

ALL CLOUDS ARE CLOCKS-
EVEN THE MOST CLOUDY
OF CLOUDS.

-KARL POPPER



CLOCKS AND CLOUDS
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AMERICAN UNIVERSITY'S UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH JOURNAL

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A JOURNAL OF NATIONAL AND GLOBAL AFFAIRS

VIVIAN G. HAGERTY

Terrorist Divorce: Examining Alliance Break-Ups And The Al Qaeda/ISIL Split

MONICA FLOYD

Neighborhood Violence and Crime: Do Public Institutions Reduce Crime in Neighborhoods?

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INTRODUCTION

Clocks and Clouds is excited to deliver new contributions to the growing tradition of outstanding research at American University. This spring we proudly present six strong and distinct voices to important discussions both on campus and in broader academia.

Clocks and Clouds unites and validates the many disparate efforts at AU to promote excellent undergraduate research. Our success this spring would not have been possible without the tireless dedication of student-authors, faculty, administrators, and our journal's hardworking and competent staff. The diversity of this semester's journal is a testament to the unified purpose and resolve of these many efforts.

The quality research we present is a reflection of the overall quality of undergraduate education at American. The authors in this semester's edition apply method-grounded research skills to serious challenges in the realms of domestic and global political affairs. Vivian Hagerty compellingly argues that counter-terrorism scholars should inform their thinking on the dissolution of alliances between terrorist groups by scholarly research in corporate strategy and psychology of divorce. Hagerty's work applies theoretical findings from these diverse perspectives to the ISIL/al Qaeda schism in a well-argued case study. Monica Floyd uses an array of quantitative analyses, incorporating geo-coded spatial models to investigate the many factors that contribute to increased neighborhood crime in Chicago. Floyd's findings suggest a positive relationship between the locations of crimes to vacant lots, an important lesson for municipal policymakers. Emily Dalgo accumulated a large and telling data pool and conducted a discourse analysis of Howard and American University black students' ideas of the American Dream. Dalgo's sound technical analysis is enriched by the equally-telling primary accounts from the students. With a focus on governance, Kari Lorentson converses with the large field of scholarship on civic engagement, adding a strong voice to discussions on how the education system can nurture a taste for robust civic engagement. Lorentson's regressions yield useful instruction on how educators and policymakers can best cultivate youth interest in politics. Daniel Savickas provides an expansive study of the relationship between GDP and U.S. military intervention from 1945 through the 2000s with the support of sound quantitative data. Savickas's work will be of great value to scholars and analysts of U.S. foreign policy. Finally, Amber Waltz conducts a discourse analysis as well, and draws interesting conclusions on favela gangs in Rio de Janeiro. Waltz's skillful implementation of Allison's Rational Actor Model provides an important contribution to the literature.

Clocks and Clouds' success demonstrates that undergraduates can produce research worth sharing. We invite you to join us in an exploration of these perspectives.

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TERRORIST DIVORCE: EXAMINING ALLIANCE BREAK-UPS AND THE AL QAEDA/ISIL SPLIT

Vivian G. Hagerty

Abstract

Though somewhat counterintuitive given terrorist organizations' clandestine nature, such organizations do engage in strategic alliances and partnerships with one another. A handful of scholars have grappled with terrorist alliances, but a gap in the literature remains when it comes to how these alliances end. This study will examine "terrorist divorce" – the point at which these alliances fall apart – by building a preliminary theoretical discussion and investigating the break-up of al Qaeda Core and The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (formerly al Qaeda in Iraq). The study finds that the level of strategic cohesion, fulfillment of needs, trust, and communication are key to determining whether an alliance partnership will dissolve. Al Qaeda Core and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant were never blessed with strategic cohesion or optimal levels of trust and communication; however, the alliance's demise can be traced to the degradation of each group's ability and willingness to fulfill the other's needs.

Introduction

"[D]on't let your eyes lose sight of the target...it should stand before you always. Otherwise you deviate from the general line through a policy of reaction... Among the things which the feelings of the Muslim populace who love and support you will never find palatable – also – are the scenes of slaughtering the hostages. You shouldn't

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be deceived by the praise of some of the zealous young men and their description of you as the shaykh of the slaughterers, etc. They do not express the general view of the admirer and the supporter of the resistance in Iraq, and of you in particular by the favor and blessing of God.”

– Ayman al Zawahiri in correspondence with Abu Musab al Zarqawi, 2005

In 2005, senior al-Qaeda leader Ayman al Zawahiri sent al-Qaeda in Iraq leader Abu Musab al Zarqawi a thirteen-page letter – from which the above excerpt is taken – admonishing the Jordanian for engaging in brutal executions of hostages and targeting Iraq’s Shia population. While the letter’s tone was not as scathing as it could have been given Zawahiri’s characteristic flowery and elaborate language, the missive, which was intercepted by Western intelligence, exposed a strategic and tactical fissure between al-Qaeda in Iraq and al-Qaeda’s core leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Nearly a decade later, this fissure would result in the split between al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In tracing the relationship between these two entities, this study will consider four determinants of successful alliances – strategic cohesion, fulfillment of needs, trust, and communication – in order to examine which factor led to al-Qaeda and ISIL’s “divorce” in 2014.

While the relationship between Zarwaqi and al-Qaeda Core (AQC) had never been rosy, the two entities were able, for a time, to fulfill one another’s needs in Iraq. This cohesion began to crumble, however, after Zarqawi’s own goals began to take precedence over that of AQC’s. After Zarqawi’s death in 2006, Bin Laden managed to gain more control over AQI. However, once Abu Bakr al Baghdadi assumed control of the organization, then the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), in 2010, the same strained dynamics between the leaders reappeared. Over the following four years, al-Qaeda lost bin Laden, and Zawahiri struggled to control the organization’s affiliate in Iraq. Finally in 2014, after Baghdadi unilaterally claimed that ISI was to subsume Jabhat al Nusra and create the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Zawahiri officially disavowed the group.

Using the case of the al-Qaeda/ISIL split, this study examines “terrorist divorce” – the point at which terrorist alliances and partnerships fall apart – as a means of filling a hole in the existing terrorist alliance literature. A handful of scholars have conducted significant research on terrorist alliances, however such findings are rarely represented in the broader literature. Though such terrorist alliance research often contains counterterrorism implications discussing weakening such partnerships, few scholars have specifically

examined why and how these partnerships dissolve independent from any external intervention. If researchers and counterterrorism practitioners can examine and correctly assess why and how terrorist alliances might end, counter-alliance operations will become a more effective tool in the counterterrorism toolbox, enabling us to systematically and strategically sabotage terrorist alliances and force a divorce.

This study is divided into five sections: first, I will review the literature on terrorist alliances, and identify that there is a gap when it comes to examining how alliances end. Second, I will delve into the business and organizational literature as well as human divorce literature in order to begin theorizing about terrorist divorce, focusing on four main determinants: strategic cohesion, need fulfillment, trust, and communication. Third, through a heuristic case study using within-case process tracing, I will examine the al-Qaeda/ISIL split in terms of those four determinants. Fourth, I will discuss the findings of this study, and, last, I will conclude with the counterterrorism implications stemming from terrorist divorce, and consider directions for future research.

An important note to consider is the relative dearth of information regarding these groups' and their leaders' intentions, as well as the decisions they make and the communication between them. Given that terrorist organizations are by nature clandestine, such reliable information as may be available about large corporations or individual public figures is conspicuously absent. As will be discussed further in the theoretical section of this study, the scholars in this field face challenges when trying to examine a fuller picture of terrorist alliances. It is thus unsurprising that I faced similar challenges in writing about the breakdown of those alliances. As a result, any such theoretical discussion is preliminary and imperfect, yet provides a helpful starting place for further research on terrorist divorce.

Literature Review

Terrorism scholar Dr. Tricia Bacon, in her extensive research on terrorist alliance hubs, has found that the conventional wisdom on terrorist alliances falls short of a complete explanation. Scholars and government officials alike often posit that the presence of a shared ideology and a common enemy will cause alliances; however, Bacon argues that, were this the case, the international community would see a preponderance of terrorist alliances, while in reality they are few and far between (Bacon 2014). Using organizational theory, her fundamental argument holds that, rather than ideology, organizational needs cause groups to seek an alliance, and that subsequently, identity features such as shared ideology, determine which



groups would be suitable partners. Bacon defines alliances among terrorist groups to be “relationships of security cooperation between terrorist groups that involve mutual expectations of coordination or consultation in the future.... alliances offer opportunities for deeper and more sustained exchanges, and therefore, can pose a greater threat” (Bacon 2014).

Similar to business scholars Prashant Kale and Harbir Singh’s view on corporate mergers as a paradox, Bacon refers to alliances as “anomalies.” Of the many reasons that groups do not ally with one another, their clandestine and illegal nature remains one of the most important (Bacon 2014). Groups are often wary of the vulnerability necessary to forge what Bacon calls “credible commitment,” and often deem the sacrificing of autonomy for increased security to be an untenable risk (Bacon 2014). Additionally, terrorist groups often hold strong in-group cohesion, wherein engaging in an alliance may alienate its constituency or increase chances of a leak (Bacon 2014).

On the other hand, those groups that are successful at forging alliances – which Bacon terms “alliance hubs” – account for a disproportionate amount of the existing or historical terrorist alliances (Bacon 2014). In her forthcoming book, Bacon explores the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and al-Qaeda as alliance hubs, and explains why groups gravitate to these organizations. Alliances, though an anomaly, occur because they increase groups’ “legitimacy and stature,” help groups accumulate additional resources, capabilities, and knowledge, and become more efficient and effective in their actions (Bacon 2014). Additionally, alliances may help groups withstand losses or counterterrorism pressure, broaden the scope of their actions, and “project themselves as part of a broader movement (Bacon 2014).”

In her book, Bacon explains her typology for partnerships between terrorist groups in terms of the level of interdependence they share with one another (Bacon Forthcoming, 88). According to Bacon, interdependence stems from, “1) how partners treat resources...; 2) the partners’ time horizon for the relationship; 3) the partnering organizations’ degree of autonomy, equality, and independence...; and 4) the breadth and parameters of cooperation” (Bacon Forthcoming, 88). From this measure of interdependence, she outlines four kinds of alliances: pooled, integrated, subordinate, and reciprocal (Bacon Forthcoming, 88). Bacon identifies a fifth relationship – the “transactional relationship” – that happens frequently, yet is not strictly considered an alliance given its *quid pro quo* nature (Bacon Forthcoming, 90).

A professor of terrorism studies and senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, Dr. Daniel Byman expresses similar findings. He too endeavors to explain terrorist alliances through organizational theory, and posits that a group

"seeks affiliates to expand the scope and scale of its operations, gain the benefits of greater local expertise, better spread innovations, and – most important – endow itself and its mission with greater legitimacy" (Byman 2014, 431). Byman defines a terrorist ally to be "a terrorist organization that accepts the leadership of another terrorist organization but remains organizationally distinct..." (Byman 2014, 434). Specifically regarding al-Qaeda, he defines affiliates as "those groups that have taken the al-Qaeda name and/or whose leaders have sworn loyalty to the al-Qaeda core leader who, in turn, has acknowledged that oath" (Byman 2014, 435).

As does Bacon, Byman observes the rarity with which groups ally with one another; given their insularity and clandestine nature, it proves difficult for them to assure one another of their commitment (Byman 2014, 439). Byman also argues that ideology cannot be the main driving force, as like-minded groups frequently remain unaffiliated (Byman 2014, 439). He takes an economic approach to the study of affiliations, explaining that a parent group will ally with a local group in order to specialize and increase efficiency through the laws of comparative advantage (Byman 2014, 441). Both Bacon and Byman cite Stephen Walt and Ely Karmon's work on alliances, wherein they propose that groups – either legitimate organizations such as states and institutions, or terrorist organizations – ally with one another when they feel threatened in order to restore a balance of power (Byman 2014, 438).

Byman argues that the most important factors determining a successful and stable alliance can be boiled down to a low level of preference diversion and appropriate levels of command and control, but that many can be stymied by delegation and integration problems (Byman 2014, 431, 445, 446). As is mentioned in the business and human divorce literature, problems that arise during challenging periods in the alliance may have already existed before the groups merged, and it is only once the groups face difficulties that these issues come to the surface (Byman 2014, 443).

Victor Asal, Hyun Hee Park, Karl Rethemeyer, and Gary Ackerman employ a more quantitative approach to studying terrorist alliance behavior and use theories from political science, social network, and organizational literature (Asal et al. 2015, 1). They place their study of terrorism within the broader subject of "organized non-state violence," yet distinguish their topic of focus by considering terrorism's psychological aspect (Asal et al. 2015, 3–4). Asal et al.'s work focuses on the networked nature of terrorist groups, and – given that most research has dealt only with al-Qaeda as a case study – seeks to examine such networks writ large (Asal et al. 2015, 6).

Within their study, Asal et al. define alliances to be "joint or

complementary action for the same (intermediate) purpose. This action can constitute activity at the rhetorical, material or operational levels” (Asal et al. 2015, 6), thus providing a broader definition than both Bacon and Byman. The authors situate the phenomenon of alliances within rational choice theory, explaining that one of the first scholars of terrorist cooperation deemed alliances possible if and when they are to the groups’ mutual benefit (Asal et al. 2015, 6). Asal et al. echo Bacon’s study of alliance hubs by examining what they call “terrorist syndicates” (Asal et al. 2015, 15), and illustrate a running theme that both Byman and Bacon consider: “Why syndicates sharing ideological similarities and geographical proximity fail to connect and why two separate syndicates can form around common motivational aspects” (Asal et al. 2015, 16), illustrating the failure of ideology to fully explain terrorist alliance behavior.

Dr. Assaf Moghadam of the Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point focuses on affiliation concerns within the context of groups pledging bayat to ISIL, explaining that “it is not uncommon for these rhetorical pledges of support to serve as a springboard for more tangible cooperative relationships in the logistical and operational realms. Such inter-organizational collaboration can significantly affect the capabilities, longevity, strategy, and tactics of the cooperating parties” (Moghadam 2015). Moghadam identifies ideological affinity and trust as key determinants for a successful terrorist alliance, and endeavors to develop a typology of cooperation based on the level of “strength of cooperative ties” (Moghadam 2015). Echoing Bacon’s typology of alliances, Moghadam’s delineations are – in descending order of strength – mergers, strategic alliances, tactical cooperation, and transactional cooperation (Moghadam 2015).

The literature on terrorist alliance behavior agrees on several things: first, alliances are rare; second, were conventional wisdom to be true, we should expect to see many more alliances than we do; third, groups engage in alliances when cooperation is deemed mutually beneficial; fourth, groups expect to increase their effectiveness, legitimacy, and skillset when engaging in alliances; fifth, a measure of strength or interdependence is needed in order to distinguish more transactional relationships from lifelong strategic alliances; and sixth, that if we can properly understand the way these alliances arise and operate, we can identify fissures and exacerbate problems as a means of degrading capabilities and increasing counterterrorism effectiveness. The literature also produces several typologies of alliances, which, while they may not be perfect, provide an excellent starting point for further research on a previously understudied phenomenon.

Theory

Building off of the existing literature on terrorist alliance formation and

behavior, this study's goal is to put forth an introductory theoretical discussion on terrorist divorce. This discussion, however, faces the same challenges that early terrorist alliance scholars faced: how does one theorize about the partnerships of clandestine groups? Scholars like Bacon, Byman, and Asal et al. turned to external subjects such as business and organizational studies to examine alliance theory in general in order to create a foundation for terrorist alliance theory in particular. Thus, when pursuing the logical next step – looking at how alliances end – it is helpful to return to the business literature on corporate demergers and divestiture. I will add a portion of human divorce theory to the mix as a means of expanding the foundation for terrorist divorce theories and including an individual-level analysis of the players involved.

Combining divorce theories from these two fields and examining relationships between companies as well as romantic partners provides a well-rounded theoretical basis for developing a typology of terrorist divorce. The theories operate on different yet complementary levels of analysis, given that organizational theories apply to groups while human divorce theories pertain to a relationship between two individuals. This proves useful for an analysis of terrorist divorce behavior in that, while terrorist organizations are groups and must deal with social and organizational dynamics, they must also contend with larger-than-life personalities of leadership that can greatly affect decision-making. While not a perfect representation, given the scarcity of research on theories of terrorist divorce proper, borrowing theories from these two schools of thought is a good place to start.

Models of Demergers and Divorce

Business scholars Mike Peng and Oded Shenkar use human divorce theory in order to build their theories of corporate divorce. Citing human divorce theory as containing four phases of divorce – initiation, going public, uncoupling, and aftermath – Peng and Shenkar place particular emphasis on the process of dissolution itself, arguing that the outcome of divorce can be determined by how the process is carried out (Peng and Shenkar 2002). In each phase, there exists a cycle of renegotiation, monitoring, and behavior change; according to the authors, the relationship can be saved at each step in this four-phase model (Peng and Shenkar 2002, 94).

A similar theoretical model comes from business scholars Oscar Thomasson and Audrius Janusonis, who propose a tri-stage process: pre-demerger phase, execution phase, and post-demerger phase. The first phase is a preparatory stage before the demerger has been made public, and appropriate structures are being put into place for the demerger to run

smoothly. Communication remains key to ensuring these structures fit everyone's needs (Thomasson and Janusonis 2012). In this phase, "information has a tendency to remain in the hands of few, something which causes uncertainty and confusion in the organization and irrevocably leads to reduced organizational performance" (Thomasson and Janusonis 2012).

During the execution stage, firms may experience a loss of employees, management, and overall talent, while "the cultural integration process puts company culture, image and identity at stake" (Thomasson and Janusonis 2012, 9, 11). Finally, within the post-demerger phase, "[t]he new company has to share future product roadmaps with customers in order to maintain customer confidence and prevent them from turning to rival companies or change their perception of the company... If the managers are not communicating and getting feedback from the customers, [customers] may turn to competitors" (Thomasson and Janusonis 2012, 14). In essence, the company must do all it can to keep constituents happy in the wake of large organizational shifts.

Building off of these models as well as the business and human divorce theory, I posit four determinants of alliance break-ups: the levels of strategic cohesion, need fulfillment, trust, and communication. Each determinant is present within business demergers, human divorce, and terrorist alliance break-ups, and will be discussed in greater detail in the following section. Additionally, the case study examining the al-Qaeda/ISIL split will be evaluated according to these four determinants. The factors can also be broken down into two smaller subcategories, which I have dubbed "conflict instigators" and "conflict managers;" the first contains strategic concerns and tactical needs, and the second, trust and communication. For the most part, strategic mismatch and a lack of fulfillment of needs will create conflict, while the level of communication and preexisting trust within the alliance will determine how well the groups will deal with that conflict. These conflict instigators and conflict managers present an interesting opportunity for further research, as they are only touched on briefly in this study.

Strategic Cohesion

The level of strategic cohesion that two entities share – whether they are two firms, humans, or terrorist organizations – plays a large role in determining how successful an alliance between the two will be. Between firms, this cohesion or mismatch can include short- and long-term goals such as levels of profit, which new markets to enter into, which products to begin or continue producing, and other strategic visions for the future (Thomasson and Janusonis 2012, 5–6). Within a human couple, such concerns include whether or not to get married and/or have children, where to live, and what style of life to lead over the course of their

partnership. Terrorist organizations also rely on this strategic cohesion, and in their case such strategic concerns include matters of ideology, visions for long-term partnership, grand strategy regarding targeting, debates over tactics, etc.

Need Fulfillment

At the outset of an alliance, groups will determine the goals and the needs of each organization. Thomasson and Janusonis lay out several causes of business demerger to include "inability to reach profit goals and financial synergies" (Thomasson and Janusonis 2012, 5–6), given the primarily financial needs and goals of a joint venture. Within a couple, such needs may include one partner's desire to live in an area pertinent to their career, while the other partner cannot move due to their current job. Within terrorist organizations, organizational needs rank highly on a group's list of reasons to ally, and can include the desire to learn a new and more effective tactic, or to expand into a new zone of combat (Bacon 2014).

Bacon argues that the primary reason for seeking out an alliance is to fulfill a set of organizational needs (Bacon 2014). Building off of that, she explains that, if an alliance hub appears unable or unwilling to "fulfill other groups' needs...it will damage the hub's desirability and stunt individual relationships" (Bacon 2014). She continues on to say that "[p]ropaganda efforts that cast doubt on a hub's ability to address organizational needs – such as training that did not prepare a partner for an operation or contributed to an operational failure – will also diminish their appeal" (Bacon 2014). Thus, the fulfillment of needs proves to be an important component of alliances, while a lack of fulfillment may lead down a path towards divorce.

Trust

In all three fields of relationship discussed, trust remains key to fostering success within an alliance (Peng and Shenkar 2002, 94; Bacon 2014). According to Kale and Singh, within business mergers, "[t]rust develops through a cyclical process of bargaining, interaction, commitment, and execution between the concerned firms" (Kale and Singh 2009, 50). They also argue that engaging in programming, hierarchy, and feedback helps to coordinate, manage interdependence, and foster trust within an alliance (Kale and Singh 2009, 50). In addition to these metrics, Kale and Singh outline three factors important to building a solid alliance: complementarity, commitment, and compatibility/fit (Kale and Singh 2009, 47).

Among romantic relationships, trust is absolutely crucial. In order to find the three "C's" that Kale and Singh discuss, one must first establish that



one's potential partner is trustworthy. From the divorce literature, one sees that limited information makes decision-making about a partner more difficult, and that over time – as one learns more information – one may determine that pursuing the relationship will be beneficial or, alternatively, detrimental (Svarer 2003). Terrorist groups face similar problems, yet given their insular and clandestine nature can have an even more difficult time establishing the trustworthiness of a potential partner. Bacon argues that alliances tend to be most prone to collapse during “early, trust-building phase[s]” (Bacon 2014), while Asal et al. claims that “[t]rust is likely to be even more important in terrorist undertakings than in licit ones” (Asal et al. 2015, 10).

Communication

The final crucial component to an alliance is effective communication. Thomasson and Janusonis discuss inadequate communication as being one of the drivers for demerger among corporations (Thomasson and Janusonis 2012), and this is echoed in the divorce literature. For terrorist organizations, maintaining communication is exceedingly difficult and can pose many problems for alliances (Byman 2014, 445, 459, 467). As William McCants discusses in *ISIS Apocolypse*, “[c]landestine communication makes it hard to run a militia from afar” (McCants 2015, 77). Asal et al. posit that various environmental conditions such as co-location may facilitate interaction and communication, thereby increasing the strength of alliances. Thus, when such communication breaks down, one can expect such relationships to degrade significantly.

Byman also highlights the unique communication issues that terrorist alliances face given their clandestine nature. He states:

An affiliate may falsely claim credit for a job, shirk responsibilities, pursue its own preferences, and otherwise act outside of or against the parent organization's wishes. Such behavior forces the parent organization to spend time, money, and other resources to monitor and control its affiliates... Often the parent organization does not know whether an undesired outcome is due to chance or insufficient resources—legitimate reasons for failure but also common excuses—or due to the affiliate not acting as ordered (Byman 2014, 443).

These problems can become particularly acute when the parent organization lacks monitoring and communication/reporting mechanisms with the local affiliate (Byman 2014, 445).

Case Study

In order to examine the al-Qaeda/ISIL divorce in terms of these four determinants, it is necessary to consider the groups' history as partners and discuss the nature of their alliance break-up. When considering this alliance, it is helpful to think about al-Qaeda and AQI/ISIL's relationship in terms of two three-year periods: the first is the bin Laden/Zarqawi era from 2003 to 2006, while the second is the Zawahiri/Baghdadi era from 2011-2014. Such a breakdown provides a more focused analysis by concentrating on the periods where the relationship was the most active as well as the most strained.

Bin Laden/Zarqawi: 2003-2006

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's relationship with Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda Core (AQC) was fraught from the beginning. Following the United States-led coalition invasion of Iraq in 2003, the leaders' two larger aims – combating the "near enemy" or the "far enemy" – were conveniently contained within one chaotic warzone (Fishman 2006, 21). Bin Laden used the presence of US troops on the ground to support his claims that the West was at war with all Muslims, supporting his far enemy narrative. This served Zarqawi's purposes as well, as the invasion proved that the Iraqi government was merely a puppet of the United States. Given this convergence of two seemingly disparate – and at times opposing – goals, both bin Laden and Zarqawi deemed a partnership beneficial.

In 2003, would-be fighters flowed into Iraq to prepare for the U.S. invasion (Kirdar 2011, 3). Zarqawi, having become the emir of a coalition of groups in the region, founded his own organization, al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (TwJ), and became the de facto leader of the Islamist foreign fighters in Iraq (Kirdar 2011, 3; Michael 2007, 341). After the official end of combat in May 2003, the Iraqi Insurgency emerged in full force (Michael 2007, 341). Zarqawi, as the leader of the foreign fighters within the Sunni insurgency, led between five and ten percent of the fighters, or between 800 and 1,200 men (Michael 2007, 341). In October 2004 – after months of negotiations – Zarqawi pledged allegiance, or bayat, to bin Laden, and renamed his group al-Qaeda in Iraq (Kirdar 2011, 4; Michael 2007, 343; Jenkins 2006, 8; Fishman 2006, 21). Although his group had outstripped al-Qaeda in both resources and publicity (Farrall 2011; Michael 2007, 343), Zarqawi deemed taking the al-Qaeda name advantageous enough to form a partnership (Kirdar 2011, 6, 8).

After the November 2004 battle in Fallujah, Zarqawi's image as a powerful insurgent leader solidified (Michael 2007, 342). At this point, he



introduced two tactics that would become mainstays of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant – a group just several iterations away from Zarqawi’s TwJ. The first tactic was a deft use of media; many battles were recorded and released on al-Jazeera as well as on the Internet (Michael 2007, 342; Kirdar 2011, 8). Additionally, Zarqawi employed a press secretary to help him facilitate the posting of his propaganda (Michael 2007, 342). The second, more gruesome tactic was the advent of publicized beheadings of westerners. Nicholas Berg, an American businessman, was the first such victim, and a recording of his beheading was posted on a jihadist website on May 11, 2004 (Michael 2007, 342; Weaver 2006; Kirdar 2011, 4). Additionally, Zarqawi openly targeted Shia civilians with his brutal tactics, losing him massive amounts of public support and even engendering the infamous admonishing letter from Zawahiri in 2005 (Jenkins 2006, 8; Fishman 2006, 23).

This letter, intercepted by Western intelligence and quoted in the introduction of this study, served as a window into al-Qaeda’s relationship with AQI. The letter’s primary themes were Zarqawi’s targeting of Iraq’s Shia population, the brutality with which he executed hostages, and his highlighting of obscure doctrinal differences within Islam (al Zawahiri 2005). Though Zawahiri admitted he saw the situation from afar, he argued these actions taken by Zarqawi were confusing and alienating the ummah or the worldwide community of Muslims – described in the translation as “common folk” (al Zawahiri 2005, 8). Zarqawi was losing public support for AQI’s cause, and giving the al-Qaeda brand a bad name in Iraq.

The following year, Zarqawi was killed by an American drone strike, and was replaced with Abu Omar al Baghdadi and Abu Hamza al Muhajir. During this period, the group was renamed the Islamic State of Iraq, and maintained a lower profile than in previous years, having taken Zawahiri’s advice to scale back its brutality (Warrick 2015, 252–3). This changed after both ISI leaders were killed in an American-led airstrike in 2010, and Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, a former courier for Abu Omar, took their places (Stern and Berger 2015, xvii).

Zawahiri/Baghdadi: 2011-2014

By the time abu Bakr al-Baghdadi took over, ISI was a shell of what it had been under Zarqawi (Warrick 2015, 245–6). According to Washington Post reporter and author Joby Warrick, ISI “had lost its sanctuary and freedom of movement, so essential for communication, training, and resupply... [I]t was selling an ideology that the Muslim world seemed no longer to care for. Five years after Zarqawi’s death, the Islamic State of Iraq had become the thing that terrorist organizations fear even more than their own annihilation. It had become irrelevant” (Warrick

2015, 245–6). As fortune – or misfortune – would have it, the Syrian Civil War proved just the boon the group needed to reassert itself on the world stage (Warrick 2015, 250).

Having been arrested and sent to the American prison Camp Bucca in January 2004, Baghdadi developed first-hand grievances with the Western forces occupying Iraq (Warrick 2015, 255). In 2011, Baghdadi sent Abu Muhammad al Julani across the border into Syria in order to scout out the developing situation and set up a network of contacts (Warrick 2015, 251). Over the next several years, Julani developed an organization called Jabhat al Nusra, or al-Nusra Front, which was sanctioned by the US Treasury Department as the "Syrian arm of al-Qaeda" in December 2012 (Weiss and Hassan 2015, 181).

Despite their roots in the same leadership organization, ISI and al Nusra developed along two different strategic paths. William McCants outlines the conflict, explaining that "[t]he [Islamic] State [of Iraq] wanted to carve out a domain in the Arab hinterland between Syria and Iraq [while] Nusra wanted to embed itself in the Syrian opposition and overthrow the Assad regime" (McCants 2015, 89–90). Over time, Baghdadi determined, with some jealousy, that the foot soldiers that made al Nusra so powerful were more loyal to Julani than to himself; he pressed Julani to make public that the Syrian group was, in fact, a subsidiary of the Islamic State of Iraq (McCants 2015, 90). On April 9 2013, after repeated requests through messages and even a private meeting between the two leaders, Baghdadi, in his frustration, announced the formation of a new group: a caliphate under the name of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, with himself serving as its caliph. ISIL was to subsume al Nusra in order to become the predominant jihadist organization in Iraq and Syria (McCants 2015, 90–91; Weiss and Hassan 2015, 183–4).

After this surprise announcement, Julani also took to the airwaves and denied Baghdadi's statement, instead pledging bayat directly to al-Qaeda's Zawahiri (Weiss and Hassan 2015, 184). After several months of silence, Zawahiri responded and placed the blame – at least publicly – squarely on both groups' shoulders. The al-Qaeda leader explained that, while ISI was at fault for declaring a caliphate and attempting to subsume al Nusra without any consultation from al-Qaeda Core (AQC), al Nusra was also at fault for showing its hand and openly acknowledging its connection to al-Qaeda (Weiss and Hassan 2015, 184–5; McCants 2015, 92). Zawahiri subsequently ordered the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant to be dissolved. Unsurprisingly, Baghdadi defied Zawahiri's orders, claiming that his options were to obey his emir, or obey his God; for him, the choice was clear, and the caliphate was to exist



(McCants 2015, 92).

In the wake of the announcement and the schism, a majority of al Nusra's foreign fighters joined ISIL's ranks (Weiss and Hassan 2015, 186). Baghdadi, as a member of Iraq's al-Bu Badri tribe, justified his position as caliph by "claim[ing] to be part of the same ancestral line as Muhammad," a requirement to lead the caliphate (Warrick 2015, 254). In essence, Baghdadi returned to Zarqawi's style of leadership, "embrac[ing] the Jordanian's most grisly excesses," and pursuing a public relations agenda as aggressively as Zarqawi's AQI had (Warrick 2015, 252–3; Weiss and Hassan 2015, 186). In response, Zawahiri followed senior al-Qaeda leader Adam Gadhan's earlier advice (Gadahn 2011), and publicly disavowed ISIL, officially cutting ties with its Iraqi affiliate (Stern and Berger 2015, 180).

Strategic Cohesion

Even from the alliance's earliest iterations, two groups' leaders had different grand strategic goals and aspirations for their jihad, and the biggest differences can be boiled down to two factors: First, the on-going debate between targeting the near enemy and the far enemy, and second, their position on targeting other Muslims, namely the Shia population. On the first point, in his 1996 fatwa, bin Laden laid out his intentions to target Americans, or the far enemy, and cashed in on this promise with the attacks on September 11th, 2001. Bin Laden, while favoring the Sunni population, refrained from targeting the Shia for fear of alienating al-Qaeda's constituency as well as harming recruitment (Kirdar 2011, 4; McCants 2015, 8). Zarqawi, on the other hand, endeavored to fight the so-called apostate regimes of the Middle East, in other words, those that he believed were run by infidels and propped up by the West (Fishman 2007, 21).

Warrick summarizes the two groups' strategic differences well: "Al-Qaeda's more pragmatic thinkers spoke of the caliphate as a distant goal, one that would have to wait until the Middle East's secular regimes could be toppled. But Baghdadi believed the opposite: raise the caliphate's ancient banner, and righteous Muslims would fall into line" (Warrick 2015, 252). Following that theme, terrorism scholars Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger argue that the AQ/ISIL divorce was "about vision," and was "born out of strife and irreconcilable differences" (Stern and Berger 2015, 177–8). ISIL's brutal violence against the very constituency that al-Qaeda believed they should winning over proved a massive thorn in the relationship (Stern and Berger 2015, 177–8). In his 2005 letter, Zawahiri, presumably rhetorically, asked Zarqawi if such violence was "correct" and necessary to achieve AQI and al-Qaeda's goals (al Zawahiri 2005, 8). He writes,

[M]any of your Muslim admirers amongst the common folk are wondering

about your attacks on the Shia. The sharpness of this questioning increases when the attacks are on one of their mosques... My opinion is that this matter won't be acceptable to the Muslim populace however much you have tried to explain it, and aversion to this will continue. Indeed, questions will circulate among mujahedeen circles and their opinion makers about the correctness of this conflict with the Shia at this time. Is it something that is unavoidable? Or, is it something can be put off until the force of the mujahed movement in Iraq gets stronger? And if some of the operations were necessary for self-defense, were all of the operations necessary? Or, were there some operations that weren't called for? And is the opening of another front now in addition to the front against the Americans and the government a wise decision? (al Zawahiri 2005, 8).

Such questioning earns Zawahiri the description that some scholars have given him, that of a parent attempting to show his child the right path without explicitly telling him what to do (McCants 2015, 95; Weiss and Hassan 2015, 184). Over the next decade, the group that would become ISIL engaged in and honed these brutal tactics, particularly during the summer of 2014 when the group came to the fore of American concern.

Need Fulfillment

In examining the relationship between Zarqawi's al-Qaeda in Iraq and bin Laden's al-Qaeda Core, it is important to recognize that – while each group gained something from the partnership – each group had to compromise as well. In pledging allegiance to al-Qaeda, Zarqawi linked himself to a weaker organization in order to obtain the grandeur of their name for recruitment and funding purposes. While al-Qaeda received a great deal of controversy and disagreement in taking on AQI, bin Laden gained a vigorous organization that kept his group relevant in a key jihadist theater.

By 2003, bin Laden knew that his leadership and, thus, the well oiled hierarchical structure of his organization had been decimated by the United States' invasion of Afghanistan; he struggled to keep al-Qaeda Core relevant, deeming it beneficial to recruit so-called franchises to evoke the image of a strong parent company (Fishman 2007, 21; Kirdar 2011, 6). For his part, Zarqawi sought to be the leader of the Sunni insurgency in Iraq, and knew that the cachet of the "al-Qaeda" name would increase recruitment and catapult him into that role (Fishman 2007, 21). Given these organizational needs on



both sides of the arena, it was clear that the creation of al-Qaeda in Iraq would benefit both parties.

Trust

In 2010, upon hearing through the media – rather than through internal communications – about Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s ascension to the head of the Islamic State of Iraq, bin Laden reportedly asked his deputies for information about the new leader. Without having a personal relationship with Baghdadi, bin Laden felt distrustful of this new emir, and sought to ensure that his Iraq affiliate was in good hands (McCants 2015, 78).

In keeping with this theme, Assaf Moghdam of the CTC intimates that the eventual split between the two groups came as a result “of the gradual erosion of trust” (Moghadam 2015). Towards the end of their relationship, it became clear that ISIL could not be depended upon; as Stern and Berger point out, “[w]hile it’s true to say that al-Qaeda saw ISIS as too extreme, it’s more accurate to say that Zawahiri fired ISIS for its public defiance of his wishes and commands,” effectively curtailing the relationship for Baghdadi’s insubordination (Stern and Berger 2015, 180).

Communication

Just a week before Osama bin Laden’s death, he wrote a letter to one of his deputies in which he questioned the nature of AQC’s communication with its Iraq affiliate. Bin Laden wrote: “Regarding the communications with the brothers in Iraq, please inform us on its progress and the reason for its scarcity” (bin Laden 2011, 5), indicating that al-Qaeda’s central leadership had not heard from ISI for quite some time. Even assessing the characteristics of the leaders in charge proved difficult, as was apparent in an al-Qaeda missive comparing the leadership styles of Abu Hamza al-Mujahid and Zarqawi (“SOCOM-2012-0000014” 2007, 10).

This breakdown in communication proved a huge obstacle for the two organizations, and was exacerbated due to concerns regarding operational security. Well into 2013, after Baghdadi’s declaration that ISI was to subsume Jabhat al Nusra and bring about a caliphate under the moniker “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant,” Zawahiri remained silent, largely – several scholars believe – to ensure his own security (Stern and Berger 2015, 190). When al-Qaeda’s leader did speak, however, he appeared out of touch with the situation (Stern and Berger 2015, 190), showing the detrimental impact that the lack of communication had on the alliance.

Findings

Having examined the background of al-Qaeda and AQI/ISI/ISIL's relationship as well as considered the case in terms of the four determinants – strategic cohesion, need fulfillment, trust, and communication – the question remains, what caused the al-Qaeda/ISIL split? During the first era of the AQC/AQI relationship from 2003-2006, there was a lack of grand strategic cohesion and not a great deal of trust. However, the groups did fulfill one another's needs insofar as al-Qaeda was able to remain relevant by having a presence in one of the most important jihadi theaters, and Zarqawi gained legitimacy through the al-Qaeda brand.

During the second era, however – after the relative lull from 2006-2010 during Abu Omar al Baghdadi and Abu Hamza al Muhajir's tenure – Abu Bakr al Baghdadi emerged as a brutal Zarqawi-esque leader and the nature of the relationship changed. The groups still had little strategic cohesion, even lower levels of trust and communication, and had lost the ability and willingness to fulfill one another's needs.

	Bin Laden/ Zarquawi	Zawahiri/ Baghdadi
Strategic Cohesion	No	No
Need Fulfillment	Yes	No
Trust	More	Less
Communication	More	Less

While Zarqawi did disobey Zawahiri and deviate from al-Qaeda's grand strategy during the course of his leadership, the alliance did – for a time – fulfill the needs that had been significant enough to warrant an alliance in the first place. Thus, I posit that the first era of the alliance was a success, or at least successful enough to determine that it was worth continuing. Trust and communication facilitated this need fulfillment in that AQC could, for the most part, trust Zarqawi to maintain an al-Qaeda presence and not make too many severe mistakes. When he did make such mistakes, in general, al-Qaeda's core leadership was able to communicate with him. Their lack of strategic cohesion, while sometimes simply unhelpful to enabling a relationship, was at other times a major source of conflict, and put strain on the relationship for the entirety of its existence.

The second era, on the other hand, saw a decrease in both trust and communication as counterterrorism pressure remained high, Osama bin Laden was killed, and new leadership took over both organizations. Additionally, ISI's autonomy and subsequent ability to operate independently from AQC allowed it to pursue its own agenda. This agenda was at odds with al-Qaeda's own needs, and the fulfillment that had existed previously finally broke down. AQI and later ISI had already gained the legitimacy, recruitment, and funding that it needed from al-Qaeda core, yet AQC still required a solid and positive brand presence within Iraq. Once Baghdadi reinvigorated Zarqawi's brutal

tactics, the al-Qaeda brand became tarnished and its AQC's needs were no longer being fulfilled.

Thus – given that terrorist organizations will never gain optimal levels of trust and communication and must take what they can get in these categories – need fulfillment appears to be the most important determinant of success within an alliance. This category proved to exhibit the most significant change over the course of the relationship, and, once it was lost, significantly invalidated any reasons for maintaining the alliance. Once Baghdadi announced the takeover of Jabhat al Nusra and the creation of the caliphate under the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, ISIL served no further purpose and only created more problems for al-Qaeda. Baghdadi's outright disobedience of Zawahiri's decrees was the nail in the coffin, and in early 2014, the alliance's fate was sealed.

Counterterrorism Implications And Further Research

Studying the nature of terrorist alliances and alliance break-ups provides counterterrorism practitioners with a greater arsenal for dismantling these organizations. This study advocates for essentially the same counterterrorism measures as the alliance literature does, yet from a different angle. Scholars of terrorist alliances encourage the use of counterterrorism measures that induce a poor alliance, in the hopes that that will result in divorce. However, by studying the way groups split, we can more directly and efficiently disrupt these alliances and degrade alliances' strength.

Byman argues that by using information operations, counterterror measures can “magnify...integration problems and, if done well, can further induce friction, discredit the brand, and otherwise throw sand in the gears” (Byman 2014, 431). Bacon echoes this sentiment, and advocates for drawing attention to allies' failures and alienation of constituents in order to exacerbate any tension within the alliance (Bacon 2014). Additionally, rather than focusing on the upper echelons of terrorist leadership, she points out that “[c]ounterterrorism efforts should also target figures within alliance hubs who manage, facilitate, and encourage alliances” given that these mid-level operatives are the ones with the most influence over the success or failure of the alliance (Bacon 2014). Bacon explains that counterterror measures need not be reinvented with increased understanding of alliances, however they must be more “focused and enhanced...against hubs as well as [utilize] well-timed interventions” (Bacon 2014).

As this study found that need fulfillment proved to be the most important component keeping the al-Qaeda/ISIL relationship afloat, counterterrorism policies and actions should seek to disrupt this aspect of alliances. In order to do this, as Bacon and Byman discuss, it is incumbent upon counterterrorism practitioners

to disrupt a group's ability or willingness to provide its ally with something it needs. If two organizations are allied primarily so one organization can traffic weapons to the other, the focus of that counter-alliance operation should be shutting down the smuggling routes used to obtain such arms. On the other hand, if a group's primary function is to provide another group safe-haven, that counter-alliance operation would be most effective if it put pressure on the haven-provider so that it becomes untenable to harbor the haven-seeker. As the scholars discuss, this is not a radical new counterterrorism strategy; CT and other security practitioners already seek to disrupt arms smuggling routes and destroy terrorist safe-havens. Rather, focusing on the specific determinants keeping an alliance alive and shifting resources towards that determinant will destroy terrorist alliances in a direct, efficient, and targeted manner.

An additional track for future research involves the two previously mentioned subcategories within the four determinants: conflict instigators – strategic cohesion and need fulfillment – and conflict managers – trust and communication. While outside the scope of this study, future studies should examine the different roles that these two sets of determinants play, and whether those roles change their importance vis-à-vis causes of divorce.

Conclusion

The case of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant provides unique insight into terrorist divorce and the broader discussion of terrorist alliances. In examining the existing literature on such partnerships, as well as considering several external subjects such as business and organizational studies as well as romantic relationships, I have argued here that four main determinants will be contribute to the success or failure of an terrorist alliance. Those determinants are the level of strategic cohesion between the groups; the ability and willingness of the groups to fulfill one another's needs; the level of trust that the groups, and particularly the leaders, have with one another; and the level of communication the groups are able to maintain.

By considering these determinants from a theoretical perspective, as well as using them as the lens through which to assess the case study of the al-Qaeda/ISIL split, we can develop a greater understanding of what keeps these alliances alive and what will prove to be a death sentence. For al-Qaeda and ISIL, the groups' ability and willingness to fulfill one another's needs – previously relatively strong during the bin Laden/Zarqawi era – was decimated by 2014, and the concurrent degradation of trust and communication put the alliance in no position to deal with such a major problem. Thus, the al Nusra



announcement served as the culmination of years of issues with need fulfillment, and the groups dissolved their alliance.

Considering this case, terrorist divorces, and terrorist alliances in general provides security practitioners a better understanding of how these groups, and the partnerships they create, function. Such an understanding is crucial for developing effective and efficient counterterrorism policy and operations. The more we study these issues, the better chance we have for dealing with the complex and persistent threat of terrorism.

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NEIGHBORHOOD VIOLENCE AND CRIME: DO PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS REDUCE CRIME IN NEIGHBORHOODS?

Monica Floyd

Abstract

This paper explores the role of public institutions in reducing or fostering neighborhood violence and crime. Understanding institutional density as a neighborhood effect, this paper examines how ten public institutions and structures influence crime rates in Chicago. Using multivariate regression analysis and geo-coded spatial models, the relationship between the institutions and four different crime statistics (homicide, assault, robbery, and burglary) are analyzed. The findings show that the public institutions have very little impact on crime. Publicly owned vacant lots, however, exhibit a positive relationship with neighborhood crime. To address neighborhood crime, policy makers, urban planners, and residents should be conscious of how city space is used. Still, the question remains whether third variables (racial heterogeneity and socioeconomic factors) are significant factors influencing the relationship between institutions and crime.

Introduction

For decades, urban scholars have studied the consequences of uneven resource and service distribution throughout cities. Overall, the empirical evidence confirms that areas facing concentrated disadvantage experience higher levels of crime and violence. The Chicago School, particularly Shaw and McKay (1942), established the social disorganization theory, outlining how uneven distribution of crime throughout the city is a consequence of social

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disorganization in those areas. Shaw and McKay claimed that neighborhood effects like poverty, absence of strong social networks, and ethnic heterogeneity exhibited strong relationships to crime in cities (Shaw and McKay 1942). This research provided an important foundation for later scholars to examine the interaction of different neighborhood effects.

In his seminal research, urban scholar Robert Sampson found that social cohesion and collective goals, what he termed ‘collective efficacy,’ is negatively related to neighborhood crime. Networks and social ties within a neighborhood, Sampson and his colleagues argued, are important mechanisms that can prevent and reduce violence. Their research also explored institutional density over time, determining that the density of non-profits was one of the strongest predictors of neighborhood collective action while church density had almost no influence (Sampson 2012). However, Sampson failed to directly connect institutional density to neighborhood crime level, relying on his research on social networks to fill the gap.

The work of other researchers found more limitations in Sampson’s study of social networks. Warner and Roundtree found that social ties were insignificant in predicting crime in minority or ethnically diverse neighborhoods (1997), while Pattillo found that neighborhoods with dense social networks inconsistently had high crime rates (1998). In order to understand the contradictory findings of these researchers, scholars have begun to explore the significance of Sampson’s institutional argument. The research of Mario Luis Small (2006) found that institutions act as ‘resource brokers,’ creating networks in which resources and services can be distributed. Therefore, the availability and density of institutions is essential in understanding how neighborhoods interact and function.

The purpose of this paper is to further explore the role of institutions as a neighborhood element that prevents or reduces crime. Research has only minimally covered this topic, leaving many gaps in the study. Peterson, Krivo and Harris’s (2000) study of libraries, bars and recreational centers had limited findings suggesting institutions lack sufficient breadth to create change. These findings, common throughout other research, could also signal limitations due to data deficiency and third variables (Bellair 1997, Triplett et. al 2003). This paper will explore public institutions as a neighborhood effect and their relationship to neighborhood violence. I will begin with a discussion of research by Sampson and other scholars on institutional strength. Following this discussion, I will present my data and research on Chicago neighborhoods. I will then explain my findings and their implications. I will conclude with a discussion on remaining limitations and areas for future research.

Social Ties and Institutional Strength

Many scholars have examined Sampson's research in an effort to better understand the function of social networks and institutions in neighborhoods. Recently, urban researchers have taken more interest in the neighborhood, debating to what extent the neighborhood is important, what constitutes a neighborhood, and when research should be conducted on the neighborhood level (Sharkey and Faber 2014). The study of uneven development has been an important topic in the development realm, holding special social significance (Messner and Tardiff 1986, Smith 1982). The spatial unevenness of societal development has been linked to the uneven distribution of crime in many studies (Messner and Tardiff 1986, Patterson 1991, Short 1997, Warner 1993). More so, these studies have determined that areas with concentrated poverty are positively related to higher crime rates, both across time and space (Keene and Bader 2013, Massey and Kanaiapuni 1993, Morenoff and Sampson, Quillian 1999, Wilson 1987). In most studies, neighborhood effects result in enduring neighborhood features, and have often proven to have a "spill over effect" on surrounding areas. Just as Sampson observed, neighborhoods are susceptible to poverty traps, partially as a result of geography. A middle class neighborhood surrounded by impoverished neighborhoods is more likely to experience higher rates of unemployment and crime than a neighborhood surrounded by higher-income neighborhoods (Sampson 2012, 240-246).

Scholars observe that this trap is replicated on the organizational level. Studies on Cleveland and San Diego neighborhoods found that higher rates of crime were present in areas directly surrounding public high schools. In contrast, areas surrounding private schools experience no change (Roncek and Donald 1985, Roncek and LoBosco 1983). Public schools' lack of 'proprietary definitions' parallels Roncek and Maier's crime "hot spots" (1991). Hotspots are areas of increased crime due to institutional anonymity and minimal guardianship. Crime increases in areas where institutions and structures do not promote ownership. However, where communities with strong community ties and collective action, collective efficacy will reduce crime (Sampson 2012).

Sampson also observed the enduring nature of organizations in neighborhoods. In his study of non-profit organizations and churches, the density of organizations in 1990 was a very accurate predictor of institutional density in 2005 (Sampson 2012, 196). This characteristic makes the study of organization strength incredibly valuable. If organizations are enduring features of neighborhoods, their ability, or lack thereof, to influence neighborhood



effects is vital to understanding future crime prevention and reduction policy. This question requires an investigation of institutional strength (Triplett et al. 2003) and capacity (Small 2006).

Data and Method

This paper returns to the city of Chicago where Sampson conducted his research. Just as many scholars have confronted the issue of defining ‘neighborhood’ (Sharkey and Faber 2014), Sampson argues that neighborhoods are “both chosen and allocated” (Sampson 2012). In an attempt to account for context and space, Sampson and many other scholars have turned to econometrics to estimate social capital (Mohen et al. 2014, Sampson 2012). Although Sampson works primarily with 343 constructed neighborhood clusters, he relies on a variety of operational definitions to study the neighborhood. In this study, I use the 2013 ward boundaries to operationalize Chicago neighborhoods. Although this does pose the risk of losing important social context of ‘the neighborhood,’ this measurement affords the best available data while controlling for population size.

The City of Chicago’s Data Portal provides data on a variety of crime and institutional characteristics by ward. The dependent variable (crime) is operationalized by 2013 crime statistics, disaggregated by activity. For the most part, this study examines homicides by ward, but supplemental analysis of assault, robbery, and burglary is also used. Because institutions are enduring characteristics of neighborhoods, the focus of this paper is to analyze the relationship between institutions and crime across neighborhoods, rather than across time.

In order to best understand the effects of public services and institutions on neighborhood crime, I examine a total of ten independent variables: the density of health clinics, hospitals, libraries, police stations, prisons/jails, schools, early learning programs, L-train stations, publicly owned vacant lots, and public parks. All but three of the independent variables are classified by ward, and are thus statistically relevant. These variables represent an assortment of institutions throughout the city that serve different social, economic, and environmental functions. Some represent positive-promoting institutions (e.g. health clinics, libraries), while others represent institutions to dissuade (e.g. prisons/jails, vacant lots).

Ideally, the strength of these institutions should be measured to best understand their impact, because the impact of a single institution has varies greatly depending on its resources, support, size, and organization (Triplett et al. 2003). Since this information is not currently available, findings presented here must be understood as if each institution holds the same capacity. Additionally, the location of certain institutions may be conditional on a third variable. For

instance, health clinics may be part of the government Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) program, serving lower-income neighborhoods. Similarly, early learning programs such as Head Start specifically target low-income children and families. Therefore the presence of such organizations could indicate a relationship between income and crime, rather than a relationship between such institutions and crime rate. The relationship between these characteristics and institutional density is acknowledged in my findings and discussion.

Employing a quantitative method, I use basic statistical analyses to observe the relationships between the ten public institutions and local crime. To capture a preliminary understanding of any relationship, I compute the correlation between all independent and dependent variables. After the initial findings, I conduct a multivariate regression on the variables exhibiting the strongest correlations. Because standard multilevel regression can disregard important spatial context in and between neighborhoods, I also use longitudinal geocoded spatial models of Chicago to visually examine neighborhood patterns and relationships (Xu 2014).

Findings

The core analyses of this paper examine the relationship between the ten public institutions and neighborhood crime level. Most wards only possess a few, if any, of each type of institutions. The data reveal that parks, vacant lots, schools, and early learning programs are the most prolific institutions throughout the city, boasting much higher densities throughout each ward. The crime data reveal that in 2013, there were 418 homicides in Chicago, with an additional 17,965 assaults, 11,822 robberies, and 17,890 burglaries spread throughout the city. Because of the high number of assaults, robberies, and burglaries, it is very difficult and, in many ways spatially irrelevant, to analyze spatial models of those crimes. The results of the first correlation analysis, calculating the correlation between all institutions and crime by ward are presented below.



Figure 1: Aggregate Correlational Analysis

	CLINIC	LIBRARY	POLICE	PARK	LTRAIN	VACANT LOT	HOMICIDE	ASSAULT	ROBBERY	BURGLARY
CLINIC	1.0000									
LIBRARY	-0.0008	1.0000								
POLICE	-0.1003	0.1361	1.0000							
PARK	0.2876	-0.0588	-0.0578	1.0000						
LTRAIN	0.0755	0.1216	0.1277	-0.1147	1.0000					
VACANT LOT	-0.0220	0.1228	0.3179	0.0182	0.1249	1.0000				
HOMICIDE	-0.1018	-0.1160	0.1664	0.1190	-0.0731	0.5968	1.0000			
ASSAULT	0.0059	0.0976	0.2277	0.1569	0.1479	0.7075	0.8416	1.0000		
ROBBERY	-0.0292	0.0107	0.2018	0.0852	0.2092	0.6642	0.7918	0.9250	1.0000	
BURGLARY	-0.0254	-0.1524	-0.1613	0.0969	-0.0737	0.0054	0.0246	0.1370	0.0943	1.0000

An examination of the correlation test reveals that all but one independent variable show no significant correlation with neighborhood homicides, assaults, robberies, or burglaries. The density of vacant lots per ward, however, shows a strong correlation with neighborhood homicides, assaults, and robberies. Interestingly, a similar correlation is not observed with the density of parks per ward despite their similar attributes. It is important to take into consideration that the data collected on vacant lots were measured by count while parks were measured by square area. When calculated again using $\log(\text{Parks}) \div \text{population}$, the correlation is significant.

Figure 2: Correlational Analysis

	Parks	Log(Park)/Pop	Homicides
Parks	1	.726**	.119
Log(Park)/Pop	.726**	1	.358*
Homicides	.119	.358*	1

	Public Lots	Homicide	Assault	Robbery	Burglary
Public Lots	1	.597*	.153	.111	-.055
Homicide	.597*	1	.379*	.371*	-.064
Assault	.153	.379*	1	.925*	.137
Robbery	.111	.371*	.925*	1	.094
Burglary	-.055	-.064	.137	.094	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

These models indicate that there is significant correlation between these neighborhood places and crime levels. Open spaces, whether abandoned public lots or public parks, are positively correlated to instances of homicide throughout the Chicago wards. Publicly owned vacant lots have the strongest correlation with neighborhood crime.

I use these two findings to perform multivariate regression analyses. Standardized beta coefficients (β) address unit disparities, so that the variance is 1. Here, the log of vacant lots exhibits the most significant coefficient, so that

β (logVacantLots) = .723. The other variables did not exhibit significant findings, presenting a strong case for the relationship between vacant lots and crime. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate these relationships in scatterplots. Neither scatterplot exhibits very strong linear regression, but a moderate relationship for both variables can be observed.

Figure 3

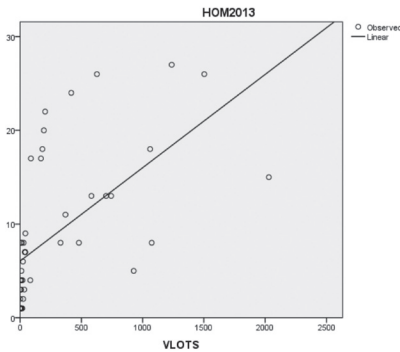


Figure 4

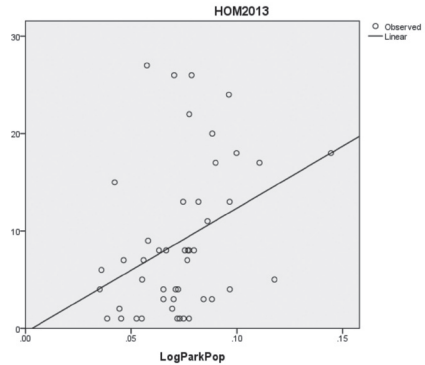


Figure 3. (left) Scatterplot of homicides and vacant lots by ward, illustrating observed and linear cases

Figure 4. (right) Scatterplot of homicides and the log of park acres divided by population per ward, illustrating observed and linear cases

To explore this relationship more, I generated spatial models of Chicago. I shaded wards by the number of vacant lots and then superimposed a map of 2013 homicides. Wards with a higher density of vacant lots appear to have higher instances of homicides, just as the correlation analysis suggested (Figure 5). This spatial model confirms that homicides are concentrated in a number of wards that have comparatively high densities of vacant lots.

Figure 5: Vacant Lot Density and Homicides

Figure 6: Vacant Lot Density in Proximity to Parks

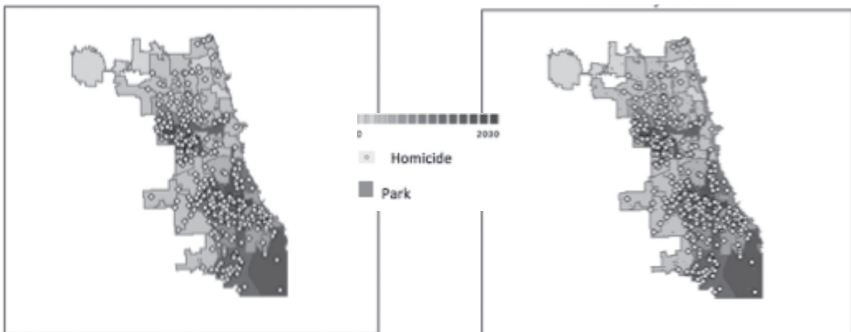


Figure 5. (Left) Spatial model of Chicago demonstrating the number of vacant lots by ward and homicide in 2013

Figure 6. (Right) Spatial model of Chicago demonstrating the number of vacant lots by ward and homicide in 2013 in reference to the location of city parks



In Philadelphia neighborhoods, vacant lots and aggravated assaults by block groups exhibited a near linear correlation (Branas et al. 2012). Similarly, block groups with high levels of vacant properties had higher rates of aggravated assault when bars and parks/playgrounds were nearby. This calls attention to my finding on parks. In Figure 6, park locations are added to the model. Parks are scattered throughout the city, with a concentration on the eastern border. As highlighted in Roncek and Maier's research (2006), vacant lots and parks are both structures with minimal understanding of ownership, posing an interesting question regarding the relationship between vacant lots and parks in cities. While no correlation was found between parks and vacant lots, their interaction may be an interesting subject for further examination.

Similarly, the spatial models of schools and early learning programs are inconclusive. The number of schools and early learning programs are too large to observe any significant pattern. Nonetheless, this spatial modeling brings to our attention that these institutions are products of strategic urban planning. As briefly discussed earlier, subsidized childcare centers target low-income areas. Over 55 percent of the early learning programs identified in the data receive Head Start funding. Although many social disorganization theories posit that low-income neighborhoods lack public services and institutions, when analyzed on the neighborhood level these areas often have the most affordable institutions (Small and Stark 2005). Thus, these Head Start programs are most likely located in disadvantaged neighborhoods to target low-income households. The relationship between institutions and income is essential to consider.

Income level and racial heterogeneity are two of the most significant variables discussed in similar research and should not be overlooked. To address these possible covariates and examine how they interact with my independent and dependent variables, I generated models of Chicago that mapped racial heterogeneity and poverty level. Below, I present three models of Chicago. The first model illustrates the population of African Americans per ward. The second model illustrates Chicago by the percent of the population below the poverty line by community area. The third model illustrates the density of vacant lots by ward.

Figure 7: Percent African-American

Figure 8: % Below Poverty Line by Community Area

Figure 9: Vacant Lot Density

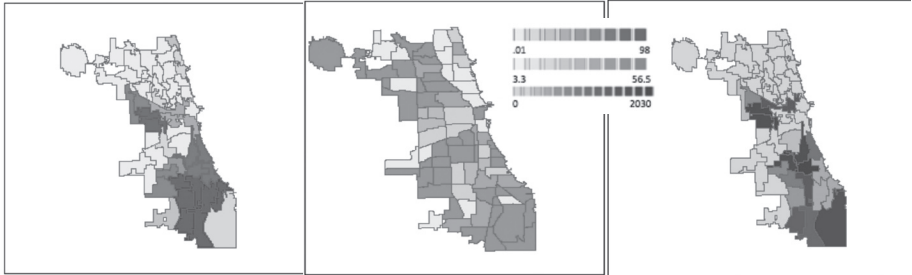


Figure 7. (left) Spatial model of Chicago displaying population of African Americans by ward

Figure 8. (center) Spatial model of Chicago displaying population (percent) below poverty line by community area

Figure 9. (right) Spatial model of Chicago displaying number of vacant lots by ward

Analysis of the spatial models reveals an important finding. Figures 7 and 9 are extremely similar, while Figure 8 shows only a moderate resemblance. These models suggest that the racial make up of a ward has a strong interaction with the density of vacant lots, thus a strong relationship to crime levels. Meanwhile, the poverty level appears to have very little relationship to the number of vacant lots. These findings are supported by previous research by Bursik and Grasmick (1993, 276-277). Their study of Chicago between 1960 and 1980 found that economic deprivation has a significant direct effect on delinquency, but that additional neighborhood effects that are not traditionally recognized by social disorganization theorists must be considered.

Although racial composition is recognized by the social disorganization theory as a driving force of disorder, its interaction with other neighborhood effects is an important concept that requires more consideration. While these spatial models cannot come to a causal conclusion, a distinct relationship between racial composition, vacant lot density, and homicide rate is apparent.

Discussion and Recommendations

These findings indicate important areas of focus. First, they reveal that how space is used or not used, as in the case of vacant lots, may play a role in determining the neighborhood effect on crime. Second, institutions do play a role in a community, but the extent of that role is not decided by its function, necessarily. Rather, it may be more interesting to examine how and to what extent people interact with these institutions. Finally, this study discredits the notion that policy and institutions create collective efficacy. Although institutions may play important roles on the local level, their capacity to



reduce violence is not supported by my findings. Institutions, more likely, provide a setting where social ties and networks can be built. Thus, the extent that people interact with the institutions, but also the extent that different institutions interact with one another is important to consider.

My finding that vacant lots are strong predictors of urban crime supports the concept that a negative perception of a space can have a negative effect on neighborhood security. Sampson, building on Kelling and Wilson's "broken window theory," found that perceived disorder in Chicago is a strong predictor of neighborhood crime (Kelling and Wilson 1982, Sampson 2012) Cities are defined by their places, which provide residents with a sense of identity, community, and security (Chen et. al 2013). This important source of social capital is not only important for the residents, however, but is essential for policymakers and urban planners who aim to reduce urban violence.

The lack of investment in these vacant lots increases the perception of disorder. The vacant lots studied in this paper are publicly owned, but nonetheless exhibit minimal ownership by the government or the residents. The correlation in my findings between racial make-up of wards and the density of vacant lots prompts questions about urban planning choices in the city of Chicago. These lots hold potential to transform into places that foster collective efficacy. Reports by Jacobs and Newman express the importance of urban planning in reducing violence (Jacobs 1961, Newman 1972). Architecture and urban planning should be more seriously considered by policymakers attempting to reduce violence.

If 'negative places' correlate with levels of crime, why was no correlation detected between 'positive places' and a reduction of crime? Schools, libraries, and parks are positive places that one would expect to promote identity and community. These findings suggest that state services and institutions do not necessarily promote collective efficacy and urban crime reduction. Instead, collective efficacy should be understood as a force that transpires independent from policy. Thus, the way in which residents interact with institutions is much more important than the institutions themselves. The networks and social ties created as a result of local institutions, ultimately may play a large role in urban governance, thus in crime reduction (Hendricks 2014, 556). In many cases, local self-organization arises when the state cannot or does not provide for residents (Koonings and Kruijtit 2007, Goldstein 2004).

In his research, Sampson concluded that the most effective way to promote social change in a neighborhood was from within (2012). Considering my findings, state institutions may provide important services to a community, but their ability to effect greater social change is greatly limited. Although some studies have been done on various other community structures, very little research has been done

regarding local institutions operated and governed by residents. This research would require very specific data that wouldn't necessarily be provided by the city, but its findings would be central to determining the importance of community organization in crime reduction.

"Governance," as Hendricks writes, "is a compound of both horizontal and vertical, both non-formal and formal arrangements" (2014). Thus, how local, state and other institutions interact is vital in understanding their impact. The capacity of an institution to affect neighborhood crime may also rely on its capacity to work with other sectors, such as non-profits, corporations, community groups, and religious organizations (Kelling and Coles 1996). An institution is not inherently strong because it is state run, rather institutional strength is derived from its stability, resources, clear expectations, and interconnectedness (Triplett et al. 2003). This may explain why the mere presence of the public institutions studied in this paper appears to have no relationship to crime rates.

The value of community interaction and multi-sector interaction also requires more investigation, but research suggests that these forms of interaction are highly valuable in determining an institution's capacity to promote collective efficacy and reduce crime. Additionally, the importance of movement and change over time remains a critical point of interest. While literature has begun to address importance of spatial and temporal dynamics neighborhood, this area merits more attention. A study of the process of gentrification could provide insight on the contingency of economic contexts for institutional effects.

In brief, research indicates that local institutions can influence the level of neighborhood violence, but the impact chain remains unclear. The findings of this paper indicate that public institutions do not appear to have any relationship to neighborhood violence, but publicly owned vacant lots appear to be positively related to neighborhood violence. These vacant lots also appear to have a significant relationship to the racial make-up of a neighborhood, supporting the concept that minority neighborhoods experience higher levels of violence and crime. While we cannot assume more vacant lots cause more homicides, local communities intending to reduce violence should consider the importance of spaces and places. While the value of services public institutions provide should not be overlooked, vacant lots provide excellent opportunities to transform a negative space into a positive place. Considering the findings of earlier research, policymakers should concentrate on how to exploit existing institutions to generate stronger social cohesion and collective action.



Appendix A: Institution Data

WARD	HEALTH CLINICS	LIBRARIES	POLICE	PARKS	PRISON/ JAIL	TRAIN STATIONS	VACANT LOTS
1	1	1	0	351.42	0	4	19
2	2	3	0	396.99	2	16	7
3	0	3	3	27.12	0	10	1074
4	0	2	0	69.19	0	0	480
5	1	1	0	1303.8	0	0	182
6	0	2	1	82.64	0	4	702
7	0	2	0	253.37	0	0	170
8	0	2	0	93.15	0	0	194
9	1	2	1	89.07	0	0	582
10	1	3	1	758.85	0	0	927
11	0	4	1	82.23	1	4	83
12	1	1	0	100.73	0	2	29
13	0	3	0	102.44	0	1	10
14	0	3	0	10.67	0	3	23
15	0	2	1	83.08	0	1	370
16	0	2	1	32	0	3	1503
17	0	1	1	114.34	0	2	417
18	0	2	0	104.24	0	0	38
19	0	3	1	123.96	0	0	34
20	1	2	0	9.44	0	5	2030
21	0	2	0	71.29	0	2	204
22	1	2	0	24.54	0		43
23	1	3	0	87.39	0	2	7
24	0	2	2	21.72	0	7	1237
25	2	3	0	29.8	0	4	42
26	1	1	0	12.7	0	0	41
27	0	3	2	62.9	0	11	743
28	0	3	0	191	0	8	1061
29	0	3	2	147	0	2	88
30	0	2	0	26.59	0	2	11
31	0	2	0	9.32	0	0	1
32	0	3	0	40.14	0	8	13
33	0	2	0	65.58	0	3	1
34	0	1	0	59.7	0	0	627
35	0	2	1	39.67	0	4	14
36	0	3	0	119.33	0	0	5
37	1	3	0	33.31	0	0	330
38	0	2	0	67.88	0	2	2
39	0	1	1	216.08	0	3	6
40	1	1	3	77.19	0	1	0
41	0	3	0	73.9	0	2	0
42	0	2	0	31.72	0	19	18
43	0	0	0	20.76	0	6	5
44	1	1	1	3.27	0	6	0
45	0	3	1	33.28	0	2	8
46	1	2	0	14.28	0	3	4
47	0	1	0	73.4	0	6	25
48	0	1	0	13.77	0	6	1
49	0	1	0	56.33	0	4	10
50	0	1	0	143.17	0	0	4

Appendix B: Crime Data

WARD	HOMICIDE	ASSAULT	ROBBERY	BURGLARY
1	4	214	202	500
2	8	597	366	359
3	8	626	397	274
4	8	332	184	220
5	18	511	332	361
6	13	658	615	295
7	17	588	315	615
8	20	639	415	497
9	13	603	368	595
10	5	410	171	423
11	4	255	87	152
12	8	215	96	295
13	4	181	145	584
14	6	213	155	438
15	11	558	403	174
16	26	579	357	312
17	24	755	522	558
18	7	293	238	209
19	3	191	94	379
20	15	690	522	379
21	22	641	560	378
22	9	243	200	335
23	3	177	96	303
24	27	745	515	298
25	7	247	121	339
26	7	308	156	462
27	13	494	349	193
28	18	820	574	616
29	17	450	267	341
30	5	252	188	325
31	4	259	131	365
32	1	151	168	262
33	1	137	115	220
34	26	634	324	245
35	8	191	153	214
36	1	147	72	112
37	8	498	306	241
38	3	181	61	244
39	3	154	99	255
40	1	189	74	271
41	0	132	12	93
42	1	415	257	276
43	0	104	118	133
44	0	142	280	162
45	1	167	80	723
46	1	254	117	243
47	2	107	78	626
48	2	162	113	791
49	4	276	116	669
50	1	180	138	536



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THE AMERICAN DREAM: DISCOURSES OF EQUALITY AND ACHIEVABILITY FOR BLACK AMERICANS

Emily Dalgo

Abstract

What is the meaning of the American Dream for educated black Americans? How do perceptions of the equality and the achievability of the American Dream among educated black Americans correlate with the dominant discourse on the subject? This research project determines the dominant discourses of perceived equality and opportunity on the American Dream for educated black Americans, taking into account the current context and historical context of black Americans. Throughout history, the American Dream has been central to the American value system and has helped to define the essence of American culture. While the literature on the American Dream suggests that subgroups of the black American population have their own unique perspectives on what constitutes the American Dream, this study has found that educated black Americans generally share both the classic definition and desire of the American Dream. The individuals in this study related overall distrust in the American Dream and view it as an institutionalized concept, and were skeptical about the American Dream's existence and accessibility for black Americans today. While literature on the topic suggests that President Obama is a symbol equality and of power for the black community, this study shows that black Americans view the President as a symbol of black elevation rather than power, and as a symbol of assimilation rather than one of change; there was also a gender gap in these beliefs. While the findings in this study should not be overgeneralized, the results speak to the overall discourse of inequality in America and can act as a stepping-stone to further research on the inaccessibility of the American Dream for black Americans.

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Introduction

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

— *“Harlem”* by Langston Hughes

Clearly illustrated in the classic American success story of the self-made man are the ideals that we have historically considered most distinctly “American”: rugged individualism, equality of opportunity, laissez-faire capitalism, social mobility, the gospel of work, self-reliance, material acquisitiveness, thrift, ambition, hard work, perseverance, and honesty (Hearn 1977, 4). The American Dream’s overarching narrative is that hard work leads to tangible results. But what if you found yourself living in a society where hard work did not offer benefits, where opportunities were limited, and where progress was always just out of reach? This is the reality of the American Dream for many black Americans. It is essential to study the phenomenon that supposedly defines this nation’s identity—most importantly, to understand any exclusions of a population from this national experience that appears fundamental to American identity, and to consider if the sense of self has changed over time for subgroups in the American population. What is the meaning of the American Dream for educated black Americans? How do perceptions of the equality and the achievability of the American Dream among educated black Americans correlate with the dominant discourse on the subject?

The classic conception of the American Dream consists of having a home, a family, an education, and a sustainable source of income. The American Dream’s overarching narrative is that no matter who you are, hard work leads to tangible results. The key puzzle that sets the stage for this research project was the following paradoxical finding in the literature: that even in 2008 after black Americans were disproportionately impacted by the mortgage and housing crises, they were still more positive that racial equality in America would soon be reached (Stout and Le 2012). In 2008, some referred to the state of the economy as the “Second Great Depression,” and others as the “Great Recession.” Black Americans were disproportionately more likely to lose their homes in the mortgage crisis.

Despite this economically oppressive time, particularly for black Americans, optimism about racial equality surged within the black community. The academic discourse regarded President Obama's victory as a personal triumph for the black community, and as proof or renewal of their faith in the American Dream (Brooks 2012). I decided to conduct interviews to see how individuals could help me to unpack the nuances behind this phenomenon.

Much literature on the topic of the American Dream claims that the Dream for black Americans is fairly similar to that of all Americans (Huttman 1991). Homeownership and education have historically been the most desired aspects of the classic American Dream for black Americans (*ibid.*). Using several surveys conducted between 1987 and 2010, one study shows that blacks are much more optimistic about the American Dream after Barack Obama's election in spite of their worsening economic status (Stout and Le 2012). The study's findings suggest that the existence of symbols of equality are a better gauge of perceptions toward the American Dream for blacks than objective economic indicators; it is important, in other words, to take into account the context of the black community's success through indicators that are not as straightforward and chartable as economic success. Beliefs in the un-achievability of the American Dream may be attributed to lack of black representation at high levels of government, rather than solely based on differences in socioeconomic standing (*ibid.*).

Throughout history, black Americans have represented higher percentages of low socioeconomic indicators, and 2008 was a time when many black Americans felt the worst of their historic economic suppression (*ibid.*). In 2008, some referred to the state of the economy as the "Second Great Depression." While levels of unemployment increased across America during this period, blacks were almost twice as likely as whites to be unemployed, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008 Report, and blacks were much more likely than whites to lose their homes in the mortgage crisis (*ibid.*). Despite this economically oppressive time, optimism existed within the black community. Barack Obama's 2008 election marked a significant step in what many black Americans call the long road to freedom. A survey conducted in 2005 revealed that 82 percent of blacks believed they were "unlikely to soon achieve racial equality" (Huttman 1991). After Obama's election, only 45 percent held that belief (*ibid.*). Many black people regarded his victory as a personal triumph, and as proof or renewal of their faith in the American Dream (Brooks 2012; Stout and Le 2012).

Many claim that the historically oppressive economic factors are the reason black Americans tend to be more skeptical of the American Dream



overall (Cohen-Marks and Stout 2011; Shlay 2006). However, Stout and Le (2012) argue that the belief in the achievability of the American Dream may not have as much to do with these economic indicators as previously believed. They have found that even as blacks made economic progress during the 1990s, they were still less likely to believe in the American Dream than their white counterparts. Furthermore, blacks with the highest socioeconomic status were the most skeptical of this American ideal (Stout and Le 2012). I propose that this result suggests that economic success may be a weak predictor of optimism in the American Dream for blacks. Perhaps those with individual success do not feel that they can adequately represent a population, whereas people of other ethnicities with economic success feel comfortable asserting themselves as living proof of the American Dream's realization. Black Americans' communal understanding remains strong according to several studies (Brooks 2012). In one survey, 70 percent of African Americans agreed that their well-being was tied to that of other black people (ibid.).

Unambiguous indicators such as economic success or possession of a college diploma have been conflated to represent achievability of the American Dream and have been used to evaluate it statistically. This study offers a philosophical examination of the weaknesses of this kind of objective, statistical analysis when discussing the dreams, goals, and perceptions of success of a population often clumped together and labeled unsuccessful. Individual stories are necessary to add a third dimension to the topic for a more complete understanding of equality, or the lack thereof, in America. Through interviews and analysis of existing literature, this research explores what it means to be a black American in today's world. This study shows that there is not just one answer, but rather several answers, to what it means to be an educated black American confronting sometimes-irrational dimension of American identity.

Literature Review

The self-made man from rags-to-riches represents the emphasis on individuality inherent in the American Dream. Without acceptance and social integration of diversity, America is a nativist society. With more acceptance of diversity, America is a pluralistic society.

Classical Nativists

Nativism: "a favored status for certain established inhabitants of a nation as compared to claims of newcomers or immigrants" (Huntington 2004, 24). Classical nativists such as Samuel Huntington recognize and criticize changes in American identity. The predominate claim in Samuel Huntington's *Who Are We* is that a once-existent American identity has gradually faltered from what it was upon the

country's establishment. Numerous exposés of the national identity's salience in decline are both postulated and reported in *Who Are We*, with examples including the lack of a single ethnicity, territorial entitlement, religion, race, or culture; the rising possession of Americans with transnational identities, and a growing "global identity crisis" on which to feed (ibid.). This perception of American society relates to the dominant discourse of the American Dream for black Americans since pluralism and nativism speak to the acceptance of minorities in society.

Structural Nativists

While classical nativists tend to believe that immigration and plurality of identity is creating a national identity crisis, some scholars have made arguments that meaning is produced and reproduced within a culture through phenomena, like current events, and that culture must be understood in terms of its relationship to a larger, overarching system or structure (Diener 1984; Kasser and Ryan 1996). This thought within the literature of American identity is relevant to the study of the American Dream, since the role of current events may be important when studying perceptions of identity.

Structural nativists recognize that events are changing the American identity but that American identity is not being destroyed by these events, but rather that the meaning of identity is changing in response to the context. While "relative salience of alternative identities...is situational," and Americans possess more alternative identities than the rest of the world, the concept of identity, as Erik Erikson would say, is "all pervasive" and the isolation of a single identity is thus significant (Erikson 1968, Introduction). Identity, Erikson writes, is as unfathomable as it is all-pervasive (ibid.). It deals with a process that is located both in the core of the individual and in the core of the communal culture. As the culture changes, new kinds of identity questions arise (ibid.). Anthony Smith says states that possess a high rate of "territorial identity" such as Israel possess a mythomoteur: a constitutive myth that gives ethnic groups their sense of purpose. This may be what America lacks (Smith 1986).

While the American Dream is supposed to provide Americans a sense of shared purpose, I assert that not all races in America can call the American Dream their mythomoteur. Since America is no longer comprised of a dominant race or ethnicity, it is impossible to link a sense of ethnic purpose to American identities—Americans are a multiethnic people (Huntington 2004, xv). Structural nativists argue that the American self-image may be changing because of a lack of a mythomoteur, which simply means an ethnic sense



of purpose. In dealing with the relation between groups in America, structural nativists may distinguish between three dimensions along which supremacy can be measured: the cultural, the political, and the social. Robert Bellah argues that the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon ethnic group has been “by no means equal in all these dimensions” and that the Anglo-Saxon dominance “has declined along all three dimensions, first in the political sphere, second in the cultural, and only quite recently has its social dominance been seriously challenged” (Bellah 1975, Chapter 4).

The Modern Day Dream and Pluralism

Social mobility is the movement of individuals, families, households, or other categories of people within or between social strata in a society. It is a change in social status relative to others’ social location within a given society. This concept most accurately depicts the dream of the pre-Depression era: to have the opportunity to transcend predetermined social status and be successful in this transition was the dream (See: Hearn 1977; Kasser and Ryan 1993).

Ronald Inglehart (1988) tests the hypothesis that modern life has a focus on self-fulfillment. The study concludes that culture can shape the basic nature of economic and political life and that American culture has certainly changed to reflect this sentiment of fulfillment. Marcus and Nurius describe the concept of self-fulfillment and its applications for psychological research (Marcus and Nurius, September 1986). The American Dream can be understood as a representation of what Americans value, ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, much like Marcus and Nurius’s claims in “Possible Selves,” and offers the perspective that with more “options” for an identity, individuals become more accepting, echoing the pluralistic view of culture. In a 2010 study, Sandra L. Hanson and John Zogby found that a majority of Americans consistently reported that the American Dream—for themselves and their family—is more about happiness than material goods (Hanson and Zogby 2010). Charles R. Hearn (1977, 194) echoes these sentiments in his statements that an increasing emphasis on leisure and self-fulfillment immersed in the 30s during the Great Depression. Hearn found that as long as American society centered on industrial expansion and was still in the process of being physically built, such as in the 1920s, businesspeople and the “idols of production” were the heroes (*ibid.*). However, once the process of growth leveled off, there was less to admire in the producers and more time to devote to entertainment and the enjoyment of leisure. Hearn states that this new attitude toward optional mobility appears “as our society gets closer to being fully developed and there are fewer opportunities to be exploited” (*ibid.*, 195).

Modern scholars in the field of American identity are predominantly pluralistic in their views, recognizing American women, black Americans, immigrant Americans and other groups in their research of what being American means. Thus, pluralism is central to modern research (Alba 2006; Zangrando and Zangrando 1970). It is this pluralistic view that leads to an ongoing discussion of the discourse surrounding equality of the American Dream; since society appears to be shifting towards more pluralistic views, Americans that were once oppressed might now have more power and opportunity to thrive and reap the benefits of the American Dream (Stout and Le 2012). Black Americans in particular have been subjected to inequalities in America, both in opportunities and in outcomes, and a pluralistic society would be necessary in establishing equality.

Two Discourses of Equality: Opportunities and Outcomes

As Stout and Le write, "[b]lack youth have to decide whether or not they invest their time and energies developing opportunities and skills that society will not let them fully utilize" (2012). This quote embodies the discourse surrounding equalities of opportunities versus outcomes. This research focuses on the discourses of equality for black American populations. Tied to these views of equality are the views on the achievability of the American Dream. As discussed in subsequent sections, the perception of racial equality in America, or equality of opportunity, impacts the perceptions of achievability in the American Dream. It is important to note here that this research is concerned with equality of opportunities as well as with equality of outcomes. In other words, not all black Americans will define the American Dream in the same way, so a perception of equality for some individuals may be simply having opportunities that are equal to other ethnic groups in America, while a perception of equality for other individuals may have more to do with the actual outcomes being equal. The latter case would presumably be more intimately tied to a discussion on institutional and economic equality, while equality of opportunities would be more linked with social equality.

Regarding equality of outcomes, there is both an implicit and explicit hierarchy between white and black Americans; socially, there is more of an implicit hierarchy today, with the continued presence of racism and disproportionate political racial representation. Economically, there is a more explicit hierarchy, since black Americans tend to represent lower-income households, among other economic indicators of a "lower" hierarchy (Shlay 2006). The literature points to an academic discourse of incongruences in



understandings of equality among the black population.

The discourses of equality of outcomes, and therefore of achievability of the unwritten “all Americans are equal” clause of the American Dream, are reflected in a 2013 Pew Research Center study. The Center, which surveyed black and white Americans through telephone interviews, found that 50 years after Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech, only 45 percent of the country believed that America had made substantial progress toward racial equality. The report states that 49 percent said that “a lot more” remains to be done. Racial equality in America is later discussed as a necessary reality before many of the educated black Americans interviewed for this study will feel positive about the American Dream. The shift in perspective also speaks to the role of current events in understanding of identity. In the analysis of interviews, this will also be elaborated further.

The report claims that black Americans are generally more likely to say that police, the courts, public schools, and other key community institutions treat blacks less fairly than whites (*ibid.*). Seventy percent of blacks and about 37 percent of whites say blacks are treated less fairly in their dealings with the police. Similarly, about 68 percent of black respondents and 27 percent of whites say blacks are not treated as fairly as whites in the courts. According to Pew’s data in 2010, black men were more than six times as likely as white men to be incarcerated in federal and state prisons as well as in local jails the last year for which complete data are available. That is an increase from 1960, when black men were five times as likely as whites to be incarcerated. Furthermore, the Pew Research Center found that since 2009, the heightened sense of progress immediately following President Obama’s election has been fading. In 2013, only 26 percent of black Americans said the situation of black people in America was better than it was five years before, down sharply from the 39 percent who said the same in a 2009 Pew Research Center survey. White Americans’ perceptions also fell, from 49 percent to 35 percent in the last four years. Opinions about black progress toward equality vary considerably by educational achievement, a change from the 2009 survey when there was no gap in perception by education among blacks; 22 percent of blacks who have attended at least some college say the situation of black people in America is better today than it was five years ago. Among those with a high school education or less, about 33 percent say equality has improved.

The findings from the Pew report have led to important decisions within this research, primarily with respect to the scope of analysis. This research examines educated people within the black population of America, seeing as the academic discourse has determined differences in perception along particular lines. This study is concerned with how the discourse of equality surrounding perceptions of achievability of the American Dream has changed since Obama’s election for black

Americans who have at least some post-secondary education. The academic discourse on racial equality has deemed the divisions in perception among this group noteworthy.

Methodology

This paper employs critical discourse analysis, which is the study of individual meaning-making that seeks to understand or challenge the "underlying ideologies that play a role in the reproduction of or resistance of dominance or inequality" (van Dijk, 1995, 18). Critical discourse analysis focuses on the ways relations of power, dominance, inequality, or other social factors are reproduced or resisted by social group members through text and talk. This paper focuses on the ways that a small number of educated black Americans perceive the American Dream, how it relates to their personal identities, and in what ways, if any, the American Dream has been misappropriated by the dominant discourse on the subject. Critical discourse analysis does not seek to generalize its findings, does not rely on positivist causality, does not have hypotheses or variable testing, is not meant to be replicable, and recognizes that the researcher, as a member of the society being observed, is not able to be completely objective. Critical discourse analysis is the best method for this particular paper because it analyzes the ways in which different discourses are constructed in relation to a dominant discourse, which is the American Dream.

Scope of Analysis

This scope of analysis for this study focuses on the perceptions of equality and achievability of the American Dream for educated black Americans, and concentrates on educated individuals for two reasons. First, because "having an education" is considered an important factor in the American Dream (Stout and Le 2012). The students who I interviewed for this study have supposedly succeeded, in at least one dimension, in achieving the dream. Second, because several sources indicate that black Americans who have attended at least some college perceive the condition of black people in America worse off than do those with a high school education or less. In short, the academic discourse on racial equality has deemed the divisions in perception among more educated Americans noteworthy. My research takes into consideration the narratives of educated black Americans to analyze disparities in optimism about the American Dream between blacks from several socioeconomic groups, and includes the context of blacks within American society.



Reflexivity

I know that I cannot be fully distant from my research, since I am an American studying other Americans. Because of my whiteness, or perhaps my youth and my accompanying lack of experience with the economic struggles that many Americans, but especially black Americans, have experienced, I can assume that I have a different perception of the American Dream. I have not been jaded by negative experiences in the workforce. These traits were an obstacle to overcome, although I do believe my inherent cynicism toward the American government to provide substantial help to the underprivileged served as a strength, because I was able to analyze information that sheds light on the issues of economic disparity and not doubt its validity, as some researchers who do not believe in equality of the races might. A lack of judgment based on race was crucial for this research project. I was able to synthesize information without an underlying belief that race is a justified cause of or rationale for inequality. I needed to be aware of potential unexplored or unintended biases I may possess, as well as how my own identity as an educated, white female might have impacted any interviews I conducted in person. As a white person who might appear quite privileged, complete disclosure of these individuals' opinions might not have been possible, and consequently might have impacted my understanding of meanings.

Case Selection

The eight interviewees in this study attend Howard University and American University. They are from diverse geographic, social, and economic backgrounds, and are studying various subjects in college. Five students interviewed identified as female, while three identified as male. While an equal representation of genders was the desired approach for this study, two potential male participants were unable to interview and therefore left the study disproportionately female. An interview guide (see Appendix) was created and used during interviews, which were videotaped for logging purposes as well as research presentation purposes. Questions asked of interviewees ranged from their personal definitions of the American Dream to perspectives on whether Obama's election marked a significant change in equality in America. All questions were written with the literature in mind, as this study is a discourse analysis that analyzes interviewee's correlations and conflicts with the literature, and all results from the interviews have some sort of correlation with the literature. While particular questions were asked of participants, interviewees were encouraged to elaborate freely on any subjects that crossed their minds that seemed relevant to share. All of the interviews flowed loosely with the help of the interview guide, although each interview had its own

unique questions asked and answers given, and no questions were leading. Interview transcriptions are not included in this paper, but are available upon request.

Analysis of Interviews

In this study, there are both agreements and disagreements with the literature surrounding the topic of the black American Dream, as well as perspectives that the literature did not address. Three major areas of discovery include: the content of and skepticism about the American Dream, Barack Obama as a symbol of black power, and the role of current events. It is difficult to discern which factors of participants' individual identities are contributing to their beliefs. However, socioeconomic status, gender, and concentration of study (major) seem to be significant variables in each student's identity that could be impacting opinions.

Content of and Skepticism about the American Dream

As stated previously, the literature surrounding the topic of the American Dream claims that the dream for black Americans is fairly similar to that of all Americans (Huttman 1991). This study finds consistent conclusions. Having a family, a home, a job, and being happy, educated, and self-aware were all goals of importance to the students in this study. There is therefore agreement about the content of the American Dream and a shared desire for it. However, a key difference between the classic definition of the American Dream and the dream described by the educated black students in this research study was the emphasis on a dream of equality. One student said, "The American Dream to me would be getting rid of those institutional barriers that I believe are in place, to allow for everyone to truly have a fair opportunity to succeed and to attain whatever socioeconomic status they desire." Another student claimed that the American Dream is not an individualistic goal in stating, "My definition of success is that I can never truly be successful if my people are suffering." Communal success was an important theme; while the classic American Dream emphasizes individualism, many of the students in this study claimed that the advancement of all black Americans was important to them. The Plurality of success, or communal success, is therefore an important theme to understand when analyzing the American Dream for the black, educated Americans interviewed in this research.

The literature is also in agreement with the results of this study with the claim that black Americans with the highest socioeconomic status are the



most skeptical of the American Dream (Stout and Le 2012). This result suggests that economic success is a weak predictor of optimism in the American Dream for black students. The student from an upper class background was the most adamant that the American Dream no longer exists. The basis for her skepticism, as well as for every other student interviewed, was not in agreement with the literature, however. The theory discussed earlier explained that skepticism of the achievability of the American Dream was attributed to lack of black representation at high levels of government (ibid.). However, this study suggests that black representation is worth nothing if there is not true equality in society, which will be touched on later in this analysis. A lack of communal success, instead, is an integral part of the skepticism in the American Dream that seems to exist for educated black Americans, which implies that a pluralistic society is needed to achieve more trust in the dream.

Structural nativists argue that the American self-image may be changing because of a lack of a mythomoteur, which simply means an ethnic sense of purpose. Many black subgroups in America possess a mythomoteur, an ethnic sense of purpose, yet they have no institutional support to make the goals a reality. The educated group of black Americans interviewed in this study may agree that the desire for equality is an aspect of their ethnic sense of purpose, and more significantly, a collective rise in equality for all black Americans is the ideal dream. While the American self-image may be changing due to a lack of a mythomoteur, the black population may be remaining socioeconomically oppressed due to an active suppression of institutional and systemic support, rendering the mythomoteur of racial equality unachievable.

Another root for skepticism implied in this research is the belief that the American Dream was never made for black Americans. Three of the interviewed students came from immigrant families. Two of these students said the idea of the American Dream was an integral part of their identities growing up; their parents' constant reminder that hard work would yield tangible results pushed them in school and even impacted what friend groups they chose to associate with. However, the other students feel as though the American Dream is an idea that was not made for them or has widely excluded them. "The American Dream has never really been something that has ever seemed like it'll apply to me so it's never been something I honestly thought about," said one student. She went on to explain, "I feel like the American Dream is tied to capitalism and with capitalism you always have to have the poor, and the poor don't look like the people who are on top. The American Dream was never really made for us, although that's what they try to put on us; it's never been the case." Capitalism as an oppressing force for equality is never touched upon in the dominant academic discourse of

the American Dream for black Americans, although this study indicates that it may be an important factor in educated blacks' skepticism of the dream. In short, denotations of the American Dream for the students interviewed for this study are similar to the classic definition, but have a more integral focus on communal equality. Skepticism of the American Dream's achievability does not seem to stem from lack of representation, but rather from the perception that the American Dream is not "made for" black Americans and from the systemic and institutional racial inequality in America.

Obama as a Symbol of Black Power

Students directly dissented from the dominant academic discourse when many of them expressed the belief that they do not believe that President Obama is a symbol of black power. One student stated, "Equality is not necessarily equal to attaining positions in government or even attaining the presidency..." She went on to explain that many black Americans and African Americans feel that for equality to be reached, it would happen from outside the current political system rather than from within it. Six students noted that President Obama has been assimilated into a "system of whiteness." The student went on to say, "I wouldn't see more black people in power as necessarily implying equality, unless they are going to change the institutions in place...You are still attaining positions in institutions that are designed against minorities." Another student said, "You can't justify millions of black lives—who are still in poverty whose humanity are still being taken away—by just a few people who made it."

Robert Bellah (1975) argues that the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon ethnic group has not been historically equal in the cultural, the political, and the social dimensions. He claims that the Anglo-Saxon dominance "has declined along all three dimensions, first in the political sphere, second in the cultural, and only quite recently has its social dominance been seriously challenged." While President Obama may represent a shift or change in the cultural and political representation of the United States government, the students interviewed for this study suggest that Obama has not posed any challenges socially because he has assimilated to the Anglo-Saxon dominated system of whiteness that the U.S. government is fueled by. President Obama's election represents equality of opportunity, which is a social equality. Having the right and ability to run for the presidency and be elected demonstrates the Equality of Opportunity. While Obama's election represents Equality of Opportunity, interviews for this study suggest that President Obama does not represent equality of outcomes, which are institutional equalities. One



female student said, “The political representation is just a distraction to me. It’s a distraction from what’s really going on.” They argue that systemic barriers to racial equality have not been broken as a result of President Obama’s election, and there are no substantive changes or outcomes for the black community as a result of having a black President.

Several students complained that the narrative of Perceptual Equality has been overemphasized. Perceptual Equality in this study refers to the impact that Equality of Opportunities has on society collectively; Obama’s election created a perception and a reality that the Presidency of the United States is attainable for black Americans. “I feel like it’s a cliché that people always say well when Obama was elected it showed every little black boy and girl that they can succeed and they can go to the White House,” said one female student. However, there appears to be a gender gap in the beliefs of Obama’s role as a symbol of black power. All women were confident and adamant that President Obama is not, and should not be considered, a symbol of black power. One woman claimed, “Obama’s built into the regular American system; he’s built into the American Dream. He’s apple pie in Leave It to Beaver honestly.”

The men in this study were not so united against the idea. Two men claimed a confident “Yes,” that Obama is a symbol of black power; they said that Obama represents black power because of the advancement and elevation, or the Perceptual Equality, which Obama’s election offered for the black community. The third man interviewed was skeptical of fully labeling Obama a symbol of black “power” but still claimed that he represents “black elevation.” “He [Obama] did something incredible in a nation that was founded on racism,” the student said. Two women who claimed President Obama is not a symbol of black power cited institutional constraints as the reason he could not create real change in the social system. To explain this claim, one of these women stated that Obama “can’t fully advocate openly because some people might look at him a little differently. He has so many constraints that he cannot fully embrace who he is, or every single issue that is a black issue in the United States because of those constraints.” Three women cited assimilation to a system of whiteness as the reason Obama could not create real change in the social system. One student said Obama is a symbol of assimilation “because he is not threatening to any system. If anything he is sustaining it.”

The man who was not as confident of Obama as a symbol of black power referenced this assimilation, but still ended his viewpoint with the idea of black elevation. The two remaining men see Obama as a symbol of black power because he has advanced and elevated the black community and understanding of what is

possible for black Americans to achieve. They did not ignore that Equality of Outcomes has not radically changed since Obama has been in office, but rather excused the lack of change by noting the bureaucratic constraints placed on the President. One student said, "I feel like they was expecting some big change and everything was going to be equal and I mean at the end of the day he has a job to do and he has to answer to somebody too. I definitely respect President Obama all the way."

The Role and Implications of Current Events

When asked if perceptions of inequality or equality of America fluctuate with current events, five interviewees said, "Yes," that current events impact their personal perceptions of racial inequality in America. Three interviewees said "No," that their perceptions of reality do not change. All three of the interviewees who answered "No" are Political Science majors. One of these students answered:

I don't think my perception changes but it makes the call to action to change those inequalities even more; it kind of lights a fire. And makes it even more pressing that I do something in my life currently and in the future to help address those injustices...Oftentimes I find more so that it's my classes that I'm taking that change my perception of inequalities. However, if you're not a political person or you don't follow the news or you're not aware of inequalities, then I think that current events alter people's perceptions, but me specifically, I don't really think so.

This quote implies two important characteristics of the impact of current events: first, those who are educated about historical events of inequality, such as Political Science majors, may be less impacted by current events due to a constant immersion in social subject matter. Second, that current events can stimulate a "call to action" even if individuals are previously aware of injustices in society. One student said of inequality, "These are issues that have been going on, it's just that when it's so intense and it's constantly in the media, everyone's talking about it and becoming aware of it—myself included. I wasn't involved in these types of conversations before and I should have been, but I wasn't." In other words, current events act as a stimulus for action. The students who claimed that current events do shape their perceptions of equality in America all cited "the media" as a source from which their judgments are made. All students, without coaxing or being asked to elaborate, referenced recent media



surrounding police brutality and disproportionate violence toward blacks as a reason that their perceptions of equality have shifted.

These findings, that most of the students interviewed in this study claim that current events have the power to influence their perceptions of equality, are important because the key puzzle that set the stage for this research project was that even in 2008 after black Americans were disproportionately impacted by the mortgage and housing crises, they were still more positive that racial equality in America would soon be reached. President Obama's election in 2008 was a current event of Equality of Opportunity that trumped the Inequalities of Outcomes of the 2008 financial crisis. The literature claimed that since perceptions of equality shifted from 2005 to 2008 after Obama's election, that even in a struggling economy Obama could be seen as a symbol of hope, of progress, and of renewal that was sure to come. The belief that Obama was a symbol of progress toward racial equality in America was not a sustainable one; according to this research study, perceptions seem to simply fluctuate with current events. Therefore, the literature has overgeneralized one period of time to say that there is a sustainable, positive trend in the belief of racial equality in America based on studies that were conducted in a time period of extreme hopefulness, motivated by a single stimulating current event.

Conclusions

The American Dream: an illusion, a myth, a set of values, a goal for one's life; the American Dream: controversial, exclusive, manipulative; the American Dream: inspiring, motivating, aspirational. The American Dream has many meanings, and the context for those meanings is important. For the educated black Americans in this research study, the American Dream overall is an illusion. Women are more skeptical of the dream than men, and women generally view the American Dream in a more pluralistic way than men, who view it as an individual journey. Racial inequality, a major player in the perceptions of the American Dream, is the foremost reason for skepticism towards the American Dream for these students, which dissents from the dominant discourse that claimed a lack of representation in government was the cause of skepticism. While President Obama's election is often referred to in the literature as a symbol of progress toward equality, several of the black students in this study do not view his election as an indication of progress or of black power, but rather the opposite. Most students in this study view Obama's election as a symbol of assimilation to a system of whiteness, since no real change has occurred in society. Several students said that Obama abandoned his roots in pursuit of the presidency, and that the barriers he, by chance, overcame in his election still exist. Current events also seem to influence perceptions of equality

and inequality, a major finding that ties into the initial puzzle in the history of the topic of perceptual racial equality in America. This particular discovery, linked with all others, can help to explain why perceptions of equality and the achievability of the American Dream fluctuate, become more positive, even as the economic dimensions of the American Dream become more oppressive. The only students who stated that current events do not shape their perceptions of equality or inequality were the three students studying Political Science at Howard University. Every other student stated that his or her perceptions fluctuate based on what the media reports, implying that in 2008, when perceptions that equality in America would "soon be achieved" were positive, perceptions may have been reactionary rather than sustainable.

Opinions about black progress toward equality and skepticism toward the American Dream may vary considerably by educational achievement. The students interviewed for this study state that their studies in school have influenced their opinions. The dominant academic discourse on the American Dream for black Americans also implies that individuals with a higher socioeconomic status are the most skeptical about equality and therefore of the American Dream's achievability. This study correlates with that literature, seeing as almost all of the students mentioned at least partial skepticism in the American Dream. This study opens a conversation that does not end here. The small number of interviews from this study cannot be overgeneralized to represent all educated black Americans. In the future, more students from colleges and universities across America should be interviewed to help uncover more nuances that interviews with students in this study may have missed. A more in-depth analysis of students from historically black universities and colleges (HBCUs) would also be valuable to uncover how the culture and setting of one's education can influence personal identity. Perspectives on equality and the achievability of the American Dream for black Americans who are undereducated and black Americans who are incarcerated should also be interviewed in the future, as a comparison for this study. The students in this study have achieved a higher socioeconomic status by virtue of being black educated individuals in America. Therefore, study of those individuals who have not achieved any of the dream's classic indicators, or those who have been legally barred from achieving them, should also be interviewed.



Appendix: Interview Guide

Notes: I aimed for interviews to last no longer than 45 minutes. Questions were asked to current college students in Washington, D.C.

-Background information on participants:

-Age

-Parents' level of education

-Hometown

-Describe the economic circumstances of your community and of your family growing up.

-Are there institutions that perpetuate the black sense of community?

-How important are black churches in your sense of community/identity?

-How do you define the American Dream?

-What is the American Dream to you?

-Searching for any discrepancies between original definition and personal definition.

-Was the American Dream an ideal that you grew up around? (Did/does it matter to you?)

-Have you found that you have had equal opportunities as compared to other Americans in America? (Perception as compared to other races)

-Does your perception of racial equality or inequality fluctuate with current events?

-What factors have impacted the American Dream over the past 10 years?

-Do Obama's election, Ferguson events; constitute causality shifts?

-Do you see Obama as a symbol of black power? If he was raised white, does he represent black community?

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REVITALIZING YOUNG-ADULT CITIZENSHIP: AN ANALYSIS OF HIGH-SCHOOL PREDICTORS ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Kari Lorentson

Abstract

Civic engagement and political participation among the US population are waning, and this is particularly apparent in the young-adult citizenry. This research paper seeks to assess which variables in civic education and the high school experience have the strongest impact on young adults' levels of civic engagement. By using a nationally representative sample of 4,483 young adults aged 18-24, this study employs multiple regression analyses to investigate the influence on civic education, classroom climate, extracurricular activities, and community service on respondents' civic engagement levels. The results indicate that high quality civic education, extracurricular activity involvement, and community service are significantly related to civic engagement levels. In particular, community service as a predictor, both when a volunteer activity and as a mandatory activity, were significant. The findings suggest that high quality civic education, rather than simply the quantity of classes taken, may be a more important factor in civic engagement. Additionally, the study indicates that out-of-classroom experiences can have a meaningful impact on young adults' levels of civic engagement. These findings can support educators and policymakers as they develop initiatives to improve political engagement among young adults.

Introduction

In the United States, mandates for public schools to provide civic education to their students are included in several state constitutions. But despite this being a chief responsibility for public school systems, the present outcomes of such civic education programs are less than promising. Civic

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engagement and political participation among Americans has been waning, with young adults appearing to be even more disengaged than the rest of the adult population (Putnam 2000). In fact, since 1964, young-adult voting rates have been in an almost constant decline, except for slight increases in 1992, 2004, and 2008 (File 2013). After the 1972 presidential election, voter turnout for the voting-age population between 18 and 24 years never exceeded 50 percent participation, with only 38 percent of this age group voting in the most recent 2012 presidential election (File 2013).

In addition to the decline in voter turnout, Putnam (2000) has also documented a decline in other forms of civic engagement, including participation in political campaigns, rallies, and organizational membership within communities. This downward trend has been particularly notable among young adults. (Putnam 2000).

In response to these alarming figures of non-engagement, educators, policy makers, and political scientists have questioned how civic education can be modified and improved to foster greater levels of civic engagement among young adults. In January 2012, the U.S. Department of Education released a report recognizing that, “unfortunately, civic learning and democratic engagement are add-ons rather than essential parts of the core academic mission in too many schools and on too many college campuses today” (U.S. Department of Education 2012, 1). Similarly, at the university level, the U.S. Department of Education commissioned a 2011 report calling to enhance educational practices at the post-secondary level of education (U.S. Department of Education 2011).

These recent reports, coupled with Putnam’s *Bowling Alone*, have revitalized the effort to explore the nuances of civic education. More specifically, recent research has attempted to evaluate the influence of several aspects of civic education on student’s present and future political participation and involvement. This research paper seeks to assess how variables related to a high school experience, including civic education, extracurricular activities, community service, and classroom climate, impact young adult civic engagement.

Literature Review

Civic education is best understood by political scientist David Campbell’s definition as “the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences to prepare someone to be an active, informed, participant in democratic life” (Campbell, Levinson, & Hess 2012, 1). The research in civic education is largely divided into two trajectories of literature. The first body covers traditional classroom factors. In other words, this scholarship investigates the influence of factors inside the classroom, such as classroom climate, diversity, discussion of current events, and

the number of civics classes taken. The second school of thought, however, argues that socialization experiences, which include community service and extracurricular activities related to civic education best cultivate future civic engagement.

Traditional Classroom Influences

A focus on the way classroom factors influence future rates of civic engagement received significant attention in the mid-twentieth century, and still persists today. Both quantitative and qualitative data have been evaluated in this process.

Early research in the mid 20th century sought to explore the connection between civic education and civic engagement. However, doubts were raised about the effectiveness of civic education when studies failed to find a significant association between taking civics courses in high school and the development of students' political knowledge and interest. (Langton & Jennings 1968). Furthermore, when Ehman, a professor of education at Indiana University considered the number of social studies courses a student has taken, the results were not conclusive in regards to the classes' influence on a student's political socialization (Ehman 1969).

More recently, Manning and Edwards (2014) conducted a meta-review of the literature surrounding the relationship between the number of civics courses a student has taken and future political participation. Overall, they found that based on the present literature, "no clear pattern emerges from the findings" linking the amount of civic education received with future political participation (Manning and Edwards 2014, 37). From these ambiguous results, other factors may need to be considered when examining connections between civic education and future political engagement.

Ehman (1969) also investigated the impact of classroom climate on political socialization. Classroom climate can be described as the degree to which students feel comfortable discussing controversial issues and disagreeing with their peers and teachers (Campbell 2008). The study found that discussing controversial issues within an open-minded classroom climate was positively and significantly related to students' political socialization in a Detroit public high school (Ehman 1969).

More recent research has also studied factors such as classroom climate and levels of diversity rather than just the number of civic education classes a student has taken. Campbell (2007) found that higher rates of racial diversity are negatively correlated with the amount of political discussion that takes place within the classroom. As a result, this lack of open classroom



discussion was correlated with high school students indicating that they would be less likely to become informed voters (Campbell 2007).

A year later, Campbell (2008) conducted another study, this time focusing on classroom climate. For students who perceived their classroom to have an open climate, they scored higher on civic knowledge questions and indicated that they would be more likely to vote in future elections (Campbell 2008). The impact of the open classroom climate was greater for students with lower socioeconomic statuses (Campbell 2008). Campbell suggested that open classroom climate in civic education courses can help to mitigate the typical gaps of civic engagement between students with high socioeconomic statuses and low socioeconomic statuses (Campbell 2008). From this scholarship, the idea originates that the quality and environment of the classroom experience may be of greater importance than just the quantity of exposure to civic education.

Extracurricular Activities

A second school of thought reasons that extracurricular activities and community service best engage and equip students for future civic and political involvement. A wide array of research has reached a consensus that students who participate in extracurricular activities are more likely to be civically engaged in their communities as young adults (Hart et al. 2007, Kahne and Sporte 2008, Annette 2005, Glanville 1999). These studies also suggest that extracurricular activities equip students with the skills necessary for participation in civic life. From holding meetings, collaborating with others, and making decisions, these skills arguably can then be transferred to the civic and political arenas as adults (Hart et al. 2007, Kahne and Sporte 2008, Annette 2005, Glanville 1999).

Not all extracurricular activities, though, are seen to produce equal outcomes. According to sociologist Jennifer Glanville (1999), the type of extracurricular activity matters when related to future civic and political involvement. Glanville (1999) categorized extracurricular activities into two groups: instrumental organizations and expressive activities. Instrumental organizations, such as debate teams, school yearbooks, student government, and political club participation are associated with greater expected political participation in early adulthood, including voting (Glanville 1999). Participation in expressive activities, such as sports teams, academic teams, and the performing and fine arts, however, was not significantly correlated with expected political engagement (Glanville 1999).

These results may be in part due to different types of skills gained from the extracurricular activities, with instrumental organizations being more likely to nurture skills for civic life, such as negotiation, decision-making, and voting

(Glanville 1999). It is also possible that students who self-select into activities such as student government rather than a performing art such as chorus, already have expressed political interests (Glanville 1999)

What is difficult to extrapolate from this body of literature is whether the students who self-select into extracurricular activities are predisposed to political and civic engagement, or whether these activities help students to develop these interests and behaviors. Furthermore, whether students were required to participate in such activities, or whether they were chosen voluntarily was not measured in these studies. This study will interact with this gap in the literature by seeking to understand whether there are differences, in particular, between students who opt-in to voluntary community service, in comparison to those who complete mandated service.

Community Service

The literature regarding community service suggests a connection between service and civic engagement. A study conducted in 2000 found that participating in community service while in high school promoted political knowledge and participation skills (Niemi, Hepburn & Chapman 2000). Some civic education experts hypothesize that community service can impact students' future civic and political participation because it connects abstract concepts and problems addressed inside the classroom to real-world, tangible scenarios outside the classroom (Youniss & Yates 1997, Crystal & DeBell 2002). Youniss & Yates (1997) argue that this personal involvement connects students directly with the political and social issues within a community. Additionally, community service may facilitate the development of social networks that revolve around community concerns (Crystal & DeBell 2002).

However, when it comes to mandatory community civic engagement. For example, Stukas, Snyder & Clary (1999) suggest that mandatory service requirements for a class or as graduation requisite could foster attitudes of resentment which may counteract the spirit of civic and political involvement. Despite this, one study found that high school community service was significantly, positively correlated with higher rates of voting and volunteering eight years after the student graduated from high school, even when the service was required (Hart et al. 2007). Hart et al. suggested that these results may be explained by the idea that community service in adolescence fosters identity formation and the development of civic skills that can be utilized in adulthood (Hart et al. 2007).

Similar to there being different types of extracurricular activities, Youniss (2012) differentiates between one-time charitable acts and ongoing



service that engages the student with social and political issues within the community. Youniss suggests that forms of service relating to social justice, environmental issues, or income inequality, in which students are educated about the topics and become aware of structural implications, act as “potential founts of policy and political education” (Youniss 2012, 129). While this concept has not been investigated at a national level relating to civic engagement, it is a compelling thought worthy of further research.

Hypothesis

This paper hypothesizes that when performing separate multiple regression analyses for civic education classes, classroom climate, extracurricular activities, and community service, each model will see these factors to be significantly related to civic engagement levels in their respective models. This paper also hypothesizes that when performing a multiple regression containing all of the independent variables without one analysis, community service participation will serve as the strongest predictor among high school students’ future civic engagement levels.

Study Design

Data

This analysis utilizes data from The Commission on Youth Voting and Civic Knowledge Youth Post-Election Survey (Levine 2012). The data for this survey is compiled from a national representative sample of 18-24 year-old United States citizens from all fifty states. Due to this study including specific information related to students’ classroom, community service, and extracurricular experiences, this survey served as a strong data source to answer the research question presented. Included in the data is individual-level information regarding participants’ voting behavior, civic education experiences, and political knowledge. In total, 4,483 young-adults participated in phone interviews within the six weeks following the 2012 presidential election. Four main school-related independent variables were evaluated for their influence on the dependent variable, which is respondents’ civic engagement.

Dependent Variable: Civic Engagement

The dependent variable, civic engagement, can be defined for this study as the rate of respondents’ involvement in community issues, service opportunities, and electoral activities. Civic engagement was compiled from five main factors that respondents may have participated in after graduating from high school.

These five factors include: being registered to vote, voting in the 2012 presidential election, volunteering for a political candidate or campaign, attending a public meeting about community affairs, and working in the neighborhood as a community service opportunity. Each of these indicators was coded zero for a "no" response, and one for a "yes" response. Thus, the civic engagement scale ranges from 0-5, with "0" coded as "no engagement", 1 coded as "very low engagement" 2 coded as "low engagement", 3 coded as "moderate engagement," 4 coded as "high engagement," and "5" coded as "very high engagement."

Independent Variables

The independent variables for this study include four indicators that may influence young-adult civic engagement. These variables include civic education exposure, classroom climate, extracurricular activities, and community service involvement.

Classroom Climate

As referenced in the literature review, previous research has suggested that an open classroom climate may play a role in fostering future civic engagement (Campbell 2008). Classroom climate is measured by two questions about respondents' classroom experience.

1. In general, students could disagree with teachers, if they were respectful.
2. In general, students were encouraged to express opinions.

The two indicators listed above were chosen because they embody Campbell's concept of classroom climate, which includes components such as students feeling comfortable to disagree with teachers about political issues, teachers encouraging students to express their opinions, and students' comfort in expressing opinions that differ from their peers (Campbell 2008, 443). For these two statements, the responses have been coded on a five point scale with "1" was coded as "strongly disagree," "2" was coded as "disagree," "3" was coded as "neutral," "4" was coded as "agree," and "5" was coded as "strongly agree."

Civic Education

The second measurement of this study includes the respondents' civic education experience. First, this study assesses whether the participants took at least one civic education course in high school. A "yes" response was



coded as '1' and a "no" response was coded as '0'. Then, five qualifying follow-up questions were asked to assess the respondents' perception of the course's quality.

1. In that course, did you spend much time discussing current events?
2. Did teachers encourage students in that class to discuss political and social issues in which people have different opinions?
3. Did you do research on social, political, or community issues for that class?
4. In that class, were you required to keep up with politics or government, either by reading the newspaper, watching TV, or going onto the Internet, or not?
5. Would you say that knowledge you gained from that class is useful in your current, everyday life?

With each of these qualifying questions being re-coded for 0 meaning "no" and 1 meaning "yes," a Likert Scale of 0-5 was created to assess the perceived quality and usefulness of the course, with "0" being "very low quality" to "5" being "very high quality." Then, this information was visually binned so that an equal percentile was "low quality civic education" coded as 0 and "high quality civic education" coded as 1.

Extracurricular Activities

The third measurement as an indicator of civic engagement is participation in extracurricular activities during high school. Two measurements of extracurricular activities were utilized for this study. First, respondents were asked whether they were involved in any form of extracurricular activities during high school. Those involved in zero activities was coded as "0." Involvement in one activity was coded as "1," two activities was coded as "2," three activities was coded as "3," and four or more activities was coded as "4."

Second, the data also measured whether the extracurricular activities were related to "social or political issues." This relates to the divide between expressive and instrumental activities as described in the literature review, in which previous literature suggests students involved with instrumental activities are more likely to be politically and civically engaged as young adults (Glanville 1999). Respondents involved in at least one socially or politically related extracurricular activity were coded as "1". Those who were not involved in socially or politically related extracurricular activities were coded as "0".

Community Service

The fourth and final indicator used for the independent variables re-

lates to community service. To assess community service experiences within students' high school careers, respondents were asked whether they took part in community service while in high school, and whether such community service was voluntary or mandatory. Dummy variables were created for these community service indicators. For the voluntary community service dummy variable, voluntary service was coded 1 and all other responses (including no service and mandatory service) were coded 0. For the mandatory community service dummy variable, mandatory service was coded 1 with all other responses being 0. Finally, the third dummy variable of no service was coded 1 while all other responses were coded as 0.

Demographic Control Variables

Individual-level demographic variables that have previously been associated with civic engagement were also included within the analysis for the purpose of controls.

Race

Race is included because racial minorities tend to have lower levels of political engagement when compared to non-minorities (Tourney-Purta et al. 2007).

Gender

Gender is also included as a control variable. In past research, females have tended to report lower levels of political engagement when compared to their male counterparts (Burns et al. 2001).

This study also utilizes a control variable for the type of school (traditionally public, private, religious, or charter) that the student attended. A meta-analysis conducted by Patrick Woolf in Education Next suggests that students attending private and charter schools tend to exhibit higher rates of community volunteerism and political participation (Woolf 2007).

An individual's expected level of education will also be utilized as a control variable. As a measurement, this paper uses the respondents' mothers' obtained level of with "college or higher" coded 1 and "below college" as 0. Rimukete et al. (2012) has indicated that the relationship exists between adolescents' expected education levels and levels of education obtained by their mothers or close female relatives. Finally, political engagement has been cited as being significantly higher among those with higher socioeconomic statuses (Verba et al. 1995). A common indicator for SES status among



adolescents and young-adults in the perceived number of books in the home as a child. Thus, books will serve as a control variable for socioeconomic status. “Books to fill several bookshelves” were coded as “1”, and any responses indicating less than several bookshelves worth of books were coded as “0”.

Method of Analysis

This study includes multiple independent variables, and seeks to measure the effect of each variable on the dependent variable of civic participation. To do so, the study will use a compilation of bivariate comparisons and multiple regressions to estimate the effects of the independent variables. The bivariate correlation will ensure that each independent variable can be distinguished from the others. Thereafter, the multiple regression analyses will be utilized to measure the relative effects of the independent variables on rates of civic engagement. Four multiple regression analyses will separately measure the impact of the four specified categories of independent variables. Then, a final multiple regression analysis will include all of the variables together in one model. This final analysis allows for each predictor variable to serve as a control against the others.

Analysis

Civic Education

In the first analysis, as shown in Table 1, a multiple regression analysis was performed with demographic controls and civic education predictors. Of the respondents of the survey, 81.5 percent of the respondents (n=3654) reported having taken a civics course in high school, while 16.7 percent (n=748) indicated they had not taken a civics class while in high school. Two dummy variables were utilized for the civic education predictors. The first dummy variable was coded with high quality civic education responses as ‘1,’ and all other responses as zero. The second dummy variable was coded with low quality civic education as ‘1,’ and all other responses as zero. Thus, those students not taking part in a civic education course in high school were coded as ‘0’ in both cases, and serve as the reference group against which the dummies estimated.

Table 1: Level of Civic Engagement following the 2012 Presidential Election among 18-24 year-old US Citizens with Civic Education Predictors

Variables	Coefficient (B) (standard error)
Constant	1.77** (0.89)
Gender (Female = 1)	0.07 (0.05)
Race (White/Caucasian = 1)	-0.03 (0.05)
Type of high school (Traditional Public = 1)	-0.24** (0.07)
Socioeconomic status (high = 1)	0.27** (0.05)
Expected Education (College Education = 1)	0.29** (0.05)
Civic Education, low quality	0.10 (0.06)
Civic Education, high quality	0.52** (0.06)

n = 4,402
 * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, # $p < 0.1$
Adjusted R Square = 0.073

In this first analysis, as shown in Table 1, receiving high quality civic education in high school yielded statistically significant results as a predictor of civic engagement. In contrast, low quality civic education was not a significant variable. Based on the data set, the mean civic engagement score for students not taking civic education courses was 1.7. For those that rated their civic education courses as low quality, these students' average civic engagement score was 1.9, and for those that indicated their civic education to be high quality,

they had an average civic engagement score of 2.3. From this it appears that the quality of civic education is a more important factor than simple general participation rates.

However, some caution should be exercised when viewing these results related to civic education. The data does not account for which students took civic education out of prior interest, or how many civics classes a student took. With that, students who were already interested and engaged in politics or government may have self-reported higher scores on the civic education quality. Additionally, these students who were already engaged in civic education may also be more likely to exhibit high levels of other civic engagement variables reflected in the dependent variable.

In this analysis, certain demographic variables were also statistically significant predictors of a respondents' civic engagement. The three demographic variables that produced significant results included type of high school, socioeconomic status, and expected education. With socioeconomic status and expected education, a positive relationship resulted. In other words, high socioeconomic status and an expected college education

were positive predictors of higher civic engagement. For type of high school, the significant relationship is negative. This suggests that students who attend private, religious, or alternative public high schools were more likely to be civically engaged than their peers in traditional public high schools.

Extracurricular Environment

The second multiple regression performed analyzed the influence of extracurricular activity involvement in high school on civic engagement for young adults. 63 percent (n=1,852) of the sampled participants indicated that they had participated in at least one extracurricular activity at school, while 37 percent (n=1092) reported that they were in no extracurricular activities at school.

For this analysis, dummy variables were utilized in the regression. For the variable “EC concerned with social or political issues,” a “yes” response was coded as 1, and all else was coded as “0.” I utilized a second dummy variable, “EC not concerned with social or political issues” with “true” coded as “1” and “all else” coded as “0,” serving the reference category for those not involved in any school activities. The third variable, as mentioned in the study design, measures

Table 2: Level of Civic Engagement following the 2012 Presidential Election among 18-24 year-old US Citizens with Extracurricular Involvement Predictors

Variables	Coefficient (B) (Standard error)
Constant	1.86** (0.13)
Gender (Female = 1)	-0.07 (0.07)
Race (White/Caucasian = 1)	-0.08 (0.07)
Type of high school (Traditional Public = 1)	-0.24* (0.11)
Socioeconomic status (high = 1)	0.26** (0.07)
Expected Education (College Education = 1)	0.24** (0.07)
EC concerned with social or political issues	0.24* (0.14)
EC not concerned with social or political issues	-0.28* (0.12)
Number of groups involved with at school	0.22** (0.04)

n = 2,944

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, # p < 0.1

Adjusted R Square = 0.139

how many extracurricular activities a student was involved in. Table 2 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis.

Based on the analysis, the number of extracurricular activities a student was involved with is a statistically significant predictor of civic engagement among US citizens ages 18-24. Students not involved in an extracurricular activity at school had a mean civic engagement score of 1.7. This average score increased to 2.1 for students in two activities, and students in four or more activities had the highest average civic engagement score, at 2.7.

Additionally, hav-

ing at least one of the extracurricular activities relate to a social or political issue was significant. These results support the hypothesis that the type of extracurricular involvement is important and matters in relationship to the outcome of civic engagement. This parallels Glanville's findings (1999), where the study indicated that instrumental activities were more influential than expressive activities with political engagement.

Contrasting this is the negative, significant correlation between involvement in extracurricular activities that do not relate to political or social issues and civic engagement. It is not immediately apparent why there is a negative relationship. A review of the literature provides some insight. Those students who participate in extracurricular activities, but not activities that are political in nature, may not develop the skills that prepare these students for civic engagement, such as voting and negotiating (Glanville 1999). It would also be worth exploring whether students in this category were already uninterested or turned off by politics, and therefore self-selected into non-political activities. It could be that those who are so focused on non-political activities become isolated from political activities. This is an area where further research could help better explain this relationship.

Several demographic variables were also significant in the multiple regression analysis. Socioeconomic status and expected education had both positive and significant relationships to the dependent variable, civic engagement. However, students who attended traditional public schools, when compared to all other types of secondary institutions, had negative, statistically significant relationships, suggesting that public school is a predictor of lower civic engagement scores in this model.

Classroom Climate

The next multiple regression analysis involved classroom climate variables. The first variable measured participants' responses to the statement "in general, students could disagree with teachers, if respectful." The second classroom climate indicator statement measured was "in general, students were encouraged to express their opinions." For both, responses were measured on a five-point scale from "1" coded as "strongly disagree" to "5" coded as "strongly agree."

As seen in Table 3, the predictor related to disagreement with teacher produced significant results, but the variable relating to the expression of opinion was not significant. Although the disagreement with teachers variable did yield a positive significant result at the $p < 0.05$ level, the coefficient

Table 3: Level of Civic Engagement following the 2012 Presidential Election among 18-24 year-old US Citizens with Classroom Climate Predictors

Variables	Coefficient (B) (standard error)
Constant	1.83** (0.14)
Gender (Female = 1)	0.07 (0.05)
Race (White/Caucasian = 1)	-0.04 (0.05)
Type of high school (Traditional Public = 1)	-0.20** (0.07)
Socioeconomic status (high = 1)	0.29** (0.05)
Expected Education (College Education = 1)	0.32** (0.05)
Disagreement with teachers allowed	0.06* (0.03)
Encouraged to express opinions	-0.03 (0.03)

n = 4,483
 * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, # $p < 0.1$
Adjusted R Square = 0.042

size of 0.06 is relatively small compared to every demographic variable coefficient except for race. Furthermore, the “encouraged to express opinions” did not have a significant coefficient, and the relationship was even negative.

When looking at the coefficient sizes, the effect of classroom climate on civic engagement is small compared to other variables in this equation. Given the insignificance of the second variable, it is difficult to reject the null hypothesis of no relationship when only one of the two classroom climate variables served as a significant predictor of civic engagement. These findings do not suggest the strength of relationship

found in Campbell (2008).

In this regression analysis, the same three demographic variables that were significant in the previous two analyses remained significant. Socioeconomic status and expected education were positively and significantly related to respondents’ civic engagement outcome. Like previous regressions indicated, public high school attendance also was a significant variable, but the correlation was negative.

Community Service

Of the participants in this survey, 2,923 were asked if they worked on a service project in high school. 49.7 percent (n=1454) indicated that they had worked on a such a project, while 50.3 percent (n=1469) stated they did not participate in a service project for school. Of the students who did complete a service project, they were asked whether they served as part of a voluntary act (n=671) or as a requirement (n=783). As shown in Table 4 below, participation in both voluntary and required service projects led to significant results.

For the initial multiple regression analysis with community service proj-

ect predictors, as shown in Table 4, the participation in community service was a significant predictor, both for required community service and voluntary community service at the $p < 0.01$ level. For students who performed voluntary community service, their average civic engagement score was 2.31, and the average civic engagement score for students completing required community service was

2.19. These were both higher than the average score of 1.73 for those students performing no service. Since both required and voluntary service had significant results, this suggests that participating in service, regardless of one's motives behind the involvement, contributes to higher civic engagement scores.

What would be helpful to further investigate this relationship would be to know what types of service the students performed. The data does not differentiate between those who committed to ongoing

service projects versus one-time events, and the length of commitment (or lack thereof) to service activities could make a difference. But, by having the required service category with significant results, we are able to see results for those who do not self-select into the activity.

Similar to the previous regressions, too, socioeconomic status and expected education were both significant, with a positive correlation. Public high school attendance was significant too, but the coefficient was negative, again suggesting that students who attended private, religious, and non-traditional schools may have exhibited stronger civic engagement levels.

Comprehensive Multiple Regression

For the final multiple regression analysis performed, all of the inde-

Table 4: Level of Civic Engagement following the 2012 Presidential Election among 18-24 year-old US Citizens with Community Service Predictors

Variables	Coefficient (B) (standard error)
Constant	1.69** (0.89)
Gender (Female = 1)	0.07 (0.05)
Race (White/Caucasian = 1)	0.01 (0.05)
Type of high school (Traditional Public = 1)	-0.16* (0.07)
Socioeconomic status (high = 1)	0.25** (0.05)
Expected Education (College Education = 1)	0.28** (0.05)
Required community service	0.42** (0.06)
Voluntary Community Service	0.49** (0.06)

n = 2,923
 * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, # $p < 0.1$
Adjusted R Square = 0.070

pendent variables and demographic factors were included in the same equation. The results are below in Table 5.

Table 5: Level of Civic Engagement following the 2012 Presidential Election among 18-24 year-old US Citizens with all included Predictors

Variables	Coefficient (B) (Standard Error)
Constant	1.80** (0.23)
Gender (Female = 1)	-0.04 (0.68)
Race (White/Caucasian = 1)	-0.05 (0.07)
Type of high school (Traditional Public = 1)	-0.23* (0.11)
Socioeconomic status (high = 1)	0.22** (0.07)
Expected Education (College Education = 1)	0.20** (0.07)
Civic Education, low quality	0.03 (0.09)
Civic Education, high quality	0.29** (0.09)
EC concerned with social or political issues	0.18 (0.15)
EC not concerned with social or political issues	-0.30* (0.12)
Number of Groups involved with at school	0.20** (0.04)
Required community service completed	0.28** (0.08)
Voluntary community service completed	0.21* (0.9)
Disagreement with teachers allowed	0.01 (0.05)
Encouraged to express opinions	-0.04 (0.05)

n = 2,923
 * *p* < 0.05, ** *p* < 0.01, # *p* < 0.1
 Adjusted R Square = 0.115

Discussion of Comprehensive Multiple Regression Analysis

In this multiple regression analysis, both some independent variables and some of the demographic variables yielded significant outcomes as predictors. High quality civic education, community service involvement, and some extra-curricular activities served as positive predictors for higher levels of civic engagement.

For the two classroom climate variables, neither of the two predictors yielded significant results in this analysis. Even though the variable “disagreement with teachers allowed” was significant at the *p* < 0.05 level in the regression that included only classroom

climate and demographic variables, this significant relationships disappeared when in a model that included all of the variables. With the weak effects of classroom climate demonstrated here, other more tangible aspects of the educational experience such as community service, extracurricular involvement and a high quality civics class were of greater impact as predictors in the comprehensive multiple regression analysis.

For civic education predictors, high quality civic education produced a significant coefficient value, but low quality education was not significant in this analysis. As noted in the earlier discussion of civic education variables, it is not necessarily important that a student took a class related to civics or American government for high civic education levels. What was important was that the course provided high quality instruction. In fact, relative to all of the other variables in this analysis, and excluding the control coefficient, the high quality civic education predictor produced the largest coefficient of 0.29.

However the data in this study does not control for whether students self-selected into the civics courses due to a prior interest in politics or whether they were required to take a course. If the students chose to take the civics course out of a personal interest, it is likely that they would enjoy the content of the course and also have high levels of civic engagement after attending high school. In other words, despite the large coefficient relative to the others, this relationship may not indicate a causal link, but rather indicates that students who rank civics courses as "high quality" may be predisposed to having high civic engagement.

As for extracurricular activity involvement, the number of extracurricular groups a respondent was involved in during high school yielded significant results at the $p < 0.01$ level. There was a positive correlation between the number of groups a student was involved in and the student's civic engagement score, with a coefficient of 0.20. Relative to the high quality civic education mentioned above, this is a slightly smaller coefficient. Also, relative to both required and voluntary community service predictors, the effect the number of extracurricular activities was smaller.

Whether any of these extracurricular groups were related to social or political issues mattered, too. Similar to the multiple regression that focused solely on extracurricular activities, there was a negative, significant correlation between non-political extracurricular activities and civic engagement. But this time, relative to the impact of all the other categories of predictors, involvement in activities related to social or political issues was not significant.

As mentioned above, for the community service predictors, positive and significant coefficients were the results for both the voluntary and mandatory dummy variables. With both types of service being significant predictors, the act of community service, regardless of the motivation behind the service, appears to be the driving force behind the significance in these variables. Interestingly, the coefficient was slightly larger for required service (0.28) over voluntary service (0.21). These community service results support Hart et al.'s findings (2007) that service can promote civic engagement, even when mandatory. In fact, besides the coefficient of the constant, required community service was the second largest positive coefficient at 0.28, only behind high quality civic education, which had a significant coefficient of 0.29. As such, this weakens and disagrees with Snyder & Clary's hypothesis that mandatory service projects fosters resentment, and in turn, counteracts civic engagement (1999).

Additionally, because the mandatory community service variables



help to control for the self-selection issue that presented itself with the civic education and extracurricular variables, there exists a stronger argument for a causal relationship between community service and future civic engagement. Even for students who did not self-select into community service, community service served as a significant predictor of civic engagement compared to those who engaged in no community service whatsoever. With this considered, these results support the hypothesis that community service would be one of the strongest predicting variables in the comprehensive multiple regression analysis.

Finally, the constant, and a few of the demographic variables, also yielded significant results in this analysis. Type of high school, socioeconomic status, and expected education were all significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. Similar to previous analyses, the correlation between public high school attendance and civic engagement was negative. However, high socioeconomic status and an expected college education were both positively correlated with the mean civic engagement of 18-24 year-olds.

Conclusion

From the analysis in this study, several important observations can be made for educators and policymakers alike. First, the importance of community service as a predictor of civic engagement is evident in the final regression analysis. Regardless of whether the service was performed voluntarily or as a requirement, both variables were significant. Incorporating service into the high school experience may serve as a way to foster civic engagement in students.

For civic education, only high quality education was significant amongst the civic education variables. With this information, educators may consider focusing on civic education best practices to ensure the education is providing students with adequate knowledge and tools about American government and means to participate in civic life.

Limitations to this study include the inability to account for selection bias with the civic education classes and extracurricular activities. It is unknown whether these students opted into take a course about civic education, or whether it was required by school policies. Additionally, the data did not provide for whether students optionally engaged in extracurricular activities, whether at least some activities were required, or whether students had the choice to self-select or opt-in to political and nonpolitical activities. Furthermore, the respondents self-reported the information about their experiences, and the survey included no mechanism to verify the responses. Respondents may have over-reported involvement in high school functions, and with this being a retrospective analy-

sis for many of the participants, it may have been difficult to recall all of this information. With that, it is difficult to be certain of the accuracy of this data to the true experiences of US citizens ages 18-24.

In the future, it would be of interest to further investigate the role of community service with civic engagement. With both required and voluntary community service yielding being significant predictors in the final regression analysis, there is reason to consider investigating commitments to community service. For example, I would recommend studying whether there is difference in outcome between sustained, long-term service versus short-term community service activities. Time investment in community service activities may enrich students' interests, knowledge, and engagement levels with social and community issues, which may, in turn, help develop stronger tendencies to be civically engaged.

Additionally, another avenue for research could be an investigation of why students who reported attending traditional public schools were associated with a negative, significant coefficient in the regression equation. It would be worthwhile to study the qualities and practices of private and non-traditional schools in order to research why the discrepancy exists between school type and civic engagement levels.



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THRIFTY AUTHORITARIANS: U.S. REGIME CHANGE 1945 - PRESENT

Daniel J. Savickas

Abstract

The efficacy of efforts by the United States government to influence regime change in foreign nations has been increasingly called into question. Motivated by these statements of skepticism, the study herein provides a statistical analysis of the impact US intervention has had on both democratic evolutions in target nations for regime change, and for the development of their GDP per capita. An analysis of GDP per capita in target nations for US-sponsored regime change offers observers insight into both how standard of living conditions may have improved in those nations and a brief overview of how that nation's economic output improved or worsened. The following analysis looks at the progress of nations in which the United States deliberately altered the governing regime. It seeks to determine whether or not, in ten years, that nation was better economically and democratically. The ten-year parameters placed on these nations are meant to indicate short-term success or failure on the part of the United States. Other variables, such as the major religion of the target nation and how economics and democracy impacted each other, were taken into account. The research and the data suggests that the United States does not have a definitive impact on democratic reforms, but is, in fact, a force for a more efficient economy after the regime change is enacted. It also suggests Islam is not a major hindrance to democracy, and that economic improvement does not indicate democratic improvement, or vice-versa.

Introduction

Given the rampant instability in various parts of the world today, and the almost constant friction emanating from the Middle East amidst the Civil War in Syria, many leading voices in the American political sphere have floated

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the idea of overthrowing the regime of Syrian head-of-state, Bashar al-Assad, in favor of a government run by moderate rebel forces. These postulations have caused uproar from a war-weary nation that has begun to strongly subscribe to the belief that it is no longer in the best interests of the United States to intervene in the affairs of foreign nations, especially those in the Middle East.

The United States has a long, well-documented history of overthrowing regime to install others that align with US foreign policy interests. These efforts can be seen as far back as the presidencies of William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. The US used these efforts to establish themselves as an expansive power in the world and to actively defend their interests abroad. Some of these ideologies persist in today's geopolitical world.

However, an equally long history of discontent with these pursuits exists as well. Many in the political world have expressed outrage over human rights abuses perpetrated by regimes in Chile and Argentina, amongst others, and targeted the American government for helping take down democratically elected governments in order to defend certain perceived interests in these states. These sentiments shift the dynamic of discussions on potential regime change efforts in the present day. The US has all but completely abandoned the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as an engine for covert regime overthrows, and any suggestion of military intervention is met with hostility and scrutiny. The harsh criticisms drawn by the intervention in Libya and potential intervention in Syria illustrate the shifting discussion.

This raises the important question of how US regime change affects nations in which it decides to alter the current power structure. This study seeks to provide statistical insights to that question by analyzing the current schools of thought surrounding the issue in detail, delving deep into the statistics of the cases where the US has intervened both democratically and economically, and to draw conclusions based on the findings. This study is not meant to be a definitive concrete answer to this or any question. However, it seeks only to provide informative data to further the conversation in this area.

Primacy, Power, and Isolation: Theories of US-Sponsored Regime Changes

Most experts and academics in international relations advocate for one of three theories when it comes to United States intervention and regime changes. Skeptics, seemingly in the majority, say that United States interventions have been largely unsuccessful in the past, leaving no reason to think they can or will successfully benefit US foreign policy in future attempts (Fukuyama 2006; Kinacioglu 2012; Kinzer 2006; Meernik 1996). Those who rebut the skeptics

directly claim that the United States, if it takes certain steps, can reshape almost any nation and force beleaguered regimes that may be unfriendly to the US to swiftly crumble (Litwak 2008). Those who fall into this camp, argue that it is not the concept of regime change that produces failure, but rather tactical errors that are wholly avoidable. The third, more nebulous camp consists of those who look at the context of the situation before advocating action. Writers, such as these, suggest certain efforts are doomed to failure due to the context and tactics used and others represent the possibility of success if it is approached in the right manner (Schulte 2013). There is a large-scale focus on the international surroundings and geopolitical climate. In this study, various aspects of each school of thought are adopted to form the over-arching conclusion

The seemingly dominant theory holds that the United States is inept when it comes to an interventionist foreign policy and, therefore, creates more enemies and threats to US interests than there were previously (Kinacioglu 2012). There are, indeed some merits to this line of thinking, especially if one were to look at the more recent endeavors the United States has made. For example, non-interventionist theorists would easily point to the propping up of leaders like Saddam Hussein at the hands of the United States as an example of the fragile nature of these efforts. The US propped up Saddam to fight a radical Iranian regime, but then overthrew him when interests conflicted. The resulting war created an unstable Middle East, according to these theorists, and allowed the various threats emerging from the destabilized region to become an even more dangerous enemy to both the US and its interests. These theorists aim to show how the interests of the United States are always changing and a regime change effort can only be temporary. Thus, any regime ouster will require the allocation of far more resources and manpower than the US can spare and these efforts are spurious at best and cannot be reliably successful.

Theorists who subscribe to this camp will use even wider ranging historical examples going back as far back as the days of Hawai'i, Cuba, and the Philippines to show that the United States cannot be successful in any context and that, despite the accomplishment of certain, specific, minor goals, these attempts will always be incredibly costly as far as resources and manpower are concerned (Fukuyama 2006). The skeptic camps, while often dismissing or ignoring the universally lauded regime change successes, such as those in Germany and Japan, highlight the important aspect of this discussion that many of these efforts are perceived as failure. This study will take that perspective into account when defining the scope of success and failure.



The direct counter posits that the United States is better off being the world's authority in other parts of the world as a there is moral degradation happening in certain areas that threaten to invade the Western world and harm American interests both at home and overseas. The argument states that some foreign aggressors who are dangerous to the world, and US foreign interests, can pose as victims in certain lights and create a moral relativism that prevents many on the global stage to be wary of outright calling out these ideologies as blatantly wrong (Kristol 1995). The only way to neutralize these threats, most commonly taking the form of Communism or radical Middle Eastern regimes, though this is not always the case, is to take them down by force. Many of these theorists, who can generally be classified as “neoconservatives” can point to the successes in nation building in the aftermath of World War II. In rebuilding the German and Japanese governments after the leadership of radical authoritarians, the US played an integral role to prop up the new regimes. Germany and Japan quickly became re-integrated into the global community and became stable democracies and improving economies soon thereafter. These theorists do recognize, as Litwak does, that there is no such possibility of a universal success and that the type of unilateral intervention where the United States come riding in on white horses overwhelming these other countries with force and instantaneously forcing their worldview upon them as people like Meernik would like to suggest (Litwak 2008; Meernik 1996). These are not irrational jingoists, but pragmatists who recognize that the best interests of the United States might lie in the exerting of effort to alter the world stage.

However, in recognizing the fact that the possibility of failure is present in the regime change efforts these theorists praise, they fail to elaborate on why failure occurs. Litwak, for example, argues that regime change, in order to be successful, needs to be accompanied by targeted, progressive sanctions to undermine the legitimacy of the regime (Litwak 2008). However, this falls short in being a generalizable statement as it does not account for why regime change efforts have been successful without these policies and why efforts utilizing these policies, like the Cuban embargo leading to the attempted ouster of Fidel Castro, have failed in unseating a sitting regime. Gregory Schulte, who does not fall into this camp, alludes to this as well in his theory in his assessment of the overthrow of Slobodan Milosevic in the former Yugoslavia, arguing that there are certain factors that need to be present for success (Schulte 2013). Optimist theories contribute to the hypothesis of this study, in that it asserts the potential for success of regime change efforts. The study will seek to ascribe a definition for what constitutes a failure, as optimist theorists generally fail to do so.

The third camp mixes these two approaches. It goes to say that there needs to be a favorable international context in play for a regime change effort to work. For example, Schulte details the United States' overthrow of Yugoslav dictator, Milosevic. He discusses how the US ensured it had allies in the region and used its regional allies as well as a precision, limited airstrike campaign with other non-military measures such as sanctions, to tear down the Milosevic regime (Schulte 2013). Theorists such as Schulte argue that these international factors need to be in place for a regime change and that the US should look carefully at what is in place and use specific tactics to make it work.

This school of thought also fails, as do the rest of the theories, to define what exactly is a success. There is no mention of the democratic, humanitarian, or economic factors necessary to be able to concretely define, for the purposes of the theory, one case as a success and another as a failure. Thus, most theorists in this area fail at making their theories generalizable. It then makes it difficult to apply them to real-world cases of this phenomenon and assess the validity of the theories.

In a case study of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Ervand Abrahamian opined that it was the failure of the US-sponsored regime to modernize institutions in the long-run that led to the collapse of the regime (Abrahamian 1980). Therefore, this study will use Abrahamian's specific theory, in conjunction with aspects of the aforementioned three to analyze whether or not success is achieved in the short term to ultimately posit that regime change does not fail due to the effort in and of itself, but rather the lack of effort for an extended period of time.

Research Design

To analyze modern instances of United States sponsored regime change, a logical starting point would be the United States nation building after the end of the Second World War. Any efforts of the United States to alter the regime of a nation had very much to do with its expansive interests. The goals of regime change efforts after such point were very much similar in rhetoric, regardless of specific differences on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, the baseline year for the study was determined to be 1945, as the year in which the regime was altered is the basis for each case study, not the year in which the United States initiated its efforts. It must be noted that there are differences that exist between US regime ousters, where the US actively assists in the overthrow of a sitting regime and "nation building", where the US takes more of a passive role in changing the existing system, but took a more active role in shaping the regime going forward. Both sets of efforts are lumped

into this study. However, it is an important distinction. The cases identified were done so through an article written by William Blum for the *Centre for Research on Globalization*. There are 38 cases that fit said criteria listed:

- Germany, 1945
- Japan, 1945
- Syria, 1949
- South Korea, 1953
- Iran, 1953
- Guatemala, 1954
- Congo, 1960
- Laos, 1960
- Iraq, 1963
- Brazil, 1964
- British Guiana, 1964
- Bolivia, 1964
- Dominican Republic, 1965
- Indonesia, 1965
- Ghana, 1966
- Greece, 1967
- Cambodia, 1970
- Bolivia, 1971
- Chile, 1973
- Australia, 1975
- Portugal, 1976
- Argentina, 1976
- Jamaica, 1980
- Turkey, 1980
- Chad, 1982
- Fiji, 1987
- Nicaragua, 1987
- Afghanistan, 1989
- Panama, 1989
- Bulgaria, 1990
- Albania, 1991
- Yugoslavia, 2000
- Ecuador, 2000
- Afghanistan, 2001
- Venezuela, 2002
- Iraq, 2003
- Haiti, 2004
- Libya, 2011

When the United States initiates a campaign to oust a sitting regime in a foreign land, it is usually for one of two reasons, if not both. The first of which would be an intervention to foster democracy, like those seen after World War II in Germany and Japan after the devastation of the recently finished war and the havoc that the Hitler and Tojo regimes imposed upon their people. The United States maintained a military presence and had an active role in shaping the new governments of those two nations. The other reason would be if vital American interests were at stake in the nation in question and the sitting regime threatened those interests. This would lead the United States to take action to ensure their interests, usually economic ones, were best suited in the nation. Therefore, when analyzing the impact of a regime ouster by the United States, it must, first and foremost, be viewed through the lenses of democracy and economic growth.

For data with regards to democratic growth or decline, the primary data set used will be data from the 2013 Polity IV Country Reports. This report rates a nation based on how democratic its regime was regarding free and fair elections, political participation, and the presence and degree of institutionalization of democratic

institutions. The ratings are on a scale from negative ten to ten, with negative ten being a full autocracy, and ten being a full democracy (Polity IV 2013). To analyze the effects of US intervention, the score from the year in which the US unseated or fostered a new regime will be recorded and then subtracted from the same rating five years afterwards. The five-year benchmark allows enough time for the effects of the regime change to set in, but does not allow too much time for outside factors to obscure the direct impact the US may or may not have had. Negative scores will indicate a more repressive regime after the intervention and positive scores will indicate a more democratic regime.

The differences that were calculated will then be submitted into a one-sample t-test to determine the significance of the data. The test will test to see what the odds of achieving similar, or more extreme results, if the true mean of the data set were zero, indicating that the US had no direct impact on the democratic future of a nation. This test will produce a p-value that will state the aforementioned odds. The threshold for significance is a p-value of less than, or equal to 0.05. Any p-value registering above that indicates insignificant data to reject the hypothesis that the US had no direct impact in the area being tested. This threshold will be universally applied to each and every one of the tests.

A different, but similar test will be performed on adjusted data. Any country that improves in democracy will be assigned a score of one, and any country that declines will be assigned a score of negative one. Countries remaining the same will be scored a zero. The same t-test will be performed on this adjusted data set to see if there is significant correlation having isolated factors such as drastic improvements or declines that may skew the test mean and alter the p-value. The same standards for significance apply.

For economic data, data was retrieved from the Maddison Project database which records the GDP per capita data for each nation by year in Geary-Khamis dollars, a universal currency (Maddison 2015). The study will then analyze three specific numbers: The GDP per capita ten years before US intervention, the GDP per capita in the year in question, and then the GDP per capita ten years later. The rate of growth will then be calculated for the ten years prior to and the ten subsequent years after intervention. Both data sets will then be submitted into a two-sample t-test to test for the significance of the data. The null hypothesis is that the means for rates during both periods would be the same and the alternative suggested hypothesis is that the mean is significantly higher in the ten years after US intervention.

The ten-year benchmark for economy was used as opposed to the aforementioned five-year one used for democracy, to allow control for short-

term exogenous shocks to the economy and hopefully get a better view of the trajectory of the economy. The data focuses on GDP per capita, as it generally provides an accurate depiction of both standard of living within that nation, and its economic output. It is an encompassing statistic unlike various other economic data indicators, which are more specific, but do not paint the overall picture to answer the question this inquiry poses.

To compare both data sets, to see if there exists a correlation between nations that do well democratically, and those that do well economically, a chi-squared goodness-of-fit test will be performed using actual and expected counts of nations who improved or declined democratically and economically. The two tables of values will produce a p-value that will be subject to the same threshold of significance as the previous t-tests mentioned for this study.

Due to the fact that much unrest in the Middle East revolves around religious struggle, it would not be unreasonable to theorize that Islam is inherently hostile towards democracy and capitalism and, therefore, US regime change efforts are futile in the Muslim world. In order to account for this in the study, two simple chi-squared goodness-of-fit test will be used to determine whether or not there is statistically significant data to show that results are notably different in Muslim countries, both as far as democracy and economics are concerned, than they are in nations that revolve around other cultures.

This study will operate on the following model:

- US Intervention -> Changed Economic Growth Rate (GDP per capita)
- US Intervention -> Altered Democratic State (as defined by Polity IV)

The running hypothesis for this study is the following: A country, after the United States intervenes, will experience more rapid economic growth in the short-term, but will suffer democratically in the short-term.

Research and Analysis

Figure 1: Democratic Change Post-Regime Change

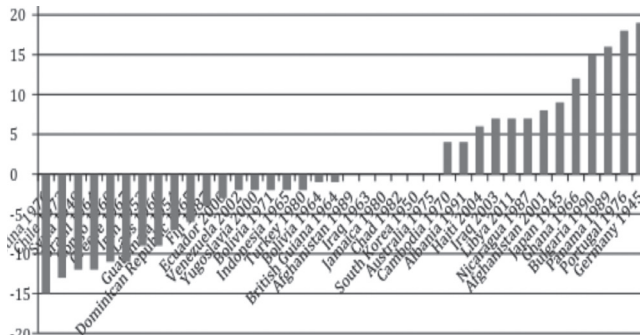


Figure 1 shows the results of the democratic subtraction. Most nations experienced a decrease in the effectiveness of their democracy five years after United States intervention. Many were small and fell close to zero. However, some nations, like Argentina 1976 and Chile 1973, experienced decreases in their scores of 15 and 13 points respectively. Conversely, however, it can be seen that Germany 1945 experienced an almost complete transformation, making the jump from negative nine to ten. The table also shows that six nations were neither affected positively, nor negatively when it came to democracy (Polity IV 2013).

Hypothesis test results:

μ : Mean of variable

$H_0: \mu = 0$

$H_A: \mu < 0$

Figure 2

Variable	Sample Mean	Std. Err.	DF	T-Stat	P-Value
DemScore Change	0.20512821	1.3955682	38	0.14698544	0.558

The results in Figure 2 do not produce a statistically significant result to reject the hypothesis that United States intervention does not affect the course of a nation's democracy. The p-value achieved shows that there would be about a 55.8 percent chance of obtaining those results if the hypothesis that US intervention has no effect on democracy was true. In fact, the sample mean for these cases was a positive number, indicating that, on average, a United States regime change will lead a nation more towards being a full democracy than it will the other direction. This seems to run counter to the common narrative amongst scholars today in the skeptics' camp and the alternative hypothesis that the United States very often fails at creating more democratic societies abroad.

However, the skew that nations like Germany, Argentina, and Chile had on this test was taken into account, and the appropriate, aforementioned adjusted t-test was completed as described in the previous section to adequately isolate that skew to find out whether the significance was affected.

Hypothesis test results:

μ : Mean of variable

$H_0: \mu = 0$

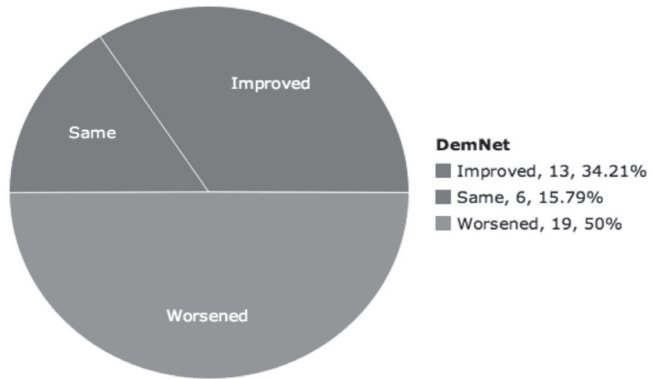
$H_A: \mu < 0$

Figure 3

Variable	Sample Mean	Std. Err	DF	T-Stat	P-Value
DemNetAdj	-0.21052632	0.14191284	37	-1.4834903	0.0732

With the null and alternative hypotheses remaining the same, the statistics still showed there to be no significant data to reject the null hypothesis that the United States intervention does not have a direct effect on the trajectory of that nation’s democracy. The p-value did, however, decrease showing, now, only a 7.32 percent chance that similar results would be achieved given that the null hypothesis was true.

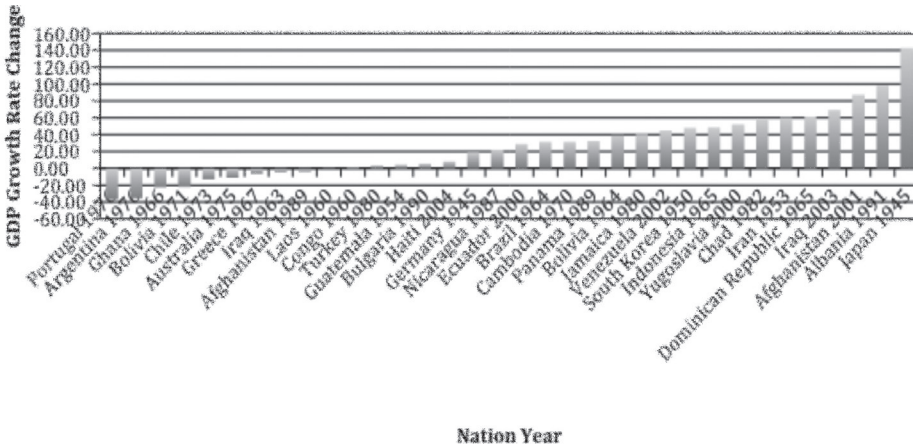
Figure 4



However, even given the data has been adjusted to account for possible skew, the evidence to show that the United States has an adverse effect on democracy is not there. This is likely because, as seen in Figure 4, half of the interventions undertaken by the United States resulted in either a better democracy, or a democracy equally as strong as it was. However, the sample mean in the first test indicating an average gain in democracy is misleading since far more nations got worse democratically than in either of the other two categories, regardless of the significance of the data. Given that the United States is only detrimental, to various extents, to the democracy of its target nation in half of cases, it is a bridge too far to say that this is a general rule in these pursuits.

The economic tests performed showed a large number of nations improving their economic fortunes in the ten years after US intervention, in relation to the ten years prior. Sticking out amongst this data is Japan, whose economy grew at a rate in the ten years after the US fostered a new regime after World War II, almost 150 percent faster than it did in the ten years before the end of the War. The data also shows that eleven nations experienced a growth rate increase of over 39 percent. To put this number into perspective, the most drastic decline in economic fortunes was Portugal, which experience a rate decline of 36.83 percent (Maddison 2015).

Figure 5: Change in GDP per Capita Growth Post-Intervention



Hypothesis test results:

μ_1 : Mean of Growth Pre

μ_2 : Mean of Growth Post

$\mu_1 - \mu_2$: Difference between two means

$H_0 : \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$

$H_A : \mu_1 - \mu_2 < 0$

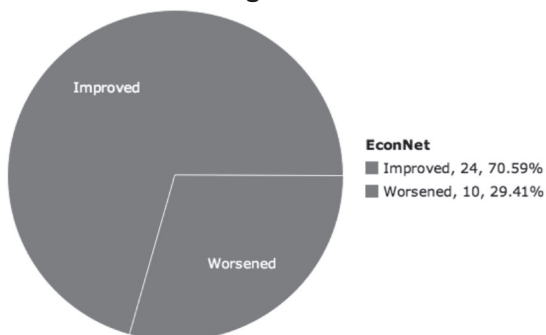
(with pooled variances)

Figure 6

Difference	Sample Diff.	Std. Err.	DF	T-Stat	P-Value
$\mu_1 - \mu_2$	-25.851328	6.5553596	67	-3.9435407	<0.0001

The data in Figure 6 shows that there is, in fact, statistically significant data to reject the hypothesis that US intervention does not affect the finances of the affected nation. The data shows that, on average, the nation that was the subject of the intervention fared almost 26 percent better, as far as GDP per Capita is concerned, in the ten years after the intervention, than it did in the ten years prior. These results are even further illustrated in Table 6 (below), where it can be seen that in over 70 percent of cases, a state that was the subject of intervention, experienced heightened economic growth. The p-value for this test came in at less than .0001. This indicates that there would be less than a .01 percent chance of obtaining these results if the means of the rates during the different periods were, in fact, the same. Given the data we have achieved enough data to reject that hypothesis.

Figure 7



It is important to note, however, that four nations did not have sufficient data to be input into the economics test (Libya 2011, Syria 1949, Fiji 1987, British Guiana 1964). Therefore, these nations could not be included in the subsequent chi-square test. Figures 8 and 9 show the actual values and expected values for the

amount of nations who would experience growth and decline in both areas given they had no impact on each other.

Figure 8

Actual	Dem Improved	Dem Worsened	Dem Same	Total
Econ Improved	10	11	3	24
Econ Worsened	2	5	3	10
Total	12	16	6	34

Figure 9

Expected	Dem Improved	Dem Worsened	Dem Same	Total
Econ Improved	8.47	11.29	4.24	24
Econ Worsened	3.53	4.71	1.76	10
Total	12	16	6	34

P=
0.9003074

The values were almost identical across both tables and indicate that how the US affects a nation with regards to its democracy has no impact on how successful the US is in altering the economic future of that nation. The p-value was over .9, indicating there would be over a 90 percent chance of obtaining these results given there was no impact and is not nearly significant enough data to imply any sort of correlation.

There is the aforementioned theory that permeates through much of academia that United States interventions are especially doomed to failure in the Muslim world, as the imposition of American values and interests run counter to those of Muslim nations. In Figures 10 and 11, the results of a chi-squared goodness-of-fit test are shown with the results of regime changes democratically in the Muslim world and the expected values based on statistical formulae. The results show no statistically significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis that US interventions are equally as effective in other parts of the world as they are in nations that have a population that is comprised of a majority of people of Muslim faith.

Figure 10

Actual	DemImproved	DemWorsened	DemSame	Total
Muslim	4	4	3	11
Non-Muslim	9	15	3	27
Total	13	19	6	38

Figure 11

Expected	DemImproved	DemWorsened	DemSame	Total
Muslim	3.76	5.5	1.74	11
Non-Muslim	9.24	13.5	4.26	27
Total	13	19	6	38

P=
0.439764229

Likewise, when a similar chi-squared test was run with regards to economic results in Muslim countries, similar results were achieved. Figures 12 and 13 show the actual and expected values for economic growth or decline and there is, again, no statistically significant data to show that the United States intervening has any more or less of an effect in Muslim countries than it would elsewhere. This would seem to fly in the face of the notion that the US is, more or less, clueless when it comes to regime change in the Muslim world. If one looks at the outcomes in that area, they would see the results one would expect and that are achieved are very much similar.

Figure 12

Actual	EconImproved	EconWorsened	Total
Muslim	7	2	9
Non-Muslim	17	8	25
Total	24	10	34

Figure 13

Expected	Econ Improved	Econ Worsened	Total
Muslims	6.35	2.65	9
Non-Muslims	17.65	6.35	25
Total	24	10	34

P= 0.580925553

Another one-sample t-test was performed on the same data. The same test used earlier with changes in the Polity democracy score was performed, but the data was split into groups based on whether or not the nation is a Muslim majority country. The results achieved, shown in Figure 14, show statistically insignificant data, consistent with those achieved in the chi-squared tests above, on both ends to reject the null hypothesis that US intervention has no effect on a nation democratically. This result is true both in and out of the Muslim world.

Hypothesis test results:

Group by: Muslim Maj

μ : Mean of DemScore Change

H_0 : $\mu = 0$

H_A : $\mu < 0$

Figure 14

Muslim Maj.	Sample Mean	Std. Err.	DF	T-Stat	P-Value
No	0.25	1.8094585	27	0.13816288	0.5544
Yes	0.090909091	1.9327538	10	0.047036043	0.5183

The United States, therefore, tends to create more economically viable nations that have murky futures when it comes to democracy. This is the only narrative that can be substantiated by the cases of US intervention since the conclusion of WWII. Any claims that the United States routinely installs radical, US-friendly authoritarians or sets the financial future of these “poor” nations back for years are not based in statistics. It is likely only the narrative of “spreading democracy” that is promoted by the government and seized upon by critics to make generalized claims that the US is unsuccessful in its stated democratic goals, and then jump to the conclusion that they are also failures economically, and spread their own narrative about US policy. As with most phenomena in life, facts often ruin perfectly good narratives. The United States policy of intervention is not an overall failure by any means, especially when it comes to finances, where it is especially efficient at promoting economic success. Neither, however, is it particularly effective at establishing democracies.

Conclusion

The United States has indeed had a mixed record when it comes to its foreign policy pursuits. Certain countries have been left in worse condition than when they started their efforts, and some efforts have absolutely sapped the Americans of key, vital resources militarily and monetarily. Many scholars in the aforementioned skeptics’ camp take these data points to try and establish that the US is almost unilaterally a failure when it intervenes abroad.

However, this study, looking at success in terms of the increase in democratic mechanisms, as defined by Polity IV, show that, in the short term, there is no basis to say that the US causes significant harm. The statistics also failed to provide data to suggest that nations suffer democratically. It cannot be said that the US is either an omnipotent force to bring prosperity, nor can it be said it brings turmoil, according to the data.

An assessment of US foreign policy, however, also includes an economic

component. That economic component paints a lighter picture of the US's capabilities. These data show that the US is successful when it comes to building stronger economies as it relates to GDP per capita growth, indicating a higher standard of living and greater economic output.

It can be seen that there are, statistically, no definitive failures in the US regime change data set after World War II in the short term. Therefore, the data is suggestive of Abrahamian's hypothesis on a larger scale. The US can be successful in the short term, but the driving force behind the perception of failure is that there are long-term considerations that are not addressed. Therefore, the results found would recommend that policy makers consider their willingness to dedicate structural support for many more than ten years after intervention to foster democratic and economic success into the future. It also suggests that the mere event of regime change initiation is not what drives failure, but rather the lack of institutional infrastructure, so skeptics should look beyond the overthrow of regimes for the cause of perceived instability.



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RATIONALLY IRRATIONAL: APPLYING THE RATIONAL ACTOR MODEL TO RIO DE JANEIRO'S POLICE-GANG CONFLICT

Amber Waltz

Abstract

Both gangs and police in Rio de Janeiro seemingly operate irrationally in an extended conflict, as it is highly unlikely that the state will make drug dealing legal, and it is also unlikely that gangs would be able to destroy the police through armed force. This article attempts to determine why favela gangs and police became and are still engaged in a conflict with what some see as an inevitable outcome, using the rational actor model to determine the motivations and strategies of each side. This article finds that because gangs understand their importance to Rio's society and depend on the income they receive through drug dealing, they know that the conflict will not result in the gang's total destruction and are willing to challenge the government's authority. On the other hand, although Rio de Janeiro has the power to completely destroy gangs in the state's favelas, it does not seek to do so; the government only seeks to decrease violence within favelas that fit within the wealthy citizens' imaginary of what the city of Rio de Janeiro is.

Introduction

In 2014, 582 people in the state of Rio de Janeiro were killed by the military police ("Em 2015, 571 pessoas foram mortas em operações policiais em São Paulo" 2015). Rio's long-lasting and far-reaching conflict emerged as violent drug-dealing gangs in the 1980s began to claim territorial zones within favelas, posing a risk to those who entered and lived in the favela and resulting in police retaliation against gangs (Morro dos Prazeres 2015). In recent years, the conflict has become more formally institutionalized through the Pacifying Police Units (UPP) Pacification program, in which the police developed

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targeted combat strategies to reclaim favelas from the gangs. Upon further consideration, it seems irrational that both gangs and police would engage in this conflict, as there is no realistic scenario in which favela gangs will defeat the state. Nor will the state legalize drug dealing. Furthermore, the state likely has enough resources to destroy favela gangs entirely, which would bring an immediate end to the conflict; however, it chooses not to do so. Therefore, this article attempts to determine why favela gangs and police became and are still engaged in a conflict that could have already ended if the state had mobilized all of its resources.

I find that because gangs understand their importance to Rio's civil society and depend on the income they receive through drug dealing, they realize that they cannot be totally destroyed and are willing to challenge the government's authority. On the other hand, although Rio de Janeiro has the power to completely destroy gangs in the state's favelas, it does not seek to. The government only seeks to decrease violence within favelas that are a part of the wealthy citizens' imaginary of the city. Furthermore, the destruction of gangs would actually be detrimental to the state, as it would lose a great number of citizenship services that are currently provided by gangs to those who live in favelas. Therefore, although this conflict will likely never be won by favela gangs, it is more preferable for both sides to fight than to not.

This topic is important to study because two actors will always rationally enter into a conflict given the information they have and their expected outcomes; therefore, in this seemingly irrational conflict, we must analyze how each side arrived at the conclusion to participate rather than concede. Perhaps after understanding the social and psychological factors at play in this conflict, we will be able to better understand how to take steps toward its resolution. Furthermore, analysis of this conflict could be telling of similar gang and police conflict around the world, particularly in the rest of Brazil and in Latin America. Arriving at peace in these situations can be made easier by total understanding of the causes of the conflict.

Literature Review

Throughout my research of the existing literature, I identified two schools of thought. The first claims that historical and systematic factors are the most important to explain the phenomenon of the gang-police conflict in Rio de Janeiro. The second claims that modern societal factors are stronger determinants of this conflict. I take a combination of their assumptions to suggest that the long-term historical/institutional assumptions create the modern societal conditions for gang-police conflict.

The first group of scholars I identified in my research was those who identify the historical and systematic factors that have contributed to favela gang formation and success. James Holston (2008) goes into depth about how citizenship is constructed in Brazil in several different sectors, including agriculture, immigration, and the favela. He points out that vulnerable Brazilians are often forced to assert their citizenship rights, as these rights are not always protected by the state. Gang members lead this fight for citizenship, both in the communist ideals they espouse (like in the case of Comando Vermelho) and the discourse of defending civil rights within the favela that they mobilize. Brodwyn Fischer (2008) also explains how economic poverty has become synonymous with a poverty of rights in Brazil, since the movement of modern citizenship in the mid-twentieth century excluded poor Brazilians, limiting their rights such that their citizenship was similar to that of illegal immigrants. Furthermore, Fernando Fernandes claims that favela gang members "suffer a triple stigma" due to their ethnicity, age and gender, and residence (2013, 220). He says that violence could potentially be reduced if the state stopped stigmatizing this population and instead adopted a more inclusive strategy to empower these youth.

The second school of thought I identified were those who identified the specific modern societal conditions that have allowed for gang success. John Hagedorn (1999) identifies why some gangs become institutionalized, and points to coordination within prisons, the easy trade of cocaine, and racial identification as key factors to the institutionalization of Rio gangs. Hagedorn claims that this is a global phenomenon within gangs that is the result of the polarization of wealth and inequality. Furthermore, M. J. Wolff (2015) claims that the social and political conditions in Rio de Janeiro have created a specifically vulnerable climate with weak governability that leads favela residents to align with drug gangs rather than the state. Wolff points out that a lack of a governmental presence in the Rio favelas, as well as extremely violent police tactics, make favela residents more sympathetic to local gangs than to the auspices of the state, which in turn makes gangs more powerful. Enrique Arias and Corinne Rodrigues also explain that gangs respond to governmental neglect by offering a "myth of personal security" (2006, 1) within the favela through governing and preventing crime within it. Enrique Arias (2006) also points out that, due to corruption within the government, favela gangs have significant ties to political and legal institutions that provide them protection and perpetuate their existence.

These two schools of thought help us to understand that historical/institutional and societal factors that allow gangs to operate are in constant



interaction with each other. This article is written with the understanding that favela gangs are both victims of a system that has historically oppressed their communities, as well as manipulative of this environment to achieve their goals. As such, gangs find power in the disempowerment that affects their communities. These scholars provide a context for me to understand how gangs operate; the purpose of this article, then, is to analyze why both gangs and the state have continued to engage in a conflict and why they choose to do so in the specific way that they do.

Theoretical Framework

Building off of the contributions of these authors, I use the rational actor model (RAM) to understand the motivations behind each side's engagement in this conflict. Graham T. Allison's rational actor model does not seek to identify the outcome of a conflict, but the process, explaining why some states become involved in conflicts that seem irrational (Levy and Thompson 2011, 163). This theory focuses on goals, strategies, estimation of consequences and uncertainty to understand how and why an actor becomes involved in conflict (Allison and Zelikow 1999, 18). RAM assumes that no actor is irrational, but makes the best choices it can with the information available. To perform this kind of analysis, it is necessary to determine the motivations and strategies of the Rio de Janeiro government and favela gangs.

Mary Kaldor's (1999) theory of New Wars is also crucial to my analysis, as favela gangs are non-traditional actors of war and fulfill the new methods of combat which Kaldor describes. Kaldor differentiates between "old" and "new" wars, claiming that modern wars are not based off of the same logics and strategies that they previously were. Kaldor explains that new wars are heavily based on "labels [...] relat[ing] to an idealized nostalgic representation of the past," and that they result from economic decline and political corruption (1999, 5-7). Furthermore, new wars are fought differently than old wars, in that they primarily involve civilians rather than soldiers, who do not follow established rules of engagement or use uniforms (1999, 8).

Therefore, Kaldor's theory asserts that new wars are a product of identity politics that can result from economic or political oppression. In analyzing the conflict between the Rio government and favela gangs, we must understand it not as a traditional war, but a new one that does not abide by official rules and is sparked by inequality. The poverty and lack of access to rights that have existed in favelas since their conception has led to the identity-based gangs the state must now fight to preserve a monopoly of violence.

Methodology

Throughout my research, I used sources from databases in order to determine the motivations and strategies of both actors in this conflict, attempting to incorporate primary sources when they were available. I primarily used Brazilian sources, in order to access the most culturally-immersed documents and firsthand reflections on the conflict. My strategy, therefore, was to review existing scholarly literature and popular media to examine the motivating factors and strategies behind the Rio police and gang conflict. Through examining government and gang perspectives, I attempt to identify the variables which the RAM model distinguishes as essential to any rational decision-making action: the goals and objectives of both actors, the possible decisions available, the consequences of those decisions and the ultimate choice (Allison and Zelikow 1999, 18). In this case, I examine the choices made to determine the goals and objectives of each actor.

One of the challenges I faced in my research was the difficulty to find official, published views on this subject from both the government and gangs. As this conflict is a very controversial subject among Brazilian citizens, the government must be cautious about releasing any official views on the topic, and is therefore unlikely to reveal the factors analyzed in RAM in an official publication. Likewise, as gangs do not usually publish official statements or hold conferences on their official views, it was necessary for me to look to informal sources of information in my application of the RAM model. Limiting myself to using official sources would prevent my complete understanding of a conflict in which non-traditional, unofficial actors (such as gangs) are involved. This conflict is heavily based in social relations and involves civil society – it occurs in residential areas in favelas, not on a battlefield. The nature of this conflict, as such, requires analysis of informal sources rather than official press releases.

Therefore, I analyze cultural artifacts such as websites and music, which are essential to understanding the way that each side of this conflict presents itself to mainstream society. To these ends, I applied critical discourse analysis to popular opinions contained within news articles and interviews that may be revealing of attitudes of each side of the conflict. Teun A. van Dijk (1993) explains that critical discourse analysis within international relations is important to understanding the messages conveyed in interaction (such as speeches, cultural events or interviews). This involves analyzing the specific word choices or messages that actors use to represent themselves. For example, the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section of the UPP



website may not be the most official source of information from the organization, but it does reveal the image and information that the organization seeks to present to the public. In using such a source, I access the popular image and understanding of the organization, which allows me to analyze how the organization positions itself within society.

Clearly, it would have been impossible for me to cover all of the popular sources available in Brazilian society on this subject; the police and gang conflict has almost become a part of Rio culture and is present in many cultural representations. However, Allison and Zelikow determine that, within RAM, we should conceive of each actor as a unified whole that acts as one (1999, 24). Therefore, I attempted to synthesize a comprehensive representation of what I found in the literature and presented it as the best representation of reality I could offer.

As such, this article is not an attempt to compare the official statements of the government and gangs of Rio de Janeiro, but to offer a societal and cultural analysis of the social factors within this conflict that have allowed it to endure for so long. To this analysis, I also bring my personal understanding of this conflict from my year living in Rio de Janeiro. My data derive from both my own experiences in favela and non-favela spaces, as well as the experiences of the Brazilian citizens that I met. Given the tension and violence between these two worlds that occurs every day, this topic is loaded with emotional weight regardless of whom you talk to; however, I try to remain unbiased and present my most impartial understanding of this conflict.

My sample includes all favelas within the city of Rio de Janeiro (although I will not explicitly analyze all of them), as well as the Baixada Fluminense. It was not necessary that I collected data from every favela within Rio de Janeiro to achieve the objective of my research, as the main differentiation that was important to note was in the experience of Zona Sul favelas and those favelas not in Zona Sul. I could therefore consider these as two groups of variables to convey the realities of this conflict.

It is important that the reader understands the geography of Rio favelas in order to fully comprehend this article. The Zona Sul (South Zone) area of Rio de Janeiro is the city that foreigners and tourists envision when they imagine drinking a coconut on the smooth sands of the Ipanema beach; however, there are favelas sprinkled throughout this region, which leads to the sharp inequality within shared spaces both in the favela and on the asphalt for which Rio de Janeiro is characteristically known. The favelas in Zona Sul are wealthier and have better services than other favelas outside of this area, largely because of their proximity to business and their geographi-

cal inclusion within the wealthiest Zone in the city. Individuals who live in these favelas often have better living circumstances and civil protections than in other favelas, as violence in Zona Sul favelas not only threatens those within the favela, but threatens to spill over into wealthy Brazilian society. Therefore, while Zona Sul favelas are poor, favelas in other Zones (primarily in the North and West) are poorer and have less access to services (Zaluar 2012, 13); we must not understand "favela" in Rio de Janeiro as an "ideal type," but as a plural term with several different meanings (Pretecelle and Valladares 2000, 481-2).

Analysis

Government RAM

The primary motivating factor behind the government's involvement in this conflict is to protect the state monopoly on the legitimate use of force, as the government must represent authority and control to fulfill the role of the state. Mary Kaldor explains that, "as war became the exclusive province of the state, so the growing destructiveness of war against other states was paralleled by a process of growing security at home" (1999, 5). Organized crime within favelas that engendered violence between gangs and residents thus threatened the legitimacy of the state by decreasing this domestic security. Therefore, the Rio government engages in this conflict because the alternative (not engaging in it) would contradict its very purpose as a legitimate government.

The UPP, or Pacification Police, was thus established in 2008 as the government's initiative to engage in this conflict through targeting and occupying specific favelas. The UPP states as its mission:

The objective of the Pacification Police is the taking back of territories before dominated by ostensibly armed criminal groups and establish the Democratic State of Law. Give back to the local population public peace and tranquility, necessary to the exercise and integral development of citizenship. Contribute to break the logic of "war" existent in the state of Rio de Janeiro (UPP, "Perguntas Frequentes").

This organization therefore defines itself as primarily concerned with controlling violence, and determines the presence of public peace as the most important factor to citizenship. In claiming that the state must "take back" the favela in order to "give back" citizenship, the UPP implies that gangs have taken away the right to citizenship within the favela. According to my analy-

sis, however, this rhetoric seems mistaken; favela gangs have actually provided a great number of citizenship services that the state has been neglectful of in the past. We can see here that, whether true or false, the state perceives itself as the legitimate actor within the favela and seeks to portray itself as such to the Brazilian public.

The UPP has adopted an infamously violent strategy in its attempt to realize peace within the favela. The UPP sets up its pacification in four phases:

Tactical Intervention, developed preferentially through groups of special operations (BOPE and BPChoque) that realize tactical actions for the effective recuperation of territorial control; Stabilization, which contemplates the tactical actions and enclosure to prepare the terrain for implementation; Implementation of the UPP, in which specifically designated policemen trained for this function occupy the locale; Evaluation and Monitoring (UPP, “Perguntas Frequentes”)

The government’s strategy in this conflict is thus to mobilize highly-trained and well-equipped police to engage in conflict with favela gangs, subsequently occupying the favela and maintaining a presence to confront day-to-day violence. These special operations groups, such as the Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais (BOPE), frequently utilize war-like rhetoric. The front page of BOPE’s website features a high-action video of stealthy police operations alongside slogans like “Force and Honor!” “Go and Win!” and “Mission given, mission complete!” (BOPE, “BOPE”). Through this battle-like rhetoric, the BOPE police unit refers to favela gangs as an other (from mainstream Brazilian society) that must be destroyed in order to defend “force and honor.” Thus, part of the police’s strategy is to ostracize favela gangs in order to establish the state presence as the legitimate one.

It is also important to note the incoherence between the purposes of the coordinating police units. While the UPP explicitly states that its purpose is not to stop drug trafficking and criminality, though doing so may sometimes be necessary to achieve its objectives (UPP, “Perguntas Frequentes”), the BOPE boasts about the drug dealers it has taken down and large quantities of cocaine it has sacked without explicitly explaining how these actions further the UPP’s objectives (BOPE, “News”). The official motivation and strategy of the different coordinating units within the governmental side of this conflict therefore appear to be out of sync. The vague language of the UPP here implies that it will do whatever is necessary to reclaim the favela, which it may sometimes perceive as taking down the largest drug dealers

(through organizations like BOPE), even though it states that destroying favela gangs is not its goal.

Along these lines, the UPP has been known to utilize fear tactics to take back the monopoly of violence within the favela. Residents have faced high levels of insecurity in their neighborhoods as an increasing amount of innocent residents have been killed by crossfire or arbitrarily deemed suspicious by the police (Vigna 2015). Some of those who live within pacified favelas claim that the violence that used to be controlled by favela gangs who would guard their territories has now become out of control, as gunfights can break out between police and gangs anywhere at any given time (Coutinho 2015). Thus, although the UPP states in its mission that it wants to reestablish public peace and break the logic of war in Rio's society, it has actually contributed to the logic of violence and war within the favela through using fear tactics and occupations that affect not only gangs, but favela residents, as well. In fact, the UPP police units' response to favela gangs has largely evoked a logic of war that might not have been necessary to ending gang activity in favelas.

Although the UPP police forces practice a strategy of violence and coercion, the UPP Social program is a government initiative to improve state-society relations within the favela. While social programs that address the inequalities that led to gang formation in the first place are necessary to achieving the UPP's goals, this program fails to address the core of these issues. UPP Social does not attempt to eliminate the root causes of poverty in favelas, but focuses on surface-level solutions for social tension, such as creating public forums for citizen-government dialogue and recreation centers for children (Henriques and Ramos n.d.). Borges dos Santos notes that UPP Social is characterized by a "lack of political power and fragile institutionalization," emphasizing initiatives of participation "without guaranteeing the inclusivity of the public sphere and effectiveness of the capacity of the insertion of [favela] societal interests in the public agenda" (n.d., 11). The government has thus promoted programs to make the favela a better place to live without comprehensively mobilizing public policies against the inequality and poverty that led to violence in the favela in the first place. The government's strategy in the conflict against favela gangs is quite contradictory, as it simultaneously mobilizes both coercion and surface-level social programs, neither of which seems to address the root causes of gang violence in the favela.

In turn, the government attempts to persuade outsiders of its legitimacy in this conflict by advertising its social initiatives while leaving out its



actual violent involvement in the conflict against gangs. The UPP website solely shows images of its UPP Social programs, even though the police unit is not actually affiliated with the social programs, and the objective of the UPP and its visible presence around the city is to take back the state monopoly on violence (UPP, “Photos”). In this way, the government presents itself as primarily providing social services rather than engaging in a violent conflict. This rhetoric contrasts that used by favela gangs in associating the favela social programs with the UPP (and thus the conflict), conveying the message that the government brings real social growth to the favela, as well as increasing governmental legitimacy in providing services to the areas it has historically excluded from city planning. Therefore, the government attempts to legitimize its actions (both past actions in neglecting the favela and present in violently attacking favela gangs) by creating social programs for the favela and emphasizing these within its advertisements and official materials as its best work; however, these programs are not the true motivation for the government to engage in the conflict, and the government still mobilizes public policy that socially oppresses the favela.

Such contradictions in the government’s strategy are evident in public policies that deliberately limit the inclusion of certain individuals from public spheres within Rio. For example, the “Operation Summer,” directed by the Military Police (under which the UPP operates) has mobilized a campaign to create “the most democratic public leisure that exists in the world” (“PM vai montar 17 pontos de bloqueio a onibus nos acessos às praias” 2011) by securing the beaches of Zona Sul, the city’s most touristic area. Part of the Operation includes mobilizing 1,000 policemen to set up 17 stations within the city that check for children under 11 years and 11 months, bringing any unaccompanied minors to shelters. The Rio government set up these checkpoints along the beach and in some of Rio’s poorest favelas, such as the Baixada Fluminense. This policy thus aims to block “dangerous” youth residents of specifically targeted geographic locations from public spaces in an attempt to protect these spaces from violence. Therefore, although the government has created social programs for the favela through UPP Social, it has specifically targeted the favela and excluded certain residents from using public space in order to ensure the security of wealthier Brazilians and tourists, deeming these the priority populations it must protect.

The UPP also prioritizes wealthy Brazilians in deciding where to set up its occupations. The UPP has only been established in 38 of Rio’s 763 favelas (UPP, “UPP”). Most of the beginning projects took place in the wealthy Zona Sul area, where adjacent neighborhoods like Botafogo and Copacabana

house wealthy or middle-class families who complain about insecurity spilling over from their favela neighbors. Pardo and Inzunza (2014) report in an interview:

“The UPPs do not reach [even] 10 percent of the favelas, even though the propaganda makes it seem like they do. In reality, their location illustrates the idea the Rio de Janeiro government has in mind for the city,” said Representative Marcelo Freixo, a former mayoral candidate, who says the authorities are focused on improving security in the southern region and points connecting to places like the airport and the port.

The specific establishment of UPP presence in certain favelas, which are not necessarily the most violent or criminal favelas, reflects the government’s strategy to protect the spaces most important to its perceived image of what Rio is. In this way, the government’s strategy displaces the problem of violence within the favela to areas which it does not necessarily prioritize as part of its imagined identity, which are less visible to wealthy Brazilians and tourists. We can see this strategy in action through the massive fence the government put up to block the favela Mare on Avenida Brasil (the highway that leads from the international airport into the city), which served to displace the violent “crackland” area away from the road further into the favela (Pardo and Inzunza 2014). The dissolution of crime that occurred within this area as a result of drug dealing and gang activity was not a priority for the state of Rio de Janeiro, but rather, the displacement of this violence away from areas that are frequented by wealthy citizens and tourists.

It is important to note, therefore, that the government’s strategy in the conflict has been marked by specific, targeted involvements. The UPP only promises to promote the end of violence, not the social foundations needed to establish a flourishing social environment within the favela; and it only promises to provide this to the favelas that it includes within its plan. Within RAM, the Rio government is motivated to resolve violence in areas it deems important to the city’s external image, not to address the root causes of violence in favelas, which explains why the government and UPP act in the way that they do.

Favela Gang RAM

One of the primary reasons that favela gangs became involved in the conflict is economic motivations. The business of drug dealing is an important motivating factor that leads individuals to join favela gangs, as they



can achieve a higher degree of economic security and avoid the unemployment that often comes with the stigmatization of being a young man from a favela (Zaluar 2012, 9). A favela drug dealer said in an interview with Pardo and Inzunza, “You get into this business by necessity; there’s no other way,” (2014). There are very few job opportunities for individuals from the favela due to cultural fear of favelados (a usually derogatory term for favela residents), so many men join gangs due to a lack of any other good options for income. Just the cocaine business of one dealer (Nem of Rocinha) supported the employment of 1,000 people (Glenny 2015).

The status that comes along with being involved in a gang is also a motivating factor for boys from the favela to join a gang; they become part of the wealthiest and most respected among their peers when young men join gangs (Aranha 2012). Favela gangs could not survive without the income they earn from drug dealing, and must therefore fight back against the police in order to ensure their survival as a unit. The alternative to this decision (not engaging in the conflict) would mean surrendering to the police, which may mean giving up drug dealing, gang membership and their livelihoods; as such, favela gangs primarily engage in this conflict in order to preserve their means of income and status.

This motivating factor is also a critical part of gang strategy in this conflict; money gained from drug trafficking means that gangs are able to finance a conflict in the first place. One of the most important ways that gang members obtain arms is through purchasing them from corrupt police officers, who are often low-paid and sell their arms to make extra cash (Monken 2012). Additionally, approximately 47 percent of weapons used by gang members are trafficked from the United States and bought from Paraguayan traffickers (Bargent 2015). According to Zaluar (2012), the ability to protect oneself and to be disposed to use the arm one carries at all times is entrenched in gang understandings and logics, which has meant that this conflict has been extremely violent. The favela gang thus uses the money it gains through illegal drug trafficking to buy illegally-trafficked guns, and mobilizes the strategy of being disposed to use these weapons to fight against police at all times.

Furthermore, the gang embodies an internal culture of risk which makes individuals within it more susceptible to engaging in violence. The majority of people who join gangs are in the demographic of young men (15-19) of color with low socioeconomic status (Fernandes 2013). Furthermore, Brazil has one of the highest homicide rates in the world (at 25.2/100,000 inhabitants), and 89.8 percent of those homicides are men (United Nations

Office on Drugs and Crime 2013). The average number of youth homicides (ages 14-19) in Rio reaches 289/100,000 inhabitants, 70 percent of these related to "drug trafficking and other related conflicts" (Zaluar 2012, 15). The life expectancy for most of the young men who join gangs is low, and they recognize this as they join; these individuals often see their life paths as a trade-off between being wealthy and being guaranteed a long life. The "nothing-to-lose" mentality that comes from poverty and short life expectancy means that these young men will be more likely to engage in conflict and risky behavior (Aranha 2012). Additionally, Zaluar (2012, 20) finds in her study that the favela harbors a culture of hyper-masculinity, in which carrying a firearm is seen as a sign of manliness and those who join a gang succeed in providing themselves protection in the local conflict; if one doesn't join the gang, he risks being attacked by both sides within this conflict. The "enlistment" strategy of favela gangs, therefore, appears to be one which capitalizes on the vulnerability of young men in poverty.

Violence and mistreatment from the police also motivate favela residents to organize against the police and align with gangs (Rodrigues and Endelmond 2014), which means that those joining the gang likely agree with the political conflict the gang engages in. A community organizer of the favela Rocinha said:

"Before, a child could walk alone in the street without fear. Today, that's impossible. We just don't understand how this situation is possible considering that, since the 'pacification' of the favela, there are now policemen everywhere" (Rodrigues and Endelmond 2014).

A communal mistrust of the police therefore aligns the favela as a whole against the police and likely leads to the recruitment of more gang members. This is characteristic of Kaldor's (1999) idea of new wars, in that the favela gang attracts new members by identifying with a common struggle of inequality and failure of the government.

This communal mistrust of the police is not only a shared experience within the favela, but one that has been popularized in the music genre of Brazilian funk, largely popular within favelas. The widely popular funk song "Rap da Felicidade (Eu Só Quero É Ser Feliz)" (translating to "Rap of Happiness (I Just Want to Be Happy)"), for example, conveys the sentiment which many people living within the favela share:

Fun today, we can't even think about it
Because even at our parties, they come to humiliate us
There in the plaza where everything was so normal



Now local violence has become fashionable.
Innocent people who don't have anything to do with it
Are today losing their right to live...
They changed the presidency, a new hope,
I suffered in the storm, now I want the calm.
The people have force, they need to discover
If they don't do anything, we'll do everything here (Cidinho e Doca
1994).

This rhetoric emphasizes the state's role in bringing insecurity to the favela. This song also shows how a political fight against the police and state has become part of the social culture of the favela in two identifiable ways. First, it refers to frustration from police monitoring of baile funks, or favela-organized parties which serve as the primary social event for young people within the favela, which shows how omni-present the police has become in monitoring all aspects of occupied favela life. Furthermore, this song contains a deliberate call for action at the end of this excerpt, in which people create their own protection without a need for the police or the state. The artist of this highly popular song (Cidinho e Doca) seems to urge favela residents to identify as from the favela before identifying as from Brazil in a more general sense, and to organize and fight for their own interests within the favela whether the government will help them or not. The inclusion of anti-government (and, thus, pro-gang) political values in spheres of favela youth pleasure works to incorporate the gang as defending a collective, imagined "us." It also makes the imagined experience of living in the favela synonymous with a struggle against the police.

In this struggle, favela gangs do not only provide material protection for their favela communities, but social protection, as well. Government neglect and police brutality are a part of favela gangs' motivation and organization, in that favela gangs often provide the social services that the state does not due to historical gang ideology. Glenny (2015) reports from an interview that Nem, the gang leader of Rocinha, provided an integral role as,

in effect, mayor, police chief and director of the chamber of commerce for a community estimated at 100,000 residents... "The food baskets and the support we gave to extracurricular school activities, such as the Thai boxing or capoeira classes, were all accounted for as part of our business expenses," [Nem] explained. "But the burials, prescription costs or if anyone who couldn't afford it needed gas,

these were all extra payments.'

Favela gangs thus fulfill governmental roles within the favela and flexibly respond to the needs of their communities. This is an inheritance of the communist nature of super-gangs like the Comando Vermelho (Red Command) of the 1980s, a group which formed alliances between common criminals and communists who were imprisoned at the same time by the military dictatorship. The political prisoners inspired criminals to politicize their work, creating a gang that had both criminal and political knowledge and strategies ("Red Command"). The communist nature of this powerful gang has meant that part of the inherited identity and motivation of today's gangs is taking care of their communities and providing services (Ramos 2013). Through gangs' support of their communities, more favela residents are sympathetic with gangs, and gangs also become legitimized within society by taking altruistic action; gang motivation to provide for their communities thus becomes part of their strategy in the conflict, as well.

Furthermore, favela gangs have a degree of uncertainty in just how far the UPP will go in this conflict. Different units within the government's initiative for the UPP and its associated parts have taken significantly varied approaches; the BOPE is extremely violent, the UPP police are less violent (but still use forceful tactics), and the UPP Social organize social programs to help the communities. The way that a gang responds, therefore, is specific to the unit that it is dealing with. A drug dealer, in an interview with Pardo and Inzunza (2014), explained, "When the police come, we give them something. When the BOPE comes... we have to escape." Part of this reactive strategy is to hire *fogueteiros*, or lookouts who set off firecrackers or other signals to announce the arrival of the police (Pardo and Inzunza 2014). Gangs have to improvise their reaction to the arrival of the UPP based off of which specific unit it is dealing with, and even then gang members may not know how violent or demanding the individuals within the approaching police unit may be. The previous knowledge that gang members may have on certain individuals or divisions of the police is critical to gang response and strategy.

Therefore, it appears that the motivation and strategy of favela gangs in this conflict are inextricably linked, in that they adopt their strategy from their historical and current motivations and are always responsive to whatever circumstances they are facing. Gang members take care of their community because it is part of their credence, and gain more supporters and legitimacy in the process; they fight against the police's attempt to restrict the drug trade and are able to finance this fight through the money gained through trafficking; and are motivated to fight due to their frustration with



the police and state government, which also fuels community support and more recruits. We can understand the favela gangs' involvement in this conflict as mobilizing all of their available resources to defend their economic livelihoods, simultaneously using economic, cultural and social tools to gain weapons, popular support and members.

Conclusion

Through this analysis, we see the rational motivations and strategies behind the involvement of both the government and gangs in Rio's civil conflict. Although this conflict seems to have an obvious outcome (favela gangs will never realistically have enough power to overcome the power of the state), the motivating factors behind each actor provoke each side to act in the way it does. Favela gang members are primarily fighting to maintain their incomes, whereas the state government is fighting to create the city of its imaginary and influence favela residents and gangs into recognizing the state's authority. Though the state government has a much higher chance of winning this conflict because of its material power, the stakes are much greater for favela gangs, as their livelihoods are threatened by state occupation.

Furthermore, the state government is quite unclear in its intentions within the favela; although it says that it is not attempting to stop drug trafficking within the favela in engaging in this conflict, part of its explicit strategy is to demobilize the most powerful actors in drug trafficking before it occupies the area with a UPP unit. It seems that the government is mostly out to "make an example" out of the individuals who had demonstrated to the rest of the community that they were working above the powers of the state. As these are usually the individuals responsible for organizing the gang's social services to the community – such as the head drug-dealer of Rocinha, Nem – the government relays its message not only to gangs but to the general favela community in going after powerful gang figures.

The government's strategy implies that it is attempting to obtain control through inspiring fear, both in hunting individuals in the way I just described and through excessively violent tactics that are sometimes directed at residents. These coercive tactics are a powerful way of showing the entire favela community that the state has arrived to the favela and will be taking control. Again, it is important to emphasize that the state has only mobilized such programs in favelas that have the potential to affect the populations that the state prioritizes (which is wealthy and tourist).

However, the government simply fuels the fire of opposition from

favela gangs and residents through this strategy. As we can see in the cultural popularization of messages against police brutality in funk music, some favela residents feel that they were better off without the occupying presence of the state, which often makes them favor favela gangs. A decline in government support also opens up a wealth of resources to favela gangs; since gangs are fighting on their own turf, those who side with favela gangs are likely to provide resources like membership or use of space, among other potentially valuable capital. The government's strategy has therefore weakened its resources and popular support by treating favela residents with coercion instead of inclusion and integration.

If the government does not adjust its strategy, it may have to confront the consequences of a neglected, ostracized, angry favela population in the future, in an even more violent conflict. The current gang/police conflict has so far only served to push violence into poorer areas, which is contributing to the further development of two distinct Rio de Janeiros (wealthy and poor) within the city limits. According to Kaldor's theory of new wars, inequality leads to conflict, which means that the Rio government may face more conflict in the future if it continues to contribute to perpetuated inequality. Therefore, the Rio government should seek out meaningful alternative strategies and motivations in this conflict to truly secure sustainable progress away from societal violence. For instance, if the state government were to shift its motivations towards creating a more equitable climate within the favela and in Rio in general, we would see an enormous change in its strategy for taking back the monopoly of violence. As the conflict currently stands, the government is not working for sustainable progress and appears to believe that perpetual fighting and occupation are more strategic to its priorities than seeking out ways to eradicate the conditions that created violence within favelas in the first place.



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Clocks and Clouds is an American University undergraduate research journal that publishes articles on the cutting edge of political science, international studies, and public policy. The journal is meant to add a voice to the intellectual dialogue both within the American University community and in broader academia. Our name comes from the work of philosopher Karl Popper, where clouds are a metaphor for the disorderly and irregular in social science while clocks represent the predictable and rational. By providing a venue for top undergraduate research, *Clocks and Clouds* aims to find the clocks amidst the clouds.

The journal is organized as an independent student-run joint venture between the School of Public Affairs, the School of International Service, the School of Public Affairs Undergraduate Council, and the School of International Service Undergraduate Council. American University undergraduates of any major may submit work for publication and will have their work assessed through a double-blind peer review and revision process. *Clocks and Clouds* publishes one issue per semester in print and electronic formats and appoints staff and editorial reviewers for semester terms.

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