for a stronger measure of Federal authority grew, but all parties regretted the prospects because part of the cost would have to be in freedoms [emphasis added] (1959: 3).

\textsuperscript{249} Similar arguments have been made by theorists of democracy such as Pateman (1970) and Young (1990).  
\textsuperscript{250} The logic behind this claim by Freedom House was that violence only “tightened tensions between the races” and further halted progress in the area of civil rights (1967: P4C1).
This discussion reveals that during the Balance Sheet era, under George Field’s leadership, Freedom House acknowledged the existence of different conceptions of freedom. This recognition is significant given that after the introduction of the Comparative Survey in 1973 discussions of this type disappeared, and the organization no longer considered these democratic dilemmas or served as a platform for deliberation. After this point in time, Freedom House conflated the concepts of freedom and democracy, and no longer saw the meaning of either as contestable.

The 1962 Balance Sheet of Freedom also commented on the U.S. economy at length. This discussion focused primarily on the economy’s sluggish growth and the high unemployment rate, but this commentary is interesting because, by its inclusion in a report on those events most relevant to the status of freedom, it reveals that Freedom House saw economic and political elements as linked. By tying the American labor market to American democracy, the annual report suggested that the state of a nation’s economy has a direct impact on its citizens’ political freedoms. This Balance Sheet specifically stressed that economic rights, such as the right of employment, provide fundamental grounds for political participation in a democracy (1962: P5C2). The inclusion of an economic component of democracy was characteristic of the way Freedom House viewed the concept during this era, and is noticeably absent from the definition advanced by the Comparative Survey. In 1962, however, Freedom House saw “[h]igh national income” as that which enabled “farsighted programs to provide the social and economic base for effective freedom for all – not only members of minority groups, but the elderly, the sick, the slum-dweller,
the semi-literate” [emphasis added] (1965: 3). In addition, the Balance Sheet hailed President Kennedy’s housing proclamation, executive actions aimed at lowering the cost of housing as well as interest rates, as “a milestone…on behalf of equality of opportunity” (1965: P5C1). During this era, therefore, Freedom House clearly linked economic freedoms with political ones.

**Political Representation**

The Balance Sheets of Freedom published between 1955 and 1967 also addressed the importance of the representation of citizens within political institutions to the functioning of American democracy. These reports covered a wide range of legislative issues concerning political representation, including taxes, elections, and voting rights.

Freedom House insisted that each of these issues was analyzed by the organization “from a non partisan point of view” (1962: P5C1). That is, rather than advancing a particular political party’s agenda, Freedom House claimed it was committed only to democracy promotion. For example, Freedom House commended the 1962 elections because “[b]y and large, the voters rejected the candidates of the ‘irresponsible right and left’ with equal decisiveness” (P5C1). Instead of attaching itself to a particular candidate or party, Freedom House simply expressed the view

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251 Freedom House does not expand on the logic behind this claim beyond stating that “poverty” among the “underprivileged” prevents these individuals from being “fully participating members of their communities” (1965: P4C1).

252 This initiative began with the Housing Act of 1961, and further steps were taken as a result of the President’s special message to Congress on March 15, 1962. See the full text of that speech here: [http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9108](http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9108).
that extremism\textsuperscript{253} in any form was detrimental to the progress of American democracy.

The organization reported on a 1962 Supreme Court decision regarding reapportionment in Tennessee in a similar manner.

When it [the decision] was handed down, 27 states had not reapportioned in more than 50 years despite the vast shift of population from country to city. City voters have thus been deprived of their rightful representation in their state legislatures and in the U.S. Congress…Since to devalue a citizen’s vote infringes his freedom, the Tennessee decision is especially significant (P5C1-2).

Therefore, during this time period Freedom House clearly saw political equality among citizens, citizens’ actual ability to exercise their right to vote, and the representation of citizens in political decision-making as important factors in defining and evaluating democracy.

\textbf{Domestic Issues Concluded}

The emphasis these early Balance Sheets placed on obstacles to the full practice of American democracy by all the nation’s citizens is best illustrated by Table 8, which appeared earlier in this chapter. This table compares the amount of coverage given to domestic issues and international ones within the body of these annual reports.

During this time period Freedom House was just as committed to advancing democratic principles within the United States as it was outside the country. The organization’s focus on domestic issues within the Balance Sheets it produced during

\textsuperscript{253} In particular this Balance Sheet referred to two groups as “extremist” – the John Birch Society, a far right group committed to fighting Communism, and the pacifists of the far left (1962: P5C1). Freedom House seems to have criticized these groups based on their “naïve” positions (1962: P5C1).
this era is evidence of that commitment. While Freedom House recognized the
democratic shortcomings of the United States, the organization was hopeful that they
would be addressed and overcome. Freedom House saw the Balance Sheets as an
important means of drawing attention to these issues. “The American democracy
contains its full share of (anti-democratic) faults. But those faults are being
ceaselessly warred against; it is our hope that the freedom which makes the faults
possible will prove effective enough to remove them through reason, morality and
community power” (1959: 22).

**CRITICISM OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY**

Not only were the Balance Sheets during this time period critical of American
policies at home, but they also took aim at the way in which the nation dealt with
other countries. These criticisms, while characteristic of this era of Freedom House
reporting, would later be absent from the Comparative Survey.

The Balance Sheet of 1960 listed the major Cold War events that had occurred
during the year. In a number of ways this list illustrates the primary characteristics of
Freedom House reports during this era. First, the organization was critical of
American foreign policy. While the Balance Sheet’s content does imply that
Freedom House disapproved of covert intelligence efforts, it specifically condemned
that year’s U2 incident,\(^{254}\) citing it as a source of embarrassment for the U.S. The

\(^{254}\) This refers to the incident that occurred in May of 1960, when “a high-altitude U-2 American spy
plane had been shot down over Soviet territory on the first of the month, and it [the Soviet Union]
angrily demanded an explanation. After a clumsy effort by the State Department to deny the
intelligence-gathering purposes of the flight, President Eisenhower accepted full responsibility for the
embarrassing incident” (Keylor 2001: 304).
1960 report also criticized Congressional funding cuts to USIA.\textsuperscript{255} This criticism was based on what also seems to have been a recurring theme in the reporting of Freedom House during its early years – a concern for the international reputation of the United States. In particular, Freedom House was concerned about the nation’s ability to take on a defensible leadership position in democracy promotion (1960: 1).

The Balance Sheet of 1962 featured mixed reviews for the Administration’s foreign policy. While it is clear that the organization approved of the Administration approaching “the talk of détente [with the USSR] with reserve,” as Freedom House did not entirely trust the Soviets’ intentions, the report chastised the government for other foreign policy actions (1962: P1C2). Freedom House clearly disapproved of any U.S. invocation of Neutrality Acts in dealing with Cuban refugees, and believed the U.S. should be aiding them instead. Given that the Soviets were actively supporting Communists in the Caribbean, Freedom House believed the U.S. ought to do the same for those attempting to flee Communist regimes. This section also subtly demeaned those the organization dubbed “the ‘peace-at-any-price’ advocates” (1962: P1C2).

In general the Balance Sheets of the 1960s were heavily focused on the Cold War, and critical of any U.S. foreign policy the organization saw as an attempt to placate the Soviet Union. These reports focused in particular on the divided control

\textsuperscript{255} The Balance Sheet links these cuts with “…the battle for man’s minds, [in which] the U.S. continued to lag far behind the Soviet Empire. Congressional cuts in USIA budgets put us at a further disadvantage in matching Communist propaganda…” (1962: P2C1). Although the United States Information Agency (USIA) was arguably a propaganda organization itself (see Snow 2010), the willingness of Freedom House to criticize the actions of the United States government during this era is still significant, particularly given that this willingness disappears after the introduction of the Comparative Survey. It is also noteworthy that as late as January of 1962, when this report was published, Freedom House was openly calling for increased democratic propaganda. This recognition, and endorsement of, what Freedom House and others did as propaganda clashes considerably with its later invocation of objectivity after the introduction of the Comparative Survey.
of Berlin, and often spoke out against what Freedom House saw as the Administration’s policy of quiet appeasement with regard to the city. Ultimately, during this time period Freedom House was not afraid to disagree with the foreign policy choices of the Administration, and generally advocated a stronger, less neutral American position in all matters related to the Cold War.

**CRITICISM OF AMERICAN ALLIES**

The criticisms leveled by these Balance Sheets extended beyond American foreign policy to include the actions of the nation’s allies as well. These reports focused on American allies’ treatment of Third World countries, particularly the current and former colonial states of Western Europe. Freedom House endorsed full independence for these colonies, and referred to European efforts to thwart their right to self-determination as “imperialism” (1959: 4). The Balance Sheet of 1959 specifically addressed the independence efforts of Algeria, the Congo, Southern Rhodesia and Cyprus, from rule by France, Belgium and Britain, respectively (1959: 3-4).

Freedom House also commented on the domestic policies of America’s allies during this era. In particular, the organization focused on those policies it saw as relevant to racial tensions and discrimination in those countries. “The West German government took vigorous measures against its still-present anti-Semites, the Japanese Diet authorized the first legal minimum wage scales for industry in April, and Israel relaxed its restrictions on travel and employment for its Arab citizens in August” (1959: 4). While these remarks were not critical in nature, they reveal that
no country, regardless of its relationship with the United States, was beyond
evaluation or reproach by Freedom House during this era. And while Freedom House
believed that the above policies “merit mention in the hopeful column” of the Balance
Sheet of 1959, those gains were offset by the imperialist actions of European powers
(1959: 4).

During this time period Freedom House was quick to point out the
shortcomings of America’s allies, despite the collective commitment among these
Western democracies to promote freedom and combat Communism.256 The
willingness of the organization to criticize American allies, as well as the policies of
the U.S. itself, were characteristic of this period of Freedom House and defined the
tone of its reporting during that era.

MULTI-LATERAL, INTERNATIONAL SOLUTIONS
TO GLOBAL PROBLEMS

The early Balance Sheets of Freedom House were also characterized by their
strong internationalist approach. These reports were almost always aimed at drawing
the attention and actions of the international community to what the organization saw
as threats to democracy. Freedom House also emphasized the use of international
governmental organizations, such as the United Nations, in solving global problems.
This also implies that Freedom House was committed to the advancement of
democratic principles at the international level as well, given that the U.N. acts as a

256 For example, the criticisms Freedom House leveled against Communism in the Balance Sheet of
1959, based on the organization’s belief that it was antithetical to democracy, included: the jamming
of American radio broadcasts into the Soviet Union; the Soviet Union’s refusal to attend disarmament
talks; and the imprisonment of “students, intellectuals, workers and peasants” in Soviet satellite
countries (1959: P1C2, P2C1).
forum for the deliberation of important issues and each country is able to vote on these matters. While these Balance Sheets often questioned the U.N.’s ability to enforce sanctions and implement democratic norms, the U.N. is mentioned in every Balance Sheet analyzed from this period as the proper platform for addressing international issues. Of the 9 reports analyzed in this chapter, 5 contained a section dedicated entirely to the U.N.’s activities during the year.257 Although some of the Balance Sheets’ content was critical of the United Nations and its ability to act as an enforcement mechanism for global peace and freedom, the sheer amount of focus on the international organization reveals that Freedom House saw it as an important player in the democracy promotion movement. In the 1960 Balance Sheet, for example, Freedom House declared that “[f]reedom’s fight came to crucial focus at the United Nations in 1960. Not since the Korean War has the UN taken such a pivotal role in world affairs” (1960: P2C2). The 1964 Balance Sheet of Freedom stated that “the United Nations, [is] considered as a force for development of a stable and free world society” (P4C1). The 1965 Balance Sheet refers to “the indispensable services of the U.N.’s technical and social agencies and its role as an international forum” (1965: P9C2). Therefore, there is much evidence that Freedom House saw the United Nations as a legitimate actor in the “fight” for freedom during this time period, and an important platform for the discussion of matters of international importance. In these reports Freedom House also urged general global cooperation. The Balance Sheet of 1959 called the current state of “leadership of the free world

257 As noted previously, the years analyzed in this section, based on archival availability, include: 1955, 1959, 1960, and 1962-1967. The Balance Sheet of Freedom, 1948-1970, Freedom House Collection, box 27, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
[which was] fractured, uncertain and deeply embroiled in unsettled problems” a major crisis for democracy (1959: 1). The organization emphasized the formation of a global coalition as key to the success of democracy promotion. Although Freedom House clearly believed that the U.S. should play an important leadership role in this movement, the organization never intended nor recommended that unilateral action be undertaken by the country.

The reports of Freedom House during this time also emphasized the use of sanctions, diplomacy, and peaceful negotiations as key to addressing global issues. This is illustrated by the continued emphasis throughout this time period on halting nuclear testing through the signing and enforcement of test ban treaties.\textsuperscript{258} The Balance Sheets of this era frequently discussed international arms control, and called for a reduction of the military budgets of \textit{all} countries. Ultimately, Freedom House reports of the 1950s and 1960s consistently recommended the use of multilateral diplomacy and international governmental organizations in order to arrive at peaceful solutions to international problems. The organization’s preference for a multilateral approach to global issues would be replaced by suggestions of unilateral methods after the introduction of the Comparative Survey in 1973 and the increasing alignment between Freedom House and the foreign policy objectives of the neoconservative movement in the U.S.

\textsuperscript{258} The Limited Test Ban Treaty was finally signed in 1963, following years of controversial negotiations. The Soviet Union, though it had favored the idea of a testing ban since the late 1950s, refused the American and British demands regarding inspection, fearing that would lead to spying. The Treaty that was eventually signed established various land and sea posts from which verification would take place, and banned all nuclear testing except underground detonations. For more information, see \url{http://www.state.gov/t/isn/4797.htm} and \url{http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty.aspx}.
ADVANCING A MORE SUBSTANTIVE CONCEPTION OF DEMOCRACY

Between 1941 and 1967 Freedom House frequently held workshops that discussed democracy and obstacles to its attainment. A 1959 pamphlet summarizing one such workshop stated that “[d]emocracy and freedom cannot be put into one definition, acceptable to any substantial section of the people who think about such things. Rather than try to bind many viewpoints together in a single formulation, it is more profitable to discuss the conditions for freedom, its problems and its methods for dealing with those problems.” This quote captures a quite different way of thinking about democracy that was commonplace during the early years of Freedom House. In fact, this notion runs completely counter to the logic of the Comparative Survey, which ranks countries according to criteria the organization now associates with a particular definition of democracy.

During this era, Freedom House promoted a more complex, substantive notion of political freedoms and democracy. This conception is present as late as the Balance Sheet of 1967, and is particularly evident in that report’s discussion of civil rights. Here Freedom House clearly asserted that any approach to equality in the United States must address “[t]he root problems [which] are mass poverty and poor education which perpetuate cultural and employment disadvantage” (1967: 15). Throughout the Balance Sheets published before 1968, one finds the argument that economic and social solutions to the problems plaguing democracy must accompany any purely procedural ones, such as legislation aimed at guaranteeing voting rights (1967: 3). That is to say, a multi-faceted approach is the only effective way to

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259 Pamphlet, “A Workshop in Democracy,” May 1959, p. 21, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
combat discrimination. This in turn implies that the freedoms of citizens will be limited unless socioeconomic rights accompany the political ones they are entitled to. This particular representation of democracy is illustrated by the inclusion of economic freedoms for Americans in the Balance Sheets produced during this time. These reports not only acknowledged and listed the institutional and legal reforms necessary for the advancement of American democracy, but also questioned whether or not these reforms translated into real, substantive progress. That is, the Balance Sheets of this era tried to assess whether or not these reforms actually made disadvantaged citizens more free.

Rather than focusing on the promotion of a singular, American-style democracy, during the 1950s and 1960s the organization devoted much of its energy to furthering human rights more broadly. An assessment of the gap between the democratic rhetoric voiced by the United States and the country’s domestic reality was characteristic of Freedom House’s reporting during this era. Questioning U.S. policy, both at home and abroad, and advancing a more substantive conception of democracy, was not only commonplace in these Freedom House Balance Sheets, but was central to what the organization then saw as its purpose.

CONCLUSION

The Balance Sheets analyzed in this chapter exemplify all that was characteristic of Freedom House during this time period. Under George Field’s

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260 The term “human rights” was used by the organization in these early works. In fact, the 1965 publication of Freedom’s Advocate, a history of Freedom House as told by Aaron Levenstein, claimed that the organization was concerned with human rights early on. This book stated that “Freedom House, on the eve of the San Francisco conference [which created the United Nations]…called for a Commission on Human Rights” (Levenstein 1965: 80).
leadership the organization addressed the shortcomings of American democracy, included economic and social components in their conception of democracy, exhibited a willingness to criticize American foreign policy and the policies of American allies, and focused on cooperative, international solutions to global problems. These reports were also created with the input of a large number of individuals, including both officers and directors of Freedom House, as well as the input of experts. Freedom House’s reporting during this time period was also marked by a greater transparency regarding how these reports were written.

While Balance Sheets of Freedom continued to exist through the year 1972, their length, structure and content began to change under the leadership of Leonard Sussman, who began serving as Executive Director of Freedom House in 1967. In comparison to previous years, the reporting on the state of freedom in the world under Sussman was shorter and composed of fewer regional subdivisions. Additionally, the tone of the Balance Sheets became much more defensive of U.S. foreign policy and gradually less critical of democratic practices within America. These changes, as well as the development of the Survey, are discussed at length in the following chapter.

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261 The organization’s accounting of global freedom the previous year was referred to as the “1972 Survey of Freedom,” even though the ranking system had not yet been introduced.
CHAPTER VI

SUSSMAN, GASTIL AND THE CREATION OF
THE COMPARATIVE SURVEY:
1967 – 1978

INTRODUCTION

While Freedom House continued to publish Balance Sheets of Freedom through the year 1972, their length, structure and content began to change under the leadership of Leonard Sussman, who became Executive Director in 1967. Therefore, I have chosen to separate this chapter and the previous one at the year that marked George Field’s retirement from leadership. In comparison to previous years, the reports on the state of freedom in the world under Sussman were shorter, and composed of fewer regional subdivisions by heading. Additionally, the tone of the Balance Sheets shifted to a much more nationalistic one (particularly with regard to U.S. foreign policy), and became gradually less critical of American democracy domestically as well. This chapter argues that during this era, Freedom House became much less transparent in its reporting of global democratic freedoms. The manner in which Freedom House described its reporting changed as well. While the descriptive Balance Sheets of the past were presented as a representation of the organization as a whole and especially its Public Affairs Committee, their 1973 replacement, the Comparative Survey of Freedom, was and continues to be publicized as an objective report on the status of democracy worldwide. The Balance Sheets of Freedom, discussed in the preceding chapter, discussed domestic obstacles to the full practice of American democracy and were willing to criticize the nation’s foreign
policy as well as those of its allies. All this disappears with the introduction of the Survey.

The method by which Freedom House reported on democracy and freedom changed dramatically as well. Rather than gathering input from the nearly 50 members of the Board and Public Affairs Committee of Freedom House as well as from experts on the crises affecting different regions of the world, the organization adopted a numeric system created by two men: a political scientist named Raymond Gastil and the new Executive Director Leonard Sussman. The two had different yet complementary roles in the creation of this ranking system. Sussman came up with the idea for the Comparative Survey, and was responsible for marketing it to public officials. While the Survey was Sussman’s conception, it was Gastil’s creation. Gastil created the Survey in that he alone arrived at the scores assigned to each country it included. After leaving Freedom House in the late 1980s Gastil spoke candidly about what he saw as the impressionistic nature of the Survey he had developed, despite its being portrayed as “objective.” While these later views seem to be consistent with those Gastil expressed in private correspondence while working for Freedom House, this later article is his first public revelation of the incredibly “personal” nature of the Survey. In the early years of the Comparative Survey, Sussman pushed for the scores to be used in policy decisions regarding aid allocation by the U.S. government, a campaign that ultimately helped the Survey achieve the status it currently enjoys. The numerous changes to Freedom House’s reporting between 1967 and 1978, which greatly reduced the transparency of the organization’s annual reports, are discussed at length in this chapter.
SUSSMAN’S BALANCE SHEETS: 1967 – 1972

As illustrated in the previous chapter, the early Balance Sheets of Freedom House dedicated lengthy sections to the discussion of domestic issues affecting American democracy, ranging from 25 to nearly 50 percent of the entire content of the report. And although domestic issues were still represented in the Balance Sheets of Freedom until the introduction of the Comparative Survey of Freedom in the January-February 1973 edition of Freedom at Issue, the organization’s flagship publication, their discussion began to take on a more nationalistic tone starting as early as 1967. That is to say, the Balance Sheets of this era began to align with the views of neoconservative foreign policy makers in the U.S. The following discussion draws from each Balance Sheet published between 1967 and 1972, except for that of 1971.

In the Balance Sheet for 1967, numerous domestic obstacles to freedom were identified. However, rather than targeting Communists and extremists (as many did during this era), this report identified various U.S. groups Freedom House believed were working against American democracy. These included: “racial extremists, the New Left, the old radicals, campus protesters and Vietnam dissenters” (1967: 4). Rather than seeing many of the events of 1967 as evidence of increasing political

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262 Freedom at Issue was first published in 1970, and existed in journal format until 1990. “Freedom at Issue” is currently the title of the Freedom House blog that discusses recent news related to global democratic development (see https://freedomhouse.org/blog).

263 The Balance Sheet of Freedom for 1971 was not among the others in this particular box and folder in the Mudd Manuscript Library, though it may be present somewhere in the Freedom House Collection (some documents were out of order). Balance Sheets of Freedom, Freedom House Collection, box 126, folder 6, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

264 I’m not suggesting here that the two are synonymous; rather, I use the latter term to refer to many of the Balance Sheets’ characterizations of those who opposed the Civil Rights movement.
participation and awareness among the electorate in response to social injustices and governmental policies, this Freedom House report denounced any activity that was not entirely supportive of American foreign policy (particularly with regard to Vietnam).

Another major point of contention in this report was directed at “the New Left” and its denunciation of the Central Intelligence Agency. This Balance Sheet argued that the group used the divisive issues of Vietnam and civil rights as merely “another weapon” in their larger aim – “attacking the society and the nation” (1967: 6). Their exposure of the CIA’s “activities which supplied funds for student, labor and foundation work overseas” was only done for the New Left’s “own advantage” – not for any benefit to democracy (1967: 5-6). The report expressed a similar opinion of student protests, castigated by the post-Field Freedom House as “organized by small groups of militants, often falsely publicized as representing the large nonparticipating majority of students and faculty” (1967: 6). Again, any disagreement with U.S. government policies, or actions that stemmed from said disagreement, are characterized during this period of Freedom House as “attacking the society and the nation” (1967: 6). Therefore, while domestic issues still constituted a large portion of the Balance Sheet of 1967 (the first such report under Sussman), the manner in which they were discussed is much more nationalistic. Criticism of American governmental actions both at home and abroad, characteristic of the reporting done under George Field, had vanished.

Attention to domestic issues was still visible through the Balance Sheet of 1972, but a change in terminology occurred at this point. While the numeric ratings
of the Survey were not introduced until the following year, the January-February 1972 edition of Freedom at Issue was primarily comprised of the “1972 Survey of Freedom.” Freedom House had therefore already started to refer to its reports as “surveys,” and this change in terminology is a clear signal that the organization was beginning to present its annual report in a much different manner. This particular “survey” began with a brief commentary on the “State of the World: 1972,” which is attributed, much like its predecessors, to the Public Affairs Committee of Freedom House.265

This section still echoed much of the sentiment expressed in the 1967 Balance Sheet discussed above, including a nationalist-tinged condemnation of “the campuses” (1972: 3). While Freedom House commented that the nation’s universities seemed “relatively quiet,” the organization’s stance toward university faculty was quite aggressive. While the lowering of the voting age via the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1971 seemed to appease many students, according to the report, “…that did not assure a complete return to sanity of the universities. Many of the professoriat [sic] were still ‘politicalized,’ dedicated to the idea that their teaching is an instrument for restructuring the society according to their own desires, rather than a commitment to truth and reason” (1972: 3). This report, therefore, is also indicative of the growing tendency within the organization to adhere more closely to the views of neoconservative American foreign policy makers.

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265 Also similar to Balance Sheets of the past, the 1972 “Survey” lists said members of the Public Affairs Committee during that time. These are: Margaret Chase Smith, Harry D. Gideonse, Roscoe Drummond, Leo Cherne, Philip Van Slyck, Rex Stout, Mrs. Andrew Jackson, Whitney North Seymour, Francis Pickens Miller, and Gerald L. Steibel (see Freedom at Issue, Jan-Feb 1972, No.11, p. 1; retrieved from a collection at Wayne State University).
Raymond Gastil created the Freedom House scores that are used so widely today. A “Harvard-trained” political scientist, Gastil specialized in the Middle East, and received both Fulbright and Ford fellowships to conduct research in the region. Later, Gastil taught anthropology courses at the University of Oregon. During his lifetime Gastil worked for the Hudson Institute, the Battelle Seattle Research Center, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). His is most widely known, however, for his creation of the Comparative Survey of Freedom in 1973. In 1977 he was officially appointed as the Director of the Survey, and remained in this position until 1989.

Archival sources (including correspondence, the minutes of meetings, etc.) make it clear that Raymond Gastil alone was responsible for the content of the Survey. Though the Comparative Survey was the brainchild of Leonard Sussman, who had been Executive Director of Freedom House since Field’s retirement in 1967, Gastil actually produced the scores. The division of labor between Sussman and Gastil was quite similar to that of a salesman and a manufacturer, respectively. Sussman was the visionary, Gastil was the engineer.

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268 Though it is clear that he had already been producing the Survey for some time now – this title seems to be recognition of both the growing fame and financial support attached to his role at Freedom House.
Correspondence between Sussman and Gastil reveals Gastil’s role as the sole creator of the measures. Because Sussman was the official head of Freedom House and the one who came up with the idea of creating the Survey, Gastil often explained his rationale for the ratings to Sussman. The language he used in doing so, however, makes it clear that Gastil alone was producing the scores, even as late as 1983. In correspondence between the two, Gastil talked about making changes to the Survey in the first person singular (“I” changed these scores, etc.). Further, Sussman presented Gastil as the creator of the Survey during meetings of the Freedom House Executive Committee. On January 30, 1978, it was reported in the minutes of such a meeting that “Mr. Sussman stated that Dr. Gastil had completed the manuscript known by its working title, Survey Yearbook.” Perhaps some of the most definitive evidence that Gastil was the only person generating these measures was his reaction to a specific individual who wrote Sussman about the Survey’s rating of Southeast Asia. Apparently, Sussman had received a number of letters from Dr. William R. Kintner, then President of the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia. On February 1, 1979 Dr. Kintner wrote that “[s]ometime ago I asked Kamol Somvichian, who is currently on the faculty of Swarthmore College, to give me his appraisal of comparative political freedom in Southeast Asia. Enclosed is a copy of his letter to me dated January 30…” Sussman passed the correspondence

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269 See, for example, a memo from Gastil to Sussman explaining changes to the Survey, dated November 23, 1983. (This memo is discussed in more detail later in the chapter). Memo, Gastil to Sussman, November 23, 1983, Freedom House Collection, box 41, folder 1, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

270 Freedom House Executive Committee meeting minutes, January 30, 1978, Freedom House Collection, box 3, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

271 Letter, Kintner to Sussman, February 1, 1979, Freedom House Collection, box 41, folder 1, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
on to Gastil as the Director of the Comparative Survey, and Gastil wrote back to Dr. Kintner on February 5, 1979. Gastil responded: “Dear Bill, Leonard passed me another letter [from] (Somvichian) relative to the Thai rankings. I have several thoughts in this regard. First, why do you keep sending these to Leonard? If you are sincerely interested in offering information for the Survey why don’t you send the information directly to me?” This frustrated exchange not only illustrates that Gastil was the only one creating the Freedom House scores at this time, but also that Sussman clearly was not.

THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF GASTIL’S “NEW CRITERIA OF FREEDOM”

The Comparative Survey of Freedom was first published in the January/February edition of 1973’s Freedom at Issue. This year also marked the unveiling of the Map of Freedom, a 20-foot visual representation of the Survey’s findings that graced the east wall of the Wendell Willkie Memorial Building (the then New York headquarters of Freedom House). Gastil later noted that the idea of creating such a map was a key component of Sussman’s initial conception of the Survey’s purpose. The dividing of countries among three tiers, ‘free,’ ‘partly free,’ and ‘not free,’ was “…primarily [used] as a means of summarizing the data for

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272 This is the name of the individual Dr. Kitner had asked to appraise Freedom House ratings of Southeast Asia, as mentioned previously.
273 Letter, Gastil to Kintner, February 5, 1979, Freedom House Collection, box 41, folder 1, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
274 While Gastil did ask Dahl to serve as an informal advisor on the Survey (which he ultimately did not – though he granted Gastil permission to use excerpts from his work in Gastil’s full length publication of the Survey), I did not see any archival evidence of further solicitation on Gastil’s part for other advisors (or any changing of the scores based on the input of others).
275 See Freedom at Issue, Jan-Feb 1973, No. 17, p. 3.
276 The seven-point scale’s relation to these three tiers is explained in Chapter 1.
presentation as a Map of Freedom...[T]he seven-point scales have always been\textsuperscript{277} the heart of the survey, with the three-point generalized status of freedom little more than a heuristic device for printing maps or adding up doubtful totals for free and unfree peoples” (Gastil 1990: 28). This Map of Freedom is a visual representation of the Survey with each country color coded according to their status. It is still available, although it is now an online interactive map (by hovering one’s mouse over a particular country one is able to see their numeric level of freedom).\textsuperscript{278} Originally, however, it was a large display across the walls of Freedom House’s New York headquarters – the Wendell Willkie Memorial Building – until the sale of the building in 1985. The Survey was here described as “an extensive analysis of institutional freedom or repression within each nation [emphasis added],” and in this regard “the most detailed examination yet undertaken” (1973: 1). Gastil explained its theoretical underpinnings and methodology in fewer than seven pages of the bi-monthly periodical in 1973.

Gastil began his discussion of the new survey by describing the state of global freedom following WWII, which he portrays as relatively bleak (save the “direct military occupation [under which] nations such as West Germany, Italy and Japan developed democratic systems”) (1973: 2). Not only does Gastil applaud this method of democratization; he also explains that he sees the Survey as a means of countering the claim that “we [the United States] have no business interfering in, or even judging, the activities of foreign governments in their countries.”\textsuperscript{279} The Survey therefore rejected this “scientific relativism” in favor of an overt agenda aimed at

\textsuperscript{277} Since 1973.
\textsuperscript{278} The interactive map can be found at: http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world.
\textsuperscript{279} Ibid.
democratization on a global scale – at least the advancement of a limited, procedural
conception.280 This scheme is one of the many signs of the allegiance to American
neoconservatism that began to permeate Freedom House during this era and influence
its reporting.

WHAT GASTIL BELIEVES THE SURVEY TO BE MEASURING
(AND NOT MEASURING)

In this first publication in 1973, Gastil described the definition of democracy
adopted by both Freedom House and the Comparative Survey, drawing heavily on the
work of his fellow political scientist Robert Dahl (primarily *Polyarchy* (1971)) in
order to do so.

Gastil admitted the survey is NOT a forecasting tool.281

In our approach, concentration is on the contemporary situation. *The Table of
Nations is not, therefore, very useful as a forecasting tool*. To forecast, four
types of additional information should be used. First, would be the degree to
which a particular society has established the preconditions that are
statistically associated with different degrees of freedom. Secondly, would be
the context of ideas to which the society and especially its elites bear primary
allegiance – where do their sons go to school, what are the avenues they use
for attaining technical assistance, what models of society do they cherish,
what sources of outside information do they habitually use? Third, would be
the local history of freedom…Finally, forecasts might be based on current
trends in society.282 [emphasis added]

Gastil’s claims about the scores are very different from what those who use the
Survey today say about their utility. The idea espoused here by Gastil, that the
Survey’s judgments could not forecast without a contextualized, rich, regional history

280 Ibid p. 2.
281 Ibid p. 22.
282 Ibid p. 22.
and analysis of the areas studied (what the Survey, therefore does NOT “do”), runs counter to many conventionally held notions of the dataset.

One particularly important theme prevalent throughout this first publication of the Survey by Freedom House in 1973 is the insistence that the organization was NOT a proponent of, nor did it necessarily condone, any sort of economic aspect of democracy.

It is hoped that in later versions of the survey, it will be possible to refine our tools to consider questions of the variable level of actual freedom and of trends toward or away from freedom that are found in nations conventionally considered to be democracies. Such studies should particularly consider the educational systems, the media, the criminal justice system, and the economic system.\textsuperscript{283}

This quotation illustrates what Gastil saw as peripheral to the Survey, i.e. what he chose to exclude from the Freedom House scores. Claiming that these areas constitute fodder for “further study” is evidence of their exclusion from the Comparative Survey.

Gastil also expanded on this idea in the first full-length publication of the Survey five years later, in 1978. In fact, he devoted an entire section of the book to a discussion of “The Relation of Alternative Political-Economic Systems to Freedom” in which he was “primarily concerned with exploring both left and right arguments that economic conditions or relationships are more fundamental than political relationships in the question of freedom” (Gastil 1978: 163).

Even 17 years after the first Survey’s publication, in 1990, Gastil was hesitant to recognize the democratic claims of the welfare state systems present in Scandinavian countries.

\textsuperscript{283} Ibid p. 23.
Should we place Iceland, etc. on a higher level than ourselves (compare Anderson 1988)? We probably will not, because we have not accepted the Icelandic definitions of democracy as indisputably adding to democracy, just as we do not include their comprehensive welfare systems (which most representatives from Scandinavian countries at international conferences often do – *even after patient explanation of the difference between economic and political democracy*) (Gastil 1990: 41).

Not only did Gastil therefore admit that an economic component of democracy is missing from the Survey, but he also attested to the fact that he did NOT take a close look at the economic practices of countries generally considered to be democratic.\textsuperscript{284} Clearly, Gastil was less concerned with economic aspects of democracy than the inclusion of socioeconomic rights in the civil liberties checklist in his article would lead one to believe. Gastil’s approach also attests to the dominance of a procedural definition of the concept of democracy at Freedom House during this time.

**THE INTENTIONAL CHOICE:**
**GASTIL, DAHL AND THE PROCEDURAL CONCEPTION OF DEMOCRACY**

It is not coincidental that the definition of democracy (used interchangeably with the term freedom by Freedom House in the 1970s) employed by the Survey is strikingly similar to that advanced by Dahl in *Polyarchy* (1971). Gastil’s first correspondence with Dahl, dated September 7, 1977, makes this resemblance abundantly clear.

Gastil briefly described the Survey to Dahl, which had been in existence since 1973 and had “…received a great deal of attention in the media and government…”

\textsuperscript{284} Gastil specifically states that there is a “difference between economic and political democracy,” though he claims that the two are erroneously conflated by Scandinavian countries (Gastil 1990: 41).
“…in spite of its tentative nature…”285 Despite this admission, Gastil asked Dahl to consider joining an advisory panel, assuring Dahl that “…[t]here will be no scheduled meetings, but I would ask for some advice and comment.”286 As Director of the Survey, Gastil also asked Dahl for “…permission to use excerpts from Polyarchy to introduce the reader to more than my own opinions on the subject.”287 Dahl granted Gastil permission shortly before the first book form publication of the Survey in 1978, which featured excerpts from Polyarchy (1971), and the intentional choice to advance a procedural definition of democracy based on Dahl’s work was made.288

**GASTIL’S 1978 VANTAGE POINT: FREEDOM V. DEMOCRACY**

In the first book-length publication of the Survey in 1978, Gastil elaborated further on the concept that he believed himself to be measuring. While Gastil and Freedom House would use the terms “freedom” and “democracy” interchangeably in the years to come, Gastil specifically addressed their distinction in this early work.

Gastil claimed that “the Comparative Survey of Freedom was developed by Freedom House as a reaffirmation of the value and relevance of Freedom” (1978: 4). In these early days, however, Gastil insisted that “We [Freedom House] question the materialistic insistence that economic development is generally more important than freedom, that economic development produces freedom, or that nondemocratic systems are necessarily more efficient in propelling development” (1978: 4). This

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285 Letter, Gastil to Dahl, September 7, 1977, Freedom House Collection, box 40, folder 12, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
286 Ibid.
287 Ibid.
288 While an excerpt of Dahl’s work was included in the 1978 publication of the Survey, *Freedom in the World*, Dahl did not serve in a formal advisory role (Gastil 1978: x-xi).
stance toward an economic component of democracy would change over time, disappearing entirely by the late 1980s following Gastil’s departure from the organization.

In the 1978 version of the Survey, Gastil revealed his reliance upon reference books as one of the primary sources of information he used to create the Survey. This gives some specific content to the “methodology” Gastil used to create the Freedom House scores.

The basic references for the undertaking are the annual editions of the Political Handbook of the World, edited by Arthur Banks for the State University of New York and the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Worldmark Encyclopedia of Nations… The U.S. State Department is another valuable source, particularly through its recent annual reports to Congress on the human rights performance of nations receiving American assistance (8-9).

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289 I think this term applies very loosely to what Gastil actually did, as “methodology” (particularly with regard to the production of numeric ratings) sounds very technical and scientific. This is, however, the way in which Freedom House describes to this day how Gastil came up with the scores (see https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology ).

290 The book’s website claims that “[t]he roots of the current Political Handbook of the World extend back to A Political Handbook of Europe: 1927, published by the Council of Foreign Relations. A year later the European volume was expanded into A Political Handbook of the World: 1928 and published for the Council by Harvard University Press and Yale University Press. At the time, the Council sought to challenge isolationist sentiments in the U.S. government and the populace as a whole, believing that a more international outlook was needed to best serve long-term U.S. interests. One goal of the original Handbook was to combat what the anti-isolationists believed was an information gap in the United States about the internal affairs of foreign countries. The 1928 Handbook quickly established its reputation as a standard reference source in government, media, and business circles by presenting strictly informational work designed to permit readers to make their own informed judgments on overseas developments. This same unbiased editorial tradition continues today under the editorial direction of CQ Press.” See https://library.cqpress.com/phw/static.php?page=about&type=public.

291 This is just one of a number of various Worldmark encyclopedias published by Gale Cengage Learning. The publisher markets this work as appropriate for students from “9th Grade – College Senior.” The encyclopedia “presents easy-to-understand information on 197 countries and 7 dependencies from around the world in 5 volumes. Its 4 country volumes are arranged by global region (Africa, Americas, Asia and Oceania, and Europe) while a United Nations volume focuses on that organization’s purposes, principles, and agencies, including the Security Council and Human Rights Commission. Country articles range from 6 to 42 pages and are organized into 50 standardized rubrics that allow for easy comparisons across countries.” See Gale Cengage’s full description of the encyclopedia here: http://www.cengage.com/search/productOverview.do?N=197+4294922390&Ntk=P_EPI&Ntt=83082815920819873699791489111121415393&Ntx=mode%2Bmatchallpartial.
It is worth noting that not only would Gastil later admit that the Survey was based on his own personal “hunches and impressions,” but in this 1978 piece he claims to have relied very heavily upon U.S. government sources as well.\textsuperscript{292} While Gastil (and Sussman, in a behind the scenes capacity) claimed initially that his sources for creating the Freedom House scores were at least to some degree academic (particularly the development of the Survey’s criteria based on Dahl’s well-known published work), after leaving the organization Gastil admitted he produced the scores based on his personal intuitions. Given that in the 1970s, the Freedom House scores, and the institution itself, had yet to gain the status they enjoy today, Gastil and Sussman marketed the Survey as a much more scientific, objective, authoritative source on global democracy than it actually was. It seems clear that the motivation behind this marketing was at least in part due to the desire for both personal and institutional prestige. In addition, Gastil’s admission in 1990 that he relied on governmental sources to create the Survey is also interesting, given that its publication would dramatically strengthen the relationship between Freedom House and the US government. That is to say, while the government may have initially influenced the findings of the Survey, these very findings now also wield considerable power over governmental decisions regarding aid assistance and other major foreign policy issues. Given the matter of Freedom House’s funding (over 80 percent of which comes from the U.S. government), perhaps the bolstering of this organization’s reputation has been beneficial for the U.S. government in that it produces a sort of justification of policy decisions. Precisely because Freedom House fiercely maintains its status as an authority on global democracy \textit{independent} from the

\textsuperscript{292} See Gastil 1990: 26.
U.S. government, the use of the organization’s scores in aid allocation decisions lends an air of credibility to American foreign policy.

**MOVING UP IN THE WORLD: SUSSMAN TESTIFIES BEFORE CONGRESS AND WRITES TO KISSINGER**

Sussman was responsible for marketing the Survey. This included ensuring that the measures garnered the attention of the media, public officials, and academic institutions. The latter group’s endorsement of the Survey provided it with an important legitimacy that Sussman would use when pitching the scores to government officials for use in foreign policy decisions. Additionally, Sussman had to guarantee financing in order to showcase the Survey in various ways, and to continue the project. In a memo Sussman wrote to the Executive Committee on October 6, 1976, Sussman appealed for greater financial backing of the Survey, claiming that the “number and diversity of places to air our views are limited only by staff and dollar resources. It is often deeply frustrating to resist accepting some commitments.

[Sussman goes on to recommend] several major steps we could take that would immediately enhance our effectiveness and visibility.”

At this point in time Gastil was still working in some capacity at the Battelle Research Center in Seattle, and one of the proposals Sussman put before the Committee was a full-time position at Freedom House for Gastil as the Survey’s Director. Sussman also appeared before Congress and wrote to several public officials (including then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger), inquiring about the government’s need for a measure of human

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293 Memo, Sussman to Freedom House Executive Committee, October 6, 1976, Freedom House Collection, box 3, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
rights around the world. He attempted to sell the Survey for this use (in the mid-1970s), illustrating his role in the project as marketer.

On Thursday, December 4, 1975, Leonard Sussman testified before the Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance and Economic Policy of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Generally speaking, the particular amendment about which Sussman testified dealt with a proposal to link foreign aid with the level of human rights in recipient countries. Sussman’s testimony here was both interesting and important in a number of ways. First, Sussman, while not necessarily being critical of governmental policy, argued against this linkage. That is to say, the Executive Director of Freedom House, an organization that purports to be one of the most important advocates in the advancement of freedom and basic human rights globally, suggested that the amount of aid a nation receives from the United States not be dependent in any way on the level of freedom among its citizens. He claimed to take this position for a number of reasons. First, “in my view,” the Board of Trustees of Freedom House would largely be divided on the issue. Secondly, he urged the government to reconsider linking assistance with human rights violations, as “…there may be overriding American national security considerations.” This stance seems counter to the original purpose and agenda of Freedom House, and reflects the organization’s increasing concern with U.S. national security during Sussman’s testimony before Congress is addressed in full later in the chapter.

Sussman’s testimony was in relation to Amendment No. 1155 to Bill S-2662—International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1975.

It seems odd, however, that given the time to prepare for this testimony he was unsure what the position of at least a majority of the Board members was on the issue.

Sussman believed the Freedom House Board would be divided on the issue precisely because of these “considerations.”

Congressional Testimony, Sussman to Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance and Economic Policy of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, December 4, 1975, Freedom House Collection, box 55, folder 17, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
tenure, one that would override its commitment to democracy. Thirdly, “…a consistent pattern of gross violations may not be established, though occasional or even aberrant examples of such violations may be apparent.” That is to say, Sussman asserted that a few sporadic human rights abuses were not sufficient cause to deny a country U.S. foreign assistance. Ultimately, much of what Sussman said before Congress on the issue ran counter to the democratic principles with which Freedom House had long been associated. Rather than speak at length about this particular amendment, which he never fully endorsed, Sussman used his testimony to advance the Comparative Survey. What is truly needed, he argued, is a governmental office that can make such determinations on the level of human rights on a country-by-country basis. Enter the Comparative Survey.

After giving a brief background on Freedom House, Sussman tailored his representation of the Comparative Survey and the organization itself to what the State Department may have been looking for – a seemingly legitimate way to make aid allocation decisions. “…[B]y means of our Comparative Survey of Freedom we have established and continually strive to refine a universal standard for measuring the level of human rights in every nation and dependent territory.” Sussman argued that the Survey measures the concept of human rights, and he used the term interchangeably with freedom and democracy. Sussman claimed that the Comparative Survey established “criteria for a standard of individual freedom that

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299 This over nationalism perhaps reaches an all-time high in the 1980s, as will be evidenced in the changing mission statements of the organization (this is addressed in the following chapter).
300 Congressional Testimony, Sussman to Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance and Economic Policy of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, December 4, 1975, Freedom House Collection, box 55, folder 17, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
301 Ibid.
goes beyond recording gross violations [of human rights] and describes as well the degree of movement toward a generally free society.”302 These criteria of freedom could therefore be used to ascertain the level of human rights in any given country. He was also careful to argue that the Survey does “…not set forth the American political system as the standard, nor do we assume western liberal democracy is necessarily the highest form of political development, though it does presently provide varied forms of comparatively free societies.”303 In addition, Sussman presented the Survey as an objective measure of freedom. “It has been argued that it is not possible to create an objective standard to test the conduct of all nations with regard to conditions of human rights. There are, it is said, vastly differing cultures, traditions and juridical, social, economic and political systems. Freedom House rejects this view.”304 While this sales pitch was clearly aimed at what Sussman argued the needs of the State Department were in order to properly make such decisions as the Amendment in question would require, he was also careful to claim that the Survey is not attached to an American conception of democracy. The organization’s prevailing regard for the foreign policy concerns of the neconservative movement, however, show this claim to be untrue.

Sussman continued his pitch to the State Department in a letter to Henry Kissinger (then Secretary of State). In a letter dated March 29, 1976, Sussman stated that, while Freedom House could not sanction the withdrawal of aid to influence political outcomes in other countries supported by the Amendment in question on which he was called to testify, the organization was “…particularly interested in the

302 Ibid.
303 Ibid.
304 Ibid.
procedures by which the Department of State, presumably through a new Office of Human Rights, will inform the Congress of the level of human rights in the relevant countries.\textsuperscript{305} This new “…law, however, would empower the Department to secure relevant data from nongovernmental as well as governmental sources. Freedom House, we submit, may be of particular service in this analytical and reportorial process.”\textsuperscript{306} Again, Sussman explained the history of the organization as one in which freedom and democracy have been advanced and promoted throughout the years, but focused on the Comparative Survey, which he argued “…is indeed recognized by scholars in Europe, Japan and, of course, throughout the United States. A recent study at the Institute of Political Science, University of Florence, Italy concluded that our Survey is the most reliable empirical analysis of freedom. A Georgetown University monograph comes to the same conclusion. A number of your academic colleagues at Harvard, Columbia, Berkeley and Stanford regularly employ our analyses and express favorable judgments of its value…The press in the United States, Europe and Asia, moreover, is accustomed to accepting our Survey as \textit{the established criterion of the level of freedom around the world}” [emphasis added].\textsuperscript{307} It is clear here that Sussman saw a great opportunity for the Survey, and a chance to form a lasting relationship with the United States government. Sussman also added

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{305} Sussman did enclose a “Sampling, news reports and editorials on Survey, January-February 1976” with his letter to Kissinger, but they were not among the documents in this folder. Letter, Sussman to Kissinger, March 29, 1976, Freedom House Collection, box 41, folder 4, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

\textsuperscript{306} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{307} Ibid.
\end{footnotesize}
that “Of no small consequence, foreign governments often turn to us for criteria and judgments” [emphasis added].

The State Department did indeed respond to Sussman’s push for the Survey’s use in aid allocation decisions. J.M. Wilson, Jr. (the U.S. State Department’s Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs), who responded to Sussman at Kissinger’s request, clearly envisioned a relationship in the future between the government agency and Freedom House. Specifically, Wilson told Sussman that the Comparative Survey would be used by the State Department to determine whether or not countries would receive (or continue to receive) U.S. aid.

We accordingly anticipate many difficult problems in implementing the human rights provisions of the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976. We appreciate the extremely useful work that Freedom House has been doing for many years in monitoring the status of political and civil freedoms around the world and we hope to maintain a close professional relationship with your organization. It is our present intention to use Freedom House’s reports, as well as those of Amnesty International, the International Commission of Jurists, information available from the UN Human Rights Commission and many other sources in the public domain in dealing with our human rights reporting responsibilities as suggested in the new legislation.

308 Ibid. Ultimately, Sussman pitched the Survey to the U.S. government in a style reminiscent of Field’s representation of Sussman, who he claimed excelled at “…act[s] of salesmanship to win satisfied customers” (Letter, Field to Sussman, November 29, 1969, George Field Collection, box 2, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library). This letter also includes Field’s resignation as a member of the Executive Committee.


310 Letter, Wilson to Sussman, April 29, 1976, Freedom House Collection, box 41, folder 4, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
Wilson closed the letter by stating that the Deputy Coordinator for the Human Rights Office would be visiting New York soon, and Wilson had asked him to meet with Sussman in order “…to gain the insights I know Freedom House has to offer us.”

Leonard Sussman’s persistence and “salesmanship” had clearly paid off, and the Survey’s influence on important decision-making apparatuses in the United States government was on its way to being established.

THE SURVEY AND THE INTER-UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM FOR POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RESEARCH

The Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research was established in 1962; it is now best known “as the data dissemination arm of the American National Election Studies (ANES).” This institution has grown to be one of the most important sources of data for scholars in the social sciences, and also functions as a training site. Its summer programs teach students to conduct research in a manner consistent with the use of large datasets. It is not surprising, therefore, that Sussman corresponded with members of the institution in the early years of the Comparative Survey.

Prior to the Survey’s publication in book form, Leonard Sussman was approached by Robert Beattie, the then Assistant Director of the International Politics section at ICPSR. Thus, while Sussman definitely anticipated the importance of the

311 Ibid.
312 See the ICPSR’s own rendition of its history on its website, at: https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/content/membership/history/early-years.html. Although the American National Election Studies’ survey data goes back as far as 1948, the ANES was not officially formed until 1977. Its formation “as a national research resource” was made possible by National Science Foundation funding. See the ANES’ own description of its origins here: http://www.electionstudies.org/overview/origins.htm.
313 The summer program at ICPSR has been in existence since 1963, and methods skills are often required by graduate programs in political science.
Survey for Freedom House’s relationship with the United States government, its use as data for social scientists was not an immediate motivation for the creation of the scores. In 1976 correspondence Sussman stated that “[i]n a less direct way, our Survey has an impact by virtue of the data it provides for scholars in the human rights field (admittedly few in number) and political and social scientists generally.”

Therefore, it was actually the data collecting institution of ICPSR that first saw the niche these ratings could fill in the discipline. Dated March 20, 1977, the correspondence represents a recognition on the part of ICPSR that “[t]his project is one of great importance for scholars and policy analysts interested in monitoring the international system,” and suggested that:

[...perhaps we might cooperate with your organization in making the freedom data more widely available to researchers around the world. The ICPSR is an organization composed of some 250 institutions of education and research in the U.S. and abroad. One of our activities is to acquire social science data for rediffusion in computer-readable form to individuals at member institutions and elsewhere.]

The institution clearly saw the value of disseminating the Comparative Survey, and Beattie even offered, if Freedom House had not already done so, to “…punch the data onto IBM cards, and…add standard country codes to the data so they may be merged with other data…Moreover, as you continue this project over time analysts will have available a file for time series analysis. All in all the prospects seem very exciting.”

This correspondence demonstrates that at a very early point, even before the Comparative Survey emerged from under the wings of Freedom House’s journal

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314 Letter, Sussman to Dr. William Evan of the Department of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, April 7, 1976, Freedom House Collection, box 40, folder 12, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
315 Letter, Robert Beattie to Sussman, March 20, 1977, Freedom House Collection, box 40, folder 12, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
316 Ibid.
Freedom at Issue to appear in book form, institutions such as ICPSR recognized the utility of the scores for other researchers. The Survey, a ranking system that Gastil freely admitted after his departure from the organization was based largely on his own intuitions, was being set up for large scale dissemination as early as 1977. ICPSR was most interested in obtaining the Survey so that it could be compared alongside other measures and variables.\textsuperscript{317} The fact that the Survey was collected over the span of many years made it amenable to time series analysis as well. The Comparative Survey conducted by Gastil between 1972 and 1976 (prior to its publication in book form) eventually became available through ICPSR in 1984.\textsuperscript{318}

**GASTIL’S RESPONSE TO EARLY CRITICISMS OF THE SURVEY: A REVELATION OF PURPOSE**

While there is currently a great deal of literature dedicated to a discussion of the methodological shortcomings\textsuperscript{319} of the Comparative Survey of Freedom, little attention is devoted to the intuitive, unscientific, non-quantitative nature of the ratings or the organization’s relationship with the United States government. This, however, was not always the case. As early as summer of 1977, prior to its publication separately from the journal Freedom at Issue, some criticism of the Survey along these lines appeared.

\textsuperscript{318} The collaboration between Freedom House and ICPSR appears to have been short-lived. These are the only years for which the Comparative Survey is available through the ICPSR website, and this data was released on May 3, 1984 in aggregate form. That is to say, in this collection “[t]he [Freedom House] data for five years [1972-1976] have been combined to produce one continuous record for each country.” See the summary of this data collection here: http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/7555#accessNotes. However, every Comparative Survey, dating back to 1973, is available in spreadsheet form on Freedom House’s website here: https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world.

\textsuperscript{319} These methodological shortcomings are discussed in Chapter 1.
Raymond Gastil responded to such criticism in one particular letter to the editor of the International Herald Tribune dated August 17, 1977. In it he refers to a July 28th piece written by Jonathan Power, a journalist who wrote for the New York Times in the late 1970’s. Gastil asserted that Power “has criticized the ‘reliance’ of the State Department on Freedom House’s Comparative Survey of Freedom for its judgment of the state of human rights in a report to Congress. In fact, the State Department’s report mentions but does not rely on the Survey.” Gastil claimed that the American government also gleans information from other available sources, including Amnesty International, and ultimately arrives at its own conclusions regarding the status of freedom in a particular country and whether or not to aid it.

Although Freedom House would later face some scrutiny (see Chomsky 1988, for example) regarding its particular neo-Conservative political affiliation and alignment with government interests, Power was perhaps the first to point out such a connection. Gastil rebuts this claim by stating that “…we must insist that Freedom House is not a rightist organization…Founded in 1941 to alert the nation to the Fascist or Nazi danger, Freedom House has striven ever since to condemn even-handedly repressions of both the right and left.” These types of criticisms of the organization, however, started to appear during Leonard Sussman’s tenure as Executive Director, and more specifically, with the introduction of the Comparative Survey of Freedom and the organization’s growing association with the United States government.

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320 Letter, Gastil to the International Herald Tribune, August 17, 1977, Freedom House Collection, box 40, folder 12, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
321 Ibid.
The most potent criticism of the Survey Power made, however, had to do with the lack of transparency in the formation of the ratings. “Mr. Power also criticizes the use of the Survey because it is ‘highly subjective’ and ‘entirely intuitive,’ …Let us consider this criticism at some length. Since no one has made the study of freedom into an exact science, there can be no doubt that the necessarily incomplete work of the Survey is also inexact.”

Gastil defended the Survey by claiming that even though the social sciences are not perfectly scientific, his scores are still a better measure than any others available. In particular, he criticized work done by Jorge Dominguez for the Council on Foreign Relations. Dominguez attempted to measure the development of societies based on “a broad range of interesting statistics relevant to social, political and economic development in Cuba and Mexico.”

Gastil, however, argued that this undertaking was too ambitious, and was plagued by the author’s lack of concretely defined concepts. The Comparative Survey, on the other hand, he argued, is a much better indicator of a society’s political development, determined by its level of democracy, primarily because it is much more narrowly focused in two important ways.

First, we feel with Isaiah Berlin that freedom is a coherent concept only if we restrict its use to a group of fairly closely related and largely negative freedoms (aside from competitive elections). Secondly, we are interested primarily in the performance of political systems, and do not believe that political systems should take responsibility for the whole of society.

Ultimately, Gastil admitted to the use of a particular, procedural definition of democracy founded on a negative conception of liberty (the extent to which one’s

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322 Ibid.
323 Ibid.
324 Ibid.
actions are unimpeded by another), a conception he claimed is not only easier to measure but also a more desirable conception in general. Gastil argued that it is necessary to define freedom in largely negative terms in order to avoid its misuse by tyrannies guided by the thought of Rousseau or the German romantics. For this reason, in the political context I have drawn fairly tight lines around an essentially individualistic definition of freedom in the spirit of J. S. Mill. This is only one way to define freedom, but I believe it is preferable, and certainly clearer.

That is to say, while positive connotations of liberty involve some higher level of self-determination and not merely non-interference, Gastil chose to defend a decidedly negative conception of freedom. In addition, Gastil rejects the notion that citizens’ basic material needs must be met in order for them to exercise political power. He argues that “…political power is much more easily converted to economic power than the reverse. In the long run, political freedoms would seem to be the best defense against economic injustice.” Thus, the consideration of socioeconomic factors drops out from Freedom House’s assessment of the global status of democracy.

Gastil leveled many other criticisms against the work of Dominguez that reveal the way in which he believed proper social science research should be conducted. Along with his lack of narrow and concrete concepts, Gastil admonished

325 The “‘negative’ sense [of liberty], is involved in the answer to the question ‘What is the area within which the subject - a person or group of persons - is or should be left to do or be what he is able to do or be, without interference by other persons?’” (Berlin 1969: 121-122).
326 Institutional, procedural definitions of democracy are certainly more amenable to checklists.
327 Memo, “Reply to the Critics,” by Raymond Gastil, September 16, 1974, p. 2, Freedom house Collection, box 40, folder 12, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
328 See Berlin 1969 for these depictions of positive v. negative liberty, from whom Gastil draws this distinction.
329 Memo, “Reply to the Critics,” by Raymond Gastil, September 16, 1974, p. 7, Freedom house Collection, box 40, folder 12, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
Domínguez for his reliance on particular sources of data in an attempt to arrive at the level of political and social development\(^3\) in the countries he studied. The work ... illustrates the difficulties encountered when analysts attempt to relate available statistics to very broad qualitative concepts... Without these statistics, and with narrower definitions, the Survey is much more transparent, [and] less intuitive. Its transparency lies in the ease of qualitative agreement among knowledgeable people on our ratings.\(^1\)

Thus, at this time Gastil was very critical of any attempt to reconcile a qualitative approach, such as regional studies, with a more quantitative one, and actually tried to make the argument that the Comparative Survey of Freedom is the best benchmark from which to measure global democracy “in the Western liberal tradition” because it relies only on itself (and no other indicators – unlike Domínguez’s work). Gastil claimed the Survey’s general acceptance\(^2\) by journalists and academics was evidence of its accuracy and worth. While Gastil never explicitly claimed that the Survey is scientific, he certainly seemed to think it is the best measure of democracy available.

**POST-FREEDOM HOUSE:**
**GASTIL’S REFLECTIONS ON THE SURVEY**
**17 YEARS AFTER ITS INCEPTION**

After Raymond Gastil left Freedom House in 1989, he published an article in *Studies in Comparative International Development* the following year entitled “The Comparative Survey of Freedom: Experiences and Suggestions.” He described the

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\(^1\) Letter, Gastil to the International Herald Tribune, August 17, 1977, Freedom House Collection, box 40, folder 12, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

\(^2\) Gastil would again later (in 1990) point to the fact that the Survey’s rankings were similar to that of other measures as proof of its general accuracy.
Survey in general as “a loose, intuitive rating system for levels of freedom or democracy” (Gastil 1990: 25). Gastil admitted that “it was years before its author [himself] understood that the survey was essentially a survey of democracy” (Gastil 1990: 26). That is to say, while Gastil initially understood the scores as a measure of global freedom, he later came to the realization that the ranking system represented the level of democracy within countries. Therefore, though Gastil did not originally approach the Survey as measuring democracy, he later came to the conclusion that the concept was synonymous with freedom. Gastil even went so far as to claim that the Survey may not even truly be capturing democracy (1990: 26). In particular, “[d]etailed comparative literature on political systems and behavior opens up problems that the relatively superficial survey has not addressed [emphasis added]” (Gastil 1990: 26). That is to say, simply assigning a numeric score to a country does not necessarily tell one much about the actual status of freedom in that country. He went on state that labeling all Western democracies as 1-1 (or “Free”) obscures differences between them. This prevents researchers from developing a more substantive definition of democracy, or examining the extent to which said country is actually free. This is a major criticism of the Survey, given that Gastil has stated at various points in time that the primary purpose of the scores is comparison between countries.

Examining in detail the literature on the United States, Great Britain, Sweden, Switzerland, or Japan, raises many doubt as to the degree to which political competition is really open and fair, or ‘meaningful.’ Although the media appear ‘fair,’ are they not constrained by an unspoken consensus representing powerful economic and bureaucratic forces in the society that makes effective criticism and mobilization for change impossible? Similarly, how do we compare party systems? In most party systems, the choice of candidates is

333 Indicating a score of “1” for political rights and “1” for civil liberties.
made form the top down, with little more than ratification at local levels. The United States has been the only major democracy with a primary system. Yet in our system, the advantages for incumbents in the House of Representatives are such that only flagrant public abuses or incompetence makes possible an effective challenge. Our ineffective party system and lack of party discipline means that most senators and representatives cannot be held responsible by the voters for the success or failure of successive government. To weigh such criticisms and differences in a more detailed survey with more rating levels would require more than marginal growth in the present resources of the survey (Gastil 1990: 26-7).

Perhaps what is most startling about Gastil’s commentary in the article is his blatant public, admission in a scholarly journal that the Survey is both cursory and non-quantitative. In fact, Gastil actually deemed the Survey “superficial,” “relatively superficial” and “highly personal” at multiple points in the piece (Gastil 1990: 26).334

Gastil’s explanation of the methodology of the Survey in this article reinforces his earlier claims, particularly response to the criticisms of Jonathan Power in 1977, that it is both un-scientific and superficial. While Gastil never uses the exact term “un-scientific” to refer to the creation of the scores, saying he did not employ quantitative methods and that the Survey is “superficial” implies this in my view (Gastil 1990: 26). In a letter to Sussman dated November 23, 1983, Gastil addressed recent changes he made to the Survey. He writes: “Obviously there is no scientific means of perfectly placing countries that vary in so many ways and for which we have such incomplete information…my hope would be to be right not on the absolute placing of a country but on its relative placing.”335 Gastil went on to add that “we [Freedom House] have never claimed that every judgment on every country is

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334 This piece in general seems to be a self-reflection on Gastil’s part. Perhaps he was able to write about these issues publicly because he was no longer associated with Freedom House at this point in time.
335 Letter, Gastil to Sussman, November 23, 1983, Freedom House Collection, box 41, folder 1, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
accurate… In regard to the seven point scales our standard has been that no country should be more than one point off what a more careful analysis would determine.”

These comments also imply that Gastil was assigning scores to countries based on his perception of a limited amount of information.

Gastil’s comments about the Survey seven years later echo those he made in this previous correspondence. In 1978 Gastil responded to a request from an educational center to use the Comparative Survey by stating that “It should also be clear in your presentation that our work is quantitative only in the sense that numbers are used to designate points along continua. The categories would as well be labeled A – G as (1) to (7). The important point is the relative rather than absolute standing of nations.” In another letter the following year Gastil explicitly stated that “The Survey does not employ quantitative methods fashionable in political science.” In 1990 Gastil expands on his description of his creation of the Comparative Survey, but he does not necessarily cover any new critical ground. The difference, however, is that this later admission was made publicly, rather than in private correspondence. Gastil did not publicly portray his process of arriving at the scores as “highly personal,” “superficial,” and “intuitive” when he was still working in an official capacity at Freedom House (Gastil 1990: 25-26). Instead, Gastil was quiet on the subject and let Sussman take the lead as marketer of the Survey. And

336 Ibid.
337 Letter, Gastil to Mr. Kenneth A. Switzer, Staff Associate, QUESST, Educational Resources Center, Boulder, CO, September 7, 1978, Freedom House Collection, box 41, folder 1, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
338 Letter, Gastil to Dr. William R. Kintner, President, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Philadelphia, February 5, 1979, Freedom House Collection, box 41, folder 1, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
Sussman pitched the Survey as “a universal standard for measuring the level of human rights in every nation and dependent territory.” 339

While the ratings were the result of Gastil’s intuitions, which he later freely admitted, he also seemed to find nothing wrong with this process. Instead, he takes comfort from the fact that “the few times that the monograph or journal literature has actually been researched [in order to compare the survey results to more in-depth country reports], remarkably little has been found that affected the ratings” (Gastil 1990: 26). Again, Gastil readily accedes these points, perhaps due to the fact that he did not see the Survey’s rankings as quantitative because he did not employ any formal methodology in order to arrive at them.

In reflecting on the origins of the Survey’s data in 1990, Gastil pondered, quite rightly, whether or not any undertaking of this kind is possible without making subjective decisions about a particular country’s situation, and democracy in general.

Are we not after all engaged in a form of judgment? We could assume that we are not judging, that we are simply setting up a list of criteria, devised at a particular point in history, and seeing how other societies measure up to them. But if this is so, then how are we going to mark the divisions on our ruler when it involves societies that seem to excel, or believe they do, our top marks? (Gastil 1990: 41).

Clearly, the survey’s methodology is and has always been based on “judgment calls” (Gastil 1990: 28). Gastil used Poland’s rankings to illustrate this point.

For example, one year Poland might be ‘6-5, Not Free,’ while the next it might be ‘6-5, Partly Free.’ The author had a picture in his mind as to what a five and six were on each scale, and also a picture of what Not Free and Partly Free were. Since these were all continuous scales, the author reasoned that a ‘high five’ and a ‘high six’ might be considered Not Free, while a ‘low five’

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339 See the previous discussion in this chapter of Sussman’s 1975 testimony before Congress.
and a ‘low six’ could be Partly Free.\textsuperscript{340} The logic was fine, but the result confusing [emphasis added] (Gastil 1990: 28).

Again, Gastil’s description of his process in creating the scores, based on “a picture in his mind,” clearly reveal that \textit{he alone} was chiefly responsible for the Survey. Even if Gastil was using government sources to inform his decisions about the scores he assigned to countries (as he claims), he was certainly not an “expert” on every country, let alone the region to which they belonged. At best, such a method would lead to perfunctory choices about how to rate countries with which one had only a passing familiarity.

These judgment calls are also reflected in the leeway granted an investigator who sits down with the “simplest of checklists”\textsuperscript{341} in order to determine a country’s rating (Gastil 1990: 27). Below are the checklists included in the article for both political rights and civil liberties. Gastil claimed that these were used to assess the level of freedom in the countries included in the Comparative Survey.

Gastil also addressed critics of the Survey who over the years called for the creation of a more accurate, scientific ranking system. He claimed that “[t]he unevenness of the sources of available information over time and its incompleteness has been a major reason why the survey never acceded to the occasional suggestion that \textit{a more transparent system} be devised in which many subindicators would be rated numerically, and then summed up for an overall rating.” (Gastil 1990: 29).

\textsuperscript{340} Countries’ numeric scores related to their ranking in the three tier system as follows: the interval between 1 and 2.5 is categorized as “Free,” those between 3 and 5 as “Partly Free,” and those above 5.5 as “Not Free.” This system leaves even more room for interpretation on Gastil’s part, as he indicates, because a country with a ranking of 5.4, for example, does not clearly fit into either the “Partly Free” or “Not Free” category.

\textsuperscript{341} This checklist was not present in either the 1973 or 1978 publications of the Survey (its first appearances in print in journal and book form, respectively).
TABLE 4. The Comparative Survey’s Checklist for Political Rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHECKLIST FOR POLITICAL RIGHTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Chief authority recently elected by a meaningful process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Legislature recently elected by a meaningful process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternatives for 1 and 2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. No choice and possibility of rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. No choice but some possibility of rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Government or single-party selected candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Choice possible only among government-approved candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Relatively open choices possible only in local elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Open choice possible within a restricted range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Relatively open choices possible in all elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fair election laws, campaigning opportunity, polling and tabulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fair reflection of voter preference in distribution of power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Parliament, for example, has effective power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Multiple political parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Only dominant party allowed effective opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Open to rise and fall of competing parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Recent shifts in power through elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Significant opposition vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Free of military or foreign control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Major group or groups denied reasonable self-determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Decentralized political power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Informal consensus; de facto opposition power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Adapted from Gastil 1990: 30. In this article Gastil did not go into detail regarding what the features on this checklist meant for him, or how he determined these features were indeed present in the countries examined by the Survey.
**Table 5. The Comparative Survey’s Checklist for Civil Liberties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Checklist for Civil Liberties</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. Media/literature free of political censorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Press independent of government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Broadcasting independent of government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Open public discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Freedom of assembly and demonstration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Freedom of political or quasipolitical organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Nondiscriminatory rule of law in politically relevant cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Independent judiciary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Security forces respect individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Free from unjustified terror or imprisonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Free from imprisonment or exile for reasons of conscience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Free from torture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Free from terror by groups not opposed to the system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Free from government-organized terror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Free trade unions, peasant organizations, or equivalents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Free businesses or cooperatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Free professional or other private organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Free religious institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Personal social rights: including those to property, internal and external travel, choice of residence, marriage and family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Socioeconomic rights: including freedom from dependency on landlords, bosses, union leaders, or bureaucrats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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343 Adapted from Gastil 1990: 36-37. These criteria loosely follow what Dahl identifies as “Some Requirements for a Democracy among a Large Number of People,” in a table in *Polyarchy* (1971: 3). These requirements include “the opportunity to: formulate preferences; signify preferences; and have preferences weighted equally in conduct of government,” and their corresponding “institutional guarantees” (Dahl 1971: 3).

344 The majority of these economic aspects focus on protecting property accumulation and other neoliberal concepts. Most do not reflect a more substantive definition of democracy, in my view, because they do not reflect the notion that economic rights are important precursors for the exercise of political ones.
Table 5 – Continued

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24. Freedom from gross socioeconomic inequality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Freedom from gross government indifference or corruption</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gastil even briefly responded to the criticism of a right-wing bias, particularly relevant during the time he was writing. This claim, he argued, “is based on opinions about Freedom House rather than a detailed examination of survey ratings” (Gastil 1990: 26). He clearly differentiated between the organization and the Survey, which remained under his direction until 1989.345

Gastil partly blames the lack of institutional resources (personnel, finances, etc.), at least in the early stages of the project for the shallowness of the Survey.

With little or no staff support, the author has carried out most of the research and ratings. Lack of a research staff is not as overwhelming a fault as it might appear. By working alone the author has not had to integrate the judgments of a variety of people. The hunches and impressions that are so important in a survey of this kind would be almost impossible to keep on the same wavelengths if one had an Asianist, Africanist, and Latin Americanist to satisfy before the ratings were finalized for each year (Gastil 1990: 26).

Gastil therefore paints a very different picture about the origins of the Survey than do Freedom House itself, most academic social scientists, or the U.S. government. For example, Freedom House, in the “Our History” section of its website, currently claims the following:

In 1973, Freedom House launched what is now its flagship publication, Freedom in the World, an annual survey of global political rights and civil liberties. Employing a methodology devised by leading social scientists, the survey analyzes and rates every country in the world on a series of fundamental freedom indicators. Its results always highly anticipated, it

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345 This differentiation is further evidence of the fact that Gastil alone, unlike the Board and a multitude of other Freedom House members in the past, was responsible for the content of the Survey.
provides policymakers, journalists, and the public a comprehensive view of the global state of freedom [emphasis added].

Given what Gastil had to say about the creation of the Survey, making it clear that he alone was responsible for all of its content, it seems quite deceptive on the part of Freedom House now to claim that the scores were “devised by leading social scientists” (plural). This description presents the Survey’s creation very differently than Gastil did in his 1990 article, and lends a false air of credibility to the scores as a result. Not only was Gastil the only person coming up with these rankings, but he admitted he did so in a non-quantitative sense (they could just as well have been assigned letters rather than numbers). Freedom House’s retrospective description of the Survey as having been the result of a “methodology” of “leading social scientists” attributes a scientific, quantitative character to the scores that they really did not possess. Even if one could claim that the Survey has become more quantitative or “scientific” over time, the way in which the measures originated would still undermine their credibility given that a country’s previous years’ ratings highly influence its current standing. Gastil explained this aspect of the measures:

> [T]he work of the survey in subsequent years has consisted of following news about a country in a variety of sources, and occasionally changing ratings when the news did not fit the established rating level. In effect, the author developed rough models in his mind as to what to expect of a country at each rating level, reexamining his ratings only when current information no longer supported this model [emphasis added] (Gastil 1990: 27).

Ultimately, “[T]he original intention was to produce, with relatively few manhours, an orienting discussion of variation in levels of freedom” (Gastil 1990: 25). The focus, then, was not on creating an authoritative measure of global democracy. The Survey, which was initially created in order to start conversation and

346 http://www.freedomhouse.org/content/our-history
be easily translated into a map, has become one of the discipline’s principal measurements of democracy. How, then, did social scientists come to regard these measures as valid and reliable when the Survey originated with one man’s “hunches and impressions”? (Gastil 1990: 26).

**CONCLUSION**

Both what was included in Freedom House reports and the manner in which the organization publicly talked about what they were doing in them changed greatly during Sussman’s tenure. While the Balance Sheets were presented as a representation of the beliefs of the Public Affairs Committee, the Comparative Survey was marketed as objective. When the Comparative Survey replaced the Balance Sheet of Freedom, the transparency of Freedom House’s reporting declined. The domestic focus of the reports dropped out almost completely by the time the Survey appeared in the January-February 1973 publication of *Freedom at Issue*. Even prior to that point, domestic politics were discussed in a much more nationalistic tone than under George Field’s leadership as Executive Director. While Sussman came up with the idea for the Survey, it was created by one individual, Raymond Gastil, behind closed doors. The Comparative Survey marked an end to the transparency of the organization’s early reports, and the introduction of a numeric ranking system concealed the fact that “hunches” and “impressions” of one person who relied on a lot of government data and reports produced them. Perhaps the strongest evidence of this trend, and of the non-quantitative constitution of the scores, are the words of Gastil himself. The fame of the Survey, and its influence, seemed to surprise Gastil
when he reflected on the origin of the scores in 1990. The Survey’s renown and use in both academia and governmental policy decisions, were the result of conscious efforts on the part of Leonard Sussman. Sussman was responsible for the Survey’s conception, Gastil for its creation. Therefore, Sussman’s tenure as Executive Director was the pivotal time period in which the changes in the organization identified in this chapter began.
CHAPTER VII

FUNDING AND FUELING:
PERSONNEL, COVERT ACTIVITIES AND OTHER CONTROVERSIES

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will discuss the process by which Freedom House as a whole changed when Leonard Sussman replaced George Field as Executive Director in 1967. Ultimately, while it is impossible to settle the debate between these two men, what can be effectively illustrated is that the Freedom House people know today is an altogether different organization than it used to be – and this is both a personal and an institutional story. While the personal story has been well-documented by Field, who was clearly quite dismayed by the changing nature of Freedom House under Sussman’s leadership, the institutional story is about money and the new way Freedom House began portraying what it does to the world.

From its thoroughly political beginning up until the introduction of the Comparative Survey in 1973, Freedom House owned its work as propaganda. Calling itself democracy’s counterpart to the German propaganda machine, the Braunhaus, makes this very explicit. This role, however, and the numerous links between Freedom House and the U.S. government, were not then seen by the organization as a pollution of its purpose. It does not seem that anyone considered these overlapping associations or the fact that Freedom House was created to drum up support for U.S. involvement in a foreign war as unethical, unprofessional, or in any way detrimental to the purity of the cause they purported to champion – democracy. This general
sentiment, however, was characteristic of many organizations, and even universities, during this time. One notable example of what Chester (1995) termed “the covert network” was Michigan State University’s South Vietnam project in the 1950s that “provided academic cover for U.S. aid to the Saigon regime,” including the provision of arms and training of secret police (Chester 1995: 163). While the project was later terminated and proved quite embarrassing for MSU, the university’s president stated that he “recognized at the beginning that we were involving ourselves in some activities that were hardly appropriate for a university to be concerned with, but because it seemed in the United States’ national interest we agreed to do what we were asked to do” (Chester 1995: 164).

This unequivocal association with the U.S. government, however, was in fact weaker at the origins of Freedom House because one important part of that relationship was then missing – huge sums of money. Funding from the government and subsidiaries thereof, and a lot of it, occurred later. Freedom House now receives over eighty percent of its budget from the U.S. State Department and the United States Agency for International Development, yet the organization continues to maintain that it is independent (Giannone 2010: 68-97; Zerndt 2016: XXX).

Beyond the exorbitant amount of money formally funneled into Freedom House by the U.S. government, there have been periodic accusations over the years that Freedom House projects have provided cover for, and been funded by the Central Intelligence Agency (see Chomsky 1988 in particular). These claims were made as

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347 For Chester (1995) this term denotes “…the interconnected set of organizations helping the U.S. intelligence community to implement a variety of clandestine operations designed to destabilize the Soviet Union and its dependent allies” (1). Freedom House as a part of this covert network will be explained in detail later in the chapter.
348 John Hannah.
early as 1976 by the *New York Times* and as recently as January of 2015 by famed investigative journalist Robert Parry. I show in this chapter that these accusations have merit. One of the distinctive changes Freedom House underwent as an organization during Sussman’s leadership was its increasing endorsement of U.S. foreign policy actions, even when those actions were detrimental to democratization in other countries. Freedom House’s newfound hesitation to criticize the actions of the American government reflects the strengthened relationship between the two.

Apart from Sussman, another individual at the heart of Freedom House activities during this era was Leo Cherne, who had been involved in the organization’s affairs since 1945. Mentioned in both the introduction and first chapter of this dissertation, Leo Cherne, like many of the influential figures in Freedom House, had his fingers in many pies (often with conflicting objectives). Cherne’s career illustrates that of a democratization “double agent,” a network professional “occupy[ing] multiple positions in different areas of society…The distinctions between these positions] are blurred by the behavior of agents who constantly shift between these ‘capacities’ but have at the same time and for the same reason an interest in the maintenance of such boundaries” (Guilhot 2005: 12). These individuals therefore work to maintain the illusion that their occupation of these various positions in different organizations in no presents a conflict of interest. “Double agents,” like Cherne, exercise their professional knowledge of democracy promotion in various fields (academic, governmental, non-governmental, etc.), fields that often have “contending agendas” (Guilhot 2005: 13). Cherne’s story is one of a long association with the U.S. government and the CIA, and therefore illustrates the

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349 See pages 8-9 and 16 of the Introduction and page 43 of Chapter 1.
conflict of interest that this association and the funds obtained as a result presents for Freedom House. While Cherne is certainly not representative of Freedom House in its entirety nor chiefly responsible for the direction of the organization, his relatively well-documented work as an important and influential “democracy maker” suggests parallels to other less well-known leaders of Freedom House. Additionally, there are important similarities between Freedom House and the International Rescue Committee, which Cherne did direct. What has been written about Cherne and the IRC is particularly useful given the dearth of academic work on Freedom House.

THE FIELD/SUSSMAN DISPUTE:
FUNDING, TRANSPARENCY AND THE FUTURE OF FREEDOM HOUSE

While Cherne is an important example of a “double agent” associated with Freedom House, he did not direct the daily operations of the organization – George Field did. Although not much has been published on the inner workings of Freedom House during this particular era, the organization’s first leader did write at length about his experiences there. George Field stepped down as Executive Director in 1967 and officially cut ties with Freedom House in 1970. After doing so, he wrote three personal memoranda that would ultimately come to be housed in his personal collection in Princeton’s Mudd Manuscript Library. These writings include: “To Complete the Record” (March 23, 1970); “To Complete the Record – Part II” (January 5, 1985); and “The End of a Dream” (1988, with an addendum in 1990). The first was distributed to then members of the Board of Freedom House, the second to Leo Cherne alone (because Field mentioned him in the memo), and the last was intended for Field’s papers alone. These writings focused on Field’s discontent with
the leadership of Leonard Sussman, primarily with what Field saw as his successor’s mishandling of finances. Much of what George Field says in these memos about the financial resources of Freedom House after he left the organization was somewhat vague. For example, Field’s discussion of the lawsuit over the sale of the Willkie Memorial Building is difficult to make sense of without a lot of insider knowledge, while some of his references to Freedom House program changes initiated by Sussman lack specific detail. What is clear, however, is that Field believed that (1) Freedom House funds were increasing exponentially, (2) these funds constituted a conflict of interest, (3) the organization’s financial transparency was vanishing, and (4) all of these trends could be attributed to Sussman.

Prior to Sussman’s stint as Executive Director, Freedom House had a very modest budget. Between 1941 and 1967, while Field was at the helm, Freedom House “…never exceeded a budget of $40,000 a year” (Field 1988: 7). Although

350 I do not have the exact annual budget of Freedom House for each of its early years (under Field’s tenure), but the fact that its budget was far smaller during this era can be gleaned from more than a few documents. First, in 1943 the organization listed its major activities as radio broadcasts, mailings that reached 75,000, and a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times* (George Field Collection: Box 2). This considerably smaller operation did not require vast funds. Also, during this time the majority of Freedom House funds were obtained via individual contributions. Many of these came from dues paying members, who also paid to attend the annual Freedom House award dinner (reservations were $5), as well as special programs ($2) (both of these figures date from 1943). When trying to acquire a headquarters for Freedom House, as well as organizations similarly devoted to promoting democracy, the organization needed to raise $250,000. Freedom House raised $125,000 through the donations of 7,000 individuals alone. The “major” contributors to the Freedom House budget for the years 1965-1966 included 34 individuals, 2 unions (the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and the Undergarment and Negligee Workers Union) and 1 foundation (the Edith and Herbert Lehman Foundation, Inc.). Individuals also paid for copies of the Freedom House magazine, at 40 cents a piece in 1972. The scope of Freedom House programs and the source of its funds all point to a significantly smaller budget than would be characteristic of the Sussman era and beyond (by 1978 the budget had reached $350,000, and Sussman’s ambition to raise an additional $150,000 drove him to reach out to a fund raising public relations firm in order to achieve this). One contradictory figure does exist, however. In a *New York Times* article from August 24, 1966 titled “Freedom House’s First Director Seeks ‘Enthusiastic’ Successor,” the budget is listed at “about $80,000 annually.” It is unclear, however, if this figure differs due to the funds received from the other organizations housed in the Willkie Memorial Building, which went toward its upkeep. From its establishment in 1945 through 1965, “the Willkie Memorial Building of Freedom House, Inc., as a nonprofit organization, has made
the political origins of Freedom House cannot be denied, the scope of its activities
and influence were somewhat limited, particularly due to its small budget. Its
finances were at least one sector of the organization free from governmental
influence, making any prescriptions and proclaims in its publications that much more
independent. These funds were the culmination of many small sums from
contributing members and individuals, whose names are listed among the archival
documents I examined.351 During its early years “[w]ithout employing professional
fundraisers, we [Freedom House] relied entirely on voluntary contributions based on
my amateur approach to solicitation” (Field 1988: 7). These contributions
transparent, but they yielded a miniscule operating budget. This trend in funding
continued during the first few decades of Freedom House’s existence. In a 1949
memo titled “Freedom and Responsibility: A Statement about Freedom House,”
written by Dr. Harry Gideonse (President of Brooklyn College and of Freedom House
from 1959-1977), the finances of the organization are touted as a credit to its modest
beginnings, steeped not in wealth but in the pursuit of principle.

Our record is an open book…Freedom House is not endowed. It operates on a
shoe string budget [sic]. It lives on the devoted commitment, the time and
energy, of its board members, [and] of its friends in the nation’s professional,
artistic and industrial life. This is what has made possible, from time to time,

office space available to other nonprofit organizations. They are charged no rent but contribute to the
essential maintenance fund. It is estimated that they enjoy their convenient headquarters in the heart of
midtown New York at about twenty-five percent of what comparable facilities would cost”
(Levenstein 1965: 83). Despite this discrepancy, it is clear that the Freedom House budget during
Field’s tenure as Executive Director was miniscule in comparison to what it later became due to the
influx of government funding that occurred during the Sussman era. Therefore, I have corroborated
the gist of what Field says here.

351 Funding during the Field years was much more transparent, for a list of individual donors in 1967,
for example, see “Form Letters 1964-1968,” Freedom House Collection, box 30, folder 4, Department
of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. This source contains a letter
from Field to these particular contributors, dated May 8, 1967. Therefore, while it could be argued that
to some extent Freedom House has always been associated with the U.S. government (note its co-
foundling by Eleanor Roosevelt), this affiliation, as well as a muddying of its financial sources,
dramatically increased during Sussman’s tenure.
the radio programs – local, national and international – the policy statements, the pronouncements, ideas, products, initiatives of one sort or another related to our basic purposes…The task of clarifying the relationships of freedom and of responsibility is one that Freedom House has accepted, is willing to keep on working at in the future. But to do it, we must have support to pay for the actual clerical, office outlays. We look to our friends for this help [italicized portion handwritten].

The organization’s finances are no longer humble. Just eleven years after Field’s departure, the organization’s budget had exceeded this amount ($40,000) by a factor of fourteen. By 2013 Freedom House revenues reached nearly $32 million. This increase is directly linked to the increasing influence of the U.S. government over the organization – Freedom House now receives over eighty percent of its budget from the U.S. State Department and the United States Agency for International Development. In 2010, government funding as a percentage of Freedom House’s total revenue peaked at over ninety-six percent (see Table 5 below).

The figures in Table 5 are drawn from 990 forms submitted to the Internal Revenue Service by Freedom House as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. These are more reliable than the figures presented in the Freedom House financial

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352 Pamphlet, “Freedom and Responsibility,” 1949, p. 2-3, Freedom House Collection, box 30, folder 8, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
354 See the table below, which lists Freedom House revenues between 2000 and 2013. These figures are drawn from the 990 forms filed with the IRS by the organization.
355 See Freedom House Annual Reports, as well as Giannone 2010.
356 These forms can be viewed here: https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/131656647. Freedom House has had 501(c)(3) status since 1943.
reports made available to the public via the organization’s website in a number of ways.  

First, Freedom House lumps together all contributions in its financial reports 

Table 6. Freedom House Revenues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Government Contributions</th>
<th>Total Revenue</th>
<th>Government Funds as Percentage of Total Revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$28,153,101</td>
<td>$31,965,126</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$32,077,136</td>
<td>$34,528,992</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$40,734,566</td>
<td>$45,249,648</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$39,919,947</td>
<td>$41,448,447</td>
<td>96.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>$31,406,443</td>
<td>$33,511,970</td>
<td>93.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>$22,586,439</td>
<td>$24,694,112</td>
<td>91.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>$21,485,686</td>
<td>$24,353,279</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>$22,436,883</td>
<td>$25,910,084</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>$20,998,613</td>
<td>$23,469,504</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$20,248,012</td>
<td>$22,280,460</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>$12,768,691</td>
<td>$14,960,775</td>
<td>85.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>$11,043,836</td>
<td>$13,349,051</td>
<td>82.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>$8,470,960</td>
<td>$10,258,040</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$6,065,672</td>
<td>$8,030,388</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

– it does not provide one with a breakdown of the sources of this revenue. However, the organization is required to give this breakdown on the 990 forms it files. For example, if one were only to examine Freedom House’s self-distributed financial report for the year 2000, one would only see the category “Grants and Contributions,” which are listed at $7,966,697. Upon viewing the 990 form for the same year, however, one is able to see that $6,065,672 of that revenue originated from the U.S.

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357 Freedom House financial reports for 2001 – 2015 can be seen here: https://freedomhouse.org/content/freedom-house-annual-reports.
government (constituting over 75 percent of the Freedom House budget for that year). Secondly, the Freedom House financial reports available online are also misleading in that they list contributors according to only three categories: (1) “Contributors $10,000 and over,” (2) “Contributors $5,000 - $10,000,” and (3) “Contributors $1,000 - $5,000.” In keeping with the example of the year 2000, then, this particular report lists 20 other contributors in this top category aside from the United States State Department, the United States Agency for International Development, and the National Endowment for Democracy. Including twenty other contributors here (not to mention the categories themselves) is deceptive, considering over $6 million came from just one source – the United States government.

The finances of Freedom House were also a matter of great concern for George Field. Field believed that the funds Sussman sought out and accepted during his time as Executive Director constituted a conflict of interest for Freedom House. It is clear throughout Field’s writings what type of behavior he considers unethical. Field points to his first disagreement with Sussman as evidence of the different principles they adhered to regarding funding.

Sussman, [sometime between 1967 and 1970], willing to accept a $15,000 contribution for special Freedom House awards, proposed that we make a $5,000 award to each of three local leaders along with our customary Freedom Award to world personality. The donor, however, insisted on the privilege of making the selections, rather than leaving such decisions to the Freedom House Board of Directors. Although I favored the idea of local awards, I disapproved of the strings attached to the donation (Field 1988: 11).

Field believed that the acceptance of these types of funds directly contributed to a decrease in the financial transparency of Freedom House under Sussman. Field commented that during his tenure “we were always an open and independent
advocate of freedom” (Field 1985: 2). However, following Field’s departure, he soon noticed that “sizeable funding” was being made available for projects “without any public announcement of the organization’s sponsorship or the source of the funds for this project and others which followed” (Field 1985: 3). As the organization stepped away from its previous practice of disclosing funding sources, the term “restricted” funds became commonplace in its financial statements. It became clear to Field, however, that “after my resignation several years later, when he was free to ‘do his thing,’ Freedom House operated with large sums of ‘restricted funds,’” Sussman’s own label for such commissioned donations [those with strings attached] (Field 1988: 11). Field cites the following figures, provided by Sussman himself during the subsequent legal proceedings in his attempt to sell the Willkie Memorial building, as evidence of these suspicious “commissioned donations.”

Field believed these figures proved that “…the chief executive of Freedom House [Sussman] was engaged in a sub-rosa operation…Where did these funds come from, what was their purpose, and why the disproportionate difference between ‘restricted’ and ‘unrestricted’ funds?” (Field 1988: 17). Therefore, in Field’s view, “restricted” funds represented the manipulation of the activities of Freedom House, as

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358 Field is here referring to Freedom House’s decision to be the primary source of funds for the U.K. magazine Encounter. It’s important to note, however, that in this text he is not necessarily being critical of the magazine itself nor its content, but the complete lack of transparency surrounding Freedom House’s funding and projects.

359 The organizations housed in the Willkie Memorial Building brought a suit against Freedom House when Sussman tried to evict them and sell the property. The plaintiffs argued that this was a violation of their agreement, and Field sided with them, provided testimony on their behalf. “Ultimately, the 11 plaintiff organizations received $700,000, which was divided up among them according to a pre-arranged formula…Besides administering the funds, the Willkie Memorial/Freedom House Inc., will retain the balance of approximately $2 million ‘to be used consistently with its corporate charter, including providing assistance to Freedom House.’ In other words, Leonard Sussman will have even these newly-acquired millions to direct as in the past” (Memo, “The End of a Dream,” 1988: 18, George Field Collection, box 4, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library).
Table 7. Freedom House Revenues in the Early 1980s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>$250,337</td>
<td>$778,329</td>
<td>$1,028,666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>$169,507</td>
<td>$661,054</td>
<td>$830,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>$215,018</td>
<td>$481,984</td>
<td>$697,002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

they were earmarked for donor initiated and donor controlled projects, undermining the independence and integrity of the organization. Field charged “…that ‘window dressing’ and a legalized form of ‘money laundering’ have paved the way for the radical changes in the operation of Freedom House once Sussman assumed complete charge. In a substantial way the organization has become a conduit for funds which promote projects initiated by the donors” (Field 1985: 1-2). Therefore, Field claimed that the projects Freedom House chose to undertake became ideologically driven by the objectives of donors (be they governmental or otherwise – it is unclear to which specific contributors Field was referring). With this accusation, Field cast further doubt on the proclaimed independence of Freedom House.

Sussman’s characterization of the “relationship” between Freedom House and the U.S. government in 2002 was quite different from Field’s. While Freedom House still publicly staunchly maintains that it pursues its own non-partisan, non-governmental objectives, it is clear that this is simply not the case. While Freedom

360 Memo, “The End of a Dream,” 1988: 16, George Field Collection, box 4, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
House was part of the U.S. propaganda machine during World War II, my review of the organization’s records reveal that Freedom House was at least financially independent from the government at that time. Sussman, however, not only applauds Freedom House’s affiliation with the U.S. government in his 2002 book on the history of the organization, but actively tries to make it appear as if the current relationship is merely a continuation of policy that has been in place since the organization’s existence.

A part of the Freedom House story is its relationship with the government of the United States. Unlike organizations whose mission is narrowly defined as the promotion of human rights, and who often adopt a confrontational attitude to the American government, Freedom House has had a somewhat different policy that does not preclude working cooperatively with government agencies towards the advancement of the democratic idea. This policy stems from Freedom House’s origins, when it worked cooperatively with the Roosevelt administration in preparing the United States for entry in the war against fascism. Freedom House did not consider its relationship as inappropriate, nor did it regard other instances of cooperation with the government as inappropriate when the objective was the spread of freedom (Sussman 2002: 3-4).

The amount of funding Freedom House receives from the U.S. government, as well as Field’s charge that donors began to be able to manipulate the way in which funds were used under Sussman’s leadership, leads one to question the motives behind the organization’s activities. Table 13 below, drawn from a 990 form filed by Freedom House, illustrates the funding that Freedom House pumped into various regions of the world during 2008. These expenditures totaled nearly $14 million. Coupled with the fact that 91.5% of Freedom House’s $24,694,112 budget that year came from the United States government, it is easy to make the case that the organization is merely an extension of American foreign policy.
Table 8. Freedom House Expenditures Outside of the United States, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th># of offices in region</th>
<th># of employees or agents in region</th>
<th>Activities conducted in region</th>
<th>Description of activities</th>
<th>Total Expenditures in region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Prog. Services &amp; Grants to Recipients.</td>
<td>Human Rights &amp; Rule of Law.</td>
<td>$2,622,726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Program Services.</td>
<td>Community Reconciliation.</td>
<td>$106,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Prog. Services &amp; Grants to Recipients.</td>
<td>Human Rights &amp; Rule of Law.</td>
<td>$6,756,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Prog. Services &amp; Grants to Recipients.</td>
<td>Human Rights &amp; Rule of Law.</td>
<td>$2,974,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Prog. Services &amp; Grants to Recipients.</td>
<td>Human Rights &amp; Rule of Law.</td>
<td>$1,455,841</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Expenditures Outside the U.S. in 2008: $13,915,892

In his memos Field also mentions the many times his expertise was sought by organizations and foundations, which would have required him to operate in various capacities outside of Freedom House. This he also considered unethical, a stance that set him apart from the democracy promotion “double agents” that had begun to operate during this time. He writes that “during my most productive years, the complement of bidding for my services with money offers far in excess of my earnings, came my way on a number of occasions. However, I was not a ‘professional’ who services could be purchased ‘if the price was right’” [emphasis

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361 As reported on the 990 form Freedom House submitted to the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization in 2008. This form can be seen here: https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/131656647.
added] (Field 1970: 4). For example, Jack Kaplan, head of the J.M. Kaplan Foundation, which contributed financially to Freedom House, offered Field a generous salary to act as the Foundation’s secretary. Field declined. Similarly, Leonard Sussman asked Field to continue planning the Freedom House Award dinners after his retirement, “assuring me [Field] that I would be ‘well-paid.’ Leonard Sussman never understood the depth of his insult, even though I shrugged off his offer with ‘I am not for hire’” (Field 1988: 11).

Nearing the end of his life, Field also took the opportunity to comment on what he saw as the role of Freedom House – a vocal proponent of democracy, even if that meant speaking out against an American president. His memo, *The End of a Dream*, written in 1988, highlights both what Field saw as shortcomings in the nation and in Freedom House as an institution. Disheartened with the course of American politics, and the lack of comment on this course by Freedom House, Field notes that:

> [I]n my day, Freedom House would not have mutely stood by if a President of the United States traveled to the German cemetery at Bitburg to lay a wreath at the graves of Nazi soldiers – an act that made a mockery of our commitment to human rights…Other issues which tip freedom’s scale include the alliance between Fundamentalist religions and the American President; the refusal to acknowledge that a raped woman has the right to abort an unwanted child; the doubling of our national debt during the first five years of the Reagan administration, despite a pledge to balance the nation’s budget by the end of the President’s first term. And the more recent spectacle of the President’s secret approval of arms shipments to our enemies in Iran while urging our allies to ban such shipments, has severely damaged our credibility as a nation (Field 1988: 19).

Field seems to attribute the silence on the part of Freedom House as indicative of its alignment with the Reagan presidency and the neoconservative movement. He believed that “President Reagan’s rationalizations [of the actions above] and the rationalizations of Freedom House [regarding the sale of the Willkie Memorial
Building] spring from the same polluted wells” (Field 1988: 19). He goes on to cite a passage from *The Founding Fortunes* by Michael Patrick Allen (1987), which “provided my first clue about the source of the funds which changed the Freedom House approach to public policy.” (Field 1990: 20). Allen’s work specifically refers to Freedom House as a neoconservative institution (Allen 1987: 295). This passage, coupled with the specific criticisms Field lays out above, illustrate what he saw as the alignment between Freedom House and neoconservatism. Guilhot (2005) describes the rise of neoconservatism, its major tenets, and its relationship to democracy promotion as follows:

The emergence of an institutionalized field of democracy and human rights in the 1980s is the outcome of the successful reformulation of the old anti-totalitarian, anti-Communist ideological project in a completely new political context, dominated by the victory of Ronald Reagan, the military, moral and ideological rearmament of the United States, and the active dismantling of the social programs inherited from decades of liberal administration. In this context, a crusade for democracy was obviously characterized by a further emptying of its potential for economic and social progress, a complete disregard for any notion of egalitarianism (no matter how important it could have been in the 1950s), and an almost exclusive concern with the fight against Communism (Guilhot 2005: 52).

Field most likely saw the rise of neo-conservatism as unsettling because the movement has largely been acknowledged to have “renewed the Cold War with a vengeance and launched a worldwide counteroffensive against liberation movements and nationalist Third World governments, involving dozens of interventionist campaigns” (Robinson 1996: 76). Ultimately, then, Field saw the reluctance of Freedom House to champion democracy by questioning Reagan’s foreign policy, as evidence of the organization’s alignment with neoconservatism, and a deviation from what he saw as its founding principles and purpose.
LEO CHERNE:  
THE MAN, HIS ORGANIZATIONS, AND TIES TO THE CIA

A “democracy maker” during this time period who did embrace the rise of neoconservatism and who was also important to Freedom House was Leo Cherne. Leo Cherne is considered by many to have been something of “a Renaissance man” – an economist, political adviser, lawyer, and even sculptor who was very well connected (Smith 2002: xi). None other than Henry Kissinger wrote the foreword to the 2002 Andrew F. Smith biography of Cherne, and his thoughts on the man began as follows: “In the Jewish religion, it is said that at any one point in time, God preserves the world because there exist ten just men who, without claiming themselves that they are just, give Him a motive for leaving the world intact. Leo Cherne was surely one of those ten just men” (Kissinger in Smith 2002: ix).

In addition to this effusive praise from Kissinger in Smith’s book, his 1999 obituary claimed “Mr. Cherne was also an adviser to nine presidents, a close friend of William Casey, the former head of the C.I.A., and from 1973 to 1991 a member of

362 In lieu of the usual plaque given to a recipient of the annual Freedom House Freedom Award, in 1966 President Lyndon Johnson was given a bronze bust of himself sculpted by Cherne (Smith 2002: 144).
363 It is important to note that I do not agree with Smith’s (2002) glowing portrayal of Cherne’s life and work, though it is a well documented accounting of his activities and therefore useful here. This view is echoed in John Ehrman’s review of the book, titled, “Leo Cherne, Neoconservative (But Don’t Tell Anyone),” and featured in Diplomatic History, Vol. 28, No. 4 (September 2004), p. 591 – 594. I concur with Ehrman’s assessment, in which he states that Smith’s work, “bordering on hagiography,” is “a missed opportunity… focusing largely on one side of Cherne, overlooking the ideas that motivated him, and skimming past anything that might raise a controversy” (2004: 592, 594).
364 Although never an official member as far as I can tell, Kissinger had a long relationship with the leadership of Freedom House. As early as October 6, 1961, he gave the opening remarks for the organization’s “Freedom Assembly” (FH Collection; Series 2, Subseries 2, Box 30, Folder 7, Correspondence between George Field and Kissinger dated October 16, 1961).
365 Smith was introduced to Cherne by a mutual friend (and longtime member of Freedom House) John Richardson in 1998, when Cherne was 86. Smith had been informed that Cherne had made a few attempts over the years to write his autobiography to no avail, and Richardson suggested that Smith might be interested in telling his story. As Smith remarks, Richardson “….was right: after the first few meetings, I was hooked. His [Cherne’s] life story was a good story – a story I wanted to tell” (xiii).
the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board [PFIAB], serving as its chairman during the Bush Administration."366 His work on the PFIAB, and his disagreement with the CIA’s estimates of Soviet military strength (which he thought were too low), “bolstered the positions of the strongest proponents of increased United States military expenditures.”367

Over the course of his life Cherne received such prestigious awards as the United States Medal of Freedom (1984), the French Legion of Honor, Germany's Commander Cross, the United Nations Gold Medal of Peace, and the Director’s Medal from the Central Intelligence Agency. He was also reported to have confided to a friend, a few days before his death, “I hope I'll also be remembered as a cold warrior.”368 Leo Cherne played a large role in a number of organizations, including Freedom House and the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Just like Cherne, however, these organizations had shadowy links to the intelligence community and U.S. government. Despite these links both Freedom House and the IRC pride themselves on their proclaimed independent status. While Leo Cherne is but one example of the elite leadership of Freedom House during this time, his background and his connection to the U.S. government and intelligence operations resemble those of many of the other “democracy makers” during this time period). Additionally, the two central organizations to which he belonged, Freedom House and the International Rescue Committee are highly comparable. Both Freedom House and the IRC were the result of mergers between WWII era organizations; these organizations had

367 Ibid.
368 Ibid.
similar membership and leadership; and both despite claiming to be non-governmental have had strong ties to the U.S. government and the CIA over the years. Because this dissertation is the first longer than article study of Freedom House, I use academic studies of both Leo Cherne and the International Rescue Committee in order to try to corroborate what I saw in the archival documents I examined and to broaden my evidentiary base. I am using the material on Cherne to solidify the claims I make in this dissertation about Freedom House’s relationship with the U.S. government and the intelligence community, based on my review of the organization’s finances and the personal correspondence of its members. The work on Cherne and the IRC, while a different type of evidence, serve to make my arguments more robust.

The Roots of Leopold Chernetsky

Leo Cherne was born Leopold Chernetsky on September 8, 1912, to working class Russian immigrant parents in New York. His parents, both of whom were socialists and agnostics, were shunned by many members of their Orthodox Jewish families. Though they operated an often financially struggling store, the two were privately devoted to intellectual pursuits. Leo’s mother “proved to be an intellectual who loved the works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Arthur Schopenhauer, and Sigmund Freud. Max and Dora quickly became a part of New York’s intellectual milieu, fusing unequal parts of socialism, agnosticism, nihilism, and idealism.”369 They were

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369 Cherne again exemplifies that career path of those Guilhot (2005) calls democracy promotion “double agents,” who he notes “are often former heretics” (11).
ardent supporters of Eugene V. Debs, the Socialist" (Smith 2002: 5). His parents allowed Leo to be a part of their intellectual discussions, and so began his interest in politics.

While he did not receive the highest marks in school, Cherne later won the Harvard Prize given to “outstanding high school students” (Smith 2002: 10). Cherne, an outstanding orator, “asserted that the prime qualification for success was ‘nerve,’ which he defined as ‘overpowering self confidence’” (Smith 2002: 8). This skill would serve him during the remainder of his life.

Inspired by what he saw as an unjust verdict in the Sacco and Vanzetti case, Cherne would later decide to attend New York Law School. Cherne’s career with the law firm he joined after graduating first in his class, however, was short-lived. Disillusioned with the law as a solution for the nation’s problems, particularly after what he saw as underhanded tactics by the prosecution in the Lucky Luciano case, Cherne was desperate to find another job. His response to an ad in the newspaper eventually led to a chance meeting with Carl Hovgard, and after a series of successful books the two formed the Tax Research Institute of America (TRIA). The organization was dedicated to helping businesses navigate the flood of Roosevelt’s New Deal legislation. Largely based on Cherne’s knowledge (he even kept detailed files on the personalities of each Supreme Court Justice), the TRIA launched the *Business and Legislative Report*, which made predictions (more often than not correct

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370 Leo Cherne’s introduction to politics, and his initial political interests, was therefore somewhat similar to George Field’s.
371 Carl Hovgard was the client who commissioned Cherne’s employer, Hugo Black, to write *Minimizing Payroll Taxes* (which went on to be wildly successful). Hovgard had previously founded an advertising agency (which failed when the economy collapse) and worked for Prentice Hall (Smith 2002: 18-20).
ones) about the potential outcomes of court cases that would affect the business community (Smith 2002: 20-21). Renamed the Research Institute of America, Cherne’s reputation grew and he was even called upon to testify before Congress in 1939. By 1940 “the Institute employed a staff of 150 people…[and] grossed $1.4 million” (Smith 2002: 22).

This reputation also led Cherne to seek out opportunities for the Research Institute, particularly in connection to the work of the U.S. government. “As he anticipated war in Europe, Cherne explored the War Department and one day he wandered into the Planning Branch, where he met Colonel William H. Sadler. Sadler mentioned that the Planning Branch was preparing plans for industrial mobilization in case the United States became involved in war” (Smith 2002: 24). Even Smith, the author of this glowing account of Leo Cherne’s life, _Rescuing the World_, recognizes that this was no chance meeting (Smith 2002: 24). The Research Institute was asked to help prepare an economic mobilization plan for businesses based on the industrial mobilization plans prepared by the War Department, and from his time reviewing “the mass of confidential material collected by the Planning Branch,” Cherne published _Adjusting Your Business to War_ (Smith 2002: 25). While their work for the government was unpaid, Cherne knew “[t]he Institute was building good connections with governmental agencies, and these relationships would pay off if…the United States went to war” (Smith 2002: 25). He was right: even prior to an official declaration of war, Cherne was asked to write a report on German economic mobilization. From 1938 throughout the war Cherne worked in various capacities for
government agencies, including the Office of War Information (Smith 2002: 30-31). After the war he would even travel to Japan in order to formulate tax policy for the newly constructed regime, having been sought out by and working directly under General Douglas MacArthur.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Cherne’s wartime work would lead to his becoming involved with two organizations created during this era – Freedom House and the IRC. There are many parallels between Freedom House and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), ranging from their similar origins, membership, relationship with the United States government, and current prominence. As of 1995, “[t]he International Rescue Committee (IRC) is the largest, nonsectarian refugee organization in the world, with a budget of over ninety million dollars and staff numbering in the hundreds” (Chester 1995: 1). Two antecedent organizations, the International Relief Association (IRA) and the Emergency Rescue Committee (ERC), merged to form the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in 1942. As discussed in Chapter 2, Freedom House was also the result of a merger between two organizations, the CDAAA and FFF. Much like Freedom House was the Western response to the Braunhaus, the IRA had formed in 1933 in response to Hitler’s rise to power and was aimed at aiding victims of Nazi aggression. Funded largely through contributions made by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) (whose vice president was also an official

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372 Eric Thomas Chester sees Cherne’s work during this period as one which “provided Cherne with an initial exposure to the workings of the intelligence community” (Chester 1995: 113).
373 One of the men most important to the Research Institute, William Casey, would later become the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.
founding member of Freedom House), the IRA shifted its focus to supporting the German social democratic government-in-exile, until the German invasion of France in June of 1940 forced its Paris headquarters to close (Chester 1995: 8-11). In order to fill the void created by the IRA’s exit from Paris, the Emergency Rescue Committee was formed. This group was more heavily focused on rescuing political refugees and providing them with visas. The ERC was much more connected to the U.S. government than the IRA had been, connections that would continue in the future. Because of its close associations with the government, including having First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt as one of its greatest champions (she was also the first honorary co-chair of Freedom House and a dues paying member until her death), the ERC was able to smuggle many refugees out of France using American visas. However, even at that time “efforts were made to insure that those granted visas were sympathetic to U.S. foreign policy objectives” meaning “known Communist sympathizers were excluded” (Chester 1995: 16).

These two organizations would merge after Pearl Harbor and America’s official entry into the war, first becoming the International Relief and Rescue Committee in February of 1942, and then changing its name formally to the IRC in 1951. Publicly funded by the government’s National War Fund (NWF) from 1943 to 1948, with its accounts overseen by David Seiberheld, William Donovan’s right hand man at the OSS, the IRC was from its inception closely connected to the U.S. government generally, particularly its intelligence branches (Chester 1995: 18-20). During this time period “the IRC budget came almost exclusively from the coffers of the National War Fund” (Chester 1995: 19). In fact, “[f]or the fiscal year ending
September 1946, the IRC received over half a million dollars from the NWF”
(Chester 1995: 19).

Leo Cherne was the chair of the IRC from 1951 until he retired to the position
of chair emeritus in 1991. He replaced David Martin after a moment of crisis for the
IRC, during which it nearly collapsed. During the height of Senator McCarthy’s anti-
Communist campaign, Vadim Makaroff, “a shadowy character,” former naval officer
and member of the White army during Russia’s civil war, wrote and distributed a
memo accusing David Martin of being a Communist. Because of Martin’s loose
association with social democratic groups in his youth, the accusation proved to be
quite damaging to the IRC, and many foundations withdrew their financial support
(Chester 1995: 98-118). Because of Cherne’s good reputation among the
intelligence community, he was chosen to replace Martin. Cherne immediately went
to work raising the necessary funds to keep the IRC afloat, and as a result “[t]he IRC
had been rescued, but only by further integrating itself into the mainstream of the
foreign policy establishment” (Chester 1995: 118). Cherne regularly met with Allen
Dulles (director of the CIA), C. D. Jackson (“Eisenhower’s personal adviser on
psychological warfare”), and Eleanor Roosevelt. The former First Lady intervened
for the IRC, persuading President Truman and Secretary of State Dean Acheson “to
immediately release government funds appropriated for refugee aid to the
Committee” (Chester 1995: 114). In addition, Mrs. Roosevelt delivered memos
written by the IRC to the President, which “asked the government to approach private
foundations ‘to help the Committee obtain funds’” (Chester 1995: 114). Under Leo
Cherne’s direction the IRC became firmly rooted in the “covert network” – Chester’s
term for “the interconnected set of organizations helping the U.S. intelligence community to implement a variety of clandestine operations designed to destabilize the Soviet Union and its dependent allies” (Chester 1995: 1). Cherne’s intelligence connections enabled him to secure the funding that would save the International Rescue Committee, while allowing him to seize power within the organization and further entrench it in covert work. As a result, the IRC began to flourish despite its previous leadership and financial crises. Additionally, the path of Leo Cherne’s career began to exemplify that of what Guilhot would later identify as a democratization “double agent,” one who has “managed to institutionalize their international skills or to sell their expertise successfully” (Guilhot 2005: 11).

Cherne, the IRC, Freedom House and the CIA: The Links and the Accusations

Periodically, journalists have attempted to call attention to the close association between both the International Rescue Committee and Freedom House and the CIA. These claims, however, have largely remained accusations, and are often met with fervent denial on the part of these organizations. Officers routinely counter these accusations by claiming that there is no way they could have possibly known the true source of these foundation funds. In fact, this is the most frequent form such denials take. Regardless of how difficult they are to prove, it is important that scholars be aware that such accusations were first made forty years ago. Not only have these accusations persisted over time, new accusations along the same lines

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374 William Donovan, Robert Sherwood’s counterpart in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) as its wartime director, was on the IRC’s board for a time. William Casey, who would later go on to head the CIA during Reagan’s presidency, was president of the IRC for a brief period between 1970 and 1971 (Chester 1995: 5).
have also been made based on more recent events and more recently available
documentary evidence.

On February 20, 1976 the New York Times broke a story regarding the
connection between Leo Cherne, the CIA, and the “independent” domestic groups
with which he was associated, including Freedom House. The accusation made was
that CIA funds had been funneled into both Freedom House and the IRC via known
conduits375 – the Norman Foundation and the J. M. Kaplan Fund.376 Uncovering CIA
involvement in domestic groups, such as the National Student Association, during the
1970s was particularly damaging to the credibility of those organizations. This
linkage was especially damning as it was revealed on the eve of Cherne’s
appointment to President Ford’s “new committee that will investigate possible abuses
of authority by the Central Intelligence Agency,” an enhancement of his
responsibilities to the oval office that began with his 1973 appointment to the
President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory board (Crewdson 1976a).

The story was published largely on the testimony of Frank Weil, president of
the Norman Foundation, who during an interview claimed that he had been
approached by “a mysterious gentleman” from the CIA in either “1963 or 1964”
(Crewdson 1976a). Weil was “asked to pass about $15,000 in Government funds to
the International Rescue Committee,” the organization Leo Cherne had headed after
saving it from near financial ruin in 1951 (Crewdson 1976a). Weil then went on to

375 These foundations served as conduits in the following sense: they received money from the CIA,
and then passed it on (according to the express wishes of the CIA) to organizations such as the
International Rescue Committee and Freedom House. In this way, both organizations are able to claim
that the funds they receive are “clean” and therefore they are independent and not subject to
governmental influence.
376 This is the same entity that offered Field a job (which he turned refused). It is unlikely that Field
knew anything about the Fund’s CIA connections at that time as Jack Kaplan had just “recently set up”
the organization (Field 1988: 6).
explain that the CIA funds were used for an IRC project in what was then the Belgian Congo, but added that he wasn’t sure whether or not Cherne was aware of the funds’ origins in the intelligence community. Crewdson, the reporter for the *New York Times*, then reached Cherne by phone. When asked for his comment, Cherne stated that “neither he ‘nor any official of the IRC had the slightest knowledge that any of those funds were CIA funds’” and that even if they “had been offered overtly” the IRC would not have accepted them (Crewdson 1976a). He then went on to deny that the IRC had ever sought or taken CIA funds. However, when “[a]sked why, in the wake of the 1967 disclosures [that these funds were known CIA conduits] he [Cherne] had not asked the IRC to recheck its sources of financing to make certain that the committee had not unwittingly taken any CIA money, Mr. Cherne replied that that was the ‘silliest question I’ve ever heard.’ It would have been next to impossible, he said, to cull the contribution records of an organization that raised in the neighborhood of $3 million each year to examine them for donations that might have initiated with the CIA, but reached the committee ‘two or three times removed’” (Crewdson 1976a).

The story was picked up by many news sources that also published the accusation, including the *Chicago Tribune*. The following day, however, February 21, 1976, the *New York Times* ran another article titled “C.I.A. Link to Cherne Unit Is Denied.” Again written by John Crewdson, it centered on a retraction on the part of Frank Weil, the president of the Norman Foundation. Although in his initial interview, Weil had cited a great many details, including being approached by “a mysterious gentleman” and the *specific* IRC project to which the CIA funds were
directed, the very next day Weil stated: “I made a mistake. I was wrong” (Crewdson 1976b). Upon “checking the foundation’s records,” Weil said he had discovered that “none of the $27,000 [the Norman foundation] gave to the I.R.C. from 1961 to 1965 had been provided by the intelligence agency” (Crewdson 1976b).

Originally, however, Weil had no qualms revealing the Norman Foundation’s passing CIA funds to the IRC, saying that they “had done nothing illegal in acting as a conduit,” and that the Norman Foundation found the IRC’s project worthy of funding and so “were trying to do what we thought was the right thing” (Crewdson 1976a). In short, Frank Weil’s statement that he “misrecalled” so many of the intricate details in his story regarding CIA funds is difficult to believe, particularly given that he was the President of the Norman Foundation at that time.377

Despite this “error” by the President of the organization, who continues to head it, Weil’s testimony that the IRC had received CIA funds via the Norman Foundation was also confirmed by Andrew Norman, a fellow officer of the organization (Crewdson 1976a). Although Andrew Norman believed that the funds had been directed to a project in Latin America rather than the Congo, he did not dispute the foundation’s role as a conduit for CIA funds.

In addition to Weil’s retraction, the New York Times also published a piece that specifically addressed Freedom House on March 12, 1976. Leo Cherne had been involved with Freedom House since 1945, and this organization was also implicated

377 In fact, Frank Weil is one of the grandchildren of the late Aaron E. Norman, who created the Norman Foundation. Weil, in collaboration with Norman’s four other grandchildren, continues to run the foundation to this day. The effort to remain a “family foundation” is one of which Weil is extremely proud, and he elaborates on this process in the historical background of the Norman Foundation he himself wrote for their website. This emphasis on the family’s involvement in the foundation makes it all the more surprising that Norman would claim he had misspoke, or was unaware of what was happening daily.
in the original piece regarding CIA funds. In the short article appearing in March, however, the *New York Times* reported that Freedom House had officially been cleared via a letter of “assurance” dated March 2nd from the CIA’s Director at that time, George H. W. Bush. Both organizations had requested this declaration from Bush. In effect, Cherne asked the man who headed the intelligence organization he was appointed to oversee to write a letter for him stating that the CIA had never funneled any money into the “independent” “non-profits,” the IRC and Freedom House. Asking the individual Cherne *oversaw* to write a letter clearing him of any wrongdoing is the very definition of a conflict of interest.

Because Cherne was also chairman of the Freedom House Executive Committee at the time these charges appeared and was also then being appointed to President Ford’s board dedicated to overseeing intelligence operations, Freedom House was investigated in the media along with the International Rescue Committee. It was specifically alleged that Freedom House had received CIA funds from another known conduit for CIA funds, the J. M. Kaplan Fund, in the amount of $3,500 (Crewdson 1976a). The J. M. Kaplan Fund, however, unlike the Norman Foundation, denied that any of the funds it passed to either the IRC or Freedom House during this time originated from the CIA. A representative for the Kaplan Fund spoke with John M. Crewdson at the *New York Times* and stated that the CIA funds were “limited to the underwriting of a single program in the 1960’s, and that none of the $21,500

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378 Tarpley & Chaitkin (1992) wrote at some length about the “special relationship” between Bush and Cherne (see page 302 in particular). When Bush left his position at the CIA he sent a lengthy note to Cherne, and “[h]andwritten at the bottom [of Bush’s note to Cherne] was, ‘I hope our paths cross in the future’” (Smith 2002: 165).

379 Although this is not a substantial sum, what is important to note is the role these types of organizations play in covert activities, even if the direct source and amount of funds they receive is difficult to pinpoint.
given by it to the rescue committee or the $3,500 given to Freedom House had been supplied by the intelligence agency” (Crewdson 1976a). In addition, those organizations that the foundation did admit to funding with CIA money were less prominent, less influential, and often “now-defunct,” including the former Institute for International Labor Research (Crewdson 1976b). It seems a bit suspicious, therefore, that those organizations to which the Kaplan Fund admitted donating CIA funds were no longer in operation, not under scrutiny, nor ones which so vehemently claimed to be “independent.” It is also interesting to note, however, that Jacob Merrill Kaplan, the wealthy former head of Welch Grape Juice Company, founder and namesake of the J. M. Kaplan Fund, was a trustee of Freedom House for many years.\(^3\) One could speculate that perhaps Kaplan excluded Freedom House from this list out of personal loyalty to Freedom House. Tracing the use of conduits to disperse CIA money is often to encounter a “complex and shadowy” web; proving a direct link between an organization’s funds and the CIA (a task which is often incredibly difficult) is nearly impossible as “a recipient could always claim that it had not been aware that the Agency had been the ultimate source of the grant” (Chester 1995: 204). Focusing on smaller foundations known to be conduits for CIA funds, and smaller amounts (like the $3,500 in the case of Freedom House), can also obscure the position of organizations like the IRC and Freedom House within the larger covert network. After all, Freedom House receiving $3,500 from the CIA via a foundation is peanuts compared to the outright acceptance of $26,832,625 from the

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U.S. government in the form of “federal grants.” A parallel can be drawn to the IRC’s alleged acceptance of $15,000 from the CIA in the 1960’s, as opposed to the $500,000 Ford Foundation grant it received in 1951 only because “the intelligence community [had] vouched for the IRC” (Chester 1995: 203-204). In similar fashion, “the [Ford] Foundation refused to renew the grant when the Agency refrained from energetically defending the Committee after it became the target of acerbic denunciations by right-wing Soviet émigrés” (Chester 1995: 204). Ultimately, however, scholars who rely on Freedom House’s reports and data should be aware of these accusations, even if they remain unproven.

Although Bush, Cherne’s friend and confidante at the CIA, officially cleared both the IRC and Freedom House, stating that neither had “requested or been given funds directly or indirectly from the CIA,” this accusation would come up again in 1980 in another New York Times article (Smith 2002: 167). At that time, President Carter was considering appointing Cherne to the Board for International Broadcasting, a “quasi-independent committee established by Congress to openly operate Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty after their covert control by the CIA had been exposed in the media” (Chester 1995: 203). The article reexamined the accusations put forth in the original piece four years earlier regarding Cherne’s connection to the CIA, and again claimed that the IRC had received intelligence funds. After this publication again in 1980 “Cherne declined further consideration for...

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381 While the $3,500 figure dates from the 1976 accusation, the latter number is drawn from the financial statement issued by Freedom House in 2015, which can be seen here: [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Freedom%20House_15%20FS_Final.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Freedom%20House_15%20FS_Final.pdf).
the post and then denounced the report as ‘bizarre’” (Chester 1995: 203). Again, however, the paper ran another story the following day saying that CIA funding had been denied on both ends. But it appeared that the intended damage was done; scrutiny of his intelligence connections continued to haunt Cherne.

The IRC claimed that these the alleged CIA connections to its specific projects in Africa wouldn’t even make sense if they were true, stating that “…it was highly unlikely that the CIA would be interested in financing Third World revolutionaries fighting to overthrow colonial rule” (Chester 1995: 203). Chester (1995) specifically refutes the IRC’s argument. It has since become general knowledge that the U.S. government did intervene in Angola during 1975, even though it had previously had little interest in the region. In late 1974, “Portugal announced plans to leave its 300-year-old colony in Angola within a year, and the United States, fearing Soviet encroachment, moved rapidly to replace the departing European imperialists” (Sullivan 2004: 117). Ultimately the CIA used the Congo (in which the IRC was operating and reportedly received funds from the intelligence group in relation to) as a launching pad for its operations in Angola. By the end of 1975, by both covert and official channels, the U.S. had committed a total of $32 million toward intervention in the area (Sullivan 2004: 117). The CIA remained

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382 Smith (2002) disputes Chester’s (1995) statement regarding this chain of events, however, claiming that Cherne had already declined President Carter’s offer of appointment when the secondary story was published. Given his glowing praise for all aspects of Cherne’s work, and the continued accusations published by the New York Times, Smith’s explanation does not seem as tenable.

383 It’s important to note that the CIA’s decision to fund the IRC makes perfect strategic sense. The organization dedicated to “rescuing” refugees (which often entailed their relocation to the United States) was of particular use to the U.S. government, who could then probe the expatriates for intelligence information. Even if such information could not be obtained, “the defection of high-level officials and highly trained intellectuals undermined morale within the Soviet elite. These defections could also be exploited as a propaganda windfall in the protracted campaign of psychological warfare conducted between the two global superpowers” (Chester 1995: 1-2).
committed to supporting the FLNA (National Liberation Front of Angola), which, although anti-colonial, had vowed to continue the existing relationship with the Western corporations that had vested interests in the country’s oil resources. In addition, the Soviet Union had chosen to support the FLNA’s rival political faction. Ultimately, the whole ordeal ended in embarrassment for the U.S., and “[b]y the time a ceasefire agreement was signed in April 2002, the war had become one of the world’s longest civil conflicts (27 years)…[and] was also one of the deadliest: close to a million people had died” (Sullivan 2004: 119).

Ultimately this illustrates that “[w]hen the IRC began its program for Angolan refugees in Zaire, its decision, once again, coincided with a corresponding shift in U.S. foreign policy [emphasis added] (Chester 1995: 202-203). On a larger scale, however, Chester (1995) argues that trying to weed out particular IRC projects that received CIA funding via conduit foundations is of little value. Just as both Freedom House and the International Rescue Committee did in the late 1970’s, organizations could ultimately argue that they were not sure from where the funds had originated, and little proof existed to rebut their claims. Cherne had gone beyond this in his comments to the press, arguing that it was “silly” to expect organizations to try to trace their funds all the way back to their source, since they had often passed through many hands by the time they reached a particular project.

Chester (1995) further argues that one needn’t be most concerned with the particular, small foundations that came to be publicly known as conduits of CIA funds. On the brink of financial ruin in 1951, the IRC was saved by a large grant from the Ford Foundation, which only occurred “…because the intelligence
community [had] vouched for the IRC” (Chester 1995: 204). Particular points in the
eine web of money and power relations between organizations such as the IRC,
Freedom House, the CIA and foundations are difficult to sort out. However, Chester
argues that what is clear is that during the Cold War the IRC played an important part
in the covert network, and it did so while advertising itself as an independent,
nonpartisan, nonprofit organization (Chester 1995: 1). Because of their similar
origins, numerous accusations of CIA funding and relationships with the U.S.
government, I think Freedom House resembles the IRC.

Even in his flattering portrait of Cherne, Andrew Smith (2002) writes that
“Cherne believed in the importance of intelligence gathering and would likely have
helped the CIA had he been asked” (168). Smith quickly adds, however, that “[n]o
evidence has surfaced indicating that Cherne received any funds directly or indirectly
from any intelligence agency other than his per diem from PFIAB and the IOB.
Cherne felt strongly about his work with these two groups and was honored to have helped improve the United States’ ability to collect information about the economic
capabilities and intentions of other nations. Mixing the IRC, Freedom House, or
other such organizations with the intelligence community would not have made any
sense, nor would it have made any difference” [emphasis added] (168-169).
Cherne and Smith both vehemently denied the charges while also flippanply dismissing them
– Cherne by stating that they amounted to the “silliest” of questions, and Smith by implying that even if evidence emerged proving the CIA connection it would have little impact on the credibility of these organizations. This latter claim by Smith
(whose partiality with regard to Cherne has been previously noted) serves as a sort of caveat, in the event that these accusations are ever found to have merit.

MORE CIA TIES TO FREEDOM HOUSE: 
THE 1980S AND BEYOND

Journalists have continued to allege that Freedom House is closely associated with the Central Intelligence Agency, even in work published as recently as January of 2015. Robert Parry, an investigative journalist famous for his writing on the Iran-Contra affair (for which he won the George Polk Award for National Broadcasting, and was nominated for a Pulitzer), has written recently that Freedom House reporting and projects were influenced by and even changed to better accommodate the foreign policy of the United States.\textsuperscript{384} This piece provides solid evidence of the connections between Freedom House and the CIA first put forth in the late 1970s discussed earlier in this chapter. Recently released correspondence between Leo Cherne, as representative of Freedom House, and the CIA, which was then headed by Leo Cherne’s long-time friend, William Casey, makes this relationship clear.

The documents on which Parry relies in the article are hyperlinked.\textsuperscript{385} These include not only letters between Cherne and Casey, but between Freedom House Executive Directors Sussman and Bruce McColm and Walter Raymond, Jr. at the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

These documents reveal that Cherne sent Freedom House reports on the 1981 political situation in El Salvador to the CIA for “corrections and changes” and


\textsuperscript{385} I was therefore able to read through this correspondence for myself, and found that I agree with Parry’s assessments of their contents.
ultimately approval (Cherne to Casey, 6/24/1981). Simultaneously, Freedom House was also actively seeking CIA funding during this time (Sussman to Raymond, 8/9/1982; McColm to Raymond, 9/15/1984).386 Parry cites Leonard Sussman’s 1982 letters to Walter Raymond, Jr., who headed a number of CIA covert projects and belonged to Reagan’s National Security Council, in which Sussman complains about the financial difficulties facing the organization. Both the late George Field and I point to Sussman as the main fundraiser for Freedom House after his takeover as Executive Director in 1967, with Field describing his technique as that of a “salesman” in “…the pursuit of profit over principle…” (Field 1988: 11, 16).387 It was Cherne who recommended Sussman to Field when he was considering replacements (Field 1988: 10).388

Both parties therefore benefited from this relationship. Freedom House received a great deal of funds from the U.S. government through various channels: the CIA, the National Endowment for Democracy389 after its creation by Casey and Raymond in 1983, and indirectly through private donors courted by government officials. These private donations were perhaps the most important for Freedom House. Not only could the governmental origins of this money be easily be denied,

387 George Field also refers to Leonard Sussman as “a salesman” in his second memoir, “To Complete the Record: Part II” from 1985 (George Field Collection, box 4, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library).
388 Cherne’s role in the appointment of Sussman as Executive Director is also discussed in Field’s 1985 memo, p. 3.
389 Robinson’s (1996) work traces the creation of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which he argues was established by the United States government in order to ensure the country’s success in Third World conflicts (81). A direct result of the National Security Council, the NED, under the guise of democracy promotion, acted to ensure US interests abroad. Democratization on a global scale came to be seen as an “a component of overall [American] foreign policy” (84). Ultimately, “while CIA intervention [abroad] has continued, a more specialized, sophisticated entity with a focus on political operations a long-term vision, and a strategic agenda came into existence with the creation of the NED in 1983” (87-8).
but “…these supposedly independent voices would then reinforce and validate the administration’s foreign policy arguments with a public that would assume the endorsements were based on the merits of the White House positions, not influenced by money changing hands” (Parry 2015). And as long as Freedom House policy recommendations were in line with the then Reagan administration’s, these sources of funding would continue (Parry 2015). This meant that in order to receive funding, Freedom House had to condemn the actions of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, mimicking the statement of the White House.

Although Parry’s (2015) work reveals that there were some concerns on the part of Raymond and Casey, who were knowingly engaged in illegal activities using CIA funds to fund domestic propaganda, regarding the potential “contamination” of their projects should these financial relationships come to light, “…Freedom House remained near the top of Casey’s thinking when it came to the most effective way to deliver his hardline policy message to the American people in ways they would be inclined to accept, i.e., coming from ostensibly independent sources with no apparent ties to the government” (Parry 2015). In the early 1990’s Parry confronted Freedom House with similar accusations, which were vehemently denied by the organization. In response Parry pointed to a memo from Raymond to then National Security Council advisor William P. Clark, dated November 4, 1982, in which Raymond passes along Casey’s suggestions for “strengthening public information organizations in the United States such as Freedom House.” These suggestions include the use of
“enhanced federal funding; the Democracy Project study (although publicly funded this will be independently managed); [and] private funds.” Parry, quite rightly, refutes this denial by stating that “it made little sense that Raymond [who sought governmental funds in the memo Parry cited] would have lied to a superior in an internal memo.”

The National Endowment for Democracy, which Casey and Raymond were so instrumental in creating, continues to carry out its propaganda work. That is to say, the NED specifically funds organizations that it believes can “influence American attitudes about foreign challenges.” “In NED’s first four years, from 1984 and 1988, it lavished $2.6 million on Freedom House, accounting for more than one-third of its total income” (Parry 2015). Today, the NED’s annual budget is more than $100 million, and, in line with its own interests which mirror that of the administration, it continues to fund Freedom House. The NED, a creation of the U.S. government (the House Foreign Affairs Committee to be exact), chooses to fund Freedom House because it promotes views that the NED agrees with, with regard to both democracy and American foreign policy. Both of these organizations are therefore more committed to the promotion of U.S. foreign policy interests than democracy, and any

390 The Democracy Project was the name initially given by the Reagan administration to what would later become the National Endowment for Democracy. See the NED’s own description of its history here: http://www.ned.org/about/history/.
392 See Parry’s (1992) Fooling America: How Washington Insiders Twist the Truth and Manufacture the Conventional Wisdom, which addresses the incentive system by which the media gains access to government officials. Parry ultimately argues that this system lead to a complete lack of hard investigative reporting in the 1980’s, during which “the Washington press corps managed to miss nearly every single major scandal.” See https://org.salsalabs.com/o/1868/shop/shop.jsp?storefront_KEY=1152&okay=True
393 This ability is the very reason Raymond and Casey were initially interested in Freedom House. See Parry 2010.
394 See http://www.ned.org/about/history/.
semblance of their independence from the U.S. government is merely a ruse in order
to increase the effectiveness of their propaganda efforts. As early as 1988 Chomsky
observed that Freedom House “…has long served as a virtual propaganda arm of the
government and international right wing” (Herman & Chomsky 1988: 28).

CONCLUSION

The nature of Freedom House has changed dramatically since the late 1960s
and early 1970s. Since this period, the organization’s funds have been obtained
primarily from the United States government, and (as discussed in Chapter 5) the
process by which it reports on the state of global democracy has become very
obscure. Perhaps Field said it best when he commented that “[c]overt programs and
my concept of Freedom House are a contradiction in terms…such an approach for the
operation of Freedom House is inexplicable when the very concept of freedom
denotes an open society” (Field 1988: 13).

The claims I make here are both significant and substantial in that they
counter conventional wisdom regarding the organization’s overall purpose and
character and are particularly important given the sheer magnitude of Freedom
House’s influence in the social sciences and policymaking. Despite the public
allegations that have haunted it since 1976, the organization has been successful in
its continued ability to present itself as independent and its findings as unbiased and
academic. This public image persists in part because of Freedom House’s tireless
campaigning, particularly in its press releases and statements before Congress. It
specifically refers to itself as “an independent watchdog organization” whose Comparative Survey reflects “methodological consistency, intellectual rigor, and balanced and unbiased judgments.” The widespread use of the scores in academia also contributes to the endurance of this image. Perhaps Freedom House’s continued success in presenting itself this way is evidence in and of itself of how well-connected Freedom House truly is.

395 See https://freedomhouse.org/about-us.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

But ultimately, and particularly in our capacity as seekers after knowledge...[one must] see differently, the desire to see differently for once in this way is no small discipline of the intellect and a preparation for its eventual ‘objectivity’ — this latter understood not as ‘disinterested contemplation’ (which is a non-concept and a nonsense), but as the capacity to have all the arguments for and against at one’s disposal and to suspend or implement them at will: so that one can exploit that very diversity of perspectives and affective interpretations in the interests of knowledge....[notions of disinterested contemplation] always ask us to imagine an eye which is impossible to imagine, an eye which supposedly looks out in no particular direction, an eye which supposedly either restrains or altogether lacks the active powers of interpretation which first make seeing into seeing something – for here, then, a nonsense and non-concept is demanded of the eye. Perspectival seeing is the only kind of seeing there is, perspectival ‘knowing’ the only kind of ‘knowing’; and the more feelings about a matter which we allow to come to expression, the more eyes, different eyes through which we are able to view this same matter, the more complete our ‘conception’ or it, our ‘objectivity’, will be.

— Nietzsche

Throughout this work I have challenged the idea that Freedom House is a non-governmental organization that produces unbiased annual scores of democracy via a rigorous, scientific process. Although this is the predominant notion in both academic and foreign policy making circles (Bollen 1990, 2000; Coppedge 2002, 2011; Munck 2002, 2009; Diamond 2015), neither claim is accurate. I will first dispute its independent status before turning to the latter charge.

Freedom House has had a long-standing relationship with the American government. Since its creation in 1941 Freedom House has been, and continues to

398 While some of these scholars do point out various methodological shortcomings of the scores, each has used the measures in academic work.
be, a purveyor of democratic propaganda. The democracy promotion movement has long produced propaganda in order to further its cause (Steele 1985; Sproule 1997; Snow 2014). The distinctly political origins of Freedom House, which are rarely discussed, reveal its original purpose. The American alternative to the *Braunhaus*, the Nazi propaganda machine, Freedom House operated with the quiet approval of the Administration. Its leadership performed staged conflicts with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt at press conferences, prior to which FDR urged them to “give me hell,” so that he could, in responding to their lobbying efforts, carry out his true political agenda – American involvement in the Second World War. While it is evident that the leadership of Freedom House truly believed in United States intervention, the alignment of the organization’s agenda with that of the government is undeniable. This may be best illustrated by the affiliations of the early leadership of Freedom House, discussed at length in Chapter 2. The majority of the organization’s members also held prestigious positions in more official governmental capacities devoted to propaganda production. These individuals, Robert Sherwood, Herbert Agar, Archibald MacLeish, and others, took pride in these activities. They all worked hard to disseminate propaganda among the American public in favor of intervention. This included the dramatic “Stop Hitler Now!” advertisement created by Sherwood, one of the first pieces urging the public to support the Allies. The advertisement also strongly condemned those who supported isolation and the movement’s organizational representative, America First. In addition to the newspaper ads, pamphlets, rallies and radio programs they produced, these men were also all involved to some extent in governmental wartime actions, whether official or
unofficial, overt or covert. Overlapping affiliations of this kind were not uncommon during the period surrounding World War II (Chadwin 1970; Doenecke 2000; Olson 2013). The service of these individuals, all of whom knew each other and worked together in various capacities, included stints in the Office of Strategic Services (forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency), the Office of War Information, Radio Free Europe, and even actual military command.

This alignment, illustrated by such overlapping associations, was not a wartime anomaly – it still exists today. Democracy promotion as propaganda is alive and well, as is evidenced by the fame of Freedom House, its increased role in the foreign policy decisions of the United States government, and the exponential increase in the use of its scores by academics. In my introduction I cited a wide variety of sources to make the case that the Comparative Survey of Freedom House, and the annual scores it produces, have gained a strong foothold in both the governmental sector and academia. The elite leadership of Freedom House is often called to testify before Congress on matters related to international democratization movements. The use of Freedom House scores in making foreign policy decisions, such as whether or not aid will be distributed to a given country based on their level of democracy as reported by Freedom House, dramatically illustrate their importance. In addition, the primary source of funding which makes the scores possible is the United States government – in particular the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Therefore, U.S. government funds are used to create these scores, which in turn are then used by the U.S. government to determine the level of aid given to foreign countries. This conflict of interest surely influences Freedom
House’s production of knowledge. Freedom House has in fact always been a creature of the U.S. government, even though it initially did not receive the incredible financial support it now enjoys. The sheer magnitude of funding Freedom House receives from the government, which as I show in Chapter 6 peaked at nearly $41 million in 2011 and constituted 90 percent of the organization’s budget, attests to this increased influence. While the wartime Freedom House of the 1940s promoted the agenda of the Administration, and its upper echelon members participated in a wide array of governmental positions, its budget was minuscule in comparison to today’s. Up until the late 1960s, under the direction of George Field, the annual Freedom House budget never exceeded $40,000, and it relied heavily on the contributions of individuals, rather than on foundations or governmental organizations.

The power and prestige of the now widely used Comparative Survey are a result of Freedom House’s cozy relationship with the U.S. government. What also helps is that the scores are presented as objective, scientific representations of the situations on the ground in the countries they purport to measure. This is untrue, as I illustrated in Chapter 5, in much the same vein that Freedom House’s claim to be an independent organization is blatantly untrue. However, the organization continues to lead a determined campaign that portrays both itself and its scores as independent and objective. Today the Freedom House scores are the most widely used indicators of democracy by academics. In addition, the measures’ ideological alignment with administrations’ foreign policy has led to their increased use by the U.S. government and additional prominence. Ultimately, then, one of the most important implications of this dissertation is the importance of historicizing entities that wield power –
whether they be organizations, networks, or datasets. The Comparative Survey, an instrument of monumental power, must be placed in its historical context in order to understand both the motivations of those who created it and the results of their creation. Instead, however, it seems most scholars see the scores as ahistorical and scientific, not the subjective “hunches and impressions” of particular human beings. In turn, the general public, and scholars who use these scores, are in a sense alienated from the origins of this knowledge that exercises power over them and buttresses the dominance of an elite conception of democracy and the purposes its promotion serves.

My time at the Mudd Manuscript Library at Princeton University, where I was able to view documents and correspondence from both the Freedom House Collection as well as the George Field Collection, was invaluable to the conclusions I reached during this project. In fact, my access to these documents has allowed me to make the statements I do about both the organization as a whole, and the scores produced by the annual Survey. This archival research also reveals the importance of historicizing instruments of power, which are the outcome of a particular context. The origins of Freedom House as an important arm of the U.S. government wartime propaganda machine, long forgotten, are a key part of this story. The creation of the Comparative Survey by Leonard Sussman and Raymond Gastil reinforced the importance of Freedom House to the government as a tool of its foreign policy when these men saw a niche open for it. Assigning a number to these measures based on the input of only two individuals resulted in a far less transparent process and dubious scores. Simultaneously, however, these scores were marketed by Sussman and
viewed by the government and academic community as “scientific” while the earlier Freedom House Balance Sheets were quickly dismissed as having been “based mainly on anecdotal analysis” (Sussman 2002: 61). Only when one views the history of this organization, its leadership, and the Survey as it emerges from its archived documents do these power dynamics and motivations become apparent.

Placing both the institution and the creation of the Comparative Survey in historical context reveals that its measures are neither independent nor objective. Examining the archival documents I was able to access proved to be essential to piecing together this story. In addition to the numerous pamphlets and reports produced for public consumption by Freedom House throughout the years, I was also able to see personal correspondence, internal memos and meeting minutes, which revealed how key members of the organization thought about the purpose of Freedom House and the utility of the scores over time. Interpretivists such as myself attempt to understand how individuals participated in meaning-making activities and place these activities into a particular historical context (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006). It was particularly interesting when the beliefs expressed by these actors clashed with current, widely held notions about the organization and its measurement tools. I also attempted to triangulate these sources in order to get a better sense of trends and patterns in the organization’s publications and rhetoric. Chester’s (1995) work on the International Rescue Committee, an organization that shares many similarities with Freedom House, was particularly helpful for this triangulation, as my dissertation is the first book-length study of Freedom House. The Comparative Survey provides what is perhaps the most dramatic example of the stark contrast between the public
and private remarks of Freedom House. While Gastil repeatedly stated in his private correspondence that the scores did not employ quantitative methods, Sussman pitched the Comparative Survey to academics and government officials as an objective tool developed using a succinct methodology. After leaving Freedom House decades later, Gastil (1990) publicly explained that the Survey was based solely on his individual “hunches and impressions.” This admission appears to have come too late to halt the incredible momentum both the institution and Freedom House scores had already gained in academia and the government.

This project draws attention to the fact that scholars often treat measures as ahistorical when in reality they are not (Roelofs 2003; Parmar 2004). In addition to the Comparative Survey, many other measurement tools used by political scientists should be historicized as well. Oren (2003) briefly addressed the ideological orientation embedded in the POLITY dataset, which was directed by Ted Gurr of the University of Maryland who also carried out other studies specifically “commissioned by the CIA” (Oren 2003: 171). Further study of the POLITY scores themselves, and the circumstances surrounding their development, is needed. Instead of historicizing tools like the Freedom House scores, however, there is a tendency in the discipline to ask if a “better” measure of democracy might be created. This is precisely the question I was confronted with when I presented some of my dissertation findings in April of 2015 at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association: “So, do you have a better measure of democracy you suggest political scientists use?” Those who ask this question clearly misunderstand my project. The focus of this dissertation is to examine the creation of this particular measure and the motivations
of both the institution and figures involved in its production. I do not attempt to provide a “better” measure of democracy. While I do find fuller, more robust conceptions of democracy more compelling, I do not offer an alternative measure based on some normative criteria here. What I try to illustrate is the way in which the scores flattened out the organization’s conception of democracy. An important part of this story is the way in which people associated with Freedom House changed how they thought about democracy over time. This dissertation is not about my conception of democracy, but Freedom House’s.

The Freedom House scores and the conception of democracy they convey represent the views dominant among the foreign policy makers of the United States government (Robinson 1996). Democracy promotion is a main goal of American actions abroad (Guilhot 2005); therefore the concept itself wields a great deal of power – wars have been carried out in its name. The assignment of numbers to the Freedom House scores has served the American government because this guise of scientific objectivity cloaks their ideological alignment. Freedom House has shown itself over the years to be committed not to democracy per se, but the interests of the U.S. as well as the organization’s own interests. Its fame is linked to the prestige of these scores and the financial support they bring in. Freedom House leadership reaps the rewards of this prestige, and the majority of these individuals enjoy high standing within the United States government, often accepting positions within the organization after having served in various governmental offices, or even vice versa. This has long been the case, and the journey of many such individuals, such as Leo Cherne, represents a path similar to that described by Nicolas Guilhot, one in which
those Guilhot terms “double agents” are transformed “from cold warriors to human rights activists” (Guilhot 2005: 29).

While it is clear that a relationship between Freedom House and the United States government has always existed, its strengthening over time is illustrated through increased financial aid and a change in rhetoric and focus on the part of Freedom House. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Freedom House held conferences and workshops during which the concept of democracy itself was up for debate. Differing opinions and definitions of the concept were expressed by various experts including academics, politicians and union leaders, and those who attended were free to offer their own conjectures about democracy and ask questions of the speakers. These proceedings were not secret; in fact, pamphlets were later published which summarized the events that occurred, often quoting speakers verbatim, as well as the questions asked of them by workshop attendees. Many of the speakers, including Harry Gideonse, who at that time was president of Brooklyn College as well as Freedom House Board chairman, arrived at conclusions during such workshops (which were also published) that democracy could not be contained by a definition, or identified by the presence of what social scientists now refer to as necessary and sufficient conditions.

Those who would argue that the Freedom House scores are not as prominent within the field of political science as I here assert have only to look to Larry Diamond’s book *In Search of Democracy*. Published in July of 2015, the work makes a number of generalizations about global democratic trends. “Drawing on the most recent data from Freedom House, it assesses the global state of democracy and
freedom, as of the beginning of 2015, and it explains why the world has been experiencing a mild but now deepening recession of democracy and freedom since 2005.”

Diamond is considered to be one of the leading authorities on the study of democratization. A professor at Stanford University, he oversees the Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law (CDDRL), and is a co-founding editor of the *Journal of Democracy*. He has done consulting work for both the International Forum for Democratic Studies of the National Endowment for Democracy and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Diamond has edited or co-edited 36 books on democracy. And although Larry Diamond is but one scholar, he is prominent in the field of democratization studies. Most notably, his position as editor of the *Journal of Democracy* allows him to influence the type of work that appears in “the world’s leading publication on the theory and practice of democracy.” This journal “ranks among the most influential of social-sciences journals; it is one of the most cited social-sciences journals, according to the *Journal Citation Reports* compiled by the Institute for Scientific Information (the Social Sciences Edition covers 1,800 leading social-sciences journals). In addition to Diamond’s 2015 book, the *Journal of Democracy* also published a book that year titled *Democracy in Decline?* in honor of the journal’s twenty-fifth anniversary. The work is a collection of short essays written by “eight of

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400 The *Journal of Democracy* is “part of the International Forum for Democratic Studies, housed within the National Endowment for Democracy,” and is published by The Johns Hopkins University Press. See the journal’s own description of its activities and history here: [http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/about](http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/about).
402 See [http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/about](http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/about).
403 Ibid.
the world’s leading public intellectuals and scholars of democracy.” Of the six chapters in this book, all but one cite the Freedom House scores as good, reliable data. The chapters that refer to the Freedom House scores were written by Francis Fukuyama, Robert Kagan, Philippe C. Schmitter, Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, and Larry Diamond. If Larry Diamond and other leading democracy scholars are currently using Freedom House scores in their work, this is a strong indication that these measures continue to remain extremely relevant.

The use of the Comparative Survey also has important implications for the kind of scholarship conducted by social scientists. That is to say, the influence of these scores actually extends to the type of questions academics who study democratization even think to ask. For example, in the aforementioned work, Diamond (2015) attempts to understand what causes transitions to democracy. Using Freedom House scores as the basis for such research, as Diamond does, provides one with a particular framework for studying democratization. For example, Freedom House’s claim that a particular country was “not free” one year and then “free” the next could lead academics to examine what changed during this specific time period and prompted a democratic transition. Ultimately, these factors could then be associated with general laws regarding the necessary and sufficient conditions required for democratization. The potential impact of the Comparative Survey, then, is tremendous.

In addition to using these scores to inform their research, political scientists identify the Comparative Survey of Freedom as a scientific, objective, non-

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405 This list corresponds to the chronological order in which the chapters appear in the book.
ideological measurement of democracy. The very recent remarks of the newly appointed President of Freedom House illustrate this commonly held view. Mark P. Lagon, a Georgetown Ph.D., said the following regarding the scores in a press release announcing his appointment: “[t]he research reports published by Freedom House are state of the art. They’re objective, sophisticated and subtle, in the sense that they look at changes in freedoms through a particularly powerful lens. They are the benchmarks for a large number of institutions around the world.” This determined campaign on the part of Freedom House to present the scores as objective also reveals the importance of invoking this claim in the discipline. The value placed on objective measures in contemporary political science is another aspect of this project worthy of further examination.

Even one political scientist who is quite critical of the methodological shortcomings of the Freedom House scores, Michael Coppedge, seems to agree. While Coppedge admits that “Freedom House claims to consider a very long list of characteristics in its ratings, but its procedures are not transparent,” he also states that the scores appear to agree on the whole with other widely used measures of democracy (Coppedge 2012: 21 FN#7). That is to say, the Comparative Survey is considered valid because its rankings of countries are similar to those generated by other measurement tools. In a wide comparison with other democracy indicators, the study found that Freedom House’s Index of Political Rights was “more than 87

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406 The position was formerly referred to as Executive Director, see the introduction of this dissertation.
407 Although many of Freedom House’s former Executive Directors served in the government sector prior to their appointment, Lagon’s status as a political science academic is a rarity for the institutional position.
408 Ibid.
409 Coppedge is head of the V-Dem project at the Kellogg Institute at the University of Notre Dame.
percent valid” (Coppedge 2012: 37). Thus, the scores continue to be used by political scientists. The sheer frequency with which the scores are used as reliable data reveals that their objectivity, soundness and ideological neutrality is rarely questioned by political scientists.  

Democracy promotion has become a cornerstone of American foreign policy, and its end is nowhere in sight. And while many of the values that are espoused by proponents of “democracy” in its Western form, such as universal suffrage, can be seen as good in and of themselves, there is a darker side to this practice as well. Aside from the U.S. government, organizations such as Freedom House, reflect a certain set of interests that are pursued under the guise of democracy promotion. Therefore, a cautionary look must be taken at the nature of these institutions – especially when they wield as much influence on both academia and the government as Freedom House does.

The field of political science generally should not be so quick to accept findings as scientific and objective merely because they have a numeric value assigned to them, and the work I have done reveals specific, substantive reasons to question the merit of the Comparative Survey on both these grounds. The origins of Freedom House; the governmental associations of its leadership; the changing content of its reporting; the Field/Sussman dispute; the motivations and conversations surrounding the creation of the Comparative Survey; the increase in governmental funding; and the promotion of U.S. national security and interest over global democracy have all been addressed in this dissertation. All reveal the ideological

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410 Whether or not the scores are ideological is in fact rarely discussed (apart from Giannone 2010). That one would question their orientation does not, therefore, seem to be a topic that gains much traction in the field.
mission of Freedom House and its close connection to the U.S. government. This narrative cannot be told without the use of the archival material I have examined.

This dissertation has revealed Freedom House to be a highly politicized organization, closely associated with the United States government. Additionally, the Comparative Survey of Freedom, for which it is so well known and praised, should be seen as the creation of an ambitious Executive Director and political scientist, whose methods were not at all transparent. The nature of Freedom House has changed dramatically since the early 1970s. This lack of transparency, as well as the ability of donors to manipulate, direct and determine the outcome of said projects, are extremely problematic with regard to the independence and objectivity of Freedom House.

While the assertions I have made here may not be welcome throughout the discipline, I would like to add that I am not attempting to discredit the use of any and all measures in the social sciences. The compiling, trading, and discussing of data, the collaborative works undertaken as a result of these data, are quintessential components of what it means to be an academic in this field. However, the processes by which data are conceived and collected should be a transparent and open one, particularly if these data are then used in scholarly work. One of the cornerstones of political science, in my opinion, is that it be a reflective field. Thus I call for an examination of the sources upon which our discipline so heavily relies. Not all of my colleagues will agree with my criticisms of Freedom House and its Comparative Survey, but it is my sincere hope we can agree that this is a conversation worth
having. Political science should always be able to reflect on its methods and tools.

This dialogue is essential to a vibrant discipline.
APPENDIX A

ARCHIVAL SOURCES: COLLECTIONS EXAMINED AND TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED
This project does not employ methodologies traditionally used by political scientists. Instead, I used interpretive methods to conduct archival research. The ways in which I employed the methods described in the body of this chapter, and my personal experiences with the collections I examined during the course of my dissertation research, are discussed below.

Before I journeyed to Princeton, I spent some time reviewing the finding aids available through the Mudd Manuscript Library’s website. These allowed me to make some very general determinations as to what kinds of material was in each of the collections I wanted to examine – the Freedom House and George Field Collections. As I expected, the former had a great deal more in it than the latter, and was better organized. Specifically, the Freedom House Collection was separated by documents related to its Board of Trustees, Administration, Programs and Projects, Awards and Celebrations, Public Relations, Serials and Pamphlets, and more. Each of these categories is divided into numerous subcategories, and some of those are divided even further. Material in each of these categories dated back to the early 1940s.

Some of the material I was interested in at the outset was housed not in the Freedom House Collection but in the George Field Collection. George Field was the Executive Director of Freedom House between 1941 and 1967; the longest serving to date, and the existence of a separate collection for his professional documents is further evidence of his lasting dispute and unhappiness with Freedom House. Though this collection was much smaller than that of Freedom House (with which there was also some overlap), I was able to view the titles of Field’s personal memos, his last

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411 See http://findingaids.princeton.edu/.
being “The End of a Dream” (1988; addendum in 1990). I decided to send away for copies of these immediately.\footnote{The Mudd Manuscript Library offers a number of services to patrons, including the free use of an archivist who will perform one hour of research per person per year. Non-university affiliates are also able to request copies of archival material for a small fee.} I contacted a librarian via email, and received the Field memos in PDF form not long thereafter.

The claims Field made in these memos, which detailed his great disappointment in the new direction he believed Freedom House was headed after Sussman became Executive Director in 1967, can be substantiated in part by other material available. This includes the change in the form of reporting done by the organization and an increase in funding from the federal government. Therefore, although one may not be able to definitely settle the feud between Field and Leonard Sussman (his successor as Executive Director), these memos alerted me to the 1970s as a pivotal period of change in the organization. Additional evidence supports this.

When I arrived at the Mudd Manuscript Library I was immediately confronted with the incredible volume of material in the archives. Even though I was primarily interested in the time period surrounding the creation of the Comparative Survey there was still a great deal to examine. For example, the Field files available through the Freedom House Collection, which were located in the “Executive Directors” subset of the “Administration” series, consisted of 12 boxes, with sporadic coverage of the years 1940 through 1970. There is therefore some overlap between the Freedom House and George Field Collections, as the former still contains a great number of documents related to Field’s leadership of the organization. Field’s personal collection contains what documents he took with him when he left the
organization, as well as his personal writings after he completely severed ties with Freedom House in 1970.

It soon became very apparent that I would not have enough time during my two-week stay at the archives to wade through all of the material in front of me. I had to make some rather quick judgments as to what seemed to be of importance, and decided to photograph those documents rather than fill out the paperwork required for copy requests. On a small scrap of paper I wrote down from which series, subseries, box, and folder that particular document was drawn, and placed this at its corner so that it would appear in the photograph.

I also learned a great deal more about the origins of the organization than I had anticipated going into the archives, and found its political connections and use as a wartime propaganda machine especially fascinating. I stumbled across the program cover for a rally held at Madison Square Gardens in 1941 by the Fight for Freedom Committee (one of the predecessors of Freedom House), which featured Mickey Mouse and was illustrated by a cartoonist who worked for Walt Disney. I then realized that additional research into twentieth century U.S. political history would be necessary to conduct my analysis.

In sorting through the material I collected I found much of the correspondence I gathered to be crucial to my project. In particular, some of the comments made by Gastil regarding what he saw as the nature of the Comparative Survey, and the manner in which he created the scores on which it relies, were incredibly revelatory. His letters to a number of organizations that wished to use the Survey for educational purposes (prior to its widespread use or publication as a book) were just as crucial to

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413 This picture appears in Chapter 2.
providing a focus for this project as the memoranda of Field. Both alerted me to the fact that neither the organization nor its measurement tools were what they advertised themselves to be, and were in fact quite different from common perceptions about them.

The correspondence of Leonard Sussman was also particularly interesting and useful in writing this dissertation. The manner in which he presented the Survey (as the result of objective, scientific, quantitative research), which differed so greatly from what Gastil had to say about he created it, captured my attention. The Freedom House Collection also contained some of Leonard Sussman’s typed testimony before a Congressional committee right around the publication of the first Comparative Survey. His suggestion that the legislature rely on the findings of the Survey, as well as his comments to other individuals in his private correspondence, supported my initial beliefs (primarily based on both Field’s writings and the increase in government funding that occurred after the Survey’s development) that Sussman poured a lot of effort into “selling” the scores.

Also, the early Balance Sheets of Freedom (produced between 1953 and 1972) were incredibly helpful in providing a picture of the organization’s early research and general stance on democracy. While I only came across a few of the Balance Sheets produced during this time period in the archives, as boxes and folders were not always clearly organized and/or chronological, I was able to collect enough to adequately gauge the early rhetoric of Freedom House.414

The Freedom House Collection also included a number of typed statements (on which edits were handwritten) from the organization’s early leadership. These

varied in content, but quite a few were dedicated to a discussion of what Freedom House saw as its mission and how it defined democracy. In addition to these statements, a number of pamphlets addressed similar issues. One pamphlet in particular summarized the events of an early conference dedicated to a discussion of what democracy entailed, and included excerpts from its various speakers who disagreed with one another on various points. I was struck by these documents because they seemed to suggest that Freedom House was previously a forum for such discussions on democracy, rather than a univocal authority on its meaning.

The material that turned out to be less important were the photographs I had taken of early drafts of the Comparative Survey. I had anticipated that these would provide greater insight into the process by which Gastil arrived at the early ratings, but many of these typed pages turned out to be only minimally different than the final Surveys that were published. Also, some correspondence I photographed ultimately had no bearing on the project, as was to be expected given the limited amount of time I had to make decisions in the archives. I also had not clearly defined the project I was undertaking when I visited Princeton, as I really had no idea exactly what I would find and what material would be interesting and useful. Unfortunately, this is par for the course in archival work, given that one is unable to see the vast majority of archived documents before one travels to where they are.

While some are critical of the use of interpretive methods, as they do centrally involve making judgments and determinations on the part of the researcher, I believe all of the claims I make in this dissertation can be substantiated. I include some lengthy excerpts of archival documents in the body of my dissertation on whose
meaning I believe there can be no argument, such as Gastil’s repeated denial that he used sophisticated quantitative methods when arriving at his democracy scores, as well as his primary reliance on his own intuitions when ranking countries. Other assertions I make are undoubtedly less straight-forward, but are the result of examining a great deal of archival material, and having knowledge of the context within which conversations between individuals and changes in the organization were taking place. For example, it is not merely coincidental that Freedom House publications are no longer critical of American foreign policy just as the organization’s government funding dramatically increases. I use numerous sources to make the claims I do in this dissertation, and explain and carefully document my reading of the material throughout.
APPENDIX B

TABLES OF ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role and Contributions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William Allen White</td>
<td>Chairman of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies (CDAAA), Editor of the Emporia Gazette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark Eichelberger</td>
<td>Worked for the League of Nations (and later the UN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert E. Sherwood</td>
<td>Playwright; approached CDAAA to put out his newspaper ad titled “Stop Hitler Now!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert Bayard Swope</td>
<td>Editor of the old New York World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas K. Finletter</td>
<td>Lawyer, later prominent in the State Department (including a 1941 appointment as special assistant to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, a 1947 appointment by President Truman to head what would later become known as the Finletter Commission in order to “make an objective inquiry into national aviation policies and problems and to assist him [Truman] in formulating an integrated national aviation policy,” and as second Secretary of the Air Force from 1950 to 1953).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Backer</td>
<td>Newspaper publisher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Goldsmith</td>
<td>New York stockbroker now credited with being one of the “key national leaders” of The American Council for Judaism between 1943 and 1948.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugh Moore</td>
<td>Creator of the Dixie cup, and this invention and his position as the President of the Dixie Cup Company made him very wealthy. He held a number of other important positions over his lifetime, including “chairman of the executive committee of the League of Nations Association (U.S.), 1940-1943; consultant to the State Department at the United Nations Conference, 1945; founding member of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, 1940; treasurer of Committee of Committee for the Marshall Plan, 1948;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Frederick McKee

An industrialist from Pittsburgh who belonged to the American Committee for Non-Participation in Japanese Aggression, the American Association for the United Nations, and the Committee on National Affairs, Free World, Inc. He also helped to create the China Emergency Committee and its successor, the Committee to Defend America by Aiding Anti-Communist China.

Henry Stimson

Future Secretary of War

Frank Knox

Publisher and owner of the *Chicago Daily News*, Future Secretary of the Navy

James B. Conant

President of Harvard

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417 See [http://academicmuseum.lafayette.edu/special/dixie/bio.html](http://academicmuseum.lafayette.edu/special/dixie/bio.html). He served on all of these very important committees despite his radical ideas about the need to curb population growth, explained in a multitude of pamphlets he published between 1954 and the mid-1960s. During this time period around 1.5 million of these pamphlets were printed, including one titled “The Population Bomb: Is Voluntary Human Sterilization the Answer?” His unfettered rise to prominence despite these views, which led “...some scholars [to] dismiss Moore as a crank, [was offset by the fact that] he was a friend to many powerful people, including William Draper, Jr. and the Bush family” [http://www.textbookhistory.com/the-population-bomb-v1-0/](http://www.textbookhistory.com/the-population-bomb-v1-0/).


419 Both Knox and Stimson were deeply involved in government-sponsored psychological warfare. Along with Sherwood, these two were instrumental in the creation of the Office of War Information (OWI).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WRITERS OF THE CENTURY GROUP’S “A SUMMONS TO SPEAK OUT”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Francis P. Miller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard F. Cleveland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitney Shepardson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Millis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis Mumford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Kent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvin Hoover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Douglas Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stringfellow Barr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE CENTURY GROUP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lewis W. Douglas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry P. Van Dusen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert Agar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will Clayton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Sloane Coffin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry W. Hobson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernest M. Hopkins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry R. Luce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis P. Miller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitney H. Sheparson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admiral William H. Standley, ret.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### FIGHT FOR FREEDOM (FFF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herbert Agar, president</td>
<td>Noted journalist &amp; editor of the Louisville <em>Courier-Journal</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulric Bell, executive vice-president</td>
<td>Dean of Washington correspondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rex Stout</td>
<td>America’s best-known detective story writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold K. Guinzburg</td>
<td>The Viking Press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward Cheney</td>
<td>Of Cheney Mills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Sherwood</td>
<td>Playwright, White House speechwriter; later director of the Foreign Information Service (FIS) and the Overseas Branch of the Office of War Information (OWI)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### OFFICIAL FOUNDERS OF FREEDOM HOUSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt</td>
<td>Honorary co-chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendell Willkie</td>
<td>Honorary co-chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert Agar</td>
<td>First President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulric Bell</td>
<td>“a hard-drinking newspaperman” Washington correspondent for the <em>Louisville Courier-Journal</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Agar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Field</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Backer</td>
<td>Publisher of the <em>New York Post</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Vincent Benet</td>
<td>Distinguished poet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellsworth Bunker</td>
<td>Ambassador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Harry D. Gideonse</td>
<td>President of Brooklyn College who served as president and chairman of Freedom House on several occasions during its first forty years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean Virginia Gildersleeve</td>
<td>President of Barnard College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lester B. Granger</td>
<td>Executive secretary of the National Urban League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Green</td>
<td>President of the Marine and Ship-Building Industrial Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Grillo</td>
<td>Secretary of the United Rubber Workers of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Hayes</td>
<td>Leading American actress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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420 Adapted from (Sussman 2002: 15-16).
Maxwell A. Kriendler | Restaurateur of the 21 Club; “Donors to the organization [FH’s predecessor FFF, on whose national board Kriendler sat] were assured of good tables at ’21,’ while known isolationists were barred from the restaurant” (Olson 2013: 323).

Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr | Union Theological Seminary
Ferdinand Pecora | Judge
A. Philip Randolph | President of the International Sleeping Car Porters’ Union
Samuel Shore | Vice-president of the International Ladies’ Garment Workers Union
Spyros Skouras | Hollywood producer
Raymond Gram Swing | Radio commentator
Dorothy Thompson | Syndicated columnist
Daniel J. Tobin | President, International Teamsters’ Union
W. W. Kayrnack | Editor of the *Des Moines Register and Tribune*
Walter White | National secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
APPENDIX C

MATERIAL DRAWN ON IN CHAPTER 3
1940s
- Memo from January 21, 1942 “Principles of Freedom House”
- Undated memo from 1942 “Freedom House has two main purposes”
- Memo from June 8, 1942 “Freedom House: What We Are, and What We Have Done”
- Undated memo from 1943 “Freedom House in Action”
- Pamphlet from 1945 describing the principles of Freedom House
- Document from 1949 (appears to have been edited for publication) “Freedom and Responsibility: A Statement About Freedom House” by Dr. Harry D. Gideonse

1950s
- Pamphlet from 1950 “This is Freedom House”

1960s
- Memo from late 1964 “Freedom House in Brief: A Fact Sheet on What It Is and What It Does”
- Pamphlet from the mid-1960s “Freedom House: where Americans of diverse viewpoints unite to strengthen our free society”

1970s
- Cherne, Leo. Transcript of testimony before the House Select Committee on Intelligence on December 11, 1975, in Freedom at Issue. March-April 1976, p. 6-7.

1980s
- 1981 Annual Report
ARCHIVAL SOURCES CITED

The George Field Collection


Series III: Correspondence; 1934-1985; Box 2; George Field Collection of Freedom House Files, Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University.

Series XI: Our Secret Weapon; 1942-1943; Box 6; George Field Collection of Freedom House Files, Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University.

Series VI: Financial Files; 1949-1969; Boxes 2 & 3; George Field Collection of Freedom House Files, Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University.

Series XII: Legal Files; 1985; Box 6; George Field Collection of Freedom House Files, Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University.

The Freedom House Collection

Series 1, Subseries 1: Bylaws and Minutes: 1941-1994; Freedom House Records. Minutes: 1941-1969; Box 1; Folders 2-27 Minutes: 1970-1988; Box 2; Folders 1-19 Executive Committee Minutes: 1945-1968; Box 2; Folders 2-27 Executive Committee Minutes: 1969-1988; Box 3; Folders 1-20

Comparative Survey of Freedom; 1978-1979, 1983; Box 41, Folder 1
Testimony; 1975 & 1981; Box 55, Folder 17

Annual Reports; 1943 1955 1977-1992; Box 75, Folder 13

Conferences; 1942-1995.
News Media/Gov’t Consultants Conference; 1973; Box 98, Folder 13
News Media/Gov’t Consultants Conference; 1973; Box 99, Folder 1-2

Balance Sheet of Freedom; 1953-1970; Box 126, Folder 6-7
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Sullivan, Michael J. III. *American Adventurism Abroad: 30 Invasion, Interventions,


