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Articles

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The Pennsylvania State University

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Dear Reader,

Welcome to the Spring 2016 edition of the Penn State Journal of International Affairs, a student-produced journal promoting collegiate scholarship from throughout the country. It has been our pleasure and privilege to serve as the executive editors for the 2015-2016 school year and we are extremely proud of the issue our editorial staff has put together.

This semester, much of our issue discusses international conflict and the peace-making institutions of the modern world, particularly focusing on the influence of the United Nations on global politics. In addition, our authors examine the changing economic and political networks running throughout Asia and the Middle East, exploring the complex relationships between key nations in international politics. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the student-authors across the country who submitted papers this semester. We would especially like to thank the authors of the articles featured in this issue: Sabrina Arias (Columbia University), Lucas Harrigan (Syracuse University), Gyu Hyung Choi (University of California, Berkeley), Aravind Boddupalli (Minnesota University), and Michelle Tan (Columbia University).

We were extremely impressed by the level of academic rigor and scholarship exhibited in this issue's articles. We are also grateful to have had the opportunity to interview Sergio Rodriguez and Gerardo Muysong about their filmmaking experiences in El Salvador and perspectives on civil war in the modern world. We hope that you are inspired by the impressive scholarship of this issue's student authors, and enjoy the Spring 2016 edition of the Penn State Journal of International Affairs.

Sincerely,

Elyse Mark, David Stack, and Cameron Stevens

Executive Editors, 2015-2016

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I NFORMAL PARTICIPATION IN THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Sabrina Arias (Columbia University)

ABSTRACT:

The United Nations General Assembly may appear to be an ineffective, log-jammed institution, but can we be sure that this is the case? Are informal channels, that is, mechanisms that fall outside of formal meetings and procedures, an important part of General Assembly policy-making that circumvent the traditional obstacles? If so, are they dominated by powerful states, or are they a forum for equitable participation? This paper will seek to assess how countries use informal mechanisms to participate at the United Nations (UN), and which countries are the most powerful in the informal backchannels. While research in this area is developing rapidly, significant gaps exist in applying existing theories to different types of informal multilateral structures. This analysis will focus on organizations with equitable universal membership, namely the General Assembly and in rigorously considering the distribution of power.

Introduction

First, I will argue that informal mechanisms play an important role in policy-making at the United Nations, and I support this claim with findings drawn from relevant literature on international organizations, specifically looking at the body of work on informal governance. I will draw upon the cooperation literature that has found that international organizations are useful to states, and informal mechanisms of these institutions are a key functional attribute. In other words, informal mechanisms are critical for the international organization (IO) to perform its useful function for states. After determining that informal mechanisms are indeed important at the General Assembly, I will proceed to assess how they work. Is power distributed universally across different international organizations, or do unique features of the organization determine how power is distributed? I will try to evaluate conflicting claims in the field of informal governance about the parameters of informal power, and apply these claims to the General Assembly as a test case. I try to assess whether the benefits of informal structures of participation are equally distributed, or if not, what factors determine how power is distributed. Do some states enjoy more informal power at the UN? What types of states tend to be more powerful or less powerful?

I conclude my analysis with an examination of country host pairs as an illustrative example of participation trends. Examining the dyadic pairs will highlight any existing general trends in participation, and may bring to light new findings about the dimensions of informal power and participation. If there is a determinant of informal power at international institutions like the General Assembly, it could influence the types of countries that are able to effectively coordinate with each other within the institutional framework. Dyadic trends, like general trends, are important to understand in order to fully capture the nuances of informal participation and informal power, and better illuminate multilateral settings where theories have not been extensively tested.

Understanding these phenomena will give a better insight into the operations of not only the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) but of other international organizations as well. Informal procedures play roles with varying importance across international organizations, thus insight into their functionality can be instructive more generally in the field of IOs and informal participation. We will be able to make more accurate claims about the relationship between participation and policy outcomes, and understand how organizational norms may impact outcomes by influencing participation and informal power.

Literature Review

This project fills a gap in the existing literature on informal governance of international organizations (IOs), testing and expanding previous theories and research. It is useful to begin with a general consideration of international institutions and their utility to states before more thoroughly examining the role of informal governance and how informal power is distributed.

Studies of formal IOs and institutional mechanisms have claimed that through a delegated principal-agent relationship, states use IOs to achieve goals that would have otherwise

been impossible. Abbott and Snidal argue that the international organizations make themselves valuable to states by providing legitimacy to facilitate efficient policy-making. When IOs can accomplish policy ends, they are certainly useful to states, but simply examining the formal procedures of IOs is not sufficient to determine their utility. The formal procedures of IOs are frequently jammed or ineffective, so states may seek alternatives in informal mechanisms to ensure that the policy-making process continues. To fully understand the role that IOs play in international policy-making, we must examine not only the formal structures but the informal structures as well, as this combination is critical for operational efficiency. These informal channels of participation can supplement and re-direct patterns of decision-making at IOs and provide workarounds when formal channels are inoperable. Therefore it is crucial that we understand how they fit into the overall policy-making framework.

There is an expanding body of work on the informal features and mechanism of international negotiations seeking to understand fully how policy-making takes place in IOs and working to demonstrate that informal mechanisms are indeed important. Notably, Helmke and Levitsky introduced a theoretical framework to the institutionalist literature to examine informal institutions. They conceptualize informal institutions as informal norms that are derived from existing formal features of the individual IO and the international system generally. Helmke and Levitsky find that informal institutions develop when formal institutions are incomplete or inadequate, and in situations where there exist effective formal rules and convergent outcomes, the informal institutions that develop will be complementary, enhancing efficiency by helping to fill gaps or facilitate organizational goals. For example, at the UNGA informal procedures include activities such as setting the agenda, negotiating policies and text of official documents, and gathering votes, supplementing the existing formal procedures. Helmke and Levitsky argue that informal structures drive behavior and must play an important part in explaining political phenomena.

Helmke and Levitsky's initial call for expanded research into informal mechanisms mainly focused on international treaties and purely informal institutions such as bureaucratic norms and clientelism. All of these studies found that informal mechanisms and institutions are useful to states and in some cases are actually preferred options to formal structures for the greater levels of flexibility, efficiency, and political cover that they can afford. While the particular scope of these studies focuses on treaties and purely informal institutions, particularly those within the structures of government, I contend that the principles can logically be applied to informal mechanisms of formal multilateral institutions. I contend that their claims are relevant at the UNGA in particular, where formal meetings are highly susceptible to public scrutiny and are governed by strict procedural rules, which make the flexibility, speed, and covert nature of informal mechanisms highly attractive, and thus would constitute an important part of the workflow deserving of further study.

Randall Stone advances the existing body of work by assessing how informal mechanisms work in formal institutional settings. Stone finds that the informal mechanisms act as channels that allow states to influence outcomes in a systematic way outside of the formal written rules, substantially modifying the formal procedures or constituting substantive unwritten rules. Stone defines two critical concepts: informal power and structural power. Informal power consists of the ability of a state to achieve its desired outcomes outside of formal channels. Structural power

is measured by “the outside options of the leading state and the externalities that its participation generates for other members.” It is this structural advantage that gives states advantages in informal governance, and in his assessment of informal governance at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Stone finds that informal structural power is largely determined by wealth and is a significant factor in determining the outcomes of informal governance. Stone further asserts that similar wealth-driven outcomes would be found broadly across IOs including the European Union and the World Trade Organization. Stone finds that informal mechanisms are generally found to give advantage to powerful states, but only to a limited extent: IOs must maintain a perceived legitimacy and buy-in from a broad membership of states, so it is impossible for powerful states to wield unlimited informal power if it is contrary to the interests of other members.

Johannes Urpelainen further explores the power dimensions of informal influence. Urpelainen finds that states have asymmetric abilities to have informal influence at IOs with varying degrees to exert unilateral influence over the IO in question. Urpelainen highlights the applications of unilateral influence as means for states to influence policy-making outside the formal rules, thus falling under the realm of informal participation considered here. The problem of unilateral influence is particularly prevalent at permeable organizations where bureaucrats are autonomous, but can be mediated with egalitarian institutional rules, such as those we see in the UNGA. If the delegation contract promotes high autonomy of the organization’s bureaucrats (in this case, the agent), then policy quality will also increase. If the autonomy of the bureaucrats is restricted, states (the principals) will have more opportunity to informally shape outcomes through unilateral influence. Urpelainen notes that the distribution of informal power may be asymmetrical, but that it is not necessarily skewed in favor of powerful states, citing the United Nations Development Programme and the World Trade Organization as examples of IOs where small or developing states enjoy a high degree of informal influence. The ability to influence policy-making through unilateral influence comes not from power but from opportunity: though the delegation contract may be indicate differently, states who are advantaged, that is, states with more opportunities to influence during the policy-making process are the ones who are likely to successfully advocate for their interests. If states have equal opportunities to influence the outcomes, Urpelainen predicts that the outcome will benefit all equally. However, if the opportunities are unevenly distributed, those states with the most opportunities will see their interests disproportionately reflected in the final outcome.

In his assessment of the IMF and the WTO, Stone assumes that the United States is the preeminent powerful state, and that this position is determined by its economic power. In the case of the IMF, this is a rather intuitive assumption because voting rights and therefore formal organizational influence directly derive from monetary contributions to the Fund. At the WTO, however, formal power is based on the principle of sovereign equity. In this case, Stone’s claim that the United States is extraordinarily powerful because of its greater market share is not as intuitive. Similar claims follow in an assessment of the EU, asserting that wealthy states are also the most powerful in the EU’s informal structures. In all three organizations, the determinants of informal power are the same regardless of the organizational structure and norms, which leads one to conclude that based on Stone’s theory, the dimensions of informal power are universally economic.

This conclusion about the asymmetrical distribution of informal power raises a critical question about the power distribution in IOs, which in these observed cases is determinative of informal influence. Is Stone correct in claiming that the same states powerful across the board, or do the dimensions of power vary based on unique features of the organization? If the same states are powerful in all institutions, what determines the dimensions of their power? Are Urpelainen's claims that it is opportunity advantages rather than power that make the difference? Urpelainen and Stone both find informal power distributed asymmetrically. Stone further argues that the degree of informal power that can be held by states varies by institution; however the determinants of the distribution of informal power do not. The amount of power held by the leading state may vary from institution to institution, by the proportion of power will not. I will test this claim in the context of the UNGA to see if the normative features of the organization affect the determinants of informal power.

Stone's findings assert that economically powerful states have a greater share of informal power, but can we conclude anything about how they exercise this power? To do so, we may combine Stone's work with Brett Ashley Leeds' notes on the cooperation patterns among like and mixed dyads. Leeds found that like states, that is democratic and democratic dyads or autocratic and autocratic dyads, are more likely to cooperate than mixed dyads. This analysis examined independent instances of bilateral cooperation outside of institutional settings, we would expect that similar states would cooperate more intensely in international institutions as well. At the IMF, for example, we could expect to see wealthy states coordinate the most effectively in crafting new policy initiatives. Based on these findings, we would not only conclude that wealthy states have a greater share of informal power, but also that wealthy states would cooperate most heavily among themselves in coordinating policy outcomes at IOs, further consolidating their share of power. At economic institutions like the World Bank and the IMF, such claims may be reasonable. However, this assertion seems insufficient given the diversity of IOs, many with strong normative ideologies that would not seem compatible with economic-based power. The UNGA is one such IO, centrally defined by an emphasis on the sovereign equality of member states, and is a case that calls for further study to either verify or reject Stone's claims of universal determinants of informal power.

In looking at the UNGA in particular, there have been very few applications of the literature on informal governance. Diana Panke's work stands alone in this regard. Panke argues that there should be a theoretically equal distribution of informal power in the UNGA because of the ideational goals of the organization that emphasize universal and equal membership. However, in her findings the distribution of power is in fact found to be unequal. After conducting a qualitative survey-based project and examining formal measures of participation, Panke concludes that economic resources generally determine a state's ability to wield informal power. Without a sufficiently staffed mission in New York or a large Ministry of Foreign Affairs in their home country, Panke finds that it is difficult for a state to participate in the labyrinthine processes of informal governance in the UNGA; however, if a state is heavily invested in a particular issue, it will often be able to "punch above its weight" by directing all of its efforts to influence informal governance in one particular area. Panke's project seems to normatively support Helmke and Levitsky's theory that informal institutional norms are significant in

policy-making, but descriptively supports Stone's thesis of a universal economic determinant of informal power. It has not been adequately demonstrated that wealth is the determinant of informal power across all international organizations, or if so, why this should be the case. In either case, the findings are not supported with rigorous quantitative assessment of informal participation, which could point in a different direction.

We see several key gaps in the literature on informal mechanisms and IOs. A significant body of literature has pointed to the utility of IOs and the informal mechanisms that facilitate their operation, and yet we do not adequately understand how power is distributed in these mechanisms, or how the theories may vary based on institutional norms. The unique emphasis of sovereign equality at the UNGA makes it an interesting and potentially instructive case study, and distinct from any other IO that has been rigorously considered by existing literature. Furthermore, there is the question of the dimensions of structural power, which has distinct implications at the UNGA, where equity is heavily stressed as an institutional norm. Stone claims (and it seems that Panke assumes) that informal structural power derives from economic influence regardless of the composition or ideological emphasis of the IO. If there were any organization where economic dimensions were not determinative of informal influence, it is likely to be the UNGA, which makes it a relevant and interesting test case.

Theory and Hypothesis

My theory begins with the claim that informal mechanisms are an important part of the policy-making process at the UNGA. I argue that deadlock in the formal channels of the General Assembly makes this formal option unattractive to states, which turn to informal channels as a preferred alternative for policy-making. The important role of informal mechanisms in the UNGA makes it an interesting phenomenon to study and an important mechanism to understand in order to better comprehend the mechanisms of governance at the UNGA. If I find that informal mechanisms are important at the UNGA, the next extension is to examine how power is distributed in these informal mechanisms.

To assess power at the UNGA, I rely on the use of a proxy measure. I develop a new measurement tool to indicate informal power, using frequency with which countries host events as an indicator for how powerful they are. In this research model, the states that host the most events are considered to be the most powerful. While this may not be a perfect proxy, the underlying assumptions are straightforward. Power in this case can be generally thought of as the ability to influence proceedings in order to bring about desired policy outcomes. Urpelainen expects that if certain states have more opportunities to achieve desired policy and benefit disproportionately from the eventual outcomes. If hosting informal events did not influence outcomes in the desired direction of the host states, then there would be little incentive for them to continue to host events, as this process incurs monetary costs, requires advanced planning and coordination, and uses up valuable staff time and resources. If states are interested in hosting informal events, there is something to be gained in terms of policy outcomes by doing so, and thus the states that most frequently host informal events have the most opportunity to influence policy outcomes. It would be logical to further claim that the states that most frequently

influence policy outcomes can be considered the most powerful. Therefore, I will assume that the frequency of hosting events can be considered a proxy for informal power.

Compared to other IOs, institutional norms are particularly strongly at work in the UNGA. The UNGA enshrines its central principle of sovereign equality in the organizational structure, for example, in the formal voting processes and the rotation of the presidency. As per Helmke and Levitsky's definition of informal mechanisms as features fundamentally derived from institutional norms, the same principles of sovereign equality should carry influence over from the formal structures to the informal mechanisms of the UNGA. I contend that if this process of creating informal mechanisms based on institutional norms is correct, then we should expect the distribution of informal structural power at the UNGA based on the ideational norms of the organization. This would manifest in equally distributed structural power based on the notion of sovereign equality, which leads to my primary theory that informal power is distributed equally. To assess this claim, I formulate the following hypothesis:

H1: Countries host informal events with the same level of frequency at the UNGA

However, it could also be the case that there informal power at the UNGA is distributed based on some other normative feature of the organization besides the principle of sovereign equality. If this were the case, we would see it manifest in an asymmetrical distribution of power at the UNGA based on some. The dimensions of power could be based on one of the many powerful norms of the United Nations, including features such as democratic governance, respect for human rights, commitment to global dialogue, and many other strongly diffused norms. Because these features are so heavily emphasized by United Nations ideologies, they could be privileged operationally, and exhibiting these characteristics could make a state more powerful in the informal settings.

H2: Countries host informal events with different frequencies at the UNGA based on the organization's normative emphasis

Either of these outcomes supports informal power based on unique institutional norms. Otherwise, it must be the case that informal power is distributed based on a universal characteristic that is not derived from specific organizational norms. Under this alternative theory, which is supported by Panke's assessment and Stone's predictions, the organizational structure, the distribution of formal power, and the ideational composition of the IO are not significant factors to consider. Rather, informal power is based purely on economic influence relative to other members. Under this alternative, we should expect to see wealthier countries as the most informally powerful.

H3: Countries host informal events with different frequencies at the UNGA based on dimensions of economic power

The research design of this paper will test these three primary hypotheses using quantitative models. If we see that H2 or H3 are borne out, that is, if power is unequally distributed, we should also see unequal distributions exhibited in the pairs of countries that host events together. Leeds found that in bilateral activities, states with similar regime types were more likely to achieve cooperation. I will test this claim with regime type and other matched criteria to assess whether the normative emphasis of the individual IO has an impact on cooperation

patterns in country host pairs. If H3 is found to be true, then wealthy countries should host more events with other wealthy countries. If H2 is found to be true, countries that host events together should be matched based on some other dimension that derives from the normative emphasis of the UNGA. If H1 is true, it is unlikely that we will see any trends among the countries that host events together. This leads us to two further hypotheses that will be tested with dyadic analysis:

H4: Country host pairs will be more frequent among countries with similar levels of some feature that derives from the UNGA's normative emphasis

H5: Country host pairs will be more frequent among countries with similar levels of economic power

Research Design

I assess a state's informal power using the frequency with which the state hosts informal events as a proxy variable for power. To measure the frequency with which states hosted events, I created a random sample of 200 dates from the time period of 2000-2010, and consulted the publicly available UN Daily Journal from each date. Excluding dates when the Journal was not published (weekends, holidays, other time periods when the UNGA was not in session), there were 145 unique dates from which I coded data. On these dates, the number of individual events hosted ranged from 0 to 20, including informal consultations, press conferences, workshops, round tables, and others. Although this method of data collection does not capture the full array of informal activities (such as chats during coffee breaks), it does capture those events that are most directly connected with the policy-making process, and the types of events at which informal power is most wielded. I also collected data on the various topics of the events (noting both the first and the second agenda topic in applicable cases). To test H1, a simple assessment of the descriptive statistics should be sufficient: if the distribution of informal power is equal among all states, there should be a high degree of parity in the number of events hosted. If there is a great deal of variation in the number of events hosted, it will be necessary to additionally assess H2 and H3.

To test H2 and H3, I collected descriptive information about the states in the data. H3 assumes that economic factors determine the distribution of informal power at the UNGA, so I collected data on a variety of economic measures. These include the logged GDP, GNI per capita, and the World Bank Development categories. Each of these measures captures a different facet of economic power and illustrates state-level and individual-wealth as well as overall development, and thus it is important to test them in different regression models to see if one or more of them is explanatory.

If H2 is correct, the distribution of power at the UNGA is explained by a feature other than economic power. This feature will be some unspecified ideological norm of the UNGA. To assess this hypothesis, I collected additional descriptive information about the relevant states. These covariates include the logged population, region, and regime type as potentially prognostic of the number of events. Each of these factors could potentially have a determinative impact on participation at the UN, although in fitting with H2, only the covariate on regime type represents a parameter that is based on the ideological emphasis of the UNGA. If any of these other covariates are found to have a significant impact on the distribution of power at the UNGA, we must search for a new theory to explain the findings.

Because there is no reason to assume otherwise, I model the relationships between the explanatory independent variables and the dependent event frequency variable as linear using OLS regression models. In each model, I included all of the non-economic explanatory covariates because there is no indication of collinearity among these explanatory variables. Among the economic covariates, however, there is a high degree of collinearity, so to fully capture their potential explanatory power I test each of them in a different regression model.

To further my examination of trends in informal participation and the distribution of informal power at the UNGA, I also conducted an analysis of the dyadic pairs of countries that hosted events together to test H4 and H5. If certain types of countries tend to host more events together, this could indicate trends in the power distribution that make them more appealing co-hosts together. Extracting the cases where events were hosted by more than one country, the data was reduced to 61 observations. I assessed the trends in pairs based on regime type, level of development, wealth, size, and region.

Findings

The descriptive statistics of the dependent variable immediately make it apparent that the distribution of informal power at the UNGA is unequal. In fact, the most active 1% of countries (Mexico, Sweden, Norway, Philippines, United States, France, and South Africa) hosted more than 20% of the total events. Only ten countries hosted ten or more events, while 60% of the countries hosted three or fewer events. We can clearly conclude that the distribution of informal power is unequal, disproving H1. The following graph illustrates that most countries host few events, with a mean number of events hosted by a given country of 4.39.

After concluding that the distribution of informal power is not uniform, we must look for an alternative explanation to account for the asymmetry. From simply examining the descriptive statistics, we see that many of the most active countries are not the wealthiest countries, and many of the wealthiest countries are far from the most active countries. This seems to indicate that there is not a correlation between wealth and informal power, but a more rigorous examination of the hypothesis is called for. For this task, I will test both H2 and H3 using regression models. In none of the models were the covariates of economic influence significant.

I tested each of the models to be sure that they were valid and well-specified. There are no observable patterns in the residuals in Model 1 or Model 2, showing that the errors are uncorrelated with the predictors and the assumption of strict exogeneity is met. There is some trend between the residuals and the measure of GNI per capita in Model 3, so it is likely that this model is not as representative as the other two. The studentized residuals of each model show generally normal distributions of the residuals.

While I did not find that informal structural power was equally distributed, it was also not the case that power was distributed based on economic dimensions. Therefore we can conclude that there is some underlying explanatory variable that accounts for the unequal distribution of power. All of the models show a consistently strong positive relationship between democratization and informal power, and there are some potentially interesting trends to note among the regional covariates. Latin American countries were much less likely to host events while Middle Eastern countries were much more likely to host events, although there are extremely high standard errors

associated with the regional covariates. The findings from the regression analysis point to H2 as a plausible explanation of the distribution of informal power at the UNGA. The models identify democracy as a consistent predictor of influence, however the covariates I assessed were hardly exhaustive and further testing would be required to see if this finding holds.

Because I was able to eliminate H1 as a possible explanation of informal power, I can now turn my attention to testing H4 and H5. I would expect to find support for H4 and not for H5 because I found positive results in testing H2, and H4 logically would follow. Nevertheless, I will test both hypotheses to see if there is support for either one. My first finding was that region was not a strong predictor of cooperation. There was not a noticeable trend between the region of country one and the region of country two.

Wealth also did not seem to be a strong predictor of cooperation, although it did seem to be an enabler of cooperation. Most cases of cooperation (69%) occurred among mixed pairs of countries, that is among wealthy and poor, wealthy and middle-income, or middle-income and poor. There were roughly an equal number of cases where wealthy countries hosted events together and where middle-income countries hosted countries together. However, there were no instances of poor countries hosting events together. This may indicate that a lack of resources inhibits poor countries from hosting events unless they are able to coordinate staff and funding with a better-resourced mission.

The strongest trend among the dyadic pairs is based on regime type. More than half of the events were hosted by two democratic countries, with the balance hosted by mixed pairs (democracy and autocracy, democracy and anocracy, or anocracy and autocracy). This finding is at least in part due to the higher relative frequency of democracies in the data compared to autocracies: democracies simply participate more in informal mechanisms at the UNGA, and thus there is a clear trend that they also host more events with other countries. However, it is a trend that cannot be shrugged off. In expanding the analysis to look at country pairs where at least one country was a democracy, the results are heavily one sided. There was only one event for which neither country host was a democracy (this was a meeting hosted by Kazakhstan and Russia). Democratic norms on the part of at least one country host can therefore be seen as the impetus for informal participation, and a strong candidate as the determinative feature of the distribution of informal power. The analysis conducted here does not indicate whether democratic norms are required to participate informally (ie. Secretariat staff is more cooperative when working with democratic missions, other states are more receptive to event invitations from democracies), or whether they simply encourage states to be more active in this arena. In either case we can see the importance of democratic norms for informal power generally and for coordinating this power with other countries.

Conclusion

The literature on IOs and informal governance has expanded greatly in the last several years, but has not determined how informal power is universally distributed, or how the dimensions of informal power may vary from organization to organization. Helmke and Levitsky define informal mechanisms as fundamentally derived from unique institutional norms, and because these norms vary by organization, therefore informal power should similarly vary based on the

organization. Randall Stone, however, defines informal structural power in a way that restricts the dimensions of informal power to economic parameters. He finds that at the IMF, the WTO, and the EU, informal power is distributed based on relative economic power, despite the organizational differences between these institutions. Diana Panke claimed that theoretically based on institutional norms, the distribution of informal power at the UNGA should be equitable, however her qualitative study found that economic power in the form of staff resources and capacity determined the dimensions of informal power.'

In this paper, I test Panke's hypothesis with a more rigorous quantitative assessment, and do not find support for equitably distributed informal power at the UNGA, but neither do I find informal power distributed based on economic dimensions. To assess the distribution of power, I use the frequency with which states hosted informal events as a proxy for their power. This assumption is based on the notion that if states host informal events, they do so to affect favorable changes in the policy outcomes. Therefore, the states that host the most events are most likely to achieve the most favorable outcomes, and are thus the most 'informally' powerful. I additionally tested Stone's hypothesis that the distribution of informal power would be based on economic dimensions, and did not find support for that hypothesis. Rather, I found support for my hypothesis based on Helmke and Levitsky's definition of an informal institution as a norm. I found that there is a determinant of the distribution of power, and it is related to the ideational norms of the UNGA. My findings provide an early indication that this feature is democratization, but future testing is required to verify this.

This paper found support for democratic norms as a determinant of informal power at the UNGA, but there are many other potential explanatory features that should be considered as well. Future research should also quantitatively measure how impactful informal participation is on policy outcomes, and should verify whether frequency of participation directly causes states to be more successful at achieving desired policy ends with success. We should also expand analysis to other IOs to see if there are unique parameters of power at each using a similar procedure to the one explored in this paper. If we can see that exhibiting a high degree of a favored norm makes states more informally powerful at a given institution, we can better understand why certain types of states participate heavily in particular IOs, and why favorable policy outcomes may vary across IOs. Future questions may determine whether there are certain factors that would make organizational norms more or less influential at determining the distribution of informal power in different organizational settings. Obtaining the answers to these research questions could change the way we understand participation in IOs and the relationship between the many different IOs in the global policy-making system.

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UNITED NATIONS: DIVIDED EUROPE A STUDY OF UKRAINIAN VOTING ALIGNMENT IN THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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ABSTRACT:

The Ukraine declared independence from the Soviet Union in August of 1991, preceding the complete collapse of the Soviet Union the following month. Since then, Ukraine has remained on a geographic and socio-cultural crossroads between the European Union (EU) and the Russian Federation (the self-proclaimed successor of the Soviet Union). An improved understanding of Ukrainian regional relationships is consequently a key addition to the mass of related scholarly literature.

There are 196 countries in our world, and 193 of them are members of the United Nations. If we are interested in International Relations, we should study the international institution which puts representatives of each country in a room together. Issues in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) can sometimes result in a roll call vote, where each member can vote “yes”, “no” or “abstain”. By studying the voting patterns of Ukraine, compared to other states in the region, the results can reveal underlying political relationships between countries in the area, advancing our knowledge of EU-Russian relations.

Review of Previous Studies

Since the establishment of the United Nations in 1945, scholars have been interested in voting data from the UNGA. In 1951, Margaret Ball sparked curiosity with a study of UNGA voting data. Scholars Alan G. Newcombe, Hanna Newcombe, and Michael Ross conducted a study using UNGA voting data from 1946-1963. In 1971, Jack E. Vincent studied UNGA voting data as it related to Gross National Product. He discovered that economic development was very relevant in terms of predicting UNGA voting. Then in 1996, Soo Yeon Kim and Bruce Russett conducted a similar study.

There have also been several relevant case studies conducted. In 2014, Michael Onderco published a report about the Visegrad countries (the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary), and their voting alignments in the UNGA. His purpose was to examine the voting relationships between Russia, the USA, and the Visegrad countries. In 2011, Suzanne Graham published a study of South Africa's voting history in the UNGA. She was attempting to discover any patterns between South Africa and other emerging powers such as India and Brazil.

Deficiencies in Past Research

When reviewing the previous literature, a few things are noticeable. Some studies have focused on the determinants of UNGA voting alignments, but they did not implement the findings towards further analysis of real-world cases. The most relevant literature are the studies about UNGA voting relations between specific countries, like Graham's study of South Africa or Onderco's research on the Visegrad countries. But nevertheless, nothing has been done that pertains to Ukraine.

It is important to realize that previous literature has contributed to a larger and much more significant discovery: UNGA voting data is proven to reveal subtle international dynamics, and it can improve scholarly understanding of the world.

Significance of Study

A study of Ukrainian voting alignment within the UNGA is important for numerous reasons. The first and most overwhelming reason is quite simple: there is a lack of scholarly research conducted about the topic. In addition, the identification of previously unknown international dynamics is very valuable. Ukraine has been in the international spotlight since protests erupted in November of 2013. Any new information discovered about Ukrainian regional dynamics can foster a better understanding of the things we see happening around the world.

The Purpose Statement and Hypothesis

The purpose of this study is to explore and compare the UNGA voting alignments between the Ukraine, Russia, and the EU, since the collapse of the Soviet Union. My intent is to interpret and explain the meaning of any patterns that emerge, and to enhance our understanding of regional relationships in Eastern Europe.

I expect this study will reveal two sensations. First, immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union the newly independent Ukrainian nation will display overwhelming UNGA agreement with the EU member states. This could be caused by the excitement of being free from the Soviet Union's grasp, and the desire to associate with new friends to the West. Secondly, I expect there will be a change around the year 2000,

where the Ukraine begins vacillating between aligning with Russia and aligning with the EU. This could be due to the admission of many new EU members, and a feeling of exclusion and isolation within the Ukraine.

Theoretical Perspective of Analysis

Before I explain the study, it is important for me to mention the theoretical perspective with which I analyze the international system. This determines the way I interpret the research results, and it will help explain why I think this study is important.

I view the world through a constructivist lens. Constructivism, defined by scholars Karen A. Mingst and Margaret P. Karns, is “An approach to the study of international relations that examines how shared beliefs, rules, norms, organizations, and cultural practices shape state and individual behavior”. Although this is the proper technical definition of constructivism, I want to clarify exactly how the constructivist perspective leads me to approach this particular research question.

Because this study involves analyzing UNGA votes given by representatives of state governments, it could give the impression that I am a strict realist. Realism is defined by Mingst and Karns as “A theory of world politics that emphasizes states’ interests in accumulating power to ensure security in an anarchic world”. Simply because I believe that states are important actors to analyze, does not imply that I believe they only act in response to global power balances. States may be important, but contrary realism, I believe that UNGA voting patterns can show me the underlying cultural ties that exist among states. Voting trends could tell me which states want to associate with which, or how states view themselves in the international system, or which countries “feel” like they have the close connections to which. These are important themes to understand when trying to make better sense of international relationships. Genuine understanding leads to more successful cooperation, and improved predictions and decisions.

I think that shared beliefs, norms and rules can heavily influence state interaction. Realists might say that state interaction is about self-preservation, proposing that states only act in the international arena to increase their relative power against opponents. But can this theory explain everything? Can realists adequately explain the ongoing collaborative United Nations peace operations in places like South Sudan or the Central African Republic? I would claim that these armed conflicts – located in relatively small and arguably trivial countries in the grander international system – could be allowed to continue without noticeably affecting the status quo in any powerful countries (USA, UK, France, Russia, China, etc...), let alone disrupting the global balance of power. But yet UN member states continuously and cooperatively commit resources for international aid. This is easier explained and understood when considering the shared norms and beliefs between members of the United Nations. Although realist theory helps foster understanding in some international relationships, the UN peacekeeping example proves there is more to understanding the world outside of realist theory. A constructivist approach will help fill theoretical cracks, making my research important for anyone who wants to collaboratively work towards a richer understanding of the world.

METHODOLOGY

This study examines UNGA voting records from 1991-2013, a period that begins with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and ends at the start of the 2013 Ukrainian conflict. I have aggregated all the votes issued by the Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, and the EU member states. The data modeling for this study has been conducted with assistance from professional computer programmer Stephen A. Graham.

Belarus is included to act as a comparative case study against the Ukraine. Since Belarus shares many of the same characteristics as the Ukraine – being a former member of the Soviet Republic, gaining independent sovereignty in 1991, being located on a geographic crossroads between the EU and Russia – any noticeable differences between the two countries UNGA voting records are equally important points to study.

I began my research with a study of EU member states. The purpose of this preliminary analysis was to compare all the EU member state UNGA voting records. My intuition was that EU states would display a very high level of UNGA voting alignment. If this proved correct, then it would enable me to calculate the average vote of all EU states, per resolution, without sacrificing data accuracy. Compressing the EU voting data would make my final comparative graph much easier to read and interpret. I only included countries in the calculations once they had become members of the EU. This is why some lines on the upcoming graph will originate half way across the “x” axis.

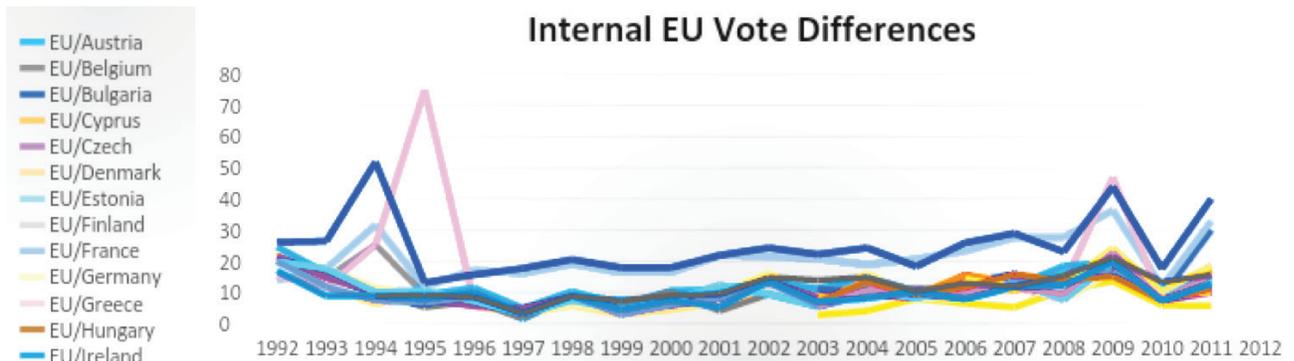
Using Microsoft Excel, I began to collect the UNGA roll call votes issued by EU members. In order to complete the calculation, I had to replace each voting option with a numeric value. In this case, I gave each state either a “1” for “yes”, a “-1” for “no”, a “0” for “abstain/absent”, or a blank space for “not an EU member”. Below is an example of the process:

| DATE | RESOLUTION | UK VOTE | FRANCE VOTE | GERMANY VOTE |
|-----------|------------|---------|-------------|--------------|
| 8/3/1992 | R/46/242 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 9/3/1992 | R/47/1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 10/3/1992 | R/47/9 | 0 | -1 | 0 |
| 10/5/1992 | R/47/12 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 10/5/1992 | R/47/8 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 11/2/1992 | R/47/14 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 11/2/1992 | R/47/15 | -1 | -1 | -1 |
| 11/2/1992 | R/47/16 | -1 | -1 | -1 |
| 11/3/1992 | R/47/19 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 11/4/1992 | R/47/23 | -1 | 0 | 0 |
| 11/4/1992 | R/47/24 | -1 | 0 | 0 |
| 11/4/1992 | R/47/29 | -1 | -1 | -1 |

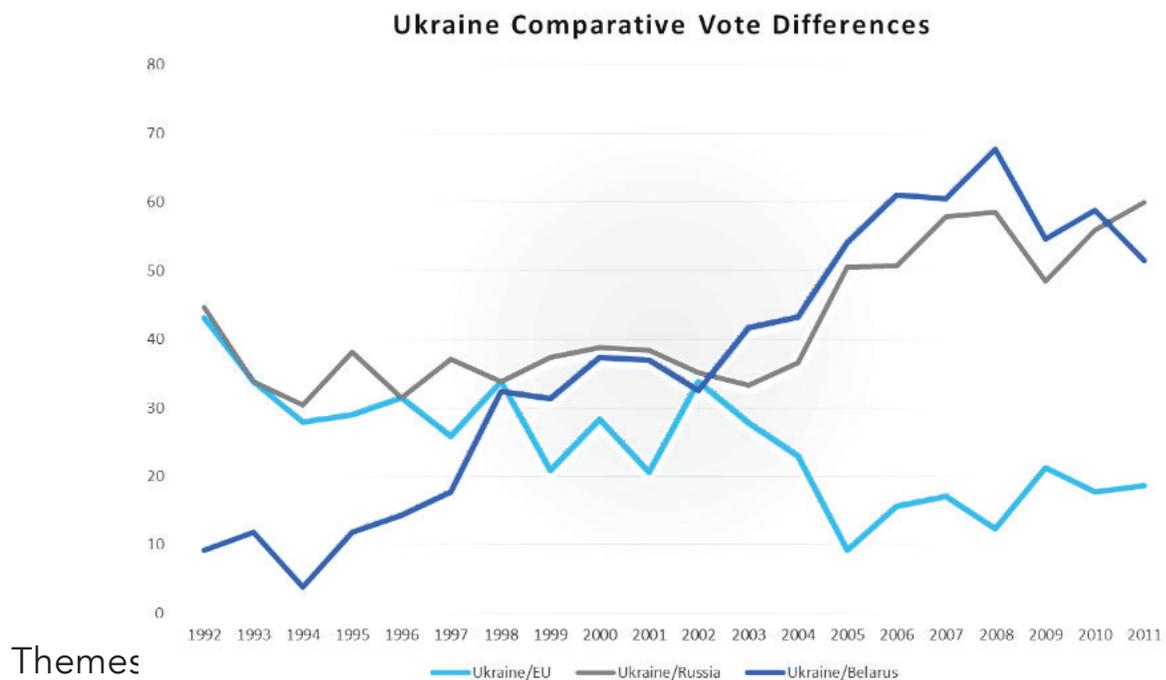
Next, I used an algorithm to determine voting similarity between every possible combination of states. This resulted in a “0” meaning “pair voted the same”, a “1” meaning “one variable was absent/abstained and the other variable voted yes/no”, or a “2” meaning “one voted yes and the other voted no”. After this, I aggregated the results and then divided by the total number of resolutions. I divided by the total number of resolutions to ensure that no particular year held more weight than any other, since a different amount of resolutions resulted in a roll call vote per year, otherwise the final line graph would not present the data accurately. The results of this preliminary analysis are listed opposite:

| Year | EU/Austria | EU/Belgium | EU/Bulgaria | EU/Cyprus | EU/Czech | EU/Denmark | EU/Estonia | EU/Finland | EU/France | EU/Germany | EU/Greece | EU/Hungary | EU/Ireland | EU/Italy |
|------|------------|--------------|---------------|-----------|----------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|----------|
| 1992 | | 16 | | | | 17.93 | | | 14.67 | 16 | 17.93 | | 22.67 | 16 |
| 1993 | | 20 | | | | 29.08 | | | 19.85 | 21.54 | 15.38 | | 24.62 | 21.54 |
| 1994 | | 14.71 | | | | 11.76 | | | 17.65 | 17.65 | 11.76 | | 16.18 | 16.18 |
| 1995 | 8.86 | 25.32 | | | | 6.93 | | 8.86 | 31.65 | 11.39 | 25.32 | | 8.86 | 10.13 |
| 1996 | 6.58 | 9.21 | | | | 9.21 | | 10.53 | 11.84 | 9.21 | 75 | | 9.21 | 5.26 |
| 1997 | 8.57 | 10 | | | | 5.71 | | 7.14 | 17.14 | 8.57 | 7.14 | | 11.49 | 7.14 |
| 1998 | 1.61 | 3.23 | | | | 3.23 | | 4.84 | 16.13 | 3.23 | 3.23 | | 4.84 | 1.61 |
| 1999 | 8.82 | 8.82 | | | | 5.88 | | 8.82 | 19.12 | 5.88 | 8.82 | | 10.29 | 8.82 |
| 2000 | 7.46 | 4.48 | | | | 2.99 | | 5.97 | 16.42 | 4.48 | 4.48 | | 5.97 | 5.97 |
| 2001 | 7.46 | 5.97 | | | | 4.48 | | 7.46 | 16.42 | 7.46 | 7.46 | | 10.45 | 10.45 |
| 2002 | 5.48 | 9.59 | | | | 6.85 | | 8.22 | 21.92 | 9.59 | 5.48 | | 10.96 | 4.11 |
| 2003 | 12.16 | 12.16 | | | | 9.46 | | 10.81 | 21.62 | 16.22 | 19.51 | | 13.51 | 9.46 |
| 2004 | 6.94 | 9.72 | | 2.78 | 8.33 | 8.33 | 11.11 | 8.33 | 20.83 | 8.33 | 8.33 | 8.33 | 11.11 | 5.56 |
| 2005 | 13.51 | 10.81 | | 4.05 | 9.46 | 10.81 | 13.51 | 12.16 | 18.92 | 16.22 | 9.46 | 13.51 | 14.86 | 12.16 |
| 2006 | 10.34 | 11.49 | | 8.05 | 8.05 | 9.2 | 9.2 | 9.2 | 20.69 | 8.05 | 9.2 | 9.2 | 10.34 | 9.2 |
| 2007 | 10.39 | 10.39 | 12.99 | 6.49 | 15.58 | 10.39 | 11.69 | 10.39 | 23.38 | 7.79 | 11.69 | 15.58 | 11.69 | 7.79 |
| 2008 | 11.84 | 19.16 | 15.79 | 5.26 | 11.84 | 14.47 | 19.16 | 11.84 | 27.63 | 11.84 | 19.16 | 19.16 | 11.84 | 11.84 |
| 2009 | 16.92 | 12.31 | 10.77 | 10.77 | 7.69 | 9.23 | 10.77 | 13.85 | 27.69 | 7.69 | 12.31 | 10.77 | 18.46 | 9.23 |
| 2010 | 19.7 | 16.67 | 21.21 | 13.64 | 21.21 | 18.18 | 19.7 | 16.67 | 36.36 | 16.67 | 46.97 | 18.18 | 19.7 | 21.21 |
| 2011 | 11.76 | 8.82 | 8.82 | 5.88 | 7.95 | 7.95 | 7.95 | 10.29 | 11.76 | 8.82 | 7.95 | 8.82 | 11.76 | 8.82 |
| 2012 | 12.86 | 12.86 | 90 | 5.71 | 17.14 | 12.86 | 15.71 | 12.86 | 32.86 | 12.86 | 12.86 | 17.14 | 12.86 | 11.43 |
| Year | EU/Latvia | EU/Lithuania | EU/Luxembourg | EU/Malta | EU/Netherlands | EU/Poland | EU/Portugal | EU/Romania | EU/Slovakia | EU/Slovenia | EU/Spain | EU/Sweden | EU/UK | |
| 1992 | | | 16 | | 16 | | 17.93 | | | | 19.33 | | 22.67 | |
| 1993 | | | 21.54 | | 20 | | 20 | | | | 16.92 | | 26.15 | |
| 1994 | | | 14.71 | | 17.65 | | 11.76 | | | | 8.82 | | 26.47 | |
| 1995 | | | 10.13 | | 10.13 | | 7.59 | | | | 8.86 | 8.86 | 51.9 | |
| 1996 | | | 7.89 | | 10.53 | | 6.58 | | | | 7.89 | 9.21 | 13.16 | |
| 1997 | | | 5.71 | | 7.14 | | 8.57 | | | | 10 | 8.57 | 15.71 | |
| 1998 | | | 4.84 | | 3.23 | | 3.23 | | | | 3.23 | 3.23 | 17.74 | |
| 1999 | | | 8.82 | | 7.35 | | 8.82 | | | | 8.82 | 8.82 | 20.59 | |
| 2000 | | | 4.48 | | 4.48 | | 2.99 | | | | 4.48 | 7.46 | 17.91 | |
| 2001 | | | 5.97 | | 7.46 | | 5.97 | | | | 7.46 | 8.96 | 17.91 | |
| 2002 | | | 8.22 | | 12.93 | | 8.22 | | | | 5.48 | 9.59 | 21.92 | |
| 2003 | | | 13.51 | | 9.46 | | 13.51 | | | | 13.51 | 14.86 | 24.32 | |
| 2004 | 11.11 | 5.56 | 8.33 | 8.33 | 5.56 | 5.56 | 5.56 | | 5.56 | 6.94 | 6.94 | 13.89 | 22.22 | |
| 2005 | 9.46 | 9.46 | 9.46 | 9.46 | 10.81 | 14.86 | 9.46 | | 10.81 | 13.51 | 8.11 | 14.86 | 24.32 | |
| 2006 | 10.34 | 9.2 | 10.34 | 9.2 | 8.05 | 10.34 | 9.2 | | 10.34 | 9.2 | 10.34 | 10.34 | 18.39 | |
| 2007 | 11.69 | 10.39 | 10.39 | 12.99 | 11.69 | 11.69 | 9.09 | 14.29 | 10.39 | 11.69 | 7.79 | 12.99 | 25.97 | |
| 2008 | 15.79 | 19.16 | 15.79 | 10.53 | 19.16 | 11.84 | 19.16 | 11.84 | 11.84 | 15.79 | 11.84 | 11.84 | 28.95 | |
| 2009 | 12.31 | 19.85 | 12.31 | 15.98 | 7.69 | 10.77 | 19.85 | 12.31 | 9.23 | 19.85 | 12.31 | 15.98 | 23.08 | |
| 2010 | 22.73 | 21.21 | 18.18 | 16.67 | 19.7 | 21.21 | 16.67 | 24.24 | 22.73 | 15.15 | 19.7 | 21.21 | 43.94 | |
| 2011 | 8.82 | 7.95 | 7.95 | 8.82 | 10.29 | 7.95 | 7.95 | 10.29 | 7.95 | 7.95 | 7.95 | 13.24 | 17.65 | |
| 2012 | 18.57 | 17.14 | 10 | 10 | 14.29 | 15.71 | 11.43 | 18.57 | 15.71 | 11.43 | 12.86 | 15.71 | 40 | |

This graph represents levels of voting similarity among EU member states. Besides an infrequent outlier, such as the United Kingdom in 1994 or Greece in 1995, the vast majority of voting between EU members is exceptionally similar, all within 10% difference. What started as intuition is reinforced by the visible evidence in the graph and chart above, where we see nearly synchronous EU voting alignment in the UNGA.



The next step was to calculate the average EU member state vote per resolution. To do this, I aggregated the EU member votes and compared the average against each EU member, and then I used the same process for Belarus and Russia. This allowed me to compose the ultimate graph of the study. The results can be found on the opposite page. The graph below shows Ukrainian UNGA voting results compared to the EU, Russia, and Belarus. The value of the “y” axis corresponds to “difference score”, e.g. a value of 10 on the “y” axis indicates two countries with similar voting patterns, as observed with the EU member states, whereas a score of 60 indicates conflictory voting records.



Themes

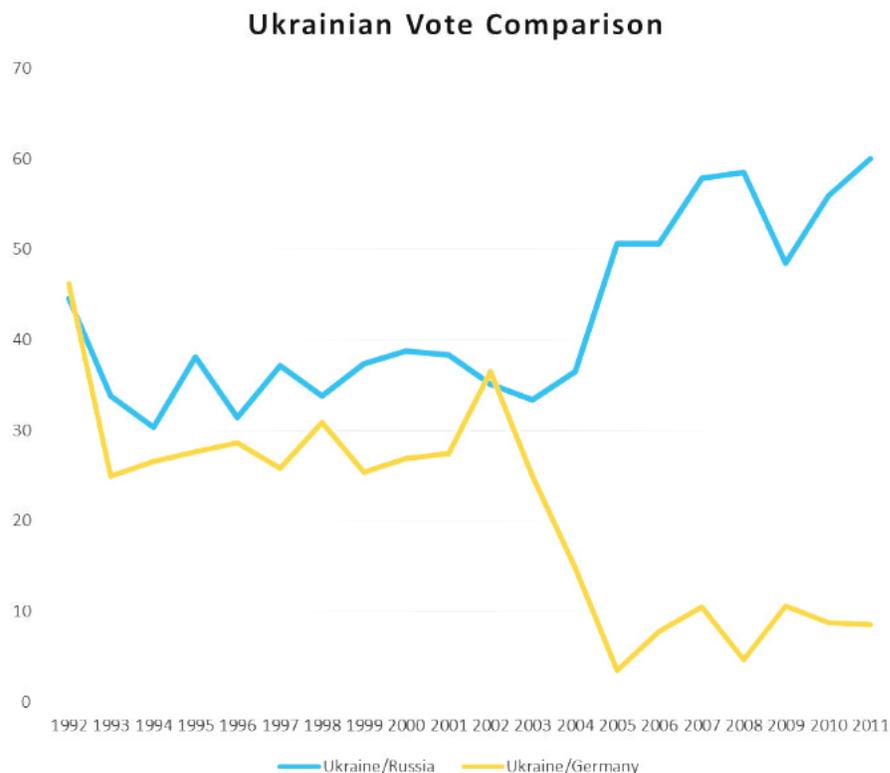
| VOTE YEAR | Ukraine/EU | Ukraine/Russia | Ukraine/Belarus |
|-----------|------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1992 | 36 | 33.33 | 10.67 |
| 1993 | 43.08 | 44.62 | 9.23 |
| 1994 | 33.82 | 33.82 | 11.76 |
| 1995 | 27.85 | 30.38 | 3.8 |
| 1996 | 28.95 | 38.16 | 11.84 |
| 1997 | 31.43 | 31.43 | 14.29 |
| 1998 | 25.81 | 37.1 | 17.74 |
| 1999 | 33.82 | 33.82 | 32.35 |
| 2000 | 20.9 | 37.31 | 31.34 |
| 2001 | 28.36 | 38.81 | 37.31 |
| 2002 | 20.55 | 38.36 | 36.99 |
| 2003 | 33.78 | 35.14 | 32.43 |
| 2004 | 27.78 | 33.33 | 41.67 |
| 2005 | 22.97 | 36.49 | 43.24 |
| 2006 | 9.2 | 50.57 | 54.02 |
| 2007 | 15.58 | 50.65 | 61.04 |
| 2008 | 17.11 | 57.89 | 60.53 |
| 2009 | 12.31 | 58.46 | 67.69 |
| 2010 | 21.21 | 48.48 | 54.55 |
| 2011 | 17.65 | 55.88 | 58.82 |
| 2012 | 18.57 | 60 | 51.43 |

The results of the study display two overwhelming themes. The first being the long term trend of increasingly common voter disagreement between Ukraine and Russia. The second is more surprising. Following the independence of Belarus and Ukraine, the two countries show high levels UNGA voting alignment. However, this anomaly equalises over the following twenty years.

A noticeable alignment emerges between Ukrainian and EU voting patterns from 1991 until 2013. While the Ukraine's early years displayed little favoritism between the EU or Russia, over time an alignment with the EU formed.

Now let us focus on an exciting trend: the convergence of voting alignment lines in 2002, after which Ukraine exhibits an exponential increase in alignment towards the EU, and the opposite dynamic with Belarus and Russia.

To reinforce what we see in the graph above, let us look at an example using just one EU member state and search for the same trend. This graph compares UNGA votes by the Ukraine, Russia, and Germany:



There is a remarkable shift around 2002, which warrants the question: what happened at the turn of the century to cause an extreme UNGA voting spike?

Review of Hypothesis

Contrary to my hypothesis, no strong alignment between Ukraine and the EU exists after Ukrainian independence. Though there was certainly early voting disagreement with Russia, this was matched

with a similar level of disagreement with the EU states. In addition there was a strong voting alignment between the Ukraine and Belarus in the early 1990's.

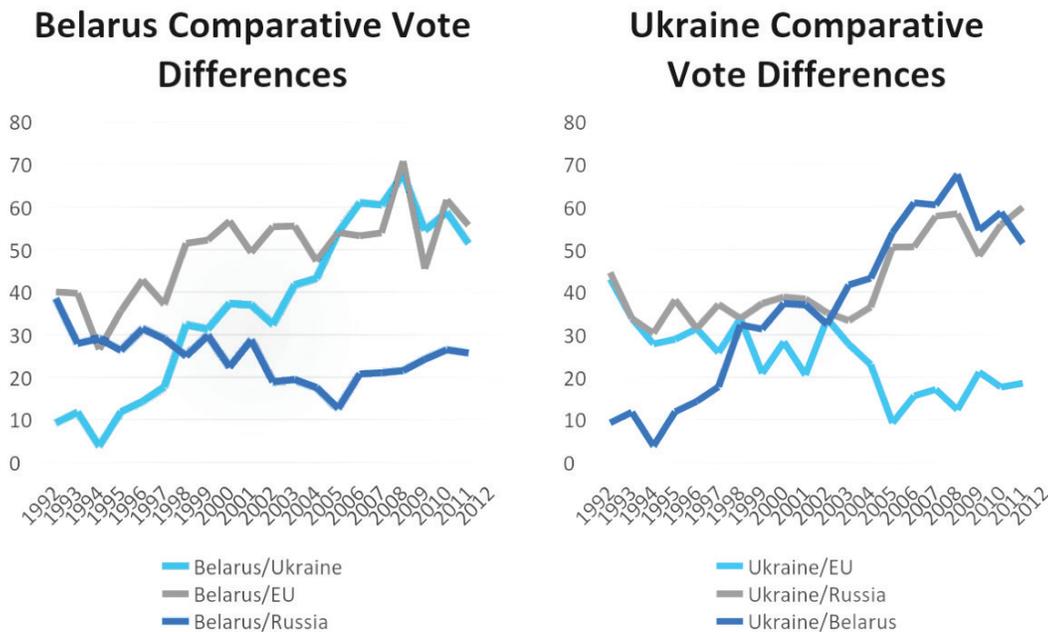
I expected to see vacillation around the year 2000, where the Ukraine would show indistinguishable alignment between Russia and the EU, but I was wrong. Instead there was an intense increase in voting alignment with the EU, and away from Belarus and Russia. The predicted period of vacillation by the Ukraine regarding Russia and the EU instead appeared during the 1990's. It seems like the Ukraine made a calculated "decision" at the start of the new century. What can explain the 2000 Ukrainian "pivot" to Europe?

Belarus Comparative Study: Opposite Voting Trends

Belarus is relevant to the study because it shares many of the same characteristics which are perplexing about the Ukraine. For this reason I will now compare Belarus to the Ukraine, Russia and the EU- results can be found on page 34. There are several trends apparent in this graph. In the broader picture, Belarus displays a consistently increasing level of disagreement with the EU and the Ukraine, but an increasing overall voting alignment with Russia. However, there is something much more interesting and much more specific to identify within the data.

In the years immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the newly established Belarus and Ukraine exhibit almost synchronous voting alignment, while maintaining similar levels of disagreement with the EU and Russia, which makes sense given their shared years of establishment. Below are the two graphs side by side, for a clearer comparison:

It is understandable that the young neighboring states turn to one another for early support in the intimidating international system, while remaining wary of powerful nations like Russia, or powerful blocs like the EU. It looks like Belarus and the Ukraine were unsure of which way to orient their countries in the international arena: East versus West, and Belarus appears to have chosen Russia before the Ukraine chose the EU. Both countries exhibit a period of contemplation and introversion from 1992 until 1994, where they only appear to trust themselves.



| VOTE_YEAR | Belarus/Ukraine | Belarus/EU | Belarus/Russia |
|-----------|-----------------|------------|----------------|
| 1992 | 10.67 | 38.67 | 33.33 |
| 1993 | 9.23 | 40 | 38.46 |
| 1994 | 11.76 | 39.71 | 27.94 |
| 1995 | 3.8 | 26.58 | 29.11 |
| 1996 | 11.84 | 35.53 | 26.32 |
| 1997 | 14.29 | 42.86 | 31.43 |
| 1998 | 17.74 | 37.1 | 29.03 |
| 1999 | 32.35 | 51.47 | 25 |
| 2000 | 31.34 | 52.24 | 29.85 |
| 2001 | 37.31 | 56.72 | 22.39 |
| 2002 | 36.99 | 49.32 | 28.77 |
| 2003 | 32.43 | 55.41 | 18.92 |
| 2004 | 41.67 | 55.56 | 19.44 |
| 2005 | 43.24 | 47.3 | 17.57 |
| 2006 | 54.02 | 54.02 | 12.64 |
| 2007 | 61.04 | 53.25 | 20.78 |
| 2008 | 60.53 | 53.95 | 21.05 |
| 2009 | 67.69 | 70.77 | 21.54 |
| 2010 | 54.55 | 45.45 | 24.24 |
| 2011 | 58.82 | 61.76 | 26.47 |
| 2012 | 51.43 | 55.71 | 25.71 |

In summary, Belarus and the Ukraine were once closely aligned in the UNGA voting arena, but something happened. Two countries that were once voting synchronously have now taken opposite sides, each aligning with a different regional power. I am reminded of Isaac Newton's first law, claiming an object at rest will remain at rest unless acted upon by an external force. In applying Newton's logic to political science, I believe something concrete must be responsible for the shifts within the Ukraine and Belarus.

The voting results from Belarus in the early 1990's are thought-provoking, but this study is focused on Ukrainian UNGA voting, as compared with Russia and the EU. With that in mind, I will concentrate on explaining the observed Ukrainian "pivot" to Europe in the year 2002.

The 2002 Ukrainian Pivot to Europe: The Kuchma Administration

Leonid Kuchma served as president of the Ukraine from 1994 until 2005. Beyond his administrative duties, Kuchma was in part responsible for establishing a new Ukrainian international identity. Perhaps the noticeable 2002 surge in UNGA voting alignment was the climax of a larger desire to "Europeanize" the Ukraine.

As noted by Paul Kubicek in *The History of Ukraine*, Kuchma wanted to integrate Ukraine into the EU, and the general population was in favor of NATO membership. Trusting Kubicek's claim, this is a good line of inquiry to follow for discovering the 2002 spike in UNGA voting. Knowing this, I look at political developments nurtured under the Kuchma administration, as well as the rhetoric of his state officials, which provides clear confirmation of a pro-Western foreign policy agenda.

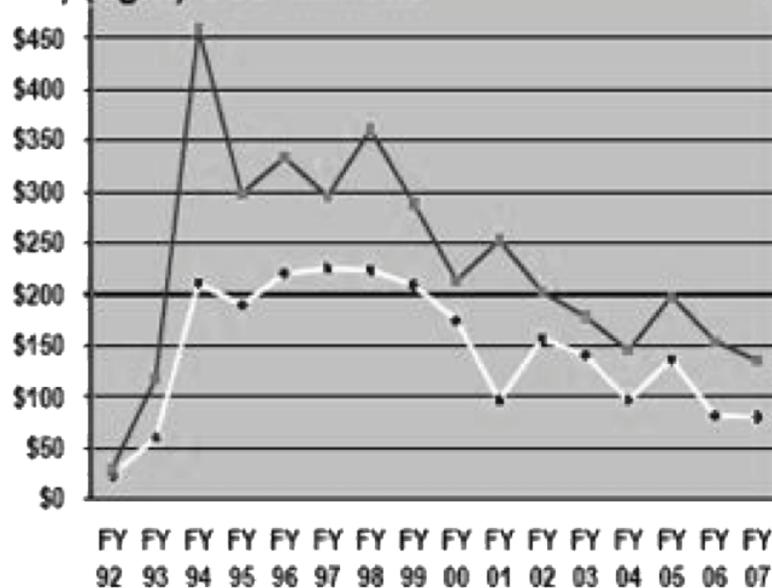
In 1994 president Kuchma was heavily involved in negotiating the Trilateral Agreement on Nuclear Weapons, which "...essentially resolved the lengthy conflict over Ukraine's nuclear weapons, committing Ukraine to surrender all its nuclear weapons...". The residual nuclear arsenal from the former Soviet Union was a main concern of its Western neighbors, including the United States. During the years preceding the 1994 agreement, Russia claimed they should inherit the nuclear stockpile, since they were the "true benefactors" of the Soviet Union. Russian aggression manifested itself as persistent threats to cut off energy supply to the Ukraine.

It is important to recognize the influence of the USA in the Ukraine's eventual "pivot" to the EU. Opposite is a graph showing US aid to the Ukraine from 1992-2007:

US Aid to Ukraine

The USA provided over 450 million dollars in aid to the newly established Ukraine between 1993 and 1994. Ukraine experts Paul D'Aniero, Robert Kravchuk and Taras Kuzio claim that Ukrainian willingness to give up nuclear weapons, combined with the fact that "...the United States was looking for a counterweight to Russia in the region..." contributed to Ukrainian political movement away from Russia. In this sense, the Ukraine was forced to choose one of two things: to give up nuclear weapons in favor of the USA, ensuring a sustained level of aid similar to 1993 and 1994, or give the nuclear arsenal to Russia and maintain a good relationship with their Eastern neighbor. Although this does not directly involve the EU, a Ukrainian shift to the USA is much closer to the EU than a shift towards Russia. This was a serious choice which had potential to anger the losing side. The decision to give up the nuclear stockpile laid a foundation for Ukraine's western oriented foreign policy in the end of the 20th century, and possibly sent ripple effects into the future of regional relations.

**USG Total Assistance 1992-2007:
Total USG (dark) and FREEDOM Support Act
(FSA) (light) USD Millions**



After the nuclear disarmament crisis was over, another development occurred in 1997: Kuchma’s government signed a partnership agreement with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), creating the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC). In the “About NATO” section of NATO’s website, a rhetorical analysis of the language can give us further insight into the pivot:

NATO is an alliance of countries from Europe and North America. It provides a unique link between these two continents for consultation and cooperation in the field of defense and security, and the conduct of multinational crisis-management operations.

The rhetoric in this statement indicates an element of exclusivity to any countries not considered European or North American. As this quote demonstrates, NATO appears to be a western oriented organization, further evidence of Kuchma’s “pivot”. Critics say that when the NUC was established, Russia had already signed a Partnership for Peace with NATO in 1995, so how is Ukrainian membership more groundbreaking? Ukraine expert Taraz Kuzio called it a “...half-hearted membership...” in reference to Russian involvement in the NATO partnership. Perhaps Russia was maintaining the status quo, just doing what they were expected to do by the international audience. I think the establishment of the NUC held much more significance in Ukraine’s foreign policy than the Russian partnership with NATO held for Russia. Scholars Kuzio, Kravchuk and D’Anieri reinforce this claim: ...Ukraine’s outreach to the West is a vision Kuchma articulated during a February 1996 visit to Washington of Ukraine’s need for integration, not within a closed and backward Commonwealth of Independent States, but with the world economy and the advanced states of the West

In 1997, Taraz Kuzio reinforces my claim, saying that “Under Kuchma Ukraine joined the Council of Europe and the Central European Initiative, moved closer to the European Union, the West European Union and NATO, while at the same time becoming a non-nuclear power”. The slow accumulation of these developments help us understand the significance of the 2002 UNGA voting shift.

A Façade of Friendship

No hostile interactions were exhibited between the Ukraine and Russia, which might point to the 1997 treaty of friendship, or the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as evidence of friendly relations. The cordial relationship with Russia was a clever façade presented by president Kuchma, to disguise a move towards closer partnership with the EU.

The 1997 agreement, officially known as “the Partition Treaty on the Status and conditions of the Black Sea Fleet”, was the culmination of an extended period of disagreement between the Ukraine and Russia. The success of the agreement does not take into consideration the lasting effects of the conflict as a whole. An agreement is one decision, made official with the signing of a piece of paper. A signature is not an equaliser against years of hostile disagreement. In 1993, Russia threatened Ukraine with war if the Black Sea Fleet and the Crimean FSU bases were not given to Russia. In 1995, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev threatened to military intervention in the Former Soviet Union (FSU), including the Ukraine, allegedly to defend the Russian speaking population. Ukrainian developments with Russia were based on maintaining civility, whereas Ukrainian developments with the West were progressive and hopeful. The hostility between Ukraine and Russia in the 1990’s help explain why Kuchma wanted a closer connection with the EU.

Furthermore Kuchma’s hidden agenda is reflected in public statements prior to the perceived “pivot”. The following statements are taken from UNGA meetings between the year 2000 and 2001, just prior to the Ukrainian “pivot” to the EU.

Ukrainian Statements in the UNGA

In the 21st plenary meeting of the 55th UNGA gathering, Borys Tarasyuk gave a statement representing the Kuchma administration. The topics he covered and the language that he used indicate a conscious attempt to associate the Ukraine with European affairs. When speaking about accession into the World Trade Organization (WTO) and international economic cooperation, Tarasyuk mentioned the importance of “...the development of our relations with the European Union”. He also mentioned building a regional – meaning the Eastern European region – center for ethnic studies in Kiev, “...under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe”. If I were to hypothesize from the language, this regional center would serve as more of a symbol of European integration than an actual center for ethnic studies. These statements reflect Kuchma’s push towards Europe.

In the 12th meeting of the 55th UNGA gathering, Kostyantyn Gryshchenko, the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Ukraine, gave a statement. He said that “As one of the major contributors to United Nations peacekeeping operations and the largest in Europe, Ukraine is deeply concerned by the increasing danger to the lives of peacekeeping personnel”. The key language in this statement is when he references the Ukraine along with the rest of Europe, emphasizing the Kuchma administration’s foreign policy agenda and desire for association with Europe at the time. In the 44th plenary of the 55th UNGA session, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Ukraine – Anatoliy

M. Zlenko – spoke about the landmark 10 year anniversary of Ukrainian independence. During his statement, he mentioned the biggest achievement during those 10 years, saying:

The main result has been Ukraine’s consolidation as a peaceful and independent European State. We have achieved sustainable economic growth as a result of consistent reforms, and my country is an active participant in European regional processes

This is the most overwhelming textual evidence of Kuchma’s “pivot” to the EU. This helps explain why we see increased Ukrainian voting alignment with the EU bloc after the year 2002. The Ukraine appears to have been reforming their identity as a European nation, which tells us how they view themselves in the current international system.

Conclusion

This study has reviewed Ukrainian, Russian, EU, and Belarusian UNGA voting records from 1992-2013. The analysis was intended to discover voting alignment patterns based on the belief that it could help us understand the regional dynamics surrounding Ukraine’s position in Eastern Europe. The study revealed a curious phenomenon in the year 2002, where the Ukraine exhibited extremely high alignment with the EU states, and tremendously low alignment with Russia and Belarus. The UNGA voting alignment with the EU represented the climax of a quiet but calculated foreign policy “pivot” to the EU by President Leonid Kuchma.

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T HE U.S. OPPOSITION TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

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ABSTRACT:

A paradox underlies the United States' position within the international human rights regime. On the one hand, the United States has a long tradition of promoting human rights at home and abroad, through mobilization of rights demands, litigation via domestic courts, establishment of international human rights treaties, foreign aid, economic sanctions, and even military interventions. At the same time, however, the United States has consistently refused to legally bind itself to international human rights standards that it helped to create for the rest of the world. The most notable (or notorious?) example is the U.S. unwillingness to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (or "CRC"), a treaty that has been signed and ratified by every country but the United States. By investigating the role of active and concentrated conservative groups in preventing the CRC from ratification, this paper provides an institutional explanation to the puzzle behind the U.S. opposition to children's rights. In particular, it is argued that the U.S. has failed to ratify the CRC because its decentralized political institution and complicated treaty ratification process empower a small minority of senators, presidents, and interest groups to effectively prevent the CRC ratification.

Introduction

Adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 1989 and entered into force in 1990, the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereafter “the CRC” or “the Convention”) offers a comprehensive framework of children’s rights including civil, political, economic, social, cultural and legal rights that encompass four core principles: non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to life, survival, and development, and the views of the child (Woodhouse and Johnson 2009, 7). The overall aims of the CRC are to protect children from human rights abuses, recognize children as individuals with evolving capacities, and ensure that children can realize their individual rights.

Today, the CRC stands as the most widely ratified international human rights treaty in history, with all but one United Nations member states having ratified the treaty (U.N. Treaty Collection). The only state that has not ratified the CRC is surprisingly the United States, despite the fact that the U.S. has played a pivotal role in the drafting stage of the Convention (Cohen 2006). The failure of the United States to ratify the CRC points to a curious disconnect between the U.S. opposition to a benign international human rights treaty and the U.S. tradition of support for human rights. How is it that the United States opposes a treaty that it helped to create? What is the most problematic hurdle that prevents the U.S. from ratifying the Convention? Simply put, why has the United States, a firmly democratic state that champions civil and political rights, failed to ratify the CRC?

The existing explanations about the U.S. opposition to the CRC fall into two broad categories. The first category includes the common wisdom that views the U.S. opposition to acceptance and enforcement of the CRC as the result of fears that international human rights treaties threaten U.S. sovereignty and federalism. The second category explains that the CRC interferes with parents’ authority to discipline and raise children in the ways parents see fit. I argue that these explanations mischaracterize both the nature of international human rights law and the legal impact of the CRC. However, these explanations are not completely irrelevant in understanding the U.S. failure to ratify the CRC. While concerns about U.S. sovereignty and parents’ rights are mostly misplaced, conservative religious and pro-family groups in opposition to the CRC have constructed their position in line with these concerns to successfully prevent the Senate from ratifying the treaty.

The real argument of this paper corresponds to the explanation that attributes the U.S. failure to ratify the CRC to the political institutional factors—specifically, the complicated supermajoritarian treaty ratification process in the Senate that has allowed conservative interest groups to effectively prevent the CRC ratification. In particular, I argue that the U.S. has not ratified the CRC because conservative religious and pro-family groups have used various veto points of the supermajoritarian treaty ratification process to stop the CRC ratification. In the first section of the paper, I explain why the U.S. failure to ratify the CRC is a puzzle that needs explanation to better understand international human rights regime. Secondly, I unfold the aforementioned two broad categories of explanations in detail and explain why the argument about U.S. sovereignty and parents’ rights is not a satisfying end. But again, though the reasoning of opponents’ arguments against the CRC is misplaced, their efforts to stop the ratification have been successful. Next, a discussion of some methodological issues associated with the research design of this paper is provided. Lastly, I argue that political institutional factors—the ratification process in the Senate and the composition of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations influenced by an active conservative minority—prevent the U.S. ratification of the Convention. The empirical evidence in support of the argument is collected by investigating ties between senators and conservative religious and pro-family groups that vehemently oppose the CRC ratification.

The U.S. and International Human Rights Regime

The U.S. opposition to the CRC is paradoxical not only because the U.S. has a long tradition of supporting human rights at home and abroad, but also because it has actively participated in negotiating the treaty. In fact, within the Working Group that was responsible for drafting the Convention, the U.S. was the single most active member, proposing or editing text for 38 of 40 articles, including, ironically, Article 14 that protects children's freedom of thought, conscience and religion—the precise article that American religious groups would later use to frame the CRC as an attack on parental rights (Cohen 1998 and 2006; Kilbourne 1996). Why, then, does the United States remain as the only country in the world that has not ratified the CRC?

The CRC is only part of the picture. The United States is practically the only developed Western democracy that has not ratified international human rights conventions dealing with discrimination against women (CEDAW), socioeconomic rights (ICESCR), rights of persons with disabilities (CRPD), and prevention of forced disappearance (ICCPED). Hence, by examining the causes behind the U.S. government's unwillingness to ratify the CRC, this paper aims to provide an understanding of the relationship between the U.S. and the international human rights regime in general.

General Arguments against the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Threat to U.S. Sovereignty

The first category of explanations attributes the U.S. aversion to ratifying the CRC, or any other international human rights treaty for that matter, to the issue of sovereignty. The argument is that the U.S. has avoided ratifying the CRC because it does not want to undermine its sovereignty by submitting itself to the international community. Implicit in this argument is the fear that international human rights treaties give unelected members of the U.N. the power to determine U.S. domestic policy. Opponents of the CRC argue, “[w]e do not elect the members of the United Nations. In fact, many of the governments in the U.N. are not even elected by their own people, much less the people of this country” (Farris 1997). Thus, the argument goes, ratification of the CRC would be a violation of the principle of self-government and national sovereignty, as it would allow an unelected, international quasi-government (i.e. the United Nations) to rule over American domestic politics.

A closely related argument with respect to U.S. sovereignty is the argument of federalism. Concerns about federalism are premised on the fact that provisions of the CRC include policy areas (e.g. healthcare, education and juvenile justice) that are primarily within the purview of states, not the national government. As such, opponents point out that ratifying the CRC would result in violation of states' rights guaranteed by the Tenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Threat to Parents' Rights

The second, and more controversial, argument is that the CRC is “anti-parent.” The argument asserts that the Convention essentially robs parents of the right to raise their children to their best judgment and control. Opponents of the CRC—mainly various conservative religious and pro-family organizations, such as the Christian Coalition, Concerned Women for America, Eagle Forum, Family Research Council, the Heritage Foundation, and Focus on the Family—further argue that the Convention shifts the responsibility of child rearing from the family to the state and ultimately the United Nations (Kilbourne 1996, 442). Often using inflammatory language, they claim that the CRC is the “ultimate program to annihilate parental authority” that will “deconstruct the two-parent family and counter traditional religious norms” (Guzman 1995, 3; Fagan 2011).

One commonly cited example in support of the “anti-parent” argument is a CRC provision dealing with a child’s right to privacy. Opponents interpret this provision to mean that children are free to do whatever they please without the consent of their parents. They claim that the right to privacy will subsequently create “the right to have an abortion without parental consent, the right to fornication and homosexual conduct within the home, the right to view obscenity within the home, and the right to obtain and use birth control” (Phillips, n.d.). Likewise, the opposition camp is concerned that the CRC allows children to choose their religion without any regard for their parents’ wishes, to sue parents who violate provisions of the Convention, and to access violent and obscene television, books, or movies over parental objection. And the list goes on. The bottom line, however, is that the CRC would be used to police over parents, undermine parental authority, and prioritize children’s rights over parents’ rights.

Misplaced Arguments

The arguments about U.S. sovereignty and parents’ rights are certainly compelling as long as their fears and assumptions are correctly deduced. The opposition’s claims, however, are—for the most part—based on erroneous assumptions about the nature of international human rights treaties and the impact of the CRC within the U.S. context.

The CRC does not undermine U.S. sovereignty

The argument about sovereignty and federalism is unwarranted because it mischaracterizes the nature of international law in the United States. While it is true that the U.S. has traditionally valued sovereignty and federalism, the above explanation based on these values is irrelevant when it comes to international human rights regime, simply because international human rights treaties cannot weaken U.S. sovereignty or federalism. When the U.S. signs and ratifies international treaties, it uses reservations, understandings and declarations (RUDs) to draw a distinction between a self-executing treaty and a non-self-executing treaty. For a treaty declared to be non-self-executing, any rights articulated under such treaty are not enforceable in the U.S. unless they are implemented through legislation at the local, state, or federal level (Malone 2006, 33). Almost every international human rights treaty that the U.S. ratified has been deemed non-self-executing (Malone 2006; Todres 2006). Likewise, when the State Department asks Senate consent to ratification of the CRC, it will almost certainly include RUDs to make the CRC non-self-executing. As such, the CRC would not undermine U.S. sovereignty and federalism, as it leaves ultimate authority of implementation to the federal, state and local bodies of the U.S. government.

The lack of an international enforcement mechanism also counters the argument that the CRC threatens sovereignty. Even if the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the monitoring body of the CRC, determines that the U.S. does not comply with the obligations set by the Convention, neither the Committee nor the U.N. has legal enforcement power to hold the U.S. accountable. In fact, existing enforcement mechanisms of the CRC are considered to be weaker than those of other international human rights conventions (Todres 2006, 28). In theory, enforcement of the CRC is possible through the mobilization of international pressure and the use of interstate complaints against states parties (Kilbourne 1996, 443). However, the likelihood of international pressure or interstate complaints having actual enforcement effect is extremely low, because (1) there are have historically been few reputational costs for violating human rights and (2) interstate complaint has never been invoked, not only within the CRC but also within all other international human rights treaty monitoring bodies (Simmons 2009, 124; Rodley 2013, 633). The only other enforcement mechanism is the state-reporting mechanism that requires states to submit periodically a report describing the status and impact of

implementation of the CRC rights. But this mechanism also does not interfere with a state's sovereignty. Upon review of state reports, the Committee merely provides states with suggestions and general recommendations on improvement of children's rights. The Committee cannot compel states parties to comply with these recommendations. Thus, it would be inaccurate to assume that U.S. ratification of the CRC would somehow empower an international entity to rule over American domestic politics.

It might be important to posit a question in this context: if the CRC depends so much on states' voluntary implementation scheme and lacks strong enforcement mechanisms, then why should the United States bother ratifying the treaty? A short answer is that while international enforcement mechanisms are weak, national enforcement mechanisms are strong. More specifically, ratified international human rights treaties are important not because they empower the U.N. or treaty bodies to force states to comply with treaties, but because they influence domestic political mobilization and litigation in ways that domestic audience can demand rights directly from its government (Simmons 2009). How? When a state ratifies a human rights convention, it sends a message that its government strongly supports human rights, providing individuals the legitimacy in claiming rights that may arise under the treaty. Because of this legitimacy, the probability of success of mobilizing for rights demands increases, allowing individuals to pressure their government to live up to its legal obligations under the treaty. In this sense, ratified treaties essentially "pre-commit" a government to be receptive to rights demands (Simmons 2009, 144). This is especially true for the United States, where individuals have realistic means to demand human rights and jurisprudence plays a significant role in creating new rights through court decisions. Hence, the U.S. ratification of the CRC would be anything but meaningless.

The CRC does not threaten parental authority

Contrary to opponents' argument that the CRC threatens parental authority, the treaty's language, legislative history and jurisprudential interpretation reveal that the CRC actually emphasizes the importance of the role of parents in the development of children. Indeed, the CRC is not intended to undermine parents' rights or family structure, but rather to prevent the state from abusing human rights of children and to establish standards for the state to use when implementing legislation related to the well-being of children.

While addressing an exhaustive list of opponents' misinterpreted claims about parental authority is beyond the scope of this paper, a few examples will help illustrate that the CRC is not designed to undermine parental authority. To begin with, an examination of the text of the treaty reveals that the CRC is never meant to be anti-parent. The Preamble to the Convention recognizes family as "the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children." Article 5 also requires state parties to "respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents... to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child." The importance of parents and family in the development of children are further reinforced in eighteen other articles. The CRC recognizes that children do not exercise their rights in a vacuum, and so need parental supervision and guidance to fully realize their rights (Woodhouse and Johnson 2009, 10). In fact, the Committee on the Rights of the Child occasionally expresses concern for state parties where there is lack of sufficient parental guidance, as it did in its 1995 Statement of Concluding Observations for Jamaica (Kilbourne 1999, 29).

The parents' rights argument fails to understand that children's rights in the CRC are not rights against their parents but against their government. In human rights paradigm, a right-holder is simply a human individual and a right-addressee is a government (Nickel 2007). In the CRC context, right-holders

are any children in the world and the right-addressee is their governments. Therefore, civil and political rights articulated in the CRC, such as freedom of religion and right to privacy, are meant to protect children from the government, not parents. For example, when Article 13 of the Convention states, “The child shall have the right to freedom of expression,” it refers to the duty on the government’s side to not infringe upon children’s rights to free expression (Woodhouse and Johnson 2009, 11). Likewise, the provision about a child’s right to education under Articles 28 and 29 is not intended to interfere with the parents’ decisions about a child’s education. Instead, the CRC is meant to redress poor or unbalanced educational systems in some countries where girls, for example, do not have means to receive fair and equal education as boys (Blanchfield 2010, 11).

Perhaps the most frequently raised concern by conservative interest groups is the claim that the CRC restricts parents’ ability to teach their religion to their children. Again, this claim is misplaced. Article 14 states that governments shall “respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,” but also respect parents’ rights “to provide direction to the child in matters of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, in a manner consistent with evolving capacities of the child.” As the language of this article illustrates, the CRC recognizes the role of parents in raising their children in a certain religion, while ensuring that the government does not prohibit child’s freedom of religion or enforce state religion upon a child (Todres 2006, 24).

The above discussion demonstrates that concerns about the harmful effects of the CRC on parents’ rights are unfounded. The aim of the CRC is not to replace parents with the state as the new discipliner of children, but to protect children against governmental intrusion and abuse. Similarly, the argument of U.S. sovereignty fails, simply because the CRC lacks any credible enforcement mechanism and relies on the state’s voluntary efforts to implement provisions of the treaty. If the arguments against ratification are unsupported, then why is it that the U.S. still refuses to ratify the CRC? I argue that this is due to an institutional problem—that is, because of the supermajoritarian treaty ratification process of the U.S., it only takes a small conservative minority to make ratification of the CRC practically impossible. As previously mentioned, the most significant actors behind this “small conservative minority” are religious and pro-family interest groups.

Methodological Design

In order to study how religious and pro-family organizations were able to influence politicians to prevent the CRC ratification, one would first need to examine the legislative history of the treaty, and identify at which points and under whose decision the ratification process terminated. However, because no president has submitted the treaty to Senate for ratification, neither the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations nor the entire Senate has formally voted on the CRC ratification. Consequently, there is no way to examine voting records to identify which senators opposed the ratification. Nonetheless, several senators have expressed their dislike of the CRC in public, and some of them even drafted resolutions to oppose any actions that resemble the beginning of ratification. Thus a good place to start would be to identify such senators and investigate their ties with religious and pro-family groups.

The real task of this study is to determine exactly how to investigate the ties between senators and religious and pro-family groups. The most obvious approach would be to find out whether these interest groups have publicly endorsed senators who oppose the CRC. When a pro-family group, say Concerned Women for America, endorses a senator, presumably the senator will endeavor to represent the interests of that pro-family

organization. Second method is to explore whether senators have received campaign donations from any of the religious and pro-family groups. Again, financial contribution from these groups does not automatically mean that senators will oppose the ratification of the CRC, but religious and pro-family groups would presumably not donate money to politicians whose values are far apart from their own. Thus, I will use the Congressional Quarterly MoneyLine Database to track the flow of money between conservative groups and members of Congress. Lastly, the Congressional Quarterly Congress Collection provides “interest group ratings” that show how well each congressional member’s voting record aligns with each interest group’s principles. Although the American Conservative Union (ACU) is the only conservative interest group represented in this database, the ACU ratings will still provide a close approximation of the views of other conservative groups because the ACU is widely considered to be the umbrella organization for conservative forces.

Senate Politics and International Human Rights Treaties

The treaty ratification process in the United States has higher threshold and more number of “veto points” (points in which a treaty dies) than any other advanced industrial democracies (Moravcsik 2005, 187). To begin the treaty ratification process, the president first has to sign the treaty and transmit it to the Senate for advice and consent. If the president does not sign the treaty or submit it to the Senate, the ratification process stops. If the treaty proceeds, however, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (SCFR) considers the treaty and may or may not report it to Senate for further consideration. The control of the committee goes to whichever party has the majority in the Senate at a given time. When the SCFR approves the treaty, it must then be approved by two-thirds of the Senate. If all 100 senators were present on the floor of the senate, then 67 of them would have to vote in favor of the treaty for it to proceed to the president’s desk for final signature. This means that support of a large and diverse coalition of senators, along with the president, is required for ratification, which is hardly feasible in any political system (Moravcsik 2002).

What this complex process implies for the CRC is that conservative religious and pro-family groups only need to secure the votes of one-third minority of senators or one vote of the SCFR chairperson to prevent the U.S. ratification of the CRC. Because overriding the decision of a SCFR chair to block consideration of a treaty is nearly impossible (such override also requires a two-thirds majority vote), the conservative groups’ task becomes even easier when the committee chairperson holds conservative views (Moravcsik 2005, 187). It is thus not surprising to learn that supermajoritarian voting procedures of the Senate and the insuperable power of the SCFR chairperson have been the primary hurdles for the ratification of the CRC. The SCFR chairs certainly have had influence, most notably Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), a prominent U.N. skeptic who said, “as long as I am chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, it is going to be very difficult for this treaty even to be given a hearing” (quoted in Kilbourne 1999).

The pattern of partisan division and ideological split over international human rights treaties further impedes the ratification of the CRC. In general, support for international human rights treaties comes disproportionately from liberal, Democratic presidents and members of Congress, while conservative, Republican presidents and members of Congress are more inclined to oppose international human rights treaties (Moravcsik 2005). The partisan cleavage over human rights treaties becomes clear when one examines the history of U.S. signature and ratification of major international human rights treaties (See Table 1).

As Table 1 illustrates, all four ratifications were accomplished under a Democratic majority Senate. In fact, it seems though a strong Democratic control of the Senate, with at least 55 Democratic senators, is a necessary condition for the ratification of human rights treaties. However, this is not to say that a Democratic-controlled Senate always ratifies a human rights treaty, as it has also come and gone without ratification. Furthermore, Democratic presidents made eight of nine signatures. A long lag time between the date of open for signature and the date of U.S. ratification is also noticeable; the four ratified human rights treaties had a lag time ranging from six to 40 years, though the lag time has been decreasing over the years. A simple pattern of which party will sign and ratify human rights treaties cannot be observed, but a general trend shows that Democrat presidents and senators are more likely to support these treaties than their Republican counterparts.

| Treaty* | Open for Signature | U.S. Signature | White House | Senate Majority | U.S. Ratification | White House | Senate Majority | Lag Time |
|----------|--------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|----------|
| Genocide | 9-Dec-48 | 11-Dec-48 | D: Truman | R (51) | 25-Nov-88 | R: Reagan | D (55) | 40 years |
| ICERD | 7-Mar-66 | 28-Dec-66 | D: Johnson | D (61) | 21-Oct-94 | D: Clinton | D (57) | 28 years |
| ICCPR | 16-Dec-66 | 5-Oct-77 | D: Carter | D (61) | 8-Jun-92 | R: Bush | D (56) | 15 years |
| ICESCR | 16-Dec-66 | 5-Oct-77 | D: Carter | D (61) | - | - | - | - |
| CEDAW | 18-Dec-79 | 17-Jul-80 | D: Carter | D (58) | - | - | - | - |
| CAT | 10-Dec-84 | 18-Apr-88 | R: Reagan | D (55) | 21-Oct-94 | D: Clinton | D (57) | 6 years |
| CRC | 20-Nov-89 | 16-Feb-95 | D: Clinton | R (53) | - | - | - | - |
| ICMW | 18-Dec-90 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| CRPD | 13-Dec-06 | 30-Jul-09 | D: Obama | D (58) | - | - | - | - |
| CPED | 20-Dec-06 | - | D: Obama | - | - | - | - | - |

*Key:

- Genocide: Genocide Convention
- ICERD: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- ICCPR: International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
- ICESCR: International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- CAT: Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- CRC: Convention on the Rights of the Child
- ICMW: International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families
- CRPD: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- CPED: International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance

Because the decentralized U.S. electoral system rarely generates a supermajoritarian Senate controlled by a single party, a one-third-minority group of conservative senators (usually Republicans and southern Democrats) becomes the most formidable veto point for the ratification of the CRC. The supermajoritarian treaty ratification process of the Senate, the special role of the SCFR chair, and the ideological cleavage between supporters and opponents help to explain why the U.S. is so detached from the international human rights regime. Yet in order to explain exactly why conservative presidents and senators consistently prevent ratification of the CRC, I need to examine the concentrated, active role of various conservative religious and pro-family groups that are behind these presidents and senators.

The Role of Religious and Pro-Family Organizations

The above discussion illustrates that the supermajoritarian treaty ratification process presents an institutional problem for the U.S. in ratifying international treaties. The most important veto players are the president, the chair of the SCFR, and the one-third minority of senators with conservative views opposed to international treaties. When this institutional problem is coupled with powerful interest groups' efforts at thwarting the ratification of international human rights treaties, the U.S. becomes more detached from the international human rights regime. In the CRC context, religious and pro-family organizations have influenced various veto players to make sure that the CRC "will never see the light of day."

The religious and pro-family groups are a major political force in the United States. Despite the fact that much of the opposition to the CRC, particularly arguments about sovereignty and parental rights, lacks substantive merits, religious and pro-family groups have been able to dominate the domestic debate over ratification of the CRC (Moravcsik 2002, 363). Mancur Olson's (1971) study of collective action, in which Olson concludes that larger interest groups are less organized and active than smaller interest groups, helps explain the success of religious and pro-family groups. While conservative religious and pro-family groups are smaller in size and quantity than organizations in support of the CRC (e.g. Human Rights Watch, the American Bar Association, and the Children's Defense Fund), the anti-CRC forces are generally better organized, more vocal, and better funded than the pro-CRC groups. As a result, religious and pro-family groups have been quite effective in mobilizing opponents to lobby against the CRC. For example, Senate staffers report that they have received 100 opposition letters for every letter in support of the CRC (Kilbourne 1999, 28). On the other hand, child advocacy groups such as the Children's Defense Fund allocate resources on creating direct welfare programs and services for children, rather than on lobbying for the CRC ratification (Moravcsik 2005, 183).

A close examination of the legislative history of the CRC in Senate provides empirical evidence that conservative religious and pro-family organizations have successfully influenced various senators to oppose the ratification. The timing of the CRC's birth was not favorable for the treaty in the United States. When the CRC was adopted and open for signature in 1989, Republican President Bush had the control of the executive branch while the Democratic Party had the majority in both House and Senate. Had President Bush signed and transmitted the CRC to Senate, the treaty could have been ratified, especially because the Senate at the time had reached the "necessary" condition of securing at least 55 Democratic senators (See Table 2). With the co-sponsorship of 59 other senators, many of whom were Republicans, Senators Bill Bradley (D-NJ) and Richard Lugar (R-IN) drafted and passed Senate Resolution 231, which urged the president to forward the CRC to the Senate for a speedy ratification. A similar resolution was passed in the House, with bipartisan sponsorship from Congressmen Gus Yatron (D-PA) and Doug Bereuter (R-NE).

Table 2: Party Control of White House and Congress, 1989-2015

| Table 2: Party Control of White House and Congress, 1989-2015 | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Year | President | Senate Majority | House Majority |
| 1989-1991 | R: Bush | D (55) | D (270) |
| 1991-1993 | R: Bush | D (57) | D (270) |
| 1993-1995 | D: Clinton | D (53) | D (258) |
| 1995-1997 | D: Clinton | R (53) | R (234) |
| 1997-1999 | D: Clinton | R (55) | R (227) |
| 1999-2001 | D: Clinton | R (54) | R (222) |
| 2001-2003 | R: W. Bush | D (50)* | R (222) |
| 2003-2005 | R: W. Bush | R (51) | R (225) |
| 2005-2007 | R: W. Bush | R (55) | R (229) |
| 2007-2009 | R: W. Bush | D (48)** | D (235) |
| 2009-2011 | D: Obama | D (56) | D (255) |
| 2011-2013 | D: Obama | D (51) | R (240) |
| 2013-2015 | D: Obama | D (53) | R (234) |
| *Republican (49) and Independent (1) | | | |
| **Independents (2) caucusing with Democrats, Republican (49), and Vacant (1) | | | |

Despite such bipartisan support for ratification, President Bush refused to sign or submit the CRC. Why is it that President Bush opposed the CRC when Senator Lugar, also a Republican, supported the same treaty? Of course, not all Republicans hold similar views, and neither can be said about Democrats. However, Senator Lugar and President Bush differ in one aspect in that the former has no significant ties with religious and pro-family groups while the latter has longstanding ties with these groups—an interesting finding given that Senator Lugar has served as the SCFR chairman during the Reagan and the W. Bush Administrations. For example, President Bush was endorsed by pro-family groups, most notably the Eagle Forum and the Heritage Foundation, while Senator Lugar, a strong fiscal conservative but a modest social conservative, lacked such endorsements. Furthermore, the ACU rating for Senator Lugar dropped from an 88 in 1988 to a 75 in 1989, a year when Lugar drafted Senate Resolution 231. To put this in perspective, Senator Jesse Helms has consistently received a 100, with one exception in 1976 when he got a 96.

In 1995, when President Clinton signed the CRC, Senator Helms introduced Resolution 133, expressing “that the primary safeguard for the well-being and protection of children is the family, and that, because the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child could undermine the rights of the family, the President should not sign and transmit it to the Senate.” The resolution drew 26 co-sponsors, all of them Republican. Because Senator Helms was the chairman of the SCFR, the Clinton Administration did not submit the treaty to Senate (Blanchfield 2010). Likewise, the divided government constantly generates a stalemate between the executive and legislative branches, where a Republican president refuses to submit the treaty to a Democratic-controlled Senate or a Democratic president decides not to waste political

capital by submitting the treaty to a Republican-controlled Senate. Clearly, there is an institutional problem here—because presidents are well aware of their and senators’ roles as veto players in the supermajoritarian treaty ratification process, they deliberately avoid submitting the CRC for ratification.

A similar pattern can be observed today. In March 2011, Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC) introduced Senate Resolution 99, a resolution that is almost identical to Helms’ Resolution 133 in 1995. DeMint’s resolution states that the president should not transmit the CRC to the Senate as the treaty “undermines traditional principles of law in the United States regarding parents and children.” The resolution garnered support from 37 Republicans and none of Democrats. Although the 112th Senate had a Democratic majority, DeMint’s resolution made clear that at least 38 senators would reject the ratification of the CRC, suggesting that even if 62 other senators vote in favor of the ratification, the two-thirds majority threshold would not be met. This explains why President Obama did not submit the CRC to the Senate. Not surprisingly, DeMint has close ties with religious and pro-family groups who have made financial contribution to DeMint’s campaigns. For example, the Christian Coalition donated over \$2,000, the Eagle Forum \$5,000, and the Heritage Foundation \$5,000. Of course, the exact amount Senator DeMint’s campaigns received from individual members of these interest groups is incalculable, as above donations are contributions made under political action committees representing these organizations.

What needs further explanation, however, is that it is puzzling why President Clinton did not take advantage of the period from 1993 through 1995 to submit the CRC when both chambers of Congress had a Democratic majority (See Table 2). The same question is especially relevant for President Obama during the period from 2009 to 2011, when Senate had a decisive Democratic majority with 56 senators. One can only speculate as to why Clinton and Obama did not transmit the CRC to Senate during such favorable periods of time. However, two explanations—one political and one institutional—can be hypothesized. First, it may be that these presidents, recently elected, did not consider the CRC as one of their priority issues that need to be dealt immediately. The second and more probable explanation consistent with the argument of this essay is that a 53-majority and a 56-majority during Clinton Administration and Obama Administration, respectively, are simply not the same as two-thirds majority of 67 senators required to secure the ratification. Though a pattern of U.S. ratification of international human rights treaties reveals that at least 55 Democratic senators were required for ratification, anything less than two-thirds majority cannot be understood as a guaranteed ratification. As such, in spite of the Democratic majority in Senate, Presidents Clinton and Obama may have decided not to waste political capital by submitting the CRC with the likely chance that one-third conservative minority would be coalesced against the ratification.

Conclusion

The conservative religious and pro-family groups have dominated the debate over the CRC ratification. While their arguments about the CRC's threat to U.S. sovereignty and American parents' authority are largely misplaced, their efforts to prevent the CRC ratification have been effective and successful. On the one hand, this is because conservative religious and pro-family groups are better organized, better funded, and more active than their counterparts. These interest groups have focused on making sure the Senate will not ratify the CRC, while organizations in support of the CRC such as the Children's Defense Fund have focused on creating tangible children welfare programs at home. More importantly, however, the supermajoritarian treaty ratification process involving various veto players is too easy to manipulate to stop the ratification. It seems that conservative religious and pro-family groups only need to secure the votes of one-third minority of senators, one vote of the SCFR chairperson, or a Republican president to prevent the U.S. ratification of the CRC. The highly decentralized political system of the U.S. almost always creates one of these three conditions. The party control of the executive and legislative branches has been frequently divided; a single party has never gained a two-thirds majority of the Senate since 1967.

The above institutional explanation behind the U.S. failure to ratify the CRC explains why there is a general reluctance in the U.S. to ratify international human rights treaties. While the United States undoubtedly supports human rights norms, as it has been instrumental in drafting almost every major international human rights treaty including the CRC, the political institution within the U.S. is all too complicated and decentralized for treaty ratification at home. The result is a paradox in which the U.S. enthusiastically helps spread human rights norms in the international sphere while failing to recognize in the domestic sphere the human rights norms it helped to create for other countries. The U.S. lack of commitment to international human rights treaties is thus not a product of short-term power politics among politicians but a consequence of a decentralized structure of American political institutions for protecting minorities that dates back to the birth of the United States. Not surprising, then, that the U.S. has only ratified four major international human rights conventions, whereas other authoritarian regimes such as China and Iran have ratified five.

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I INTERVIEW: SERGIO RODRIGUEZ & GERARDO MUYSHONDT

STEPH SPRINGER, CAMERON STEVENS (PENN STATE UNIVERSITY)

ABSTRACT:

*The following is a condensed and edited transcript of an interview of the creators of a new documentary trilogy on the Salvadoran Civil War conducted by JLA editors Steph Springer and Cameron Stevens. In this feature, Sergio Rodriguez and Gerardo Muysbondt, producers of *El Salvador: Lost Files of the Conflict*, provide their candid views on the causes of Salvadoran Conflict, the Cold War, and, more generally, the process of documentary filmmaking.*

Stephanie: Hello. To begin, could we have each of you introduce yourselves and describe the role you played in making the documentary?

Sergio: I was executive associate producer - basically, the manager of the team in the filming part. I started this project with Gerardo, although there were 30-40 other people also working on it. It was a non-profit project about the war in El-Salvador that has taken us four years to make. I'll let Gerardo [continue]...

Gerardo: Oh, and his name is Sergio Rodriguez by the way! But my name is Gerardo Muyschondt. I was the director of the film, so I was in charge of all the technical stuff from hiring the people behind the cameras, to deciding what kind of equipment we were going to use. It's a very important role. Both of us who are here right now, we were a part of deciding the editorial content of the movie, basically the backbone of the entire project. So that's what I had to do, make sure that everybody was working, and was okay while we were putting the film together.

Stephanie: Could you give some background information to our readers - tell us about the documentary, the war itself, what you chose to include, and why?

Sergio: Maybe telling you how the documentary started... wait, are you students of Professor Wanner? [Catherine Wanner, Professor of History, Anthropology, and Religious Studies, Barry Director of the Paterno Fellows Program]

Stephanie: Yes, I took a class with her last semester.

Sergio: When I was a student here at Penn State, I took a class with her on the history of communism, and we spent a week talking about El Salvador. In that class it was mandatory that we watch a movie about El Salvador. She suggested two of them: Salvador, and I think the other was Romero. They are pretty imprecise about what actually happened; both are pretty biased. I mean Salvador was made by Oliver Stone, he is openly leftist, and he didn't even get the name right.

It's El Salvador, not Salvador, so imagine how the content is [laughs again].

Gerardo: That's like calling a movie "United" or ...

Sergio: ... or just "States." So the thing is, I told her, "You can't show this movie for academic purposes." We ended up seeing another one that I recommended, but it was made by Mexicans and with Mexican actors. That's like a movie about the United States with a British accent. The thing is, later on I graduated in 2011. I had known Gerardo for a while, but I met Mr. Simon in 2012 and he told me that he had a personal video collection that he had started back in 1979 when El Salvador had a coup. He started recording the evening news. He got his videomax (like an old VHS recorder) and started recording all evening news, and he did this for twelve years, every day. If you sit down and watch his material it takes you three years, without going to the bathroom, and eating while you're watching it. So he asked, "what should we do? I have all of this material, all of these terabytes of low quality video ...

At that point, the three of us got together and started talking about doing a documentary about El Salvador. We did a couple market studies of how the story has been told by one of the two groups of the war, by the left, the guerillas. There is huge misinformation about what really happened. We had this material, so we said, "Why don't we do a project that is unbiased, that tells the truth about both sides of the story?" We wanted to get the protagonists of the stories in it, not to tell our version of the story but to let them tell it. We used all of this material to accompany whatever they said. Also, we got some newspapers to give us all of their footage and prints from the day, and we put that in the movie. That's where Gerardo comes in. He's a publicist, so he has a lot of experience with documentaries. He did one about El Salvador, about the World Cup, and that's where his artistic mind comes into play. I'll let Gerardo speak to this now.

Gerardo: I think if you have to summarize what we did, it was to try and tell somebody who had not lived in El Salvador (or had): “We had a war.” We were after what had caused the war, we were after how the war turned out, and what had happened after the war ended. That’s basically the story that we are trying to tell here. It started that we were planning on doing an hour and a half documentary, but once we got the whole picture of what we were actually doing, we realized that the story couldn’t be told responsibly in just 90 minutes. That’s why we decided to do three volumes, a trilogy. We decided to try to have the broadest perspective ever in the history of documenting the Salvadoran Civil war. That was the purest objective that we had. We wanted to talk to the guerillas, we wanted to talk to the Republican party, we wanted to talk to the military, we wanted to talk to Catholic church, we wanted to talk to the local press, because those were the stakeholders of the war. That was what we thought probably the hardest part would be, getting people to talk about it. But when we started, we realized that everybody has a story, and everybody wanted to talk about what happened.

We didn’t have much resistance from practically anyone, except from those who are still politically active. All of the other people who are not politically active, people who lived in the 80s or 90s, they were pretty honest about their approaches and how they matured their ideas since they were twenty year old kids, they’re all grandpas and grandmas now. They have matured a lot and are not trying to defend an ideological point of view any more, which I think gives them a completely different perspective than any of the other documentaries that have been done on the Salvadoran Civil War, because the previous efforts had been done while the war was still going on which made them a bit dishonest. The other documentaries were just trying to convince you as an American that “I am right and the other guys are the bad guys of the story.” But right now, they [the interviewees] don’t care about what you think. They just care about trying to tell us, the new generations, what made them tick back then. Sometimes they

even openly recognize where they were mistaken. This is amazing, seeing these guys who were in your history books telling me, “You know what? I actually regret thinking like that” now that I have a “software update” in my brain and the ideology that I had in the war has fallen away. That’s what was really fresh about this approach.

Stephanie: As a followup question, were any of the members of your team involved in the war personally? Were your personal stories included at all?

Sergio: Mr. Simon was the president of the Chamber of Commerce in the day, and although he was not involved directly in any way, he was, and still is, a very influential businessman in El Salvador (so he does represent the private enterprise side of the situation). Remember, the country was communist at the time, he was definitely a target. He can tell you stories about it. Private enterprise played a very important role in the peace accords because they could meet in other countries with the guerillas and tell them, “Okay, all we need is for you to stop killing us so we can start talking, and we’ll help you guys start speaking with the government.” They played a very decisive role because they were the ones who were going to help rebuild the country; they were the job creators. So yes, Mr. Simon played a very important role in the situation and he was really the one responsible for the videos. For the record though, not even the TV channels have those videos because one of them had the records from three of the channels and they all burned down about 15 years ago. Something happened in the building and it burned, so only he has them.

Gerardo: To complement what Sergio is saying, everyone has a story regarding the war. We all know someone who knows someone. That’s how it is in El Salvador. Either you know someone who was shot in the war, [maybe] not necessarily killed, but someone who experienced an attempt on their life. All of us have friends who never made it to school the next morning. Stuff like that happened every

single day. That's one of the things that, editorial-wise we tried to stay away from, because what we wanted to do was tell the story of the war, not the stories of the war... I don't know if that makes any sense, but in Spanish it sounds good [laughs].

If we started telling personal stories it wouldn't have been a trilogy, it would have been a billion volumes. It was really hard to stay away from that; to fight the temptations of doing the personal stories and trying to individualize something that affected a country of 6 million people. We did have some interviews of guys who were recommended to us. We were told that they had amazing stories. Once we started listening to their stories, they were compelling, and very touching, but it didn't bring any context on why El Salvador had fought a war. So that's why we tried to stay away from the individualization of the story. We wanted to stay on the facts of how it was fought, why it was fought, and why it came to an end. It was really hard to find that notation.

Cameron: The tagline of the documentary is, "No one is entirely good, nor entirely bad". The question I have is about creating a narrative of the war, or any historical event where there isn't a group with a clear moral high-ground, and where there is so much grey area. How can you attempt to tell an objective story based off an event like that?

Gerardo: That's an excellent question. In order to not fall into that trap, which is really easy to fall into when you're documenting something, what we decided was to attempt to do a documentary that doesn't use a voiceover, a voice of god. You know how in Discovery documentaries where they say, "And then the hero approaches..." They unintentionally orient the audience through the narrative and are practically fixing your mindset. What we wanted to do was to stay as far away from that as possible, so we didn't use any voiceover recording. We had to assemble a six hour documentary where we had to make a link

between every testimony by editing, and that really made the post-filming process easily twelve to fifteen months. It would have been so much easier to use the voice of god to make everything public property. Running into different positions that countered each other, sometimes we would hit a dead end with the editing, and have to redo about an hour of the documentary just to give it an objective perspective. We wanted the viewers to make up their own mind about what really happened. You're going to be the judge of the version of the Salvadoran Civil War; it's going to be your responsibility, not mine.

We tried to show everybody this with the tagline of the film ["No one is entirely good, nor entirely bad"], that's how we launched it commercially. No matter which version of the story you hear, it makes sense. That's actually what went wrong with the Salvadoran Civil War. The guerillas were laughing at us, telling us that they had more embassies around the world than the establishment (the government) and the guerillas said, "That's why we kept on getting so much funding, because everybody out there was only ever hearing our version of the story." Those guys had reasons to be angry, but was it so much of a reason to pick up an AK-47 and start shooting people? Probably not, at least from my point of view. Of course, there were some things that needed to change, and they had their own way of getting their message across. 10-15 years after the war, those people had largely lost their perspectives, that's what they tell us. They had become as inhumane as the other side, they were killing as many people as the other side, they had as many massacres under their belts as the other guys, but they were still receiving a lot of funding because they were the good guys in the international scene.

If you talk to people around the world, you can see that some people still think of them that way [as the "good guys"], but both sides really had legitimate reasons to fight for what they were fighting for. That's why you have a war! You don't have a war because one side is right and the other side is full

of blood-thirsty villains. It doesn't work that way. What we're trying to show people is that it doesn't matter where your ideology is in your head, war is not the answer. You have to learn to understand each other. That's why I like the college atmosphere - here in college, you're studying communism, you're studying capitalism, and the point is that you have to make up your own mind. To make up your own mind without being a fanatic, you really have to make up "your own" mind. That's what we were trying to do here, allow everybody to understand where the "other guys" were coming from. To begin to understand that nobody is right or wrong, they just have different versions of their truth.

Cameron: If you're making a documentary that allows the audience to determine their own views on the war, to think up their own narrative of what really went on in the war, this is a good approach. However, from a foreign policy standpoint, is it possible for third-party actors like the United States to have objective or moral foreign policies for situations like the Salvadoran Civil War?

Sergio: I don't think that it is necessary for them to be objective. Usually in the media you hear "Oh, they're looking out for their own self-interest", and what else do you expect? A government's job is to look out for their own interests, and what is best for their own citizens ... our war in El Salvador was the last one of the Cold War. The peace agreements really started when the Berlin wall came down in 1989; they called it the last offensive. When the Berlin Wall came down, so did the U.S. funding. Now that the Cold War wasn't there anymore, it wasn't in their [the U.S.] self-interest anymore, the Soviets didn't exist anymore, and thus the Domino effect wasn't there anymore. What we usually say is that even if the Cold War wasn't around, if there hadn't have been the ideological influence from the Soviets, we would have killed ourselves by ourselves. But with the United States and Russia, it

made everything even bigger and longer. I don't think a country needs to be objective, it needs to be biased towards what they want, but that doesn't mean it always has to justify the means though.

Gerardo: Just to complement that, let's think about the context of what was going on back then. You had the missile crisis in the 60s, right? The thing was, the communists, they had control over Cuba, they had control over Nicaragua (they had taken over the Nicaraguan government). Now they were going after El Salvador, and that would have practically sliced the Americas in half. They needed El Salvador to complete that slice, coming through the Caribbean, through Central America. That's how El Salvador, a tiny country the size of New Hampshire, all of the sudden became relevant.

But you have to understand that we were completely irrelevant. We had no resources, we had no petroleum to fight over, we had no diamonds, no copper. We just were geographically in the wrong place at the wrong time. That's why we became relevant all of the sudden. Let's face it, we did have reasons for our people to be divided, but not to go to war. Honduras never had a war, Guatemala had a war, but it lasted only briefly. But our war, let's say we had some social issues, but because of the funding from the Cold War, it was like Vietnam 2.0. So maybe we had a little flame, we had our issues, but the Cold War just threw fuel on to the fire.

Sergio: Yeah, we literally had Vietnam's helicopters.

Gerardo: They shipped the helicopters from the other side of the world, right into the United States' backyard. That really shows how important the El Salvadoran war was to Reagan. Legend says that guy, in his first meeting with his chiefs of staff, opened a huge American map. He pointed at El Salvador and he said, "Communism stops here". So he decided, after Jimmy Carter who had a relatively soft-handed perspective on how to approach things in the Americas, that the United States needed to compensate. He decided to

give it everything he had, but without winning the war. That's what was really hurtful for Salvadorans.

I asked one of the guys in the US government who we had a chance to talk with, and he said that it wasn't in the United States' best interest to finish the war right away because they also needed the Soviet Union to run into bankruptcy as soon as possible. They knew that the communist system would eventually bankrupt, but they needed to speed things up because otherwise the threat of nuclear war was still there. The United States needed that system to fail, to fail without firing a single bullet. He said that the United States had several traps that they placed so that the Soviet Union would walk into them and get bogged down; one of those traps was really the space program. After Apollo 11, when we landed the first man on the moon and saw that there was nothing there, there was no reason to continue. All of the space program was really an ego boost. It was just a pissing contest. So then the United States had won, and we needed to keep the Soviets spending. That's what they were trying to do in El Salvador and in some of the other wars around the world. They were all part of the plan to get the Soviet Union to fall into bankruptcy as soon as possible. They needed us, we were just collateral damage of the war that was actually happening. The world and the war just somehow managed to work itself into El Salvador.

Cameron: My next question has to do with how El Salvador has healed. How has the country changed politically and socially in the years since the conflict? What does modern day El Salvador look like?

Sergio: It depends on what person you ask. For people in our generation, people who weren't around in 1992, we obviously don't remember anything about the war. Politics-wise there is still great polarization. If you ask Mr. Ricardo Simon, he'd probably tell you a very different story, and Gerardo would probably tell you something different as well. Currently we have one of the guerilla leaders, one of the guys with the most blood on his hands, as the current president. If you think about it, with the current peace, former terrorists have come into

power. It sounds nice, but the thing is that they were trained to handle guns and fight in mountains. They had no education, in many cases they didn't even have a chance to graduate from primary school, and now they're ministers and in positions like that. They came into power, they won by 6,000 votes, and now the economy is doing poorly, delinquency is in the clouds, and the political polarization is worse than ever. The country is still very divided, even though many of the people in my generation don't even know what happened in the war. That's why we needed to do this project.

Doing market studies, we found that such a telling of the story of the war was needed. In textbooks, we found that the word "guerilla" was never mentioned. They were called "Social modernization motivators" or something like that. The book was approved during the Right-wing government ... what they were not saying, and what the students weren't seeing, was that there was another side to the story. Just to put it into context, the way we see it, Democrats and Republicans are pretty much the same thing ideologically. To us, both of them believe in democracy, both of them believe in private enterprise. They have different views about taxes and how to distribute the wealth. One of the sides is just more about creating opportunities, the other is more about trying to naturally generate those opportunities, but you're never debating a system. You just change presidents. Companies never have to worry that when a certain person comes into power that they would have to leave. In the U.S., capitalism itself is never in question. But in El Salvador, there are guys who promote communism and there are guys who promote capitalism. That's how extreme it is.

Gerardo: Yeah, Bill Clinton would have been a Republican back at home. Like an extreme right-wing Republican.

Sergio: So yeah, putting that in context you can see how difficult it is to just sit down and talk about the issues in El Salvador. Because, before you even sit down, they already consider you the enemy on both sides.

Gerardo: They were your enemy... your military enemy.

Cameron: What lessons could you take from the El Salvadoran civil war and apply to the civil wars going on now, like the one in Syria or elsewhere? What conflict resolution strategies do you think could learn from this? How do you think people should think about these civil wars given your experience researching this one?

Gerardo: I think the biggest lesson I personally learned, which is basically what I speak on behalf of, is [that] you got to try harder to listen, you know?

I only live in the States a couple of months at a time, but when the war was going on, my baby brother was born in the U.S. and we lived in Miami. He got married in New York and lives in New York, but he was born an American because of the war. And then back in '89, when the conflict got heated up again, we used to live in Mississippi.

In retrospect, I can tell you guys that Americans knew very little about the El Salvadoran conflict, although it was all over the papers all around the country. So when you knew very little about El Salvador's culture it was very easy to take sides ... but you actually don't know much about anything, and it's not anyone's fault! Similarly, El Salvadorians know very little about the U.S., and why should they? But still, they're very hard on their opinions about U.S. politics! You know, that's how we human beings tend to be. I don't know if it's western culture that we're like that, that we always feel obliged to have an opinion on everything. That's always happening. And I think that, with the El Salvadoran war much of the, of the help we really needed - because you guys saved our asses, putting it bluntly - I mean, El Salvador would be Cuba or something more similar to what Venezuela is right now, if it wasn't because of Ronald Reagan. And, I mean, freedom was what it was all about. We hadn't met freedom. We were a super right wing type of country, militarized government type of country.

Sergio: Fascist -

Gerardo: Yeah, it was fascist, very fascist-type of economy. It was great for the economy. But guess what? It was not good for civil liberties, not good for people who thought differently than the people that were in power. That's not right! It's not how our generation thinks. But he still tried. For example, I was talking to one of my brothers and my girlfriend, trying to explain to her what Sergio just explained about having two extreme political options. Centrism is not an option, because we're used to enemies that were killing each other. So you cannot reach across the hall and just change a person's mindset that has been built into his head for the past 60 years, with a friendly conversation.

Gerardo: As for some things - people act and thought from different nationalities ... they find it hard to understand [El Salvador], because their countries' democracies are much older than ours. They just don't work like that. So it's really frustrating for us to try to explain that to someone.

Gerardo: To sum it up, we have had to put a lot more dedication into our research, because you not only have to listen to the loudest voice in the room, but you have to then go and find out if it's really true what he's saying. This was just recently the Salvadoran case. The loudest voice in the room was the guerillas, and they studied Goebbels (you know, Joseph Goebbels). I mean, he's the guy that they studied to build their propaganda, so they use massive tactics to build ideas into our own heads, and we fall for them ... And for me it's just unbelievable - to see that people that went to the UN, and bluntly lied about what was going on in their different countries, "Oh, we're not committing fraud, and the boxes full of ballots, we don't know where they came from." Everybody in Venezuela knew they were committing fraud. But everybody else believed them. They just lied to the international community and the international community said, "Okay, I can tell my people this is what's actually going on with that country, so that justifies our posture regarding what's going on over there. We're not going to intervene." They only intervene when it becomes a [personal] threat, and eventually El Salvador was a threat to U.S. public safety.

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Sergio: What impressed me the most about this project is that this actually happened in El Salvador. When people tell you stories about wars and what they lived through (and you probably talked to someone about 9/11, which we saw on TV), we see it as movies, for some reason. Like a really weird terrorist, in a John Travolta or Arnold Schwarzenegger movie, but -

Gerardo: Travolta, are you serious?

Sergio: Well, I'm not really good on my hollywood. What I'm trying to say is these things actually happened - and there are incredible differences between studying them in a book, studying them in a classroom, and actually being there. For me it [reality] can be expressed in seeing journalists that are still famous and are still on TV, later in their careers, calmly narrating in the street in a peaceful environment. I compare it to seeing them younger [on Mr. Simon's tapes], where you see them, you recognize the streets, you recognize the buildings, you see buildings with bombs, and you realize, "Okay, this really happened, and this can happen again." Likewise, what's happening in the middle east, or with syria: that is actually happening. We must ask ourselves, what are our children or our grandchildren are going to say about what we did? What did we do to change it?

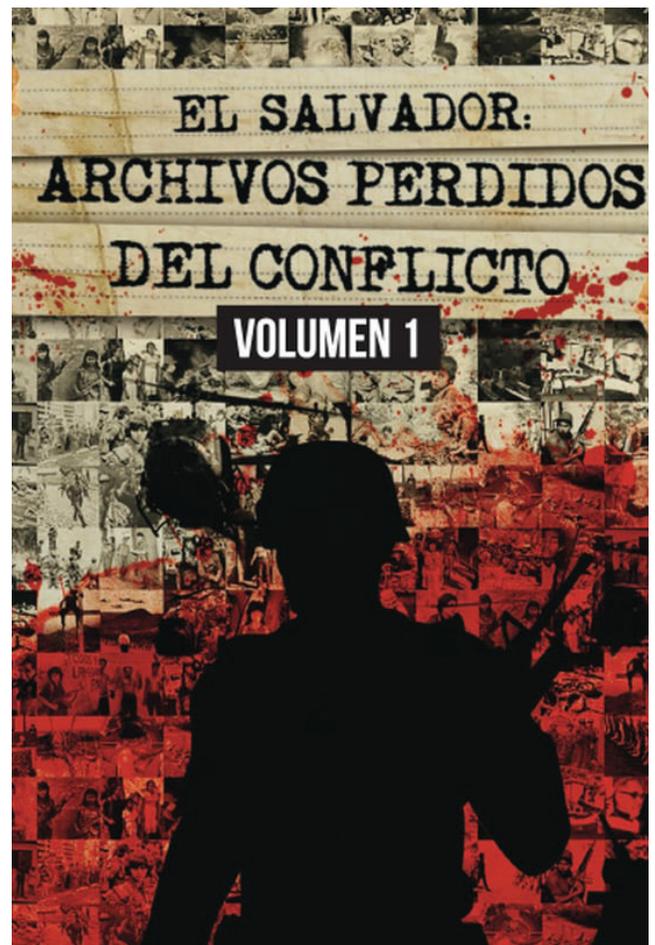
That's the message of this project - we cannot allow for conflicts to continue. They probably will for the rest of history, but at least not around our area.

You know, Salvadorans will sometimes romanticize the war, as though it was something heroic. Wars have nothing heroic about them. They're insane, they're horrible. You can hear testimonies from eight year old kids about how "they" [the guerillas] hanged their fathers in front of them. Watching these interviews, you don't realize it, but all of a sudden you're dropping tears from your eyes. It hurts - our country went through that, and it's really painful. There's nothing romantic about a war. It's a horrible thing. It's

not heroic, it's not cool. It sucks. And that's what we're trying to make some of our younger Salvadorans realize. Because some of them said, convincingly, as if they knew what they were talking about, "Nah, the war was necessary," and also, "it was heroic, and it had to happen." You can avoid it wars, you can - you have to! That's the message we're trying to send.

Cameron: Thank you both for your time, I don't know if we can come up with a better conclusion than that.

END



Sergio and Gerardo's film *El Salvador: Lost Archives of the Conflict* is available to rent or purchase on Vimeo

I NDO-CHINA TERRITORIAL DISPUTE: PRIDE, AGGRESSION, AND RESOLUTION

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ABSTRACT:

Territorial disagreements continue to restrain healthy diplomatic relations around the world. With India and China, unresolved disputes at Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh stir frequent conflicts that undermine the wellbeing of residents and harm bilateral agendas. Despite the 1962 Sino-Indian War and numerous formal/informal agreements, the two countries fundamentally disagree on how to interpret the politics of British-colonized India. Previous research has majorly covered the Simla Accord, Panchsheel Agreement, and the Sino-Indian War, but a comprehensive study on how Indo-China territorial disputes have festered, is lacking. This article explores diverse aspects of this dispute such as political elite dynamics, and the roles of media coverage and ulterior interests. The two countries are increasingly in focus as global players with great economic influence. Therefore, bilateral resolution will not just relieve military unrest, but will also reinforce South Asian diplomacy by closing a long pending geopolitical debate. This article highlights the possible pressures exerted by the threat of military and economic embargos, and promotes 'Cooperative Monitoring' as a reasonable methodology towards resolution. In conclusion, the article explains how India and China are likely to strengthen the status quo and split territorial responsibilities in order to maintain robust economic relations.

Introduction:

China and India share history as two of the oldest civilizations in the world living in harmony beside one another for many centuries. The two fastest growing and most populous economies in the world have recently fostered healthy bilateral trading and strategic relations extending their increasing international influence. But despite their diplomatic and economic ties, the two countries remain at odds about sensitive territorial disputes that have plagued Indo-China relations for more than 150 years now. This dispute centers on two territories (see map p.12) namely Aksai Chin, nestled between Jammu Kashmir in India and Xinjiang autonomous region in China, and Arunachal Pradesh (formerly North East Frontier Agency), lying next to the Tibet Autonomous Region in China and Northeast India. The two countries have had numerous negotiations and bilateral agreements that have failed to satisfy historical territorial claims of either side or define political borders. Such disputes have also led to a major war and a few skirmishes along the contested Himalayan regions. Through this research paper, I examine the Indo-China territorial disputes in Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh based on a history of inadequate policy-making, pride, and aggression. With a focus on potential solutions such as Cooperative Monitoring for negotiating jurisdiction, I also seek to rule out the decline of Sino-Indian relations from the perspectives of economic and security preservation.

Historical Background

In order to take change of rapidly changing politics today, China and India continue to hold negotiations over border policies that were founded in agreements from early 20th century and before. Though their territorial conflict has not escalated as frequently as those between China and Japan or India and Pakistan, it remains a source of geopolitical tensions in Asia. The Simla Accord of 1914 between Great Britain, China, and Tibet, was instrumental in devising the McMahon Line as the border between India and China. Conceived only a year after Tibet's declaration of independence, the Simla Accord was well-received and supported by Great Britain and Tibet, but China consistently denied its validity and participated under constraint, labelling the McMahon Line as an illegal bilateral agreement in defiance of the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention. In his realist analysis of the border conflict, Steven Hoffmann studies security concerns and vested interests between the two nations. According to Chinese authorities today, "Simla was an instance of British imperialism encroaching on Chinese territory via a British-Tibetan agreement that was never ratified by any government of China" much in contrast to India's exceptional acceptance of British acts in this treaty. (Hoffmann 2006, 167). Since Tibet had declared 'de facto independence' from the Government of the Republic of China from 1912, China's disapproval of the bilateral agreement was influenced by its internal autonomy issues. Expressing dissent over Tibet's very involvement in the Simla Accord, the Chinese government stated that, "Tibet lacked the right to conclude such an agreement, and the British-Indian methods for a formal border were illegitimate" (Hoffmann 2006, 169). For China to accept the McMahon Line as the official outline between India and China would spell trouble in two ways; firstly, this would involve seceding areas it historically had a claim upon, as Tibet was

under administrative rule of the Qing dynasty until 1912, and secondly, this would imply China's willingness to accept Tibet's authority as an autonomous state negotiating the border dispute. Thus, the Simla Accord was a defining chapter in Indo-China history as the first political talk that concluded in an extensive border outline, but China's strict and political denial of its legitimacy did not allow it to resolve both nations' underlying political issues.

China and India continue to hold different interpretations of the Simla Accord of 1914, and both extend territorial claims that are shrouded by nationalist claims of self-interest. Either side's policymakers sought to resolve the dispute by maximizing self-gains, but their interests in the claimed territory of Aksai Chin were not aligned and rather conflicted. Hoffman points out that the British ambition was to make Tibet a "genuine buffer state" of extensive autonomy that maintains a purely diplomatic status of subordination to China, legitimizing China's formal claims while providing protection to Indian borders (Hoffmann 2006, 168). Britain's claims at the time arose from threat perceived from China's increasing military presence in South Asia, particularly to north-eastern Indian states like Assam. While independent India did not support the views of Tibet as a buffer state, it endorsed the view that natural geographic features such as the Himalayas that separates watersheds, and the historical affinity of the local people to India, dictate that Aksai Chin and other contested Tibetan territories belong naturally to India (Hoffmann 2006, 166). But historical claims made by India were not taken seriously by China, which refused to validate the culture of locals or significance of the Himalayas. For China, the ambition was to control Tibet from the prying hands of British imperialism since no Chinese government had ever considered alienating any Tibetan territory, via the Simla Accord or any other means (Hoffmann 2006, 169). Chinese claims at the time and now remain that Tibet as a legally recognized Chinese region never had the authority to agree upon a formal demarcation of borders in Aksai Chin. The Simla Accord was thus indicative of a border dispute between India and China that was not just another pending bilateral agenda, but rather a highly politicized and militarized issues of pride and strategy for the nations.

A stark historical insight of the territorial conflict lies in the escalation of pride and nationalism into aggression that deteriorated India and China's initial diplomacy of peaceful coexistence and strategic cooperation. With the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and Indian independence in 1947, India and China began a new chapter in their shared history. Based on common historical experiences and diplomatic cooperation, the respective governments signed the Panchsheel Agreement in 1954, which dictated bilateral acts of mutual respect, non-interference, and non-aggression. In an article titled "Causes of the 1962 Sino-Indian War", the author discusses that the Indo-Tibetan historical relationship and China's growing ambitions soured such diplomatic treaties. Given India's grant of political asylum to the Dalai Lama during the 1959 Tibetan revolt, this was taken to be "India's meddling in their domestic affairs" by Chinese authorities (Abitbol 2009, 76). Since this act was in violation of non-interference prescribed in the Panchsheel Agreement of 1954, the peaceful coexistence of the two nations seemed doubtful after only a decade of their independence. Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou Enlai, India and China's leaders respectively, could not resolve and subsequently deferred the looming border conflict, which came back to haunt the two nations. The author states that "Chinese modernity and Indian intransigence on border conciliation" led to the

establishment of an arbitrary “line of actual control represented by the extent of either nation’s ability to administer the territory” (Abitbol 2009, 77). Therefore, the 20th century context shows that both countries initially recognized a need for rapid economic expansion and cooperation that could give impetus to unprecedented growth rates. But strictly defined national boundaries were considered a symbolic sign of pride and authority for any nation, particularly those building their economies up from previous regimes. Since the Simla Convention did not provide a mutually acceptable border demarcation, the Panchsheel agreement and consequently Indo-China friendship deteriorated at an accelerated rate, until it exploded in 1962.

The Sino-Indian War of 1962 was the culmination of the widely debated territorial conflicts along the unilaterally rejected McMahon Line. India did not realize the extent of China’s motivations and expressed that China’s betrayal and aggression was unprovoked. According to Neville Maxwell, both sides claimed that the other was expansionist and predictably changed their border patrols to armed forces from 1959 to 1962. During this time, Nehru consistently told an impatient China to accept “facts on the ground”, a reference to largely Indian occupation around the McMahon line, but continued with a “Forward Policy” of placing checking outposts along borders (Maxwell 2003, 101). Nehru’s unyielding approach and unawareness of China’s growing unease for India’s patrolling north of the McMahon line was central to the build-up to the war. On the other side, Chinese leaders Mao and Zhou were ready for the eventual commencement of war and prepared to advance from their failed practice of “Armed Coexistence”, when they saw that India would not negotiate “in a friendly fashion like Nepal, Burma, and Mongolia did” (Maxwell 2003, 108). China’s aggression was thus not rooted in just India’s counter military patrols but also in expecting an equally ambitious India to modify border discussions and bow to China’s growing might in South Asia, like smaller neighboring states did before. India was wrongful in imposing and extending a unilaterally rejected McMahon Line upon China, while China’s aggression was misplaced in expecting India to fall in line to their growing ambitions of dominating all disputed territories. The conflicted interests and the relatively fast-paced escalation of aggression in this war activated persistent mutual distrust in the political and economic actions of either nation. Therefore, lack of open dialogue and misunderstood expectations between India and China led to mass casualties and only minor relocations of a volatile border dispute that remained unresolved.

The Line of Actual Control or an informal ceasefire line between India and China was officially accepted after the Sino-Indian war of 1962, with Aksai Chin under Chinese administration and Arunachal Pradesh (NEFA) under Indian administration. On the political side of the conflict, India and China have transitioned into more accommodating and openly communicative nations. A Reuters report titled “China, India sign deal aimed at soothing Himalayan tension” reveals that in the political sphere both countries seek to alleviate growing distrust and maintain peace. The article states that under the new agreement of 2013’s bilateral meeting in Beijing, “the two sides will give notice of patrols to ensure they do not “tail” each other, “maximize self-restraint” where the line of control is unclear, and use a hotline between top-ranking officers” (Blanchard 2013, 1). Therefore, recent discussions of the territorial disputes have welcomed mutual interest and further negotiations towards resolution. This unravelling of an old political stalemate has also coincided with China’s apparent shifts in foreign policy from

an “abrasive diplomacy” due to domestic insecurities and lack of responsibility in international community, to a “peaceful rise” as a great power status (Christensen 2011, 5). India-China relations have only improved since the 1960s with more meetings and wider economic relations. Cooperation on the recent border defense treaty and other economic negotiations has brought political leaders of India and China on the same page, a significant advancement from the lack of dialogue when Nehru’s ideologies and Mao’s ambitions consistently conflicted.

Modern Legacy

The media coverage on the border conflict between India and China is skewed and imbalanced, which impacts pride and perceptions differently in either nation. India’s emphasis on the border conflict and its political commentary far outweighs China’s, which also downplays the role of the 1962 Sino-Indian war as part of its history. A recent article by popular newspaper Times of India gives a detailed account of what the Home Minister of India has to say about peace with China. Discussing the minister’s approach to the border row, the article includes his excerpts stating India-China negotiations will never compromise on national integrity, and that “peace cannot come at the cost of honour” (Times of India 2014, 2). Asking political leaders to comment on the border incursions and upcoming bilateral talks is common in Indian media sources, and this unfailingly feeds to the image of China held by the Indian public. On the other hand, Chinese media sources, mostly regulated by the government, undermine border issue reports and only seek to comment on the outcomes of bilateral talks. An article by Xinhua refers to the constant stream of border issues in Indian media sources as destructive to trade relations and sensationalist of isolated incidents (Bowen 2013, 2). Chinese media sources neither approve of the incursion claims nor agree with media reports seeking commentary on such issues. Chinese news agencies rather prefer to cover news on economic relations of the two countries. It is tricky and insufficient to claim that disproportionate media coverage may influence action on territorial conflicts, knowing that the two countries hold very different political and news media systems. But watching political leaders comment on such conflicts appeals to people’s sense of safety and sympathy. When discussing negotiations over territorial conflicts, macro-level talks that are held infrequently and often to no tangible outcomes, it is difficult to distinguish how much of political elites’ media participation is rhetoric and how much is representative of official policy. real policy talks that will follow through., Nevertheless, media coverage on the Indo-China border conflict plays a role in determining how much importance the public attaches to the issue, and how they perceive their government’s performance and reputation.

While significant improvements in diplomacy and communication are noteworthy, the political realist side of the conflict reveals that India and China continue to display a blatant disregard for bilateral negotiations by militarily preoccupying contested lands. While both countries maintain legal recognition for the LAC, military structures and civil incursions on either side are not uncommon. An article by BBC News reveals that border stand-offs between the two nations are increasing, with the Indian Home Ministry alleging that “there have been 334 transgressions by Chinese troops over the Indian border in only the first 216 days of 2014” along the Line of Actual Control (Pant 2014, 1). With recently appointed Indian ministers

aggressively addressing China's frequent border incursions and bringing global attention from news media, the territorial dispute is now in focus more than ever before. Both countries are more actively patrolling daily and increasing their military infrastructure around the contested areas, and it is now common to see troops routinely transgressing into areas administered by the other side, sometimes even days before or after major bilateral visits (Pant 2014, 2). Therefore, the political climate on border issues that had seemed to be encouraging and effective on paper has been fiercely neglected by military deployments. While the scale of military aggression with the Indo-China borders is no match for the relatively frequent skirmishes and tensions at the Indo-Pakistan contested regions, the disruption to the lives of inhabitants and failure to follow bilateral policies (even if implicit) need to be addressed. Recurrent violations of where the border lies according to the LAC and up to which point both sides patrol, reveal that the politics of the issue is not translating into effective governance of the disputed areas.

Envisaging the future of Indo-China relations from the perspective of their territorial conflict is crucial to comprehending the significance such conflicts hold, and where potential lies for improvements. From an economic outlook, the two nations hold incredible global influence with consumer markets, natural resources, and foreign investments. China is also currently India's largest trading partner with total trade between them exceeding \$65 billion from February to April 2015 (DGI&S 2016, 2). The two countries also together account for 37 per cent of the world's population (UN 2015, 1). Thus both countries have recognized the other's economic potential and how their geographical proximity can supplement easy trade and access to resources. Under such circumstances, China and India's diplomatic relations are highly dependent on economic relations. This is in contrast to the state of affairs during and before the Sino-Indian war of 1962, when both economies were focused on self-interest and short-term economic benefits after gaining independence. In today's press statements and bilateral talks, the resolution of the conflict is mostly under the shadow of its effects on existing trade agreements and the integrated economies, rather than the wilful demands of local populations. Therefore the economic outlook of India and China shows promise for resolution or at least steady negotiations of the border/territorial conflict, proving that Indo-China relations will not deteriorate on the basis of this dispute.

From an outlook of power and security, the two nations are among the most equipped and highest spending in the world, though China's armed forces and defense far outweigh India's. According to 2014 defense spending data, China had a defense budget of \$136.3 billion compared to India's \$38.2 billion (Department of Defense 2015, 50). Therefore, keeping aside the economic impact and trade arguments, China's armed forces would likely have the advantage over India in the case of a traditional military standoff. However it is highly unlikely that power dynamics and national security concerns over the distressing border conflict will result in large-scale wars between India and China. But short-term border conflicts may continue to prevail due to increasing attention on patrolling military structures, and armed skirmishes and patrol stand-offs along the Line of Actual Control are likely outcomes.

Potential for Resolution

Keeping their differences and growing economic ambitions aside, it is vital for China and India to address the border conflict in a practical and effective manner. With the pride and national heritage of the two nations often escalating into aggression through patrol stand-offs and skirmishes, the political climate surrounding this issue revolves around threat and suspicion on either side. But with the vast economic prospects that India and China hold, and the volume of bilateral trade between them on a steady rise in the last few decades, the nagging territorial conflict has detrimental global implications if not resolved in a firm manner. A comprehensive research study titled “Resolving the Sino-Indian border dispute” focuses on “Cooperative Monitoring” as a viable solution towards ending the dispute. In discussing the bilateral meetings the countries conduct, the authors argue that to verify the practical implementation and sincerity of commitment to military reduction and disengagement, “some degree of intrusiveness and transparency” would largely increase the likelihood of enforcement (Sidhu and Yuan 2001, 374). Cooperative monitoring, or making reasonable information, of a pre-emptively agreed upon amount available to concerned parties for verification purposes, is largely not in practice between India and China. But if implemented gradually and equitably, it can go a long way in improving transparency and trust between the states.

Critics of Cooperative Monitoring ideologies maintain that the dissemination of sensitive military information could help other nations decode long-term strategies and government plans, creating more risks to national security. In the 21st century, information on nuclear weapons, their whereabouts and scale of threat, are of particular significance. The authors address this inherent risk by maintaining that a transitioning system from small scale minimalistic models of revealing data on flag meetings and military exercises notifications, to relatively large scale models of revealing number of arms and armament units catered to security at contested locations, will be effective in building confidence (Sidhu and Yuan 2001, 375). The informational exchange that the system will propagate is different but along the same lines as the pervasive hacking of government files that troubles nations around the world. If Cooperative Monitoring is made a reality, then the incentive to hack into another government’s sensitive documents and allege foul play by certain IT companies of either country will be lowered. Thus, Cooperative Monitoring has the potential to alter a pervasive problem of hacking into a useful exchange of information that keeps up a system of checks and balances. Further, technological advancements of the 21st century have brought this alternative system to be within the capability and competence of either nation. If carefully implemented, this will not only open dialogue and keep a system of verification on border conflicts, but also set up a mutually agreed upon precedent of commitment to resolving the territorial disputes.

Certain constraints exist to the realistic execution of Cooperative Monitoring or any other system of bilateral resolution that ranges beyond the usual limitations of legislative measures and technologies. Researchers state that these constraints include geographical proximity and relationship of China with Pakistan, India’s warmer relationship with the United States, and the isolated and distant stretches of strategic passes within the disputed territories that may not be monitored efficiently (Sidhu and Yuan 2001, 372). In comparison to the successful cooperative

monitoring in U.S-Soviet or European models, the aforesaid complications make India and China less inclined to economic and technological investments in this system. Nevertheless, it is also possible that the same constraints may be resolved through demonstrative practices over a stipulated time period. Keeping in mind the presently cognizable constraints and the potentially positive impacts of Cooperative Monitoring, its likelihood is small from an empirical standpoint but large from an experimental standpoint. Furthermore, in an analysis of the South China Sea's disputes, John Baker lauds Cooperative Monitoring through satellite imagery of disputed regions as an effective mechanism to shed light on actions of claimant countries and welcome international scrutiny. These "high-resolution commercial and civilian observation satellites" are well within capabilities of both India and China's defense spending, and can also facilitate a shared system of environmental monitoring in the contested high-altitude regions, similar to the South China Sea Monsoon Experiment organized by several countries in 1998 (Baker 2013, 2). Therefore, implementing a small-scale cooperative monitoring model and building in verification provisions within bilateral treaties on the LAC is a reasonable first step towards resolution.

The Indo-China territorial dispute has been a historic conflict of competing motives and unresolved status quo, though not escalating to mass military aggression except once in the last century. Thronged by a history of inadequate policy-making and lack of open communication between the two nations, this issue has been majorly influenced by the pride of either nation to act in self-interest and in defiance of previously-negotiated agreements such as the Simla Accord and the Panchsheel Agreement. The culmination of their aggression resulted in the Sino-Indian War of 1962, the aftermath of which served no purpose in resolving the border dispute, and only worsened the suspicion of threatening intentions on either side. Through the Cooperative Monitoring system, India and China can hope to resolve the border-dispute through verification and exchange of information to alleviate mutual distrust in Indo-China relations. While the territorial disputes in Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh continue to have a large impact on economic and security concerns on either side, the weakening of Indo-China trade relations or the prospects of more Sino-Indian wars are highly unlikely. The presently established system of Chinese authority over Aksai Chin and Indian authority over Arunachal Pradesh is likely to prevail, relatively stabilizing Indo-China relations.

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T HE INFLUENCE OF DOMESTIC ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE ON RUSSIA'S MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SYRIA

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ABSTRACT:

On 30th September 2015, Russia began its military intervention in Syria at the request of Syrian President Assad, consisting of – according to Russia's official accounts - air strikes on Islamic State (IS) held territory in Syria. Amidst the developments in Russia's involvement in the Syrian quagmire, it is timely to take a step back to analyze Russia's geopolitical considerations in Syria in order to develop a better strategy to engage Russia in managing the Syrian imbroglio. The coincidental timing of the recent Russian military operation in Syria that began at the time of continued economic difficulties raises the question of the role of economic performance in driving the decisions behind Russia's recent engagement in Syria. Poor economic performance does not bode well for President Vladimir Putin, whose support and legitimacy of the regime depend, in part, on being able to deliver good economic performance. This paper aims to evaluate the effects of economic performance on domestic politics, and how it influences Russia's geopolitical considerations in Syria. This paper concludes that it is one of the many other geopolitical concerns, which include Russia's "Great Power" ambitions, intention to lend support to the Assad regime, the desire to address the threat posed by IS, and the role of informal politics.

Introduction

On 30th September 2015, Russia began its military intervention in Syria at the request of Syrian President Assad, consisting of – according to Russia’s official accounts - airstrikes on Islamic State (IS) held territory in Syria. However, leaders from other intervening countries dispute this claim and argue that “Russia had hit territory that was not dominated by IS, but in some cases, were where American supported rebels (against the Assad regime) were located”(Baker & MacFarquhar, 2015). Nonetheless, despite international concerns over Russia’s involvement in Syria, Putin had promised to ramp up its attacks on Syrian IS held territory in response to recent developments, such as the IS attacks in Paris and the alleged bombing of the Russian charter jet in Egypt. In fact, Russia’s military officials updated in December 2015 that “Russia’s air force had struck 1,500 targets in Syria in the past week” (Vernitskiy, 2015a), heralding an intensification of Russia’s intervention in the conflict.

The developments in Russia’s involvement in the Syrian quagmire and the coincidental timing with continued economic difficulties raises the question of the role of economic performance in driving the decisions behind Russia’s recent engagement in Syria. The latest World Bank report forecasted that “the continued impact of the lower oil prices in a context of ongoing international sanctions will cause the Russian economy to contract by an estimated 3.8 percent in 2015”. (World Bank, 2015) This situation does not bode well for President Vladimir Putin, whose support and legitimacy of the regime depend, in part, on being able to deliver good economic performance.

This paper aims to evaluate the effects that economic performance has on Russia’s current military operation in Syria, which would enable a better understanding of Russia’s geopolitical considerations in Syria, and offers an insight into Russia’s future possible foreign policy orientations in the event of an economic downturn in Russia.

Russia’s economic performance

Russia’s recession deepened in the first half of 2015, as a result of international sanctions, low oil prices and a weak ruble. The 2015 World Bank report forecasted a 3.8% contraction in Russia’s GDP in 2015, highlighting that Russia’s slower pace of growth “reflects stalled structural reforms, weak investment, declining total factor productivity and adverse population dynamics” (World Bank, 2015). Moreover, the report revealed that there had been a significant increase in poverty rate, decreased consumer demand and a sharp contraction in real wages. In particular, these economic problems have a direct and severe impact on households, bringing the problems in Russia’s economy to the awareness of the population.

Popular support for Putin

Since coming to power, Putin has received high levels of support from Russians; even with the dip in ratings the aftermath of the 2012 Presidential elections, Putin enjoyed levels of popularity that are on average, higher than leaders in Western countries. The early years of the Putin regime coincided with a prosperous time of economic growth and the re-emergence of Russia as an international power in the early 2000s, which resulted in the consolidation of support for his regime. Using data from the New Russia Barometer database, Rose et al (2011) found that the support for the Putin regime had “risen substantially since its early years, with three-quarters to five-sixths now positively support[ing] the regime” (Rose, Mishler, & Munro, 2011). However, academics observed that “for the first two years of his third term as President, Mr. Putin’s approval rating hovered around 60 percent, his lowest ever. However, his invasion of Ukraine eventually propelled his approval rating back up” (McFaul M.

A., 2015). The most recent poll conducted by Levada Center from 20 to 23 November 2015 reflected that Putin's approval ratings stood at a high of 85% (Levada Center, 2015).

However, some limitations one exists when using poll data to estimate support for Vladimir Putin. The poll results are likely to be positively biased in reflecting the level of support for the regime, given that Russia is a semi-authoritarian regime in which freedom of expression and belief is limited. Freedom House reports that "vague laws on extremism grant the authorities great discretion to crack down on any speech, organization or activity that lacks official support", giving Russia a grade of 4/16 (with 1 being the lowest score possible) for "Freedom of Expression and Belief" (Freedom House, 2015). Polling respondents might exercise self-censorship and be induced to overstate their support for Putin. Nonetheless, even with a "dictatorship discount" (Sperling, 2015), corroboration with other data sources like the New Russian Barometer and the Global Attitudes Survey show that overall, Putin enjoys strong levels of support from Russians.

There are several reasons that explains the remarkable levels of domestic support for Putin.

Using data from the Russian Election Studies (RES) survey, Colton and Hale (2014) found that Russia's regime enjoyed substantial support because the regime's portrayal of the lack of credible alternatives, the broad appeal of Putin's leadership style, the belief held by many that the regime brought economic improvement and the emergence of more durable links with the electorate (Colton & Hale, 2014). The lack of improvements in economic performance is likely to strain the support that Putin has from the Russian population. The next section assesses the impact of economic performance on domestic support for Putin, and how it has influenced Russia's military intervention in Syria.

Influence of economic performance on Russia's military operation in Syria

The economy is a lever of power for Putin that helps him to establish legitimacy and consolidate domestic support. The RES conducted by Colton and Hale (2014) found that the "2012 RES confirms that the slowdown in Russian economic growth had affected popular perceptions of economic success under Putin" (Colton & Hale, 2014), which cast doubts on Putin's irreplaceability and strong leadership skills and partly contributed to the decline in Putin's approval ratings. This provides some evidence that Putin's domestic support is inevitably tied to the performance of the economy.

Economic sanctions, low oil prices and falling import demand from fast growing markets like China have taken a toll on Russia's economy which has further strained domestic support for Putin. While the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Ukraine reversed the downward trend in Putin's approval ratings, the lack of progress in the conflict also meant that Putin could no longer rely on the conflict in Ukraine to bolster domestic support. Mitchell (2011) argued "when faced with a domestic political crisis, leaders often seek to identify an external enemy at whose feet to lay the blame for internal problems. This can take the form of rhetoric and propaganda, but it can also manifest itself through military actions" (Mitchell, 2011). Taking into consideration domestic politics, it is plausible that Putin's decision to engage in airstrikes in Syria may serve to provide a means of distraction from economic difficulties at home; by evoking sentiments of Russian's supremacy in the international arena, the Putin regime hopes that it will help to boost Putin's popularity ratings and consolidate support for his regime. In a similar vein, Sperling (2015) argued that "much of what Putin has been doing abroad is calculated for his domestic audience. What might look like aggressive, risky or even dangerous foreign policy decisions have been largely welcomed by Russian populace as evidence of their leader's muscularity and clout" (Sperling, 2015). The bombing in Syria provides a new and much needed spectacle

at a time when the war in Ukraine appears to be frozen and the euphoria over the annexation of Crimea had faded. Putin's gambit in Syria seemed to have paid off in boosting his domestic approval ratings, with poll results from Levada Center indicating an 88% approval rating for Putin in October 2015 (Levada Center, 2015). This surge in popularity is likely to provide Putin more confidence and incentive to continue Russia's military intervention in Syria, although the effectiveness of such a move would be evaluated in greater detail in Section 6.

In fact, Putin's rise to power during the second Chechen war was very much tied to military successes, providing Putin a precedence to refer to when deciding to rely on the demonstration of military might to rally domestic support. During the second Chechen war, "Putin was fully engaged in denouncing the Chechens and taking credit for military successes" (Rose, Munro, & White, 2000), which enabled him to gain support from political elite and the masses which handed him a decisive victory in the 2000 Russian Presidential Elections.

Other considerations explaining Russia's military intervention in Syria

Great Power Ambitions

Russia seeks to be a great power, meaning that it desires to be more assertive and have a greater international presence and authority. In a leaked policy paper from the start of the Putin-era in 2000, which outlined the "Foreign Policy concept of the Russian Federation", one of the top priority for Russian foreign policy is to "achieve firm and prestigious positions in the world community, most fully consistent with the interests of the Russian Federation as a great power". (FAS, 2000) Even though the term "Great Power" was removed under Medvedev, the recent choice of words used by Putin to justify Russia's intervention in Syria, such as "leadership", "strength" and urging the international community "to join Russia in an international effort to fight IS" (Верницкий (Vernitskiy), 2015b) seems to suggest a return to the "Great Power" ambitions of the early Putin era. In fact, Russian foreign policy experts such as Dmitry Suslov opined that "Russia is a rising power, as demonstrated by it being a member of the BRIC countries and desires to be a 'Great Power' on the world stage, of which her intervention in Syria is a bid to consolidate Russia's authority on international issues" (Suslov, 2015). Such a foreign policy directive has its roots in the theory of "balance of power" in international relations. Mankoff (2012) argued that "if the world is destined to be multipolar, the Russian elite is largely unanimous in believing Russia must be one of the poles" (Mankoff, 2012)

The reluctance to intervene and lack of a clear strategy and coordination among Western powers provided a platform for Russia to portray her intervention in Syria as an attempt to provide leadership in the efforts to safeguard international security and in the fight against an internationally recognized 'common evil'—terrorism. Moreover, Russia's intervention in Syria allowed Russia to rejoin the international community, especially after being sidelined as a result of the Ukraine crisis. In line with the theory of 'Balance of Power', Russia desires to be involved in the decision making process of the resolution of the Syrian conflict to prevent it from being a unilateral decision by NATO/US. Mankoff (2012) contended that "Russia's international behavior will continue to operate on the basis of the same considerations that have driven it since the implosion of Kozyrev's integration strategy around 1994-1995. These include a desire to be consulted on all decisions affecting international peace and security" (Mankoff, 2012). In a similar vein, Suslov (2015) raised an interesting argument that "Russia is intervening in Syria in part to provide leadership and help in the resolution of the refugee crisis that Europe faces, so as to improve her bargaining position in negotiations over the international sanctions slapped on Russian businesses as a result of the Ukraine crisis" (Suslov, 2015).

Russia's aspiration to be a leader in the resolution of the Syrian conflict can be readily observed from Putin's rhetoric of late. In his address to the Federal Assembly in December 2015, Putin lauded Russia's demonstration of leadership in the fight against terrorism with the effective weapons that Russia deployed. (Верницкий (Vernitskiy), 2015b) Nonetheless, despite Russia's eagerness to play a bigger role in the Syrian conflict, the receptiveness by the international community on Russia's involvement had been cautious and hesitant. For instance, US officials expressed doubts that Washington would coordinate airstrikes with Moscow because of concerns that Russia had been targeting moderate rebels and causing heavy civilian deaths. (Reuters, 2015).

Provide support for a long-time ally, President Bashar al-Assad of Syria

Syria has been a long-time ally of Russia, one that is dependable and acts as a cornerstone in Russia's bid to counterbalance US dominance in the Middle East. Putin had stated publicly that the reason for intervention in Syria is in response to the request by President Assad for assistance in countering "terrorists" in Syria, which "is a catch-all term that the regime and Moscow use to refer to the rebels, including IS, fighting to overthrow Assad" (Shaheen, 2015). Assad's visit to Moscow in October 2015 further reinforced the image of a close alliance between Russia and Moscow, with Assad expressing his gratitude for Putin's military support in the Syrian crisis.

An evident consideration grounding Russia's support for the Assad regime is the presence of Russian military assets in Syria. Russia has a naval installation in Tartus, Syria, and is Russia's last foreign military base outside the former Soviet Union. While its "primary purpose is to repair and resupply Russian navy ships transiting the Mediterranean" (Gorenburg, 2012), it also provides strategic access to the region, which Russia fears would close with the fall of the Assad regime.

A more subtle reason for Russia's support for the Assad regime is that "Russian leaders do not want to create a new norm of international intervention in internal conflicts, particularly when these conflicts were the result of a popular uprising against an authoritarian ruler" (Gorenburg, 2012). This is concurred by Charap (2013), who argued that "Moscow does not believe the Security Council should be in the business of either implicitly or explicitly endorsing the removal of a sitting government" (Charap, 2013). Given that Russia is a semi-authoritarian regime which may potentially face a similar situation as with the Arab countries during the Arab spring, this suspicion is not completely unfounded. By supporting the Assad regime, Russia makes a stand that it does not tolerate the unilateral stance of supporting the opposition in face of internal conflicts, which Russia perceives as the stance adopted by the Western powers.

Threat from Islamic State (IS)

In addition, Russia's intervention in Syria could be a response to the geopolitical risks posed by IS, which is also part of the official rhetoric by the Russian government. IS poses a security threat to Russia, in part because of the possibility of North Caucasus jihadists gaining valuable lessons from IS in how to fight against Russian security forces when they return home, and to subsequently carry out acts of terror within Russia's territory. North Caucasus militants have been slipping over the border from Turkey into Syria as "tourists" since 2011 in order to gain training and experience in fighting jihad in Syria's civil war (Stepanova, 2015). The report also found that "the number of fighters from Russia went from 300-400 in Syria as of September 2013, to 800 in Syria and Iraq combined in 2014, to 1,700 in Iraq alone in 2015". Moreover, the formation and consolidation of an Islamic State in Syria would destabilize the political situation in the Middle East, which is close to Russia's borders, and is likely to interfere with Russia's strategic interest in the region. Marten (2015) argued that Russian concern about Islamist extremism in the North Caucasus gives it "no choice except to ally with Iran and Syria, either to prevent Iran from supporting rebels in Chechnya or to prevent extremist Sunni resistance in Syria from destabilizing the Middle East" (Marten K., 2015).

Moreover, Putin's decision to conduct airstrikes would appeal to the nationalist base in Russia, who are concerned about the Islamic influence and movement in Russia. The recent bombing of the Russian charter flight and the killing of 6 Russian tourists in Mali by jihadist militants further intensifies these nationalist sentiments. By intervening in Syria, Putin would be able to render help to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to defeat IS and the rebels, thereby eliminating a source of training and support for Russia's own Islamist militants, and at the same time, garnering support from the nationalist base in Russia.

The role of "Informal politics"

Given the high economic value of state-to-state arms relationship, Putin's decision to engage in airstrikes in Syria may be a means of supporting and advancing the interest of his networks in the Russian defense industry. Marten (2013) argued that "patronage politics and network competition best describe Russian foreign policy" (Marten K., 2013). In a similar vein, Gorenburg (2012) contended that "Russia has extensive economic interest in the Middle East, especially Syria, where the most important spheres are sales of military equipment and energy, which has a value of approximately \$20 billion" (Gorenburg, 2012). Marten's more recent article also highlighted that "Almaz-Antey, a state-owned company in the arms industry, is likely to benefit from increased arms exports to Syria" (Marten K., 2015).

In fact, Russia's economic elite's interests are not limited to the arms industry; it extends to the oil and gas, manufacturing and nuclear energy industry (Gorenburg, 2012). Major Russian firms such as Tatneft, Soyuzneftegaz, Uralmash have signed hefty contracts and/or have investments in Syria and the economic elites would desire to have their investments protected. Gorenburg (2012) argued that "Russia's economic interest in Syria can be maintained only if Assad defeats the opposition or there is a negotiated settlement". (Gorenburg, 2012) However, it has been three years since the report was written. In the interim, with the formation and consolidation of IS, Assad has to now defeat both the opposition and IS in order to return to power. Assad was losing much ground to the rebels and IS until Russia's intervention push backed the grounds gained by the rebels and IS. If it is Russia's intention to prop up the Assad regime to secure its economic and elite interest, then Russia was left with few choices other than to intervene directly in the conflict because of Assad's languishing hold on to power, and his inability to regain lost territory with his own resources.

Extent of influence that economic performance had on Russia's Syria intervention

As reflected in popularity polls conducted by Levada Center, Putin's approval ratings soared to 88% in October 2015 (Levada Center, 2015) right after Russia began airstrikes on 30th September 2015, continuing on the momentum of high levels of support since the Ukraine crisis in 2014. Putin's approval ratings remain high, even with the forecasted 3.8% contraction in GDP and international sanctions looming in the backdrop; it is thus likely that he had successfully distracted the population from the economic problems and successfully rallied domestic support for the regime. The persistently poor economic performance prompted the regime to consider establishing their performance and legitimacy based on military successes rather than strong economic performance, the latter being the basis for Putin's support in the last decade. The quagmire in Syria provided an opportunity for Putin to demonstrate leadership in the international platform and direct the attention of the population away from domestic problems. Of late, the headlines on major television channels in Russia have been focused on the unfolding conflict in Syria and the numerous developments and complications that have surfaced since Russia's participation in the conflict. A separate poll conducted by Levada Center found that most respondents remembered the plane crash in Egypt, the flood of Syrian refugees in Europe and Russian bombings in Syria when asked to list events from the last four weeks that they

remembered the most (Levada Center, 2015). While not a perfect indication, the polling results suggest that economic troubles were not on the top of the minds for majority of the population.

Nonetheless, in light of recent developments, it appears that the desire to pursue a “balance of power” in the international structure has greater weight in influencing Russia’s foreign policy decisions, including her military intervention in Syria. Russia perceived NATO’s decision to invite Montenegro to join the alliance on 2 December 2015 to have completely disregarded the latter’s interest, and serves as an indication to Russia’s foreign policy makers that Russia is still not viewed in similar regard as other Western countries. The downing of the Russian fighter plane on 24 November 2015 over Turkish/Syrian airspace and NATO’s backing of Turkey has intensified Russia’s desire to establish a “balance of power” in the international structure to safeguard Russia’s strategic interest.

Moreover, one cannot ignore the threat posed by IS to Russia. The ‘bombing’ of the Russian charter jet in Egypt, killing of Russian tourists in Mali and the intelligence picked up by Russia’s intelligence agency of “IS agents from Syria being present in Thailand to target Russians” (BBC, 2015) demonstrate that the threat posed to Russian civilians is substantial and grave. While it is debatable whether the attacks were carried out in response to Russia’s intervention in Syria, the desire to safeguard the interests of Russians by reducing the capabilities of IS is likely to be one of the top considerations in Russia’s intervention in Syria. While it is probable that the interests of Putin’s allies were considered in determining whether to intervene in Syria, it is difficult to be able to fully evaluate the role of informal politics in driving Putin’s foreign policy decision in the Syrian conflict because of the secrecy of the patronage networks. Hence, it is difficult to evaluate role of informal politics vis-à-vis other considerations such as economic performance and the threat posed by IS.

Conclusion

Economic performance impacts domestic politics and support for the Putin regime and the lacklustre economic performance of late is likely to have guided Putin’s decision to conduct airstrikes in Syria. The surge in popularity ratings after the Ukraine crisis and the Syrian military intervention, despite Russia’s poor economic performance, provides evidence to suggest that Russia’s military intervention in Syria had successfully distracted the population from the economic troubles and allowed for Putin to establish legitimacy based on military, rather than economic, performance.

Nonetheless, other geopolitical considerations such as Russia’s “Great Power” ambitions, intention to lend support to the Assad regime, the desire to address the threat posed by IS, and the role of informal politics play a significant, if not more significant, role in Russia’s foreign policy strategy in Syria. This is in line with the centrist tendency of Russia’s foreign policy, where different individuals have different shades of emphasis but are united by a shared belief that Russia should play a pivotal role in world affairs. It is highly likely that the foreign policy decision makers in Russia weigh the interest of various interest groups in Russia before deciding on an action plan for her involvement in Syria.

Russia’s military intervention in Syria could very quickly backfire on the Putin regime because of the counterattacks on Russian civilians conducted by the IS and the complications arising from a loose international coalition in the fight against IS. Russia’s involvement in Syria brings it in direct confrontation with IS, which is likely to worsen the threat posed by IS to Russian civilians. We have already witnessed the threat that IS can cause to Russian civilians: “On 31st October 2015, a Russian charter flight plummeted into the Sinai Peninsula

in Egypt, killing all 224 people on board, most of whom were Russians” (Macfarquhar, 2015). There is also substantial international displeasure shown towards the Putin regime as a result of Russia’s military intervention as Russia is perceived to be propping up the Assad regime rather than attacking IS targets, making it difficult for Russia to establish “balance of power” in the international structure.

Russia’s decisions in Syria should be analyzed in tandem with Russia’s responses to other developments in the external environment. To that end, given that Russia has “failed to develop the sturdy institutions that would lend a degree of regularity to its international behavior” (Mankoff, 2012), it will remain a challenge to analyze Russia’s foreign policy, even after developing a better understanding of Russia’s motivation behind her Syrian campaign. Foreign policy leaders of countries involved in Syria must develop a better insight into the reasons behind Putin’s decisions in Syria and formulate a coordinated and well deliberated response to engage Russia in Syria, which would aid in effectively countering the threat brought about by IS. The downing of Russian bomber plane and the Montenegro accession in NATO in December 2015 do not bode well for international cooperation in tackling the crisis in Syria. Moreover, despite the ceasefire agreement that began on 27 February 2016, there are accusations of Russia violating the agreement by resuming airstrikes, giving little reason for optimism that a coordinated international response would be reached in the Syrian imbroglio in the near future.

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Appendix 1:

Source: Levada Center. (2015, November 23). Ratings. Retrieved from Levada Center: <http://www.levada.ru/eng/ratings>

This survey took place between 20 and 23 November 2015 and was conducted throughout all of Russia in both urban and rural settings. The survey was carried out among 1600 people over the age of 18 in 134 localities of 46 of the country's regions. The answer distribution is presented as percentages of the number of participants along with data from previous surveys. The statistical error of these studies does not exceed 3.4%. From 2008-2011 this question was given in the following form: "Overall, do you approve or disapprove of Vladimir Putin's actions as prime minister of Russia?"*

| | | Approve | Disapprove | No answer |
|------|-------|---------|------------|-----------|
| 2015 | Nov. | 85 | 14 | 1 |
| | Oct. | 88 | 12 | 1 |
| | Sept. | 84 | 15 | 1 |
| | Aug. | 83 | 17 | 1 |
| | Jul. | 87 | 12 | 1 |
| | Jun. | 89 | 10 | 1 |
| | May | 86 | 13 | 1 |
| | Apr. | 86 | 13 | 1 |
| | Mar. | 85 | 14 | 1 |
| | Feb. | 86 | 13 | 1 |
| Jan. | 85 | 15 | 1 | |
| 2014 | Nov. | 85 | 14 | 2 |
| 2013 | Nov. | 61 | 37 | 2 |
| 2012 | Nov. | 63 | 36 | 1 |
| 2011 | Nov. | 65 | 33 | 2 |
| 2010 | Nov. | 78 | 19 | 2 |
| 2009 | Nov. | 79 | 19 | 3 |
| 2008 | Nov. | 86 | 12 | 2 |
| 2007 | Nov. | 84 | 15 | 1 |
| 2006 | Nov. | 81 | 18 | 1 |
| 2005 | Nov. | 76 | 23 | 1 |
| 2004 | Nov. | 69 | 29 | 2 |
| 2003 | Nov. | 81 | 18 | 1 |
| 2002 | Nov. | 83 | 15 | 2 |
| 2001 | Nov. | 80 | 18 | 2 |
| 2000 | Nov. | 70 | 22 | 8 |

Appendix 2:

This survey took place between 20 and 23 November 2015 and was conducted throughout all of Russia in both urban and rural settings. The survey was carried out among 1600 people over the age of 18 in 134 localities of 46 of the country's regions. The answer distribution is presented as percentages of the number of participants along with data from previous surveys. The statistical error of these studies does not exceed 3.4%.

Question 1: In your opinion, is the Russia of today a superpower?

| | Mar. 99 | Apr. 00 | Oct. 01 | Nov. 05 | Nov. 06 | Jun. 09 | Nov. 10 | Nov. 11 | Mar. 14 | Mar. 15 | Nov. 15 |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Definitely yes | 12 | 20 | 11 | 7 | 12 | 17 | 16 | 11 | 17 | 19 | 65 |
| Probably yes | 19 | 33 | 29 | 23 | 31 | 44 | 39 | 36 | 46 | 49 | |
| Probably no | 34 | 30 | 35 | 44 | 36 | 27 | 32 | 35 | 27 | 24 | 25 |
| Definitely no | 31 | 13 | 22 | 23 | 16 | 6 | 9 | 11 | 5 | 3 | |
| It is difficult to say | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 10 |

Question 2: What, in your opinion, does the concept of a “superpower” connote? (multiple answers)

| | Mar.99 | Jul.08 | Sept.12 | Nov.14 | Nov.15 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|
| High standard of living | 63 | 66 | 61 | 60 | 64 |
| Economic and industrial resources, might of the country | 64 | 57 | 55 | 60 | 58 |
| Military power, possession of nuclear missiles | 30 | 37 | 44 | 44 | 51 |
| High culture, science, art | 31 | 31 | 27 | 23 | 25 |
| Having the respect of other countries and international authority | 35 | 24 | 19 | 19 | 20 |
| Rich natural resources | 14 | 19 | 21 | 20 | 18 |
| Freedom and civil rights | 15 | 16 | 17 | 13 | 15 |
| Size of the country, wide open spaces | 4 | 8 | 10 | 16 | 9 |
| Heroic past | 7 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 9 |
| Size of the population | 2 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 |
| Other | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| It is difficult to say | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |

Appendix 3:

Levada Center. (2015, November 11). Syria & the Plane Crash in Egypt. Retrieved from Levada Center: <http://www.levada.ru/eng/syria-plane-crash-egypt>

The survey took place between 13 and 16 November 2015 and was conducted throughout all of Russia in both urban and rural settings. The survey was carried out among 1600 people over the age of 18 in 134 localities of 46 of the country's regions. The answer distribution is presented as percentages of the number of participants along with data from previous surveys. The statistical error of these studies does not exceed 3.4%. A significant portion of the respondents was questioned until news came out about the terrorist attacks in Paris, and before the Federal Security Bureau confirmed the story that the terrorist attacks were the cause of the plane crash in Egypt!

Question: HAVE YOU BEEN FOLLOWING THE CURRENT EVENTS IN SYRIA, AND IF SO, HOW ATTENTIVELY?

| | June 13 | Sept. 13 | Sept. 15 | Oct. 15 | Nov.15 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------|----------|---------|--------|
| I attentively follow the current events in Syria | 8 | 16 | 15 | 23 | 25 |
| I know a bit about the current events in Syria, but I don't follow them attentively | 52 | 57 | 54 | 64 | 64 |
| I know nothing about the current events in Syria | 39 | 27 | 30 | 11 | 12 |

Question: HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT RUSSIA'S USE OF AIR STRIKES IN SYRIA?

| | Nov. 15 |
|------------------------|---------|
| Entirely positively | 21 |
| Somewhat positively | 34 |
| Somewhat negatively | 19 |
| Entirely negatively | 8 |
| It is difficult to say | 19 |

Question: IN YOUR OPINION, SHOULD RUSSIA PROVIDE DIRECT MILITARY SUPPORT TO SYRIA IN THE FORM OF AIR STRIKES?

| | Oct. 15 |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| <i>Definitely yes</i> | 21 |
| <i>Probably yes</i> | 33 |
| <i>Probably no</i> | 14 |
| <i>Definitely no</i> | 17 |
| <i>It is difficult to say</i> | 15 |

Executive Editors:

President: Elyse Mark

Elyse is a senior at Penn State majoring in Chinese and English with minors in Business and German. In the summer of 2014, she studied in Suzhou, China on a Critical Language Scholarship. More recently, she interned with *Panjiva*, a global trade data company located in Shanghai, China. When she isn't doing coursework or reading research papers, she enjoys cooking, eating, skiing, and tang soo do martial arts. She originally got involved with the Journal in 2013, and is excited to be leading the reboot of the organization in 2015!

Vice-President: David Stack

David is a senior at Penn State majoring in Economics, International Politics, and Chinese. During the academic year, he has interned with Penn State's Strategic and Global Security Program as well as their Center for Global Business Studies. His prior work experience in the field includes internships with the U.S. Army War College and the Brookings Institution. In his spare time, he enjoys exploring the great outdoors and sampling the culinary delights of downtown State College.

Treasurer: Cameron Stevens

Cameron is a junior at Penn State majoring in Finance, Economics, and International Politics, with a minor in Mandarin Chinese. His interests include economics, politics, financial services, and international currency markets, which he was able to pursue through an internship as a market analyst for an equity fund in Shenzhen, China in the summer of 2015. When he's not busy, he enjoys playing table tennis and improving his Mandarin language skills.

Contributing Editors:

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Alex McCollom is a sophomore at Penn State majoring in Finance with minors in German, Six Sigma, and IST-Aerospace Engineering. He enjoys supporting Penn State athletics and FC Bayern football, as well as learning new languages in his spare time.

Editor: Ethan Paul

Ethan Paul is a sophomore studying Economics and Political Science. After graduation I plan on studying Economic History and Political Economy at graduate school, where I hope to do research on and advocate on behalf of global economic inequality, the growth of international institutions, and American electoral reform.

Editor: Larissa Gil

Larissa Gil is a junior in the Schreyer Honors College majoring in Philosophy and German. She serves as secretary of the Penn State Mock Trial Association and competes on their A team. She is also Vice President of the Penn State Odyssey of the Mind Club and Secretary of the Moot Court Association on campus. She represents the College of the Liberal Arts as a Liberal Arts Envoy and is a member of the University Park Undergraduate Association as a Student Conduct Advisor. She hopes to study international law after graduation and live in Germany for a couple years to perfect her German.

Editor: Stefan Pelikan

Stefan is a junior at Penn State majoring in Graphic Design, Art History and German. His academic interests include information design, e-learning, illustration, sequential art, arts research and advertising. This summer he will be pursuing a study abroad program in Berlin, during which he plans to visit as many museums as possible.

The Penn State Journal of International Affairs is currently accepting submissions from undergraduate and graduate students for its spring 2016 issue, to be published in May of 2016. Papers should focus on topics relevant to international affairs, including, but not limited to, economics, political science, security, the environment, terrorism, and diplomacy. Submissions will be considered on a rolling basis until March.

To be considered for publication, a paper must be:

Between 3,000 and 7,000 words in length (shorter or longer submissions will be examined on a case by case basis). Double-spaced, Times New Roman font, sized 12pt. Submitted as either a .doc or .docx file. Formatted and cited according to Chicago guidelines. All submissions should be sent to PSUJIA.submissions@gmail.com. Please remove all references to your name from your paper, as all submissions will be reviewed blindly by PSU JIA staff. An abstract of 100 to 200 words should accompany all submissions.

We look forward to reviewing your submissions!



