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VOLUME XVII

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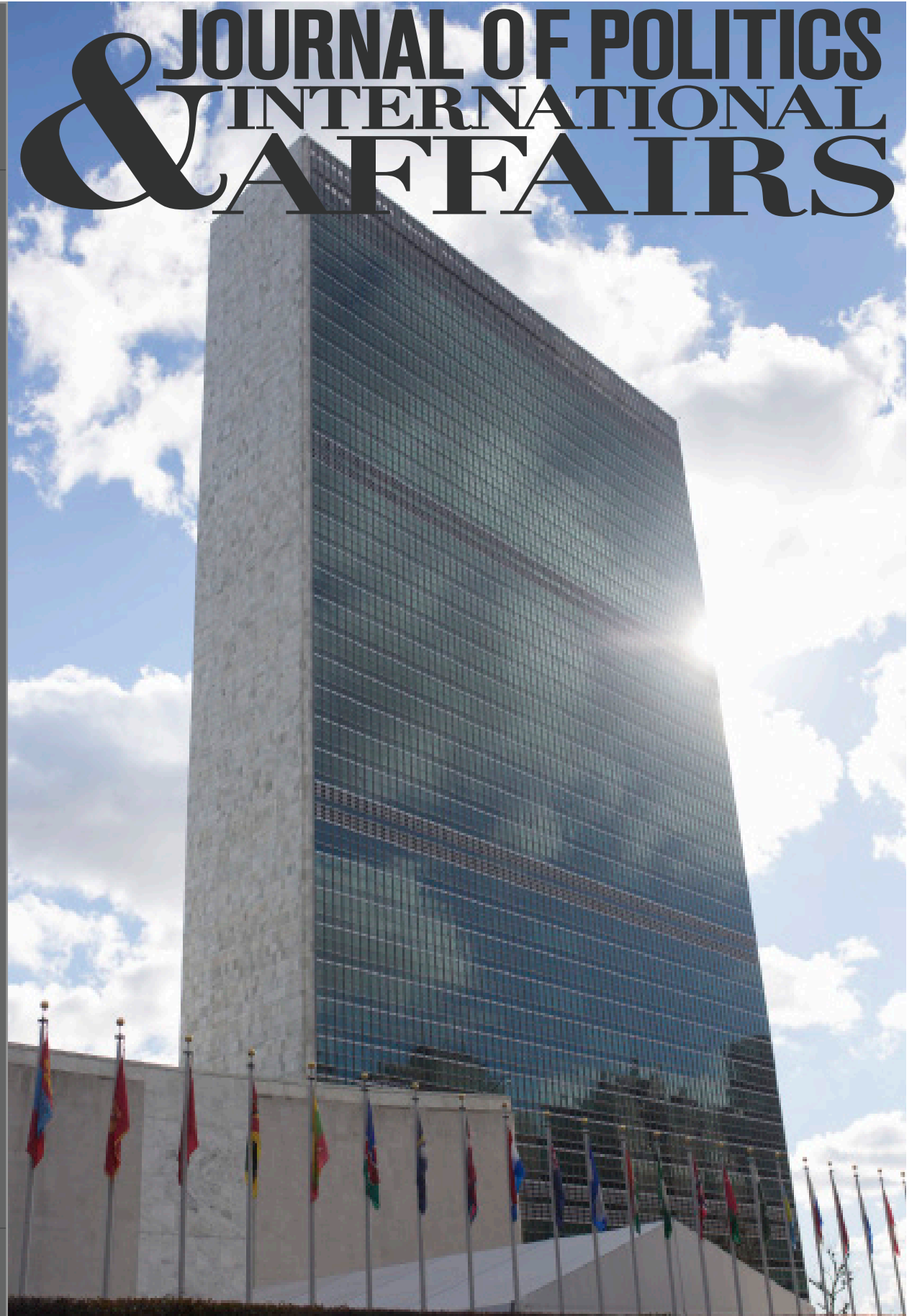
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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Journal of Politics & International Affairs at New York University is a student-run publication that provides a forum for outstanding student work on relevant, thought-provoking topics in the domestic and international landscape, including research in political science, economics, history, and regional studies.

We believe that the student theses published biannually in the Journal—chosen and edited rigorously by our editorial staff—are legitimate and valuable examples of the intellectual growth of politically-minded students and writers at New York University.

NOTES

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Articles published in the Journal of Politics & International Affairs do not represent an agreement of beliefs or methodology, and readers are not expected to concur with all the opinions and research expressed in these pages. Instead, we hope that these pieces are able to inform and inspire dialogue in the NYU community by addressing a wide variety of topics and opinions.

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Each year the submissions we receive from writers across the university speak to the current events and pressing global issues on the minds of New York University students. We don't request that all submissions be of topical concern, but without fail, they almost always are. This year the research and editorials that came across our "desk" followed that pattern. We had more submissions about China than ever before, we received and accepted the first piece we have ever published about a nation's successful passage of marriage equality by referendum, and we released an original editorial by public policy professor Paul C. Light on the political tumult over Benghazi.

Being able to highlight and honor exceptional student and faculty work on these topics is exactly what the Journal of Politics & International Affairs at NYU was created to do. Getting to read and edit insightful student writing that provokes our own conversations and debate is just an added benefit of the process. We hope to support more of that kind of dialogue next semester, by featuring sharp op-eds that provoke conversation on our website, and by sponsoring more debate and panel forums along with other politically-minded clubs at NYU.

To keep up with the changes, get involved, and stay informed of what JPIA is up to, we hope you'll follow us on Twitter and Facebook. We'll be waiting to see what you write next.

Kenzi Abou-Sabe & Anjana Sreedhar
Co-Editors in Chief

WANT TO WRITE FOR THE JOURNAL?

Our editorial staff accepts submissions for consideration throughout the year. To submit your work, or to inquire about being published on our website, email jpia.club@nyu.edu.

Pitch the print Journal with your original essay or thesis:

Works that are published by the print Journal tend to be longer than 5,000 words or 20 pages, double spaced. Submissions are vetted based on their originality, academic strength, and syntax. Works that are chosen are then polished by several staff editors. The Journal is published every December and May. Submissions from NYU students of any school are welcome.

Pitch JPIA's online editorial forum:

Our website publishes short blogs that are often around 500 words and feature unique, and creative insights into political issues, current events, and international affairs. We also welcome long-form, reported pieces. These are typically 1,000-2,000 words, allowing writers to explore more complex topics with a heavier research component than the blogs. When pitching please keep your idea to a general abstract, and offer us an example of your written work.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

PROFESSOR PAUL C. LIGHT

Dr. Paul C. Light is the NYU Wagner School's Paulette Goddard Professor of Public Service and founding principal investigator of the Global Center for Public Service. Before joining NYU, Dr. Light served as the Douglas Dillon Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, founding director of its Center for Public Service, and vice president and director of the Governmental Studies Program. He has served previously as director of the Public Policy Program at the Pew Charitable Trusts. Light is the author of 25 books, including works on social entrepreneurship, the nonprofit sector, federal government reform, and public service. His book, *A Government Ill Executed*, received the American Political Science Association's Herbert Simon Award for the most important book on public administration in the preceding three-to-five years upon publication.

PROFESSOR ARVIND RAJAGOPAL

Arvind Rajagopal is a professor of media studies at NYU, and is an affiliated faculty in the Departments of Sociology and Social and Cultural Analysis. From 2010-2011, he was a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford. He has won awards from the MacArthur and Rockefeller Foundations, has been a member in the School of Social Sciences at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, as well as at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington D.C. Over the last ten years, his research and writing has focused on the role of media in influencing political and economic processes.

ALEXANDRA TAYLOR

Alexandra studied at New York University's College of Arts and Science. She holds a B.A. in English Literature, as well as in Gender Studies and Communications. She recently edited *Field Notes*, a NYU Center for the Humanities-published journal that features interviews, essays, poems, and images that engage with a range of disciplines and aim to show how the humanities help us answer the most pressing questions about the human experience. She is currently pursuing a career in media.

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Jade is a senior in the College of Arts & Sciences majoring in International Relations and East Asian studies. Her areas of specialization are democratization, regime change, and economic development in Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan. She is currently working on a senior thesis concerning civil conflict in democracies and membership in intergovernmental organizations. Outside of academics, she is interested in digital illustration and soccer.

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Ian graduated from New York University in 2015 with a B.A. in International Relations with honors. He is a former Editor in Chief of the Journal of Politics & International Affairs, President of the International Relations Society, Secretary-General of Model United Nations, and an advocate for clubs on SAB and ASSBAC. His undergraduate studies focused on managing the U.S.-China relationship. Ian currently works in New York at a cyber defense firm called Darktrace.

THE BENGHAZI SITUATION DESERVES A BETTER ENDING

DR. PAUL C. LIGHT

Dr. Paul C. Light explores Paul Ryan's recent appointment to the position of Speaker of the United States House of Representatives. With the importance of selecting the right Speaker in the context of the upcoming 2016 election, the author weighs possible outcomes of current events, including the Benghazi committee. Moreover, Dr. Light suggests political recommendations as to how this new Speaker should lead and take charge of his new reign.

The three-year, ten-committee Benghazi investigation that began almost immediately after the attacks is now likely to end far without the impact it deserves. Unless it is brought to a close soon, it is almost certain to last through the 2016 presidential campaign, and might even continue past inauguration day if the new president happens to be named Clinton.

If so, the House Select Committee on Benghazi will be to blame, while the U.S. diplomats still stationed in high-threat posts abroad will remain in peril. As the last committee standing in what had once been an exemplary investigation, the Select Committee could have easily built upon the available record to streamline the State Department's bloated, unaccountable security system, but it chose the hot lights instead.

The Select Committee began this journey with lofty rhetoric about doing the right thing for the right reasons in the right way. But the Select Committee chairman, Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-South Carolina) began thinking about bringing the former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton to Capitol Hill only two days after using his gavel for the first time, and is now demanding confessions of wrong-doing from the mid-level bureaucrats who rejected Benghazi's desperate pleas for help.

The Select Committee is right to ask these officers tough questions about their cavalier disregard, but the goals seems to be less about fixing the State Department's inane disciplinary process and more about finding a new way to climb the chain of command back into the Secretary's suite. Flipping mid-level bureaucrats just might be the way to bring Secretary Clinton back to Capitol Hill in the midst of the primary season.

The Benghazi investigation as a whole deserves a better ending, and the four Americans who died deserve a more distinguished legacy. The first inquiry began only days after the tragedy, and the investigation as a whole reached my list of the 100 most significant congressional investigations since World War II by spring.

The investigation was not just historically significant. It was fast and to the point, and produced recommendations that could have been easily wrapped into reform legislation in time for a White House signing ceremony in late 2013. Comprehensive reforms had already reached the House and Senate floors by September, and a compromise was well within reach. Although the two bills were not carbon copies,

there was plenty of room for negotiation, and more than enough minor provisions to trade.

House Republicans did not want a compromise, however. They wanted a Select Committee on Benghazi to keep the investigation going as long as they could, and had put introduced their proposal two days before President Obama took his second oath of office in January 2013. With the Senate elections moving their way by fall, and Secretary Clinton a potential target by the following spring, the House Republicans finally got their Select Committee in May 2014. The \$3 million Select Committee immediately collected the records of the four House committees that had already issued their reports, and the pending legislation was dead.

The new House Speaker, Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wisconsin) can still give the long-running Benghazi investigation the impact it deserves, and last month's humiliating Select Committee performance gives him the opportunity and potential Republican votes to issue the orders.

First, Ryan should order the House Foreign Affairs Committee to prepare substantive legislation to streamline the State Department's intelligence, planning, and personnel systems. As the Select Committee argued in its first hearing, the problem at State is not a lack of recommendations, but a lack of implementation.

Second, the Speaker should order Judiciary Committee to assume control of all House investigations of Sec. Clinton's alleged violations of the Freedom of Information Act. The Judiciary Committee knows how to collect documents, hold hearings, and even draft contempt of Congress resolutions if the allegations prove true.

Finally, Ryan should order the Select Committee to finish its final report by December 31, archive its final, release the staff, and stand down. In doing so, Ryan would send the signal that the time for blistering hearings on Benghazi is over, while the time for long-overdue reform has arrived.

These orders would test Ryan's hold on the House, but he needs to show that he sets the agenda. He has much more important work to do than give the Select Committee another chance to embarrass itself while Sec. Clinton basks in the glow of her steady present. Sec. Clinton may yet be undone by her failings, but Gowdy and his poorly prepared majority will not do it.

Moreover, Ryan has the chance to give the Benghazi investigation the White House signing ceremony it deserves. He also has the obligation to give the nation's diplomats the security they deserve. In doing so, Ryan would honor the four Americans who lost their lives in Benghazi, and raise the long-running investigation to its rightful place as one of the most influential investigations on my list.

PUTTING AMERICA IN ITS PLACE

ARVIND RAJAGOPAL

Rather than assume that media technology is inherently global in its form, we should ask how it came to be regarded as such. This essay argues that the historical origins of the media are specifically North American. While their physical reach may be global, our understanding of the media's relation to globalization will retain the influence of its provincial origin unless we bring it into view as a problem.

*Excerpted from: "Putting America in its Place," by Arvind Rajagopal in *Public Culture*, Volume 25, no. 3, pp. 387-399. Copyright, 2013, Duke University Press. All rights reserved. Republished by permission of the copyright holder, Duke University Press.*

It is now a commonplace that the media are global, or that they create, in Marshall McLuhan's terms, a global village, and that such globality comes to us as a mediated phenomenon. If we needed any reminding of this fact, recent uprisings from Tahrir Square to Occupy, as well as many smaller movements against corruption and for citizens' rights, have provided it. In what lies this globality of media, and are we celebrating its worldliness too easily? Rather than assume that media technology is inherently global in its form, we should ask how it came to be regarded as such. I argue that the historical origins of the media are specifically North American. While their physical reach may be global, our understanding of the media's relation to globalization will retain the influence of its provincial origin unless we bring it into view as a problem (see Chakrabarty 2000).

Criticisms of United States—centric theories are familiar from debates on modernization theory. We will recall that the word modernization synthesized liberal postwar American values to present an abstract idea of what many intellectuals wished the United States would become. It also prescribed an agenda for new states in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. "By defining a singular path of progressive change," a historian recently observed, "the concept of modernization simplified the world-historical problems of decolonization and industrialization, helping to guide American economic aid and military intervention in postcolonial regions" (Gilman 2003: 3). Modernization expressed anxiety about the United State's place in the Cold War era as well as confidence that with economic growth and technical expertise communist influence could be overcome, drawing the world's countries toward the U.S. model instead.

If scholars assumed that media as well as research on media had worldwide application, modernization theory was both matrix and motor of those assumptions. Modernization theory launched the academic analysis of media as a global object of research, with the work of Daniel Lerner and others. Media were seen as indispensable agents of modernization. Lerner pointed out that Europeanization had meant the promotion of "class media," directed at educated populations. Modernization, by contrast, uses mass media, he wrote. Middle Easterners, for example, might reject the label "Made in U.S.A." while

accepting the modern package (Lerner 1958: 46).

Indeed, at times it seemed as if media represented the culmination of modernity. To quote Wilbur Schramm, “The world had been trembling on the verge of mass media for centuries” (1977: 7). By the end of the Cold War, modernization theory had succumbed to its critics; today it has few overt defenders in the academy. Many of the ideas it helped launch remain in orbit, however, embedded in objects that appear immune to criticism. “Media” are one such class of objects. What I propose to highlight in this essay is the fact that “media” became a carrier of a distinctly North American understanding of individual freedom and rights, while the theories that had actually formulated such a view ceased to draw attention.

The Object of Media Studies

Like many other multidisciplinary formations in the academy, media studies defines itself around objects rather than as a conventional discipline per se. Object-centered fields of study must presume a theoretical subject, an ideal actor/observer whose norms and values prioritize the evidence to be analyzed and the arguments that merit attention. In this case, subjects are constituted through their relation to media objects as readers, viewers, hackers, and so on. Accounts that investigate the latter, for example, in “reception studies,” have devolved into more specific subfields. The focus of the most visible scholarly work has shifted from theories to things.

Two points bear notice with regard to the perils of object-centrism. First, an object-centered history presumes a plurality of objects. Some objects, however, have acquired significant status, such as the phonetic alphabet, paper, and the printing press. A history centered on a different object, for example, ideographic instead of phonetic script, or papyrus instead of paper, could only be additive. It excludes social antagonism unless subjects are brought back in. The apparent victory of one object over another “speaks for itself”; as a result, there is typically no counterhistory that can be used as critique. Perhaps technocentric and teleological histories are now less common or more apologetic than they used to be. But even sophisticated critics of teleology often merely invert Eurocentrism, recoding enlightenment as domination.

The second and perhaps more significant issue is this: media are a distinct kind of object, since they acquire their object status by the act of mediation. Specifically, a relationship between subject and object appears as if embedded in the media object and appears as its inherent form. This social character of media requires unearthing from the sense of a purely technological form and has to be decoded much like the social hieroglyph of the commodity form. In other words, the media appear before us as already mediated entities; they embody both a technological development and a social history. We can assign a global status to the former, but the latter is specific and regional.

Media studies as a field has developed mostly in the United States and, not surprisingly, tends to concentrate on the United States and Europe. Unwittingly, this reproduces a logic of *realpolitik*, since it is in these countries that media technologies are understood to have developed. Rather than investigate how globalization takes shape, media studies tends to assume a trickle-down theory of global effects, with non-Western areas presumed to have little impact on the West and providing little theoretical purchase on questions concerning technology. The hubris of such a position is perhaps more apparent today with the waning of the U.S. empire and the emergence of non-Western centers of power.

Therefore, while scholarly debates abound on a range of issues directly relevant to media studies, including issues of political power and sovereignty, cultures of sense perception, language and linguistic difference, and religion and religiosity, the major thrust of media studies is toward long-standing political goals of enlightenment and emancipation as they are conventionally understood and on the means by which these goals may be achieved, notably through the media. No one can dispute that these goals are important. But the interest in these goals also demands that the political express itself in ways familiar to those in the United States itself. Such an expectation results in impatience toward factors that subtend or qualify the political in most other contexts. American exceptionalism and its post—World War II history now provide the implicit frames through which we understand media effects.

Meanwhile, media “in the rest of the world” suggest discrepant histories of use, interesting for their variety but illuminating nothing essential in all the range of their forms. If the media tend to exhibit or mobilize other characteristics, whether the interanimation of different linguistic strata and consequently different layers of social history or of varying cultures of ritual and worship, for example, the research uncovering such phenomena tends to gravitate to other fields, for example, to area studies, ethnomusicology, religious studies, or visual culture. For the most part, media studies will take little account of such findings. The object-centered character of the field can thus make it difficult to hold it accountable for ignoring relevant research. Theoretical critiques may be dissuaded by historical facts, while historical counterevidence can be deflected by theoretical assumptions. Case studies that could alter existing assumptions migrate to other fields or disciplines, leaving the propulsive forces of the existing field undisturbed. “New media” represent the cutting edge of media studies research, in this sense, since “old media” are liable to be plagued by Old World problems. Such strategies rely on triage to preserve the thrust of the field and keep it insulated from critiques of the political assumptions involved as well as from findings from other parts of the world.

(New) Media in the (New) World

The idea of America as the medium of the media, I suggest, underpins the key concerns of media studies. In the beginning, all the world was America, John Locke wrote, in his *Second Treatise of Government*. The ideas of natural law presumed by Locke’s argument about inherent rights of property in personhood render the modern state a caretaker, at best, of processes whose growth is natural and *laissez-faire* and whose legal authority was no longer understood as the preserve of the state but ultimately rested with its citizens (Locke 1970 [1689]: 319). Implicitly, in this understanding, tools such as communication media are a potential to be actualized, rather than merely an apparatus of information transfer or state rule. In these accounts, the media ideally connote an empowered people, governed by reason.

More than 250 years later, Raymond Williams, in 1961, argued that communications media as a whole were part of the “long revolution” that would make equals of the rich and the poor. Precisely for this reason, he pointed out, governments feared the power of media. Today many would demur at Williams’s argument and might suggest that mass media are not always positive in their effects. By contrast, it is likely that many would view “new media” or “social media” as ensuring the media’s progressive potential.

For example, broadcast media have come to symbolize nonconfrontational communication or even pacification, and that too without overt state supervision. In the meantime a newer set of technologies have become sites of more pressing concern, that is, the so-called social media. But what are media if

not social? The answer is, broadcast media's one-way communication is presumably less social (and new) than interactive media such as cell phones, Facebook, and Twitter. However we respond to this mode of analysis, it appears that the gravitational pull of "new media" dissuades many scholars from posing questions about it, because the latter are thought to present more urgent problems for analysis. Why that should be so is seldom made explicit.

An influential argument made by McLuhan suggests a reason. Old media become the content of new media; the form of the dominant new communication technology defines the media environment in a given period. A medium like television can no longer repay analytical scrutiny to the degree it used to, if we accept this reasoning: the world has moved on. "Digital" and "mobile" media have clearly taken radio, film, and television's place as more visible and trafficked sites of academic labor.

Such swings in scholarship may be influenced by academic fashion, and there are few things one rejects as unhesitatingly as yesterday's fads. But there is more than fashion at work here. McLuhan argued that with oral-tactile forms of communication created by broadcasting, the hitherto print-dominated West would be equipped to better engage with the world's nonprint literate majority.

McLuhan provided an ingenious argument about the power of media. A scholar of Elizabethan literature, he overcame his distaste for mass culture with a heroic theory of the media, one that gave it the ability to constantly surpass its own limitations. The move should have provoked questions, but he was treated as a prophet. McLuhan connected concerns about social order and the fear of the crowd, and latent apprehensions about the power of communist ideology, with the possibility of utopian transcendence. If the medium was the message, and the message was something about neotribal togetherness, it implied that communist propaganda would be neutralized. Modern media might in fact serve as silent allies of the West in the Cold War. Communications would create a global village, McLuhan prophesied, betraying his New World naïveté about the village as a place of consensus and harmony. He thus folded media globalization into an account of the West as an eternal harbinger of modernity, forever transcending its shortcomings. One reason that these assumptions were not explored is that McLuhan appeared to be above the fray at a time when arguments about US intervention and super-power conflict were partisan. To criticize the idea of a global village was perhaps not the most urgent task of criticism at a time of counterinsurgency warfare, in Vietnam and elsewhere, and when hamlets were a site of peasant resistance. At the same time, McLuhan provided linguistic purchase on a rapidly changing world, offering cultural analyses that were easily repeated but less often understood. His writing registered the sense that something new was happening, even if people did not know quite what it was, except that "the medium was the message." And the media were, after all, American.

America as Medium of the Media

The unique circumstances of U.S. history led to extraordinary policies for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with state subsidies for the postal system, libraries, schools, and newspapers and, more unusually yet, an absence of censorship. These were undertaken in the attempt to strengthen national bonds within a nascent, far-flung republic. The U.S. state expected that interaction between citizens could only strengthen its social base, which was not a typical assumption for the time. It reflected the reality of the government's reliance on settlers to extend the frontiers, battle the natives, cultivate the land, and build the nation in the process. Lacking a standing army and without much by way of revenue, the boundary

between state and nation was tenuous at best. Subsidized education and communication, however, ensured an empowered citizenry that expressed a level of identity with the nation that was probably without parallel at the time (see Starr 2004; John 1995; Rajagopal 2006).

Thus in the United States, the modern problem of social order acquired a distinct solution. Alexis de Tocqueville observes in *Democracy in America* that the people understood themselves to be the real seat of sovereign power. As a result, the distinction between state and civil society was fungible and contingent; the political culture of the state was akin to popular culture. That was not his perception alone. Well before, in 1755, Benjamin Franklin could write: “In fine, a nation well regulated is like a polypus; take away a limb, its place is soon supply’d; cut it in two, and each deficient part shall speedily grow out of the part remaining. Thus . . . you may of one make ten nations, equally populous and powerful; or rather, increase a nation ten fold in numbers and strength” (1755: 23.53).

Franklin envisions a decentralized and homogeneous nation, whose form of vitality replenishes its overall similitude, activating the immune defense mechanism of self-multiplication when needed. His organic metaphor echoes the thought of his age. Today we would be more likely to employ technological imagery, invoking, for example, circuitry and networks of communication. Franklin’s word picture suggests that a deeply mediatized sense of the American project was present even before the birth of the republic. Such a retrospective reading clarifies tendencies that were only incipient at the time but are full-blown today.

Tocqueville’s essay too can be read through this prism, I suggest. One of the puzzling aspects of *Democracy in America*, in this context, is the change in tone over the course of the work, from generous approval to apprehension and foreboding. The optimism of the first volume, where he praises the equality mandated by law and reiterated in everyday life, and the pessimism of his concluding pages, where despotism looms, can be linked if we factor in the means of communication, which were subsidized by the central government and, by the 1830s, influenced by the mass political party. As Paul Starr has written, the modern sense in which we invoke “the media” was, arguably, created in the United States, as an essential institution of the republic. Governmentalization of state power was not only political-economic but simultaneously communicational and devolved onto white settlers and their progeny by means of the state bearing the cost of education, information, and early forms of virtual interaction via the post.

In the United States, media emerge as a ventriloquism of state power in and through civil society. A parliamentarism of marketplace communications arises to complement it, with conventions about neutral and bipartisan newspaper report-age taking shape alongside partisan pamphleteering. A republic that sought to ally society with a fledgling state, including giving citizens the right to bear arms, promoted the growth of media by all means possible. The market was not opposed to the state but in concert with it.

An unexpected site where we can find confirmation of this view is in the proliferation of a communicative form regarded as distinctly American. In the United States, advertising matured more quickly than anywhere else. Advertising, although an interested system of communication, is granted its own citational authority and claims to speak to the common interest as if it were the state. The message itself acquires the status of sanctioned communication and becomes free-floating, rendering questions such as who is speaking, where, and when relatively unimportant.

The unique characteristics of the U.S. state’s influence on its media, including its racial, religious,

and nationalist entailments, have been normalized through a familiar method of distinguishing between those data that conform to a given theory and those that are aberrant. In discussions of civil society, when theory collides with reality, Karl Marx once observed, theory wins. Reality is declared deficient instead (Marx 1844).

The theoretical subject of the media in media studies is American. This subject exercises communicative privileges as a natural right in the marketplace and encounters the state as a discrete actor rather than as a historically contingent support authorizing communication. Advances in media technology appear as means to enhance human capacity, and media form is understood as containing the secret of this possible enhancement.

Even if we set aside the philosophical problem of independent, self-adequate objects (how can we know they exist, absent a subject able to know?), “media” arise only from conventions that designate certain objects as such. Furthermore, if “the medium is the message,” this depends on a subject who registers the message and activates its codes. The media are not, therefore, independent objects but are constituted together with the subject through whom media achieve their mediating effects. And as we have seen, the normative subject of media studies operates in a New World context where the individual is sovereign and the media are a support to that sovereignty.

It is in the interwar and post—World War II period that a different theoretical model arose most forcefully to challenge such an idealized view of the intermediation of state and society in the United States. The Frankfurt school’s critique of mass society, informed by the experience of European fascism, marks this historical moment, one that is in fact on a line of continuity with the early American solution to the problem of order. The American citizen was both medium and message of governmental power. In the early republic this power was experienced as cultural ethos, not as state directive (Tocqueville 2000 [1835 [1840]). In mass society, citizens acquired an intensive conformism resulting from a mode of power where the distinction between state and market was hardly relevant. But in the context of Cold War rhetoric, the default framework was one in which media growth and the expansion of freedom were aligned most clearly with the idea of America, even if not with the historical experience of the United States. Technologically advanced media, according to this logic, held the possibility of furthering the project of enlightenment, even if they were enmeshed in systems of social regulation and political control.

I have mentioned Marx’s epigram, that theory is the rule and reality the exception. In this case we could say that myth rather than theory is the rule, myth that informs life but does not claim conformity with reality. This is the myth of America as the site of natural law and Rousseauian harmony and as the destiny of the world, a myth that is neither narrow nor parochial and can elicit wide support. Geography, however, is not incidental to this myth but constitutive of it. The New World, existing far from the decaying structures of European feudalism, offered a “blank slate” for the utopian projects of Enlightenment philosophes and continues to function as the transparent and nonmaterial support for mediating Enlightenment in the imagination. Colonial genocide and slavery exist at the margins of this myth and do not fundamentally alter it, because for all its flaws, this idea of America provides a guiding light for collective action.

Studying Media: Locating an Emergent Field

Those engaged in media studies who wish to acknowledge the global character of their subject

labor under a double burden of provinciality, certainly in the view of many of those who study new media. First, they imply a focus on places distant from where technologies incubate and advance, and in many cases, though not all, they examine old rather than new media.

There is a familiar irony here. The political and theoretical vanguard in a field feel obliged to turn their backs on the majority because their attention is fastened on defining tendencies and maturing contradictions, which are premised on the centrality of their own situation as they understand it.

We can say that there are, implicitly, two kinds of media studies operating here. Although they are not clearly distinguished from each other, they reflect a salient divide. One follows the development of science and technology that leads to the development of media artifacts from paper and print to the telegraph, radio, and beyond. The historical location of this body of work is the West, where the work of the media can be assessed in terms of measurable deviations from the norm. Broadly speaking, the modes of subjectivation shaped by media, which would include cultural, linguistic, and religious factors, can be bracketed because they are normalized, as also the mode of state intervention. In these contexts, the medium can be granted agency (“the medium is the message”) to the extent that the subjective mediation of the media can be treated as relatively homogeneous and taken for granted.

Meanwhile, studies of the media from elsewhere invariably have to negotiate multiethnic, multilinguistic, and multireligious contexts. In these places the state is seldom a background presence, as arbiters and regulators maintaining a level playing field; it often seems designed to foil rather than foster the possibility of free communication. Accounts of the production, interpretation, or circulation of media texts, or of media organizations in their historical context, can consequently appear too detailed and inaccessible to all but the area specialist, even when such accounts are working through social scientific or critical theories. This is to some extent true across area studies, but the parochialism in media studies is more noticeable because as “modernizing” technologies, communications media should present a ready basis of comparison. However, media tend to scramble temporalities and present heterogeneous, nonlinear outcomes, complicating any claims about modernizing effects. The result is that a political frame (e.g., of anticolonialism or nationalism) is allowed to subtend the analysis, while bracketing the phenomena in question. It is striking how little distance has been traversed in comparative analysis, toward, for example, asking how different state regimes are disposed toward communication technologies or how different multilingual or multireligious contexts accommodate and constrain media institutions and texts.

The success of the best-received effort in this regard is perhaps Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, and its success perfectly illustrates my claims here. Nationalism is presented as an empty modular form, to be filled through the combination of print capitalism and national sovereignty. Historical subjects, with their ethnic, religious, linguistic, and other contingencies, to say nothing of their concrete forms of thought, are incidental to the analysis presented in this argument.

The result of this mode of partitioning inquiry is that it leaves intact the hierarchies posited between the West and the presumptively less modern non-West, when for some time now, a range of forces have both been tying them together and producing difference between them at the same time. For example, communications technologies in the colony served as means of extraction, censorship, and surveillance, as well as means of elite and subaltern formation. Media were not neutral in the history of these developments but produced a series of outcomes, intended as well as unintended. Decolonization and national sovereignty were achieved, but national elites gained power too.

In this connection, it is relevant to note that the spread of technology was always claimed to incrementally (if not rapidly) Europeanize the provinces as sites of modernization. Forensic medicine, fingerprinting, and photography tracked and surveilled natives, while railways moved raw materials extracted from the hinterland to the port cities and transported finished goods from the metropole. Communications technologies such as print, radio, and telegraph were rigorously controlled and subject to censorship, and the government maintained a monopoly over the airwaves to ensure their proper use. Under colonial government, technology brought the provinces closer to Europe. Technology also held natives apart as distinct entities, maintaining a rule of colonial difference. With political independence, the project of national developmentalism that followed the colonial state reproduced a *raison d'état* aloof from popular sentiment as a condition of its existence. Rulers were now elected, but politics appeared external to the logic of technology and development both, and as a process more likely to subvert the rationality of governance than to advance it.

Divergent histories correlate with the media in every period. Increasingly, however, we witness the fetishism of technology and assumptions that new technology drives social change and promises emancipation. Social media such as the Internet and the cell phone have launched a new wave of arguments about a digital sublime awaiting humanity. Older arguments, of criticism premised upon popular uprising and the accumulation of surplus value by the rich, reappear now in altered form, suggesting that the erstwhile contradiction of capitalism has now found a technological solution to which we must adapt ourselves. Media expansion can lead to democratization if popular empowerment undercuts the exploitative power of elites. The tautological character of these accounts notwithstanding, they use terms from critical theory to affirm major trends of social change with little or no qualification (see, e.g., Shirkey 2011).

Media, which for some time now have been a symbol of the advanced character of Western modernity, have simultaneously reproduced Western insularity. For example, radio, television, and, to a lesser extent, the cinema cultivated audiences according to prevailing norms of improvement or entertainment. Societies elsewhere stayed in the periphery of the popular imagination unless they were disaster zones. The term *emerging markets*, applied to many of the world's oldest market societies, reflects this strange conceit.

But with the globalization of media, it is not the West so much as the rest of the world where scholars seek to discern the future to come. We might say the difference is that between being and becoming. The West seeks to preserve the broad character of its present structures, while the rest of the world's population is aware that their future lies in transcending their present, not in preserving it.

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AN INVESTIGATIVE REPORT INTO IRELAND'S MARRIAGE EQUALITY REFERENDUM

ALEXANDRA TAYLOR

This essay explores Ireland's Marriage Equality Referendum by investigating the events that led to a majority 'Yes' vote on May 23, 2015, making Ireland the first country to legalize same-sex marriage by popular vote. By examining key changes in Ireland's sociopolitical landscape since homosexuality's recent decriminalization in 1993, this essay identifies how and why this particular social transformation occurred with unprecedented speed and intensity. This essay presents data collected from firsthand interviews, newspapers, and published reports, to construct a narrative that captures the perspective of the many individuals and groups involved in this historical moment. This essay argues that both marriage equality and the Irish cultural brand itself were at stake in the referendum, evidenced by the extensive community building that took place in the country throughout the campaign. This essay demonstrates how the passing of the referendum won legal rights for LGBT couples in Ireland and ultimately, identified and celebrated the presence of a unified, compassionate, and evolved Irish national body.

Introduction

On May 23rd, 2015, Irish deputy prime minister and Labour Party leader Joan Burton was quoted saying, "The people of Ireland have struck a massive blow against discrimination."¹ The blow was many years in the making and was dealt in the form of a landslide majority "yes" vote for legalizing same-sex marriage, making Ireland the first country to ever do so by popular vote. 62 percent of Ireland's electorate voted in favor of gay marriage, representing over 1.2 million citizens who actively fought for equality and showed support for the LGBT community. Considering that homosexuality was only decriminalized in Ireland 22 years ago in 1993, this was a major step forward in the nation's progression toward a more secular, liberal society. From landmark court cases to grassroots campaigns, the referendum had tremendous momentum behind it to increase its chance of success in the polls on May 22nd. The purpose of this independent study is to investigate the catalysts for the passing of the referendum, and to

¹ McDonald, Henry. "Ireland Becomes First Country to Legalise Gay Marriage by Popular Vote." The Guardian 23 May 2015, The Observer sec. Print.

analyze what makes this particular act of social change so remarkable and unique in its intensity. Through firsthand interviews, my aim is to reconstruct a narrative that captures the perspective of politicians, campaign leaders, and citizens who all played part in this major historical moment. I argue that there was more than marriage equality at stake in the referendum, not only for the homosexual population in Ireland but also for the Irish cultural brand itself. Gay marriage is a social and political justice issue that has certainly been known to incite citizen action, but something about the way a real and rhetorical community formed around the referendum, campaigned for it tirelessly, and then collectively celebrated its legal victory suggests that unity, nationhood, and decency were also on the ticket with same-sex marriage. Ultimately, through presentation of my research, I will show that the “yes” vote symbolizes Irish people creating for themselves the type of world they desire to live in, and then presenting that to the international community as a testament to the nation’s positive evolution.

The Beginnings of a Movement

International Precedent

In 1989, Denmark passed the Registered Partnerships Act that granted same-sex unions almost the same rights and responsibilities as heterosexual marriages, including tax breaks and other benefits. However, the Act stopped short of calling the partnerships “marriages” and Danish couples were not lawfully permitted to be married in a state church or to adopt a child.² Considered an important step forward at the time, other countries followed suit throughout the 1990s until the Netherlands became the first country to fully legalize same-sex marriage in 2001. The Dutch law, unlike any before it, fully eliminated any distinction between heterosexual and homosexual marriages. However, the same could not be said for Irish law, which at that time did not legally recognize civil partnerships or other such unions between LGBT couples.

Zappone v. Revenue Commissioners (“the KAL case”)

Anne Louise Gilligan and Katherine Zappone met in 1981 while studying Theology at Boston College in Massachusetts. In September 2003 the couple married in a civil ceremony in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, where their marriage is legally valid. When they returned to Ireland in 2004, the couple wrote to the Revenue Commissioners—the Irish tax authorities—to inform them of their marriage and claim tax allowances (among other financial advantages) that are awarded to married couples in Ireland. The Revenue Commissioners informed Katherine and Anne Louise that they would not authorize the couple’s tax claim because “the Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘husband’ as a married man and ‘wife’ as a married woman,” terms that Irish tax legislation uses but does not define independently. The High Court of Ireland heard the case in 2006, upon which it was decided that the Irish constitution had always meant for marriage to be between a man and a woman, and that, although the constitution is a flexible document open to interpretation, it could not redefine historically upheld definitions of marriage.

Justice Elizabeth Dunne, who ruled on the decision, also stated that the welfare of children could

² Taylor, Adam. “What Was the First Country to Legalize Gay Marriage?” *The Washington Post* 26 June 2015, WorldViews sec. Print.

potentially be at stake if same-sex couples could be legally married.³ As Ronan Farren, Deputy Director of the Irish Labour Party, said, this legal case generated major interest in and new traction for same-sex marriage rights, similarly to how the AIDS crisis of the '80s generated interest in the same-sex couple for reasons related to healthcare and spousal rights. It was not until 2010 that the Civil Partnership Act was put in place, which recognized same-sex "unions" (but not "marriages") under Irish law. Thus, many felt that the law still fell short of providing full equality between homosexual and heterosexual couples.⁴

Marriage Equality: The Organization

In 2008, in the midst of Katherine and Anne Louise's legal battles, Marriage Equality formed as "a not for profit, single issue, national grassroots advocacy organization" whose goal was "to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Ireland through the extension of civil marriage rights to same-sex couples."⁵ According to director Moninne Griffith, the idea was originally to make same-sex marriage legal either through the courts or through legislation. They wanted to be sure that they targeted "all of the spheres—the legal, the political, and the public."⁶ The organization had some initial difficulties gaining access to politicians, and even the few they were able to contact often had trouble with the idea of legalizing gay marriage. "They would often say, 'not in my lifetime,' or, 'it's not going to happen.' It was a different climate back in 2008," Griffith said. Griffith She mentioned that there was even some resistance in the LGBT community itself. Some within the community did not want to "rock the boat." Some wanted to enact change incrementally instead of all at once with one legislative push. Others did not want to pursue the issue at all. Certain radical feminists do not even believe in the institution of marriage because it simply mimics reflects the heteronormative patriarchy. All things considered, "it took an enormous amount of time to really get things going."⁷ In April 2013, Ireland's economic recession altered the landscape of the debate. The recession, though devastating, allowed Marriage Equality to make new strides in their movement. The Labour Party came into power, and Marriage Equality worked with them to create a line about same-sex marriage in their general manifesto. Griffith said the grassroots feel of the organization softened people, and encouraged them to visit their local politicians in constituency clinics to express their support for the initiative. This is how momentum around the movement began to grow.

A Constitutional Convention

In 2011, at the insistence of Ireland's Attorney General, a Constitutional Convention was held to decide on proposed amendments to the constitution, as well as to discuss the interpretation of existing aspects of the document (including definitions, language, and the voting system)⁹. This convention was made up of 66 randomly selected, broadly representative Irish citizens, 33 nominated parliamentarians from each political party, and one independent chairman. From 2012-2013, after the 12-month Convention

3 "About Katherine & Ann Louise." Marriage Equality. Web. 25 Aug. 2015.

4 Interview with Ronan Farren." Personal interview. 19 Aug. 2015.

5 About Katherine & Ann Louise." Marriage Equality. Web. 25 Aug. 2015.

6 "Who We Are." Marriage Equality. N.p., n.d. Web. 25 Aug. 2015.

7 Ibid

8 "Interview with Moninne Griffith." Personal interview. 26 Aug. 2015.

9 "About Katherine & Ann Louise." Marriage Equality. Web. 25 Aug. 2015.

concluded, public attention focused largely on the issue of same-sex marriage, and in 2014, Taoiseach Edna Kenny announced that there would be a referendum the following spring.¹⁰ Griffith said that Marriage Equality initially resisted the idea of the Convention. She explained, “We didn’t think it was a good idea to have the majority people voting on minority rights. Generally, that isn’t a good idea. That’s why we have a constitution—to protect minority rights. But it was the only show in town, so we had to get on board if we wanted to make marriage equality happen.”¹¹ As it turned out, the convention was instrumental in creating positive public discourse around the issue. There were reportedly over 1000 citizen applications to the convention, and ultimately participants voted three to one in favor of constitutional reform to allow for civil same-sex marriage.¹²

Panti Bliss

On January 11, 2015, Rory O’Neill, also known as drag performer and LGBT activist Panti Bliss, appeared on *The Saturday Night Show* and publicly addressed homophobia in Ireland. His comments included how “people who make a living writing opinion pieces for newspapers” often get away unscathed when making derogatory comments about gays. His naming of various newspaper columnists during this discussion led the show’s broadcaster, RTÉ, to redact the episode from its online player due to “potential legal issues and for reasons of sensitivity following the death of Tom O’Gorman,” a popular journalist who was murdered the week prior and whom O’Neill did not mention in his commentary.¹³ RTÉ later apologized and paid over 80,000 Euro to various members of the Iona Institute, a Catholic lobbying group, who O’Neill mentioned in his comments.¹⁴ This event incited major public debate surrounding about homophobia and RTÉ’s treatment of gay people on their network. On February 1st, O’Neill took the stage at the Abbey Theatre as Panti Bliss and made a powerful speech on how it feels to be relentlessly subjected to prejudice because of one’s sexual orientation. Panti said:

People who have never experienced homophobia in their lives, people who have never checked themselves at a pedestrian crossing, have told me that unless I am being thrown in prison or herded onto a cattle train, that it is not homophobia. And that feels oppressive. And so now, Irish gay people, we find ourselves in this ludicrous situation where not only are we not allowed to say publicly what we feel oppressed by, we’re not even allowed to think it, because our definition has been disallowed by our betters. And for the last three weeks I have been denounced... for using “hate speech” because I dared to use the word “homophobia”, and a jumped-up queer like me should know that the word homophobia is no longer available to gay people...and now it turns out that gay people are not the victims of homophobia—

10 Ibid

11 Interview with Ronan Farren." Personal interview. 19 Aug. 2015.

12 Ibid

13 O’Carroll, Sinead. "Part of *The Saturday Night Show* Removed from RTÉ Player over ‘legal Issues’." *Thejournal*. ie. N.p., 15 Jan. 2015. Web. 25 Aug. 2015.

14 Daly, Susan, and Rory O’Neill/YouTube. "Watch Panti’s Powerful Speech about Oppression of Gay People." *Thejournal*.ie. N.p., 2 Feb. 2015. Web. 25 Aug. 2015.

homophobes are the victims of homophobia.¹⁵

She received a standing ovation, and the following day over 2,000 people gathered in Dublin city centre for a protest sponsored by LGBT Noise against homophobia in Irish media. The speech went viral, putting an international spotlight on Panti herself and on LGBT rights. The injustice she faced from RTÉ and the profound speech she gave in response made her one of the most prominent voices in the campaign for marriage equality. O'Neill told Independent.co.uk that he received "thousands of emails from gay people...people in wheelchairs and with autism...and from women."¹⁶ He also said that people are united in their experiences of oppression and that he hoped his speech would start conversations about homophobia within families. Many gay people thanked him for his words.¹⁷

By drawing attention to the basic rights that gay people deserve but do not receive, Panti Bliss advocated not only for herself but also for oppressed people from all walks of life. The intense social activism she incited suggests that there was more at stake in the referendum than same-sex marriage rights. As the LGBT community came into focus just months before the referendum date, people expressed a growing interest in and a deepening concern for how gay people are treated and how homophobia manifests in their society. Voting 'yes' on gay marriage became equated with voting 'yes' to a society that encourages and values respect for everyone, regardless of sexual orientation.

Campaign Strategies: What, Why, & How

The Human Story

"The real ethos of the campaign," Griffith remarked, "was the human story. The personal stories that people shared that everyone could relate to or find empathy for. This needed to inform all the work we were doing, even with politicians."¹⁸ For instance, marriage equality brought in adults and young adults from the LGBT community to talk to the politicians so that they could put a face to the issue. To figure out what angle Marriage Equality would need to use with certain politicians to convince them to support same-sex marriage, the organization conducted extensive research into their backgrounds and passions outside of politics. Often, this led to a connection that would help Marriage Equality convince the politicians to express support. The importance of the human story is a thread that runs throughout the narrative surrounding the referendum. With the Labour Party making up 10 to 15 percent of the voting population at that time, Farren noted how necessary it was for them to initiate campaigns that touched people's hearts—not just their minds.¹⁹ The main Labour Party spokesperson for same-sex marriage was a married, heterosexual white man with children. While this may have seemed counterintuitive to some, Farren said it was designed to attract more votes.

Polling revealed that while most women in the Labour Party's voting population were in favor

15 Ibid

16 Attwood, Karen. "Drag Queen Panti Bliss on the Irish Same-sex Marriage Referendum, International Fame and the Changing Gay Scene." Independent. N.p., 11 Apr. 2015. Web. 25 Aug. 2015.

17 Ibid

18 "Interview with Moninne Griffith." Personal interview. 26 Aug. 2015.

19 "Interview with Ronan Farren." Personal interview. 19 Aug. 2015.

of same-sex marriage, most men were not. They cited “unspecified” reasons—something made these men uncomfortable, something felt “off” or “not right,” but they could not articulate what it was. The spokesperson was chosen so that these men could connect and identify with a man who “looked” like them, ideologically if not physically, and who supported same-sex marriage. Both the Labour Party and Marriage Equality felt that they risked alienating people if their campaigns were too political, so it was all the more important for them to address their audience not just as “voters,” but as mothers, fathers, children, friends, coworkers, siblings, and Irish citizens.

The Role of the Media

About 100 days before the referendum date, the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN) launched YES Equality, a campaign that made extensive use of social media platforms to publicize promotional pictures and videos. Another campaign out of Trinity College Dublin released one particularly resonant video titled “#RingYourGranny for Marriage Equality,” which received over 65,000 views on YouTube and was picked up by other media news outlets such as Entertainment.ie, The Irish Times, and Out.com.²⁰ The video opens with a montage of young people looking slightly nervous as they dial their grandparents to ask their opinion on the referendum. The video was based on the premise of uncertainty for how older age groups would vote as opposed to younger age groups, who were expected to vote yes.

While some grandparents expressed full support, others were not as sure. The video aimed at getting younger generations involved in the momentum of the campaign, closing with “If we want to play a part in this referendum, the simplest way is to talk about it with those who aren’t as sure.” It attracted attention for its tenderness and humor, and for its portrayal of same-sex marriage as an issue that could be discussed in families and that could help bridge the gap between generations. It was important for all campaigns to involve the media because, as Griffith noted, the media in Ireland has the most persuasive power. “Local stories are far more convincing than a politician on TV,” she said, “and it was revolutionary at the time to get people outside the city to talk about their experiences.

“It was important to have other voices besides the gays from Dublin city center.”²¹ Farren, who served on the board of Marriage Equality in addition to his role at the Labour Party, also spoke about the necessity of running a tight, broadly focused four to six week campaign for the purposes of stronger media coverage. Irish media law mandates that broadcasters give equal time to both the “for” and “against” sides of any debatable issue, so a shorter campaign meant less debate time on air.²² Farren noted that the campaign also paid special attention to how their tone came across in the media—it was imperative not to call anyone homophobic or use derogatory language of any kind. Keeping the campaign broad also meant keeping it positive and focused on individual stories of equality. The message intended to extend the definition of marriage to include gay couples, not to detract from the marriages of straight ones. “All in all, it mobilized very well,” Farren said.²³

20 #RingYourGranny for Marriage Equality - TCDSU. Prod. Zooko Creative. YouTube, 15 Mar. 2015. Web. 25 Aug. 2015.

21 "Interview with Moninne Griffith." Personal interview. 26 Aug. 2015.

22 "Interview with Ronan Farren." Personal interview. 19 Aug. 2015.

23 Ibid

Children and the Opposition

Both the Labour Party²⁴ and marriage equality²⁵ aimed to neutralize a major issue that the opposition clung to throughout the campaign period: the welfare of children raised by same-sex couples. Religious, political, and social conservatives often argued that children raised by two parents of the same sex were at a disadvantage. The Labour Party offset this by having children of LGBT couples speak publicly about their positive experiences during their upbringings. This not only refuted the opposition's claim, but also showed that LGBT couples had already been (and continue to be) raising children and having families together long before the referendum became a political talking point.²⁶ Marriage Equality also stressed the importance of making their campaign visible to the public eye. Posters of "ordinary LGBT families" were put up around the city and sponsored by Dublin city buses for a summer to help dispel myths and fears about LGBT families, just as they had already been doing.²⁷ "We felt it was important to show the kids, that way people could see for themselves that [the kids] turn out fine—high functioning, smart, ordinary kids. It's not like they have three heads or something," Griffith commented.²⁸ The Labour Party anticipated oppositional arguments surrounding surrogacy and adoption, so they put legislation in place legalizing adoption for same-sex couples in March 2015, two months before the referendum was held.

When the opposition ultimately argued that same-sex marriage would "disturb the traditional family unit," it dramatically backfired. The "traditional family unit" no longer existed, and their argument insulted many families who existed outside of an ideal that only applied to a small portion of the middle class. Many citizens, especially those who know gay people and socialize with gay families, no longer wanted to be lectured on traditional heteronormative values.

Referendum Results and Public Perceptions

Anticipating "Yes"

When the Netherlands legalized gay marriage in 2001, the vote was a "foregone conclusion" according to the Washington Post.²⁹ Fourteen years later, Farren and Griffith were similarly confident about the passing of the Irish marriage equality referendum. In months leading up to the campaign, market research showed that there was an increase in public support. Not long after that, Marriage Equality garnered cross-party support for the vote.³⁰ "The campaign was really building momentum and people were on paper as supporters of marriage equality, so we knew pretty much who was going to be voting 'yes'," Griffith said. Both Farren and Griffith described the referendum as "pushing an open door" since they had the majority's support behind them. "The campaign wasn't just about how many gay couples

24 Ibid

25 Ibid

26 "Interview with Moninne Griffith." Personal interview. 26 Aug. 2015.

27 "Interview with Ronan Farren." Personal interview. 19 Aug. 2015.

28 Ibid

29 Taylor, Adam. "What Was the First Country to Legalize Gay Marriage?" The Washington Post 26 June 2015, WorldViews sec. Print.

30 "Interview with Ronan Farren." Personal interview. 19 Aug. 2015.

wanted to get married, it was also about issues of kin support and also just about principles of equality," Farren said.³¹

*The Results Are In*³²

If anything above 50 percent "yes" would've been considered a resounding win, then the 62 percent Yes vote revealed on May 23, 2015 is best described as a phenomenon. The turnout was 60.5 percent, the highest for any referendum since the Divorce referendum of 1995. Only one constituency out of 43 voted "No," eliminating the fear of a divide between urban cities like Dublin and the more rural parts of the country. The vote was strongest among young people, women, and working class voters. Yet, the sheer scale of Yes to No votes reflects the intensity of the cultural progression which took place in the 22 years between the decriminalization of homosexuality and the legalization of marriage equality. An astounding 96 percent of new voters who registered in the electoral register to vote in the referendum actually showed up on voting day. The hashtag #HomeToVote represented how many young emigrants returned home to Ireland to vote Yes. As Conor Payne writes in his Socialist Alternative article "Massive 'Yes' to Irish Marriage Equality Referendum,"³³ "The scale of the victory...demolishes the myth of an innately conservative silent majority and points to the forces who are the real agents of change and progress in Irish society." Griffith commented, "The campaign really reaped the benefits of the eight years of hard work we had done prior. People in local groups across the country, of which there were over 60, were all on-message. Everyone knew what they were talking about. It was like putting the roof on a house we had built."³⁴

Irish Health Minister Leo Varadkar, who came out this year as the country's first openly gay minister, said the campaign was like "a social revolution."³⁵ This "social revolution" was on full display at the Dublin Castle that day, where the rainbow colors of the international gay movement lit up the cobblestone courtyard and over 2000 people gathered to celebrate. Celebrating at such a historical landmark represents a change made that would not have been possible on those grounds just a few decades earlier.³⁶ Today, the Irish constitution boldly reflects this embracement of equality with the words, "Marriage may be contracted in accordance with the law by two persons without distinction as to their sex."³⁷ This gives equality not only to same- sex couples, but also to those who do not identify within the gender binary.

31 "Interview with Ronan Farren." Personal interview. 19 Aug. 2015.

32 Payne, Conor. "Massive 'Yes' to Marriage Equality Referendum." Socialist Alternative. N.p., 29 May 2015. Web. 25 Aug. 2015.

33 Ibid

34 "Interview with Moninne Griffith." Personal interview. 26 Aug. 2015.

35 McDonald, Henry. "Ireland Becomes First Country to Legalise Gay Marriage by Popular Vote." The Guardian 23 May 2015, The Observer sec. Print.

36 Ibid

37 "Interview with Moninne Griffith." Personal interview. 26 Aug. 2015.

*Public Perceptions: Irish Nationhood, History, Religion, and Pride*³⁸³⁹

Dean and Luke, a gay couple in their early thirties living in Dublin, attributed the success of the vote not only to the creativity of campaigns like YES Equality and the #CallYourGranny Campaign but also to the small size of their nation. "They say there are only six degrees of separation between strangers—in Ireland, there's even fewer than six," Dean said. Luke agreed that due to the close-knit social tapestry of the nation, everyone knew at least one person affected by the decision on same-sex marriage. He said, "It would've been a close enough connection that even a rural granny would stop and think, 'How can I vote no?'" Social media coverage of Panti Bliss got people who lacked social connections on board with gay rights because they felt obligated to stand up to such an extreme injustice.

Dean and Luke also discussed the role of the country's history saying: "People are more willing to get on board with things because that's always been our way. We have always had to deal straight on with issues we face. There is nothing in our history we have hid from, so we don't run away when there's a problem. People supported the majority thinking even if they were somewhat on the fence about the issue, because they recognized that it was for the greater good of the country." The declining role of the Catholic Church also contributed significantly. "In some areas," Luke said, "older people left their congregations because they didn't want to be told how to vote."

Farren agreed that today in Ireland, people under 30 are not known for their church attendance anymore. Though 85 percent of the country still identifies as Roman Catholic, the church plays a less distinct role in daily life now that corruption and sexual scandal has challenged its moral authority.⁴⁰

A group of straight women in their fifties attested to the conflict that their age group felt between the referendum and the teachings of the church. One woman felt that it was a question of whether a person stood by the church or not. She attended Catholic school and felt that the religious conflicts with same-sex marriage took her a long time to process. However, they also felt that it was slightly "backwards" that gay marriage progressed forward before women's rights such as abortion and contraception. A strong sense of Irish pride was one aspect of the Yes vote that Dean, Luke, and the older straight women all agreed on despite differences in sex, age group, and sexual orientation. The women expressed that the country felt a strong sense of national pride knowing that they were the first country to do this by popular vote. Dean and Luke agreed that everyone was "very aware" of the international attention this would attract. "We knew that if we were the first country to do something like this, other countries would not be far behind. And look what's happened in the U.S. already," Dean said, referring to the nationwide ruling on legalizing same sex marriage in the United States on June 26th, 2015. The women also noted how other countries have an impression of Ireland as "behind the times." This motivated people to vote yes because they wanted to prove that Ireland had "caught up with the rest of the world."

Panti Bliss encapsulated these comments when she remarked, "I think [outsiders] are still hung up on the idea that Ireland is some sort of very conservative country ruled by the Catholic Church."⁴¹ The

38 "Interview with Dean and Luke." Personal interview. 6 Aug. 2015.

39 "Interview at Panti Bar." Personal interview. 12 Aug. 2015.

40 Hjelmggaard, Kim. "Ireland Legalizes Gay Marriage in Historic Vote." USA Today. N.p., 24 May 2015. Web. 25 Aug. 2015.

41 Ibid

Yes vote demonstrates otherwise. Griffith had other thoughts about the final vote, concluding, “The lesson? Change doesn't happen overnight. It takes time, coalition building, softening both political and public opinion. It takes data, and it takes a solid evidence base. It takes international development and help. But that wasn't the point for Irish people. They don't care if they'd be the last country on Earth to vote 'yes.' It wasn't about that so much as fair play—that is deep rooted in the Irish psyche.”⁴²

Conclusion

Prime Minister Edna Kenny best captured the essence of what the referendum truly stands for in Irish society when she said, “With today's vote we have disclosed who we are: a generous, compassionate, bold and joyful people.”⁴³ She invokes feelings of relief by suggesting that truth has been present all along and now is revealed for all to see. Using one simple word, this was not only a vote about marriage equality, but also a vote about generosity, love, compassion, diversity, and inclusion. It showed the world that change had been made and that the country had already transformed. The people of Ireland were ready to make it legally official. It meant more than just tolerating gay marriage and awarding tax benefits to gay couples. It meant sharing a deep sense of Irish-ness through enacting social change as one unified body. It made LGBT Irish citizens an equal part of Irish society, which YES Equality summarized beautifully with the words, “It means that all of us—lesbian, gay, straight, family members, friends, colleagues, allies, voters—belong equally to the Irish national family.”⁴⁴

The vote bolstered national pride by showing Ireland at its best—a fairer, better Ireland where Irish people actively made their country, and the world, a better place by offering a fundamental human right to those deprived of it for so long. In *Out for Ourselves*, published in 1986 by the Dublin Lesbian and Gay Men's Collective, the authors write that the project of creating the book “was ambitious and the work involved much pain and sweat. There were some disappointments and conflicts and at times many of us would have abandoned the whole project. But the book had become too important for the collectives involved, for the many other contributors, and we think, for Irish lesbians and gays generally. So we carried on. We are now sure that it was worth it.”⁴⁵ The same can be said for the Marriage Equality Referendum as a type of national project. It involved diligent, conscientious work on the part of countless volunteers, campaigners, politicians, activists, and LGBT community members, and it taught the whole country a lesson about one another and themselves as a nation. Despite its challenging, emotionally tiresome, and divisive nature, Ireland carried on. Moreover, they can be sure that it was worth it.

42 "Interview with Moninne Griffith." Personal interview. 26 Aug. 2015.

43 Hjelmggaard, Kim. "Ireland Legalizes Gay Marriage in Historic Vote." USA Today. N.p., 24 May 2015. Web. 25 Aug. 2015.

44 YES Equality. N.p., 23 May 2015. Web. 25 Aug. 2015.

45 "Out for Ourselves – The Lives of Irish Lesbians & Gay Men – 1986." Web log post. Brand New Retro. N.p., 27 June 2014. Web. 25 Aug. 2015.

THE UNITED STATES- TAIWAN-CHINA TRILATERAL RELATIONSHIP: RESOLVING THE QUESTION OF TAIWAN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

JADE CHEN

Taiwan's current political trajectory leading into the 2016 presidential elections indicates a burgeoning pro-independence stance that may serve to destabilize cross-Strait relations significantly. Beijing will certainly be vigilant should Taiwan elect an administration holding cooler views towards the mainland, especially in the wake of last year's protests over governance in Hong Kong. Whether or not Taiwan decides to move concretely towards independence, its existence will always serve as a point of contention between the United States and mainland China. As China's stature in international politics rises, it will increasingly turn to the island of Taiwan with intentions of reunification. Any Chinese movement that is seen as infringing upon Taiwan's sovereignty could potentially draw the United States into direct conflict with China, as the United States is bound by the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) to consider aggressive Chinese incursion a "threat" to peace and security in the Western Pacific. However, the TRA does not obligate the United States to take any decisive military action, leaving unanswered the question of whether or not to defend Taiwan. Numerous arguments exist to support either answer to the Taiwanese conundrum. Those against American involvement in a cross-Strait conflict have depicted Taiwan as "a strategic liability, an expensive diversion, and most often, an obstacle to more important U.S.—China relations". Those who support upholding American commitments to Taiwan cite the importance of economic ties between the United States and Taiwan, as well as the imperative of retaining credibility in a region that is increasingly turning towards the United States as a bulwark against China. Regardless, cross-Strait reunification would have a profound effect on American interests in the Asia Pacific.

Introduction

From the 1970s into the 21st century, China's star in international politics has steadily risen. Where China was once the "sick man of Asia", weakened by feudalism and ruthless foreign exploitation, modern-day China is now robust in health both militarily and economically. China has risen to a point where it is unquestionably a superpower: numerically, in 2013 it had the second largest gross domestic product (in terms of purchasing power parity) in the world after the United States, and it occupies one of

the five permanent seats on the United Nations' Security Council, possessing a nuclear arsenal¹. China bristles at the international constraints placed upon it, but it also engages in trade and diplomacy with the United States and the rest of the West. As China grows ever more powerful in the crucial Asia Pacific, it is important that the United States is able to understand its preferences and its norms so that the United States may avoid conflict, as well as ensure American security and prosperity in the region.

As China has enjoyed formidable economic growth, it has funneled much of its profits into its own self-defense and military program. China's improved military capacities have allowed it to act less hesitantly in projecting power across disputed regions such as the South China Sea and the border it shares with India. As the United States observes the interactions between China and its ASEAN, East Asian, and South Asian neighbors, it is important for the Americans to act with discretion on which disputes to get involved in and which to stay out of. One such dispute is China's ongoing relationship with Taiwan: one that China, claiming sovereignty over the island, believes is an issue of domestic policy; and external onlookers such as the United States interpret as a matter of foreign affairs between two geographically and ideologically separate parties. Indeed, the issue of Taiwan is one that Washington must approach with utmost caution. Taiwan is a trigger and an old wound for Beijing, and an issue capable of bringing the United States and mainland China into direct conflict.

The debates that this research paper will address center upon the relationships and interactions between the United States, China, and Taiwan. What are Taiwan's political prospects leading in to the 2016 general elections, and what evidence is there for Taiwanese reunification or independence? Do Taiwanese interests stand a chance against the Chinese reunification narrative? In the event that China attempts to reclaim Taiwan, should the United States intervene or stay out of the cross-strait conflict?

2014 was a significant year for Taiwan, in both political and economic terms. In March 2014, the Taiwanese government ratified the controversial Cross-Strait Services Trade Agreement (CSSTA) with Mainland China, which sparked the Sunflower Movement—pro-democracy student demonstrations and sit-ins in the Legislative Yuan. The primary opposition to the agreement feared that the CSSTA would sacrifice Taiwanese autonomy in exchange for economic growth, catalyzed largely by the mainland's emerging middle class and subsequent demand for high-quality services (such as in retail or healthcare). The Taiwanese public perceived the CSSTA to be the handiwork of the dominant Kuomintang (KMT) administration, which had already faced heavy criticism over the course of its eight-year tenure due to its failure to improve the Taiwanese economy. Indeed, the KMT suffered heavy losses in the November 2014 local elections, winning only six municipality and county seats out of twenty-two, where the rival Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won thirteen. Quite significantly, the DPP was even able to gain control of the municipality of Taipei, which had been under KMT control for the previous sixteen years.²

Though local elections are generally not considered accurate predictors of general election results (the presidential, vice-presidential, and Legislative Yuan seats are contested in the general elections); that the KMT appears to be on the back foot and the DPP at a relative advantage will certainly color

1 The World Bank, "GDP (Current US\$)," The World Bank, accessed April 25, 2015, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDPMKTPCD/>.

2 Ricky Yeh, "Why the KMT Failed in Taiwan's Local Elections," The Diplomat, December 9, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/12/why-the-kmt-failed-in-taiwans-local-elections-2/>.

Taiwanese political machinations leading up to the January 2016 voting period. It is important to note that the November 2014 election results do not represent support of the DPP and party chair Tsai Ing-wen, but rather a reaction to dissatisfaction and disappointment with the KMT and current president Ma Ying-jeou. The KMT's actions and policies have been determined to be overly pro-China by a young and politically active constituency that is increasingly confident in its Taiwanese identity. DPP chair Tsai Ing-wen, who was previously criticized for her dispassionate and ambivalent stance on cross-Strait affairs, will need to practice caution and discretion in her rhetoric towards Mainland China, lest it alienate her constituency (though the DPP has historically been pro-independence, as a member of the Taiwanese Pan-Green Coalition). Similarly, the KMT will need to rethink its amiable policy towards the mainland if it wants to win back voters in time for 2016.

The Taiwan Brain Trust (a think tank based on the island) polls a selection of citizens for their opinions on identity and political status every other month. As of February 2015, a majority of respondents (56.2 percent) still supported the status quo in Taiwan, *de facto* statehood.³ However, 31.2 percent of respondents would prefer independence—a significant increase from the 25.4 percent recorded from the same survey in August 2014 (right at the conclusion of the Sunflower Movement).⁴ When the option of status quo was taken away, leaving independence or reunification, 68.9 percent of all respondents chose independence; among respondents aged 20-29, the percentage was much higher with 79.1 percent supporting independence. The younger generation in Taiwan clearly skews towards independence, which the KMT and the DPP will have to keep in mind as they contest the general elections in 2016. Because the current administration has been criticized for taking an excessively pro-Beijing stance, the next administration can be expected to shift back in the opposite direction to maintain equilibrium.

The TBT's poll results demonstrate that the advent of Taiwanese independence is far from happening, if at all. Nonetheless, Beijing still finds the island conundrum to be a nuisance. To the Chinese government, which has always upheld the values of sovereignty, unity, and centralized power in great importance, Taiwan has both strategic and historical significance. Taiwan is the proverbial “one that got away” from the “century of national humiliation”—a reminder of the struggles the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) faced in the 19th and 20th centuries from both foreign exploitation and the ruthless Kuomintang, before the CCP's eventual triumph to legitimacy on the mainland. From a less symbolic and more pragmatic point of view, Taiwan's existence and links to the West (namely, the United States) are also threatening to the mainland, which feels choked and restricted by the “first island chain” of American allies South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and the Philippines.⁵ Reunification between Taiwan and China could happen one of two ways: either China decides to take the island by force (whether invasive or through intimidation), or Taiwan acquiesces and formally recognizes China's 1992 Consensus and Anti-Secession Law (2005).

3 Loa Iok-sin, “Support for Taiwanese independence, identity: think tank poll,” *The Taipei Times*, February 5, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2015/02/05/2003610873/>.

4 Taiwan Brain Trust, “Shifts in Unification/Independence Preferences in the Wake of the Sunflower Student Movement,” Taiwan Brain Trust, August 26, 2014, http://en.braintrust.tw/article_detail/1966/.

5 David B. H. Denoon, *The Economic and Strategic Rise of China and India: Asian Realignments after the 1997 Financial Crisis* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007): 103.

Statement of Themes

- 1) Cross-Strait reunification is a core interest to Beijing. Adhering to the dictates of offensive realism, China cannot become a regional hegemon without reunification, and thus cannot challenge the United States.
- 2) The repeal of the Taiwan Relations Act (1979), or any other conscious decision by the United States to break ties with Taiwan, will inevitably result in reunification. As a matter of fact, reunification—whether it be twenty or fifty years into the future—is inevitable.
- 3) The United States will face commitment and credibility problems from its allies in East Asia, as it deliberates over the question of Taiwan.

The purpose of this research paper is to discuss a possible future course of events undertaken by China and Taiwan, and to provide an assessment of how the United States should deal with this course of events. This research paper will provide evidence for why Taiwan represents an important strategic and political juncture for Sino-American relations, and hypothesize upon China's present and future foreign policy.

Empirical Analysis

Any perceived infringement upon Taiwan's de facto political status could potentially draw the United States into direct conflict with Mainland China. The United States is bound by the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) to consider any non-peaceful attempt (including boycotts and embargoes) to shape Taiwan's political future "a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States."⁶ The TRA (a public law) and the Three Communiqués form the basis for all interactions between the United States, Mainland China, and Taiwan. The TRA in particular also arguably established any kind of international legitimacy that Taiwan has today, as it was only through its ties to the United States that Taiwan was able to achieve any kind of international recognition that allowed for economic and cultural exchange. It's important to note that the Chinese government considers the TRA completely illegitimate: in line with its one-China policy and priority of political unity, any diplomatic extensions to Taiwan are an internal affair, and should go through Beijing.

Under the Taiwan Relations Act, the United States is required to maintain the "capacity" to resist any sort of coercion or forceful threat to the security of Taiwan. This clause is fulfilled through the existence of the United States Seventh Fleet, which patrols the Asia Pacific and was previously mobilized in the 1996 Third Taiwan Strait Crisis. Moreover, the United States is also obligated to provide Taiwan with "arms of a defensive character" in "such quantity as may be necessary to... maintain a sufficient self-defense capability" which Washington has done since 1980 through arms sales.⁷ Over the years, Beijing has increasingly chafed at these sales. The United States has responded in kind by promising to gradually decrease the amount of armaments sold to Taiwan year by year. Last but not least, the United States cannot change its position on the legal status of Taiwan under the TRA; it cannot officially recognize the PRC's sovereignty over Taiwan.

6 Taiwan Relations Act. U.S. Code 22 (1979), § 3301.

7 Taiwan Relations Act. U.S. Code 22 (1979), § 3302.

Much of the Taiwan Relations Act is written in a vague or “strategically ambiguous” manner.⁸ While clauses such as those addressing arms sales and diplomatic recognition are relatively clear, the provisions on potential American military intervention are not. As the Act currently stands, the United States is not required to do anything decisive should, for instance, Taiwan find Chinese warships stationed on its Western coastline. The United States is only obligated to “consider” such actions a threat to peace and security. The “capacity” clause in Sec. 3301 carries the implication of the United States coming to blows with Mainland China; but as it is written, the United States’ only responsibility is to maintain a degree of military strength capable of offsetting Chinese aggression, which it does already. Ultimately, the TRA fails to establish concrete guarantees, reflecting Washington’s lack of explicit protocol should a cross-Strait conflict emerge. The TRA serves not as an American promise to Taiwan, but rather as a set of guidelines for American policy towards Taiwan.⁹ The framework for potential American involvement in a cross-Strait conflict exists in the TRA, but the vagaries of the legislation require that a hawkish Congress must back up the Act should the United States desire mobilization.

The United States and Mainland China are not the countries they were back in 1979, when the Taiwan Relations Act was originally written. Both countries have increased their military capabilities, China more dramatically so. The balances of power in the Asian Pacific theater have also changed over these four decades: with the “Asian tigers” of Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan all hard-hit by the 1997 Financial Crisis, the economic stagnation and subsequent decline of Japan, the emergence of ASEAN, AIIB, TPP, and the rise of China and India.¹⁰ In hindsight, the “strategic ambiguity” of the Taiwan Relations Act seems well-placed: with China ever ascendant in international politics, its economic and military power have likewise increased, and the plausibility of the United States entering a conflict with China has decreased. The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has modernized significantly since the 1990s, spurred on primarily by its run-ins with the United States—namely, the Third Taiwan Straits Crisis and the Americans’ accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade during Operation Allied Force. Chinese defense spending has increased yearly by double-digit or near-double-digit percentages since 1988.¹¹ With a military budget anywhere from a quarter to a sixth of the United States’—China spent \$119.5 billion on defense in 2013, compared to \$672.88 billion by the United States in the same year—it’s clear that China’s PLA is not yet mature enough to meet the United States in head-on combat.¹² Nonetheless, the PLA is more than capable of projecting power regionally.¹³

8 Steve Chan, *China, the U.S., and the Power-Transition Theory: A Critique* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008): 105.

9 Richard C. Bush III, “Thoughts on the Taiwan Relations Act,” Brookings, April 2009, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2009/04/taiwan-bush/>.

10 David B. H. Denoon, *The Economic and Strategic Rise of China and India: Asian Realignment after the 1997 Financial Crisis* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007): 11.

11 Charles Clover, “China: projections of power,” *Financial Times*, April 8, 2015, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/12424108-da0b-11e4-9b1c-00144feab7de.html/>.

12 Michael S. Chase et al, *China’s Incomplete Military Transformation: Assessing the Weaknesses of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA)* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2015): 15.

13 U.S. Office of Management and Budget, *Fiscal Year 2013 Budget of the U.S. Government* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012): 84.

In the past decade, China has increasingly sought to project its interests across the Western Pacific by bolstering its maritime capabilities. Much of China's modern defense capabilities have developed as a response to American actions in East Asia: their anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) strategies—the capability to close off territory to a foreign navy—are intended to disrupt American power projection, support networks and control of the Western Pacific. A2/AD strategies can keep American forces away from China's crowded coastline; as well as out of the crucial Taiwan Strait, which must remain navigable should China resort to armed conflict or intimidation to force reunification (as in the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis). China has been particularly active in the South China Sea in the past decade, engaging in territorial disputes over tiny islands, such as the Spratly Islands or the Senkaku/Diaoyutai, with ASEAN states and Japan.

Particularly worrying to the United States is Chinese investment in and development of anti-ship capabilities. To counter the American destroyers and supercarriers of the United States Seventh Fleet, the Chinese have developed the DF-21D, the world's first anti-ship ballistic missile.¹⁴ The Chinese have also invested heavily in stealth submarines, which can be armed with both ballistic and nuclear missiles and are difficult to detect. Despite the large discrepancy between the American and Chinese military budgets, the PLA is still capable of impeding and restricting American movements in the Asia-Pacific theater through its A2/AD capabilities. If the United States continues under upon its liberal, gun-shy administration while remaining bogged down in its Middle East engagements, Chinese A2/AD may be sufficient to deter the United States. The “strategic ambiguity” of the Taiwan Relations Act, nearly forty years on, seems to have rescued the United States from yet another commitment problem that it can't fulfill.

The two factors—a militarily ascendant, increasingly aggressive China and a passive legislative framework for U.S.-Taiwan relations—have complicated the possibility of the United States entering a conflict with Mainland China over Taiwan. The topic of Taiwan has become a question of “Should we stay or should we go?” Will the United States ever come to blows with China over a perceived infringement upon the political status of Taiwan? And underlying that question, should the United States even go to bat for Taiwan? As of 2015, there are numerous arguments for either side. Those who believe the United States should give up on Taiwan cite uncertainty over China's growing militarism and interconnectedness with the American economy as a reason, expressing fears that any type of conflict with a China emboldened by its upgraded military will lead to a jeopardizing of American interests and security. Those who believe the United States should not give up on Taiwan believe that American abandonment would signal a lack of commitment to liberal democracy, damage American credibility and its strategic position in the Western Pacific, and not guarantee appeasement of Beijing. The ramifications of both decisions could be immense.

Many American foreign policy scholars and analysts believe that the United States should repeal the Taiwan Relations Act and leave Taiwan to fend for itself. Charles L. Glaser advocated for an end to the American accommodation of Taiwanese interests in his 2011 essay, “Will China's Rise Lead to War?” Based upon realist rationale, his advice is primarily cautionary: he believes that China's improved military capacity and modernized nuclear arsenal enable Beijing to behave with fewer and fewer constraints. A conflict over Taiwan, Glaser argues, has the potential to exacerbate into nuclear war; both the United

14 Michael S. Chase et al, *China's Incomplete Military Transformation: Assessing the Weaknesses of the People's Liberation Army (PLA)* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2015): 74.

States and China would have cause to escalate, as all stages of conflict would appear rational to the actors involved.¹⁵

More importantly, the United States could easily find itself following events in a crisis involving Taiwan instead of leading them. Glaser notes that on the American end, “enhancements to U.S. offensive targeting capabilities and strategic ballistic missile defenses might be interpreted by China as a signal of malign U.S. motives” and subsequently augment tensions and uncertainty between the two sides.¹⁶ The risk of escalating military engagement leads Glaser to believe that Taiwan is not worth upholding commitments to. Glaser believes that Asia is not a zero-sum game: Chinese and American interests do not necessarily run counter to each other, and both powers can coexist in the region without igniting a major war between them. For this reason, Glaser thinks that Taiwan is a relatively small issue that should be let go of in order to engender good relations between Washington and Beijing.

John J. Mearsheimer, another adherent to the realist school of thought, also believes that Taiwan is not worth backing. In a speech delivered to the Taiwanese Association of International Relations in 2013, Mearsheimer cites uncertainty over future Chinese military might as a reason for the United States to let Taiwan go. Mearsheimer’s primary theory regarding the U.S.-China relationship is one based upon offensive realism—that superpowers seek to become the hegemon of their native regions, so that they may project their interests across the globe without having to worry about incursions upon their own borders. Moreover, he theorizes that only one regional hegemon may exist in the world at any given time: regional hegemonies are preoccupied with projecting power into other regions so that other regions are in a constant state of disruption, forcing fledgling hegemonies to deal with the “noisy neighbors” on their own doorstep before looking further outwards. Mearsheimer cites American involvement in World War II and the Cold War as examples of the United States seeking to “disrupt” the hegemonic rise of imperial Japan in its region of East Asia, Nazi Germany in Europe, and the Soviet Union in Eurasia, respectively.¹⁷

Mearsheimer believes that China’s rise to power will emulate that of the United States, in that China will seek regional hegemony by subduing Russia, Japan, and American “offshore balancers,” similar to how the United States subdued Canada and Mexico in the 19th century. While Charles L. Glaser argues that the benefits of potential U.S.-China synergy in East Asia are reason to give Taiwan up, Mearsheimer is more focused on the costs of continuing to support Taiwan. Mearsheimer believes that in a future where China’s military capacity is significantly augmented, war between the United States and China is very possible. Given that the question of Taiwan ignites China’s sensitive ideological core of hypernationalism, China is likely to revert to force or coercion to violently retake Taiwan. In this future, Taiwan will have three options: 1) nuclear deterrence, 2) conventional deterrence, or 3) to acquiesce and pursue the “Hong Kong strategy.”

Mearsheimer is not optimistic on any of these options. Taiwanese development of nuclear capabilities was done away with in the 1970s and 1980s under American pressure, rendering the first option impossible. The option of conventional deterrence is predicated upon the idea that Taiwan can

15 Charles Glaser, “Will China’s Rise Lead to War? Why Realism Does Not Mean Pessimism,” *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 2 (March/April 2011): 82.

16 Glaser, “Will China’s Rise Lead to War? Why Realism Does Not Mean Pessimism,” 83.

17 John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014): 367.

deter Beijing with the threat of a Pyrrhic victory: that Taiwanese defense of the island would result in a protracted, costly, and destructive war for Beijing. Conventional deterrence would require American backing, but the United States is not likely to join in a war it doesn't see itself winning. Finally, the "Hong Kong strategy" is the least likely to result in open conflict or loss of life. However, it signifies eventual political suffocation for Taiwan, as Hong Kong has already demonstrated that democracy is incompatible with the centralized, autocratic political structure of the Mainland. Ultimately, Mearsheimer writes, "whether Taiwan is forced to give up its independence largely depends on how formidable China's military becomes in the decades ahead."¹⁸ How large China's offensive capabilities can become is still a matter of conjecture, but to Mearsheimer this uncertainty over the potential force of Chinese military power is exactly why the United States should let Taiwan go.

Mearsheimer acknowledges that Taiwan bears great strategic significance to the United States due to its geographical position in the "first island chain," and that retaining ties with the island is important to preserving the United States' credibility in the region. These points are echoed in the Peterson Institute's 2008 book *China's Rise*—but in favor, rather than against, pro-Taiwan policy. The four authors of *China's Rise* (economist C. Fred Bergsten, analyst Charles Freeman, economist Nicholas R. Lardy and diplomat Derek J. Mitchell) maintain that an American relationship with Taiwan is imperative to the future security of the East Asian region, with the secondary effect of putting pressure upon China to stick to its promise of a "peaceful" rise and cooperative policy goals.¹⁹

According to the Peterson Institute, it is impossible for Washington to cut relations with Taiwan "without seriously damaging its international credibility and reputation" to states such as South Korea and Japan—"allies and friends who relied on the United States for their security and for maintaining peace and stability in East Asia more broadly."²⁰ In addition, how the United States and China interact over the issue of Taiwan has the potential to form a precedent for future U.S.-China dealings. Should the United States compromise and renege on its commitments, it could risk "sending a signal of license to Beijing on other matters."²¹ Finally, the United States should not break off its relationship with Taiwan due to the important role it plays in mediating between either side of the Strait. China and Taiwan may cooperate extensively on the economic front, but militarily there is still a great deal of mistrust between the two. Even in the midst of Ma Ying-jeou's Beijing-friendly administration, the Mainland increased the number of missile deployments facing Taiwan to 1,500 units in 2011,²² and stationed the DF-21D anti-ship ballistic missile near Taiwan in 2013.²³ While the United States is viewed overwhelmingly as a "defender" of Taiwan due to its TRA obligations and shared culture of liberal democracy, its duties in "dual deterrence"—

18 John J. Mearsheimer, "Say Goodbye to Taiwan," *The National Interest*, no. 130 (March/April 2014): 39.

19 C. Fred Bergsten et al, *China's Rise* (Washington, DC: Peter G. Peterson Institution for International Economics, 2008): 178.

20 Bergsten et al, *China's Rise*, 174.

21 Bergsten et al, *China's Rise*, 178.

22 Nancy Bernkopf Tucker and Bonnie Glaser, "Should the United States Abandon Taiwan?," *The Washington Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (2011): 30.

23 Sarah Mishkin and Kathrin Hille, "China deploys anti-ship missile off Taiwan," *Financial Times*, April 19, 2013, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/3d026ec6-a8d1-11e2-a096-00144feabdc0.html/>.

preventing China from encroaching upon Taiwan, while simultaneously dissuading Taiwan from making any sudden, unilateral movements towards independence—should not be overlooked.²⁴

Analyst Bonnie Glaser and the late historian Nancy Bernkopf Tucker also argue for upholding American commitments to Taiwan in their 2011 *Washington Quarterly* article, “Should the United States Abandon Taiwan?” Their analysis is couched in tenets of liberal internationalism, citing Taiwan’s economic capacity and involvement in international institutions as reasons for the United States not to give up on the island. This contrasts with John J. Mearsheimer and Charles L. Glaser’s realist argument for the opposing perspective. According to Glaser and Tucker, the United States would face economic complications should it decide to cut ties with Taiwan. Taiwan has always been one of the United States’ top trading partners, ranking as the 11th largest (behind China, Japan, and South Korea in terms of regional competitors) as of February 2015. At the same time, the United States has consistently been one of Taiwan’s top three trading partners since 2006, responsible for roughly 10 percent of all imports and 10 percent of Taiwanese exports in 2013.²⁵ Glaser and Tucker note that the American defense contractors form one of the groups reliant upon the preservation of U.S.-Taiwan relationships, as the United States continues to sell F-16 fighter aircrafts to Taiwan as part of the TRA.²⁶ Evidently, the economic ramifications of cutting ties with Taiwan are not insignificant and Glaser and Tucker advise that “at a time when the U.S. economy remains in the doldrums, the United States should not impede access to economic opportunities in Taiwan.”²⁷

As represented by John J. Mearsheimer and Charles L. Glaser, the realist interpretation of the U.S.-China-Taiwan situation is pessimistic. Both realist scholars believe that the United States should relinquish its commitments to Taiwan due to the threat of a looming, militant China. On the other hand, the liberal internationalist view on the trilateral relationship is more optimistic. Bonnie Glaser and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker acknowledge that the Chinese militarism Mearsheimer and Charles L. Glaser fear is indeed valid, but point out that despite \$13 billion worth of arms sales between 2009 and 2011, “cross-Strait relations are in the best shape in decades.”²⁸ One can imagine that the ratification of the CSSTA in 2014 under the same pro-Beijing Ma administration has only improved matters. Moreover, Glaser and Tucker argue that Taiwan’s representation on the international scale is also evidence of peaceable cross-Strait ties: under the Ma administration alone (2008–2016) it gained membership or observer status to eight international governmental organizations and two international NGOs.²⁹

Finally, Glaser and Tucker cite Taiwan’s control of “the content and pace” of cross-Strait negotiations as proof of its leverage. Under Ma, Taiwan has been able to progress from “easy issues” to more sensitive ones, resolving economic differences gradually before moving on, if at all, to matters of

24 Steve Chan, *China, the U.S., and the Power-Transition Theory: A Critique* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008): 100.

25 Central Intelligence Agency, “Taiwan,” *The World Factbook*, last accessed April 25, 2015, <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/tw.html/>.

26 Nancy Bernkopf Tucker and Bonnie Glaser, “Should the United States Abandon Taiwan?”, *The Washington Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (2011): 26.

27 Tucker and Glaser, “Should the United States Abandon Taiwan?”, 32.

28 Tucker and Glaser, “Should the United States Abandon Taiwan?”, 34.

29 Tucker and Glaser, “Should the United States Abandon Taiwan?”, 31.

military and politics. Taiwan's de facto statehood is not necessarily debilitating. After all, Taiwan's political status has not been an obstacle to its fostering of economic relations with the United States, nor to its involvement on the international stage, nor to its bargaining power in negotiating with Beijing. Even in its limited political state, Taiwan stands as an example of liberal democracy, "as a model to others in East Asia, and as assurance of U.S. credibility and dependability." The United States should "not abandon its principled dedication to freedom of choice, but should strengthen it" by upholding its commitment to Taiwan.³⁰

Conclusion

It's clear that among the cases presented for an answer to "What should the United States do about Taiwan?" there is a clear divergence based upon schools of thought in international politics. The realists John J. Mearsheimer and Charles L. Glaser, who base their arguments upon military power, believe that the United States should give up on Taiwan. The adherents to liberal internationalism, which include Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, Bonnie Glaser, and the Peterson Institute economists and diplomats, believe that the United States should uphold its commitments to the island. The arguments of the liberal internationalists are based upon trade partnerships, maintaining credibility, and a shared adherence to liberal democracy.

Regardless of their position on Taiwan, all scholars cited identified the militarism of China as a threat to the security of the region. All scholars agreed that Taiwan was of immediate interest to a rising China, though they disagreed on how well and for how long the United States could deter China in this regard. Reunification seems to be inevitable: the realists Mearsheimer and Glaser were adamant it would occur. Even the most optimistic of the scholars, Tucker and Glaser, acknowledged that although Taiwan had controlled the pace of cross-Strait talks thus far, it would eventually have to move on to the "harder issues" it had avoided previously. The backlash to Ma Ying-jeou's pro-Beijing tenure also suggests that the 2016 elections may produce an administration that is cooler towards the Mainland, which would alter the tone of cross-Strait negotiations completely.

While increasing Chinese militarism is certainly dangerous to the United States, the United States is also obligated by its East Asian partners to uphold its commitments to the region, one of which is preservation of its ties to Taiwan. There are numerous interpretations of what these partners are. According to Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism, states like South Korea and Japan are no more than pawns that the United States has had to engage and mobilize in order to keep China preoccupied in its own region; according to Tucker and Glaser, such countries are cooperative friends to the United States, and the United States is thus beholden to them.

The analysis conducted in this paper was largely inconclusive—there is no definite answer to Taiwan question. A great deal of uncertainty remains regarding the trilateral U.S.-China-Taiwan relationship, much of it centering on China's development over the next few years. China may develop into the militaristic nightmare Mearsheimer cites in his worst-case scenario analysis, or China may indeed suffer an economic slowdown and burdensome internal problems that will shackle its ambitions.³¹ Fortunately, from an American perspective, a good deal of time remains for the United States to formulate

30 Tucker and Glaser, "Should the United States Abandon Taiwan?", 35-36.

31 John J. Mearsheimer, "Say Goodbye to Taiwan," *The National Interest*, no. 130 (March/April 2014): 39.

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OIL RESERVES AND PUBLIC POLICY IN U.S. STATES

ALEX HASAPIDIS

The nature and existence of the resource curse has long been debated within the international community. The resource curse is the inverse relationship between abundant natural resources and economic and political development—a relationship that some argue leads to depressed economic growth, the rise of nondemocratic regimes, and steep decreases in social spending. This also occasionally leads to the creation of rentier states, which are governments that are so resource-rich that they are able to provide significant benefits to their citizens. Such benefits sometimes act as bribes to ignore government inefficiency and corruption. The vast majority of studies that have found evidence supporting the existence of these phenomena have focused on developing countries in Asia, South America, and Africa. In contrast, this study will examine the effect of natural resources on public policy on U.S. states, to further our understanding of the relationship between developed countries and natural resources. This study suggests that while U.S. states receive increased revenue from the exploitation of natural resources, there is little perceptible increase in spending on social programs, an outcome bearing a resemblance to a resource curse or a rentier effect.

Introduction

The relationship between oil and public policy has received significant scholarly attention in part because of the former's supposed impact on the behavior of governments—a relationship that often stems from a “resource curse.” The resource curse is a paradox that afflicts natural resource abundant countries by making such countries overly dependent on these natural resources for income, economic growth, and ultimately economic prosperity. This phenomenon has tremendous political and economic repercussions on nations that suffer from it, including slower economic development, lower investment in human capital, rent-seeking, conflict, and more autocratic regimes. However, some states that have these abundant resources exploit them in part to provide benefits to their citizens, such as low taxes. This is often called a rentier effect.

Many resource curse-driven studies have focused on oil and its influence on public policy outside of the United States, with the majority examining developing countries in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and South America. Some, such as Ola Listhaug (2005), have studied the political and public policy implications of the resource curse in developed and resource abundant democracies such as Norway. However, outside of past work by Ellis Goldberg, Erik Wibbels, and Eric Mvukiyehe (2008) and Elissaios Papyrakis and Reyer Gerlagh (2006), there remains far more unexplored territory concerning how oil affects the governance of American states, a group of governments constitutionally constrained in the policies they can pursue and the types of government they can implement. Given that the United States

is poised to become the world's largest producer of oil and natural gas with some of the largest reserves of both in the world (Smith, 2014), it seems increasingly implausible to assume that oil—and perhaps some effects associated with the resource curse—could not have some impact on public policy on a state level, despite the limitations on these states previously described. It seems, then, that this field is ripe for experimentation and exploration.

This research question is a differences-in-differences study that will examine the effects of an interaction between average oil reserves and oil prices on public policy in U.S. states from 1960 to 2012. This interaction between average oil reserves and oil prices will use the average amount of reserves present in a state over a number of years and the price of oil at the federal level, which varies over time. This indicator will therefore take into account not only the amount of discovered oil in a state, but also its value. The observed variables are total state severance tax revenues, total state tax revenues, state tax rates, state total expenditures, state expenditures on primary and secondary education, state expenditures on healthcare and hospitals, and state expenditures on highway construction (used as an indicator of state spending on public infrastructure). This study finds that despite growing revenues from the severance tax, state total tax revenue does not increase, nor does spending on many state programs. Instead, state and local tax burdens fall, suggesting that total state tax revenue and total state expenditures are not increasing because tax cuts have both drained revenue and limited state expenditures, ultimately suggesting something similar to a rentier effect or a resource curse. Alternatively, this decrease in state and local tax burdens and slight increase in some social spending lends credence to the ideas espoused by the selectorate theory, namely, that elected officials are taking advantage of increased revenues to provide public goods to their constituents in order to improve their chances of reelection.

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows: the following section contains a literature review. The third section provides deeper background on this subject, while the fourth section describes the theoretical mechanisms and hypotheses for this study. The fifth and sixth sections address the data being used in this study and the empirical approach for this study, respectively. The seventh section will summarize this study's results, while the eighth section will conclude the study. A short appendix follows the references.

Literature Review

The relationship between oil and policy outcomes has been examined for years by numerous scholars with a variety of different focuses and findings. The literature compiled below explores studies that could offer hypotheses or causal mechanisms for possible outcomes of the research question. The initial studies are more general in their scope. Findings by Jeffrey Sachs and Andrew Warner (2001) apply to many studies examining natural resources. The later studies referenced are more focused on outcomes that could be useful specifically in understanding the behavior of U.S. states. This compilation includes the work of several authors who have previously pursued studies similar to that of the research question.

Sachs and Warner (2001) found that the “curse of natural resources” is a phenomenon in which resource-rich countries tend to economically underperform. He clarifies that this phenomenon is not caused by other, possibly endogenous variables, such as geographical or climate conditions. Instead, Sachs et al. reaffirms that the curse of natural resources has been and can be empirically observed, a conclusion that forms the basis of this research question. If the resource curse is, in its simplest definition, observable, then the research question would have no connection to or basis in political theory.

Michael Ross is known for his studies on oil, its sometimes deleterious effects on democratization, and its inversely reinforcing effects on autocracies. The relationships that Ross examined were an impetus in pursuing this research question. In his 2001 article, “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?” Ross examined the

presumed link between higher government revenue and autocracy when revenue is linked to oil wealth in countries both inside and outside of the Middle East. Ultimately confirming the statistic validity of this link, Ross also found that the detrimental effects of oil on democracy are magnified when that democracy is impoverished, and are less so when that democracy is wealthy. Ross's findings have been affirmed by a number of different studies, including those by Andersen and Ross (2013), Colgan (2014), Andersen & Aslaksen (2013), and by a study that will be explored later, Goldberg, Wibbels & Mvukiyehe (2008).

This alludes to the possibility that American states, which compared to the countries in Ross's study are relatively wealthy, may not experience some of the more detrimental effects stemming from oil wealth. Ross also concludes that many oil-rich governments experience a rentier effect, which lowers tax rates and raises government spending to quell political and social unrest among the populace or to ensure that a government remains popular. Though many of these oil-rich governments that use such tactics are autocracies that are concerned with ensuring that their citizens do not turn against them, elected leaders could conceivably take these same actions to gain favor among their constituents.

Gylfason (2011) built upon Ross's findings. Whereas Ross found that oil-rich countries tend to have higher levels of spending than other countries, Gylfason concludes that oil, or "natural capital," tends to crowd out social capital, human capital, and physical capital, hindering economic growth and reducing education rates. The possibility that oil could affect a state government's investment in education led to the research question incorporating state education spending as a dependent variable and as an indicator of how oil reserves may affect a state government's public policy. However, according to studies such by Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson, and Morrow (2002) and Acemoglu and Robinson (2000), given that American states are democratic and not autocratic regimes, elected leaders in state governments may find an incentive to increase spending on public goods, such as public schools and hospitals, in order to please their constituents and strengthen their chances of reelection. This strategy is different from simply providing the baseline amount of public goods needed to keep the public from revolting or being economically unproductive, a behavior that is common in autocracies.

Di Tella, Dubra, and MacCulloch (2008) explored a different facet of oil's effect on governance. In their study, Di Tella, et al., examined the correlation between the belief in individualism and "luck"—calculated by interacting the share of the oil industry in the country's economy multiplied by the price of oil—from 1983 to 2004. Like Gylfason's aforementioned study, Di Tella et al. found intuitive implications for oil wealth. The more a nation economically depends on oil, the more its citizens demand government intervention to assist the poor and correspondingly lack individualist sentiment. It is questionable how likely such sentiments are to be found among residents of oil-rich U.S. states. Many studies have found that the average American tends to be individualistic and disapproving of heavy-handed government intervention. It is possible, however, that there could still be demand for government intervention for other initiatives, such as building new roads or schools, in oil-rich American states, as opposed to demand for government intervention to assist the poor.

Listhaug (2006) examined oil's effect on the quality of Norway's democracy, finding that oil has slowly eroded public trust in Norway's political institutions in a "mild form of resource curse." Norway, which is much more analogous to American states than other oil-rich countries in Africa, Latin America, or the Middle East, is suffering from similar problems, as discussed by Di Tella et al.: As Norway's oil wealth has grown, so too has demand for that money to be used to fund "public services and lower taxes." Though Listhaug finds that oil wealth has not weakened many Norwegians' support for democratic government, their demand for increased government intervention could mirror action taken in American states to use oil wealth to pay for government services or tax cuts. Because this study ultimately finds that oil reserves are correlated with increases in state education spending and decreases in state tax burdens, it is possible

that public demand to utilize oil revenue for these policy outcomes could be a possible explanation for their existence.

Allcott and Keniston (2013) explored whether or not the the Dutch Disease, a hypothesized relationship between the inverse growth of the natural resources industry and the decline of the manufacturing industry, and by extension, the resource curse, exists in the United States and negatively impacts American business. While Allcott et al. found that the Dutch Disease is evident in areas with natural resource booms due to large increases in local wages, they also found that, instead of harming local manufacturing growth, natural resource booms contributed to the growth of the local manufacturing industry.

These findings confirm several key assumptions for the research question. First, there is empirical evidence to suggest that some areas in the United States exhibit signs of a resource curse (via the Dutch Disease), making it more likely that municipalities or states could exhibit some of the characteristics that define oil-rich countries, such as low taxes or increased government spending. However, as discussed by Ross (2001), because of the relative wealth of American states, the effect that oil has on governance may not be what is expected in developing countries. Instead of natural resource booms crippling local industries, it bolsters their growth. This suggests that the effect of oil on American state economies and thus U.S. governance may not align with how other countries respond to the presence of significant oil reserves.

Elissaios Papyrakis and Reyer Gerlagh (2007) explore the absolute convergence hypothesis—the theory that incomes in developing countries grow faster than those in developed countries, such that poverty could vanish—in income levels in 49 U.S. states (excluding Delaware), finding that natural resource abundance is a significant negative determinant to growth and that it decreases investment, schooling, openness, and expenditures on research and development. Each of the variables measure research and development accounted for “innovation and endogenous technological progress,” natural resources accounted for the share of the primary sector’s production in GSP for 1986, schooling accounted for the “contribution of educational services in GSP in 1986,” openness accounted for the “difference between migration to an area from outside the U.S. and migration from that area” from “1990-1999 for each state to the population of the state in 1990,” and corruption accounted for by “the number of prosecuted corrupted public officials over 1991-2000 per 100000 citizens.”

Papyrakis et al. found that resource abundance is negatively correlated with growth, though the authors “do not suggest that there runs a necessary causality from resource abundance to lower growth.” However, because Papyrakis et al.’s study is cross-sectional, it does not explore whether these effects are still significant with time series data, a gap that this research question will address.

The gaps left by this study are wide and many of them are already being addressed by the research question. First, Papyrakis et al. examined resource abundance and how it affected growth, as opposed to specific policy outcomes, such as education spending, total state spending, and state tax burdens. While Papyrakis et al. did find statistically significant results for “education services” (in the year 1986), the other dependent variables that the research question addresses are not represented in the paper. However, it is not clear if the research question and Papyrakis et al. use the same data, as the data used in the research question is from the Department of Education, and the data used by Papyrakis et al. was from the Department of Commerce. In addition, the research question’s time-series nature fills the gap that Papyrakis et al. said needed to be addressed in order for future study.

Ellis Goldberg, Erik Wibbels, and Eric Mvukiyehe (2008) examine the link between resource abundance and authoritarianism and poor economic development through time-series data and case studies of Louisiana and Texas, finding evidence that resource abundance results in “slower economic

growth, poorer developmental performance, and less competitive politics.” The dependent variables that they explored are tax effort—the difference between actual taxation and tax capacity from 1929 to 2002—and electoral competition—the difference between the electoral winner’s vote share and the runner-up’s vote share, from 1929 to 2002. Independent variables included economic growth on the state level, per capita income (first at the state level in 2002, then the “10-year average of log annual differences in per capita income,” and finally the yearly “percentage change in per capita income,”), slave population in 1860, colonizer (whether the state was first colonized by the French, Spanish, etc.), deficits per capita, and resource dependence. Noting that there is no perfect way to measure resource dependence, Goldberg et al. used the annual oil and coal production as a share of state income). Goldberg et al. found a statistically significant negative impact on tax efforts with increased resource abundance, while finding “suggestive” but not conclusive evidence of a correlation between electoral outcomes and natural resource dependence. The authors explore this last dependent variable through two case studies on Texas and Louisiana.

Like Papyrakis et al., Goldberg et al. comes to no single conclusion concerning the causal mechanisms behind the relationships they discussed. They noted that despite the statistical significance of their findings, “there is widespread disagreement as to the causal mechanisms behind the correlation between resource reliance and political and economic outcomes.” The authors add that there exists at least a dozen distinct hypotheses that could account for the impact of mineral wealth specifically, but conclude that American states represent an opportunity for future work in exploring the effects of resource abundance.

The research question’s approach differs from Goldberg et al.’s research design in several ways. First, the research question controls for population and the political make-up of state legislatures, which helps control for the endogeneity of oil reserves. Deficits per capita, though plausibly related to state expenditures, are not an accurate measurement of state spending as states tend to run very small budget deficits, if any, relative to the federal government (Wilson 2014). Additionally, similar to Papyrakis et al., Goldberg et al. did not regress the same data that the research question is using to examine education spending. However, Goldberg et al. regress tax efforts, which is related to the state tax rate variable used in the research question, and found statistically significant results. The research question will test some variables similar to those used in Goldberg et al.’s paper and will build upon their results to deliver a more comprehensive study.

As this research question is studying the behavior of government, it is appropriate to discuss a theory of government behavior that the research question will use to describe one of its key theoretical mechanisms, the selectorate theory. Most prominently discussed in Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson, and Morrow (2002), selectorate theory builds on the idea that democratic and autocratic leaders are willing to go to great lengths to stay in power.

That is why leaders across all forms of government find it in their best interest to please those that keep them in office, whether that be a voter electorate made up of millions of people in a democratic system or a small group of powerful generals and party leaders in an autocratic system. To please these groups, or “winning coalitions,” autocratic leaders will find it monetarily efficient to provide private goods to their relatively smaller winning coalition. However, in democratic governments—the type of government that this research question examines—elected officials will find it more efficient to please their larger winning coalition through the distribution of public goods, such as public education, hospitals, and lower taxes. Therefore, based off of the selectorate theory, we should expect to see state governments doing what they can to expand the provision of public goods to their voters.

Background

This study will observe an interaction of average proven oil reserves in states across years and oil prices at the country level, and its relationship with state expenditures, taxes, and revenues. Below is a brief history of the main variables of interest in this study.

Average Proven Oil Reserves

Despite the eminence of OPEC and its oil-rich member countries, the United States has slowly risen to become one of the foremost oil producers in the world (Grant 2014). The US attained this status after the recent discoveries of vast oil reserves in North Dakota, Montana, South Dakota, Colorado, Texas, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Nebraska, Kansas, and Wyoming (U.S. EIA, 2014). Some of these states, such as Texas and West Virginia, have long been known to have large oil reserves. Others, such as North Dakota, have only recently begun to experience the effects of the discovery of oil.

Though these booms have seemingly resulted in lower unemployment rates (Gebrekidan, 2012), increases in government revenue, and tax cuts, they have also led to claims that population booms in small cities and towns have overburdened local housing systems and school districts, increased crime rates (Nicas, 2012; Sheerin and Bressanin, 2014; Holeywell, 2011), and heightened xenophobic sentiments (The Overnights). Reports of these occurrences beg for not only greater research into the effects of oil on policy making and governance in North Dakota and other boom states, but in regions where oil has been a part of state politics and economics for generations.

U.S. Crude Oil First Purchase Price

The oil boom across the United States has been matched by the dramatic increase in the U.S. crude oil first purchase price since the early 2000's, though this figure has plunged due to the recent fall in oil prices. Regardless, the general trend for oil prices is upward.

State Expenditures

Over the span of the past 50 years, state expenditures in every category that this study measures—total, health, education, and highway construction—have increased considerably. These increases most likely stem from an overall growing U.S. population and a burgeoning economy, which may have forced state governments to increase their distribution of public goods.

State Tax Revenue and Tax Burdens

As the United States economy and population has boomed over the past 50 years, so have state tax revenues, including those gained from the severance tax. The severance tax is a tax placed on the extraction of natural resources for profit, so named because the resources are being “severed” from the earth. While the severance tax encompasses a number of natural resources besides crude oil, this study suggests that severance tax revenue and crude oil reserves are correlated. Overall state and local tax burdens have also been increasing across years, possibly as a result of growing state expenditures.

Theoretical Mechanisms

The connection between abundant natural resources and policy and economic outcomes has been empirically observed in a number of studies, some of which are in the literature review. This connection has been suggested to be present in developed democracies such as Norway and the United

States, one or both of which have experienced different levels of trust in government, lower levels of individualist sentiment, slower economic growth, and increased corruption, among other things (Listhuag, 2005; Papyrakis and Gerlagh, 2006; Goldberg, Wibbels, and Mvukiyehe, 2008).

The exact causal mechanisms linking these outcomes to natural resources has long been a subject of debate among scholars, with Goldberg et al., stating, “there is widespread disagreement as to the causal mechanisms behind the correlation between resource reliance and political and economic outcomes.” Regardless, this research question postulates that after having allowed oil exploration and production companies onto state lands, a state government will tax these companies for revenue to put towards state expenditures and the distribution of public goods. Each of these occurrences are not only rooted in theories from past research on natural resources and political and economic outcomes, but also in the rentier effect and the selectorate theory. Both give state political leaders clear incentives to pursue actions that will extend their time in office.

First, a state that discovers significant reserves of oil on its land will allow private oil companies to begin exploring and drilling for oil, regardless of political orientation. This is seen in the fact that states as politically diverse as California, Texas, Colorado, and Utah all take advantage of these natural resources. The state government will most likely then tax these companies (Goldberg et al. demonstrated that at one time, the Louisiana state government paid for a quarter of its total annual expenditures with tax revenue from oil companies), giving lawmakers new revenue to spend. Given that oil companies would need to stay on a particular oil field for a matter of months or years to fully exploit the oil, the revenue gained from these taxes could prove tremendous. Given that, according to the selectorate theory, democratic lawmakers will spend great sums of money on public goods in order to please their constituents and help themselves maintain office, lawmakers will most likely use these new revenues to increase overall expenditures and cut taxes, thereby solidifying these lawmakers in their positions of power (as conjectured by Goldberg et al. in their case study of Louisiana and Texas).

However, should a state decrease tax burdens on its citizens, it could decrease its own total revenue, making it more difficult to direct expenditures towards different programs. Regardless, health expenditures, education expenditures, highway expenditures, and state tax rates were all chosen as variables to be examined because of their ability to improve the quality of life for families. If an elected official can improve quality of life for families, it may improve that elected official’s chances of winning reelection.

While selectorate theory posits that elected officials would have the incentive to spend these extra tax revenues on public goods, this outcome is the reverse of what has been found in studies regarding resource abundance. Studies such as Gylfason’s (2011) found that oil-rich states crowd out spending on social, human, and physical capital. In the lens of selectorate theory, this is most likely done by leaders of autocracies—which tend to be oil-rich more often than democratic states—in order to devote more money to purchasing private goods for their political supporters. However, autocrats still must placate their citizens to prevent unrest, a prediction similar to that described by Ross (2001) and in line with what is conjectured by the rentier effect. While selectorate theory and past research on resource abundance sometimes have contrasting predictions about the outcome of the research question, they come to similar conclusions on policy outcomes, a finding that will play a role in the hypotheses for the research question.

There are several hypotheses that the research question will seek to address. First, do states actually experience an increase in revenue as the interaction between oil prices and oil reserves change? If the rentier effect holds, this would give state governments the incentive to take advantage of their increased revenues to decrease state and local tax burdens, pleasing their constituents.

Next, should states raise tax revenue off of oil companies and selectorate theory holds, then it is expected that state governments would spend this additional revenue towards benefiting their political supporters (i.e. voters) through the distribution of public goods such as education, healthcare, highways, and hospitals. However, as proposed by Goldberg, Wibbels, and Mvukiyehe (2008), it is possible that the rentier theory could be another lens by which the same result is observed. As oil prices on mean oil reserves rise, there should be an increase in state education and healthcare and hospital spending, as a way for government to provide benefits to maintain the support of their citizens.

Alternatively, if the same theories hold, then state taxes should decrease as oil prices on mean oil reserves rise.

Finally, should severance tax revenues increase but states see a decrease or no change at all in state expenditures on different programs as the interaction between oil prices and mean proven reserves increases, this suggests that some states may be exhibiting symptoms of the resource curse. This is because even as revenues increase, money is still not being directed towards total spending or social spending, a phenomenon discussed by Gylfason (2011), raising the question of what this revenue is being directed towards and whether the presence of oil is depressing economic productivity.

Hypothesized outcomes for the research question

Hypothesis 1: If the rentier effect holds, we should observe that as the interaction of oil reserves and prices increases, state tax rates will decrease.

Hypothesis 2: If the selectorate theory or the rentier effect holds, we should observe that as the interaction of oil reserves and prices increases, state expenditures on healthcare, hospitals, highways, and on primary and secondary education should increase.

Hypothesis 3: If symptoms of the resource curse are observed, it should be seen that as the interaction of oil reserves and prices increases, state expenditures on healthcare, hospitals, highways, and on primary and secondary education should decrease.

Data

The majority of the data used in this thesis was obtained from federal sources; only a few variables utilize data from outside sources. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) provided information on oil reserves and prices for all states from 1960-2012, which is utilized by the variables `mean_provenreserves` and `oilprices`, respectively. The price data used for `oilprices` represents the average price of domestic crude oil first purchase prices. Oil, as defined by the EIA's dataset, refers to crude, black oil. The Tax Foundation provided all data on state and local tax burdens from 1977-2011 (accounting for variables `sltaxes` and `taxranking`). The National Conference of State Legislatures provided all data on state party composition from 1978 to 2012 (accounting for the variables `legdem`, `legrep`, and `legsplit`). The United States Census Bureau provided most data on state finances – state expenditures from 1977 to 2008, state health expenditures from 1977 to 2008, state expenditures on highway construction from 1961 to 2008, total state tax revenues from 1960 to 2010, and severance tax revenues from 1960 to 2008

(accounting for variables *stateexp*, *educationexp*, *highwayexp*, *statetaxrevenue*, and *sevtaxrev*). Data on education expenditures was provided by the Digest of Education Statistics, part of the National Center for Education Statistics. Data on gross state product (GSP) and population size by state from 1963 to 1997 and 1960 to 2000, respectively, was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. This data accounts for *lngsp* and *lnpopulation*; both of which are logged variations of GSP and population. The summary statistics are located in the appendix of this study.

Empirical Approach

The research design for the research question utilizes a number of variables to measure the effects of mean oil reserves on state public policy. The dependent variables for this question include state tax rates (*sltaxes*), state total fiscal expenditures (*stateexp*), state expenditures on healthcare and hospitals (*healthexp*), state expenditures on highway construction (*highwayexp*), and state total fiscal expenditures on primary and secondary education (*educationexp*). To measure the validity of the theoretical mechanism, the tax revenue gained from state severance taxes will also be measured as a dependent variable (*sevtaxrev*), and total state tax revenue (*statetaxrevenue*) will be included provide a sense of scale of the effects of the severance tax. To obtain an improved understanding of how education, health, and highway spending interacts with overall state expenditures, each will be divided by total state expenditures, and the resulting quotient will be logged.

The independent variable of interest is an interaction between the average of proven reserves in a state across years (*mean_provenreserves*) and crude oil first purchase prices across years (*oilprices*), called *mean_provenreservesoilprices*. Oil reserves are averaged across years in order to gain a better understanding of how oil-rich a state is, while the average domestic crude oil purchase price is utilized instead of domestic crude oil purchase prices by area because most states lack their own purchase price. Oil reserves and oil prices are interacted in order to examine how oil-rich states are affected by price shocks, specifically, how these price shocks affect state policy. Control variables for the regression include state population (logged as *lnpopulation*), gross state product (logged as *lngsp*), party composition in the state legislature (*legdem*, *legrep*, *legsplit*), and state business environment (*taxranking*). Standard errors are clustered. Due to a significant decrease in observations that would occur in some regressions, only data from 1976 onwards is used in all specifications.

Finally, to test the hypotheses in a rigorous manner, year and state fixed effects are used alongside *oilprices* and *mean_provenreserves*, both of which somewhat act as year and state fixed effects, respectively. To show the differences between outcomes that do and do not use fixed effects, each regression table will contain four columns; columns 1 and 2 contain *oilprices* and *mean_provenreserves*, while columns 3 and 4 contain year and state fixed effects in place of *oilprices* and *mean_provenreserves*. Therefore, the regression equations resemble the following:

$$\begin{aligned} (\text{Dependent Variable})_{st} &= b_0 + b_1(\text{Mean Proven Reserves} * \text{Oil Prices})_{st} + b_2(\text{Mean Proven Reserves})_{st} \\ &+ b_3(\text{Oil Prices})_{st} + b_4(\text{Log Population})_{st} + b_5(\text{Log GSP})_{st} + b_6(\text{Democratic State Legislature})_{st} \\ &+ b_7(\text{Republican State Legislature})_{st} + b_8(\text{Democratic State Legislature})_{st} + b_7(\text{Tax Ranking})_{st} + e_i \\ (\text{Dependent Variable})_{st} &= b_0 + b_1(\text{Log Population})_{st} + b_2(\text{Log GSP})_{st} + b_3(\text{Democratic State Legislature})_{st} \\ &+ b_4(\text{Republican State Legislature})_{st} + b_5(\text{Democratic State Legislature})_{st} + b_6(\text{Tax Ranking})_{st} + \text{Year} \\ &\text{Fixed Effects} + \text{State Fixed Effects} + e_i \end{aligned}$$

To provide empirical evidence for the causal mechanism, states must be observed generating or losing severance tax revenue when proven oil reserves interacted with oil prices increase or decrease. This source of revenue is hypothesized to change policy outcomes in states. That is why, in addition to the policy outcomes that the research question will examine, severance tax revenue, as well as state tax revenue, will also be regressed.

Results

Table 1

Log Severance Tax Revenue

VARIABLES	(1) Severance Tax Revenue	(2) Severance Tax Revenue	(3) Severance Tax Revenue	(4) Severance Tax Revenue
Mean Proven Reserves * Oil Prices	0.104*** (0.0269)	0.0752*** (0.0280)	0.104** (0.0493)	0.0740*** (0.0260)
Oil Prices	81.75*** (26.66)	107.3*** (33.43)		
Mean Proven Reserves	2.281*** (0.660)	2.423* (1.343)		
Log GSP	1,442 (1,379)	1,400 (1,493)	1,924 (7,593)	2,411 (6,255)
Log Population	-5,207** (2,273)	-4,914** (2,182)	6,785 (14,025)	5,494 (10,822)
Democratic State Legislature		3,184*** (1,055)		268.7 (706.1)
Republican State Legislature		3,373* (1,822)		
Legislature Split		4,617** (1,756)		262.6 (704.4)
Tax Ranking		137.4** (60.10)		227.0** (85.47)
Observations	1,050	990	1,050	990
R-squared	0.497	0.559	0.189	0.294
Number of state			50	50
State Fixed Effects			Y	Y
Year Fixed Effects			Y	Y

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

The positive coefficient in Table 1, column 4, has significant effects, demonstrating that governments do gain more revenue as more oil reserves are discovered and are correlated with fluctuations in oil prices. This finding is key to the rest of this study, as many of the assumptions that it makes are based on the fact that governments tax oil companies in order to increase their revenue and possibly their expenditures towards public goods.

Table 2

Severance Tax Revenue in Terms of Total State Revenue in All States

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Fraction of Severance Tax Revenue In All States	Fraction of Severance Tax Revenue In All States	Fraction of Severance Tax Revenue In All States	Fraction of Severance Tax Revenue In All States
Mean Proven Reserves * Oil Prices	0.132*** (0.0374)	0.0938*** (0.0310)	0.137* (0.0703)	0.0987*** (0.0348)
Oil Prices	97.53*** (32.26)	135.6*** (42.05)		
Mean Proven Reserves	2.740*** (0.889)	3.017* (1.738)		
Log GSP	2,245 (1,770)	2,256 (1,895)	1,388 (9,781)	2,012 (8,083)
Log Population	-6,841** (2,914)	-6,565** (2,834)	10,890 (18,798)	9,341 (14,845)
Democratic State Legislature		3,610*** (1,234)		349.8 (869.0)
Republican State Legislature		3,980* (2,145)		
Legislature Split		5,533** (2,088)		242.4 (826.3)
Tax Ranking		157.2** (70.59)		284.9** (115.8)
Observations	1,050	990	1,050	990
R-squared	0.508	0.566	0.185	0.283
Number of state			50	50
State Fixed Effects			Y	Y
Year Fixed Effects			Y	Y

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

These results indicate that as oil prices increase, many states experience an increase in the fraction of their budget that is financed by the severance revenue tax. When interpreting the coefficient in column 4 $[(413.2 * 24.3 * 0.0987) / (3413.3)]$, there is a possible 29.03 percent increase in the fraction of severance tax revenues that make up the total state tax revenues. This builds on the causal mechanism that is at the heart of this study, which suggests that states will tax oil companies in order to increase government revenue.

Table 3

Severance Tax Revenue in Terms of Total State Revenue in States with Oil Reserves

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Fraction of Severance Tax Revenue in State Tax Revenue In Oil- Producing States	Fraction of Severance Tax Revenue in State Tax Revenue In Oil- Producing States	Fraction of Severance Tax Revenue in State Tax Revenue In Oil- Producing States	Fraction of Severance Tax Revenue in State Tax Revenue In Oil- Producing States
Mean Proven Reserves * Oil Prices	0.113*** (0.0370)	0.0706** (0.0336)	0.125 (0.0783)	0.0814** (0.0378)
Oil Prices	171.9*** (50.53)	206.8*** (56.71)		
Mean Proven Reserves	2.945*** (0.577)	3.436** (1.359)		
Log GSP	3,041 (2,151)	3,202 (2,295)	1,355 (11,527)	2,792 (9,110)
Log Population	-9,977*** (3,224)	-10,805*** (3,207)	18,101 (23,986)	15,086 (18,447)
Democratic State Legislature		7,948*** (1,692)		415.5 (1,534)
Republican State Legislature		4,170* (2,327)		
Legislature Split		8,391*** (1,986)		798.3 (1,206)
Tax Ranking		138.2 (88.19)		372.3** (144.2)
Observations	695	654	695	654
R-squared	0.587	0.652	0.245	0.372
Number of state			34	34
State Fixed Effects			Y	Y
Year Fixed Effects			Y	Y

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The table above is different from Table 2 in that it only includes states that have severance tax revenue that is greater than zero, eliminating 16 states from the analysis, to ensure that the results are not being skewed by states that do not produce oil. Given the significant effects demonstrated by the coefficients in columns 1, 2, and 4 in this table, it is clear that even in oil-producing states, there is a correlation between the interaction variable and the fraction of severance tax revenue in the total state revenue in most years.

Table 4
Stable and Local Tax Burden

VARIABLES	(1) State and Local Tax Burdens	(2) State and Local Tax Burdens	(3) State and Local Tax Burdens	(4) State and Local Tax Burdens
Mean Proven Reserves * Oil Prices	-0.857*** (0.269)	-0.219 (0.138)	-1.028* (0.608)	-0.462*** (0.157)
Oil Prices	-3.315*** (263.9)	-3.001*** (258.8)		
Mean Proven Reserves	-26.44*** (7.510)	-14.21 (8.822)		
Log GSP	25,869 (18,243)	29,311** (11,811)	71,173 (82,937)	80,421* (41,272)
Log Population	18,587 (25,532)	-8,147 (13,108)	-133,132 (149,790)	-100,854 (63,839)
Democratic State Legislature		-11,244 (13,062)		-153.2 (6,393)
Republican State Legislature		-9,163 (10,137)		
Legislature Split		-1,468 (9,707)		6,000 (6,222)
Tax Ranking		-7,824*** (269.5)		-7,012*** (556.4)
Observations	1,044	984	1,044	984
R-squared	0.249	0.856	0.372	0.763
Number of state			50	50
State Fixed Effects			Y	Y
Year Fixed Effects			Y	Y

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The negative coefficient lends credence to the idea that the rentier effect becomes more active as oil reserves are discovered, leading many states to cut taxes, possibly with the goal of ensuring an individual or a group of individual's reelection. The outcome seen in this table also may explain why, as will be observed later, total state expenditures do not seem to increase even as the interaction variable is increasing. Because taxes are being lowered, state governments have less money to spend towards different expenditures.

Though the effect of increasing or decreasing oil prices is consistent across almost each column, the effect loses strength by column 4, the most rigorous specification on the table. Interpretation calculations ultimately suggest that per unit increase of the independent variable, there is a decrease of $[(413.2 * 24.3 * -0.462) / (952514.3) = -0.48\%]$ in state and local tax burdens.

Table 5

Log Total State Expenditures

VARIABLES	(1) State Expenditures	(2) State Expenditures	(3) State Expenditures	(4) State Expenditures
Mean Proven Reserves * Oil Prices	-0.201*** (0.0451)	-0.244*** (0.0533)	0.0750 (0.0775)	0.0516 (0.0782)
Oil Prices	-152.0** (59.26)	-166.7* (91.99)		
Mean Proven Reserves	4.454 (3.427)	7.273** (3.045)		
Log GSP	109,662*** (4,636)	108,119*** (5,245)	31,455*** (7,564)	34,562*** (7,007)
Log Population	-18,974*** (5,889)	-20,485*** (6,177)	59,319*** (11,943)	55,644*** (12,442)
Democratic State Legislature		34,845*** (3,837)		-489.1 (2,002)
Republican State Legislature		29,666*** (3,248)		
Legislature Split		40,470*** (3,382)		519.4 (1,583)
Tax Ranking		-606.6*** (130.3)		-201.4** (93.33)
Observations	1,050	990	1,050	990
R-squared	0.961	0.968	0.986	0.985
Number of state			50	50
State Fixed Effects			Y	Y
Year Fixed Effects			Y	Y

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

The negative coefficient with significant effects indicates that states with increasing oil reserves may suffer from a key component of the resource curse: falling economic growth, in part through falling state expenditures (GSP does indeed fall as the regression specifications become more rigorous). As previously discussed, it is possible that shrinking tax burdens may also be responsible for decreasing how much a state is willing to spend on its citizenry, possibly out of fear of accruing a deficit. Though including year and state fixed effects eliminates significant effects from the regression in columns 3 and 4, there is a clear and significant decrease of $[(413.2*24.3-0.244)/(1591306) = -0.153\%]$ in state expenditures for every one unit increase in the interaction variable.

Table 6
Log Education Expenditures

VARIABLES	(1) Education Expenditures	(2) Education Expenditures	(3) Education Expenditures	(4) Education Expenditures
Mean Proven Reserves * Oil Prices	-0.164** (0.0737)	-0.220*** (0.0470)	-0.0363 (0.0360)	-0.0533* (0.0305)
Oil Prices	-269.9** (128.4)	-164.3 (136.9)		
Mean Proven Reserves	5.093** (2.255)	7.833*** (1.668)		
Log GSP	60,492*** (12,628)	53,875*** (10,490)	13,104 (8,032)	15,530* (7,889)
Log Population	36,791*** (12,955)	42,845*** (10,765)	71,432*** (14,571)	75,306*** (12,739)
Democratic State Legislature		-7,364** (3,320)		-710.4 (1,539)
Republican State Legislature		5,834* (3,125)		
Legislature Split		3,618 (3,280)		-689.2 (1,093)
Tax Ranking		-464.3*** (123.9)		-231.7*** (66.56)
Observations	450	441	450	441
R-squared	0.977	0.984	0.954	0.956
Number of state			50	49
State Fixed Effects			Y	Y
Year Fixed Effects			Y	Y

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

The outcomes of the state education expenditure regressions provide support for both of the two different hypotheses that are central to this study. In this first specification, which only examines log education expenditures, the interaction variable has a clear affect on the dependent variable, as shown by this interpretation: $[(413.2 * 24.3 * -0.0533) / 2219103 = -0.024\%]$. This outcome suggests that states with oil reserves and increasing oil prices suffer from a symptom of the resource curse discussed at length by Gylfason (2011).

Table 7

Education Expenditure out of State Expenditures, Logged

VARIABLES	(1) Education Expenditures Out of State Expenditures	(2) Education Expenditures Out of State Expenditures	(3) Education Expenditures Out of State Expenditures	(4) Education Expenditures Out of State Expenditures
Mean Proven Reserves * Oil Prices	0.124* (0.0644)	0.118** (0.0467)	0.167*** (0.0438)	0.183*** (0.0448)
Oil Prices	812.5*** (145.8)	951.4*** (167.7)		
Mean Proven Reserves	-3.494 (2.677)	-3.656 (3.304)		
Log GSP	-23,232** (9,077)	-26,285*** (9,162)	-37,395** (14,184)	-39,025*** (13,698)
Log Population	30,370*** (10,216)	35,498*** (10,243)	51,038** (24,283)	54,262** (23,820)
Democratic State Legislature		-39,005*** (4,018)		2,590 (2,675)
Republican State Legislature		-25,941*** (3,074)		
Legislature Split		-31,116*** (4,138)		-197.9 (1,821)
Tax Ranking		157.0 (143.4)		17.40 (117.7)
Observations	450	441	450	441
R-squared	0.235	0.384	0.407	0.425
Number of state			50	49
State Fixed Effects			Y	Y
Year Fixed Effects			Y	Y

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

The positive coefficients above suggest the opposite conclusion of Table 6, that some states do not suffer from the resource curse. Instead, as oil reserves and oil prices increase, states spend more money on primary and secondary education than they would otherwise. This suggests the possibility that the other hypothesis discussed in this study, which revolve around selectorate theory, may explain this phenomenon in U.S. states. The coefficient in column 4 is interpreted as $[(413.2 * 24.3 * 0.183) / (577542.3) = 0.32\%]$.

Table 8
Log Health Expenditures

VARIABLES	(1) Health Expenditures	(2) Health Expenditures	(3) Health Expenditures	(4) Health Expenditures
Mean Proven Reserves * Oil Prices	-0.242*** (0.0648)	-0.266*** (0.0935)	0.0135 (0.0727)	0.00918 (0.0822)
Oil Prices	21.85 (86.51)	-126.2 (121.5)		
Mean Proven Reserves	-2.782* (1.462)	-1.772 (1.955)		
Log GSP	99,895*** (5,522)	102,757*** (5,984)	26,854* (15,266)	29,027* (14,502)
Log Population	-580.7 (6,963)	-6,854 (7,218)	44,802 (28,919)	46,372 (29,149)
Democratic State Legislature		16,607** (6,846)		-1,539 (5,368)
Republican State Legislature		-7,217 (6,041)		
Legislature Split		3,280 (7,541)		-985.6 (4,001)
Tax Ranking		-255.4 (316.5)		-125.5 (239.9)
Observations	1,050	990	1,050	990
R-squared	0.915	0.921	0.908	0.898
Number of state			50	50
State Fixed Effects			Y	Y
Year Fixed Effects			Y	Y

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

While Table 8 has no significant effects with the most rigorous specifications, without year and state fixed effects, the table seems to suggest that health expenditures decrease as the interaction variable increases, another indication of states suffering from a phenomenon similar to the resource curse. While the interpretation calculation $[(413.2 * 24.3 * -0.269) / (1281372) = -0.212\%]$ shows that the changes resulting from a one-unit increase in the interaction variable are small, they are still important in examining the effects of natural resources.

Table 9

Health Expenditures out of State Expenditures, Logged

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Health Expenditures Out of State Expenditures	Health Expenditures Out of State Expenditures	Health Expenditures Out of State Expenditures	Health Expenditures Out of State Expenditures
Mean Proven Reserves * Oil Prices	-0.0405 (0.0557)	-0.0215 (0.0796)	-0.0615 (0.0603)	-0.0425 (0.0830)
Oil Prices	173.8* (90.85)	40.55 (133.0)		
Mean Proven Reserves	-7.236** (3.548)	-9.045*** (2.716)		
Log GSP	-9,767* (5,723)	-5,361 (5,827)	-4,601 (14,540)	-5,535 (13,994)
Log Population	18,393** (7,846)	13,631* (7,579)	-14,517 (25,176)	-9,272 (25,237)
Democratic State Legislature		-18,238*** (6,609)		-1,050 (5,314)
Republican State Legislature		-36,882*** (5,640)		
Legislature Split		-37,190*** (6,306)		-1,505 (3,786)
Tax Ranking		351.3 (259.6)		75.87 (241.4)
Observations	1,050	990	1,050	990
R-squared	0.176	0.290	0.064	0.066
Number of state			50	50
State Fixed Effects			Y	Y
Year Fixed Effects			Y	Y

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

The coefficients above do not suggest that the interaction between oil reserves and oil prices has any effect on health expenditures, even when it is placed in the context of state expenditures. Therefore, even as severance tax revenue increases in some states, that money does not go toward or is diverted from health expenditures, a possible symptom of the resource curse in the sense that it would be expected that health expenditures would grow as the government gained more revenue due to incentives that elected officials face to increase the distribution of public goods.

Table 10
Log Highway Expenditures

VARIABLES	(1) Highway Expenditures	(2) Highway Expenditures	(3) Highway Expenditures	(4) Highway Expenditures
Mean Proven Reserves * Oil Prices	-0.190 (0.154)	-0.269* (0.151)	-0.0806 (0.103)	-0.133 (0.0887)
Oil Prices	-292.0*** (99.74)	-399.3*** (123.6)		
Mean Proven Reserves	7.644* (3.911)	7.730* (4.005)		
Log GSP	82,118*** (5,456)	79,893*** (6,197)	51,090** (20,895)	52,587** (20,375)
Log Population	-11,890* (6,687)	-7,548 (7,044)	20,359 (35,800)	16,184 (37,268)
Democratic State Legislature		-139.3 (6,923)		-4,610 (5,137)
Republican State Legislature		1,482 (4,715)		
Legislature Split		1,115 (5,940)		-1,735 (4,140)
Tax Ranking		512.4** (191.5)		-179.1 (247.8)
Observations	1,050	990	1,050	990
R-squared	0.873	0.880	0.845	0.831
Number of state			50	50
State Fixed Effects			Y	Y
Year Fixed Effects			Y	Y

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

The lack of significant effects for highway expenditures demonstrates that even as oil is being discovered, presumably generating business and creating jobs, little new infrastructure is being built by states as a result. States actually spend less on infrastructure, indicating that states may suffer from a symptom of the resource curse. However, such a conclusion seems to be in conflict with studies such as Allcott and Keniston (2013), which found that jobs and economic growth should expand alongside oil booms. Based on that study, it would be expected that highway expenditures should increase.

Table 11

Highway Expenditures out of State Expenditures, Logged

VARIABLES	(1) Highway Expenditures Out of State Expenditures	(2) Highway Expenditures Out of State Expenditures	(3) Highway Expenditures Out of State Expenditures	(4) Highway Expenditures Out of State Expenditures
Mean Proven Reserves * Oil Prices	0.0110 (0.131)	-0.0244 (0.120)	-0.156 (0.167)	-0.184 (0.148)
Oil Prices	-140.0 (85.00)	-232.6** (111.1)		
Mean Proven Reserves	3.189 (2.865)	0.458 (2.346)		
Log GSP	-27,544*** (5,128)	-28,226*** (5,321)	19,635 (22,438)	18,025 (21,610)
Log Population	7,084 (7,304)	12,937* (6,664)	-38,960 (32,610)	-39,460 (32,531)
Democratic State Legislature		-34,985*** (6,098)		-4,121 (4,630)
Republican State Legislature		-28,184*** (4,001)		
Legislature Split		-39,355*** (5,719)		-2,254 (4,283)
Tax Ranking		1,119*** (198.6)		22.33 (210.8)
Observations	1,050	990	1,050	990
R-squared	0.331	0.487	0.368	0.366
Number of state			50	50
State Fixed Effects			Y	Y
Year Fixed Effects			Y	Y

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

Similar to Table 10, Table 11 demonstrates that the interaction variable has no significant effect on highway expenditures, even when state expenditures are taken into account. This suggests that oil price shocks and oil reserves do not generate economic growth on such a level that would warrant the state government to increase infrastructure expenditures.

Conclusion

The findings of this study almost consistently suggest that oil-abundant U.S. states suffer from some effects of what is generally associated with the resource curse or a rentier effect. Tables 1, 2, and 3 demonstrated that state governments gain some revenues from their severance taxes on businesses that exploit oil reserves, in relation to oil prices. Despite this increase in revenue, even when put into context with the inclusion of total state tax revenue, tables 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11 each suggest that even as state governments experience increases in revenue from the severance tax, their total, social, and infrastructural spending either decline or remain stagnated, while local and state tax burdens decrease, similar to what would be expected from a rentier effect or a resource curse.

Taken together, these results suggest that U.S. states may suffer from the resource curse and experience the rentier effect. More research needs to be done on the effects of oil on corruption, public infrastructure, and other areas in order to come to a more definitive conclusion. Regardless, the results and conclusions of this study are in line with those found by Ellis Goldberg, Erik Wibbels, and Eric Mvukiyehe (2008) and Elissaios Papyrakis and Reyer Gerlagh (2006), each of which have suggested the presence of a resource curse and/or a rentier effect. Future studies on this subject may benefit from examining the relationship between oil and public policy at the local and city level, where exploitation of natural resources may have a larger and more immediate impact on local and city governance, especially as suggested by the increased media attention that towns and cities in North Dakota have received regarding the oil boom. Given that the U.S. Census Bureau has significant troves of data on finances across all levels of government, a study similar to this thesis could easily be conducted on local and city governments.

This study should raise awareness of the potential for resource abundance to contort and prove economically deleterious, not only to governments in developing countries, where many studies on resource abundance tend to focus, but also those in developed countries, including the United States. As U.S. states continue to take advantage of their newfound oil reserves, they must be made aware of the unknown and possibly dangerous effects that these resources may have on their economies and society at large.

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PROTESTS IN CHINA: A MINTER OF DISCONTENT

IAN MANLEY

This paper tests several popular theories about civil unrest with provincial level data on protests in the People's Republic of China. It covers 31 provinces over 35 years, from 1979-2013. Modernization theory would expect a decrease in protests as a country's wealth increases, but this paper finds very little relationship between the two. Instead, it finds the rate of economic growth to be significantly inversely related with protests throughout all models, suggesting the explanatory power of relative deprivation theory. Repression is found to be positively associated with protests rather than negatively, suggesting that increased repression instigates, rather than deters protests in China. With Chinese national growth rates set to decline over the next few years, this study suggests that China should expect an increase in protests to come with it.

Introduction

This paper explores the determinants of protests in China. Drawing from modernization and relative deprivation theory, it tests two of the prevailing hypothesis about the relationship between wealth and protests; that increases in the aggregate level of wealth discourage dissidence, and that relative changes in wealth vary inversely with public disorder.

A Note on Terminology

The literature on political stability is rife with misnomers, confluations, and simple misuse of terms. One scholar's rebellion is another scholar's revolution, both of which are lumped together as someone else's "civil disorder." Transferring designs from one study to the next is made exponentially more difficult by these different measures. In order to provide some clarity, I offer the following taxonomy to the field typically called domestic political stability or civil unrest.

Stability is the measure of how likely something is to resist change. Instability, as its inverse, is the measure of how likely something is to change. Political stability is the likelihood of change in power, traditionally defined as institutional authority. Any study that seeks to measure political stability and instability must identify the target for change. The following hierarchy identifies six of the major targets of change. A change in any value at the top of the hierarchy can result in a change in any of the lower values. But a change in a lower value cannot change a higher value. For example a change in government system

will change the government but a change in government does not change the system.

1. System of Government
2. Government
3. Leader
4. Cabinet Member
5. Policy
6. Action

As a scale of political instability, the above sequence is what would be expected. A change in government system is the most destabilizing, followed by a change in government, leader, a cabinet member, policy, and action. Political events can then be categorized based on which of the different values they are targeting for change.

A Taxonomy of Destabilizing Events

Under this taxonomy, protests are the smallest unit of event analysis for political instability. They target

	Target for Change	Action (violent)	Action (Nonviolent)
1	System of Government	Revolt ³	Referendum
2	Government	Coup/Rebellion ⁴	Election
3	Leader	Assassination	Election
4	Cabinet Member	Assassination	Fire
5	Policy	Protest	Protest
6	Action	Protest	Protest

government policy and action for change, and are also the entry-level indicator for political instability. Therefore, changes in protests will provide the most precise measure of political instability in a country. Analysis of the causes of protests will also provide a much richer understanding of political instability than far less frequent events such as revolutions and coups d'état. While the methods employed to enact these changes can be either violent or nonviolent, both follow the hierarchy in decreasing magnitude of change in political power.

China's Policy Significance

China's meteoric rise in GDP over the last four decades has drastically altered the balance of global power. A glance at International Power measured by the Pardee Center for International Futures shows a clear power transition between the United States and China around 2026. The other P5 and BRICS countries are included for comparison.

Despite the literature on balance of power and power transition theory being at war with each other, China's rise is going to be a major factor in global stability for at least the first half of the 21st century. China's ability to continue this rise depends on the sustainability of its current economic and political models. In addition to the danger political instability poses to a regime, political instability has a strong negative correlation with economic growth (Barro 1994; Alesina et al. 1996). Political instability makes investments uncertain, and as investments decrease economic growth suffers (Alesina et al. 1996). As China's GDP is approximately 16 percent of the world's total, any changes in economic growth will reverberate throughout the global economy. China's political stability is therefore a concern for both international security and prosperity.

Political Stability in China

After the reforms of Deng Xiaoping in 1979, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) abandoned its Marxist economic policies and embraced gradual market reforms. In doing so it diverged from its core socialist ideology, calling the new mix of policies "socialism with Chinese characteristics." Chinese elite politics are often defined by the debate between rapid economic growth and equal economic growth (ensuring that new increases in wealth are shared by all levels of society). These competing factions are known as the elitists (favoring rapid, capitalist growth) and the populists (favoring equal growth and a return to traditions of the cultural revolution). When Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, it was a triumph of the market capitalists. The main populist challenger, Bo Xilai, was purged from the party on corruption charges and placed under indefinite house arrest.

Under such stakes, it is popular wisdom among China watchers that the CCP's legitimacy rests so heavily on economic performance that a decline in relative growth could lead to unrest (Shambaugh 2000). This unrest could reinforce declining economic growth by scaring off investments, leading to even more protests and creating a vicious cycle of instability in China.

Many of the protests in China so far have been allegedly isolated. They did not have a unified national fabric, had no connection with one another, and were sparked by local policies (Tong and Lei 2010).

Methodology: China as an Empirical Case

Few countries offer a better observational laboratory for modernization and relative deprivation than China. Its rapid economic growth over the last four decades, with its resultant transformations on society, provide a wide range of varying data. The history of protests in China during the 20th century provides an equally rich dataset.

This study expands on the current literature of unrest by using the unit of province-year. In the classical models of unrest, Gurr looked at 114 countries over five years (570 observations) and Tilly at a 131 year time-series of France at the national level (131 observations). Analyzing cross-sectional time-series differences in China's 31 provinces over 35 years provides a much richer 1,085 observations.

In addition to the richer dataset, looking at protests at a provincial level instead of a national level is a more precise unit of measurement. While not completely resolving the ecological fallacy, provincial level measures are a closer approximation to a protest group's conditions than national aggregates. Provincial level data allows for more refined data on variables such as urbanization, newspaper distribution, and passenger traffic.

Moreover, variances between provinces are much smaller than variances between countries. Cross-province study controls for regime type, culture, foreign policy, and a host of other often intangible, hard to control factors between countries. What do vary are the explanatory variables: urbanization, industrialization, GDP per capita, newspapers published, etc. While a provincial analysis has far less variance between cross-sectional units than countries, it still has stable factors such as geography and unique traditions that differ among provinces. Since each of the explanatory variables vary over time within a province, I use a fixed effects model throughout the study to control for unmeasured characteristics of provinces. Standard errors are also clustered by province.

Theory and Literature Review

Modernization Theory

There are two dominant theories in the literature about sources of civil unrest. The first is modernization theory. The idea is that as economic development increases, the opportunity cost of rebelling also increases. It is Tocqueville's wisdom from the analysis of democracy in America that "only those who have nothing to lose ever revolt." The foundation of this theory comes from Lipset in the 1960s. He argued that economic development (an umbrella for a host of factors, including wealth, industrialization, urbanization, and education) would eventually lead to stable democracy (Lipset 1959). While Lipset erroneously conflated democracy with stability, the simplicity of his arguments for economic development and social stability are compelling.

According to the modernization theory, increased income leads to increased social conditions of workers. They develop longer time horizons, are less receptive to extremism, and are exposed to middle-class values, all of which bring them into the moderate national identity. Increased wealth increases the size of the middle class, which rewards moderates and stabilizes the conflict between upper and lower classes. Increased wealth also allows for greater leisure time, which allows citizens to form voluntary associations that increase their participation in national politics (Lipset 1959). According to modernization theory, greater participation and national connections forged by rising income make citizens less likely to rebel.

H1: A rise in per capita income will lead to a decrease in protests.

A derivate version of modernization theory states that while aggregate levels of wealth may be stabilizing, rapid changes in wealth are potentially destabilizing. "It is not those who are accustomed to poverty, but those whose place in the social order is changing, who resort to revolution," (Olson 1963). Specifically, rapid economic growth leads to structural social changes that result in a *déclassé*, or class-less group, that is inherently destabilizing because of its weak bonds to the social order.

Rapid economic growth is brought about by innovation and technological change. Rapid changes in the methods of production affects the demand for different industries and types of labor. The redistribution of income, along with these new industries and skills, shifts economic power from the old wealth (based off old methods of production) to the new wealth (based off new technologies and skills). In agrarian societies, this change was industrialization. In modern society, it is the shift to digital technology. Decreases in income for the old wealth lead to a mismatch between their low economic status and their

high class status, while increases in income for the new wealth lead to a similar mismatch between their high economic status and low class status. These mismatches in elements lead to rank disequilibrium, which is inherently destabilizing as citizens seek to correct their perceived injustice by raising their lower element to match their higher one (Galtung 1964). Moreover, this disparity creates economic groups that are detached from their class groups, weakening the caste ties that bind citizens to the social order (Olson 1963).

The old rich are the ones that hold political power at the time of transition, having used their wealth to craft political and social power for themselves. When they are challenged by the new rich, they still hold onto this political power. Unless the old rich voluntarily expand political power (participation) to the new rich commensurate with their increased economic power, the new rich will have no recourse but to challenge the existing political order.

H2: Rapid economic growth will increase protests.

Theoretically, expansion of political power to the new wealth should act as a mitigating effect on protests. This kind of government reform is known as “opening the safety valve” because it relieves underlying structural social pressures. During the Tiananmen protests in 1989, opening the safety valve was the preferred method of the liberal Zhao Ziyang (Hu Yaobang’s successor as party general secretary). However, he was eventually overruled by hard-line premier Li Peng and paramount leader Deng Xiaoping and placed under house arrest after the crackdown. Unfortunately, exact data on political participation in China is difficult to come by, so it will not be included in this study. However, I suggest the number of CCP cadres per capita as a reasonable measure should the information become available in the future.

In addition to redistributing wealth, industrialization also increases the alienation of citizens. The transformation from an agrarian to an industrial society replaces family-run agriculture and cottage industries with individually hired factory workers. These weakened family ties further alienate citizens from the social order, making them more prone to protest against it (Olson 1963).

H3: Industrialization will increase protests.

The rapid urbanization that accompanies industrialization forces people to migrate from rural villages to cities in search of work. This increased mobility further weakens family ties, which lessens a person’s bond with society and further increases their alienation. In China right now there is a debate over the relevance of the ancient Hukou system which was designed originally to regulate populations of cities to prevent instability. In the system, each citizen is identified as a resident of an area and can only receive public services (health, education, welfare) from their own hukou-designated area. The massive migration of citizens from rural villages to cities in search of work has created a large class of temporary workers and squatters, as well as an underground market for hukous. The alienation of rural migrants to Chinese cities is not just theoretical, but it is coded in the law.

Urbanization also increases the proximity of people to each other, providing all kinds of logistical benefits to protests. Improved communication (both by word of mouth and the increase in media that comes with urbanization), ability to rapidly mobilize, and the ease of spreading new ideas all decrease the

organizational costs of protests.

H4: Urbanization will increase protests.

The increase in urbanization and wealth that come with industrialization and modernization of a country also increases education levels as citizens retrain for the new economy and have more wealth and time to devote to learning (Lipset 1959). There are two contrary theories on the effect of education on unrest. Under the basic (Lipset) version of modernization theory, an increase in education is a highly stabilizing force, decreasing susceptibility to extremism and mass movements. Under the rapid growth version, increased access to education creates a new intellectually rich who may challenge the old intellectually rich for political power. However, increased education may also expose citizens to alternative political ideas, encouraging them to change their system. Primary education increases the literacy rate, increasing the number of citizens who can communicate in the written language, and thereby organize for protest.

H5: Increased education will increase protests.

These five hypotheses are tested under the modernization models (Models 1-3) in this study.

Relative Deprivation Theory

The second dominant theory in the literature is relative deprivation theory. According to relative deprivation, people are frustrated when their achievements do not match their expectations (Gurr 1968). The frustration from this expectations-achievement gap manifests as aggression and drives men to rebel (Gurr 1970, Fierabend 1966). Therefore a citizen will protest any time his achievements do not match his expectations. This can occur through with either a change in expectations or a change in achievement. Rapid economic development increases expectations about future wealth. A person expects that they will at least make as much this year as they did last year. If they do not, due to macroeconomic trends, firm profits, or just individual performance, they become frustrated and aggressive. The act of protest is driven by the belief that the state is at fault for the underachievement. Over the last forty years China transitioned from a command economy into a free market, and still has several large state-owned-enterprises and price controls in place. It is not absurd for a Chinese citizen to blame economic performance on the government.

Grievances are expectation-achievement gaps that could cause a protest. The benefits from protesting are the expected benefits derived from the resolution of that gap. Possible grievances include economic growth, education, price of goods, tax rates, and unemployment (Gurr 1968).

Economic growth, as discussed above, has wide influence on both expectations about the future and present achievements. A decrease in the economic growth rate will lessen year-to-year increases in income. If a person expects their wealth to continue rising at a certain level and it does not, they may protest. Davies' J-curve hypothesis states that when a period of rising expectations is met with sharp decline, citizens will be driven to rebel (Davies 1962). The sharpness of economic decline is best measured by its growth. Economic growth in this study is measured as the yearly percent change in GDP per capita.

H6: Economic growth rate is negatively correlated with protests.

Education is so important for socioeconomic advancement that an inability to get access to education may be perceived as a deprivation. In a rising economy, those with increased wealth may expect increased access to education. If they cannot access education, they may protest. Secondary education is less accessible than primary education, so it is a more useful deprivation variable than primary education. Primary education made a better education variable for the modernization idea of economic development because it represented the achievement of a certain threshold, rather than a lack of something. This study uses the percent of the population enrolled in secondary education.

H7: Education is negatively correlated with protests.

Inflation, increases in the price of goods, is likely to lead to protests because there is a numerical gap between what is expected in the store (the accustomed price), and the actual (inflated) price. Moreover, these price increases often hit lower income earners harder because wages lag behind inflation, decreasing real income. Inflation is measured in this study using the general consumer price index.

H8: Inflation is positively correlated with protests.

Tax rates can be a grievance because increased rates decrease the after tax income of workers. Burdensome or increasing tax rates are cited by the American revolutionaries as one of their grievances against King George and were widely regarded as one of the contributing factors of the French Revolution.⁹

H9: Tax rates are positively correlated with protests.

Unemployment rates are a possible grievance, as more people who expected to have a job lose them.

H10: Unemployment is positively correlated with protests.

However, just because someone is frustrated does not mean they will protest. They must also have the opportunity to do so. Grievances are mediated by both encouraging opportunities and discouraging opportunities. Encouraging opportunities are anything that would make a protest easier for a citizen to organize (decreases the cost of organizing). They include mobility, previous protests, urbanization, and communication.

Mobility, or the ability for citizens to move around, allows them to assemble for collective action. Geographic proximity, available vehicles, number and size of public spaces, all contribute to mobility. In this study I use volume of passenger traffic within a province as a proxy for mobility. Passenger traffic volume is measured in passenger-kilometers (the number of unlinked passenger trips times the average length of their trips) and accounts for different modes of transportation across provinces (development of

rail, waterway, or highways), as well as geographic areas.

Past protests can leave a legacy of infrastructure, knowledge, and experience that make future protests easier to implement. They may also create a culture of protests within a specific area, or inspire future protesters with their previous success. Previous protests are measured in this study by taking the cumulative moving average of the number of protests in the preceding five years.

Urbanization, as discussed earlier, increases geographic proximity, and with it communication, rapid spread of ideas, and the ability to rapidly mobilize.

Communication is a mediating variable itself and is intuitively necessary for collective action. The freer communication is among citizens, the easier they will be able to organize. Communication is measured in this study as the number of newspaper copies printed per capita.

H11: Encouraging opportunities (mobility, past protests, urbanization, and communication) are positively correlated with protests.

Discouraging opportunities are factors that increase the costs of collective action. They act as deterrents to a citizen's rational choice to protest to redress their grievances. The most widely studied and intuitive is repression. In Tilly's time-series study of France, he found a government's repressive capacity to be a better determinant of unrest than traditional measures of relative deprivation (Tilly 1972). Tilly's study also found no correlation between prices of goods and industrial output and civil unrest in France over his 131-year study, claiming to cast doubt over the usefulness of relative deprivation as an explanatory theory. His models, however, were over-simplistic, and did include nearly as many indicators of grievance, and none of encouraging opportunities. Tilly tried to measure repression directly with the number of excess arrests in a given year and man-days in jail. Excess arrests were endogenous and man-days in jail a poor measure, since most arrests are made for actions other than collective action. His final index, the sheer bulk of the national budget, is a very rough measure of repressive capacity of a state. Gurr, in his study, used the sum of internal security and military personnel per capita combined with a loyalty score based on previous military interference in politics (Gurr 1968). Unfortunately, this measure of repression doesn't transfer well for this study because provinces do not have their own militaries and there has been no direct intervention in Chinese politics by the military on the scale proposed by Gurr, since the revolution. Moreover, China's internal security budget, personnel, and expenditures are notoriously opaque, making data collection exceedingly difficult.

Following Tilly, this study uses provincial government expenditures as a rough measure of repressive capacity. Provincial government expenditures are broken down into expenses on: capital construction; innovation funds; supporting agricultural production; culture, education, science, and healthcare; and government administration. Their average share of the provincial government budget is displayed below. China's public security budget has exceeded its military budget in recent years, and reports from the Ministry of Finance show that the bulk of total national spending on internal security is under provincial and local government outlays. There is no category in the provincial data source for public security, but in the national data the administration budget is placed after the national defense budget—the same way it is reported by Xinhua, China's state-run news agency. Aside from bureaucratic salaries, it seems likely that this data includes public security outlays. While more refined than bulk government

expenditure, government administrative expenditure is still only a rough measure, since it is polluted with other possible expenditures labeled administrative.

H12: Discouraging opportunities (repression) are negatively correlated with protests.

In sum, grievances are the variables that drive citizens to protest, encouraging opportunities decrease the costs of protesting, and discouraging variables increase the costs of protesting. Hypotheses 6-12 are tested in the relative deprivation models (Models 4-9) in this study.

Table 1: Hypotheses Summary

Variable	Relationship
Modernization Theory	
GDP per capita	Negative
Growth Rate	Positive
Industrialization	Positive
Urbanization	Positive
Education	Positive
Relative Deprivation Theory	
<i>Grievances</i>	
Growth Rate	Negative
Education	Negative
Inflation	Positive
Tax Rate	Positive
Unemployment Rate	Positive
<i>Encouraging opportunities</i> (mobility, past protests, urbanization, communication)	Positive
<i>Discouraging opportunities</i> (repression)	Negative

Data Description

Dependent Variable: Protests

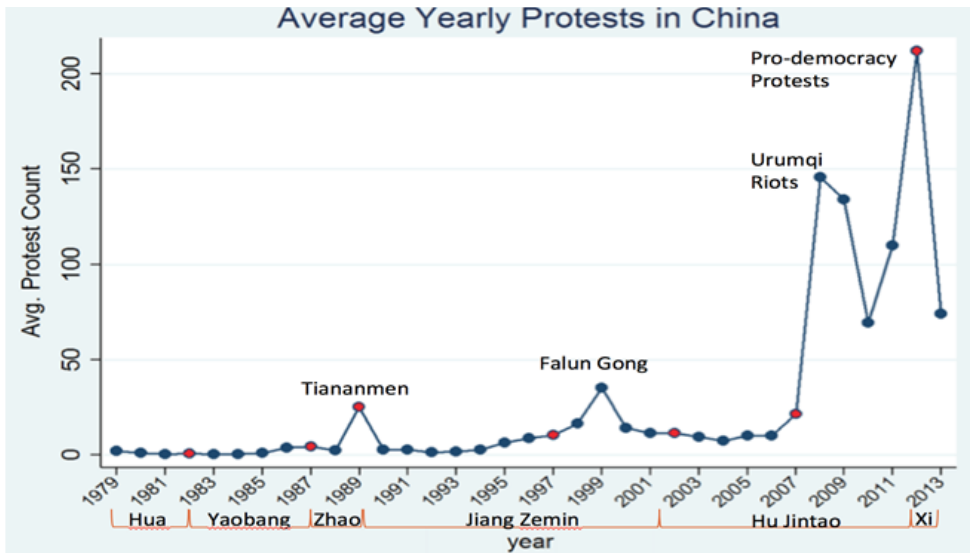
Protest data was collected from the Google Database of Events, Language, and Tone (GDELT)

and spans 35 years from 1979-2013. GDELT uses a computer algorithm to scan the web for all print, web, and radio news articles mentioning a given event for any regions. In this case I collected event data for protests in China. The algorithm distinguishes separate protest events from multiple news mentions and returns all individual events with dates and geographic coordinates. Each count in this data is a unique protest event. The data is sorted into provinces and aggregated into years for province-year analysis. Due to concern about the possible effect of increased reporting over time, year is held as a control in all regression models.

The protest counts vary widely by province, with Beijing the clear outlier. Figure 2 shows the mean count of protests for each province over the 35 year period. The data is log transformed using the natural log to allow comparison with other variables. The summary statistics of the log of protests is reported below.

Table 2: Summary Statistics of Dependent Variable

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Protests	1085	27.63041	173.709	0	3121
Log(protests)	1085	.9920344	1.60873	0	8.046229



*The data for past protests are constructed using a cumulative moving average of the previous five years of protest data. This cumulative moving average is then log transformed for comparison.

**The second, broader measure for repression is used only once, in the classic relative deprivation model (Model 4).

Red points indicate leader transitions.

Independent Variables

The independent variables in this experiment, as well as the controls, come from the All China Data Center at the University of Michigan. The data is collected by the All China Data Center directly from the National Bureau of Statistics of China (NBS). The independent variables, their measure, and their units are reported in the table below.

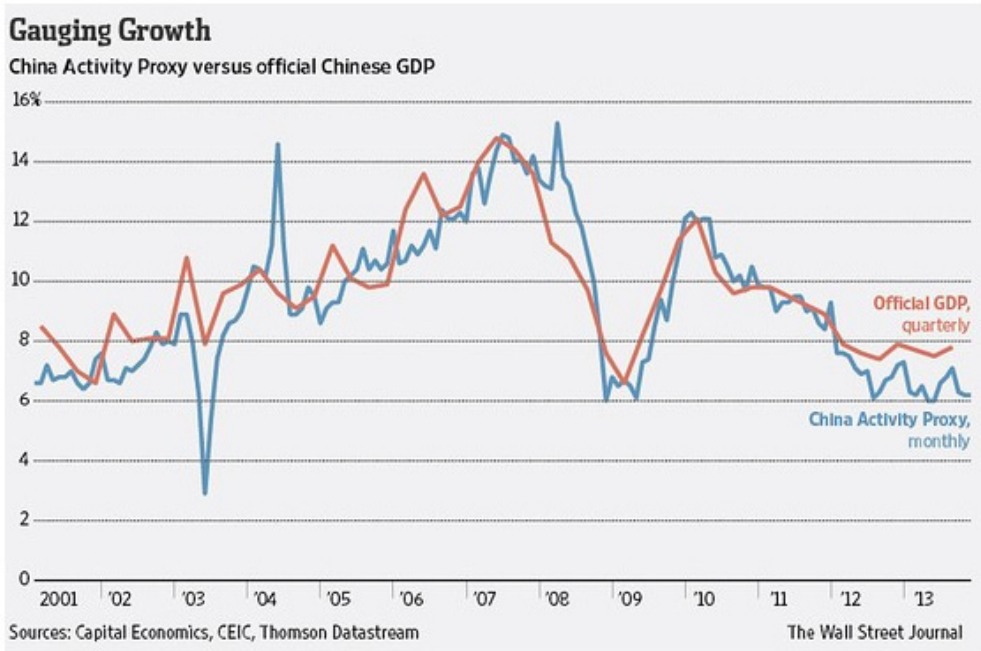
Table 3: Independent Variable Measures

Variable	Measure	Unit
Wealth	Log(GDP per capita)	Yuan, log transformed
Growth Rate	Yearly change in GDP per capita	Percent (out of one)
Urbanization	Urban Employed/Total Employed	Percent (out of one)
Primary Education	Number of persons enrolled in primary education/total year-end population	Percent (out of one)
Secondary Education	Number of persons enrolled in secondary education/total year-end population	Percent (out of one)
Population	Log(total year-end population)	10,000 persons, log transformed
Inflation	Consumer Price Index	Percent of previous year
Tax Rate	Tax Revenue per capita/GDP per capita	Ratio
Unemployment Rate	(Total Population – Total Employed)/Total Population	Percent of population
Mobility	Log(passenger traffic volume)	Passenger-kilometers, log transformed
Past Protests	Log(past protests)*	Log transformed
Communication	Newspapers published per capita	100 million copies
Repression 1	Log(Local Government Expenditure per capita)**	10,000 yuan per person, log transformed
Repression 2	Log(Local Government Administrative Expenditure per capita)	10,000 yuan per person, log transformed

*The data for past protests are constructed using a cumulative moving average of the previous five years of protest data. This cumulative moving average is then log transformed for comparison.

**The second, broader measure for repression is used only once, in the classic relative deprivation model (Model 4).

Official Chinese GDP figures have faced a lot of criticism for accuracy. Local cadres are promoted based off of GDP figures, incentivizing them to over-report when they are not hitting their targets. The central government is encouraged to polish GDP figures in order to maintain legitimacy and stability. The London firm, Capital Economics, produces a proxy for Chinese economic growth called the China Activity Proxy (CAP). It measures electricity output, freight shipment, construction, passenger travel, and cargo volume as a measure of economic activity every month. Comparing official quarterly GDP with monthly CAP across the most recent decade, the data are relatively consistent. While the data starts deviating after 2012, this has a negligible effect on the 1979-2013 range of panel data used in this study. Official GDP data is therefore accurate enough for the purposes of this study.



The unemployment rate is not a true unemployment rate, since it uses the total population instead of the labor force, but should still be useful as a rough unemployment indicator. It also appears that employment figures are inflated in reporting, since there is a negative minimum unemployment rate. The variance between provinces should still be meaningful if over-reporting is a consistent practice across provinces.

Table 4: Summary Statistics of Independent Variables

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Wealth	1085	8.326422	1.510708	5.32301	11.509
Growth Rate	1054	.1487881	.0740236	-.0581655	.5072062
Urbanization	1019	.3229024	.1663124	.114963	.9404032
Primary Ed.	1066	.1057536	.0423742	.0258433	.8020107
Secondary Ed.	830	.0042438	.0048122	.0006146	.0593862
Population	1066	7.957017	.917465	5.20894	9.343997
Inflation	1061	105.7226	6.523668	96.4	129.7
Tax Rate	1017	.0824408	.0372596	.0166503	.2213801
Unemployment	1037	.490577	.2273778	-4.384286	.6927173
Mobility	1074	5.240102	1.313349	0	8.006111
Past Protests	1080	1.382631	1.553314	0	7.63211
Communication	1042	.0041192	.0115064	.0000994	.0953725
Repression 1	1066	.1587982	.2254836	.0026315	1.447055
Repression 2	849	.0072546	.0106828	.0003039	.1073299

Population, wealth, and year are also used as basic controls throughout all of the models. Administrative expenses include expenditure for administration, diplomacy, public security, the judiciary, the law court, and procuratorial matters, as well as subsidies to the parties and mass organizations and to the expenses for treating the cases by the public security department, procuratorial organs, and law courts. While stated above, it is worth mentioning again that the measures of repression, even the refined local government administrative expenditure, are a rough measure and more indicative of repressive capacity than repression itself.

Industrialization was included as an independent variable in earlier models, calculated by dividing gross industrial output by gross agricultural output. As expected by modernization theory, it co-varied greatly with urbanization. Urbanization holds more explanatory power for protests because of its facilitation of communication and assembly, so industrialization was removed in subsequent models. Its effects can still be seen through urbanization.

Models

The unit of analysis is province-year and the study is a panel analysis of 31 provinces for 35 years (1979-2013). All models are fixed effects OLS regression models and standard errors are clustered by provinces for robustness.

Modernization Models

Model One: Classic Modernization

$$1. \text{Log}(\text{protests}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{Wealth} + \beta_2\text{Urbanization} + \beta_3\text{Primary Ed} + \beta_4\text{Population} + \beta_5\text{Year} + \epsilon$$

Model Two: Rapid Growth

$$2. \text{Log}(\text{protests}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{Growth Rate} + \beta_2\text{Urbanization} + \beta_3\text{Primary Ed} + \beta_4\text{Population} + \beta_5\text{Year} + \epsilon$$

Model Three: Combined Development, Growth Model

$$3. \text{Log}(\text{protests}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{Wealth} + \beta_2\text{Growth Rate} + \beta_3\text{Urbanization} + \beta_4\text{Primary Ed} + \beta_5\text{Population} + \beta_6\text{Year} + \epsilon$$

Table 6: Effect of Relative Depravity on Protests (1979-2013)

Dependent variable: <i>Log(Protests)</i>	(4) Classic	(5) Grievances	(6) -Encouraging	(7) +Discouraging Unlagged	(8) +Discouraging Lagged	(9) Lagged Growth
<i>Secondary Ed</i>	6.390 (0.85)	9.352 (1.04)	5.996 (0.86)	5.838 (1.34)	4.452 (0.80)	5.399 (0.83)
<i>Growth Rate</i>	-3.657*** [-1.52]	-3.879*** [-1.95]	-3.461*** [-1.49]	-2.875*** [-1.02]	-3.118*** [-1.18]	-5.55* [-2.05]
<i>Inflation</i>	0.0230** (3.21)	0.0251** (3.20)	0.0220** (2.82)	0.00901 (1.20)	0.0123 (1.67)	-0.003 (1.42)
<i>Tax Rate</i>	5.051 (2.02)	1.05*** (4.87)	9.265*** (4.57)	2.407 (0.85)	2.233 (0.92)	1.790 (0.65)
<i>Unemployment</i>		0.452 (0.27)	0.271 (0.24)	0.597 (0.52)	0.440 (0.38)	-0.158 (1.15)
<i>Population</i>	-1.212 [-1.76]	-0.356 [-0.48]	-0.849 [-1.32]	-0.191 [-0.23]	-0.714 [-0.85]	-0.428 [-0.48]
<i>Year</i>	-0.0263 [-0.49]	0.0312 (0.70)	0.0165 (0.35)	-0.0875 [-1.27]	-0.0774 [-1.40]	-0.135 [-2.02]
<i>Wealth</i>	0.640 (1.75)	0.588 (1.94)	0.615 (1.91)	0.871** (2.78)	0.923* (2.65)	1.228** (3.00)
<i>Mobility</i>	0.0632 (0.54)		0.0828 (0.63)	0.00321 (0.09)	-0.0573 [-0.41]	-0.0908 [-0.40]
<i>Past Protests</i>	0.0555 (1.14)		0.150* (2.39)	0.00884 (0.18)	-0.07732 [-0.16]	0.07542 (0.10)
<i>Urbanization</i>			1.424 (0.81)	-1.814 [-0.73]	-1.615 [-0.74]	-2.504 [-0.57]
<i>Communication</i>			-11.64 [-1.25]	-10.80 [-0.62]	-5.974 [-0.27]	-11.41 [-0.92]

Relative Deprivation Models

Model Four: Classic Deprivation Model

$$4. \text{Log}(\text{protests}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Secondary Ed} + \beta_2 \text{Growth Rate} + \beta_3 \text{Inflation} + \beta_4 \text{Tax Rate} + \beta_5 \text{Population} + \beta_6 \text{Year} + \beta_7 \text{Wealth} + \beta_8 \text{Mobility} + \beta_9 \text{Past Protests} + \beta_{10} \text{Repression1} + \epsilon$$

Model Five: Grievances

$$5. \text{Log}(\text{protests}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Secondary Ed} + \beta_2 \text{Growth Rate} + \beta_3 \text{Inflation} + \beta_4 \text{Tax Rate} + \beta_5 \text{Unemployment} + \beta_6 \text{Population} + \beta_6 \text{Year} + \beta_6 \text{Wealth} + \epsilon$$

Model Six: Grievances + Encouraging Opportunities

$$6. \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Secondary Ed} + \beta_2 \text{Growth Rate} + \beta_3 \text{Inflation} + \beta_4 \text{Tax Rate} + \beta_5 \text{Unemployment} + \beta_6 \text{Population} + \beta_6 \text{Year} + \beta_6 \text{Wealth} + \beta_6 \text{Mobility} + \beta_6 \text{Past Protests} + \beta_6 \text{Urbanization} + \beta_6 \text{Communication} + \epsilon$$

Model Seven: Model 6 + Discouraging Opportunities

$$7. \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Secondary Ed} + \beta_2 \text{Growth Rate} + \beta_3 \text{Inflation} + \beta_4 \text{Tax Rate} + \beta_5 \text{Unemployment} + \beta_6 \text{Population} + \beta_6 \text{Year} + \beta_6 \text{Wealth} + \beta_6 \text{Mobility} + \beta_6 \text{Past Protests} + \beta_6 \text{Urbanization} + \beta_6 \text{Communication} + \beta_6 \text{Repression2} + \epsilon$$

Model Eight: Model 7 with Repression2 lagged one year

$$8. \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Secondary Ed} + \beta_2 \text{Growth Rate} + \beta_3 \text{Inflation} + \beta_4 \text{Tax Rate} + \beta_5 \text{Unemployment} + \beta_6 \text{Population} + \beta_6 \text{Year} + \beta_6 \text{Wealth} + \beta_6 \text{Mobility} + \beta_6 \text{Past Protests} + \beta_6 \text{Urbanization} + \beta_6 \text{Communication} + \beta_6 \text{L.Repression2} + \epsilon$$

Model Nine: Model 8 with Growth Rate lagged one year

$$9. \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Secondary Ed} + \beta_2 \text{L.Growth Rate} + \beta_3 \text{Inflation} + \beta_4 \text{Tax Rate} + \beta_5 \text{Unemployment} + \beta_6 \text{Population} + \beta_6 \text{Year} + \beta_6 \text{Wealth} + \beta_6 \text{Mobility} + \beta_6 \text{Past Protests} + \beta_6 \text{Urbanization} + \beta_6 \text{Communication} + \beta_6 \text{L.Repression2} + \epsilon$$

Results

Modernization Models

The results of the classic modernization model, Model One, suggest that increases in urbanization lead to increases in protests. Urbanization is highly significant, possibly because it captures the effects of industrialization, but also because of its inherent contribution to the logistic ability to organize protests. Importantly, wealth is not significant, which casts doubt on the validity of economic development as an explanation for stability.

Model Two tests the rapid growth version of the modernization theory by substituting the level of wealth with the rate of economic growth. Urbanization remains very significant, and the model suggests that the growth rate is significant as well. Year, a constant, is significant in this model, likely because it is capturing the exponential increase in wealth over time. This is corrected by reintroducing wealth to create the combined model in Model Three. Controlling for the increase in level of wealth, both urbanization and the growth rate remain highly significant, with p-values of less than 0.001. Model Three suggests that, holding all else constant, a one standard deviation increase in the growth rate will lead to an 11.56 percent decrease in the standard deviation of the log of protests. Urbanization is four times more impactful than growth rate in the opposite direction. Holding all else constant, a 44.14 percent increase in the log of protests can be expected from a one standard deviation increase in urbanization. All three models are summarized

in Table 3.

These results cast heavy doubt on the validity of the basic modernization theory: that increases in economic development lead to greater stability. Aggregate levels of wealth were not significant. Neither was primary education—Lipset’s espoused greatest driver of social stability. Growth rate was significant, but not in the direction predicted by the rapid growth model. If anything, the growth rate lends itself as support to the basic modernization model that rising prosperity leads to a more stable policy. It is overshadowed, however, by the reverse, quadrupole larger effect, of urbanization. This seems consistent with the portion of the rapid growth model that suggests urbanization increases protests.

Table 5: Effects of Modernization on Protests (1979-2013)

Dependent variable:	(1)	(2)	(3)
<i>Log(Protests)</i>	Classic	Rapid Growth	Combined
<i>Wealth</i>	-0.192 (-0.74)		-0.104 (-0.38)
<i>Growth Rate</i>		-2.549*** (-6.03)	-2.517*** (-5.48)
<i>Urbanization</i>	4.239*** (4.44)	4.195*** (4.48)	4.278*** (4.37)
<i>Primary Ed</i>	0.654 (0.28)	-0.205 (-0.08)	-0.264 (-0.11)
<i>Population</i>	-0.064 (-0.08)	-0.277 (-0.36)	-0.293 (-0.39)
<i>Year</i>	0.0953* (2.51)	0.073*** (9.73)	0.0875* (2.15)
N	1005	977	977

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Relative Deprivation Models

The classic deprivation model is a replication of Gurr’s original, as closely as it applies to China. The results are consistent with Gurr’s findings that economic deprivation (in this case growth rate and inflation) can lead to protests. The other significant variable is Repression 1, the bulk size of government as

measured by local government expenditure per capita. This very rough estimate was curvilinear in Gurr's findings, but is positively correlated with protests here. The effect of repression is revisited in models seven and eight.

In order to dissect the grievances from the mediating variables, opportunities, Model Five regresses grievances exclusively. It suggests that growth rate, inflation, and tax rate are the most significant grievances. Notably, when controlling for these other economic indicators, urbanization loses the significance identified in the modernization model. The inclusion of more variables may have removed the correlation of urbanization with protests, or it may have been due to a reduction in the sample size from 977 to 758 (a 23 percent reduction).

Adding the encouraging opportunities to the equation with Model Six results in little to no change in the significance and strength of growth rate, inflation, and tax rate as correlations of protests. Past protests gain a slight significance in this model, but their lack of significance throughout the rest of the models makes a true correlation unlikely. This suggests a result consistent with Gurr's, that mediating variables do little to alter the underlying effect of grievances on civil unrest. To test this fully, the discouraging variable Repression 2 is added in model seven.

The addition of repression removes the significance of tax rate and inflation, in addition, while wealth regains mild significance. Repression itself is not significant in this model. The only grievance to survive the addition of repression, and robustly at that, is the growth rate. However, because repression is best understood theoretically as a deterrent to protests, Model Nine lags Repression 2 by one year. Protesters are likely to make their decisions based on their observed repression last year, rather than the recorded repression this year which may additionally suffer from endogeneity problems.

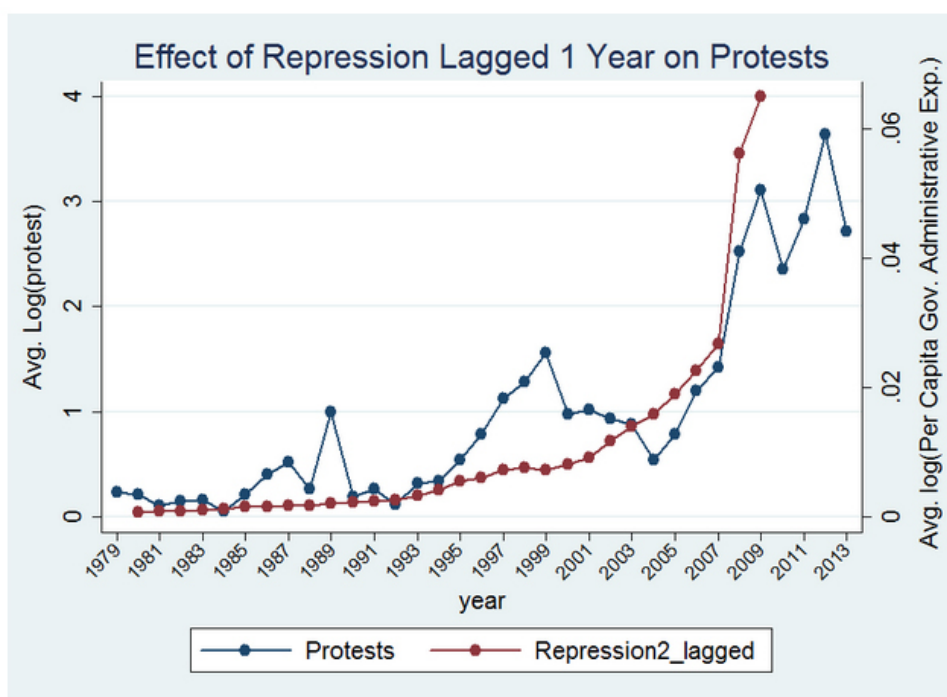
Table 6: Effect of Relative Depravity on Protests (1979-2013)

Dependent variable: <i>Log(Protests)</i>	(4) Classic	(5) Grievances	(6) +Encouraging	(7) +Discouraging Unlagged	(8) +Discouraging Lagged	(9) Lagged Growth
<i>Secondary Ed</i>	6.360 (0.85)	9.353 (1.04)	5.696 (0.86)	6.638 (1.34)	4.492 (0.80)	5.399 (0.83)
<i>Growth Rate</i>	-3.657*** (-4.92)	-3.839*** (-4.96)	-3.461*** (-4.49)	-2.875*** (-4.02)	-3.118*** (-4.48)	-.555* (-2.05)
<i>Inflation</i>	0.0230** (3.21)	0.0251** (3.20)	0.0220** (2.82)	0.00901 (1.20)	0.0123 (1.60)	-0.003 (-0.42)

	(3.21)	(3.20)	(2.82)	(1.20)	(1.60)	(-0.42)
<i>Tax Rate</i>	5.051 (2.02)	11.05*** (4.87)	9.269*** (4.57)	2.407 (0.95)	2.233 (0.93)	1.740 (0.65)
<i>Unemployment</i>		0.452 (0.37)	0.271 (0.24)	0.597 (0.52)	0.440 (0.38)	-0.159 (-0.45)
<i>Population</i>	-1.212 (-1.76)	-0.336 (-0.48)	-0.849 (-1.32)	-0.191 (-0.20)	-0.714 (-0.83)	-0.428 (-0.48)
<i>Year</i>	-0.0263 (-0.49)	0.0313 (0.70)	0.0165 (0.35)	-0.0875 (-1.57)	-0.0774 (-1.40)	-0.135 (-2.02)
<i>Wealth</i>	0.640 (1.75)	0.588 (1.94)	0.615 (1.91)	0.971** (2.78)	0.923* (2.63)	1.228** (3.00)
<i>Mobility</i>	0.0602 (0.54)		0.0828 (0.63)	0.000321 (0.00)	-0.0573 (-0.41)	-0.0908 (-0.40)
<i>Past Protests</i>	0.0555 (1.14)		0.130* (2.39)	0.00884 (0.18)	-0.00732 (-0.16)	0.00543 (0.10)
<i>Urbanization</i>			1.434	-1.814	-1.615	-2.304 (-0.97)
<i>Communication</i>			-11.64 (-1.25)	-10.80 (-0.62)	-5.974 (-0.37)	-11.41 (-0.92)
<i>Repression2</i>				4.626 (1.08)		
<i>Repression2 Lag1</i>					19.89* (2.20)	21.71* (2.10)
<i>Repression1</i>	2.552** (3.35)					
N	756	758	746	649	677	660

t statistics in parentheses, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

When Repression 2 is lagged one year it gains a significance it did not have in the prior model. The strength of the relationship is also suggestive of its importance to the model of protests. A one standard deviation increase in lagged repression leads to an expected increase in the standard deviation of the log of protests by 13.23 percent. It is not clear why increased repression corresponds with an increase in protests, but it may be due to a couple of reasons. The first is that repression is, as Gurr posited, a destabilizing variable. Repression may represent a grievance in itself, as expected political participation and rights are violated. The second is the possibility that there is an endogenous effect of repression on protests. The correlation may be capturing the government’s crackdown on protests, rather than protests as a response to repression. However, because repression is not significant in the un-lagged model, and becomes significant in the lagged model, the sequential relationship suggests that protests are a response to repression in this data, rather than the other way around. If there was an endogenous effect, it would have appeared consistently in the un-lagged model as well.

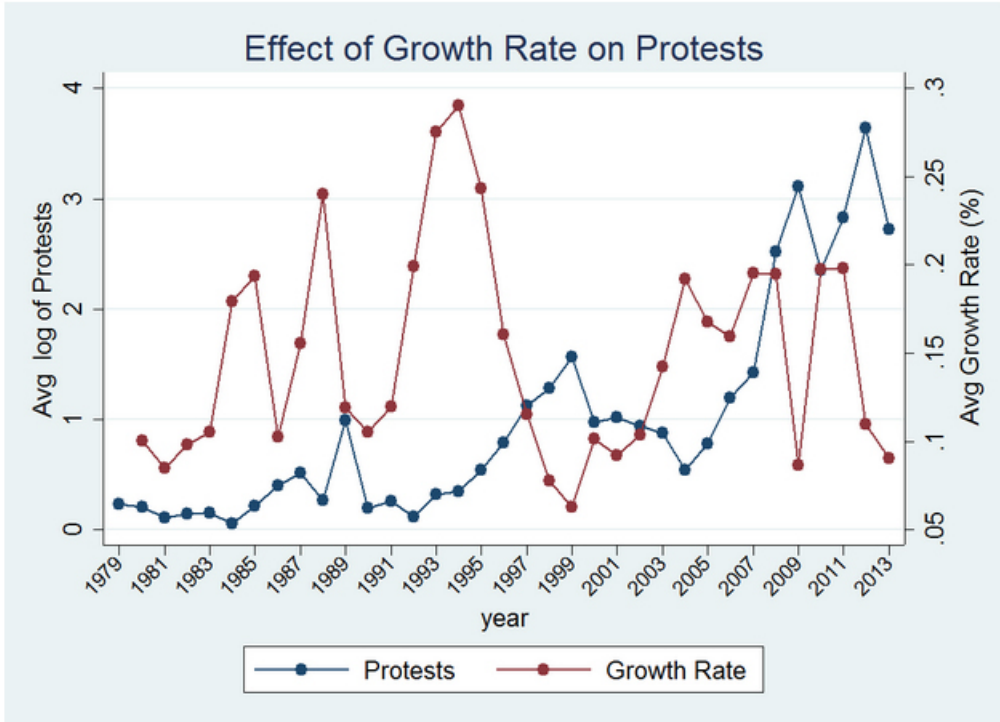


Importantly, growth rate remains very significant at the $p < 0.001$ level. A one standard deviation increase in the growth rate leads to an expected decrease of 14.34 percent in the standard deviation of the log of protests. Or, in relative deprivation terms, a one standard deviation decrease in the growth rate will lead to an expected increase in the standard deviation of the log of protests by 14.34 percent, holding all else constant.

In terms of raw protest count, a one percent decrease in the growth rate will lead to an expected

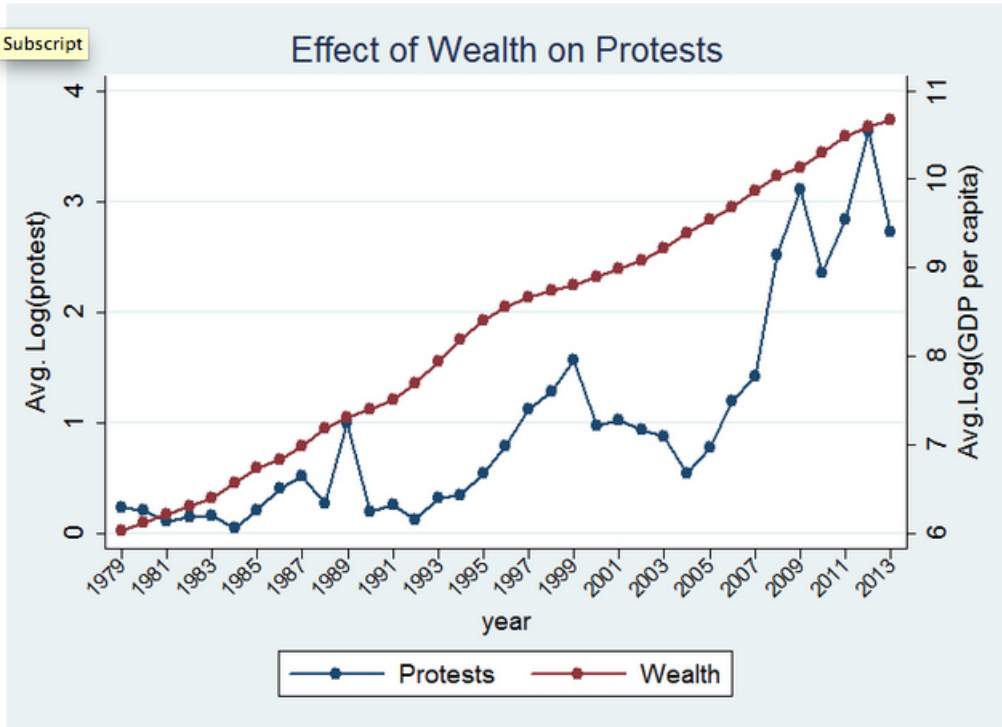
increase of 22.6 protests. For repression, a one percent increase in the preceding year’s per capita government administrative expenditure leads to an expected 2.20 percent increase in protests.

Finally, even though wealth was not a significant determinant of protests in the modernization model, its significance in model eight suggests that it may have some explanatory power in the relative deprivation model. A one percent increase in GDP per capita leads to an expected increase in protests by 2.63 percent. The inverse relationship between growth rate and protests is displayed in the graph below.



The inverse relationship between protests and growth rates in this graph is striking. The peaks and troughs are neatly aligned. This could be the result of a causal relationship between growth rates and protests, as suggested by relative deprivation theory, or it could be the result of investors reacting to political instability. Investors will be scared away by protests, and the decrease in investments would lead to a decline in growth rates. In order to try to separate the two, Model Nine runs the same regression as Model Eight with growth rate lagged one year. The effects are less significant, but the fact that they are not completely insignificant suggests that growth rates provide some explanatory power, independent of possible endogenous effects.

The third relationship, the effect of GDP per capita on protests, is graphed below.



Wealth does not explain as much of the variance in protests as the growth rate does. Moreover, it has no major dips that would support a j-curve hypothesis or relative deprivation theory. The only logic in which the constant increase in wealth makes sense is in modernization theory, under which it was insignificant. There is a possibility that this relationship is spurious due to the increase in both protests and wealth in China over the last forty years.

Conclusion

The variables expected to be significant in the basic modernization model, with the exception of urbanization, fail to demonstrate explanatory power. The aggregate level of wealth, the principal determinant of modernization theory in particular, appears to have no relationship with protests under the first series of models. This result remains consistent when combined with the rapid growth model. In fact, the models suggest that rapid economic growth has very robust explanatory power, but it is in the opposite direction predicted by the rapid growth model. Contrary to Olson’s theory, these models suggest that rapid economic growth is actually a very stabilizing force. This is more consistent with relative deprivation logic than modernization logic. As economic growth is rising, people’s expectations are being met, and possibly exceeded, by their achievements. The only piece of the modernization theory that holds any

significance consistent with its theory is urbanization. Urbanization, however, fails to remain significant when combined with a larger set of variables in the relative deprivation model that account for a lot of similar effects, such as mobilization and communication. This may be due to decreased sample size, or it may be because mobilization and communication (a variable highly correlated with urbanization), are able to account for variance originally lumped into urbanization.

Most significantly however, the growth rate remains robustly significant through both the modernization and the relative deprivation models. The addition of both encouraging and discouraging variables do not significantly alter its effect on protests. This is consistent with Gurr's initial finding, and suggests that the growth rate is an underlying grievance, the effect of which on protests cannot be mitigated by other variables, even repression. In fact, this study suggests that repression does not act as a deterrent as initially theorized, but instead as an instigator of protests. High levels of government administrative spending in one year correlates with an increase in protests the next year.

While economic wealth did show some significance in the last couple of models, including its theoretical home: the modernization model. The inconsistency of the significance of aggregate levels of wealth on protests casts doubt on its relationship.

In short, this study suggests that modernization theory can safely be tabled, at least as an explanation for protests in China. Gurr's relative depravity is repeatedly vindicated by the models, and growth rate identified as the most influential grievance. Furthermore this study suggests that repression in China is positively related to protests. While the measures used are very rough, it casts doubt on Tilly's criticism of relative depravity and warrants further investigation using more detailed measures of repression.

For policy, this study counters the current belief that there is no national fabric unifying protests in China. This study suggests that if there were a decline in the growth rate across all provinces—perhaps as the result of a national economic crisis, there could be spontaneous protests across the country. This is not to say that these protests would have a unified goal or any potential for scale. Only that there is the potential for simultaneous protest throughout China in response to a simultaneous decline in growth rates. China's current restructuring of its economy to a "new normal" is a controlled decrease in the national growth rates. This study suggests that this decrease in national growth rates could lead to an increase in protests throughout the country.

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