They Came, They Saw, They Voted: A Historical Perspective on the Political Culture of Russian-Speaking Israelis

Gary Dreyer


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New Year’s Magic: Nowruz, Persianate Politics, and Eid Diplomacy in Post-Revolutionary Iran

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Building(s) in Nationhood: Sites of Memory in Moscow, Russia

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Beyond the Spectacle: Assessing the Intent of Isis Perpetrated Beheadings from June 2014-2015

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Ultras in Spain: A Study on the Relationship Between Macro-level Cleavages and Micro-level Actors

David Westby
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EDITOR’S NOTE
The View from South Lawn

As the Helvidius Group prepared the 29th volume of The Journal of Politics & Society for publication, we strive 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 Drejer 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. Drejer 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 Stær’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, Stær 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. Stær 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 work to construct or shape national identities. Johnson’s analysis of gender disparities in electoral politics is an important contribution to an area of literature seeking to understand and explain violent terrorism. In her original analysis, Stær 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. Stær 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.

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 commissuration 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 for understanding and interpreting this topic’s implications into broader Israeli society, Russian-speaking Israelis currently constitute roughly 15 percent of Israel’s total population.

Amongst historians, Dr. Dmitry Shumsky, a well-known professor of Sociology at Bar-ilan University, has become a figure of intellectual leadership in the field of Russian-speaking Israeli studies. Shumsky identifies as defining Russian-speaking Israelis’ ethnic nationalism and general hostility toward Israeli Arabs.1 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.2 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 Yeleneskaya analyzed folklore to build an ethnographic understanding of the community, Olga Gersh-Tishkov’s ethnographical research.3 Amongst sociologists, Eliezer Ben-Rafael and Sammy Smooha have contributed findings to the body of political science research on the political culture of Russian-speaking Israelis from a comprehensive, historical perspective.

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.4 While these comparisons do 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 Phillipov and Anna Knafelman.5 However, Ben-Rafael and Smooha’s conclusions do aid comparisons of the historically-driven dynamics of Russian-speaking Israelis’ political culture to another liberal community of olim and (descendants of olim) that have largely found their home on the political right, the Mizrahim.6 Indeed, both argue that Russian-speaking Israeli 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.7 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.”8 This shift will draw Russian-speakers to “the political center and left,” making them “more tolerant of Arabs inside and outside Israel.”9 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 underestimating these shifts.10

Hence, this prevailing understanding of Jewishness, and 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 identity with the Jewishness of the Jewish state remains consistent with the policy preferences of 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 Phillipov 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 that of the old-timers with similar demographic characteristics.”11 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.”12 Although the long-term majority 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 Phillipov and Knafelman’s contributions to the body of political science research on the political culture of Russian-speaking Israelis is Dr. Vladimir (Ze’ev) Khanin, who courteously agreed to be interviewed by me for this project. Khanin’s extensive work studying the political and social integration of Russian speakers into the “mainstream” of Israeli society 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.13 Moreover, Dr. Khanin is highly skeptical of some of the research that presents the primacy of the Soviet experience on the community’s

Tshitkov’s ethnographical research. That research identified the importance of “ethnic territories” and indigeneousness in Soviet nationality politics. Shumsky identifies as defining Russian-speaking Israelis’ ethnic nationalism and general hostility toward Israeli Arabs.1 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.

Throughout, this piece, I seek to put much of the existing scholarship for understanding and interpreting this topic’s implications into broader Israeli society, Russian-speaking Israelis currently constitute roughly 15 percent of Israel’s total population.

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 legacies of Soviet ethnic politics within the context of Valery Tolerant’s work 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.4 While these comparisons do 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 expansive findings of political scientists Drs. Michael Phillipov and Anna Knafelman.5 However, Ben-Rafael and Smooha’s conclusions do aid comparisons of the historically-driven dynamics of Russian-speaking Israelis’ political culture to another liberal community of olim and (descendants of olim) that have largely found their home on the political right, the Mizrahim.6 Indeed, both argue that Russian-speaking Israeli 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.7 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.”8 This shift will draw Russian-speakers to “the political center and left,” making them “more tolerant of Arabs inside and outside Israel.”9 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 underestimating these shifts.10

Hence, this prevailing understanding of Jewishness, and 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.

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political culture, arguing that it is tainted by question-
able 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 skepti-
cism 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
temporary political culture of Russian-speaking
Israelis. While a political wave, formed by various
political phenomena and demographics, has unques-
tionably shifted the center of gravity in Israeli poli-
tics 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 quantitative 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
behavior that are similar to their parents’ and grand-
children’s 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 Russian political culture
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 from review of key articles by
social scientists and historians concerned with the rele-
vant 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 Ash-
dod, 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 top-
ic, a process which I completed via phone interview later
that month. These individuals were drawn from the class
of Russian-speaking political personalities, public fig-
uals, and civil servants, many of whom unambiguously 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
only to be identified through pseudonyms. Moreover, they
are also part of a greater, Russian-speaking Jewish intel-
lectual exchange, and keeping in touch with the ongoing
work 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 Kness-
set elections, which reflected a substantive role of Rus-
sian-speaking voters in ensuring the re-election of
the Netanyahu government. This, alongside my personal ex-
posure 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 Jews in
the Soviet period, with Dr. Yuri Slezkine’s work providing
the critical intellectual backdrop to my own analysis of
the problem. By then, as my inquiry turned into a full-
pledged independent research project, I began to seek out
individuals who were experiencing this community’s poli-
tics 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-Jan-
uary 2017, I called on the four individuals that I had
located through a network of closely connected former
Refusniks (Soviet Jewish activists who spent years wait-
ning 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 Svet-
lova, specifically to gauge her response to the opinions
I had gathered and to obtain an alternative perspective
from extensive and ample room for substan-
tiation, and some will

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
major party group with its own media base, prominent personalities,
cohesive narrative and national values that pay par-
ticular deference to social commentary.

Having conducted these interviews, I sought to
reconcile my subjects’ divergent views with the em-
pirical data I was assembling from relevant academic
literature, and attempted to make sense of these out-
comes 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 conduct-
ed, 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.

Within this analysis, I should note that none of my interview
subjects, or any of the authors of the articles which I
analyzed in this study fully subscribe to my conclu-
sions, and some will find ample room for substan-
tive, 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 Rus-
sian-speakers within Israeli politics, and give addition-
al 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
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 skepti-
cism, particularly given that throughout my research
I have had to balance the intellectual politics of the
practical applications and ongoing consequences of
the political and social history I brought “under the mi-
croscope,” 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.

The main conclusion, that
as they 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 decisive-
ly right-of-center with parties within the “national
vote” winning the overwhelming majority of Russian
speakers’ votes. The experience of Soviet rule left a
profound imprint on all Jews who emigrated from the
Former Soviet Union, and made them somewhat pre-
disposed 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 proportion-
ally, and numerically, the biggest destination for Rus-
sian-speaking Jews leaving the Former Soviet Union.

Here, I have adopted some of the methods and
conclusions of previous researchers while pro-
viding 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, espe-
cially 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 soci-
ety 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

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politics and cemented them into the political culture that prevails within the community today. The consequenc- es of this definitive shift rightwards have been decisive for the whole behavior, by far, 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 strug- gle 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 pronounced rightward 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 prefer- ences 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-speaking Israelis. However, the Russian-speaking Israelis that led to their over-whelming support for the Right, involve an overlap among Russian speakers for importing alcoholism, prostitution, and organized crime in the 1990s to blam- ing Russian speakers for importing racism, nationalism, and xenophobia in the 2010s.

Right-wing defenders of the community, both within and outside of it, counter this stereotype in several ways. First, they argue that Russian-speaking Jews' 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-wing- ers, both inside and outside the community, also em- phasize 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 fueled a worldview among the Russian-speaking Jews of the Soviet Union to provide 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.

JEWSH NATIONALISM AND THE EFFECTS OF SO- VIET 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 through- out the whole behavior, it should be noted that, until the early 1990s in the Soviet Union as “the prison house of nations,” one-size-fits-all approach, describes only part of how authoritarian empire that presided over almost one-sixth of the earth’s land area dealt with its countless ethnic minorities. While the Russian language and culture was unquestionably dominant within the post-war Soviet Union, all of the titular nationalities were afforded substantial 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).

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 substan- tially 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.

The odd ones out of this arrangement were those eth- nic 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. The largest of these groups, and the most geographically dispersed, were several million Soviet Jews. It should be noted that this was in spite of the existence of the Jewish Autono- mous Oblast in southern Siberia, which in theory existed as a defined geographic unit where Soviet Jews enjoyed "titular nationality" status. Yet only a miniscule por- tion of the USSR’s Jews called the JA0 home, and most lived in the major cities of the European USSR. The Jews 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.

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 de- cades, 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 calls for independence, this prompted a restoration of the right of self-determination, Soviet Jews found themselves im- pacted by these changes as well.

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 and the openness of the Jews from the former Soviet Union, seeking to emulate the political processes, and pressures that fomented a worldview which 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 them- selves, for the first time, in a position of demographic and political dominance as members of the titular national- ity of their new home. The newly formed Russian-Jewish construc- tions of nationality policy, in which ethnic minori- ties were expected to “fall in line” and act in a subordi- nate 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 continued to this day. Despite the fact that Jews from the former Soviet Union, seeking to emulate their former countrymen, were now prepared to some- what over-compensate for decades of repressed national and cultural aspirations, and were thus well-positioned to become Israel’s “top patriots.”

For example, Israeli nationalistic sentiment 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 elation now felt when their children enlist in the Israeli Defense Forces.22 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 at the very center of it all, and the fact that most 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’s 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 predominates 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**

Russian 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.23 The subsequent stage of Israeli political history, spanning the late 1990s and early 2000s, when Russian Jews found themselves more firmly planted in the country, took place in the shadow of the Second Intifada and Gaza Disengagement.24 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 2001.25 This coalition relies heavily on overwhelming support for the Right amongst Russian-speaking voters. The current climate and foreseeable future, forming a stable, genuinely left-of-center, Zionist coalition would be very difficult.26

No doubt, the political impotence of the Israeli Left, which has formed and reformed political parties, lacked stable leadership, and failed to produce attractive and effective political front lines to the Russian-speaking electorate, cemented the Right’s majority. In the current electoral cycle, the right-wing parties which controlled one-sixth of the earth’s landmass on the Russian-speaking street in Israel.

Middle East’s political landscape that lends itself to the role and operates with a historically conscious view of the IDF soldier of Soviet Jewish origin takes on this new narrative, which dominated Israeli politics for the ideological convictions.27 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.30 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, wrapped by constant shortages of consumer goods and endemic corruption, transformed the vast majority of Soviet Jews into ardent supporters of “capitalism,” as many community leaders and voters vocally support liberalizing the economy and reducing the size of government.44 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. These are very critical supporters of maintaining and increasing pensions and other welfare benefits.45 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 traditional populist agenda of Avigdor Lieberman.46 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.

Russian-speaking votes in the middle and upper-middle class, 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.47 These voters largely became reliable voters for Likud, and now form a substantial portion of the base of Israel’s ruling party.48 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.49

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.50 Indeed, the animosity towards the “old elites,” and their privileged position within Israeli society can be reinforced by the perception of “olim” as “newcomers” or “outsiders,” and thus, as many in the Russian-speaking community feel, targets for political pressure on the “old elites.”
tunities for members of the Russian-speaking community in the upper echelons of Israeli society.42 However, deeper analysis reveals that the hostility runs beyond economic positions and extends to xenophobia and political ideologies. For example, Russian-speaking Jews are more likely to express a strong preference for a two-state solution, albeit a controversial variation of it that calls for the transfer of Arab-Israeli towns to a future Palestinian state.43 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 contrast strongly with the Israeli-Jewish and Arab-Israeli views.44}

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.45 However, this response is simply unsupported by facts, as polling of Russian citizens in Israeli conducted before the 2012 Russian presidential election showed that less than 15 percent of Russian voters in these elections participated in the vote while only the lever for Putin.46 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.47 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.48 In this, one can see the clear shadows of the experiences these Russian-speaking Israelis had as Soviet Jews during the time of forced Russification and Stalinism, 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.49

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 still likely avoid the parties of the Left, who will continue to be shunned from any subsequent governing coalition. Earlier research conducted by Philippov and Knaflaim demonstrated that the only change in voting among Russian-speaking Israelis which was correlated with their length of stay in Israel was their ultimately avoiding the parties of the Left. The younger Russian-speakers being far more tolerant of this group than their older counterparts.50 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, Philippov and Knaflaim found little variation between younger Russian-speaking Israelis and their parents and grandparents.51

While research on the politics of this small but significant group is limited, with the most recent surve-
rather similar to the prevailing sentiments in Israel. Concerns over security issues, alongside fierce patriotic/nationalist sentiments, a distinct preference for controversial ‘strong’ leaders to ‘be the tough character’ between the two communities.” 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. This, of course, is not surprising given that the United States, and its politics, strikes a resonate and security concerns to the same level that Israel’s do.

POLITICS OF POST-FIRST GENERATION RUSSIAN SPEAKERS

In a 2015 interview, Lily 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.” 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 Sharansky himself welcomed. Concurrently, many religious (but not Ultra-Orthodox) Israelis, a community that includes mainly National-Loverly, religious individuals of Naftali Bennett and many on the right-wing of Likud, have embraced Russian-speakers as political allies, despite obvious cultural differences and the 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 Israeli Right and Russian-speakers, a relationship 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.

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 dramatic back-up 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 Philippov and Knafel’s survey). Concurrently, many religious (but not Ultra-Orthodox) Israelis, a community that includes mainly National-Loverly, religious individuals of Naftali Bennett and many on the right-wing of Likud, have embraced Russian-speakers as political allies, despite obvious cultural differences and the secularism, because of their mutual prioritization of security issues.

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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.


Caroline Anne Johnson, University of Maryland - College Park (2018)

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. 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.” 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, equalling 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. However, female leadership should not be encouraged simply because of the tangible benefits it can bring to a state and its population. Benefits 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. 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.

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 exhibit 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. 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. 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. 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

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. Individuals in most societies are socialized to view politics as a “man’s world.”
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. Those in power shape societal expectations; if the president of a country has always been male, women may not 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 the societal expectation of who should run for public office. Eagly and Karau (2002) proposed a role congruity theory of prejudice toward 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 leadership. Women are often assigned communal characteristics, being seen as affectionate, sensitive, nurturing, and gentle; in contrast, male leaders are assignedagent 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. 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 political 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. She was not viewed as having typically feminine characteristics. Traditional political party structures often think about leadership and these factors are present on both 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 have 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 leadership is an essential quality for leaders. In individuals in top political positions, women are viewed as more honest and ethical. Women are much more likely than men to believe that leadership is an essential quality for leaders. In individuals in top political positions, women are viewed as more honest and ethical. 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

Structural barriers to female leadership

A substantial body of literature exists relating to the underrepresentation of women in government. Coelho (2009) 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 urbanization were insignificant in predicting female cabinet ministers and percent of women in the legislature. 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. 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. 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 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. 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 candidates; there is a pattern of popular support preceding traditional party support. 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. Female candidates are more expendable to traditional party establishments. Parties may fail to support female candidates because of a lack of qualification, but a fear that the electorate will not support the candidate. 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. 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. 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 intra-party preference votes can also disadvantage female candidates. Valdini (2011) 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. 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. It was believed that the then leader of her party had a 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. 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. 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 democracy, 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 leaders and thus become 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. Significant women become prime ministers; this is one way to bypass a biased electorate. Prime ministers are also seen as more collaborative; in 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 president when they lose their power. Eventually, prime ministers 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 as a bias in the electorate. 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. Jalalai (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. In these dual systems, women tend to be present, those in power. Still, evidence suggests 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 not have children at all.

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. 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. 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. Their criticisms come from both men and women. For example, during the Conserva-
tive 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. 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 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**

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. 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 reelect. 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 a woman bears in her lifetime, is a useful measure of the fertility rate of the year in consideration, was used to investigate this hypothesis. 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
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. 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. Thus, voters are less likely to 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 primarily perceived through a male lens because soldiers and military leadership are overwhelmingly men and this lens can persist after conflict. 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 presidential.

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. The latter are expected to have independent, decisive leadership styles, which are traditionally associated with masculinity. 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: Female leaders are more likely in dual systems.

- Power is shared between the prime minister and president, but the president is dominant (e.g. South Korea).
- Parliamentary-presidential dominant: power is shared between the prime minister and president.
- Parliamentary-presidential dominant: power is shared between the president and prime minister.
- 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 (e.g. Croatia).
- Parliamentary-presidential corrective: power is shared between the president and prime minister.
- Presidential: power is shared between the president and prime minister (e.g. Italy).

Figure 6: Female leaders are less likely in unified presidential systems.

- 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. 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.” Approximately 68 percent of the observations are prime ministers.
- 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. Missing data points were interpolated.  
• **Fertility rate**: average number of children per woman. Data obtained from the World Bank Development Indicators.  
• **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. 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. 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 time.  

• **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.

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.

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.

**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.

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![Adjusted Predictions with 95% Cl](image)

**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.

![Adjusted Predictions with 95% Cl](image)

**Figure 8**  
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.
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.

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 without 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.

![Figure 9](image)

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.

Table 3

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<th>LEADER-LEVEL QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS</th>
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<td><strong>EMPIRICAL APPROACH</strong></td>
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| 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. 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.

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

**THE RISE OF THE IRON LADIES**

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. 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 strong political gatekeepers, these ties may be a way to endow a female leader with a reputation of her father, husband, or other close relatives that come before her.

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. Countries with high Polity scores are further down the path of democratization, and may therefore be more likely to choose a female leader.

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.
différent. For all the others, an average of 9.92 years as compared to 18.44 years. When the data is examined more closely, it appears that this is a structural factor of the democracy system. The models agree that a female head of government is 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 the political office. Among these elections, 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 leader is more likely 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. Oaks & Almquist (1993) found that lower fertility rates do not increase the likelihood of women in national legislatures. 67 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.68 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 Kazimiera Prunskiene 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 systems 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 changes in the political socialization of the cohort. 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.69 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.”70 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. 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. 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 family ties to power. At the same time, all Latin American countries (excluding Guatemala and Venezuela) have gender quotas that most adopted in the late 1990s. 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 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 countering 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 Asia even 10 years. To 9 years prior to entering power, those with 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 6.6 years of political experience, while those without average 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 13 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. 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 not more likely to have more 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 a testament 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 and the United Kingdom both have two-party systems; the United States has a unicameral legislature, 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 codification 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. 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.

The 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. To get the attention and approval of party
officials, candidates must take the initiative and con- tact 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 select- ed 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. 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 was consistent with the literature, which has found that women are more likely to be cho- sen to contest risky seats, while men are much more likely to be chosen to contest safe seats. 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 in the safe Conservative seat and enter the House of Commons.

Subsequently, Thatcher was chosen as the leader of the Conservative Party in 1975 after her predeces- sor 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 Brexit, the reason her predecessor had resigned. Her posi- tion on the controversial referendum was that “Brexit means Brexit, and we’re going to make a success of it.” Normally in a leadership contest, MPs would vote for their party’s preferred candidate. If two remain; then, the members of the Conservative Party across the UK would vote. 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. 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 promot- ing 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 can- didates 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. These characteristics made her an appealing leader to negotiate Britain’s with- drawal from the European Union. She even warned Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Com- mission, that she would be “a bloody difficult woman” during Brexit negotiations. Like Thatcher, May is far from the soft, feminine leader that a female stereotype may predict. Unlike Thatcher, May has been an inclu- sive leader; seven of her cabinet ministers are women, and she has women holding major positions. 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.

Thatcher and May can be evaluated in terms of the characteristics examined during the quantita- tive leader analysis. Both women were very qualified politically; May was a member of parliament for nearly twenty years 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 cam- paign funds, volunteers, and endorsements. Again, similar to the United Kingdom, women are less likely to be recruited as candidates.

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. In the case of the United States versus the United Kingdom presents an inter- esting glimpse into how the findings of the quantita- tive 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 charac- teristics 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 power presidency, the offset 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 difference is that 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 a 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 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 working 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 government? Is the increase of 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, Ketsu Kajal was elected as 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 Ardern became the third female prime minister of New Zealand, and Ana Brnabic became the first female and openly gay prime minister of the country. In 2018, Viorica Dancila became the first female prime minister of Romania and Pau-la-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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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 intellectualists and state leaders increasingly celebrated pre-Islamic Persian identity, ancient depictions of Nowruz celebrations carved into Achaemenid ruins cemented the holiday’s place in the Iranian national heart and memory. 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 Shams, some religious leaders from the revolution called on the new regime to restrict public Nowruz celebrations. Though popular demonstrations quickly put to rest fears of a “Nowruzban,” 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

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**New Year’s Magic: Nowruz, Persianate Politics, and Eid Diplomacy in Post-Revolutionary Iran**

Carson O. Kahoe, University of Pennsylvania (2019)

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

– Mohammad Baqai’i-Makan, in Sharq, 2005
Taking place on the last Wednesday of the old year, the tradition involves building and jumping over bonfires in a symbolic cleansing process. 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. 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 natural themes and new focus. Finally, in the wake of leaping up to the holiday, Iranian families clean their houses (khāne tekāni, or “house shaking”) and begin growing wheat-grass (saffeh) 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. Children enjoy the antics of Hajji Firuz, a minstrel character who plays traditional songs and dances for everyone. Nowruz feasts include delicious foods and many sweets, and families dye eggs bright colors for the sofreh. Businesses, schools, and government close for the holiday, and many families take advantage of the time to visit friends and family and to travel for fun. 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 purposes of the state, the Islamic Republic continues an old tradition of incorporating the holiday into Iranian politics.

NOWRUZ AND IRANIAN NATIONAL IDEAS IN THE 20TH CENTURY

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).

NEW YEAR’S MAGIC
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!” 5

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 Khomeini’s life and teachings, Khomeini drew from Nowruz’s theme of rebirth to challenge Iran’s “to enhance their spiritual qualities and [the] divine characteristics during the…revival of nature.” 6 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.” 7 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.” 8 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 for 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 nationalist 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 *motaakbarin* (oppressors).” 9 Defending the oppressed was central in Khomeini’s desire to export the revolution, a foreign policy framework that concerned Iran’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 inaugural Nowruz speech, Khomeini, thus a second month 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!” 10 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.”

Yet Iraq’s 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. 11 In his speeches throughout the 1980s, the Ayatollah assailed crimes committed by “the agents of imperialism.” 12 Highlighting Iraq’s positional stances and 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.” 13 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 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 *sidast-e dast-e gol,* or a “policy of a beautiful flower.” 14 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.” 15

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 door and forbidding visage of the Iranian Revolution.” As a part of this diplomatic engagement, Rouhani and his pragmatic predecessors leveraged shared features of Persian identity, including Nowruz, to engage with Iran’s neighbors on an ethnic level. 16 In addition to Rouhani’s official state efforts, an array of philanthropic, business, and media foundations loosely associated with the government (in Persian, *bonyād-hā*) bolstered Rouhani’s “cultural diplomacy.” By conveying religious, cultural, and ideological formation, the operations of these *bonyād-hā* in Iran’s neighbors act as an expression of Iranian soft power. 17 Notable *bonyād-hā* include transnational aid foundations, such as the Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation, and news agencies, such as the Mehr News Agency.

**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. 18

For example, Rouhani authored a string of letters in 2016, individually tailored for the heads of state of Iran’s Persianate neighbors, congratulating them on the New Year. 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.” 19 Similarly, the language in his 2017 letters promoted a policy of engagement. Celebrating Nowruz as a “symbol of moderation, peace, wariness, light, abundance and liveliness,” he encouraged cooperation “to confront the misunderstandings of religion and tribal extremism which results in terrorism.” 20

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.” 21 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; “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.” 22 In Tajikistan, the Imam Khomeini Relief

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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 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, and Uzbekistan. He added India to the list.

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 Afghan representatives.
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, Iraq 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.” 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 referred to the “two countries,” including Nowruz, to rebuild ties with the region. In an interview with *Mehr News Agency* (owned by a *bonyad*), 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.”

In spite of this *eid* diplomacy, Azerbaijan’s linguistic and political ties with Turkey, Iran’s prima-ry regional competitor, have remained a barrier. In a meeting during a regional conference in 2014, Rouhani underscored Iran and Azerbaijan’s “common histori-cal and cultural roots.” However, in a rebuff, Azerbai-jani President Ilham Aliyev merely acknowledged the “common spiritual values and traditions.”

President Aliyev’s snub did not just highlight the dominance of Turkish political and ethnic con-nections over Iranian aspirations 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 to rebuild ties with Iran’s *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 emphasized: “There never was a better time for 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 several of the sanctions against Tehran. Once again drawing from the imagery of the holiday, Obama con-cluded 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.”

Rouhani’s 2015 Nowruz message was not aimed at the White House. Instead, it painted a picture of na-tional power to dampen domestic criticisms that the nuclear talks would weaken Iranian national security. In his speech, he praised Iran’s “economic rise,” 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 Unit-ed States, the “hegemon” learned that “interaction and understanding and respect are the only ways to treat the Iranian nation.”

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 program. 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.”

Rouhani’s 2016 Nowruz speech similarly attempted to win over domestic critics of the JCPOA by asking them to engage in the holi-day’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, JCPOA’s promised prosperity. Likewise, Obama heeded Khamenei’s desire to end American accusations of Iran seeking nuclear weapons. The speeches were not just directed at each other; they were in dialogue with and, 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 be-fore economy.”

However, even as Rouhani defended the progress in relations borne out of the deal, Ayatolah 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 América’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 criti-cism of Rouhani, Khamenei lambasted those “inside #Iran who believe in& accept this moving discourse of arrogance system & try to convince others as well.”

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 eidi diplomacy between Tehran and Wash-ington indicating a willingness to engage Tehran, positive or negative. In the place of eidi diplomacy, Trump offered his own vision for a new phase of engagement with Iran, under the JCPOA’s promised prosperity. Likewise, Obama heeded Khamenei’s desire to end American accusations of Iran 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 exist- ed, eidi 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, at least one aspect it has stayed its predecessors’ course.

27 "Imam Khomeini Sought Welfare." Ibid.

28 Ibid.


30 Ibid., 215-16.

32 Sick, "Iran's Foreign Policy." 388-59.


44 Jenkins, "Bonyads," 165.


46 "Brothers, or Comrades?" 47.


52 "Imam Khomeini Sought Welfare." Ibid.

53 "Imam Khomeini Sought Welfare of Oppressed Nations during Nowruz," Congratulations For The Start Of The New Iranian Year 1391: Imam Khomeini And Nowruz,


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 Orthodox Orthodoxy. Drawing from the analyses of the sites of memory, this research examines the role of religion in the nation-building efforts and consolidation in the Russian Federation.

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.

**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. 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 Tötz identified five main versions of post-Soviet nationhood in intellectual discourse.

This research will pay particular attention to the idea of Russia

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-
as “a nation of Eastern Slavs, united by common origin and culture.” This version of nationhood emphasizes the importance of Christian Orthodoxy as well as the innate connection between Russia 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 often arise from public space. For example, since the real environment of Tsarist Russia no longer exists, sites of memory that represent the Tsarist regime attempt to consecrate deification of the Fire of Moscow on September 12, 1812. 12 Napoleon's 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.13

The first architect chosen for the cathedral was Aleksandr Vitberg, an architect of Swedish descent.14 Vitberg had planned for a cathedral standing 230 meters high with a dome of 50 meters, which was taller than St. Peters Cathedral by almost 100 meters.15 The cathedral was to be built on Spassov Hills, which was eight miles from the Kremlin.16 Vitberg's vision broke with traditional Russian Orthodox architecture, and instead he tried to dedicate the cathedral to the three branches of Christianity.17 Vitberg's design incorporated a vertical three-part structure, contradicting the traditional model, representing Christ's nature of triple personality and resultant resurrection.18 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 1861.19 The overall architecture of the cathedral had little Russian influence and instead combined classicism and romanticism.20 Vitberg's vision, however, never materialized and effectively ended with the death of Tsar Alexander I in 1825.21

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.22 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 Russian Romantic) style.23 Ton’s cathedral also had a new location: Volkonska 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 1588 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).
Before 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 Yuri Luzhkov and Patriarch Alexander. It was announced that it would cost US$150 million, nearly double the estimated cost of rebuilding the cathedral by 1997, and it was consecrated on August 19, 2000. 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. 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 in 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. 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.

Furthermore, the western facade of the cathedral, traditionally the most important facade in Orthodox architecture, differed from the original. On the original cathedral, the western facade is a sea of angels. The dome is a symbol of divine light” in old Russian Orthodox churches. The substitution of gold with gold-leafed 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. The cathedral was consecrated by Alexander, who represented the religiosity by demolishing what the people regarded as their main cathedral. 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 Nicolas I’s new vision of Russian nationality 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. The Tsarist past, 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.

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 ‘martymdom’ 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. 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 for postsoviet Russian nationalism. 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 Yuri 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. 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. The Communist Party was leading 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.”

Regarding the Cathedral, Yeltsin stated that “it is a Russian national sacred space and must be reborn. With it, it will be easier to find the path to societal accord, the creation of goodness, and a life in which there will be less room for sin.” 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 Russian 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.” 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 in 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. On February 21, 2012, the group performed their song "Holy Mother, Take Putin Away" to the tune of a traditional Orthodox hymn in the Cathedra-ral of Christ the Savior. The group wore babushkas while dancing and lip-synching to the song in the Cathedral. They were arrested afterwards. Pussy Riot became an international cause célèbre when three mem-bers of the group, Maria Alyokhina, Yekaterina Samutse-vich, and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, were convicted of hooliganism and sentenced to two years in prison by a Moscow judge, Maria Alekhina.

The members of Pussy Riot used this perform-ance 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 cri-tique 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 turned it into a tool for the efforts by those who installed it, to create a new message.

While the original Cathedral stood as a monu-ment 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, as well as the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the monu-mental 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 Patriotic War of 1812. Victory Park was built to celebrate the victory of the Patriotic War of 1812, Moscow Mayor Yurii Luzhkov collaborated with the sculptor Zurab Tsereteli to plan the construction of the park. Moscow Mayor Yuriu 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, a mosque, and a synagogue. Victory Park was opened in August 1997 (although Victory Day had been cele-brated in the park two years earlier). 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 II 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 celebrates the defeat of Nazi Germany and the memory of the Great Patriotic War, however, was found to be insufficient, and thus, in 1959, the project was entrusted to the architect Yege-ny Vutchech. Although Vutchech submitted a proposal in 1960, the project never materialized before his death in 1974.

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. Goloubovskiy, 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 would be to stand close to the center of the park. Due to the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games, however, the project was rele-gated to the periphery. In 1986, under Gorbachev’s leadership, the Cen-tral 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 in-fluenced 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.

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. Never-theless, the new administration proceeded with the construction of the park. Moscow Mayor Yuriu 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 opened in August 1997 (although Victory Day had been cele-brated in the park two years earlier). Both Yeltsin and Luzhkov were present for the official opening of the park on Victory Day of 1995.

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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 ethnic and imperial past while down-playing Russia’s troubled Soviet era domestic heritage.” Schleifman argues that “(Victory Park’s) structure is the collective memory” and represents the syncretic Russian memory groups. Although Schleifman argues that the park is a result of different memory groups which “strove to restore Russia’s glorious past, whether as Impe-rial 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 Rus-sian 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.

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 Imperi- al Orthodox imagery.

The location of the park is connected to memory of the victory of the Patriotic War, the construction of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and the St. Vladimir, which are in the historical center of Moscow near the Kremlin, Victory Park is on Poklonnaya Hill in the western periphery of Moscow. After the victory of the Patriotic War of 1812, an arch was built to commemorate the twenty-seventh victory of the Tsar on the Gorkovsky Road. As Schleifman notes, “the battle of Borodino entered the Russian memory as a heroic victory, and Poklonnaya gora with its immediate surroundings became associated with it.” 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 symboler of the victory over West-ern, fascist, and imperial forces.

Victory Park itself covers 335 hectares and as of 2016 contains sixteen monuments and sites. 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, Goloubovskiy, Korabel’nikov, and Korolev. The museum was built in the shape of a semi-circular tent with the Red Army floating on it, in the form of 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. Forest and Johnson describe the monument as an obelisk with “a huge drag-on covered with swastikas, curled beneath a towering obelisk adorned with Nike, the goddess of victory, en-gages in mortal struggle with a statue of St. George on horseback.” 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 Poklonnaya. 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 democ-acy, a subsequent mosque and synagogue were added. 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 con-struction was funded by the government, the mosque was an effort on the part of both the Government of Moscow and the Jewish community of the European Region of Russia, and the construction of the synagogue was funded by the Russian Jewish Congress. The locations of the church, mosque, and synagogue are also significant. The cathedral is located in the southwest part of the park close to the entrance on Kutuzovskiy Street, while the church is located near Minskaya Street. The church is also closer to the Monu-ment 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-
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. 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 less. 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 Moscow, Odessa, and Yerevan. Although the monument added a Soviet element to the park, the statue was created in response to a WWI Soviet monument that was blown up in Georgia in 2009. Putin directly addressed the demolition of the Georgian statue 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 especially the memory of our own heroes.” Furthermore, Putin stated that the statue “is a tribute to the immortal achievement of our people.” 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.”

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. 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 rebranded 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. BBC published an article titled “Putin Unveils 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 called(ed) the Statue Wars.”

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. 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 millennium anniversary of the death of St. Vladimir. 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 near the Kremlin. 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 and state from Putin and state help consolidate Russian nationalism 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 Vladimir vis-a-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 MacDonald, Hughes, and Dodds note: Geopolitics has to some extent becomes a question of how particular episodes become figures in visual culture and how the visual cultural is in turn interpreted, and political realities enacted through a process of visual demonstration. Thus, Putin too has used Russian Orthodoxy to consolidate his power. Fagan notes, “Putin taps the nominally orthodox majority’s confidence in the

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church for how own image of permanence and security. Religion in the Russian Federation, and especially in Putin’s Russia, has become increasingly important. 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). By June 2014, Putin’s approval rating had increased to 86 percent. 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. 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 of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour: Your Holiness, Moscovites, 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 Russians. The monument is not just a symbol 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, united, centralized state, which united different peoples, languages, cultures and religions into one big family. His epoch was full of achievements, and the Baptist 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.

The annexation 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 nationalism as a union of East Slavs. Although Putin recognized that St. Vladimir’s conversion of Kiev 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, 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, Kazma 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.

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’s current government to the victory of 1612 despite a Soviet intersection 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 the Tsarist and Soviet 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 patriotic environment of the Tsarist regime. One of the only pre-Soviet institutions to survive the Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks disposed of the Tsarist values and the new regime effectively destroyed the patriotic environment of the Tsarist regime. Numerous attempts to preserve the inheritance of the Tsarist regime were made in the 1990s. The construction of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour was 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 religious influence and alignment with the Tsarist values of ‘autocracy, orthodoxy, people.’ The performance by the controversial group called 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 the park, is connected 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 Kiev Rus in the Russian capital. This territorial claim, although present in the discourse on nationalism from the 1990s, has become particularly important in light of the an-
nation 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. Saint Petersburg was also the former capital of the Russian Empire, so it would be 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 conducted to analyze this increase and trends in the new monuments if applicable.

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.

Figure 4

Figure 5
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 James Foley in August, 2014. Beheadings captured attention, and thus, many reporters and academics alike easily explained ISIS’s 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. 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. States, such as Saudi Arabia, continue to use beheadings for perpetrators of substantial crimes to this day. State beheadings are perceived as legitimate by the population and are at times considered honorable. However, beheadings have recently gained attention due to their use by non-state actors in horrific, violent events. 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 size and brutality. Their acts of terror, although they resulted in widespread international condemnation, attracted a flood of foreign fighters to join their ranks. Over the past three years, ISIS has claimed hundreds of beheadings of civilians and military personnel. Many academics 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. The time and place of these executions also do not appear to be random. Beheading incidents bear variations in the manner 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’s use of beheadings gives insight into their intended goals. More broadly, I consider what explains ISIS’s use of beheadings in the context of their campaign and other terrorist actors. 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 beheadings 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 role of position, goals, and strategy of ISIS and other terrorist organizations.

Existing Literature

With the rise of terrorist beheadings and media coverage, 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 Fujii 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. 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. 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 Tim-othy Furnish, argue that the shock value of terrorist techniques, such as hijackings and car bombs, wears off. As a result, they add, “violence is its own spectacles.” Their acts of terror, however, although they result in widespread international condemnation, attracted a flood of foreign fighters to join their ranks. 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. The time and place of these executions also do not appear to be random. Beheading incidents bear variations in the manner 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.

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Another rationale for explaining the use of beheadings by ISIS is that by demonstrating its authority to the global Muslim 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. The time and place of these executions also do not appear to be random. Beheading incidents bear variations in the manner 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.

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arguments disregard the dimensions of ISIS beheadings and tend to focus on the video rather than the event itself. It is possible that there are multiple motivations to behead. Beheadings are used as a 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 conceptual framework for analyzing each beheading type based on the context and the desired effect. Secondly, I discuss the motivations that drive its use, it is important to note what the specific motivation is. Third, I discuss the coding. Lastly, I apply this framework to a categorized 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 their effectiveness. Additionally, they could serve as punishments and deterrence 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 primary goals of ISIS beheadings are to demonstrate control over an unoccupied or ungoverned area 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.” 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. Beheadings have the potential to create a perception among the local population that ISIS has control in the use of violence. Since it is the group's strategy 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 unnoticed decreases ISIS’ authority. If 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. 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 أبيب في منبج، عائلة ابن ابنتها لـ "انتظار حرب"، والذي يترجم إلى "تنتظر الحرب",” which translates roughly to “set the limit with a sword thrust at a witch in Tell Abyad.” 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 and assert ISIS' authority. Therefore, they should correlate with ISIS' territorial control. Territorial control refers to areas where ISIS has ruling authority to employ 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' territorial control, which are published on-line. From this information, we can determine which scaffold beheadings occurred within, near, or outside of an ISIS 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 territory 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. 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." 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. Foley reads a long message of regret before the executioner condemns U.S. airstrikes and commits the execution. 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.

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 clearly not only
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 beheading to 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 ransom is not paid or the 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 pilot Muath al-Kasasbeh quickly led to retributive aerial bombing against ISIS positions.24 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. airstrike and suicide bomb attacks and the number of beheadings. This relationship has been used by the U.S. intelligence community and elsewhere 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 sixty-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 smaller 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 include 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 beheading in the 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 beheadings were 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 or propaganda channels, and are more public displays. If scaffold beheadings are featured in videos, militants often recite Arabic phrases such as passages from the Quran or legal proclamations before the event to large crowds gathered in a public square. In most cases, armed militiants 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 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. Below we will examine the most common 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 rapprochement gestures carried out by the victim: [ISIS (IS or Islamic State) AND (behead or execute or decapitate)]. The search term was then refined to exclude “execute,” which gave a significant number of stabbing, 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, report 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 national identity 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. 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.25 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 conducted 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 goal of the beheading phenomenon is to be explored further in the analysis. Below we will examine the most common ISIS media channels and included ISIS symbols, such as its flag.
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 numbering of people assembled to 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 “de-
servers.” These beheadings are less likely to be document-
ed with photos or videos, and even if video evidence does exist, it is typically disseminated locally through DVDs.

**PLUNGE 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. At times, militants cover their entire heads except for their eyes, wear military vests over traditional clothing, and carry at least one weapon. The victims often wear orange jump-suits 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 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 dramatization with music in the background.

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. A media review during this period (photos or video) found for thirteen out of the fourteen beheadings from June 2014 to 2015. 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 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. 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, con-
demning the act by a foreign government or militant force in the region. 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’s area 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 shapecfiles 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.

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.

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.

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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.
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-Raqqa 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-Raqqa, 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.

October through December was a violent time in Kobani as ISIS attempted to capture the cities with increasing violence and force. The statistics show a clear skew above the average scaffold beheading activity in each country for the entire year, with 61 percent of scaffold beheadings occurring 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-Raqqa, 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.

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

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-
Airstrikes Against ISIL “with the location of the event. Press releases indicating airstrike event is defined as a cluster of strikes occurring in a location from June 2014 to June 2015, where each unique airstrike labelled as counter-ISIL occurred on August 8, 2014 near Kobani, and 8 airstrikes on a given target location. As noted in the study, the airstrike campaign 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 Cormac, 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:

Airstrike 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. 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. According to press releases accessed from USCENTCOM’s online media archives, the first airstrike labelled as counter-ISIS occurred on August 8, 2014 near Irbil, Iraq. 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. 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.

Airstrikes 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.

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. The beheadings of British aid worker David Haines and French tourist Hervé Gourdel’s execution on September 13 and 14 took place just before the heaviest airstrikes in the region to date. In the days following Gourdel’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. After instigating 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 airstrike trend. This may suggest that the impact from the beheadings of David Haines, Hervé Gourdel, 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 Cormac, 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.

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 sug-
gest that perceived increases in airstrike activity led to the use of punish beheadings. Furthermore, more than 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 evi-
dence 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 signif-
ificant decrease in the number of post event 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 behead-
ings is not high enough to deter U.S. military action. This
analysis works to highlight the use of beheadings may be
predicted based on the number of airstrikes in the
region by concluding whether beheadings are moti-
ated by perceived increases in airstrikes, as all but one
punish beheading (Herve 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

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 categoriz-
ing beheadings based on two possible motivations: pun-
ishing 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 sam-
ple 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 con-
trol 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. Ad-
ditionally, 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 is possible that policymakers
were not perceived as capitulating to the terrorists' demands.

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

FURTHER RESEARCH

This study presents points of further research. By evalu-
ating ISIS beheadings on a more individual level, this
study demonstrates that there is a relation-
ship between factors in the broader terror campaign and
the effectiveness of the beheadings. As a result, these 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
counter these tactics, it would need to do so in an effective
fashion that ISIS could perceive as a threat.

The paper aims to explore the motivations for ISIS
beheadings and whether they occur at predictable
dates. This study presents an additional line of inquiry
that could be pursued by interested researchers.
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 punishment beheadings could be analyzed by evaluating the number and frequency of airstrikes occurring after a punishment 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 of 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Number Retained</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Motive</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syrian Civilian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8/24/2014</td>
<td>Scaffold</td>
<td>Alu, Lebanon</td>
</tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>punish</td>
<td>Raqqah, Syria</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9/24/2014</td>
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</table>
- **Appendix 1**: Data compiled from Lexis Nexis and Jihadology online database searching for primary and secondary materials of ISIS beheadings.
- **Appendix 2**: Data compiled from Institute for the Study of War ISIS Sanctuary and Iraq Situation Reports.
- **Appendix 3**: Fields collected per beheading incident.
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://arcgis.is/ITPOS.

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.

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.
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 (af, af) had just arrived from Galicia for a football game later in the day. 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 shoulder ed 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 (af, af) militants, and they knew that the Galicians were likely to trespass on their turf, a bold move that had occurred by the river. As more and more of the men felt the pressure to get involved in the violence, the entire event had turned into a veritable battle.

Meanwhile, the ultras had dispersed and reconven ed 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 (af, af), situated in their usual place behind the north goal, Frente Atlético, not to be outdone 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 capital city. 11 The game was stopped, and the ultras 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.

The Frente Atlético (af, af) 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 (af, af) 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. 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 (af, af) and Alkor Hooligans (af, 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. 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.1 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 (af, af), situated in their usual place behind the north goal, Frente Atlético, not to be outdone 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 football stadium. 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 other football fans: “The violence will finish with the sport.” 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 Alkor Hooligans in Madrid, when Franco took just football. It is a struggle between fascism and anti-fascism forged in the crux of a dictatorship and subjugated nationalism. Manuel de la Sota Aburto, Basque nationalist politician and president of Athletic Bilbao in the 2020s, 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 supporters. They become bellicose supporters… the jerseys are soaked with all the regional enthusiasm, they’re living symbols.”

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.”

The Riazor Blues ultra group is a Galician regionalist, anti-fascist organization made up of supporters of the Deportivo A Coruña football team. Bukaneros (af), 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 independents. 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 1873–1874.12 Association football grew slowly, and it was not until after World War I that Spain experienced its first professional league. When the Franco regime came to 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.13 The dictatorship, meanwhile, found football to be a vital tool in a push to consolidate a national Spanish identity with the concept of nacionalismo.14 It was no accident that Real Madrid, run by Franco administrators and a favorite team of the Caúdillo himself, became ‘Spain’s Team.’15 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. Spaini and Viñas explain: ‘The first Spanish ultra groups emerged after the 1982 World Cup held in Spain. Mainly mimicking 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.16 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 essentially a political identity in the Spanish ultra case. I begin with a premise central to the Spanish identity. I begin with a premise central to the Spanish case. I begin with a premise central to the Spanish identity. I begin with a premise central to the Spanish case. I begin with a premise central to the Spanish identity. I begin with a premise central to the Spanish case.
state-led, and often features unifying claims over a previous diffuse population with the goal of consolidating a state ideologically. Bottom-up nationalism is typically a reaction to colonialism, a rejection and substitution of the imposed nationalism with a regionally-focused one. “Top-down claims regularly generate bottom-up claims,” Tilly says. 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 Catalan, Basques, and Galicians have all been represented by their own national football teams, often against the will of the Spanish government. These patrias chicas have been in competition in varying degrees with the Spanish state for the loyalty of their citizens since before Franco. 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 championships.” 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.

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 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 they have formed. Gilmore and Greco 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 dominant national narratives: a long contest between fascist and anti-fascist, 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 ultra macro-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.

To primordialists, a person’s identity is an immutable part of their being, part of their legacy passed down by ancestors and manifested in shared language, history, and lineage. Responses to primordialism are an example 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. Because they are rooted in the past, inflexible historical facts, 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 Catalanas 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 sign 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.

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 understood as a natural expression of deeply-embedded cultural immutability. 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. Vazci asserts, “This definition summarizes what most consider the essence of the Athletic brand: a soccer culture defined by its difference.”

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 among populations. Individuals within the same ethnic group who share the same language, and have similar ancestry, can have very different 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 the Catalonia that are neither anti-fascist nor regionalist. The Brigadas Blanquisueltas 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.

Additional 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 leftist and regionalism in Spain. Certainly, primordialism does not suggest a tendency towards leftist 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 Marxists argue that the productive system 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. 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. The 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 therewith.

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. Vin- nai is a writer who illustrates this parallel most overtly and explicitly. “That which pretends to be a game, repro-
duces, under the appearance of free development of pow-
er, the world of work,” he argues.
Likewise, ultra groups can be seen as extensions of a strong working class identity, supported by observ-
ations that the vast majority of these radical fans are young, male workers. In fact, popular weekend particip-
ation in football for ultras and hooligans was originally the result of the industrial work schedule. Football fan-
dom became the activity to fill the Sunday leisure void, and was demographically overlapping with the ranks of workers at the factory.18 Ian Taylor, echoed more recent-
ly by Giulianiotti, also highlights the globalization and commodification of football as a progression that consol-
idates class identity in clusters of hooligans or ultras.19
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.”

While acknowledging the agency that political entre-
preneurs 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 Francisco’s meddling in the football world. While he had in mind a wholesome expression of antifascist sentiment, his actions, in practice football actually became an oasis for ideological resistance. Also, concepts presented by the instrumental-
ists 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 performative rhetoric, which can also drive political outcomes.

The most valuable contribution of the instru-
mentalists 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 activ-
tion and identity construction.

CONSTRUCTIVISM
Lastly, constructivists theories of identity formation are most useful. Constructivists shy away from reductive his-
torical analysis by minimizing the agency of individual actors on the pro-
cesses 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 fur-
thor 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.24 In such moments, polar-
zizing 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 for-
mation, transformation, activation, and sup-
 pression of social boundaries. It happens at the small scale of interpersonal dialogue, at the me-
scale medium of rivalry within organizations, and at the large scale of genocide. Us-them boundaries matter.25

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The most valuable contribution of the instru-
mentalists is to begin to marry the seemingly irresolvable 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 pro-
cesses 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 fur-
thor a political or economic goal.
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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.

8 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.
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 political ideology the group maintains either a neo-fascist or anti-fascist ideology.6

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 indepen- dents or regionalists are prohibited ultra group. Many ultra display flags with compatible symbolism in the stadium. For example, flags and scarves with Che Gue- vara’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.7 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 ultraism by fighting ultras from other groups. Fights can occur spontaneously, but they can also be highly organized activities in which time, location, and number of participants is agreed upon. Fights almost always are between groups with conflicting ideologies.8

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 chants). When an event is not in the immediate day-to-day oversight is typ- ically weak. Many fights, meetings, and ultra interactions are initiated organized 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.9 Many ultra, 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 organization, and a group that organizes on- and off-ground activities, 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 in Frente Atlético Estico are divided into more than a dozen sections, all with varying degrees of politi- cal and violent participation. Sections from Madrid like Neptuno, FANS, and TifoMakers are joined by nonlocal

6 While some ultra groups that publicly claim to be apolitical, in reality only a small handful actually are.  
7 Falanismo is the fascist ideology of Franco’s political party—the Falange Española. 
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. 

10 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. 
11 The ultrs 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 ultra take great pride in being part of a special subculture.
radical political messages, although obvious by the combination of ultra apparel with fascist or anti-fascist symbolism, is not formally recognized by the group’s leadership, but is understood as part of a collective recognition of the group’s identity.

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 ‘why, to clean out theaptcha?’. This is to help them 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 anti-fascist and leftist ultra groups have shown solidarity with occupied Palestine. Also, Celtic fans have organized 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 Xómox, among others, have capos who are prominent members of fascist parties and skinhead organizations. Fascist symbols and language are common in their publications. Brigadas Blanquiazules old fanzine (God Surf Ultrazine) published “Brigadas Segí Segal” in 1986. 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 anti-fascist signage in addition to hype for an upcoming match and graffiti 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 cannot be brushed off as 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 FC’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.8 Fighting is the hooligan’s specialized niche in the group, and for many is the reason they join. The politics come after, imposed by the group.8 Even those who are politically apathetic utilize their fencing skills. For their group’s political stance, becoming millinets.

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.55 Hostile incursions like this are dynamically different from organized fights. There is an unspoken moral code, but it cannot be enforced, and often fights get out of hand. Less-regular 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 can not kick a man while he’s on the ground, you can not take out a knife… but it happens. A guy from another club attacks 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, An tonio finished with 3 stab wounds in his side. When I was with the ultras from Zafra there were knives, too.8

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 ultra’s 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 is 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 community’s own rules of engagement against a prominent opponent or use of knives and similar weapons), and use similar rhetoric in defense of their own violations.8 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 bombard ed with chants of “murderers!” at away matches.8 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 meant to illustrate, form part of a political protest or campaign, or to demonstrate the power of the weakened legislative courts alternated by an authoritarian government to forestall, and the most to do with political identity. Such is the case with fights between Frente Atletico (n, f) and Riazor Blues (t, af), Ultrasur (n, f) and Boixos Nos (t, supporters Gol Sur (n, f) and Riazor Blues (af), or Yomus (n, f) and Biris Norte (t, af). 14 In these fights, more ultras are injured because more weapons are brought and sporting animosity is multiplied with the violence.

All of these aspects of ultralis 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 does by capturing symptoms before diagnosing 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. 15 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 dictatorical, 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), the lines of fascist/anti-fascist and nationalism/region- alism were 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 an assault on traditional values, and the consequent progressive side of the Republicans. Again, one side’s outspoken defense of an idea unambiguously polarized it and cemented it into the national dialogue.

As we followed along the thread of Spanish history, we have seen 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-progres- sivism. 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 con- servative values. The opposition was a far more diffuse coalition. Anarchists, Communists, Socialists, Republi- cans, 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 Civil War demonstrated the weight of distillate 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. 16 Additionally, because the Cat- alans, Basques, and to some extent Galicians were crucial 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 a natural rallying cry for the two sides of 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 dia- logue, nationalist and regionalist frameworks 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 na- tionalism/regionality. Because of this, conflict between fascists and anti-fascists lived on in Spanish ultralis today despite being outside of the scope of mainstream politics.

Franco single-handedly professionalized and in- stituted football as a national sport. In Spain, it is no acci- dent that football became the national past-time; the na- tional league received funding support, footballers were professionalized, and games were organized abroad in a way of showcasing Spanish talent to the world. The ex- aggerated 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 encour- aging 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.

Nacionalfutbolismo is also directly related to Spain’s histori- stry, steeped with beads of critical moments, dialogue re- interpreted 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 propensi- ty towards organizing ideological conflicts into binaries 12 The partnership of the anti-fascist coalition was anything but strong. The ideological differences between Communists, Anarchists, and independentists were stark. Legislative elections showed that a republican Spain was degrees closer to its goal than a Francoist Spain was by no means ubiquitous. Thou- sands 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.

11 The Pact of Forgetting was a compromise amongst Spanish political elites to efficiently ignore the legacy of the Franco regime for the sake of democracy.

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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 change, and new cleavages 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.2

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 not completely dismiss the group identities 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 ultrismo is largely defined by political ideology. Rare are ultra groups that do not fall into one side of the anti-fascist fascist argument. In peripheral regions like Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia, another point of contention is even more important: regionalism. Regional independence can be seen as a natural progression from the anti-Franco resistance during the regime, but nationalist ultra groups 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 nationalists, 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 a more activist frame made up 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 ‘hool’, ‘mod’, and ‘skin’ aesthetics.25 They quickly became an active presence in stadia, and a rise in violent encounters was nothing unusual, even expected.

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.”26 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 ultrismo 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 rhetoric in a way they had not before. This endogenous pressure to 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 ULTRISMO—EXPANSION OF FREE SPEECH AFTER FRANCO’S DEATH

The extremely high cost of ultrismo during the regime 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.26 Known political dissidents 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 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, conservative values, nor 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...-pregnant with fascist terminology. The ideas giving meaning to sport were obedience, sub mission, and military discipline.27

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.

(continued)
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terized by a removal 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 For-
getting 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.

Youth in many peñas splintered simultaneously as they defy its goal of forgetting the past. By reviving tunnel-vision towards the future, juxtapose with the democratic political institutions, predicated as they are on competitive rivalries that facilitate boundary creation between groups. Ultras imbue preexisting sporting rivalries with political meaning.

While many cite this novel approach to deal-
ing 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 contradictory, interpretations of their histori-
cal memories. The stability of Spain’s post-dictatorship democratic political institutions, predicated as they are on tunnel-vision towards the future, juxtapose with the ultra’s insistence on reviving past conflict. By reviving the fascist/anti-fascist/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 deflect its goal of forgetting the past.

Spain’s immediate political liberalization follow-

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

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perform.18 Global commodification has therefore provided the ultras with the opportunity to ride the coattails of football culture in creating and maintaining countercultures. Ultras’ political vision has expanded considerably. 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.19

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. A number of these complaints have been successful. This on multiple occasions, complaining of the club’s refusal to allow them to display certain signs. A number of these complaints have been successful. 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. A number of these complaints have been successful.

The ultras respond with a public commitment indicating their indignation, and declared a temporary cessation of activity.20 Ultras responded with a public commitment indicating their indignation, and declared a temporary cessation of activity. Sevilla FC banned any sign with the word Biri on it in the Bianconeri, in which several Italian ultras were injured, in response to the ultra’s refusal to allow them to display certain signs. A number of these complaints have been successful. 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. A number of these complaints have been successful.

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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.22 Their topophilic relationship with the club 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 ultras, a flâneur. “A true football flâneur,” writes Giulianotti, “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 belonging and community. The ultras, meanwhile, pledge their eternal support of the team, while consumer spectators have for the home stadium is replaced with virtual and impersonal reproductions of place through television and internet through which consumer fans watch football. For a traditionally-minded consumer, the consumer increasingly longs to be virtually enveloped in the physical atmosphere of the stadium—without the commitment or participation that traditional fans value.

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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 spectating of team colors) as a badge of honor precisely because it distinguishes them from regular fans. Radical politics were tightly intertwined with ultras 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.24 Fashion sense was not the only contribution that the skinheads made to the ultras 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 ultras from the beginning. Again, this represents a point of distinction between the ultras and the flâneurs.
The function of an endeavor that serves a significant of group activity according to Huizinga. He argues that represents a fundamental misunderstanding of the value of 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 pitch is match. The match is immediately one 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.”

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 is a unique set of rules and laws that define 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.

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. This view also supports the theory that music is a preg energetic and functional area which the audience claps rhythmically and participates through verbal jaleos

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 game is not only for the fans, but for everyone involved. On the other hand, the ultras also do things that are not compatible with everyone else’s acceptability framework. 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 questioning 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 le kill-sport he reveals the relativity and fragility of the play world. 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-play to withdraw from, although not necessarily subjugated to, the real world.)
For the footballers and fans, the ultras are indeed operating as spoilsports 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 ultra play is constructed around football but is at its root a play 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 among other political elements. Political ideology is fundamental to the banners, cheers, altercations, and representations of something.

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.

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 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. In Atletico Madrid, fans sing the anthem with red and white 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.

The effect 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 zealous fans, the ultras embody the 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 communautas within the general body of supporters; the ecstasy of sharing in a ‘walk on’ display of flags and scarves for one’s club.” 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 with the group’s ideology. Jack argues that the ultras’ performance transcends the football match itself: “I argue that crowd atmosphere and chants are the byproducts 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.’”

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. It is only after they join and participate in matchday performances that the ultras begin to adopt the ideology of the group. In Spain’s study of Espanyol’s neo-fascist ultras, Brigadas Blanquinezules, he found the same pattern. “The politicization of members and affiliates of Brigadas Blanquinezules tends to take place by osmosis and through contacts with specific environments—football matches or (skinhead) music concerts—rather than as a result of personal ambivalence or fixed and consistent political ideologies,” he writes.

The strong overlap between ultras and radical political parties and organizations throughout Spain is testament to the homogenizing power of ritualistic performance. Young, eager recruits join for the intense football contests. Ultras often feel the most strongly 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 performance with the group, they develop a thick sense of communal identity 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 project their political identity 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, therefore, are taking advantage of having a weekly audience numbering in the thousands.

This chapter is a surface-level analysis of the many factors that enabled ultrasim 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 open political tendencies, testing the new limits. Football and ultrasim 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 ultrasim 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 ideology of sport and ultras, coinciding with the rapid growth of the ultrasim 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 are 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, demonstrates how it is not the case that the macro-level 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 educators.”

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

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.

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lusio, illiure or indulere). Therefore he must be cast out, for he threatens the existence of the play-community.”

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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, coindependent distinction. In The Concept of the Political, Schmitt writes, “Emotionally the enemy is easily treated as evil and ugly, because every distinction, most of all the political, as the strongest and most intense of the contests with their ideology. Because of the strength of their political

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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 bottom up. It is not uncommon 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 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 into the framework of anti-fascism/nationalism/regionalism 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 independence in new places, and regionalism tied to fascism. Ultras have expanded regional independence movement. 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. Ultras groups like Biris Norte, Brigadas Amazuluas, and Kolectivo Sur, emphasize regionalism 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's Estadio Ramón Sánchez Pizjuán. Yet of the thousands of fans who flock to the stadium, 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. The Basque Country, Galicia, and Catalonia; they have adopted the claim themselves. The ultras’ assimilation of regional independence outside of the Basque Country, Galicia, and Catalonia. The current political structure of Seventeen Autonomous Communities is the result of the 1978 Constitution, 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.

Andalusians, for example, have never shown the broad support or impetus for Andalusian nationalism 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. 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 Amazuluas, 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.

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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. Spajai and Vidales 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.111 Ultras in Andalusia are often white-supremacist and 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 players 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.111

Within the ultra world, Boixos Nois is an anomalous group. 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 one it was the Sevilla-Betis [match] and in

the Barcelona airport there were Boixos members—everyone who was coming to bet with ‘Betis’ Support-Porters, and Boixos members who were coming to be with [Sevilla’s] Biris. It’s a really weird group.11

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. Despite disagreements with the ultra groups, Boixos Nois breaks the tendency towards uniform binary 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 ultraism, 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 independence 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 popular among the public. There is no hint of irony when they talk about the ultra ‘family,’ and they are not exaggerating when they confine the league stadium with ‘Home.’ Spanish ultras, however, defy attempts at quantifying the political realm from sports and other leisure
Performance and identity thus can have tangible impacts in shaping the way we think and perceive ourselves. 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 nationalism/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 coalicing 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 overly 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.
Manuel, empecé en golf sur, ya cuando llega a los 14-15 años, tuve and Lawyer, sec. 0:51. “Siempre se empieza, osea yo por ejemplo qué siguen en los fondos de los estadios?” Bruña, “Las Diez Medidas Contra Los Ultras.”


Cabezas, Francisco. “Ya No Es Fútbol, Es Otro Cosa.” Ibarra, “¿Por qué siguen en los fondos de los estadios?” Bruta, “Las Diez Medidas Contras Los Ultras.”


Pineda, Ediciones El. “Frente Atlético, arsenio” El