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- THEY CAME, THEY SAW, THEY VOTED:  
A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE POLITICAL  
CULTURE OF RUSSIAN-SPEAKING ISRAELIS  
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- THE RISE OF THE IRON LADIES: FEMALE  
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MICRO-LEVEL ACTORS  
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THE VIEW FROM SOUTH LAWN

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As the Helvidius Group prepared the 29th volume of *The Journal of Politics & Society* for publication, we strived to uphold the Journal's mission to highlight outstanding undergraduate research in the social sciences. Thanks to the work of our dedicated members and authors, I can confidently say we have met that goal.

The Fall 2018 edition reflects our commitment to publish papers on a wide range of topics related to the social sciences. From political violence to group identity formation to gender in democratic politics, these papers present exhaustive research on subjects highly relevant to our world today. We are also pleased that these contributions represent a wide variety of research methodologies. These authors implore everything from historical analysis to interviews to quantitative research in their essays.

Gary Dreyer examines the role of Russian immigrants and their descendants in Israeli political culture. This population of Russian-speaking Israelis, estimated to be roughly 15 percent of the Israeli population, represent a niche political group. Dreyer contextualizes his work within the existing literature on Russian Jewish immigration to Israel before presenting his own analysis of Russian-speaking Israelis' roles in recent Israeli elections, including the results of his interviews conducted in Israel in January 2017.

In her paper on the rise in female leadership in democratic countries over the past half century, Caroline Anne Johnson focuses on the characteristics of countries with female heads of government, the backgrounds of the individual female leaders who are elected in these countries, and finally the differences between the first female leaders who break the "glass ceiling" in their country and subsequent female leaders. Johnson tests several hypotheses related to these questions, using a quantitative analysis of data from democratic countries across the globe. Johnson's analysis of gender disparities in electoral politics is a significant contribution to an important area of ongoing research.

Carson O. Kahoe's essay presents an interesting analysis of Iranian foreign policy. Starting with the historical backdrop of Nowruz, the Persian New Year, as a holiday affiliated with Iranians' Persian and Zoroastrian roots, Kahoe explores how the Iranian state after the creation of the Islamic Republic in 1979 came to use this holiday to its advantage in diplomatic relations. Analyzing Iranian diplomacy through the lens of Persian culture, using Nowruz as a case study, is a novel contribution, as most scholars look to analyze Iranian foreign

policy through a religious lens.

In her historical analysis of consolidation and nationhood-building in post-Soviet Russia, Tiffany F. Luk examines specific sites of memory in the city of Moscow. Placing her research in the broader context of works examining Russian nationalism after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Luk analyzes three Moscow monuments to discuss their connections to significant historical events and their use in post-Soviet nationhood-building. This historical work is a fascinating study of how states use public space to construct or shape national identities.

Sarah Starr's work on ISIS-perpetrated beheadings is an important contribution to an area of literature seeking to understand and explain violent terrorism. In her original analysis, Starr sets up a conceptual framework to classify ISIS beheadings from June 2014 to June 2015, using this framework to uncover correlations between types of beheadings and factors that point to motivation. Starr concludes that the analysis shows that geo-temporal and victim patterns exist in the ISIS beheadings data, and suggests policy options and further areas of research.

Finally, David Westby analyzes a unique aspect of political violence in Spain, the fascist-antifascist clashes of "ultras," or groups of ultra-fans associated with Spanish football clubs. Westby's analysis builds on established theories of identity formation, as he proposes his own new theory of an intermediary "mezzo-level" of social interaction to explain the ultras phenomenon. This work is an innovative contribution to scholarly efforts to better understand the formation of radical political groups.

On behalf of the entire Helvidius Group, I would like to thank the authors of the Fall 2018 edition for sharing these contributions to the *Journal*. My thanks also to my fellow student editors for their dedication and hard work to make this edition possible. I would also like to extend special thanks to members of the current and past Executive Board for their help, in particular to my predecessor Jordan Singer for her generous advice and guidance and to our Publisher, Ciara O'Muircheartaigh, for her tireless work on this edition's layout.

Ryan Joel  
*Editor in Chief*

New York City  
 December 2018

## THEY CAME, THEY SAW, THEY VOTED: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF RUSSIAN-SPEAKING ISRAELIS

Gary Dreyer, Rice University (2018)

In the quarter-century following the fall of the Soviet Union, and the commencement of the so-called “Great *Aliyah*,” the migration of over one million Jews from the Former Soviet Republics to Israel, has cardinally changed the face of the Jewish state. Indeed, recent estimates suggest that there are around 1.2 million Russian-speakers in Israel, thus indicating that Russian-speaking Jews constitute roughly 15 percent of Israel’s total population.

Russian-speaking Jews have become a vibrant and vital part of Israel’s culture, economy, and political system, as their integration into broader Israeli society has been largely successful. Concurrently, as part of their assimilation into broader Israeli society, Russian-speaking Israelis are becoming full participants in the highly tribal and fragmented Israeli political system, learning from the experiences of earlier waves of *olim* (immigration), and rapidly ascending the ladders of Israeli politics, in which Russian-speakers presently occupy a unique niche. In this piece, I seek to put much of the existing scholarship under scrutiny and merge it with original historical and political analysis and research, looking to consider the political culture of this distinct community in the context of Soviet history and contemporary Israeli domestic politics. Moreover, I hope to accomplish this with a keen eye for understanding and interpreting this topic’s implications for the broader geopolitics of a complex region.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The social sciences dominate the body of literature on the political culture of Russian-speaking Israelis, with political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, and historians contributing much of the contemporary analysis. Amongst historians, Dr. Dmitry Shumsky, a well-known voice of the Israeli left and member of the faculty of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, has conducted the most notable research into Russian-Israeli political culture. Shumsky’s research into Russian-speaking Israeli perspectives on ethnicity and citizenship focuses on the legacy of Soviet ethnic politics within the context of Valery

Tishkov’s ethnographical research. That research identified the importance of “ethnic territories” and indigenism in Soviet nationality politics, which Shumsky identifies as defining Russian-speaking Israelis’ ethnic nationalism and general hostility toward Israeli Arabs.<sup>1</sup> While this work was seminal in its use of historical, ethnographic, and anthropological methods to connect regarding Soviet nationality policy to the social-political-intellectual milieu of Russian-speaking Israelis, I diverge substantively from Dr. Shumsky’s characterization of the prevailing ideological mainstream of Russian-speaking Israeli society as authoritarian.

Concurrently, Dr. Larissa Remennick, a Professor of Sociology at Bar-Ilan University, has become an authority within the social sciences, particularly on research projects relating to Russian speakers in Israel.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the community’s social milieu, which naturally has a role in the development of its politics, has been explored from several angles. Larisa Fialkova and Maria Yelenevskaya analyzed folklore to build an ethnographic understanding of the community, Olga Gershenson and Nelly Elias have conducted media-studies research, and Shulamit Kopeliovich and Marina Nizik have contributed findings in socio-linguistics.<sup>3</sup> All of these projects have, in one form or another, focused on problems of representation of Russian speakers within mainstream Israeli society and ongoing integration issues experienced by Russian speakers throughout the 1990s and early 2000s—a phenomenon not uncommon to many large immigrant groups.

However, given the community’s substantive, and rather rapid integration into mainstream Israeli society over the last decade in particular, the nature of the community’s concerns has vastly changed. This change has been underscored in the research and analysis of Dr. Vladimir (Zéev) Khanin, whose work is described in more detail below. Roughly a decade ago,

Sociologists Eliezer Ben-Rafael and Sammy Smooha separately compared the political and social integration of Russian speakers into Israeli society with that of the *Mizrahi* (Jews from the Middle East and North Africa) *olim* of the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>4</sup> While these comparisons serve to add perspective and depth to the analysis put forth here, they nonetheless fail to fully contextualize the origins of the unique, contemporary political culture of Russian-Israelis from a comprehensive, historical perspective. My research indicates that this political culture is grounded more in the ideologies of the right and center-right than either Ben Rafael or Smooha suggest, a conclusion supported by the extensive findings of political scientists Drs. Michael Phillippov and Anna Knafelman.<sup>5</sup> However, Ben-Rafael and Smooha’s conclusions do aid comparisons of the historically-driven dynamics of Russian-speaking Israelis’ political culture to another large community of *olim* and (descendants of *olim*) that have largely found their home on the political right, the *Mizrahim*. Indeed, both argue that Russian-speaking Jews have been a positive influence on Israeli society, pushing it toward greater multiculturalism and boosting the ranks of the “secular middle class,” as defined by Ben-Rafael.<sup>6</sup> Both authors, and especially Smooha, also argue that Russian-speakers will “merge into the *Ashkenazi* group to which they will draw increasingly close in culture and socioeconomic status.”<sup>7</sup> This shift will draw Russian-speakers to “the political center and left,” making them “more tolerant of Arabs inside and outside Israel.”<sup>8</sup> However, both authors fail to adequately account for the impetus Russian-speaking Israelis place on national self-determination and Jewish ethnic nationalism in defining the identity of the Israeli state, potentially undermining these shifts.<sup>9</sup>

Hence, this prevailing understanding of Jewishness, and thus what Israel, as the nation-state of the Jewish people, ought to be, has been the driving factor behind the political culture of Russian-speaking Israelis. This understanding of Jewishness is fundamentally self-defined by individuals who often do not strictly fall into the religious or cultural definitions of Judaism and Jewishness, and is instead rooted in a shared historical consciousness that is often synonymous with memories of Soviet and Arab anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. This, in turn, lends itself to a political culture whose core values center around security politics and the preservation of the nation-state from hostile external forces, but also embraces religious and cultural pluralism as an affirmation of the concept of

Jewishness-by-choice.

So long as the underlying nature of why and how Russian-speaking Israelis define their identification with the Jewishness of the Jewish state remains oriented around these parameters, the group’s political values will continue to lend themselves toward a right-wing political culture, differentiating them from *Ashkenazi* veteran Israelis—even as the socioeconomic status of Russian speakers in Israeli society rises. This is in part confirmed by Phillippov and Knafelman’s 2011 study, which argues that the “political orientation and electoral behavior of Former Soviet Union (FSU) immigrants in Israel differ significantly from the old-timers with similar demographic characteristics.”<sup>10</sup> While Phillipov and Knafelman concurred with the resilience, and importance, of the Soviet political experience, on defining older Russian-speaking Israelis, they also noted, like some other political scientists, that younger Russian-speakers in Israel are more open to a more “democratic outlook.”<sup>11</sup> Although the long-term political trajectory of younger Russian-speaking Israelis remains an open question, and the data are still fairly limited (especially in terms of actual vote tallies and long-term trends in political preferences), such ambitious statements do not necessarily mean that younger Russian-speaking Israelis are more open to left-wing politics. Instead, I argue that younger Russian-speaking Israelis are simply more open to different versions of center-right or right-wing politics than earlier generations consistently loyal to the Yisrael Beiteinu or Likud parties have been.

Joining Phillippov and Knafelman’s contributions to the body of political science research on the political culture of Russian-speaking Israelis is Dr. Vladimir (Zéev) Khanin, who courteously agreed to be interviewed by me for this project. Khanin’s extensive work stressing the primacy of political socialization in Israel over the experiences of Russian-speaking Israelis in the Soviet Union provides room for substantive discourse, even as it somewhat diverges from the conclusions of this paper. Overall, Dr. Khanin strongly rejects the theory of the ongoing influence of Soviet political culture on the contemporary political culture of Russian-speaking Israelis, which he views as almost entirely a product of contemporary Israeli politics and reflect the broad (and in his view, almost complete) integration of Russian-speakers into the “mainstream” Israeli body politic.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, Dr. Khanin is highly skeptical of some of the research that presents the primacy of the Soviet experience on the community’s

political culture, arguing that it is tainted by questionable research methods and left-wing political bias that treats with contempt the community, its politics, and leading political personalities. While I share many of these concerns, and have sought to build such skepticism into my treatment of the research I have analyzed, synthesized, and conducted, I do not as readily dismiss the ongoing impact of the Soviet experience on the contemporary political culture of Russian-speaking Israelis. While a political wave, formed by various political phenomena and demographics, has unquestionably shifted the center of gravity in Israeli politics significantly to the right since the arrival of most Russian speakers in Israel in the early 1990s, this wave ended up taking Russian-speaking Israelis, on both a quantitative and qualitative level, further to the right than their contemporaries. Moreover, it has also taken younger Russian speakers further to the right than non-Russian speakers in their age cohort. This divergence among youth suggests that a component of the Russian-speaking community's political structure primed Russian-speaking Israelis to move further to the right than their veteran-Israeli neighbors during the same period; it also empowered their younger generation to largely stay within parameters of political behavior that are similar to their parents' and grandparents' generations.

#### METHODOLOGY

This paper contributes to this ongoing discourse through its incorporation of previous research into the political socialization and political culture of Russian-speaking Israelis with original research, and analysis of those findings through a historical framework that explores the long history of Soviet nationality policy through the lens of the late Soviet period, the political and cultural milieu of the global Russian-speaking Jewish diaspora, and the tumultuous nature of Israeli politics over the last two decades. In conducting the year-long independent research that it took to complete this article and compile my findings, I reviewed numerous books and articles by social scientists and historians concerned with the relevant subject. I also analyzed news articles from Israeli, American, and European news outlets, both in English and in Russian.

Additionally, I examined the results of the 2015 Knesset elections, focusing on those cities known to have outsized Russian-speaking populations, especially Ashdod, Ashkelon, Bat Yam, Netanya, and the suburbs of Haifa. Finally, I conducted field work in Israel in January 2017, when I interviewed multiple prominent leaders of

the Russian-speaking community about my research topic, a process which I completed via phone interview later that month. These individuals were drawn from the class of Russian-speaking political operatives, public intellectuals, and civil servants, most of whom avowedly identify as right-wing and have been active in the community's politics almost since their arrival in Israel. Most have opted to be quoted openly, but others have requested to only be identified through pseudonyms. Moreover, they are also part of a greater, Russian-speaking Jewish intellectual exchange, and are keenly aware of the ongoing of their fellow Russian-speaking Jews around the world, particularly in North America, Germany, and the Former Soviet Union itself.

The framework for my research largely stemmed from initial research into the results of the 2015 Knesset elections, which reflected a substantive role of Russian-speaking voters in ensuring the re-election of the Netanyahu government. This, alongside my personal exposure to the widespread pro-Trump sympathies within the American Russian-speaking Jewish community, led me to investigate the historical literature that analyzed the political development of Russian-speaking Jewry in the Soviet period, with Dr. Yuri Slezkin's work providing the critical intellectual backdrop to my own analysis of the problem. By then, as my inquiry turned into a full-fledged independent research project, I began to seek out individuals who were experiencing this community's politics at high levels, and could provide further insight into these questions of Russian-speaking Jewish politics. Thus, during my trip to Israel in December 2016-January 2017, I called on the four individuals that I had located through a network of closely connected former *Refuseniks* (Soviet Jewish activists who spent years waiting for permission from Soviet authorities to emigrate) and political activists in the United States and Israel. Later, upon my return to the United States, I conducted a phone interview with Zionist Union MK Ksenia Svetlova, specifically to gauge her response to the opinions I had gathered and to obtain an alternative perspective that would help better flesh out my conclusions. The individuals I interviewed in Israel come from a broad spectrum of political involvement in Israel, but all are well-known and respected public intellectuals within the country's Russian-speaking community. Despite varied careers, "day jobs," and degrees of religiosity, all four men I interviewed proudly identify with the Israeli right, but have different understandings of the nature and origins of their community's politics, stemming not only from personal reflection and empirical evidence, but also from an acute intellectual awareness of the cultural legacy of Sovietization and the experience of *Aliyah* and integration.

I believe emphasis on self-identified right wing, public intellectuals gives unique insights into the political milieu of this community, distinct in Israel as the lone secular group with its own media base, prominent personalities, cohesive social network, and cultural values that pay particular deference to social commentary.

Having conducted these interviews, I sought to reconcile my subjects' divergent views with the empirical data I was assembling from relevant academic literature, and attempted to make sense of these outcomes through a historical lens that also accounted for Russian-speaking Jewish politics in the United States. Ultimately, these factors were all weighted at differing rates, but combined to articulate a coherent and highly relevant narrative. While it is impossible to calculate definitively what percentage of my conclusions were drawn from analysis of (imperfect) statistical data, and which were drawn from the interviews I conducted, or the academic literature and media I analyzed, the core of the project was rooted in the qualitative analysis, with the quantitative data buttressing main points. While this makes this paper more consistent with historical research methods than those of political science, this conscious decision was made necessary by the flaws I recognized in the statistical data I analyzed, namely small sample sizes and instances of political bias, even when I agreed with its conclusions.

It should be noted that none of my interview subjects, or any of the authors of the articles which I analyzed in this study fully subscribe to my conclusions, and some will find ample room for substantive, evidence-based disagreements about both my approach to these questions and subsequent answers to them. Yet, I fully believe that these conclusions, reached through broad and deliberate inquiry, help explain the fundamentals of the current state of Russian-speakers within Israeli politics, and give additional depth to scholarship concerned with the long-term legacy of post-war Soviet politics on communities outside the Former USSR.

Clear limits to this methodology exist in the overall lack of available data, particularly in terms of how it relates to actual voting behavior (especially at the most recent election in 2015) and in terms of age and geographic distributions, which are most important for drawing the conclusions I seek. Moreover, my personal lack of Hebrew language knowledge was a significant hindrance in terms of obtaining access to primary and secondary source literature, one that I was only able to somewhat overcome through proficiency

in English and Russian. Thus, as with any analytical work that blends the qualitative with the quantitative, both need to be scrutinized with appropriate skepticism, particularly given that throughout my research I have sought to balance intellectual discourse with the practical applications and ongoing consequences of the political and social history I brought "under the microscope," so to speak. No less important procedurally is the caveat that comes with conducting transnational historical analysis as I completed with my study of the historical processes that shaped the Soviet world as well as the contemporary Middle East.

This research has led to the conclusion, that as they have come to operate within a unique political milieu, the voting behavior of Russian-speaking Israelis, and the political ideology which has become dominant within the community, has been decisively right-of-center with parties within the "national camp" winning the overwhelming majority of Russian speakers' votes.<sup>13</sup> The experience of Soviet rule left a profound imprint on all Jews who emigrated from the Former Soviet Union, and made them somewhat predisposed to embracing right-wing parties after arriving in their new countries. However, Israel's politics were by far the most affected, as it was both proportionally, and numerically, the biggest destination for Russian-speaking Jews leaving the Former Soviet Union.

Hence, I have adopted some of the methods and conclusions of previous researchers while providing key, individual insights and components of my arguments. I should note that none of the researchers I cited fully concur with my conclusions or with each other, but amidst substantive and critical points of dissent, each has played a vital role in building the argument I have set out here. Most importantly, and critically connected to this issue, is my firm belief that analysis of the political culture of this community, which has largely been addressed through the prisms of political science, sociology, and anthropology, could stand to substantially benefit from more qualitative approaches, such as the one I have taken here, especially to counterbalance the methodological difficulties of over-reliance on survey data that is drawn from a small sample size.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SOVIET LEGACY

Political conditions "on the ground" in Israel, which have simultaneously pushed the whole of Israeli society to the right in the last quarter-century, combined to create a perfect storm that brought forth the existing inclinations of the Russian-speakers towards right-wing

politics and cemented them into the political culture that prevails within the community today. The consequences of this definitive shift rightwards have been decisive for the whole of Israeli politics, as in the wake of the Russian-speaking community's decisive turn toward the Right, Israel has elected only one left-of-center government since 1996, with the Israeli Left continuing to struggle in its attempts to appeal to communities outside its historic base of *Ashkenazi* "old elites."

The specific aspects of the Soviet experience that are behind the predominantly right-wing voting behavior of Russian-speaking Jews in Israel are not easy to isolate or describe in a vacuum. Indeed, each of the *olim*, as well as their decedents, had individual life experiences, encounters, and perceptions of the Soviet system. Most of them, however, when transplanted into the political environment of a liberal democracy, expressed preferences for the political Right. While the Israeli political discourse of the 1990s and early 2000s, characterized by the dominance of security issues in the wake of the Oslo Accords and the Second Intifada, dominated the core political socialization of most Russian-speakers and coincided with the effective collapse of the Israeli left, one cannot ignore the aspects of their political consciousness that were rooted in pre-*Aliyah* experiences, and thus in the Former Soviet Union. It is this unique combination that now defines the community's political culture and ongoing voting behavior.

The continued relevance and importance of the Sovietized aspects of Russian Israelis' political influence, its consequential correlation with right-wing voting patterns, along with the remarkable resilience of these voting patterns over the last two decades, shows itself in two distinct, but critical, ways. The first of these is that Russian-speaking Jews who emigrated to other Western countries, including the United States, largely exhibit a similarly right-of-center political culture. Secondly, the right-leaning voting behavior of Russian-speaking Jews in Israel is not isolated to those who spent a substantial period of their life in the Former Soviet Union. Indeed, the second-generation of Russian-speaking Israelis, including those who were born in Israel to Soviet *olim* or who arrived in the country as young children, are also substantially more right-wing than the overall Jewish population. These voters ascribe primacy to security issues over socio-economic ones when making voting decisions, a tendency that in Israeli politics is correlated with support for center-right and right-wing parties in Israel. Moreover, these younger Russian-speaking Israeli voters mostly to the same cultural and political values as their elders – values that were developed generations in the intellectual traditions of the late Soviet period and an

uneasy assimilation into Israeli society.

The specific aspects of Russian speaking Israelis' political consciousness, which have manifested themselves in their voting behaviors, and are linked to the Soviet experience, are difficult to identify, and have become grounds for substantial political controversy. Indeed, the left-leaning figures in the Israeli Jewish academic, media, and political establishments have come to accuse Russian speakers, in so many words, of being the bearers of an almost Stalinist ideology that carries a predilection for authoritarianism and has clear racist undertones. In the words of the chief researcher of the Israeli Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, political scientist, and noted expert on Russian-speaking Israeli political culture Dr. Vladimir (Zé'ev) Khanin, the primarily *Ashkenazi*, left-wing, Israeli cultural and political elite has gone from "blaming Russian speakers for importing alcoholism, prostitution, and organized crime in the 1990s to blaming Russian speakers for importing racism, nationalism, and xenophobia in the 2010s."<sup>14</sup>

Right-wing defenders of the community, both within and outside of it, counter this stereotype in several ways. First, they ascribe Russian-speaking Israelis' voting behavior and prevailing concern for security issues to an intense patriotism that comes from a long-suppressed desire to openly express their Jewishness—manifestly denied to Russian-speaking Jews in the Soviet Union. Second, they also accuse the Left of condescension and ignorance regarding the community's values, dynamics, and experiences, which they argue have only further driven Russian speakers further Right. Lastly, right-wingers, both inside and outside the community, also emphasize experiences of official anti-Semitism, life under a command economy, and Soviet support for the Arab cause as major factors that endeared Jews from the Soviet Union to more hawkish, pro-market parties upon arrival to Israel (and other Western countries).

In any case, the complicated causes, historical processes, and pressures that fomented a worldview among Russian-speaking Israelis that led to their overwhelming support for the Right, involve an overlapping array of understandings of nationalism, ethnicity, state, and the role of government. Thus, identifying specific aspects of the Soviet experience which translated fluently into perceptions of Israeli politics among *olim* from the Former Soviet Union must involve interpreting and analyzing relevant aspects of post-war Soviet history.

#### JEWISH NATIONALISM AND THE EFFECTS OF SOVIET NATIONALITY POLICY

A natural beginning for this historical analysis lies in

analyzing Soviet nationality policy, a matter which was at the heart of the decades-long struggle for the right of Soviet Jews to emigrate. While many historians throughout the Cold War, and until very recently, blankly wrote off the Soviet Union as "the prison house of nations," this one-size-fits-all approach, describes only part of how an authoritarian empire that presided over almost one-sixth of the earth's land area dealt with its countless ethnic minorities.<sup>15</sup> While the Russian language and culture was unquestionably dominant within the post-war Soviet Union, different ethnic groups were afforded unique rights and privileges within specific geographic zones and historical periods. As the USSR was a union of fifteen different Republics, each with its own titular nationality, these fourteen non-Russian titular nationalities enjoyed nominal cultural "dominance" within the boundaries of their respective Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs).<sup>16</sup> However, the degree of this cultural deference varied widely across nationalities. For instance, Ukrainians and various Central Asian nationalities largely enjoyed a great deal of cultural autonomy and special privileges within the confines of their titular Republics. Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians, on the other hand, encountered substantially more hostility from Soviet authorities, who almost uniformly distrusted and repressed cultural expression and autonomy among the Baltic peoples because of their well-documented displeasure with the Soviet system and loss of their independence in 1940.<sup>17</sup>

The odd ones out of this arrangement were those ethnic minorities not granted a titular republic, or in some cases, an "Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic," of the type granted to the Abkhazians or Karelians within the Georgian and Russian SSRs, respectively.<sup>18</sup> The largest of these groups, and the most geographically dispersed, were several million Soviet Jews.<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that this was in spite of the existence of the Jewish Autonomous Oblast in southern Siberia, which in theory existed as a defined geographic unit where Soviet Jews enjoyed "titular nationality" status.<sup>20</sup> Yet only a minuscule portion of the USSR's Jews called the JAO home, and most lived in the major cities of the Slavic Republics.<sup>21</sup> Here – in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Minsk, Kiev, Kharkiv, and Odessa – as well as everywhere throughout the Soviet Union, Jews found themselves singled out for systematic, institutionalized discrimination as they faced cultural, economic, and political pressures that encouraged their Russification.<sup>22</sup>

However, Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms, and the greater room for independent cultural expression which they precipitated, caused the national consciousness of Soviet Jews, which had been obscured for over six decades, to re-emerge in a number of ways. As the ethnic

groups of the various constituent Republics, as well as other Soviet bloc states in Eastern Europe, experienced nationalistic-driven national awakenings and widespread popular movements called for the restoration of the right of self-determination, Soviet Jews found themselves impacted by these changes as well.<sup>23</sup>

While *Perestroika* and *glasnost*, which were designed by Gorbachev to promote transparency in government, tone-down the authoritarianism of the Brezhnev era, and encourage grassroots activism at the local level, did succeed in affording national minorities more freedom of expression, it inadvertently led to more public displays of anti-Semitism in Soviet society, forcing Soviet Jews to confront this anti-Semitism throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s and making them more conscious of their distinct identity.<sup>24</sup> As the Soviet Union as a political entity began to implode, Soviet Jews saw their non-Jewish neighbors of various nationalities rewarded with cohesive and independent nation-states in exchange for vocal and increasingly assertive nationalistic demands, and in turn the mentality of Soviet Jews drastically changed. No longer did Soviet Jews believe that nationalism could only bring destruction rather than liberation from repression, instead, they now came to think of Jewish nationalism and Zionism as a means of their own national liberation from the growing pressures of anti-Semitism and political instability.

#### DEFENSE AND SECURITY AS LEGACY OF POST-SOVIET NATIONALISM

Upon arrival in Israel, just as the mentality of Soviet Jews was becoming more open-minded and susceptible to ethnic nationalistic ideas, these individuals found themselves, for the first time, in a position of demographic and political dominance as members of the titular nationality of their new home. Still heavily influenced by Soviet constructs of nationality policy, in which ethnic minorities were expected to "fall in line" and act in a subservient position to the "titular" ethnic group, *olim* from the FSU came to view Israeli Arabs in an almost exclusively negative light, an aspect of the community's political views which has not substantially changed to this day. Jews from the former Soviet Union, seeking to emulate their former countrymen, were now prepared to somewhat over-compensate for decades of repressed national and cultural aspirations, and were thus well-positioned to become Israel's "top patriots."

This embrace of patriotic nationalism made itself known in multiple dimensions, establishing a way of viewing the Israeli present through a lens which was cut in the Soviet past. Russian-speaking Israeli leaders whom I interviewed all alluded to patriotism as a pillar

of community values. One of them contrasted the pains which Jewish parents went through to keep their sons from being drafted into the Soviet army with the sense of joy and pride that their descendants now feel when their children enlist in the Israeli Defense Forces.<sup>25</sup> In a broader sense, these sentiments are part and parcel of the self-perception of Russian-speaking Israelis: what they see as their role in Israeli society and how it fits in with their longer historical experience. Incubated in an understanding of history that placed the Second World War front-and-center, Soviet Jews, almost all of whom had family members who fought in the Red Army, came to see themselves as the liberators of Europe and its Jews from Nazi subjugation. In this narrative, Soviet Jews took on a distinct responsibility to defend the continued existence of Jewish life in Europe. Transposed into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they and their descendants have applied these principles to the current day, creating the image of a new kind of warrior, only two or three generations removed from the young Jewish boys who liberated Berlin and Budapest from anti-Semitic fascists. Today, the IDF soldier of Soviet Jewish origin takes on this new role and operates with a historically conscious view of the Middle East's political landscape that lends itself to the very hawkish, security-oriented politics that predominate on the Russian-speaking street in Israel.

Furthermore, as the former citizens of a government which controlled one-sixth of the earth's landmass who had been relocated to a country that was less than the size of the Crimean Peninsula, Jews from the FSU were fundamentally bewildered by the notion of surrendering territory to a belligerent people. Under this context, Soviet Jews arrived in Israel as a group that was susceptible to the message of the Right – but were only convincingly brought into the fold because of the existing political conditions on the ground during the 1990s and early 2000s.

### RUSSIAN-SPEAKING JEWS AND THE RISE OF THE ISRAELI RIGHT

Israeli politics in the early and mid-1990s – the years immediately following the *Aliyah* of most Russian-speakers – were characterized by the collapse of the Oslo Accords, as the Israeli Right leveraged the political revolution of Menachem Begin's victory in 1977 to become the dominant force in Israeli politics.<sup>26</sup> The subsequent stage of Israeli political history, spanning the late 1990s and early 2000s, when Russian-speaking *olim* found themselves more firmly planted in the country, took place in the shadow of the Second Intifada and Gaza Disengagement.<sup>27</sup> It was also during this period that the Israeli Right assembled a demographic coalition which has

cemented their majority in the electorate and kept the Left locked out of power since 2001.<sup>28</sup> This coalition relies heavily on overwhelming support for the Right amongst Russian speakers, and effectively guarantees that in the current climate and foreseeable future, forming a stable, genuinely left-of-center, Zionist coalition would be very difficult.<sup>29</sup>

No doubt, the political impotence of the Israeli Left, which has formed and reformed political parties, lacked stable leadership, and failed to produce attractive policy alternatives to the Right, has played a role in Russian-speaking Israelis' firm placement in the right-nationalist camp.<sup>30</sup> For most, the only triumph of the Left since 1996, the 1999 elections that brought Ehud Barak to power, were no more than a mere asterisk in an otherwise consistent track record of support for the Right. Indeed, the only reason why it was notable for my interview subjects was that Barak's stronger performance among Russian-speakers was key to his victory (many of those I interviewed referenced his effective Russian-language advertising campaign, flaunting his stellar military record as "Soldier Number One.")<sup>31</sup> However, Barak's incredibly disappointing – and short – tenure as Prime Minister, coupled with the impact of the Second Intifada, which dominated Israeli politics for the first half of the 2000s, created lasting antipathy towards the Left on Israel's "Russian street."<sup>32</sup>

Although the Right's seeming hold on power has been the subject of much debate and discussion, the unquestioned fact remains that the substantial shift rightwards in the center of Israeli political gravity has been well-documented. Furthermore, if demographic trends hold, the shift will become even more pronounced, as data indicates that younger Israelis are substantially more religious, nationalistic, and right-wing than their grandparents' generation, which they will gradually replace in the electorate. This also represents a diametric shift from the political age-gap between young people and retirees, which maintains an opposite direction to those of most other Western democracies.<sup>33</sup>

Today, Russian speakers are present in most major Israeli political parties, with prominent figures including Avigdor Lieberman, the current Defense Minister, Yuli Edelstein, the incumbent Speaker of the Knesset, and Ksenia Svetlova, a high-profile MK for the Zionist Union.<sup>34</sup> Lieberman's party, Yisrael Beiteinu, whose name translates to "Israel Our Home," has become the primary political vehicle for Russian-speaking Israelis. Much of the party's base and senior leadership is drawn from the ranks of Russian speakers; however, YB nonetheless maintains that it is a truly "national party" that represents Israelis of all backgrounds who adhere to its distinct

right-wing politics.<sup>35</sup>

Beiteinu bills itself as the "pragmatic" party of the right, and concentrates much of its fire on Israeli Arabs, the dovish, *Ashkenazi* establishment, and the religious establishment, represented by the Chief Rabbinate and the Haredi parties.<sup>36</sup> Yisrael Beiteinu's political orientation makes it a natural ally of Likud, with which it shared a joint electoral list in the 2013 Knesset elections.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, after Beiteinu, Likud has taken the second-largest share of the Russian-speaking Israeli vote in 2009 and 2015, the two most recent elections when Likud and Beiteinu did not run on a joint list.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, in addition to being the political party of the highly-regarded Yuli Edelstein, prominent Russian-speaking Israelis in Likud include Natan Sharansky, former Refusenik and current head of the Jewish Agency, and Zeev Elkin, the incumbent Minister for Jerusalem & Environmental Protection.<sup>39</sup>

### POLITICAL VALUES AND COMPARISONS TO OTHER ISRAELI DEMOGRAPHICS

The political dynamics within the Russian-speaking community in Israel are rather complex and multi-faceted. Indeed, while the fact remains that some 65-75 percent of Russian-speaking Israelis align themselves with the Right, in contrast to about 55-60 percent of all Israeli Jews as a whole, there is great diversity within this political spectrum, and even more so in the roots of these ideological convictions.<sup>40</sup> It should be noted that the kind of "conservatism" which predominates amongst Russian-speaking Israelis is unique within the Israeli political spectrum, and is the product of political understandings crafted in the Soviet past, as well as in the Israeli present. First and foremost, as has been mentioned earlier, Russian-speaking voters prioritize security issues to a greater degree than most other Israeli Jewish voters, even if these matters dominate the country's political discourse. Second, *olim* from the FSU are overwhelmingly secular and most vigorously oppose the rabbinical and religious establishment, which they accuse of systematic discrimination against Russian speakers. The most long-standing point of contention between Russian-speakers and the Rabbinical establishment is the question of civil marriage in Israel, a high priority for the many Russian speakers who cannot claim Jewish descent through their matrilineal line, and thus are not able to be married in a Jewish ceremony in Israel per current law.<sup>41</sup> Thirdly, on economic issues, Russian-speaking Israelis largely demonstrate a curious duality of views that is somewhat contradictory, but also highly dependent on individual age and socio-economic status. On the one

hand, the experience of life under the Soviet command economy, wrought by constant shortages of consumer goods and endemic corruption, transformed the vast swath of Russian-speaking Israelis into public "enemies of socialism," as many community leaders and voters vocally support liberalizing the economy and reducing the size of government.<sup>42</sup>

However, a substantial part of the community is formed of older and poorer citizens, who for a variety of reasons did not ascend up the socio-economic ladder during their time in Israel, and thus are vigorous supporters of maintaining and increasing pensions and other welfare benefits.<sup>43</sup> These voters who found themselves on the periphery in Israel – socially, economically, and geographically – have historically been the base for Yisrael Beiteinu, and identify strongly with the traditionally populist agenda of Avigdor Lieberman.<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, even these voters, and Beiteinu as a party, largely balk at the suggestion that they favor "socialist" policies, or those that are redistributive in nature, even when they themselves are highly reliant on pensions and various government benefits.<sup>45</sup>

Middle and upper-middle class voters, who tend to be in their prime working age, are the most skeptical of increased government interference in the economy, and thus tend to be among the most vocal supporters of free markets in Israeli society.<sup>46</sup> These voters largely became reliable voters for Likud, and now form a substantial portion of the base of Israel's ruling party.<sup>47</sup> It should also be noted that these voters in particular, who form what can be called an "economically aspirational class," are especially resentful of Israeli Arabs, the ultra-Orthodox, and *Ashkenazi* elites because of tangible, economic interests. The first two, as the largest economically depressed sectors of Israeli society, are highly dependent on government benefits, and thus earn the ire of higher-income Russian Israeli voters who resent having to economically support (via taxes) sectors of Israeli society with whom they have fundamentally contradictory political agendas.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, the *Ashkenazi* "old elites," who dominate in the highest levels of the press, political establishment, bureaucracy, academia, and the private sector, are seen by Russian speakers as their main competitors for top positions in these areas.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, the animosity towards the "old elites," and their privileged position within Israeli society only reinforces Russian speakers' preference for right-wing parties. On a basic level, because the "old elites" form the base for the Israeli left, by voting for right-wing parties which are the "old elites'" traditional political opponents, Russian-speakers are applying political pressure on the "old elites," thus creating more oppor-

tunities for members of the Russian-speaking community in the upper echelons of Israeli society.<sup>50</sup> However, deeper analysis reveals that the hostility runs beyond economic posturing to a fundamental disagreement about political culture, values, and ideology. According to a 2009 poll for the Israel Democracy Institute, nearly 60 percent of sampled Russian-speaking Israelis considered themselves right-wing, just over one-in-four self-identified as centrists, and only around one-in-eight self-identified as left-wing; by contrast, for all Israeli Jews, the breakdown fell among the lines of 47 percent right-wing, 30 percent centrist, and 23 percent left-wing.<sup>51</sup> 88 percent of Russian-speaking right-wing voters and 72 percent of Russian-speaking centrist voters vocalized negative opinions of left-wing activists, who have historically been identified with the *Ashkenazi* “old elites,” further entrenching the cultural gulf between the Israeli left and Russian-speakers.<sup>52</sup>

Perhaps even more revealingly, not only is the entire ideological axis of Russian speakers demonstrably to the right of all Jewish Israelis, but within their self-identified groupings of right, centrist, and left, Russian-speakers fall decisively within the most conservative camps. Nowhere is this more apparent than on Russian-speaking Israelis’ views of the peace process and security issues. Within the same 2009 poll, while right-wing Russian-speaking Israelis were barely more conservative than all right-wing Israeli Jews, (70 percent of Russian-speakers opposed evacuating any settlements in Judea and Samaria and 64 percent opposed the transfer of any Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem to the Palestinians, in contrast to 66 percent and 58 percent among all right-wing Israeli Jews), self-identified centrist and left-wing Russian-speaking voters were substantially more conservative than their non-Russian speaking ideological counterparts.<sup>53</sup> While only 16 percent of left-wing Israeli-Jews were opposed to any evacuations of Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria, 49 percent of Russian-speaking self-identified left-voters concurred with this line of thought. The divide between Russian-speakers and non-Russian speakers in the left/peace-camp was even more stark on the issue of East Jerusalem, where 22 percent of all left-wing Israeli Jews opposed any part of the city going to the Palestinians as opposed to 60 percent of left-wing Russian-speakers who expressed disagreement with such an arrangement.<sup>54</sup> Among centrists, 39 percent of Israeli Jews opposed the evacuation of any settlements compared to 53 percent of centrist Russian speakers did, and while 38 percent of all centrist Israeli Jewish voters opposed any division of Jerusalem, this view was endorsed by 59 percent of self-identified centrists in the Russian speaking community.<sup>55</sup>

This brand of politics, which has become popular amongst Russian-speaking Israelis is unapologetically nationalistic with a populist bent, yet also devoid of hardline religious rhetoric and vocally neoliberal on economic issues. In many ways, it is a kind of conservatism (somewhat similar to the UK Independence Party) that is rather foreign to Israeli politics, where nationalism is oftentimes heavily intermixed with greater deference to the religious establishment (although the degree falls along a very wide spectrum).<sup>56</sup> Nonetheless, the strongly anti-Arab, anti-Left rhetoric and sentiments which predominate amongst Russian-speaking Israelis and their leaders have raised alarm and condemnation amongst Israeli (left-wing) elites.<sup>57</sup>

In response, left-wing academics and political observers have argued that the historical experiences of *olim* from the USSR predisposed them to skepticism of democracy and support for (what the Israeli left considers) firebrand populists with authoritarian inclinations.<sup>58</sup> However, this response is simply unsupported by facts, as polling of Russian citizens in Israel conducted before the 2012 Russian presidential election showed that less than 15 percent of Russian citizens in Israel who intended to participate in the vote would pull the lever for Putin.<sup>59</sup> The same poll also put Putin at one-third of the support of the most pro-Western and reformist candidate in the race, billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov.<sup>60</sup> Analyzing Russian-speaking Israelis’ views of Israel’s democratic institutions and cultural values also requires a thorough examination of the historical context in which these views were formed. In particular, while Russian speakers were somewhat more skeptical of democracy than veteran Israelis, favoring a government of “a few strong leaders” by a larger margin than veteran Israelis (74 percent as opposed to 60 percent) and supporting a technocratic “government of experts” (by margins of 72 percent and 55 percent, respectively) they were also less likely to support censorship of those offering “harsh criticism” of the Israeli state.<sup>61</sup> In this, one can see the clear shadows of the experiences these Russian-speaking Israelis had as Soviet Jews during the Gorbachev period, where *glasnost*, characterized by a promise of transparency of government and free speech, was accompanied by leadership that was popularly seen as weak, ineffective, and corrupt, leading many to embrace the stability that elements of authoritarianism and technocracy can provide to a state.<sup>62</sup>

#### POPULAR PARTIES AND PLATFORMS

Furthermore, branding Beiteinu as a dogmatic, ultra-nationalist party is simply inconsistent with the party’s messaging in recent years and its record in office. Yisrael Beiteinu has gone to extra lengths to emphasize its “prag-

matic solutions to Israel’s challenges, whether they are social, diplomatic, political, economic, or religion and state.<sup>63</sup> The party brands itself as an explicitly non-messianic right-wing party, and unambiguously supports a two-state solution, albeit a controversial variation of it that calls for the transfer of Arab-Israeli towns to a future Palestinian state.<sup>64</sup> Nonetheless, these calls to dilute the Arab portion of the Israeli population, and reduce the minority’s voting power and influence, are popular amongst the party’s Russian-speaking base and consistent with their historic antipathy towards Israeli Arabs on economic, ethnic, and political grounds.<sup>65</sup> Additionally, Beiteinu’s other policy proposals towards Israeli Arabs, those which have provoked the most ire from the party’s critics as reactionary, are unapologetically populist. These include instituting the death penalty for convicted terrorists and demanding that non-Jews applying for Israeli citizenship swear loyalty oaths.<sup>66</sup> In any case, Yisrael Beiteinu’s general attitude towards the peace process, and politics in general, is demonstrated by one of its most-discussed ads of the 2015 election cycle, which featured popular Soviet/Russian rockstar Andrei Makarevich singing a jingle whose lyrics translate to “no need to cave into a changing world – better the world caves in to us!”<sup>67</sup>

#### POLITICS OF POST-FIRST GENERATION RUSSIAN SPEAKERS

Perhaps the greatest indicator of the substantial and lasting impact that the Soviet experience had on the political socialization of Russian-speaking Israelis is the fact that the Second Generation still largely adheres to the general voting patterns of their parents. In other words, even if younger Russian-speakers chose a different party in the center-right, right, or center political space, they will nonetheless overwhelmingly avoid the parties of the Left, who will continue to be shunned from any subsequent governing coalition. Earlier research conducted by Phillippov and Knafelman demonstrated that the only change in views among Russian-speaking Israelis which was correlated with their length of stay in Israel was attitudes towards sexual minorities, with younger Russian speakers being far more tolerant of this group than their older counterparts.<sup>68</sup> On all other major data points, including hostility towards Arab Israelis, support for social programs aimed at integrating Russian speakers, and hostility towards left-wing political activists, Phillippov and Knafelman found little variation between younger Russian-speaking Israelis and their parents and grandparents.<sup>69</sup>

While research on the politics of this small but significant group is limited, with the most recent sur-

vey being based on a very small sample (only ninety three respondents), and the impact of this group’s voting patterns have yet to be realized, the general consensus, based on recent reporting, the survey indicated above, and the interviews I conducted generally indicates that while second-generation Russian speaking Israelis (defined as those who were either born in Israel to *olim* from the FSU or made *aliyah* before the age of five), still largely express preferences for right-wing parties, they are more politically open-minded than older generations.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, while left-wing parties take a bigger portion of the younger Russian-Israeli vote, this share still only amounts to only around one-in-five second-generation Russian-Israeli voters.<sup>71</sup> Yet, the most intriguing aspect of the survey, which somewhat concurs with the views of some of my interview subjects, was that younger Russian-speaking Israelis are more interested in “shopping around” the various parties of the Israeli right, center-right, and center. Indeed, as some have been attracted to the center-right Kulanu party and centrist Yesh Atid, both of which have cultivated a reputation for emphasizing domestic, rather than security issues—once again a point of contradiction from older FSU *olim*.<sup>72</sup> Additionally, younger Russian-speakers also seem more open to supporting the National-Religious Jewish Home party, so while Likud and Yisrael Beiteinu currently possess a structural advantage with these voters, they would be mistaken to take them for granted.<sup>73</sup>

Concurrently, the fact that the political tendencies which prevail amongst Russian-speaking Jews in Israel apply to their counterparts in other countries as well, including the United States, demonstrates that the Soviet experience cannot be dismissed out of hand entirely. In fact, more populist, right-wing politics, of the sort that Avigdor Lieberman and Yisrael Beiteinu have been associated with in Israel, have appealed to Russian-speaking Jews in the United States as well, albeit in a different form. Results from the 2016 Republican Primary elections in New York City, as well as from the 2016 Presidential General Election indicated that Donald Trump performed very well in precincts with high concentrations of Russian-speaking voters.<sup>74</sup>

In areas of South Brooklyn such as Brighton Beach and Sheepshead Bay, and parts of Staten Island with substantial Russian-speaking populations, President Trump’s performance was roughly on-par with rural areas throughout the country’s interior, which both his campaign and the media identified as his “core” support base.<sup>75</sup> While the political power of Russian-speaking Jews in the United States is negligible to that which is held by their counterparts in Israel, the core themes which seemed to drive their support for Trump appear

rather similar to the prevailing sentiments in Israel. Concerns over security issues, alongside fierce patriotic/nationalist sentiments, a distinct preference for controversial but “strong” leaders seemed to be the unifying characteristics between the two communities.<sup>76</sup> However, media reports seem to suggest that economic issues, and fear of “creeping socialism,” played a much bigger role in determining Russian-speaking American Jews’ preference for Donald Trump and the Republican Party.<sup>77</sup> This, of course, is not surprising given that the United States, and its politics, simply do not revolve around security concerns to the same level that Israel’s do.

### POLITICS OF POST-FIRST GENERATION RUSSIAN SPEAKERS

In a 2015 interview, Lilly Galili, veteran Israeli journalist, expert on the Russian-speaking community, and author of a book entitled *One Million Who Changed the Middle East*, declared that “the old elite associated with the Labor Party, are dying, going away...the Russians are the new elite of Israel.”<sup>78</sup> The Russian speakers, said Galili, had completely upended the process of *Aliyah*, skipping the stage of integration, and moving straight to leadership—a move which Natan Sharnsky himself welcomed for breaking with the “paternalistic approach to *Aliyah*.”<sup>79</sup> In the political realm, Russian speakers brought their unique wealth of historical experiences and formed new ones in the personal, and politically transformative, experience of repatriation to their historic home land.<sup>80</sup> These, combined with the other political forces that pushed Israeli society as a whole, including native-born Israelis, rightward from the mid-1990s until today, have served to overhaul the landscape of Israeli politics.<sup>81</sup>

As the Israeli Right continues to bear the burdens of being in government while drawing the bulk of its votes from *Mizrahim*, Russian-speakers, the Ultra-Orthodox, and the National-Religious segments of Israeli society, the cultural and ideological differences among these groups will continue to pose major obstacles to the Right’s unity, thus feeding the tribal nature of Israeli politics. Indeed, according to the 2009 data from Phillipov and Knafelman, traditional, religious, and Mizrahi Israelis feel an acute cultural distance from the Russian speakers, as non-Russian speaking *Mizrahim* were almost two times more likely than non-Russian-speaking *Ashkenazim* (38 percent vs 20 percent) to believe that Israeli society would be better off without the Aliya of Russian speakers.<sup>82</sup> Concurrently, 39 percent of all self-identifying “traditional” veteran Israelis, 33 percent of “religious” veteran Israelis, and a whopping 58 percent of Ultra-Orthodox veteran Israelis agreed that “it would have been better if FSU immigrants had not

come at all.”<sup>83</sup>

### CONCLUSION

One can postulate that as the arrival of Russian speakers fundamentally changed the nature of Israeli politics, and the Israeli Right in particular, so too did the goals of Israel’s other political tribes change in response. For Secular Israelis and established *Ashkenazim*, the arrival of Russian speakers meant a demographic buttress against the agenda of the Ultra-Orthodox, as the two groups are fundamentally at odds over the appropriate role of religion in Israeli public life and share a well-known mutual antipathy (nearly three fourths of Russian speakers reported negative attitudes towards the Ultra-Orthodox in Phillipov and Knafelman’s survey).<sup>84</sup> Concurrently, many religious (but not Ultra-Orthodox) Israelis, a community that includes the mainly Nationally-Religious constituents of Naftali Bennett and many on the right-wing of Likud, have embraced Russian-speakers as political allies, despite obvious cultural differences over state-secularism, because of their mutual prioritization of security issues.

Today, Russian speakers are the anchors of Israel’s secular Right, sharing a distinct set of political understandings rooted in a unique historical experience that was refined and contextualized in the Israeli political climate of the last quarter-century. While today’s Russian-speaking voters are far more concerned about the day-to-day challenges facing Israeli society, be they related to security, socio-economic issues, or the role of religion in public life, the group’s unique approach to these issues was defined under Soviet rule, with values and ideas that were inherited by the younger generations. Skepticism towards social-democratic politics and greater openness towards nationalism created a lasting partnership between the Israeli Right and Russian-speakers, one which will likely endure into the coming decades. Understanding the historical context which drives the political beliefs of this enormously powerful voting bloc is key to understanding the present, as well as the future of Israeli politics, with all the consequences which the latter entails for the State of Israel and the Jewish people.

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## THE RISE OF THE IRON LADIES: FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN DEMOCRACIES (1960-2015)

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### ABSTRACT

Since Sirimavo Bandaranaike became the first female prime minister in 1960, there has been a gradual increase in the number of women entering top political office. In 2013, there was a peak of fourteen women-led democracies. However, most of the previous research used case studies instead of focusing specifically on the phenomenon of female leaders coming to power in democracies. This study investigates three aspects of female leadership in democracies: a) the common characteristics identifiable in the countries where women entered top office; b) traits of female leaders compared to their male counterparts; and c) traits of the initially successful female leaders compared to subsequent female leaders. Data indicate that female leaders are more likely *to enter* or *to be in* power in democracies where women have possessed the right to vote for the longest periods and where the executive is a powerful presidency. Additionally, female leaders are more likely *to be in* power in countries with lower female enrollment in secondary education, recent conflict, and with a dual executive. This presents an interesting difference between women rising to power and retaining power. Compared to similar male leaders, women who have obtained power are more likely to be childless and have family ties to power. Compared to subsequent female leaders, initial female leaders tend to have less prior political experience and are less likely to have experience at lower levels of government. The results have positive implications for the emergence of female leadership in democracies.

The 2016 U.S. Presidential race spotlighted the issue of female leadership and questioned the qualifications women must possess to be elected president of one of the world's most consistently democratic nations. Hillary Rodham Clinton was an experienced candidate, having served as the First Lady, as one of New York's senators, and as U.S. Secretary of State. In contrast, Donald Trump lacked political experience, but had significant business and entertainment experience. Both candidates shared public name recognition, yet the leadership styles and dispositions of the candidates on the campaign trail were strikingly different. Trump adopted a confrontational style with aggressive policy proposals, while Clinton projected a calm demeanor and leveraged her extensive political experience to propose reasonable solutions to major political issues. Analysts suggested that sexism played a role in Clinton's defeat and her ability to connect with voters. The former Secretary of State was in agreement.<sup>1</sup> Although other factors certainly contributed to her loss, it can be confidently

asserted that Clinton was judged more harshly and treated differently as a candidate because of her gender. In her concession speech, Clinton stated "I know we have still not shattered that highest and hardest glass ceiling, but someday, someone will."<sup>2</sup> Clinton's "highest and hardest" glass ceiling has not yet been broken in the United States, but it has been cracked in forty democracies around the world. In this study, I am interested in understanding what it takes to break this glass ceiling. Do certain aspects of a society or political system increase or decrease the likelihood of a qualified woman entering top political office? Do significant differences exist between female heads of governments and their male counterparts or between those women who first reach the highest office and their female successors? Here, I seek to determine what factors impact a woman's ability to overcome societal bias to become her country's leader.

Following the rise of Sirimavo Bandaranaike to Prime Minister of Sri Lanka in 1960, a total of forty democracies and seven non-democracies have

had female leaders. This is only a small percent of the world's 193 states. From 1960 to 2015, there were 47 female leaders of democracies, compared to 676 male leaders, equaling only 7 percent. This lack of female representation in the highest levels of government is concerning. Recent studies support the benefits associated with female political leaders, including empowerment of young women, promotion of family and minority friendly policies, and the building of more collaborative and open governments.<sup>3</sup> However, female leadership should not be encouraged simply because of the tangible benefits it can bring to a state and its population. Female political leaders are fundamentally important because qualified women deserve equal access to all parts of society, including top political office. Although there is a significant body of literature on female leaders, much of it is more than a decade old. Female leaders have made huge strides in the last 10 to 15 years, and therefore an updated study of the characteristics of successful female leadership is needed.

#### TREND TOWARDS INCREASING FEMALE LEADERSHIP

This analysis studies the ascension of female executives to the primary leadership offices and the roles they occupy in democracies. The Archigos dataset is used to identify the executives and the authors focus on the effective ruler of each state.<sup>4</sup> In parliamentary systems, this is the prime minister; in presidential systems, this is the president; in systems with a dual executive, the effective ruler depends on the individual state. I have chosen the executives identified by Archigos because these positions are the most politically important in terms of governing. Other positions, such as figurehead presidencies or premierships in a system dominated by the president, are typically less involved in true governing. Only those executives ruling in democracies are considered. Democracies are defined as countries with a Polity score of six or greater in the year being considered.

Generally, increasing numbers of female executives have entered office since Bandaranike became prime minister in 1960 (Figure 1). Although the trend is towards an increase in the onset of female leaders over time, in most years, only one female leader entered office. There was a peak in 2010 when five female leaders entered power: Kamla Persad-Bissessar (Trinidad and Tobago), Laura Chinchilla (Costa Rica), Doris Leuthard (Switzerland), Iveta Radicova (Slovenia), and Julia Gillard (Australia). It is a positive sign that at

least one woman has entered power in every year since 2004. This is in contrast to the less frequent female ascension to leadership between 1960 and 2004; during this period, thirty-two years went by during which no female leaders entered into power. However, the trend in the number of women in office is stronger than the number of women entering office (Figure 2). There is a steady increase over time, with a peak of fourteen female leaders in power in 2013.

The following two maps display the geographic distribution of female leaders in democracies. In both maps, non-democracies are excluded and coded as white. Figure 3 shows the spatial distribution of the onset of female leadership; most democracies have not had a female leader, while one country (Switzerland) has had more than four female leaders. Some clustering in Western Europe and Southwest Asia is evident. Figure 4 maps the incidence of female leaders in democracies. Many of the democracies have never been led by a female executive while several have been led by a woman for more than twelve years. Again, clustering can be seen in Western Europe and Southwest Asia.

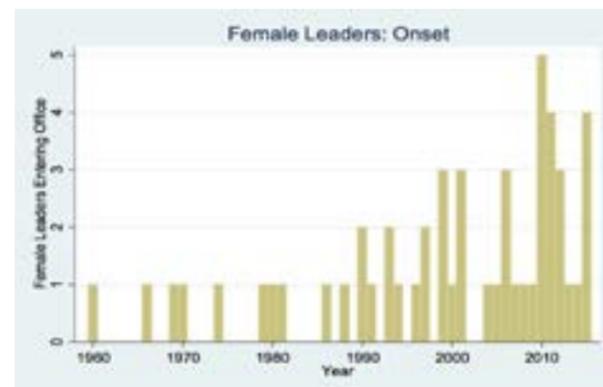


Figure 1

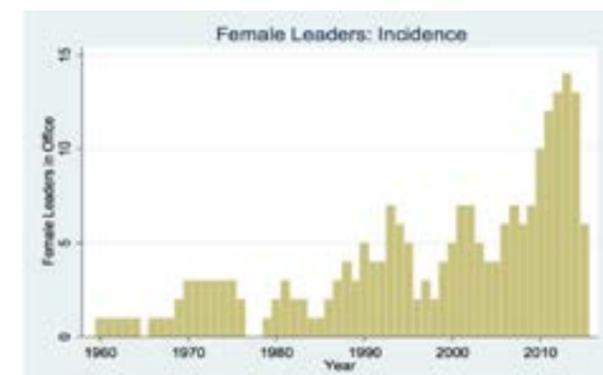


Figure 2

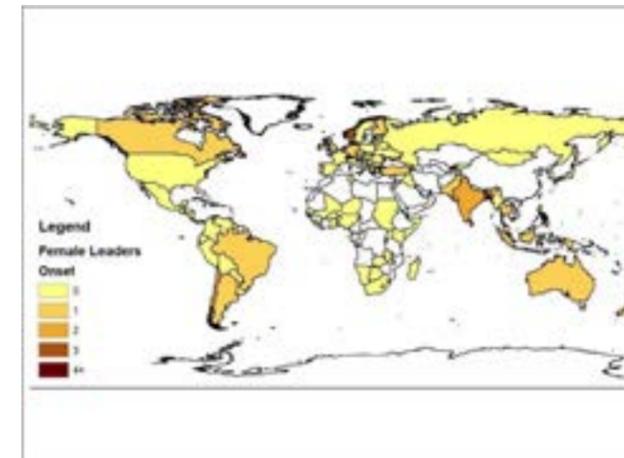


Figure 3

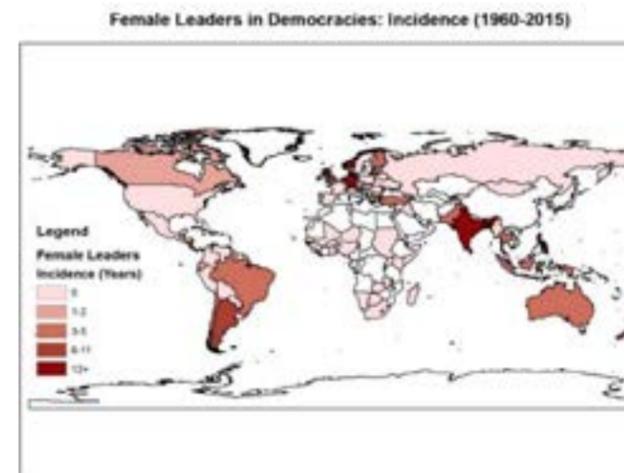


Figure 4

#### THEORY

Examining female leaders in the context of democracy is especially interesting because of the influence of the public and its importance in elections. The electoral process is an opportunity for the public to express who they want to lead their country, a major choice that can be significantly affected by internalized bias against women. The election of the executive can be direct, such as in presidential democracies where electorate chooses the president. In other regimes, the election of the executive is indirect. Such is the case in parliamentary democracies where the leader of the majority party becomes the prime minister but is only elected by a relatively small constituency.

This study seeks to answer three questions. First, what elements of democracies increase the likelihood that a female executive will come to power? Second, what characteristics do female executives ex-

hibit in comparison to their male counterparts? Finally, do women who are the first to lead their countries differ significantly from subsequent female leaders in the same position? The overarching inquiry revolves around what characteristics of the leader or country, if any, allow successful female executives to overcome the barriers faced by other female politicians and enter the highest office in their country.

Identifying the type of societies that elect female leaders and the type of women who do become those leaders is important from more than just a theoretical standpoint. Scholarly literature describes the many benefits of female leadership. Having more women in the legislature increases the likelihood that teenage girls and adult women will talk about politics and participate in them as adults.<sup>5</sup> This representation addresses one aspect of the supply problem: women need to put themselves forward for consideration. Women are encouraged when they see fellow women in positions of political leadership; this promotes changes in the way young people are politically socialized. Having women in top offices is also important in terms of policy. Female leaders help advance certain types of policy, especially those that improve quality of life and help families, women, and minorities.<sup>6</sup> Having these policies can further improve diversity and representation in government. For example, women who may have otherwise been excluded from government because of family obligations could enter office because of family-friendly policies like mandatory paid maternity leave. Finally, female leaders tend to form more collaborative and open governments. They are more likely to work across party lines and promote diversity and inclusion.<sup>7</sup> Creating these types of governments leads to better policies and increases the likelihood of improved future representation. Thus, this work will examine the characteristics of countries where female leaders come to power and of successful female leaders themselves.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

##### GENDER STEREOTYPES AND SOCIETAL VIEWS OF WOMEN IN POWER

Female leaders face certain barriers not experienced by male leaders when entering the political system. Three factors tend to be identified as explanations for why there are fewer women in political office. These include political socialization, structural factors, and discrimination against women.<sup>8</sup> Individuals in most societies are socialized to view politics as a "man's world." This

is a cyclical problem. Women are less likely to run for office because of the lack of representation of women and minorities in public office.<sup>9</sup> Those in power shape societal expectations; if the president of a country has always been a man, society will continue to expect a man to be elected. This socialization presents a barrier to diversity in political leadership and contributes to one side of the supply issue. In order to put themselves forward for consideration, women need to be able to see themselves as political leaders.

Female leaders and candidates for leadership face stereotypes about their gender and must contend with societal views of women in power. Eagly and Karau (2002) proposed a role congruity theory of prejudice towards female leaders, which stems from society's stereotypes about women and consequently believing that these stereotypes are incongruent with the characteristics needed to succeed in political leaders.<sup>10</sup> Women are often assigned communal characteristics, being seen as affectionate, sensitive, nurturing, and gentle; in contrast, men are assigned agentic characteristics, often thought as assertive, confident, independent, and dominant.

Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) also found a preference for "male" personality traits in candidates for national political office.<sup>11</sup> There exists a bias against candidates without masculine traits, which suggests that women who show voters that they possess these traits could be more successful in bids for national office. This can be an explanation to the tendency of some female candidates to adopt combative policy stances and language to fight gender stereotypes. For example, Margaret Thatcher refused to compromise her conservatism and advocated for a strong defense, she was more than willing to fight for her beliefs and policies.<sup>12</sup> She was not viewed as having typically feminine characteristics. Furthermore, men are viewed as more competent regarding issues of national security and military crises.<sup>13</sup> This attitude is more prevalent among individuals with aggressive attitudes towards foreign and defense policy. "Hawks" are 30 percent more likely than "doves" to believe that men are better able to handle military crises than women. Even when women break into the executive, such as being appointed to a cabinet position, they tend to be given "soft" portfolios, such as social affairs, health, or environment, instead of "strong" portfolios like foreign affairs or finance.<sup>14</sup> This reduces their influence on major policy areas and the likelihood that they will move to top political office. Most voters would prefer a candi-

date with experience as a foreign or finance minister over one who is an environmental minister.

In electoral politics, the electorate may be influenced by various values they hold, which influence their choice of candidate. In post-industrial societies, egalitarian attitudes towards women in political office tend to be more widespread. A 2011 Gallup poll found that 95 percent of respondents in the United States answered that they would vote for a woman for president if their party nominated her and she were qualified for the job.<sup>15</sup> However, it is possible that this number is inflated due to the social desirability effect, in which respondents mask their true opinions to conform to social norms. In this case, they may say they would vote for the female candidate, even though they would not, in order to avoid being perceived as sexist. Another study, which tried to circumvent the social desirability effect with a list experiment, found that about 26 percent of Americans are upset about the prospect of a female president.<sup>16</sup> This shows a much less sanguine view of the public attitude towards female political leaders. These studies focus solely on the United States but present an interesting case about how women are perceived as political leaders. Attitudes revealed in the studies play a part in the supply and demand sides of the equation. If party gatekeepers believe the public will not support a female candidate, they will not run her in an election. If a potential female candidate feels she will never be an electoral success, she will not put herself forward.

Identifying where female leaders are likely to emerge involves understanding what citizens want to see in their leaders. A Pew Research Center survey found that American respondents identified honesty, intelligence, and decisiveness as essential traits for leaders. Women are much more likely than men to believe that compassion is essential in a leader. Of individuals in top political positions, women are viewed as more honest and ethical.<sup>17</sup> However, 47 percent of women, compared to 29 percent of men, believe that women seeking high political office are held to higher standards and need to prove themselves more than men. This disparity could also contribute to the supply issue of female representation. Women may be less likely to put themselves forward because they believe the rules are different for male and female politicians. Men are slightly more likely to believe that men make better political leaders, likewise for older generations. However, these differences are relatively small. Consistent with other literature, respondents believe that

men are better at dealing with issues related to national security and defense.

#### STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TO FEMALE LEADERSHIP

A substantial body of literature exists relative to female representation in government, focusing both on the executive and the legislature. Reynolds (1999) considered several aspects of society and their influence on female representation. The best predictor of female cabinet ministers was female representation in the legislature. He also found that population, level of democracy, and level of urbanization were insignificant to predicting female cabinet ministers and percent of women in the legislature.<sup>18</sup> The legislatures in Buddhist, Eastern Orthodox Christian, and Muslim countries tend to have a lower percentage of women in the legislature when using Catholic countries as the baseline.<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, Stockemer (2009) did not find a significant difference in the representation of women in democracies and non-democracies after controlling for the type of electoral system, quotas, workforce participation, corruption, and GDP.<sup>20</sup> This demonstrates that issues with female representation are not limited to non-democratic or less developed countries.

Other structural factors in democracies also act as barriers to female leadership and these factors are present on both the supply and demand sides of the electoral equation. First, as previously mentioned, women are less likely to push themselves for political office. Second, women may be disadvantaged by the process during which political gatekeepers evaluate candidates. It is difficult for women to break into politics in the traditional party system, making it hard to get experience in electoral politics. Women are often put into fundraising or clerical roles, which reduces their ability to gain the type of experience that helps one get elected.<sup>21</sup> Developing an area of expertise (e.g. economics) or entering the civil service can help overcome this barrier by circumventing the party structures. Traditional political party structures often fail to initially support female candidacy; there is a pattern of popular support preceding traditional party support.<sup>22</sup> Parties may underestimate the strength of a woman's candidacy and be proven wrong by the electorate. When parties do run female candidates, they tend to send them to contest risky districts, allowing male candidates to claim safe seats.<sup>23</sup> Female candidates are more expendable to traditional party establishments. Parties may fail to support female candidates not because of a lack of qualification, but a fear that

the electorate will not support the candidate.<sup>24</sup> Thus, a structural issue emerges when party gatekeepers lag behind the public and reduce the demand for female candidates, even if qualified female candidates present themselves.

Another important structural feature that affects female representation is the type of electoral system. More women are elected in proportional systems than in single-member district plurality (SMDP) systems.<sup>25</sup> Using proportional representation as the baseline, SMDP and block vote systems result in a statistically significant depression of the percentage of women in the legislature.<sup>26</sup> In SMDP systems, the election rides on the appeal of the candidate, allowing any potential bias of the voters to have a large effect. In proportional representation, the party plays a much larger role. It could be true that parties are more willing to have women on their party lists instead of their sole representative in elections. Furthermore, having intraparty preference votes can also disadvantage female candidates. Valdini (2012) found that voters themselves act as political gatekeepers during these votes, in which they are required to indicate their preferred candidate among several candidates of the same party. In societies with traditional gender norms, when voters select candidates from a list of to-be candidates, there will be fewer females in the general election.<sup>27</sup> In places without traditional gender norms, the type of proportional representation does not affect the number.

It is also important to consider whether the executive is elected directly or indirectly. This has a significant impact on the size of the constituency that the leader must win. For example, in 1959 Margaret Thatcher was elected as the Member of Parliament for Finchley, a constituency in north London.<sup>28</sup> It was only in 1979 when the Conservative Party won the majority under her leadership that she also became the first female prime minister. In that year, the size of the Finchley constituency was only 55,683 people, while the UK had a total population of fifty-six million.<sup>29</sup> In comparison, Laura Chinchilla was directly elected as the first female president of Costa Rica in 2010, where the total population was approximately 4.5 million.<sup>30</sup> A woman running for president must overcome the bias of a country. Technically, a woman who becomes prime minister needs only to overcome the bias of her constituency (along with that of her party) to become the leader. It is also important to consider that there is significant variation in parliamentary democracies

and among political parties within them regarding how party leaders and thus future prime ministers are chosen. In a presidential democracy, the electorate votes for its preferred candidate. In a parliamentary system, the leader of the majority party becomes the prime minister. This leader may be voted upon by all members of their party, a certain selection of members, or the party's MPs.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL FEMALE LEADERS

Although it is important not to generalize the experiences or characteristics of the diverse set of women who become national leaders, there are observable similarities. As previously mentioned, female leaders must combat certain societal expectations; they are often associated with communal rather than agentic characteristics. These characteristics align with societal views of women as nurturers. Some women combat these expectations by embracing them. They may use the familiar language of motherhood and sisterhood to appeal to the electorate. These traditional roles can positively connect to the people.<sup>31</sup> However, other women use masculine leadership styles to reach top political office, like the aforementioned Margaret Thatcher. Furthermore, once in office, women may or may not help advance the cause of other female politicians. Many fail to improve the status of women during their time in office.<sup>32</sup> Instead of opening the government to women, they “pull up the ladder.” In fact, O'Brien et al. (2015) found that female leaders tend to appoint fewer women to cabinet positions. This presents an interesting situation; female leaders may feel constrained in their ability to appoint other women to powerful positions because they fear backlash or accusations of preferential treatment.

These assumptions about women and power manifest in two ways for female leaders. First, women are seen as having less potential for leadership because political leadership is associated with stereotypical male characteristics. Second, female leaders who violate the expectations of their gender can experience negative reactions as a result. For example, they are viewed as hostile or selfish and are assigned nicknames like “Iron Lady” or “Dragon Lady.” These nicknames specifically highlight the contrast between femininity and toughness, suggesting that a woman who earns the epithet deviates from the expectations of her gender.

There is a comparatively smaller body of literature about the traits of female executives and the systems in which they emerge. Jalalzai (2008) found

that women are more likely to be executives when they share power with men; they are more constrained, which may make the electorate more comfortable with their choice.<sup>33</sup> In these dual systems, women tend to be in the weaker position. Similarly, women are more likely to be prime ministers; this is one way to bypass a biased electorate.<sup>34</sup> Prime ministers are also seen as more collaborative; in unified parliamentary systems, legislature and executive power is joined, making cooperation key. Collaboration is a more feminized quality, so women may be viewed as more suitable for the position. Prime ministers are also more vulnerable than presidents; the former can be ousted not only by elections, but also by votes of no confidence. Having a female prime minister could therefore be considered less threatening than having a female president. Interestingly, lower GDI (lower gender parity) is associated with female executives. Jalalzai & Krook (2010) found that female executives tend to emerge in countries where the educational and economic status of women lags behind men. However, women who rise to power in these countries are likely to be better educated and more privileged than the women in the general population. Their elite status could mitigate the disadvantages of their gender.

Female leaders are also more likely than men to have family ties to power, often through a father or husband. Adler (1996) found that approximately one-third of female leaders had family connections to power, and almost all had their father or husband assassinated before they gained power.<sup>35</sup> These ties are especially important in Asia and Latin America. Female leaders who enter power after the death of a husband or father can be seen as symbols of legacy or unity. These women can build their political vision around these themes. Furthermore, Jalalzai and Krook (2010) found that, at the time of their article, no woman in Asia or Latin America had ever come to power without family ties.<sup>36</sup> These widows and daughters of political leaders (including Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka, Khaleda Zia of Bangladesh, Isabel Peron of Argentina, Indira Gandhi of India, and Benazir Bhutto of Bangladesh) were some of the first female leaders. Having these strong ties to former leaders helped them gain the trust and support of the electorate.<sup>37</sup> Their connection to power was one of the factors that contributed to their ability to break the glass ceiling in their country.

Societies also hold certain expectations regarding female leaders and their children. Gro Brundtland of Norway expressed that “there simply isn't time to

be a mother, wife, and a politician at the same time.”<sup>38</sup> This sentiment seems to be echoed in a Pew Research Center study which found that 49 percent of Americans believe that a woman's family responsibilities do not leave enough time for politics.<sup>39</sup> The same study found that 22 percent of the respondents believe that a woman with leadership aspirations would be best not to have children at all; 36 percent think she should have them early in her career, while 40 percent believe she should wait until she is well established. Although public opinion is divided over when she should have children, it seems to be the consensus that a woman must carefully plan her career around her offspring, an expectation that does not exist for men.

Women face a double standard around family and children when they are in the professional world or the public eye. In the business world, the motherhood penalty and fatherhood bonus coexist. Men are rewarded for having children; they are more likely to be hired and tend to be paid more than childless men. In contrast, women are punished; mothers, perceived as less competent, are less likely to be hired, are perceived as less competent, and tend to be paid less than childless women.<sup>40</sup> This could translate to politics; voters like to see a candidate that has family and children. It reflects the family values that voters themselves may hold. However, society expects the mother to bear the brunt of childcare, leading to the assumption that the female politician has too little time and energy for her family.<sup>41</sup> Thus, it appears that having a strong family support system would be necessary in order for a woman to take on the extremely demanding role of a political leader. It seems that women cannot win; when they have children, they are accused of failing to devote enough time to their families, but when they are childless, they are criticized for failing to fulfill their traditional roles. These criticisms come from both men and other women. For example, during the Conservative Party leadership race in the United Kingdom in 2016, Andrea Leadsom suggested that she would be a better prime minister than Theresa May because Leadsom was a mother, which she believed gave her a greater stake in the future and a stronger sense of empathy.<sup>42</sup> May was not criticized on her experience or policy position, but rather on her extremely personal decision not to have children. In conclusion, there is significant literature on female leaders, specifically about the various barriers to the entry of female political leaders and the traits of these leaders. However, there seems to be a gap regarding female leadership in democracies, which

involves a path to power fundamentally different from non-democracies.

#### COUNTRY-LEVEL QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS EMPIRICAL APPROACH

The data analysis focuses on the aspects of the countries where female leaders come into power. The unit of observation is the democratic country-year from 1960 to 2015. For the purpose of this analysis, a country is considered democratic if it had a Polity score greater than or equal to six in the year of the observation.<sup>43</sup> In total, there are 3,336 democratic country-years.

Given that certain variables may influence whether a female leader is elected and a different set of variables could influence her time in office, two dependent variables were considered: the onset of female leadership and the incidence of female leadership. Each dependent variable was tested relative to the hypotheses outlined in the following section. The onset variable captures the conditions for a female leader to be elected, limiting the observations to years in which leaders entered power. There are 786 democratic country-years between 1960 and 2015 in which a new leader entered power or a previous leader was reelected. A female leader entered office in fifty-two of these country-years. The incidence variable captures a leader staying in power. This variable includes all observations and denotes whether there was a male or female leader in power at the time. Logistic regression was used to analyze each set of hypotheses.

#### HYPOTHESES

This analysis investigates the question of whether there are certain characteristics of democracies which increase the likelihood that a female executive will come into power.

*Hypothesis 1: Female leaders are more likely when the fertility rate is lower.*

Total fertility rate, or the number of children that a woman would bear in accordance with the fertility rate of the year in consideration, was used to investigate this hypothesis.<sup>44</sup> A lower fertility rate suggests that women play a larger role outside of the household, rather than devoting their time to the private sphere. The lower fertility rate is also correlated with increased levels of female education, which would allow women to get the education necessary to enter political office and promote societies where women are understood as

intellectually equal to men.<sup>45</sup>

*Hypothesis 2: Female leaders are more likely when female enrollment in secondary school is higher.*

This variable captures the proportion of female students enrolled in secondary education, compared to male students. Having a larger proportion of female secondary school students means that more women are being educated and given opportunities outside the private sphere. Additionally, having equal numbers of male and female students entering secondary education could reduce bias as male students would interact with their female peers and understand that they are academic equals. This measure of female education is used because it is a relative measure, rather than an absolute measure (such as mean years of schooling.) This captures how female students get an education relative to their male peers, rather than how their education compares to female students in other countries.

*Hypothesis 3: Female leaders are more likely the longer women have had the right to vote.*

Suffrage is the most basic level of entry to the political system. Thus, it can be assumed that after their initial entrance, women will gain more and more access to the political system as time passes. In societies where women have had the right to vote for a longer period, young women are taught that they are an important part of the political community, which could help address the supply side of the representation problem.

*Hypothesis 4: Female leaders are less likely when the country is in conflict.*

In times of conflict, a country looks to a strong and dependable leader. Older and more masculine leaders are preferred during times of war.<sup>46</sup> War is traditionally a masculine practice, fought and directed primarily by men and involves stereotypically male traits, such as aggression or physical strength. Women are viewed as less competent in the fields of national security and defense.<sup>47</sup> Thus, voters are less likely turn towards female leaders during times of conflict.

*Hypothesis 5: Female leaders are less likely when the country has previously been in conflict.*

After conflict, the country may rely on a strong leader

to help them rebuild. Conflict is primary perceived through a male lens because soldiers and military leadership are overwhelmingly men and this lens can persist after conflict.<sup>48</sup> Voters may seek leaders who have experienced the conflict and can alleviate societal feelings of insecurity. This could result in the election of male leaders, rather than female leaders.

*Hypothesis 6: Female leaders are more likely when the position of head of government is a premiership.*

Compared to presidents, prime ministers are more constrained political actors. Prime ministers, selected by parties, are answerable to the legislature; presidents, popularly elected, are independent of the legislature.<sup>49</sup> The latter are expected to have independent, decisive leadership styles, which are traditionally associated with masculinity.<sup>50</sup> Thus, it is hypothesized that female leaders are more likely to be prime ministers because the position is granted less independence than the presidency.

*Hypothesis 7: Female leaders are more likely in dual systems.*

Many countries have dual executives. For example, France has both a president (head of state) and a prime minister (head of government). In a dual system, the leader can be seen as having less power, which could make a country more comfortable with a female leader.

*Hypothesis 8: Female leaders are less likely in unified presidential systems.*

In a unified presidential system, the constituency of the executive is the entire country, meaning that a female candidate needs to overcome the bias of a larger set of voters. Presidents also have a significant amount of power and are less beholden to the legislature, making them less constrained than prime ministers.

#### OVERVIEW OF VARIABLES

The following independent variables are of interest:

- Descriptive variables: Country name, Year.
- Dichotomous region variables for North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia, and Oceania. Figure 5 displays the distribution of observations across each region; Europe has the highest number of democratic country-years.

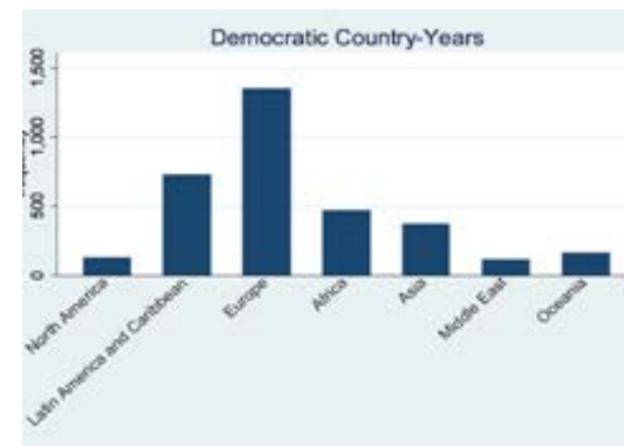


Figure 5

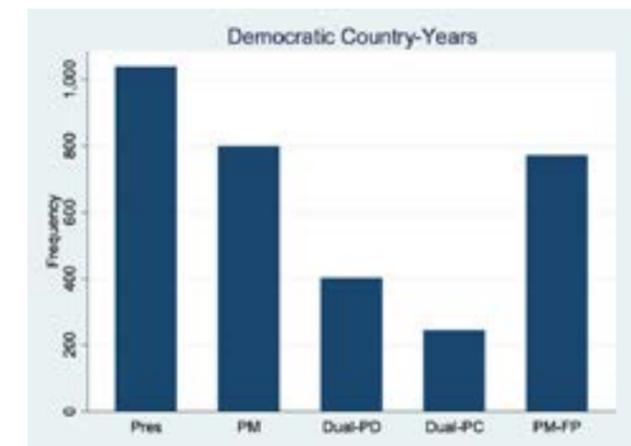


Figure 6

- *Polity*: Polity score for the year obtained from the Polity IV Project.<sup>51</sup> Observations with Polity scores greater than or equal to six were included in the dataset. 44.8 percent of the observations have a Polity score of ten, indicating full democracy.
- *GDP*: real GDP per capita, constant 2010 USD; data from the World Bank Development Indicators.<sup>52</sup>
- *Government Type*: variable classifying the type of government, based on the executive. Data obtained from “Women Rule: Shattering the Executive Glass Ceiling.”<sup>53</sup> Figure 6 displays the distribution of country-years across the categories. The categories are:
  - Unified presidential: an elected president who is not answerable to the legislature (e.g. United States).
  - Unified parliamentary: an appointed prime minister who is answerable to the legislature (e.g. United Kingdom).
  - Parliamentary-presidential dominant: power is shared between the prime minister and president, but the president is dominant (e.g. South Korea).
  - Parliamentary-presidential corrective: power is shared between the prime minister and president; the prime minister is more influential, but the president still has considerable power (e.g. Croatia).
  - Parliamentary with figurehead president: the prime minister is dominant; the president is very weak (e.g. Italy).

- *Powerful president*: dichotomous variable coded as one if Government Type is classified as unified presidential. Thirty-one percent of country-years have executives that are considered powerful presidents. Women are in power for 7.23 percent of the 1,038 country-years in which the executive is a powerful president. They are in power for 6.40 percent of the country-years in which the executive is not a powerful presidency.
- *Dual*: dichotomous variable; coded one if the leader is part of a dual executive, i.e. when the *Government Type* is classified as parliamentary-presidential dominant, parliamentary-presidential corrective, or parliamentary with a figurehead president. Forty-five percent of country-years have executives that are considered dual. Female leaders are in power for 6.53 percent of the 1,500 country-years in which the executive is classified as a dual executive and 6.75 percent of the country-years in which the executive is a non-dual executive.
- *Prime minister*: dichotomous variable; coded one if the head of government is a prime minister. Data obtained from the UN Protocol and Liaison Service.<sup>54</sup> Approximately 68 percent of the observations are prime ministers.
- *Female vote*: year in which women obtain the right to vote. Data obtained from “Women Rule: Shattering the Executive Glass Ceiling.”<sup>55</sup>
- *Female vote length*: years since women obtain the right to vote, calculated by subtracting the year in which women are granted the right to vote from the year being considered in the observation.
- *Female Enrollment in Secondary School*: percent of secondary school students who are female. Data

obtained from the World Bank Development Indicators.<sup>56</sup> Missing data points were interpolated.

- *Fertility rate*: average number of children per woman. Data obtained from the World Bank Development Indicators.<sup>57</sup>
- *Conflict incidence*: dichotomous variable; coded one if there is an armed conflict in the country in the year being considered. Data obtained from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program. Armed conflict is defined as having more than twenty-five battle-related deaths in a calendar year.<sup>58</sup> Twelve percent of the country-years in the dataset are coded as being in conflict.
- *Past conflict*: dichotomous variable; coded one if the country has been in conflict in the past five years and missing if the country is currently in conflict. Data obtained from the UCDP.<sup>59</sup> There is past conflict in 6.5 percent of the country-years in the dataset.

Two dependent variables are used to study female leaders.

- *Onset of female leader possible*: dichotomous variable; coded one if a female leader enters power in the year being considered, zero if a male leader enters office, and missing if no leader enters office. There is an election or re-election of a leader in 786 of the 3,336 country years; women enter power 6.62 percent of the democratic country-years in this category.
- *Female leader incidence*: dichotomous variable; coded one if a female leader is in power during the country-year being considered. Women are in power for 6.65 percent of the 3,336 country-years in the dataset.

OVERVIEW OF VARIABLES

Logistic regression was used to analyze the data; two models were created for each dependent variable. Models One and Three include the independent variables; Models Two and Four add GDP and region controls. For the regional controls, Europe is excluded since it is used as the baseline. Table 1 shows the two logistic regression models for the onset of female leaders.

Female Leadership: Onset		
	Model 1	Model 2
Fertility Rate	0.120 (0.68)	0.099 (0.47)
Female Enrollment in Secondary School	0.002 (0.04)	-0.012 (0.57)
Female Vote Length	0.034 (3.49)**	0.032 (2.66)**
Conflict: Past	0.059 (0.07)	-0.197 (0.24)
Prime Minister	1.799 (2.32)*	2.073 (1.74)
Dual Pres/PM	-0.000 (0.00)	0.829 (1.27)
Powerful President	1.840 (2.34)*	1.823 (1.98)*
Real GDP per capita, constant 2010 USD		0.000 (1.79)
North America		0.786 (0.69)
Africa		1.176 (1.08)
Asia		1.350 (2.11)*
Oceania		0.885 (0.98)
Latin America and Caribbean		1.902 (2.44)*
Constant	-7.099 (2.95)**	-8.062 (3.97)**
N	648	603

\* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01

Table 1

In Model One (without controls), female vote length is significant and positive at p<0.01, while prime minister and powerful president are significant and positive at p<0.05. In Model Two (with controls), prime minister loses significance, with female vote length and powerful president remaining significant at p<0.01 and p<0.05, respectively. Of the controls, Latin America & the Caribbean and Asia are positive and significant (p<0.05), suggesting that the onset of female leaders is more likely in these regions compared to the baseline region of Europe. Fertility rate, female entrance to secondary school, current conflict, past conflict, and dual executive are not significant in either of the models, so Hypotheses 1, 2, 4, 5, or 7 are not supported.

Female vote length is positive and significant with and without controls. This suggests that the election of female executives is more likely the longer that women have the right to vote, which supports Hypothesis 3. Figure 7 shows the margins for values of female vote length between ten years and fifty years, with all other variables being held at their means.

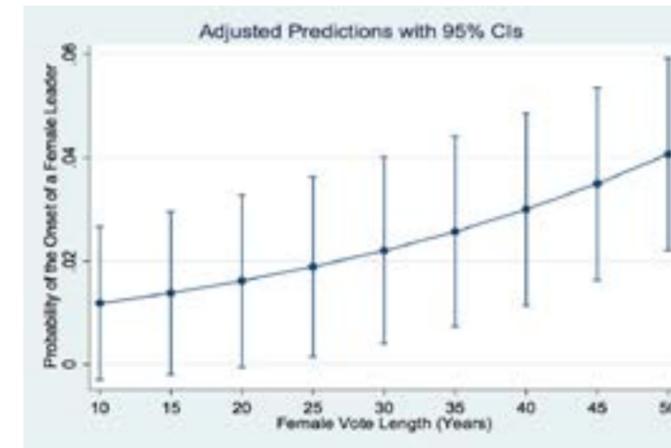


Figure 7

Female vote length is positive and significant with and without controls. This suggests that the election of female executives is more likely the longer that women have the right to vote, which supports Hypothesis 3. Figure 7 shows the margins for values of female vote length between ten years and fifty years, with all other variables being held at their means.

Prime minister is significant without controls, but loses significance when controls are added. Thus, Hypothesis 6 is not supported, presenting an interesting deviation from the literature. Finally, powerful president is positive and significant with and without controls, suggesting that female heads of government are more likely when the position is a powerful presidency. This is the opposite of Hypothesis 8. Additionally, this effect is substantial. If all other variables are held at their means, there is a 13.7 percent likelihood of a female leader when the position is a powerful presidency. If it is not, the likelihood of a female leader drops to 2.5 percent. Thus, onset of female leadership in democracy is positively impacted by the length of time women have the right to vote and whether the position is a powerful presidency.

Table 2 displays the two logistic regression models for the incidence of female leadership. In Model Three, female vote length, past conflict, prime minister, and powerful president are significant (p<0.01). When controls are added, female enrollment in secondary school gains significance (p<0.05), prime minister loses significance, and dual executive gains significance (p<0.01). Of the controls, Asia, Oceania, and Latin America and the Caribbean are significant and positive (p<0.01), showing that female leaders are more likely in these regions than in the baseline region

of Europe.

Female Leadership: Incidence		
	Model 3	Model 4
Fertility Rate	0.043 (0.58)	0.102 (1.08)
Female Enrollment in Secondary School	-0.011 (1.26)	-0.018 (2.19)*
Female Vote Length	0.031 (6.54)**	0.029 (5.34)**
Conflict: Past	1.161 (4.40)**	1.050 (3.78)**
Prime Minister	1.532 (3.08)**	0.939 (1.51)
Dual Pres/PM	0.355 (1.61)	1.339 (3.82)**
Powerful President	2.165 (4.14)**	2.310 (4.25)**
Real GDP per capita, constant 2010 USD		0.000 (5.03)**
North America		-1.407 (1.36)
Africa		0.408 (0.81)
Asia		2.378 (7.70)**
Oceania		1.458 (3.28)**
Latin America and Caribbean		1.464 (3.89)**
Constant	-6.211 (6.89)**	-7.503 (7.89)**
N	2,737	2,628

\* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01

Table 2

GDP per capita is also significant when added as a control. As shown in Figure 8, the likelihood of the incidence of a female leader when the GDP per capita is \$5,000 is 2.4 percent. When GDP increased to \$65,000, the likelihood increases to 16.7 percent. This demonstrates that wealthier democracies are more likely to have a female leader in power. It is interesting to note that GDP per capita is not significant in the onset model.

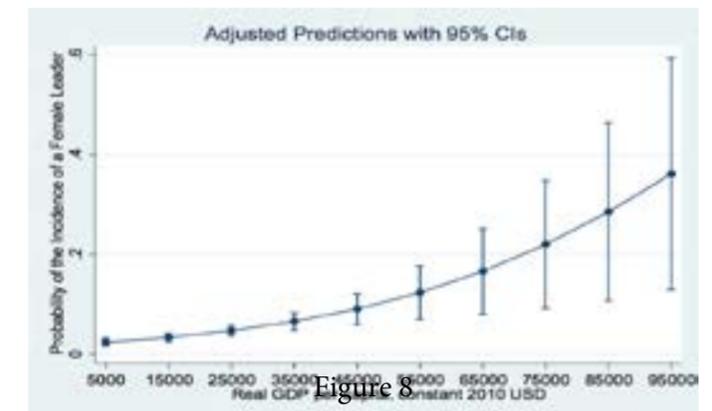


Figure 8

Because fertility rate and current conflict are not significant in either of the models, Hypotheses 1 and 4 are not supported. Female enrollment in secondary school is significant and negative when controls are added, suggesting that higher female enrollment in secondary education is negatively correlated with the incidence of female leaders. This is the opposite of Hypothesis 2. Figure 9 shows that when all other variables are held at their means and female enrollment in secondary school is at 20 percent, the likelihood of the incidence of female leadership is 6.3 percent. When female enrollment rises to 50 percent, the likelihood drops to 4.6 percent. It seems counter-intuitive that female leaders are less likely in countries where there is relative parity in secondary education enrollment. This could indicate that the women who enter power in countries with lower gender equality are part of the elite, allowing them to attain political office without being negatively impacted by the status of women in their country.

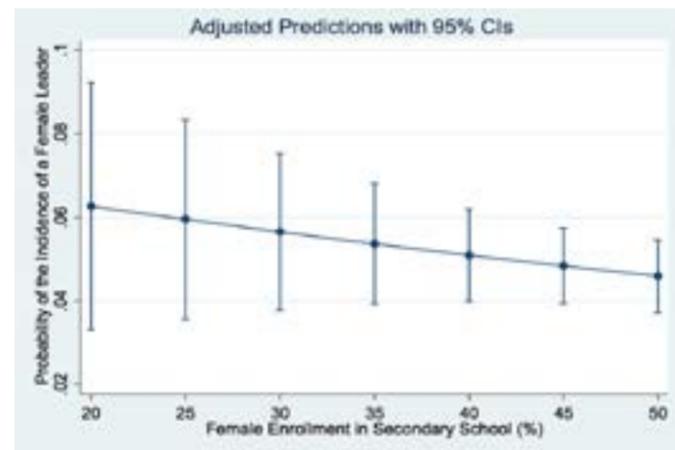


Figure 9

Like in the models for the onset of female leaders, female vote length is significant and positive with and without controls. The longer women have the right to vote, the more likely a female executive is to be in power. This is consistent with Hypothesis 3. When female vote length is ten years, the likelihood of the onset of a female leader is 1.25 percent; when female vote length increases to fifty years, the likelihood of the onset of a female leader increases to 4.11 percent. The effect of female vote length is approximately equal on both incidence and onset of female leadership. The margins for a vote length of fifty years on female leader onset was 4.08 percent, compared to 4.11 percent on female leader incidence.

Relative to incidence of female leadership, past conflict is also positive and significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) with and without controls. This suggests that if there has been a conflict in the country in the last five years, the country is more likely to have a female leader. This is opposite of Hypothesis 5. When there is recent conflict, there is a 12.7 percent likelihood of incidence of female leadership. When there is not, the likelihood drops to 4.4 percent.

Prime minister is significant and positive with-out controls, but loses significance when controls are added. This is the same pattern observed in the onset models. Thus, Hypothesis 6 is not supported. Dual executive is significant and positive when controls are added, suggesting that a female head of government is more likely when the position is part of a dual executive. This supports Hypothesis 7. If all other variables are held at their means, the likelihood of the incidence of a female leader if the position is part of a dual executive is 5.7 percent. This likelihood drops to 4.1 percent if the position is a unified presidency or unified premiership.

Finally, powerful president is significant and positive with and without controls, meaning that a female leader is more likely if the position is a powerful presidency. When the position is a powerful presidency, the likelihood of the incidence of a female leader is 17.7 percent. When it is not, the likelihood drops to 2.4 percent. This meant that the powerful presidency position has a stronger effect on the incidence of female leadership than the onset. Like the findings from the analysis of female leader onset, this is the opposite of Hypothesis 8. Thus, the incidence of female leadership is positively influenced by the length of time women have the right to vote, when there is past conflict, when the position is a dual executive, and when the position is a powerful presidency. It is negatively influenced by female enrollment in secondary education. Table 3 summarizes the findings for each hypothesis across the two dependent variables, focusing on the models that include controls.

	Female Leader Onset	Female Leader Incidence
H1: Fertility rate	Not significant	Not significant
H2: Female enrollment in secondary education	Not significant	Negative and significant
H3: Female vote length	Positive and significant	Positive and significant
H4: Current conflict	Not significant	Not significant
H5: Past conflict	Not significant	Positive and significant
H6: Prime minister	Not significant	Not significant
H7: Dual executive	Not significant	Positive and significant
H8: Powerful president	Positive and significant	Positive and significant

Table 3

**LEADER-LEVEL QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS  
EMPIRICAL APPROACH**

The second part of the data analysis focuses on the individual experiences of leaders prior to entering power, specifically whether there is a difference between the experiences of male and female leaders and first female and subsequent female leaders. The unit of observation is the individual leader in democracies from 1960 to 2015. A country is considered democratic if it had a Polity score greater than or equal to six in the year in which the leader entered power.

To create a dataset to compare male and female leaders, the Nearest Neighbor Matching Technique was used.<sup>60</sup> The original dataset contained 883 leaders (827 men and 56 women). Because the focus of this section is on the experience of leaders prior to entering top office, the first observation for each leader was used; subsequent observations were dropped. For example, Indira Gandhi entered power twice, once in 1966 and once in 1970. Only the 1966 observation was used. After dropping duplicate leaders, the dataset contained 765 leaders (718 men and 47 women). To create groups of equal size, male leaders were matched to female leaders based on the Polity score and the GDP per capita of their country in the year in which they entered office. Because the leaders were matched using Polity score, certain countries were excluded. Polity scores were only calculated for countries with populations exceeding 500,000; therefore, leaders from these countries were dropped.<sup>61</sup>

After matching, both groups had forty-seven leaders. Several countries, such as Iceland and the Bahamas, have had female leaders, but did not meet the Polity population threshold. Thus, these female leaders were not included in the analysis. After leaders were matched, two-sample t-tests for group means were used to compare the groups. First female leaders

were also compared to non-first female leaders. There were thirty-eight first female leaders and nine non-first female leaders.

**HYPOTHESES**

This analysis investigates the question of whether there are major differences between male and female leaders and whether there are differences between the first female leader of a country and subsequent female leaders. Comparing first female to non-first female leaders would demonstrate whether there is a difference in how female leaders enter top office after the glass ceiling within a country has been broken. These hypotheses are related to the characteristics of the female executives and investigate whether certain mechanisms help women overcome bias and become executives. These mechanisms include previous experience and family ties.

*Hypothesis 9a: Female leaders are less likely to have children than male leaders.*

*Hypothesis 9b: First female leaders are more likely to have children than non-first female leaders.*

Female leaders are hypothesized to be less likely to have children. Advancement in a demanding career is more difficult with family obligations and the expectations associated with motherhood. Women are expected to be the primary provider of childcare; this is especially true in countries with traditional gender roles. In contrast, men are expected to have a wife to take care of their children, giving them the flexibility to pursue more demanding careers. However, first female leaders are hypothesized to be more likely to have children than non-first female leaders. For these initial leaders, conforming to societal standards of womanhood may be more important to gain the trust and support of a potentially biased electorate. It could be that subsequent female leaders are less beholden to those standards.

*Hypothesis 10a: Female leaders tend to have more political experience, including at lower levels, than male leaders prior to entering office.*

*Hypothesis 10b: Female leaders tend to have more political experience, including at lower levels, than male leaders prior to entering office.*

This hypothesis was tested using two variables: the lower level political experience of the leader and the

total years of political experience. One mechanism of overcoming voter bias could be having significant and demonstrable experience in the political arena, potentially at a local or provincial level in addition to the federal level. Having significant experience is a way for a female politician to show her political competence and gain the trust of her constituents. Lower-level experience is a potential method to prove to party gatekeepers that she can get and maintain public support. Additionally, it could be that women feel the need to obtain more experience prior to entering a top position, as has been observed in the private sector.<sup>62</sup> Women may be less likely to run for president or party leader if they have not climbed the hierarchy and obtained sufficient political experience. First female leaders are hypothesized to be more likely to have lower-level political experience because of the necessity of breaking the glass ceiling in their country. Winning the support of lower-level constituencies could demonstrate to the larger electorate that the candidate is strong, hence having a proven track record could be important. Subsequent female leaders may have to face less bias, and thus may not have to work their way up through the political hierarchy.

*Hypothesis 11: Female leaders are more likely to have family ties.*

Family ties are a different mechanism of gaining credibility in the eyes of a constituency. Having these ties endows a female leader with a reputation of her father, husband, or other close relatives that come before her. These ties allow the constituency to trust the leader, even if she is unfamiliar to them. In societies with strong political gatekeepers, these ties may be a way to circumvent traditional party structures. A woman with family ties has the name recognition and trust that she may have otherwise obtained from political experience.

*Hypothesis 12: Female leaders are more likely to enter power when the Polity score is higher.*

A higher Polity score means that the country is closer to a full democracy; increased gender equality is closely related to democratization.<sup>63</sup> Countries with high Polity scores are further down the path of democratization, and may therefore be more likely to choose a female leader.

*Hypothesis 13: Female leaders are more likely to enter power when GDP per capita is higher.*

A higher GDP per capita indicates a more economically developed country; there is a correlation between GDP per capita and gender equality.<sup>64</sup> This suggests that wealthier countries would be more likely to have a female leader.

OVERVIEW OF VARIABLES

In this section of the data analysis, data on individual leaders were collected from various biographical sources. Certain country-level indicators were also used. The following independent variables are of interest:

- Descriptive variables: country name, leader name, entrance year.
- Dichotomous region variables for North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia and Oceania. Figure 10 displays the distribution of leaders across each region; the largest number of female leaders is in Europe, followed by Latin American and the Caribbean.



Figure 10

- *Female*: dichotomous variable; coded one if the leader is female.
- *Polity*: Polity score in the year the leader enters power.
- *GDP*: GDP per capita (real GDP per capita, constant 2010 USD) in the year the leader enters power. Data obtained from the World Bank Development

Indicators.<sup>65</sup>

- *Family ties*: dichotomous variable; coded one if the leader has family members who have been in power; data obtained from the Archigos Dataset.<sup>66</sup>
- *Total political experience*: years of political experience prior to the leader entering top political office. Relevant political experience includes any elected or appointed positions in the executive, judicial, or legislative fields. Figure 11 displays the distribution of political experience for the matched male and female leaders.

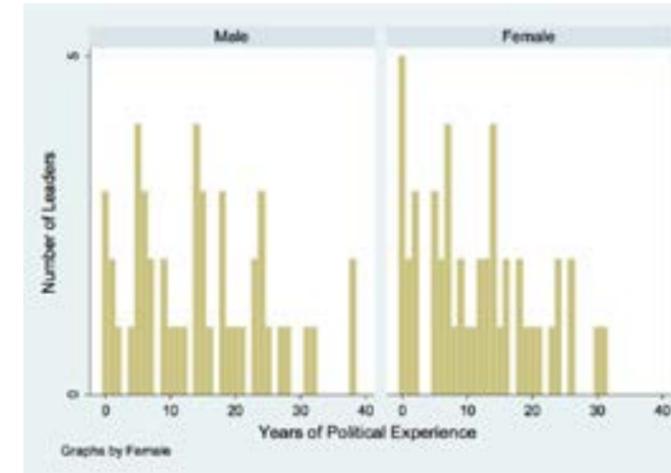


Figure 11

- *Local experience*: dichotomous variable; coded one if the leader has prior experience at the local level (city council, mayor, etc.). In the matched groups, approximately 25 percent of both male and female leaders have experience at the local level.
- *State experience*: dichotomous variable; coded one if the leader has prior experience at the state or provincial level. Similar to the local level, approximately the same proportion of male and female leaders (15 percent of each group) have experience at the state level.
- *Federal experience*: dichotomous variable; coded one if the leader has prior experience at the federal level. The majority of each group have prior federal experience (94 percent of male leaders, 90 percent of female leaders).
- *Lower-level experience*: dichotomous variable; coded one if the leader has prior experience at the state or local level. This variable takes into consideration that some systems lack a state level of government. The same proportion of each group (32 percent) has some type of lower level political experience.

- *First female*: dichotomous variable; coded one if the leader is the first female leader of her state, zero if she is not, and missing if the leader is male. Eighty-one percent of female leaders in the dataset are first female leaders.
- *Children*: dichotomous variable; coded one if the leader has children. Approximately 75 percent of female leaders have children, compared to 90 percent of male leaders.

RESULTS

Male and female leaders were compared using two-sample t-tests for group means. Two groups, each containing forty-seven leaders, were created by matching all female leaders from 1960 to 2015 with similar male leaders using the Nearest Neighbor Method. The leaders were matched based on GDP per capita and Polity score in the year they entered power. Additionally, female leaders who were the first female head of government were also compared to female leaders who were not the first. There was a total of thirty-eight first female leaders and nine non-first female leaders. Table 4 shows the results of the two-sample t-tests for group means, while Table 5 shows the results comparing first female leaders and non-first females. Table 6 displays the analysis of the unmatched data using two-sample t-tests for group means. This allows the variables used to match the leaders (GDP per capita and Polity score) to be compared.

Variable	Female Average	Male Average	Significant?
Political experience	11.55 years	14.44 years	No
Lower level political experience	0.32	0.32	No
Children	0.74	0.89	Yes (p<0.10)
Levels of political experience	1.30	1.36	No
Family ties	0.21	0.06	Yes (p<0.05)

Table 4

Variable	Female Average	Non-first Female Average	Significant?
Political experience	9.92 years	18.44 years	Yes (p<0.01)
Lower level political experience	0.26	0.55	Yes (p<0.10)
Children	0.76	0.66	No
Levels of political experience	1.18	1.78	Yes (p<0.05)
Family ties	0.21	0.22	No

Table 5

Variable	Female average	Male average	Significant?
GDP per capita	\$22,863.87	\$15,337.09	Yes (p<0.01)
Polity	8.68	8.63	No

Table 6

Hypothesis 9a is supported; female leaders are less likely than male leaders to have children, with significance at the  $p < 0.10$  level. Hypothesis 9b is not supported. There is no significant difference between first female and non-first female leaders in terms of having children. Hypotheses 10a is not supported; there is no significant difference in lower-level political experience or years of political experience between men and women. However, Hypothesis 10b is partially supported. Although there is no significant difference in lower level political experience, first female leaders have significantly less experience than non-first females, an average of 9.92 years as compared to 18.44 years. When the data is examined more closely, it reveals that all non-first female leader have more than seven years of prior political experience. In contrast, 13 percent of the first female leaders have no prior political experience. The non-first female leader sample size is relatively small, but this is nonetheless an interesting finding.

Hypothesis 11 is supported; women are significantly more likely to come to power with family ties (0.21 vs. 0.06 for men). However, when looking more closely, it appears that this effect is largely driven by samples of female leaders in Asia. For all the other regions, the difference between male and female leaders who have strong family ties is not significant. Hypothesis 12 is not supported; there is no significant difference in the Polity scores of the countries in the year women come into power. Finally, Hypothesis 13 is supported; the countries in which women come to

power tend to have higher GDP per capita. The average GDP per capita for the countries where women come to power is \$22,863.87, compared to \$15,337.09 for men. This indicates that women are more likely to be leaders in countries with higher levels of economic development.

#### DISCUSSION COUNTRY-LEVEL

The empirical analysis shows that the likelihood of a female executive is larger in countries where women have the right to vote for a longer period of time and those where the executive is a unified presidency. However, the models for analyzing the incidence of female leaders are significantly different. While these models agree that a female head of government is more likely when women have had the voting rights for a longer period of time, it suggests the likelihood is larger when the country has been in recent conflict, and when female enrollment in secondary schools is lower. It also suggests that female leadership is more likely when the position is a unified presidency and when it is part of a dual executive. The difference between these two dependent variables is proposed that certain variables matter more for a female leader remaining in power, while certain variables matter more for her entrance into power. One of the interesting differences is the significance of a dual executive for incidence, but not onset; this is a structural factor of the democracy but is shown to matter more for keeping a female leader in power rather than getting her into power.

Just as interesting are the variables that are not significant or lose significance when GDP and regional controls are added. Fertility rate, current conflict, and the position of prime minister fail to obtain importance in any of the models with controls. The fertility rate result is consistent with findings about female legislators. Oakes & Almquist (1993) found that lower fertility rates do not increase the likelihood of women in national legislatures.<sup>67</sup> It appears that this may also apply to women in the executive. The impact of fertility rate, which is often used as a proxy for female involvement outside of the private sphere, could also be influenced by the fact that many female leaders in developing countries are from elite families. These families can afford a high-quality education for their daughters, who are not nearly as constrained by expectations of marrying and having children or working in labor intensive jobs. For example, Benazir Bhutto, the first female prime minister of Pakistan, attended Harvard

University and Oxford University; Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, the former president of the Philippines, went to Georgetown University.<sup>68</sup> Thus, the type of women who are more likely to rise to top political office are those who are less affected by gender expectations of their home country.

Current conflict is not significant, suggesting that female leaders are no more or less likely in times of war. This is an interesting deviation from existing literature, which holds that female leaders are viewed as less competent in the fields of national security and defense, and hence suggests that countries would prefer male leaders in times of conflict. However, it is important to note that both female leaders and conflict incidence are relatively rare phenomena. Perhaps when the set of female leaders has expanded, better conclusions can be drawn about their relationship to ruling during conflict.

Prime minister is one of the most intriguing variables that fail to gain significance. Without controlled GDP and region, the variable is positive and significant, which is consistent with the hypothesis and existing literature. However, with controls, it loses significance. Most literature finds that women are more likely to come to power in premiership due to the more constrained nature of the position and a smaller electorate. This deviation could stem from the fact that the Archigos dataset considers only the effective leader of a country, who, in many systems with dual executives, is the president. For example, Edith Cresson was the prime minister of France from 1991 to 1992 and Kazimira Prunskienė was prime minister of Lithuania from 1990 to 1991. However, neither leader was included in the analysis because the Archigos dataset designed these two as the effective leaders. Thus, the use of a Archigos dataset could explain the deviation from literature because a different set of female leaders was considered.

Meanwhile, several variables are significant in the opposite direction as hypothesized. For both onset and incidence, female leaders are more likely when the executive position is a unified presidency. The effect is large; for onset, the likelihood of a female leader in a unified presidential executive is 13.7 percent when all other variables are held at their means. This is compared to 2.5 percent when the position is not a unified presidency. For incidence, the effect is 17.7 percent, compared to 2.4 percent when the position is not a unified presidency. This is opposite to the hypothesis that predicts that female leaders are less likely in sys-

tems where the executive is a unified presidency. This finding has positive implications for female leadership as it suggests that women are holding more powerful positions than previously expected.

The significance of female vote length is as anticipated: the longer period women have had the right to vote, the higher likelihood of having a female executive. The effect is slightly larger for incidence of leadership. Interestingly, the effect is significant only after twenty-five years for the onset of female leadership. Twenty-five years is approximately one generation, which could be the length of time necessary to affect change in the political socialization of the country. Women who were children when females were granted suffrage grew up to elect and become female legislators and executives themselves. Change in the way a society perceives who can and cannot be effective politicians takes time. The fact that vote length has a positive and significant effect on the onset and incidence of female leadership is encouraging. As each year passes, these findings suggest that more and more women should be elected into top political office.

Past conflict is positive and significant for female leader incidence, suggesting the opposite of the hypothesis which predicts that female leaders are less likely when there is conflict. However, this phenomenon could be explained by the idea of women as peacemakers—the gendered stereotype of communal female characteristics could be beneficial in post-conflict states. At this point, it is time for the country to rebuild, reach compromises, and build consensus; women have proven that they are skilled at crossing party lines and building collaborative and inclusive governments.<sup>69</sup> These skills are invaluable in a post-conflict leadership role. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan stated that “for generations, women have served as peace educators, both in their families and in societies.”<sup>70</sup> It makes sense to extend this role of a nurturer and peace-maker to the highest political position after the country has suffered discord.

Having a dual executive is significant in the expected direction for female leader incidence. This supports the initial predictions that voters would be more comfortable electing a woman to a constrained position. Finally, female enrollment in secondary education is significant opposite to the prediction for female leader incidence. The data suggest that females are more likely to be in power in countries with lower female enrollment in secondary education. This is consistent with some literature, which has found that

female executives often emerge in countries where women's economic and educational statuses lag behind men.<sup>71</sup> Additionally, as Jalalzai (2008) found, female executives tend to have elite backgrounds, allowing them to access levels and quality of education that may be inaccessible to others in their country.<sup>72</sup> The general state of gender equality may be less important to predicting the rise of these women, especially if they have family ties to power and are viewed to some extent as extensions of their fathers or husbands. Finally, two regions (Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia) are significant for both onset and incidence. Female leaders are more likely in these areas than in the baseline region of Europe. In general, Europe and the Western regions are viewed as most advanced in terms of democracy and gender equality. However, these findings show that more recently democratized and developed regions are making strides towards the equal access of political power for men and women. One explanation for the prevalence of female leaders in Latin America is the widespread use of gender quotas. At this point, all Latin American countries (excluding Guatemala and Venezuela) have gender quotas that most adopted in the late 1990s.<sup>73</sup> Because these laws require that political parties nominate a certain percentage of women to run for the legislature, they help women get their foot in the door of electoral politics by reducing the likelihood their candidacy will be thrown out by party gatekeepers. They also allow women to gain relevant experience. As proved by the data, leaders tend to have more than ten years of political experience prior to entering power; quotas help women gain political experience. However, quotas are less prevalent in Asia, suggesting that other mechanisms may be at work. Another explanation could be the prevalence of family ties to power: as previously mentioned, as of 2010, no female leader in Latin America or Asia had come to power without family ties.<sup>74</sup> In these two regions, these ties could be one mechanism that facilitates a woman's ascent to power.

#### LEADER-LEVEL

The empirical analysis at the individual leader level reveals fewer differences between male and female leaders than hypothesized. The only significant differences are the number of children, the likelihood of family ties, and the country's GDP per capita. From this data analysis, a female leader would be most likely to come to power if she does not have children or family ties, and if her country has a moderately high GDP

per capita.

Interestingly, there are no significant differences between male and female leaders in terms of their prior political experience. Both groups average between 10 and 15 years of prior experience; neither group is significantly more likely to have experience at a lower level of government. This prior political experience is proposed as a potential mechanism for overcoming the bias of the electorate; it is predicted that a woman who has substantial relevant experience would be viewed as a more competent leader. However, it appears that women are not judged more harshly than their male counterparts in terms of experience; female leaders do not need to have more experience to come into power.

Another predicted mechanism for gaining the trust and counteracting the bias of voters is family ties; the data analysis reveals that women are significantly more likely to have family ties than men. Like previously mentioned, that effect is largely driven by Asian leaders. To determine whether family ties can substitute for experience, a two-sample t-test was run on the female leaders, comparing those with family ties to those without. The difference between the groups is significant; female leaders with family ties average 6.8 years of political experience, while those without 12.8 years. This supports the idea that the two mechanisms could substitute for each other. Women with family ties are granted the trust that the public once had in their father or husband. Women who lack those family ties must prove their abilities by gaining relevant political experience, just like men. Both men and women without family ties tend to have around 11 to 15 years of political experience prior to entering top office, which is plenty of time to prove one's leadership capability.

There is a distinct difference between male and female leaders in terms of having children—female leaders are less likely to have children. This is consistent with the hypothesis and existing literature: a high demanding job, such as top political office or the experience required to get to this office, makes raising children difficult, especially when society expects the mother to do the majority of the work. This finding about leaders in the political arena is consistent with data from other areas, including academia. Female professors without children and male professors are 33 percent more likely to get tenure-track positions than women with children.<sup>75</sup> Society may assume that a mother needs to focus her energy and time on her

offspring; if society transitions to placing more equal division of the parenting responsibility between men and women, perhaps this leadership gap can be narrowed.

There are more differences between first female leaders and non-first female leaders than observed between male and female leaders. First female leaders tend to have significantly less prior political experience. This would suggest that instead of having political experience, these first female leaders gain the trust and confidence of their voters through other mechanisms, such as having family ties. However, first female leaders are no more likely to have family ties than non-first female leaders. Further research would be required to determine why first female leaders average half of the prior political experience than non-first female leaders (9.92 years compared to 18.44 years). There could be another mechanism at play unrelated to experience or family ties to power. Furthermore, non-first female leaders are much more likely to have lower levels of political experience, which could be the result of the political system becoming more open to women. This could indicate that once the glass ceiling has been broken, women are more willing to enter electoral politics or political gatekeepers are more open to female candidates. Finally, there is no significant difference between first female and non-first female leaders in terms of having children. This suggests that the expectation of children is not imposed on first female leaders any more than on non-first female leaders.

#### CASE STUDY

The findings from the two quantitative data analyses can be put into context using a case study examining the United States and the United Kingdom. The United States has never elected a female leader, while the United Kingdom elected Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and Theresa May in 2016. Socially, the two countries are very similar. They share a language and many values due to their close relationship and colonial heritage. The quantitative analysis focuses primarily on the factors that could influence how voters saw the leader and her position as public opinion is key to the election of leaders in democratic states. Voters are one form of political gatekeepers but there are other different gatekeepers embedded in the party or political structures of a country. The following case study compares the two countries, focusing both on the variables examined during the quantitative analysis and on the key political gatekeepers.

In the 2005-2009 wave of the World Values Survey, which is the most recent wave to include both the United States and the United Kingdom, the two countries were found to have very similar attitudes towards female leaders. When asked whether they think men make better political leaders, 72.3 percent of Brits and 73.8 percent of Americans responded "disagree" or "strongly disagree."<sup>76</sup> This suggests that voters in the two countries have similar views about women and political leadership. Both countries have Polity scores of 10 and a long history of democracy; women gained the right to vote in 1918 in the United Kingdom and in 1920 in the United States. Finally, the countries are both strong economies with relatively equal GDP per capita values; in 2015, the GDP per capita of the United States was \$51,638.10, while the UK's was \$41,182.60.<sup>77</sup>

The major political difference between the two countries is the type of government. The United States is a unified presidency, with the American president serving as both the head of state and head of government. The United Kingdom is a unified parliamentary system with a constitutional monarchy; the monarch is the head of state, while the prime minister is the head of government and effective ruler. Neither system can be considered a dual executive according to the coding used in this dataset. According to the quantitative analysis, the United States should be slightly more likely to elect a female leader due to its government being a unified presidency. However, the United States has never elected a female president; in contrast, the United Kingdom has had two female prime ministers.

Margaret Thatcher was elected the first female prime minister of the United Kingdom in 1979. She served in this role until resigning in 1990, making her the longest serving British prime minister since 1827.<sup>78</sup> Her political experience before taking office was significant. From 1959 to 1979, she served as the Member of Parliament for Finchley, a London constituency that was considered a safe seat for the Conservative Party. Before winning in Finchley, Thatcher lost twice in Dartford, a safe Labour seat.

This sequence of events demonstrates one interaction between political gatekeepers and female candidates. In the United Kingdom, the traditional route to power in the country is to obtain and keep a seat in the House of Commons. However, getting that seat is restricted; there are no primary elections, so local party officials regulate who runs for each constituency.<sup>79</sup> To get the attention and approval of party

officials, candidates must take the initiative and contact the party via the national headquarters for local office. In Thatcher's time, women would not have been actively recruited. If the female candidate is selected to be a candidate, it is usually for a constituency where men are not interested, meaning a constituency in which a candidate of her party is very unlikely to win.<sup>80</sup> Thus, the political elite in the United Kingdom is exclusive, and entering that elite requires pleasing local party officials, who are most likely to be men. Thatcher ran twice in a risky constituency for the Conservative Party; she was unlikely to win because Dartford was solidly Labour. This is consistent with the literature, which has found that women are more likely to be chosen to contest risky seats, while men are much more likely to be chosen to contest safe seats.<sup>81</sup> Thatcher, as a young woman, was expendable to the Conservative Party; they needed a less valuable candidate to contest the risky Dartford seat. However, Thatcher proved her worth in those two elections; she was then able to run for a safe Conservative seat and enter the House of Commons.

Subsequently, Thatcher was chosen as the leader of the Conservative Party in 1975 after her predecessor lost two consecutive general elections for the party. She was relatively low in the hierarchy of the party but was supported by a right-wing faction. Being the only challenger to the former party leader, she became prime minister in 1979 after leading the Conservative Party to a majority. She came to power campaigning on the privatization of state owned enterprises, reductions in spending on social services, and restricting trade unions.<sup>82</sup>

Thatcher's leadership can be described as masculine: she was a fighter filled with determination and complete certainty in her ideology. Unlike what stereotypes would suggest, she did not promote a government based on compromise or openness; instead, she rejected consensus politics.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, she did not work to advance women within her government; during her eleven years in power, she appointed only one woman to the cabinet.<sup>84</sup> She went against feminine leadership stereotypes, especially in areas of national security, projecting strength and toughness. She was especially aggressive in the Falklands War and the 1990 Gulf War.<sup>85</sup> She was not afraid to dominate meetings, make her opinions heard, and interrupt those she disagreed with. These traits reinforced her reputation as the "Iron Lady," a nickname coined by a Soviet newspaper in 1976 after she was chosen as the leader of the

Conservative Party; Thatcher embraced the name and the toughness it conveyed.<sup>86</sup>

Theresa May was the second female prime minister of the United Kingdom. Since May was elected in 2016, she was not included in the leader-level analysis. May served as a Member of Parliament for Maidenhead for nineteen years before becoming prime minister; she also served as a local councilor from 1986 to 1994.<sup>87</sup> Immediately before becoming prime minister, she was David Cameron's Home Secretary, serving from 2010 until becoming prime minister in 2016.

Unlike most party leaders, May was unelected. After Cameron's resignation, several major figures in the Conservative Party entered the leadership race, including Boris Johnson, Michael Gove, Andrea Leadsom, and Theresa May. May campaigned on Brexit, the reason her predecessor had resigned. Her position on the controversial referendum was that "Brexit means Brexit, and we're going to make a success of it."<sup>88</sup> Normally in a leadership contest, MPs would vote for their preferred candidate until only two remain; then, the members of the Conservative Party across the UK would vote.<sup>89</sup> The first part of this process eliminated several candidates, including Gove and Fox. Later, Johnson and Leadsom dropped out of the race, leaving only May. May was elected by her district of Maidenhead, but was un-elected by the Conservative Party as a whole.

One fascinating aspect of her election was that her last remaining challenger was Andrea Leadsom, another woman. Leadsom styled herself as a feminine candidate; she repeatedly highlighted the fact that she is a mother of three, in contrast to the childless May.<sup>90</sup> Leadsom even suggested that she was more suited for leadership because of her children and the stake they gave her in the future of the country. May's strategy during the leadership election was to focus on promoting her experience and success during her long tenure as Home Secretary. This contest between two women of the same party presents an interesting case. It seems that female stereotypes still arise even when both candidates are women.

May's leadership style can be described as understated. She is calm, intelligent, and tenacious. She is not afraid to challenge established institutions or wait out flashy opponents.<sup>91</sup> These characteristics made her an appealing leader to negotiate Britain's withdrawal from the European Union. She even warned Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission, that she would be a "bloody difficult woman"

during Brexit negotiations.<sup>92</sup> Like Thatcher, May is far from the soft, feminine leader that a female stereotype may predict. Unlike Thatcher, May has been an inclusive leader; seven of her cabinet ministers are women, and these women hold important portfolios.<sup>93</sup> In addition, she has worked in other ways to promote the inclusion of women in government. For example, she co-founded Women2Win, which seeks to increase the number of Conservative women in parliament.<sup>94</sup>

Thatcher and May can be evaluated in terms of the characteristics examined during the quantitative leader analysis. Both women were very qualified politicians, serving approximately twenty years each in Parliament before entering top office. However, all of Thatcher's experience was at the federal level. May had a greater amount of experience, a total of twenty-seven years in local and federal office. This is consistent with the findings from the quantitative analysis. Finally, neither of the women had family ties to power and only Thatcher had children. These family ties are far less common in Europe than Asia and Latin America, again rendering the observations consistent with the findings of the quantitative analysis.

In contrast to the two female leaders chosen by the United Kingdom, the United States has never had a female president. Because of the primary system, political gatekeepers play a different role in the United States. However, similar to the United Kingdom, the gatekeepers tend to be men. The primary system controls who is nominated; most primary candidates need support from the gatekeepers to access adequate campaign funds, volunteers, and endorsements.<sup>95</sup> Again, similar to the United Kingdom, women are less likely to be recruited as candidates.<sup>96</sup> This lack of recruitment reduces political ambition and subsequently, the likelihood that women will run for public office.

Furthermore, the presidential system of the United States means that candidates have a more varied route to power. In the United Kingdom, the established path to the premiership is to win a seat in Parliament and hold onto it; because the prime minister must be a MP, being involved at the federal level is key. In contrast, the American president can have experience at other levels of government, or no political experience at all. For example, President George W. Bush was the governor of Texas, President Nixon was a congressman and former vice president, and President Trump had no prior political experience.

The men elected to the U.S. presidency at the same time as Thatcher and May can be compared to

the female leaders. Ronald Reagan was elected in 1980; he had previously served eight years as the governor of California.<sup>97</sup> Compared to Thatcher, he was less experienced, although he did have lower level political experience. He had children and did not have family ties to power, which is consistent with the findings in the quantitative analysis. Reagan's leadership style involved confidence and certainty, two characteristics often considered agentic and thus masculine.<sup>98</sup>

Donald Trump was elected in 2016, the same year Theresa May entered power. He has no ties to power and has several children. Unlike any of the aforementioned leaders, Trump has no prior political experience. In general, he presented himself as a political outsider who would change Washington for the better. Trump's confrontational leadership style and aggressive policy stances can be viewed as masculine. He also consistently used sexist discourse, directed mainly at Hillary Clinton. According to Trump, she was "screechy," she did not have "the look" or "the strength or stamina" to be president, and she was an "enabler" of her husband's affairs.<sup>99</sup> These remarks were not limited to his Democratic opponent. He also insinuated that he thought Carly Fiorina, one of the Republican candidates, was ugly and that her appearance should impact the support of the voters. He asked voters why anyone would vote for "that face."<sup>100</sup>

These comments display the sexism that is still at play in the U.S. electoral system. Most telling are his remarks about Clinton. It is hard to find a reason for such derogatory comments apart from her gender. It is also interesting to note that Clinton has family ties to power through her husband, former President Bill Clinton. The data demonstrate that first female leaders are more likely to have family ties than non-first female leaders. Had Clinton been successful, she would have reinforced the trend. Thus, the case of the United States versus the United Kingdom presents an interesting glimpse into how the findings of the quantitative analysis can be seen in the world and how several additional factors, including the role of political party gatekeepers and the leadership style of the candidate, affect the election of female candidates.

## CONCLUSION

Female leaders are becoming more common in all parts of government, and they are an important step towards true equality. This paper examines two aspects of female leadership in democracies: first, the characteristics of the systems that increase the likelihood of a

female executive, and second, the characteristics that the female executives tend to have. The empirical analysis suggests that in democracies where women have the right to vote for longer and the executive is a powerful presidency, the onset of female leaders is more likely. In democracies with lower female enrollment in secondary education, where women have the right to vote for a longer time, where there is past conflict, and where there is a dual executive or a powerful president, the incidence of female leaders is higher. The second part of the analysis suggests that there are fewer differences between male and female leaders than expected. The only significant differences between male and female leaders are GDP per capita of country, family ties, and children. Finally, there are some interesting differences between first female and non-first female leaders regarding previous political experience; first female leaders tend to have less political experience than non-first leaders.

The findings in this analysis have several positive implications for female leaders in democracies. First, there is an increasing number of female executives and focus on obtaining equal representation at the legislative level. Obtaining female seats at the political table is very important for positive political change and increased equality of representation in the future. Second, the data suggest that women are not held to higher standards in terms of their prior political experience, which could mean that once women enter into the political arena, moving up the political hierarchy is possible. The difficulty comes in trying to get women into electoral politics as they are less likely to be recruited or even be willing to run for office. In the future, it is crucial to shift the way young men and women are politically socialized. Third, the more time women have been active members of political communities, the more likely female leadership becomes. As each year passes, the time women have had voting rights increases, allowing them to become more and more involved in politics. This suggests a positive future in which equal female representation in top political positions is possible.

Ultimately, women are making strides towards more balanced representation in the highest political offices in democracies around the world; however, full equality of opportunity and representation has yet to be achieved. Women are continuously fighting to gain equality, and they are slowly succeeding. For example, Iceland's first female president, Vigdis Finnbogadóttir credited her electoral success to the 1975 nationwide

strikes by women who demonstrated their importance and demanded the equal treatment.<sup>101</sup> It took the determination of multiple women to change the perception of their importance and role in governance. To bypass the gatekeepers of the political system, women need to work together to break down the barriers that have too often and too long worked against their gender.

In the future, it would be interesting to look more into the difference between first female and non-first female leaders. What happens once the glass ceiling is broken? Does it become easier or harder for female leaders to enter into high political office? Is the effect different at the legislative level where there have been many more women? It would also be important to consider party level quotas and their effect at the executive level. These quotas have been effective in many systems in increasing female representation at the legislative level. Does this effect translate to the executive level and increase the number of female heads of governments by increasing the pool of women with relevant experience?

In conclusion, the findings suggest that there are certain structural aspects of countries that make women more likely to come to power and that the women who do come to power differ from similar male leaders in several ways. The data used in the analysis cover 1960 to 2015, but more recent trends are promising. In 2016, Kersti Kaljuaid was elected the first female prime minister of Serbia, Theresa May became the second female British prime minister, and Tsai Ing-wen was elected as the first female president of Taiwan. In 2017, Angela Merkel was reelected for her fourth term as German chancellor, Jacinda Aherm became the third female prime minister of New Zealand, and Ana Brnabic became the first female and openly gay prime minister of Serbia. In 2018, Viorica Dancila became the first female prime minister of Romania and Paula-Mae Weekes was elected the first female president of Trinidad and Tobago. It is hopeful that the momentum behind female executives will continue to grow and that the women currently in legislatures and executives around the world will work to create more inclusive and representative governments.

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## NEW YEAR'S MAGIC: NOWRUZ, PERSIANATE POLITICS, AND *EID* DIPLOMACY IN POST-REVOLUTIONARY IRAN

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*Nowruz is the magic of centuries and millenniums. It is in us, and we are in it.*

– Mohammad Baqai'i-Makan, in Sharq, 2005

Iranians have long felt a strong connection with their own heritage. A vast body of literature and countless popular archaeological sites link modern Iran with its distant past. For centuries, the Persian New Year, or *eid-e Nowruz* in Farsi, has stood at the center of that historical and cultural heritage. The single most important Persian holiday, Nowruz is rooted in Zoroastrianism, the predominant Iranian faith prior to the introduction of Islam in the seventh century. As a result of cultural diffusion over centuries, peoples in various neighboring nations, from Turkey in the West and Kyrgyzstan in the North to India in the East, now celebrate Nowruz alongside Iran.

By the end of the nineteenth century, that connection entered into Iran's evolving nationalist discourse. As states around the world, from Italy and Germany to China and Turkey, began to organize themselves as "nations," Iranians faced barriers particular to the Iranian context. Nationalism came to the Middle East at a time when the states there struggled not only against outside imperial designs but also for internal identity. For many in the Middle East, exhortations for national unity around Sunni Islam (pan-Islamism) or around a common Arab identity (pan-Arabism) became animating nationalist conceptions, but those frameworks excluded the Shi'i and Persian-majority Iran. Instead, around the turn of the 20th century, various factions of Iranians, including a mercantile class, a rising educated elite, and the clergy, entered into dialogue with each other and the imperial government in Tehran to construct an Iranian nation organized around a common Iranian identity. As one such national construction, an inheritance of Iran's Persian history, culture, and traditions emerged as one of several conceptions of the Iranian nation, which would become a powerful marker of identity throughout Iran's modern history.

As a central facet of that inherited Persian culture, history, and tradition, Nowruz incorporated into many frameworks for the Iranian nation. As intellectuals and state leaders increasingly celebrated pre-Islamic Persian identity, ancient depictions of Nowruz celebra-

tions carved into Achaemenid ruins cemented the holiday's place in the Iranian national heart and memory.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, more than a century of nationalist discourse thoroughly fused this Persian cultural heritage with the Iranian state, such that throughout the 20th century the state became Persian. As such, Iran postured itself as the global center for Persian culture, making it the de facto Nowruz capital for the millions of people who celebrate the holiday in the region and in émigré communities around the world.

Iran proudly maintained its monopoly on Persian culture until the tectonic shift following the collapse of the Pahlavi monarchy and the 1979 Revolution. In an attempt to distance the new Islamic Republic from the Persian ethno-religious nationalism espoused by the Pahlavi Shahs, some religious leaders from the revolution called on the new regime to restrict public Nowruz celebrations.<sup>2</sup> Though popular demonstrations quickly put to rest fears of a "Nowruz-ban," whether an Islamic Republic could incorporate a Zoroastrian national holiday remained questionable until Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the face of the Revolution, signaled an unambiguous "yes" in subsequent speeches.

This paper examines Nowruz's political role in the Islamic Republic of Iran's *eid* diplomacy. Since the 1979 Revolution, much of the scholarly analyses of Iran's foreign policy have focused on the religious tones and dimensions of Iranian diplomacy. Additionally, as Iran expressed hard power through strategic alliances in recent decades, most notably with Lebanon's Hezbollah party and the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria, scholarship has likewise oriented itself toward Iran's strategic posturing in the Middle East in terms of Iranian military maneuvers. Within this framework, analyses rarely focus on Iran's use of soft power through friendly diplomatic engagement, and they spend even less time on the dimension of the Islamic Republic's diplomacy that relies on Persian culture.

Therefore, this paper uses the case of Nowruz to examine the Islamic Republic's embrace of Persian

culture for state purposes. Illustrating the staying power of Persian culture in Iranian politics, this paper studies the Islamic Republic's use of Nowruz as a forum for foreign dialogue and as a means of engaging with the global community.

First, historical literature illustrates the space that Nowruz occupied in Iranian nationalist discourse throughout the early twentieth century, including its incorporation into the Islamic Republic's religiously-centered national identity. Next is an examination of Iran's leveraging Nowruz in its diplomatic resurgence as a cultural, economic, and political power in the region. Finally, the paper concludes with an analysis of the use of the language and themes of Nowruz in Iran's period of rapprochement with the United States leading up to the creation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

This paper expansively uses the term Persianate to include not just the nations but also the peoples in Iran's proximity who share common Persian cultural characteristics, in this case particularly the celebrations of Nowruz. "Persian-speaking" refers only to the countries whose official languages are a dialect of Persian: Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan. Additionally, the term "Greater Iran" refers to the geographic region, extending from Turkey to India and the Caucasus to Central Asia, that comprises the spread of these Persianate countries in the region. "Greater Iran" encompasses areas where Nowruz is popularly celebrated.

## BACKGROUND: NOWRUZ AND IRANIAN NATIONALISMS IN THE 20TH CENTURY

### NOWRUZ: RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Nowruz's history and traditions contribute to the significance of its incorporation into the Islamic Republic's foreign policy. For millennia, Nowruz has marked the end of the winter and the beginning of spring in Greater Iran. Corresponding with the vernal equinox, it is celebrated in the Gregorian calendar either on March 20 or 21. The celebration, rooted in Zoroastrian religious belief, is based largely around the imagery of spring, and themes of rebirth, renewal, and change feature prominently.

Even as Iranians became overwhelmingly non-Zoroastrian in the centuries after Islam's introduction to Persian in the seventh century CE, popular celebrations of Nowruz retained aspects that were specific to its Zoroastrian roots. In modern celebrations, for example, people participate in a tradition called *chahārshanbe suri* (Red Wednesday, approximately).

Taking place on the last Wednesday of the old year, the tradition involves building and jumping over bonfires in a symbolic cleansing process.<sup>3</sup> Given the centrality of fire in Zoroastrianism, this tradition is one of the clearest examples of modern Nowruz's connection to its Zoroastrian roots. Additionally, the occasional use of three fires echoes the three virtues ("good thoughts, good words, and good deeds") of Zoroastrianism.<sup>4</sup>

Even after the introduction of Islam to Iran in the seventh century CE, the Zoroastrian holiday remained popular among the peoples of Greater Iran. Today, it remains popular because of its vernal themes and its focus on family. In the weeks leading up to the holiday, Iranian families clean their houses (*khāne tekāni*, or "house shaking") and begin growing wheatgrass (*sabzeh*) to symbolize rebirth. On Nowruz day, families set out a spread, called a *sofreh*, filled with seven items (the *haft sin*), each of which represents rebirth and renewal for the new year.<sup>5</sup> Children enjoy the antics of Hajji Firuz, a minstrel character who plays traditional songs and dances for onlookers.<sup>6</sup> Nowruz feasts include delicious foods and many sweets, and families dye eggs bright colors for the *sofreh*. Businesses, schools, and the government close for the holiday, and many families take advantage of the time to visit friends and family and to travel for fun.<sup>7</sup> These qualities that make Nowruz popular also make it an interesting and powerful vehicle for the Islamic Republic's diplomacy. First, its use of a Zoroastrian holiday provides an example of the Islamic Republic's willingness to stray from a religious framework for its policy and instead embrace another religion's holiday for its own purposes. Additionally, through Nowruz's popularity and familial themes, the Islamic Republic utilizes the holiday as an opportunity to portray itself in a friendly light on the global stage. Ultimately, in utilizing Nowruz for the purposes of the state, the Islamic Republic continues an old tradition of incorporating the holiday into Iranian politics.

### NOWRUZ AND IRANIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

The sense that "Nowruz without Iran and Iran without Nowruz are meaningless" arose in part as a result of Iranian nationalist projects of the twentieth century.<sup>8</sup> As Iran entered the age of nationalism, its citizens grappled with the question of what it meant to be Iranian. As part of a Persian ethno-linguistic identity, Nowruz arose as one explanation of Iranian identity, alongside competing nationalist visions of the physical

realm of Iran (*Irānshahr*) and of Shi'i Iranian identity.<sup>9</sup>

The nationalist debates that contributed to the formation of the modern Iranian national identity emerged in the late Qajar period around the turn of the twentieth century. After a tumultuous century in power, the Qajar dynasty in Iran proved increasingly unstable. In the wake of the 1906 Constitutional uprising and the creation of the Iranian parliament (*majles*), various nationalist groups in Iran began articulating their own conceptions of nation, often in opposition to those of the shahs. Out of this environment arose one of the most enduring articulations of Iranian nationalism: an identity rooted in the ancient peoples and civilizations of the Iranian plateau.

Though the Qajars manipulated ancient Iranian imagery to legitimize their dynasty, intellectuals by the 20th century put that ancient heritage to use in nation building.<sup>10</sup> Nationalists such as Hassan Taqizadeh, Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzadeh, and Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani sought to replace the model of imperial nationalism built around the figure of the Qajar shah with one built instead around the concept of a pre-Islamic golden age.<sup>11</sup> With a newfound air of "authenticity," this nationalistic framework elevated anything associated with the "golden age" historical narrative.<sup>12</sup> Part of this framework centered on "the revival of traditional myth narratives and [a] renewed encounter with Iran's Zoroastrian past," a past that featured Nowruz centrally.<sup>13</sup> Ancient bas reliefs of Nowruz celebrations in the ruins of the old Achaemenid capital Persepolis helped ensure Nowruz's part in this revival of Iran's Zoroastrian and pre-Islamic past.

After the 1925 coup that deposed the last Qajar shah and established the Pahlavi dynasty under Reza Khan, this narrative of pre-Islamic nationalism was adopted as a state-building project. In what would become a recurring motif under the Pahlavi shahs, Reza Khan implemented a vision of national identity based in the pre-Islamic past. As part of a campaign of "intellectual indoctrination," the monarchy revisited representations of the past in Iran's classrooms.<sup>14</sup> Textbooks written by the early Pahlavi state, for example, aggrandized Persian literature and history with the intention of "linking the celebrated past to the present."<sup>15</sup> Decades later, his son, Mohammad Reza Shah, would make that link obvious in his infamous celebration of 2500 years of royal rule in Iran at the ruins of Persepolis, where a bas relief portrays an ancient Persian king accepting tribute for Nowruz. Nowruz, too, had a place in Reza Khan's nationalist project. In one more link to

Iran's glorious pre-Islamic history, Reza Khan changed the Iranian calendar to the solar calendar that it uses today. The law took effect on Nowruz, 1304 (1925).<sup>16</sup>

### ZOROASTRIAN HOLIDAY AND RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC

The Persian ethno-nationalism that elevated Nowruz and its Persian cultural milieu remained a hallmark of Iranian state ideology throughout most of the mid-twentieth century. However, as the century progressed, the monarchy grew increasingly unpopular. The 1979 Revolution that deposed Mohammad Reza Pahlavi also brought an end to the primacy of Persian nationalism in state articulations of identity. In its place, the new Islamic Republic cemented Iran's Shi'i identity as the primary vision of Iranian-ness. This rejection of Persian nationalism jeopardized many manifestations of the pre-Islamic past as symbols of the Shah's legacy. As a "mob" descended upon Persepolis intent on destroying it, some revolutionary clerics also called for an end of public celebrations of Nowruz. Only public demonstrations, and the exigencies of war, would save them both.<sup>17</sup>

Though demonstrations spared Nowruz from immediate danger, only its public acceptance by the Islamic Republic's leaders could secure its place long-term. To that end, the writings of a revolutionary-era intellectual and proponent of religious nationalism, Ali Shari'ati, would provide an intellectual justification for incorporating the Zoroastrian holiday into an Islamic national framework. In a pre-revolution article detailing Nowruz's connection to Islam, Shari'ati "formed, transformed and Islamized" the holiday to fit it into its new context.<sup>18</sup> Echoing Persian ethnic nationalists of the early twentieth century, he lauded Nowruz's ability to connect Iranians to their past, calling the celebration "a universal festival that allows man to return and rediscover nature." For Shari'ati, Nowruz's significance lay in its ability to "transport us across this horrifying crevice to introduce us to our predecessors and past."<sup>19</sup>

Rather than viewing it in conflict with Shi'i religious nationalism, Shari'ati believed that Nowruz benefited from Islam's introduction to Iran, allowing him to incorporate the tradition into an Islamic framework. He claimed that Nowruz had "always been dear" to the Shi'is of Iran, and that Islam "gave Nowruz a shinier polish, made it firm, and, bestowing it with a strong protective covering, saved it from decadence in the time that Iranians became Muslims." Even the explicitly Zoroastrian roots of the holiday posed no barrier for

its incorporation into an Islamic framework. Shari'ati called the Zoroastrian creation myth around which Nowruz was organized "a beautiful myth! More beautiful than reality!"<sup>20</sup>

Though Shari'ati never lived to see the revolution, his pattern of emphasizing the Islamic connection to Nowruz was echoed by the Islamic Republic's founder and first Supreme Leader, Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Like Shari'ati, Khomeini harnessed Nowruz's spiritual power to graft it into an Islamic national structure. According to a website published by a branch of the Iranian government following his life and teachings, Khomeini drew from Nowruz's theme of rebirth to challenge Iranians "to enhance their spiritual qualities and [the] divine characteristics during the... revival of nature."<sup>21</sup> He used the holiday "to promote divine values," stating in a Nowruz speech, "I am hopeful that this spirit of mutual brotherhood prevails throughout this New Year."<sup>22</sup> Through such proclamations, Khomeini ensured that Nowruz would maintain a privileged place not only in Iranian society but also in Iranian politics.

#### **EID DIPLOMACY: NOWRUZ AS A TOOL OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC'S FOREIGN POLICY**

Beyond highlighting its spiritual context, Khomeini saw in Nowruz's popularity "the rallying potential of nationalism."<sup>23</sup> This nationalistic use of Nowruz would come into its own during Iran's horrific eight-year war with Iraq. As the war put ever greater strains on the new government, Khomeini utilized his annual Nowruz speeches to broadcast a message of resilience to the Iranian people. In doing so, he set a precedent of using Nowruz as a tool to advance foreign policy goals that continues to this day.

#### **NOWRUZ, THE WAR, AND ISLAMIC FOREIGN POLICY**

The state's post-revolutionary shift to a religious nationalism was matched by a turn toward a more ideological foreign policy. Under Khomeini, the Islamic Republic's foreign policy was in part driven by his "Shi'a worldview that called for empowerment of the *mosta'zafin* (oppressed) over the *mostakbarin* (oppressors)."<sup>24</sup> Defending the oppressed was central in Khomeini's desire to export the revolution, a foreign policy framework that concerned Iraq's dictator Saddam Hussein, who ruled over a historically oppressed Shi'a majority in Iraq. Soon after the establishment of the Islamic Republic, Hussein launched one of the twentieth century's longest conventional wars, bringing Iran's

newly ideological foreign policy into direct conflict with its neighbors.

As the war dragged on, Khomeini used his annual Nowruz address to rally support. In his 1981 Nowruz speech, delivered six months after the war's inception, he prayed that Iran "be freed from all the evil effects of the war imposed upon it by Saddam who is an agent of the superpowers!"<sup>25</sup> His speech of 1983, at the height of the war's phase of attrition, praised "the strata that is engaged in holy struggle," and hoped that "this year be an auspicious year for the nation of Iran and bring victory in its wake."<sup>26</sup>

The reference to the superpowers would prove to be a common motif in Khomeini's Nowruz speeches. In warning about the "aggressive policies of colonial powers," Khomeini used the annual New Year's felicitations as a platform for advocating his hardline stances against Iran's international rivals.<sup>27</sup> In his speeches throughout the 1980s, the Ayatollah assailed crimes committed by "the agents of imperialists."<sup>28</sup> Highlighting Iran's oppositional stance toward the United States, Khomeini urged the Iranian people in 1985 to follow the Prophet's example of "resistance against the enemy," assuring them, "It has been ordained to resist. If you put up resistance, you will be victorious."<sup>29</sup>

Though Khomeini used Nowruz as a medium for rallying a war-stricken country, his successors would come to wield it as a tool to mend Iran's relations with its Persianate neighbors.

#### **POLITICAL PRAGMATISM AND PERSIAN CULTURE**

After Khomeini's death in 1989, the revolutionary rhetoric surrounding Iran's foreign policy quietly gave way to a pragmatic vision of regional engagement. That same year, the newly-elected president, pragmatist Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, inaugurated a foreign policy designed to repair relations with Iran's neighbors and rivals, including limited outreach to Europe and the United States. Though much of his engagement with the West was foiled by conservative factions within the government, Rafsanjani turned to the formerly-Soviet Persianate republics to Iran's north with a *si'asat-e dast-e gol*, or a "policy of a handful of flowers."<sup>30</sup> Such engagement, which relied on "pragmatic exploitation of [Iran's] geographic, cultural, and economic assets," allowed the nation to emerge "as a solid economic partner and a credible political interlocutor in the process of regional integration."<sup>31</sup>

The 1997 election of reformist Mohammad Khatami consolidated this policy of pragmatism and

promoted a greater cultivation of economic ties within the region. Khatami "muted [Iran's] Islamic message" in its interactions with its neighbors in an attempt "to remove the dour and forbidding visage of the Iranian Revolution and to inspire a degree of respect and even trust among Iran's neighbors."<sup>32</sup> Khatami's successor elected in 2005, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, reverted to Iran's antagonistic posture in the region, resulting in a period of relative international isolation. However, Hassan Rouhani's election in 2013 saw a resumption of the policies of engagement and committed Iran to an attempt to reset its relations with its neighbors.

As a part of this policy reengagement, Rouhani and his pragmatic predecessors leveraged shared features of Persian identity, including Nowruz, to engage with Iran's neighbors on an ethnic level.<sup>33</sup> In addition to Rouhani's official state efforts, an array of philanthropic, business, and media foundations loosely associated with the government (in Persian, *bonyād*, pl. *bonyād-hā*) bolstered Rouhani's "cultural diplomacy." By conveying religious, cultural, and ideological information, the operations of these *bonyād-hā* in Iran's neighbors act as an expression of Iranian soft power.<sup>34</sup> Notable *bonyād-hā* include transnational aid foundations, such as the Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation, and news agencies, such as the *Mehr News Agency*.<sup>1</sup>

#### **IRANIAN CULTURE AND SOFT POWER IN THE "NOWRUZ ZONE"**

Since his election in 2013, President Rouhani has opened relations with Iran's neighbors, citing a shared cultural heritage to promote unity with Iran. In the years surrounding his carefully-negotiated 2015 nuclear accord with the P5+1, his administration publicly contrasted its moderate international stance with the hostile rhetoric pushed by his predecessors. In a series of public gestures, Rouhani celebrated Nowruz as a cultural glue holding together Greater Iran. Calibrated

to advance his foreign policy push for increased regional engagement, these actions also serve as expressions of Iranian soft power in the region.<sup>2</sup>

For example, Rouhani authored a string of letters in 2016, individualized for the heads of state of Iran's Persianate neighbors, congratulating them on the New Year.<sup>3</sup> In these letters Rouhani highlighted "our shared history's most ancient dynamic tradition," underscoring transnational cultural connectedness. In a rejection of Ahmadinejad's alienating rhetoric, Rouhani's letter congratulated the leaders and their people on the "festive occasion of moderation." He concluded by expressing "hope of establishing better and wider ties among the Nowruz zone neighbors."<sup>35</sup> Similarly, the language in his 2017 letters promoted a policy of engagement. Celebrating Nowruz as a "symbol of moderation, peace, warmth, light, abundance and liveliness," he encouraged cooperation "to confront the misunderstandings of religion and tribal extremism which results in terrorism."<sup>36</sup>

This *eid* diplomacy flowed naturally in Iran's dialogue with its Persian-speaking neighbors. For example, Rouhani used the occasion of a 2016 Nowruz phone call with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to emphasize the "strengthening friendship and ties and mutual, regional and international cooperation" between the two nations. In return, President Ghani "stressed Iran's important role in the region and called for further development of relations between the two countries."<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Iran's cultural consulate in Islamabad, Pakistan, used Nowruz celebrations as an occasion to strengthen culturally-based ties. In 2014, the consulate jointly sponsored a Nowruz celebration with Islamabad's Quaid-e-Azam University.<sup>4</sup> The program, attended by government representatives from Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, provided an opportunity for Iran to showcase its traditional foods and music to its neighbors.<sup>38</sup> In Tajikistan, the Imam Khomeini Relief

1 It is worth noting that, though the advancement of cultural ties through these *bonyād-hā* furthers Rouhani's policy of engagement based on cultural similarities, they operate outside of official circles of government and are prone to having connections with more conservative factions, including the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, who tend to promote more incendiary positions, including the ideological export of revolution, over Rouhani's pragmatic engagement.

2 The P5 is shorthand for the five permanent members of the UN Security Council: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The "+1" includes Germany.

3 In 2016, Rouhani sent letters to the leaders of Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Armenia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan. He added India to the list in 2017.

4 Though Pakistan's national language, Urdu, is not a "Persianate" language (i.e., Farsi, Dari, or Tajiki), this program is relevant for Iran's significant historical and cultural ties with Pakistan, as well as the program's inclusion of Afghani representatives.

Foundation invoked “brotherly Persian identity” in building educational and infrastructural ties between the two countries.<sup>39</sup>

Beyond Iran’s regional allies, Rouhani also employed this *eid* diplomacy to rebuild ties with Iran’s regional rivals. In recent decades, Iran’s relationship with Azerbaijan has been strained by Iran’s close ties with Azerbaijan’s main rival, Armenia, as well as by Azerbaijan’s ties to the United States. Though President Ahmadinejad exacerbated these divisions in office, Rouhani’s administration has leveraged “the historical, cultural, and religious similarities between the two countries,” including Nowruz, to rebuild ties.<sup>40</sup> In an interview with *Mehr News Agency* (owned by a *bonyād*), Iran’s ambassador to Azerbaijan emphasized the distinct similarities in “the customs and traditions of Nowruz on both sides of Aras River” separating Iran and Azerbaijan. After sharing his plans to celebrate the holiday with the people of Azerbaijan, the ambassador concluded the interview hoping that “1394 [2015] will be a good year for both countries with respect to the future of relations between the two countries.”<sup>41</sup>

In spite of this *eid* diplomacy, Azerbaijan’s linguistic and political ties with Turkey, Iran’s primary regional competitor, have remained a barrier. In a meeting during a regional conference in 2014, Rouhani underscored Iran’s and Azerbaijan’s “common historical and cultural roots.” However, in a rebuff, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev merely acknowledged the “common spiritual values and traditions.”<sup>42</sup>

President Aliyev’s snub did not just highlight the dominance of Turkish political and ethnic connections over Iranian exhortations of cultural unity in Azerbaijan. Indeed, it reflected the soft power arms race that has charged Iranian-Turkish relations in recent years. Rouhani has engaged Turkey using *eid* diplomacy, with ambiguous effect.

On one hand, acknowledging a shared cultural heritage provides an opportunity for civil engagement between the two nations. In a 2016 letter congratulating Iranians and Rouhani on Nowruz, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan lauded the “very beautiful symbols of our common traditions which transfers our countries’ friendship, brotherhood, and solidarity from the past to the future.”<sup>43</sup> Nowruz also provides an economic foundation for improved relations, given the popularity of Turkish beaches for Iranian tourists vacationing for Nowruz.<sup>44</sup> Such cultural links underscore the holiday’s value in stabilizing Turkish-Iranian relations.

On the other hand, the efficacy of Iran’s *eid* diplomacy among the region’s Kurdish populations has exacerbated Turkish-Iranian tensions. Nowruz has long been a salient cultural bond between Iran and regional Kurds. In 2010, for example, Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, himself a Kurd, issued a statement in Tehran celebrating “the Nowruz banner as one of justice, freedom, equality and fraternity among all countries.”<sup>45</sup> Such connections are a source of anxiety for Ankara, which has been locked in conflict with Kurdish separatist movements for much of the Turkish Republic’s history. In February 2017, President Erdogan derided Iran’s “Persian nationalism” in the region.<sup>46</sup> Such language condemns the same soft power Rouhani has cultivated with Kurds through his *eid* diplomacy. Erdogan’s statement prompted a response from Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi and heightened tensions on the eve of the Nowruz tourist season in Turkey.<sup>47</sup>

Productive or not, Iran’s strategic insertion of Nowruz into the international arena has altered Iran’s relations with its neighbors. As a means of flexing Iranian soft power, Nowruz has provided a diplomatic forum and vocabulary for international relations. Whether strengthening ties or enflaming tensions, Rouhani has made the politics and economics of Nowruz a tool for regional diplomacy.

#### NOWRUZ AND “THE HEGEMON”: A WINDOW WITH AMERICA, OPEN AND SHUT

As President Erdogan’s letter shows, Iran is not the only country to utilize the language and ideas of Nowruz to communicate political messages. As with Turkey, Nowruz provided a forum for political exchange with the Islamic Republic’s central historical opponent, the United States. As these nations’ relationship evolved in the twenty-first century, *eid* diplomacy and the themes of Nowruz would animate dialogue between the two states.

#### MAKING CONTACT: OBAMA AND KHAMENEI

Two months after his 2009 inauguration as President of the United States, Barack Obama announced a Nowruz message to “the people and leaders of Iran.”<sup>48</sup> The speech was not altogether radical; his predecessor, George W. Bush, issued similar statements. But President Obama’s message was unique in its language. In the absence of formal diplomatic channels with an Iran then still headed by hardliner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Obama’s Nowruz speech utilized the spirit and

vocabulary of Nowruz to engage in *eid* diplomacy just like Rouhani’s messages to his “Nowruz zone” neighbors.

Opening his statement with a proposal for rapprochement, Obama acknowledged Nowruz as “both an ancient ritual and a moment of renewal.” He used his speech to frame a shared humanity between Iranians and Americans, pointing to “the common humanity that binds us together.” In the holidays, he argued, people of both nations celebrate “by gathering with friends and family, exchanging gifts and stories, and looking to the future with a renewed sense of hope.” In Nowruz’s spirit of renewal, he intended to deliver on that “sense of hope,” advocating for a “future with renewed exchanges among our people.”<sup>49</sup>

Obama’s speech reached at least one Iranian. Four days later, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei issued a response to the US President in his own Nowruz speech. Khamenei invoked the same theme of change as Obama, insisting that a rebirth in relations must commence with America. Citing US support for Saddam Hussein in the Iran-Iraq war and American sponsorship of “bandits, terrorists, [and] murderers” along Iran’s borders, Khamenei asked, “should our nation forget this? Can it forget?” Indeed, the lack of change in American policy was the primary barrier to a rebirth of relations for Khamenei. Obama’s message itself indicated this need for change when it congratulated Iran on Nowruz and “in the same message call[ed] the Iranian nation supporters of terrorism, who seek nuclear weapons.” Scoffing at the idea that Iran would “forget the past” at the first sign of American willingness to engage, Khamenei instead challenged Obama to take his own advice and change American policy to allow for a real rebirth: “Change must be real. . . . If you do not change, then divine traditions will change you, the world will change you.”<sup>50</sup>

The next year, as if in response to Khamenei’s criticisms, Obama issued another Nowruz message with political undertones. Obama echoed Khamenei’s emphasis on the theme of change, only he insisted that Iranian, not American, policy must change. “I said, last year, that the choice for a better future was in the hands of Iran’s leaders. That remains true today.” Again, Iran’s nuclear program arose as a sticking point, with Obama claiming that members of Ahmadinejad’s government “turned their backs on a pathway that would bring more opportunity to all Iranians” by refusing to limit their nuclear program. Pointing to Ahmadinejad’s controversial reelection in the summer 2009, Obama

closed his speech by imploring Iranians to change its “self-defeating focus on the past . . . [in order] to build a better future.”<sup>51</sup> Though this *eid* diplomacy between Obama and Khamenei yielded no significant improvement in the relations between the two countries, it set a precedent of engagement that served as a prelude to the large-scale reengagement over Iran’s nuclear program.

#### THE NEGOTIATION YEARS: NOWRUZ AND NUCLEAR TALKS

As American and Iranian diplomatic engagement intensified in 2015 in the lead up to the nuclear deal, the Nowruz speeches reflected the tensions of the shifting diplomatic environment. Obama’s message, issued March 19, encouraged Iranian change with a renewed sense of faith in his negotiation partners. Honoring Khamenei’s and Rouhani’s claims that Iran did not seek a nuclear weapon, he recognized that Tehran “halted progress on its nuclear program and even rolled it back in some areas.” In a display of American willingness to change reciprocally, and to highlight American good faith, Obama pointed to America’s role in relieving some of the sanctions against Tehran. Once again drawing from the imagery of the holiday, Obama concluded his speech, exhorting: “Now it is early spring. We have a chance—a chance—to make progress that will benefit our countries, and the world, for many years to come.”<sup>52</sup>

Rouhani’s 2015 Nowruz message was not aimed at the White House. Instead, it painted a picture of national power to dampen domestic criticisms that the nuclear talks would weaken Iranian national security. In his speech, he praised Iran’s “economy of resistance,” operating in opposition to US-led sanctions, which “paved the way for the Iranian nuclear negotiators to stand firm against world hegemonic powers.” Further, as a result of his diplomatic engagement with the United States, the “hegemon” learned that “interaction and understanding and respect are the only ways to treat the Iranian nation.”<sup>53</sup>

By Nowruz of 2016, the US and Iran had agreed on a preliminary Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Both leaders heralded the deal in their Nowruz messages, claiming that it arose, in the spirit of Nowruz, out of mutual “change.” With the deal in place, both leaders took to their podiums and used their speeches to defend the nascent nuclear plan. Highlighting American change, Obama pointed to the realization of American promises “to engage with

Iran in a spirit of mutual interest and mutual respect.” Aimed at the Iranian people, Obama’s speech emphasized American goodwill and urged Iranians to be patient in accepting the JCPOA until they could “feel the full benefits of the lifting of these sanctions.” To win Iranian public trust, Obama promised “more trade and investment, which will mean more jobs” for Iranians. Finally, in a concluding reference to a poem by the Persian writer Sa’di, Obama praised the new contact between the two rivals as “an opportunity—a window—to resolve other issues.”<sup>54</sup>

Rouhani’s 2016 Nowruz speech similarly attempted to win over domestic critics of the JCPOA by asking them to engage in the holiday’s spirit of renewal. On the dawn of a new era of engagement with Iran’s historic rival, Rouhani urged Iranians to remember that “Nowruz means washing hearts clear from grudges.” Indeed, he seemed to answer Khamenei’s 2009 question: yes, Iranians can, and should, forget “grudges” in the name of rebirth. In another justification, he claimed that the deal changed the nuclear question from “an excuse for pushing threats against the Iranian nation” into “a symbol for partnership between the world[s] nations and beloved Iran.” In the end, the JCPOA “broke the chains of sanctions” and laid the groundwork for Iran to “enter the path of prosperity, attempt, and growth and economic activity.” In the spirit of rebirth, it was a policy of “reconciliation and empathy; a JCPOA which will start with morality before economy.”<sup>55</sup>

However, even as Rouhani defended the progress in relations borne out of the deal, Ayatollah Khamenei reflected the mistrust in some Iranian circles that the United States could truly change. In a string of Nowruz tweets, Khamenei criticized the American “policies of the arrogance” that persisted even after the JCPOA. He considered the deal itself to be an example of America’s forcing rivals either to “[get] along with the US or [suffer] US pressures.” Insisting that the “US didn’t fulfill its pledges” and change as Rouhani expected, he proclaimed, “US officials keep sanctions on one hand & give #Nowruz message on other hand & set Haft-Seen table in White House; these are deceptions.” In a thinly-veiled criticism of Rouhani, Khamenei lambasted those “inside #Iran who believe in& accept this moving discourse of arrogance system & try to convince others as well.”<sup>56</sup> Even in tweet-form, these messages spoke the language of “#Nowruz” to delegitimize Iranian cooperation with the United States.

## CONCLUSION

The 2016 American presidential election brought an end not only to the Obama administration but also to the era of *eid* diplomacy between Tehran and Washington. In March 2017, the new American President Donald Trump issued his first Nowruz message and simultaneously closed Obama’s “window” of engagement. He addressed the Iranian people, but he had little to say. His relatively short message offered a single, innocuous message: “On behalf of the American people, I wish [Iranians] freedom, dignity, and wealth.”<sup>57</sup> Abandoning the Nowruz message as a mode of diplomacy, Trump offered no insight into any policy toward Iran, positive or negative. In the place of *eid* diplomacy, Trump offered a season’s greetings.

Rouhani’s and Khamenei’s 2017 Nowruz messages similarly signaled the end of US-Iranian Nowruz diplomacy. Rouhani repeated his prior year’s Nowruz message of “letting grudges go” and lauded the positive effect the JCPOA had on a growing Iranian economy, but he made no mention of the United States.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, even Khamenei largely ignored the “hegemon.” His single reference to the “one disrespectful act committed by the American president,” presumably Trump’s travel ban of Iranian citizens, was calibrated more to praise the “enthusiastic, passionate and courageous” Iranian response than to engage the American President.<sup>59</sup> In the absence of an unlikely shift in Washington indicating a willingness to engage Tehran, future Nowruz messages will likely remain similarly sparse.

Though the experiment of *eid* diplomacy between the two rivals has ended for now, the exchanges that occurred only reinforced the significance of Nowruz as a diplomatic tool. The US-Iranian Nowruz messages were responsive not only to an evolving diplomatic environment but also to each other. Rouhani echoed Obama in urging Iranians to embrace the JCPOA’s promised prosperity. Likewise, Obama heeded Khamenei’s desire to end American accusations of Iran’s seeking nuclear weapons. The speeches were not just directed at each other; they were in dialogue with each other. For a moment, while the political will existed, *eid* diplomacy allowed these two rivals to listen.

The image of a mob attacking Persepolis painted a portrait of a new Iranian state at odds with its own heritage. Indeed, in many ways the Islamic Republic can appear utterly unlike anything that came before it. However, despite the revolutionary rhetoric, in at least one aspect it has stayed its predecessors’ course.

In wielding Persian culture as a tool to benefit the state, the Islamic Republic’s leaders resemble many of the same shahs from which the revolutionary state has desperately tried to distance itself. Just as Mohammad Reza Shah throughout his reign acquired all the accoutrement of an Achaemenid king, reviving the old term *Shāhanshāh* (King of kings) to shore up his own rule, so too has the Islamic Republic come to embrace Iran’s heritage for its own ends.

The practice of using Persian culture and Nowruz for political ends precedes 1979 and even Reza Khan. As early as the start of the nineteenth century, Qajar shahs harnessed the ancient past to legitimize their rule. Following that long history, Rouhani’s *eid* diplomacy represents the staying power of a practice that has remained a central theme in the Iranian political playbook for centuries. Ultimately, no amount of revolutionary rhetoric, regional tension, or hegemonic meddling could remove from the Iranian state Nowruz, the New Year’s “magic of centuries and millenniums.”

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## BUILDING(S IN) NATIONHOOD: SITES OF MEMORY IN MOSCOW, RUSSIA

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### ABSTRACT

This research investigates the development and consolidation of post-Soviet Russian nationhood through sites in Moscow, the political capital of Russia. The sites studied are the following: the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, Victory Park, and the Statue of St Vladimir. This research adopts the concept of sites of memory (more commonly known as *les lieux de mémoire*) to analyze the historical and symbolic significance of these locations. This research analyzes the sites of memory under the scope of one specific version of Russian nationhood that was identified in post-Soviet academic discourse, namely the (re)union of Eastern Slavic nations (which include Belarus and Ukraine), with a particular focus on Eastern Christian Orthodoxy. Drawing from the analyses of the sites of memory, this research examines the role of religion in the nationhood-building efforts and consolidation in the Russian Federation.

On December 31, 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered his annual New Year address, in which he reflected on the past year and voiced his hopes for the upcoming year: "Love for one's Motherland is one of the most powerful and enlightening feelings. It has found its reflection in our fraternal aid to the residents of Crimea and Sevastopol, after they made the firm decision to return to their native home. This event will remain a landmark in national history."<sup>1</sup>

This statement marked the end of a turbulent year with the annexation of Crimea serving as a turning point in post-Soviet international relations with the West. The annexation was condemned by the international community; members of the European Parliament criticized the annexation of Crimea and subsequent referendum as illegal and illegitimate, and the United States, European Union, and several other countries imposed sanctions against Russia.<sup>2</sup> Although the Western media highlighted the increase in Putin's approval ratings after the annexation as a reason for the action, their focus overlooked the importance of the annexation of Crimea for nation building and nationalism. This "love for one's Motherland" was present not only in Putin's New Year's address, but also in Russian ideas of nationhood immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup>

1 Moscow was chosen instead of another Russian city such as St Petersburg, which was the capital of Russia between 1712-1918, since Moscow was the capital of the USSR and is currently the capital of the country. The choice of Moscow follows Forest and Johnson's (2002) argument that changes in the urban landscape of core cities happen earlier and more radically (p. 527).

2 In Tolz's article "Forging the Nation: National Identity and Nation Building in Post-Communist Rus-

Nationhood and nation building can manifest in many ways, including physical monuments and sites. It was not a coincidence that Putin delivered his New Year speech against the backdrop of the Red Square—the heart of Moscow and the center of political power in Russia. Public monuments and sites serve as powerful symbols and purveyors of messages. My work investigates the consolidation of post-Soviet Russian nationhood through specific sites in Moscow by combining the literatures about sites of memory (*les lieux de mémoire*) and about geography.<sup>1</sup>

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This work will use a constructivist approach to nationalism since the two terms often overlap. This paper assumes that nationalism and the idea of the "nation" is constructed.<sup>4</sup> In the Russian case, this is particularly important because the country has experienced major transitions in the last two centuries as it evolved from the Russian Empire to Soviet Russia and finally to the current Russian Federation. Both transitions required efforts by the state to define its identity. In the immediate post-Soviet period, Vera Tolz identified five main versions of post-Soviet nationhood in intellectual discourse.<sup>25</sup> This research will pay particular attention to the idea of Russia

as “a nation of Eastern Slavs, united by common origin and culture.”<sup>6</sup> This version of nationhood emphasizes the importance of Christian Orthodoxy as well as the innate connection to Belarus and Ukraine, the latter which has become crucial in the diplomatic relations between Russia and the West.

This study will draw from Pierre Nora’s sites of memory. The sites of memory replace the real environment of memory (*les milieux de mémoire*) to consecrate a memory in a modern society in which the conditions for that memory no longer exist. For example, since the real environment of Tsarist Russia no longer exists, sites of memory that represent the Tsarist regime attempt to recreate it. Scholars studying sites of memory argue that this phenomenon arises from the onset of the Industrial Revolution, the loss of traditional peasant culture, and globalization.<sup>7</sup> Sites of memory often consecrate defining events in the history of a nation.<sup>8</sup> The manipulation of memory remains at the discretion of the political officials who install (and in some cases, reinvent) the sites of memory. Sites of memory and cultural memory are inherently paradoxical: to remember requires forgetting since memory often arises from selective memory.<sup>9</sup> A prominent Russian example of selective memory is the common reference to World War II as the ‘Great Patriotic War’ (*великая отечественная война*) instead of ‘Second World War’ (*вторая мировая война*). More than just a linguistic difference, the two names signify different time periods. World War II refers to the period between 1939 and 1945; the Soviet term Great Patriotic War refers to the period between 1941 and 1945, which ignores the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. The interest of this study lies, however, in the physical manifestations of selective memory in monuments and sites.

The use of space in Moscow has been analyzed already. Robert Argenbright focuses on the initial post-Soviet transition and the development of public space for civil society in Moscow. Alexander Kalyukin and Thomas Borén use Gorky Park as an example of the influence of consumerism over public life.<sup>10</sup> Nurit Schlieffman focuses on Victory Park in relation to collective memory and its role in the consolidation of a national identity.<sup>11</sup>

she identifies five different forms of post-Russian nationhood as: (1) “union identity: the Russians define as an imperial people”; (2) “Russians as a nation of all eastern Slavs united, by common origin and culture”; (3) “Russians as a community of Russian speakers, regardless of ethnic origin”; (4) “Russians defined racially”; (5) “a civic Russian (*rossiiskaya*) nation” (995-996). In her subsequent work, “Conflicting ‘Homeland Myths’ and Nation-State building in Post-communist Russia,” Tolz narrows the forms of nationhood to: (1) “restoration of [the Soviet] union”; (2) a union of East Slavs; (3) Russia as a federation “excluding some areas where non Russian ethnic groups constitute a majority” (p. 268).

3 These terms are defined by Forest and Johnson as the following: “Co-opted/Glorified monuments are maintained or further exulted. Disavowed sites are literally or symbolically erased from the landscape either

Schleifman discusses the history of the park from its conception to its construction in the early 1990s and notes that the structure and layout of the parks relate to collective memory. Schleifman notes also that “the problem of Russian identity is still vacillating among many controversial symbols.”<sup>12</sup> This suggests that the symbolic meaning behind Victory Park has changed and may change again.

Svetlana Boym dedicates a chapter of her book *The Future of Nostalgia* to Moscow and the reconstruction of Cathedral of Christ the Savior.<sup>13</sup> Boym argues that monuments are symbols of memory and exist in constant flux. This study will adopt this argument, which other scholars such as Benjamin Forest and Juliet Johnson have overlooked. In Boym’s work, nostalgia serves a similar function to collective memory. She argues that “[p]laces are contexts for remembrances and debates about the future, not symbols of memory or nostalgia.”<sup>14</sup> Her observations conclude that post-Soviet Moscow is nostalgic for the Soviet era and, at times, the Tsarist era. This work will deviate from the established scholarship because although it will examine the Soviet era, it will focus primarily on the return to Tsarist Russian values.

Benjamin Forest and Juliet Johnson also focus on national identity in post-Soviet Moscow through the “critical juncture” between 1991 and 1999.<sup>15</sup> They argue that the “critical juncture” required the newly formed Russian Federation to redefine itself. They highlight the struggle for the control of this redefinition by three main elites: Moscow Mayor Yuriy Luzhkov, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF), and the Russian President at the time Boris Yeltsin.<sup>16</sup> Forest and Johnson discuss three different types of national identities: the ethnic ideal, the imperial ideal, and the civic ideal.<sup>17</sup> Forest and Johnson conclude that the elites were able to influence the direction of the new Russian identity. The authors focus on four main case studies: Victory Park (*Park Pobedy*), the Lenin Mausoleum, Exhibition of the Achievements of National Economy (*VDNKh*), and the Park of Arts (*Park Iskusstv*). They categorize the case studies as either co-opted/glorified, disavowed, or contested.<sup>3</sup> Since their work was published in 2002, Forest and Johnson only briefly discuss Vladimir Putin.

Furthermore, even as Forest and Johnson expanded on the topic of space in post-communist countries, they noted that a vast literature on the role of monuments in nation building exists in the disciplines of geography, history, and sociology, but has been overlooked in political science.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, Forest and Johnson’s work has been cited largely by other scholars as a model for studying urban space in other cities or states.<sup>19</sup>

The present study fills the gap in political-science literature on the significance of monuments. While this study builds off Forest and Johnson’s work, it differs from their work in its theoretical framework.<sup>20</sup> Although the years between 1991 and 1999 were a crucial time for formation of the new Russian identity by the elites of that era, the present study focuses on the consolidation of Russian identity and the changes that have occurred from the 1990s to 2016. Although the categories that Forest and Johnson offer are useful, they do not fit with this work since their definition of “contested sites” is limited to “objects of political conflict.”<sup>21</sup> While political conflict could include a variety of participants, Forest and Johnson’s work focuses on the political elite and the conflicts among them. Forest and Johnson focus on the interests of the elites throughout their discussion on the monuments in Moscow. This paper hopes to analyze the semiotics of sites of memory with particular attention to Tsarist values: Autocracy, Orthodoxy, and People. While Forest and Johnson’s work focuses primarily on the Soviet era and onward, this work refers to Tsarist Russia. In addition, Forest and Johnson focus on the immediate post-Soviet transition between 1991 and 1999, but this study focuses on the years 1991 to 2016. It would be difficult to discuss Russia without a mention of the 2014 annexation of Crimea. Although it may have appeared that Russia’s national identity was consolidated in the early 2000s, the annexation of Crimea reflects the Russian national identity and is an important development of this identity.

The sites chosen for this study are the Cathedral of Christ the Savior (*Храм Христа Спасителя*), Victory Park (*Парк Победы*), and the Statue of St. Vladimir (*Памятник Владимиру Великому*). All three monuments were either constructed or completed in the post-Soviet period with some state intervention. This study will provide the essential historical background for each site and will analyze how the construction and structure physically and symbolically represent an effort by the state to return to pre-Soviet values.

#### THE RESURRECTION OF A MARTYR: CATHEDRAL OF CHRIST THE SAVIOR (ХРАМ

through active destruction or through neglect by the state. Contested monuments remain the objects of political conflict, neither clearly glorified nor disavowed” (Forest and Johnson, “Unravelling the ‘Threads of History’”, 525),<sup>61</sup>

#### ХРИСТА СПАСИТЕЛЯ) HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

After the victory of the Patriotic War of 1812, Tsar Alexander I decreed the construction of a cathedral in honor of Christ the Savior for the Russian peoples’ salvation from the Napoleonic forces. Although the capital of the Russian Empire was Saint Petersburg, the church was to be built in Moscow. The capture of Moscow by the Napoleonic forces had proved unsuccessful since the city was desolate, with two-thirds of its buildings ruined in the Fire of Moscow on September 12, 1812.<sup>22</sup> Napoleonic forces retreated a month after the capture of Moscow. The Tsar and the people believed that the fire and the French capture of Moscow were the result of the collective sins of Russians, including the Western reformation by Peter the Great in the sixteenth century.<sup>23</sup>

The first architect chosen for the cathedral was Aleksandr Vitberg, an architect of Swedish descent.<sup>24</sup> Vitberg had planned for a cathedral standing 230 meters high with a dome of 50 meters, which was taller than St. Peter’s Cathedral by almost 100 meters.<sup>25</sup> The cathedral was to be built on Sparrow Hills, which was eight miles from the Kremlin.<sup>26</sup> Vitberg’s vision broke with traditional Russian Orthodox architecture, and instead he tried to dedicate the cathedral to the three branches of Christianity.<sup>27</sup> Vitberg’s design incorporated a vertical three-part structure, contradicting the traditional model, representing Christ’s nativity, transfiguration, and resurrection.<sup>28</sup> In Vitberg’s design, the lower level of the church represented the soldiers lost in the Patriotic War. This was a more liberal view of the individual, especially for a country in which the emancipation of serfs would occur only in 1861.<sup>29</sup> The overall architecture of the cathedral had little Russian influence and instead combined classicism and romanticism.<sup>30</sup> Vitberg’s vision, however, never materialized and effectively ended with the death of Tsar Alexander I in 1825.<sup>31</sup>

Tsar Nicholas I, unlike his predecessor Alexander I, wanted to orient the cathedral’s meaning toward a national Russian one, rather than an international (Eurocentric) one.<sup>32</sup> Thus Nicholas I employed a new architect, Konstantin Ton. Ton had previously worked at the Imperial Academy of Arts for Architecture and introduced courses on icon painting and Russian architecture, and he was one of the main figures of the ‘Russian Revival’ (or Russo-Byzantine) style.<sup>33</sup> Ton’s cathedral also had a new location: Volkhonka Street, close to the Kremlin and bordering the Moskva River. The Convent of St Alexius the Man of God, however, already occupied the proposed location. Although the convent was built in

1360, making it one of Moscow's oldest buildings, it was moved in 1837.<sup>34</sup> Sidorov notes that "the convent's demolition to clear space for the cathedral provides an example of pre-Soviet manipulation of sacred places."<sup>35</sup>

The construction of Ton's vision spanned forty-five years, from 1838 to 1882, and the cathedral was consecrated in 1883. The decor on the exterior and interior of the cathedral put Biblical imagery together with events of the Russian past.<sup>36</sup> As Sidorov describes:

The sculpture of the main western façade symbolically depicted Russian troops under protection of heavenly forces. The southern façade, facing the direction of the decisive battles of 1812, depicted events of direct relevance to that war. The eastern façade, facing the Kremlin, showed Russian national saints, protectors of the country, while saints who spread Christianity were dominant in the northern façade (Kirichenko 1992: 74–75). The cathedral was an unprecedented synthesis of religious and national-historical themes, and of architecture, sculpture, and paintings.<sup>37</sup>

This is an example of how physical space is used to communicate a message: the idea of Holy Rus'. The juxtaposition of a contemporary event, the Great Patriotic War of 1812, and the imagery of national saints—which cannot be discussed without mentioning St. Vladimir, who converted Rus' to Christianity—reinforced the idea that contemporary Russia was still the ancient Holy Rus'.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, the cathedral alongside other property of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) was confiscated by the Bolsheviks on December 11 of the same year.<sup>38</sup> Under Stalin's rule the cathedral was demolished on December 5, 1931.<sup>39</sup> The Palace of Soviets, dedicated to the triumph of communism, was supposed to replace the Cathedral. The Palace was never built, however, due to War World II as well the fact that the location on the bank of the river would not be able to support the proposed structure.<sup>40</sup> The pit left by the cathedral was eventually replaced with the Moskva Pool.<sup>41</sup>

#### RECONSTRUCTION: EXPEDIENCY, COMMEMORATION OF TSARIST GLORY, AND THE REVIVAL OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

In the period prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, primarily after the introduction of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, a discourse began on the importance of Russian Orthodoxy in the USSR. Both liberal and conservative circles characterized the destruction of the cathedral as a victim of the Soviet regime.<sup>42</sup> The cathedral, however, was not reconstructed.

After the collapse, the state was able to implement its new vision onto the architectural landscape of Russia and, more specifically, of Moscow. The decision to reconstruct the cathedral was announced on September 16, 1994, by Moscow Mayor Yurii Luzhkov and Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' Alexei II in major newspapers.<sup>43</sup> The church was to be completed by 1997 to celebrate the 850th-year anniversary of Moscow.<sup>44</sup> Although the actual sum for the reconstruction remains unknown, Luzhkov and Patriarch Alexei announced that it would cost USD 150 million.<sup>45</sup> The cathedral was completed by 1997, and it was consecrated on August 19, 2000.<sup>46</sup>

Although the cathedral was a replica of Ton's cathedral, the new cathedral differed in many ways. Some additions were made, such as the dining hall and the garage in the basement, and a lobby in the church, which would be used for sales and future exhibitions. The new cathedral omitted a space for a female convent.<sup>47</sup> The deviations from the original cathedral also signified deviation from traditional Orthodox architecture, which represented the importance of the appearance of religiosity rather than actual adherence to religious traditions.

Throughout the construction of the cathedral, efficiency often surpassed quality. For example, the original paintings inside the cathedral had taken around twenty-five years, yet the paintings in the new cathedral took only a year. The painting of the icons for the interior of the cathedral was entrusted to Luzhkov's friend, the sculptor Zurab Tsereteli (who also worked on Victory Park). The iconography painted by Tsereteli and his fellow artists were not frescos, but instead were painted in the style of Socialist Realism since all of the artists had been trained in Soviet art schools.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, since the original frescos had been destroyed, the painters relied on black-and-white photographs. In addition, the new paintings were made with acrylic paints, while the originals had been created with oil paints.<sup>49</sup>

Furthermore, the western facade of the cathedral, traditionally the most important facade in Orthodox architecture, differed from the original.<sup>50</sup> On the original cathedral, the western facade featured a medallion of Christ the Savior surrounded by St. Alexander Nevsky, St. Elizabeth, St. Nicholas, and St. Nicholas of Pskov.<sup>51</sup> The arches featured white marble sculpture of angels such as archangel Gabriel and Uriel. On the western facade of the new cathedral, the marble statues that once surrounded the arches of the cathedral were replaced with bronze statues, and bronze was often replaced with plastic (see Figure 1). Gold, despite a donation of one hundred kilograms of gold by Alexander Smolensky, was often substituted with "titanium nitrate sprayed with gold lacquer."<sup>52</sup> Gold was particularly significant as it served as a "symbol

of divine light" in old Russian Orthodox churches.<sup>53</sup> The substitution of gold with gold-lacquered titanium nitrate and bronze with plastic highlights the importance of appearance rather than facade. The overall spirit of reconstruction suggests the use of religion as a means to an end.

The contemporary Cathedral of Christ the Savior serves as a site of memory that commemorates two fateful events of Russian history: the victory of the Patriotic War of 1812 and the destruction of Ton's cathedral by the Bolsheviks that struck "into the very heart of Orthodox religiosity by demolishing what the people regarded as their main cathedral."<sup>54</sup> The first event, the victory over the Napoleonic invasion, is represented in the reconstruction that represents the old cathedral, which was a monument to 1812. The cathedral also serves as a physical manifestation of the glorification and return of the Tsarist past. The original cathedral was a monument to the Tsar's power and represented Nicolas I's values of "Autocracy, Orthodoxy, People," which essentially stipulated that to be Orthodox was an integral part of being Russian. It also served as a testimony to the Tsar's power and a symbol of Nicholas I's new vision of Russian nationhood that centered around Russia, unlike that of his predecessor. The reconstruction of the Cathedral represents the reconstruction of the image of the Tsar, who was disposed of by the Soviet authorities, in the cultural memory of Russia.

Memory, as mentioned earlier, can be manipulated or changed through what is remembered and, paradoxically, what is repressed. In this case, the reconstruction of this cathedral is a physical reinstatement of an important memory of Tsarist history that was forgotten by the people of the Soviet Union. The focus on the Tsarist past attempts to highlight and romanticize that period of history without what Haskins refers to as a "sober appraisal" of the failures of that past, such as the loss of the Russo-Japanese War in the early twentieth century.<sup>55</sup> Thus, the reconstruction serves as a physical connection of the romanticized Russian Empire to the Russian Federation.

The second event that the reconstruction commemorates is the 'martyrdom' of the original Cathedral during the Soviet era. The modern Cathedral serves as a physical way to signify that the Soviet era is over by reversing the Soviet authorities' decision to demolish it. After the Bolsheviks came to power, the Soviet Union became an atheist state. Despite this, the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) was one of the only pre-Soviet institutions to survive the Soviet Union.<sup>56</sup> The reconstruction of the Cathedral plays into the popular memory of the Cathedral as a martyr of the Soviet regime. The reconstruction,

thus, was symbolic as a response to the trauma that the ROC suffered at the hands of the Soviet powers. The reconstruction, or rather resurrection, of the Cathedral represented the reinstatement of the Russian Orthodox Church's importance in the newly formed Russian Federation.

In the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union and therefore the Soviet nationhood and identity, it is not a surprise that politicians looked to the ROC as one of the bases of post-Soviet Russian nationhood. Although the reconstruction of this site of memory was for the entire nation, Forest and Johnson succinctly highlight the main political elites involved: Moscow Mayor Yurii Luzhkov and Boris Yeltsin. Luzhkov presided over the reconstruction in ways such as overseeing the blueprints, using the project to stabilize and consolidate his power.<sup>57</sup> Similar to Luzhkov, Yeltsin used the Cathedral as a tool to consolidate his own power. A pro-Orthodox stance for Yeltsin was also important in the 1996 federal elections for defeating the Communist Party, which at the time was still considered a threat.<sup>58</sup> The Communist Party was leading in opinion polls, and the Cathedral symbolized the return of traditional Russian values under Yeltsin's leadership. This was further emphasized by Luzhkov's efforts to portray the construction of the Cathedral as a symbol of "Russia's Renaissance."<sup>59</sup> Regarding the Cathedral, Yeltsin stated that "it is a Russian national sacred place and must be reborn. With it, it will be easier to find the path to social accord, the creation of goodness, and a life in which there will be less room for sin."<sup>60</sup> The rhetoric of rebirth and revival that surrounded the reconstruction of the Cathedral emphasized the importance of religion in the cultural memory that both Luzhkov and Yeltsin aimed to create.

Although both Yeltsin and Luzhkov supported the reconstruction of the Cathedral, albeit with Luzhkov's role being particularly significant, it should be noted that Russia had already adopted the 1993 constitution by the time of the constructions. Under the 1993 constitution, Article 14 §1 states that the "Russian Federation is a secular state. No religion can be established as a mandatory or state religion."<sup>61</sup> The newly formed Russian Federation was secular, but the involvement of politicians from both the federal and municipal levels in the reconstruction of the Cathedral was indicative of the increased future role of religion, specifically Russian Orthodoxy, in the state.

Although Sidorov concludes that the new Cathedral has been highly localized rather than nationalized, the punk rock group Pussy Riot's performance at the Cathedral and the subsequent controversy and international attention has elevated and consolidated the Cathedral as

a national monument.<sup>62</sup> On February 21, 2012, the group performed their song “Holy Mother, Take Putin Away” to the tune of a traditional Orthodox hymn in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior.<sup>63</sup> Members of the group wore balaclavas while dancing and lip-syncing to the song in the Cathedral. They were arrested afterwards. Pussy Riot became an international cause célèbre when three members of the group, Maria Alyokhin, Yekaterina Samutsevich, and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, were convicted of hooliganism and sentenced to two years in prison by a Moscow judge, Marina Syrova.<sup>64</sup>

The members of Pussy Riot used this performance to protest against the reelection of Putin in the 2012 Federal Elections as well as the Church’s support of Putin. Pussy Riot’s work also included a feminist critique of role of women in Russia and the involvement of the Patriarch and the state. This is again significant, as this site functioned as the site of the female Convent of St. Alexius prior to Ton’s original Cathedral. Thus, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior became an important location as a purveyor of their message. Pussy Riot’s performance serves as an example of how the public has taken the space and used it, despite the efforts by those who installed it, to create a new message.

While the original Cathedral stood as a monument to the Tsar’s power, this reconstruction stands as a monument to the Russian Federation’s power in the deconstruction of the Soviet identity. The new Cathedral serves as a site of memory for the Patriotic War of 1812 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the monumental nature of the Cathedral thus signifies the triumphant return of Russia.

#### A MONUMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT: VICTORY PARK (ПАРК ПОБЕДЫ) HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

While the original Cathedral of Christ the Savior was built to celebrate the victory of the Patriotic War of 1812, Victory Park was built to celebrate the victory of the *великая отечественная война* (Great Patriotic War). The construction of Victory Park was first proposed in 1947, and a cornerstone was laid later in that same year. The construction of the park, however, failed to materialize during Stalin’s lifetime.

After the appointment of Khrushchev, the project was reviewed again. In 1956, under the recommendation of Politburo member and former Marshal of the Soviet Union Georgii Zhukov, a new commission was created to draft plans for the tentative park to be approved by the Central Committee’s Secretariat. The proposal was approved by the USSR Council of Ministers and the Central Committee in 1957. The proposed park was to

be constructed by the fifteenth anniversary of the victory in 1960. A contest, which was originally scheduled to be held from October 1957 to April 1958, was held in 1958 with approximately 150 submitted proposals. The proposals, however, were found to be insufficient, and thus, in 1959, the project was entrusted to the architect Yevgeny Vutechich. Although Vutechich submitted a proposal in 1960, the project never materialized before his death in 1974.<sup>65</sup>

The idea of the project was revived by the Party Committee of Moscow City in 1975. Under Brezhnev’s administration, a contest was held and N. V. Tomsky, L. G. Goloubovsky, A. P. Korabel’nikov, and Yu. K. Korolev were the winners in 1976. One aspect of the proposed project was the Great Patriotic War Museum, which was to stand close to the center of the park. Due to the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games, however, the project was relegated to the periphery.<sup>66</sup>

In 1986, under Gorbachev’s leadership, the Central Committee announced a Union-wide contest for the main monument of the park. A total of 384 projects were displayed and subsequently visited by the public. The sculptor Vladimir Klykov’s project was heavily influenced by Russian Orthodox Christian architecture. Although the project was rejected, it created interest and dialogue among the public and critics since the Soviet Union was officially an atheist state and home to many groups that were not historically Russian Orthodox Christians.<sup>67</sup>

In 1987, a new contest was held for the design of the main monument. By 1989, the winners V. Klykov and T. Nekrasov were announced. It was also decided that the park would be completed by May 1990 and that the museum from the 1976 plans would be completed by 1993. The USSR, however, dissolved in 1991. Nevertheless, the new administration proceeded with the construction of the park. Moscow Mayor Yuriy Luzhkov collaborated with the sculptor Zurab Tsereteli to plan the park. Although it was largely based on the 1978 plans, the proposed park was to include the additions of a (Russian Orthodox) church, mosque, and synagogue. Victory Park was open in 1995 (although Victory Day had been celebrated in the park two years earlier).<sup>68</sup> Both Yeltsin and Luzhkov were present for the official opening of the park on Victory Day of 1995.

#### SYMBOLIC VICTORY: AN ANALYSIS

Although the site took almost half a century to complete from the first cornerstone, the completion itself signifies the importance of World War II, but more specifically, the Great Patriotic War in the memory of the Soviet Union and the (then newly formed) Russian Federation. While World War Two refers to the period between 1939

and 1945, the Soviet term Great Patriotic War refers to the period between 1941 and 1945. The focus on the Great Patriotic War, similar to WWII, commemorates and propagates the victory of the war in the cultural memory of Russians, but the focus on 1941 (and onward) erases the events that occurred before 1941. One of the biggest events that is erased in the memory of the Great Patriotic War is the Nonaggression Pact between Nazi Germany and the USSR. The victory of the Great Patriotic War focuses only on the defeat of the Nazis and fascism at the hands of the Red Army while failing to include the previous cooperation between the USSR and Nazi Germany. The distinction between terminologies, WWII and the Great Patriotic War, highlights that memory consists of what is remembered and repressed.

Forest and Johnson, however, argue that Victory Park is a “co-opted/glorified” site, which has been re-appropriated by political leaders to highlight the victory as a distinctly Russian victory, and the park “emphasize[s] the “best” of Russia’s ethic and imperial past while downplaying Russia’s troubled Soviet era domestic heritage.”<sup>69</sup> Schleifman argues that “[Victory Park’s] structure is the collective memory” and represents the synthesis of different memory groups.<sup>70</sup> Although Schleifman argues that the park is a result of different memory groups which “strove to restore Russia’s glorious past, whether as Imperial Orthodox, Red Communist, or a liberal Westernized state,” the Imperial Orthodox past has been significant. While the Communist past would have been easy to revive in the immediate post-Soviet era and the liberal ideals of Westernized states was a direction that the Russian Federation had looked to, the Imperial Orthodox past required more effort since Tsarist Russia had largely been erased from the cultural memory of Russia, and Orthodoxy had been replaced with state atheism.<sup>71</sup> While it is evident that Victory Park serves as a site of memory for the victory of the Great Patriotic War, the victory has been characterized as distinctly Russian by using Imperial Orthodox imagery.

The location of the park is connected to memory of the Russian Empire. Unlike the Cathedral of Christ the Savior or the Statue of St. Vladimir, which are in the historical center of Moscow near the Kremlin, Victory Park is on Poklonnaya Hill in the southwest periphery of Moscow. After the victory of the Patriotic War of 1812, an arch was built to commemorate the twenty-seventh victory of the battle of Borodino on Kutuzovsky Road.<sup>72</sup> As Schleifman notes, “the battle of Borodino entered the Russian memory as a heroic victory, and Poklonnaia gora with its immediate surroundings became associated with it.”<sup>73</sup> Poklonnaya Hill, therefore, became a symbol of victory over the Napoleonic forces. The decision to build

Victory Park on Poklonnaya Hill created a connection between the Patriotic War and the Great Patriotic War, and thus it became the signifier of the victory over Western, foreign aggression.

Victory Park itself covers 135 hectares and as of 2016 contains sixteen monuments and sites.<sup>74</sup> The first completed part of the museum was the Central Museum of the Great Patriotic War. The museum originated from the 1978 plans by Tomsky, Goloubovsky, Korabel’nikov, and Korolev. The museum was built in the shape of a semi-circle and stands behind the focal point of the park, the *Monument of Victory*. The *Monument of Victory* is an obelisk that is 141.8 meters tall to represent the 1418 days of the Great Patriotic War.<sup>75</sup> Forest and Johnson describe the monument as an obelisk with “a huge dragon covered with swastikas, curled beneath a towering obelisk adorned with Nike, the goddess of victory, engages in mortal struggle with a statue of St. George on horseback.”<sup>76</sup> The imagery on the statue symbolizes the triumph over Nazi—and, more importantly, western—aggression. This victory was important to emphasize especially in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the subsequent chaos.

Religion also played a role in this park, as a church, a mosque, and a synagogue were built within its parameters. Although the proposal for a park with Russian architectural motif, put forward by V. Klykov in 1987, was originally met with controversy, one of the first buildings built was the Church of St. George.<sup>77</sup> Schleifman argues that the church was built as a response to popular demand and fit into the Russian tradition of constructing churches in honor of victories. Later on, since the new Russian Federation strived to be a democracy, a subsequent mosque and synagogue were added.<sup>78</sup>

Although the park contained three sites dedicated to the three main religions in Russia, the source of the funding makes it clear that the Russian Orthodox faith takes precedence above the rest. While the church’s construction was funded by the government, the mosque was an effort on the part of both the Government of Moscow and the Ecclesiastical Board of Moslems of the Central European Region of Russia, and the construction of the synagogue was funded by the Russian Jewish Congress.<sup>79</sup> The locations of the church, mosque, and synagogue are also significant. The cathedral is located in the southwest of the park close to the entrance on Kutuzovsky Street, while the synagogue and the mosque are in the east near Minskaya Street. The church is also closer to the *Monument of Victory*, which stands in the center of the park. The proximity to the center of the park and the source of its funds demonstrate the relative importance of Russian Orthodoxy, whereas Islam and Judaism occupy the geo-

graphic periphery of the park, as well as the periphery of Post-Soviet Russian nationhood.

Another monument within the park that includes an Imperial Orthodox motif is *The Defenders of Russian Land*. Erected in 1995, the monument depicts three soldiers: one Ancient, one Tsarist, and one modern.<sup>80</sup> The exclusion of a Soviet soldier effectively ignores Russia's Soviet past. The inclusion of the Ancient and Tsarist soldier establishes a connection to Tsarist history and the ancient Kievan Rus past, both of which are connected to Russian Orthodox Church, again emphasizing the importance of Orthodoxy.

The presence of religious sites within the park characterizes it as distinctly Russian, separating it from Soviet history, since the Soviet Union was an atheist state. The use of religion also signifies a return to the Tsarist value of Orthodoxy. Thus, the inclusion of religion in the large and family-friendly park dedicated to the victory that was often lauded as the single greatest accomplishment of the Soviet Union (even greater than the Communist Revolution) serves to reinvent the victory as a Russian one in the cultural memory.

Since 2001 and 2002, when the works by Forest and Johnson and Schleifman were published, more monuments have been added to the park even though the source of the memory, the Great Patriotic War, becomes more distant.<sup>81</sup> Thus, Victory Park, and its developments up until the end of 2016, highlight its continuous role as a site of memory.

The continual additions of monuments in the park emphasize the importance of this event in the collective memory and identity of the Russian Federation. The park contains sixteen monuments, six of which were built after 2000. The monument *In the struggle against fascism we were together* introduced a Soviet element to the park. The monument depicts two Red Army soldiers waving the Soviet flag victoriously. One soldier stands on top of a defeated eagle with a swastika on it, representing the victory over Nazi Germany. The statue stands upon a pedestal that has the names of former Soviet cities engraved in it, such as Minsk, Odessa, and Yerevan. Although the monument added a Soviet element to the park, the statue was created in response to a WWII Soviet monument that was blown up in Georgia in 2009.<sup>82</sup> Putin directly addressed the demolition of the Georgian statue

4 Regarding the Russo-Georgian War, the National Security Advisor of the Carter administration Zbigniew Brzezinski, stated that Putin's actions were "following a course that is horrifying similar to that taken by Stalin and Hitler in the 1930" (Tempest, "The Charismatic Body Politics," 103). This will only focus on Putin's perception within Russia. This should be noted, however, as an example of re-Sovietization in the region. Although that is one of the forms of nationhood examined by Vera Tolz ("Forging the Nation"), this research argues that the main one being propelled by Putin's Russia is a nation of East Slavs.

at the unveiling of the new monument: "This caused a harsh rejection and resentment in the world, and above all, in Georgia. And this is understandable since people cannot be with those who destroy memory. Memory of the people. Especially the memory of our own heroes."<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, Putin stated that the statue "is a tribute to the immortal achievement of our people."<sup>84</sup> The Georgian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nino Kalandadze criticized the statue as an "attempt to convince the public that Georgia allegedly did not appreciate those who died during World War II."<sup>85</sup>

The monument, *In the struggle against fascism*, is an anomaly amongst the other monuments due to its Soviet imagery. The monument, however, is a physical embodiment of Putin's dominance in the Caucasus. Although the statue is dedicated to the Great Patriotic War and fits into the theme of Victory Park, it should also be noted that this was built shortly after the Russo-Georgian War in 2008.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it is unlikely that the chosen location for the statue was a coincidence: it resides on Poklonnaya Hill, the site that celebrates victory over foreign aggression.

Victory Park is an example of how the meaning behind a site of memory can evolve. The main memory of victory remains, but the depiction of the victory has changed. In Tsarist Russia, the park served as site of memory for the victory of the Patriotic War; while in the Russian Federation, it serves as the site of memory for the victory of the Great Patriotic War, which has also been largely reframed as a Russian victory with Imperial Orthodox motif. The post-1990s additions to the park represent an effort to continuously keep the memory of the victory alive. It represents the continuous effort to preserve a memory that is becoming ever distant. The use of religion, particularly Russian orthodoxy, echoes the Tsarist value of Orthodoxy, present in the memory of Poklonnaya Hill. Victory Park serves as a site of memory for the 'glorious' Russian past.

#### A TALE OF TWO VLADIMIRS: THE STATUE OF ST. VLADIMIR (ПАМЯТНИК ВЛАДИМИРУ ВЕЛИКОМУ) HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On November 4, 2016, the Statue of St. Vladimir was unveiled on Borovitskaya Square near the Kremlin. The statue received international attention since St. Vladimir was

the Grand Prince of Kievan Rus (present-day Kiev) from 969 to his death in 1015 and the figure that converted his subjects to Christianity on August 1, 988.<sup>5</sup> BBC published an article, "Putin unveils 'provocative' Moscow statue of St. Vladimir," and the New York Times published "A New Vladimir Overlooking Moscow," in which the author, Neil MacFarquhar commented that the new statue is a part of "what might be call[ed] the Statue Wars."<sup>6</sup>

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As of the end of 2016, no academic work on the Statue of St. Vladimir in Moscow exists, but this research aims to provide some understanding of it.<sup>6</sup> The statue serves three functions: it establishes the importance of Russian Orthodoxy, it is a monument to Putin, and it serves as a site of memory for the fateful event of the Christianization of Kievan Rus (which also consolidates the importance of Russian Orthodoxy).

At the most superficial level, the sheer height of the statue, which stands at 16 meters, conveys the importance of Russian Orthodoxy. The statue was proposed in 2015, the millennial anniversary of the death of St. Vladimir.<sup>7</sup> The original design proposed a 25-meter tall statue on Sparrow Hills—one of the highest hills in Moscow. The statue was to overlook the city, but due to concerns about the levelling of the hill, the statue was moved to less than 100 meters away from the Kremlin in Borovitskaya Square. The distance, or lack thereof, between the statue and Kremlin establishes a close physical connection between the church and state. The connection to the ancient ruler of Kiev with the current government attempts to legitimize the new government as distinctly 'Russian' while erasing the Soviet atheist past. The emphasis on the relationship between the church with roots from Kiev and state helps consolidate Russian nationhood as a union of East Slavs who share a common religion. This connection also highlights Putin's connection to the fateful events of the Kievan Rus past.

The monument also serves as a monument to Putin. The juxtaposition of Putin and St. Vladimir is best exemplified in a photograph, released by the Kremlin, of Putin standing in front of the Statue of St. Vladimir (figure 7). The photograph of Putin explicitly shows one Vladimir vis-à-vis another Vladimir. Visual imagery is important to the construction of Putin's persona, and, more importantly, his cult of personality. It is, therefore, important to briefly discuss the history of the 'imaging' of Putin in the popular Russian imagination. As MacDon-

5 St. Vladimir is known as St. Volodymyr in Ukrainian. Since this research focuses on Russia and at times uses Russian language sources, the Russian version of his name is used; Kubiiovych, Volodymyr, and Danylo Husar Struk. 1984. *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984): 643.

6 There is a statue of St. Vladimir in Kiev from 1853.

ald, Hughes, and Dodds note:

Geopolitics has to some extent becomes a question of how particular episodes become figures in visual culture [...] geopolitical truths are established, and geopolitical realities enacted through a process of visual demonstration.<sup>88</sup>

Tempest notes that in authoritarian regimes:

The ruler's physical self embodies the authority of the state [...] [and] the ruler's physiognomic traits and physiologic characteristics become universal objects of signification, [...] that represent not just his own virtues and talents but those of the political system over which presides, the ideology he professes and even the policies he enacts.<sup>89</sup>

Tempest also argues that the imagery of Putin as the embodiment of masculinity worked particularly well in a post-Soviet Russia since the state lost its *raison d'être*, and Putin represented Russia as it would like to imagine itself as: athletic, healthy, and proud.<sup>90</sup> Thus, the juxtaposition of Putin with St. Vladimir not only emphasizes the importance of Russian Orthodoxy in the Russian Federation, but it also emphasizes that, like St. Vladimir, Putin plays a key role in the development of Russia as a powerful leader.

Furthermore, although the base of the statue is engraved with the phrase "*Holy Prince Vladimir the Baptist*," the only word that is completely visible in the photograph is "Vladimir." Even the name of the statue (*The Statue of St. Vladimir or Statue of Vladimir the Great*, if directly translated from Russian) and the text at the base of the statue (*Holy Prince Vladimir the Baptist*) makes it unclear to which Vladimir the statue refers. Through the image of the two figures together, it allows an explicit comparison between the two. The comparison, in the most reductive version, is that between two great leaders, one historical and one present. The comparison is interesting since St. Vladimir had converted to Christianity as a tool to consolidate power and unify the different groups of Rus.<sup>91</sup> As Machiavelli noted: "A prince should appear merciful, faithful, kind, religious, upright, but should be flexible enough to make use of the opposite qualities when it is necessary."<sup>92</sup> Putin too has used Russian Orthodoxy to consolidate his power. Fagan notes, "Putin taps the nominally orthodox majority's confidence in the

church for how own image of permanence and security.<sup>93</sup> Religion in the Russian Federation, and especially in Putin's Russia, has become increasingly important. Patriarch Kirill, for example, is often seen at official engagements, including the unveiling of this statue.

Since religion is an important part of the East Slavic identity, the focus on religion draws attention to the contentious issue of an 'ancestral' land. The claim to this 'ancestral' land manifested in the annexation of Crimea. Although Tempest argues that "his last full year as a charismatic was in 2010," Putin's approval ratings have improved significantly after the annexation of Crimea in early 2014. According to the Levada Center, Putin's lowest approval rating was in November 2013 at 61 percent (the last time his approval ratings were as low as in June 2000, which was around the onset of the Second Chechen War).<sup>94</sup> By June 2014, Putin's approval rating had increased to 86 percent.<sup>95</sup> Putin's aggressive foreign policy, especially after the annexation of Crimea, conveys his role in the popular imagination as a "tough guy" who stands up to Western "liberal-fascist" enemies who are allegedly trying to weaken Russia at home and abroad.<sup>96</sup> The annexation of Crimea can be seen as a territorial claim to an 'ancestral' land and an assertion of political power.

Moscow's territorial claim to Kiev and Ukraine was evident during Putin's short, but significant speech at the opening ceremony:

Your Holiness, Muscovites, friends, welcome and congratulations on the opening of the monument to Holy Great Prince Vladimir, Equal of the Apostles. This is a major, significant event both for Moscow and the entire country and for all Russian compatriots. It is symbolic that the opening is being held on Unity Day here, in central Moscow, by the walls of the ancient Kremlin, the very heart of Russia. The new monument is a tribute to our prominent ancestor, an especially revered saint, national leader and warrior, and the spiritual founder of the Russian state. Prince Vladimir went down in history as a unifier and defender of Russian lands, and a far-sighted politician who created the foundations of a strong, unified, centralized state, which eventually united different peoples, languages, cultures and religions into one big family. His epoch was full of achievements, and the Baptism of Rus was of course the most important, defining and essential of them. This choice was the common spiritual source for the peoples of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, and laid

the foundations of our moral standards and value priorities which continue to define our lives to this day. It is this solid moral foundation, unity and solidarity that helped our ancestors overcome difficulties, live and achieve victories to the glory of the Fatherland, strengthening its power and greatness from one generation to the next. And our duty today is to work together to confront modern challenges and threats, while relying on spiritual covenants and the invaluable traditions of unity and harmony, and to preserve the continuity of our thousand-year history as we move forward.<sup>97</sup>

The mention of Belarus and Ukraine emphasizes that these three East Slavic countries share a common history. The connection among the three countries is used to foster post-Soviet Russian nationhood as a union of East Slavs. Although Putin recognized that St. Vladimir's conversion of Kievan Rus to Christianity is shared amongst Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine, Putin's Russian-centric and territorial rhetoric throughout the majority of the speech is evident through his references to St. Vladimir as the "founder of the Russian state" and the "unifier and defender of Russian lands." Through the previous statements as well as his goal "to preserve the continuity of our thousand-year history," Putin highlights Russia as the successor and preserver of East Slavic traditions, namely Russian Christian Orthodoxy. Putin's use of "thousand-year history" ignores the period of state atheism in the Soviet Union and creates a direct connection between Kievan Rus to Tsarist Russia to the Russian Federation.

The statue of St. Vladimir next to the heart of Russian politics asserts Russia's territorial claim over Ukraine and reappropriates the memory of the Christianization of Kievan Rus on August 1, 988, as a Russian memory.<sup>98</sup> The juxtaposition of Vladimir Putin with St. Vladimir attempts to immortalize Putin in the cultural memory by installing a statue dedicated to a saint and leader with the same name. The use of St. Vladimir is controversial, especially after the annexation of Crimea, as St. Vladimir was the Grand Prince of Kievan Rus' which is present-day Kiev. This can be seen as a further claim on Kiev and Ukraine, which fits into the idea of Russian nationhood as being the "triumph of Orthodox Russian nation."<sup>99</sup>

Furthermore, regarding unity, it should be noted that the date of the unveiling of the statue was Unity Day (День народного единства), a holiday first introduced by Putin in 2005. Putin delivered a speech in which he explained his decision to make Unity Day

a holiday:

While this is a new state holiday, its meaning and value have deep spiritual and historical roots. Almost four centuries ago, at the beginning of November 1612, Kuzma Minin and Prince Pozharskii led their home guard army to liberate Moscow from foreign invaders. This marked the end of the Time of Troubles in Russia, and of civil strife and conflicts connected with that period. This was a victory of patriotic forces, a victory for the project to strengthen the state by uniting, centralizing and joining forces. These heroic events mark the beginning of the spiritual revival of the Fatherland and the creation of a great and sovereign power.<sup>100</sup>

Unity Day, thus, celebrates the Tsarist, not Soviet, victory over foreign aggression. The emphasis on Tsarist Russia allows an explicit religious component to be introduced that would not be possible with a Soviet victory (although Victory Park has been rebranded with religious symbolism). It also ties Putin and his government to the victory of 1612 despite a Soviet intermission between Tsarist Russia and the Russian Federation. Thus, it is symbolic that the statue to St. Vladimir and to Putin was unveiled on a day dedicated to the "spiritual revival of the Fatherland" and the "creation of a great and sovereign power."

Almost every aspect of this monument has political and religious significance. This has created a site of memory that represents the Christianization of Rus, the 'innate' connection between the East Slavic countries, and the greatness of Russian leaders, in the past and present. The statues also glorify the Tsarist value of orthodoxy by its physicality and symbolism. However, the site of memory ignores the fact that these East Slavic states are independent sovereign states and projects nostalgia for the unity of the East Slavic countries.

#### CONCLUSION: ACROSS MONUMENTS

Sites of memory arise from the destruction of the real environments to which these memories belong. After the Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks disposed of the Tsarist values and the new regime effectively destroyed the political environment of the Tsarist regime. One of the only pre-Soviet institutions to survive the Soviet Union was the Russian Orthodox Church. Thus, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, elements of Russian Orthodoxy were used in sites of memory to try to bring back the Tsarist environment, which

was lost to the revolution, as a tool to establish and consolidate the Russian identity. The sites analyzed in this research are related to Russian Orthodoxy and represent the reconstruction of Russian Orthodoxy in Russia. The attempt at the restoration of Russian Orthodoxy as an ancient tradition has also brought up the contentious issue of the origins of Russia. This has led to territorial claims over Kiev and Ukraine as a whole. The three sites of memory discussed in the present study: Cathedral of Christ the Savior, Victory Park, and the Statue of St. Vladimir.

The reconstruction of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior represented one of the first steps of reinstating Russian Orthodoxy into the Russian Federation. The Cathedral has become a site of memory for the victory of 1812 and the victory of the Russian state over the Soviet Union. The scale of the reconstruction also glorifies the return of the Russian state and religion along with the Tsarist values of 'autocracy, orthodoxy, people.' The performance by the controversial *cause célèbre* Pussy Riot in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior reflects how the Cathedral symbolizes both the Russian church and state since Pussy Riot's performance was essentially a political protest.

The construction of Victory Park, despite almost a fifty-year delay, emphasizes the importance of the creation of a site of memory for the victory of the Great Patriotic War. The park demonstrates how a fateful event from the Soviet Union could be reframed as 'Russian' with the addition of religious sites and monuments. The new additions to the park demonstrate the importance of this site of memory and how 'new' sites of memory can be added to continue the narrative of victory in the Russian cultural memory.

The statue of St. Vladimir, which is the only monument in this study that was fully constructed after Putin's rise to power, demonstrates the multifaceted role of religion in the Russian Federation. The juxtaposition of Vladimir Putin and St. Vladimir creates the connection between the two leaders. The implications of the connection are that, first and foremost, Putin is continuing the work and tradition of St. Vladimir, and that there is an inherent connection between Russia and Ukraine through St. Vladimir and Christian Orthodoxy. The statue of St. Vladimir serves as a physical assertion of a territorial claim to Ukraine by the placement of a statue of the Grand Prince of Kievan Rus in the Russian capital. This territorial claim, although present in the discourse on nationhood from the 1990s, has become particularly important in light of the an-

nexation of Crimea.

Through the study of the triad of sites of memory in Moscow, the development of a Russian nationhood and identity as a union of East Slavs connected by Russian Orthodoxy can be observed. Although other forms of nationhood have been identified in intellectual discourse in the late 1990s, Putin’s Russia has been overwhelmingly oriented towards Russian Orthodoxy. This orientation is evident in political discourse and has also imprinted itself into the architectural landscape of Moscow.

Although this present study focuses on the role of sites of memory in the consolidation of a Post-Soviet Russian nationhood in Moscow, this research aims to highlight the overarching importance of public space—of sites of memory in political discourse. The state of Russian politics is often hard to gauge, and this study aimed to show an aspect of contemporary Russian politics (specifically nationalism and nationhood) through the state’s use of public space. Public space and its use by both the state and the people is often overlooked in political discourse, despite it being arguably one of the most direct ways citizens come into contact with the state. This study specifically focuses on Russia, but public space exists in virtually all states.

**FURTHER RESEARCH**

Since my research only focuses on Moscow, further research is recommended in sites of memory in cities across the Russian Federation. The recent transfer of St. Isaac Cathedral in Saint Petersburg from the state to the Russian Orthodox Church, for example, has led to protests by citizens.<sup>101</sup> Saint Petersburg was also the former capital of the Russian Empire, so it would be a point of interest to research how Tsarist remnants have been reappropriated. Another point of interest is Kazan, the capital of the Muslim-dominant Republic of Tatarstan—it would also be important to research to see if Moscow’s vision of East Slavic and Russian Orthodox Christian nationhood has affected the monuments in the city. Cities in Siberia and the Russian Far East (where the population density is also significantly lower) should also be researched to see whether or not sites of memory in cities in the periphery of Moscow are within Moscow’s interest to influence.

Only three sites of memory were analyzed in this essay, but as of 2013, more than 180,000 monuments exist in Russia. This is an increase from the 46,000 that existed in 1990 and a study can be con-

ducted to analyze this increase and trends in the new monuments if applicable.<sup>102</sup>



Figure 1: The locations of the sites of memory: (1) Cathedral of Christ the Saviour; (2) Victory Park; (3) Statue of St. Vladimir



Figure 2: The modern Cathedral of Christ the Saviour (photo by author)



Figure 3: Map of monuments and sites in Victory Park. Numbers correspond to Figure 4.

No on map	Names (Russian and English)	Date of Completion
1	Центральный музей Великой Отечественной войны Central Museum of the Great Patriotic War	1993
2	Храм Георгия Победоносца Church of St. George	1993
3	Музей Победы Museum of Victory	1993
-	Мемориальный знак «Движение» Memorial Place "The Spirit of Life"	1997
-	«Пропавшие без вести солдаты без имен» "Missing Soldiers without names"	1997
-	Памятник «Защитникам родной России» Monument "Defenders of Russian land"	1997
-	Памятник «Братство народов» Monument "Brotherly of Peoples"	1997
4	Мемориал жертв Елизаветы Memorial Wipeq Shakhida	1997
5	Мемориал жертв Холокоста Holocaust Memorial Synagogue	1998
-	Памятник Панафилису Андреевичу, участнику ВОВ Monument to Pankov volunteers who perished in the Great Patriotic War	2003
-	Памятник Воинам-интернационалистам Monument to Soldiers-Internationalists	2004
-	Памятник Спарку участникам антитеррористической операции Monument to member-states of the Anti-Terror Coalition	2005
-	Памятник семье Фроловой в память ВОВ (1941-1945) гг. Commemorative site to the Parents and Natives of the Great Patriotic War, 1941-1945	2005
6	Вечный огонь Eternal Flame	2010
-	Памятник «В борьбе против фашизма мы были вместе» Monument "In the struggle against fascism, we were together"	2010
-	Мемориальный комплекс, посвященный жертвам репрессий Memorial complex dedicated to cities and heroes	2010

Note: Only monuments whose geographic location is important to note have been given a indicator on the map.

Figure 4



Figure 5

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## BEYOND THE SPECTACLE: ASSESSING THE INTENT OF ISIS PERPETRATED BEHEADINGS FROM JUNE 2014-2015

Sarah Starr, University of Chicago (2017)

### ABSTRACT

The use of beheadings by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria captured Western media attention since the horrific beheading of American journalist of James Foley in August, 2014. Beheadings captured attention, and thus, many reporters and academics alike easily explained ISIS' strategy as a spectacle display—working to put the world's eyes on them. However, examining beheadings more individually indicates geo-temporal and victim patterns. In this paper, beheadings from June 2014 to June 2015 are classified based on their political motivation. Further analysis compares this sample of beheadings to factors of the broader terror campaign: territorial control as well as US-coalition airstrikes. Evaluating the relationship between these factors and beheadings provides insight into the meticulous calculus involved in a beheading, and whether it is effective.

The act of deliberately decapitating a person has been used as a form of capital punishment for millennia.<sup>1</sup> In fact, “capital punishment” derives from the Latin word *caput*, “head,” which refers to the punishment of serious offenses by forfeiting the head, i.e., beheading.<sup>2</sup> States, such as Saudi Arabia, continue to use beheadings for perpetrators of substantial crimes to this day.<sup>3</sup> State beheadings are perceived as legitimate by the population and are at times considered honorable.<sup>4</sup> However, beheadings have recently gained attention due to their use by non-state actors in horrific, violent events.<sup>5</sup> Terrorist organizations use beheadings during an insurgency or jihad as a technique in their terror arsenal. The Salafi jihadist extremist militant group Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), in particular, is a terrorist organization notorious for its use of aggressive insurgency methods and strategic tactics introduced by Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) to fortify its caliphate in Iraq and Syria since 2014. Though ISIS controlled a nation-sized portion of land roughly the size of Great Britain, it has come to be known of its unfathomable brutality.<sup>6</sup> Their acts of terror, although they resulted in widespread international condemnation, attracted a flood of foreign fighters to join their ranks.<sup>7</sup> In many ways, ISIS has become the most feared group in the Middle East, crippling the Iraqi Forces, initiating the Syrian Civil War, and committing horrific acts of violence in their wake.

Over the past three years, ISIS has claimed hundreds of beheadings of civilians and military personnel. Many academicians argue that the primary motivation behind ISIS's use of graphic decapitations is to provoke the shock and maintain the attention of the international

community. However, evidence reveals that there is more to the story. ISIS often features its beheadings in highly stylized videos with carefully selected music, background, and militants.<sup>8</sup> The time and place of these executions also do not appear to be random. Beheading incidents bear variations in the manners in which they are conducted. All the above seem to suggest that ISIS may be using decapitation as a tool in their strategic arsenal to serve a variety of purposes.

In this paper, I hope to account for the political purposes of beheadings by the Islamic State from June 2014 to June 2015. I examine how ISIS' use of beheadings gives insight into their intended goals. More broadly, I consider what explains ISIS' use of beheadings in the context of their campaign and other terrorist actions. To answer this question, this paper proceeds in the following sections. First, I discuss the current literature addressing ISIS's use of beheadings, and highlight its shortcomings in explaining variations between events. Next, I discuss the collection of individual beheading incidents from June 2014-2015 and how I categorize them based on their motivation. Then, I discuss how ISIS's territorial control and coalition airstrikes may explain unique motivations that account for the beheading variations. Specifically, I suggest that the executions serve the distinct political purpose of establishing power of presence or punishing occupying forces. Finally, I assess how this study informs implications on the position, goals, and strategy of ISIS and other terrorist organizations.

### EXISTING LITERATURE

With the rise of terrorist beheadings and media cover-

age, many experts have attempted to theorize what leads groups to commit acts of such “extra lethal violence.” In particular, numerous scholars have offered explanations for what drives ISIS to behead civilians and military personnel and circulate the beheading documentation widely via their active social media presence.

Most robust literature describes the performative or spectacle nature of a beheading. This theory is introduced by Lee Ann Fuji in “The Puzzle of Extra Lethal Violence,” where she argues that beheadings serve to capture the attention of a particular audience and explains how people will respond to the bloody, glory act by wanting to take action.<sup>9</sup> Under this framework, beheadings are a tool in the “extra-lethal violent” arsenal that deploys violence transgressing shared norms about the proper treatment of people. They grab the attention of the local and international community to incite fear and gain support. This argument relies heavily on the graphic effect or “performative lens” that beheadings take. Performance highlights a moment as special, causing people to remember it and act in ways they otherwise would not have imagined.<sup>10</sup> This explains the theatrics of shocking beheading incidents aimed to convey to the audience the seriousness of ISIS's intent. However, it does not account for ISIS's strategic consideration.

If ISIS beheads daily, surely decapitation events would be normalized, thus the effects of “shock and awe” would wear off. This can be explained by the motivation split. The beheadings of local people can serve to intimidate them into obeying the rules of a weak state, while the beheadings of Westerners may be designed to strike back at the United States and coalition nations for military action against ISIS. The latter may be extremely performative while the former may not require such tactics. These performative beheadings additionally act as a recruiting tool to attract people who are energized by violent scenes.

Other proponents of this school, such as Timothy Furnish, argue that the shock value of terrorist techniques, such as hijackings and car bombs, wears off. As the opponent becomes immune to a particular tactic, terrorists must develop new ones to remain a threat, thus turning to beheadings.<sup>11</sup> This view is supported by Erick Stakelbeck, who describes beheadings as “attention-craving” and states that videos on social media target millennials accustomed to gruesome displays of blood and gore.<sup>12</sup>

Another rationale for explaining the use of beheadings by ISIS is that by demonstrating its authority to decapitate individuals, it demonstrates that it alone possesses the ultimate power to act as a judge and executioner. This seeks to explain the point in a campaign in which

ISIS begins using beheading as a tactic. Steven Zech and Zane Kelly explain in their book the strategic logic of ISIS in using beheadings as part of a repertoire for deterrence to or coercion of both the local population and Western powers, among the many other tools such as suicide attacks, torture, sexual violence, and mass slaughter.<sup>13</sup> ISIS also uses beheadings to mark its legitimacy by showing that it has the ability to pick up individuals and kill them in brutal ways, underscoring its might. Theorist Ronald Jones highlights this when he examines the procedures of most beheadings. He asserts that Iraqi beheadings typically come in two phases: the demand, where kidnappers make requests that must be met, and the execution, where kidnappers record the beheading or the aftermath.<sup>14</sup> Pete Lentini also supports the show of strength argument by illustrating the ways in which beheadings demonstrate power to the global Muslim community.<sup>15</sup> ISIS beheadings often follow a protocol as outlined in state run punishment systems and are rooted to the very beginning of Islam. This implementation of traditional Muslim themes of punishment serves to communicate ISIS' power to the Muslim world. Given imagery is abundant and critical to Islamic culture, ISIS beheading videos often feature imagery in the militants' dress, their weapons, and the decapitation process itself.

Another reason often cited for ISIS's use of beheadings is its utility as a religious sanction or historical precedence to punish individuals. Death by decapitation has long been used as a form of punishment for wrongdoings. ISIS may be using beheadings as a way of restoring the world to its ancient order. Scholars in this school of thought typically provide a significant amount of historic context for decapitation as a state's form of capital punishment. For instance, Jones considers the anthropological history of ritual murder and argues for the precedence of decapitation.<sup>16</sup> Letini makes a similar claim, justifying ISIS beheadings in an Islamic context by considering the Quaran's references to beheadings of unbelievers at times of war.<sup>17</sup> ISIS adopts traditional Islamic religious law and culture to rapidly gain supporters and uses execution sanctified by the Quaran to establish their authority as a religiously-backed organization.

Though each of these frameworks attempts to explain the use of beheadings in a terrorist organization's campaign, all fail to provide a nuanced understanding of ISIS's extreme acts in several regards. First, they do not account for any variations among beheadings. As beheadings are not posted regularly, there appears to be a methodical strategy that decides when ISIS posts these violent videos. Most literature also do not consider the factors that determine the selection of victim and the choice of time and location of a beheading. Second, these

arguments disregard the dimensions of ISIS beheadings and tend to focus on the video rather than the event itself.<sup>18</sup> It is possible that there are multiple motivations to the use of beheadings such as revenge, public example, means of display for recruitment, validation for donors, or propaganda—however, the intention of a beheading based on the context and the desired effect is scarcely discussed in current literature. This paper aims to determine what the specific motivation is for any given beheading.

### RESEARCH DESIGN

To look beyond the spectacle of a beheading and assess the motivations that drive its use, it is important to note that there is, in fact, systematic variability among events. This section proceeds in four parts. First, I provide a summary of a conceptual framework for analyzing each beheading based on its characteristics. Then, I define the terms and establish the possible correlation between each type of beheading and its corresponding motivation. Third, I discuss the coding. Lastly, I apply this framework to categorize a sample of beheadings and explore the unique characteristics of each beheading type based on the resulting sample.

### FRAMEWORK

First, it is necessary to introduce a framework to consider beheadings as a tactic motivated to serve specific political purposes. I show that not all beheadings are created equal in terms of the media they attract, the ceremonial ritual attached to it, and the response from the target audience. In examining beheadings committed by ISIS and reading existing literature on the topic, numerous potential intentions arise. Beheadings may serve to recruit foreigners attracted by ISIS's power or to reinforce authority in a region. Additionally, they could serve as punishments and deterrents to foreign governments acting in the region or as a way to distinguish an organization from other terror groups by their brutality. However, I suggest that two of these intentions can serve as the primary motivations for a beheading while the others may be subsequent goals. I propose that the two most significant goals of an ISIS beheading are either to reinforce their authority amongst Iraqi and Syrian citizens under ISIS rule and to change the international community's actions in the region. Therefore, the conjecture introduced here is that a beheading by ISIS is either motivated to serve scaffold or punishment purposes. I claim that these two categories represent the primary motivations driving a specific beheading.

*Scaffold Beheadings* are beheadings that showcase ISIS' authority over the local population by acting as the juror and executioner. Punish Beheadings are

beheadings directed at foreign occupying groups, coalition powers, or regional militia groups allied with the coalition, in order to increase the cost of their continued fight against ISIS in the region. The categorized sample of beheadings is considered within the greater ISIS's campaign to determine whether a beheading type (based on the timing, location, and victim of the beheading) is a function of other factors of the campaign. Our two categories are related to either ISIS' strength as sovereign authority (scaffold beheadings) or the U.S. activity in the region (punish beheadings) - therefore in order to explain the variations in the beheadings, we need to look at possible influencers that demonstrate the involvement of the strength of ISIS' position and the United States in the region. To describe ISIS' power in the region, we could use their overall budget, frequency of all attacks, or territorial control. I choose to use territorial control due to the accessibility of data and the theory that scaffold beheadings are used to control a population, hence should be directly related to the territory under ISIS' control. U.S. involvement could be measured by troops deployed, money invested in the operations, or airstrikes. Airstrikes are chosen as the explanatory variable to represent U.S. involvement in the region because the data is easily accessible and ISIS has directly addressed U.S. airstrikes in several of their beheading videos.<sup>19</sup>

### CORRELATION BETWEEN EXPLANANS AND EXPLANANDUM

#### SCAFFOLD BEHEADINGS AND TERRITORIAL CONTROL

Scaffold beheadings are the terrorist group's replication of the public executions performed by state governments to assert control over an unoccupied or ungoverned town and impose its strict law. They are committed against local civilians and military, such as accused spies or Iraqi citizens for purported wrongdoings, and may lack widespread media attention. Since the objective of scaffold beheadings is to demonstrate authority in the region, the beheadings of Iraqi and Syrian military victims are counted as scaffold unless there are specific demands made to coalition forces related to the events.

Scaffold beheadings follow French social theorist Michel Foucault's theory of penal force as the "spectacle of the scaffold."<sup>20</sup> Scaffold beheadings committed against the local population are a form of public execution and function like a political ritual, displaying sovereign power as corporal punishment. They present figures of authority and acknowledge the important role played by the public in bearing witness to the display. As one of ISIS's stated goals is to enforce its Sharia law on the populations in the territory under its control, the act of beheading helps reinforce its power in the eyes of the local people—many of

whom were all too familiar with the horrors of war and terrorism by 2014.<sup>21</sup> Beheadings have the potential to create a perception among the local population that ISIS has control and authority in a region, since it has the power to remove people from their homes, charge them with crimes, and administer such punishments. Additionally, ISIS scaffold beheadings demonstrate the importance of the presence of people in public executions. There is always a gathering of men, women, and children assembled to witness a display of power. A beheading that goes unwitnessed is purposeless. Attracting the attention of a mass of people allows ISIS' power to be exercised in a ritual display of its authority over the people. To demonstrate the characteristics that make a scaffold beheading unique, I will give an example of a beheading.

On December 30, 2014, in Tell Abyad, Syria ISIS beheaded a man accused of being a wizard in front of an onlooking crowd. The photos published regarding the event show a black-clothed militant leading the accused man into the middle of a town square where men, women, and children have gathered. The accused man is blindfolded and wears dilapidated clothing. It appears that there are roughly fifty people present to witness the event, with at least six armed ISIS militants.<sup>22</sup> The black-clothed militant then leads the accused onto his knees and places him in a hunched posture over a tree stump. The militant turns and briefly addresses the crowd of onlookers, describing his crime in Arabic. Several other armed militants stand around the accused, while others serve as crowd control. The executioner raises a rusty machete and the final photo is of the severed head lying next to the body. Though there are no videos for the beheading, the Wialayat ar-Raqqah media center published photos from the event. The caption reads "تل ابیتض، اقامة الحد بضرربة سيف علی س احر ف ی م دینة" which translates roughly to "set the limit with a sword thrust at a witch in Tell Abyad."<sup>23</sup> ISIS beheaded the Syrian civilian for his crime of witchcraft before an onlooking crowd to assert its authority to punish.

Often, the goal of scaffold beheadings is to induce fear in the local population to reinforce ISIS' authority. Therefore, they should correlate with ISIS' territorial control. Territorial control refers to areas where ISIS has ruling authority to emplace laws, execute justice, control economy, and oversee social life. Beheadings are one of the many ways ISIS demonstrates its power in the region, hence territorial control may be an indicator for the presence and frequency of scaffold beheadings. Recently threatened or acquired ISIS' territory may see an increased number of these beheadings as the group attempts to exercise its power to act as judge and executioner. In this lens, beheadings are a tool in the context of

the overall campaign where group power explains where and when a beheading will occur. Group power is determined by maps of ISIS's territorial control, which are published monthly by the Institute for the Study of War. From this information, we can determine which scaffold beheadings occurred within, near, or outside of an ISIS's area of influence (AOI). These beheadings are designed to display power, so I hypothesize that if ISIS has control of an area, there will be more beheadings in that region. In particular, I would expect that beheadings will occur in towns that ISIS has recently overtaken (or re-taken). However, an additional explanation could exist to predict when this type of beheading is observed. It could be that ISIS uses them to feign control when losing territory. If this was the case, then we would see increases in group power and decreases in the number of beheadings.

### PUNISH BEHEADINGS AND U.S. AIRSTRIKES

Punish beheadings are beheadings against Western or coalition citizens. They are categorized by their choice of victim. Punish beheadings are often individual and focus on the victim being symbolically punished for crimes committed by their government (often airstrikes or military intervention). As opposed to scaffold beheadings, there is often much more dramatization and theatrics surrounding the beheading itself, with widespread media attention. The beheading may begin with a kidnapping, followed by ISIS making demands and threatening to behead the victim, and end with the final execution when the victim's government does not comply. To highlight the characteristics that identify a beheading as punish, I examine the beheading of journalist James Foley in August 2014 as an example.

In November 2012, James Foley was kidnapped in northwestern Syria.<sup>24</sup> His captors made demands to the United States that went unfulfilled. ISIS then sent Foley's parents an email saying the government "refused to pay ransoms" and they were "avenging" the U.S. bombings.<sup>25</sup> On August 19, 2014, ISIS uploaded a video to YouTube entitled "A Message to America." The video begins with President Obama announcing the first U.S. airstrikes against ISIS in Iraq and then cuts to Foley kneeling in the desert next to a masked ISIS executioner.<sup>26</sup> Foley reads a long message of regret before the executioner condemns U.S. airstrikes and commits the execution.<sup>27</sup> The video shows the beheaded corpse and the executioner ends with a threat that American journalist Steven Joel Sotloff will be next if the airstrikes do not halt.<sup>28</sup> There is no question that this video was intended to punish the United States for its involvement in Iraq and Syria by inflicting a toll high enough that the United States would be coerced to stop its military action. This is clear not only

because ISIS sent Foley's parents an email outlining its intentions, but the executioner also directly stated it during the video.

The goal of punish beheadings is to change the U.S. or coalition position and activity in the region by kidnapping Western civilians (such as journalists) or military personnel for ransom and using the threat of decapitation as leverage over the country so as to coerce the United States or coalition to stop their military action in the region (e.g., stop airstrikes or remove troops). If the ransoms go unmet or the victim's country does not enter into negotiations with the terrorists, the kidnapped individual will be beheaded. In this model, terrorists use beheadings as an extreme tactic in their arsenal to increase tolls on a government for continued strikes against ISIS. This principle is counter-intuitive from a strategic point of view. The killing of foreigners in graphic and horrific ways often unifies the government and home population in an effort against the terrorist group. For instance, the execution of Jordanian fighter pilot Muath al-Kasasbeh quickly led to retributive aerial bombing against ISIS positions.<sup>29</sup> However, this could work because as costs increase, an adversary may decide to stop their behavior rather than be subjected to the increasing toll. To test the impact U.S. activity has on ISIS' use of punish beheadings, we look at the number of U.S. airstrikes in Iraq and Syria published daily by United States Central Command (USCENTCOM).<sup>30</sup> If it holds true that punish beheadings are intended to deter U.S. military intervention, then there will be a clear trend of increase in the number of airstrikes, leading to a punish beheading aimed to stop the activity, followed by a significant drop in airstrikes in the region. On the other hand, if it is incorrect, then the number of airstrikes (or any increase in the airstrike campaign) will have no correlation with the beheadings or there will be no change in beheadings as airstrikes change.

#### CODING

In the next step of analysis, I aim to apply the above framework to a sample of beheadings. To highlight variations amongst beheadings and to provide insight into the motive of a beheading, it is necessary to construct a database of a sample of beheadings within a given time frame, which serves as a constraint to limit the amount of data and scope of analysis. This study will look at beheadings undisputedly claimed by ISIS from June 2014 to June 2015 since it declared the establishment of a caliphate at the end of June 2014.<sup>31</sup> In the first year of existence, ISIS aggressively expanded their area of influence throughout Iraq and Syria.<sup>32</sup> Along with increasing territorial control, ISIS launched a widespread propaganda campaign that

included many beheading videos.<sup>33</sup> As a result, this time frame allows for unique analysis of the areas of influence and beheadings for the newly formed terrorist group.

Within this time range, there are execution events similar to ISIS beheadings that will not be considered in the scope of this study. These include beheadings conducted by groups which are allied with or have pledged allegiance to ISIS (e.g., Boko Haram, Abu Sayyaf Group, al-Ansar Battalion, al-Shabaab, Tehreek-e-Khilafat).<sup>34</sup> The reason for their exclusion is that group relations can change rapidly as motives can differ, hence the agenda of these groups may not necessarily align with ISIS's at all times. Since the goal of this study is to evaluate each beheading in the context of ISIS's goals and position in its campaign, all beheadings examined must adhere to the principle of advancing ISIS's political aims. However, offshoot groups which claim allegiance to or support for ISIS at one time may not continue to align their agenda with ISIS, just as Zarqawi's militant organization had a tenuous relationship with Al Qaeda.<sup>35</sup>

This study will also not include many other violent acts and executions committed by ISIS that are not explicitly beheadings, such as point-blank gun fire and torture. As the objective of this study is to address when ISIS chooses to use beheadings as a tactic and the particular political purpose it serves, executions carried out by ISIS that are examined have to be categorized specifically as beheadings. Executing spies, enemies, civilians, and government officials is a tactic used by a significant number of terror organizations and is outside the scope of this study, though it often critically interacts with the use of beheadings as a tool in a violent militant organization's arsenal. More details on collection methodology and rationale follow below.

To answer the question of what political purpose a particular ISIS beheading serves, it is necessary to examine an array of beheading incidents. While there are existing lists of ISIS beheadings compiled by sources such as Wikipedia, this study aims to present a more thorough examination of beheadings and therefore includes those that may not have been captured by Western media due to the nationality of the victim (e.g. Iraqi or Syrian) or the circumstances of the event (e.g. limited local goals).<sup>36</sup> As a result, data collection is necessary to obtain a more comprehensive list of beheadings for further analysis. This allows us to examine trends in the context of ISIS' campaign or military action in the region.

Collection of beheadings from July 2014 to 2015 occurred in two distinct steps. The first step collected beheadings from primary sources (e.g., ISIS social media sites and repositories) in the format of videos and photographs. To be counted as a beheading incident, the

primary media source had to directly show that the individual was in fact beheaded (as opposed to stabbed or shot) and the beheading was committed by an ISIS member. Often, the primary sources were known ISIS media channels and included ISIS symbols, such as its flag. The second step of beheading collection relied on secondary mentions of beheadings in news wires. The reports were accessed in wires held in the Lexis Nexis database and were searched through for ISIS beheadings during the date range specified. Reports had to contain a derivative of the word "behead" to be counted as a beheading incident: [(ISIS OR Islamic State) AND (behead OR execute OR decapitate)]. The search term was later refined to exclude "execute," which gave a significant number of stabblings, shootings, and irrelevant executions. When possible, a second wire report was used to verify the original report; however, this was not available for all beheading incidents.

Each beheading incident was then entered into the database including the twelve attributes listed in Appendix 3. While information was not available for all twelve attributes for every beheading, any event that was included in this study had to, at a minimum, indicate the date it occurred, the number of victims, the nationality of victims, and the location specified to the city level. This was to ensure that data were included with enough information to conduct further analysis.

Finally, each beheading incident was categorized as either a scaffold or punish event based on reporting and primary evidence. For the sorting process, the nationality of the victim was decided first. If the victim was a Westerner or a citizen of a coalition force nation, the beheading incident was immediately categorized as punish. If the victim was not a Westerner or a coalition nation citizen, then their military or non-military status was taken into consideration. If the victim was a Kurdish fighter, the beheading was categorized as punish since the Kurdish militia allied with the United States during this time.<sup>37</sup> In summary, the first tier of sorting relied on the citizenship of the victim and the second on whether the victim was a civilian or non-civilian target.<sup>38</sup> See Appendix 4 for further explanation of sorting.

#### RESULTS

The result of this collection is a dataset that examines each beheading, its motive, and the time at which it is committed in the campaign. An instance of beheading for the scope of this paper is defined as a unique event where one or more persons are decapitated by ISIS with or without primary media evidence. Therefore, a particular beheading instance may include the execution of one or sometimes multiple individuals who are beheaded

in the same time and location. The geo-temporal significance of the beheading is a property of the beheading phenomenon that will be explored further in the analysis section of this paper. The full dataset is contained in Appendix 1. In the following sections, we will analyze these beheading incidents to note the similarities and variations in the events. These beheadings include information from dozens of videos, photos, and wire reports. The links to primary and secondary sources are available as supplementary material to this paper.

In total, the data consist of seventy-six instances of beheadings that occurred between June 2014 and June 2015. The collection represents the beheading of approximately 692 individuals beheaded in seven different countries (Syria, Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, France, Lebanon, and Egypt). The overwhelming majority of beheadings occurred in Iraq or Syria, with a small number occurring elsewhere. Beheadings occurred at a rate of between 2-9 per month, with an average of 6.33 per month. Of the total beheadings, 25 percent have photo documentation, 42 percent have video footage, and 32 percent have only a wire report. The collected incidents also indicate the individualistic nature of this tactic, as 76 percent of the beheadings have five or fewer victims. The collection also indicates the important, widespread use of beheading videos that are distributed worldwide via ISIS's social media channels. In this collection, twenty-nine of the seventy-six beheading instances have a video link or mention the circulation of a video following the incident, while nineteen have photos posted to ISIS's social media accounts. In total, 48 or 63 percent of the beheadings were represented with photos or videos. Most critical to our study, sixty-two of the seventy-six are categorized as scaffold beheadings while only fourteen as punish beheadings.

#### SCAFFOLD BEHEADINGS

The collected scaffold beheading incidents display a set of common characteristics: they are often not videotaped, are published in news sources, and are public displays. If scaffold beheadings are featured in videos, militants often recite Arabic phrases such as passages from the Qur'an or legal proclamations before the event to large crowds gathered in a public square. In most cases, armed militants also watch the beheading while standing amongst the crowd or acting as crowd patrol. While these militants appear initially as crowd control for the assembled masses, they also serve as an ever-present reminder of the power and authority of ISIS. A clear message that they are in charge and anyone who fails to follow their rule will be punished however they see fit. Without such an image, it would be easy to claim beheadings are nothing

more than a tool for justice. The presence of additional militants indicates that this is, in fact, a political move as well. Moreover, beheading videos or photos vary in quality and in procedure. The videos show that there is no standardized procedure for conducting a beheading ritual: while there are some general steps that are followed, small variations exist. For example, knives range from pocket-knives to machetes or swords, the cutting motion varies in speed and from slicing to hacking, and the number of people assembled to bear witness ranges from a dozen to over a hundred.

The collection of scaffold beheadings shows clear differences with punish beheadings. Scaffold beheadings often feature a greater number of victims per incident. They contain between 1 and 150 beheadings, with an average of eleven per incident. There are only four incidents claiming greater than seventy-five victims. The names of the victims are typically not given; instead they are labelled by their crime or position, such as “wizard,” “homosexual,” “spy” and “Iraqi Military.” The victims of scaffold beheadings are overwhelmingly Iraqi and Syrian civilians or military, with a small percentage of incidents involving North African civilians and purported ISIS “deserters.” These beheadings are less likely to be documented with photos or videos, and even if video evidence does exist, it is typically disseminated locally through DVDs.

#### PUNISH BEHEADINGS

The majority of the punish beheadings collected feature video media. Although there are slight variations among videos, there exist many commonalities between events. Beheadings are typically set outdoors with three or more militants standing behind one or more captives.<sup>39</sup> At times, militants cover their entire heads except their eyes, wear military vests over traditional clothing, and carry at least one weapon.<sup>40</sup> The victims often wear orange jumpsuits and are at times blindfolded. They are made to kneel in front of their captor or hunch over a table in preparation for the decapitation. The most common ending scene in the videos is a shot of the head on the ground near the severed body. Punish beheading videos tend to be longer than scaffold beheadings and feature more theatrics and dramatization with music in the background at various times.<sup>41</sup> For instance, the video of James Foley includes footage of President Obama, of airstrikes, and Foley reciting a speech of regret before the actual execution takes place.<sup>42</sup>

1 The only punish beheading where no primary media could be found was for 4 Afghan farmers beheaded on 4/17/2015 in punishment for the Afghan government refusing a prisoner exchange of captured ISIS insurgents.

2 All 10 named victims are the citizenship listed except Yasser Namsan Daham, an Iraqi public official beheaded on February 1, 2015.

In the time of this study, punish beheadings account for only 22 percent of the incidents collected but constitute much of the widespread beheading media coverage during this period, with primary media (photos or video) found for thirteen out of the fourteen beheadings from June 2014 to 2015.<sup>1</sup> This supports the spectacle aspect of these beheadings. Furthermore, a majority (71 percent) of punish beheading incidents occur on an individual victim, with the greatest number in a unique punish beheading featuring four victims. Unlike scaffold beheadings that typically feature more than one victim to signify the power of ISIS and the crowd assembled to view the event, punish beheadings are more likely to feature one victim to emphasize the importance on the individual. In ten of the fourteen cases, victim identities for punish beheadings are known and publicized as American, British, French, or Japanese civilians.<sup>2</sup> This represents the countries either directly involved in airstrike campaigns against ISIS or allied with nations participating in military action in the region. In all of these cases, public statements by ISIS are made either in the video or surrounding the release of photos from the event, condemning actions by a foreign government or military force in the region.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the punish beheadings are not equally distributed throughout the year. Five out of the fourteen occurred within the first three months of the period in question. Only one occurred in the three months to follow, with a second spike of six punish beheading events occurring in January through March. In the sections below, the time of the beheadings compared to the frequency of coalition airstrikes may indicate a possible relationship between military action and punish beheadings.

After reviewing the collected beheading incidents, we now turn to geo-temporal analysis. The objective of this analysis is to determine a relationship between beheading incidents and either U.S. airstrikes or ISIS group power to show that ISIS' use of beheadings is particular to the purpose they wish to serve. The group uses beheadings in strategic ways to accomplish the goals of punishing governments for military action and disciplining the population of the areas it controls. It seems logical that the tactics a terrorist organization deploys will fit with its broader mission and strategy in the campaign. For this reason, the group's control of territory and the force of the enemy are two possible predictors for when beheadings may occur and who the target victim could

be.

#### TERRITORIAL CONTROL AND SCAFFOLD BEHEADINGS

To understand how ISIS's control of territory may have impacted its use of beheadings, it is important to outline key expansions of ISIS territory between June 2014 and June 2015. First, I examine how ISIS's territorial control changed within the year of study, and then I analyze how this territorial control correlates with the scaffold beheadings to determine if it is possible to explain some of the use of scaffold beheadings based on either growth or loss of territory.

By considering ISIS's control of territory, the aim is to understand whether ISIS's strength in the campaign—measured by their successful capture and hold of territory—has an impact on its use of beheadings against local civilians and military. This would fit into a strategy that seeks to rule over the local population, including rival Shi'ite and competing Sunni groups through fear, intimidation, authority, and domination. ISIS's goal of achieving a caliphate in the Middle East hinges upon getting support from local populations and stamping out resistance. Beheadings are one way to accomplish this. To examine more closely how a beheading may result from attempts to establish power in a territory, we first look at ISIS's use of beheadings in June 2014-2015 and then compare it to its control of territory to see if we can establish a relationship between the two. The data for ISIS' sarea of influence in Iraq and Syria from June 2014 to 2015 came from twenty maps published by the Institute for the Study of War. Appendix 2 contains the dates of map publication with the shapefiles contained in an ArcGIS public map (available at the hyperlink listed in Appendix 5). ISIS Sanctuary maps as well as Iraq and Syria Situation Reports were used to determine the ISIS area of influence from the ISIS control, attack, and support zone. These areas are defined as areas where ISIS exerts physical/psychological pressure to assure that individuals/groups respond as directed, conducts offensive maneuvers, or permits logistics and administrative support of ISIS's forces.<sup>44</sup>

Within our time of study, sixty-two scaffold beheadings occurred. Locations of all the events are known at the city level. Thirty-four percent occurred in Iraq and 49 percent in Syria, though this distribution is not consistent throughout the year, as discussed below. Figure 1 shows the number of scaffold beheadings occurring by month and the location aggregated at the country level.

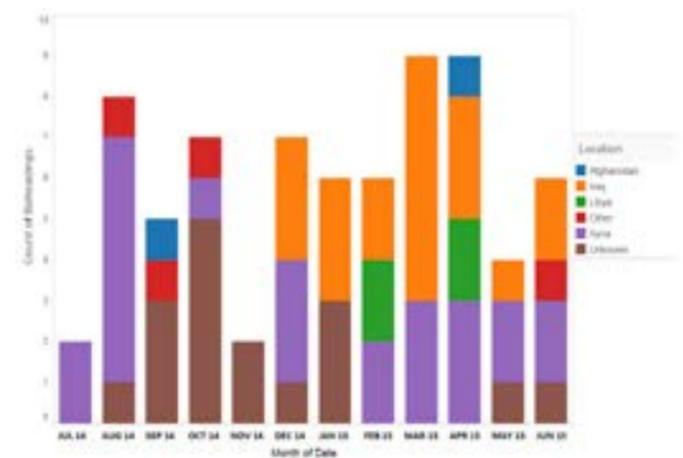


Figure 1: Location of scaffold beheadings from June 2014-June 2015. Figure was compiled using the dataset in Appendix 1.

From this figure, it is immediately apparent that the use of scaffold beheadings varies across locations and months. The most active months (March and April 2015) saw nine scaffold beheading incidents while the lowest month (July 2014) had only two.

In the section to follow, I will use rough geo-temporal analysis in three-month blocks to analyze the correlation between scaffold beheadings and territorial control. Considering three-month time blocks provides aggregation and smoothing for the constant gain and loss of territory that marked the first year of ISIS's ground combat in 2014 (e.g. the control of cities went back and forth several times in some months). We will begin with the establishment of the caliphate in June 2014 and proceed to analyze the entire year. The map of scaffold beheadings overlaying ISIS Area of Influence is presented before the monthly assessment.



Figure 2a: Scaffold beheadings and ISIS territorial control plotted from July - September 2014.



Figure 2b: Scaffold beheadings and ISIS territorial control plotted from July - September 2014.

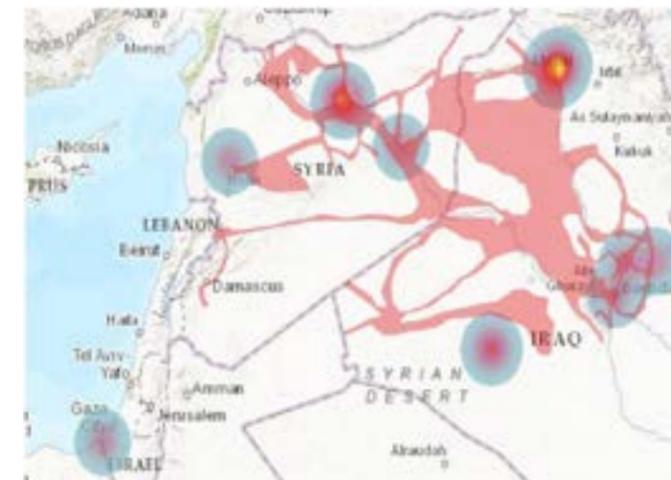
Since there are no scaffold beheadings reported in the month of June, we begin the analysis in July 2014. In the first three months of collection, ISIS had control of Syrian cities al-Raqqqa and Aleppo and Iraqi cities Tikrit, Bayji, and Mosul. Of the eleven beheadings that took place from July to September, 54 percent occurred in cities directly under ISIS control and 72 percent in or near ISIS controlled territory and border areas. In fact, the majority of scaffold beheadings during this time occurred in the self-proclaimed ISIS capital of al-Raqqqa, Syria, where ISIS had tighter control compared to its struggle in Iraq to capture cities such as Kobani and Ramadi. This seems to support the claim that ISIS uses scaffold beheadings to enforce their power in a region. Since they had a stronger offensive in Syria, they immediately began using scaffold beheadings in the area.



Figure 3a: Scaffold beheadings and ISIS territorial control plotted from October - December 2014

Figure 3b: Scaffold beheadings and ISIS territorial control plotted from October - December 2014

October through December was a violent time in Kobani as ISIS attempted to capture the cities with increasing violence and force. The statistics shows a clear skew above the average scaffold beheading activity in each country for the entire year, with 61 percent of scaffold beheadings within the first six months of study occurring in Syria while only 16 percent in Iraq. The distribution of scaffold beheadings in the two countries corresponds with the territory under ISIS control in the two respective countries. From June 2014 to December 2014, ISIS did not gain a significant amount of territory beyond their initial offenses in the first few months. This could suggest that ISIS's goal was to first fortify their authority in Syria, supported by their self-proclaimed capital in al-Raqqqa, before extending their power to Iraq. This distinct lack of beheadings in Iraq for such a long period of time suggests that there may be reasons why we do not observe these beheadings until later in the campaign. Beginning in December and continuing for the next few months, there was a surge in scaffold beheadings in Iraq, specifically in the cities of Mosul and Anbar. The balance of scaffold beheadings begins to shift from Syria to Iraq in the coming months, with ISIS's success in capturing significant territory in Iraq, particularly the critical cities of Kobani and Ramadi. Of the sixteen scaffold beheadings occurring during this time, 56 percent occurred in an ISIS-held territory while 69 percent in either an ISIS-held territory or a border area. This further supports the principle that scaffold beheadings may be used specifically in territory under ISIS control.



any increase in the number of scaffold beheadings in the city.

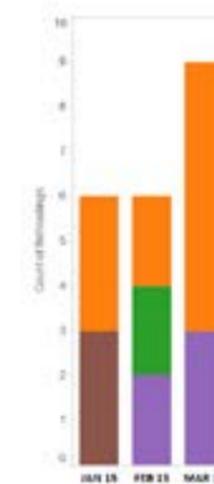


Figure 4: Scaffold beheadings and ISIS territorial control plotted from January - March 2015

From January to March 2015, only 28 percent of scaffold beheadings occurred in Syria while 57 percent in Iraq. This is a clear divergence from the trend at the outset of the study and the overall averages of scaffold beheading locations for the year collected. This could indicate that during this time, ISIS gained territory in Iraq and as a result, there was an influx in the number of events designed to reinforce their power in the region. In January through March, sixteen scaffold beheadings occurred. Of these, 56 percent took place in ISIS-controlled territory and 88 percent in border regions or within ISIS AOI. These numbers are consistent with the trend demonstrated in previous months as well. It appears that over half of the scaffold beheadings occurred in an ISIS-held territory. At least 80 percent of the scaffold beheadings occurred in an ISIS area of influence (including border areas). While March and April saw a continued elevated level of scaffold beheadings occurring in Iraq, the months following the capture of Ramadi did not observe

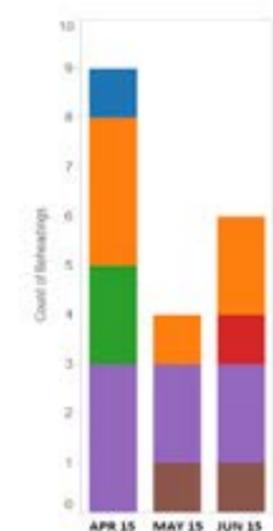


Figure 5: Scaffold beheadings and ISIS territorial control plotted from April - June 2015

The next major territorial gain for ISIS occurred in May with the capture of the town of Ramadi. In the final three months of analysis, from April to June 2015, nineteen scaffold beheadings occurred. Fifty-eight percent of these beheadings took place in an ISIS-held territory and 84 percent either in a border or ISIS AOI. Overall, trends in the location and time of scaffold beheadings suggest that the increase in the number of scaffold beheadings depends on ISIS' military action and control of territory.

As discussed above, scaffold beheadings were largely concentrated in Syria until late 2014 and early 2015, when ISIS captured Kobani, alongside its increasingly aggressive territorial control in Iraq. After this, ISIS continued scaffold beheadings in Syria, though the rate of beheadings in Iraq was higher for the first few months of 2015. The results from the year in question are summa-

rized in the following table:

	Within	Border	Outside	Total
Jul-Sep	6	2	3	11
Oct-Dec	9	2	5	16
Jan-Mar	9	5	2	16
Apr-Jan	11	5	3	19
Total	35	14	13	62

Table 1: Scaffold beheadings vs. ISIS territorial control from June 2014-2015. ISIS territorial control obtained from ISW maps.

This table indicates that the number of beheadings occurring within ISIS territory is at a minimum 55 percent. This shows that there is a strong relationship between the ISIS's territorial control and the use of scaffold beheadings. In summary, scaffold beheadings are most likely to occur in ISIS controlled territory than outside territory or border areas, which supports the claim that ISIS's territorial control may serve as a potential predictor for the timing and location of a scaffold beheading.

**AIRSTRIKES AND PUNISH BEHEADINGS**

In autumn 2014, ISIS' expansion and attacks against the local Yazidi population ultimately led the U.S. government to declare that it would carry out airstrikes against ISIS.<sup>45</sup> This marked the first offensive action by the United States in Iraq since the withdrawal of U.S. ground forces in 2011. The ensuing U.S.-led coalition of airstrikes targeted ISIS' military positions, oil wells, and refineries and limited the organization's mobility considerably.<sup>46</sup> According to press releases accessed from USCENTCOM's online media archives, the first airstrikes labelled as counter-ISIL occurred on August 8, 2014 near Irbil, Iraq.<sup>47</sup> In total, over 1,750 airstrikes events occurred from June 2014 to June 2015, where each unique airstrike event is defined as a cluster of strikes occurring in a location per press release. Press releases indicating airstrike events always included the title "U.S. Military Conducts Airstrike Against ISIL" with the location of the event.<sup>48</sup> The number of strikes in the event is not taken into consideration in this study due to limitations in collection; however, airstrike events typically include between 1 and 8 airstrikes on a given target location. As noted in the USCENTCOM reports, all airstrike assessments are based solely on initial reports. Additionally, all of the strikes were conducted as part of Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR), which is the U.S. military operation to eliminate the ISIL terrorist group and the threat they pose to

Iraq, the region and the wider international community. The objective of OIR is the destruction of ISIL targets in Syria and Iraq to further limit the terrorist group's ability to project terror and conduct operations. Coalition nations also involved in conducting airstrikes in Iraq include the United States, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Coalition nations conducting airstrikes in Syria include the United States, Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. A summary graph of airstrike activity is illustrated in Figure 6.



Figure 6: Daily airstrike events occurring between June 2014 and June 2015 as part of OIR. Dataset was compiled from USCENTCOM reporting and is available upon request.

Airstrikes occurred throughout Iraq and Syria, though strikes in Kobani, Mosul, Bayji, Sinjar, Fallujah, Tal Afar, and Al Hasakah represent roughly 68 percent of all events. As indicated in the figure, though the airstrikes begin in Iraq in early August, it is not until October that the airstrikes start gaining momentum and drastically increase the number of targets hit daily. From August through late September, the use of airstrikes is limited to few targets and strikes per day. The United States launched its first airstrikes against ISIS in Syria on September 23, 2014, and just days later began targeting Kobani in an effort to stall the encroaching militants seeking to seize the town. By early October, there is a significant increase in airstrikes, particularly in and around Kobani, to counter ISIS advances. The number of airstrikes occurring aggregated at a monthly level continues to rise throughout the year (Figure 7) beginning with only 28 airstrike events in August 2014 and ending with 279 in June 2015. In fact, only the months of November and March deviate from this upward trend.

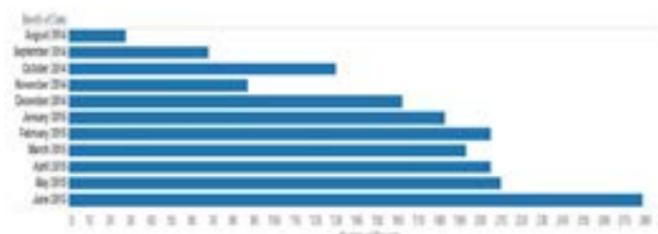


Figure 7: Airstrikes occurring in Iraq and Syria as part of OIR aggregated at the monthly level. Dataset of airstrikes is available upon request.

Comparing the airstrikes to the fourteen punish beheadings could reveal a motivation for ISIS' use of beheadings and whether the tactic is effective in making a change in the U.S. behavior in the region. Analysis on each punish beheading seeks to understand whether it was motivated from a possibly perceived increase in the airstrike campaign and whether it had any significant impact on the number of airstrikes that followed in the aftermath. Naturally, it would be expected that at times of intense airstrikes, ISIS would have incentive to up the ante with a beheading. If this tactic proves effective in increasing the cost for policy makers, then there would be a noticeable decrease in the number of airstrikes after a beheading (given the current baseline with allowances for airstrikes supporting ground operations or other possible extenuating circumstances). When the first punish beheading of American journalist James Foley in August occurred at the start of the airstrike campaign, the United States was shaken to its core by the brutality and violence of ISIS. Airstrikes continued at the same rate directed at Irbil and the Mosul dam in the following days. A similar pattern unfolded regarding another American journalist Steven Joel Sotloff, who was beheaded on September 2, 2014, while airstrikes continued to hammer Mosul and Irbil undeterred.<sup>49</sup> The beheadings of British aid worker David Haines and French tourist Hervé Gordel on September 13 and 14 took place just before the heaviest airstrikes in the region to date. In the days following Gordel's execution, airstrikes essentially doubled across an array of cities in Iraq and Syria. However, after British aid worker Alan Henning was executed the following weeks, there was a significant reduction in airstrikes, from 37 per week to an average of 23.5 in the month following the execution. When aggregating the airstrikes to the monthly level, there was a noticeable decline in November, with forty-three fewer airstrikes than the previous month, a 33 percent drop in an otherwise increasing monthly air-

strike trend. This may suggest that the impact from the beheadings of David Haines, Hervé Gordel, and Alan Henning in the months of September and October had begun to make an impact on policy makers' decisions to instigate airstrikes given the increasing tolls. Although November saw a decline in airstrikes, potentially resulting from costs incurred by punish beheadings, the number of airstrikes began to steadily increase towards the end of the year. The threats against Japanese hostages Haruna Yukawa and Kenji Goto in January followed a record high number of airstrike activity across the region. Airstrikes spiked 11 percent in the days leading up to the attack. This gives compelling evidence to suggest a perceived increase in the bombing campaign may have led to the captures and beheadings of the hostages. The week following the beheading of Haruna Yukawa showed a drop in airstrikes though the trend as a whole continued to rise. The beheading of Kenji Goto just days later did not demonstrate an immediate effect. In March, there was a decline in airstrikes, potentially the result of the numerous punish beheadings occurring in late January through March. Table 2 provides the airstrike climate (increased or decreased from baseline levels) in the weeks leading up to each beheading attack. The final punish beheading in the timeframe examined is of Frenchman Hervé Cornara, which occurred at the highest point of airstrike activity in the campaign's history. A summary of every punish beheading and the airstrike activity before and after is illustrated in the following table:

Beheading Event	Airstrikes Prior	Airstrikes After
James Foley	Increase	No change
Steven Joel Sotloff	Increase	No change
David Haines	Increase	Decrease
Hervé Gourdél	Decrease	Decrease
Alan Henning	Increase	Decrease
Petter Kassig	Increase	Decrease
Haruna Yukawa	Increase	Decrease
Kenji Goto	Increase	Increase
Yasser Namsan Daham	Increase	Decrease
Kurdish Military	Increase	Increase
Kurdish Military	Increase	Decrease
Kurdish Military	Increase	Decrease
Afghan Civilians	Increase	Decrease
Hervé Cornara	Increase	Decrease

Table 2: Data compiled from Appendix 1, Complete Collected Beheadings dataset and USCENTCOM OIR Airstrike dataset. Dataset is available upon request.

As noted previously, the airstrike campaign grew more aggressive as the year continued, thus most weeks saw an increase in the number of strikes. In

all, thirteen of the fourteen punish beheadings occurred within a week of an increase in airstrikes. This could suggest that perceived increases in airstrike activity led to the use of the punish beheading tactic by ISIS. Furthermore, ten out of fourteen or 71 percent of the beheadings were followed by a comparative decrease in the number of airstrike events in subsequent weeks. This provides evidence for the effectiveness of this tactic by ISIS. Certainly, policy makers were still actively using airstrikes in days following punish beheadings; however, there was a significant decline in the number of targets and airstrike events in the majority of cases. At the same time, the airstrike campaign had an overall increasing trend throughout the year, despite dips occurring throughout, which certainly supports the claim that the possibility of future beheadings is not high enough to deter U.S. military action. This analysis works to highlight that the use of beheadings may be predicted based on the number of airstrikes in the region by concluding whether beheadings are motivated by perceived increases in airstrikes, as all but one punish beheading (Hervé Gourdel) followed an increase in the number of airstrike targets striking daily prior to the execution (Table 2, Column 2). Furthermore, as demonstrated in the data above, it is possible that punish beheadings are strategically effective since many led to a decrease in the frequency of airstrikes in the region in the days after the beheading, given that the number of airstrikes remained constant or decreased in all but two cases (Kenji Goto, Kurdish Military) (Table 2, Column 3).

## CONCLUSION

### LIMITATIONS IN DATA

The sections above present a method of data collection on beheadings from June 2014 to June 2015 and a framework of analysis for how these beheadings interact with ISIS' territorial control and U.S. coalition airstrikes in the region. Since there was a significant amount of data acquisition involved in this study, it is critical to discuss the limitations of data collection and potential gaps or biases in the data sample. The greatest amount of bias occurred in the collection of scaffold beheadings, as they are more common yet less likely to be reported and circulated by Western news media due to the type of victim and highly localized nature of the event. Ample articles, reports, and information were, however, available for most of the punish beheadings, particularly the American and British citizens who were executed. These beheadings were often widely distributed and directly commented on by politicians and news reporters. In discussing the bias in collecting beheadings, the focus is on the potential gaps in the data on scaffold beheadings. ISIS' social media wing is responsible for the distribution of most photos

and videos relating to scaffold beheadings. As a result, the only videos collected were ones that ISIS wanted the world to see. They all resulted in a successful execution and none included any resistance from the crowd of on-lookers gathered to witness the event. ISIS' social media wing selected those videos out of what was conceivable a large pool of videos to deliver a curated message about their organization. If a video is released, it is added to a narrative that ISIS seeks to build about their authority and action in the region. As a result, there are probably videos and photos that are not released by the social media wing, particularly of less spectacular beheadings or in locations that are not of interest for the campaign to promote. Videos in high-conflict or contested areas may be more likely to be released to solidify the perception of ISIS' control in that area. Additionally, one of the largest biases affecting the data lies in the availability of secondary source wire reporting based on the current focus of U.S. and Western allies. Western news reports are most interested in reporting stories that will sell. Spectacular stories of beheading children make news headlines while the frequent beheadings of Iraqi men for minor crimes may not. As a result, it is likely that secondary reporting only represents a fraction of the number of beheadings that were committed by ISIS during the time of study. However, while the seventy-six beheading incidents collected may not be an exhaustive list of all beheading events, there is reasonable confidence that they could represent trends in beheadings. Since both primary and secondary materials and reports were used, the data collected represent a more comprehensive list of beheadings than that of other researchers in the field.

There are also limitations in the collection of data for ISIS' territorial control and U.S. coalition airstrikes. The ISIS' territorial control map is only published once a month.<sup>50</sup> This means there is a lag in updates to ISIS' areas of influence, although additional effort was taken to utilize military reporting to corroborate the ISW map story. The result is a reasonably accurate account of ISIS' area of influence from June 2014 to June 2015. While it may not be completely up to date for every beheading, it does portray a legitimate picture of the net control at the country and province level at any given time.

As part of OIR, the United States has continued to conduct airstrikes in Iraq and Syria into the Trump presidency. According to reports published online after a Military Times investigation in February 2017, the American military failed to publicly disclose potentially thousands of lethal airstrikes conducted over several years in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan. The investigation reveals that airstrikes carried out by helicopters and armed drones operated by the U.S. Army were "quietly excluded

from otherwise comprehensive monthly summaries."<sup>51</sup> Since the data of the airstrike numbers in this study were collected from daily USCENTCOM reporting, this gap was avoided. However, USCENTCOM officials have acknowledged that their data may still be incomplete in other ways, such as not tracking the number of strikes from AH-64 Apache attack helicopters.

The limitations highlighted above in each dataset indicate that evaluating each beheading individually could lead to bias or inaccuracy, since it is possible that a dataset may have inaccuracies for a small number of beheadings. However, since much of the analysis examines trends and aggregated beheadings at the monthly level, this has avoided much of the risk in inaccurate conclusions.

## IMPLICATIONS

In recent years, the media has reported beheadings to highlight the brutal and grotesque tactics used by ISIS in its mission to establish a caliphate and impose its law over the local population. The objective of this study is to look beyond the spectacle of a beheading and consider the political purpose a beheading tactic serves based on characteristics such as the time, location, and victim. The paper begins by introducing a framework for categorizing beheadings based on two possible motivations: punishing the United States and its coalition for their actions in the region or reinforcing ISIS' power over the local population. To account for possible explanations, a sample of beheadings is taken from June 2014 to June 2015 to create a dataset of beheadings spanning the first year of the established caliphate. These beheadings are pitted against U.S. coalition airstrikes and ISIS' territorial control to determine how the broader campaign influences the use of each type of beheading. A possible relationship between punish beheadings and ISIS' territorial control as well as a relationship between scaffold beheadings and U.S. coalition airstrikes are found and discussed. Both punish and scaffold beheadings tend to follow periods of time of ISIS' territorial expansion as well as perceived increases in the U.S. coalition airstrike campaign. Additionally, evaluating the pattern of airstrikes directly after punish beheadings supports the claim that punish beheadings demonstrate a degree of success in reducing the number of airstrike targets hit on average each day. Understanding the geo-temporal patterns in scaffold and punish beheadings may enable U.S. counteractions that limit the effectiveness of the beheadings. With these conclusions in mind, the paper will conclude with policy implications as well as further steps of analysis.

## POLICY

By evaluating ISIS beheadings on a more individual level, this study aims to demonstrate that there is a relationship between factors in the broader terror campaign and the type of beheading committed (as determined by its motivation). As a result, there are important policy implications regarding how the United States should respond to a beheading and what would be effective in potentially preventing future beheadings. As scaffold beheadings occurred when ISIS sought to increase its authority over the local population in a region, if the United States wanted to combat these efforts, it would need a way to delegitimize ISIS in the eyes of the local population. This could be through pamphlets, radio or media control, and preventing the mass viewing of beheading events in towns. Since these activities would have to be done in areas of ISIS control, the United States would need to influence the minds of the local population without acting as their security force, and instead exert mechanisms of influence to persuade locals that accepting ISIS as the governing body is not in their best interest. Doing so will further U.S. efforts in the region by increasing local support for coalition interests.

There are also important policy implications based on the analysis of punish beheadings. After the beheadings of American journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff, President Obama spoke nationally on the United States' firm commitment to eradicate ISIS and regional terrorist activity.<sup>52</sup> He stated, "the United States of America will continue to do what we must do to protect our people. We will be vigilant and we will be relentless."<sup>53</sup> As demonstrated in this statement, the United States will respond to beheadings with strong political statements and military action. However, the analysis of airstrike targets following punish beheadings indicates that on average, there was a decrease in the number of strikes following a punish beheading. This suggests that ISIS' strategy was effective at reducing U.S. activity in the region, at least in the immediate aftermath. However, at no point did the United States stop their airstrike campaign altogether, despite rising costs inflicted by ISIS with incredibly spectacular, horrific beheadings. It is possible that policymakers did not want to be perceived as capitulating to the terrorists' demands.

By considering the motivations behind the beheadings, it is possible to design more effective methods of countering the propaganda narrative circulated by ISIS.

## FURTHER RESEARCH

The paper aims to explore the motivations for ISIS beheadings and whether they occur at predictable geo-temporal moments by introducing a framework and

analyzing a sample to determine on a micro level what motivates a particular beheading and what the response is. While this paper only applies the framework and analysis on a partial dataset (the first year of the caliphate) due to time constraints, it is useful to consider the full range of ISIS' actions from 2014 to the present day to investigate further the relationship between the factors and the types of beheadings examined. It would also be interesting to evaluate how ISIS' growth and loss of territory influence their use of scaffold beheadings. It may be the case that there is an influx in beheadings not only when ISIS gains territory but also when losing it. With its authority challenged by the U.S. superior military forces and in face of losing control of areas, ISIS may turn to beheadings to reinforce its power over a population just as it did when attempting to establish it in the first place.

Additional analysis should be undertaken on the impact and effectiveness of these beheadings. The influence of punish beheadings could be analyzed by evaluating the number and frequency of airstrikes occurring after a punish beheading. However, it is more challenging to evaluate whether a scaffold beheading is effective. A scaffold beheading is successful if it accomplishes ISIS' political goal of reinforcing its power among the local population. This effect is difficult to measure from an external perspective. To determine whether a scaffold beheading has an impact on the local population, researchers could examine the social media activity in the region to see if there is discussion of the beheading on a more localized level. However, this would be a long process, as it would require thorough examination of social media activity for any mention of beheadings in days prior to the beheading event. However, this could provide invaluable insight into the effects the scaffold beheadings have on the local population and whether they are indeed effective in reinforcing ISIS' authority.

Public execution is not only a judicial ritual, but a political one as well. This is certainly true in the case of ISIS beheadings. In the course of this paper, beheadings have been evaluated as more than a mere spectacle, with the intent behind them examined in the context of ISIS' campaign. By looking at the beheadings in conversation with broader regional phenomena, it is possible to glean intent behind them and postulate what the West could do to stop ISIS.

Appendix

Nationality	Number Beheaded	Date	Motive	Location
Syrian Military	75	7/25/2014	Scaffold	Abu A-Dbar Air Force Base
Syrian Military	6	7/27/2014	Scaffold	Raqqa, Syria
Syrian Military	8	8/10/2014	Scaffold	Akhtarin, Syria
Syrian Military	1	8/11/2014	Scaffold	Raqqa, Syria
Syrian Military	1	8/14/2014	Scaffold	Raqqa, Syria
Syrian Civilian	Not Stated	8/18/2014	Scaffold	Deir ez-Zor, Syria
American Civilian	1	8/19/2014	punish	Raqqa, Syria
Syrian Civilian	3	8/24/2014	scaffold	Deir ez-Zor, Syria

Lebanese Military	1	8/28/2014	scaffold	Arsal, Lebanon
Kurdish Military	1	8/29/2014	scaffold	Mosul, Iraq
American Civilian	1	9/2/2014	punish	Raqqa, Syria
Lebanese Military	1	9/7/2014	scaffold	Arsal, Lebanon
British Civilian	1	9/14/2014	punish	Dabiq, Syria
Afghan Civilian	15	9/20/2014	scaffold	Ghazni, Afghanistan
French Civilian	1	9/24/2014	punish	Kabylic, Algeria
Syrian Military	10	10/1/2014	scaffold	Kobane, Syria
Kurdish Military	3	10/2/2014	scaffold	Jarabulus, Syria
British Civilian	1	10/4/2014	punish	Al Dara, Syria
Iraqi Civilian	3	10/10/2014	scaffold	Baiji, Iraq
ISIS Militant	Not Stated	10/11/2014	scaffold	Ramadi, Iraq
Iraqi Civilian	5	10/11/2014	scaffold	Samarra, Iraq
Iraqi Civilian	1	10/21/2014	scaffold	Kobane, Syria
Iraqi Civilian	1	10/31/2014	scaffold	Ramadi, Iraq
ISIS Militant	1	11/14/2014	scaffold	Raqqa, Syria
American Civilian	1	11/16/2014	punish	Dabiq, Syria
Syrian Military	21	11/16/2014	scaffold	Dabiq, Syria
Iraqi Civilian	4	12/8/2014	scaffold	Baghdad, Iraq
ISIS Militant	100	12/1/2014	scaffold	Raqqa, Syria

Syrian Civilian	3	12/9/2014	scaffold	Kobane, Syria
Iraqi Civilian	150	12/17/2014	scaffold	Fallujah, Iraq
Iraqi Civilian	3	12/18/2014	scaffold	Tikrit, Iraq
Syrian Civilian	3	12/20/2014	scaffold	Aleppo, Syria
Syrian Civilian	3	12/29/2014	scaffold	Tell Abyad, Syria
ISIS Militant	120	1/2/2015	scaffold	Deir ez-Zor, Syria
Iraqi Military	3	1/19/2015	scaffold	Diyala, Iraq
Kurdish Military	3	1/28/2015	scaffold	Mosul, Iraq

Japanese Civilian	1	1/24/2015	punish	Raqqa, Syria
Japanese Civilian	1	1/30/2015	punish	Raqqa, Syria
Iraqi Civilian	2	1/30/2015	scaffold	Anbar, Iraq
Iraqi Public Official	1	2/1/2015	punish	Saladin, Iraq
Iraqi Military	2	2/1/2015	scaffold	Anbar, Iraq
Syrian Civilian	1	2/7/2015	scaffold	Raqqa, Syria
Iraqi Civilian	4	2/7/2015	scaffold	Mosul, Iraq
Egyptian Civilian	10	2/10/2015	scaffold	Gaza Egypt Border
Egyptian Civilian	21	2/13/2015	scaffold	Tripoli, Libya
Syrian Spy	1	2/18/2015	scaffold	Raqqa, Syria
Iraqi Civilian	2	3/1/2015	scaffold	Baghdad, Iraq
Kurdish Military	3	3/5/2015	punish	Tell Tamer, Syria
Syrian Civilian	8	3/15/2015	scaffold	Raqqa, Syria
Iraqi Civilian	3	3/11/2015	scaffold	Habzani, Iraq
Iraqi Civilian	2	3/14/2015	scaffold	Mosul, Iraq
Kurdish Military	4	3/15/2015	punish	Tikrit, Iraq
Kurdish Military	3	3/19/2015	punish	Tikrit, Iraq
Iraqi Military	1	3/24/2015	scaffold	Baqubah, Iraq
Syrian Civilian	8	3/30/2015	scaffold	Hama, Syria
Syrian Civilian	6	4/4/2015	scaffold	Deir ez-Zor, Syria
Iraqi Civilian	4	4/4/2015	scaffold	Mosul, Iraq
Iraqi Spy	4	4/5/2015	scaffold	Salahuddin, Iraq
Iraqi Civilian	2	4/13/2015	scaffold	Mosul, Iraq
Syrian Civilian	1	4/14/2015	scaffold	Hama, Syria
Afghan Civilian	4	4/17/2015	punish	Ghazni Afghanistan
Syrian Civilian	2	4/30/2015	scaffold	Raqqa, Syria
Ethiopian Civilians	15	4/20/2015	scaffold	Al Marj, Libya
Syrian Spy	1	5/5/2015	scaffold	Aleppo, Syria
Iraqi Civilian	2	5/7/2015	scaffold	Homs, Syria
Iraqi Civilian	2	5/16/2015	scaffold	Mosul, Iraq
Libyan Civilian	5	4/28/2015	scaffold	Al Marj, Libya
Iraqi Military	1	5/16/2015	scaffold	Diyala, Iraq
Syrian Spy	1	5/29/2015	scaffold	Raqqa, Syria
Iraqi Military	1	6/5/2015	scaffold	Baghdad, Iraq
Afghan Spy	1	6/12/2015	scaffold	Kabul, Afghanistan
Syrian Rebel	12	6/25/2015	scaffold	Damascus, Syria
Iraqi Military	1	6/25/2015	scaffold	Raqqa, Syria
French Civilian	1	6/27/2015	punish	Lyon, France
Syrian Civilian	4	6/30/2015	scaffold	Al-Hasakah, Syria
Syrian Spy	0	6/30/2015	scaffold	Haditha, Iraq

Appendix 1: Data compiled from Lexis Nexis and Jihadology online database searching for primary and secondary materials of ISIS beheadings.

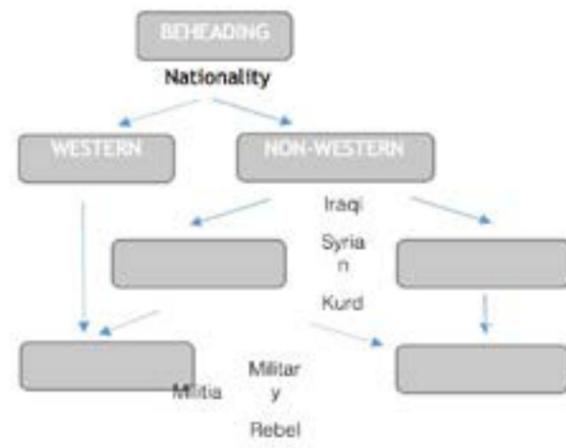
Index	Start	End	Citation
1	6/9/2014	6/19/2014	<a href="http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-june-10-2014">http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-june-10-2014</a>
2	6/20/2014	7/7/2014	<a href="http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-june-20-2014">http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-june-20-2014</a>
3	7/8/2014	7/20/2014	<a href="http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-july-8-2014">http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-july-8-2014</a>
4	7/21/2014	8/8/2014	<a href="http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-july-21-2014">http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-july-21-2014</a>
5	8/8/2014	9/10/2014	<a href="http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-august-8-2014">http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-august-8-2014</a>
6	9/10/2014	10/29/2014	<a href="http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-september-10-2014">http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-september-10-2014</a>
7	10/30/2014	12/5/2015	<a href="http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-october-30-2014">http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-october-30-2014</a>
8	12/5/2014	1/14/2015	<a href="http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-december-5-2014">http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-december-5-2014</a>
9	1/15/2015	3/4/2015	<a href="http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-january-15-2015">http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-january-15-2015</a>
10	3/4/2015	4/2/2015	<a href="http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-march-4-2015">http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-march-4-2015</a>
11	4/3/2015	6/19/2015	<a href="http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2015/04/isis-sanctuary-april-3-2015.html">http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2015/04/isis-sanctuary-april-3-2015.html</a>
12	5/20/2015	6/19/2015	<a href="http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-may-20-2015">http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-map-may-20-2015</a>
13	6/19/2015	7/1/2015	<a href="http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-june-19-2015">http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-sanctuary-june-19-2015</a>

Appendix 2: Data compiled from Institute for the Study of War ISIS Sanctuary and Iraq Situation Reports.

Attribute	Values
Name	Name of Victim
Nationality/Military Status	Iraqi Civilian, US Civilian, Iraqi Military
Number Beheaded	# beheaded in instance
Date	Date of beheading (not posting of video)
Age	Age of Victim
Weapon	Weapon (if specified)
Motive*	Scaffold, Punish*

Appendix 3: Fields collected per beheading incident

Appendix 4: Sorting Methodology



Sorting methodology for classifying beheadings based on motivation. Each beheading collected was sorted based on the criteria above. Results are compiled in Table 3.

Appendix 5: Technical Analytic Note

Data visualization played a critical role in the research and analysis of this paper. To analyze the collected beheadings, Tableau dashboards were constructed to examine the relationship between features. This analysis drove the statistics mentioned in the data exploration section and justifies the distinction between the punish and scaffold beheadings in subsequent analysis. These dashboards are publicly available to view at: <https://public.tableau.com/profile/sarah.starr#!/vizhome/Beheadings2014-2015/BeheadingSummary>.

The analysis regarding the impact US airstrikes and ISIS territorial control have on the motivation of ISIS beheadings was done using an ArcGIS map with beheading, area of influence, and airstrike layers. The map is available at <http://arccg.is/18TPOS>.

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- 4 Lisa J Campbell, "The Use of Beheadings by Fundamentalist Islam."
- 5 Mario Fumerton, "Beyond Consumption of Violence: Performativity of ISIS' Atrocities against Hostages in Execution Videos from 2014-2015."
- 6 Rick Noack, "Here's how the Islamic State compares with real states"
- 7 Cole Bunzel, "From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State."
- 8 ISIS, A Message to America. Video.
- 9 Lee Ann Fujii, "The Puzzle of Extra-Lethal Violence."
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- 23 ISIS, "ISIS Beheading Execution Of 'Wizard' In Syria."
- 24 James Harkin, "LETTER FROM SYRIA: EVAPORATED."
- 25 ISIS, "Full Text of the Last Email the Islamic State Sent to the Foley Family."
- 26 ISIS, A Message to America.
- 27 Chelsea J. Carter, "Video Shows ISIS Beheading U.S. Journalist James Foley."
- 28 ISIS, A Message to America.
- 29 Mark Thompson, "The Power of Vengeance."
- 30 USCENTCOM, "Military Airstrikes Continue against ISIS Terrorists in Syria and Iraq."
- 31 Matt Bradley, "ISIS Declares New Islamist Caliphate."
- 32 Kathy Gilsinan, "How ISIS Territory Has Changed Since the U.S. Bombing Campaign Began."
- 33 Simone Molin Friis, "Beyond Anything We Have Ever Seen': Beheading Videos and the Visibility of Violence in the War against ISIS."

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- 35 Octavia Nasr, "How Zarqawi's Terror Network Morphed into ISIS."
- 36 "ISIL Beheading Incidents."
- 37 Matt Bradley, "America's Marxist Allies Against ISIS."
- 38 Non-civilians include military, rebel actor, dissenting ISIS member, militia fighter, or government official
- 39 David Carr, "With Videos of Killings, ISIS Sends Medieval Message by Modern Method."
- 40 Simone Molin Friis, "Beyond Anything We Have Ever Seen': Beheading Videos and the Visibility of Violence in the War against ISIS."
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## ULTRAS IN SPAIN

### A STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MACRO-LEVEL CLEAVAGES AND MACRO-LEVEL ACTORS

David Westby, Tufts University (2017)

The morning of November 30, 2014, was a brisk and cloudy Sunday in Madrid. In a quiet residential neighborhood along the banks of the Manzanares River, a crowd was growing. Dozens of young men were milling about, dressed in jeans and khakis, and sporting button-down shirts and polos. These members of *Riazor Blues* (r, af) and *Alkor Hooligans* (r, af) had just arrived from Galicia for a football game later in the day.<sup>1</sup> As the men nervously chatted, they were joined by some local members of *Bukaneros* (af).

At the same time, a large group of young men left a nearby bar, where they had breakfasted. The masks they wore clashed with fashionable attire: Brand-name jackets, button-down shirts, crisp jeans, and clean shoes. Some of them shouldered bats or metal rods as they left, walking into the early morning. Like guards manning battlements, they set about patrolling around the football stadium, cautious eyes open for enemy incursions. These were *Frente Atlético* (n, f) militants, and they knew that the Galicians were likely to trespass on their turf, a bold statement of disrespect that would not go unpunished. Each organization is an ultra group made up of fanatical football fans, and the scene was set for a clash between *Frente Atlético* (n, f) and the insurgent *Blues* (r, af), *Alkor Hooligans* (r, af), and *Bukaneros* (af) coalition.

*Frente Atlético* (n, f) rounded the corner and saw the Galician coalition on the same bank of the river. There was a second of hesitation, as the Galicians sized up the larger *Frente Atlético* (n, f) force. Shouts broke the spell, and *Frente Atlético* pushed towards the *Riazor Blues* (r, af), *Alkor Hooligans* (r, af), and *Bukaneros* (af) members, brandishing bats, brass knuckles, and bottles.<sup>1</sup> The Galicians were not caught off guard. They took out their own weapons and prepared for a skirmish.

As more and more of the men felt the pressure to get involved in the violence, scuffles gave way to a brawl of over 180 people.<sup>2</sup> The fighting was nervous and messy. The *Frente Atlético* (n, f) ultras forced the Galicians into

a disorganized retreat, and some of the Blues ultras found themselves abandoned at the front lines, alone amongst the angry locals. Amidst the chaos, a *Riazor Blues* (r, af) ultra named “Jimmy” was bludgeoned by a *Frente Atlético* (n, f) member’s bat. The aggressors then picked Jimmy up and threw him into the Manzanares river.

Twenty minutes later, the police arrived to break up the sputtering remnants of the fight. By then, the damage had already been done. At least ten ultras had been seriously injured.<sup>3</sup> Jimmy was quickly rushed to the hospital. Like the locals, the police had been caught completely off-guard by the violence. The visiting *Riazor Blues* (r, af) and *Alkor Hooligans* (r, af) ultras had evaded detection by buying tickets directly from local fan clubs, and had avoided police checkpoints on their way to the capital city.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the Anti-Violence Commission had not even registered the game as a high-risk encounter, anticipating fewer than fifty Galicians traveling south for the game.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, the ultras had dispersed and reconvened at the Vicente Calderón stadium for the game. Each side took their allotted place in the stands, unfurling flags and banners and singing the usual songs. Word made it to the ultras that Jimmy was in critical condition at the hospital, and the *Riazor Blues* (r, af) ultras began chanting, “Killers, killers!” at *Frente Atlético* (n, f), situated in their usual place behind the north goal. *Frente Atlético*, not to be insulted in their own stadium, responded with their own chants. By then, most of the regular fans in the stadium had also heard of Jimmy’s condition and of the fight that had occurred by the river. The regular Atlético fans, usually supportive of their ultras, met their chants with silence and jeers.

Finally, the news came out that Jimmy had passed away in the hospital from the wounds received at the fight. Regular fans of Atlético Madrid were quick to distance themselves from the *Frente Atlético* ultra fans, and the club banned some ultras that it deemed “radical”

from the grounds. Nationwide, Spaniards voiced their disapproval at the radicals. In a letter to the editor of *El País*, Bernardo Asensio Colino expressed a sentiment echoed by many: “Either we end this gratuitous violence, or the violence will finish with the sport.”<sup>6</sup>

As Spaniards questioned with disgust how ultras could get so worked up over football as to kill a supporter of a rival team, a different line of thinking began to surface, spurred on by deeper analysis of the ultra phenomenon after Jimmy’s death. The enmity between *Riazor Blues* and *Frente Atlético* is the result of more than just football. It is a struggle between fascism and anti-fascism forged in the crux of a dictatorship and subjugated nationalism.<sup>7</sup> Manuel de la Sota Aburto, Basque nationalist politician and president of Athletic Bilbao in the 1920s, understood football in the context of war. “Football is a miniature war,” he said, “the jerseys are flags made to the players’ size, which also model the soul of the spectators. They become bellicose supporters... the jerseys are soaked with all the regional enthusiasm, they’re living symbols.”<sup>8</sup>

Jimmy’s death represents much more than football passions gone awry. The reality is that such ultra violence is not rare in Spain, and this case was just another example. Summed up in a headline for the news outlet *Estrella Galicia*: “It was not football, it was politics.”<sup>9</sup>

The *Riazor Blues* ultra group is a Galician regionalist, anti-fascist organization made up of supporters of the Deportivo A Coruña football team. *Bukaneros*, a different ultra group who joined the Blues along the river that November morning, support the Madrid football team Rayo Vallecano. Both are part of a larger web of ultra groups that identify as anti-fascist.

Ultras are a team’s most intense fans. In the stadium, they create spectacular visual displays and lead the fans’ cheering. They are also known for violence inside and outside the stadium. In Spain, ultras almost always have a radical political ideology. This uniform political ideology, along with their organization and general intensity, sets them apart from normal fans.

It is for this reason that *Bukaneros’* and *Blues’* members traveled boldly into the lion’s den, knowing that they would incur a violent retaliatory attack. Both groups are anti-fascist, and Blues are Galician regional independentists. Their rivalry with *Frente Atlético* is the result of their irreconcilable political ideologies, for *Frente Atlético* is both nationalist and fascist. *Bukaneros’* and *Blues’* show of force near the Atlético football stadium was an invading challenge to *Frente Atlético’s* nationalist ideology.

In short, the conflict was rooted in political cleavages, and not in sporting rivalries. In fact, between the

allied ultras of teams like Rayo Vallecano and Deportivo A Coruña, political ideology is the only unifying factor. Their alliance is strictly political; geography and football play no part in their cooperation. Political ideology alone was enough to generate their unified mobilization and violence against Atlético Madrid’s ultras.

Football was first imported by the British in the late nineteenth century, just in time for the short-lived first Spanish Republic of 1873–1874.<sup>10</sup> Association football grew slowly, and it was not until after World War I that Spain fielded a national team. When Franco took power in 1939, football teams in regions with particularly repressed identities (notably the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia) came to represent rallying points for regionalist pride.<sup>11</sup> The dictatorship, meanwhile, found football to be a vital tool in a push to consolidate a national Spanish identity with the concept of *nacionalfutbolismo*.<sup>12</sup> It was no accident that Real Madrid, run by Franco administrators and a favorite team of the Caudillo himself, became ‘Spain’s Team.’<sup>13</sup> It was not until Franco’s passing in 1975 that out of the seeds of traditional fan groups began to modern ultra groups began to grow. In celebration of Spain’s newfound political openness, the country hosted the 1982 World Cup, and it was here that the Spanish first experienced British hooliganism. Spaaij and Viñas explain:

The first Spanish ultra groups emerged after the 1982 World Cup held in Spain. Mainly mimicry of both Italian and English supporter styles, the Spanish ultras separated themselves from the indigenous ‘peña’ culture emphasizing instead a more active and visible approach to football fandom.<sup>14</sup> Since then, ultra groups have generally fallen into two categories, in line with the historical packaging of past conflicts into two clear cleavages: fascist and anti-fascist. Additionally, a second distinction can be made between regionalist and Spanish nationalist ultra groups, which overlaps with the first. Fascist groups tend to be nationalist, and anti-fascist groups tend to be regionalist.

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Nationalism is essential to political identity in the Spanish ultra case. I begin with a premise central to Charles Tilly’s writings about nationalism: that it can be either bottom-up or top-down. Claims of both types of nationalism, according to Tilly, follow the advent of the Westphalian state. Top-down nationalism is generally

1 Parenthetical notation will be used to indicate the ideological stance of ultra groups for the sake of clarity. Regionalist groups will be represented with ‘r’, nationalist groups with ‘n’, neofascist groups with ‘f’, and anti-fascist groups with ‘af.’ I use ‘football’ rather than ‘soccer’ because of the importance of England as birthplace of both the sport and the hooligan phenomenon, as well as because of its dominance in the language of world football.

state-led, and often features unifying claims over a previously diffuse population with the goal of consolidating a state ideologically. Bottom-up nationalism is typically a response to a top-down nationalistic assertion, a rejection and substitution of the imposed nationalism with a regionally-focused one. “Top-down claims regularly generate bottom-up claims,” Tilly says.<sup>15</sup> For our purposes, top-down nationalism will be simply called ‘nationalism,’ and the bottom-up variety will be called ‘regionalism.’ Tilly’s distinction is particularly relevant in Spain, a country made up of various autonomous regions that have asserted subnational independence claims. The Catalans, Basques, and Galicians have all been represented by their own national football teams, often against the will of the Spanish government.<sup>16</sup> These *patrias chicas* have been in competition in varying degrees with the Spanish state for the loyalty of their citizens since before Franco.<sup>2</sup> Competition between top-down and bottom-up nationalist claims created a constant conflict throughout Spanish history.

Sports fans in many parts of the world, most notably the United States, will find that such a phenomenon is completely foreign to their understanding of sports. In Spain, however, the Center of Sociological Investigation found in 2007 that 31.4 percent of Spaniards think that, “politics has a great influence in which team will win the national championship.”<sup>17</sup> While proof of direct political involvement in the national football league may be hard to find, it is certainly true that political ideology is integral to the identity of ultra groups in Spain, from *Riazor Blues* and *Frente Atlético* to the dozens of other similar groups.

This is certainly not the first study of radical football fans. Hooligan culture in England (from which the ultra phenomenon can be traced) has been the object of much scholarship in the last century. Sociologists, political theorists, and historians have been searching for a paradigm to explain why hooligan groups are so violent. But scholarship on the Spanish case is conspicuously absent, as ultra groups there are a relatively new phenomenon.<sup>18</sup>

The development of ultras in Spain represents an insightful case on the formation of identity at a local level. Understanding how ultra groups in Spain have come to have politically-rooted identities will lead to better understanding of the interaction between national-scale

2 Patria Chica is a Spanish term originating in the Americas that refers to loyalties to local communities as a challenge to national loyalty and the consolidation of the state.

3 For good outlines of dominant paradigms relating to collective identity, see David Laitin’s *Identity in Formation* and chapter 1 of Consuelo Cruz’s *Political Culture and Institutional Development in Costa Rica and Nicaragua*. Charles Tilly also prefaces his relational model of group interaction by describing existing schools of thought in *Politics of Collective Violence*.

political dialogues and their impact on local identities, and vice-versa. Spain’s political situation offers deep insight into the ideological drivers behind the communities of ultras, and the ultras themselves are able to deepen our understanding of political dialogue nationwide. If one considers ultra conflict and interaction as more than isolated phenomena, a new paradigm for understanding the dialogue between macro-level and local level identity reveals itself.

To study Spanish football ultras, one must trace two dancing Spanish narratives: a long contest between fascism and anti-fascism, and the history of football fandom. Together, they are a case study in the relationship between macro- and micro-level political identity. Ultras reflect historical cleavages imposed on them from above by history, and they also shape present interpretations of these cleavages from below. We find in the ultras micro-level expressions of macro-cleavages, but also the power of constructive identity formation that warps the macro-cleavage. The combination of these two directions of interaction between local communities and broad ideological conflicts, top-down and bottom-up, can be called the ‘mezzo-level’.

#### PARADIGMS FOR UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY FORMATION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY OF SPANISH ULTRAS

Even before the Spanish Civil War and Franco’s regime, identity in Spain was a divisive concept. Unified national identity was hard to come by in a country characterized by fiercely distinctive regions with multiple dominant languages. Subnational and regional nationalist identities have been points of political contention in Spain for over a hundred years. In the world of football, political identities have been equally important and conflictual.

A focus on local identities and their interplay with national rhetoric necessitates an understanding of the paradigms through which identity has been conceived. As it applies to the Spanish case and the football world, four dominant schools of identity thought can be identified: Primordialism, Marxism, Instrumentalism, and Constructivism.<sup>3</sup>

#### PRIMORDIALISM

Primordialism as a paradigm for understanding identity has largely been discredited by modern social scientists.

To primordialists, a person’s identity is an immutable part of their being, part of their legacy passed down by ancestry and manifested in shared language, history, and lineage. In the twentieth century, Clifford Geertz was one of the most well-known primordialists, and he emphasized the importance of shared language and history in the successful maintenance of collective identity. He notes the great extent to which people’s sense of self is, “bound up in the gross actualities of blood, race, language, locality, religion, or tradition,” in new states.<sup>19</sup> Because they are rooted in enduring, inflexible historical factors, shared culture and language are static in a primordialist model.

Primordialist arguments about local football and fan culture are most prevalent in regions that were most threatened by Franco’s imposed Spanish nationalism. Some Catalans and Basques have resorted to primordialist arguments to exaggerate the strength of their nationalist identity, particularly as a challenge to Spanish nationalism. Popular regional support for certain teams in the Basque Country, Catalonia, or Galicia has been reductively described in fundamentally ethnic or nationalist terms. Athletic Bilbao, for example, has come to be the Basque team through its commitment to signing exclusively Basque players in an increasingly globalized football market. The team, its red-white-green colors reminiscent of the Basque flag, is a symbol for Basque exceptionalism. There is a fierce pride in Basque prehistoric heritage that has been propped up by primordialist anthropologists, sociologists, and scientists for years.<sup>20</sup>

While primordialist language often seeps into the words of players, coaches, supporters, and media, it has also been used to explain some ultras’ regionalist independentism. The strong regionalist identity of Basque ultra groups like *Herri Norte* can thus be interpreted as a natural expression of deeply-embedded cultural inimitability. It would be impossible for *Herri Norte* or other Basque ultras to succumb to a mainstream political ideology without an accompanying focus that differentiates them. Vaczi asserts, “This definition summarizes what most consider the essence of the Athletic brand: a soccer culture defined by difference.”<sup>21</sup>

Primordialist arguments are rife with flaws. Firstly, they fail to account for dramatic cultural changes in communities. Ethnic groups and cultures change over time, often quickly. Secondly, they fail to explain discrepancies within populations. Individuals within the same ethnic group, who share the same language, and have similar ancestry, can have radically differing political and cultural traits.

4 Throughout the Manuscripts, Marx repeatedly asserts that the means of production are the base upon which other institutions are created. Any change in cultural and political institutions is, to him, limited to the constraints of the economic base.

The Spanish ultra system offers another criticism of primordialist analysis. While the above description of the *Herri Norte* ultras is true, there are some ultra groups in the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia that are neither anti-fascist nor regionalist. The *Brigadas Blancas* ultra group, who support RCD Espanyol in Barcelona, are Spanish nationalists in a city hot with regionalist fervor today. Similarly, Basque exceptionalism is a popular sentiment, but not so deep that it is universal among Basques.

Additionally, in Spain there is almost complete overlap between regionalist ultra groups and anti-fascist ultra groups rooted in historical political factors. The primordialist lens may offer an exceptionalist explanation for ‘natural’ regionalist ideology, but it cannot extend its explanatory scope to the intersection between leftism and regionalism in Spain. Certainly, primordialism does not suggest a tendency towards leftism or fascism. The correlation in Spanish ultras between anti-fascism and regionalism, even amongst ultras in regions typically devoid of independentist movements, suggests that the two traits arise from similar constructive processes. As such, the primordialist perspective proves to be too narrow to correctly interpret the Spanish ultra phenomenon.

#### MARXISM

Highlighting the materialist societal perspective, the Marxist places great stock in economic systems and modes of production. Humanity’s greatest touch on the world is the organization of production based on material conditions. This forms the economic base upon which culture and political institutions exist.<sup>22 4</sup>

An individual’s labor in production is therefore their central method for understanding their own relationship to the world and to other members of society—class is the principal unit of identity, predicated on a specific shared relationship between the individual and the product of their labor. Class antagonism is therefore the driving force in historical progress. To Marx and Engels this is the identity that matters:

National differences and antagonism between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto.<sup>23</sup>

It appears that the Marxist perspective has, at

least at first blush, large explanatory power when it comes to radical football fan identities. Some point to the rapid growth of football in Europe and South America as a phenomenon with close links to the maturity of societal class distinctions. To these scholars, the soccer world is a perfect microcosm of Marxist historical evolution. Vinnai is a writer who illustrates this parallel most overtly and explicitly. “That which pretends to be a game, reproduces, under the appearance of free development of power, the world of work,” he argues.<sup>24</sup>

Likewise, ultra groups can be seen as extensions of a strong working class identity, supported by observations that the vast majority of these radical fans are young, male workers.<sup>25</sup> In fact, popular weekend participation in football for ultras and hooligans was originally the result of the industrial work schedule. Football fandom became the activity to fill the Sunday leisure void, and was demographically overlapping with the ranks of workers at the factory.<sup>26</sup> Ian Taylor, echoed more recently by Giulianotti, also highlights the globalization and commodification of football as a progression that consolidates class identity in clusters of hooligans or ultras.<sup>27</sup>

The ultras are self-aware of their general class homogeneity. In a discussion with Díaz, one young *Biris Norte* ultra from Seville said, “What the working class, the unemployed, really like is soccer. . . My father is a crane driver, and he works wherever he can.”<sup>28</sup>

Although class antagonism is certainly a focal point in ultra identity vis-à-vis regular fans, intra-ultra conflict is generally not based on class. Intense rivalries and animosity between ultra groups are not drawn along class lines. *Frente Atlético* and *Riazor Blues* have had many violent interactions, including the fight that ended with Jimmy’s death, but their class composition is almost identical. This is broadly true in the ultra landscape in Spain.

Marx provides a useful framework for understanding how events throughout history set up a rhetorical frame in which actors situate their identities. Marx’s dialectic analysis is predicated on the synthesis of previously antithetical concepts. Political and social evolution is driven by consciousness of present tensions.<sup>29</sup> When we follow Spanish history, charting the evolution of the rhetorical frame in which actors situate their identities, Marx’s material-based application of Hegel’s dialectic will be vital. Deep political cleavages between fascism and antifascism in Spain develop in a binary way that evidences history’s dialectical progress. The tensions between political camps throughout the nineteenth and twentieth

5 This concept is more foundational to Marxism than most would believe, and justifies Marx’s insistence on the ‘consciousness’ of the proletariat as prerequisite for revolution. From here comes his modus operandi of ‘ruthless criticism’ as a means to elevate current tensions.

centuries repeatedly climax into violence, and the result is always a new, synthesized political landscape.

#### INSTRUMENTALISM

Instrumentalism is a camp in the study of identity that has often been discussed in the context of ethnicity and ethnic groups. Instrumentalists look at ethnic groups or other collective identities as evolving interest groups with an ad hoc nature. Unlike primordialists and Marxists, who minimize the agency of individual actors on the processes of identity formation, some instrumentalists go so far as to say that communal identities can be artificially and strategically produced by actors. They do so to further a political or economic goal.

The instrumentalist lens has the characteristic of making changes to the rhetorical frame and to identity non-linear. Actors’ abilities to influence collective identity change depending on the situation, and are greatly enhanced in times of turmoil.<sup>30</sup> In such moments, polarizing rhetoric can activate boundaries that are crucial for members of a collective group to distinguish themselves from the other groups and the rest of the world. Tilly does not hesitate to assert:

People everywhere organize a significant part of their social interaction around the formation, transformation, activation, and suppression of social boundaries. It happens at the small scale of interpersonal dialogue, at the medium scale of rivalry within organizations, and at the large scale of genocide. Us-them boundaries matter.<sup>31</sup>

While acknowledging the agency that political entrepreneurs have in such matters, I offer a necessary caveat. Political actors are not always conscious of the repercussions of their actions. Attempts to redirect, or stifle, the expression of a cleavage may result only in exacerbating it, as is the case with Franco’s meddling in the football world. While he had in mind a wholesome expression of a unified Spanish culture on the pitch, in practice football actually became an oasis for ideological resistance. Also, concepts presented by the instrumentalists are valuable in examining the actions of key political actors through Spanish history as it pertains to football, but they can overlook the power of collective activity and performance in creating identity.

The most valuable contribution of the instrumentalists is to begin to marry the seemingly irresolvable

levels of analysis presented by structuralists on the one hand, and individual-level actor theorists on the other. We will heed the warnings of the instrumentalist not to ignore the power that local actors have on boundary activation and identity construction.

#### CONSTRUCTIVISM

Lastly, constructivist theories of identity formation are most useful. Constructivists shy away from reductive historical arguments or myopic concentration on individual agents. Instead, they focus on how social, economic, and political institutions can be productive forces for identity formation. The constructivist camp is quite popular among those who study radical football fans. It can be easy to argue that ultra groups pertaining to a certain political ideology or demographic subsections grow out of existing societal institutions and cleavages. For example, football fans in historically oppressed regions of the country imbue their fandom with regionalist ideas, or economically disadvantaged fans express frustration of lack of social mobility in militant radicalism.

The afore-mentioned Díaz can be labeled as a constructivist. To him social patriarchy drives flamboyant youth expressionism. The ultras’ wild behavior and appearance seems to be a radical rejection of social norms, but Díaz argues that it actually is a socially-approved rite of passage, a way for the youth to shed the authority of elders and assume their own place in society.<sup>32</sup> The ultras even come to accept this fact, accepting the labels imposed by outsiders. For Díaz, ultra identity is the result of social forces.

The so-called Leicester school is a loosely constructivist collection of scholars who have published significant research surrounding football, especially in England. They maintained for a time a hegemony on the study of hooligan crowd disturbances in football stadia. Dunning and his colleagues are famed figurational sociologist Norbert Elias’ disciples, using environmental factors such as socioeconomic class and education to build a roadmap towards outbursts of violence at football matches. They argue that hooligan violence is the result of lower working class males resorting to violence in an attempt to recover a sense of social stature denied to them by the middle class.<sup>33</sup> For the Leicester school, hooliganism demonstrates incomplete absorption of societal etiquette amongst a certain demographic. The penetration of social norms like abhorrence of violence is less deep in certain pockets of society, leading to groups (often distinguished socioeconomically) that are more prone to expressions of violence.<sup>34</sup>

If we focus on the ultras’ fascist/anti-fascist dialogue, we can trace its origins to a long-standing political

divide between those two camps, reinforced by politics and war. Historical analysis gives great insight into the ultra phenomenon.

Beyond the obvious criticism that the actor-focused instrumentalists would level against constructivism, Marx also wrote a graceful critique of the paradigm. Ironic as it is to cite Marx in a criticism of structuralism, he was certainly cognizant of the constructivist tendency to reduce the agency of actors in the face of the influence of structural institutions. In his quest to show the synergistic interdependence of the status quo on man, Marx reminds us that, “[This conception of history] shows that circumstances make men just as much as men make circumstances.”<sup>35</sup>

This thesis presents an amalgamation of the above-mentioned paradigms in its framework for understanding identity formation. It focuses on the constructivist notion that identity is constructed within a rhetorical frame. Collective identity is thus the product of an ideological context that is the result of various long-standing political institutions: political institutions can trace their development through political discourse and key events.

The rhetorical frame is built around fundamental societal cleavages, conflicts of ideology fashioned from antithetical relationships as outlined by Marx. Identity also possesses this binary characteristic of the rhetorical frame, necessitating the activation of boundaries to conceive of self in opposition to an ‘other.’ At the same time, political entrepreneurs repackage and restate these cleavages, informing the process and deepening the cleavages. Lastly, I use models of performance and flow to solve the tension between structuralism and individual agency. Humans reflect a status quo that they help create, but collective action can push the boundaries of the rhetorical frame. The process is neither exclusively top-down nor bottom-up, rather both occur concurrently. This multi-directional symbiotic influence between the macro-level and the micro-level can be called the ‘mezzo-level.’

#### WHO ARE THE ULTRAS?

The ultra world is only partially visible to the rest of the world. Most people see ultras only ever in two instances: in the stadium, where they act as a powerful cheering section, and in the news, where reports of ultra violence are published. Between these two occurrences exist a host of other activities and characteristics in the ultra world.

An ultra is a diehard fan of a football club. Ultras distinguish themselves from regular fans with their unyielding, loud, and even violent support. They organize themselves into groups. Spanish ultra groups almost al-

ways have two defining characteristics: Fervent support for a club team, and political ideology. Each ultra group exists primarily to support a professional Spanish club football team. The group also maintains either a neo-fascist or anti-fascist ideology.<sup>6</sup>

In terms ideology, there is a broad range of participation. At the very least, ultras are expected to avoid presenting any ideas or symbols that conflict with the group's political ideology. Nationalism is not tolerated inside an anti-fascist ultra group, and regional independence is prohibited in a neo-fascist ultra group. Many ultras display flags with compatible symbolism in the stadium. For example, flags and scarves with Che Guevara's visage or other communist symbols are speckled throughout an anti-fascist group's fan area, while Spanish and Falangist flags are seen at neo-fascist group's cheering sections.<sup>7</sup> Most groups have dedicated political arms that carry out events and local campaigns or actions. Some ultras participate in the political and ideological aspect of ultras by fighting ultras from other groups. Fights can occur spontaneously, but they can also be highly organized affairs in which time, location, and number of combatants is agreed upon. Fights almost always are between groups with conflicting ideologies.<sup>36</sup>

Ultra groups, especially larger ones, which can eclipse 1,000 members, are well-organized and nominally hierarchically structured. Concentrated central leaders organize major events (like large banners, away trips, and charity campaigns), but their day-to-day oversight is typically weak. Many fights, meetings, and ultra interactions are initiated organically or spontaneously by smaller groups of ultras.

Often, there are many informal subunits from surrounding towns and neighborhoods, and they may have a single spokesperson.<sup>37</sup> Many ultras, however, do not belong to any kind of subunit. The only direct power dynamic to which these ultras are subjected is from the central leadership. The ultra group may also have a fairly complex formal or informal division of labor. These can include a hooligan group that specializes in violent encounters, a political group that carries out functions like charities or anti-racism campaigns, a tifo group that creates large-scale visual displays, a group that plans mobilization for away games, and a small group of leaders. The large size of some ultra groups demands a somewhat hierarchical, sound organizational configuration. The 2,000 members of *Frente Atlético* are divided into more than a dozen sections, all with varying degrees of political and violent participation. Sections from Madrid like *Neptuno*, *FANS*, and *TifoMakers* are joined by nonlocal

ones like *Sección Lepanto*, *FA Jaén*, and *Sección Levante*. The capos (leaders) centrally monitor the organization and distribute roles.<sup>38</sup>

This organizational structure and diversification of functions distinguish ultras from hooligans. Hooliganism, a phenomenon that started in the UK, lacks such formal hierarchy and is predicated on violence as an end itself. Bill Buford, a writer who immersed himself in the world of English hooliganism notes the importance of violence to the hooligans after participating in a brawl: "For the first time, I was able to understand the fans' words to describe that experience. That massive violence was their drug."<sup>39</sup> Further, hooliganism does not have the clearly distinguished political landscape like ultraism. Hooliganism starts and ends with rabid support for a football team and violence.

One final popular myth to demystify is that there is somehow a difference between the ultras that lead the cheers inside the stadium and the ones that fight outside. The loud support displayed by ultras during games is perceived positively by regular fans, but accounts of violence outside are met with condemnation that 'violence has no place in football.'<sup>40</sup> One of Sevilla F.C.'s ultra group's lawyers (and an ex-member), Ismael, explains:

The *Biris*, for example, are very well seen by Sevilla's fans. For Sevilla's fans, the *Biris* are the best. But when there's a fight they say, 'they have to kick those crazies out of *Biris* because they hurt their image.' But in reality, those crazies are the same ones that are in side.<sup>41</sup>

For those looking for useful nomenclature, there are two political binaries with which one can categorize ultra groups in Spain. They are either fascist or anti-fascist, and they are either nationalist or regionalist. With few exceptions, each ultra group falls clearly in one camp or the other of each binary, and there is a significant correlation between fascist and nationalist groups, as there is between anti-fascist and regionalist groups. Which side of this binary they stand on has an enormous impact on the group and its members. It governs the boundaries of acceptable action of the ultras. It determines the colors and symbols that can appear in the team's stadium. Most importantly, it leads to a network of alliances, brotherhoods, and hostile relationships. Like-minded ultra groups cooperate on political campaigns and fight opposing groups together.

The *Riazor Blues* (r, af), *Bukaneros* (af), and

*Alkor Hooligans* (r, af) collective that gathered before the fight that resulted in Jimmy's death is an example of this alliance network. *Riazor Blues* and *Alkor Hooligans* are both ultra groups that support teams in Galicia. *Riazor Blues* supports Deportivo A Coruña, a team in Spain's first division. *Alkor Hooligans* supports AD Alcorcón, a team that has spent its forty-year history playing in lower divisions before being promoted to second division in 2010.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the two teams have never played each other in a league match. The common thread between them is a commitment to anti-fascism and Galician regionalism. The third group, *Bukaneros*, supports Rayo Vallecano, a team in Madrid that lately oscillates between first and second division. *Bukaneros*, being from the capital, is not a regionalist group, but they are anti-fascist, and support other anti-fascist groups' vocal regionalism. These teams would not, however, have come together for Deportivo A Coruña's game were it not for *Frente Atlético*.

*Frente Atlético* (n, f) falls on the other side of the binary. It is a fascist, nationalist ultra group, following in the tradition of skinhead culture. Many *Frente Atlético* members are also members of the various far right organizations in Madrid, and skinhead dress, language, and ideology has permeated the ultra group as a result.<sup>42</sup> Members can be seen in large numbers giving Nazi salutes and presenting neofascist symbols. It is also currently the largest ultra group in Spain, with its members numbering over 2,000. Ultras from *Riazor Blues* (r, af), *Bukaneros* (af), and *Alkor Hooligans* (r, af) made a trip into Madrid before the game precisely because they knew it was understood as an affront to *Frente Atlético*'s sense of sovereignty around the stadium. They came into *Frente Atlético*'s area not only with weapons but also with antifascist imagery and chants to challenge the fascist ultra juggernaut. It was a political statement and attack.

To be an ultra in Spain today is to take a side in a dialogue between fascism and anti-fascism. For the ultras, there are three acceptable forms of argument in this dialogue. One includes ultra activity inside stadia such as chants, songs, and displays of political symbolism. The second form of dialogue for the ultras is any campaign or organized activity outside the stadia. This includes statements, charities, and campaigns with political overtones. Lastly, violence also has its place in the ultra dialogue. Ultra violence generally takes place outside of the stadium because of the police presence around football matches. Ultras use aural, visual, and violent displays to perform

8 In Spain, as in most European professional leagues, the league has many levels of competition, called divisions. Only the first division is lucrative or watched by many people. For players on teams that are below second division, football is usually not their only job.

9 Salas gives an excellent account of the overlap between ultras and the skinhead community in Spain.

their political identity for the regular fans and the world.

#### INSIDE STADIA

Inside the stadium the ultras have two goals: to support the team and to make political statements. Supporting the team is primary. This is fundamental to their ethos. The ultras define themselves by their loyalty, especially in comparison to normal fans. This will be examined more closely in the next chapter, but suffice to say that the ultras take pride in being the driving force behind songs and chants, as well as in their impressive visual displays that the rest of the stadium admires.

Chants and songs constitute the bulk of the ultras' aural activity. The most iconic songs tend to be the football club's anthem. Spanish ultras, like English hooligans and fans, often will sing a capella renditions of the club's anthem before the game. Almost always, it is the ultras who initiate a song, and are followed by the rest of the fans. Additionally, ultras are continuously coming up with new songs or chants, with which regular fans may or may not be familiar. When Real Madrid wins a game, it is often accompanied in the final minutes by chants of, "Like this, like this, Madrid wins like this!"<sup>43</sup> The Valencia ultras make their presence known by singing, "We are the curva of Mestalla, I'll always be by your side."<sup>44</sup> In Sevilla, during the sixteenth minute of the match, ultras sing out Antonio Puerta's name in remembrance of the local player who died on the pitch in a 2007 match.

Other chants have more to do with rival teams, and are not so tasteful. In matches against the Basque team Athletic Bilbao, *Frente Atlético* sang, "Whoever who does not jump is a fucking Basque."<sup>45</sup> *Boixos Nois* are always willing to dedicate Real Madrid fans special lyrics as well. "Here comes the plague, here comes the Madrid fan, with those easy-to-see horns!"<sup>46</sup> *Biris*, even when rival cross-town team Betis was in second division, chanted their hatred for Betis in every game: "Fuck Betis, fuck Betis, eh!"<sup>47</sup> For the ultras, like for many sports fans, putting down the other team is a valid way of demonstrating support for their own team.

The ultras' political ideology finds its way into chants and songs as well. Fascist ultras will often insult people from regions with independence claims, especially Catalans, Basques, and Galicians. Conversely, depending on where the away team is from, they'll assert that the visitors are also Spanish to minimize and insult their regional identity. At Athletic Bilbao matches, *Talde Herri Norte* has been known to call for prisoners of the Basque

6 While some ultra groups that publicly claim to be apolitical, in reality only a small handful actually are.

7 Falangism is the fascist ideology of Franco's political party—the Falange Española.

independentist terrorist organization ETA be freed.<sup>10</sup>

The visual aspect of in-stadia ultraism consists mainly of *tifos*, flags, and scarves. A tifo refers to a large-scale banner or mosaic that the ultras display on their section of the stadium. It is always large enough to be clearly seen from anywhere in the stadium, sometimes taller than five meters. They can be the team's flag, an image associated with the ultras, or anything else. A common image displayed on ultra *tifos*, for example, is the visage of Alex, the main character from *A Clockwork Orange*, often draped in the team's colors. His face represents anarchic disregard for rules and a penchant for casual violence with which many ultras identify.<sup>48</sup> Ultra sections are always the most colorful part of the stadium. There are many flags and scarves being waved, most of them with the team's colors.

Looking at the flags that are waved by ultras in matches is the easiest way to determine their ideology. Save for a few exceptions, fascist ultra group sections will be rife with red-and-yellow Spanish flags, regardless of their team's colors. Often, some of them will have fascist symbols, like the Falange's set of arrows, a perched eagle, or a Celtic cross. In anti-fascist groups, there will be regional independence symbols, especially the colors of the Autonomous Community's flag. Anti-fascist ultras will sometimes bring flags with Che Guevara or other leftist icons on them. Additionally, there will be a notable absence of Spanish flags and red-and-yellow flags.

Songs, chants, *tifos*, and flags are simple ways for ultras to make their ideology clear to everyone in the stadium, including youths interested in joining. Most young people do not join ultra groups because they are sympathetic to the ideology. They join because they are interested in the atmosphere, and then they take on the ideology through osmosis.<sup>49</sup> Youths make their way into the ultra milieu as a social activity, and those who stay feel direct or indirect peer pressure to uphold the group's ideology. It is common for small groups of kids from the same neighborhood to go to games together, and join the ultras together. The political subtext to chants, images, songs, and activities undertaken by the ultras take on ritual importance to the new recruits.

#### OUTSIDE STADIA

Ultra activity outside of stadia and not on match day is harder to trace, especially when it is political in nature. Most groups uphold a façade in official mission statements or publications, maintaining that they are apolitical. Their participation in marches and events with overt

<sup>10</sup> ETA, or Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, is a Basque Separatist terrorist organization that has killed hundreds of Spanish civilians since the 1960s in the name of Basque independence. They issued a definitive cease-fire in 2011 and officially disarmed in 2017.

radical political messages, although obvious by the combination ultra apparel with fascist or antifascist symbolism, is not formally recognized by the group's leadership, but is common.

An often-overlooked activity that ultra groups do is local campaigns. Many groups, especially anti-fascist ones, organize charity drives or political campaigns for local causes. In Sevilla, for example, *Biris Norte* (r, af) organized various local charity drives last year. "This year [Biris] collected toys [for kids], collected food... A lot of people say it's just to clean our image, but it's really done to help."<sup>50</sup> They try to preserve involvement in their local communities through such charities. Biris also supported "match the fine for Palestine" last year, a movement started by Celtic's ultra group Green Brigade (af) in Glasgow. In Celtic's match against Israeli club Hapoel Beer Sheva, Green Brigade displayed a Palestinian flag, earning them a hefty fine by the European football governing body UEFA. In response, the Celtic ultras launched the movement to give money to various charities that operate in Palestine. Various antifascist and leftist ultra groups have shown solidarity with occupied Palestine.

Many ultra groups also publish fanzines, stickers, and pins that they distribute. Their ideas and symbolism transcend the football match. Reading fanzines or looking at the symbols and colors present in their stickers provides valuable insight into the ideology of ultra groups. Fascist ultra groups maintain tight relationships with the skinhead movement in Spain. *Ultrassur*, *Brigadas Blanquiazules*, *Frente Atlético*, and *Ultras Yomus*, among others, have capos who are prominent members of fascist parties and skinhead organizations.<sup>51</sup> Fascist symbols and language are common in their publications. *Brigadas Blanquiazules* old fanzine (Gol Sur Ultrazine) published, "Brigadas Sieg Heil" in 1988.<sup>52</sup> Anti-fascist ultra groups, on the other hand, commonly use the anti-fascist red-and-black sign in their publications and stickers. In the *Brigadas Amarillas* fanzine published for the 2014–2015 season, the Cádiz ultras have antifascist signage in addition to hype for an upcoming match and gripes with the club administration.

#### VIOLENCE

That violence is a tolerable aspect of inter-ultra interaction is unmistakable because of their attempts at regulating it. It is not uncommon for ultra groups to plan a fight in which both groups agree to bring a set number of people. These kinds of fights are like sport—it is a leisure activity. Organized fights are predicated on a certain degree

of trust. Each group needs to be fairly confident that their opponents will respect rules about what kinds of weapons will be used and when the fighting will stop. This form of violence most closely resembles English hooligan violence, characterized as a thrill-seeking endeavor. In fact, many ultra groups have 'hooligan' sections made up of people who specialize in, and enjoy, fighting. Francisco, a hooligan for Sevilla F.C.'s Biris, actually exclaimed that he was anomaly in being so 'well-rounded'—he attended rallies and participated in making large visual displays in addition to fighting other ultras.<sup>53</sup> Fighting is the hooligans' specialized niche in the group, and for many is the reason they join. The politics come after, imposed by the group.<sup>54</sup> Even those who are politically apathetic confine their violence to the group's political stance, becoming militants.

Although fights are organized between politically sympathetic groups over sporting rivalries, violence between a fascist ultra group and a rival anti-fascist group is a much more dangerous endeavor. It generally starts like the fight in Madrid that led to Jimmy's death started—with an invasion of the opposition's 'turf.' Ismael describes the event:

The objective is to try to avoid the police checkpoints, arrive at the other team's city, sit in a bar, and call and say, 'hey, we're here - we're in your city, right? We're disrespecting you.' Then, supposedly, the local group has the obligation to attack you.<sup>55</sup>

Hostile incursions like this are dramatically different from organized fights. There is an unspoken moral code, but it cannot be enforced, and often fights get out of hand. Less-regulated encounters affirm the metaphor of the ultra world as a war. No longer is the fight about leisure, now it becomes a struggle between fascism and anti-fascism, and just like in war, the rules are not always followed. Ismael and Francisco reflect on how a fight against *Frente Atlético* is entirely different from the previously described structured contests, because one is fascist, and the other is anti-fascist:

Ismael: There's a general moral law that you ca not kick a man while he's on the ground, you ca not take out a knife... but it happens. A guy from *Frente Atlético* and a guy from Biris, the way things are right now [it happens].

Francisco: Fuck, in Plaza Mayor there were knives flying everywhere.

Ismael: It's just that at the end of the day the

rivalry is so... politics get so encrypted in it that they go all out. It's not ultra, it's a war—it's a war.

Francisco: In the fight between *Frente Atlético* and *Riazor Blues* where they killed Jimmy, Antonio finished with 3 stab wounds in his side. When I was with the ultras from Zafra there were knives, too.<sup>56</sup>

In short, the 'senseless' violence that fans and media condemn is anything but. In some instances, the violence is organized and expressive. Ultras from rival groups will set a date and fight each other in a relatively structured setting. Violence in such a setting is fun for the participants. Also, it is more tied to football. The fight gains import because it takes place with the backdrop of the competition between the ultras' respective teams. It is clear that ultras accept that violence is an important part of their interactions with other ultras. The ultras, notably hooligan sections within the ultra group, talk to each other and plan the encounter specifically for their enjoyment. Videos of the fights are sometimes taken and uploaded to the internet, further indicating the acceptability of violence as a legitimate form of inter-group interaction.

The second kind of fight—spontaneous and unregulated—derives its meaning from ideological conflict. There is nothing fun about these fights. Some thrill-seeking ultras enjoy the feeling of being involved, but enjoyment is not the goal. Instead, the fight is a statement. It is a simultaneous validation of one's own ideology and a repudiation of the enemy's ideology. Football has little to do with this kind of fight. Every ultra group ostensibly exists first-and-foremost to support a team, but the sport is left behind when knives come out. It's a war, and it has more to do with Franco's legacy than it does with the week's football match.

The bloody, spontaneous fights that occur in an overtly political context are complicated. Ultras on both sides condemn the flagrant disregard for the commonly accepted rules (excessive violence against a prone opponent or use of knives and similar weapons), and use similar rhetoric in defense of their own violations.<sup>57</sup> Ultras decry violence that goes beyond the traditionally accepted scope. Today, years after the fight that resulted in Jimmy's death, *Frente Atlético* ultras still are bombarded with chants of "murderers!" at away matches.<sup>58</sup> Ultras are disgusted when their opponents bring lethal weapons, and call them cowards. Lack of trust is the barrier to organizing regulated fights, leading instead to chaotic and violent brawls.

In the ultra world, violence is a legitimate method

of measuring oneself against other groups, having a good time, or making a statement against an opposing group's political ideology. This last case is when the violence is most brutal and has the least to do with football, and the most to do with political identity. Such is the case with fights between *Frente Atlético* (n, f) and *Riazor Blues* (r, af), *Ultrassur* (n, f) and *Boixos Nois* (r), *Supporters Gol Sur* (n, f) and *Riazor Blues* (af), or *Yomus* (n, f) and *Biris Norte* (r, af).<sup>59</sup> In these fights, more ultras are injured because more weapons are brought and sporting animosity is multiplied by political differences.

All of these aspects of ultraism that happen inside or outside stadia, including violence, are legitimate forms of dialogue in a large-scale political discussion for the ultras.

### CONSTRUCTING THE RHETORICAL FRAME

Spanish football ultras, like any collective group, operate within a rhetorical frame. Accurately describing something as imprecise as a rhetorical frame is impossible. Nonetheless, one can at least capture the essence of the rhetorical frame by discerning the apparent critical cleavages, much like one diagnoses a disease by recording the symptoms. As previously stated, in Spain two such critical cleavages exist: a fascist-anti-fascist conflict, and a nationalist-regionalist divide. It is critical to note that these cleavages are not to be understood as fiery, ongoing debates. Without a doubt, fascism in Spain has fallen dramatically out of favor, and is currently all but politically insignificant. Regionalism and nationalism, too, are not the most important ideas to voters, outside of Catalonia. Out of these cleavages, however, has risen the frame in which subsidiary issues are discussed. The intensity of past fascist/anti-fascist conflict led to a Pact of Forgetting.<sup>11</sup> Imposed silence is as indicative of the weight of the divide as any voiced argument. In fact, the Spanish state exists and conceives of itself in many aspects in opposition to the way things were under Franco. There is a latent fear of its own dictatorial, fascist past that still guides Spain's democracy today. Regionalism, as a counter to nationalism, also sprouted out of this historical struggle. Decades of fighting, regime changes, and war have repeatedly framed dialogue around these two divides. From the fires of the First Republic (1873–1874), through the elections of the Second Republic (1931–1934), and into Civil War (1936–1939) and the Franco regime (1939–1975), a narrative of fascism/anti-fascism and nationalism-regionalism was forged.

It is sparked in the First Republic, which institutionalized political competition in the form of parties

after centuries of uninterrupted monarchy. This ideal persisted through the Bourbon restoration, in which power of the weakened legislative courts alternated by design between conservative and progressive parties. Two regime changes are critical moments in which political power was dichotomized between 'progressive' and 'conservative.' The First Republic had consolidated the idea of political parties, moving away from monarchical political monopoly, and the Restoration simplified this new political forum into two camps. Thus, out of a long-standing, monarchical political system appear the beginnings of what will become a future fascist/anti-fascist divide.

General Primo de Rivera's eight-year military dictatorship is sandwiched between the two Spanish Republics. His attempts to unify Spain by eliminating political opposition and crippling the political party institution actually kindled a widening ideological divide. By criminalizing political opposition, Primo forced people into growingly antithetical camps in which the outlawed side was forced to take on a new clandestine, existential tone. He was unable to minimize the dialogue initiated in the First Republic, and succeeded only in polarizing the two camps created under the Restoration.<sup>60</sup> His counter-productive strategy can be chalked up to a miscalculation of the intensity of the ideological dichotomy institutionalized in the First Republic and Bourbon Restoration. Where he thought he could simply eliminate one side of the conflict, Primo instead caused the progressives to dig deeper in response to his attempt at eradicating them. He elevated political dissent to a life-or-death cause, pushing progressives even further away from the traditionalist power-holders.

Massive opposition ousted Primo and set the stage for another critical moment—the establishment of the Second Republic in 1931, in which regionalism/nationalism was established as a key cleavage. In the democratic Second Republic, the progressives took their turn in power, and the Catalans and Basques suddenly found sympathetic ears to their claims of independence, swiftly initiating a process for acquiring political autonomy. The conservatives interpreted this initiative as a direct assault on traditional Spain, a fracturing of the sovereign nation. In the midst of a fierce ideological battle between already-polarized progressive and traditional camps, regional autonomy became a central issue that mobilized an already-frustrated conservative faction. That the existing camps fell neatly on opposite sides is not unexpected. In a time of such contentious power struggles, it is natural for opponents to distance themselves from the opposition, even if the issue is not that ideologically important

to one side. 'Othering' one's opponents serves to consolidate one's own base, reinforcing a group's existence in contrast to the enemy. When the Republicans agreed to grant degrees of political autonomy to Catalonia and the Basque Country, and the conservatives protested in accordance to their views, it served only to reinforce a previously tepid commitment to regional autonomy on the side of the Republicans. Again, one side's outspoken defense of an issue unwittingly polarized it and cemented it into the national dialogue.

Up until now, what we have seen are a series of critical moments in which dialogue (largely in the form of debate by political elites) repeatedly framed conflict as a binary. Each new regime sought to consolidate its power by focusing on a set of issues, forcing opposition to consolidate ideologically. Conflict deepened and polarized the two camps as political elites underscored regional autonomy as a defining issue. Regionalism-nationalism grew as a coinciding cleavage to traditionalism-progressivism. Thus, as the Second Republic progressed, the important cleavage resembled a progressive-traditionalist divide with regionalism-nationalism serving as a sub-cleavage that fell along the same political lines.

The 1936 Civil War was the largest critical juncture that led to an evolution from progressivism/traditionalism to anti-fascism/fascism. The composition of the two sides in the Civil War was vital in the shaping of the rhetorical frame. Franco became the leader of the 'traditionalist' side, inserting fascist ideology into the mix. Because of his leadership, conservative allies found themselves fighting behind a Mussolini-esque banner of nationalism and fascism, instead of Spain's historical conservative values. The opposition was a far more diffuse coalition. Anarchists, Communists, Socialists, Republicans, Catalans, and Basques came together. To label this side as 'republicans' would be not only an oversimplification but also an error. Certainly the Communists and Anarchists did not support republican government. The Catalans and Basques may have had republicans among them, but were generally fighting for their own political autonomy. The more natural rallying cry was a statement of distilled opposition: anti-fascism. Because the war demanded partnership among these groups to defeat Franco, the central ideological conflict in Spain morphed from a traditional vs. progressive conflict into one of anti-fascism and fascism.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, because the Catalans, Basques, and to some extent Galicians were cru-

<sup>12</sup> The partnership of the anti-fascist coalition was anything but strong. The ideological differences between Communists, Anarchists, republicans, and independentists cannot be understated. The idea of some leftists that a republican Spain was degrees closer to their goal than a Francoist Spain was by no means ubiquitous. Thousands of men died due to infighting, especially in this side of the war. Often, the coalition resembled barely more than a set of independent militias with tenuous declarations of neutrality.

cial to the war effort, both sides were similarly forced to integrate nationalism or regionalism into their wartime rhetoric. Violence, as I consider it to be form of dialogue, was an escalation of debate at this critical juncture. War and death reinforced this new framing of a macro-level Spanish cleavage.

After the war, one of Franco's first goals was to unify Spain by eliminating precisely the expressions of ideological conflict that had sparked the conflict. While he was quite successful in silencing opposition and dialogue, Franco underestimated the depth of the cleavages formed from the First Republic, molded in the second, and deepened in the Civil War.

The expression of conflict he was trying to suppress, however, found an outlet in football. Ironically, it was Franco himself who helped football become the perfect context for a revival of a dialogue centered around the macro-cleavages of fascism/anti-fascism and nationalism/regionalism. Because of this, conflict between fascists and antifascists lives on in Spanish ultraism today despite being outside of the scope of mainstream politics.

Franco single-handedly professionalized and institutionalized the game of football in Spain. It is no accident that football became the national pass-time; the national league received funding support, footballers were professionalized, and games were organized abroad as a way of showcasing Spanish talent to the world. The exaggerated importance that football took on was designed to lend authority and legitimacy to an institution that Franco hoped would become a beacon of Spanish unity and pride. Stadia were rare oases in which the display of flags and symbols was allowed with the goal of encouraging demonstrations of national pride through sport. *Nacionalfutbolismo* was an attempt at centralizing a new cultural tradition and bridging the gap between fascists and anti-fascists, regionalists and nationalists. Football, meant to be the perfect manifestation of traditional, unified Spain, ended up being the opposite: a ground for symbolic contention and dialogue along the same lines that the Civil War had played out on.

As we followed along the thread of Spanish history, strung with beads of critical moments, dialogue reinterpreted some existing cleavages and dragged others into the national consciousness, but never simply eliminated them. We can apply here the dialectic model to better understand the process. I noted previously the propensity towards organizing ideological conflicts into binaries

<sup>11</sup> The Pact of Forgetting was a compromise amongst Spanish political elites to effectively ignore the legacy of the Franco regime for the sake of democracy.

and cleavages. The critical cleavages become the base of the rhetorical frame, influencing present identities and dialogue. In the future, group identities within the same frame may face their own struggles, and new conflicts will arise that are repackaged into critical cleavages, changing the nature of the rhetorical frame along the way. Collective identity, which absorbs and expresses the critical cleavages of the rhetorical frame, is a synthesis of the antithetical parts of a critical cleavage.<sup>13</sup> Rarely, however, do the cleavages simply disappear, even when they are stifled—they are only absorbed and evolved.

Franco's endeavor to make football a place of expression, and yet avoid expression of the dominant cleavages was doomed to fail. He underestimated how the Civil War had made the fascist-anti-fascist and the regionalist-nationalist divides parts of the Spanish ethos, and he overestimated his own ability to reshape these cleavages at a time in which the rhetorical frame was not nearly as malleable as it was during the Civil War.

Throughout the Franco regime, football fans continuously participated in thinly veiled dialogue centering along regionalist and nationalist lines. Football teams that became emblems of regional rebellion took on regional colors, and highlighted whenever possible regional pride. Subtle displays of regional pride like team banners with regional colors in the background became bolder as the regime became more involved in international affairs, and bent to pressures to liberalize economically and politically. Quiroga writes, "there is little doubt that Barça acted as a catalyst and vehicle of a Catalan, sometimes Catalanist and often anti-Francoist identity in the early 1970s."<sup>61</sup> Athletic Bilbao institutional culture was even more of a rejection of Franco's *nacionalfutbolismo*. In the Basque Country, Vaczi explains that, "Athletic's philosophy is celebrated as a centenarian tradition whose symbolic function rests in its invariance: the Bilbao club does not sign foreigners, and resists the laws of a rapidly changing soccer world."<sup>62</sup>

Of course some teams did fall into Franco's desired archetype. Atlético Madrid and Real Madrid vied for the favor of El Caudillo, and the football club RCD Espanyol in Barcelona became a nationalist oasis in a region determined to fight for more regional autonomy. The media celebrated Real Madrid's victories as Spanish victories. Games between Real Madrid and F.C. Barce-

13 This understanding of the dialectic paradigm is of course rooted in Hegel's original representation in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and then in Marx's future elucidations, especially in his Letter to Arnold Ruge and *Capital*. Still, while Marx and Hegel's dialectic approaches are tainted by teleological implications, the process needs not be. It simply highlights that one cannot ignore either role of the past nor the historical legacy in following the process of the construction of the rhetorical frame.

14 This is not unique to Spanish soccer. Parallels can be drawn with sporting contests between the USSR and the United States during the Cold War, like the Fischer-Spassky chess match with obvious political undertones.

lona, or between Atlético Madrid and Athletic Bilbao carried extra importance as they were perceived as fights between the nationalists and the rebellious independentists.<sup>14</sup>

Post-Franco Spain is exemplified politically by the Pacto del Olvido (Pact of Forgetting). It was far more successful at mollifying ideological cleavages than Franco had been, in part because it allowed for their expression instead of pretending they did not exist, simply opting to not engage in dialogue at the top political level. The pact did nothing, however, to address football as a world in which the dialogue (including violent and symbolic media) stayed alive, and grew as liberalization allowed it to. The ultras arose out of this fragile continuation of suppressed dialogue. The ultras are the expansion and intensification of the same dialogue, now allowed to go further, dipping even into violence.

The landscape of Spanish ultraism is largely defined by political ideology. Rare are ultra groups that do not fall into one side of the anti-fascist argument. In peripheral regions like Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia, another point of contention is even more important: regionalism. Regional independentism can be seen as a natural progression from the anti-Franco resistance during the regime, but nationalist ultras similarly trace their roots to the same conflict. Groups like Ultra Boys (n, f) and *Brigadas Blanquiazules* (n, f), from Gijón and Barcelona, respectively, are Spanish nationalist, in stark opposition to other local teams.

These are cases in which the rhetorical frame shapes group identities. The endogenous pressure to distinguish self from other is a mainstay of the process of identity formation. Obviously, ultra groups easily and readily pull from the well of sporting competition to fulfill this process. As organizations primarily conceived to support a football team that exists to compete with other teams, ultra groups are born with natural 'others.'

#### ULTRAS AFTER FRANCO —A CHANGE IN OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURE

Up until the death of Franco, peñas had been the default unit of organized football fandom in Spain. Peñas are groupings of fans of a certain club team which often meet to cheer and talk about football. They are the casual, traditional birthplace of ultra groups. After the regime

change youths in the peñas broke off to congregate in their own groups, eschewing the more passive, traditional support displayed by older peña fans in favor of the new ultra style. The ultra groups, consisting almost exclusively of young males, were nuclei for active and violent support for club football teams. Modeled initially after the English hooligans and Italian ultras, the Spanish ultras copied their youth subcultures, imitating the 'heavy,' 'mod,' and 'skin' aesthetics.<sup>63</sup> They quickly became an active presence in stadia, and a rise in violent encounters between ultra groups accompanied their growth.<sup>64</sup> By the early 1990s, the ideological lines were clear, and most football teams had ultras that identified with one extreme of the fascist-anti-fascist binary. "From the start various political tendencies existed among the militant fan groups, closely reflecting the deep-seated regional and national identities in Spanish football and society at large," writes Spaaij. But within a year, "political oppositions gradually came to dominate inter-group rivalries."<sup>65</sup> The young ultra fans had not only escalated support for their favorite teams, but had also imbued fandom with highly contentious political meaning.

The extreme politicization of football ultraism in Spain is the result of a change in the opportunity structure for this mode of expression directly after the death of Franco: a lowering of cost due to the sudden expansion of freedom of speech initiated by the democratic regime, which allowed ultras to be open about their contentious political views. Ultraism also has three endogenous properties that add to its incentive structure, encouraging the creation of strong political identities: existing sporting rivalries that promoted 'othering,' the global commodification of football against which ultras perceive their own traditional identity, and the performative aspect of ultraism that makes it fertile ground for communal identity construction. What follows is an examination of each factor.

#### LOWER COST OF ULTRAISM —EXPANSION OF FREE SPEECH AFTER FRANCO'S DEATH

The extremely high cost of ultraism during the regime was diminished as political barriers to regionalist and anti-fascist expression were removed after his death. Under Franco, strict ideological conformity was sustained through fear. He set the tone for his ruthless and systematized repression of political expression during the first year of his rule, known as the "White Terror," in which it is estimated that 200,000 people died.<sup>66</sup> <sup>15</sup> Known political dissenters were imprisoned, or even put to death. An abridged justice system erred on the side of severity, and it was not uncommon for accusations of ideological

15 This directly after a brutal war that claimed over 500,000 lives.

impurity to be met with stark punishment, without trial. Intellectuals and Republicans were heavily discriminated against. Franco strove to create an ideologically unified Spain based on traditional, Catholic values. Any minor display of progressive, republican ideas was swiftly eliminated. Football did not escape this repression. If anything, the sport was closely watched over. Llopis-Goig writes:

Sport became part of the state's machinery... Sport was subordinated to the state and impregnated with fascist terminology. The ideas giving meaning to sport were obedience, submission, and military discipline.<sup>67</sup>

The regime's active interest in promoting fascist, nationalist values through football made the raucous displays of regionalism in stadia that today's ultras are known for impossible.

Franco's unified Spain also meant a subjugation of regional culture in favor of a dominant Spanish culture. For Catalonia and the Basque Country, the Second Republic had been an opportunity to push for autonomy. The republican coalition had been sympathetic to their claims of independence, and the government had sought to allow Catalans and Basques their own regional governments with more autonomy. This had been perhaps the single most polarizing issue between leftists and moderate conservatives in the 1930s. During his nearly forty years in power, Franco was relentless in his efforts to reverse this movement. The dictator's concentrated assault on peripheral culture was a continuation of a war strategy that had deemed it strategically important to bomb F.C. Barcelona's corporate headquarters. The next year, the inaugural Generalissimo's Cup Final was held in Barcelona as a statement of cultural conquest to accompany military victory. Franco's cultural genocide attacked F.C. Barcelona and Athletic Bilbao especially, forcing Barcelona to adopt a more Castilian name: 'Barcelona Club de Fútbol.'<sup>68</sup> This dampened football fandom in Catalonia and the Basque Country, where support for local teams was tied to local culture and language. Even innocuous exhibition of regional pride was harshly suppressed.

Franco's death, and the cessation of his regime's political censorship fundamentally changed the opportunity structure of ultra expressions of regional and political ideologies, and by extension the incentive structure. In terms of freedom of expression, there is a clear before-and-after Franco.

The political freedom found in post-Franco Spain is embodied in the Pacto del Olvido, or the Pact

of Forgetting. It was a decision by both progressive and traditionalist political elites to actively avoid dealing with the legacy of Franco's dictatorship. The pact was characterized by a remarkable willingness of political leaders from all sides to compromise for the sake of building a stable democracy. One of the goals was to ensure free political expression. In Spanish psyche, the Pact of Forgetting stands in direct contrast to Franco's imperative of a unified Spain. It maintains a neutral stance on historical memory, rather than dictating a narrative about the past dictatorship. Shevel describes the ramifications of the Pact and the success of the democracy:

The Spanish case challenges a common belief that collective historical memory is a precondition for national unity by showing that national unity can be built on a foundation other than shared collective memory. Spain has been called 'one of the most politically and regionally divided nations in Europe.' The sources of this division are not only the "peripheral nationalism" of Basques and Catalans but also the depths of the divisions created by the civil war and the Franco era that resulted in attempts 'to appropriate national identity from the opposing side.'<sup>69</sup>

While many cite this novel approach to dealing with historical memory as crucial to the strength of Spain's post-Franco political institutions, it also carries significant repercussions that percolate down to the micro level. Most importantly, throughout Spain, many people were left without "closure." Although political elites had decided to leave the Franco legacy behind, many local communities were left with incongruent, and sometimes conflictual, interpretations of their historical memories. The stability of Spain's post-dictatorship democratic political institutions, predicated as they are on tunnel-vision towards the future, juxtapose with the ultras' insistence on reviving past conflict. By reviving the fascist/anti-fascist and nationalist/regionalist fight in the football world, the ultras are taking advantage of the democratization of memory provided by the Pact, at the same time as they defy its goal of forgetting the past.

Spain's immediate political liberalization following Franco's death decriminalized anti-fascist and regionalist speech. Youth in many peñas splintered off to form ultra groups who focused on precisely these ideas. At the same time, raucous nationalist and fascist ultra groups arose from traditionalist peñas in response, leading to

16 Salas repeatedly finds that even superficial investigation reveals the close ties between Spain's fascist movement and *Brigadas Blanquiazules*, despite their half-hearted claims of being apolitical.

the binary political conflict that is central to Spanish ultraism. All of this started within a few years of Franco's death.

The lowered cost of ultraism enabled open displays of previously prohibited ideas. But why was football ultraism the ideal context for the expression of these ideas? There are three endogenous benefits that affect the incentive structure, making it a perfect domain for the incursion of ideological conflict: Existing sporting rivalries, global commodification, and performance.

#### EXISTING COMPETITIVE SPORTING OPPOSITIONS

Football as organized sport is a uniquely fertile ground for planting identities predicated on the fascist/anti-fascist cleavages of the past through ultraism. It is already predicated on competitive rivalries that facilitate boundary creation between groups. Ultras imbue preexisting sporting rivalries with political meaning.

The existing football rivalries allowed ultra groups to consolidate their own political ideologies in response to other groups.' Intra-group ideological tension was not uncommon, especially during the development of the Spanish ultra phenomenon, but it was almost always transcended by intergroup conflict. The two major teams in Barcelona present a good example.

F.C. Barcelona was by the 1980s already a cultural symbol of Catalanism. Its ultras, *Boixos Nois*, developed three initial factions: right-wing separatists, left-wing separatists, and apolitical ultras. By the early 1990s, the skinhead movement had gained traction in Spain, and so the right-wing separatist factions grew to control *Boixos Nois*.<sup>70</sup> RCD Espanyol, F.C. Barcelona's cross-town rival, spent much of its existence trying to dispel a common belief that they represented the fascist-sympathizing club in Barcelona. The director of a RCD Espanyol fan organization argued that "the fact that Espanyol never explicitly backed a certain political position has been exploited by Barcelona. An image has been created of Espanyol as a pro-Franco movement."<sup>71</sup> Yet RCD Espanyol's ultras *Brigadas Blanquiazules* did indeed develop into a far-right, nationalist group, in part to consciously distance themselves ideologically from the separatist *Boixos Nois*.<sup>72</sup> <sup>16</sup> Sporting rivalry was consolidated by ultras that came to adopt and amplify previously exaggerated political caricatures of themselves. The ideological conflict between *Brigadas Blanquiazules* and *Boixos Nois* was then deepened throughout the 1990s by multiple violent interactions.<sup>73</sup>

At the same time, an ultra rivalry in Seville was developing along similar lines. Real Betis and Sevilla F.C.

are the two dominant football clubs in the city. Sevilla's peña Biri Biri turned into Spain's first ultra group, *Biris Norte*, in 1975. It was not until 1986 that Betis' own peña El Chupe turned into an ultra group, known as *Supporters Gol Sur*.<sup>17</sup> *Biris Norte* from the beginning had a strong anti-fascist, Andalusian, and antiracist identity, named, as they were, after the team's first black player. *Supporters Gol Sur* initially developed a compatible ideology. As Supporters' became popular, however, a skinhead faction, called Skin Betis, grew from within the ultra group, ultimately coming to dominate the group and impose their ideology on the group in 1991. The impetus for the radical ideological shift was the rivalry with Sevilla F.C., whose ultras were older and already well-established. The onus was on Supporters to distinguish themselves and to reaffirm the sporting rivalry on ideological terms.

Betis' *Supporters Gol Sur*'s ideological flip-flop points to the irresistible desire to reinforce sporting rivalries with politics. Betis' club history proves how unlikely the turn to fascism and nationalism was for the ultras. The team has generally been known as the working class team in the city, or the 'poor man's team.' Further, Betis' colors are green and white, an allusion to the Andalusian flag, which ironically was abandoned by the ultras in favor of the Spanish flag after 1991 by *Supporters Gol Sur*, their ultras. The team with a working class, Andalusian ethos nonetheless has a fascist, nationalist ultra group.

The Sevilla-Betis rivalry is one of the fiercest in the football world. *Biris Norte* has a habit of singing lewd chants against Betis in every match, regardless of who Sevilla is playing against. Even in the 2014–2015 season (in which Betis was competing in the 2nd division and thus was literally not even in the same league as Sevilla) *Biris* continued their tradition of chanting "Put a Betis," at least once a game. The two ultra groups regularly get into fights. And yet, for the ultras, sporting rivalry has been subjugated to the dominance of political ideological rivalry. In an interview, two *Biris* explained that Betis fans, and even some Supporters members are welcomed by them, provided they do not share Supporters' racist and nationalist ideology.<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, *Biris* and Supporters regularly come to violence over ideological disputes. The stark contrast between the two ultra groups is evident in their respective stadia. The area around the north end of Sevilla's stadium, where *Biris* is situated, is speckled with Andalusian independence flags and leftist symbolism, and there is a conspicuous absence of Span-

17 *Supporters Gol Sur* is a classic example of the English influence on early ultraism in Spain, while *Biris Norte* is an anomaly in its reference to Sevilla F.C.'s first black player, Alhaji Momodo Nije, from Gambia. Nije's nickname was Biri Biri.

ish flags as far as the group's sphere of influence reaches. In the south end of Betis' stadium, meanwhile, red-and-yellow Spanish flags and Falangist symbolism is as ubiquitous as the absence of Andalusian flags.<sup>75</sup>

#### GLOBAL COMMODIFICATION OF THE SPORT

The globalization and commodification of football encourages ultraism as expression of political ideology in two ways. It increases global viewership of football matches, in which the ultras' activity itself is part of the product, amplifying the reach of their symbolic performances and granting them a small degree of leverage over the club. At the same time, the non-local consumer of football becomes the archetype against which ultras fortify their own anti-consumerist, traditional identity.

The globalization and commodification of football revolves around football as a business. The largest football leagues have multi-billion dollar television deals, and the value of top football clubs has steadily risen over the last decades, including a 24 percent increase from last year.<sup>76</sup> The fuel for the proliferating football industry is, of course, viewership. Hundreds of millions of people tune into important club games, and the World Cup reached an estimated 3.2 billion viewers. Spanish football is characterized by the dominance of Real Madrid and Barcelona both in terms of sporting success and profits. Real Madrid has an estimated 125 million fans worldwide. The country with the largest contingent of Real Madrid fans is Indonesia, followed by China, USA, and Mexico.<sup>77</sup> Real Madrid and Barcelona are both valued in the billions of dollars.<sup>78</sup> Revenue generated through television deals, online viewership, and merchandise vastly dwarfs ticket sales. It is not an exaggeration to say that for the biggest clubs, the importance of filling the stadium has far more to do with creating ambiance for the television spectator than with ticket sales.

The commodification of the sport has also changed the nature of the consumption of football. Most fans are now non-local, and even fans that support local teams often also consider themselves fans of one of the major international clubs. Fan identity has been corporatized as well. International fans come to follow star players, and the brands that they sponsor. Superstars like Beckham and Ronaldo have caused fandom to transcend allegiance to teams, focusing instead on following the teams for which star players play. Hyper-commodification has turned football into a global product, and fans are consumers of not just the match, but the merchandise, atmosphere, and the spectacle in which the ultras

perform.<sup>79</sup>

Global commodification has therefore provided the ultras with the opportunity to ride the coattails of football, becoming performers for enormous audiences. Ultras' political vision has expanded concordantly. Biris, in addition to engaging in various local charity and political campaigns, recently publicly supported a movement to pay a fine that a Scottish club received due to their fans' displays of Palestinian flags during a match against an Israeli club. Biris displayed their own Palestinian flags in solidarity, and organized a charity event to contribute money to the cause.<sup>80</sup>

The ultras' role in providing atmosphere and intrigue in football matches is not lost on them. When ultras feel stifled or oppressed by their clubs (which is often), it is not rare for them to issue a press release outlining their qualms. In the last few years, Biris has done this on multiple occasions, complaining of the club's refusal to allow them to display certain signs. After a violent altercation with Juventus' neofascist ultras, Drughia Bianconeri, in which several Italian ultras were injured, Sevilla FC banned any sign with the word Biri on it in the stadium in an effort to demonstrate their condemnation of violence. The ultras responded with a public communication indicating their indignation, and declared a temporary cessation of activity.<sup>81</sup> Biris Norte's bold action offers insight into their own estimation of their importance to the club. Obviously, Biris feels that their absence in the stadia is pressuring the club; they think that they have leverage as a crucial piece of the product.<sup>18</sup>

The global commodification of football has also been a driving force in distinguishing the Spanish ultra network as a 'world apart.' The increasingly easy access to football through television and internet has caused an upsurge in casual fandom, a relationship underpinned by consumption. This has shaped ultra identity and activity in active opposition. Ultras focus on traditional, loyal, non-consumer support in response to the hyper-consumerist fandom that is becoming ubiquitous in world football. Ultras use loud, boisterous, and violent support to juxtapose their participation against the common fans' spectating.

Giulianotti establishes an original taxonomy of football fandom. There are two binary scales that reflect the way that people interact with football: hot-cool and traditional-consumer.

'Hot' and 'cool' refer to the importance of the club

18 "Sevilla." MARCA. Incidentally, their boycott has coincided with a five game winless streak for the club. The Athletic Director, a legend for the club, recently called them the "guardians of the club."

19 Parallels can be drawn with the Christian notion of overcoming the devil's seduction by commitment to God in times of struggle, and indeed hot fans are no strangers to this metaphor, employing it to mark their disdain for cool fans.

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for the supporter, or their loyalty to the club. Hot loyalty describes intense support, identification, and solidarity with the club, while cool loyalty is the opposite. For the hot supporter, the football club is a point of focus in their identity—above and beyond the current players on the team. Indications of hot solidarity with a club are many. Tattoos and other permanent body alterations, for example, can symbolically reveal the weight of the club in the fan's life. The club is often personified and can even take on a pseudo-religious connotation for hot supporters.<sup>82</sup> Cool fandom is typified by a lack of solidarity, or a 'fair-weather-fan' mentality. Inconsistent following and support of the club, affected by convenience of the moment is common. The cool fan considers football to be a hobby, and wears the team's colors only occasionally, while football takes on extreme importance to the hot fan, who is perennially dressed in the colors. When the club is not playing well, or is relegated to a lower division, cool supporters often lose interest, whereas hot supporters might double down on their support as proof of loyalty.<sup>19</sup>

On the other end of the binary, 'traditional' and 'consumer' refer to the fan's investment in the club. Traditional supporters have local and cultural identification with the club, while consumer spectators have a market-centered relationship with the team.<sup>83</sup> The traditional fan prioritizes physical match attendance, and values more permanent aspects of the club (stadium, colors, crest) over transient aspects (players, coaches, current management). The club takes on a cultural emphasis, being a node around which community life organizes itself. Consumerist fans, on the other hand, have a consumer-product relationship with the club. They are more likely to watch a match on television. Players, especially stars, capture their attention more than the club itself. Consumerist fans are those who buy the shirt of a new signing, while traditional fans will almost always wait for the player to prove himself before purchasing merchandise. Congruently, traditional fans will wear jerseys of ex-players who gave much to the club, as if in remembrance. The hyper-consumer, brought about by intense commodification of the game, shows almost no loyalty to any club. Instead, they follow the whims of international football, regarding themselves as fans of whatever team is popular, or happens to be playing good football.

Sense of place is crucial in this distinction. Traditional/hot fans have topophilic relationships with their team. They actively support the team and focus on phys-

ical attendance. The grounds become a home for traditional supporters, a place that is sacred and tied to a sense of belonging and community.<sup>84</sup> Physical relationships and shared, cultural space is integral to the traditional supporter's relationship to the club. Contrast this with the impersonal relationship that the consumer/cool fan has with the club. The topophilic affection that traditional supporters have for the home stadium is replaced with virtual and impersonal reproductions of place through television and internet through which consumer fans watch football. Paradoxically, the consumer increasingly longs to be virtually enveloped in the physical atmosphere of the stadium—without the commitment or participation that traditional fans value.

Ultras are unequivocally in the hot/traditional quadrant of the matrix. The ultras' support of the team during a game, with its visual displays, chants, and songs, is a performance that imbues the space with special meaning that strengthens their communal identity.<sup>85</sup> 20 Their topophilic relationship with the stadium is such that even at away games they attempt to make the match have the same feel as a home game with banners and chants. They scoff at the regular fans who attend the matches but are more subdued in their support, and truly look down upon the fans who only watch from home.

Giulianotti calls the cool/consumer fan, the opposite of the ultra, a *flâneur*. "A true football *flâneur*," writes Gioulianotti, "the cool consumer belongs only to a virtual community of strollers who window-shop around clubs. In the most extreme manifestation, national allegiances may also be exchanged on the grounds of competitive successes or mediated identification with superstar celebrities."<sup>86</sup> The ultras' support lends itself to thick social solidarity, or a sense of *communitas*, while the *flâneurs*' support remains quite thin.<sup>87</sup>

*Flâneurs* and ultras, although diametrically opposed, benefit from a symbiotic relationship. Economically, they both help the club, and therefore each other. *Flâneurs*, greatly outnumbering ultras, make up the bulk of the club's revenue by watching matches on television and purchasing merchandise. Their money benefits the ultras in a number of ways by helping maintain the stadium and club infrastructure, from which the ultras benefit the most. It also helps the team purchase better players, making it more competitive. Conversely, the ultras play a crucial role in setting the atmosphere of matches for television/internet consumers. Exciting atmosphere and passionate ultras influence the appeal of a club, enticing

20 Stokes emphasizes how performance can be crucial to creation of 'place,' especially if it is positive and carnival-like.

21 Llopis-Goig points to the festive nature of modern football as a key attribute of its hyper-commodification.

more *flâneurs* to watch.<sup>88</sup> 21

Moreover, *flâneurs* serve as the archetype against which ultras construct their identity. The *flâneur* is a mercenary, favoring whichever team appeals to them at the moment. The ultras, meanwhile, pledge their eternal allegiance to the club. The *flâneur* enjoys football as an insulated hobby with no relation to politics. The ultras put so much emphasis on political ideology that it can

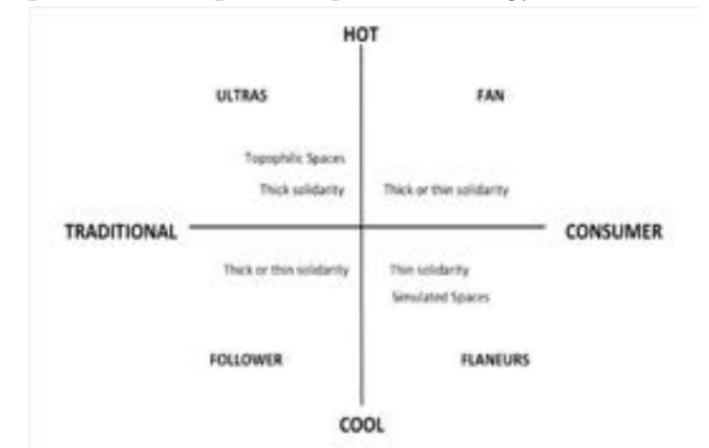


Figure 1

Ultras sneer at the nonlocal fans who purchase jersey and apparel, but might not even watch the games. They wear their own unconditional support and commitment to the team (expressed in time, money, and continuous sporting of team colors) as a badge of honor precisely because it distinguishes them from regular fans.

Radical politics were tightly intertwined with ultra culture from its nascent stages in the 1980s. The skinhead movement had a lasting impact on Spanish ultraism, visible in the aesthetics of early ultras. In those years, bomber jackets and Doc Martens-style military boots were pervasive amongst ultras of every ideological denomination, though this style has since become emblematic of fascist ultras.<sup>89</sup> Fashion sense was not the only contribution that the skinheads made to the ultra movement. Many ultra groups also quickly adopted their radical ideology. Skinhead culture, far from monolithic, includes an incredibly broad range of ideals, some in complete opposition to traditional neo-Nazism. Although smaller in number, leftist and antiracist skinheads also influenced Spanish football ultraism from the beginning.

Again, this represents a point of distinction be-

tween the hot/traditional ultra and the cool/consumer *flâneur*. The embedding of political ideology in the Spanish ultra and their common use of politically-motivated violence challenges the *flâneur*'s casual consumption of football. The ultras reject that football is something to be enjoyed in an off-hand way; they elevate football to a representation of ideological conflict that harkens back to the Civil War and the deep ideological battle at its root.

The ultras' fanaticism serves to consolidate their communal identity against that of the normal fans. A member of Cadiz's *Brigadas Amarillas* ultra group said, "To be a Cadiz fan is not to be a Cadiz fan for ninety minutes on Sundays. It is to be a Cadiz fan all the days."<sup>90</sup> Global commodification of the sport has magnified the distinction, fortifying the ultras' sense of being a group apart from the casual, consumer fandom.

**ULTRAISM AS IDENTITY-CONSTRUCTING PERFORMANCE**  
Many aspects of football and ultraism are performative in nature, and thus provide a perfect setting of constructing communal identity around the critical ideological cleavages of the Civil War rhetorical frame. The football match provides the setting for a 'game' in which the regular fans are recipients of the ultras' political displays. Additionally, the performance itself builds communal identity. In the simultaneous top-down and bottom-up relationship between macro ideological cleavages and ultra political identity, the performative aspect of ultraism is vital. It allows the ultras creative license within the frame to re-imagine ideological conflicts.

Andrés Iniesta, Spanish hero for netting the 2010 World Cup-winning goal, once said, "To say that football is just a game is like saying that music is just noise."<sup>91</sup> In addition to providing fodder for football blogs, Iniesta hints at a parallel between two fields that are seldom studied through the lens of political science: music and football. Ethnomusicologists have recently begun to look at music and musical performance as an activity with constructive properties when it comes to identity and culture. This represents a radical departure from the traditional paradigm of seeing music as merely reflective of existing cultural, ethnic, and political norms.<sup>92</sup>

In fact, this common portrayal of music performance and football games as passive, reflective events represents a fundamental misunderstanding of the value of group activity according to Huizinga. He argues that 'play' is at once a basic, pre-societal human activity and an endeavor that serves a significant function. In modern society, it often takes the form of complicated, highly organized activities like chess, historical reenactments, musical performances, or football games. "The function of play in the higher forms which concern us here can large-

ly be derived from the two basic aspects under which we meet it: as a contest for something or a representation of something," Huizinga writes.<sup>93</sup>

Play can exist only in contrast to the real world. Ultras might disagree with players' and fans' minimization of the importance of football when they say that it is 'just a game,' but these words do reveal a nugget of truth. The constructive and productive power of the football match is in part due to its isolation from the rest of life. The play world has to be clearly delineated. During the match, the football pitch is a unique setting that is separate from, although not necessarily subjugated to, the real world.

Huizinga notes that play "proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner."<sup>94</sup> Play operates within a spatial and temporal boundary in which special rules of the game are in effect. It is, in other words, a world apart.

Observing the rules of the game is crucial. Inside the boundaries of the game a unique set of rules and laws emphasizes separation from the world outside. The special rules and boundaries of play all serve to build an illusory world, independent of the 'real' one occurring at the same time. All members involved must submit and maintain the order of play. Further, although they are aware that the play world is their own construction, participants are encouraged to temporarily elevate this construct above the normal world, even forgetting about it completely. "Any game can at any time wholly run away with the players. The inferiority of play is continually being offset by the corresponding superiority of its seriousness. Play turns to seriousness and seriousness to play," says Huizinga.<sup>95</sup>

In highly-organized play, roles are often divided amongst the members. In musical performances, for example, different musicians play different instruments, each with their own music. Still, roles can go beyond even instrument specialization. The concentric circle model used to categorize elements of musical performance identifies music, performers, audience, and time/space.<sup>96</sup> This nomenclature is as cloudy as it is useful. A Spanish flamenco performance in which the audience claps rhythmically and participates through verbal *jaleos* blurs the line between audience and performers. Through this paradigm, participation is not constrained only to the performers. The audience is equally important to the performance, and plays its own role, depending on the game.

On game day, the football pitch is the setting for play with all the characteristics described by Huizinga in *Homo Ludens*. The fans at the football pitch are an interesting case. Unbeknownst to them, at the same time as

they are enjoying the football game taking place before them, they are also immersed in a different play world—one dominated and dictated by the ultras.

There are obvious consistencies between football matches and Huizinga's theories. The barrier between the real world and the world of soccer is conspicuous in its physical manifestation. Walls serve to contain the game within the stadium, marking separation between pedestrians outside and spectators inside. Within the stadium, a chalk line delineates the pitch. The match is immediately stopped and restarted if the ball crosses this plane. There is no mistaking where the illusion of the play world ends.

The referee, charged with upholding the rules and maintaining order within the stadium, blows his whistle to mark the temporal boundaries of the game. His authority even extends past the footballers and to the fans; he can stop the game prematurely or expel coaches and fans. In addition to the special regulations outlined in the rulebook, footballers and fans alike also subscribe to a set of unwritten rules. For example, footballers will willingly remove the ball from the field of play to allow an injured teammate or adversary to receive medical attention. Likewise, fans are expected to cheer for their team and heckle the opposition, within the bounds of socially accepted behavior. Fans assess the play of both teams and are vocal with their judgment. Poor or boring play from the home team will often be met with jeers, and particularly skillful or aesthetic goals from the opposition can garner resigned applause from the opposition. The most well-known case of such sportsmanship from the crowd in recent memory, because of the importance of the game and magnitude of the rivalry, is Barcelona's 0-3 dominant victory over Real Madrid in their own stadium, the Santiago Bernabeu.<sup>97</sup> The result is an iconic image of somber Madrid fans rising from their seats to applaud Ronaldinho's goal, a culmination of a superb game by the Barcelona star.

In this way, fans and footballers display an understanding of both written and unwritten rules. By voicing support of good football above all else, fans reinforce the integrity of the game. The value of the football match transcends the scoreboard, and audience members and performers take on the responsibility of protecting its integrity. Though the referee is the enforcer of the rules, it is the fans who preserve the illusion that football is the single most important action taking place within the stadium. Football, like most professional sports, is taken quite seriously. The sheer quantities of money involved make it easy to be serious about the game. Through ticket purchases, applause, and jeers fans demonstrate their approval of the spectacle, and play a part in making football

a powerful performance for all participants.

As noted above, everyone at the pitch on game day plays a part in the performance. One can see specialization at all levels: Players are subdivided into position, referees have a hierarchy for making decisions, stadium workers are responsible for various aspects of the spectators' comforts, and fans cheer for one team or another. Generally speaking, participants are aware of how each group contributes to the performance. Despite their heckling, and even the occasional scuffle, fans actually need opposition fans—they feed off the rivalry and the conflict.

There is another group of fans, though, whose role is misunderstood. Usually located behind one of the goals, the ultras are hard to miss. They are colorful, young, and loud. They wave flags, sing songs, and lead cheers. They are also often responsible for any violent and illegal actions that occur on game day. In light of widespread ultra violence at the 2016 Eurocup in France and a few recent high-profile ultra deaths, the prevalent opinion amongst Spaniards is that ultras should not be allowed to attend football matches.<sup>98</sup>

In the context of Huizinga's play world, the reaction is reasonable. On the one hand, the ultras' presence and relentless cheering for the home team adds weight to the game. The amount of time, energy, and resources that they put into organizing songs and banners indicates that something is at stake on the pitch. This buttresses the illusion that the football match is meaningful for everyone involved. On the other hand, the ultras also do things that are not compatible with everyone else's accepted framework of play. They occasionally participate in violent confrontation, introducing danger into what is meant to be a safe game. They display political messages, breaking the boundary with the outside world and tarnishing the purity of the play world within the stadium. In doing so, they knowingly ignore very explicit rules of the game. It follows, as Huizinga argues, that the other participants will seek to bar them from joining in the play, so as to defend the illusion of the play world:

The player who trespasses against the rules or ignores them is a "spoil-sport." The spoil-sport is not the same as the false player, the cheat; for the latter pretends to be playing the game and, on the face of it, still acknowledges the magic circle. It is curious to note how much more lenient society is to the cheat than to the spoil-sport. This is because the spoil-sport shatters the play-world itself. By withdrawing from the game he reveals the relativity and fragility of the play-world in which he had temporarily shut himself with others. He robs play of its illusion—a pregnant word which means literally "in-play" (from in-

lusio, illudere or inludere). Therefore he must be cast out, for he threatens the existence of the play-community.<sup>99</sup>

For the footballers and fans, the ultras are indeed operating as spoil-sports to the football match. That is not, however, the full extent of their role. In reality, the ultras are just as committed to following the rules and maintaining the illusion of the play world—they're just playing a different game.

The ultras' play is constructed around football but is at its root a battle of ideology with distinctions that reinforce the strength of their own identity. Eclipsing the sporting battle between the two teams vying for the ball on the pitch is the political discourse taking place. To be sure, football is still a crucial element for the ultras. Like the other fans, they want their team to win, and demand effort and skill from their plays. But it is only one element amongst other political elements. Political ideology is fundamental to the banners, cheers, altercations, and very existence of most Spanish ultra groups.<sup>100 22</sup> The other people attending football matches may not be conscious of this game, but they are also playing with the ultras.

The ultras' game is also consistent with play as outlined in *Homo Ludens*. The ultras despise ultras of opposing ideology as much as they need them to confirm their ideology. Because of the strength of their political disagreement, the sporting rivalry becomes a subjugated, coinciding distinction. In *The Concept of the Political*, Schmitt writes, "Emotionally the enemy is easily treated as being evil and ugly, because every distinction, most of all the political, as the strongest and most intense of the distinctions and categorizations, draws upon other distinctions for support."<sup>101</sup>

This play world does not have the same boundaries as the football match. It is not contained within the stadium. Because the relevant conflict is between political ideologies, the scope is much larger. Ultras treat the stadium, and often the neighborhood around it, as their 'turf'. Visiting or rival ultras are seen as the enemy; they cannot be allowed to display their own antagonistic political messages near the stadium.<sup>102</sup> The referee's whistle has no jurisdiction over ultras' battle. The illusion of political battle surpasses the ninety-minute match.

Just as politics seep into the stadium where the ultras are located, conflict and ideas spill out into the streets. Ultras often mobilize in the political context in addition to on game day. The plaza, the political rally, and the activism march are all venues for the ultras, just like the stadium is. This is why the regular fans feel their

play-world encroached upon by the ultras. The ultras play their game both within and outside of the boundaries of the football match, so the normal fans discern a breach in their smaller sphere. Every politically-motivated banner visible in the stadium is an attack on the regular fans' football game. Likewise, every time people parade under an ultra flag at a political rally, they introduce football into the real world without the fans' permission.

To the ultras, the other fans in the stadium occupy a similar role to the one they have for the match as an audience. They represent the public, and the ultras' goal is often to obtain political acquiescence. This is in line with Huizinga's argument:

The function of play in the higher forms which concern us here can largely be derived from the two basic aspects under which we meet it: as a contest for something or a representation of something. These two functions can unite in such a way that the game "represents" a contest, or else becomes a contest for the best representation of something.<sup>103</sup>

The game that the ultras are playing, and which the regular fans unwittingly participate in, is a representation of a political contest familiar to all participants. For the ultras, there is a significant overlap of football identity and political identity. On the pitch, political symbolism is omnipresent in the banners, flags, pins, and signs that are being displayed. Slogans and pictures iconic to political ideology are melded with the football team's traditional crest and colors. Teams like Sevilla F.C., Deportivo de la Coruña, and Celta de Vigo, with their anti-fascist or left-wing ultras, are conspicuously devoid of red and yellow, the colors in Spain's flag. In Atletico Madrid, Real Madrid, and Real Betis, though, red and yellow are speckled throughout the colors of the team, evidence of right wing and nationalist identity. The ultra world mirrors the Civil War's ideological struggle.

This symbolism and focus on symbolic color exists throughout the stadium, not just in the ultras' designated area. Regular fans generally submit to the ultras' rules of engagement. Any particularly bold defiance of the ultras' political identity is liable to be forcefully stopped. Fascist or monarchical symbolism anywhere in Estadio Riazor, Deportivo A Coruña's stadium is liable to removal by ultras. Similarly, left-wing or pro-independence signs are often removed by nationalist ultras in El Molinón, Sporting Gijón's stadium. Although fans often view the ultras as a contained element in the stadium,

they are also participants in the performance. Their own symbolism is monitored and interpreted as either agreement or challenge.

A key aspect of performance from which the ultras benefit is its intrinsic ability to consolidate collective identity and build a sense of community. Although festive, there is a pseudo-religious feel to the match within the ultra zone, in part because of the gravity with which they impregnate the game. In the heat of the match, jumping up and down and singing in a mass of other zealous ultras, the members of the ultra group enter a state of flow akin to that of a ritual performance. Giulianotti writes that these moments of flow "may include the experience of deep immersion and *communitas* within the general body of supporters; the ecstasy of sharing in a 'walk on' display of flags and scarves for one's club."<sup>104</sup> The ecstasy of which Giulianotti writes is a powerful feeling. It helps integrate new ultras into the group and serves as a vehicle for inculcating them with the group's ideology. Jack agrees that the ultras' performance transcends the football match itself: "I argue that crowd atmosphere and chants are the byproduct of fans' construction of collective identity and the ensuing conflicts with opposing groups that occur, all of which are inherently connected with the 'real world.'"<sup>105</sup>

The idea that the ultra performance aids the instillation of ideology and consolidation of communal identity is well supported by observations on how and when ultras become politically conscious in Spain. In my interview with a current and a past member of Biris, they noted that they had both joined the group as young teenagers, before they had any kind of anti-fascist and anti-racist ideals.<sup>106</sup> It is only after they join and participate in matchday performances that the ultras begin to adopt the ideology of the group. In Spaaij's study of Espanyol's neo-fascist ultras, *Brigadas Blanquiazules*, he found the same pattern. "The politicization of members and affiliates of *Brigadas Blanquiazules* tends to take place by osmosis and through contacts with specific environments—football matches or (skinhead) music concerts—rather than as a result of ideological training or fixed and consistent political ideologies," he writes.<sup>107</sup>

The strong overlap between ultras and radical political parties and organizations throughout Spain is testament to the homogenizing power of ritualistic performance.<sup>108</sup> Young, eager recruits join for the intense football support and end up becoming very involved in the ideology of the ultra group. Many of them may not even feel very strongly about fascism or anti-fascism. Nonetheless, because they participate in the performances with the group, they develop a thick sense of community and an identity that is built upon these ideas.

In their play world, the ultras enjoy two-fold benefits for the expression of critical cleavages. They have regular fans who act as a general public towards which the ultras display their side of a fascist/anti-fascist cleavage as well as a performance that is beneficial to cultivating communal identity around their political ideology. They are taking advantage of the performance-rich environment of the football match and of a large audience that comes to take in the spectacle of the football match of which they are a significant part. As organizations with political interests, the ultras benefit from having a weekly audience numbering in the thousands.

This chapter is a surface-level analysis of the many factors that enabled ultraism to become a world predicated on the critical cleavages of fascism/anti-fascism and regionalism/nationalism. The post-Franco expansion of freedom of speech considerably lowered a barrier of expression of these cleavages so ultras developed violent tendencies, testing the new limits. Football and ultraism also had their own intrinsically beneficial characteristics, including increasing commodification of football, inherent sporting rivalries easily hijacked by ideological conflict, and the community-building nature of ultra performance on the pitch. In short, these are the existing structures that allowed for ultraism to express the critical cleavages and for ultras to be a local level embodiment of the macro-level rhetorical frame. Franco's death is the turning point in the opportunity structure of ultras, coinciding with the rapid growth of the ultra phenomenon immediately afterwards.

#### CHANGING THE FRAME

Previously, a narrative was constructed explaining that ultras situate their identity within a rhetorical frame, which is a boundary for expressions of identity that is built around macro-level critical cleavages. Therefore, the ultras' political ideology is an example of the impact of macro-level cleavages on local-level identities. In other words, broad ideological conflicts are illustrated on a much smaller scale. But Marx, in *Theses on Feuerbach*, demands that we not exaggerate the power of existing ideological structures, lest we ignore the agency of the micro-level actors in the construction of their own identity: "The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that it is essential to educate the educator himself."<sup>109</sup>

I described how political rhetoric, public discourse, and violent conflict make up a historical process by which the rhetorical frame is molded. This focuses on the top-down side of the process—national overarching political battles that are firmly situated in the past. At

22 The interviewed Biris told me a story of a young Betis supporter with a *Supporters Gol Sur* sticker in his window who was told, under threat of physical violence, to stop displaying the sticker in his window.

the same time, though, the local-level communities that are in many ways the product of the rhetorical frame, in this case Spanish ultras, also have a measurable impact on the frame from the inside. Their connection with the rhetorical frame is not entirely passive or reflective; they push its boundaries as well. The implication is that the relationship between macro-cleavages and local communal identities is not solely a top-down phenomenon. It is both top-down and bottom-up, the simultaneity of which we might call a 'mezzo-level.' Because local communities, like ultras, are also not isolated groups, their unique interpretation of the macro-cleavages also has an outward effect on the country's rhetorical frame. In short, a country's central ideological conflicts, which are foundational for the expression of political identity at every level in society, are molded by pressures from both above and below.

Evidence for the top-down part of this mezzo-level has been proven by describing how Spanish ultras have taken advantage of the post-Franco expansion on freedom of speech to build a community that expresses historical political cleavages. Ultra groups' political identities tend to fit within the framework of anti-fascism/fascism and regionalism/nationalism that are the product of Spanish history. Intergroup interactions reinforce the historical ideological dichotomies. The ultras are reflecting the content of the rhetorical frame.

Evidence for the bottom-up half of the mezzo-level, by which local actors reinterpret the rhetorical frame on their own behalf, can be found when collective identity differs marginally from the ideological structure of the rhetorical frame. Actors take the ideological cleavages in the rhetorical frame and change or expand them. There are two clear examples in the Spanish ultra case: regional independentism in new places, and regionalism tied to fascism. Ultras have expanded regional independentism as an applied ideology, even in regions that have never had mainstream independence movements. At the same time, *Boixos Nois* has broken the Spanish ideological alliance between regionalism and anti-fascism.

#### REGIONAL INDEPENDENTISM IN A NEW PLACE

Independentism in Spain has been historically isolated to the Basque Country, Galicia, and Catalonia. These three regions largely collaborated with the Republicans during the Civil War because a republican government represented a new chance for political autonomy. Because of the alliance between the progressive coalition and these regions against the fascists in the twentieth century, regionalism became synonymous with anti-fascism. As a concept, it represented a rejection of Franco's unified Spain. Nevertheless, it was never adopted as a

mainstream movement outside of the Basque Country, Galicia, and Catalonia. The current political structure of Seventeen Autonomous Communities is the result of the passing of Article 151 in 1980, which allowed for an expedited process of granting Autonomous Community status to applying regions. Article 151 is a response to the initial preferential status given to the Basque Country, Galicia, and Catalonia, after which the other regions followed.<sup>110</sup>

Andalusians, for example, have never shown the broad support or impetus for Andalusian regionalism or independentism as Basques, Catalans, or Galicians have. Even today, recent election results show a wide gulf in pro-independence votes between these Autonomous Communities. In the 2016 general elections, over 50 percent of Catalans voted for independentist or Catalan nationalist parties. In the Basque Country, over 38 percent voted for Basque independentist or nationalist parties, and in Galicia the number eclipsed 25 percent. In Andalusia, meanwhile, pro-independence and Andalusian nationalist parties garnered less than 1 percent of the vote, surpassed by the animal-rights party.<sup>111</sup> There has never been a widespread or mainstream Andalusian independence movement.

Ultras in Andalusia, however, stand in contrast to history and electoral results. Anti-fascist ultra groups in Andalusia have developed an affinity for independentist ideology and symbolism. Ultra groups like *Biris Norte*, *Brigadas Amarillas*, and *Kolectivo Sur*, emphasize regionalist symbols. Spanish flags are completely absent in their cheering sections, and in the sea of team colors there are also flags of Andalusian independence. The flag is distinguished from the normal Andalusian green-and-white flag by a red star in the center.

The ultras are unlike normal fans in the area. Andalusians do not think themselves any less Spanish than citizens of other Autonomous Communities. In Seville, many fans take particular pride in the Spanish national team's undefeated record in twenty-five games played in Sevilla F.C.'s stadium, the Ramón Sánchez Pizjuán. Yet of the members of *Biris Norte*, Sevilla F.C.'s ultra group, most seem to have a practiced nonchalance when it comes to the national team. They are uninterested and often do not watch the games, even at home. Basque, Galician, Catalan, and Andalusian independence flags might be on display at any home game by anti-fascist ultra groups in Andalusia. The Andalusian ultras have moved past solidarity for independence claims in the Basque Country, Galicia, and Catalonia; they have adopted the claim themselves.

The ultras' assimilation of regional independentism outside of the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galici-

cia, where it is a mainstream movement, represents an adaptation of the rhetorical frame. The historical impetus for anti-fascist support of peripheral political autonomy was a necessary alliance during the Civil War. Andalusian ultras, however, adopt the ideology as their own, making it central to their political identity. Hence, they are pushing the boundaries of the rhetorical frame from the local level and defying macro-historical legacies with their own bottom-up reimagining of regional independentism.

#### REGIONALISM TIED TO FASCISM

As indicated in the historical analysis, politics and war forced regionalists and anti-fascists into an alliance against Franco. In the ultra world, this association is evident in the binary of fascist/nationalist ultra groups and anti-fascist/regionalist groups. *Boixos Nois'* regionalist-but-fascist ideology defies this binary and the rhetorical frame's packaging of these cleavages.

Racism serves as a good indicator of a group's fascist or anti-fascist ideology. Fascist groups are invariably involved in cases of racial violence, whereas anti-fascist groups identify as anti-racist.

Spaaij and Viñas present a list of over twenty reported cases of racial abuse at matches in five months during the 2004–2005 season. While the authors indicate that in a few of these incidents, the team did not have an ultra group, in most of them the home team did have an active ultra group, which always had a fascist ideology.<sup>112</sup> *Ultrasur*, *Frente Atlético*, *Brigadas Blanquiazules*, *Ultras Yomus*, *Supporters Gol Sur*, and more are all represented on the list, as are *Boixos Nois*.

*Boixos Nois* has a heated rivalry with crosstown ultras *Brigadas Blanquiazules* and the Madrid group *Ultrasur*. In both instances, the incompatibility of their opinions on nationalism is the root of their rivalry. *Brigadas Blanquiazules* and *Ultrasur* are both Spanish nationalist groups. The national trend is for regionalist groups like *Boixos Nois* to have anti-fascist, and therefore anti-racist, values. Instead, they exhibit white-supremacist ideals in their visual displays, chants, and actions. In 2003, members of *Boixos Nois* assaulted two Moroccan men in the stadium and stabbed a Maghrebi man in the metro. In 2004, there were numerous instances of racist chants and monkey calls directed at players in Barcelona games.<sup>113</sup>

Within the ultra world, *Boixos Nois* is an anomaly because it does not fit into the commonly accepted matrix. Francisco, a member of *Biris* explained the confusion:

In fact, there's an anecdote in Seville in which once it was the Sevilla-Betis [match] and in

the Barcelona airport there were Boixos members who were coming to be with Betis' Supporters, and Boixos members who were coming to be with [Sevilla's] *Biris*. It's a really weird group.<sup>114</sup>

Francisco's story demonstrates the confusion when one group has a regionalist and fascist ideology. The group is conflicted on which ultra groups to side with because each is compatible with one half of their ideology, and discordant with the other half.

*Boixos Nois* breaks the tendency towards uniform binary between fascism/anti-fascism and nationalism/regionalism with its pairing of fascism and regionalism. They represent a decoupling of the historical alliance between regionalists and the left wing. They are a bridge of agreement between two cleavages that were repeatedly reinforced in the rhetorical frame as having a wide gap between them.

Because of the highly performative and visual aspects of ultras, ultras also represent a concerted public statement about regionalism. Viewers and fans see their flags and hear their chants, and thereby adopt the ultras into public discourse. It is a small-but-meaningful pressure, exerted on an existing national conception of independentism and fascism. Certainly, the ultras will not spark a widespread Andalusian independence movement, but without a doubt function as an active rhetorical force. *Boixos Nois* also will not single-handedly break the bond between anti-fascists and regionalists, forged as it was in a Civil War. Nonetheless, they are a reminder that political alliances change and that the Civil War's packaging of ideological cleavages cannot monopolize the rhetorical frame forever. Although ultras are a fringe community looked down upon by the public, they do have a small voice in mainstream rhetorical battles because they exist in the thoroughly accepted world of football. Thus, these are examples of bottom-up influence on the rhetorical frame by the same local actors whose identities are shaped by it.

#### CONCLUSION

Football is absolutely at the core of the ultra phenomenon; their self-identification as 'ultra' fans is honest. For them, the football club is a dominant pillar in life. Ultras are the loudest cheerers, the most loyal followers, and the most violent supporters of the team. There is no hint of irony when they talk about the ultra 'family,' and they are not exaggerating when they conflate the home stadium with 'home.'

Spanish ultras, however, defy attempts at quarantining the political realm from sports and other leisure

activities. Rare are the ultra groups that do not have a clearly dominant fascist or anti-fascist creed. Political ideology has become an inextricable facet of their existence; it is an essential part of ultra identity to the point that it has subsumed the sporting aspects. Although strong intergroup rivalries and conflicts do exist amongst ultra groups with similar political ideals, the fundamental variable in determining the nature of inter-group interactions is ideological compatibility. Violence between ideologically antagonistic ultras is far more dangerous and unpredictable.

The characteristic fascist/anti-fascist and nationalist/regionalist binaries of Spanish ultra identity further reveal the extent to which politics can percolate into local communities. That the essential ideological conflicts of the ultra world mirror the battle lines drawn in the most significant historical events in recent Spanish history implies a top-down relationship between the formation of critical macro-cleavages and political identity at the micro-level. I argue that the mechanism for this top-down pressure, flowing from the macro-level to the micro-level, is a 'rhetorical frame.' A rhetorical frame is the coalescing of historically formed ideological cleavages into a set of boundaries for values, identities, and dialogue. Thus, the rhetorical frame reinforces macro-cleavages by creating the boundaries in which communal identities fit. Dialogue is the umbrella term I use for the interactions that shape the rhetorical frame in critical moments, and it encompasses elite political debate, public discourse, and acts of violence.

In addition to this reflective connection to macro-ideological cleavages that local ultra groups have, they exert a bottom-up influence on the rhetorical frame. Bottom-up influence is tied to the performative nature of communal group identity. Spanish ultras engage in a kind of performance, or game, in which regular fans and worldwide consumers of football are the audience. Collective performance allows for reimagining the critical cleavages of the rhetorical frame that might slowly be adopted at the macro-level.

Emphasizing the simultaneity of top-down and bottom-up interactions between ideological cleavages and local political identities offers a more nuanced framework for understanding political identity. Coupled with a dialectical focus on binaries and 'othering,' it represents an amalgamation of constructivist, Marxist, and instrumentalist schools of thought. My theory attempts to show compatibility between local actors, with the agency to change the world around them, and structuralist arguments, which demonstrate the power of institutions in shaping the way we think and perceive ourselves. Performance and identity thus can have tangible impacts

on political institutions, and vice versa.

I follow thinkers like Tilly and Kalyvas in adding an intermediary level of interaction: the 'mezzo-level.' Where the macro- and micro-levels can largely be defined by the units of analysis identified in each (institutions and actors/groups, respectively), the mezzo-level denotes direction of interaction instead. The mezzo-level is embodiment of the competing top-down and bottom-up pressures that local actors and institutions have on each other.

The Spanish ultra phenomenon is a fantastic case study on this theory. Because of the overtly performative nature of ultraism, it is easy to trace historical ideological cleavages straight to their current political values. Likewise, twentieth-century Spanish history offers a striking narrative of clear, dramatic changes in ideological conflicts and their development. Nonetheless, this thesis is only an introductory application of a mezzo-level argument onto a practical group identity phenomenon. It demands more small-n and large-n testing, first with ultra phenomena in other countries, and then with other types of groups.

Spanish ultras allow us to question basic assumptions about our interaction with the world. They disabuse us of our misconception that anything, even the innocent world of sport, can be isolated from politics.

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