

Are we leaving them behind? A rhetorical analysis of <veteran> on the No One Left Behind website

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## Abstract

Ideographs are words or phrases which represent a common belief held within a culture (Cloud, 2004). These words and phrases invoke feelings and attitudes an audience has been conditioned to accept, and in strong cases, act upon (Cloud, 2004; McGee, 1980). One such term is <veteran>, which in a U.S. context invokes feelings of honor and respect, and attitudes which put those who fit in the <veteran> category on a pedestal above citizens. This analysis seeks to understand the importance of defining who deserves the title of <veteran> by examining the use of the term by a nonprofit organization, *No One Left Behind*, to describe their clients as <veterans>. *No One Left Behind* (NOLB) serves individuals who have received Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) as a result of their service to the U.S. military. SIV recipients are citizens of Iraq and Afghanistan who served as interpreters and cultural ambassadors to the U.S. military, and as a result are persecuted by the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Because of this persecution, they immigrate to the U.S. NOLB makes the argument that these individuals should be included in the ideograph <veteran> because of their service to the U.S. military, regardless of their citizenship status. Therefore, this analysis examines the consequences of attempting to include such a marginalized group in the <veteran> ideograph.

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## **Dedication**

To all of the people who have served in the U.S. Military, regardless of your sex, gender, race, ability, or citizenship status. May this be a step toward the respect and honor you deserve.

## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

In 2008, First Lieutenant Matt Zeller found himself under heavy fire by the Taliban while stationed in Afghanistan (Klaimont, 2018). He made his peace with dying in the desert when he realized that he was surrounded, out of ammunition, and with nowhere to go. But Matt did not die that day, because his interpreter, a man named Janis Shinwari, saw Zeller was under duress and risked his own life to kill the Taliban fighters (Zeller, 2018). Janis served alongside the U.S. military for seven years, working as an interpreter who went into the most dangerous areas of Afghanistan alongside his American counterparts (Klaimont, 2018), and on that day in April, he happened to be assigned to Matt's unit. After that Janis and Matt were inseparable. Besides saving his life, Janis helped Matt communicate with local tribes, gather intelligence for the U.S. military, while teaching him about his culture and way of life. Eventually, Matt's tour was up and it was time for him to head home. He knew that Janis would stay behind in Afghanistan, with his two young children, helping the next group of soldiers (Klaimont, 2018). He also knew that one day, the Taliban would come for him; he was a traitor to his country in their eyes. Matt promised Janis that if it ever came down to it, Matt would help him immigrate to the U.S.

The call came in February 2011, when Janis learned he and his family had been singled out by Taliban fighters (Klaimont, 2018). He and Matt began the work to apply for a Special Immigrant Visa to the U.S. These visas, SIVs, were designed for wartime allies in Iraq and Afghanistan whose lives were in danger because of their service to the U.S. military (Zeller, 2018). Despite his exemplary service record, it took Matt and Janis over three years, numerous emails to the State Department, and eventually a media firestorm to acquire a visa. Janis and his family finally arrived in 2013, and together with Matt, they decided to start a nonprofit



organization (NPO) called *No One Left Behind* (NOLB) that would help translators and U.S. allies living in Iraq and Afghanistan to migrate to the U.S. (Zeller, 2018).

*No One Left Behind's* mission is to resettle wartime allies- those who worked with the U.S. military despite being citizens of Iraq and Afghanistan- resettle in the U.S. (Zeller, 2018). In the years since its creation, NOLB has become a nationwide nonprofit organization with branches in Chicago, Denver, Boston, San Diego, San Francisco, and Omaha, among others. NOLB assists translators in the application process, as well as helping provide housing, furniture, education, and vehicles to those who need them. They ask local community members for donations of time and money (No One Left Behind, n.d). NOLB volunteers/staff also meet newly arrived SIV recipients at the airport to greet them as heroes, the same way U.S. soldiers are greeted upon their return from war (Zeller, 2018). The organization thus far has aided over 8300 wartime allies resettle in the United States (No One Left Behind, n.d). The NOLB website labels SIV recipient allies as 'heroes' and 'veterans,' rather than immigrants, and encourages U.S. citizens to view them as 'veterans' (No One Left Behind, n.d.).

Part of what sets NOLB apart from other refugee or immigrant charities is their rhetorical placement of SIV recipients as <veterans> rather than as refugees or immigrants. While SIVs who successfully immigrate to the U.S. are not immediately granted citizenship, NOLB strives to treat them not just as Americans, but as American heroes, as <veterans>. This is manifest in NOLB's website, [nooneleft.org](http://nooneleft.org); wartime allies or foreign nationals who worked with the U.S. military should be recognized as veterans and given the same support, service, and treatment as American veterans.

With this as backdrop, in this study I am interested in analyzing the rhetorical impact of the use of the label 'veteran' for SIV recipients, especially in a U.S. cultural context where this

label has significant implications. To be precise, it functions not just as a descriptor for those who served in the U.S. military, but as an ideograph that informs citizens how to feel about <veterans> and how to treat or act towards them. Ideographs are a rhetorical representation of cultural beliefs, values, and ideologies (McGee, 1980). Their meaning may change through time, and their rhetorical impact may be more or less latent in different contexts, but once an ideograph is culturally recognized it informs people how to think and feel about the world, in other words, it influences their worldview. Some examples of ideographs present in American culture are <freedom>, <liberty>, or <justice for all> (Foss, 2004). In this study I argue that <veteran> functions as an ideograph in the U.S. and seek to understand the rhetorical implications of NOLB's use of <veteran> to describe SIV recipients. In other words, the question I raise is: **What are the rhetorical implications of *No One Left Behind's* use of the ideograph <veteran> to describe SIV recipients immigrating to the U.S.?**

Thus, the purpose of this study is to understand whether the rhetoric used by NOLB on its website subverts definitions of <veteran> which rely on citizenship and service to the U.S. government in the military as prerequisites for the title ("What is a veteran?", 2018 para 1). The U.S. has been relying on the service of its citizens in the military for centuries to protect citizens from foreign threats as well as domestic disasters. In recent times (the past few decades) we have also begun relying on foreign nationals. Too often, those who choose to help the U.S. government in some capacity are then left behind in a country even more broken than when a conflict began, and with no resources to protect themselves. Similarly, once <veterans> return to the U.S. they may be left out of the assistance and resources they were promised. The purpose of this analysis is not only to reveal the underlying tension in the <veteran> ideograph, but to point out the need for resources to protect those who protect us. This will also contribute to

understandings of global communication in terms of the strategic inclusion of foreign refugees in the rhetoric of a U.S. nonprofit organization.

In the following chapter, I proceed with a review examining scholarship on NPO communication strategies, digital rhetoric, ideology, and a background discussion of NOLB. Next, I elaborate on the methodology used for this study followed by a diachronic and a synchronic analysis of <veteran>. When examining an ideograph, it is important to examine both the vertical (diachronic) structure of the terms as well as the horizontal (synchronic) shifts that may be occurring in the artifact presented (Foss, 2004; McGee, 1980). This way, the researcher may trace the evolution of a term throughout history to understand if current trends are repeating the past in order to understand the current rhetorical implications of the term. Finally, I discuss the findings of this ideographic analysis and its implications.

The question this study investigates contributes to the field of rhetoric and intercultural communication by uncovering the importance of ideology in maintaining support for nonprofit organizations. While my own ideology will inform pieces of the arguments, this analysis asks questions about global ideologies as well. The nonprofit sector is one which contributes to global humanitarian problems, meaning there is an intersection of ideological leanings that must be addressed, and I attempt to do so in this thesis.

## Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Nonprofit organizations (NPOs) use rhetoric to construct an identity for themselves that not only establishes their beliefs and values, but also ensures that an organization is viewed as ‘legitimate’ (Gill & Wells, 2013). Due to the growing popularity of the Internet, NPOs have begun constructing websites, blogs, listservs, and social media profiles to diversify their audiences, reaching more people at a fraction of the cost (Kang & Norton, 2004). Reaching a wider audience means NPOs can rhetorically appeal to more people who share similar beliefs about their mission and are willing to support the NPO’s actions (Gill & Wells, 2014). NOLB does this through the use of its blog and website; anyone can access this information at any time, from anywhere in the world. To understand the impact this has not only for the organization but also for the ideograph central to this study--<veteran>--it is important to briefly review the affordances of websites for NPO communication and how that might affect NPOs’ rhetorical affordances. The following sections highlight how NPOs use the Internet to communicate their goals and beliefs.

### **NPOs Online Communication**

The creation of the Internet allowed organizations, whether governmental, corporate, or nonprofit, to share their messages, mission, products, and values with customers, supporters, and citizens on a national and international level. By creating webpages, organizations began building their online presence and establishing their identity among multiple and wide-reaching audiences with minimal financial burden (Kang & Norton, 2004). NPOs often rely on donations and operate on limited budgets, meaning the ability to communicate with more people for less money is key to NPOs’ communication strategy. These websites afforded the opportunity to engage publics with different levels of interest, means, and education; however, at first NPOs

were not using them to their full potential (Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009; Kang & Norton, 2004). As more and more tools became available, organizations had to choose what media types to engage on their platforms- for example, pictures, videos, blogs, comment/discussion threads, email, and instant messaging. Depending on an organization's goals, different media types prove beneficial.

As a medium, the Internet was originally seen as the least credible way to get information, and struggled to overcome the impact of traditional media such as newspapers, radio, and television (Jean Kensicki, 2003). The mentality that anyone can say anything they want online forced organizations to prove to their audiences that they were serious and legitimate. This meant organizations had to adjust their rhetorical strategies to gain legitimacy online, without relying on more costly traditional media. Saxton and Guo (2011) argue that the introduction of web-based communication encourages NPOs to include stakeholders such as donors, volunteers, or clients in their rhetorical choices. When stakeholders have the ability to follow the organization's communication more closely, and organizations are sharing success stories and plans for future actions, there are increased levels of accountability for both stakeholders and organizations.

Web-based rhetoric is often an organization's best choice for advertising, sharing success stories, and reaching out to new audiences (Baym, 2010). Organizations have more control over their digital, web-based rhetoric, as they can communicate directly with their audience, rather than relying on a middleman (such as a television or radio host) to deliver their messages. Organizations have the opportunity, through online rhetoric, to carefully craft a rhetorical strategy that reflects their goals and ideology. This also gives the organization complete control

over how their ideology is manifested through rhetoric for their target audience. The next section discusses how NPOs communicate their ideology.

### **NPO's and Ideology**

Through advocacy and engagement with citizens on a local and national level, NPOs work to amplify marginalized voices and contribute to policy changes largely on religious and social issues (Guo & Saxton, 2014). Because of the highly personal nature of the work many nonprofits do, ideology plays a significant role in their day-to-day experiences (Dempsey, 2012). NPOs operate outside of the commercial realm, meaning their audience holds expectations that the work NPOs do is for the benefit of society, rather than for their own self-interests (Rose-Ackerman, 1997). This gives them political power to lobby for issues which corporate organizations lack, as they are viewed as operating for their own interests and capital gains (Dempsey, 2012). Nonprofit communication places an emphasis on public good and the betterment of society as a whole. In fact, many NPOs work focuses on problems and causes which are highly politicized in nature, such as environmentalism, immigration, women's rights, or social welfare (Gill & Wells, 2013). Without the power of profit to further their agendas, NPOs rely on rhetorical strategies to persuade an audience to believe in their mission and support their cause.

These rhetorical strategies vary, but they serve to promote an organization's *ideology*. Words, images, and media shared via social media is latent with rhetoric meant to achieve any number of goals for a nonprofit organization- primarily to increase the number of supporters and followers. Bell Woods (2006) argues that one of the main strategies NPOs use to gain volunteers is to create a sense of social responsibility through their rhetorical choices- that is, people are motivated to volunteer for an NPO when they feel that the organizational mission is something

society needs. Organizations must commit to identifying an audience likely to support its cause and targeting their rhetorical choices towards that audience. These appeals contribute to the way organizations rhetorically frame their mission on their websites., making an analysis of the NOLB website highly appropriate to uncover the impact and implications of the ideograph <veteran>, especially its use to label SIV recipients as U.S. <veterans>.

McGee (1980) argues that ideology is a form of consciousness, wherein individuals gather a set of beliefs to belong to a larger group. Individuals find “truth” about the world through their beliefs, values, and morals, which in turn inform their actions (Buckler, 2007). Ideology is a construction of social reality through language. It represents a pattern of political consciousness, which in turn shapes reality and power within a public (McGee, 1980). Actors alter their rhetorical choices to display their rhetoric, and ultimately persuade an audience to agree with their ideological preferences.

Buckler (2007) points out the performative nature of ideology in terms of rhetoric by arguing, “the typical styles and modalities at each level of discourse may be understood in relation to the contrasting *performative* circumstances that pertain.” (p. 37) (italics in original). Ideological appeals to an audience, Buckler (2007) argues, are more emotional in nature than theoretical arguments, as an actor is trying to do something different with an ideological appeal- they are trying to draw a distinction between the status quo and the potential for change. Because powerful people construct an ideology that reflects their own social reality, ideology may be a form of persuasion or social control. When a public absorbs the dominant ideology, they are more likely to behave in ways that reflect and support systems of power (McGee, 1980). These performances are persuasive in nature, and as McGee (1980) argues “the clearest access to persuasion, (and hence, to ideology), is through the discourse used to produce it” (p. 444). Thus,

ideological rhetoric functions as a form of persuasion which attempts to encourage individuals to behave in ways that support the ideological beliefs inherent in a group or organization. Ideology often manifests in discourse through *ideographs*. An ideograph is, as McGee (1980) argues, “the building blocks of ideology” (p. 445). These words and phrases have definitions that are culturally engrained, and may not be questioned, and which “function as guides, warrants, reasons, and excuses for behavior and beliefs” (McGee, 1980, p. 445). Ideographs are rhetorical devices which allow powerful people to control the beliefs and behaviors of those around them.

Because of their political and social nature, NPOs rely on ideological arguments in their rhetoric to persuade individuals to support their mission. People are more motivated to volunteer or donate to an organization that ideologically aligns with their own beliefs. This is why it is so important for NPOs to strategically communicate their beliefs through the rhetorical choices they make. This may take the form of an ideographic appeal to the audience by using terms and phrases which have cultural significance and recognition. When NPOs use ideographs, they have the power to appeal to a larger audience, because ideographs are culturally recognized. An organization, through the use of ideographs, may at the same time reinforce their ideological beliefs while redefining or challenging definitions of ideographs.

### **Background of the Artifact**

As previously discussed, *No One Left Behind* was the brainchild of Matt Zeller and Janis Shinwari. Following Matt’s campaign to bring Janis to the United States, the two experienced an outpouring of financial support in the form of donations from around the country (Klaimont, 2018). Matt’s intent was to give the money to Janis, to help him adjust to life in the U.S. and provide for his two young daughters. Janis, however, was so grateful for the opportunity to start again in the U.S. that he wanted to ensure all interpreters had access to the same opportunity



(Klairmont, 2018). The two decided to create *No One Left Behind* to keep what they saw as America's promise to the translators- that in exchange for their assistance, America would keep them safe. *No One Left Behind* has since helped more than 5,000 translators through the visa process as well as aid resettling them once they arrive in the U.S. (Klairmont, 2018).

Besides direct communication with translators, NOLB also engages in lobbying for legislation to increase both the number of SIVs available as well as increase funding to assist recipients in their transition to American life. They not only engage with legislators to enact these changes, but stage protests and sit-ins as well. For example, in early 2017 President Donald Trump signed an executive order restricting travel from seven Muslim-majority countries (Tzmach Lemmon, 2017). This impacted translators by bringing the application process to a halt and preventing those who were already on flights to the U.S., when the order went into effect (Tzmach Lemmon, 2017). NOLB volunteers and staff sprang into action by going to the airports, providing free legal advice to translators who were being detained, and refusing to leave until everyone was safely out of the airports. Over two dozen of NOLB's clients were on air, on their way to America, when the travel ban went into effect, which would have left them stranded at airports and possibly even forced to return to their home countries (Tzmach Lemmon, 2017). Everyone from CEO Matt Zeller, to volunteers, to lawyers were at the airport throughout the entire process. NOLB representatives used Facebook live stream to bring attention to the situation at the airports, as well as to provide updates to family and friends of the affected translators around the world. Jason Gorey, an Iraq and Afghan veteran who serves as the Chief Operating Officer for NOLB told *CNN* on January 31, 2017:

It was really disappointing to me as a veteran. I consider the combat interpreters fellow veterans, and I have heard that over and over again from many men and women who

have served. For a lot of us, it feels like we are leaving fellow vets behind. (Tzmach Lemmon, 2017).

Through what the organization refers to as ‘operations’, they work to help SIV recipients with several aspects of the transition process when they arrive in the U.S. For example, ‘Operation Lost In Translation’ is how NOLB helps interpreters with the application process for the Special Immigrant Visa, while ‘Operation Medic’ helps recently arrived SIV recipients receive healthcare (NOLB, n.d.). According to the most recent data posted to the organization’s website, as of 2018, 1,674 wartime allies have benefitted from the assistance of NOLB. Over the years, NOLB has branched out, with volunteers in cities such as Dallas, Omaha, Chicago, Rochester, and San Francisco, and they continue to grow (NOLB, n.d.).

What started as two friends reunited after the horrors of war has evolved into a nationwide nonprofit organization with a clear mission and goals. Through their website, Facebook and Twitter presence, as well as attention from more traditional media such as newspapers and magazines, Matt and Janis have reached an audience that supports their cause. Hundreds of Special Immigrant Visa recipients rely on the assistance of *No One Left Behind* every year. This is why NOLB’s rhetoric, especially its rhetoric on its website, matters. This analysis will shed light on the implications of NOLB’s use of the ideograph <veteran> in a context that is outside of the cultural understanding of the term. The following sections explore the definition and cultural connotations that have followed <veteran> since the term surfaced in America. These sections rely on news sources, reference books, and popular culture to examine the attitude shifts surrounding <veteran> as an ideograph throughout the history of U.S. conflicts. The following section relies heavily on sources from U.S. newspapers and magazines, because as Rhidenour, Barrett, and Blackburn (2019) point out, these sources often set the tone

for how the population views a group of people, and set the tone for global coverage of events. By tracing the evolution of the population's attitude toward <veterans> throughout the years, we may gain an understanding of the ideographic power of <veteran> as an identifier.

### **Background of <Veteran>**

Etymologically the term <veteran> refers to an “old, experienced soldier” according to the “Online Etymology Dictionary” (2019; para 1). While the term has been mainly used to refer to soldiers or those who serve in war, the “Online Etymology Dictionary” also notes, since the 1590s <veteran> has generally referred to someone who has seen long service in any office or position. This definition is emphasized by Webster's Online Dictionary (2019), which defines <veteran> as “a former member of the armed services”, “an old soldier of long service” (para 1) these definitions acknowledge the term's roots to refer specifically to those who have served in the military, however <veteran> may also refer to “a person of long experience usually in some occupation or skill (such as politics or the arts)” (para 1). While the latter definition may be used in public discourse, the more prominent one (as evidenced by the fact it is listed first in most dictionaries) refers to military veterans.

In the U.S., <veteran> is legally defined as “a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable,” according to Title 38 of the Federal Regulations (“What is a veteran?”, 2018 para 1), suggesting, military employment in the U.S. is considered “service” rather than work. Additionally, it is important to note, this definition does not include citizenship as a precursor to <veteran> status. Presumably, to join the military, one would first need to be a U.S. citizen, but this does not take into account foreign nationals (such as SIV recipients) who serve with the U.S. military in their home country. Those who enlist in the military, and who eventually leave and

make the shift from soldier to <veteran>, are compensated for their work, but are described as “serving” the country rather than making a career choice.

While the denotative definitions/descriptions of <veteran> can be somewhat straightforward and oft used, understanding the rhetorical/cultural connotations associated with <veteran> becomes expedient to answer the question/s this study raises. This diachronic analysis, thus, will focus on how the <veteran> ideograph has evolved in the U.S. political/public discourse over time, to provide context for NOLB’s attempt to address SIV recipients as <veterans> and the rhetorical function of the <veteran> ideograph as manifest in NOLB’s website. The following section provides a brief analysis of the rhetorical evolution of <veteran> in the U.S., in both state and civilian contexts; this is followed by an analytical discussion of the <veteran> ideograph in popular culture; this diachronic analysis concludes with an analysis of the <veteran> ideograph in the context of marginalized veterans in the U.S. Additionally, as Parrott, Albright, Dyche, and Grace Steele (2018) point out, news sources are also influenced by outside factors such as political leanings, ideological beliefs, and social norms surrounding how we as a society treat <veterans>. Thus, the news media is central to upholding or shifting attitudes towards ideographs because of the cyclical nature of their reporting, i.e. they are influenced by cultural attitudes, and in turn, also act to influence cultural attitudes.

### **The History of <Veteran> in the U.S.: Honor/Respect Or Deficiency/Posturing?**

The importance of naming a person <veteran> is codified not only in the respect they are perceived as having earned, but also in the physical, literal, and economic benefits granted to anyone who has served in the U.S. military. The U.S. has been protecting <veterans> and providing services for those injured in war even before the country, as we know it, was created. The Veteran’s Affairs (VA) website (“History”, 2018) explains the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony

passed laws, following wars with the Pequot Indians, that the colony would support anyone injured in battle. Rothman (2014) writing for the *Time Magazine* points out that the Plymouth colonizers stated in 1636 that “If any man shall bee[sic] sent forth as a souldier[sic] and shall return maimed, hee[sic] shal[sic] bee[sic] maintained competently by the Collonie[sic] during his life” (para 1). The assumption that the government owes maimed <veterans> for their service was established before the creation of the U.S., as can be inferred from the earlier example, and is maintained to this day.

The mission statement of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is to “fulfill President Lincoln’s promise to “care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan”, by serving and honoring the men and women who are America’s veterans” (“About VA”, 2019; para 1). This organization was borne out of the logic of the Plymouth Colonies. Before the U.S. was even established as a nation, leaders felt the need to care for veterans after they returned from battle. In modern times, Parrot et al (2018) point out that <veterans> are honored and respected because they are portrayed as victims of battle, a concept that is displayed through organizations such as the Department of Veteran’s Affairs, or VA. The mission statement of the VA rhetorically constructs <veterans> as those worthy of “honor” and “service” from the government as its mission is “serving and honoring the men and women who are America’s veterans” (“About VA”, 2019; para 1).

However, as Hay (2017) writes in *Vice* news, these promises of pensions and benefits for disabled soldiers often fall flat, with most veterans only receiving a fraction of what they were promised- if they are lucky. While government officials (including President George Washington and Abraham Lincoln), citizens, and even veterans themselves have fought for benefits, the payouts have been few and far between. For example, following WWI, veterans protested in

Washington D.C. when the government could not pay them the pensions promised due to the Great Depression (Rothman, 2014). This problem has persisted through the long history of U.S. wars and conflicts, which illustrates that while rhetorically the federal government “honors” and postures to “serve” veterans, it fails to act on its rhetorical intentions. The U.S.’ posturing suggests that the <veteran> rhetoric, although promising for veterans in theory, is hollow and deficient in praxis as it does not satisfactorily provide veterans special services. The following sections discuss the experiences of <veterans> chronologically based on which war they served. This allows a historical examination of the evolution of attitudes towards <veterans>, shedding light on the shifts that have occurred in the ideograph over time.

### **Pre-Vietnam War.**

The Revolutionary War of 1775 was the first war that saw states and territories providing direct medical care to servicemen and women. Following WWI, several government agencies that handled veterans’ benefits consolidated in 1921 to create the Veterans Bureau (“History”, 2018). The Veterans Bureau was tasked with medical care, vocational rehabilitation, and insurance for veterans. In 1930, the organization saw another shift when Herbert Hoover created the federal Veteran’s Administration (which would later evolve into The Department of Veteran’s Affairs), which expanded benefits beyond health care and pensions to include housing and care for disabilities that were not service related (“History”, 2018). By expanding services for <veterans>, the U.S. government reaffirmed its commitment to serving <veterans>.

Throughout the U.S.’s history of violent wars, veterans have been seen receiving some of the highest honors in the country, such as the Purple Heart for those injured in war, the Medal of Honor for those distinguishing themselves with acts of valor, or the Bronze Star, given to veterans for heroic service (Department of Defense, n.d.). Furthermore, following WWI,

veterans who returned home were greeted with parades, celebrations, and honors by their loved ones and communities. Veterans Day, a national holiday to commemorate and celebrate those who have served in the military, was originally celebrated on Armistice Day, or the day the Treaty of Versailles ended WWI (Lange, 2018). It was established as a day to honor the “heroism of those who died in our country’s service” (Military, 2019, para 1).

While these celebrations honored <veterans>, the government did little in practice to assist veterans. Upon their discharge, WWI veterans were given \$60, a train ticket home, and a future \$500 ‘bonus’ meant to be paid in 1944 (Buckley & Cleary, 2010). When the Great Depression hit, veterans marched on D.C. to demand their early bonuses, and were met with tanks and artillery shells (Buckley and Cleary, 2010). The nation that purported itself to honor and support veterans had turned against them, and while the bonuses were eventually prepaid in 1936, this conflict harmed the power of the ideograph <veteran>. Not only did the country ignore veterans, but the government actively fought against them. Veterans during this time were more reliant on bonuses and monetary assistance from the federal government, because after their service was over, there was little to no vocational programs or transition training that would help them transition back into civilian life. This serves as a reminder of the ceremonial nature of the <veteran> ideograph, what I have earlier termed *posturing*. Medals and ribbons, parades and holidays, did not give veterans access to tangible benefits such as increased pay, access to healthcare, or guaranteed jobs upon the end of their service.

According to “The American Legion History” (2015), the country as a whole was not prepared for the emotional and physical trauma veterans of WWI endured, and as a result, there was little help that could be offered to veterans once they returned home. When official government resources were scarce and hospitals were overcrowded with veterans, civilians and

veterans came together to create the American Legion in 1919. The American Legion is a non-profit organization designed to assist veterans with the transition back to civilian life (“The American Legion History”, 2015). Its mission statement highlights commitment to “advocate patriotism and honor, promote strong national security, and continued devotion to our fellow service members and veterans” (“Mission”, 2019, para 1). The first of many private, nonprofit organizations created to assist veterans in their transition back to civilian life, the American Legion set the standard for organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign War, and Wounded Warrior project, which would come later on. The need to create an organization distinct from governmental assistance illustrates the gap between the federal government’s promise to assist veterans and citizens’ views on how veterans were being treated/served. The attitude towards <veterans> from citizens and other <veterans> at the time was that <veterans> deserved assistance, but that the federal government was not doing enough. Despite the disparity of benefits, WWI <veterans> were still receiving honor and respect from citizens who were motivated to act on their own not only to pressure the government for more resources, but to establish their own programs.

Since then, other organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), have been founded with similar mission and goals, pointing one more time to the deficient nature of the <veteran> rhetoric. Not only did these organizations assist by raising funds for veterans, but also by exposing the conditions veterans were subject to in hospitals and other service contexts (“The American Legion History”, 2015). The VFW has been instrumental in lobbying for legislation which established the VA, compensated veterans affected by Agent Orange, and those diagnosed with Gulf War Syndrome (“No One Does More, 2019). This advocacy was necessary because the U.S. government was largely ignoring <veterans> who faced issues specific to the Vietnam



conflict and Gulf war. Even into modern times, private organizations such as the American Legion and VFW have been responsible for pressuring congress to take care of <veterans>. The <veteran> ideograph thus continued to grapple with it's ideal implication, associated with honor and respect, and its actual implication, representing a population forgotten and un-served.

The pressure created following the end of WWI led to a marked improvement in veteran's benefits and transitions from soldier to civilian following WWII. The GI bill was created to help those who wanted to return to school or buy houses, by providing federal loans to veterans ("The American Legion History", 2015). Despite efforts by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to reduce the amount of federal money aimed at helping veterans, lobbyists pressured Congress to elevate veterans benefits from regulations to statutes- preventing the executive branch of government from cutting them from the federal budget ("The American Legion History", 2015). It is notable that Dwight D. Eisenhower's administration was responsible for creating Veteran's Day, yet still attempted to take actions that would reduce funding for veteran's benefits. Thus, solidifying my claim that the <veteran> rhetoric was marked by the paradox of honor/respect and deficiency/posturing. Congress' action to prevent this decreased funding elevated the status of <veteran's> funding beyond the reaches of the executive branch. This made it impossible for administrations to make unilateral decisions to cut funding. The shift was successful partially due to the number of veterans serving in Congress, exemplifying, again the need for veterans to advocate for themselves ("The American Legion History", 2015).

Hay (2017) claims that this has changed over time; in the past few decades, the amount of federal support- both rhetorically and literally- that veterans receive when they return from combat has increased. Jackie Kilby, an archives technician at the national archives told Hay

I hate to say this, but I think the current benefits veterans receive are the best it has ever been. It is seriously lacking and can be incredibly painful and difficult, but it is easier than it has been in the past [to receive care and benefits]. Can it be and should it be improved? Yes. But was it worse 50, 100, 150 years ago? Definitely (para 10).

By establishing the GI Bill, a federal program to help veterans pay for college, gaining skills they would need in a more knowledge-based economy following WWII (Hay, 2017) and creating vocational programs to help veterans train for jobs, the government did attempt to reaffirm its support for veterans. However, universities began charging exorbitant tuition to veterans as a way to make money off of the federal government, showing that they were more interested in the money than in helping veterans' transition back into civilian life. As a result, the GI bill was restructured, making it difficult for veterans to receive the tuition money needed to attend school, explains Greenguard (2012) in Workforce.com. Thus, although Hay (2017) tries to be optimistic, this situation is yet another exemplar of the rhetorical (and social, political, etc.) bind that the <veteran> ideograph characterizes.

### **Vietnam War to Present**

It also becomes pertinent to discuss the shifts in attitude and rhetoric of civilians towards <veterans>, which has largely depended on the context of the conflict in which the veteran featured. During and following the Vietnam War, veterans were met with hostility, disrespect, and even violence, as outrage about the war consumed civilian life (Ciampaglia, 2018). Bob Fiest, a Vietnam veteran writing for the *Minnesota Star Tribune* (2012) tells the story of when he got home from the war, stating:

I am not aware of many Vietnam vets who were not subjected to some disrespect, either personal or from the culture that called us "baby killers." We were shamed and embarrassed.

My car (with a military base sticker) was "egged." I bought a wig to hide my military haircut.  
(para 7).

Fiest's experience was not uncommon for Vietnam veterans who felt betrayed by the country they served. This was partially due to the never-ending feeling of the Vietnam War, which lasted from 1964-1973. As fewer soldiers returned with their companies, returning home alone instead, the Vietnam War was largely seen as a loss; and the nation's attitude toward veterans portrayed the negativity that entails loss (Ciampaglia, 2018).

A lack of civilian support for the Vietnam War overall meant that soldiers and veterans lost the emotional support of the nation. This also emphasizes how closely tied veterans and the <veteran> rhetoric are to the war they fought. Because the nation did not support the wars in Vietnam (and Korea) the same way they did WWI and WWII, the veterans who fought in Vietnam were not held in the same regard. For example, Vietnam veterans were not greeted at the airport, not offered applause or praise upon their return, and largely lived in isolation in the years following the Vietnam War (Shipler, 2015). During and following the Vietnam and Korean War, the <veteran> ideograph thus symbolized loss and contempt, thus adding to the connotation of deficient, as now <veterans> not only struggled to get the benefits they had earned, but lost the respect of American citizens because of the unpopularity of the wars they served in. Due to the economic pressures the Vietnam war placed on the U.S., veterans saw a decrease in governmental benefits. Not only were veterans not treated with the respect they were hoping for, but they struggled to make a life for themselves once they returned to the U.S. (Ciampaglia, 2018). Importantly, at the end of the Vietnam War/Korean conflict, the U.S. did away with conscription, shifting the U.S. military from that of forced service for men over the age of 18 to a volunteer service. This had an impact on the perception of soldiers.

Veterans who returned from the Persian Gulf War (1990-1991) reported facing similar difficulties in finding jobs or support. In fact, Gulf War veterans were faced with higher rates of divorce, alcoholism, and unemployment than Vietnam veterans, despite increased support for the Gulf War compared to the Vietnam (and Korea) conflicts (Schmitt, 1995). This was largely rooted in the fact that military service was voluntary during the Gulf War. Soldiers wanted a career in the military but returned to find that post-Cold War cuts to the Department of Defense meant that once their tour was up, they were out of a job (Schmitt, 1995). This, again, coupled with economic constraints and new diseases (Gulf War Syndrome), led veterans to face struggles in their day to day lives. On average, Gulf War veterans who file injury claims must wait four months longer to process than other veterans, even though their claims, on average, involve twice as many medical issues as other disability claims, writes Eric Pianin for the *Fiscal Times* in 2017. Pianin argues that the biggest reason for this delay is ignorance of doctors and medical staff to diagnosing and treating the illnesses and injuries of Gulf War veterans. Following the Gulf War, veterans returned home with inexplicable symptoms, likely a result of being exposed to pesticides, smoke from oil fires, and depleted uranium. Lumped into one disease called “Gulf War Syndrome”, these symptoms are difficult to diagnose, and even more difficult to treat, leaving Gulf War veterans at a disadvantage when it comes to claiming their health benefits from the VA (Pianin, 2017). While doctors and administrators attempt to streamline these services, the message Gulf War veterans receive is clear: they won’t be getting better anytime soon, and it doesn’t seem that anyone cares all that much. In this case, <veteran> may entitle Gulf War veterans to walk in the door at the VA hospital, but it does not grant them access to real, tangible solutions to their problems.

Yet, unlike Vietnam (and Korea), the general attitude of civilians towards struggling veterans was positive; the <veteran> ideograph had won back some of its earlier connotations of honor and respect. They were once again greeted with parades, treated like heroes and held up as examples for their communities (Schmitt, 1995). These celebratory stances, however, were short lived, leaving veterans feeling to fend for themselves to get medical care and social support once the war was forgotten. Because the Gulf War was so short lived, the public had a very different image of what happened than the veterans who fought there. One doctor of an anonymous patient explains, saying:

“He and many other Gulf War vets saw the full range of the war’s destruction, images that he still relives today. But the public only saw a sanitized, impersonal view on TV.” (Schmitt, 1995, para. 14).

This left a disconnect between the rhetoric the public heard about the war and the actual horrors the veterans experienced. While citizens expected Gulf War veterans to return fully ready to either pursue a career in the military or reintegrate into civilian life, this was not the experience of veterans. Thus, veterans of the Gulf War were left with little support from civilians as well as the government. Despite the fact the country was supportive of the Gulf War, and celebrated the victory, individual <veterans> still faced challenges reintegrating to civilian life.

When it came to benefits and assistance, one veteran, Charles Sheehan-Miles told the *New York Times*, “I’m disappointed in the way our government has treated us. I’m afraid we’re getting closer to the public image the Vietnam veterans had” (Schmitt 1995), which as the previous section shows, was disrespectful and deficient in the way <veterans> were treated. This sentiment reflects the wariness veterans have about how <veterans> have been treated throughout the history of the U.S. military’s deployments; in other words, while they were

expecting to be treated with respect and honor from the general public and reap the benefits of their service from the U.S. government, this was not the reality. Thus, Sheehan-Miles' concerns about getting "closer to the public image the Vietnam <veterans> had" (Schmitt, 1995) reflect the rhetorical shift <veteran> as ideograph experienced from the Revolutionary War through the Vietnam War, and then between the Vietnam war and the Gulf wars. Towards the beginning of the Gulf war, <veteran> was beginning to regain its rhetorical connotation of honor and respect, at least in the context of civilians, as increased support for the Gulf war meant soldiers were celebrated by civilians. However, upon return veterans' struggles with mental health and reintegration were met with little to no support, yet again, from the end of the government. Gulf War veterans were expected to return to civilian life as if nothing had happened; rhetorically, they were heroes who should have been able to easily find jobs, contribute to the economy and raise families. But without the mental health and physical support they needed, they struggled to adjust. This is evidence, and reiterates, the paradox earlier stated that while <veteran> may be perceived as a symbol of heroism and respect, it has been plagued by deficiency, posturing, and in some contexts, loss and contempt.

### **Post 9/11**

These rhetorical dynamics were also apparent in the events leading up to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centers on September 11, 2001, left the nation in shock. While this attack did not lead to high enlistment numbers as initially expected (Dao, 2011), it did lead to a spike in patriotism (Li and Brewer, 2004). Much of the spike in enlistment that did occur during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (the longest fought wars in U.S. history) was more a result of economic hardship brought on by the U.S. recession at the time than a desire to go to war (Dao, 2011). Because the U.S. had not fought wars on this

scale since the wars in Vietnam (and Korea), there are currently more veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan than at any other time in U.S. history; while many are still relatively young (in their 30s and 40s) they face a lifetime of challenges overcoming PTSD, physical injuries, and reintegrating into civilian life (National Veterans Foundation, 2017). To assist with this reintegration, President George W. Bush did expand the GI Bill for veterans returning from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. These expansions included increasing the amount available, as well as lengthening the time frame that veterans can claim their educational benefits and allowing them to transfer benefits from themselves to a dependent, such as a spouse or child (Buckley & Cleary, 2010). This action showed the U.S. following through on its promise to support <veterans>, signaling a potential shift away from the posturing around the ideograph.

Besides the GI bill, veteran's hospitals, and benefits, services like suicide hotlines, support groups, and alternative therapy are becoming more widespread (National Veterans Foundation, 2017). There has also been a rhetorical shift when it comes to the treatment of veterans who fought in these wars, as public discourse has now started to separate the <veteran> from the war. As veteran Christian Bengsten tells the *New York Times*, "It's not for me to support our wars. It's more like: Hey, this guy has sacrificed everything. Let's give this guy a chance to come back hom" (Dao, 2011). The focus on supporting <veterans>, rather than the popularity of the conflicts, has allowed for more resources, along with an attitude of pride and recognition for <veterans> as sacrificial heroes.

This shift has occurred largely as a result of efforts from the nongovernmental sector. Nonprofit organizations benefiting veterans have carried much of the burden of supporting <veterans> in their transition back to civilian life. NOLB recognizes the difficulty of this transition, especially for translators who are not only leaving the military- but leaving their home

country. *The New York Times* details this by pointing out that prominent organizations such as the VFW and American Legion, which have traditionally supported <veterans> are now competing for resources with other organizations (Steinhaur, 2019). While organizations like the VFW or American Legion focused on building spaces for <veterans> to meet and organize, these newer organizations focus on the individual needs of <veterans>. Steinhaur (2019) argues that these organizations are more financially efficient, and work on a smaller scale to tackle specific issues <veterans> face. For example, “Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America” focuses on <veterans> who served in those wars, advocating for the specific health issues they face, while “Student Veterans of America” helps ease the transition for <veterans> who return to school. With the expansion of the GI Bill, the government has taken steps to live up to the rhetoric of <veteran>, but more than ever, veterans and citizens are taking responsibility to assist <veterans> as well. This suggests that <veteran> as ideograph is currently less about the posturing of ceremonial respect and honor- but is beginning to encourage more tangible benefits for <veterans> once they return to civilian life. The following section examines current ideographic research of terms related to <veteran>.

### **Relevant Ideographic Criticisms**

Communication scholars have examined multiple ideographs which are related to the <veteran> ideograph, because they pertain to war, service, soldiers, and patriotism (Cloud, 2004; Edwards & Winkler, 1997; Hamilton, 2012; Towner, 2010; van der Lippe and Väyrynen, 2011). Not only do these studies shed light on the power of ideographs which pertain to violent international conflict and the actors involved in it, they open opportunities for scholars who analyze these ideographs. It is important when examining narratives of war and violence to



understand multiple perspectives, so the following section is a brief overview of various ideographic analyses of the terms associated with <veterans>.

In their analysis of gendered discourse on the war on terror, van der Lippe and Väyrynen (2011) analyzed Laura Bush's rhetoric as it related to Nordic feminist rhetoric of war. They examine the ideograph <women and children> as a means to justify actions taken during the war on terror, as they argue "[ideographs] may seem to be ordinary-language terms, they are high-order abstractions that form the basic linguistic and structural elements of ideology" (p. 20). They argue that while Norway and Finland rely on "equity feminism", the U.S. uses rhetoric which more closely resembles "maternal feminism". The difference here is important, as <women and children>, when used by Laura Bush in her speech to the U.N., abstracts the problem, equalizing women from Afghanistan who suffered under Taliban rule with women from the U.S. who support the war on terror (Lippe & Väyrynen, 2011). Despite the differences in each culture's approach to feminism, Norwegian and Finnish female politicians co-opted what Lippe and Väyrynen (2011) coin a "rhetoric of silence" through using the ideograph of <women and children> to undermine hegemonic discourses of war and justify wartime actions. Justifying war and violence by invoking notions of protecting <women and children> allowed female politicians to adopt a "motherly" attitude, where the "protection" of <women and children> justified acts of violence towards Afghan people. Thus, the separation between good and evil, those who should be protected for violence, and those who should be applauded for protecting the innocent (soldiers or <veterans>) is present in the <women and children ideograph (Lippe & Väyrynen, 2011).

Another example of ideographic analysis is Towner's (2010) examination of <patriotism> and <freedom of speech> as it regards the famous music group "The Dixie

Chicks' statements towards George W. Bush in 2003. As members of the country music genre, The Dixie Chicks' statements that they did not agree with the President's decision to invade Iraq were not accepted among their fanbase and attempts to apologize by issuing statements did not help them regain their following among country music fans. On the other hand, as Towner (2010) points out, following their statements and subsequent defense of their <freedom of speech> to criticize the President's decision did gain them popularity among a more general audience. In the case of the Dixie Chicks, members of the group managed to subvert an affront to the <patriotism> ideograph through an appeal to another ideograph: that of <freedom of speech>. While their appeal to <freedom of speech> did not regain their popularity within the country music fan base, it elevated their status among a more general audience, with the group winning multiple Grammys, but being left out of the Country Music Awards (Towner, 2010). This shows that while ideographs are culturally bound and may be used to sway an audience, some ideographs may carry more weight, depending on the audience (Towner, 2010). This also shows the shifting nature of ideographs, meaning that the power of culturally bound words and phrases may shift over time.

McGee (1980) argues that ideographs must consist of words or phrases, but Edwards and Winkler (1997) argue that images may also function as ideographs. In their analysis of Joe Rosenthal's photographs of U.S. soldiers lifting the flag over Iwo Jima, they argue that this iconic image is also culturally bound to ideological beliefs and values (Edwards & Winkler, 1997). While the original image of the flag raising at Iwo Jima did not function as an ideograph because the use was controlled by the government and military for recruitment and portrayal of the Pacific Front, the editorial cartoons that resulted afterward put the control of the image in the hands of regular people. This shifted the message from the original intention, allowing a visual

critique of government leadership, which shifted the image into a more ideological critique, transforming the image into an ideograph (Edwards & Winkler, 1997). The visual ideograph is interesting, because rather than upholding a belief or cultural value, the parodies of the image, while remaining recognizable as the Rosenthal image, it serves as a critique of the government and military industrial complex (Edwards & Winkler, 1997). The original image shifted the view of the Pacific Front to a heroic effort by the U.S. Navy instead of highlighting the costs of war, and as the ideographic parodies became more popular, they undermined the original image and offered an alternative view of the war (Edwards & Winkler, 1997). This shows the power of co-opting ideographs to undermine the intended meanings.

Other research that has attempted to understand the ways ideographs have been co-opted in America includes Heidi Hamilton's (2012) ideographic analysis of <patriotism> in the contexts of anti-war movements leading up to the Iraq war. Hamilton (2012) argues that <patriotism> can be defined simply as a devotion to one's country, in America it also demands certain behaviors and actions, dictating what <patriotic> citizens can and cannot do. <Patriotism> involves both a "love of country" and a "love of principle", where the former refers to loyalty to one's country and the latter refers to dedication to national values, i.e., one should be loyal to their country because of what it stands for (<liberty>, <freedom>, etc.) (Hamilton, 2012). Historically, <patriotism> has represented a tension between unquestioningly following the decisions of the Federal Government and military, and a desire for the nation to be better through questioning and protesting these very actions. This is exemplified in the previous discussion when the Dixie Chicks defended their critique of President Bush by appealing to <freedom of speech>, arguing that by questioning his actions they were holding the country to a higher standard (Towner, 2010). Hamilton (2012) identified four functions of <patriotism> in her

synchronic analysis: embracing the flag, supporting the troops, dissent as patriotic, and distinguishing between the government and the country. Thus, <patriotism>, like the Iwo Jima image, can mean different things to different populations of people. For some, <patriotism> involves upholding the ideals and decisions of the government, where for others it represents a duty to the symbols of the U.S. (like the flag), and still others see dissent, questioning of the government, and attempts to stop armed conflict as upholding <patriotic> ideals. Perhaps what is most interesting about this analysis is the need to invoke other ideographs in attempts to redefine or co-opt <patriotism>. While on the surface, <patriotism>, <freedom of speech>, <dissent>, <liberty>, <equality>, <nonviolence> and other ideographs may appear to go hand in hand, in reality, an audience may be able to invoke one ideograph to redefine another (Hamilton, 2012). While ideographs may guide behavior and belief, they are constantly being redefined, reevaluated, and reconditioned based on cultural context.

A final example of ideographic analysis relevant to the present study examines the <clash of civilizations> ideograph as it relates to the war in Afghanistan. Dana Cloud (2004) examines this ideograph in conjunction with cultural notions of the “white savior complex” when wars are represented as a battle between “civilized” societies and “savages”. A civilization, as Cloud (2004) defines it, refers to a “group bounded by a shared cultural identity and/or religion” (287). Rhetoric referring to <a clash of civilizations> has been present for centuries, as justifications for violence often include a call to help societies who are “backwards” modernize to be more like the conqueror. This is true of the U.S. conflict with Afghanistan, where Afghans were viewed as the anti-U.S.- the complete opposite in terms of religion, cultural norms, and civilization (Cloud, 2004). Because the <clash of civilizations> ideograph relies on visual elements to capture its meaning, Cloud (2004) agrees with Edwards and Winkler’s (1997) argument that images may

also function as ideographs. Rather than examining the term <clash of civilizations>, Cloud (2004) examines how *Time Magazine* image coverage of the war in Afghanistan enacted the ideograph by juxtaposing the American “self” and Afghan “other” as means to justify the invasion. She argues that these photographs invite the audience to view the war as a moral clash between good and evil, where the U.S. was rescuing Afghan citizens from a backwards and abusive government and cultural norms. These images do not solely rely on the <clash of civilizations> ideograph, but on metaphors of darkness and light, cultural beliefs about gender, race, slavery, and violence, as well as religion (Cloud, 2004). This analysis shows the multiple layers of an ideograph, in that they are multifaceted and can include cultural variables outside of the ideograph itself. The ability for ideographs to be shown and upheld through images, rather than just texts, contradicts McGee’s (1980) initial beliefs about how ideographs function, however, as media becomes more and more reliant on visual communication in the form of images, videos, and cartoons, not only are the definitions of particular ideographs changing, but the very nature of ideographs is shifting. To understand how this shift applies to the <veteran> ideograph, the following section will describe the methods the present study used to analyze the NOLB website.

## Chapter 3 - Methods

Until now, theories about nonprofit communication have focused on economic and financial strategies; however, as Koschmann (2012) argued, scholars should focus more on the identity and ideology of NPOs to understand how the relationships they build foster support. The ideology of U.S. NPOs center around service delivery, social entrepreneurship, civil/political engagement, and religious faith; therefore, “communicative theories of the nonprofit should seek to understand, explain, and direct our attention toward the ways in which existential qualities are constructed and how lived experiences influence a host of relevant social outcomes.” (p.142). Because ideographs are words that are closely tied to ideology and culture (McGee, 1980), when nonprofit organizations such as NOLB use ideographs, they are rhetorically crafting their ideology. Therefore, this analysis will understand the ways NOLB uses the <veteran> ideograph to describe SIV’s immigrating to the U.S.. Because NPOs rely more on social beliefs and ideology to persuade their audience than fiscal or capital benefits, it is important to understand how they use rhetorical strategies to display or forward their ideology and identity.

The purpose of this study is to examine how No One Left Behind (NOLB) uses the ideograph <veteran> in their online discourse to expand the definition to include Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients. Ideographs are words tied to ideological beliefs- they carry the weight of a society’s ethics, morals, values and beliefs (McGee, 1980). These words are culturally bound and have the power to evoke emotions and beliefs in their audience. In this analysis I start with the claim that <veteran> is an ideograph in American culture and then proceed to unearth the rhetorical implication of the label <veteran> for SIV recipients; I achieve this through an ideographic analysis of the NOLB website. This study answers Koschmann’s (2012) call by analyzing the rhetorical strategies of a particular nonprofit organization on their

website, focusing more on identity and ideology than on finances. Rhetorically analyzing the NOLB website provides insights into not only NOLB's ideology, but also the implication and significance of the use of the <veteran> ideograph by NOLB, especially in the context of SIV recipients. To do so, I will first outline the concept of ideological critique as it relates to nonprofit organizations, second describe the artifact for analysis, and finally explain the role of the researcher.

### **Ideographic Analysis**

Gaining support from stakeholders is a primary concern of any nonprofit organization, as they must rely on volunteers and donors to fund their mission (Bell Woods, 2006). To persuade an audience to support them, NPOs rely on rhetorical ideological appeals. McGee (1980) argues that "the clearest access to persuasion (and hence to ideology) is through the discourse used to produce it" (p 444). Therefore, this language, according to McGee (1980) is political, and is present through the rhetorical device of ideographs. Ideographs are words which represent ideological beliefs through culturally agreed upon presuppositions about power, and social control. Ideographs are essentially a vocabulary for ideology (Hamilton, 2012). They may work against logic, shift throughout time depending on context, and vary from culture to culture (McGee, 1980). These terms, images, and phrases may be co-opted to argue for different beliefs, or as an attempt to shift attitudes, as shown in the literature review (Cloud, 2004; Towner, 2010). Ideographs may come in the form of words and phrases, as McGee (1980) argues, but may also be present in visual form (Cloud, 2004, Edwards & Winkler, 1997). Some examples of ideographs in the U.S. may include <freedom>, <liberty> and <equality>. While these terms represent values Americans hold dear, they have also meant different things at different times. During the founding of the country, for example, <freedom> was the crux of the Declaration of

Independence, yet only property-owning white men were allowed to exercise their freedom to vote (McGee, 1980). As time went by, and people fought for more rights, <freedom> expanded not only to include the right to vote, but to own property, use certain public resources, and go to school. The addition of these <freedoms> in legal code changed the meaning of <freedom> in popular discourse. For the purpose of this analysis, an ideograph is defined as a word or phrase which recommends actions and beliefs, i.e. <veteran> in the U.S. context invokes an attitude of honor and respect and recommends behaviors that assist former servicepeople in their transition back to citizen life. Through rhetorical devices, such as ideographs, organizations use ideology to persuade and influence their audience/s.

### **Diachronic Analysis**

An ideographic analysis consists of two parts, a diachronic and synchronic analysis. This is because an ideograph, while maintaining its cultural rhetorical power, may change over time. Thus, it is important to understand the evolution of a term through time. The diachronic section of this paper examines the ideograph <veteran>, and what it has meant in the U.S. since the settlers founded Plymouth Colony. Beginning with an etymological and legal analysis of <veteran> provides a framework for the technical definition of the term. Following this, news articles, the mission statements of veteran's organizations, and historical analysis of benefits and services promised to veterans help unearth the connotative cultural attitudes towards <veteran>. The purpose of the diachronic analysis is to understand whether definitions, descriptions, and perceptions of <veteran> are in sync with the social, political, and pragmatic dynamics of veterans' lives through history. I analyzed news articles, websites, and federal documents which discussed <veterans> issues in the context of each major U.S. conflict, from Native American



wars during colonial times through the Revolutionary War, WWI, WWII, Vietnam and Korea, Desert Storm and up to the modern conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

While news articles and organizations supporting <veterans> are important sources of information, some of the biggest influences on societal recognition of terms comes from the popular culture we consume in the form of films and music (Early, 2013). The purpose is, again, to recognize how <veteran> may have changed over time. This analysis also will reveal what film and music perceive to be the best and proper treatment of <veterans> by the government, the military, and civilians. These depictions of <veterans>, whether fact or fiction, both reflect and influence attitudes towards <veterans>. While there are a huge number of films and music to choose from when it comes to depictions of <veterans>, I chose films which portray <veterans'> transition back to civilian life as examples, as well as songs that directly mention <veterans>, rather than active duty soldiers.

It is also important in a diachronic analysis to examine the ideograph from multiple perspectives. It is especially important to pay attention to the inherent power structures which may be present in any given ideograph, and <veteran> is no different. Thus, I examine the use of the term <veteran> as it applies to those who have served in war, but who come from marginalized genders, sexual orientations, or races. This is especially pertinent to this particular analysis as the group NOLB refers to as <veterans> (SIV recipients), are members of multiple marginalized groups in the U.S., due to their race, ethnicity, and immigrant status. By analyzing the perspective of minority citizen <veterans>, there may be insights to gain that parallel the experiences of SIV recipients. The first section of my analysis, thus, focuses on the vertical or chronological definitions of <veteran>, offering examples from history and pop culture, as well as perspectives of those who are marginalized within the group.

## Synchronic Analysis

After analyzing the historical and cultural definitions of <veteran>, it is important to understand the horizontal, or synchronic direction of the ideograph in the *No One Left Behind* website. The central purpose of this kind of analysis is to examine the *drama* happening in the artifact (Foss, 2004). By identifying the words associated with a key term, in this case, <veteran> within an artifact, a researcher may uncover the rhetor's overt and covert attitudes toward the word. This is done, as Foss (2004) points out, by analyzing words with close proximity to the key term. Words which are connected directly, or through conjunctions to the key word, are likely to illuminate aspects of the rhetoric which are hidden on the surface. Beside proximity, words which appear with a degree of frequency in the text are also likely important factors, therefore frequent terms may appear in the cluster (Burke, 1945; Foss 2004). Finally, words which are novel, or intense, even though they may not appear with frequency, likely display something about the key term, or the rhetor's attitude towards the key term (Foss, 2004). Therefore, a cluster is comprised of words which appear in close proximity, have high frequency, or are novel/intense words around the key term.

The second step for this analysis is a pentadic analysis, which involves separating the key terms into pentadic categories. A pentad is comprised of agents, scenes, acts, agency and purpose (Burke, 1945). Each element of the pentad identifies an aspect of the drama occurring within the rhetoric. By understanding the relationship between *who* is acting, *what* action they are taking, or *where* the action takes place, for example, the researcher may see the rhetor's underlying assumptions, beliefs, or practices. Therefore, the clusters around the key terms are first categorized according to their pentadic elements. Burke (1945) explains that after the terms are identified and categorized, the researcher must analyze the relationship between these terms as

well as between the elements of the pentad which are more prevalent in the artifact. The relationships between elements of the pentad are called ‘ratios’, and as Foss (2004) argues, the researcher must pair each of the elements to discover if there is a relationship between them. There are 20 possible ratios (scene-act; scene-agent; scene-agency; scene-purpose; act-scene; act-agent; act-agency; act-purpose; agent-scene; agent-act; agent-agency; agent-purpose; agency-scene; agency-act; agency-agent; agency-purpose; purpose-scene, purpose-act; purpose-agency; purpose-act; and purpose-agent). After separating the cluster terms into each element, I examined these ratios to determine whether certain elements had influence over the others, or where the strongest relationship existed, per Foss (2004).

The term for analysis in this study was the ideograph <veteran>. Therefore, in my analysis identified <veteran> as the key term and unearthed the terms that clustered around it. Examining the clusters through a pentadic analysis for <veteran> on the NOLB website reveals the organization’s attitude about who should and should not be included in the ideograph <veteran>. Because SIVs are not technically U.S. <veterans> by the legal definition of the term, not having officially served in the U.S. military, this study seeks to investigate NOLB’s rhetorical decision to name SIVs as <veterans> and the rhetorical/ideographic implications of that choice.

### **Artifact**

I will analyze the *No One Left Behind* website focusing on the pages titled “Who we are”, “Who we support” and “What we do” as well as the NOLB blog, which contains 33 posts dating back to 2015. I will code text-based rhetoric, which includes the mission statement, blurbs about the founders of the organization, as well as several success stories about interpreters who have safely arrived in the U.S. and been assisted by NOLB. The blog posts focus on a variety of

topics, from yearly reports detailing the numbers of people helped by the organization and what type of assistance they received, to news releases about the organization or issues surrounding it (such as legislation passing which affected the program), to the personal musings and thoughts of CEO Matt Zeller. These sources provide an interesting take both on the official position of the organization, as well as a more personal view of some of the clients and organizers who are actively involved in the mission of NOLB. I will analyze these sections of the website because they are text-heavy and present a rich opportunity to examine the rhetorical structure of <veteran> as used by NOLB. These sections of the website also directly address the organization's target audiences with persuasive messages encouraging support for SIVs, the organization, and <veterans>. The persuasive strategies NOLB uses in these sections of the website present a unique opportunity to unveil the attitude surrounding what it means to the organization to invoke the title <veteran>. Thus, I will separately code the website and the blogs, looking for similarities and differences in the themes and descriptions of clients, donors, and veterans to answer the question:

**What are the rhetorical implications of *No One Left Behind's* use of the ideograph <veteran> to describe SIV recipients immigrating to the U.S.?**

### **Role of the Researcher**

Ideology is subjective; peoples' beliefs and values shape the way they see the world and shape their reality. Foss (2004) argues that our reality is constructed through the rhetoric we use (p. 21). This means that rhetorical analysis can never be objective, because the researcher's ideology will influence the arguments they make. This analysis, then, only offers one interpretation into the ideological leanings of NOLB. While components of this analysis may be

transferable to the rhetoric of other NPOs, it is important to note that the overall analysis is specific to one researcher's interpretation of one organization's website.

The assumptions and beliefs of a researcher may prevent complete objectivity, however, as Foss (2004) furthers, the researcher "must show the reader how the claims [they] make can be inferred from [their data]" (p. 21). Through evidence-based logic, examples from the artifact, and explanations, researchers can separate themselves from the artifact to provide an analysis that explains the inferences made. Justifying the claims made through the analysis is key to proving the link between the analysis and the artifact itself. This is especially true in ideological or ideographic criticism where dominant interpretations and ideologies often mask or prevent non-dominant or other interpretations from shining through. Because of the power ideographs contain, it is vital for a researcher to recognize their own privilege and factor that into the analysis. Through a diachronic and synchronic analysis, McGee (1980) argues, we "can explain the tension between *any* [emphasis added] 'given' human environment ('objective reality') and any 'projected' environments ('symbolic' or 'social reality') latent in rhetorical discourse" (p. 453).

## Chapter 4 - Diachronic Analysis

This diachronic analysis examines scholarly communication research regarding <veterans> to understand how the communication field has understood and researched this population. I pay particular attention to research regarding marginalized <veterans>, who have struggled to gain the recognition and benefits promised to them as a result of their personal identity. Examining the struggles of marginalized <veterans> reveals power structures which exist not just between <veterans> and civilians or government officials, but between different groups of <veterans> as well. This section begins with an examination of the ways that <veterans> have been portrayed in films. Because ideographs are impacted by popular culture, images, and media discussion, it is vital to examine the impact that films have had on <veteran> as ideograph. Price (2005) argues that film, popular culture, and media represent attempts to “exercise some form of *real world* influence over a subordinate body or class...aimed at producing some change in the behavior, attitude, belief or perception of a weaker group” (p. 84). Thus, films may be an attempt at an ideological shift of how <veterans> are viewed, treated, or assisted.

Following the examination of <veterans> in film, I examine scholarly representations of <veterans> who are marginalized in U.S. society based on gender, sexual orientation, race and ability. <Veterans> who are marginalized both during their time in service as well as after they have left the military illustrate the power imbalances that prevent groups of people from gaining not only the honorable status they are purported to deserve, but who struggle to receive the tangible, economic, and healthcare benefits promised to <veterans> when they enter service to the U.S. military. This is pertinent as this thesis analyzes a struggle to include marginalized people in the <veteran> category as well. SIVs face discrimination as a result of their immigrant

status, race, and religion. This is exacerbated by the fact that they are immigrants from a country at war with the U.S., which creates fear that SIVs are terrorists or combatants masquerading as allies in an attempt to stage an attack against the U.S. from within its borders. These hurdles make it necessary to understand how those who are <veterans> of marginalized status must overcome obstacles to conjoin their identity outside of the military with their <veteran> status, as well as how these marginalized <veterans> may impact beliefs about the ideograph <veteran>.

### **<Veteran> in Film**

The American public has been fascinated by the experiences of <veterans> and service members for decades evidenced in the large number of films, books, plays, and music created, featuring, and focusing on veterans. Early (2013) argues that “a movie can be a statement about collective culture” (p. 10). Because of the collective collaboration between directors, actors, production companies, and the audience, films often create a reflection of the society or culture. Therefore, when examining the cultural beliefs surrounding the ideograph <veteran>, examining films becomes appropriate. This section analyzes how popular culture has portrayed veterans to uncover the rhetorical dynamics of this <veteran> discourse.

There is no shortage of films portraying the struggles of veterans, and these films often take on a different tone than those that focus on active combat (Early, 2013). Rather than glorifying conflict, films about <veterans> returning from war have attempted to bring to light the struggles many face reintegrating into civilian life. Early (2013) argues that veterans are often portrayed in these films as “action heroes, the wounded war veteran, the veteran aging within family, or the veteran as a disguised and comic figure” (p.11). These depictions highlight the paradoxes apparent in the <veteran> ideograph as discussed in the earlier section, namely, in the context of federal policies, governmental practices, and civilian perceptions and acts. Films

and movies portraying <veterans> often rely on stereotypes, ignoring the more complex struggles that <veterans> face (Merry, 2015; Parrott, Albright, Grace Steele, & Dyche, 2019). While films may portray <veterans> as heroes, they also portray the struggles veterans face when they return home to reintegrate into civilian life with little assistance.

Tim Gray writes for *Variety* magazine in 2014 that films about veterans often focus on the rough transition from soldier to <veteran>, as individuals struggle with physical and mental scars while attempting to find jobs and reconnect with family and friends. Most recently, films like Clint Eastwood's "American Sniper" (2014) have shed light on the struggles of PTSD that <veterans> face after their return home; this film in the context of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Unlike active duty soldiers, <veterans> are portrayed as more vulnerable, facing economic, physical, and mental hardships- many are still dealing with the grief of losing friends and loved ones in war, while others struggle to connect with their loved ones at home (Gray, 2014). Films showcasing veterans' attempts to get the help they deserve and frustration at the system serve to showcase the dissonance that comes with the deficiencies present in the <veteran> ideograph, as detailed earlier. Price (2005) argues that while films about war, or which depict <veterans> may be an attempt at re-enacting historical events, they still act within an ideological frame which often upholds cultural values of masculinity, service, and other motifs. These themes may allow the audience to gain a more nuanced understanding of a <veterans'> struggle in real life, through a semi-historic but still fictitious narrative. While the audience wants the veterans to succeed, to be honored and respected, they are confronted with the reality that this is not always the case. Thus, rhetorically, the same themes of honor, tradition and values are present in films for the audience to reflect on (Horwitz, 2017), while also showcasing the deficiencies America still must overcome to truly support veterans. Writing for *Film Journal*



*International* (2017), Horwitz points out that <veterans> portrayed in films are seen as worthy not only of respect and honor, but of empathy and support. Thus, films can strengthen the rhetorical influence of <veteran> as ideograph, at least on a symbolic level, by showcasing the contradictions present in the ideograph on a tangible level.

### **Marginalized <Veterans>**

While the U.S. government has always purported to be concerned with taking care of the veterans who protected their land, they weren't always inclusive, rhetorically and legally, as regards who is qualified as a <veteran>. Women, African Americans, Native Americans, and LGBTQ individuals have been serving in wars for decades, yet it hasn't been until recently that these groups have been granted the same attention as their White male counterparts (*Citizen Soldier*, 2013). For example, it wasn't until the past decade that women have begun to gain positions similar to men in active duty, and advocate for their benefits when they return home (*Citizen Soldier*, 2013). In 1994, the VA established a center for minority veterans, providing special services directed toward racial and gender minorities ("History of the VA" 2018). While this program begins to address some of the bureaucratic oversight when it comes to minority veterans, its very existence highlights the struggles <veterans> of minority status have had in gaining the same levels of respect and admiration as White male veterans. This marginalization is due largely to discourse surrounding soldier/<veteran> bodies (Brouwer, 2004).

Soldiers/<veterans> are purported to be big, strong, and hyper-masculine (Brouwer, 2004; Ferradino, 2014; Pawelczyk, 2014). This disparity points out the symbolism of <veteran> as not just representing someone's job- but what that someone must look like as well. Brouwers (2014) defines this symbolism as "rhetorics of the body"- pointing out the cultural codes which allow certain bodies to speak, be heard, and/or be authorities in certain scenarios. Minority <veterans>

may have all done similar work, but unless they fit what society expects a <veteran> to look like, they will not be treated the same way. The following sections analyze some of the struggles specific categories of marginalized <veterans> have faced over the years.

### **Female <Veterans>**

While women who served in the U.S. military are eligible to receive benefits from the VA such as medical care, housing assistance, and mental health resources, they are underused because women have not historically been granted the same amount of respect as their male counterparts (Citizen Soldier, 2013). This disparity for soldiers who are minorities begins with active duty soldiers before carrying over into the <veteran> status. For example, in 2015, Defense Secretary Ash Carter created a policy to allow women to serve in the same combat positions as men, saying

They'll be allowed to drive tanks, fire mortars and lead infantry soldiers into combat.

They'll be able to serve as Army Rangers and Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Marine Corps infantry, Air Force parajumpers, and everything else that was previously open only to men (Pellerin, 2015, para 1).

This policy was met with harsh criticism from those who didn't believe women should be serving in combat positions as a result of their perceived physical inferiority to men. By arguing that men are more "lethal" toward enemies, and that allowing women to serve in these roles would increase the loss of American life, critics relied on critiques of the female body to establish arguments against the policy. For example, writing for *The Wall Street Journal*, Heather MacDonald argues

But war isn't about promoting equality. Its objective is to break the enemy's will through precise lethal engagement, with the lowest possible loss of American life. The claim that

female combat soldiers will perform as lethally as men over an extended deployment entails a denial of biological reality as great as the one underlying the transgender crusade (2019; para 11).

The “transgender crusade” MacDonald alludes to here refers to President Donald Trump’s decision to ban transgender individuals from serving in the military; despite the fact that women and LGBTQ people have been serving in the military for decades, attempts to keep them out of the military and out of the <veteran> category. This shows that the respect and honor <veterans> are purported to deserve only applies to those who look a certain way- male, cisgender, and white.

Female <veterans> also face a larger struggle than male <veterans> when it comes to advocating for themselves in the healthcare system (Villagran, Ledford, & Canzona, 2015). This is due to the nature of the shift away from compulsory preventative health steps and fitness guidelines while enlisted, but once they achieve <veteran> status they are granted more agency over their healthcare (Villigram, Ledford & Canzona, 2015). Healthcare is one of the areas that many <veterans> struggle with, largely as a result of a lack of resources coupled with increasing agency and an expectations that <veterans> will take care of their own healthcare. For example, without constant orders regarding fitness standards, the freedom <veterans> are granted often leads to more risky behavior, which results in health complications (Villigram, Ledford, & Canzona, 2015). However, women are not culturally associated with risky behavior, because of cultural gender roles, meaning doctors and health care officials do not counsel women on risky behaviors such as drinking alcohol or doing drugs. Because women who are often struggle to advocate for themselves in the health care industry to begin with, female <veterans> are ignored,

or are unaware that they are eligible to receive health benefits in the same way men are (Citizen Soldier, 2013).

After the 2015 decision to allow women in combat positions, there has been a push by scholars and female veterans to be recognized for the service they provided, as well as to draw attention to problems women face in the military such as sexual harassment, assault and rape (Citizen Soldier, 2013). Ferradino (2014) points out that women do not access many of the benefits allocated to them because they do not personally identify as <veterans>, largely as a result of societal expectations of what a <veteran> looks like- strong, white, and male. This confusion begins as early as when women enlist. Pawelczyk (2014) points out that the hegemonic gendered context of the military forces women to come to terms with how they can be both soldiers *and* women, without compromising what it means to culturally embody either role. As early as the 1940's, when the U.S. Navy allowed women to join their ranks through the WAVES program (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Services), female <veterans> have reported struggling with their identity upon their return home because they do not relate to the civilian women in their lives, and because they do not know how to embrace traditional gender roles (Suter, Lamb, Marko, and Tye-Williams, 2006). While women are perceived as being other-centered, maternal, and caring, the military embraces a more masculine culture. This paradox is exacerbated by the sheer imbalance of men and women who serve in the military as well as legal constraints preventing women from serving in particular roles in the military (Pawelczyk, 2014). Thus, women's identity construction in the military is inherently gendered, making it difficult for many women to identify with their own military service. For example, when asked what a stereotypical <veteran> looks like, one female responded "male", expressing that even though she is a woman, and there are many female <veterans>, she feels that people

don't think about women being <veterans> (Ferradino, 2014). This was a theme throughout Ferradino's (2014) research, as many women recognize that they are not treated the same as male <veterans>.

### **LGBT <Veterans>**

Similarly, those in the LGBTQ community have been not only left out of <veteran> status, thus being removed from even being featured within the <veteran> ideograph and discourse, but actively prevented from serving in military positions to begin with because of the U.S.' "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Originally touted as a liberal compromise to end the longstanding ban on LGBTQ individuals on enlisting to begin with, this policy allowed queer soldiers to enter the military- so long as they did not reveal their sexual preferences (Pruit, 2018). Prior to "Don't Ask Don't Tell", <veterans> who were revealed to be LGBTQ faced risks of losing all decorations, benefits, and honors, forcing the hundreds of thousands of queer service members who fought for the U.S. to stay in the closet their entire lives (Pruit, 2018). This policy was eventually repealed in 2011, but the stigma surrounding queer <veterans> has left many out of the ideographic rhetoric of the <veteran> discourse, silencing an entire swath of the community who fought (and died) for the U.S. military. Again, this discrimination is largely based in rhetorics of the body, as pointed out by Brouwer (2014) in his analysis of court hearings attempting to repeal the ban. Brouwer (2014) argues that those who testified in favor of removing the ban on LGBT individuals in the military used arguments which painted the queer body as disciplined and orderly while those in favor of keeping the ban argued that the queer body was dangerous and unruly. Because, at the time of the hearings, queer bodies had been rhetorically symbolic of disorganization, excessiveness, and even a specter of disease (following

the HIV/AIDS epidemic), those queer individuals arguing for the removal of the ban found it difficult to separate their bodies from their arguments (Brouwer, 2014).

As a result of the controversy surrounding the ban on LGBT service members, those who did serve following Don't Ask, Don't Tell were forced to either continue to hide their sexuality or sacrifice their honorable discharge and claims to <veterans> benefits. Thus, once again, <veterans> ability to receive benefits, respect, and honor, is tied to an individual's willingness to compromise their identity. Would they rather be a <veteran> or a queer person, because according to the U.S. government, they could not be both.

In the months following President Donald Trump's ban on transgender individuals from serving, anti-queer rhetoric has resurfaced, further silencing queer <veterans>. Therefore, the <veteran> ideograph is exclusionary when it comes to minorities. Rather than honoring and respecting all <veterans>, the US government has told specific <veterans> that they aren't worthy of the title, and will be blatantly denied the benefits they were promised when they enlisted.

### **<Veterans> of Racial Minorities**

Similarly, Logue and Blanck (2008) describe how Black soldiers as far back as the civil war had to engage in legal battles to receive the pensions they were promised. While these veterans were legally entitled to pensions for themselves and their family, pension workers were openly biased about providing benefits to African Americans. While veterans, regardless of identity, have been forced to fight and self-advocate for their benefits throughout history, marginalized populations face an even more difficult battle in gaining the recognition they deserve. Until 1948, black soldiers served in separate units, and were not given the same ranks, awards, or decorations as their white counterparts, despite playing an integral part in fighting in

WWII (Gates, n.d.). This reiterates the deficient nature of the <veteran> as ideograph where only those who fit into societal expectations of <veteran> can potentially expect benefits they were promised. Because women, people of color, and those in the LGBT community hold minority identities, they often do not feature in the <veteran> ideograph.

Black soldiers are often referred to as fighting a “double war”, that is they are fighting the wars that the U.S. government fights, but they also must overcome racism and mistreatment within the ranks while they serve (Gates, n.d.). This problem persists once Black soldiers are discharged from the military and take up their <veteran> status. While Black <veterans> have been found to achieve higher levels of upward mobility and economic gains than Black citizens who do not serve, there is a disparity between Black <veterans> and white <veterans>, where white <veterans> earn more and experience more upward mobility than their Black counterparts (Loveless-Morris, 2013). Similarly, the GI Bill, while intended to assist all <veterans> in taking advantage of higher education, failed to account for racist policies that allowed colleges to deny admissions to Black <veterans> based on race (Blakemore, 2019). Besides the GI Bill’s failure, <veterans> of color were also denied housing, and forced to take sub-par jobs in segregated communities (Blakemore, 2019). Despite their service, and the advancement of <veterans> benefits following WWII, the government continued to posture to Black <veterans>, denying them promised benefits, while society continued to treat them as second-class citizens, based solely on the color their skin. For these <veterans>, the rhetoric of bodies still excluded them from achieving full <veteran> status.

While the <veteran> ideograph is paradoxical for all <veterans>, in that they are not given the tangible benefits they are promised, this is even more true for marginalized populations. Women, people of color, and members of the LGBTQ community struggle to be

recognized as soldiers when they are active members of the US military, and struggle even more for recognition and support once they are <veterans>. Thus, the <veteran> ideograph does not even function symbolically for these <veterans>.

### **<Veterans> with Disabilities**

<Veterans> who are disabled face a unique set of challenges, because for many of them, their marginalization occurs as a direct result of their service, rather than as a precursor to their service. Whether their injury is physical or psychological, the government has a responsibility to care for them. However, Achter (2010) points out that often, <veterans> with disabilities are hidden from society's view, as their bodies represent the military's failure. <Veterans> with disabilities are underrepresented in media coverage of <veterans>, despite the media being largely blamed for perpetrating stereotypes about them (Parrott et al., 2019). Following WWI, advocates began handing out paper blue "forget-me-nots" as a way to raise awareness and money to assist <veterans> with disabilities (Kinder, 2007). This effort combined symbolic recognition for <veterans> with disabilities with actual monetary value, as well as giving <veterans> with disabilities a way to support themselves (by making and selling the forget-me-nots) (Kinder, 2007). However, as the U.S. began questioning whether or not to enter WWII, <veterans> with disabilities shifting from representing the strength and resilience of a country who fought for what they believe in to a visual indicator of the costs of violent wars, and the forget-me-nots served as a reminder that in many ways, the country as a whole *had* forgotten the costs of war (Kinder, 2007).

When <veterans> with disabilities are shown in the media, including social media, the media relies on and perpetuates stereotypes suggesting all <veterans> are broken, traumatized, or even violent (Parrott et al., 2018). Disabilities are often reduced to a personal challenge



<veterans> must overcome, rather than a display of the costs of war, which takes responsibility away from the military (Achter, 2010). While <veterans> who incur injuries during their service are viewed as those who should be thanked for their sacrifice, they are also not effective as a recruitment tool for the U.S. military, as they remind the target audience of the costs of their service. <Veterans> who incurred disabilities, and injuries during their time in war are not portrayed as heroic or brave, but rather, those to be pitied and assisted for the rest of their lives (Achter, 2010). Following WWII, <veterans> with disabilities who received benefits were thought to be “idle” and “dependent” as a result of their inability to work traditional labor jobs, forcing them to rely on governmental benefits (Kinder, 2007). Besides the economic costs of supporting <veterans> with disabilities, the nation was undergoing shifting attitudes about the nature of disability, masculinity, and social welfare, resulting in the creation of rehabilitation programs to assist <veterans> in their transition back to civilian life (Kinder, 2007). This led to a huge divide in the national conversation about <veterans>, where rather than asking the <veterans> with disabilities what they wanted or needed to transition, pro- and anti war advocates used <veterans> with disabilities as pawns to further their arguments (Kinder, 2007). While pro-war advocates pointed to the success of rehabilitation programs, arguing that because <veterans> were now able to integrate into society, the U.S. should continue to wage war to increase its status on the global stage. Meanwhile, anti-war advocates used images of wounded soldiers and <veterans> with disabilities to highlight the cost of war and argue for its inhumanity (Kinder, 2007). Thus, <veterans> who incurred disability as a result of their service were reduced from whole persons who had voices and agency to simply a representation of war. Additionally, one of the largest problems facing <veterans> in modern times is psychological trauma such as PTSD, which is seen as an invisible illness (Rhidenour et al. 2019). Media

framing of mental illness showcases those who suffer from things like PTSD as victims, or weak links in war, rather than as heroes who also made a sacrifice to protect freedom and democracy (Rhidenour et al., 2019).

<Veterans> who faced injury, whether physical or psychological, as a result of their service, find that on their return home, rather than being treated as whole humans who made a sacrifice for their country, their bodies are used as rhetorical tools to either critique or support the war effort. Because of this, and the obstacles that already exist for <veterans> in the American healthcare and education industry, their ability to fully reintegrate into society is hindered. Their bodies become rhetorical tools, representations of either the cost of war or the power of an individual to overcome obstacles. Because the government engages in these rhetorical strategies without offering the benefits that <veterans> with disabilities need to regain their lives, the posturing found in the literature review also persists here. The next section examines the NOLB website and their efforts to include SIV recipients in the <veteran> status. Through a synchronic analysis, I attempt to uncover how the rhetoric of bodies and posturing are represented in the case of <veterans> who immigrate from a foreign country.

## Chapter 5 - Synchronic Analysis

A diachronic analysis has shown that the <veteran> ideograph is dichotomous and paradoxical. While veteran is defined as an individual who deserves respect and honor as well as tangible benefits and gratitude for service to the nation, <veteran> as an ideograph connotes otherwise. To build on the findings of the diachronic analysis, this chapter, which is a synchronic analysis, focuses on how the ideograph <veteran> functions in the NOLB website. As the founders and employees of NOLB attempt to label Special Immigrant Visa recipients (SIVs) as <veterans>, it becomes expedient to analyze the ideographic implications of this labeling.

According to a synchronic analysis, *No One Left Behind's* rhetoric surrounding <veteran> suggests the organization not only agrees that <veterans> should be treated with honor and given benefits such as specialized healthcare, housing assistance, and employment preferences, but that Special Immigrant Visa recipients deserve to share the same status as <veterans> who are U.S. citizens. The organization attempts to bridge the gap between the rhetoric of how <veterans> are treated and the reality of the lack of benefits. This is evident in claims such as: “These are our fellow veterans... They fought with us. They bled with us. In many cases, they’ve died for us and killed the enemy to save the lives of our men and women in uniform.” (Blog, Marine Fights). To reiterate, NOLB’s argument is that SIVs (who are not U.S. citizens) should receive the same benefits as <veterans> who are citizens of the U.S. By defining <veteran> based on someone’s experiences in battle rather than their legal citizen status, NOLB expands <veteran> to include SIV recipients.

Nevertheless, <veteran> in the NOLB website shows similar tendencies to the trends found in the diachronic analysis. The following section shows how NOLB’s rhetoric attempts to

subvert the paradoxical nature of the ideograph <veteran> that was discussed in the diachronic analysis. However, NOLB's treatment of the <veteran> ideograph, like its usage by the U.S. government, citizens, popular culture, etc. falls short in some instances to follow through on promises made to <veterans>, thus paralleling the posturing identified through the diachronic analysis. Yet, because NOLB is arguing for the inclusion of a population of marginalized individuals into the <veteran> ideograph, its rhetoric has implications for the way <veterans> may be perceived by U.S. citizens.

Burke (1945) explains that the relationships between the elements of the pentad, called *ratios*, help clarify the dynamics of the drama in the artifact. As explained in the 'Methods' chapter, the first step of a pentadic analysis is to identify what terms belong to each category (Foss, 2004). "The next step is to discover which of the five elements identified dominates or is featured in the rhetoric" (Foss, p. 387). While some artifacts may be more dependent on scene and act, elements such as agent or purpose may play a larger role in others. The researcher must discover which elements from the artifact are *moving* the rhetoric. This is where ratios become important. Burke (1945) explains that these relationships between different elements of the pentad are called ratios. Every element is related to another, based on their prominence in the artifact. For example, as Burke (1945) points out, the *scene* may merely be a container for the *act*, but it also may be crucial to the *act*. By charting cluster terms based on the elements of the pentad, these relationships stand out more clearly to the researcher.

Through an analysis of ratios of the pentad conducted in this study, I identified that the most influential and persuasive elements of the pentad that affect the <veteran> ideograph in the NOLB website are act, agency, and purpose. As discussed in previous chapters, rhetorical acts describe steps the organization has taken to include SIVs in the <veteran> ideograph, while

agency describes the power the organization has to take those actions, and purpose describes the reasoning behind the organization's choices. Thus, in the following sections I focus on the relationship between the act and agency of the organization, the act and agency of the clients NOLB serves, and act and purpose of the organization. Ideographs are by their very nature *a priori* persuasion (McGee, 1980). So, any use of an ideograph, such as <veteran>, will contain both the surface level argument as well as underlying arguments. The following section is an attempt at unearthing these underlying arguments associated with the <veteran> ideograph in the rhetoric of the NOLB website.

### **Acts and Agencies: NOLB and the SIV Recipients**

While the acts and agencies ratio is vital to this analysis, it is important to understand that there are two actors present in this rhetoric. NOLB (as an organization) is one actor, while the clients they serve (SIV recipients) are another. The website identifies actions taken by both actors and connects each to the agency that is most closely associated with them. Therefore, I will first discuss the acts and agencies that apply to the organization, NOLB, before moving on to discuss the acts and agencies attributed to the SIV recipients. The cluster analysis, thus, can be divided into clusters that apply to the organization *No One Left Behind* as actor and SIV recipients as actor, separately. This is because NOLB's rhetoric assigns different acts and agencies to themselves and to its clients (the SIV recipients). This first section discusses the interaction between the acts and agency associated with No One Left Behind.

#### **NOLB Acts and Agencies.**

The acts associated with NOLB are: “consists,” “supports,” “prioritize,” “greeted,” “grant,” “said,” “telling,” “working,” “acknowledge” (x2)<sup>1</sup>, “triggering,” “allow,” “giving,”

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix B for explanation of number denotation.

“mean,” “reaction,” “vouching,” “volunteered,” “helping,” and “keep,” while the terms describing their agency are: “combat,” “joyful,” “should,” “Purple Heart,” “simple,” “appropriate,” “time,” “past,” “together,” “similar,” “tirelessly,” “Shona ba Shona” (Shoulder to Shoulder), and “Operation Medic”.

The connection between the acts and agencies that describe NOLB gives the organization a semblance of credibility- to persuade the audience that it follows through on its promises to treat SIV recipients with the same honor and respect as U.S. <veterans>. NOLB’s arguments that the organization’s actions, such as greeting SIVs at the airport, or volunteering to help them resettle, are actions that everyone should take to honor <veterans>, regardless of the <veteran’s> identity or bodily makers. This is because the agency and acts NOLB portray in its rhetoric rely on experience to define <veteran>. This strategy is an attempt to subvert the rhetoric of the body which prevents those who are marginalized from reaping the benefits of <veteran>. Focus on experience as what makes a <veteran>, rather than on race, religion, gender, or other factors is beneficial not just for SIVs, but for all <veterans> who have struggled to gain access to benefits. On its website, the actions connected with NOLB provide arguments that <veteran> should mean that organizations go above and beyond to help all <veterans>. While the focus here is on SIV recipients, the implications are far-reaching for all <veterans>. For example, the following sentence affirms NOLB’s commitment to SIV recipients by showing the organization’s willingness to “fight” for them. “We are fighting tirelessly until we accomplish our mission and keep our country’s promise to its veterans and wartime allies” (Blog, A Veteran’s Fight).

The action of “fighting” for SIV recipients reaffirms the organization’s commitment to repay the SIVs who fought for U.S. <veterans> while they were deployed together. This is how an action may function rhetorically to improve the legitimacy of a nonprofit organization. When

an organization deploys rhetorical actions, it signals to the audience where its ideological beliefs lie (McGee, 1980). Another important action citizens have taken to show respect for U.S.

<veterans> is meeting them at the airport to celebrate their safe return home; something NOLB points out that they do for SIV recipients. They do this because, as <veterans> themselves, they know how important this simple act is.

I remember just how special it felt to me and my soldiers as we were greeted in similar fashion upon our return home. We wanted to ensure the interpreters- also American veterans- got the same welcome home. It's one of the most emotional and joyful things we do (Blog, Welcome Home Jack).

This excerpt clarifies not only how important it felt to be greeted at the airport as someone who is already classified as <veteran> but also acknowledges the emotional and moral support shown to SIV recipients when they are treated like <veterans>. In this instance, NOLB does not posture because its members actually show up to the airport and the organization follows through on its promise. This is one example of how the organization rhetorically reinforces the notion that <veterans> deserve honor, respect, and gratitude.

The organization upholds the ideals of treating <veterans> with honor and respect by following through on its actions by use of rhetorical agency, unlike the federal government. For example, "Operation Medic" is another action NOLB takes to assist SIVs. Through this program, established to help with medical care, the organization ensures that SIV recipients have access to healthcare. The following example highlights not only that SIVs are <veterans>, but that those who meet the <veteran> criteria should have access to healthcare. "Through Operation Medic, our chapters are also locally giving our honorary veterans and their family members support in navigating the American healthcare system" (About, What We Do). NOLB's actions through

Operation Medic are fueled by member's own experiences navigating the complicated legal system surrounding American healthcare. They use the resources at their disposal (i.e. a legal team and knowledgeable volunteers) to ensure SIVs not only know their rights when it comes to medical treatment but that they receive the healthcare they need. Because <veterans> have faced discrimination and complications within the healthcare industry upon their return home, by assisting interpreters in receiving healthcare, they attempt again to overcome the obstacles they have faced themselves.

As healthcare has been at the center of <veterans'> struggles in reintegrating to civilian life, it is significant that NOLB makes healthcare a priority for SIVs. NOLB's use of military terminology to describe actions, i.e. "Operation" and "Medic" to describe a program advocating for access to healthcare, also displays the organization's rhetorical agency. NOLB as an organization, acts through the power of their knowledge of both the military experience as well as firsthand knowledge of navigating the U.S. healthcare system. Members of the organization who work on 'Operation Medic' have the power, or agency, to take actions to empower their clients to navigate the healthcare system on their own. NOLB displays this power through the website's use of language that mimics military terminology, to remind the audience that members of the organization have very similar experiences to SIV recipients. This gives the organization credibility in identifying the needs of <veterans>, and experience in navigating the healthcare system themselves. Therefore, NOLB's rhetorical agency and actions support its beliefs about how <veterans>, including SIV recipients, should be treated.

NOLB also has agency because of the time its members spent working with translators while they were in Afghanistan. Those who served with translators in Iraq and Afghanistan know potential SIVs personally and can vouch for their character. Because the <veterans> who work in



the organization saw SIV recipients as peers when they worked together, once they arrive in the U.S., they also treat SIV recipients as peers. Therefore, they empathize with the struggles SIV recipients face, because they are similar to the struggles that all <veterans> have faced, especially those who are marginalized. By drawing parallels between their service experiences and the experiences of their translators, and in some cases even giving more weight to their translators' sacrifices, they argue for the equality which should (in their eyes) exist between U.S. citizen <veterans> and SIVs on a legislative level. This is evident in statements such as:

As a combat veteran from Vietnam, it's immoral to hire native interpreters, rely heavily on their assistance in times of war and then dispose of them when their lives, and the lives of their families, are threatened just for working for the U.S. and coalition forces (Blog, Veteran's Reaction).

This author uses their experience fighting in Vietnam to draw parallels to the experience of soldiers and translators who fought in Afghanistan and Iraq. By viewing these conflicts through a historical lens, they make an argument about how things haven't changed. The author has authority to speak on this matter because they are not only a <veteran>, but someone who served with local translators who were not given the treatment they deserved following the conflict. The author of the above example goes on to encourage people to support NOLB in their efforts to allow interpreters to immigrate to the U.S., through their agency as a <veteran> with a direct call to action. This sentiment is also reflected in NOLB's attempts to encourage Congressional change to allow SIV recipients to earn more rights through an "honorary" <veteran> status. By encouraging its supporters to include SIVs in the ideograph <veteran>, NOLB uses its rhetorical agency to encourage rhetorical actions that support its arguments that <veteran> should include those who fought alongside U.S. soldiers, despite citizenship status.

This is further exemplified in the excerpt below from the blog post “Telling it like it is: Our allies are Veterans too”:

They faced the risks and hardships of battle, and they now endure death threats to themselves and their families for working with us. Those threats are real and ongoing. These Afghan and Iraqi translators are real veterans just as those we typically honor. It’s time to acknowledge that fact and tell Congress to declare Afghan and Iraqi combat translators “Honorary” veterans (Blog, Telling).

NOLB, in this quotation, calls attention to the actions of SIVs, which would categorize them as <veterans>. This is because NOLB defines <veterans> as those who have participated in the hardships of battle and faced the same things that civilian soldiers endured. This is consistent with findings in the diachronic analysis that found marginalized <veterans> who experienced the same battles as privileged <veterans>, but who still had to prove their worth as <veterans> before receiving support. Not only does the above excerpt encourage action to “tell Congress to declare Afghan and Iraqi combat translators “honorary” <veterans>”, but it gives SIVs the same agency of <veterans> by drawing comparisons between the types of actions that grant U.S. soldiers agency and the actions of SIVs. Thus, through the interaction of acts and agency of the organization, NOLB attempts to include in the <veteran> ideograph individuals beyond American citizens, in this case, translators who immigrate to the U.S.

### **SIV Recipient’s Acts and Agencies.**

The agencies and acts tied to SIV recipients come from the *No One Left Behind* organization, because SIV recipients do not contribute to the content of the website. NOLB uses its website as a platform to advocate on behalf of SIV recipients, which the organization does by describing the actions and agencies of translators. The acts and agencies of SIV recipients are

constructed by the rhetoric of the NOLB organization. The acts associated with SIVs are: died, killed, triggering, allow, giving, mean, and reaction, while agency associated with SIVs are: Honorary (x6), should, dedicated, real, valuable (x2), and heroic (x3).

The rhetoric surrounding SIVs and their agency and actions seeks to prove to the audience that SIVs deserve the label <veteran>, despite not being U.S. citizens. For example, NOLB argues: “Those threats [to SIV potentials] are real and ongoing. These Afghan and Iraqi translators are real veterans just as those we typically honor” (Blog, Telling). The sentiment that SIVs are “real” <veterans> implies that they should be treated the same as <veterans> who are citizens and receive benefits for their service, based solely on service, rather than nationality. NOLB argues because translators’ threats are “real and ongoing”, they are “real veterans” as opposed to “honorary”.

To further highlight the importance of keeping America’s promise to <veterans>, the organization’s rhetoric explains the agency SIVs have based on their actions during their service. For example, “Without Zia’s dedicated work and devotion, we wouldn’t have been able to succeed in our mission over there,” Marine Corps veteran Ramiro Lopez says in the video. (Blog, Marine Fights). By describing Zia, a translator, as “dedicated” and “devoted”, Ramiro Lopez testifies to his character. Thus, SIV recipients acted the same way the U.S. government would expect any of their soldiers to act. Their agency matches what is expected of U.S. soldiers- dedicated, devoted individuals who make sacrifices to protect those they love. Lopez argues that Zia was a vital component to the U.S. mission, the same way U.S. citizen soldiers were vital to their mission. This means Zia deserves to gain <veteran> status. SIV’s have fought using any means necessary, putting their lives and the lives of their family in danger. Translators didn’t just fight for the U.S. – they “showed tremendous care and compassion” (Blog, A Marine

Fights). This rhetoric highlights the character of translators, humanizing them and encouraging the audience to recognize that SIVs went above and beyond for U.S. soldiers.

This notion reappears when NOLB describes the actions of translators as well. Not only are translators “dedicated”, they have proven their dedication through the actions they took while serving. Matt Zeller points this out when he writes: “These are our fellow veterans,” Zeller said. “They fought with us. They bled with us. In many cases, they’ve died for us and killed the enemy to save the lives of our men and women in uniform” (Blog, Marine Fights). SIV recipient’s willingness to fight and die alongside soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan proves their commitment to the U.S. The way that they acted during battle (their agency), proves their worth to become U.S. citizens and be treated as <veterans>. This is part of the reason NOLB classifies <veteran> through the dedication and service rather than through civilian status. NOLB’s argument highlights the actions of SIV recipients who “fought”, and “died” for the U.S. and furthers its argument that the ideograph should include SIV recipients. Similar to the ways marginalized veterans have and continue to fight for recognition based on their service record, NOLB is fighting for the recognition of SIV recipients by explaining why their actions, qualify them to be considered <veterans>.

At times, however, NOLB’s rhetoric creates a divide between <veterans> who are citizens and those who are SIV recipients. Despite arguments that SIV recipients are “real” veterans, throughout the website and blog, the organization refers to them as “honorary” veterans. For example:

That seemingly simple and appropriate step [Congressionally declaring SIVs “honorary” veterans], while not triggering Title 34 or VA benefits, would allow 46,000 501c3

veterans' charities to help these "Honorary" veterans just as they do all veterans (Blog, Telling).

I claim, the argument that SIVs should be officially declared "honorary" <veterans> so that charities can help them still reinforces the posturing found in the diachronic analysis. This is because the modifier "honorary" ignores the argument that SIVs should be given rights simply because they did the same work that U.S. soldiers did. While NOLB argues that translators have endured the same hardships and strife as citizen <veterans>, they do not deserve the title of <veteran> without the "honorary" modifier.

NOLB specifically points out that declaring SIVs "honorary" veterans would not trigger Title 34 (Education benefits) or VA benefits. This is because the status of "honorary" <veteran> does not allow individuals to collect benefits, it is simply a symbolic title (H. Rep. No. 105-109, 1997). By portraying SIVs as "honorary" <veterans>, the NOLB rhetoric implies a similar attitude as was found in the diachronic analysis- <veterans> should be respected, but not necessarily offered tangible benefits to assist their transition from soldier to citizen. By separating "honorary" <veterans> from <veterans>, the ideograph <veteran> brings back the paradox and posturing featured in the diachronic analysis when applied to those who are not U.S. citizens, undermining the very goal the organization purports to support. In this sense, when describing the dynamics between the acts and agencies of SIV recipients, NOLB continues to propagate the paradoxical nature of the <veteran> ideograph.

This paradox is present throughout the website and blog, even in the "About Us" section of the website, which states: "Our tribe consists of veterans, honorary veterans, civilians and the people who support them." From the first page of the website, NOLB reinforces the posturing that has been present in the <veteran> ideograph throughout the history of the U.S. public and

popular discourse. While the move to call SIV recipients “honorary” <veterans> may still increase their status and earn them respect, it still contributes to the paradox of the <veteran> ideograph.

The very need the organization feels to distinguish “real” veterans followed by “those who we typically honor” (Blog, Telling) suggests that there are <veterans> who are not “real” or not “typically honored”. This takes away from an understanding of the <veteran> ideograph as an all-inclusive term for those who have served in the U.S. military and therefore deserve to be honored, irrespective of citizenship. This makes it more difficult to advocate for including SIV recipients in the <veteran> ideograph as they are continuously referred to as “honorary” <veterans>, rather than simply <veterans>. This strategy continues to marginalize some <veterans> by creating arbitrary distinctions based on national identity/citizenship rather than service record.

NOLB’s attempts to include SIVs in the <veteran> ideograph by describing the acts and agencies of SIVs while they were translators fall short of its promise. While NOLB argues that SIV recipients are “real” <veterans>, the statement “These Afghan and Iraqi translators are real veterans just as those we typically honor” (Blog, Telling) reinforces the emphasis on SIVs as “honorary” <veterans> throughout the NOLB website and blog detracts from this argument statement is too long and unclear. Despite the parallels drawn between the agencies and acts of SIV recipients and U.S. <veterans>, NOLB argues that SIV recipients should not receive the same educational or healthcare benefits. This further reinforces the paradox found in the diachronic analysis that the honor and respect due to <veterans> is a mark of posturing.

## Act and Purpose

NOLB's purpose and acts in describing its clients as <veterans> also furthers the posturing theme of the ideograph. This is because, despite the organization's stated purpose to "keep America's promise", it does not state what that "promise" entails. NOLB's purpose is most clearly stated in its mission statement, in the "About" section of its website: "In November 2013, Janis and Matt started NOLB with one mission: to ensure America treats our interpreters as the heroes and veterans they are. We continue to fight for and support our wartime allies and keep America's promise" (Who we are, About).

The rhetoric surrounding the organization's "mission" often refers to "keeping America's promise". As <veterans> have been fighting for centuries to gain the benefits they were promised by the federal government before enlisting, the notion of keeping America's promises to <veterans> hits close to home for NOLB members who are <veterans>. Therefore, NOLB's stated purpose is not only to save SIV's, but to include them in the <veteran> ideograph so that they may receive the benefits the organization purports to believe them to deserve. Interestingly, NOLB does not attempt to include SIVs in the same VA benefits afforded to citizen <veterans>. For example, in this excerpt, the author points out that SIVs would not receive benefits if they were declared "honorary" <veterans>:

It's time to acknowledge that fact and tell Congress to declare Afghan and Iraqi combat translators "Honorary" veterans. That seemingly simple and appropriate step, while not triggering Title 34 or VA benefits, would allow 46,000 501c3 veterans' charities to help these "Honorary" veterans just as they do all veterans (Blog, Telling).

NOLB, while attempting to acknowledge the <veteran> status of SIV recipients, paints the fact that they would not receive <veteran> benefits as a positive to declaring them "honorary"

<veterans>. This simply treats SIV recipients with the same disregard <veterans> have faced since the inception of the Department of Veterans Affairs, which was discussed in the diachronic analysis. The organization's purpose- to include SIVs in the <veteran> ideograph, does not match its actions to "declare" SIVs "honorary" <veterans>. While "honorary" status for <veterans> may seem to elevate SIVs past their current status as "immigrant" or "refugee", it is merely a strategic shift. Therefore, in this case, the act of "declaring" SIVs "honorary" <veterans> does not meet the purpose of honoring them as <veterans>.

Part of the purpose behind expanding the <veteran> ideograph to include SIVs is also to include them in the community of <veterans>. Many citizen <veterans>, especially those who served with translators in Iraq and Afghanistan, view SIVs not only as soldiers, but as brothers. To rhetorically include these translators in the category of <veteran> could expand the bond they share with <veterans> throughout the U.S. This is why, in the blog post "CNN Heroes- NOLB", the author argues that applying the <veteran> label to SIV recipients would function to give these individuals a better life.

We also owe them a chance at a new and better life. We want them to feel as if they're part of the greater community of veterans who are going to step up and take care of them (Blog, CNN Heroes-NOLB).

Giving SIVs a chance at a better life, according to this example, requires <veterans> to take care of them- putting the onus for action on the <veterans> to advocate for the SIVs. NOLB strives to care for SIVs the way they would expect citizens and the U.S. government to take care of <veterans>. This also draws parallels between the experiences of <veterans> and SIVs by pointing out the services being offered to SIVs through NOLB mirror the services that the government has promised to <veterans>, such as healthcare, education, and housing.



On the other hand, at times, NOLB's explanations fall short of explaining the actions SIVs take which contribute to their purpose. An example of this is: "Operation Lost in Translation assists American veterans in their efforts to help their wartime allies obtain Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs)" (Blog, Freeing our Allies). Rather than pointing out the long and arduous process translators must go through on their own, and the immense amount of bureaucratic hoops they jump through to get their visas, this sentence puts the action of obtaining visas in the hands of the American <veterans> to help their allies. Similarly, many of the volunteers, staff, and even the co-founder, Janis Shinwari, are SIVs themselves.

While the organization's purpose is to help translators come to the U.S., it appears that it is more interested in helping American <veterans> help their interpreters, rather than directly helping the <veterans> who need Special Immigrant Visas. This furthers the rhetorical separation between <veteran> and SIVs. Although the organization may see SIVs as "honorary" <veterans>, the distinction of "honorary" prevents the ideograph from being fully inclusive. Because of the organization's disconnect in its purpose and actions, it appears that the ideographic power of <veteran> will not be expanded to include Special Immigrant Visa recipients.

While, at times, NOLB's rhetoric falls short of overcoming the paradox present in the <veteran> ideograph, their attempts to include a marginalized population in the <veteran> ideograph is significant. SIV recipients are still treated as immigrants or refugees in America. By attempting to elevate them to <veteran> status, even if that means they aren't necessarily receiving the same benefits as citizen <veterans>, they are expanding the definition of <veteran>. The synchronic analysis shows that NOLB tries to bridge the gap between the promises made to veterans and the service actually provided to them; the gap that leads to the paradox unearthed by

the diachronic analysis that discusses U.S. veterans. Since NOLB's focus and the focus of this study is SIV recipients as <veterans>, this claim is at least true for this group. NOLB rhetorically tries to include SIV recipients in the <veteran> ideograph and tries to do away from the paradox this ideograph features in the case of U.S. public and popular discourse as analyzed in the diachronic analysis.

However, NOLB is unable to break away from the marginalization characteristic of the <veteran> ideograph seen in the diachronic analysis. Being unable to de-couple "honorary" from <veteran>, despite challenging the paradox, the NOLB rhetoric is unable to give SIV recipients full <veteran> status. Thus, according to the NOLB rhetoric, SIV recipients cannot ever fully enjoy the services and status afforded to U.S. citizen <veterans>. Overall, while the organization itself may strive to treat SIVs like <veterans>, their rhetorical choices prevent the full integration of SIV recipients into the <veteran> ideograph.

## Chapter 6 - Discussion

Following the diachronic and synchronic analysis, this chapter will discuss the implications of NOLB's use of <veteran> to describe their clients, the SIV recipients by returning to the research question

**What are the rhetorical implications of *No One Left Behind's* use of the ideograph <veteran> to describe SIV recipients immigrating to the U.S.?**

The rhetorical implications of NOLB's use of <veteran> further situates those who have served in the U.S. military on a pedestal above civilians. In order for SIVs to be treated with the *same* honor and respect as <veterans>, the <veterans> themselves must be treated with honor and respect. Thus, this use of the ideograph draws attention to the disparities uncovered in the diachronic analysis. While U.S. culture is taught to hold servicemen and women, as well as <veterans> in high regard, the diachronic analysis shows that the U.S. falls short of providing <veterans> the assistance they so desperately need to reintegrate into daily civilian life. This is especially true for <veterans> whose bodies are not viewed as <veterans>, either because of their race, gender, or ability level. This is a struggle SIVs will also face, not just because they are not white, but because their bodies and the bodies of the "enemy" are so similar. For many U.S. citizens, an immigrant from Iraq or Afghanistan is someone who cannot be trusted, because of a national fear that terrorists will disguise themselves as immigrants coming to the country to carry out attacks. This fear is evident in President Donald Trump's executive order banning travel from seven Muslim-majority countries (Tzmach, 2017). The rhetoric of <veterans'> bodies is a powerful tool which acts as a gatekeeper to stop those who have fought for the U.S. from achieving <veteran> status. This analysis finds that while ideographs are culturally engrained

and have a large role to play in cultivating values and beliefs, often, prejudice and bias may be stronger than the ideological beliefs an ideograph represents.

Because so many of the founders, board of directors, and volunteers of NOLB are <veterans> themselves, they have firsthand knowledge of the challenges of coming home, and can empathize with SIVs, who may face even more struggles as they are living in a new country where their immigration status already marginalizes them. By taking the lead in advocating for SIVs, the <veterans> and citizens who are involved in NOLB are leading the way in combatting racist stereotypes regarding who can and cannot be classified as a <veteran>. While race and citizenship status is not explicitly stated as a reason for marginalization or as justification to prevent SIVs from being <veterans>, it is implicit in the arguments which state that SIVs are the same, have experienced the same things, and have done the same work as American soldiers. In this sense, the only thing that is different about a SIV or a <veteran> is that one is a citizen of the U.S., while the other is not. Even if SIVs are granted citizenship, they maintain the cultural markers which separate them from the “ideal” soldier. They remain Afghan or Iraqi, they still speak with an accent, and they often maintain their Islamic religion. Therefore, constant appeals to experience and service are the main method NOLB uses to draw comparisons between the interpreters and the soldiers they work with. By concentrating on this element, the organization attempts to erase the racial and religious markers that have marginalized not only SIVs, but other U.S. <veterans> for centuries.

*No One Left Behind* must argue for the inclusion of Special Immigrant Visa recipients in the inclusion of <veteran> as ideograph because those who receive SIVs have similar problems to those who have struggled to be included as <veterans> for centuries: their bodies do not represent what U.S. culture and the U.S. government view as “bodies of <veterans>”. A largely

brown, Muslim population who looks and sounds like the very people U.S. soldiers were deployed to fight against, U.S. citizens and governmental agencies struggle to accept SIVs as <veterans>. This is exemplified in the “extreme vetting process” (Tzmach, 2017) that many government officials, including President Donald Trump have demanded for them to receive entry into the U.S., let alone for them to receive the benefits they earned for fighting alongside U.S. soldiers. These claim ignore the already extreme nature of the SIV application process, which includes passing polygraph exams and acquiring letters of recommendation from their supervisors during their time of service (NOLB, n.d.). Their bodies are perceived as threatening, and contrary to the <veteran> ideograph, which, as the diachronic analysis points out, has mainly been associated with strong white men, ignoring the diverse population of people who have chosen to serve in the U.S. military for decades.

Similarly to findings of other ideographic analyses, it is interesting to note that one of the strategies NOLB uses to convey the shifting term <ideograph> is to appeal to other ideographs. I argue that terms such as <honorary> and <America’s promise> function as ideographic appeals. Drawing attention to the <honorary> status <veterans> enjoy, as well as arguing that America is not keeping <America’s promise> to the SIVs functions in a similar way that the Dixie Chick’s argument that using <freedom of speech> constitutes <patriotism> (Towner, 2012). These appeals force the audience to view SIVs and the lack of benefits they receive from a different perspective, one where allowing translators to immigrate to America is not enough. <Honoring> those who have served in battle goes beyond begrudgingly allowing them to take up space in America, NOLB’s appeal to these other ideographs encourages Americans to treat SIVs, and by extension, other marginalized <veterans> with more honor, respect, and benefits than they are accustomed to.

The paradox of <veteran> as an ideograph has been present since before the U.S. was an independent nation, and changing that overnight isn't going to happen. While NOLB as an organization may not fulfill *every* promise made to Afghan and Iraqi translators during their service, their attempts to rhetorically include them in the <veteran> family in the U.S. work to overcome obstacles that minority <veterans> have faced for decades. By using their own experiences, sharing the stories of others, and remaining vocal and adamant about the work SIVs did to help the U.S. in combat, the <veteran> ideograph may just become more inclusive than it has been. At the very least, we may begin to see a new rhetorical category of <veterans>- not 'honorary' <veterans>, but those who served without holding citizenship. Perhaps this shift will be a compromise between granting benefits to non-civilians and flat out ignoring our allies.

## **Power**

No One Left Behind's choice to include SIV recipients in the <veteran> category also draws attention to power dynamics which affect cultural beliefs about <veterans>. As the diachronic analysis points out, <veterans> of marginalized status face an even higher burden in obtaining benefits, both tangible and intangible within the U.S. Due to their immigrant status, SIV recipients already face discrimination in the U.S., and this is compounded by their racial and religious status. Therefore, NOLB's arguments regarding inclusion of SIV recipients in the <veteran> ideograph indirectly draws attention to the fight that marginalized <veterans> must go through in order to get the benefits they earned through their service. This analysis found that rhetorics of bodies dictate who is considered a <veteran> worthy of honor and who is not. <Veterans> who are disabled, who are female, people of color, or members of the LGBT community are judged based on their bodily appearance. These power structures have been

present since the beginning of the U.S. military, and continue to permeate the <veteran> community to this day.

NOLB attempts to undermine these power structures through their inclusion of individuals whose bodies not only do not fit the mold of <veteran>, but who embody many of the characteristics associated with “enemies” of the U.S. military. SIV recipients are citizens of the countries the U.S. is fighting against, they are often members of the Islamic faith, and they are not white. However, an organization founded by a <veteran> who *does* fit the mold of <veteran> (Matt Zeller) argues that they are just as much <veterans> as any white, heterosexual, male who served in the U.S. military. The organization could do more to break down these barriers by making arguments which directly address the marginalized status of SIV recipients. The organization spends a vast amount of time discussing why SIVs *should* be considered <veterans>, for example in the excerpt: “They fought with us. They bled with us. In many cases, they’ve died for us and killed the enemy to save the lives of our men and women in uniform.”” (Blog, Marine Fights). However, the organization does not offer explanations for why SIVs are *not* included in the <veteran> ideograph. By pointing out the only thing stopping these individuals from receiving official benefits or symbolic honor is their body or potentially their citizenship status, the organization would draw attention to the power imbalances that exist within the U.S. military industrial complex, even after a soldier’s service has ended.

As others have suggested, ideographs function as a method of social control – a way for those in power to dictate the beliefs of the masses (Cloud, 2004; Edwards & Winkler, 1997; Hamilton, 2012). The <veteran> ideograph is no exception. U.S. citizens are taught to believe anyone labeled <veteran> deserves honor, respect, and gratitude for their service. However, as this analysis has shown time and time again, this is not the case for many <veterans> who find

themselves in worse situations as a result of their service, whether economically, physically, or psychologically. The continued belief that <veterans> are held in a higher regard than citizens prevents a critique of established programs that discriminate against marginalized groups. Only now are women finally starting to question the benefits they have been denied (Citizen Soldier, 2012). The military still openly discriminates against individuals with varying gender and sexual identities, and black and brown soldiers have been fighting for recognition for centuries. SIVs will, unfortunately, face similar battles unless organizations like NOLB, citizens, and members of marginalized <veterans> groups continue to fight for the recognition they deserve.

### **Contributions to the Field**

This analysis contributes to the field of nonprofit communication studies by answering Koschman's (2012) call for more research pertaining to the ideological and identity communication of NPOs. By analyzing the use of ideographs by NPOs in their online rhetoric, it is apparent that finding common cultural terms may allow an organization to appeal to their audience. Recognizable terms which carry weight, such as <veteran>, when used to draw attention to an organization's cause, may not only contribute to increasing support, but may shift an audience's beliefs about the ideograph itself. As Bell Woods (2006) points out, NPOs seek an audience of supporters which shares beliefs and values- something NOLB has done through their appeals to servicepeople who worked with and can empathize with interpreters. By calling SIV recipients <veterans>, even 'honorary' <veterans>, those who served in the U.S. military automatically have something in common with SIVs. The ideograph functions to allow U.S. citizens to identify with the struggles of SIVs, motivating them to take action to assist the organization in their mission. Further research should examine other ideographs used in NPO



communication, which will contribute to the understandings of organizational identity, rhetorical strategies for persuasion, and ideological communication as well.

Further, because this analysis examines an organization which serves a global population of immigrants, it contributes by discussing the impact one culturally accepted term may have on a global population. As more and more NPOs become global (Gill and Wells, 2013), it is vital to embrace the fact that cultural beliefs and ideology impact how NPOs serve populations of different cultures. In this case, <veterans>, while holding high rhetorical status in the U.S., may not be perceived as heroes in Iraq and Afghanistan. As more and more SIVs are granted visas and immigrate to the U.S., however, we may begin to see changes in how Iraqi and Afghan culture treat those who serve in the military, whether in their own national forces or by assisting foreign militaries. Further research on this front should examine the experiences of SIVs once they arrive in the U.S. to understand how the rhetorical strategies of NOLB and organizations like it influence the worldview of their clients. Asking questions about the experiences of immigrants who are <veterans> may shed more light on the impact of the term across cultures. For example, do SIV recipients see themselves as <veterans> the way that their supporters do, or is their understanding different based on their cultural background?

### **Shortcomings**

As with any ideographic analysis, there are undoubtedly nuances in this rhetoric that have gone unnoticed based on my own background as well as limitations of time and space. The scope of this project prevented a full analysis of the entirety of the NOLB website, for example. As someone who has never served in the U.S. (or any other) military, and who has never been forced to immigrate for my own safety, I consider myself a relatively objective observer to this communication. At the same time, however, this may have prevented my understanding of the

rhetorical choices NOLB and its supporters made when choosing to include SIVs in the category of <veteran>.

### **Conclusion**

Matt Zeller and Janis Shinwari had no idea that one day in Afghanistan would change the course of both of their lives, and countless others, forever. Thanks to Janis' quick thinking that saved Matt's life, Matt's gratitude that got Janis a visa to the U.S., and both of their determination to protect the U.S.' allies in Iraq and Afghanistan, *No One Left Behind* was born. This organization dedicates itself to serving those who served us, with the concept that anyone who helped the U.S. military is a <veteran>, even if the government does not recognize them as such. This analysis focused on why the choice to call SIVs <veterans> is an important one, not just for NOLB or the SIVs, but for the U.S. and global concept of what it means to be a <veteran>.

While <veterans> and SIVs in the U.S., especially those of marginalized identities may feel as though they are being left behind by their own government, the rhetorical power of <veteran> is still as strong as ever- encouraging the cultural belief that the sacrifices of those who serve are worthy of honor and respect. NOLB knows this, and uses the term <veteran> as a persuasive tool to argue that SIVs deserve the same honor and respect given to citizen <veterans> upon their return from combat, as well as similar benefits and resources to ease their transition into their new home. Matt and Janis were unlikely comrades in Afghanistan, from opposite sides of the planet, with different religions, backgrounds, and beliefs, but the one thing they had in common was that they always had each other's back, and now they have the back of every other soldier, <veteran>, and wartime ally who has risked their lives in the name of freedom.

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## Appendix A - Synchronic Clusters

1. Veteran- tribe, honorary, consists, support
  - a. “Our **tribe consists** of veterans, **honorary** veterans, civilians, and the people who **support** them.” (Who we are, About)
2. Veteran- tribe, civilians, empowerment
  - a. “Our **tribe** consists of veterans, honorary veterans, **civilians**, and the people who support them. **Empowerment**- Honorary veterans and their families are irreplaceable leaders in the NOLB cause.” (Who we are, About)
3. Veteran- honorary, prioritize, NOLB, cause
  - a. “**Honorary** veterans and their families are irreplaceable leaders in the **NOLB cause**. We **prioritize** programs that help families become self-sufficient.” (Who we are, About)
4. Veterans- mission, keep
  - a. “In November 2013, Janis and Matt started NOLB with one **mission**: to ensure America treats our interpreters as the heroes and veterans they are. We continue to fight for and support our wartime allies and **keep** America’s promise.” (Who we are, About)
5. Vets- honorary, members, driver’s license
  - a. “Operation wheels assists **honorary** vets and **members** of their family age 16 and older in acquiring a **driver’s license** and a vehicle for the family.” (What we do, Wheels)
6. Veterans- honorary, American, Operation medic

- a. “Through **Operation Medic**, our chapters are also locally giving our **honorary** veterans and their family members support in navigating the **American** healthcare system.” (About, What We Do)
7. Veteran- combat, Jack
    - a. “Yesterday, I had the honor to help our Southern California team welcome home **Jack**, an Afghan who served as an interpreter with the US military for six years- a six tour **combat** veteran.” (Blog, Welcome Home Jack)
  8. Veterans- American, similar, greeted, joyful
    - a. “I remember just how special it felt to me and my soldiers as we were **greeted** in **similar** fashion upon our return home. We wanted to ensure the interpreters- also **American** veterans- got the same welcome home. It’s one of the most emotional and **joyful** things we do.” (Blog, Welcome Home Jack)
  9. Veterans- our, make
    - a. “This is why we exist- to Keep America’s Promise and ensure that all of **our** veterans **make** it home.” (Blog, Welcome Home Jack)
  10. Veteran- life, foreign, should
    - a. The mental, emotional and financial stress of beginning a new **life** in a **foreign** country with minimal means creates a pressure that no one, especially a veteran, **should** have to endure. (Blog, No One Left Behind Kept America’s Promise)
  11. Veteran- without, home
    - a. “We could not do this **without** you. Together, we will Keep America’s Promise and bring all of our veterans **home**.” (Blog, Operation Welcome Home)
  12. Veteran- Ramiro, Marine Corps, devotion

- a. “Without Zia’s **dedicated** work and devotion, we wouldn’t have been able to succeed in our mission over there,” **Marine Corps** veteran **Ramiro** Lopez says in the video.” (Blog, Marine Fights)
13. Veteran- Afghan war, Purple Heart, Kabul, grant
- a. “Matt Zeller, an **Afghan War** veteran and **Purple Heart** recipient from Rochester, N.Y., pressured the U.S. Embassy in **Kabul** to **grant** a visa for his former interpreter as part of the Afghan Allies Protection Act.” (Blog, Marine Fights)
14. Veteran- Died, killed, us, fellow, Zeller
- a. ““These are our **fellow** veterans,” **Zeller** said. “They fought with us. They bled with us. In many cases, they’ve **died** for us and **killed** the enemy to save the lives of our men and women in uniform.”” (Blog, Marine Fights)
15. Veteran- department, Zia, showed, said
- a. ““There was no other interpreter I’ve ever worked with in the U.S. Marine Corp like **Zia**,” **said** Slivka, who is planning to become a mental health counselor for the **Department** of Veterans Affairs. “He understood the humanistic side of things. He empathized with us. He **showed** tremendous care and compassion.”” (Blog, Marine Fights)
16. Veteran- hero, helping, Omaha Nebraska
- a. “**Helping** a Veteran **Hero** in **Omaha, Nebraska**” (Blog, Helping)
17. Veteran- charities, not, No One Left Behind
- a. “I’m **not** a veteran, but I am a former military spouse and I volunteer regularly for military **charities**, like **No One Left Behind.**” (Blog, Volunteer Profile)

18. Veteran- telling, too, like, allies

- a. “**Telling it like it is: Our Allies are Veterans too.**” (Blog, Telling)

19. Veterans- with, working, real, Congress

- a. “They faced the risks and hardships of battle, and they now endure death threats to themselves and their families for **working with** us. Those threats are real and ongoing. These Afghan and Iraqi translators are **real** veterans just as those we typically honor. It’s time to acknowledge that fact and tell **Congress** to declare Afghan and Iraqi combat translators “Honorary” veterans.” (Blog, Telling)

20. Veterans- honorary, fact, acknowledge, VA Benefits

- a. “It’s time to **acknowledge** that **fact** and tell Congress to declare Afghan and Iraqi combat translators “**Honorary**” veterans. That seemingly simple and appropriate step, while not triggering Title 34 or **VA benefits**, would allow 46,000 501c3 veterans’ charities to help these “Honorary” veterans just as they do all veterans.” (Blog, Telling)

21. Veterans- simple, appropriate, veterans, 501c3, charities

- a. “That seemingly **simple** and **appropriate** step, while not triggering Title 34 or VA benefits, would allow 46,000 **501c3** veterans’ **charities** to help these “Honorary” veterans just as they do all veterans.” (Blog, Telling)

22. Veterans- triggering, honorary, Title 34, veteran box

- a. “That seemingly simple and appropriate step, while not **triggering Title 34** or VA benefits, would allow 46,000 501c3 veterans’ charities to help these “Honorary” veterans just as they do all veterans. As veterans, our allies could also now check

the **veteran box** on employment forms, giving them valuable veteran's preference." (Blog, Telling)

23. Veterans- forms, allow, 46,000, giving, all

- a. "That seemingly simple and appropriate step, while not triggering Title 34 or VA benefits, would **allow 46,000** 501c3 veterans' charities to help these "Honorary" veterans just as they do **all** veterans. As veterans, our allies could also now check the veteran box on employment **forms, giving** them valuable veteran's preference." (Blog, Telling)

24. Veterans- 501c3, veterans, valuable

- a. "That seemingly simple and appropriate step, while not triggering Title 34 or VA benefits, would allow 46,000 **501c3** veterans' charities to help these "Honorary" veterans just as they do all veterans. As veterans, our allies could also now check the veteran box on employment forms, giving them **valuable veteran's** preference." (Blog, Telling)

25. Veterans- honorary, undeniably, box, veterans

- a. "That seemingly simple and appropriate step, while not triggering Title 34 or VA benefits, would allow 46,000 501c3 veterans' charities to help these "**Honorary**" **veterans** just as they do all veterans. As veterans, our allies could also now check the veteran **box** on employment forms, giving them valuable veteran's preference. Simple and yet **undeniably** powerful, the wording is key and could mean the difference between us honoring our commitment and our allies realizing the American dream or not." (Blog, Telling)

26. Veterans- veterans, mean, allies, difference, preference, valuable

- a. As **veterans**, our **allies** could also now check the veteran box on employment forms, giving them **valuable** veteran's **preference**. Simple and yet undeniably powerful, the wording is key and could **mean** the **difference** between us honoring our commitment and our allies realizing the American dream or not." (Blog, Telling)
27. Veterans- past, time, link
- a. "Make your voice heard. Email your Senators and Representatives in Washington today and tell them it is **past time** to treat our allies as the wartime veterans they are and honor our promise to them. The **link** will get you where you need to go." (Blog, Telling)
28. Veterans- book, messages, together, American
- a. "To show our appreciation and profound gratitude for his championing our cause, we're putting **together** a **book** of **messages** from you – our Afghan and Iraqi wartime allies and post 9/11 **American** veterans – to share with him." (Blog, Our Best to John McCain)
29. Veteran's- reaction, Vietnam, War
- a. "A Veteran's **reaction**: The **Vietnam War**" (Blog, Veteran's Reaction)
30. Veteran- Similar, Burned
- a. "As I'm finishing Ken Burns' amazing documentary film, The Vietnam War, I'm struck by how **similar** my war, Vietnam, is to the war in Afghanistan. These quotes from a fellow Vietnam veteran are **burned** in my mind:" (Blog, Veteran's Reaction)
31. Veteran- combat, Vietnam, war, times



- a. “As a **combat** veteran from **Vietnam**, it’s immoral to hire native interpreters, rely heavily on their assistance in **times** of **war** and then dispose of them when their lives, and the lives of their families, are threatened just for working for the U.S. and coalition forces.” (Blog, Veteran’s Reaction)
32. Veteran’s- fight
- a. “A Veteran’s **Fight**” (Blog, A Veteran’s Fight)
33. Veterans- vouching, gave, Kristy, Muhammad
- a. **Kristy** gave us an in-depth look at the tedious and ambiguous process Muhammad, his family, and veterans **vouching** for **Muhammad**, like Karsten Daponte who wrote a letter of support for Muhammad, have been going through.” (Blog, A Veteran’s Fight)
34. Veterans- Muhammad, keep, heroic
- a. “It is our mission to **keep** America’s promise to our **heroic** veterans like **Muhammad**.” (Blog, A Veteran’s Fight)
35. Veterans- fighting, tirelessly, Shona ba Shona
- a. “We are **fighting tirelessly** until we accomplish our mission and keep our country’s promise to its veterans and wartime allies. From all of us at No One Left Behind, thank you all for standing **Shona ba Shona**, Shoulder to Shoulder, with us and our wartime allies.” (Blog, A Veteran’s Fight)
36. Veterans- Heroic
- a. “Working through these operations, we treat our clients as the **heroic** veterans they are” (Blog, Freeing our Allies)
37. Veterans- American, Visas

- a. “Operation Lost in Translation assists **American** veterans in their efforts to help their wartime allies obtain Special Immigrant **Visas** (SIVs).” (Blog, Freeing our Allies)

38. Veterans- thousands, national priority

- a. “We are calling upon Americans, including the hundreds of **thousands** of veterans of these two wars, to demand from this Congress and administration that they make it a **national priority** to rectify this grievous mistake.” (Blog, We Cannot Betray)

39. Veterans- Vietnam, Memorial, volunteered, afternoon, helping

- a. “I had the honor to meet with Sen. McCain on four occasions in my life. The first was when I **volunteered** for his first Presidential Campaign in 2000. I was 18. I met him at the Rochester, NY **Vietnam Veterans Memorial** in Highland Park on a cold February Saturday evening. I had spent the **afternoon helping** to set up the rally and in so doing, got to meet several Vietnam War Veterans, two of whom had served as POWs with Sen. McCain.” (Blog, No One Left Behind’s Matt Zeller)

40. Veterans- afternoon, two, stepped

- a. “I had spent the **afternoon** helping to set up the rally and in so doing, got to meet several Vietnam War Veterans, **two** of whom had served as POWs with Sen. McCain. I’ll never forget the moment he **stepped** off his Straight Talk Express Bus and into the scrum of media, campaign staff, and adoring fans (at least a thousand people attended the rally in the cold and cramped conditions).” (Blog, No One Left Behind’s Matt Zeller)

41. Veterans- chance, community, new

- a. “We also owe them a **chance** at a **new** and better life. We want them to feel as if they’re part of the greater **community** of veterans who are going to step up and take care of them.” (Blog, CNN Heroes-NOLB)

42. Veterans- NOLB, acknowledge, adaptation, heroic

- a. “No One Left Behind (NOLB) is a non-profit aid organization bridging the gap that exists between current State Department and NGO refugee relief programs and provides assistance with housing, employment, and cultural **adaptation**. **NOLB acknowledges** the service of Iraqi and Afghan translators and treat clients as the **heroic** veterans they are.” (Blog, CNN Heroes Features Work of NOLB)

43. Veterans- supporters, volunteers

- a. “No One Left Behind is proud of the advocacy efforts of our staff, **supporters**, **volunteers**, partner organizations like International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) and Veterans for American Ideals (VFAI), and the advocacy of the 9/11 Commission.” (Blog, We Did It!)

## Appendix B - Cluster Groups

**Table 1**

*<Veteran> Cluster Terms*

Pentad Elements	NOLB website <veteran> cluster terms
Act	Consists, support, prioritize, greeted, make, grant, died, killed, said, showed, telling, working, acknowledge (x2) <sup>2</sup> , triggering, allow, giving, mean, reaction, stepped, burned, fight, vouching, volunteered, helping, keep
Agency	Honorary (x6), combat, joyful, should, dedicated, Purple Heart, real, VA Benefits, simple (x2), appropriate, Title 34, valuable (x2), undeniably, difference, time, past, together, similar, heroic (x3) tirelessly, Shona ba Shona, Operation Medic
Agent	Tribe (x2), civilians, NOLB (x2), members, American (x2) our, Ramiro, Marine Corps, Zeller, Zia, hero, No One Left Behind, charities (x2), allies (x2), Congress, 501c3 (x2) 46,000, thousands, Kristy, Muhammad (x2), supporters, volunteers
Purpose	Cause, empowerment, mission, keep (x2), driver's license, similar, life, fellow, with, fact, veteran box, forms, box, preference, book, messages, visas, national priority, chance, community, new, adaptation
Scene	Foreign, home, Afghan war, Kabul, Department, Vietnam War, times, war, Vietnam Memorial, afternoon (x2)

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<sup>2</sup> Some terms were clustered around <veteran> more than once, the number of clusters is denotated with (x#)