Ramerican Political Science Review

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2019

Ramerican Political Science Review (Vol. 4, 2019)

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Letter from the Department of Political Science

The Department of Political Science at Virginia Commonwealth University is proud to present Volume 4 of *The Ramerican Political Science Review*. This journal presents some of the best undergraduate work produced by students at VCU during the 2018-2019 academic year.

Political science students ask normatively important questions impacting politics at home and abroad, and the five papers featured in this volume are examples of the extensive research and the systematic investigations conducted in order to begin answering those questions.

Questions about the strength of democracy abound, both domestically and globally, as do questions about the emergence of violence in democratic nations. **Anna Connor** explores the relationship between activist violence and support for, or opposition to, social movements in the United States, while **Corey Brocke** recounts the use of violence by independence groups seeking autonomy in Spain.

As citizens of democracies and non-democracies adapt to emerging technologies, like social media platforms, political scientists continue to ask questions about the effect of new media and mass media alike**. James Grubb** investigates trends in campaign strategy and election results since the adoption of social media, while **Caitlyn Page** examines whether the traditional, mainstream media's coverage of immigration impacts public opinion.

Ella Bronaugh captures political scientists' interests in both areas – threats to democracy and the advent of social media – by presenting a normative case against precedent-setting internet censorship measures in the United Kingdom.

We hope that these articles not only help to provide better understanding of relevant questions concerning the state of our politics, at home and abroad, but also that they help inspire new questions for our readers. Furthermore, we hope that the work of this volume's researchers will encourage other students to conduct their own political science research, and to submit it for consideration to *The Ramerican Political Science Review* next year, whether exploring American politics, international relations, comparative politics, public policy or political theory.

While the journal is supported by the Department of Political Science and the contributions of our alumni, the final product is the work of a student editorial board that solicits and reviews manuscripts in a double-blind fashion. Over forty submissions were received and reviewed by the editors. The researchers featured in this issue went through a "revise and resubmit" process, wherein they made content and style changes that were requested by the editorial staff. The articles were then edited once more by the editorial staff prior to publication. This final product is a testament to their immense efforts during the summer months. The Department of Political Science would, therefore, like to thank this year's editorial board:

Moesha Baptiste, Class of 2020
Darby Olivia Lindsay, Class of 2020
Kathryn Rowe, Class of 2021
Gregory Smith, Class of 2020
Carl Warf, Class of 2019

The Department of Political Science would also like to thank Dr. Alexandra Reckendorf for advising our student editorial board as they worked through the process of critiquing submissions and formatting this journal.

VCU Department of Political Science
October 2019

THE EFFECT OF VIOLENCE ON SOCIAL MOVEMENT SUPPORT

Anna Connor, Virginia Commonwealth University

Abstract

In determining the legitimacy of specific actions by social movements that may work as tactics against their opposition as well as draw support from individuals, it is increasingly important to distinguish the implementation of non-violent versus violent action as fuel for a given movement. The usage of violence by social movements and the implications upon support from individuals who are not active participants in the movement may be noted in a movement's attempt to maximize support from inactive individuals. In conjunction with a survey that sought to find correlations between the usage of violence and nonviolence with favorability of Antifa, the study finds that the usage of violence by social movements may ultimately work against the garnishing of individual support. The movement's engagement in nonviolent actions would promote the movement in a more favorable manner, and support the legitimacy of a call for reform and resolution of issues. The generalizability of the experiment's outcomes opens pathways for further research to be completed in different contexts, with possible intersections of other variables such as identity and social history.

Introduction

Social movements are used as a vehicle to bring about political and/or social change, and often rely on individuals to help them achieve their goals. There exists a wide variety of tactics that social movements can draw upon to bring attention to their causes, and the methods that they choose to utilize can have an adverse impact on their levels of support from the wider populace. Although an increasing number of strategies rely on nonviolent approaches, some groups still

employ violence to bring visibility to their cause (Nepstad 2013). This paper seeks to understand how the use of violent tactics by social movements against opposing groups of individuals can affect their current level of support among individuals who are not active participants in the movement. In addition, the experiment will test the level of future support for and participation in the social movement.

The data yielded from the experiment holds normative importance in the study of political science because it will allow social movements to better understand the actions that they should choose when attempting to maximize support for their cause. The generalizability of the results allows for a broad application of the findings across a range of cases, as many such movements exist and can incorporate the appropriate actions into their campaigns to increase their legitimacy. Additionally, the willingness of individuals to support violence can be indicative of growing tensions centered around a movement's reform attempts and signifies that the state should seek to resolve the selected issues or face increasing extremism.

Literature Review

Theories of Social Movements

Social movements are defined as "rational, purposeful, and organized actions" undertaken by individuals acting together to express their own interests as part of the political process (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 14). In order to overcome the collective action problem, social movements rely on their ability to mobilize a variety of actors to achieve their goals. The burgeoning number of social movements internationally has sparked explorations as to how and why social movements form, operate, and succeed, generating the school of thought known as Social Movement Theory. Social Movement Theory is comprised of many competing subsections: three primary theories, Resource Mobilization

Theory (RMT), Political Opportunity Structures, and Relative Deprivation Theory will be briefly discussed.

The first of these theories, Resource Mobilization Theory, concentrates on the operations of the actors and how they "acquire resources and mobilize support" (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 15). Grievances are considered necessary but not sufficient; the formation instead relies on the ability of social movement organizations to generate potential supporters and mobilize their labor and money into a successful network to pursue their goals (Golhasani 2016). Capacity for mobilization often rests on a cost-benefit analysis wherein tactical choices are made by individuals as to whether or not they will participate and where the movement will focus in terms of distribution of incentives (Della Porta and Diani 2006). It leans on rational choice theory, which can invite critique on the grounds that it overlooks culture and identity roles and how they are interwoven into daily life (Melucci 1996).

The second theory, that of Political Opportunity Structures, analyzes how changing contexts enhance or discourage social movements and activism (Watanabe 2007). Sidney Tarrow (1983) incorporated the role of external political processes into the study of protest cycles by examining the level of openness of formal political structures. In short, the premise rests on the belief that exogenous factors affect the social movements ability to advance their prospects, with the key recognition being that these prospects are context-dependent (Meyer 2004). However, the inclusion of a wide variety of variables can limit the parsimonious nature of the theory, thus reducing the generalizability of the theory (Della Porta and Diani 2006).

Relative Deprivation Theory relies on the judgement of one group that they are worse off as compared to another group, which can lead to the rise of a social movement (Smith and Pettigrew 2015). Under this theory, people join social movements once their expectations have outgrown their material situation, causing

them to bond with like-minded individuals. The emphasis is on the social solidarity of movement mobilization, with the actors working to achieve a collective end (Gurney and Tierney 1982). Problems surrounding this theory typically arise from a lack of specificity in regard to which factors are perceived and which are objective, leading to disagreements on the conceptualization of the term (Gurney and Tierney 1982).

Social Movements and Nonviolence

Civil resistance, an umbrella term that covers various types of nonviolent action, is comprised of "two bodies of literature" that have evolved in their own way (Nepstad 2013, 590). Sharon Nepstad (2013) claims that the study of civil resistance has long been parallel to social movement studies, but has witnessed a lack of convergence, particularly since many scholars treat nonviolence as a tactic and not its own theory of political power. Correspondence inference theory "posits that a person makes judgements about how to respond to an adversary" based on the actions of the adversary, and thus advantages nonviolent resistance (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008, 13). Maria Stephan and Erica Chenoweth argue that the crucialness of public support coupled with the reduced risk of associating with nonviolent movements leads individuals to side with nonviolent resistance campaigns, at least in regard to regime change (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008). Taken together, these two theories indicate that many social movements have weighed the social and political landscapes that they exist in and have decided that utilizing nonviolent methods would be the most tactically efficient. Therefore, it is necessary to first analyze the context of their decisions and then understand how these methods affected the support for their cause.

Much of the existing literature relates to conflicts between state and nonstate actors, to which the following research adheres. Gene Sharp (1973) promoted the use of strategic nonviolence as opposed to moral nonviolence by choosing to withhold power sources until the regime relented to the demands of

the movement. It was argued that the utilization of repressive means by the regime against nonviolent bystanders would increase support for the movement while simultaneously decreasing support for the regime (Nepstad 2013). K. G. Cunningham (2013) also hypothesizes that smaller groups operating in less-democratic countries would follow more nonviolent principles, as opposed to large groups whose internal divisions were more prone to violence. In addition, when social movements are trying to decrease polarization they are more likely to turn to nonviolence as a way to facilitate cooperation between conflicting groups (Ben David and Rubel-Lifschitz 2018).

In their defense of civil resistance, Stephan and Chenoweth (2008) state that "major nonviolent campaigns have achieved success 53 percent of the time," as compared to 26 percent for violent ones (p. 8). Max Abrahms (2006) also found that violence, as used by terrorists, accomplished political objectives only 7 percent of the time, although he still concluded that actors chose such methods as they were more effective than nonviolent means. Another experiment by Emma Thomas and Winnifred Louis (2013) found that nonviolent actions used by an interest group were more supported and correlated with lower rates of hostility towards the group involved than the usage of violent actions; it should be noted that their results indicated that the support derived from using nonviolent tactics could also promote more extreme actions in the future due to the raised levels of efficacy. Stephan and Chenoweth (2008) did note that international support and sanctions of nonviolent movements were typically higher, but could in fact hurt the movements as they delegitimized them domestically and/or reduced the resources available for mobilization. Finally, although a large number of social movement theorists support nonviolent tactics over violent ones, there is little in regard to intergroup violence, and some overall contention remains in the usage of nonviolent tactics, as discussed in the next section.

Social Movements and Violence

In an effort to limit extraneous material, the vast majority of articles that analyzed support for violent actions on the basis of terrorism were excluded from this review. Of the existing works regarding "extreme forms of political violence," Donatella della Porta (2008) charges that little exists in the way of results, especially in regard to conflation with acts of terrorism (p. 221). Della Porta (2008) continues on to provide a general overview of political violence between state and nonstate actors, pointing to the lack of political opportunity structures as a main reason for the rise of violent tactics amongst groups. Other violent organizations argued for their chosen tactics by appealing to specific rationales among potential supporters, often relying on aspects of identity (Bjorgo 2004). Della Porta's (2008) overview indicated that the development of political violence could spark polarization, which often resulted in "a weakening of the civil rights coalition" as observers sided with the state (p. 226). Another potential problem for using violence to counter structural state violence is that the social movement may be seen as having initiated the cycle and suffer a loss of legitimacy for their movement (Bretherton 2018).

Other researchers found that violence could work in the favor of the organizations. In a study by William Gamson (1990), violence was found to positively correlate to his measures for success: the acceptance of the group as legitimate and the obtaining of advantages for its constituents. Further analysis of his findings yielded similar results, although a lack of consensus persists on the credibility (Giugni 1998). Jeremy Pressman's (2017) study on the first intifada in Palestine takes into consideration the context of the events, as whether stone-throwing was viewed as violent or not determined if the actions were supported by bystanders. In some instances, the violent actions were used to garner both domestic and international support for the movement (Pressman 2017). Finally, when the legitimacy of the authorities is called into question, or if individuals

perceive themselves to be at greater risk, they are more likely to condone violent actions to achieve social and political goals (Jackson et al. 2013).

Theory and Hypothesis

The purpose of this experiment is not to determine how the various identities and motives of individuals affects their decisions to join social movements, but instead attempts to understand how the use of violent actions increases or decreases their support for said movement. As such, Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) will be used as the general theoretical framework because RMT is primarily concerned with the mobilization of supporters and resources on a cost-benefit analysis system, therefore limiting potentially confounding variables (Della Porta and Diani 2006). The experiment will not look at how different demographics react to the use of violence except in cases where it may lead to bias. Although correspondence inference theory was suggested earlier in regard to explaining why nonviolent actions are typically more well-received than violent actions, it relies on the adversary's reactions to help formulate individual judgements on the legitimacy of the movement (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008). Since the adversaries in the given scenarios do not react, this theory will not be used to explain varying levels of support, if such a finding occurs.

As seen in the literature review, it appears that a large number of theorists ascribe to the belief that nonviolent actions, or civil resistance, are correlated with higher levels of support from the surrounding community. However, the majority of these cases are concerned with state versus nonstate actors and not intergroup relations. In addition, the one study that focused on social movements against a company and not the state produced findings which, while supporting nonviolence overall, indirectly endorsed the use of more extremist actions in the future, thereby lessening the credibility of the results (Thomas and Louis 2013). The compilation produced by Marco Giugni (1998) contained conflicting accounts regarding the

outcomes and support for social movements that utilized violent or nonviolent actions. In some instances, even multiple analyses of the same data yielded different results (Giugni 1998). Pressman (2017) found that violence can be used to increase support of their movement, although differing opinions on how to classify the methods used during the intifada clouded the true levels of support for the violent actions.

This paper will attempt to determine whether violent actions used by one social movement on another group will impact an individual's level of support for the organization. In this line of thinking, RMT will be the most practical theory as it excludes most aspects of identity and political opportunity structures and instead looks at rational choices surrounding incentives and detriments for the potential supporters of the social movement. Due to the lack of consensus on whether violent actions impact levels of support, coupled with the mixed results from Pressman's (2017) and Thomas and Louis' (2013) studies, the researcher hypothesizes (H1) that violent actions will increase the level of public sentiment for the chosen social movement. The null hypothesis (H0) will identify no statistical correlation between the effects of violent actions on the level of public sentiment for the movement, giving a clear statement that the data will seek to disprove. The hypothesis (H1) will be broken down into three sub-hypotheses to better test levels of support, shown below as $H1_a$, $H1_b$, and $H1_c$.

H0: Violent actions *will have no effect* on public sentiment for the social movement

H1: Violent actions *will have a positive effect* on support for the social movement

H1$_a$: Violent actions will *lead to higher favorability* toward the social movement

H1_b: Violent actions *will lead to a higher favorability* toward allowing the social movement to protest in an individual's neighborhood

H1_c: Violent actions *will increase* the number of actions taken in support of the social movement

Methodology

This study will define the independent variable (IV) as *violent or nonviolent actions*, with the resulting dependent variable (DV) classified as the *level of support* for the social movement. Violent actions will be conceptualized as acts of private violence, defined by Jonathan Jackson et al. (2013) as "violence outside formal state channels…as a means of social control or social change," which is in keeping with the actions of the social movements as non-state actors (p. 479). Violence itself is defined as the possibility of physical harm to either individuals or property (Pressman 2017). In the context of this study the violent action will be defined as a *physical altercation* between the two groups. It is further established that the opposing group received minor injuries, so that the respondents are aware that the violence was in sufficient measure to cause harm, but not enough to seriously injure them. In order to stress that the actions were violent, it is additionally stated in the written summary that the methods were violent to prevent any lingering ambiguity over whether unarmed attacks count as violence (Pressman 2017). The intent of the action is disregarded in favor of the above conceptualizations in order to avoid confusion with force; whether the protestors meant to cause harm is ignored in favor of if they did or did not commit an act defined as violent (Pressman 2017).

Nonviolent resistance avoids "the threat or use of violence," and can include a wide variety of methods outside of the traditional political channels (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008, 9). Strategic nonviolent resistance is further

refined to distinguish it from principled nonviolence; in the context of this survey it will refer to "widespread noncooperation and defiance" in order to ensure that the loud chanting and protesting used in the survey example falls under this definition (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008, 10). These two variables will be measured through the use of A/B testing as part of a larger survey, with the respondents sorted into either the group using violence or the group using nonviolence.

In order to measure the effect that the violence had on public sentiment, the level of support for the social movement acts as the dependent variable. Support is defined in the context of violence as the right to use force in society (Jackson et al. 2013). In keeping with RMT, the conceptualization of support will be broadened to also incorporate the willingness of individuals to donate money, volunteer with the social movement, and/or either join their protests or allow them to protest in their neighborhoods in the future. The broadening of the definition seeks to incorporate the multi-dimensionalism surrounding this concept, as RMT looks at a wider range of resources than simply whether or not individuals believe the actions of social movements are legitimate. Since the acquisition of resources and the support of adherents both within and outside of the movement are considered when studying RMT, it was necessary to include them in the chosen definition as well (Della Porta and Diani 2006). The level of support will be measured in three ways: how the respondents viewed the social movement after reading the scenario, whether or not they were willing to allow the social movement to protest in their neighborhood, and the actions they were willing to take to show support for the movement in the future.

The social movement Antifa was selected in order to narrow the type of social movement to one that is both recognizable to the general populace and includes a human rights issue. This was done because the Pressman (2017) study that found some level of support for violence was centered around human rights,

as were the riots covered in the 1990 Gamson study. In addition to attempting to verify these findings, the researcher believed that understanding the tactics that garner the most support for campaigns for social rights holds normative importance in regard to the current geopolitical climate.

To collect the data, an eleven-question survey was collected from college students attending Virginia Commonwealth University and Dartmouth College in April and May of 2019. All of the survey questions are included in the appendix for reference purposes. There were sixty-two total responses, although two were rejected because they failed to answer the questions needed to accurately test level of support. 83.6% of the sample was between the ages of 18–24, with 8.2% and 6.6% of the sample between the ages of 25–45 and 35–55, respectively; one person was under the age of 18. 61.3% of the survey was female, with 33.9% identifying as male, 3.6% as nonbinary, and 1.2% as genderfluid. 67.2% of the applicants identified their race/ethnicity as white or Caucasian, with Black or African American amounting to 18%, Asian or Asian American to 14.6%, Native American or Alaska Native to 4.9%, and Latine or Hispanic to 3.3%. One respondent identified as Jewish. 68.9% of the respondents identified as Democrat, 13.1% as neither Democrat nor Republican, and 8.2% as Republican. Half of the respondents were atheists, and 44.38% were Christian/Catholic; 3.5% were Jewish. Respondents were also asked whether they identified as members of Antifa: 80% said no, 8.3% said yes, and 11.7% were unsure; the limited sample size prevented the elimination of those who had responded in the affirmative. 14.8% of respondents were favorable toward using violence in protest of human and social rights, 18% were neutral, and 67.2% were unfavorable.

The survey then moved into the testing section. A brief description of Antifa was provided, and respondents were asked to rank how they felt about the group from very favorably to very unfavorably. They were then sorted into A/B groups and provided either a violent or nonviolent scenario, and the question was

repeated to measure if their level of support had changed. The data was then coded using an ordinal scale where 5 represented very favorably and 1 represented very unfavorably. $H1_a$ was tested two different ways here using ANOVA Analysis: the first looked at the favorability in the after-scenario group alone, and the other looked at the rate of change between the before and after group. The IV was set as the type of group they were in, and the DV varied in accordance to the performed test. The second of these tests used an Excel formula (=After-Before) to create a score ranging from -5 to +5, with the lower number indicating a higher level of unfavorability. It was then run through ANOVA to determine the statistical significance. $H1_b$ was tested by converting the ranking of very favorably to very unfavorably into an ordinal scale running from 5 (very favorably) to 1 (very unfavorably), in keeping with the other conversions. It was then run through ANOVA Analysis as well, with the IV remaining as the type of A/B group the respondent was in. The third sub-hypothesis, $H1_c$, took the three possible choices for future actions (donations, volunteer outreach, or protesting) and made a composite score, with 0 indicating that they were unwilling to do the action and 1 indicating willingness, for a maximum score of a three. The composite score was then run through ANOVA Analysis to see if those in the violent group correlated with a higher level of involvement. A significance level of .05 was set for all of the tests.

Findings and Analysis

The first analysis run was to test whether the use of violence positively correlated with a higher level of favorability ($H1_a$), which was accomplished by setting the category of "After" as the dependent variable. The ANOVA Analysis revealed that the mean of those in the violent category (Group 1) was a 2.26 out of a possible 5, and that the mean of the nonviolent category (Group 2) was 2.97 out of 5, as seen in Figure 1. Neither of the groups felt favorably or neutrally toward Antifa, regardless of which scenario they received; Group 2 was merely less

unfavorable toward Antifa by a count of 0.71. Furthermore, the *p*-value was .018, and so it is possible to reject the Null Hypothesis (H0), as the use of violence does have a statistically significant effect on the level of support for social movements. However, the correlation runs in the opposite direction of the sub-hypothesis $H1_a$, and therefore cannot be accepted.
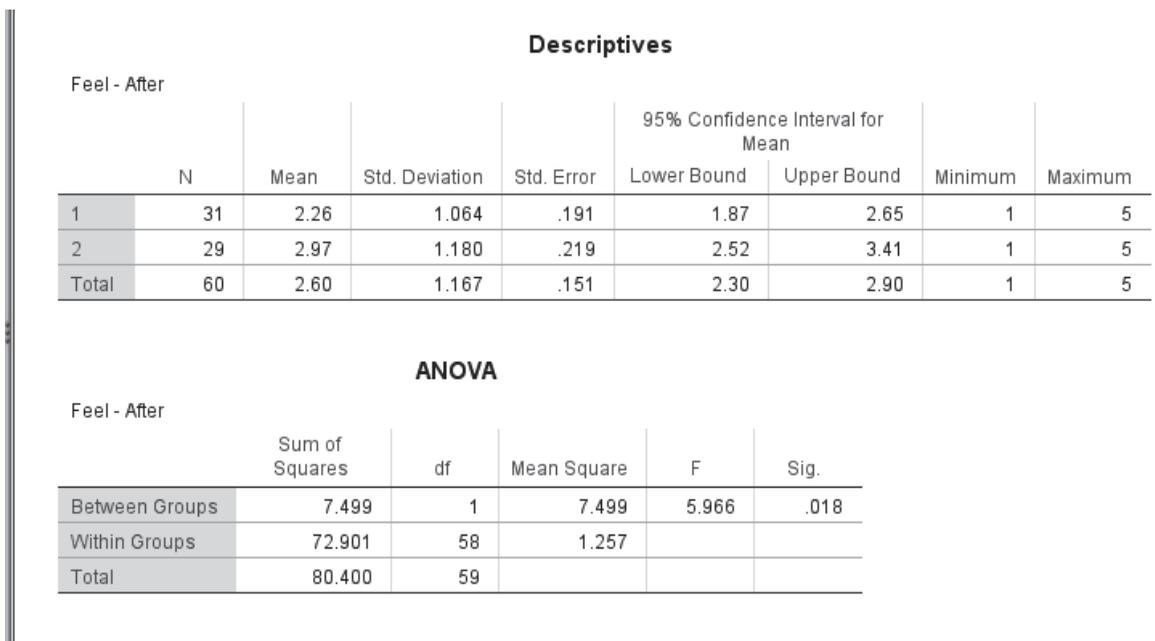
Descriptives

Feel - After

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
1	31	2.26	1.064	.191	1.87	2.65	1	5
2	29	2.97	1.180	.219	2.52	3.41	1	5
Total	60	2.60	1.167	.151	2.30	2.90	1	5

ANOVA

Feel - After

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.499	1	7.499	5.966	.018
Within Groups	72.901	58	1.257		
Total	80.400	59			

Figure 1. "After"

The second test also sought to test $H1_a$, this time looking at whether or not the use of violence changed the rate of difference in the before and after groups. The DV was set as the "Difference" category created in the Excel spreadsheet discussed in the previous section. After running the ANOVA Analysis, it was revealed that Group 1 (violent) had a mean of -.65 and that Group 2 had a mean of .28, as seen in Figure 2. This shows that the use of violence had correlated with a decrease in the level of support for Antifa, while the use of nonviolence had

resulted in a small increase in favorability. The p-value was .000, so it is possible to reject the Null Hypothesis (H0) once more as the findings are statistically significant. However, the data reveals a trend running in the opposite direction of H1$_a$, and so the alternative hypothesis cannot be accepted. Taken together, these two tests show that there is a decrease in the level of support for a social movement if the social movement utilizes violent actions during a protest.

Descriptives

Difference

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
1	31	-.65	.709	.127	-.91	-.38	-2	0
2	29	.28	1.032	.192	-.12	.67	-2	4
Total	60	-.20	.988	.128	-.46	.06	-2	4

ANOVA

Difference

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.710	1	12.710	16.422	.000
Within Groups	44.890	58	.774		
Total	57.600	59			

Figure 2. "Difference"

The third test analyzed whether the use of violence affected the willingness of the respondents to allow Antifa to protest in their neighborhoods in the future, using the sub-hypothesis H1$_b$. The ANOVA Analysis revealed that Group 1 had a mean of 2.27 out of 5 and Group 2 had a mean of 2.54 out of 5, as shown in Figure 3. Both were unfavorable toward allowing future protests, although Group 2 was slightly more willing. The p-value was a .338 and did not have the statistical significance required to reject the Null Hypothesis (H0). Despite the means indicating that nonviolence leads to a higher favorability for allowing the social movement to protest in their area, the lack of confidence prevents this claim from being made.

Descriptives

Protest in Neighborhood

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1	30	2.27	1.015	.185	1.89	2.65	1	5
2	28	2.54	1.105	.209	2.11	2.96	1	5
Total	58	2.40	1.059	.139	2.12	2.67	1	5

ANOVA

Protest in Neighborhood

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.048	1	1.048	.934	.338
Within Groups	62.831	56	1.122		
Total	63.879	57			

Figure 3. "Protests in Neighborhood"

The final test that was supposed to be run was designed to test $H1_c$, or whether violent actions actually do increase the number of actions taken in support of the social movement. However, because 53.3% of the respondents put no actions, designated as 0, and 41.6% put down only one, designated as 1, the lack of variance in the answers renders the scale almost dichotomous in nature. As the ANOVA Analysis is not the appropriate way to test such a variable, it was not included here and $H1_c$ was neither accepted nor rejected. In purely descriptive terms, of those who put down some form of action respondents were almost twice as likely to either volunteer outreach or join a demonstration than to donate money, indicating a possible trend among college-age students for eschewing monetary support in favor of more tangible support.

Discussion

Overall, this study has revealed that the use of violence by social movements can harm their support by individuals, albeit in a limited context. The experiment does expand the existing literature in regard to intergroup violence and seems to be in alignment with some of the previous experiments conducted

between state and non-state actors. In regard to $H1_a$, the data shows that if a social movement wishes to be viewed favorably by the general public then they should choose to engage in nonviolent actions, a finding that holds normative importance as social movements are increasingly relied upon as vehicles of change today. More experimentation will be needed to determine if violence affects the willingness of individuals to allow future protests in their neighborhood and the individual's actions in support of the social movement. In regard to the findings, there is the caveat that the levels of support in the $H1_a$ testing never exceeded the classification of "unfavorable," indicating that there may be a deeper bias against Antifa which could be influencing the findings. Although the survey did not test identity factors as an influence, it is interesting to note that the one person of Jewish descent was very favorable to Antifa both before and after reading the violent scenario, indicating a possible direction for future research.

There are a few flaws with the experiment that can be addressed in the future for more concrete results. The randomness of the survey was very limited, as the respondents were drawn from friends and classmates of the author and was limited to only students at two universities. In addition, the demographics overall were not representative of either the universities nor the United States as a whole, with women and Caucasians over-represented. The inability to properly run $H1_c$ also hindered a more complete understanding of the effects of violence on support; in the future, more data and appropriate statistical testing could yield useful results.

Expanding the context of the experiment and analyzing different variables may yield different results in the future than the ones recorded here. Further research should be conducted into how overall identity, especially with traditionally marginalized groups, can tie into opinions on the usage of violence in social movements, since this particular study overlooks this approach. In addition, this study was restricted only to the social movement Antifa acting against an unnamed opposing group. Antifa is typically associated with social and human

rights, but other groups protesting for similar rights, such as the Human Rights Campaign, or for different rights, such as Greenpeace for environmental rights, might have differing levels of support when it comes to violent actions. In addition, identifying the other group could change the perception of the conflict; for example, if Antifa violently engaged with a group of Neo-Nazis, the levels of support may increase in support of Antifa because the respondents would have a deeper understanding of whom was engaging with whom. There are a myriad of possible avenues for future research to take to help better understand the role that violence takes in social movements.

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THE IMPACT OF INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS IN SPAIN ON VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM

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Abstract

Violence has plagued Spain as the country struggles to square its union with increasing calls for more autonomy and independence from its regions. Much of this violence can be attributed to extreme political parties and domestic terrorist groups resorting to desperate measures in attempts to achieve their goals. The Spanish government finds itself in the compromising situation of wanting to reduce the high levels of violence that continue to damage communities without capitulating to actors with a range of goals. One solution the government must consider is to amend policies equitably, so that regions receive greater autonomy while still are under the authority of the central government, ultimately reducing violence.

Introduction

In the past 50 years, there have been 857 deaths and thousands of injuries resulting from violence associated with the domestic terrorist group, Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA), which has operated in multiple regions in Spain and France but has been concentrated in the autonomous community of the Basque Country in Spain (Martín-Peña, Rodríguez-Carballeira, Varela-Rey, Escartín, & Saldaña, 2015, p. 53). Violence has played an integral role in the independence movements in Spain, with the most notable being in Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia. Through these independence movements, nationalist political parties have created terrorism groups in order to further their political agenda of increasing the autonomy of their respective regions, increasing violence rates in their respective autonomous communities and in the country as

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a whole. This is a result of autonomous communities desiring more freedom under the constitution and extreme political parties taking drastic actions to ensure the advancement of their agenda. The Spanish government must update policies equally in order to grant more autonomy under the constitution for all regions and reduce state violence, while simultaneously keeping the regions an integral part of the country in order to lower violence rates connected to the independence movements. By taking these steps, the central government will allow for a country that is more inclusive regarding ethnicities, languages, and ideologies.

Background Information on Spanish Independence Movements

Spain is a country with a devolved government which allows for a central government in Madrid, 17 autonomous communities, and 2 autonomous cities. These autonomous communities are the equivalent of nations within the Kingdom of Spain that have their own government and are granted some degree of autonomy under the Spanish Constitution of 1978. Each region in Spain is granted a statute of autonomy, but the details of the degree of autonomy are different for each region (Räthzel, 2018, p. 148). Given that there are varying degrees of autonomy, there have been multiple independence movements in certain autonomous communities such as Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia. Nonetheless, secession from Spain is considered unconstitutional as the central government states that article 1.2 "places sovereignty with the Spanish people" and article 2 "proclaims the indivisibility of the Spanish nation" (Lecours, 2018, p. 257). Independence movements in the Basque Country and Catalonia have been very well-known to the international community, while independentist sentiment in Galicia has not garnered the same amount of attention mainly due to the region having a smaller economy and a smaller population than the other two regions. Nonetheless, Galicia has maintained an

armed resistance group operating in their region, similar to the Basque Country (Warf & Ferras, 2015, p. 259).

Reasons for Independence Movements

Each region in Spain has specific reasons for their individual movements and struggles for independence or more autonomy. Although Catalonia is a region with a distinct culture and unique identities, there has been an increasing amount of support for financial independence from Spain since 2010 (Gillespie, 2015, p. 11-12). The desire for financial independence is important for Catalan citizens as Catalonia is one of the wealthiest autonomous communities in Spain and benefits from a large tourism sector. Although there has been a strong desire for fiscal independence, traditionally, the nationalist groups in Catalonia have not wanted to create an independent state. They have worked mostly to assure that the Catalan people can keep their cultural identity, while still being a full member in Spanish society (Crameri, 2015, p. 5-6). This changed when it became clear that the Catalan public opinion changed and wanted more autonomy after Artur Mas, President of Catalonia, proposed greater fiscal independence from Spain in 2012 (Crameri, 2015, p. 10). In addition to being one of the wealthiest regions in Spain, Catalonia is unique as they speak a different language than the rest of Spain. This has caused a rift between Catalonia and the rest of Spain since the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, when the Spanish people were forbidden from speaking anything but Castilian Spanish. Lastly, issues have arisen regarding the statute of autonomy in Catalonia. Catalonia is unable to collect its own taxes, while the Basque Country is able to because it as seen by many as a re-establishment of the Basque Country's sovereign rights since it was once a separate kingdom (Räthzel, 2018, p. 148). Due to this, they held a referendum for reformation of the statute of autonomy, but it ultimately failed and caused public outrage and political dissatisfaction in Catalonia (Crameri, 2015, p. 4). This dissatisfaction and outrage led to larger support for the Catalan independence movement among its citizens.

The Basque Country has had a very public independence movement in recent years. Although the Basque Country is able to collect its own taxes and has more financial freedoms than other regions, its political parties still remain extremely polarized (Gillespie, 2017, p. 17). This polarization has caused a rift between the current political parties and recent referendums on independence in Scotland and Catalonia have inspired a new group: Gure Esku Dago (It's in our hands). The main purpose of this group is to push for a new referendum, yet its mission contrasts with many of the current political parties that believe in keeping a bilateral relationship with the Spanish State, while conserving Basque values (Liñeira & Cetrà, 2015, p. 263). Historically, the Basque Country has desired independence due to the fact that their culture is unique and different from the Spanish culture. The Basque Country's official language, Euskara, is the only remaining pre-Indo-European language that is still spoken in Spain and Western Europe as a whole. This is because of the isolation of Basque culture and its location in a very mountainous region. The Basque culture and language are very important to the Basque people because of the oppression endured during the Franco dictatorship when they were forbidden from speaking Euskara (Olivieri, 2015, p. 1613). Finally, similarly to Catalonia, the Basque Country is wealthier than the rest of Spain with a GDP 34% higher than the rest of the autonomous communities (Liñeira & Cetrà, 2015, p. 261). The stronger economy in this region has caused tension, as Spain had been enduring a financial crisis that coincided with the global financial crisis of 2008. However, the financial crisis in Spain lasted until 2014 (Cadoret, 2019). Larger, more financially secure regions felt like they were unfairly supporting the economy compared to poorer, smaller regions.

Although the northwestern autonomous community of Galicia has not received as much scrutiny as its counterparts, it has also had a long history of secession and nationalism. A principal reason for independence in Galicia is their unique culture that is a hybrid of Portuguese, Spanish, and Celtic cultures. They

speak Galician, a language that was considered the same as Portuguese in medieval times due to their close proximity and is not spoken in any other region of Spain (Warf & Ferras, 2015, p. 260-261). The complex identity of the Galicians has created a niche for nationalism that recognizes the differences between the Spanish culture, Portuguese culture, and Galician culture. Given the mix of cultures, the independence movements and resistance in Galicia have created an uncertain future for the region. Some groups have sought to create an independent Galician state, others have sought to secede Spain in order to join Portugal, and other groups have favored staying within Spain (Duerr, 2016, p. 9). A reason for some groups desiring to stay in Spain is that the constitution allows for pluralism and various national identities around Spain, which gives Galicia more freedom than previously held during the Franco government (Warf & Ferras, 2015, p. 258). Any secession from Spain would be extremely illegal as Galicia only reserves the right to protect their language, but not to secede from Spain, according to the Constitution of 1978 (Duerr, 2016, p. 10). Finally, isolation is another principal reason for the growth of independence movements. Galicia is located very far from the capital and the majority of the legislation-making that impacts them (Duerr, 2016, p. 9). This has led to a sentiment that they have been colonized by Spain, but they are not involved with the law-making process that impacts their daily lives.

Terrorism Related to Independence Movements

The independence movements in Spain have created multiple domestic terrorism groups to gain independence for their respective region. Throughout the third wave of modern terrorism, which includes nationalism and radicalism, domestic terrorism has greatly impacted Spain. The third wave of modern terrorism is characterized by "New Left terrorists" that have chosen large targets to achieve political goals more aligned with the political left. This type of terrorism has caused the country to be one of the democracies most effected by

terrorism in the West (Alonso, 2018, p. 985). Possibly the most well-known of these groups is Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA). ETA has been operating out of the Basque Region for over 50 years and has been found responsible for the deaths of 857 people with 576 of those deaths taking place in the Basque Region. The Basque Region is defined as the autonomous communities of the Basque Country and Navarra in Spain and three states in France (Martín-Peña et al., 2015, p. 53). The main mission of ETA has been to achieve an independent Basque State and has worked to achieve this by killing anyone who has a political meaning or who works in politics (Alonso, 2018, p. 991). This methodology has caused widespread violence in not only the Basque Country, but the rest of Spain.

The violence associated with ETA has been covered in international news and shows a pattern in their attacks and killings. The group's main strategy is to cause damage through low-intensity violence, which includes violence that is not as destructive as wide-scale attacks. This violence includes homemade explosives and small bombs, but also includes non-physical violence (Martín-Peña et al., 2015, p. 58). The non-physical violence that has been associated with ETA includes threats and coercion. The type of violence inflicted by ETA contrasts from other major terrorist groups that inflict violence with large scale attacks because it has also focused on psychological terror that has a lasting impact far after the attack takes place (Martín-Peña et al., 2015, p. 58-59). Even though ETA committed attacks in the rest of Spain, its violence caused widespread terror in the Basque Country in order to greatly impact the daily lives of everyone in the Basque society. They achieved this by focusing on targets with political ties or significance, while also choosing civilian targets to maintain the level of terror for all citizens (Martín-Peña et al., 2015, p. 55). This is shown in the statistics of deaths and injuries because although there is a definite number for the amounts of deaths caused by ETA, the estimates for the injuries are in the thousands and an exact number is not known (Alonso, 2018, p. 985). This demonstrates how widespread ETA's influence has been and the impacts of the

psychological damage inflicted, as victims are less likely to report when they are in fear of retaliation. In addition to an unspecified number of injuries, there have been 314 unsolved cases (36.63% of total murders) related to ETA (Alonso, 2018, p. 995). Authorities have been working to solve these murder cases for decades to no avail. Finally, another violence tactic associated with ETA is persecution violence. Persecution violence focuses on psychological damage through threats and physical violence. This can range from stalking and threats to street violence and murder. This is a prominent tactic used for their political targets that publicly express their political viewpoints against the group and ETA uses it to silence them (Alonso, 2018, p. 987). Therefore, terrorist groups can inflict terror even if they are not using physical violence. They can disrupt the life of a whole family just due to their psychological effects (Martín-Peña et al., 2015, p. 71). Due to ETA's diverse terror tactics, they have been able to gain international infamy as they work to further their political agenda. Even though ETA has used these multiple tactics and inflicted large amounts of violence, they have been considered by some to be a failed group. They have been active for over 50 years and failed to accomplish their political goals of an independent Basque State and therefore, their political base eventually called for the group to disband and ETA gave up all weapons in 2017 (Zulaika & Murua, 2017, p. 346). Their political base once wholeheartedly supported their movement due to the political motives of ETA.

A lesser-known terrorist group operating in Spain is Resistência Galega (REGA) which has been operating since 2005 in Galicia (Buesa & Baumert, 2016, p. 476). REGA has been fueled by Galician nationalism, but REGA has not been as successful as ETA for many reasons. Galician nationalism is based on a unique culture, just as the Basque and Catalan nationalism are in their regions. What sets Galician nationalism apart is that the region does not have the money that the Basque Country and Catalonia have. Due to this REGA, has had smaller-scale attacks and tendencies when compared to ETA (Warf & Ferras, 2015, p.

258). For instance, there is actually a distinction between REGA and their followers that commit attacks on REGA's behalf. In one period, there were 12 recorded attacks relating to the pro-independence movement in Galicia with four attacks being carried out by REGA for certain. The other eight attacks were connected to REGA through other organizations or individuals that have followed their lead to create an independent state (Buesa & Baumert, 2016, p. 479). These other groups and individuals have followed REGA because they have been the driving force in the movement for an independent Galicia.

According to Europol, REGA's main mission is to create an independent state in Galicia following socialist policies and principles. However, the organization has not elaborated much on their exact goals even after committing multiple attacks (Buesa & Baumert, 2016, p. 479). They have given two words to define their mission: liberation and socialism. This is because they have considered themselves the "armed branch of the people" that works to liberate the Galician people from the Spanish state (Buesa & Baumert, 2016, p. 481). Another point that REGA has touched on is Spanish colonization. Just like ETA and the Basque Country, REGA believes that Spain has colonized their land and that gives them justification to secede and become an independent state (Buesa & Baumert, 2016, p. 478). The organization also states that the Spanish state is a government still under the control of the policies left over from Franco, and not a democratic country (Buesa & Baumert, 2016, p. 481). REGA has used the history of Spain's opposition to national identity to justify its mission and purpose as a pro-independence group. Galician nationalists and REGA have used their loss of freedoms under Franco and their loss of political sovereignty to the Spanish state as past factors that impact the present and the future. REGA has used violence to "liberate" the people and bring Galicia to a socialist state to restore the glory that was seen before they were controlled by the Spanish state. Even though they have not had as much success as other groups in Spain, they have continued to operate and inflict violence in order to push their political agenda.
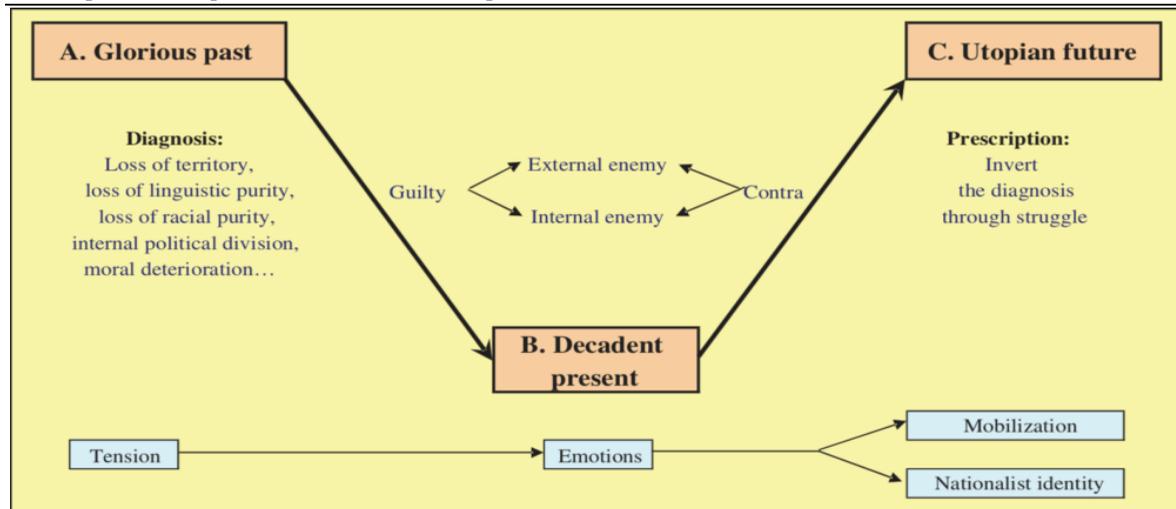
(Buesa Baumert, 2016, p. 480).

REGA has used political violence to further pro-independence movements for years as it is thought of an integral part of liberation. In the second manifesto of REGA, the terrorist group claimed to inflict "severe economic damage" after multiple attacks over a six-year period (Buesa & Baumert, 2016, p. 481). This shows that the organization uses their violence to inflict economic damage, rather than focusing on physical or psychological violence like ETA.
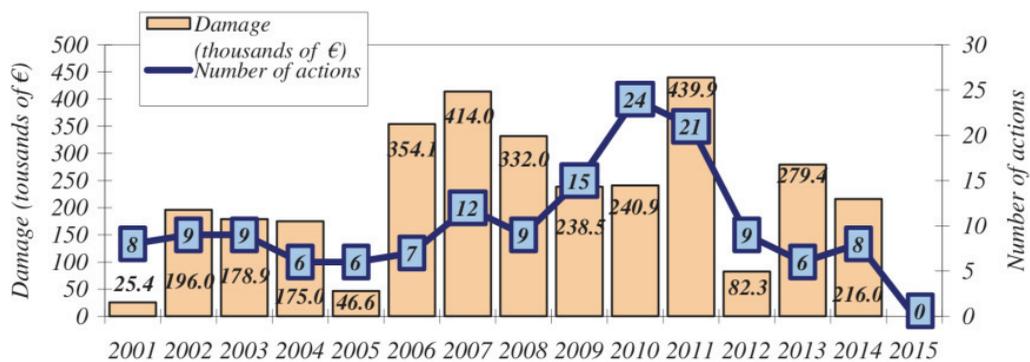
Actions by REGA and other Galician independence groups.
(Buesa & Baumert, 2016, p. 487).

There have been 137 attacks committed by REGA between 2001 – 2013 and the majority have been low-intensity. These attacks have caused economic damage but have not caused many injuries to people (Buesa & Baumert, 2016, p. 487). ETA uses this method of low-intensity violence, but unlike REGA, ETA inflicts actual physical violence against opponents. REGA aims to cause damage that would impact banks, real estate agencies, and construction because they are thought to be extraordinary examples of how the Spanish state has colonized Galician land (Buesa & Baumert, 2016, p. 488). This shows that Galician terrorism is more symbolic than terrorism seen in other parts of Spain.

State Violence Related to Independence Movements

Although Catalonia has not been as impacted by domestic terrorism related to their independence movement as other autonomous communities, they have been subjected to other types of violence, such as state violence. When choosing how to deal with the rising secessionist sentiment and pro-independence movements in Catalonia, the Spanish government had two choices: to hold a referendum to allow for more autonomy in the region or to forcefully create unity by suppressing the local government (Barceló, 2018, p. 1). On October 1, 2017, the Catalan government held a referendum to decide if Catalonia should declare independence from Spain and was supported by the pro-independence groups. The move to hold a referendum was considered illegal under Article 1 Section 2 of the constitution and was banned by Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy and his government. On the days leading up to the referendum, the Spanish government seized ballots and arrested Catalan government officials (Räthzel, 2018, p.153). Throughout the day of the vote, the Spanish government sent the Guardia Civil, the Spanish national police, to polling stations in an effort to stop the referendum. The police used batons, tear gas, and rubber bullets to gain entrance to polling places and stop Catalan citizens from voting. According

to the Catalan Health Department, injuries amounted to 900 people throughout the day (Barceló, 2018, p. 2).

The widespread use of force by the Spanish government was seen in many areas around Catalonia in order to stop voting, as well as deter other citizens from voting on the referendum. Although Spanish forces only visited 100 out of the 2305 polling stations, the news not only spread throughout Spain, but throughout the world (Barceló, 2018, p. 2). Out of those 100 polling places that were impacted by state violence, they were located in only 57 (6.02%) of the municipalities in Catalonia. Of those 57 municipalities, 38 municipalities (4.01%) were impacted by Spanish police officers using actual physical violence on the citizens casting their ballots instead of non-violent intervention (Barceló, 2018, p. 3). Although it is small percentage of Catalonia, it is note-worthy because the state violence seen in Catalonia is different from state violence previously seen in other parts of the world. In this circumstance, the state violence yielded only injuries, and not deaths. Secondly, it is distinct because the violence was enacted by a developed, democratic country in Europe, rather than a developing country that does not have an established history of democracy (Barceló, 2018, p. 6).

The turnout rate for the October 2017 referendum in Catalonia was low, but on average, the turnout rate and numbers of
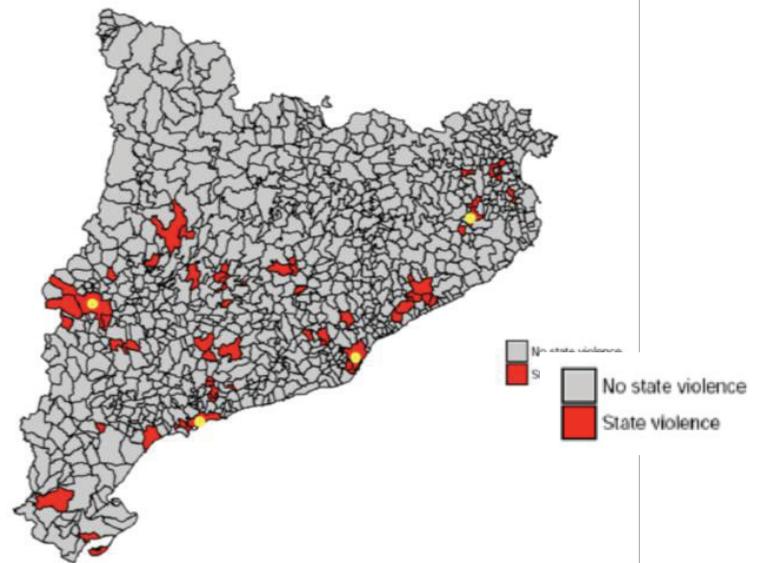
(Barceló, 2018, p. 3).

votes for an independent Catalonia were not higher in the municipalities impacted by state violence, than those that were not victims of state violence (Barceló, 2018, p. 2). From the 43% of registered voters that voted, 90% of people voted for independence. However, when looking at the referendum as a

whole when compared to recent elections in Catalonia, fewer people voted in the October 2017 referendum than in the 2015 regional elections (75% turnout). This may have been because all polling locations were open and there was not an active threat of violence for voting (Jones, 2017, p.42). Given this information, it can be concluded that the threat of state violence did not influence the votes for independence when comparing by municipality, but it set a precedent of violence in the country and may have impacted voter turnout as a whole.

Responses and Solutions

The issues associated with the violence and terrorism stemming from the independence movements in Spain have been issues that both the Spanish government and regional governments have been working to resolve. The Spanish government has responded to the terrorism regarding anti-terrorism legislation but has largely disregarded the root causes of the problems. For example, Spain has a very advanced system in place to take care of victims of terrorism, as shown by their various programs designed to aid those impacted directly or indirectly by ETA. This system stems from years of combating ETA, Europe's longest-running terrorist group (Argomaniz, 2015, p. 124). While this response is positive and beneficial to those affected by domestic terrorism, it took time for the Spanish state as a whole to organize this system. The Basque Country, which has been impacted the most by political violence, was first in supporting victims of terrorism. Due to the high rate of violence in the Basque Country, the regional government created and passed legislation before the Spanish state could create a country-wide system (Argomaniz, 2015, p. 139). Nonetheless, both the central government and the regional governments must address the independence movements in order to find a solution to the violence.

The central government is tasked with the delicate balancing act of keeping the country whole, while allowing for each autonomous community's government to have freedoms that cannot be encroached upon by the government

in Madrid. The government has struggled to pass legislation regarding autonomy in Catalonia and the Basque Country because their respective independence parties have had great influence in their regions for years (Gillespie, 2015, p. 9). On the other hand, the central government has been criticized by many different party leaders and the general public that the decentralization under the current devolved government is out of control and must be centralized again (Gillespie, 2015, p. 6). This call for more autonomy by some political parties and a call for more centralization has made it very difficult and complex for the government to address the root causes that would fix the large issues regarding separatism and its subsequent violence in Spanish politics.

One prospective solution would be to change the statutes of autonomy to be equal for all autonomous communities, regardless of the current statutes. Since the Basque Country is allowed more financial freedom, political leaders in other regions believe they can declare their own freedoms or believe that the Spanish state is mistreating them. The Spanish government must update the policies across the board so that all regions are equal regarding their autonomy. However, the Basque Country is currently given more freedom to tax than other communities, and political parties are still becoming more polarized in the region (Gillespie, 2015, p. 17). The Spanish government must also refrain from engaging in state violence, as it can fuel both anti-Spanish sentiment and allow pro-independence movements to justify fighting violence with violence.

Conclusion

The Independence movements in Spain have shaped Spanish politics, in addition to Spanish culture, in recent years through the violence they have brought to the country. The independence movements in Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia have all used different forms of nationalism to spark pro-independence movements in the region. Each region has had different reasons for their prospective secession from the country, but they are all rooted in centuries

of unique culture and history. These independence movements have led to a spectrum of violence that ranges from simple intimidation to large-scale bombings and the infiltration of a region by police armed with riot gear. The rise of domestic terrorism related to independence movements has forced Spain to confront the realities of the violence and how it can fix the root causes. Unfortunately, the government has been reactive instead of proactive in its policies. In order to effectively reduce violence related to the independence movements, Spain must reflect on their political system and restructure to allow for equality among all regions, meanwhile refraining from state violence. This will allow for a more peaceful coexistence of unique nations under one government.

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TREND AND PREDICTIONS OF MIDTERM ELECTIONS

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Abstract

Midterm election results have shared common trends since the realignment of parties 1894 to the present with few exceptions. Analyzing previous Midterm election results provide support theories that support these trends. Research regarding Midterm elections offers several theories regarding the cause of election results. Advances in technology present the question of predictability. The timing of research allows the data gathered to be compared to the 2018 Midterm election conclusion. This paper considers the advent and use of social media; the research shows a change in campaign strategy but not a change in trends. I will implicate empirical evidence to support the standard of trends in U.S. Midterm elections. On my honor. I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment, and I pledge that I am in compliance with the VCU Honor System.

Introduction

The studies of Midterm elections by political scientists have led to many different theories that support causation and predictions of election outcomes. Results on both sides suggest that a variety of factors can determine the outcome of Midterm elections. Though there are several arguments that focus on predicting Midterm elections, the process determining why elections result in the way they do are often agreed upon. There are two facts that are common starting points when research begins on determining Midterm election results: one being that the President's party always loses; the other being that voter turnout is not the same during Midterms compared to Presidential elections.

There are multiple commonly attributed theories that attempt to explain Midterm election results. There are also a number of trends that are applied in an attempt to predict the results of upcoming Midterm elections. A further analysis of the theories used to interpret the results of elections can be helpful when acknowledging why these events develop as they do. Election results correlate with Presidential approval and disapproval, availability of information and news, voter participation. When reviewing Midterm election trends the intention of research evolved into an attempt to predict future results. The changing of technology, cultural movements, marketing, and subject complexity, should produce unpredictable results. We need to know "Why did a specific party win the previous Midterm elections?" so we can then answer, "Who will win the next Midterm elections?" Through historical research and analysis this paper will support existing trends to predict the 2018 Midterm elections.

The timing of this research allows us to compare the upcoming 2018-Midterm election results to results of the past and measure the accuracy of those predictions. The information following the Midterms will also offer an opportunity to compare modern election data to the theories that attempt to explain past election results. Supporting data from a current election will not only support or disprove previous Midterm election theories, but will also help to point out possible new trends in Midterm elections.

Media and communications has always been a pillar of election campaign strategy. Connecting candidates with constituents has proven to be an effective method of presenting candidates, parties and ideas. The current technological climate provides a more informed electorate. Considering the electorate is more informed, research attempts to determine whether information from current events may affect the 2018 election results. The unique nature of the current Presidential administration, the timing of Supreme Court Justice Kavanaugh, and even broad trends within social media are all events that may affect the results of the 2018-Midterm election when considering the momentum

these events produce. The analysis of how recent developments may impact previous trends must be applied to current elections.

This paper first explores historical trends that correlate among Midterm elections during the realignment period spanning from 1894 through 1994, as well as 1994 to present; Analyzing irregularities during these periods that aim to categorically separate common predictions. I will review historical anomalies within these trends and analyzing modern alignments within parties to determine the effect that technological evolution, hot button issues, and current events may sway the traditional results and trends of Midterms. Predictions seem indecisive when news resources reported on the 2018 election. Predictions that focus on quantitative data were more accurate when following previous trends than those that focus on current events to support their predictions. Ultimately, this paper will show how changing times and sensationalism have done little to produce a change from historic trends.

Theories Supporting Midterm Election Trends

The existing body of research on Midterm elections acknowledges several events that support trends within the study. These theories are presented through four concepts that place the outcome of elections on presidential popularity, information available to the public, and voter participation. This section will present these theories and evidence that may support, or contradict, their effectiveness. The concept that the President's party loses is supported by a trend that measures the Midterm elections between 1894 and 1994. Since 1894, the President's party has always lost seats in the House of Representatives with the exception of the Midterm election of 1934 (Busch 2). The Democratic Party gained seats in the House and the Senate for the only instance in a 100-year span with Franklin Delano Roosevelt as President (Busch 14).

This time period's relevance begins with the most prominent realignment of parties in modern history prior to 1998, but ends with a new realignment in

1998, which is influenced by the emergence of increased internet and social media usage in the late 90's. This trend seems to have lost some support, as Midterm elections in 1998 and 2002 resulted in the President's party winning. The commonality that links elections that result in the President's party winning are agreed on as event-oriented exceptions, in which an event is to blame for the influence of voting trends. An example of this would be 9/11, where the President's party won Midterm elections under the idea that 9/11 brought support to the party (Theiss-Morse 3).

There are multiple theories that attempt to explain why the President's party almost always loses during Midterm elections, including the "Coattails" theory by John F. Bibby, the "Surge and Decline" theory by Angus Campbell, the "National Conditions" theory by Anthony Downs, and the "Presidential Penalty" theory by Samuel Kernell (Busch 3). The Coattails theory holds that Midterm losses are the consequence of Presidential coattails" being withdrawn. Political Scientist John F. Bibby found the connection while researching Midterm elections in 1983. Though the term Coattails Theory had been coined long before, Bibby was able to correlate election results to voter participation that correlated to Presidential popularity (Campbell 45).

In marginal districts, members of the Presidential candidate's party are swept into office by their placement at the top of the ticket. Their association with a favorable Presidential candidate's party gives them the support they need to win their district's election (Bibby 41). When Midterm elections occur the same representatives lack the recognition and resources that came with the Presidential election. Some scholars have referred to this as the "regression to the mean" theory, since it postulates a return to a more normal state of affairs (Busch 2).

The Surge and Decline theory expands on the Coattails theory, as presented by Angus Campbell in 1960; the theory emphasizes the impact of voter turnout (Busch 3; Campbell 1). According to Campbell, peripheral voters are

voters who turnout for Presidential elections but not Midterms. This is supported by the significantly lower number of voters participating in Midterms versus Presidential elections. The average difference between Midterm elections and presidential elections is approximately 15%-20% higher voter participation during Presidential elections in the last 20 years (McDonald). Campbell's research focused on analyzing data, which supported the participation of voters between Presidential elections and Midterm elections, as a caveat to the Presidential Coattails theory. This becomes even more important with a changing political climate, in which more and more identifiably independent voters are participating in Midterm elections (Bartles 1).

The National Conditions theory works against the Surge and Decline theory, suggesting that Surge and Decline fails to account for the conditions at the time of the Midterms, instead relying on the outcome two years prior to support its theory (Busch 4). The National Conditions theory, presented by Anthony Downs in 1957, essentially argues that voters don't have information during a referendum style vote. Presidential elections are flooded with media participation and information to aid in the vetting of Presidential candidates by individual voters. This situation demands an increase in ideology due to a lack of information (Downs 142). During Midterm elections there is not enough coverage and information presented to voters to be able to determine which candidate they should support to represent their locality. According to Downs, voters are too rational to accept a major ideological change by a party, so parties must present ideology they can rely on to support their relationship with voters (Downs 143).

The Presidential Penalty theory is similar to the Coattails theory, in that it attributes the President's popularity to voter turnout, but instead focuses on the President's disapproval rating. The theory attributes the President's party losing Midterm elections to the simple desire that voters have to punish the President's party for holding the White House (Busch 5). Kernell argued that Presidential

popularity is not as important as the President's disapproval ratings. The motivation to vote during Midterm elections results in more activity by voters who feel negatively about the President's time in office. Robert Erikson and Gerald C. Wright determine the congressional vote for the President's party drops 4 to 5 percent in Midterms, and this seems to occur regardless of how the economy is doing or how the public feels about the President (Busch 5).

Recent elections in 2010 support the Presidential Penalty theory as President Obama's approval rating was determined to be at 41%. His party lost the Midterm elections, although he had done exceptionally well during Presidential elections. An exception to the trend, but also supportive of the Presidential Penalty and Coattails theory, would be the 2002 Midterm elections when the President's party won the Midterm elections in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. His approval rating was generally recorded to be in the mid-60th percentile (Theiss-Morse 6; 2011).

This table illustrates the turnout of Voting Aged Participants during previous elections both Presidential and Midterms:
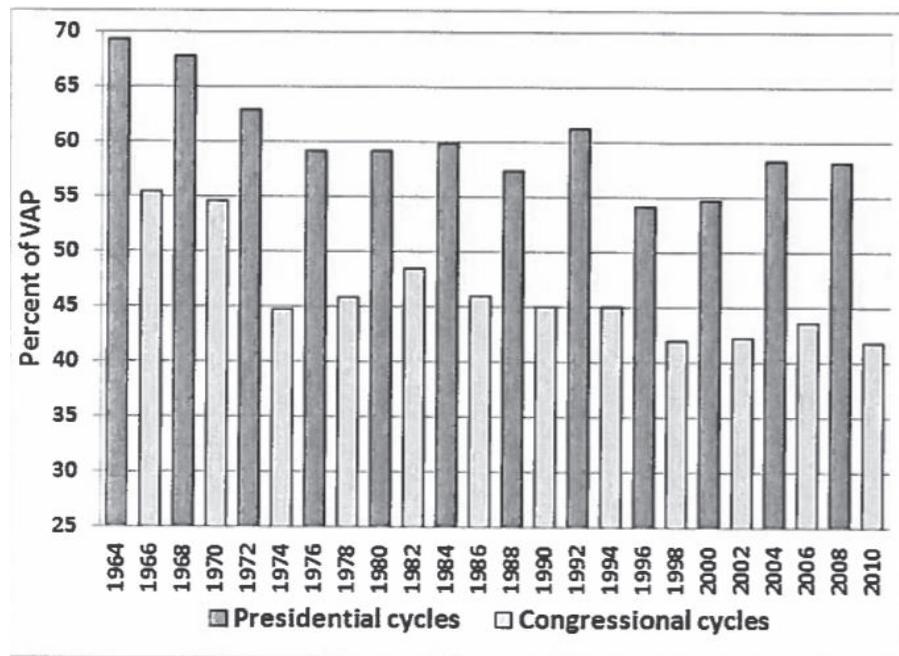
U.S. VEP Turnout 1789-Present: Statistics
Michael McDonald

Considering historical trends that affect election outcomes, voter turnout is consistently approached as an explanation to the stagnation in results. The above table illustrated the recession of Voting Aged Participants. Individuals are less likely to vote in Midterm elections and the regular decline in participation suggests little likelihood of change.

Historical Analysis Determining Trends

This section will provide data to determine new trends within the most modern era of realignment, as well as support previous claims to trends found historically in Midterm elections. Previous Midterm trends have stabilized at a participation level of 40-45% of the Voting Age Population (McDonald). This level of participation trails the Presidential elections by participation gap of approximately 15%. This contributes to the "Surge and Decline" theory, as voter turnout is attributed to a lack of interest in the candidates, or positions, involved.

The undeniable trend that is agreed upon by political scientists is that the President's party almost always loses. This is supported by election results showing only 3 events since 1894 where the President's party won the Midterm elections (Busch 1; Julius 9; Frail 2010). Two major periods of research after a party alignment are, 1894-1998 and 1998-Current. The instances where exceptions arise are usually preempted by a major event.

The first of the three exceptions is the Midterm election of 1934, where President Franklin D. Roosevelt's party, the Democratic Party, would gain seats in the House and the Senate (Busch 137). This event would create a political environment where policy development would thrive. This would be the only election in a 100-year span where the President's party would win the House and the Senate. The second instance would be 1998, when Democrats would again gain seats in the House under President Clinton. This surprising result was just after the President's involvement in the Monica Lewinsky Scandal. This marked the beginning of the most recent realignment, where negatively attacking a party

isn't always the most productive means of gaining voter support. The final Midterm election result where the President's party suffered no losses would be the election of 2002, in the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks. These elections were exceptional events that support a common explanation to the trend that the President's party always loses.

The most commonly noted variable that influences the Midterm elections would be the President's approval among voters, which in turn determines the voter turnout for the Midterm election (Theiss-Morse 2). Simply, the surge of voters during Presidential elections is due to the sensational nature of the election. Voter turnout decreases with Midterm election as constituents see less benefit in the outcome of Midterm elections. Scholars across the board generally agree that voter turnout decreases, especially in regards to the president's party. Voter turnout is the foundation of Midterm predictive theories.

The speculation and theories that determine voter turnout share similar ideas that focuses on presidential approval, key issues and availability of information. Post-1998, the theory of voter turnout remains, but the cause changes as social media and the nationalization of communication becomes apparent. Two variables that have created a precedent during the latest realignment are funding and recognition of Midterm candidate. The Tea Party's ability to raise in small contributions from what one assumes are very politicized donors (Sisco 14), supports the concept that recognition, even due to ideology, is necessary to candidate popularization.

Trends that contribute to Presidential approval ratings post-Midterm elections also support the school of thought that the Midterm elections exist as an additional check to the executive branch (Busch 8). This strategy allows the post-Midterm Congress to veto and override policy supported by the President to decrease party support during the Presidential elections. Only one post-Midterm congress was more productive from 1946-1990 with major legislative acts falling by 1/4th (Busch 10). The strategy of using legislative gridlock shows a shift in

priority, from legislation to campaign ammunition. Studies that focus on the realignment beginning in 1894 and ending in 1994 are unable to take social media into account. Post-1994 the President's party has won two more times during Midterm elections, suggesting a change from the former school that the President's party always loses.

Historical Exceptions to the Rule

The trend of the President's party always losing has been a relatively predictable pattern from 1894-1994. The Midterm elections following this era of realignment started with the Midterm elections of 1998. This election resulted in a surprise with the Democratic party, and President Clinton's party, gaining seats during the Midterm election (Busch 149). Further disrupting the predictability of Midterm election results, the trend was broken again in 2002 when Republicans gained seats in the House while George W. Bush is President. The explanation for the change in predictability for the 2002 Midterm election is held with the events the year prior. The country was recovering from the events of the 9/11 terrorist attack. This event has been speculated to be the cause for the outcome of the 2002 Midterm elections, as many voters looked to the President's party to provide a plan and act on these attacks.

The Midterm elections of 1998, however, are not as simply explained. The President's participation in an impeachment hearing for his involvement in the Monica Lewinsky situation all but ensured the party's loss of seats in the 1998-Midterm elections. The President's high approval ratings, positive economy, and low democratic exposure had a share of responsibility in the 1998 outcome (Busch 150). This also resulted in lower voter participation from the previous Midterm election. Election commonalities provide indications that point to the development of trends, assuming the result is the same. The campaign strategy of historic Midterm elections, beginning in 1894, put parties in an alternating desired result. Realignment is the result of each party's shift ideology

to gain the support of an electorate. This shift is often in response to a loss of support from the electorate, or in some cases opportunity to gain support, as both parties hope to be an exception to the trend when their President is in office.

The 1894 realignment of parties, with a newly developed constituent base, derived from a situation where parties essentially changed the demographics they would market themselves toward. Grover Cleveland would win the Presidential election in both 1884 and 1892. In 1892, the country would experience massive joblessness, a railroad strike, and a depression (Frail 2010). This resulted in the greatest loss of congressional seats in history, at 116 seats of the House changing hands from Democrat to Republican representation. The loss came during full Democrat control of the White House, the Senate, and Congress. The realignment refers to both parties rebranding themselves. The Democrat's strategy involved a rebuild, and re-staffing, of northern Democratic candidates, as well as those closest to President Cleveland, as only 9% of Southern Democrats lost their seats (Busch 64). This was subjectively minor compared to the 90% of lost seats in the Midwest and 87% of northeastern seats lost during the Midterm elections (Frail 2010). Out of the then 44 states in the United States, Democrats didn't win a single seat in 24 states, only being able to win one seat in 6 other states. The rebranding of the Democratic party was an effort to separate the party from the President. The result of the realignment was a Republican constituency based in urban and labor-oriented communities, while Democrats would see themselves representing rural areas.

After the Midterm election of 1894, the next exception to the President's party trend in would take place in 1934, when the Midterm election during President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's gained seats in both the House and the Senate. The credit for the win was the support of the New Deal. In 1930, Republican President Herbert Hoover had developed an image of indifference toward what would become known as The Great Depression. The Midterm election of 1930 cost the Republicans 49 House seats and 8 others in the Senate

(Frail 2010). This shift would develop a 2 to 1 ratio, with Democrats leading Republicans in the House. The heavily Democrat led house would influence the direction of politics for decades (Frail 2010). Moving into 1932, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected President, with credit given to a heavy occupation of the House and public support in "The New Deal" (Julius 40). The Democrats find growing support in farmers, labor unionists, Southern whites and ethnic and racial minorities (Frail 2010). This progression would support the school of the Presidential Coattails theory. Though the President may not be completely responsible for the economic position of the country, we see credit being awarded through voter support.

The Midterm election of 1934 would be the only time after the realignment of 1894 that the President's party wins the Midterm elections (Busch 137). The President's party always losing had become a trend that would seem unbreakable. This was until 1998 when the Democratic party claimed victory while President Clinton resided in the White House (Busch 16). The common relevance of the President's Coattails theory that assumes the President's approval and popularity are the cause for Midterm success. The legitimacy of President's Coattails theory comes into question as President Clinton was rebounding after the Monica Lewinsky trial. Though President Clinton's approval rating was higher than average compared to previous presidential offices, the rollercoaster of a presidential impeachment hearing would seem like all but a win for Republicans in 1998, but due to a negative campaigning strategy from the Republicans the Democrats gained support and were able to claim a victory in the 1998 Midterm elections.

The 1998 Midterm elections proved to be an indication of future election trends. In 2002 we see another scenario where the President's party wins the Midterm elections. The outcome is greatly accredited to the country's rallied support after the attacks of 9/11. The Midterm elections of 2002 shared commonalities with the previous trend breaking Midterm elections of 1934 and

1998. The 1934-Midterm elections shared the common school of the President's Coattails theory. President Bush's approval ratings had a historic high of 90% the October following 9/11, while a year later when Midterm elections were held, the President still received a 68% approval rating (Moore 2002). During the 1934 Midterm election the Gallup polling for presidential approval/disapproval had not been initiated as of yet, though President Franklin D. Roosevelt's popularity would be commonly noted (Frail 2010; Busch 136). The outcome of the Midterm elections assumes support for the President's party during Midterm elections as a residual support the voters have for the President himself.

The sudden unpredictability of the Midterm elections brings into question the validity of prior theories, as well as future strategies. The assumption that the President's party always loses has been supported statistically since 1894, but the contradiction to this trend has presented itself two times in the most recent realignment beginning in 1996. The increasing complexity of political environments surrounding elections can be attributed to social media's renationalization of media. Social media has succeeded in providing news and topics across the country, while traditional media has had a focused scope in the past. The impact of a dynamic political tool like social media seems to have created a less predictable Midterm election.

Strategic Efforts to Direct the Public

Midterm election results have created separate strategic campaigning trends within the election system. During the most recent realignment era, 1996-Present, the strategy of fundraising has developed their own trends. An example of funding trends can be illustrated by comparing the origin of funds given to candidates. Generally speaking, since 1996, and more quantitative in more recent Midterms, Republican candidates raise more funds from in-state donors, while Democratic candidates receive more funding from out of state sources. This strategy is the result of a nationalization of communication, which has found a

partisan home in the development of social media (Sisco 4). In terms of fundraising, we also see a strategy where interest groups focus on candidates that are further from centrist views, to show the group's dedication to their cause. We can see the result of these strategies with modern experiences in the media when we are informed of candidates running as representatives in districts out of state.

Trends have developed in response to Midterm results that are widely understood as long term campaign strategies using decreased production during Midterm elected Congress. This tactic justifies strategic positioning to aid Presidential election campaigns. Issue development slows in an attempt to obstruct the President's progress and slow the government's accomplishment ratio. The strategy has added risk, as the decrease in productivity can also be indicative of those incumbents that wish to run again. This has also created a tactic some party members have used in which Congress will confront the President with a popular bill that he is forced to veto out of principle or interest (Busch 64). These strategies have led to a period where the illusion of production is used to sway public approval. The only time we see positive production, post-Midterm since 1994, is when the President's party wins.

The development of communication applied to a national level, advancements in technology, and marketing necessities of each party contribute to all four theories explaining why the President's party always loses, through separate media outlets. The current media climate is being redefined with direct communication through social media (Morris 2017). In 2016, almost 60% of twitter users admitted to getting their news from Twitter, while 66% of Facebook users get their news from social media (Gottfreid 2016). With the development of online-only news outlets, heavy bias and sensationalism effects how campaigns and politicians communicate to the public and even react to issues. Online-only news outlets have even been accused of using their influence to strategically spread bias news to shift electorate opinion.

Congressional Productivity

Public laws enacted by each Congress in first year of its two-year term, by type

	Ceremonial	Substantive	Total
114th 2015-2016	26	87	113
113th 2013-2014	11	61	72
112th 2011-2012	18	63	81
111th 2009-2010	46	79	125
110th 2007-2008	78	97	175
109th 2005-2006	37	124	161
108th 2003-2004	54	144	198
107th 2001-2002	27	81	108
106th 1999-2000	33	137	170
105th 1997-1998	23	130	153
104th 1995-1996	14	74	88

Note: Figures for the 114th Congress as of Dec. 28, 2015
Source: Library of Congress' THOMAS website

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Pew Research Center: Congressional Productivity. By Drew Desilver

The advent, and use of social media as a campaigning tool has proven to be invaluable to candidates during the information age. The evolution of communications technology develops from print media, to broadcast radio, to network television and resulting in internet-based news outlets. Candidates can now reach beyond their constituency to gain recognition on a nation, and even global, platform. The weaponization of policy development and ideological

sensationalism cultivated a new environment in which constituents could reaffirm their political party association.

Though social media has been a tool for candidates, it has also become a tool used by interest groups, online only media outlets and ideological fan pages. Social Media has been credited with affecting all facets of politics, including elections. Social Media becomes a proxy for the ideology politicians subscribe to (Sisco 61). A common technique we experience is a candidate swaying from ideological identification to a moderate stance later in their campaign to maximize their vote share (Sisco 61). This platform puts the constituent base in direct contact with the candidate for the first time in history. The tool also has the specific strategic advantage of being nearly instant communication. This has brought a new avenue in which candidates and representatives can communicate with their constituents about issues, policies and news faster and more directly. Social media has developed an environment of sensationalism and unregulated news outlets; it has also shown to simply reaffirm individual ideology and beliefs (Morris 2016; Reckendorf 2018).

Research examining major social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and MySpace showed a deliberate participation in a political capacity (Baumgartner 2010). Even with a growing presence in campaign use, social media has been unable to take a position as a reliable source of news, with more voters considering traditional news outlets as reliable over social media sources (Gottfried 2016). Social media, as a tool of communication, is an effective means, while as a campaigning strategy, has yet to show substantial gains in Midterm elections. This doesn't negate the potential social media platforms may have when candidates and parties decide to rebrand.

Political marketing effectively supports the surge and decline theory, as rebranding can change electorate size, issue and ideology (Sisco 36). The manipulation of the electorate is simply divided into three rules of political marketing. First, parties sell themselves in the same manner a business sells a

product, by developing clear brands. Secondly, they perform market research to develop their campaign strategy. Lastly, the parties build relationships with voters as businesses do with customers (Sisco 37). Party branding is apparent in labeling of campaign operations including "Contract with America", "War on Terror", "Tea party" and can be seen as early as the Democrat's success with three letter acronyms with Presidents "JFK, LBJ and FDR". Even a change in vernacular during campaign speeches develops a change from "No Yes" to "Well" when discussing policy (Julius 51). Establishing a product to convince a customer to invest in is the strategy of political campaigns, but the use of brands in the information age of political market shows a necessity for innovation in the industry.

Contemporary political culture seems to have evolved with the utilization of social media and direct communication, which has changed the predictability of Midterm elections. Even with the advent and use of social media, we see similar trends, though the predictability of those trends is not as stable as those previously outlined. The use of social media as a tool to calculate how the electorate is feeling, subjectively, has shown to be much more effective than social media's use as a campaigning tool (Chalufour 2018). Programs like Crimson Hexagon allow researchers to actively measure electorate feeling by using an algorithm to present Tweets based on word usage. This helps connect electorate exit polls to how certain geographic locations may be feeling about a specific candidate (Chalufour 2018).

The first noted use of social media as a campaign tool was led by Howard Dean's failed attempt at becoming the Democratic Party's nominee in 2004. Although he was not able to gain enough support to succeed at becoming the Democratic nominee for the White House, he was able to utilize social media platforms to become a front-runner after being relatively unknown. Social media's predecessor in digital media was the use of candidate websites, with the first belonging to the California Senator Dianne Feinstein (Edgerly 2012).

Former Governor Dean may have been the first time social media was utilized as a campaign platform, but candidates saw an opportunity to connect directly with constituents. In 2008, President Barack Obama proved social media's effectiveness when credit was largely given to the campaign team's ability to use electorate internet usage to really direct campaign focus (Hendricks 2016). By 2014 the Democrats had all but perfected the utilization of social media with successful Presidential elections in 2008 and 2012. Unfortunately, they would also learn that social media doesn't always win (Hendricks 2016).

Social media's effectiveness still lies in the ability to shape the press' agenda and understanding of electorate feeling (Kreiss 2014). Interestingly, only about 1/4th of voting aged participants actually engage in social media, specifically 25% of those that identified as Republicans and 29% of those that identified as Democrats (Hendricks 2016; Smith 2014). The common usage of social media and the unrestricted ability to reach anyone, anywhere, created new strategies in recent years. Micro targeting, personalization, and interactivity allowed candidates and campaigns to create a more relatable image (Edgerly 2012). The ever-changing environment of technology, specifically social media, has also affected election predictions. The agenda molding of press outlets also creates a bias tunnel vision for online-only media, which produced presidential predictions of Hillary Clinton having 99% favorability over Republican opponent, now President, Donald Trump. Can the modern use of social media derail the usual trends and outcomes of Midterm elections due to its unrestricted nature?

Summarizing the Impact of Media

We have seen analytical support for historical trends in Midterm elections; the impact of social media may also have a part in shifting those trends. Although social media has not directly affected the result of elections, these communities have shown to be effective tools of campaigning. Considering

the Midterm elections held November of 2018, we saw a lot of the same trends and marketing strategies we have experienced throughout American Midterm election history. We experienced the effect of nationalized media with focused stories on battleground elections. The Midterm elections also had a similarity usually only found in Presidential elections, sharp movement in partisan support.

This can be explained by media coverage of controversial events like the confirmation hearing of Justice Brett Kavanaugh. The story of Justice Kavanaugh seemed as if it would single-handedly be responsible for the 2018 Midterm elections, and it didn't. In fact, the President's approval jumped two percentage points from it is highest-to-lowest during the ordeal, but from the time Justice Kavanaugh was nominated to the time he was appointed the President's approval actually increased by .1% (Silver 2018). Media sensationalism has been believed to influence public opinion, and in turn, voter preference. Evidence suggests that these opinions do not influence election results.

In 2018 a record 49.4% of voters participated in voting in the Midterm elections (McDonald 2018). Texas and Georgia all had a record number of voter participation for major elections involving the House, Senate, and the State government, with Texas 14% above their past average and Georgia at 21% above their past average (Dottle 2018). This can be relative to election spending, which reached a record $5.2 billion toward campaigning (Rannard 2018). The record voter turnout supports the "Surge and Decline" theory, as well as the "Presidential Penalty" theory, as a record number of voters participated while the President's approval rating was at a 40-45% among voters. The current election results for the 2018 Midterm election show the President's party, Republicans, losing 38 seats in the House (Kommenda 2018). This analysis supports little difference from previous Midterm elections, despite evolution of technology and use of social media platforms.

Another issue to keep in mind while considering the technological adaptations to political elections is new vulnerabilities. In 2017, an investigation

was opened into the interference of the 2016 Presidential Election using social media and hacking. The claim involved Russian intelligence operators hacking DNC emails and sending them to the controversial Wikileaks community. These Russian operatives were also allegedly involved in spreading social media messages that supported President Trump, then a candidate running for office (Bacon 2017). The investigation shows the impact of social media and the ways it can affect elections. The hacking of DNC emails is reminiscent of the Watergate scandal, while foreign influence using social media shows the tool's effectiveness in reaching users. While constituents and voting aged participants may not be swayed by short term, sensationalist, headlines, they do consider shifts in public trust of election systems and their parties. The association between technological opportunities of corruption and representative elections has developed new concerns for voters that deter voters from participating,

Midterm election result patterns show another trend that supports the "Presidential Coattails" Theory, as well as, the "Presidential Penalty" theory through historical results. Historically, the President's party loses an average of 36 seats in the House when the President's approval rating is below 50%, while conversely, the President's party loses and average of 14 seats in the House when the President's approval rating is above 50% (Jones 2010). Social media and marketing had an impact on the 2018 Midterm election, as media and marketing do every election. The outcome of elections is the result of complex factors that are difficult to quantify, but easy to blame. We do know that social media has made some strategies much easier to accomplish, like the mobilization of party bases, persuasion of non-partisan voters, and the ability to communicate with large groups directly (Hendricks 2016).

Conclusion

The predictability of Midterm election results seems to have stabilized from the phenomena of 1998 and 2002. Looking forward, we can expect to see

similar results in future Midterm elections compared to historical outcomes. The changing conditions to consider in the future when looking at Midterm election predictions should focus on monetary support of candidates, Presidential approval, and the national climate. With the exception of abnormal events dictating a jump in Presidential support, the 2018 Midterm elections were aligned with previous election outcomes. The consideration of changing conditions is necessary with election analysis, as increases in campaign support can develop a shift in electorate support. We can predict future Midterm elections with marginal accuracy. A notable shift is partisan support grew, for both sides. In general, Democrat districts become more blue while unchanged Republican districts became more red. This shift may be something that makes the difference to nonpartisan voters in the future (Rakich 2018). Although voter turnout has increased, and campaign funding has reached record-breaking values, there was no major variation in the results of the election. With the development of social media, and the newfound ability candidates have to communicate quickly and directly with constituents, we may see a surge in the grassroots type of candidates running for seats in the House.

The "National Conditions" theory may actually become the least valid explanation for Midterm election results, as constituents are now directly connected to their representatives and national conditions are readily available for the public to access. The dynamic nature of technology adds a variable to election campaigning that makes a prediction more difficult to provide with accuracy, but we are still within the reasonable accuracy with Midterm election predictions if historic trends are used. I do not believe there will be a notable shift from the trends we have seen throughout history, that the President's party always loses. It is easy, however, to see how the growing complexity of technological campaign strategies will continuously change what we see as the standard for political campaigning. The broad reaching connectivity of social media seems to be slowly leveling the playing field for both parties, which the nonpartisan

electorate quietly grows. At some point in the future, even the use of social media as a campaigning tool will noted as historical relevance, rather than cutting edge strategies.

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THE UNITED KINGDOM: A CASE STUDY IN INTERNET CENSORSHIP

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Introduction

In the era of expanding the availability of information through the internet, governments have passed legislation to restrict access to certain online media in an effort to protect the public's health and safety. Though this trend has made the internet a safer place for many users, governments have begun to expand on this legislation in a way that impedes on the freedoms of internet users. The United Kingdom provides an interesting example of this phenomenon. Through methods such as Internet Service Provider (ISP) filtering and otherwise, the United Kingdom's government has begun to enforce a degree of internet censorship that violates international treaties for freedom of expression. Specifically, the United Kingdom has begun restricting non-threatening content, limiting access to content that is not necessarily harmful to the public, and enforcing increasingly strict policies that restrict freedom of expression through mission creep policies. Legislators are now moving from solely blocking illegal content, such as child pornography, to restricting content that only debatably harmful, such as violent video games. Ultimately, legislators in the United Kingdom are setting a precedent for democracies worldwide, and they must be held accountable for the policies they produce. Through various methods of restrictive legislation such as ISP filtering, the United Kingdom is attempting to establish mission creep policies that violate international protections for freedom of expression.

Background on Legislation Regarding Freedom of Expression on the Internet

In order to establish context for the implications current United Kingdom legislation has had on the legality of censorship, the international laws protecting

freedom of expression must be explored. In the article "The Beginning of the End of Internet Freedom," Dawn Nunziato explains that various pieces of international legislation have been passed in an effort to protect citizens from unnecessary censorship (2014). For example, the United Kingdom signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees freedom of expression in any media, as well as the right to hold opinions without interference, unless the rights of others, national security, or public health are threatened. She further explains that the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, another piece of legislation signed by the United Kingdom, establishes that governments must make the "least restrictive means required" to ensure the aforementioned categories are not threatened (Nunziato 2014). In short, to be in accordance with international law, all internet censorship that is enforced by a government must be solely for the purpose of protecting public, individual, and national health and safety in the most clearly defined, least prohibitory way possible, while still maintaining the most extensive protections of freedom of expression possible. As citizens of the United Kingdom have seen, legislation to enforce mandatory default ISP filtering and other censorship initiatives have become more and more restrictive, violating many pieces of international legislation.

There are certain terms that are crucial to understand in order to fully appreciate the implications of the United Kingdom's actions. ISP filtering allows administrators to block certain websites or content from being accessed by their clients. The United Kingdom has taken charge of ensuring Internet Service Providers filter content the government deems necessary. Though this can be used to ensure unsuspecting users do not stumble across illegal content on the internet such as child pornography, under little oversight it could also allow the government to abuse its power by restricting content that does not necessarily need to be restricted. Another form of Internet censorship includes the

government banning specific types of content, such as extremism. The United Kingdom has seen instances of both forms of censorship in recent years.

Proponents for ISP Filtering

Before discussing the disadvantages of ISP filtering and how it leads to censorship, it is important to recognize why the technology was developed and in what areas it works well. One of the original purposes for ISP filtering was to filter out strictly illegal activity such as creating and distributing child pornography, and in this it has been relatively successful. In the article previously mentioned, "Child Abuse images and Cleanfeeds: Assessing Internet Blocking Systems," McIntyre argues that, following after the model set by the United Kingdom's Internet Watch Foundation, the ISP filtering system specific to child pornography has been adopted by various countries including Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Canada, Switzerland, and more. Moreover, private companies such as Google and Facebook have adopted similar systems for the same purpose. He argues that whether an image contains child abuse is far simpler to judge by filtering systems than whether content "glorifies terrorism," and for that purpose ISP filtering does well (2011).

In the case of other "adult" content that might legitimately need to be filtered out of the internet, such as true extremism and violence, McIntyre outlines a few criteria the government must fulfill in order to do so in a way that does not violate the internationally-protected rights of the United Kingdom's citizens, including: being transparent with their actions and allowing for public oversight, following strictly defined, legitimate guidelines, reducing overblocking as well as mission creep policies, and others (2011). So long as the United Kingdom upholds these standards, there may be a future for ISP blocking and other legitimate internet filtering procedures; it is up to the citizens of the United Kingdom and other democracies of the world to stand up against unfair

internet censorship and ensure the government does not take advantage of legitimate legislation such as fighting against child pornography on the internet.

<u>ISP Filtering is Restricting Non-Threatening Content</u>

To begin, one must consider what the government should define as "threatening" material in an effort to clearly identify what should be censored. As mentioned before, ISP filtering began as an effort to filter out definitionally illegal content, such as child pornography; however, since then, legislators have taken the opportunity to expand on their original provisions, restricting access to content that is questionably threatening at best. In the article previously mentioned, "The Beginning of the End of Internet Freedom," Nunziato argues that without specific criteria for what may be censored by the government, a "mission creep" effect could happen, and the United Kingdom has already seen evidence of this through recent legislation (2014). She explains, "...requiring that the criteria by which the censoring authority makes the decision

> to censor be set forth with precision helps to cabin administrative
> discretion and also helps to limit "mission creep" within the censoring
> body. Without a precise and detailed specification of the criteria for
> censorship, the censor can exercise unbridled and expansive discretion to
> restrict speech,"

and recent legislation has shown just that (Nunziato 2014).

A clear example of this happening is the evolution of ISP filtering legislation. In 2013, Prime Minister David Cameron pushed for the most prominent ISPs of the United Kingdom to begin setting content-blocking as a default in an effort to prevent pornography from "corroding childhood," (Holehouse 2015). This led to most ISPs not only blocking pornography, but many other 'corrosive' categories such as violent material, alcohol, smoking, web forums, web-blocking circumvention tools, and others (BBFC n.d.). In 2017, the Digital Economy Act, an expansion on the original push for ISP filtering,

required all ISPs to content-block all loosely-defined adult content unless users provided proof of being over the age of 18 (Wired 2019). In this expansion on legislation the government went from only blocking strictly illegal material such as child pornography to blocking categories that some might not consider to be threatening to the health and safety of the public, as the International Procedural Protections for Speech outlines. Consequently, the question of whether these categories of content should be restricted must be considered.

Though there are several categories of this nature mentioned above, this essay will focus mainly on pornography as an example of a questionably corrosive category of content currently being filtered by the United Kingdom. There are many schools of thought on whether obscene material, including pornography, is damaging to young minds, though many modern studies have concluded that perhaps pornography is not as damaging as researchers originally believed. In the article "Facts Versus Fears: Why Should We Worry About Pornography?" published in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* W. Cody Wilson argues that, despite common misconceptions by society, the most common result of young people viewing sexual material is merely gaining information, and that it very rarely results in actual sexual activity, poor moral character, or "calloused sexual attitudes toward women" (1971).

Despite this evidence, one of the most common arguments against viewing pornography insist that it causes "moral harm." In the essay "Does Obscenity Cause Moral Harm," published in *Columbia Law Review,* Andrew Koppelman, a professor of law and political science at Northwestern University, argues that, whether morally harmful or not, the concept of "moral harm" cannot be a "workable legal test for obscenity" (2005). Obscenity is a historically contested category of restricted material internationally, and it causing "moral harm" on its readers or watchers on the internet is a flimsy argument for its nationwide restriction through ISP filtering. This is not to say that the

pornographic websites themselves should not attempt to restrict those under 18 from viewing their content; however, the potential consequences pornography could have on young minds are hardly a reason for the United Kingdom government to enforce mandatory ISP filters, as there is a lack of evidence that this poses a credible threat on the public health.

Separate from the argument of whether pornography is actually corrosive to young minds in the United Kingdom, the poor design of the ISP filtering technology might be causing more of a threat to the public health than the content it is actually filtering. Evidence has shown that, despite current legislators' expectations, ISP filtering has proved itself an ineffective method of filtering "harmful" content, and, in fact, often filters out a large portion of innocuous or helpful content. In the *Library Technology Reports* article "Internet Filtering," Sarah Houghton-Jan, award-winning technology blogger, argues that the ineffectiveness of ISP filtering lends itself as a force working against digital citizens (2013). According to the studies mentioned in this article, ISP filters and are only accurate 78 percent of the time, causing significant over-blocking and under-blocking (2013). In fact, due to the automatic nature of the filters, many ISPs end up blocking sites with advice on sexual health, advice on pornography or sex addiction, support services for rape and domestic abuse, drug advice, and more (Smith 2013). Due to the inefficient nature of ISP filtering, the international treaties previously mentioned are being violated through unnecessary censorship of innocuous content, which could lead to significant negative consequences for the very people governments are attempting to protect.

To further support the idea that ISP filtering is an ineffective method of protecting the public health, one must consider evidence of underblocking in the United Kingdom's current technology. In the online article "Internet Filtering and Adolescent Exposure to Online Sexual Material," Andrew Przybylski and Victoria Nash argue that internet filtering tools in the United Kingdom are ineffective in respect to whether young people encounter sexualized content

online or not (2018). In the article, two studies are explored: one case study of adolescents in the European Union and one preregistered study regarding British adolescents. Both studies came to the conclusion that whether adolescents' parents were enforcing parental internet filters, the difference between the rate of porn being viewed was insignificant (Nash 2018). This reinforces the idea that pornography filters, and ISP filters in general, are ineffective at protecting the public's health and safety. Not only do they violate international legislation by often overblocking material that is unlikely to be harmful to the public in the first place, they often underblock a significant portion of material, making the content fairly accessible despite their attempts at restricting it. All in all, ISP filtering is far from the most effective way at protecting the public's health and safety, and it violates several international provisions protecting against censorship in attempting to do so.

Current ISP Filtering is not the "Least Restrictive" Means Possible for Protecting the Public

Though the initial push for ISP filtering was an attempt to restrict access illegal activity such as child pornography, the United Kingdom government has taken this method of censorship far beyond its original purpose. Much of the evidence for the United Kingdom violating the "least restrictive means possible" clause in international legislation can be found in the previous section. Seeing as many of the categories they are restricting in ISP filtering are mostly non-threatening, by filtering the content they are being more restrictive than necessary to protect the public health and safety. Furthermore, ISP filtering often leads to overblocking, meaning the government is restricting websites that need not be restricted. Both of these realities of ISP filtering violate the international provisions designed to protect citizens from unnecessary government censorship previously outlined.

One of the reasons why the United Kingdom has been able to violate this particular provision is their loose definition of what is and is not considered harmful material. This is evident in the attitudes of the legislators behind the policies. When asked about the United Kingdom's growing push for control over social media in an effort to filter out threats to national security, Security Minister James Brokenshire said the government should deal with material "that may not be illegal but certainly is unsavoury and may not be the sort of material that people would want to see or receive," (Clark 2014). This perspective allows for the government to define themselves what they believe to be "material people would want to see or receive." In the article "Child Abuse images and Cleanfeeds: Assessing Internet Blocking Systems" published in the *Research Handbook on Governance of the Internet*, T.J. McIntyre, law professor at the University College Dublin, points out that there is little legislative basis or judicial oversight that goes into the process of determining what could be "potentially illegal" (2011). This supports the idea that the United Kingdom government has designed a system in which they are able to determine what should and should not be censored from the public through ISP filtering with little to no accountability from the public. This has left plenty of room for mission creep policies that have restricted what the government believes the citizens of the United Kingdom should and should not be able to see on the internet. Setting this precedent is a small step away from the government being able to censor content such as political commentary they disagree with, and recent legislation has pointed towards this becoming a reality.

Mission Creep Policies Take Away Freedom of Expression

Opening the door for ISP filtering has led to a 'Pandora Effect' for even more areas of censorship separate from just filtering out "adult" content for users under 18 years old. In 2014, United Kingdom Home Secretary Theresa May announced a push for new legislation, dubbed the Extremism Disruption Orders,

that would disallow any person holding "extremist" views, such as criticising Sharia law or gay marriage, from being able to appear on broadcasts, post messages on online forums or social media, or be able to protest in restricted locations (Bingham 2014). This sets a precedent for censoring other points of view that the governing body disagrees with, violating the international legislation of having the right to hold opinions without interference. The United Kingdom Parliament is no longer dealing with what is the least restrictive means necessary to ensure the safety of their public, and their loosely-defined categories worthy of content-filtering are allowing government officials to themselves determine what should and should not be seen by the public.

To understand the mission-creep trend in this particular issue one must look at the history of where the call for counter-extremism legislation originated. In the Queen's speech of 2015, she announced that new legislation would be introduced in Parliament to "tackle extremism in all its forms," this being the Extremism Disruption Orders, also known as the Counter-Extremism and Safeguarding Bill. Since then, the bill has failed to pass because of its lack of clarity in defining "extremism" and "British values," and has been criticised for working against protections for free speech (Townsend 2017). That being said, as of 2017 the United Kingdom has established a Commission for Countering Extremism with the same mission as that outlined in the previously-proposed counter-extremism bills. Though the method by which Parliament will take to actually counter extremism is unclear as of now, research is being done on various types of extremism and the potential ways to combat it (gov.uk 2019). Of course, countering extremism certainly has its place in online activity and otherwise, as terrorist groups certainly take advantage of the freedoms the internet offers to the public; however, the United Kingdom government must be held accountable for strictly defining what counts as extremism as well as how they would handle cases of potential extremism.

A final example of how small missteps in failing to maintain government oversight in internet censorship could lead to dystopian-level control of the public is Prime Minister David Cameron's call for Facebook and Twitter to ban people from social media during riots or other times of civil unrest (Halliday 2011). This policy has very dangerous implications on the ability to freely express one's self in times of civil discord, as we have seen in international examples, such as the 2018 Bangladesh road-safety protests. During these protests, the Bangladesh government attempted to shut down the internet to prevent news of the revolt from spreading, causing Bangladeshi citizens to take to social media platforms to attempt to spread the news of the atrocities their government was committing. In this instance, one user of the social media app Reddit used the platform to attempt to make the world aware of what was happening in his country, which allowed mainstream news media to begin reporting story (Farhadjaman, 2018).

In the instance of the Bangladesh student protests, the government was blatantly attempting to stifle their citizens' ability to speak their mind on the matter, as well as make the public aware of the realities of their government's failures. Giving the United Kingdom the power to shut down social media during riots and protests would be putting an unprecedented amount of control over their citizens' right to free speech in their hands. Facebook and Twitter did not comply with this initiative; however, this is one more example of how the attitudes of the current administration in the United Kingdom could lead to dangerous legislation that would impose on the internationally-protected right to freely express one's self.

Conclusion

As evidenced, the United Kingdom has a history of expanding on legislation that imposes government-enforced internet filtering that has the potential to, and in some cases has already, violated international legislation that

protect the expression of freedom. In various pieces of legislation, the United Kingdom has restricted their citizens' ability to freely express their opinions through mission creep policies, they have hampered their ability to access content that the government deems "corrosive" or unfit for the public, and they have established sweeping filtering systems that cause overblocking, violating the "least restrictive" clause in the protections against internet censorship. Overall, there is a legitimate place for filtering internet content, such as with policing child pornography; however, legislators in the United Kingdom have taken this initial push for legislation and has expanded on it to include initiatives such as the Counter-Extremism and Safeguarding Bill that threaten the public's right to the freedom of speech. The public must recognize when a democratic government is overstepping its bounds and push back against overbearing legislation, with the goal to make the internet a safe place for citizens worldwide to freely express their opinions and have unrestricted access to legally-obtainable information.

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LATIN AND SOUTH AMERICAN IMMIGRATION, MEDIA BIAS, AND POLICY PREFERENCE

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Abstract

The author conducted an experiment concerning American perception on Latin and South American immigration as a result of media bias. The experiment used mixed methods to test the author's hypothesis that the Trump administration's presentation of inaccurate information on immigration has encouraged some Americans to take harsher stances on immigration policy.

Introduction

There has been controversy concerning President Donald Trump's immigration policy, and it seems that many Americans have reached a stalemate on this issue. Some consider Trump's rhetoric to be hate speech or bigotry, while some believe that his words encompass the realities of immigrants coming from Latin and South America. The current administration's perception of Latin American immigrants has contributed to a rise of xenophobic, poorly-based, and often damaging sentiments towards foreigners seeking to enter the country. The information presented by the current presidential administration has flown through the media and can be seen as inaccurate while also fear mongering throughout the country. Fear continues to spread as the president fails to recognize immigrants as human beings, having consistently referred to foreigners as "rapists" and "animals." Due to the fact that immigration policy and its inaccuracies have taken the forefront of Trump's presidency, it may be concluded that these biases have presented themselves in many Americans' perceptions of immigration.

Literature Review

   When reviewing the context of Latin and South American immigration to the United States, it must first be understood that this is not a new issue introduced by Donald Trump; rather, it is a topic of historical discussion and debate. Throughout recent decades, presidential administrations and Congress have viewed immigration as an integral issue to the United States (Brockett, 2017). The Obama administration introduced a friendly stance on Hispanic immigrants when introducing Deferred Action for Parents of Americans; for Democrats and Latin and South American immigrants, this policy was widely accepted (Brockett, 2017). However, Republicans did not favor this policy, and in his effort to make the United States tough on immigration, Donald Trump spoke to their concerns (Brockett, 2017). For example, the Trump campaign promised that a wall would be created to protect the southern border, and that Mexico would front the bill (Gimpel 1, 2016).

   A policy proposal as strong as this reflects Trump's initiative to alleviate economic tension, a primary concern for many Americans (Gimpel 1, 2016). Based on economic frustrations, Trump was able to garner support from voters who occupy the following demographics: blue-collar workers, those who have not received higher education, and those who earn relatively high household incomes (Rothwell & Diego- Rosell, 2015). In addition to these characteristics, evidence shows that those who are racially isolated and less impacted by immigrant populations are supportive of Trump (Rothwell & Diego- Rosell, 2015). Based on a sample from the 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey, the claim that Trump supporters are wary of big government and dissatisfied with American democracy cannot be fully stated without recognizing the racism behind their vote (Hooghe & Dassonneville, 2018). Due to drastic policy proposals such as the creation of a wall, the rise of anti-immigrant and xenophobic sentiments has increased in American media.

In general, the media has been the direct source of information linking a country's populous to their government. Due to this connection, a relative bias is typically supportive of the government and thus is presented to those who keep up with current events (Elejald et al. 24, 2018). The media is responsible for presenting these events, and only a limited amount of recipients are aware that a bias is there (Elejalde et al. 24, 2018). The American media consistently covers South and Latin American immigration, and since Trump's administration began, many media sources have aligned themselves with the President. For instance, the media has broadcasted stricter measures on undocumented immigrants and the flow of refugees (Tunney & Chavez 2, 2017). Network providers such as FOX News claims to be unbiased; however, it typically leans towards conservatives and Republicans (Zuniga et al. 600, 2012). Due to conservative viewership of FOX, many have agreed to Trump's strict policy proposals; however, those who typically watch CNN are considered to be more liberal and often negate harsh immigration stances (Facchini et al. 27, 2017).

The importance of where Americans receive their news is crucial as to how they then create policy preferences; in all, those who strictly watch one news provider such as FOX or CNN are typically less informed on current matters, and it is best to diversify one's media exposure to gain a more honest portrayal of information (Hericourt & Spielvogel 16, 2013). Based on American media exposure their perception of Latin and South American immigration has been swayed.

Due to their media exposure, the public's policy preferences depend on the information they have received. Information presented by the media is sometimes inaccurate, in which case it can corrupt people's judgment and result in subsequent behaviors (Rapp, 2016). As stated previously, many voters supported Trump due to economic insecurities which lead many to also view social programs negatively. For example, major recipients of social programs are falsely broadcasted by the media, which disproportionately associates welfare beneficiaries with negative

stereotypes especially pertaining to ethnicity (Mohamed & Farris 25, 2019). These ethnic biases, presented by the media, also pertained to how Americans viewed immigrants, often portraying a negative narrative to Latin immigrants (Mohamed & Farris 22, 2019). A culmination of falsely reporting the behaviors of Latin immigrants in the United States and exaggerated policy proposals such as a wall catered to the underlying racist sentiments of Donald Trump's campaign in 2016 and his current presidency.

Many Trump voters reject the correlation between their support for the President and racism. Bias from the media often conflates fallacies with the truth, and in these cases Trump supporters are left unaware of the racism to which they are catering (Konrad, 2018). In all, immigration has been a highlight of American policy for multiple decades and Donald Trump illuminated it again during his campaign in 2016. Since then, some conservative media outlets have upheld Trump's perception of immigrants, which is primarily negative and false. For example, the president has inaccurately portrayed the scope of homicides committed by illegal immigrants and falsely accused the United States immigration system to cost taxpayers billions of dollars a year (Lee et al., 2017). Due to American media exposure, many Americans have succumbed to Trump's rhetoric, and some have adopted harsher policy preferences in response to the president's articulation of Latin and South American immigrants.

Methods

In order to test the effects of inaccurate information about Latin and South American immigration presented by mainstream media during the Trump era on Americans' policy preferences, the author first posited the following questions: if one receives inaccurate knowledge from mainstream media about immigration to the United States during the Trump era, how does that affect their stance on the issue? Are those who lack quality information about immigration more likely to have a harsh stance on protecting American borders? If so, why?

In order to answer the questions stated above, a system of mixed methods was used. This allowed the author to collect numerical data while simultaneously gaining contextual information. In order to collect this information, a survey of 10 questions was administered to participants. The survey consisted of six quantitative questions, one of which having two parts, and four qualitative question, one of which also having two parts. Quantitative questions ranged from demographic characteristics to how often participants stay updated on current events and how frequent Latin and South American immigration is referenced in the news they consume. Qualitative questions concerned whether or not participants had seen a difference in conversations on immigration in the United States since the inception of the Trump era, and what should be done in order to protect America's southern border. Altogether, the author interviewed 10 people, all of whom consented to participating and being audio recorded.

Due to the Institutional Review Board requirements, the author was only allowed to interview VCU students. In order to survey ten VCU students, convenience sampling was used. Five of these participants were to be liberal and the other half would be conservative to reveal possible similarities and differences in competing political ideologies on immigration. Ultimately, the author interviewed five liberals, four conservatives, and one who did not identify with either ideology. The results from the one participant who did not identify with either ideology was mixed with data from the conservative participants. Those who participated in the survey were between the ages of 19 and 23. Eight participants identified as male and two identified as female. Eight participants identified as white, one identified as black, and one identified as both white and Asian.

Findings

Demographic factors such as ethnicity and gender showed little to no impact on participants' responses. The most crucial factor affecting participants' responses was their political ideology, as expected. After identification questions

were asked, participants were asked to state whether or not they stayed updated on current events and politics, and if so, where they received their information. Nine out of ten respondents claimed that they stayed updated on current events; six out of this nine claimed they received their information from readings articles. Regardless of political ideology, most participants either received their news from CNN or BBC. One respondent, a conservative, indicated that they received news on current events and politics from Facebook.

For the fifth question, the survey respondents were asked how often they come across information about Latin and South American immigration to the United States, and how important this issue is to them. All respondents, including the participant that does not stay updated on current events and politics, stated that they received information about immigration at least once a week. The frequency by which they received information on immigration ranged between hourly, daily, weekly, and monthly. Similar to news presence, how important Latin and South American immigration was to the participants was scaled. Participants were asked to rate the level of importance they felt for immigration on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being of least importance and 10 being of most importance. One participant responded as low as a two out of ten, and two answered as high as an eight out of ten. The participant who responded with a two mentioned that the topic wasn't of interest and did not pertain to them; the participants who responded with an eight believed that immigration is an interesting and a pressing issue for the United States to resolve. The most common answer was six, putting the average level of importance for participants at a 6.2. In other words, the responses collected indicate that Latin and South American immigration is a slight area of interest for Americans but not a mass concern. The final quantitative question posed asked what words or phrases came to mind when thinking of Latin and South American immigration and regardless of political ideology the three most common words were: illegal, wall, and asylum.

In the author's survey, the qualitative questions were most reflective of how the participants viewed immigration and how the media has presented itself in such policy preferences. The first qualitative question asked to participants was whether or not they believed that Donald Trump's campaign in 2016 changed conversations on immigration in the United States. The majority of participants (7 out of 10), said "yes", while 2 said "maybe" and 1 said "no". The participants who responded with "yes" believed that the campaign caused inaccuracies on immigration to become salient, thus falsely portraying immigrants and contributing to a rise in racist sentiment. The 2 that responded with "maybe" believed it was possible that the racism towards immigrants they witness now was also prevalent in previous presidential administrations, and were thus unsure if Trump was the sole facilitator of xenophobic rhetoric. The participant that responded with "no" believed that conversations on immigration haven't changed, and anti-immigration sentiment is the same as it was before Trump's campaign. Overall, the important part to note is that every participant concluded that all conversations regarding the Trump campaign and immigration led to the discussion of racism.

The next qualitative question was whether or not the participants were more concerned about immigration since Trump was elected. 6 of 10 respondents said yes while 4 said no. Out of the 6 who responded yes, all 5 identified as liberals and believed that the racism towards immigrants could impact how humane future immigration policies may be. The one conservative who also said yes noted that due to the controversial nature of immigration in the United States, the issue has begun coming to their attention more frequently, which has caused them to reconsider how immigration negatively affects taxes and social programs. The four participants that said no believed that concern over immigration has become too prevalent which has caused them to ignore it in the news.

The third qualitative question was whether or not the participants believed that Donald Trump has accurately portrayed the realities of Latin and South American immigration. Overall, 8 out of 10 participants claimed that Trump

inaccurately depicts immigrants and the rhetoric he puts forth is false; Latin and South American immigrants are not always the rapists and murderers he depicts them to be. The two participants who believed Trump has accurately portrayed Latin and South American immigrants predominantly agreed that immigrants are living tax-free, causing a strain on social programs like social security and thus resulting in a failing economy.

The last question of the survey garnered great diversity among participants' responses. The question asked was how *should* the United States construct policies about immigration from Latin and South America. No participant gave a cohesive answer or a response that was very similar to that of any other participants. One participant responded with "I don't know," and failed to provide further rationale. When comparing liberals and conservatives, there was no stark difference in their policy preferences; most participants responded that more personnel, technological advancements or a revised immigration policy should be enforced to respond to Latin and South American immigration. However, one participant claimed that birthright citizenship was unfair for those born by illegal immigrants and that the United States should have a world quota as to how many immigrants could enter the country per year. In addition, the participant suggested that immigrants should provide proof of financial success, positing that having three months' worth of living expenses would be an adequate requirement for allowing someone into the United States.

The excessiveness of that participant's policy proposal was not similar to that of others. When asked why their policy preference is best for the United States, most liberals implied that treating people humanely is not questionable especially since the United States is a country founded by immigrants. In comparison, conservatives were primarily focused on the perceived betterment of the United States rather than the livelihood of people escaping oppression, in contrast specifically to what more liberal respondents said.

Discussion/Conclusion

Overall only one participant interviewed completely solidified the author's posing question in which the lack of accurate information on immigration leads one to have a harsher stance on Latin and South American immigration to the United States. The participant who suggested an elimination of birthright citizenship on top of other policy preferences was the same person who received information on current events and politics from Facebook. Another participant who takes information from more conservative sources such as FOX (a media network that has been referenced previously as falsely presenting information on immigration via Trump) and military/defense journalists supported the creation of Trump's wall in addition to increased personnel and well maintained checkpoints on the southern border. These two conservatives suggested harsher immigration reformer than the other conservatives. Two out of the five conservatives had the least to say on their policy preferences due to the lack of information they have on immigration, revealing that people do not always form opinions based on hearsay, refuting the author's proposed question. Altogether, the five conservatives spoke to immigration in hopes to better the United States in order to protect the country's safety and to secure economic success. In doing so no conservative backed their policy preferences with fact and direct correlation of immigration negatively impacting the economy and immigrants committing violent crimes.

Although two out of the ten participants took a harsher stance on policy preferences in regards to Latin and South American immigration, all participants were either indifferent or supportive of immigration. No respondent discouraged immigration nor responded with blatant racially biased rhetoric; however, harsh policy preferences mentioned previously rather encouraged xenophobic policy whether or not the participants recognized their unconscious bias. Overall, regardless of political ideology or media consumption many were not in favor of Trump's wall nor separating and detaining families at the border. There are a couple of proposed reasons for this more humane approach to immigrants when

asked of liberals and conservatives. Due to the fact the authors research was limited by IRB requirements VCU students could only participate, the importance of this relies in the bias that the university promotes. VCU is generalized to be a liberal campus that encourages diversity and inclusion. In addition, research showed participants of the younger generation, aged between 19 and 23 are more supportive of immigration in comparison to older generations (Parker et al., 2019).

In order for the author to receive information to better support their research question, the sample would have to be widened to older participants. To receive harsher stances on immigration it would most likely come from older generations such as Baby Boomers. In 2016 it was reported 31% of Boomers identified as conservative (Smith & Maniam, 2017). Much of these conservatives garner their information on current events from FOX News, research shows that 40% of those who voted for Donald Trump relied on FOX as their main source (Sutton, 2017). During the campaign trail in 2016 most Americans received their information from television (Sutton, 2017). In comparison to the authors research none of the participants viewed their news from cable networks. In all due to televised reports on immigration via Trump became an outlet for many of his supporters who in fact agreed with stronger immigration policy. Due to the fact older generations were more likely to receive their news from television than articles, they are more likely to be swayed and are more likely to succumb to inaccuracies presented by networks such as FOX. If the author's sample did not have to abide to IRB requirements it is likely older voters who more likely consume cable network media would better prove that inaccuracies presented by mainstream media would result in harsher policy preferences when protecting American borders from Latin and South American immigrants.

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Review of "From Politics to the Pews" by Michelle F. Margolis

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Two of the most polarizing topics one can bring up in conversation today are religion and politics. While they occupy two distinct tracts of one's life, the two subjects overlap in terms of one's identity more than the average individual may at first believe. In Michelle F. Margolis' 2018 book, *From Politics to the Pews*, the author attempts to define and explain the often misunderstood relationship between the two; further, she attempts to answer whether conventional wisdom surrounding their relationship is correct, or whether there is a different, overlooked hypothesis that provides an answer. She begins by putting forth two equally tantalizing hypotheses: the conventional hypothesis that religion creates the God gap, which are the religious differences between Democrats and Republicans in political affiliation, and the second being that inversely, politics is actually the driving force behind the God gap. Margolis posits that the truth of the matter can be found more in the latter, with political affiliation having serious potential to impact one's religious identity and level of engagement. Overarchingly, the author's central claim was supported by her findings and research, and ultimately accepted.

Margolis' findings are notable given that they contradict the presumed status quo. Throughout the book, she provides a wealth of evidence to support her claim that partisan identity can largely determine religious identity. This evidence includes her establishment that the relative calm and outsized role of religion in everyday life during the 1950's was counteracted by the chaos of the succeeding decade. Such upheaval led politicians to attempt to either appeal to voters who favored the older, more religious and subdued societal norms, or to who favored the new, outspoken, and seemingly radical norms-in essence, an adoption of a preferred way of life as a political issue to accumulate capital on. The aftereffects of this, according to the author, can be seen today in the God gap, as voters who today would prefer a return to a more subdued and traditional way of life, based in religion, identify as Republicans and those who may see themselves as the next wave of anti-establishment and anti-tradition individuals identity as Democrats. As such, her research holds serious weight given both the possible far-reaching effects of it on our national political consciousness, as well the potential it carries to better understand and explain the voting trends of young voters in elections.

Margolis admits that her theory and her findings require certain assumptions to hold true. One notable example of this is the assumption that an individual's partisan identity is stronger than their religious identity; that is, their partisan values and ideology maintain a stronger influence on the individual than their values of religious nature. She addresses this assumption by explaining that often the strength of each identity rises and subsides over time, creating windows for maximum influence. This is important to note as it helps explain how one identity may permanently influence an individual to a greater extent than another.

A roadblock that can be found in her research exists in chapter seven, titled "Faithful Partisans: A Closer Look at African Americans." While the chapter is fairly significant, the author seems to commit certain research design errors. One example of this is the research and accompanying graphs she cites throughout the chapter.

Margolis discusses such research extensively; however, there is little in the way of critical analysis or scrutinization of it past what appears to be necessary to substantiate, to an extent, her overarching claims. Such an oversight does not seriously damage the author's credibility or call into question the validity of her core argument, but rather it serves as a reminder that even the methods of the most experienced political scientists are not beyond reproach.

As previously mentioned, Margolis' work carries significant weight in the realm of political science, specifically in the field of voter and electoral research. It helps answer questions such as the relationship between religious identity and political identity, while also creating new ones, such as the extent to which research such as the authors can truly be generalized given the human nature of its subject. Further research along these lines would do well to both remember that conventional wisdom can and should be challenged, as well as devote serious resources to addressing the contradictory and consistently shifting nature of voting trends.

Review of "How Fascism Works" by Jason Stanley

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How Fascism Works is a book by political philosopher Jason Stanley, first published in 2018. In it, Stanley argues that nearly all fascist regimes, both historic and contemporary, use many of the same tactics to obtain political power. He claims that the central function of these tactics is to sow divisions within the general populace of a state, thus amassing support for an exclusionary ideology that keeps the regime in power. Chapter by chapter, Stanley breaks down each of the strategies that fascist leaders deploy to this end. He explains their role in furthering the objectives of fascist ideology, and then incorporates specific examples of their success in actual fascist governments. Stanley frequently points to the governments of contemporary Turkey and Hungary, Nazi Germany, the American Reconstruction era, and others as evidence of the pervasiveness of fascist politics worldwide. In doing so, Stanley makes a compelling case for why fascism so often recurs around the world despite the foreboding lessons history has taught.

A proper analysis of *How Fascism Works* requires a distinction between the quality of Stanley's research and that of his writing. In regards to the former, Stanley uses diverse evidence and sound reasoning to support his points about fascist politics. In doing so, he reinforces his arguments and avoids specious claims to which many political theory books fall victim. A criticism worth noting, however, is that Stanley's argument comprises so many individual parts that while each one may be convincing, he fails to adequately draw them into a cohesive whole. Certain points do attest to Stanley's ultimate thesis that fascist politics uses an "us versus them" dichotomy to create societal divisions that amass power for a nation's leaders. However, other elements of Stanley's argument appear detached from this main idea. The result is a book with cogent, compelling discussion for each of the ten political tactics that Stanley incorporates, but with little tangible connection to a single, overarching hypothesis.

Similarly, the quality of the writing in *How Fascism Works* has areas of both strength and weakness. Unlike academic journals, whose writing intends only to convey research in as clear and concise a

manner as possible, the writing in academic *books* must function as a tool to construct a narrative and keep the reader engaged. Consequently, it is important to assess how well Stanley uses the language in *How Fascism Works* to serve these ends. Perhaps Stanley's most substantial achievement here is his ability to take bold, esoteric claims about fascist politics and explain them in such a way that their function and consequences are unmistakably clear. However, at times his effort to avoid ambiguity veers his writing towards the opposite extreme—redundancy. Stanley often makes his point so clear at the outset of an argument that the reader can progress through the discussion without needing any reminders to stay on track. Nevertheless, Stanley continues to reintroduce his claims about fascist politics again and again, upwards of a dozen times for each tactic he discusses. The consequence is a strong sense of repetitiveness in each chapter that is noticeable to the average reader and outright frustrating to those who are particularly focused.

Despite the nuanced criticisms of Stanley's book, *How Fascism Works* is still one of the most comprehensive, informative books on the role of fascism in today's political arena. In a sense, it is a guidebook for understanding how corrupt regimes use seemingly innocuous tactics to rise to power and support perverse, undemocratic ideals. For anyone interested in the current political climate and its possible trajectories in the coming decades, *How Fascism Works* provides a strong foundation for examining modern politics with a critical lens.

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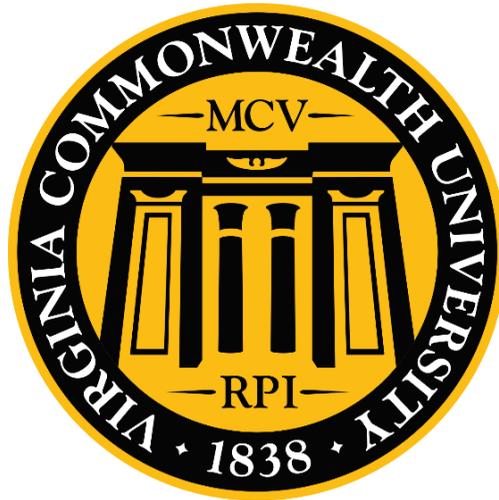
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