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It is my honor to welcome you to the eighth volume of Paideia. The eighth edition remains committed to its mission of showcasing excellent academic and professional work done by Cal Poly undergraduate and graduate students as well as alumni. As always, the journal aims to reflect the diversity of our political science students' knowledge and intellectual pursuits.

The chosen collection of student-authored papers reflects the diversity of a Political Science degree while the alumni Spotlights further highlight the opportunities presented to Cal Poly Political Science students in their careers. This year, we made an intentional decision to include paper topics of some of the world's most contemporary issues and debates, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. It is our goal to encourage discussion in various disciplines of work, to think critically and challenge conventional notions about existing and newly emerging issue areas.

Due to the global Coronavirus pandemic, Volume 8 will be accessible digitally through the Kennedy Library's Digital Commons database. It is our hope that by taking the time to read through Paideia, you are inspired to dive deeper into some of the most pressing issues of our time.

The Paideia team and I are delighted to serve Cal Poly San Luis Obispo's Political Science Department and thank you for taking the time to explore Volume 8 of Paideia.

Lauren Milligan
Executive Editor

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

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The Economic Implications of the Coronavirus on the U.S.-China Trade War

Alice Sukhostavskiy

Edited by Lizzy Marshall

Abstract

The U.S.-China trade war is an ongoing economic crisis between two global superpowers fighting for economic dominance. Under the leadership of U.S. President Donald J. Trump, the U.S. has imposed a tariff campaign on China in hopes of retaliation. However, tariffs have often fallen out of favor because they can lead to reduced trade and higher prices for consumers in tariff-wielding countries. Tariffs are once again rising under President Trump, which is important to consider as global trade slows due to the economic impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Companies from both countries could soon face higher costs and the world economy could suffer. Using an analysis of three case studies, this research will examine how the economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic will affect the U.S.-China trade war, and the economic impacts on both countries.

Real World Observation

On October 25, 2020, the Wall Street Journal reported that the China trade war did not boost U.S. manufacturing might.¹ Factory production peaked in 2018, and President Trump's trade war against China did not achieve the central objective of reversing a U.S. decline in manufacturing. President Trump's trade advisers said that the tariff campaign would yield benefits over time. However, tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars of Chinese goods to discourage imports have not proven to be effective. While the tariffs did reduce the trade deficit in 2019, overall U.S. trade imbalance has continued increasing, reaching a record \$84 billion in August.² Amid the economic effects of the global pandemic, the trade deficit has risen further-back to where it was at the start of the Trump administration.³ Essentially, tariffs on China have not been successful and have negatively affected the American economy when job growth in manufacturing started to slow in July of 2018 and manufacturing production peaked in 2018.⁴ Nevertheless, President Trump believes that the tariffs have positively affected the United States by forcing China to agree to a phase one trade deal, which would also force China to be making purchases of United States manufactured goods, agriculture, energy, and services.⁵

To put the trade war into context, the Trump administration's approach to China has been relatively aggressive, pushing more tariffs and trade barriers on China starting in 2018 in response to unfair trade practices. Tariffs have, in some part, forced the phase one trade deal onto Beijing, in which Beijing agreed to buy more U.S. goods, enforce intellectual property protections, remove regulatory

barriers to agricultural trade and financial services and to not manipulate its currency.⁶ President Trump's trade war on China has caused the decrease of U.S. manufacturing jobs and an economic recession that occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Manufacturing jobs further plummeted due to the recession-as if the decrease in manufacturing jobs was not bad enough already as a result of the tariff campaign made by the Trump administration. During the 2016 presidential campaign, President Trump credited China for "the greatest theft in the history of the world," such that he laid out a four-part plan to secure a deal with China: to declare China a currency manipulator; confront China on intellectual property and forced technology transfer concerns; end China's use of export subsidies and lax labor and environmental standards; and lower America's corporate tax rate to make U.S. manufacturing more competitive.⁷ With the economic effects of the pandemic pushing the United States and the rest of the world into recession, the trade war could only worsen the United States economically.

Above all, the results of the trade war that followed the phase one trade deal between China and the United States have significantly hurt the American economy without solving any underlying economic concerns. These negative economic effects were worsened by the coronavirus pandemic, after the United States experienced an economic recession. However, China did not experience the same economic effects of the pandemic as the United States did-in fact, China experienced a 4.9% growth in their economy during their third quarter of 2020, putting China's economy back toward its pre-coronavirus trajectory.⁸ Despite this growth, it is also clear that China is also hurting as a result of the trade war, as China's most ambitious companies once flocked to the US to raise money, but many are now adding secondary listings in China due to rising US

1 Josh Zumbrum and Bob Davis, "China Trade War Didn't Boost U.S. Manufacturing Might," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 25, 2020.

2 Foreign Trade Data Dissemination Branch, "Foreign Trade: Data," U.S. Trade with China (U.S. Census, April 21, 2009).

3 Paul Wiseman, "US Trade Deficit up to \$67.1 Billion in August, 14-Year High," AP NEWS (Associated Press, October 6, 2020).

4 op. cit., fn. 1

5 "President Donald J. Trump Is Signing a Landmark Phase One Trade Agreement with China," *The White House* (The United States Government, January 15, 2020).

6 op. cit., fn. 1

7 Ryan Hass and Abraham Denmark, "More Pain than Gain: How the US-China Trade War Hurt America," *Brookings* (Brookings, August 25, 2020).

8 Jonathan Cheng, "China Economy Grows 4.9% as Rest of World Struggles With Coronavirus," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 18, 2020.

hostility in terms of poor economic relations between the US and China.⁹ Thus, it is questionable whether the trade war provides any benefits to either side, despite the claims of the Trump administration. Furthermore, the U.S. will not be able to handle decrease in manufacturing jobs after the pandemic hit the U.S. economy hard. To better understand the economic impacts of the worsening trade war on both countries, I will ask the following research question: How will the economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic affect the U.S.-China trade war?

Conventional Wisdom

The conventional wisdom as to the economic effects of the U.S.-China trade war is that the coronavirus has negatively impacted China and America economically in terms of the trade war. According to a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center, non-partisan polling data suggests that Americans' unfavorable view of China is at a historic high throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with many Americans blaming China on the rise of COVID-19.¹⁰ Regarding the trade war, Americans believe that current economic ties between the U.S. and China are in poor shape, and a majority view China as an enemy or competitor. Twenty-three percent say the U.S. should prioritize strengthening economic relations with China. In another poll conducted by Politico of American voters, almost half of voters think tariffs on Chinese goods would hurt the U.S. economy. Forty-six percent of respondents also felt the penalties would hurt U.S. consumers, particularly lower- and middle-class Americans.¹¹

While tariffs and the coronavirus do have an impact on the trade war and the U.S. economy, this conventional wisdom is incomplete. There are several more factors that need to be considered to fully understand the economic effects

9 Quentin Webb and Jing Yang, "Chinese Companies Head Home to Raise Money, as Beijing's Relations With U.S. Fray," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 27, 2020.

10 Laura Silver, Kat Devlin, and Christine Huang, "Americans Fault China for Its Role in the Spread of COVID-19," Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project (Pew Research Center, October 27, 2020).

11 Megan Cassella, "Poll: Almost Half of Voters Think Tariffs on Chinese Goods Would Hurt U.S. Economy," *POLITICO*, May 22, 2018.

of tariffs on China. Although the Trump administration's tariff campaign has produced mostly negative effects, there have also been some positives, such as Beijing agreeing to a phase one trade deal and the U.S. trade deficit reducing in 2019. The economic recession as a result of the coronavirus pandemic may have a much worse effect on the U.S. economy than the tariffs placed on China-these effects may be very little compared to the effects of the recession. Therefore, the economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic on the trade war must be considered.

Methodology and Evidence

To illustrate the economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic on the U.S.-China trade war, this paper will use qualitative methodology in the form of case study research. These case studies will examine how the trade war has decreased Chinese exports, decreased American exports, and reduced the number of Chinese students coming to study in American universities. This research will also use primary evidence including government reports, World Trade Organization reports, and United Nations reports. This paper will also use secondary evidence including newspaper articles from *The Wall Street Journal*, *BBC*, and *The New York Times* as well as scholarly journals.

Theoretical Paradigm

I will use a theoretical paradigm of realism to examine my research question. In international relations, realism's primary assumptions are that human nature is conflictual, and change is state driven.¹² Realism emphasizes an anarchical structure of world power and three institutions: states, politics, and power.¹³ The theory, which was founded by Thucydides and Hans Morgenthau, stresses that the principal actors in the international arena are states, which are concerned with their own security, act in pursuit of their own national interests

12 Professor Shelley L. Hurt, "Theoretical Paradigms of International Relations," *POLS 427 course reader* (Fall 2020).

13 *Ibid.*

and struggle for power.¹⁴ Realism analyzes actions in the international system while accounting for states' self-interest and struggle for power in an anarchical world. Realism emphasizes states' competition for power, which is especially important to consider when discussing an inter-country conflict.

Realism's assumptions about an anarchical international system, states as primary actors, and conflictual human nature and state-driven change will provide me with the best theory about my research question. The U.S.-China trade war is caused by states acting in an anarchical international system. In the trade war conflict, President Trump is attempting to remove all U.S. economic interdependence on China in order to become a stronger economic power to protect its position in the international system. Meanwhile, President Xi of China is using China's rise to a global economic hegemon to attempt to unseat the U.S. in its position. Because realism stresses the competitive and conflictual side of international politics, the U.S.-China trade war is a perfect example of a realist conflict. Both countries are acting given their own economic interests and are struggling for hegemonic power.

Case Study: American Exports

First, this research will examine the case study of a decrease of American exports, especially in the agriculture industry. According to a study conducted by the World Trade Organization, bilateral tariffs have increased on average to 17% between the U.S. and China, and the Phase One Agreement signed in January 2020 between the two countries only leads to minor reductions in the tariffs to 16%.¹⁵ As a result, there is a decrease in American exports, as the conflict has led to a sizable reduction in trade between the U.S. and China. According to the same study conducted by the World Trade Organization, since the start of the trade conflict between the U.S. and China, the two countries have

raised tariffs substantially on each other's exports, from 6.2% to 16.4% on U.S. imports into China.¹⁶ Additionally, U.S. exports to China fell by about 1% in 2018, accelerating to a reduction of more than 25% in the first three quarters of 2019.¹⁷ Clearly, this dramatic decrease in American exports to China will hurt the U.S. GDP, which is particularly harmful after the economic recession caused by the coronavirus pandemic which further decreased exports. If this data is analyzed, it suggests that increasing tariffs on China hurts the U.S. economy by drastically reducing exports, which the U.S. cannot afford. This is because the coronavirus pandemic has caused the trade war to intensify by further reducing exports in both countries and increasing tensions, which will be demonstrated throughout the rest of this paper.

According to data provided by the USDA, the U.S. agriculture industry had already been hit hard by the economic recession caused by the pandemic. The USDA's study shows that the toll of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy is expected to cause the world's gross domestic product (GDP) to decline in 2020 for the first time since 2009.¹⁸ Because GDP is expected to shrink in some of the United States' foremost agricultural export destinations, U.S. agricultural exports are expected to fall as a result of the reduction in overseas demand for agricultural goods. According to the Economic Research Service's latest report for U.S. Agricultural Trade, U.S. agricultural exports are projected to be down \$0.5 billion from 2019 at \$135 billion in fiscal year 2020.¹⁹ Thus, the U.S. agricultural industry, one of the largest industries in the United States, is already suffering losses as a result of decreased international demand. A decrease in demand causes a reduction in exports, causing a decline in GDP, and this holds true for every other U.S. industry. Admittedly, in addition to the American government experiencing losses, American farmers have also

14 W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz, "Political Realism in International Relations," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Stanford University, May 24, 2017), <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/realism-intl-relations/>.

15 Eddy Bekkers and Sofia Schroeter, "An Economic Analysis of the US-China Trade Conflict," World Trade Organization, 2020.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 "Falling Global GDP Surrounding Worldwide Pandemic Likely to Weaken U.S. Agricultural Exports in 2020," USDA Economic Research Service, November 4, 2020.

19 Ibid.

experienced diminished profits due to declines in U.S. agricultural exports. It is evident that every country will experience a decrease in exports due to health implications of the coronavirus, so these losses will add on to America's loss in exports due to the trade war. Above all, farmers have lost the vast majority of what was once a \$24 billion market in China as a result of Chinese retaliatory actions, according to data provided by the Brookings Institution.²⁰

Thus, the economic losses the U.S. experiences as a result of the pandemic will only be worsened by the decrease in exports caused by the trade war. According to a study conducted by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the ongoing U.S.-China trade war has resulted in a sharp decline in bilateral trade, higher prices for consumers and trade diversion effects, specifically, consumers in the U.S. are bearing the heaviest brunt of U.S. tariffs on China, as their associated costs have largely been passed down to them and importing firms in the form of higher prices.²¹ This study clearly shows that the trade war not only hurts the American economy, but it also hurts American consumers.²² President Trump's tariffs on China have proven to be ineffective. According to data provided by the Brookings Institution, U.S. companies primarily paid for U.S. tariffs, with the cost estimated at nearly \$46 billion.²³ The tariffs forced American companies to accept lower profit margins, cut wages and jobs for U.S. workers, defer potential wage hikes or expansions, and raise prices for American consumers or companies.²⁴ Essentially, this trade war is causing losses to both sides, which will not only harm the U.S. economy through a loss of exports, but it will also compromise the stability of the global economy.

²⁰ op. cit., fn. 7

²¹ "Trade War Leaves Both US and China Worse Off," United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, November 6, 2019.

²² Ibid.

²³ op. cit., fn. 7

²⁴ Ibid.

Case Study: Chinese Exports

The tariff war has also left China worse off, as Beijing begins to experience a reduction in exports which has hurt their GDP, partly as a result of tensions amid the coronavirus pandemic. According to a study conducted by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, China experienced a 25% loss in exports in 2019.²⁵ This has caused detrimental effects to Chinese firms who rely on U.S. exports and the Chinese economy, as imports from other foreign countries can increase as a result of the trade war. This trade diversion has caused net trade losses of about \$14 billion for the U.S. and China both, and for the office machinery and communication equipment sectors (the hardest hit), China experienced a loss of \$15 billion in exports to the U.S. due to trade diversion.²⁶ However, this report was conducted for fiscal year 2019, before the coronavirus pandemic. It is likely that China has experienced further losses due to a decrease in exports as a result of the pandemic, so, it is interesting to consider whether these losses caused by the pandemic will motivate China to retaliate in the trade war.

In April 2020, The New York Times reported that the coronavirus outbreak has brought China's extraordinary, nearly half-century-long run of growth to an end when Chinese officials said that the world's second-largest economy shrank 6.8 percent in the first three months of the year compared with a year ago.²⁷ The pandemic and attempts to contain it have sharply cut the world's need and desire for China's goods, which lead to factory shutdowns and worker furloughs.²⁸ China may have recovered from the pandemic, but it is still experiencing weakening global demand for its exports, especially in the United States, where President Trump has used the pandemic as a reason to further push back against China. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and

²⁵ op. cit., fn. 19

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Keith Bradsher, "China's Economy Shrinks, Ending a Nearly Half-Century of Growth," The New York Times, April 16, 2020.

²⁸ Ibid.

Development, China has lost 35 billion dollars in fiscal year 2019 in a decrease in exports to the U.S.²⁹ This shows that both countries are experiencing losses as a result of the trade war, and neither country is experiencing economic gain.

Clearly, data suggests that China is experiencing billions of dollars of loss in exports because of the sharp cut in desire for Chinese goods due to the coronavirus pandemic and as a result of increased pressure on the country by President Trump. President Trump has repeatedly blamed China for the spread of COVID-19 while Beijing blames Washington, so essentially, the coronavirus has caused both countries to push back further on each other. Even before the pandemic, China was experiencing a loss in exports due to the phase one trade deal and these losses continued to increase throughout the pandemic. It is important to consider that the phase one trade deal had extremely ambitious goals, most of which were not met. Therefore, as China experiences more and more export losses, they will likely begin to push back further against the United States.

Case Study: Chinese Visiting Students

While it may not seem obvious at first, the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on the U.S.-China trade war have caused another implication: a decrease in Chinese students studying in American universities. Many Chinese students choose to either study abroad or attend university in America, but with heightened political tensions between the U.S. and China caused by the trade war and especially during the pandemic, there has been a dramatic reduction in Chinese students studying abroad in America. This implies that American universities are losing a great sum of money. According to a recent article published by the BBC titled “Being a Chinese student in the US: ‘Neither the US nor China wants us’” there are 360,000 Chinese students currently enrolled in American universities, but “Washington has warned that not all students from China are “normal”, claiming some are Beijing’s proxies who conduct economic espionage, orchestrate pro-China views and monitor other Chinese students on

American campuses.”³⁰ According to the same article, the Trump administration recently cancelled visas for 3,000 students they believe have ties to the Chinese military.³¹ The pandemic has caused heightened tensions between the U.S. and China, which further intensifies the trade war and turns these Chinese students into a political target for Washington. Furthermore, some students may refrain from coming to the U.S. because of coronavirus-related racism, especially as President Trump used words such as “kung flu” and “China virus” to describe the coronavirus in order to heighten tensions with Beijing. If these students are being highly politicized and marginalized by the U.S. government due to the political implications of the coronavirus and the trade war, there will be a decrease in the number of Chinese students who come to the U.S. to study, causing an economic loss for American universities.

Accordingly, how the reduction of Chinese students studying in the U.S. will affect American universities (and the economy) must be examined. According to data provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce, in 2020, there were 163,509 arrivals of Chinese students coming into the U.S. to study, however, this is a 69.8% reduction from the previous year.³² Evidently, a large number of Chinese students come to the U.S. to pay a large sum of money to study at American universities, however, this number has dramatically decreased due to political and economic implications of the coronavirus and the trade war. Data from NAFSA: Association of International Educators shows that international students studying at U.S. colleges and universities contributed \$38.7 billion and supported 415,996 jobs to the U.S. economy during the 2019-2020 academic year.³³ NAFSA data shows that Chinese students alone contributed almost 13 billion dollars to the U.S. economy in fiscal year 2018, showing that Chinese

30 Zhaoyin Feng, “Being a Chinese student in the US: ‘Neither the US nor China wants us’” BBC News (BBC, June 11, 2019).

31 Ibid.

32 “I-94 Arrivals Program,” International Trade Administration (U.S. Department of Commerce, October 2020).

33 Rebecca Morgan and Kasey Penfield, “NAFSA International Student Economic Value Tool,” NAFSA (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, November 18, 2019).

29 op. cit., fn. 21

students make up almost one-third of the market for international students in the U.S.³⁴

There is growing pressure in the U.S. to place restrictions on foreign students, particularly Chinese, amid tensions between the two countries over trade despite the U.S. being the number one destination for Chinese students seeking to study abroad, according to a fact check published by BBC News³⁵. After analyzing the data provided, it has become evident that the reduction of Chinese students studying in the U.S. will be detrimental to the American economy. The data provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce showed that there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of Chinese students arriving to the U.S., and it is clear that this almost 70% reduction³⁷. This is because international students studying at U.S. colleges and universities contributed almost \$40 billion and supported around 400,000 jobs to the U.S. economy³⁸. One-third of these numbers belong to Chinese students, and travel restrictions stemming from the coronavirus pandemic combined with efforts by Beijing to keep students away from the U.S. due to the trade war will ultimately be detrimental to the U.S. economy.

So What? Implications of Research Findings

As the world progresses through the coronavirus pandemic, U.S.-China relations will worsen, and the trade war will begin to exhibit more negative consequences on both sides. The initial goal of increasing tariffs on China to reverse a U.S. decline in manufacturing will not be reached. Both sides will experience drastic net losses due to a decrease in exports. It has been shown that US manufacturing and industries such as agriculture have suffered as a result of not only the economic impacts of the pandemic, but the tariff campaign

which has caused major losses on both sides. An unstable U.S.-China economic relation will also compromise the stability of the global economy. Both the U.S. and China have already experienced an economic recession due to effects of the coronavirus pandemic, such as less consumption of goods and a decrease in exports and imports worldwide. This economic downfall will continue to agitate the trade war. Heightened tensions began when there was genuine anger in Washington at the Chinese government's lack of transparency about the virus, which caused the Trump administration to push for tougher action against Beijing. Of course, this intensified the trade war, but it is also important to recognize that the U.S. cannot blame the trade war solely on the events of the past year.

Although eliminating the Chinese trade deficit would not solve all the U.S.' economic problems, it would aid the U.S. economy. Especially as economic relations worsen and tensions heighten through the coronavirus pandemic, the U.S.' best option is to quit increasing tariffs and form a treaty with China. The phase one trade deal proved to be ineffective, especially given China's slowing economic growth, the disruptive impact of the coronavirus, and the logistics involved in large increases over a short period of time. The case studies discussed in this research show that both countries are suffering negative impacts caused by the intensifying trade war. Both countries have experienced a loss in exports that will only continue to increase throughout time. While China does not appear to be looking for escalation, and President Trump is not looking for serious confrontation that would further damage relations, research shows that negotiations between the countries would improve both countries' economic situations.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ "Trade War: How Reliant Are US Colleges on Chinese Students?," BBC News (BBC, June 11, 2019).

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ op. cit., fn. 23

³⁸ op. cit., fn. 24



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The Key to the U.S. Demographic Advantage: Immigration

Kate Curcio

Edited by Harrison Kirk and Abby Oldemeyer

American Historical and Contemporary Attitudes Toward Immigration

On January 20, 2021 the White House released a fact sheet outlining the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021, which seeks to establish a new system to provide safe pathways to citizenship, manage the border, and address the root causes of migration.¹ The proposal of the U.S. Citizenship Act follows President Biden's campaign promises to pursue immigration policies that safeguard security, stimulate the U.S. economy, and align with American values.² Biden administration priorities constitute a sharp departure from that of the immigration policies of the previous administration. On several occasions, former President Trump publicly challenged the 14th amendment which guarantees citizenship to anyone born in the United States.³ This stance on birthright citizenship invited criticism from officials across party lines, who remind the public that a constitutional amendment cannot be overturned by an executive order.⁴ In August of 2019, Trump administration officials announced a proposal to mandate the indefinite detainment of undocumented families — replacing the standing 20-day limit for holding children.⁵ Among others, these efforts are representative of former President Trump's anti-immigrant agenda and emphasis on border control.

The Trump Administration's anti-immigrant platform was consistent with a pattern of nativism deeply rooted in U.S. history. Fear of foreigners can be traced all the way back to 1755 when founding Father Benjamin Franklin

1 The U.S. White House. Statements and Releases. January 20, 2021. Fact Sheet: President Biden Sends Immigration Bill to Congress as Part of His Commitment to Modernize our Immigration System.

2 "The Biden Plan for Securing Our Values as a Nation of Immigrants," (online article, Biden Harris).

3 Jeremy Diamond, "Donald Trump: Birthright Babies Aren't Citizens," CNN (August 19, 2015).

4 Paul LeBlanc, "Trump Again Says He's Looking 'Seriously' at Birthright Citizenship Despite 14th Amendment," CNN (August 22, 2019).

5 Geneva Sands, "Trump Administration to Allow Longer Detention of Migrant Families," CNN (August 22, 2019).

wrote, "A colony of Aliens who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them and will never adopt our Language or Customs any more than they can acquire our Complexion."⁶ About a century later, a wave of German and Irish immigrants arrived sparking the creation of the "Native American Party" also dubbed the "Know Nothing Party".⁷ This group won six governorships based off their anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant platform and goals surrounding placing restrictions on new immigrants.⁸ Chinese workers flocked to the U.S. in the 1880's, providing cheap labor to the railroad and mining industries.⁹ This exchange swiftly turned sour in 1882 when an economic downturn triggered job scarcity, prompting U.S. lawmakers to pass the Chinese Exclusion Act.¹⁰ This was the first law blocking citizenship from a specific ethnic group.¹¹ The late 19th century brought waves of Southern and Eastern European immigrants to east coast cities.¹² Supremacist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan grew astronomically in this time period, targeting minorities such as the Catholic Italians and Russian Jews.¹³ Anti-Semitism spread through channels created by powerful American elites such as Henry Ford and Charles Lindbergh.¹⁴ Homogeneity was in turn pursued through the 1924 Immigration Act which limited entry from Southern and Eastern Europe and banned Asian immigration completely.¹⁵ In the 21st century, the United States is now

6 Whitfield J. Bell, "Benjamin Franklin and the German Charity Schools," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 99, no 6 (1955): 381-387.

7 Peter Schrag, *Not Fit for Our Society: Immigration and Nativism in America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010).

8 Andy Warner, "Fear of Foreigners: A Cartoon History of Nativism in America," KQED (September 12, 2016).

9 "Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History," (online article, Classroom Materials at the Library of Congress).

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 op. cit., fn. 8

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 op. cit., fn. 9

experiencing nativist rhetoric particularly in regard to Middle Easterners (in reaction to 9/11 and the War on Terror) and Mexicans (in reaction to perceived American job scarcity/draining of public services). Former President Trump’s “Make America Great Again” platform gained popularity based on the idea of returning American jobs to American workers, largely through fortifying border control and restricting the flow of both legal and illegal immigrants into the U.S.¹⁶ Clearly, anti-immigrant sentiments are deeply rooted in the American experience and remain relevant in U.S. foreign policy discussions to this day.

Pursuing policy driven by anti-immigrant attitudes carries serious implications for the United States’ economy and thus its position globally. Despite adverse reactions from Americans toward foreign workers, the reality is that immigrants allow the United States to keep up with the labor demands of the nation’s growing economy.¹⁷ At a private event during February of 2020, former White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney said, “We are desperate, desperate for more people... we are running out of people to fuel economic growth.” Mulvaney suggested that the country needs “more immigrants” but in a “legal fashion”, reflecting the following demographic reality: immigrants have accounted for half of the expansion of the U.S. labor force over the last ten years.¹⁸ Despite this data, the Trump Administration’s tightening on immigration resulted in the lowest number of immigrants entering the United States since the 1980’s.¹⁹ This leads me to ask the following research question: How does immigration maintain a demographic advantage that allows for continued economic growth in the United States?

16 “Immigration,” (Web Archive, Library of Congress, March 2016).

17 Congressional Budget Office. Nonpartisan Analysis for the U.S. Congress. January 2020. The U.S. Foreign Born Population and Its Effects on the U.S. Economy and Federal Budget — An Overview.

18 Ibid.

19 William H. Frey, “The 2010s May Have Seen the Slowest Population Growth in the U.S. History, Census Data Show,” Brookings (January 2, 2020).

Assessing the Accuracy of Public Perceptions

The conventional wisdom regarding immigration policy is largely in favor of reform. According to a poll conducted by Gallup, American concern about immigration is at an all-time high.²⁰ 23% of Americans said that immigration is the most important problem the country is facing today.²¹ This is the highest statistic recorded since they began measuring this issue in 1993, when just 3% of Americans said immigration was the most important issue.²² Another poll conducted by The Washington Post and ABC News found that 54% of Americans think that the government is doing “too little” to keep illegal immigrants out of the U.S.²³ Both of these polls reveal a general dissatisfaction among the American public about how the United States handles immigration issues.

The conventional wisdom on this topic is somewhat misleading. The notion that immigration is problematic and should be restricted puts us at odds with United States economic interests. Over the past decade, the United States has experienced the lowest population growth ever recorded due to a combination of low fertility and increased deaths.²⁴ By 2030, immigrants and the children of immigrants will account for more than half of the population growth in the nation.²⁵ Without the contributions of both legal and illegal immigrant populations, the United States will be unable to offset this decline in population and meet labor demands needed to keep up with growing markets.

20 Jeffrey M. Jones, “New High in U.S. Say Immigration Most Important Problem,” Gallup (June 21, 2019).

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Scott Clement and David Nakamura, “Post-ABC Poll: Trump Disapproval Swells as President, Republicans Face Lopsided Blame for Shutdown,” The Washington Post (January 25, 2019).

24 Op. cit., fn. 19

25 U.S. Census Bureau. 2017. 2017 National Population Projections Tables: Main Series.

Methodology and Evidence

Qualitative methodology will be used to assess the case studies in this paper. My units of analysis are economic sectors. My case studies include the agricultural sector, the service sector, and the technology sector. These case studies are relevant because industries within these sectors all act as major contributors to the annual United States Gross Domestic Product.²⁶ This paper includes a combination of primary and secondary evidence. Examples of primary sources that will be used include presidential speeches and government reports. Examples of secondary sources that will be used include peer reviewed articles and news articles from sources such as The Washington Post.

Theoretical Paradigm

The theory that best explains my research question is historical institutionalism. A core assumption of this theory is that states and institutions are responsible for changes in social, political, and economic behavior and outcomes over time.²⁷ Historical Institutionalism was founded by Charles Tilly, Barrington Moore, and Theda Skocpol who put forth the idea that “timing and sequence contribute to unpredictability (outcomes may vary greatly), inflexibility (the more time passes, the more difficult it is to reverse course), nonergodicity (chance events may have lasting effects), and inefficiencies (forgone alternatives may have been more efficient).”²⁸ Historical institutionalism asserts that political behavior is at the will of these phenomena. The theory also advocates for the existence of path dependency, that is, historical developments make it so that systems are resistant to institutional change.²⁹

It follows that historical institutionalism can help explain how immigration maintains the demographic advantage allowing for continued

26 “Changing the Lens: GDP from the Industry Viewpoint,” Deloitte (July 24, 2019).

27 Sven Steinmo, “Historical Institutionalism,” in *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences A Pluralist Perspective*, ed. Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating (Florence: European University Institute, 2008), 118-138.

28 Orfeo Fioretos, “Historical Institutionalism in International Relations,” *International Organization* Vol. 65 (Spring 2011): 371.

29 Ibid.

economic growth in the United States. Path dependency helps us to understand how historic decisions resulting in the United States’ dependence on immigrants to fuel the labor force restricts the policy options that can be made by the state in order to maintain the position of the U.S. In other words, the United States’ current position makes radical changes difficult without disrupting economic momentum. The belief under this theory that the state is the primary driver of change frames the central role of immigration policy in the United States’ demographic and economic position. Considerations of unpredictability, inflexibility, nonergodicity, and inefficiency are central to grasping the far reaching and often overlooked impacts of state led changes to immigration policy, especially in considering complex interdependence of the several economic sectors impacted by these U.S. foreign policy decisions.

The Agricultural Sector

The population of foreign-born farm workers across the nation should not be understated. Pew Research estimates that unauthorized immigrants hold 26% of farm working jobs in the United States.³⁰ The American Farm Bureau Federation estimates 50-70% of farm laborers in the United States are undocumented.³¹ Since the Trump era, conventional wisdom would hold that undocumented immigrants are taking away jobs from Americans.³² In reality, this is not the case. Evidence suggests that immigrants keep the agricultural sector booming and that a tightening of U.S. immigration policy would put the agricultural sector at risk.

A perception that should be addressed when discussing immigration in the context of the agricultural sector is that foreign born laborers take employment opportunities from American citizens capable and ready to take

30 “Occupations of unauthorized immigrant workers,” Pew Research Center (November 3, 2016).

31 Patrick O’Brien, John Kruse, and Darlene Kruse, “Gauging the Farm Sector’s Sensitivity to Immigration Reform via Changes in Labor Costs and Availability,” *American Farm Bureau Federation* (February 2014).

32 Donald J. Trump, “Remarks by President Trump on Modernizing Our Immigration System for a Stronger America,” (speech, White House, Washington, DC, May 16, 2019).

these jobs.³³ Initially, one may jump to the conclusion that immigrants provide a cheaper source of labor and therefore are more attractive to employers. There is some truth to this due to the fact that employers don't carry certain costs with undocumented immigrants such as the cost of providing benefits. The more complex reality is that American workers are very reluctant to accept farm work.³⁴ A study conducted by the American Farm Bureau found that the majority of Americans prefer to stay unemployed rather than take on unskilled, farm work.³⁵ In another study presented to Congress conducted by the National Council of Agricultural Employers, researchers found that 68% of domestic workers seeking jobs through state agencies declined farm working jobs.³⁶ Both of these studies clearly demonstrate American's refusal to take jobs in the agricultural industries. This gap in the job market is what makes an immigrant's role in this sector viable and essential.

It is important to now consider more specific policy implications. The legal avenue through which foreign born labor can obtain jobs in the agriculture industry is through what is called the H2-A Visa. An H2-A Visa can be obtained when an employer can anticipate a shortage of domestic labor that justifies bringing in foreign workers.³⁷ Various flaws and glitches relating to H2-A Visa have highlighted the undeniable dependence the agricultural sector has formed on foreign born labor. The Guardian reported on a 2015 glitch in the electronic visa system at the California-Mexican border which prevented workers from getting to Washington for a portion of the cherry-picking season.³⁸ Farm owners

33 Gretchen Frazee, "4 Myths about How Immigrants Affect the U.S. Economy," PBS News (November 2, 2018).

34 op. cit. fn. 30

35 Ibid.

36 U.S. Congress. House of Representatives. Committee on Education and the Workforce. 2011. Workforce Challenges facing the Agriculture Industry. 112th Congress, House Hearing, September 13, 2011.

37 U.S. Congress. House of Representatives. Committee on the Judiciary. 2017. Immigration and Nationality Act. 115th Congress, January 4, 2017.

38 Nina Lakhani and Amanda Holpuch, "Computer Visa Glitch Leaves Migrant Workers Stranded at U.S. Mexican Border," The Guardian (June 17, 2015).

were unable to fill in the labor gaps with domestic workers and in turn a portion of the crop was ruined. Agricultural failures resulting from limited labor supplies are representative of the widespread dependence on foreign workers to keep up with demand. Additionally, employers experience a high level of scrutiny over minor details in their applications during the approval process for obtaining H2-A workers.³⁹ As a result, a nervous population of farm owners exists, dependent on an openness in immigration policy to support their industry.

More broadly, restricting the flow of immigrants into the agricultural sector is projected to increase food costs thus financially burdening American consumers. The American Farm Federation conducted a survey studying the Farming Sector's sensitivity to immigration reform in respect to labor costs and availability, finding that an enforcement only method in which border security and deportation efforts were increased would trigger an increase in food costs by 5-6% and 15% to 29% drop in farm income and an overall downturn in the farm economy due to a shift in the labor supply.⁴⁰ In a second set of proposed policy guidelines, a path to citizenship was included in enforcement measures. Less drastic impacts were recorded with a 2-3% increase in food prices and a 7% -14% drop in net farm income.⁴¹ In a third set of policy guidelines, which included a guest worker program, the least negative impact on the agriculture sector as a whole was found. There was a drop in net farm income by just 6% and a 1-2% increase in food prices.⁴² Increases to the cost of food would further expand food insecurity in the United States. As of 2019, 10.5% of households struggle with food insecurity.⁴³ Any efforts to further restrict the flow of foreign workers into the agricultural sector would result in a worsening of this issue.

39 David J. Bier, "H-2A Visas for Agriculture: The Complex Process for Farmers to Hire Agricultural Guest Workers," Cato Institute (March 10, 2020).

40 op. cit., fn. 19

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

43 "Food Security Status of Households in 2019," (online article, United States Department of Agriculture, 2019)

Clearly, the more leeway the U.S. allows for immigrants to work in the agriculture industry, the better the outcome for the American economy as a whole.

The Service Sector

The service sector is a major contributor to the annual GDP, accounting for over 68% as of 2018.⁴⁴ As much as 24% of jobs in service sector are filled by foreign born labor.⁴⁵ The National Immigration Forum notes that more than half of immigrant workers in the U.S. work in educational services, health care, social assistance, accommodation, food services, waste management services, and related fields.⁴⁶ Evidence suggests immigrants play a key role in the service industry, and that stricter immigration policy would dampen this demographic advantage.

Health and home care is an area of major concern when it comes to maintaining the U.S.'s labor supply. The high demand for labor is a consequence of the U.S.'s demographic reality: that of an aging population. By the year 2030, baby boomers will all be over the age of 65 —making one in every five Americans of retirement age.⁴⁷ It follows that the number of Americans needing long term care is expected to increase from 12 million (as of 2012) to 27 million in 2050.⁴⁸ The United States will need to drastically increase its labor supply to keep up with this demand. The immigrant population provides a sufficient pool of workers to meet high demands. Currently, foreign born workers account for 28% of personal care or at home health aides.⁴⁹ These workers are often women,

44 op. cit., fn. 26

45 Arloc Sherman, Danilo Tristi, Chad Stone, Shelby Gonzales, and Sharon Parrott, "Immigrants Contribute Greatly to the U.S. Economy, Despite Administrations 'Public Charge' Rule Rational," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (August 15, 2019).

46 Dan Koste, "Immigrants as Economic Contributors: They Are the New American Workforce," National Immigration Forum (June 5, 2018).

47 "Older People Expected to Outnumber Children for the First Time in U.S. History," (online article, U.S. Census Bureau, March 13, 2018).

48 Lisa R. Shugarman, "Growing Demand for Long-Term Care in the U.S.," The Scan Foundation (June 2012).

49 Jane Henrici, "Improving Career Opportunities for Women In-Home Care Workers," Institute for Women's Policy Research (February 2013).

immigrating from Latin America and the Caribbean.⁵⁰ Approximately half of these workers have earned citizenship, but a portion either have temporary legal status or are undocumented.⁵¹ Providing a pathway to citizenship would allow for greater career development, training, background checks, and other services conducive to stabilizing the workforce.

The question becomes: can this growing demand for laborers in the service sector be met without immigrant flow? The conventional wisdom holds that reducing immigration would allow jobs to be filled by American workers. Experts refute this notion, insisting that immigrants are the primary driver of the total population growth in the United States and thus are essential to meeting the needs of key industries such as the service sector.⁵² The Trump Administration's attempts to tighten immigration policies instigated issues among service workers as evidenced by the suspension of the temporary protected status (TPS) which allowed thousands of Hattians to find employment disproportionately in the service sector.⁵³ Paul Osterman of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management predicts a shortage of 151,000 direct-care workers by 2030 and 355,000 by 2040 as a result of the Trump Administration's attempted reforms.⁵⁴ It is evident that immigrants in the service sector provide the United States with the demographic advantage needed to maintain its stability.

The Technology Sector

There is no question that the tech industry is of huge importance to the United States' economy. Reuters reports that in 2018, the tech industry accounted

50 Ibid.

51 Joe Caldwell, "Immigration Reform: Key Issues for People with Disabilities and Older Adults," National Council on Aging (April 7, 2014).

52 Stuart Anderson, "Immigrants and Billion Dollar Startups," National Foundation for American Policy (March 2016).

53 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Termination of the Designation of Haiti for Temporary Protected Status, March 19, 2018

54 Melissa Bailey, "As Trump Target Immigrants, Elderly and Others Brace to Lose Caregivers," The Washington Post (March 24, 2018).

for 10% of the United States' total GDP.⁵⁵ There is also evidence that growth in the technology industry snowballs and creates opportunities elsewhere. The Economist found that for every job created in the high-tech sector, 4.3 more jobs will emerge in the local economy as a result.⁵⁶ The U.S. Department of Commerce reported 2.1 million jobs supported by the high-tech industry in 2016.⁵⁷ The following evidence demonstrates the key role that immigrants play in one of the largest economic sectors in the U.S., and how stricter immigration policy dampens this demographic advantage.

The role immigrants play in the growth and maintenance tech industry should not be minimized. The National Science Foundation's Science and Engineering Indicators finds that 25% of all workers in science and engineering in the U.S. are foreign born — of which more than half are Asian.⁵⁸ Similarly, the Brookings Institute found that 16% of all “high impact, high tech” companies have at least one immigrant employed.⁵⁹ Besides the general employment of immigrants in high tech, there is also an abundance of data indicating immigrants are often founders of highly successful tech companies. A study conducted by the National Foundation for American Policy finds that 51% of the U.S.'s startup companies valued at \$1 billion or more have at least one founding member who is an immigrant.⁶⁰ This is supported by a National Venture Capital Association study which found that of the venture capitalist backed tech companies publicly

55 David Shepardson, “Internet Sector Contributes \$2.1 Trillion to the U.S. Economy: Industry Group,” Reuters (December 26, 2019).

56 “The jobs machine: Immigration and America's high-tech industry,” The Economist (April 13, 2013).

57 “Foreign Direct Investment Strengthens America's High Tech Competitiveness,” (United States Department of Commerce, October 12, 2017).

58 “Science and Technology Public Attitudes and Understanding,” Science and Engineering Indicators, (2010)

59 Zolton J. Acs and David M. Hart, “Immigration and High Impact Tech Entrepreneurship,” Brookings Institute (February 7, 2011).

60 Op. cit., fn. 51

traded between 2006 and 2013, 33% had immigrant founders.⁶¹ It in turn becomes evident that immigrants have and continue to be catalysts to the growth and success in the technology sector.

Evidence indicates the role immigrants play in the success in the technology industry is unique to the role domestic workers play. Conventional wisdom dictates that tech jobs could be filled by American workers. After all, the supply of American students graduating from universities with STEM degrees is greater than the number of graduates being hired into the tech industry.⁶² The Economic Policy Institute reports that for every two students graduating with a STEM degree, only one is being hired into a STEM job.⁶³ That said, according to industry experts, the U.S. tech industry thrives largely as a result of immigrant contributions specifically. Instagram co-founder Mike Krieger was interviewed by The New York Times on the essential nature of immigrants in promoting the growth of tech, “Every step of the way while we were creating it we were thinking, can you create something with international appeal?”⁶⁴ Technology venture capitalist John Graham notes, “Exceptional performance implies immigration. A country with only a few percent of the world's population will be exceptional in some field only if there are a lot of immigrants working in it.”

⁶⁵ Testimonials like these convey a shared sentiment among industry leaders that the immigrant skill set is essential to the global marketplace, filling industry needs unique to that of domestic workers.⁶⁶

61 Stuart Anderson and Michaela Platzer, “American Made: The Impact of Immigrant Entrepreneurs and Professionals on U.S. Competitiveness,” *National Venture Capital Association* (2006).

62 Hal Salzman, Daniel Kuehn, and B. Lindsay Lowell, “Guest Workers in the High Skill U.S. Labor Market,” *Economic Policy Institute* (April 24, 2013).

63 Ibid.

64 Farhad Manjoo, “Why Silicon Valley Wouldn't Work Without Immigrants,” *The New York Times* (February 8, 2016).

65 Paul Graham, “Let the other 95% of Programmers In,” *Paul Graham* (December 2014)

66 Ibid.

The pro-immigrant sentiments of industry executives are made tangible through big tech's shown commitment to lobbying for pro-immigrant policy. Currently, the H1-B Visa provision written into section 101(a) of the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act is the primary avenue through which tech companies are able to hire immigrant workers.⁶⁷ With an H1-B Visa, U.S. companies can employ graduate level workers who have a special expertise in particular fields such as IT, medicine, engineering, and other technical fields.⁶⁸ Tech companies including Alphabet, Amazon, Microsoft, Facebook, Intel, Uber Technologies Inc, and more have been known to lobby for the continuance of this program.⁶⁹ In June of 2020, The Trump Administration suspended the H-1B program in order to reduce immigration and bring jobs back to the U.S.⁷⁰ This regulation is one of three regulatory efforts to restrict H-1B visas.⁷¹ Imposing restrictions on immigrants entering the high-tech dampens the demographic advantage of the United States, posing a threat to the U.S.'s tech sector. That said, the Trump administration's H1-B regulation efforts will not likely have lasting effects as one rule has expired and the other two will likely be ruled invalid in court.⁷²

Implications of Research Findings

This research is presented at a time of heightened tension in regard to addressing U.S. immigration concerns.⁷³ Aside from partisan debates, an overarching misconception exists that the population is exploding and that

67 "Immigration and Nationality Act," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (1952).

68 Ibid.

69 Prabhjote Hill, "Google's Sundar Pichai, Facebook and Amazon — here's how American companies reacted to Donald Trump's H1-B visa freeze," Business Insider (June 23, 2020); Salvador Rodriguez and Jeffrey Dastin, "Tech Companies to Lobby Immigrant Dreamers to remain in U.S." Reuters (October 19, 2017).

70 Micheal D. Shear and Miriam Jordan, "Trump Suspends Visas Allowing Hundreds of Thousands of Foreigners to Work in the U.S." The New York Times (June 22, 2020).

71 Ibid.

72 Stuart Anderson, "The Biden Administration And What Happens to Trump's H-1B Visa Rules," Forbes (January 21, 2021).

73 Op. cit., fn. 20

allowing more people to enter the U.S. is irresponsible.⁷⁴ However, the findings of this research illuminates that this is simply not the case. The United States population is not booming, there is not an excess in the labor supply — in fact, the U.S. is strengthened across the board by the addition of immigrant workers. Evidence from the agricultural sector, the service sector and the technology sector clearly demonstrate that immigrants are an asset across a diverse array of industries. Immigrants provide the labor supply needed for the United States to maintain the demographic advantage needed to continue bolstering vital economic sectors.

It is also important to note how this research reveals the irrelevance of legal status in the value immigrants add to the United States economy. Whether discussing an undocumented farm worker, a nurse, or a highly educated tech entrepreneur foreign born workers add value regardless. This puts to rest much of biased, misinformed rhetoric centered around the undocumented population. With these findings in mind, it becomes clear that the United States should not restrict the flow of immigrant workers and should consider loosening the barriers to entry in order to keep up with the increasing labor needs. Acknowledging the vital role of the immigrant population in maintaining the momentum of the Biden administration provides hope that these objectives will be prioritized with legislation such as the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021 on the horizon.

74 Op. cit., fn. 21



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Unrest in Darfur: Understanding the Climate Change Conflict

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Edited by Abby Oldemeyer

Abstract

The Darfur region of Sudan is often heralded as the first climate change conflict, with much of the unrest in the area stemming from the lack of accessibility of common goods due to environmental degradation. While this theory is generally accepted, its strength has been questioned, as the concern arises of which stakeholders would benefit from this narrative and what that means for the conflict as a whole. This piece serves as a literature review examining not only the impact of climate change in Sudan, but how climate change has become the driving force in the conversation about the war in Darfur. By examining the works of various academics, the conflict in Darfur becomes a case study which is investigated through differing perspectives, revealing the importance of how conflicts are framed by the wider global community

Introduction

The conflict in Darfur, Sudan has been tumultuous and violent, with seemingly no end in sight to this long-standing struggle. The war in Darfur officially began in 2003 between the National Islamic Front led-government in Khartoum and the southern rebel movement known as the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A).¹ Ever since the Islamist takeover of power in 1989 in Sudan, the people of Darfur felt marginalized and excluded by their government which had failed to bring regional equality as they had promised.² Since the conflict began, many questions arise about the causes and circumstances which have allowed such unrest to unfold. The most popular argument amongst them considers the war in Darfur to have been essentially caused and accelerated by the rapidly changing climate. Scholars who hold this stance attribute the causes of conflict themselves to the physical transformation of Sudan which has altered a once fixed way of life.³ However, more literature has been published refuting these assumptions, which claims that too much emphasis has been placed on the role of climate change rather than the internal social and economic problems that have continually existed in Darfur.⁴ Here it is argued that the connotations of a "climate change crisis," have the ability to lead peacemakers astray. The ways in which the conflict in Darfur is being depicted reveals the dangers of misplacing the root cause of the unrest, as the subsequent response may not adequately address the problems in its wake. The current literature based on the situation in Darfur has examined the origins of civil conflict through various scholarly lenses.

1 Anders Hastrup, "Studying War and Displacement in Sudan," *The War in Darfur* 1, (2013): 11, accessed November 12th, <https://www.routledge.com/The-War-in-Darfur-Reclaiming-Sudanese-History/Hastrup/p/book/9781138922549>.

2 Ibid, pg 13.

3 Hastrup, "War and Displacement in Sudan," 11.

4 Hastrup, "War and Displacement in Sudan," 11; Plowman J. Andrew, *Climate Change and Conflict Prevention: Lessons from Darfur*, (Washington DC: National Intelligence University, 2014).

Darfur as the First Climate Change Conflict

Those who see Darfur as a prominent example of climate change conflict emphasize the ubiquity of the issue of climate change. This perspective notes that as global emissions are increasing and population sizes are continually rising, it has become necessary for states to seek more sustainable and eco-conscious policies in order to address this mounting issue that is changing the fundamental nature of local environments. Climate change has posed different problems and solutions to various states, even entire continental regions. Scholars note that among them, developing countries within Sub-Saharan Africa have been disproportionately affected by the consequences of climate change.⁵ The region has experienced harsher climate conditions at a more frequent rate and the increase in the world's global temperature would only profoundly escalate these effects.⁶ It is estimated that by this year, "some [African] countries, yields from rain-fed agriculture could be reduced by up to 50 percent."⁷ Due to various conditions—including the fact that they lack stronger economies, eco-focused technologies, and even have unstable governments— for countries such as Sudan, climate change is a climate crisis.⁸ Extreme weather conditions and natural disasters are much more difficult to address and as a result, are more destructive and harmful. Africa faces substantial impediments when it comes to protecting their own environment, as they must endure pressures of conflict, human development, debt issues, and various other compounding problems.⁹ The effects of climate change reach incredibly far in Sub-Saharan Africa, as

5 Plowman, "Climate Change and Conflict Prevention: Lessons from Darfur," 4.

6 Dan Shepard, "Global Warming: Severe Consequences for Africa," *Africa Renewal* (2019), accessed November 11, 2020, <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2018-march-2019/global-warming-severe-consequences-africa>

7 Kristen A Hite and John L Seitz, *Global Issues: an Introduction*. Vol. 5, (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), 179.

8 Plowman, "Climate Change and Conflict Prevention: Lessons from Darfur," 8.

9 Joseph N. Weatherby, Craig Arceneaux, Anika Leithner, Ira Reed, Benjamin F. Timms, and Shanruo Ning Zhang, *The Other World: Issues and Politics in the Developing World* 10 (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2018), 231.

they have the highest rate of land degradation, with the livelihoods of more than one billion people at risk¹⁰.

The increased conflict in the region of Sudan is widely attributed to the destructiveness of land degradation, desertification, and dwindling water supply being caused by climate change. Mohamed Osman Akasha, who specializes in international security, explains that the people of Darfur are highly dependent on access to land and water as they rely on these natural resources for their socio-economic activities, specifically subsistence agriculture.¹¹ The agriculturalists in the region are mostly ethno-African, while the pastoralists are primarily ethnically Arab, which means they have competing agricultural systems.¹² These two groups have a history of conflict, but it is argued that the effects of climate change had worsened conditions in the area which resulted in outright destructive competition. The underlying conflict was over water and land for grazing, which also then created problems related to migration.¹³ As farmers and pastoralists were forced to move from their traditional field, they began encroaching on other group's lands, which were also facing the effects of climate change. Proponents of the concept that climate change is the driver of conflict would note that this has caused an increase in already existing tensions among those who compete for this dwindling resource, which has escalated from local disputes to fully armed conflicts.¹⁴ If the groups of agriculturalists and pastoralists were able to maintain their way of life uninterrupted by the

10 Elie A Pandonou, Anne M Lykke, Yvonne Bachmann, Rodrigue Idohou, and Brice Sinsin. "Mapping Changes in Land Use/land Cover and Prediction of Future Extension of Bowé in Benin, West Africa," *Land Use Policy* 69 (2017): 85-92, accessed November 12, 2020, <https://www-sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/science/article/pii/S0264837715302131?via%3Dihub>

11 Mohamed Osman Akasha, *Darfur: A Tragedy of Climate Change* (Hamburg, Germany: Anchor Academic, 2014), 10.

12 Ibid, 13.

13 Ibid, 13.

14 Ibid, 16.

geographical changes brought on by climate change, the conflict would not be as severe as it is currently.

US Foreign Service Officer J. Andrew Plowman goes even further and uses Darfur as a case study to examine how climate change can lead to violent conflicts. He argues climate change is a physical vulnerability, but can also affect the Sudanese economy through aspects like GDP from agricultural output.¹⁵ Yet climate change itself then causes other domains such as governance and development to be institutionally vulnerable, as it exposes the cracks in the already shaky system.¹⁶ As the effects of climate change affect all areas of a person's livelihood, many Sudanese people in the region of Darfur struggle with both absolute and relative deprivation. In Darfur, economic marginalization and lack of means for Sudanese individuals have allowed for higher levels of recruitment by terrorist groups.¹⁷ Without the means to provide for oneself and one's family, along with essentially no government support and increasingly fewer opportunities, it puts these vulnerable groups in an even more precarious situation. To scholars who support the climate change theory in conflict, its effects work to compound already existing problems within a state, while keeping those who are the least equipped to deal with it at risk.¹⁸

Questioning the Role of Climate Change

As more literature examining the situation in Darfur has been published, arguments have arisen questioning the credibility behind the climate change argument. The War in Darfur is widely considered the first climate change crisis by international leaders and scholars alike, making it the blueprint for how climate change is actively affecting the modern world. However, some find this depiction of the conflict lacking in the complexity of the situation itself in Sudan. A key distinction here is that these scholars are not denying the impact of climate change, but rather regard it as one of the factors which has worsened

15 Plowman, "Climate Change and Conflict Prevention: Lessons from Darfur," 87.

16 Ibid, 27.

17 Ibid, 104.

18 Akasha, "Darfur: A Tragedy of Climate Change," 18.

conflict rather than creating it.¹⁹ Some would even argue that the war being labelled as a climate crisis can result in dangerous hidden consequences caused by the stakeholders who are perpetuating this depiction of Darfur. A major argument is that the immediate assumption of the climate-conflict link can lead peacemakers astray.²⁰

Much of the literature based on this perspective serves as a response to the climate change argument, contending that scholars simply lack enough credible information to make such a claim. Despite great improvements within the ability to conduct research, some scholars argue that social scientists are ill-equipped to predict highly volatile and fickle events such as conflict itself.²¹ Thus, attempting to adequately connect climate change to the concept is even more difficult, as there are various indirect links between environmental variability and intrastate conflict.²² While there is a clear understanding that the impacts of climate change will inevitably affect the livelihoods of individuals, especially those who are already vulnerable, the larger argument is that the assumption that climate change is the main underlying cause of conflict can dismiss the various other factors which can be linked to violence. Due to the fact that the very nature of the situation that is being observed cannot be replicated or controlled without ethical concerns, it makes evaluating the causes inherently challenging. Furthermore, environment-related conflicts have existed in Sudan since colonization, a time in which the impacts of climate change were not as severe. Access to water has been one of the major drivers of conflict during this

19 Harry Verhoeven, "Climate Change, Conflict and Development in Sudan: Global Neo-Malthusian Narratives and Local Power Struggles," *Development and Change* 42, no. 3 (2011): 679-707, accessed November 12, 2020, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2011.01707.x>.

20 Ole Magnus Theisen, Nils Petter Gleditsch, and Halvard Buhaug, „Is Climate Change a Driver of Armed Conflict?“ *Climatic Change* 117, no. 3 (2013): 613-25, accessed November 12, 2020, <https://link-springer-com.ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/article/10.1007/s10584-012-0649-4>

21 Ibid, 614.

22 Ibid, 625.

time, so scarcity has remained an issue for some time.²³ The literature focusing on climate change and conflict fail to consider the links to the deeper structure of exclusion and historical violence which is a crucial aspect of the conflict in Sudan.²⁴

Some have also focused on the specific empirical data and outdated assumptions that have not aligned with arguments about climate change inducing conflict within Darfur. While reasoning which suggests that the impacts of climate change can worsen conditions and increase the likelihood of natural disaster is not disputed, some have noted that specific changes within Sudan's borders do not accurately align with climate change arguments. The height of violence during the war in Darfur has been from 2003 to 2005, yet during this time, Darfur experienced above average rainfall.²⁵ Furthermore, the worst violence took place in areas where there was consistently good rainfall, the fringes of the Jebel Marra highlands.²⁶ Scholars argue that, "two assumptions are operative here: that Darfur's 'traditional' economy and society are utterly dominated and determined by the availability of water; and equally, that this traditionalism – Darfur's low level of development – was a crucial intervening variable between (claimed) water scarcities and the descent into war."²⁷ The emphasis on internal water scarcity as a leading issue within Sudan is based on Western ideas and stereotypes about Sudanese society. The outside Western world fails to recognize that the people of Darfur are not solely reliant on agriculture, as a means for survival, which is assumed based on their peripheral status in the global community.²⁸ Outside forces attempt to quickly classify the conflict in

23 Jan Selby and Clemens Hoffmann, "Beyond Scarcity: Rethinking Water, Climate Change and Conflict in the Sudans," *Global Environmental Change* 29 (2014): 360-70, accessed November 13, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2014.01.008>.

24 Verhoeven, "Climate Change, Conflict and Development in Sudan: Global Neo-Malthusian Narratives and Local Power Struggles," 679-707.

25 Selby and Hoffmann, "Beyond Scarcity: Rethinking Water, Climate Change and Conflict in the Sudans," 360-70.

26 Ibid, 365-366.

27 Ibid, 365-366.

28 Ibid, 365.

Darfur as one of resource scarcity, rather than recognizing the colonial history which created much of the root causes of conflict that is seen today. The impact of the British colonial rule, “left a legacy of highly uneven land relations, in which contestation over property relations between tribes was aggravated, with some remaining dependent on access to other’s land and water...”²⁹ The war in Darfur is therefore not a modern problem solely rooted in climate change, but rather the inevitable outcome of Western paternalism and colonialism in Africa.

Furthermore, those who are skeptical of the climate-conflict link questions the interests of stakeholders who benefit from the climate change argument. The fear is that the global Malthusian narratives between climate change and security is highly susceptible to manipulation by national elites, in this case, Sudan’s globalized Islamist elites and foreign investors.³⁰ Harry Verhoeven notes, “For politically marginal communities, sweeping investments and land ownership transfers brought dramatically increased vulnerability, as they lost assets and their livelihood strategies were completely destabilized through structural and physical violence.”³¹ The regime in power essentially benefits from the climate change narrative as it allows them to distance themselves in their own role at causing the conflict. They push the idea that the conflict is simply between farmers and nomads, rather than addressing the underlying inequality and corruption which exists in Sudan.³² The government is able to use the argument of economic necessities and environmental conflict as a facade for their own interests. It should also be noted that the war in Darfur has been influenced by Cold War era regional legacies, making it a geo-political rather than a localized conflict. Therefore, the risk posed by climate change might be less about the environmental changes related to scarcity, but the ways

29 Selby and Hoffmann, “Beyond Scarcity: Rethinking Water, Climate Change and Conflict in the Sudans,” 360-70.

30 Verhoeven, “Climate Change, Conflict and Development in Sudan: Global Neo-Malthusian Narratives and Local Power Struggles,” 679-707.

31 Ibid, 705.

32 Ibid, 707.

in which it can encourage patterns of exploitation within Sudan’s borders.³³

Conclusion

The war in Darfur is an ongoing conflict, which will continue to be studied for years to come. The perspectives on this issue will continue to develop as more researchers analyze the various factors which play a role in this conflict. While the dominant assumption was that the war in Darfur was caused and proliferated by the consequences of climate change, new scholars have begun questioning these widely accepted assumptions. Though the war began in the early 2000s, the deep-seated problems underneath existed in Darfur for decades earlier. Whether those problems are based on environmental causes or socio-political is dependent on the researcher. However, this distinction becomes much more crucial as peacemakers attempt to resolve the ongoing conflict in Sudan, where it will be necessary for them to decide which perspective is the most relevant when determining possible solutions.

33 Selby and Hoffmann, “Beyond Scarcity: Rethinking Water, Climate Change and Conflict in the Sudans,” 360-70.



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COVID-19 and Economic Gender Inequality

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Edited by Drew Navarre

Abstract

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on female employment demands global attention and solutions because of the greater implications this economic crisis will have on women for decades to come. Since the beginning of the pandemic, women have been disproportionately suffering from the COVID economy. From layoffs to unequal representation in healthcare and essential services, women are not receiving the economic assistance they need to support themselves and their families. The spike in female unemployment embodies macroeconomic risks including exacerbating the gender wage gap, invisible labor responsibilities, and access to employment opportunities. Long term implications for the global economy and domestic recovery should be prompting officials to create policy tailored to women's needs during this global economic disaster.

Real World Observation

According to the National Women's Law Center, the economy witnessed the first drop in job growth in months with 140,000 jobs lost in December, all of which belonged to women, revealing the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus pandemic.¹ Today, female unemployment rates implicate a prolonged recovery for the global economy.² The Wall Street Journal cites data from the U.S. Labor Department revealing women's unemployment rates rose above sixteen percent during the first three months of mandated quarantine.³ Over a year later, in April of 2021, female labor participation continued to drop to 55.8%, its lowest since 1987.⁴ Additionally, the U.S. Labor Organization's data expounds that female employment during the pandemic is nineteen percent more at risk than men and COVID-induced layoffs led to the loss of 140 million.⁵ Many of the lost jobs are concentrated in female-dominant economic sectors such as health care, education, retail, food service.⁶ Accompanying the disparity in compensation and employment, Dana Peterson, a global economist at Citi Research, warns The Wall Street Journal.⁸

The Wall Street Journal offers historical context on how female unemployment came to such a critical point. This history suggests how the coronavirus pandemic bears novel effects on the economy.⁹ In the past,

1 Thorbecke, Catherine, "Unemployment Rate Remains at 6.7%, Employers Cut 140,000 Jobs Last Month 'What's Really Driving the Economy Is Still the Path of the Virus.'" ABC News (January 8, 2021).

2 Sarah Chaney, "Women's Job Losses From Pandemic Aren't Good for Economic Recovery," The Wall Street Journal (June 21, 2020).

3 Sarah Chaney and Lauren Weber, "Coronavirus Employment Shock Hits Women Harder Than Men," The Wall Street Journal (May 15, 2020).

4 Tim Smart, "In One Year, Coronavirus Pandemic Has Wrecked Havoc on Working Women," US News (March 8, 2021).

5 UN Women, "COVID-19 and Its Economic Toll on Women: The Story behind the Numbers," (September 16, 2020).

6 op. cit., fn. 1

7 op. cit., fn. 4

8 op. cit., fn. 1

9 Ibid

recessionary unemployment affected men more than women because men dominate goods-producing sectors, typically the first sector to suffer.¹⁰ A shock to goods-producing industries would prompt women to join the labor force, such as in the four recessions since the 1980s.¹¹ In an interview between The Wall Street Journal and Julia Pollak, a labor economist at ZipRecruiter, Pollak reveals COVID-19 negates access to the "added worker effect," or women's ability to find jobs to make up for the lost income of their spouses.¹² Since the last recession and before the coronavirus' disruption of the global economy, working-age women were increasingly entering the labor force.¹³ In an unprecedented economic environment, state policy needs to pivot from its past strategies.

The spike in female unemployment embodies macroeconomic risks involving a vicious cycle working against hard earned measures of equality in past decades. The reality outlined by the Wall Street Journal presents a case for concern regarding the global economy since lowered participation, worsened by the previously mentioned inequities, negatively impacts the business cycle, economic consumption, discretionary incomes, and growth.¹⁴ Since unemployment precedes reduced consumption, female employment thus determines how long global economic conditions remain poor.¹⁵ Capitalism contracts and the world economy suffocates unless countries advocate for female labor-force participation policies that support women through recovery plans addressing their needs such as aid, child care, and paid leave. Current estimates from the Wall Street Journal project delayed employment for many occupations formerly offering women flexible schedules and benefits.¹⁶ To understand why

10 op. cit., fn. 1

11 Ibid

12 Ibid

13 Ibid

14 Ibid

15 Ibid

16 Ibid

women now face new challenges in their fight for equality, I am led to ask the following research question: How does the coronavirus pandemic exacerbate global economic gender inequality?

Conventional Wisdom

The conventional wisdom on economic gender inequality presents an idealistic notion that current conditions of equity are at historic highs. According to a non-partisan poll done at the Pew Research Center, a global majority developed support for gender equality over the past two decades; 23 of the 27 countries surveyed report increasing equality in their country.¹⁷ The poll cites the decisions made at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women and the subsequent Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action states, “Shared power and responsibility should be established between women and men at home, in the workplace, and in the wider national and international communities.”¹⁸ The poll concluded, “people around the globe embrace this document’s key principles.”¹⁹ The Pew Research Center published a similar poll also citing the Beijing Declaration as a benchmark for global support of gender equality.²⁰ This poll surveyed 34 countries and found, “a median of 94 percent think it is important for women in their country to have the same rights as men, with 74 percent saying this is very important.”²¹ With optimism at the forefront, conventional wisdom on global economic gender equality is perceived as a concern of the past.

However, these polls have misleading conclusions; the perception of a consensus on adopting gender equality does not match reality. Amid the coronavirus pandemic, conventional wisdom hinders the visibility for

17 “How People around the World View Gender Equality in Their Countries,” Pew Research Center’s Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, (December 30, 2019).

18 Ibid

19 Ibid

20 Julianna Menasce Horowitz, Janell Fetterolf, “Worldwide Optimism About Future Of Gender Equality, Even as Many See Advantages for Men,” Pew Research Center’s Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, (April 30, 2020).

21 Ibid

governments and policy makers to address women’s current needs. If conditions were satisfactory, women would not be withdrawing from the economy at such drastic rates putting their families, retirements, and, consequently, the global economy at risk. The layman’s view neglects to consider how disproportionately and dramatically the pandemic harms women in the economy. While both polls acknowledge an existing degree of inequality, there’s untapped value in the expansion of social protection policies for women, such as unemployment benefits and childcare subsidies. These policies support women’s participation in the economy and maintain global consumption, innovation, and growth. States have a duty to examine the impacts of the pandemic’s economy through a gender lens.

Methodology and Evidence

To illustrate how the global economy addresses economic gender inequality, this paper will use qualitative methodology in the form of case study research. This paper evaluates three case studies: the exacerbation of wage gaps invisible labor responsibilities, and employment barriers for women. Additionally, this paper utilizes a combination of primary and secondary evidence. Examples of primary evidence include government reports, interviews, CRS reports, World Bank reports, and United Nations reports. In support, my secondary evidence will be drawn from the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, and other scholarly journals.

Theoretical Paradigm

The theory that best explains and frames my research question is historical institutionalism because of its assumptions about states, policy, and path dependency. Founded by Charles Tilly, Barrington Moore, and Theda Skocpol, historical institutionalism illustrates how state policy develops from the influence of states, politics, and their structures.²² Historical institutionalism assumes states are main actors “guided by a balance of past attachments

22 Professor Shelley L. Hurt, “Theoretical Paradigms of U.S. Foreign Policy,” POLS 420 course reader (Fall 2020).

and prospective opportunities.”²³ Additionally, historical institutionalism emphasizes the influence of policy set by states.²⁴ Lastly, the assumption of path dependency and continuity frame my research question because they highlight why policies are difficult to change.²⁵ Path dependency explains how over time, certain “paths” of policy solidify through the creation of feedback loops and constituencies.²⁶ Lastly, path dependency assumes an interconnectedness and thus a slowed pace of development.²⁷

Case Study: Gender Wage Gaps

In global politics, countries increasingly recognize the necessity to address existing barriers to economic gender equality such as gender wage gaps. In an interview in May of 2020 with *The New York Times*, Nahla Valji, the senior gender adviser to the secretary general of the United Nations notes, “women are being affected more severely by the socioeconomic impacts of this pandemic. In every country women earn less and they’re more likely to be in jobs with little security or protection.”²⁸ The international conversation points heavily to persistent gender wage gaps as an explanatory source of economic stagnation.²⁹ In fact, The United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals include Target 8.5 which aims to work towards “equal pay for work of equal value.”³⁰ This distinction between pay and value is important because it compares women and men’s job qualifications, skills, responsibilities, and conditions, and argues that although different, their work can “be of equal value, and, therefore, merit equal

23 op. cit. fn. 21

24 Ibid

25 Orfeo Fioretos, “Historical Institutionalism in International Relations,” *International Organization* Vo. 65 (Spring 2011): 367-399

26 Ibid

27 Ibid

28 Francesca Donner, “How women are Getting Squeezed by the Pandemic,” *The New York Times* (May 20, 2020).

29 Ibid

30 UN Sustainable Development Goals, “SDG Indicators: Metadata repository,” (online report, September 2020).

pay.”³¹ However, the rate to move towards economic parity has historically and consistently been sluggish. The global gender wage gap is 16 percent, meaning on average, women make 84 percent of what men earn.³² Predictions done by the World Economic Forum estimate full wage equality to occur after 257 years.³³ To revive the pandemic economy, countries must act on addressing the gender wage gap.³⁴

By examining the structure of gender wage gaps, one can understand how this economic disparity faces higher stakes because of the pandemic. According to a Congressional Research Service report from 2016, several factors contribute to gender wage gaps such as career interruptions, occupation choice, wage negotiations, discrimination, and preferences for flexible work schedules.³⁵ The *New York Times* adds that wages can also be set by “social beliefs about the relative value of a job,” which inevitably intertwine with sexist biases.³⁶ Notably, the gender wage gap experiences further pressure by the pandemic since employees’ needs have shifted to reflect working from home. For example, women commonly struggle with the trade-off between flexibility and compensation. Work flexibility entails “where work is performed, the number of hours, and when those hours may be worked.”³⁷ Without alterations to pre-pandemic work responsibilities, mothers find this transition challenging as it intertwines work, home-life, and child-care responsibilities. Mandated quarantine orders drive up the demand for work flexibility and thus place

31 Ibid

32 UN Women “Everything You Need To Know About The Gender Wage Gap,” (online report, 2020).

33 “Global Gender Gap Report 2020,” World Economic Forum (2020).

34 “Global Wage Growth lowest since 2008, while women still earn 20 per cent less than men,” International Labour Organization (November 28, 2018).

35 op. cit., fn. 33

36 Anna Louie Sussman “Women’s Work Can No Longer Be Taken for Granted,” *The New York Times* (November 13, 2020).

37 Congressional Research Service Report, “Gender Earning Gap,” (online report, June 1, 2016).

downward pressure on wages.³⁸ The price of the flexibility unevenly falls on women who need to both participate in the workforce and parent.³⁹

Globally, gender wage gaps are widening from COVID-19 despite a country's level of economic advancement.⁴⁰ Based on data from the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) member countries including Korea, Great Britain, the U.S., and Chile scored significantly around .04 where 1 equals maximum inequality.⁴¹ The OECD countries experienced surging gender wage gaps during the pandemic and attribute this to "women's weaker positions and participation in the labor market."⁴² Modern inequality heavily influences the United States since they are home to the largest global economy, the most consumers, and the most discretionary income to influence global markets.⁴³ In 2020, the U.S. still recorded a gender wage gap of 19 percent.⁴⁴ Alongside this data, a few dollar to dollar comparisons highlight the disparities in sectors with female majorities. For every \$1.00 a man makes, female elementary school teachers make \$0.92, female family doctors and general practitioners make \$0.94, female nurses make \$0.98, and female flight attendants make \$0.92.⁴⁵ For other countries, the widening of the gender wage gap risks placing more women in poverty.⁴⁶ In the South Caucasus, which includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, the economy is transparently discriminatory against women.⁴⁷ There, women make up about half the workforce, receive

38 op. cit., fn. 32

39 Ibid

40 "Korea's gender wage gap rises with age and is the largest in the OECD: In 2013 or latest year available for full-time employees," OECD Economic Surveys (online report, May 16, 2016).

41 Ibid

42 Ibid

43 Caleb Silver, "The Top 20 Economies in the World," Investopedia (March 18, 2020).

44 PayScale, "The State of The Gender Pay Gap 2020," (March 31, 2020).

45 Ibid

46 UN Women, "The Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality in the Arab Region," (online report, 2020).

47 Ibid

equal levels of education, but earn about 36 percent less per year.⁴⁸ A large percentage of women comprise a vulnerable class in informal sectors, suffer limited unemployment insurance and wage and social protections; the gender wage gap extends across borders.⁴⁹

Countries are now presented with an opportunity to pass equalizing economic policy, expand their tax base, increase discretionary incomes, and rebound vulnerable populations from COVID-19. In the U.S., California and fifteen other states passed legislation that emphasizes transparency; California's Equal Pay Act states, "An employer shall not prohibit an employee from disclosing the employee's own wages, discussing the wages of others, or inquiring about another employee's wages."⁵⁰ New Zealand has also made recent efforts to address "equal pay for work of equal value."⁵¹ The New York Times decodes New Zealand's Equal Pay Amendment Bill as a re-evaluation of women's work and praises their assembly of an in-depth task force made up of union officials, Ministry of Children delegates, social workers, and employer representatives.⁵² The World Bank explains other strategies to reduce the wage gap including promoting skill-development programs, expanding care services and parental leave opportunities, and increasing women's presence in management and decision making positions.⁵³ Further, the World Bank suggests that governmental policies and a reduced educational gap positively narrow the gender wage gap.⁵⁴ The gender wage gap biases can be realized if states adopt measures of equality and transparency modeled by the U.S., New Zealand, and others.⁵⁵

48 Ibid

49 UN Women, "COVID-19 and its economic toll on women: The story behind the numbers," (online report, September 16, 2020).

50 "Equal Pay and Pay Transparency Protections," US Labor Department Women's Bureau (online report, 2020).

51 op. cit., fn. 32

52 op. cit., fn. 32

53 op. cit., fn. 33

54 Ibid

55 op. cit., fn. 32

In short, closing the gender wage gap is not possible without government regulation, whereby the state needs to codify wage equality through social and economic measures. Linda Hill, a member of the Coalition for Equal Value, Equal Pay, a feminist organization, said in an interview with the New York Times, “Employers are not entitled to make even small profits on the backs of underpaid women.”⁵⁶ There are several state policy responses that have already been modeled by other states with the effectiveness to alleviate current gender wage gaps. Once the international community can create a family-friendly labor market by re-evaluating the value of women’s work, the economy can unleash true innovation, higher capital flows, high investment yield return, sustainable population control, and increased GDP.⁵⁷

Case Study: Unpaid Labor

“Invisible labor” alludes to the uncompensated, undervalued, yet continually expected work from women in the home.⁵⁸ Globally, women’s unpaid labor is worth 10.9 trillion dollars.⁵⁹ Invisible labor is defined by the OECD as “time spent doing routine housework, shopping for necessary household goods, child care, tending to the elderly and other household or non-household members, and other unpaid activities related to house maintenance.”⁶⁰ With the pandemic’s closure of schools and day care facilities, plus reduced access to outside help, mothers bear the additional responsibility of homeschooling, supervising remote learning, and caring for their children during the hours they would be at school.⁶¹ A Congressional Research Service Report released in the summer of 2020 cites data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics illustrating the

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ Bank of America Securities, “Thematic Investing: Womument: The Gender Gap - we should all care,” (March 3, 2020).

⁵⁸ Gus Wezerek, Kristen R. Ghodsee, “Women’s Unpaid Labor is Worth 10,900,000,000,000,” (March 5, 2020).

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ op. cit., fn. 45

⁶¹ Francesca Donner, “How Women are Getting Squeezed by the Pandemic,” The New York Times (May 20, 2020).

pandemic’s impact on the childcare sector: “The number of child care workers decreased by about one-third between March and April and about one-quarter between March and June.”⁶² Additionally, parents and providers face uncertainty about if and when child care facilities will be able to reopen safely.⁶³ Invisible labor profoundly impacts women’s productivity in the workforce and should be a prioritized issue in state policy in response to COVID-19.

Invisible labor has historically fallen on women; in fact, the global averages reveal women doing three times more than their male counterparts, and in some countries, six or seven times their partners.⁶⁴ The global norm places working mothers as the parent to bear the majority of child care and housework.⁶⁵ Polling data from the Pew Research Center states “women have more influence with decisions about raising children.”⁶⁶ During the pandemic, invisible labor responsibilities increased for mothers and drove women out of the formal economy and back to the unpaid position of home-makers.⁶⁷ Although egalitarianism popularized globally, survey research done at the Boston Consulting Group found five advanced economies, including the U.S., report working moms spend 15 more hours per week than working dads on childcare and household chores.⁶⁸ Furthermore, new research from the U.S. Census Bureau and Federal Reserve shows working mothers are 68.8 percent more likely to take leave from their jobs than states where quarantine and school closure orders happened later.⁶⁹ Addressing these inequities by investing in

⁶² Congressional Research Service Report, “COVID-19: Child Care Tax Provision in HR 7327,” (July 24, 2020).

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ op. cit., fn. 45

⁶⁶ op. cit., fn. 16

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ Matt Krentz, Emily Kos, Anna Green, and Jennifer Garcia-Alonso, “Easing the COVID-19 Burden on Working Parents” Boston Consulting Group (May 21, 2020).

⁶⁹ Misty L. Heggeness, Jason M. Fields, “Working Moms Bear Brunt of Home School While Working During COVID-19,” United States Census Bureau (August 18, 2020).

children through childcare subsidies alleviates the imbalance in responsibilities of invisible labor on women, who want or need to stay in the labor force.

Globally, the trend of unpaid labor responsibilities burdening women persists. The United Nations found 44 percent of men say they do not engage in household activities.⁷⁰ Moreover, the percent of mothers aged 25 to 44 not working due to COVID-19 related childcare issues grew by 4.8 percent, compared to no increase for men.⁷¹ A majority of Eastern countries are home to the most inequitable home responsibility distributions where labor falls heavily on women.⁷² The New York Times published the OECD's data on unpaid labor exposing how Indian women spend nearly six hours a day managing the home, while men spend 52 minutes.⁷³ In the Middle East and North Africa, the United Nations reports women spend 4.7 times more hours in unpaid work than men, the highest rate among all regions globally.⁷⁴ In the West, more promising data still leaves room to achieve equality; women in the U.S. work 4 hours of unpaid work per day compared to men's two and half hours.⁷⁵ Additionally, 44 percent of U.S. mothers report "being the only one in the household providing care."⁷⁶ With high global numbers of women out of the workforce, invisible labor responsibilities reveal the extreme imbalance of labor forced upon women.

Provisions such as early childhood education and childcare services can offset unpaid care provided by mothers and increase women's participation in the labor force.⁷⁷ The smallest global labor divides are found in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, where social safety net programs provide care for

70 Ginette Azcona, Antra Bhatt, Jessamyn Encarnacion, Juncal Plazaola-Castaño, Papa Seck, Silke Staab, Laura Turquet, "From Insights to Action: Gender equality in the Wake of COVID-19," United Nations Women (2020).

71 op. cit., fn. 45

72 Ibid

73 Ibid

74 op. cit., fn. 45

75 Gemma Zamarró, "Gender Differences In the Economic and Social Impact of The COVID-19 Pandemic," Women In America Report (July 8, 2020).

76 Ibid

77 op. cit., fn. 74

children and older people.⁷⁸ The United Nations prescribes states to make long-term investments in the structure and systems of care services.⁷⁹ This should include expansive social protection for unpaid caregivers and grant access to paid family and sick leave.⁸⁰ The World Bank recommends states to employ family-friendly labor market policies aimed at balancing women's time between family and work.⁸¹ Currently, the United States Congress is discussing two child care bills that would expand existing eligibility for benefits to reflect more income levels and adjust to inflation.⁸² The revisions being considered will expand federal assistance access for families in need of childcare.⁸³ If more citizens receive aid, support will rise, as more beneficiaries realize their needs can be met by welfare policy. Invisible labor is foundational to daily life and the economy, but it's rooted in gendered norms and inequalities.⁸⁴ Thus, women cannot continue being disrupted in their careers by the country's inability to support and invest in both their women and children.

Case Study: Employment Access

During the pandemic, some women in the formal economy hold particularly vulnerable roles: essential front-line workers and informal employees in service sectors. By diversifying the economic sectors available to women, the economy may be strengthened. At this time, the coronavirus' impact on women in the economy is undoubtable; however, states can minimize the disparities in employment caused by the drastic economic upheaval in recent months. Women face barriers to employment opportunities such as high participation in fragile economies, narrow job options, gender wage gaps, and

78 op. cit., fn. 49

79 op. cit., fn. 61

80 Ibid

81 Mercy Tembon, "Why We Care About Closing Gender Wage Gaps in the South Caucasus," World Bank (March 7, 2020).

82 CRS Report, "COVID-19: Child Care Grants in H.R. 7027 and H.R. 7327," (July 22, 2020).

83 Ibid

84 "Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women," United Nations (April 9, 2020).

invisible labor responsibilities.⁸⁵ The OECD claims that women globally make up seventy percent of the healthcare industry, although they comprise a minority of the leadership positions.⁸⁶ The concentration of female front-line workers makes women vulnerable to contracting COVID-19 and exposes them to the stresses of influxes in patient demands.⁸⁷ To mobilize women to join and grow the economy, barriers to employment need policy's help.

Historically, states such as the U.S. have demonstrated their capability to create policy to marshal female workers. During World War II, women were needed in the economy when men were drafted for the war, so the government federally subsidized nurseries and childcare centers in every state.⁸⁸ However, when the war ended so did financial assistance.⁸⁹ Alike the call and response between the U.S. people and government of decades past, the U.S. today needs a similar crisis response. The necessity for federal action is accentuated by recent policy decisions of U.S. states. Eight states, including California, chose to perpetuate inequality through policy by continuously voting down resolutions such as affirmative action.⁹⁰ Despite these votes, revitalizing the pandemic economy, just as the interwar economy, necessitates states to promote the economic participation of women.

On a global scale, the coronavirus continues to threaten women's access to employment. Employment can begin with women's access with basic services such as transportation, internet, and initial funds.⁹¹ An exemplary case of a need for state assistance directed at catalyzing female workers in the U.S. arose in

⁸⁵ "Women at the core of the fight against COVID-19 crisis," OECD (April 1, 2020).

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ Patricia Cohen, "Recession With a Difference: Women Face Special Burden," *The New York Times* (November 17, 2020).

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Viviann Anguiano, Marshall Anthony Jr., "California Is Not A Bellwether on Affirmative Action," *Center for American Progress* (November 24, 2020).

⁹¹ Mercy Tembon, "Why We Care About Closing Gender Wage Gaps in the South Caucasus" *World Bank* (March 7, 2020).

an interview with the *New York Times*. Ms. Poe, a single mother, expressed her concerns about being able to find a job if her car was to be repossessed, since she cannot make payments without stimulus aid.⁹² In other global corners, most of the 3.9 billion poor, less educated, and offline populations, are women⁹³ Moreover, women's contact to computers may be limited within households, in part because of high costs, women's unpaid work responsibilities, or discriminatory norms.⁹⁴ Since most modern communication is conducted through online platforms, internet access is vital to maintain educational and professional status, especially during quarantine.⁹⁵ Research from past pandemics notes that women's economic sectors can be disproportionately affected, such as in 2014-15 when West African Ebola outbreaks contracted female dominant sectors of retail, trade, hospitality, and tourism.⁹⁶ On an analytical level, identifying the employment barriers such as transportation, internet, and funds for employment are insightful to develop effective COVID-19 response policy.

Even in countries where educational attainment is relatively high, women's skills are not always in line with those required to succeed in new professions.⁹⁷ Women currently encounter barriers to employment in high demand occupations.⁹⁸ Based on data from LinkedIn, women are underrepresented in six of the eight micro-clusters with the highest employment growth rate: people and culture, content production, marketing, sales, specialized project managers, data and AI, engineering, and cloud computing.⁹⁹ Further, comparing where women are currently employed with the skills they possess, they are under-utilized in qualified positions, including high-tech and management.¹⁰⁰ Consequently, many

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ op. cit., fn. 45

⁹⁴ Ibid

⁹⁵ op. cit., fn. 45

⁹⁶ op. cit., fn. 87

⁹⁷ op. cit., fn. 32

v

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

women who should be reaping the benefits of their skills are being held back from joining the most profitable economic sectors.¹⁰¹ The United Nations reports the addition of employment and leadership opportunities for women results in great benefits for companies such as scoring the highest in organizational performance when three or more women are in senior management positions.¹⁰² Reconnecting women's skills to the right jobs will facilitate their rebound into the economy.

States are already being held accountable by international organizations for how they address employment recovery for women. The United Nations assessed various states' initial social measures and found "less than 1 in 5 state-led social protection measures were gender sensitive."¹⁰³ There are state led responses that can mitigate the employment effects of COVID-19 declared by the United Nations council on Women.¹⁰⁴ First, states can pass economic stimulus packages that may include direct cash-transfers, unemployment benefits, tax breaks, and expanded child care benefits; these solutions would give women financial security they need during the pandemic.¹⁰⁵ Next, the state can give support to women workers with directed and expanded worker rights.¹⁰⁶ Another strategy for countries is grant funding to women-owned and women-led businesses, including populations of women in both formal or informal sectors.¹⁰⁷ The many barriers to employment such as resources and skill-to-title matching concern women and our recessionary global economy.

101 Ibid

102 UN Women, "Facts and Figures: Economic Empowerment: Benefits of economic empowerment," United Nations (2020).

103 op. cit., fn. 31

104 Ibid

105 op. cit., fn. 31

106 Ibid

107 Ibid

So What? Implications of Research Findings

Since this paper's completion, female unemployment has dramatically worsened. What was once shocking data is being exacerbated monthly, including initial reports such as The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) publication on June 21st of 2020 detailing spiking levels of female unemployment.¹⁰⁸ Global economic inequality has been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic in numerous ways including gender wage gaps, invisible labor responsibilities, and employment access. The pandemic forces women to use fewer resources but continue financially supporting their families, managing their children's schooling, and attending to other household necessities.¹⁰⁹ The implication of gender wage gaps results in women held back from being able to fully support themselves and their families. Additionally, invisible labor starves women from contributing and benefiting the economy. Lastly, barriers to employment withhold the true potential of the global economy. The issue of economic gender injustice raises enormous economic, social, and cultural stakes. The research is important because COVID-19 responses possess the power to determine the direction of women's rights, gender norms, and cultural acceptance of working mothers. Economically, recovery plans are important for states grappling with the damage from reductions in female participation they face slashes in tax bases, consumption, discretionary spending, and economic productivity. This research is innovative because it suggests governments should pass specialized recovery policy rather than accepting gender equality as finished business.

As the coronavirus worsens, the research findings on female unemployment expose the global economy as a deeply inequitable and broken domain. The coronavirus pandemic has sent destructive shocks through the core of inequalities like wages, invisible labor, and employment access. On November 24th, 2020 when the Dow Jones Industrial Average stock hit an all-

108 Sarah Chaney, "Women's Job Losses From Pandemic Aren't Good for Economic Recovery," The Wall Street Journal (June 21, 2020).

109 Misty L. Heggeness, Jason M. Fields, "Working Moms Bear Brunt of Home School While Working During COVID-19." United States Census Bureau, August 18, 2020

time high of 30,045 points, many interpreted this as an indication of economic strength.¹¹⁰ The international community should be wary of what lies underneath our markets: a fractured economy weakened by elusive gender inequalities. The greatest step to be taken will be for states to adopt a gender lens in their policy to ignite global economic recovery. There are exemplary states that have already begun the process of appreciating women's work and adjusting their societies to reflect their values. Women and their allies worked for decades to carve out their rightful place in the global economy. At a turning point in history, countries now face the critical choice to retire tradition, normalcy, and inequality and commit to building a stronger, more robust, and open market valuing the work of women.

¹¹⁰ Investopedia, "What is the Dow Jones Industrial Average: All-Time High?" (November 24, 2020).



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China's Belt and Road Initiative: Fatalistic Economic Infrastructure

JT Hussey

Edited by Harrison Kirk

Abstract

Over the past decade, China has put forth substantial financial resources into developing its Belt and Road Initiative—a series of overland infrastructure projects connecting China with Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. This initiative aims to strengthen China's economic ties to host nations and cultivate more powerful relationships that affirm its geopolitical power. Despite these goals, the Belt and Road Initiative has produced substantial backlash in host countries where it is perceived as exploitative and has created populist backlash where it takes away local jobs. This backlash prompts me to ask: how does China's Belt and Road Initiative impact its geopolitical position? This paper uses a qualitative methodology through case study research to answer this research question and challenge the conventional wisdom surrounding China's inexorable rise. The findings of this research suggest that the Belt and Road Initiative's terms tend to be improperly evaluated in poor host countries, leading to sovereign debt default and economic decline that antagonizes host countries view of China, which in turn discourages future projects or cooperation.

Torched Chinese Factories in Myanmar

On March 17th, 2021, the Washington Post reported protestors in Myanmar “torching nearby Chinese-run factories in a bid to weaken the economy and punish Beijing over perceptions that it backs the [Myanmar] military.”¹ These factories are part of China’s Belt and Road Initiative, a series of overland infrastructure projects connecting China with Europe, Africa and the Middle East.² In Myanmar’s case, China has invested billions of dollars in such projects including “a strategically important deep-sea port, an economic zone,” and an “industrial park in [Myanmar’s] commercial center.”³ The initiative, however, is “producing a growing global backlash against China’s investments,” as Myanmar protestors target Chinese infrastructure and staff, associating China with the crimes of the Myanmar military.⁴ Such resentment culminates in heavy economic and human tolls, such as an attack on 32 Chinese-financed factories’ causing an estimated \$37 million in damage as well as the deaths of 60 laborers following wage disputes gone violent.⁵ In total, attacks against China’s reputation undermine its image and power in Belt and Road project countries where host countries’ populations resent and reject Chinese influence and work to remove China from the region.

Although Central Asian governments are keeping local anti-China sentiments in check, such protests indicate a much broader trend towards the rejection of China’s global economic ambitions.⁶ China advertises the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with lofty promises of “win-win” investments that give poor developing host opportunities for infrastructure development in exchange

1 Lily Kuo & Shibani Mahtani, “As Myanmar protesters torch Chinese factories, workers are caught in spiraling crisis,” Washington Post, (March 17, 2021)

2 The Economist “Gateway to the globe; China’s Belt and Road Initiative” (July 28, 2018)

3 op. cit., fn1

4 Bradley Jardine, “Why are there anti-China protests in Central Asia?” Washington Post (Oct. 16, 2019)

5 op. cit., fn4

6 op. cit., fn2

for accepting Chinese business and infrastructure.⁷ However, the BRI’s impacts have had contrasting outcomes for host countries. The BRI specifically has received criticism for contributing to “debt traps, land seizures, corruption and environmental degradation” in host countries.⁸ The initiative’s impacts on host countries depict China as a more exploitative, colonialist power.

The effects of the BRI have large implications for the global geopolitical balance of power. China’s push for the BRI challenges the United States’ claims to power in promoting views that China is “replacing” opportunities in developing countries the United States used to provide.⁹ Yet, the BRI also carries the heavy financial cost of “400 billion dollars” and accrues the image of a dominating and underhanded aggressor.¹⁰ China has been met with counter-challenges from the United States, Japan, India, and other states that have spent billions of dollars in Asian development projects to offer alternatives to China’s BRI.¹¹ While counter challenges to the BRI often pale to the staggering amount of capital China is willing to spend on the BRI, they still represent pushback to China’s global economic ambitions.¹² Therefore, given the mixed image of China’s BRI between creating economic and political potential alongside a negative image and global pushback, it becomes necessary to ask the following research question: How does China’s BRI impact its geopolitical situation?

Conventional Wisdom:

The conventional wisdom is that China is on the rise. According to nonpartisan Pew Research Center polling, a majority of countries surveyed say

7 Jonathan Hillman, “Five myths about China’s Belt and Road Initiative” Washington Post (May 31, 2019)

8 Aaron Halegua & Jerome A. Cohen “The Forgotten Victims of China’s Belt and Road Initiative,” Washington Post, (April 23, 2019)

9 op. cit., fn2

10 op. cit., fn7

11 Andrew Chatzky and James McBride, “China’s Massive Belt and Road Initiative” Council on Foreign Relations (May 21, 2019)

12 Ibid

China plays a more important role in the world today than it did 10 years ago.¹³ Additional nonpartisan polls from Gallup add that there are signs that China's leadership is gaining more clout.¹⁴ In 2018, the median approval of China's leadership across 134 countries gained, a modest increase across the previous two years.¹⁵ Both polls illustrate consensus belief that China is leading a more important role in the world than before. This majority belief portrays China as a rising power with more sway and influence than other countries.

These polls indicate that China is playing a more important role in world politics than before and would thus imply that the BRI is a part of this trend. This wisdom, however, is misleading. For example, the BRI has also led to financial losses, political backlash, and environmental damage that has served to undermine, rather than support, China's goals.¹⁶ Such negative reactions towards the BRI contradict the positive image China of its economic infrastructure program, establishing that the conventional wisdom that the BRI is part of China's rise, is misleading.

IV. Methodology and Evidence

In challenging the research question, this paper uses qualitative methodology in the form of case study research. These case studies examine how the BRI is weakening China's soft power and undermining China's alliance structures. The case study analyzing how the BRI weakens China's soft power uses China's Environmental and Social Information Assessment (ESIA) as a unit of analysis to detail how the BRI's failings contradict the country's ESIA, damaging China's image and influence abroad. The case study focusing on how the BRI undermines China's alliance structures uses the United States' Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development Act of 2018 (BUILD) as

¹³ "China's power seen as rising more than other major nations" Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. (October 1, 2018)

¹⁴ RJ Reinhart & Zacc Ritter "China's Leadership Gains Global Admirers," Gallup (March 4, 2019)

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶

a unit of analysis to illustrate how the BRI alienates host countries of BRI projects and incites retaliatory economic projects, like the U.S.'s BUILD, that compete with the BRI and undercut Chinese power. This paper will use primary sources supplemented by secondary sources. Examples of primary sources include government reports, speeches from political figures and officeholders, and China Export and Import Bank reports. Secondary evidence will be drawn from sources such as The New York Times, The Washington Post, and scholarly journals.

V. Theoretical Paradigm

Constructivism is the most useful theory with which to understand China's application of BRI projects and their impact on its soft power image and system of alliance structures. This theory was developed by American political philosopher Alexander Wend and critiques materialism, with an emphasis on "the social construction of interests, its relationship between structures and agents, and its multiple logics of anarchy."¹⁷ Professor Brian Smidt notes in U.S. Foreign Policy that "Constructivists accentuate the role of ideas and identity that they argue play a major role in foreign policy."¹⁸ Constructivism treats identities and interests as malleable social constructions and focuses on the social processes that create them, like national identity and how states differentiate themselves from others.¹⁹ These examples of constructivism demonstrate its focus on immaterial and intangible ideas rather than concrete and physical distributions of power, focusing on the ability of abstract ideas and interests to create physical, real-world change.

Therefore, this theory demonstrates its value in stressing the importance of immaterial and intangible factors such the influence of ideas or the power of image. This focus on image fits well with China's use of the BRI as an image boost to create and reinforce its identity of a powerful, and influential world

¹⁷ Christian Reus-Smit & Duncan Snidal, *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford, Aug 2008) p298

¹⁸ Brian Smidt, *Foreign Policy* (New York, 2018) p15

¹⁹ Ibid

power.²⁰ Constructivism fits well with this research question given how China fashioned image of its widely accepted and incredibly beneficial BRI despite data that challenges the veracity of this claim.²¹ The application of Constructivism to the BRI, therefore, better explains how China can expand its political influence through its image as well as how a negative image could hamper the country's economic ambitions.²²

China's Weakening Soft Power

Examining how the BRI weakens China's soft power gives a better understanding of how the BRI affects China's geopolitical position. To examine this weakening of China's soft power, the Environmental and Social Information Assessment (ESIA) assigned to the BRI will provide the best unit of analysis. ESIA assessments are processes designed to predict and assess the potential environmental and social impacts of a proposed project, evaluating alternatives and designing appropriate mitigation, management and monitoring measures.²³ As for China's ESIA, a translated issue from the China Export and Import Bank (China EXIM Bank) claims that their ESIA specifically implements "strategies for sustainable development, [and the promotion of] economic, social and environmental development."²⁴ China "shall effectively control credit risks and respect local people's rights to land and resources."²⁵ This outline of China's ESIA claims that the BRI's implementation will be economically sustainable and ethically principled.²⁶ It follows the narrative Chinese President Xi Jinping claims in a Keynote Speech At the Opening Ceremony of the Second Belt and Road that the BRI will help "improve people's lives in [participating] countries

²⁰ op. cit., fn2

²¹ op. cit., fn18

²² Ibid

²³ Business and Biodiversity Offsets Programme (BBOP) Glossary. (2012 Washington, D.C.)

²⁴ China Export and Import Bank, "Guidelines for Environmental and Social Impact Assessments of the China Export and Import Bank's Loan Projects," (August 2007)

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid

and [gives] priority to poverty alleviation and job creation."²⁷ The BRI image Xi Jinping presents corroborates the standards set forth in the ESIA of a sustainable, profitable and safe initiative that will encourage development and credit stability while reducing poverty. Through heralding sustainable promises, China strengthens its global image and reinforces countries trusts in its ability to deliver contracts. In total, positive ESIA descriptions facilitate trust in that the standards of China's ESIA and the overall narrative that the BRI is a positive means for host countries and is a sufficiently oversights and effectively executed initiative.

However, China's attempts to meet its Environmental and Social Information assessment are severely lacking. According to a United States Congressional Research Service report, "China's initial implementation of the BRI has been rocky and its 'laissez-faire approach' allows Chinese developers to benefit by cutting corners and evading responsibility for legal, social, labor, environmental, and other issues."²⁸ The report identifies such problems as "rushed agreements, a failure to conduct environmental and social impact assessments, and financing terms that create unsustainable debt for host governments."²⁹ These issues "alienate local communities and taint the BRI brand," and as of 2019, "119 countries who have entered into BRI contracts have sought to renegotiate the terms of their agreements."³⁰ This Congressional Service Report contradicts the image set forth from the Chinese government's ESIA in that China is "evading responsibility for legal, social, labor, and environmental" issues fundamental to the BRI's image.³¹ This set of contradictions decreases their soft power and culminates in contractual renegotiation or termination of BRI contracts. These

²⁷ "Xi's Keynote Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation," (Speech, Belt and Road Forum, Xinhua, April 26, 2019)

²⁸ Susan V. Lawrence, Caitlin Campbell, Rachel F. Fefer, Jane A. Leggett, Thomas Lum, Michael F. Martin & Andres B. Schwarzenberg, "U.S.-China Relations," Congressional Service Report (August 29, 2019)

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Ibid

impacts demonstrate that there are real world consequences for a failure to meet image expectations and a loss of soft power as China's faltering image with BRI host countries has led to tangible detriments towards the implementation and perpetuation of the BRI. This image problem connects well with the theoretical paradigm of constructivism as it shows the consequences for a loss of image. The fact that contractual renegotiation proceeded China's inability to maintain its presented image of the BRI demonstrates the influences of intangible, immaterial goods like image and the ramifications for the loss of soft power.

Additionally, a report from the Center for Global Development evaluating China's BRI examines the forms of economic strain and risk China's BRI puts on member states. The report details that some countries face a significantly increased risk of a sovereign debt default if planned BRI projects are implemented in an expeditious manner.³² This sovereign debt default entails significant damage to citizen livelihoods resulting in banking, economic, and currency crisis with lasting impacts on individuals who fall into poverty.³³ Furthermore, the report adds that evidence of a causal relationship between public investment and economic growth is mixed with only a weak and short-term positive association between the BRI and host countries economic growth.³⁴ This report from the center for Global development reveals economic instability at odds with the stability and poverty reduction painted by the ESIA. It depicts the BRI as a riskier endeavor that can lead host countries to damaging debt and poverty for measly economic returns. While China has advertised the BRI as a universally beneficial agreement that Chinese President Xi Jinping claims as, "[occupying] the commanding height of international morality and justice," the results have proven otherwise.³⁵ In cultivating deals that punish poverty-stricken

32 John Hurley, Scott Morris, & Gailyn Portelance "Examining the Debt Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative from a Policy Perspective" Center for Global Development (March 4, 2018)

33 Ibid

34 Ibid

35 Xinhua, "Xi Jinping: Promote the Successful Implementation of One Belt, One Road to Benefit the People," (August 27, 2018)

countries, China damages its global image, thereby discouraging host countries and prospects for future deals.

The consequences of image loss and a failure to keep with Chinese ESIA promises have led to active pushback against the BRI since the mid-2010s. A 2019 hearing from the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission notes that a number of countries have "spoken out about their concerns over the debt and sovereignty risks associated with BRI loans."³⁶ The commission details a notable example of pushback from Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad stressing concern over the exorbitant costs of BRI projects in his country, warning against BRI partnerships "giving way to a 'new version of colonialism.'"³⁷ They note how such pushback enabled Malaysia to "lower the price tag of its largest BRI project by a third."³⁸ During his campaign in 2018, Mahathir specifically connected Malaysia's growing indebtedness to China with a potential loss of sovereignty, obliquely referring to the case of Sri Lanka while warning that Malaysia did not want to similarly "lose chunks of [its] country."³⁹ The consequences for China's negative image are realized with the public outcry against the BRI's exorbitant prices and labeling China as a colonialist. Assertions against the BRI enable host countries to demand more from China financially simultaneously damaging the image China has worked diligently to create. Through a loss of image set forth in its Environmental and Social Information Assessment, China opens itself up to blatant criticism and removes avenues for financial gain and political control.

In total, the BRI's assault on China's image significantly weakens its soft power and enables host countries to demand more from China. The perception that China is breaking the promises it sets forth in its Environmental and Social

36 Commissioner Roy D. Kamphausen, "Hearing on 'China's Belt and Road Initiative'" (U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, Subcommittee on International Trade, Customs and Global Competitiveness; U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, June 12, 2019)

37 Ibid

38 Ibid

39 Ibid

Information Assessment echo arguments presented through sources like Voice of America that depict inefficiency and host country resentment for the BRI. BRI's losses in image connects well with disgruntled Cambodians who "after losing their homes to a Chinese-backed dam [that] flooded the area" have "refused the government's order to accept a compensation package and housing at several remote resettlement sites."⁴⁰ Additionally, in terms of inefficiency, Voice of America claims that the Social Baseline Conditions section of the Pak Lay dam TBSEIA/CIA," that is a detailed report of the Hydroelectric Dam's impacts and status, "is copied directly from the Pak Beng dam assessment," a more dated and inaccurate version of the report.⁴¹ Voice of America adds that "at least 90 percent" of the Social Baseline Conditions report "was plagiarized, including photos, tables and text."⁴² This narrative of the BRI as a dangerously inefficient and locally despised initiative finds strength with the reality driven effects of the BRI. While Voice of America tends to favor Western perspectives, connecting evidence like sovereign debt defaults, the forged the Pak Lay dam report, and Malaysian Prime Minister Mohamad's assertions against China lends strength to Voice of America's arguments. In summary, China's BRI fails to abide by its Environmental and Social Information Assessment, endangering host countries to dangerous economic conditions that lead them to criticize China and renegotiate deals. In terms of soft power, the BRI damages China's image and identity through its failure to hold itself accountable to conditions that paint it as an exploitative "new colonialist" that discourages future project deals and jeopardizes current ones.⁴³ Consequently, China's geopolitical position is weakened as countries lose trust in its soft power image.

40 Sun Narin "Our Ancestors' Graves have been Drowned': Cambodian Dam Wipes Out Hill Tribe Way of Life" Voice of America (December 7th, 2018)

41 Hul Reaksmey & David Boyle, "Laos Accused of Copy-Pasting Dam Impact Survey," Voice of America (September 20, 2018)

42 Ibid

43 op. cit., fn 36

Undermining Alliance Structures

China's pursuit of the BRI has served to undermine its system of alliance structures. Several states that have typically worked with China now stand against it after their membership in the BRI.⁴⁴ Additionally, coalitions of states actively undermine China's BRI and economic interests.⁴⁵ The best unit of analysis that illustrates this growing backlash and coalition of forces against China is the United States' Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development Act of 2018 (BUILD). This act "represents a major overhaul of U.S. development finance efforts designed against China's BRI" that "gives the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, or OPIC, authority to purchase equity in development projects, instead of merely providing loans."⁴⁶ BUILD capitalizes on host states disagreements with China to provide additional development options encouraging frequent Chinese collaborator states to now work with the U.S. or others.⁴⁷ BUILD represents a stronger commitment from the U.S. to work with allies to build alternative infrastructure development options to China.⁴⁸ While BUILD does encourage the U.S. to build its own framework for providing additional opportunities to development, it also encourages other states to do likewise in creating international effort against China's BRI. In total, it represents the means with which international community is pushing back against China's BRI.

BUILD creates a framework that supports the growth of alternatives to China's BRI. A 2019 Senate hearing of the Economic and Security Review Commission notes that a number of countries—including the United States, Japan, India, and the European Union—have announced new projects to

44 Nadège Rolland, "A Concise Guide to the Belt and Road Initiative" National Bureau Asian Research (April 11, 2019)

45 op. cit., fn 36

46 Shayerah Ilias Akhtar & Marian L. Lawson "BUILD Act: Frequently Asked Questions About the New U.S. International Development Finance Corporation" Congressional Service Report (January 15, 2019)

47 Ibid

48 Ibid

provide countries in need of infrastructure assistance with alternatives to the terms of China's BRI.⁴⁹ Following the passage of BUILD, Australia, Canada, the European Union, and Japan signed multilateral cooperation agreements to provide alternatives to unsustainable state-led models.⁵⁰ The formation and promotion of economic agreements represents a threat to China's BRI. While China was able to present itself as the only option for poor host counties to develop, competing economic infrastructure agreements provide alternative options that can appear superior to China's unsustainable state-led models.⁵¹ Such competing economic agreements towards China's BRI represent a threat to China's geopolitical situation in the accumulation of states in opposition to China's BRI. Because there are now alternatives to the BRI, China is no longer able to dictate the terms of deals without restraint. The presence of alternatives forces China to make less self-interested deals that are fairer to host countries and do not motivate hosts to abandon an unsustainable deal in favor of competitors.

Additionally, China has aimed to expand its military capacity through the BRI. A report from the Chinese Congress titled China's National Defense in the New Era claims that overseas interests are a crucial part of China's national interests and that one of the missions of China's armed forces is to effectively protect the security and legitimate rights and interests of overseas Chinese people, organizations and institutions.⁵² To address deficiencies in overseas operations and support, China "builds far seas forces, develops overseas logistical facilities, and enhances capabilities in accomplishing diversified military tasks."⁵³ Goals discussed in the China's statement of intent claim that their state aims to expand its military control to protect its overseas investments. With this expansion of military control overseas, China's construction of seas forces and overseas

49 op. cit., fn 36

50 Ibid

51 Ibid

52 "China's National Defense in the New Era" (The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, July 2019)

53 Ibid

logistical facilities will give it a greater means to exert its power abroad and strengthen its geopolitical position.⁵⁴ These statements align with assertions that China uses its BRI to increase its military in relation to its geopolitical position. Such assertions, like the "string of pearls" theory articulated by the Council on Foreign Relations suggests that China's projection of military power allows it to "[surround] India with a series of ports and naval bases to "restrict its maritime capabilities and establish dominance in its neighborhood."⁵⁵ Fears of China's military expansion materialize with China's acquisition of Pakistan's Gwadar port that give China access to a deep seaport on the western side of India and lead some to fear Gwadar could be used to house the PLA Navy and project Chinese naval power.⁵⁶ The fears that China's economic expansion will precede the expansion of military might appear more concrete through the statements of the Chinese government and physical acquisitions of territory with a stated means to development. Therefore, understanding how China can protect its interests overseas in defense of economic deals and benefit China's capacity to exert power better explain why China pursues its promotion and protection of the BRI.

China's goals to use its economic power to increase its military power abroad has not gone without significant pushback that challenges its military stability and economic domination. A report from the National Bureau of Asian Research details that other countries such as India and Japan have, announced competing economic infrastructure programs, titled Joint Asia-Africa Growth Corridors, days after the BRI forum in May 2017, alongside similar commitments from the European Union in September 2018.⁵⁷ Joint Asia-Africa Growth Corridors provide development opportunities designed to directly challenge

54 Ibid

55 Elizabeth C. Economy "Will Piekos: China's Port in Gwadar—Another Pearl Encircling India?" Council on Foreign Relations (February 7, 2013)

56 Ibid

57 op. cit., fn 44

and undermine China's economic goals.⁵⁸ These goals that were drafted mere days after China's BRI forum are designed to economically connect Asia and Africa, through developing a free and open Indo-Pacific region that is efficient and sustainable.⁵⁹ Indian and Japanese prime ministers discussed shared interest synergy between India's Act East Policy and Japan's Expanded Partnership for Quality Infrastructure, by closely coordinating, bilaterally and with other partners, for better regional integration and improved connectivity as well as industrial networks based on the principles of mutual consultation and trust.⁶⁰ The two prime ministers, during the Indian prime minister's visit to Japan in 2016, "also expressed their intention to work jointly and cooperatively with the international community to promote the development of industrial corridors and industrial network in Asia and Africa."⁶¹ The set of deals and stated goals to strengthen economic cooperation and development between Japan and India represent a direct challenge to China's BRI. In following the goals stated in the U.S. BUILD act to challenge China's BRI through international cooperation in providing sustainable alternatives to the BRI. In total, Joint Asia-Africa Growth Corridors drawn mere days after China's Belt and Road Forum illustrates a determination to combat China's economic expansion through the promotion developmental opportunities to compete with China's. While the qualities of improved connectivity and cooperation deliberately reflect China's own stated ESIA goals of sustainable and moralistic development, Japan and India criticize China's BRI.⁶² They claim that their projects are more efficient and sustainable, that is, better than China's deals of the BRI.⁶³ Furthermore, their commitment to

58 Asia Africa Growth Corridor, "Partnership for Sustainable and Innovative Development,"

(African Development Bank Meeting, Ahmedabad, India, 22-26 May 2017)

59 Ibid

60 "India-Japan Joint Statement during the visit of Prime Minister to Japan," (November 11, 2016)

61 Ibid

62 Ibid

63 Ibid

cooperate with the international community demonstrates a mindset mirroring BUILD encourages multilateral intervention against China's BRI.⁶⁴ In total, the development of economic deals amongst, Japan, India, the EU, and other nations in response to the BRI demonstrate the influence of intangible and immaterial power stated in Constructivism. These deals further show how the immaterial fear, or perception, that China may threaten India's sovereignty as described in the string of pearls theory produces physical action in developmental alternatives that undermine China's BRI.

The means with which China has sought to extend its military capacity and create strategic allies through the BRI has often had mixed or outright negative results. A report from the Senate Economic Commission notes that while some precipitants of the BRI like Pakistan have sought to strengthen their ties to China, many recipients have done the opposite.⁶⁵ At the same time, "countries that are recipients of BRI investments, including many in South and Southeast Asia, have also opted to enhance their security partnerships with the United States and its partners in the Indo Pacific."⁶⁶ Furthermore, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence states in a speech at the 2018 APEC Summit that "The United States' total investment in the Indo-Pacific is now more than \$1.4 trillion—more than China's, Japan's, and South Korea's combined."⁶⁷ Furthermore, Pence asserted that the United States "will partner with Papua New Guinea and Australia on their joint initiative at Lombrum Naval Base on Manus Island and work with New Zealand, Japan, and Australia to contribute to the development of PNG's electrical power grid."⁶⁸ Instances where BRI recipients began working closer with the U.S. than China refutes the idea that that BRI always cultivates closer Chinese military relationships with host countries. These countries construction

64 op. cit., fn 36

65 op. cit., fn 36

66 Ibid

67 Vice President Mike Pence "Remarks by Vice President Pence at the 2018 APEC CEO Summit," (Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, November 16, 2018)

68 Ibid

of competing military bases undermine Chinese military and naval superiority in the region. This response of military action in addition to Pence's statements that the U.S. has spent more than China in the Indo-Pacific contradict the notion that China is the only country seeking economically and militarily leverage in the region. Furthermore, it establishes that although China is expending a great deal of capital to increase its influence and presence in some regions, it cannot outspend every country in every region where the BRI is deployed. Therefore, China's efforts to project its influence and power into regions through its BRI appear unsustainable and may even weaken its presence in regions when powers like the United States perceive China's investments as a threat and expend resources to exclude Chinese influence.

Widespread negative reactions towards Chinese influence throughout India and Asia indicate that there is a wide pushback against China's BRI. The BRI undermines Chinese Alliance Structures in encouraging BRI recipients to "defect" to the U.S. for military support. Alternatively, countries that feel threatened by China's influence, like Japan and India, can work to develop competing BRI deals that actively undermine China's power. In encouraging countries to pushback against China, the BRI brings opponents of Chinese economic interests closer together and alienates recipients of the BRI that once supported China. These negative implications for Chinese power work in tandem with BUILD act policies that actively seek international cooperation against the BRI through providing alternatives to development that are deemed safer or more sustainable to China's BRI. Therefore, understanding how the BRI undermines China's system of alliance structures in marshalling economic opposition against Chinese programs and alienating states hosting BRI projects demonstrate how the BRI has damaged China's geopolitical situation.

Recommendations for Further Study

Examination of the BRI's impact on China's soft power and alliance structures reveals that the BRI not only damages China's geopolitical situation, but also puts the nation on a trajectory towards political alienation and military

confrontation. Failure to uphold promises made in its Environmental and Social Information Assessment depict China as a dishonest aggressor and incites hosts countries to criticize China, damning the BRI as exploitative and demanding renegotiations for better deals. Additionally, the military implications of the BRI, despite extending the projection of Chinese military power, also antagonize the international community. States that feel threatened from China's BRI create alternatives to the BRI and the United States, and a collection of other countries, create bases and reinforce their naval power to match China's military growth. In total, China's expansion of potential military power incites antagonized countries to respond in kind and even prods host states of the BRI, that once sought China for strategic alliances, to switch to the United States for military protection.⁶⁹ A weakened soft power image and undermined alliance structures damage China's geopolitical situation in uniting countries against China and leading to opposition, not just against China's BRI, but the entirety of Chinese economic and military grand strategy.

While the effects of the BRI on China's political situation are important in understanding the broad impacts of multinational trade development and the power of perception, this study is useful for understanding the consequences for the BRI's victims. For lack of money or options, many host countries are unable to properly assess deals before accepting them and face the consequences of sovereign debt default when they find they cannot pay contracts that were unfairly made or improperly understood. The application of preparation funds that enable host countries to evaluate deals before signing could promote more comprehensive deals that prevent sovereign debt default, unfair treatment, and or economic catastrophe. However, even for countries that have conducted proper deal evaluation, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the underlying fragility of BRI projects hit hardest by the pandemic.⁷⁰ For example, the Council of Foreign relations notes that for countries like Kenya, that are "already the

⁶⁹ op. cit., fn36

⁷⁰ Max Yoeli, "Belt and Road in Kenya: COVID-19 Sparks a Reckoning with Debt and Dissatisfaction," Council on Foreign Relations (March 25th, 2021)

subject of scrutiny over corruption, pollution, and debt concerns,” BRI loans and a covid induced economic slowdown have left Kenya “at elevated risk of debt distress.”⁷¹

In addition, other BRI host countries with failing economies have turned to other states to help pay for Chinese debt.⁷² The state of Montenegro, for example, which has seen a massive decline in tourism, a vital component of their economy, has turned to the EU to help pay for the \$1 billion of Chinese debt they still owe.⁷³ These countries demonstrate the fragility of BRI deals during the COVID-19 pandemic as the prospect of paying for BRI projects on top of worldwide economic stagnation grows unbearable. Whether the BRI can survive the economic devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic is yet to be seen but paying attention to how host countries handle BRI projects with increased financial burdens may prove a useful indicator for the longevity of China’s BRI. Despite apocalyptic expectations for China’s BRI during the coronavirus pandemic, this paper has a very limited discussion of the impacts of COVID-19 upon the BRI and would benefit from further study of the pandemic’s impact on the BRI and China’s soft power. Achieving a more comprehensive understanding of China’s BRI, whether through deal assessment, renegotiation, or other means, should better enable potential and active BRI host countries to avoid the tragedy of debt default and financial ruin. In addition, developing a BRI that is more considerate and less threatening, towards BRI host countries and those around, can reduce the prevalence of exploitative practices abroad and unnecessary military confrontation between major world powers going forward.

71 Ibid

72 Michael Birnbaum, “Montenegro mortgaged itself to China. Now it wants Europe’s help to cut it free,” Washington Post (April 18, 2021)

73 Ibid



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The United States Addressing Human Rights Via Economic Measures

Samantha Ellard

Edited by Lizzy Marshall

Abstract:

The United States has confronted various human rights abuses across the world due to the power, influence and respect the United States maintains. Whether this is a result of crises created or worsened by the United States, the U.S. has approached human rights abuses through a variety of measures. In contemplating the reconciliation of human rights by the United States, this paper will examine enforcing arms embargoes and implementing sanctions. Through the philosophical lens of realism, these case studies confront the misleading conventional wisdom that the United States promotes human rights in foreign policy. My research findings suggest the misleading conventional wisdom is somewhat correct because the United States occasionally weighs human rights in economic matters, but inconsistently in policy decisions. While there are various ways to effectively confront human rights abuses, economic measures are a powerful tool in the United States' power.

Real World Observation:

On May 16, 2020, Michael LaForgia and Walt Bogdanich published the article “Why Bombs Made in America Have Been Killing Civilians in Yemen” in *The New York Times*.¹ Throughout the piece, LaForgia and Bogdanich outline the protections an American weapons manufacturing company, Raytheon, has received to keep manufacturing their weapons during the Yemeni Civil War, the largest humanitarian crisis according to the United Nations, as well as their relationship with former President Trump. When the Obama Administration “halted [the] delivery of bomb parts that had been sold but not yet shipped, a decision that angered the Saudis and Raytheon, ... the [Obama] administration would not budge” on lifting this embargo. Despite the civilian deaths that have occurred since the Trump Administration removed these restrictions, the Senate voted in a bi-partisan majority to halt shipment of weapons to Saudi Arabia due to the humanitarian disaster in Yemen. Since the embargo was removed, Raytheon has “averaged about \$51 billion a year during Mr. Trump’s first three years,” a major economic win contributing to their prominent footing in the American defense industrial complex.² In evaluating the advantages of authorizing the movement and shipment of the weapons, the Trump Administration cited the number of jobs that are created within this industry and how it could help lower the trade deficit. The United States is the world’s largest military weapons manufacturer, which could explain the lack of embargoes on arms sales. According to Mwatana for Human Rights presented in the article, the mounting civilian deaths in Yemen can be traced back to Raytheon’s weapons and therefore shipments authorized by the United States government.

This event highlights a continuation in policy by the United States even though there is a difference presented between the Obama and Trump Administrations. The Obama Administration halted the shipment of their weapons when civilian deaths rose, while the Trump Administration reversed

1 Michael LaForgia and Walt Bogdanich, “Why Bombs Made in America Have Been Killing Civilians in Yemen,” *The New York Times* (16 May 2020).

2 Op. cit., fn. 1

that stance when it appeared to present an economic gain. However, this policy presents a continuation in U.S. policy because the back-and-forth change by different administrations has been a constant theme in economic and human rights policies. Regardless of policy continuation, the welcoming of arms sales for economic gain reveals the U.S.’ indifference to the death of “100,000 people in the Arab world’s poorest nation.”³ Even though Raytheon does not establish these policies but only follows them, the company still “went to great lengths to influence [American officials], even after members of Congress tried to upend sales to Saudi Arabia on humanitarian grounds.”⁴ Although the company has maintained the rhetoric of wanting to sell weapons abroad, the change in policy by the executive branch of the U.S. government raises questions about how the U.S. balances its economic interests with human rights.

This observation provides a staggering intersection between prioritizing human rights and economic gain, reinforcing the power dynamics allowing the United States to maintain control over a country’s actions and economy. The geopolitical economic consequences of the U.S government’s conflicting actions reveals an inconsistent sense of responsibility for human rights abroad. While the United States is a relatively wealthy country, the Trump Administration’s decision to promote weapon shipments presents a different economic priority compared to the United States Congress; the United States Congress has consistently advocated and voted in favor of embargoes and preventative measures to ensure morality in arms sales. The pursuit of selling weapons for economic prosperity despite civilian consequences suggests, according to Representative Malinowsk of New Jersey, that “[the United States is] the only country in the world that is ever capable of using this immense power that we have in a way that’s more than just about our naked self-interest.”⁵ The measures taken by the United States in response to the UN declared largest humanitarian disaster, the Yemeni Civil War, reflects the moral standing of the United States

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

as well as the self-profiting policies involved. The response to humanitarian crises abroad leads me to ask the following question: How does the United States address international human rights in domestic economic matters?

Conventional Wisdom:

The conventional wisdom is the United States should promote and emphasize human rights in their foreign policy; however, the conventional wisdom also concludes that economic interests are more important than human rights for the United States. This conventional wisdom is derived from two non-partisan polls. According to the Pew Research Center in 2018, 31% of Americans surveyed believe “promoting and defending human rights in other countries” should be a top foreign policy issue for the United States⁶ —the 31% was derived from 39% of Democrats and 20% of Republicans surveyed. In the same poll, 45% of Americans agree that “promoting U.S. business and economic interests abroad should be a top foreign policy priority.”⁷ This poll illustrates the American people’s perception that economic interests are more important than human rights policy. In another poll by Gallup in 2013, 52% of Americans claim that “promoting and defending human rights in other countries” is “very important.”⁸ In the same poll, 66% of Americans said that “promoting favorable trade policies for the U.S. in foreign markets” is “very important.”⁹ This Gallup poll highlights a similar sentiment of the American people’s interest in the power of economic policy over human rights policy despite the five-year time gap. The conventional wisdom is misleading since the American people see economic interests over human rights interests, but they do not connect the fundamental nature of the two policies. Moreover, the United States’ policy

6 “Conflicting Partisan Priorities for U.S. Foreign Policy,” Pew Research Center (29 November 2018).

7 Opt. cit., fn 5.

8 Jeffrey M. Jones, “Americans Say Preventing Terrorism Top Foreign Policy Goal,” Gallup (20 February 2013).

9 Op. cit., fn. 8

on human rights and economic interests may coincide with this conventional wisdom, but without accurate contextualization.

The conventional wisdom highlights that the American public views the importance of human rights policy as relatively significant; however, that may not necessarily be reflective of how the Executive Branch of the U.S. government views human rights policy in respect to domestic economic matters. The United States does everything possible to maintain the power distribution on their side because power means control. This power distribution leads the United States to have control over the narrative of human rights in the world as well. Compared to the potential layman’s interpretation of human rights, the United States maintains their own definition. From the point of view of the United States’ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, human rights are defined as “stand[ing] for the freedoms of religion, speech, and the press, and the rights of people to assemble peaceably and to petition their government for a redress of grievances.”¹⁰ They do not address the connection between economics and human rights. Although the pollsters of these respective polling organizations did not define the human rights to their audience, it is noteworthy to consider the ambiguity of this conventional wisdom as the United States may project a different human rights agenda that is not widely agreed upon by the general population.

Methodology and Evidence:

Since the United States is potentially jeopardizing its human rights standing through their economic measures, this piece will utilize qualitative methodology through various case studies. The case studies, regarding implementing sanctions and enforcing arms embargoes, will analyze the impact of these economic measures relevant to the aforementioned research question. This paper will use primary and secondary evidence to illuminate the significance of these case studies. The primary sources include various pieces

10 Robert A. Destro, “Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor: Our Mission.”

of legislation by Congress as well as Congressional Research Service reports while secondary sources include The New York Times, National Public Radio and scholarly journals.

Theoretical Paradigms:

Realism is the best theory to explain the research question because realism's assumption is that the United States' foreign policy, and policy generally, is state driven. The theory of realism focuses on the system or state and how they act through politics to gain power. Additionally, the three main assumptions, framed by the founders Thucydides and Hans Morgenthau, are that the international system is anarchic, sovereign states are the most important actors, and states must act upon the basis of self-help¹¹. The United States' economic and human rights policies are state driven, a fundamental assumption of realism¹². State-driven change is necessary in human rights policy and economic measures, making realism suitable for explaining the research question.

These realist assumptions assist to explain and frame this research question. Addressing human rights policy in the face of domestic economic measures pressures the state, in this case the United States, to balance and manage the consequences through their institutions and power. Realism provides a basis of analysis to outline the United States motivation in implementing human rights policy relating to economic power to maintain hegemonic status. In answering this research question, realism will focus on the potential exchange taking place between economic gains and protecting human rights abroad.

Case Study: Enforcing Arms Sales Embargo

Throughout the history of the United States' foreign policy, arms sales embargos have been implemented to project and protect American ideology. First established in 1961, the Arms Export Control Act and the Foreign Assistance Act "establish[ed] provisions governing Foreign Military Sales

11 Brian Schmidt, "Theories of U.S. Foreign Policy," in Michael Cox and Doug Stokes *US Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018): 7-20.

12 Op. cit., fn. 12

(FMS) and Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) to foreign consumers, including foreign governments."¹³ Today, the FMS manages about \$55 billion "per year in new sales of defense equipment to foreign allies and partners" while the DCS "[approves] approximately \$115 billion per year in sales of defense equipment, services, and related manufacturing technologies."¹⁴ Because of the increased revenue these acts garner, the resulting economic power of the United States could be used to sway another country's actions. However, these acts "[do] not refer specifically to human rights, [as] the act includes general provisions and conditions for the export of the U.S.-origin defense articles that may indirectly address human rights concerns," such as the potential violation of US agreements and general guidelines¹⁵. Despite the creation of these legislative measures to control and regulate the export of arms, these measures do not consider the political nature of arms exports since the United States is a global leader in the industry. Since the Acts were passed in 1961, they set precedent to somewhat protect human rights in arms embargoes even though the term "human rights" were not as mainstream as it is today. Due to the ratification of the Arms Export Control Acts and Foreign Assistance Acts, the justification for arms embargoes to protect and address the significance of human rights continues in the United States.

The New York Times article highlighting the Obama Administration's decision to halt the shipment of Raytheon's weapons to Saudi Arabia, after the revelation that civilians were being killed with these weapons, represents an enforcement of arms embargoes to protect human rights. Following the Obama Administration's embargo, members of the US Congress doubled down on its enforcement, maintaining their stance when confronted by lobbying efforts from Raytheon's political operatives. Members of Congress have passed various bills

13 Paul K. Kerr and Liana W. Rosen, "U.S. Arms Sales and Human Rights: Legislative Basis and Frequently Asked Questions," Congressional Research Service (6 May 2019).

14 "U.S. Arms Sales And Defense Trade: Fact Sheet," Department of State: Bureau Of Political-military Affairs (27 July 2020).

15 Op. cit., fn 14.

and resolutions re-affirming their dedication to human rights. In March of 2019, Senator Cardin (Democrat-Maryland) introduced the Enhancing Human Rights Protections in Arms Sales Act of 2019¹⁶ to protect human rights in arms sales. This act includes three significant guidelines, with one notable guideline instructing the State Department to ensure that “the articles or services will not be used in hostilities where the receiving government has committed gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.”¹⁷ While the Enhancing Human Rights Protections in Arms Sales Act expands existing programs to monitor financial arms trades, this bill reinforces the significance of human rights and economic advancement through soft power. Despite the possible economic gains in trading or selling weapons to foreign countries, the enforcement of human rights abroad is a key theme when discussing weapon sales. The enforcement of arms embargoes uses economic matters to address human rights abuses in order to reflect the intersection of power and wealth.

While the United States is entirely capable of enforcing and creating arms embargoes to prevent the violation of human rights abroad, there are several exceptions to the conventional wisdom that the United States prioritizes human rights in arms sales. Following President Trump’s lift on preventing manufacturing companies from selling weapons to Saudi Arabia, in July of 2019 lawmakers passed a bill preventing these sales from occurring. President Trump stated that he believes these preventative measures will “weaken America’s global competitiveness and damage the important relationship we share with our allies and partners”, even though this bill was intended as a stance in support of those suffering in the Yemeni Civil War¹⁸. Further, this bill prevented the false emergency authorization by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to continue because, as Senator Menendez states, this bill is “a comprehensive effort to hold

16 As of April 2021, it has only been introduced, not passed by either the Senate or the House, and, thus, not signed by the President.

17 U.S. Congress, Senate, Enhancing Human Rights Protections in Arms Sales Act of 2019, S. 854, 116th Cong., introduced in the Senate 25 March 2019.

18 Merret Kennedy, “Trump Vetoes Bills Intended To Block Arms Sales To Saudi Arabia,” National Public Radio (25 July 2019).

... the Saudi-led coalition [accountable] for its role in the devastating conflict in Yemen.”¹⁹ The emphasis on the need for power and maintaining a state level relationship with Saudi Arabia allows realists to view these as self-interested actions, ignoring the reality of potential collateral damage.

On the other hand, there are political motivations to be considered when assessing the lack of arms embargoes to confront human rights issues. The connection between Raytheon, the American weapons manufacturing company, and the Trump Administration illustrates the blind eye technique allowing weapons sales to move forward to Saudi Arabia. The former Secretary of Defense Mark Esper²⁰ was also “the top lobbyist for Raytheon, which of course is the nation’s third largest defense contractor.”²¹ While former Secretary Esper must prioritize the United States’ interests over his former employers’, it is possible he advocates for the movement of Raytheon’s weapons despite his place in American institutions. The political network formed between the Trump Administration and Raytheon connects to the larger impact of the defense industrial base and the lack of consistently strong arms embargoes. The network provides a strong insight into why domestic economic measures and human rights are kept mutually exclusive, and arms embargoes are not used to their full capacity to address human rights.

While the defense industrial base effectively argues to prevent the passing of arms embargoes, the geo-political implications for imposing these embargoes provide insight to motivations. Throughout the Yemeni Civil War, Saudi Arabia has received shipments from Raytheon. While the United States has announced their disdain for the war, there have been no significant embargoes to prevent the war from continuing. In several cases the Trump Administration has turned a blind eye to human rights violations, for instance the murder of

19 Op. cit., fn. 19

20 Former Secretary of Defense Esper was also the Army Secretary before being the Secretary of Defense.

21 Senator Elizabeth Warren, “Warren Questions Defense Secretary Nominee Mark Esper’s Refusal to Fully Recuse Himself from Matters Involving His Former Employer, Raytheon,” News release, (16 July 2019).

the journalist Jamal Khashoggi. The backing of Saudi Arabia yet the consistent condemnation of Iran by the Trump Administration is a hypocritical narrative affecting the geo-political policies regarding arms sales. Despite the human rights violations by both countries, the United States has been very hesitant for continuing arms embargoes on Saudi Arabia or Iran for political and economic reasons, making the enforcement of arms embargoes rendered useless due to the political underlying motivations. The geo-political consequences for the inconsistent application cause the global opinion of the United States to alter significantly.

The implementation of arms embargoes is a somewhat effective way of undertaking human rights since the United States can weigh the geo-political implications and the reliance a country has on American made weapons. While the geo-political implications are significant in determining why or why not there are embargoes in place, the domestic politics of the defense industrial base highlight the potential lack of enforcement. Arms embargoes are only effective so long as the administration is not hypocritical in implementing this for political or economic gain. The selectivity of when to protect and address human rights depends strongly on the amount of power the United States carries. The United States has attempted to maintain a mutually exclusive relationship between human rights and economic measures; however, the push back due to the large humanitarian crisis, is forcing the United States to re-think their position. Kate Kizer of the Win Without War organization states “[t]he United States should not be in the business of arming human rights abusers — not when those weapons are used regularly in Yemen, Libya, and the Horn of Africa to massacre civilians, not when those weapons have repeatedly ended up in the hands of violent non-state actors in direct contravention of U.S. law.”²² The lack of addressing human rights goes directly against the conventional wisdom of the American people and perpetuates a negative reputation and precedent for the United States.

22 Bryan Bender, “What’s Next for the NDAA,” Politico (11 November 2020).

Case Study: Implementing Sanctions

While the enforcement of arms embargoes has the potential to regulate human rights violations by U.S. made arms, the implementation of various sanctions, economic in particular, can be used to protect human rights. The use of economic sanctions can prevent a country from receiving specific imports, getting revenue from their main source, or to simply block individuals from committing specified acts. Various legislative measures have been passed to ensure the use of economic sanctions to protect human rights as well as measures administered by the Treasury Department. The Treasury Department regulates sanctions, and a variety of sanctions were implemented by Secretary Mnuchin. However, the nature of some sanctions has underlying partisan motivations rather than the pure intention of protecting and addressing human rights. These underlying motivations could disrupt the power of the United States’ sanctions.

For several years now, the United States has implemented economic sanctions on Iran due to the potential development of their nuclear arsenal. Leading up to the 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal, the United States imposed harsh economic sanctions, effectively ruining the Iranian economy. After the creation of the Iran Nuclear Deal, multiple countries lifted their economic sanctions on Iran so they would adhere to denuclearization. However, since then, the Trump Administration has unilaterally removed the United States from this deal and has implemented economic sanctions once again. In October of 2020, the “Treasury Department announced sanctions on Iran’s Ministry of Petroleum, the National Iranian Oil Company and its oil-tanker subsidiary for providing financial support to Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, the elite military unit that is designated as a terrorist group by the United States.”²³ The oil industry in Iran is one of their most significant sectors; therefore, the economic sanctions against the industry are seen as a hefty defeat. Treasury Secretary Mnuchin stated that the purpose of these sanctions was to highlight that “the Iranian regime continues to prioritize its support for terrorist entities and its nuclear

23 Pranshu Verma and Farnaz Fassihi, “U.S. Imposes Sanctions on Iran’s Oil Sector,” The New York Times (26 October 2020).

program over the needs of the Iranian people.”²⁴ While Secretary Mnuchin claims to be implementing these sanctions to benefit the Iranian people and protect their rights, there appears to be other motivations which could deter the efficacy of these sanctions. Earlier in October of 2020, Secretary Mnuchin “imposed sanctions on 18 Iranian banks, effectively locking Iran out of the global financial system and further damaging its collapsing economy.”²⁵ Putting economic sanctions on large Iranian banks disrupts and halts their economy to a large degree, placing significant pressure on the government to adhere to the United States’ wishes. However, the United States’ goals are ambitious since the U.S. wants Iran to change their practices towards their citizens and to stop escalating the goal of nuclear weapon production. Therefore, the use of these sanctions can be interpreted by the Iranians as not addressing human rights but rather completing an American political agenda to ensure that Iran cannot achieve a nuclear weapons status. Moreover, during a global pandemic and global recession, these economic sanctions appear to go against helping the Iranian people. Using these economic sanctions convolutes the distinction between genuinely addressing human rights and wanting to devastate the key economic sectors in Iran.

While the United States has placed economic sanctions on Iran most recently, there is a long history of the United States’ placing economic sanctions on North Korea. Although economic sanctions are not the only type of sanctions the United States has placed on North Korea, they are significant for the human rights disaster that North Korea has faced. A July 2020 United Nation Human Rights report on North Korea highlights stories from 100 “women [who were] detained after having been caught trying to leave the country and repatriated, which included sexual violence and other humiliating acts, forced abortion

24 Department of the Treasury, “Treasury Sanctions Key Actors in Iran’s Oil Sector for Supporting Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force” News release, (26 October 2020).

25 Opt. cit., fn. 24

against repatriated mothers and infanticide of their children.”²⁶ While the United States has actively and consistently denounced the practices there, the economic sanctions put in place were to prevent the imports of goods which would support their closed economy and society. Secretary Mnuchin outlined these February 2018 sanctions to “target shipping and trade companies, vessels, and individuals across the world who we know are working with North Korea’s behalf, specifically, ... sanctioning ²⁷ entities, ²⁸ vessels, and 1 individual.”²⁷ The secretary continues by stating that these “actions will significantly hinder North Korea’s ability to conduct evasive maritime activities that facilitate illicit coal and fuel transports and limit the regime’s ability to ship goods through international waters.”²⁸ These economic sanctions will further prevent the import and export of goods funding the North Korean economy by regulating “cut off the banking system in other parts of the world” for these companies “doing business in other places in the world.”²⁹ Cutting the sources that are keeping the North Korean economy from completely collapsing reveals the motivations to not only prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, but also put pressure on the human rights violations. The various non-proliferation sanctions imposed by the United States “are targeted economic sanctions and travel restrictions on several high-level North Korean government officials, including Kim Jong Un, in response to their role in gross human rights violations.”³⁰ This is a significant action as the threat of nuclear warfare from North Korea is imminent; however, the United States has the ability to go beyond their own interests and recognize the gross human rights abuses occurring. The sanctions placed on North Korea

26 “Human rights violations against women detained in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,” United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, July 2020.

27 Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, “Press Briefing by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on North Korea Sanctions” Press Briefing, James S. Brady Press Briefing Room, (23 February 2018).

28 Opt. cit., fn. 29

29 Ibid.

30 “Q&A: North Korea, Sanctions, and Human Rights,” Human Rights Watch (30 May 2018).

highlight the capabilities of the United States while pursuing existential threats like nuclear war without allowing partisan politics to interfere in the process.

The implementation of economic sanctions on countries wrought with human rights abuses can present partisan policies or bipartisan, unifying ground. The partisan policies can be seen when discussing Iran or Saudi Arabia, while the bi-partisan policies are seen with North Korea. While it is unfortunate that partisan politics interfere with using economic sanctions, it is important to reflect on how this may impact the effectiveness of economic sanctions. Implementing economic sanctions to change a country's behavior when it may do more harm can present hypocritical usage of sanctions in the future. Addressing human rights abuses can be relatively effective through enacting economic sanctions; however, the United States should re-evaluate the effectiveness of these sanctions because partisan politics may weaken their powerful nature.

Implications:

The United States' human rights policies are significant because they reflect the country's overall moral standing. The economic measures taken in response to human rights violations contribute to the moral standing of the United States. While I am still conducting my research, my preliminary research findings suggest that the conventional wisdom initially appeared incorrect but is somewhat correct because the United States does sometimes weigh human rights in economic matters. However, the constant back and forth in the United States' policy position creates confusion when there should not be. Partisan politics is very heavily involved, altering the motivation and ability of enforcement of economic measures to have countries fundamentally change their human rights stance. This can be weighed in the reversal of policies and the president's attitude on specific policy decisions. The fundamental separation between human rights and economics is evident in U.S. policy due to the inaction presented. Therefore, there is no definitive conclusion on whether or not the United States will address human rights through economic matters since there are advantages and disadvantages weighed to favor the United States

in geo-political, economic and political issues. The United States maintains the philosophy of potentially leaning towards economic gains to control the distribution of power. The global impact of the United States' policy decisions matters because it projects to the rest of the world that the United States will go to great lengths to protect and stand for human rights. While the United States has protected human rights to varying degrees, all the presidents represented the United States in their actions and their actions have future consequences. Overall, the economic measures taken in the past century by the United States have proven the efficacy of American economic power; therefore, ensuring the potential success in deterring human rights violations currently.



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Economic Development in U.S. Territories: A Historical Glance at a Contemporary Problem

Ila Moncrief

Edited by Drew Navarre

Abstract

The island territories of the United States face stagnant if not dire economic conditions amidst destabilizing natural disasters and insufficient economic stimulus. These constituencies' political and socio-economic needs are generally ignored due to their limited citizenship, contributing to a foreign, rather than domestic, policy relationship with the federal government. This paper contextualizes the history and development of Puerto Rico, Guam, and American Samoa as three case studies to examine territory economies as a product of U.S. foreign policy. Qualitative analysis reveals that standard foreign policy follows neoliberal patterns of economic development reproduced within Western financial institutions. I conclude that these policies engender few improvements in the quality of life for island residents, fueling political tension surrounding their citizenship status, stemming from their historical subordination as possessions of the U.S., a root cause for their economic predicaments.

Real World Observation

On February 19th, 2020, the Associated Press and Reuters reported on Puerto Rico's rejection of a new debt-restructuring deal in *The New York Times*. The plan, brokered between the Federal Control Board and several bondholders, will reduce their deficit by \$24 billion. However, the deal includes pension cuts and new bond measures which, as quoted by Governor Wanda Vázquez Garced, do not hold the interest of the people in mind.¹ According to the article, the Puerto Rican government continues talks with the board but has halted any action on the proposal as they take the issue to court.² The territory filed for the largest municipal bankruptcy in the U.S. in May 2017 and now garners more than \$70 billion in debt.³ The subsequent action following Puerto Rico's bankruptcy maintains a status quo in American foreign policy.

The confrontation between Puerto Rico, the federal government, and bondholders reveals a greater dynamic between the U.S. and its territories. Historically, the U.S. acquisition of a territory looks different from colonization in Europe on the backdrop of capitalism. The U.S. by 1898 was not searching for new land but new markets, as elucidated by James Dunkerely in his examination of U.S. foreign policy towards Latin America.⁴ For example, when it came to Puerto Rico, a Supreme Court ruling in 1901 framed the region as foreign to the U.S. in the domestic sense.⁵ This ruling was the first of a series called *The Insular Cases* that concerned not only Puerto Rico, but five territories retained by the United States. These cases granted certain rights and levels of self-governance, for example, all territories except Guam were granted birthright

citizenship, marking the beginning of unequal citizenship status.⁶ Economically, as in the case of Puerto Rican bankruptcy, the U.S. continues to utilize the same structures that induced the problem to alleviate it. Within the international liberal order, American policy follows neoliberal guidelines implemented through international institutions like the IMF and World Bank. Puerto Rico has suffered a thirteen-year recession with decades of mismanagement, corruption, and excessive borrowing to balance budgets⁷. Being bailed out last minute by states and organizations is a frequent occurrence under the neoliberal doctrine, especially throughout Latin America. Moreover, territories are substantially underfunded compared to states: they currently receive \$7.3 billion in federal benefits yearly.⁸ According to James Bikales in his piece from *Harvard Political Review*, if the amount was proportionate to their population (like states), territories would receive over \$17 billion per year in benefits. Territories lack this kind of political attention from the legislative and executive branches. They lack representation in Congress with one delegate per territory who can participate in committees but cannot vote on the House floor.⁹ Territory residents pay taxes and register for selected service when they are eighteen but cannot vote for their president.¹⁰ Additionally, they are underrepresented in media which feeds ignorance on citizenship status and the issues that plague their communities.¹¹

U.S. foreign aid and development follows neoliberalism—utilizing international institutions and organizations to spread western ideologies and economic structures. The neglect of U.S. territories is not an exception to the system but a consequence. The treatment of U.S. territories reflects American exceptionalism and racist attitudes in the mainland that stem from a long history of American imperialism. Although some territories, such as the Philippines,

1 The Associated Press, "Puerto Rico Goes to Court Against Debt-Restructuring Deal," *The New York Times* (February 19, 2020).

2 Ibid

3 Ibid

4 James Dunkerley, "US foreign policy in Latin America," in Micheal Cox and Doug Stokes, 3rd eds, *US Foreign Policy* (UK: Oxford University Press, 2018): 262.

5 Ibid

6 James Bikales, "Fifty States (and a Few Territories)," *Harvard Political Review* (March 29, 2019).

7 op. cit., fn. 1

8 Ibid

9 op. cit., fn. 7

10 Ibid

11 op. cit., fn. 6

were granted independence, the U.S. preserves a legacy of colonialism by its possession of five island nations: Guam, Puerto Rico, the Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa. The unequal power and policy relations with these territories make it an odd issue of both domestic and foreign policy leading me to the question: How do capitalist policies shape the development of U.S. territories abroad?

Conventional Wisdom

The conventional wisdom holds that a majority of Americans believe capitalism works well. According to a study from the Pew Research Center, about 65% of Americans have a positive view of “capitalism,” while a third view it negatively.¹² Furthermore, a report from the Brookings Institute examined the support for international cooperation and aid. Their study revealed that two-thirds of Americans favor, “aid that helps needy countries develop their economies.”¹³ These two polls show an ideological continuity derived from the liberal order: Capitalism is good, and it is in the interest of the U.S. to help underdeveloped countries.

Although the American public maintains the values of the free market and global engagement, they lack the context of U.S. hegemony and internationalism. The conventional wisdom is misled about the systems and institutions that influence U.S. foreign policy, specifically when it comes to development. The effect on territories is complicated by an imperial culture obscured from the collective conscience. Puerto Rico, Guam, and American Samoa are neglected as citizens in part due to their geographical distance and by the state (mainland government). Economic policies in U.S. territories looks different from other foreign nations but similarly ignores the circumstances of each island with “one size fits all” solutions and ineffective aid. The poor economic condition of these territories thus reflects neoliberal policies and

discrimination that are upheld by each administration regardless of political affiliation.

Methodology and Evidence

I employ a qualitative methodology that uses three of the five U.S. territories as case studies: Puerto Rico, Guam, and American Samoa. I will be utilizing qualitative information on economic indicators alongside observable economic conditions, contextualized in the broader scope of the American Empire and historical evidence towards their treatment. The three island nations were most appropriate for analysis since they have (or had) an indigenous population that experiences the effects of American imperialism and second-class citizenship. Furthermore, they each have unique economic and political situations borne from similar policies. The majority of my research findings are derived from primary sources including the Congressional Research Service, Party Platforms, The World Bank, CIA, and Bureau of Economic Analysis. The remaining secondary evidence comes from peer reviewed journal articles.

Theory

Through the lens of international relations, Marxism identifies systems as the causal mechanism in the global power structure. Change is driven by systems, specifically economic, that impose a hierarchy among states. This is the ideal paradigm to frame my research question which analyzes power imbalances, founded on policy derived from the capitalist system that has long designated a consumer and exploited class within the international liberal order.

Based off this framework, I theorize that neoliberal policies negatively impact the economic development of inhabited U.S. territories. International organizations founded after WWII like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank as well as the World Trade Organization in the 1990’s were the visions of the United States. Free trade, open markets, and austerity measures evolved with a return to laissez faire capitalism in the 1970’s, also known as neoliberalism. Though, territories are shielded from some of the effects of the international liberal order, the U.S. promotes and imposes the same policies.

¹² “In Their Own Words: Behind Americans’ Views of ‘Socialism’ and ‘Capitalism,’” Pew Research Center (October 7, 2019).

¹³ Steven Kull, “American public support for foreign aid in the age of Trump,” Brookings (July 31, 2017).

The effect on underdeveloped nations is negative since it typically involves cutting welfare programs which weakens government and permits multinational corporations to exploit their land and labor. America has the capacity to enforce harmful practices as the regional hegemon and imperial power. Territories have developed in a subordinate position: within a hierarchical world, their economic and political needs are second to their utility to U.S. national interests.

Case Study: Puerto Rico

As previously mentioned, I examine Guam, American Samoa, and Puerto Rico as three case studies. I will begin with Puerto Rico; the island nation has been a valuable asset to the U.S. since its acquisition from Spain in 1898.¹⁴ It is 1,500 miles from Washington D.C. and inhabited by nearly 3.2 million American citizens.¹⁵ The geographic and cultural distance between the U.S. and Puerto Rico reinforce the ideology that U.S. possessions are “foreign in a domestic sense”.¹⁶ Thus, American policy is torn between strong, local self-government and direct federal intervention.¹⁷ Congress established Puerto Rico as a civilian government in 1900.¹⁸ A series of acts, namely the Foraker and Jones Act, created the foundations for a democratic government and the delegate position of Resident Commissioner to represent them in Congress. The Federal Relations Act granted them authority over internal governance with their own territorial constitution in 1952.¹⁹ Afterwards, the island was officially designated the “Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.” The title has stirred controversy in the argument for statehood since there are legal and political implications for a commonwealth. However, it has no strict meaning to the federal government; ultimately, Congress reserves the right to grant rules and regulations over Puerto

Rico which stems from the Territory Clause of the Constitution.²⁰ Therefore, only legislation passed by Congress and approved by the president could change their political status. Their self-governance is a privilege in lieu of policy that halts one of the most important decisions they could make towards self-determination. In the past few years, their neocolonial status appears salient after the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act, or PROMESA, passed in response to the debt crisis. Even when Puerto Rico’s (limited) self-determination was an agenda item, American economic interests have consistently determined their development.

Historically, the U.S. has promoted economic development in the territories through the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) which treats them as foreign countries.²¹ Puerto Rico has a non-mirror tax jurisdiction which allows them to dictate their own income taxation and regulations.²² Federal taxation applies only in specific circumstances, notably, towards U.S. corporations and residents who have income connected to the mainland. Subsidiaries of foreign-owned corporations are subject to a corporate income tax when it relates to U.S. trade and business. Consequently, development is promoted through tax incentives such as a foreign tax credit in IRC Section 936 which attracted foreign investment.²³ However, this has led to a huge problem of tax arbitrage, with some companies paying little to no income tax.²⁴ Furthermore, the practice has yielded few welfare improvements in the territory and instead largely benefits the subsidiary companies and their investors.²⁵ The idea that profit will flow from the business down to the employees, workers, and larger community comes from trickle-down economics. Propagated by President Ronald Reagan, the theory

14 R. Sam Garret, “Political Status of Puerto Rico: Brief Background and Recent Developments for Congress,” Congressional Research Service (June 12, 2017)

15 Ibid

16 José Javier Colón-Morera, “US Policy toward its Territories: A Complex and Perhaps Intractable Problem,” American Political Science Association (April 2017).

17 Ibid

18 Op. cit., fn. 6

19 Ibid

20 Ibid

21 Sean Lowry, “Tax Policy and U.S. Territories: Overview and Issues for Congress,” Congressional Research Service (October 7, 2016).

22 Sherlock et. al, “Business Tax Provisions that Expired in 2017 (“Tax Extenders”),” Congressional Research Service (March 29, 2018)

23 Ibid

24 Op. cit., fn. 13

25 Ibid

holds that tax cuts for the top income earners and businesses will indirectly benefit the broader population and stimulate growth.²⁶ However, economic theory and empirical evidence does not support this claim. A study performed by Kierk Herzera and Sebastian Vollmer in the *Journal of Policy Modeling* uses quantitative methodology to account for bias and endogenous variables in prior studies that discredit trickle-down theory. Their results confirm the consensus, finding that, “the long-run effect of the top income share on economic growth for these countries is negative.”²⁷ Despite this knowledge the IRC, federal, and even local government continue to employ these measures. In 2010, Governor Luis Fortuno infamously maintained the status quo through an initiative that left thousands unemployed. Following his asserted neoliberal ideology, he enacted Public Law 7 with the purpose of easing the economic problems and \$3.2 billion budget.²⁸ Declaring a state of emergency, he attempted to lay-off 17,000 government employees with the pretext of shrinking the public sector to induce the privatization of government agencies.²⁹ This propelled massive protests and compounded the recession he attempted to alleviate with the unemployment rate spiking to 16.1% in 2010.³⁰ Repeating the same economic practices to no avail have stirred upheaval in Puerto Rico and contributes to the current governor’s rejection of the debt-restructuring deal. Their government employees and public sector are vital to rebuilding infrastructure and hope after two recent natural disasters. Shrinking their capacity is reminiscent of Fortuno and a reminder of their vulnerability to federal oversight and governance.

Puerto Rico is in an economically dire situation: the unemployment rate has seldom dipped below 11% in the past twenty years and they currently

experience an average annual rate of 1.8% contraction, consistent with steady declines in the population according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Furthermore, their designation as a “commonwealth” denies them relief in a federal bankruptcy court and they are ineligible for aid from the IMF since they are not a sovereign nation.³¹ This is an interesting predicament since they are largely contained from the destructive effects of austerity measures that would likely be imposed by the IMF after their file for bankruptcy. Nonetheless, they are at the will of the U.S. that holds a large share of power in those organizations as their proprietor. On the one hand, it is an opportunity for the federal government to employ different measures that focus on relief and smart planning. Instead, Puerto Ricans are faced with a revamped set of neoliberal measures. PROMESA was deemed necessary to restructure their municipal debt since international institutions are inaccessible. The act established a seven-member fiscal board to manage the crisis but Puerto Ricans and critics claim it undermines their relative autonomy codified in the 1952 constitution and feeds their fading hopes for self-governance.³²

Case Study: Guam

Similarly, Guam was a Spanish colony until 1898 when the U.S. acquired it through the Treaty of Paris.³³ The U.S. has held a military interest in Guam since the 1840’s. At the time, the island sat between two politically valuable possessions: Hawaii and the Philippines.³⁴ The strategic position in the Pacific distinguished them as an important base and waypoint. President McKinley delegated control over the island to the U.S. Navy which remained the governing force until 1950.³⁵ Guam’s status as a military asset has largely remained unchanged since its political beginnings as a U.S. territory. A 1973,

31 Op. cit., fn. 8

32 Ibid

33 Adam Burns, “Continuing Imperialism (1940–2013).” Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, (2017).

34 Ibid

35 Ibid

26 Dierk Herzera and Sebastian Vollmer, “Rising top incomes do not raise the tide,” *Journal of Policy Modeling* 35 no. 4 (July-August, 2013).

27 Ibid

28 Bonilla, Yarimar, and Rafael Boglio Martinez, “Puerto Rico in crisis: government workers Battle neoliberal reform.” *NACLA Report on the Americas* 43, no. 1 (2010).

29 Ibid

30 H. Plecher, “Puerto Rico: Unemployment Rate from 1999 to 2019,” *Statista* (February 12, 2020).

CIA memo to the Nixon administration calls Guam a “US territory and military support community.” It is precisely this designation that prompts continued resistance towards U.S. imperialism. This was especially evident after the Trust Territories received expanded self-governance in the seventies. These territories were accepted by the U.S. after WWII as part of the trusteeship system under the United Nations.³⁶ Guam also took a relevant role in the Pacific theater during WWII, occupied by Japan nearly the entire time.³⁷ When the U.S. regained the island, Truman expanded their autonomy, issuing an executive order that transferred control over Guam to the Department of the Interior. He subsequently passed the Organic Act (which Puerto Rico received forty years earlier) alongside a bill of rights and citizenship.³⁸ They became a self-governing, unincorporated territory with the 1950 Act which set up an executive headed by a presidentially appointed governor, and an elected legislature and district court.³⁹ However, their political status and relationship with the U.S. has remained relatively static since. Watching the increasing self-determination and economic investment in the Trust Territories fueled hopes in Guam for a political status change to statehood or even independence.⁴⁰ This prompted a CIA Memo that requested a report for the president synthesizing the situation and suggesting an appropriate response to their requests for change. The report found that Guamanians would likely seek political and social improvements amid an atmosphere of growing alienation regarding resource allocation and the economy. Many citizens felt that their land, shorelines, and resources were taken for uses other than their own (not surprising considering the heavy military presence).⁴¹ Overall, people could feel their second-class status and the CIA memo concedes that, “little organized effort has been made to bring them up to American standards.” The

memo concludes that action should be taken such as programs that assist the goals of local communities as to preserve U.S. interests, not only in Guam but the greater Western Pacific region.⁴² Under what can be gathered as neocolonial conditions, the territories grow quickly frustrated by their status and invisibility in the mainstream American consciousness.

Guam’s economic stagnation has proven troublesome over the years. In the 1970’s there was growing concern in the territory over their economic future: they placed many hopes in tourism mostly from Japan. They accepted Japanese investment for this reason as well but resented the influence of outside capital.⁴³ The Bureau of Economic Analysis found that export services—such as tourism—for 2018, grew 2.2%, due to increased visitor arrival and spending by Korean and Japanese tourists who make up the majority of tourists. This illustrates the disconnect driven by geography. Guam is closer to Asian nations which is visible through their trade partnerships and cultural distance from the U.S., similar to Puerto Rico. It is unclear whether the U.S. views this as a risk to their relationship considering their policies. Guam is an unincorporated organized territory whose population has citizenship and a delegate to the House of Representatives but limited representation including the inability to vote for the president.⁴⁴ Tax policy is a critical area of consideration for their treatment: Guam has a mirror-tax code system, meaning they follow the IRC for income tax regulations.⁴⁵ According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, their GDP decreased .3% in 2018 after increasing .2% in 2017. The decline reflects reduced spending by the territorial government and private fixed investment partly offset by their exports’ growth.⁴⁶ Factoring in population, Guam is actually performing better than Puerto Rico, however that does not discount their reliance on two

36 Ibid

37 Ibid

38 Ibid

39 Ibid

40 William P. Clements, “GUAM,” [CIA] CREST: 25-Year Program Archive (September 12, 1973).

41 Ibid

42 Ibid

43 Ibid

44 Ibid

45 Op. Cit. fn. 21

46 “Gross Domestic Product for Guam, 2018,” Bureau of Economic Analysis (October 9, 2019)

sectors, one of which bars Guam from more serious considerations of statehood or moreover, independence. American and Guamanian interests intersect on the national security level: their economic dependency on the U.S. Military is indicative of federal investment into one of the most important American bases in the Pacific.⁴⁷ This constraint recognizes the power of systems and organizations. The saliency of military interests in the region has defined their time as a territory of the U.S. Though, less driven by economic policies than state interests, the impact on their economy and ability to join the liberal order is blocked by their status. The lack of control over their resources and governance such as immigration policy has greatly changed the dynamics of society and leaves the public, like many Puerto Ricans, frustrated by simultaneous federal neglect and regulation.

Case Study: American Samoa

American Samoa has the smallest population of the three territories at 55,465 people and consequently a GDP of \$636 million.⁴⁸ Again, their relationship with the United States stems from military investment; their territorial status developed under Naval control.⁴⁹ The objective of the U.S. Navy was to establish a strong presence which they achieved through a large naval station on the island.⁵⁰ The Samoan population, with long-held traditions and societal order, were mandated to assimilate which inevitably involved “civilization” through cultural genocide. In early territorial years, village ordinances banned nakedness, tattoos, and familial customs which subsequently enforced matrimony and domesticity. Additionally, the navy strategically broke down the communal land system in favor of individual property ownership.⁵¹ The effect of colonial oppression carries massive influence on the present and

despite the transference of authority to the Department of the Interior like Guam, Samoans recognize the continued constraints on their autonomy and the consequences of full citizenship. American Samoan’s, unlike the other two islands, are U.S. nationals but they still maintain a non-voting delegate to the House as an unincorporated, unorganized territory.⁵² This means they have greater self-governance with their own local constitution and authority over immigration and customs.⁵³ There has been much debate over changing their status but the majority fear full citizenship would impose the Constitution and overwrite their own which served to reinstate communal land laws and traditional organization. So, it might jeopardize their land rights as well as their federal financial aid.⁵⁴ The federal government already controls foreign trade, defense, and taxation in the territory. American Samoa as a non-mirror tax jurisdiction could have formed their own regulations but chose to adopt an older version of the IRC tax code.⁵⁵ Following protocol, a corporate tax credit is extended for business operations and investment in the island. Notably, their GDP increased 2.2% in 2018 after decreasing 5.8% in 2017.⁵⁶ This was largely due to an increase in private fund investment and good exports.⁵⁷ So, while there is a positive effect from this policy the distribution of these gains is narrow. The American Samoa economic development credit (now expired) purportedly retained manufacturing operations in the territory, but the main beneficiary is StarKist.⁵⁸ One multinational corporation receiving this benefit is no indicator that residents are uplifted consequently. Again, tax policy has the potential to impact communities positively but with little control over foreign trade, credits

52 Memea Kruse, “Legal and Political Futures for American Sāmoa. In: *The Pacific Insular Case of American Sāmoa*,” Palgrave Macmillan, Cham (2018).

53 Ibid

54 Ibid

55 Op. cit., fn. 21

56 “American Samoa GDP Increases in 2018,” Bureau of Economic Analysis (August 23, 2019).

57 Ibid

58 Op. cit., fn. 22

47 Ibid

48 American Samoa,” The World Bank (2018).

49 Memea Kruse, “American Sāmoan Legal History: 1900–1941. In: *The Pacific Insular Case of American Sāmoa*,” Palgrave Macmillan, Cham (2018).

50 Ibid

51 Ibid

and regulations will usually favor companies backed by the ideology that “a rising tide lifts all boats.” As witnessed in Puerto Rico and Guam, this is not exactly true. The American Samoa economy is dependent on three sectors: public works and government, tuna canning, and the residual private sector (i.e. tourism).⁵⁹ With a relatively weak economy, diversification and investment into long-term growth is important for supporting their unique policies that revive cultural values and familial practices that risk infringement not only from the federal government but by private investment.

Conclusion: Implications of Research Findings

Neoliberalism, from the local to federal level, has done little to positively direct the development of Puerto Rico, Guam, and American Samoa. Nevertheless, the current condition of the islands stems from national interests rather than economic. Guam and American Samoa were taken for military (specifically naval) purposes. Strategic positioning in the Pacific for stations and bases are common motivators in the story of each island. The overwhelming perception that these possessions were important for national security and hegemonic purposes detracted from federal investment into the communities and societies that lived there. Instead, racist ideology and American exceptionalism influenced the oppressive treatment of locals as seen in American Samoa. The inconsistent and frequently detrimental policies guiding territorial development thus undermine the conventional wisdom. My findings suggest rather that neoliberal policies in the past fifty years have not lifted the territories to mainland standards and the aid extended to them is generally limited in effectiveness—exposing these beliefs as a facet of American creed. As José Colón-Morera remarks in his article, U.S. territorial policy reflects, “an uneven and incomplete democratization of the American polity.” If the federal government has a real interest in uplifting Puerto Rico, Guam, or any of the territorial economies, their policies will target welfare programs and investment into education for the lower,

working, and middle-class.⁶⁰ Tax policy like progressive income taxation on top income-earners and multinational corporations has the potential to provide economic assistance as well.⁶¹ A report from the Congressional Research Service recommends lowering payroll tax rates to increase individuals’ after-tax income as well as offering a refundable tax credit for workers earning low wages which benefits people with children and encourages mothers to enter the workforce.⁶² These are a few approaches to alleviate the economic pressures territories face but the glaring barrier of limited citizenship poses a deeper problem for U.S. democracy and credibility. The poor response to hurricane relief and federal intervention recalls the “foreign” framing of territorial policy. Puerto Rico and Guam are acutely aware of their limited capacity and strive for statehood or independence. Meanwhile, American Samoans fear how citizenship could constrain their own self-governance. Without control over key institutions like foreign trade and taxation, neoliberal policies continue a hierarchical relationship that disadvantages territories in a manner reminiscent of the colony and empire (neocolonialism). The economic development of U.S. territories is thus indefinitely restricted under the imperial conditions of their existence.

⁶⁰ Op. cit., fn. 26

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Op. cit., fn. 13

⁵⁹ Ibid



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Political Determinants of Adherence to Public Health Guidance: Analyzing Mobility in the COVID-19 Pandemic

Harrison Kirk

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Abstract

Since the late twentieth century, Americans have divided across partisan lines on their support of science and the scientific community. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the extent to which these views towards science have shaped attitudes to public health guidelines has yet to be fully understood. I argue that support for former President Donald Trump will have a significant correlation with adherence (or lack thereof) to social distancing recommendations. I apply a regression model to test the relationship between Trump margin of victory and mobility trends at the state level. I then utilize a second more complex model testing the relationship between mobility, Trump margin of victory, and other state-level sociodemographic factors (educational attainment, religiosity, and age). The findings of this research suggest that support for Donald Trump is a significant predictor for pandemic mobility patterns, while other sociodemographic factors included in the model are not. These findings are highly relevant to understanding how public health messaging must adapt to a post-truth political culture.

The COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) pandemic has resulted in immense consequences for economic, social, and political stability worldwide. Upon guidance from public health professionals and the scientific community, governments have taken drastic action to curb the spread of the virus. Controversially, several state governments within the United States have imposed stay-at-home orders, lockdowns, and curfews. The backlash generated by these policies has deeply politicized American attitudes towards public health and played a central role in the discourse of the 2020 presidential election. In order to better understand how partisanship influences views on COVID-19 public health guidelines, I ask the following research question: what factors most influence adherence to social distancing recommendations?

The relationship between partisanship (alongside other sociodemographic characteristics) and science is well documented. When compared to liberals, conservatives tend to be more skeptical of science as a whole, especially regarding heavily politicized areas such as climate change and evolution.¹ Conservative voters are also increasingly less educated and more religious than their liberal counterparts.² This is particularly relevant because educational attainment is one of the strongest demographic indicators of belief in science.³ A strong trend of “post-truthism” fueled by social media echo chambers and extremist political leaders has invigorated anti-science movements within the United States.⁴ Due to the recency of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the implications of these divides have yet to be fully understood. Particularly, it remains to be seen to what extent partisanship has influenced reactions to social distancing guidelines.

Using COVID-19 mobility information derived from publicly available smartphone GPS data, I predict that the United States’ state-level mobility patterns will display a positive correlation with Donald Trump’s 2020 margin of

victory. I also analyze other variables including religiosity, age, and educational attainment. In the next sections, I first summarize the existing literature regarding post-truthism in the field of public health, the sociodemographic determinants of scientific literacy, political partisanship in science and technology, and methods for quantifying mobility in the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, I argue why there is a high likelihood of correlation between Trump margin of victory and state-level mobility trends. Next, I outline my research design to test this relationship. Based on the model outputs, I conclude that Trump’s 2020 margin of victory is indeed a robust predictor of mobility at the state-level.

Literature Review

Post-Truthism and Public Health

Post-truthism is a characterization of a social environment where facts are secondary to opinions.⁵ The popular portrayal of the 2010s as a “post-truth” political environment has gained prominence due to the spread of misinformation that has accompanied the global rise of social media usage. The 2016 Brexit referendum, the presidency of Donald Trump, and the rise of global neo-nationalist sentiment are often pointed to as examples of the deterioration of conventional values of truth and authority.⁶ Some view that post-truthism has been accelerated by the “opinion markets” of social media paired with a growing public distrust in academics, experts, and institutions.⁷ The advent of an “open source” media landscape where users can consume, generate, and disseminate information without regulation or fact-checking has resulted in concerns regarding the proliferation of online echo chambers. Internet echo chambers have been shown to provide users with a “cascade effect” that reinforces the perceived credibility of their information bubbles.⁸ Echo chambers are perpetuated by engagement-maximizing algorithms that entrench social media users within communities isolated from authoritative sources of

1 Hamilton, “Conservative and Liberal Views of Science,” 2.

2 Pew Research Center, “Ideological Gap.”

3 Ibid

4 Lewandowsky et al., “Beyond Misinformation,” 359.

5 Ibid

6 Marshall and Drieschova, “UK’s Brexit Referendum,” 90.

7 op. cit., fn. 4

8 Vicario et al., “Misinformation online,” 556.

information.⁹ This phenomenon could be described as a horizontal relationship where the playing field between consumers and experts has been leveled by the democratization of information.¹⁰ This stands in contrast to the conventional vertical (or “top-down”) media relationship, which was defined by hierarchical communication from expert to consumer.¹¹

A prominent example of the emergence of post-truthism in the public health field is the anti-vaccine movement. While there is a broad consensus among medical experts that vaccines are safe and effective, a growing movement of self-identified “anti-vaxxers” has falsely perpetuated the notion that vaccines have led to an “epidemic” of childhood autism.¹² A 2010 study by the United Kingdom’s Department of Immunization showed that parents of young children trust immunization advice from their family and friends twice as much as they trust the advice from legacy media.¹³ In the same study, 42% of parents expressed distrust in immunization advice provided by the government. Public distrust has proven challenging for public health professionals, and the World Health Organization contends that vaccine hesitancy is a significant threat to global health.¹⁴ Evidence suggests the anti-vaccine movement has had direct impacts on the needless spread of diseases such as measles, mumps, and meningitis—all of which are preventable through vaccination.¹⁵

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a similar pushback to public health experts. In May of 2020, a video titled “Plandemic” went viral online.¹⁶ The half-hour documentary included misleading and false claims about a number of aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including attacks on NIAID

Director Anthony Fauci and other public health officials.¹⁷ The video also promoted a growing conspiracy theory that the COVID-19 virus was developed in a laboratory by humans.¹⁸ According to a June 2020 Pew Research Center survey of Americans, about one third of respondents believed a conspiracy theory that the COVID-19 outbreak was planned by powerful elites.¹⁹ The same survey found that those who obtain COVID-19 news from social media were 10% more likely to believe the conspiracy theory than those who viewed news from other sources.²⁰ These conspiracy theories have gained credibility among many of the same groups that have promoted anti-vaccine messaging, and the main subject of the “Pandemic” film, Judy Mikovits, has ties to the anti-vax movement.²¹

Due to the rise of the internet, public health misinformation is a truly global crisis. A poll by the Center for Countering Digital Hate found that one out of six United Kingdom residents indicated they would not take a COVID-19 vaccine when it became available.²² Unsurprisingly, participants in the study who relied on social media for pandemic-related news were the most likely to indicate anti-vaccine sentiment.²³ Despite recent attempts at regulation from tech leadership, social media accounts dedicated to soliciting anti-vaccine content have not been deplatformed—on the contrary, CCDH findings suggest that popular anti-vaccine social media accounts have gained nearly 8 million followers since 2019, an increase of 19%.²⁴ A consequence of the global reach of the internet is that this content can easily spread far beyond its country of origin. Clearly, public distrust in public health is a widespread issue that extends far beyond one single policy area. It follows that the same processes

9 Ibid

10 Larson et al., “Vaccine confidence gap,” 528.

11 Ibid

12 Ibid

13 Ibid

14 World Health Organization, “10 Threats to Global Health.”

15 Lewandowsky et al., “Successful Debiasing,” 107.

16 Spring, “Virus conspiracy video.”

17 Spencer et al., “‘Plandemic’ Video Peddles Misinformation.”

18 Ibid

19 Pew Research Center, “Conspiracy theory that COVID-19 was planned.”

20 Ibid

21 Enserink and Cohen, “Fact-checking Judy Mikovits.”

22 Burki, “Online anti-vaccine movement,” 504.

23 Ibid

24 Ibid

that promoted anti-vaccine sentiment in the past decades will likewise aid in spreading misinformation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sociodemographic Determinants of Scientific Literacy

The rise in post-truthism has spurred speculation on whether scientific literacy can be predicted by social and/or demographic factors. A 2020 report by the National Science Board found that educational attainment is the single most important determining characteristic associated with a positive view of science.²⁵ Only 29% of respondents in the report with less than a high school diploma displayed a “great deal of confidence” in the scientific community, as opposed to 68% of graduate degree holders.²⁶ Furthermore, the majority of individuals with less than a high school diploma shared a view that science “makes life change too fast.”²⁷ Only 70% of that same group believed that the government should even fund scientific research at all.²⁸

Age is another major demographic factor that shapes acceptance of science. In a 2015 study by the Pew Research Center, 60% of American respondents between the ages of 18-29 indicated that they believed climate change was caused due to human activity, compared to only 31% of respondents aged 65 and older.²⁹ Additionally, 73% of respondents between the ages of 18-29 indicated that they believed in evolution, compared to only 54% of respondents aged 65 and older.³⁰ Similar findings were represented in a 2018 Gallup poll, which found that 42% of American adults older than 55 did not think that most scientists believe that global warming is occurring.³¹ Despite the wealth of data that supports the conclusion that older individuals are less likely to display robust scientific literacy, there is some contention over whether age accounts for

this phenomenon alone. This is especially relevant in the United States where there are clear partisan divides among generations.³²

Religious affiliation is another considerable demographic factor that influences scientific literacy. In a 2014 study conducted by the Pew Research Center, 49% of U.S. adults who attend worship services at least weekly did not indicate belief in evolution.³³ Scientific literacy is especially poor amongst evangelical groups, of which 60% in the study indicated they believed in creationist ideology, and 49% indicated that scientists did not agree on evolution despite the theory’s essentially universal support among scientists.³⁴ Across the board, evangelical Christians were more likely to hold demonstrably false views about the level of agreement on issues in the scientific community when compared to other religious groups.³⁵ A similar study by Michigan State University confirmed this finding that Christians report less trust in science and less support for science to be used in policymaking than non-religious respondents.³⁶ Like age group and educational attainment, religious affiliation is highly correlated with partisanship.³⁷

Political Partisanship in Science and Technology

Partisanship encapsulates many of the demographic trends that explain levels of variation in scientific literacy. In a 2015 study conducted by researchers at the University of New Hampshire, self-identified liberals were more likely to indicate trust in scientists across all surveyed policy areas (vaccines, climate change, nuclear power, evolution, and GMOs).³⁸ While there is a myriad of historical examples of political debates on the role of science in society, the stark partisan divide between liberals and conservatives in the United States as

25 National Science Board, “State of U.S. Science,” 15.

26 Ibid

27 Ibid

28 Ibid

29 Pew Research Center, “Scientific Issues.”

30 Ibid

31 Reinhart, “Global Warming Age Gap.”

32 Ibid

33 Pew Research Center, “Religion and Science.”

34 Ibid

35 Ibid

36 McCright et al., “Influence of political ideology on trust in science,” 5.

37 Ibid

38 op. cit., fn. 1

it exists today originated in the latter half of the twentieth century.³⁹ Trust for science among conservatives has declined substantially since the 1970s, while other groups (i.e., liberals and moderates) have exhibited little or no change.⁴⁰ The rate of this scientific realignment was especially drastic during the 1980s during the presidency of Ronald Reagan, who was famously a harsh critic of government regulation.⁴¹

Partisan bifurcation of scientific literacy is underscored by a shift in educational attainment among liberals and conservatives that occurred around the same time period.⁴² Since the 1970s, liberals are significantly more likely to obtain a graduate degree than conservatives.⁴³ However, education alone does not account for conservatives' distrust in science. General anti-establishment sentiment among conservatives may be the primary driving force of anti-science attitudes due to the relationship between organized science, private economic interests, and government.⁴⁴ Public health initiatives like mandatory vaccination may bear the connotation of big government and higher spending, alienating voters with traditionally conservative values. Scientific literacy depends on a combination of individual intellectual engagement, religiosity, confidence in government, and a number of other factors that may reinforce a collective "conservative" scientific identity.⁴⁵ In other words, the conservative-liberal divide in trust in science is better understood by the complex ideologies and beliefs that inform party identity.

There are other explanations for partisan divides in science, namely that it is an increasingly viable political strategy. Marjorie Taylor Greene, a known advocate of the "QAnon" conspiracy theory, was elected to the U.S. House of

Representatives after an overwhelming victory in the 2020 general election.⁴⁶ Greene's victory is characteristic of a global trend towards extremist politics concurrent with the rise in post-truthism.⁴⁷ This radical approach to political messaging is known as "strategic extremism," a strategy where politicians deviate from the center and benefit more from attracting their own supporters than they lose from alienating their opponent's supporters.⁴⁸ Politicians with fringe beliefs such as anti-vax or anti-science views are increasingly viable because they can energize a vocal minority with remarkable electoral consequences. Political extremists influence their party's rhetoric and policy and push their supporters further from the center over time.⁴⁹

Quantifying Mobility in the COVID-19 Pandemic

Since January 2020, several firms have aggregated cell phone mobility data to track the movement of the United States population during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵⁰ These firms include Apple, Facebook, Google, Teralytics, and several others. While the practice of tracking mobility for the purposes of gaining public health insight is relatively new, there have been a few academic studies assessing the efficacy of this method. A November 2020 study found that data collected from the Swiss firm Teralytics showed significant correlations between mobility patterns and COVID-19 cases.⁵¹ A similar study confirmed these findings, with data displaying strong correlations between decreased mobility and reduced COVID-19 case growth.⁵² There are serious constraints to consider when analyzing mobility data, as they only provide a small snapshot of the entire picture of disease transmission, and do not account for other variables such as mask wearing, hygiene, etc. Despite its limitations, cellphone GPS data

39 Gauchat, "Politicization of Science," 170.

40 Ibid

41 Gershon, "Reagan."

42 op. cit., fn. 39

43 Ibid

44 Ibid

45 Gauchat, "Political Context of Science," 727.

46 Rosenberg, "QAnon."

47 op. cit., fn. 4

48 Glaeser et al., "Strategic Extremism," 1322.

49 Ibid

50 Lomas, "Google."

51 Badr et al., "Mobility Patterns."

52 Gatalo et al., "Phone Mobility Data."

is the most viable available metric for analyzing population mobility patterns during the COVID-19 pandemic. Limited research has been conducted using this data on how various groups are responding to calls for social distancing during the pandemic. Using the insights gained from analyzing determinants of scientific literacy and partisanship in public health, it would be valuable to test if these identities explain adherence to social distancing guidance from public health officials.

Theory

Based on what is known of the divides in support for science, it follows that conservatives will be less likely to support and adhere to social distancing guidelines. This seems especially likely for Trump-supporting conservatives who represent an intensely partisan version of the American conservative movement and often vocally oppose the establishment and institutions. Outside of political affiliation, religiosity, educational attainment, and age may be other notable determinants of social distancing practice. At the state-level, I argue that Donald Trump's 2020 margin of victory will be the most significant explanatory variable for COVID-19 mobility score. When other variables (religiosity, education, age) are added to the model, I would expect significance to further increase.

H_0 : Covid-19 mobility score is independent of Trump 2020 electoral margin.

H_a : Covid-19 mobility score is not independent of Trump 2020 electoral margin.

Research Methods

In order to test these hypotheses, it was paramount to quantify a value encapsulating state-level mobility patterns. To do so, I pulled data from Apple's "Mobility Trends Report," a daily log of the relative volume of Apple Maps directions requests per state compared to a baseline volume on January 13th, 2020.⁵³ I define this value as the Relative Inverse Mobility (RIM). In other words, the RIM value reflects how much a state has restricted their movement relative to pre-pandemic levels. For example, on April 9th, 2020, the state of

Alabama had a RIM of 74; meaning their mobility was 74% of the baseline defined in January.

Timeframe was another important factor to consider once RIM had been quantified. In Apple's mobility report, statewide RIM values are updated every 24 hours, so a RIM value exists for every day since January 13th, 2020. Due to the changing nature of regional pandemic lockdown and stay-at-home orders, it was important to choose a date range that provided a case study for the most extensive period of mobility limitations in the United States. I decided to use the average state RIM for the week of April 1st, 2020, to April 7th, 2020. This was a period three weeks after the World Health Organization officially declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, and at a time of peak school and workplace closure across the nation.⁵⁴ If we were to take an average RIM from the baseline to the time of writing—March 17th, 2021—this average would include periods of lenient mobility restrictions, as states have adapted their public health guidelines based on the spread of COVID-19 in their jurisdiction. As such, narrowing our time frame to a specific week at the height of the pandemic provides the best-case study for testing the hypotheses of this research.

The independent variables for this analysis were collected from a variety of sources. Donald Trump's 2020 state-level margin of victory was obtained from the Federal Election Commission's "Official 2020 Presidential General Elections Result" document, which displays state-level vote totals for all candidates on the ballot for the 2020 presidential election.⁵⁵ Trump's margin of victory was then calculated by subtracting the aggregate of all opponent vote totals from his total votes. Age data was quantified as the median age at the state-level in 2018, obtained from publicly available U.S. Census Bureau data. Educational attainment was defined as the percent of a state's population with an undergraduate degree, also obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. Religiosity

⁵⁴ World Health Organization, "Timeline: WHO's COVID-19 response."

⁵⁵ Federal Elections Commission, "Presidential General Election Results."

⁵³ Apple, Inc., "Mobility Trends Report."

was defined at the state-level using the percent of residents who identified as “highly religious” in a 2017 poll conducted by the Pew Research Center.⁵⁶

Research Findings

Relative Inverse Mobility

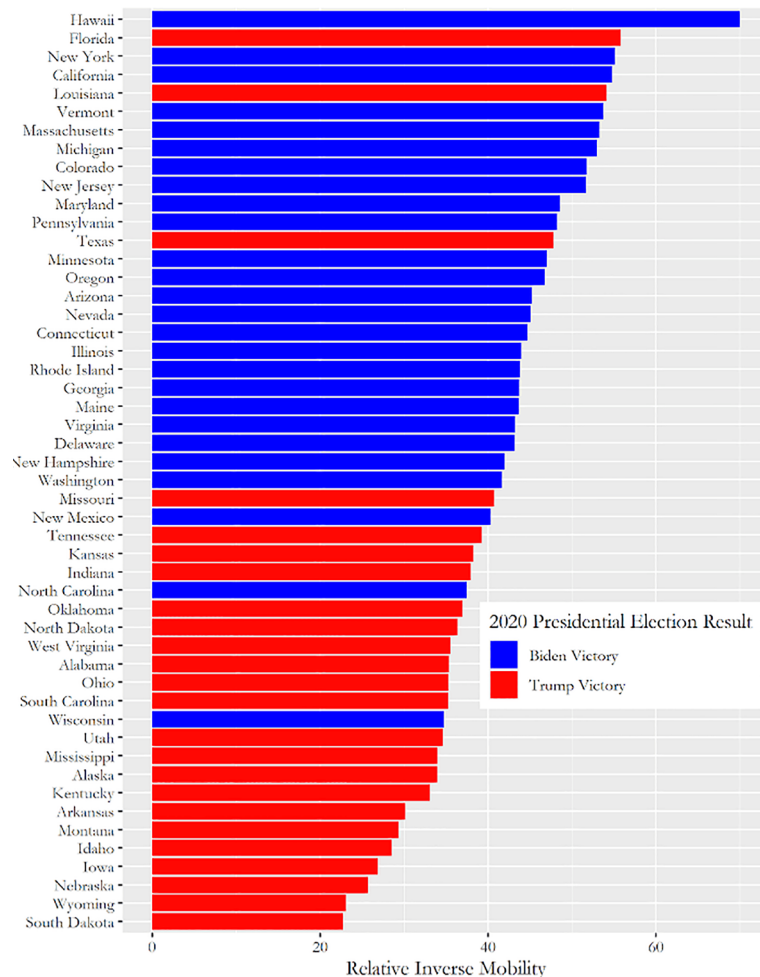


Figure 1: RIM Score by State and 2020 Presidential Election Result. *This plot shows the relative inverse mobility score by state, colored to reflect whether the state was won by Donald Trump or Joe Biden in 2020.*

In Figure 1, higher RIM scores, such as the case of Hawaii, reflect that mobility during the observation period was less than the baseline level, indicating that Hawaiians stayed home more often than usual. Conversely, low RIM scores, such as the case of South Dakota, suggest that South Dakotans did not change their mobility as significantly from the baseline. While there are a few exceptions, states carried by Joe Biden (represented in blue) tend to demonstrate higher RIM scores than states carried by Donald Trump (represented in red). Of the top fifty percent RIM scores, only three states were won by Trump in 2020 (Florida, Louisiana, and Texas). Of the bottom fifty percent RIM scores, only four states were won by Biden in 2020 (Washington, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Wisconsin). This overwhelmingly partisan divide is consistent with the notion that Trump’s margin of victory would influence a state’s adherence to social distancing guidelines.

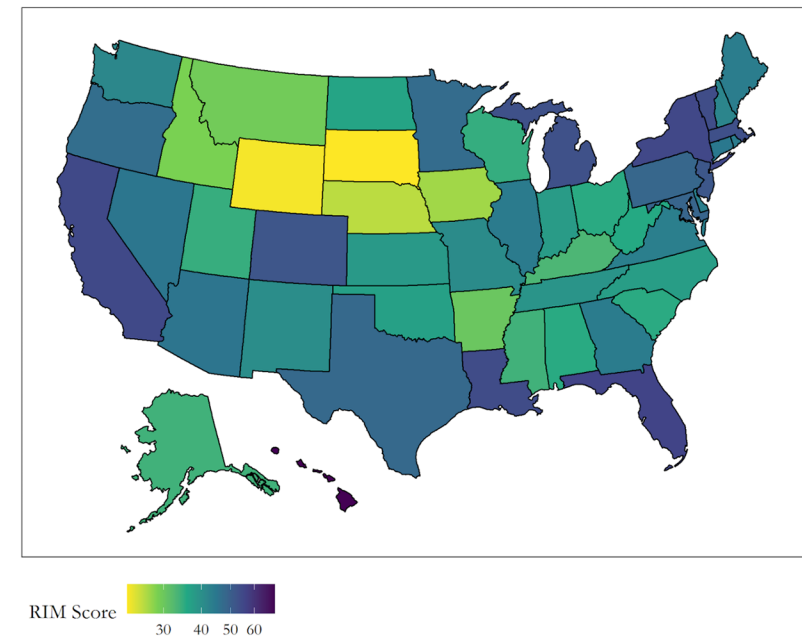


Figure 2: Geospatial Illustration of RIM Score by State. *This plot shows the relative inverse mobility score by state, represented geospatially with a continuous gradient corresponding to RIM score.*

⁵⁶ Lipka and Wormald, “How religious is your state?”

In Figure 2, RIM score is represented geospatially in a choropleth map, with colors based on a continuous gradient from yellow (lower RIM) to purple (higher RIM). Consistent with the findings of Figure 1, it is evident that traditionally liberal states demonstrate generally higher RIM scores. Regions with high concentrations of liberal states such as New England, the Pacific North West, and the Mid-Atlantic are overwhelmingly blue and purple, while regions with high concentrations of conservative states, such as the Great Plains and the Southeast, are overwhelmingly yellow and green. Once more, there is a clear picture of the outlier cases of Texas, Louisiana, and Florida, which demonstrated higher RIM scores than other states carried by Trump in 2020. Interestingly, these are all states in the Gulf Coast region, suggesting some kind of regional factor may have attributed to anomalous RIM scores. Further study is necessary to examine why this specific region of the United States appears to deviate from partisan convention.

Model 1: Inverse Mobility and Trump 2020 Margin of Victory

Table 1. Model 1 Regression

	Coefficient	Std. Error	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept*	75.385	4.742	15.899	2.00×10^{-16}
Trump Margin*	-0.675	0.093	-7.283	2.71×10^{-09}
Residual std. error = 6.706, df: 48				
Adj. R ² = 0.515				

*indicates $p < .05$

In Model 1, state-level RIM score is tested against the Trump 2020 margin of victory. Producing a p-value less than 0.001, this relationship is statistically significant. We may reject the null hypothesis that Covid-19 mobility score is independent of Trump 2020 electoral margin. Given the coefficient estimate of approximately -0.68 for the Trump margin of victory variable, we can conclude that there is a significant negative relationship between Trump 2020 margin of victory and RIM score. The model suggests there is a 0.68 unit decrease in RIM score for every one unit increase in Trump's electoral margin.

Model 2: Inverse Mobility Multivariate Model

Table 2. Model 2 Regression

	Coefficient	Std. Error	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept*	79.729	30.723	2.595	0.013
Trump Margin*	-0.847	0.159	-5.316	3.19×10^{-06}
Education	-0.263	0.336	-0.783	0.438
Religiosity	0.127	0.154	0.826	0.413
Age	0.106	0.452	0.235	0.815
Residual std. error = 6.747, df: 45				
Adj. R ² = 0.509				
F-statistic = 13.71, df: 45, p-value: 2.187×10^{-07}				

*indicates $p < .05$

Model 2, state-level RIM score is tested against the Trump 2020 margin of victory and the independent variables for education, religiosity, and age as defined in the research methods section of this paper. This multiple regression confirms the findings of Model 1: Trump's 2020 margin of victory remains a statistically significant predictor of RIM score. None of the other variables introduced in this model produced statistically significant results. In other words, there is no evidence of a relationship between age, educational attainment, or religiosity and RIM score. Regardless, this is a substantial finding because it suggests that Trump margin of victory is a particularly robust predictor remaining highly significant despite the addition of other variables into the model. In fact, the coefficient for Trump margin of victory increased in Model 2, suggesting when accounting for other variation there is a 0.85 unit decrease in RIM score for every one unit increase in Trump's electoral margin.

Conclusion

This research suggests that there is strong evidence that state-level adherence to social distancing guidelines at the apex of COVID-19 induced restrictions can be predicted by state support for Donald Trump. Overall, states that supported Trump in the 2020 election demonstrated more mobility than

states that supported Biden by statistically significant margins. Despite the wealth of studies of the impacts of education, religion, and generational divides on scientific literacy, these factors do not appear to greatly influence RIM in the context of this study. These findings may suggest that above all else, Americans are divided along partisan lines. Given intense political discord—which has almost certainly been exacerbated by the pandemic and resulting economic collapse—acceptance of science is an increasingly political position, rather than one informed by other personal identifiers.

There are several limitations to this research. RIM score as calculated in this data could be a more complete metric if there were resources available to provide for other types of movement. Apple Maps data only reflects users of Apple products, and only those who use GPS directions. It is safe to assume that many people traveled within the observation period yet left no trace of their movement. There are third-party mobility datasets available that have more complex methods of analysis for quantifying mobility, but unfortunately these data are often proprietary and unavailable to the public. Because of consumer privacy regulations, tech companies like Apple are only able to provide a snapshot of their users' mobility data. Regardless, even the most robust of mobility datasets inevitably fail to perfectly capture the behavior of their populations—there is simply no way to track the movements of hundreds of millions of Americans, both practically and politically. Another major limitation of this research is the scarcity of available data meant analysis had to be conducted at the state-level, a relatively large unit of analysis considering that the research question seeks to answer questions about individual behavior.

For future study, it would be beneficial to attempt to gain more information from tech companies and see if there are better ways to quantify mobility. It would also be interesting to see how the time frame of the observation period impacts the scope of this research. Perhaps a different model could be constructed where individual state lockdown policies are considered as starting and ending points for calculating RIM, rather than a predefined period as utilized for this research. Restructuring the scope of the project to a narrower

unit of analysis could also prove to be beneficial, for instance using census tracts rather than states. This modification would allow for a clearer conclusion to be drawn regarding individual behavior. It would also be interesting to see if other variables, such as climate, urbanization, and economic activity, among others, would influence the model output. Race would also be an important variable to study, given the stark divides in racial attitudes towards health care systems that have likely worsened during the pandemic.⁵⁷ It is my belief based on my own research that Trump's margin of victory would remain as the best indicator for RIM at any unit of analysis, especially given the failure of variables such as religiosity and educational attainment, but it is still worth exploring other variables, research designs, and sources of data.

57 Royles, "Black Americans less likely to trust coronavirus vaccine."

Alumni Spotlights

Bryan Corcoran

By Mckenzie Taffe

Bryan Corcoran graduated from Cal Poly in 1982 with a political science degree and a concentration in public administration, which he describes as the business side of government. He was hired by Procter and Gamble and worked with them for 36 years in sales. He retired at 58 years old and is a chair on the Alumni Advisory Board for the Cal Poly Political Science department. He lives with his wife in Palm Desert and spends his free time serving on the Board of Directors of his golf club and staying connected with colleagues and family.

Reflecting on his time at Cal Poly, Brian says his political science classes prepared him and his fellow students on how to think. He interned with San Luis Obispo County in an administrative role, doing projects for the county administration officer and performing business analyses. During his first year at Cal Poly, he had no idea what he wanted to do later in life. He always thought the law school or business school were options, and really enjoyed being in leadership positions. He was the general superintendent of Poly Royal, which is now known as Cal Poly's famous Open House. He also was a member of Phi Kappa Psi and advises that current students take advantage of the leadership opportunities available in Fraternity and Sorority Life. He credits his time at Cal Poly for his leadership and public speaking abilities.

Bryan also worked through college for 3 years at the Shell Gas Station, which allowed him to pay his college tuition- which was just \$200 per quarter! Bryan also met his wife his sophomore year at Cal Poly, and they married the year after graduation. His sister, nephew, and brother-in-law all went to Cal Poly as well.

His favorite classes at Cal Poly were those that included debates and participation. Professor John Culver taught California Government, and in this class, Bryan learned to think on his feet. Bryan especially enjoyed professors that understood their audience and says that any good leader must understand their

audiences' perspective in order to be well-liked. Bryan finds few differences between the skills needed to succeed as a political science student and his career in sales. Bryan says if he were going back to college today, he would be a political science major. It is an underrated degree that facilitates soft skills.

Bryan interviewed with Procter and Gamble during his senior year at Cal Poly. He has been able to move and travel throughout his storied career. He started in Los Angeles, became a sales manager in Birmingham, Alabama, then moved to Nashville, Tennessee. He became a Sales Manager for Southern California. He has lived in Cincinnati at the Company's headquarters for about 20 years, and became the US Sales Manager for Fabric Softeners, which is a 1.3-billion-dollar business. Before retiring in 2017, he became the Sales Manager for Southwest regional grocery for P&G. In today's world, people usually do not stay with the same company for very long, but Bryan enjoyed managing a large business and is passionate about working with people and helping people become successful. During his role in the fabric care business, he attributes the growth of the business to his ability to work well with all of the field salespeople.

Bryan used to perform interviews for P&G and can tell almost immediately the level of communication skills just by having a one-on-one conversation with an applicant. His best advice for political science students in their job interviews would be to provide examples of leadership, analytical capability, and to always have a story to tell.

Bryan is very passionate about the excellence of the Cal Poly political science department. Whenever he comes up to San Luis Obispo to visit in his role on the Alumni Advisory Board, he is always impressed by the caliber of students and faculty. He is energized by coaching colleagues in the business world and talking to Political Science students about their senior projects. Bryan is a huge believer in the Cal Poly Learn-By-Doing motto and advises everyone to make sure their college experience is broader than just taking classes- you need to set up volunteer experiences and internships to really get the most out of your education. "You are never going to find your life on autopilot.

Danielle Borelli

By Lauren Tankeh

Danielle Borelli graduated from Cal Poly with a bachelor's degree in Political Science in 2011 and a Master's in Public Policy in 2017. She specializes in the convergence between artificial intelligence and human trafficking.

Danielle put herself through college and worked over twenty hours a week as a Computer Technician at the Cal Poly Information Technology Services (ITS) Department to pay for school. As a Computer Technician she troubleshooted classroom technology, designed and installed technology, and learned project management skills. She recalls that it was not always easy to balance working and being a full-time student, but through it she learned to persevere and not shrink back from adversity. Her time at the Information Technology Services Department taught her a technical skill set that eventually led her to her current career path.

While in undergrad, Danielle learned about the prevalence of human trafficking. She began to volunteer her time doing anti-human trafficking work at the local level. When Danielle eventually decided to return to Cal Poly for her Master's in Public Policy, she selected human trafficking as her area of policy expertise. During her time as a master's student she states that she learned to aggressively explore her own personal bias and apply the policy analysis framework she learned to everyday activities and institutions.

Since graduating from the Cal Poly Master's in Public Policy program, Danielle has combined the technical skills she gained while working at the Cal Poly Information Technology Services Department with her Public Policy education and passion for combating human trafficking. She is currently the Operations Coordinator at the California Cybersecurity Institute. One of her many projects there was launching the Trafficking Investigations Hub. The Trafficking Investigations Hub allows her to deliver immersive virtual-reality training for law enforcement and prosecutors throughout the nation. The training allows law enforcement agencies to identify aspects of crime scenes

that are potential indicators of human trafficking. She has also worked with other agencies and companies to develop tools to aggregate data and identify potential victims of human trafficking.

While she works in cybersecurity, Danielle still uses the research and writing skills she honed during her time at the Cal Poly Political Science Department. After delivering a speech at the Women in Cybersecurity Conference, she was approached by a publisher for a British cybersecurity journal and her work on combating nontraditional cyber adversaries was published in a peer-reviewed journal.

Danielle has also done anti-human trafficking work internationally and launched three safe houses for victims of human trafficking. While working in Brazil for an international NGO, Danielle worked with local law enforcement to identify victims, advocated for local legislative change, and worked to redirect the livelihood of trafficking victims. She also traveled to Tijuana,

Mexico to conduct anti-human trafficking training with local law enforcement agencies and nonprofits. Her experiences abroad led her to embark on the journey to open a safehouse in the United States. To prepare, she conducted interviews and researched safe houses across the nation. Danielle spent 8 months running her first safe house in San Luis Obispo. After that house shut down, she did not give up and has since opened three more safe houses, two of which are still in operation. The homes she has opened have helped over thirty girls in the past year and a half.

Danielle's contributions to San Luis Obispo have not gone unnoticed, she was nominated for the Top 20 Under 40 by the San Luis Obispo Tribune in 2019 and was nominated by Jordan Cunningham to be Woman of the Year for the 35th District in 2019.

Lauren Feuerborn

By Lauren Tankeh

Lauren Feuerborn works with some of the biggest names in California politics including Governor Gavin Newsom, newly appointed Senator Alex Padilla, and San Francisco's Mayor London Breed. As the Political Director at SGR Consulting—a predominantly female finance firm— she strategizes with politicians' finance teams and advocacy groups to build meaningful relationships with community members and donors. Lauren loves seeing the behind-the-scenes lives of politicians and is often reminded that as they tackle big and important issues, they are people with families, hopes, and dreams. She still gets teary-eyed watching them speak about their goals and plans to make change. It often serves as a reminder that this work is more than a job, but rather part of a bigger solution to create a more equitable world for all.

While she is now fully immersed in the political realm, Lauren began her time at Cal Poly as Business Major who wanted to work in fashion. After almost failing an accounting class, she decided to pursue another path: Political Science. Political Science was the crossroads between her academic strengths and personal passions, and she recalled that once she switched her major, she immediately realized it was what she wanted to do. While at Cal Poly she participated in Model UN and studied abroad, both of which were meaningful experiences. When thinking about how to make the most of your time at Cal Poly, she recommends students ask lots of questions, take advantage of internship opportunities while in undergrad and strive to find mentors that can help them during their career.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in Political Science in 2013, she started working in social media marketing, but realized politics was where she wanted to truly focus her career. Lauren eventually enrolled in the Public Affairs Master's Program at the University of San Francisco (USF). While in graduate school, Lauren took advantage of her professor's office hours and cultivated great relationships with them. Her graduate school networking

opened many doors and led her to work on the Hillary Clinton 2016 Presidential campaign, where she campaigned in California, Nevada and Florida. Lauren describes the 2016 loss as heartbreaking, and soul-crushing, but it made her realize that losing was part of politics and only motivated her to work harder. Another pivotal experience in her career was being the Campaign Manager for Suzy Loftus, a San Francisco District Attorney candidate in 2019. Lauren truly believed in her candidate and worked harder than she had. While ultimately the campaign was unsuccessful, Lauren still credits it as her greatest professional experience. Upon reflection, Lauren views her graduate school experience as the culmination of her academic experience at Cal Poly and her real-life political work. Cal Poly prepared her for life: whether it was the intensity of the quarter system or the ongoing support of her friends from college. When work becomes difficult, she has the foundation of Cal Poly's motto "Learn by Doing" as a reminder to keep fighting.

Stacy Okoro

By Mckenzie Taffe

Stacy Okoro graduated from Cal Poly in 2017 with a Political Science degree and a Pre-Law concentration. She minored in Psychology and Ethics, Public Policy, Science and Technology. She is currently a J.D. candidate at Columbia Law School and has recently completed an externship with the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University.

In her senior year of high school, Stacy was deciding on a major to apply to Cal Poly. She enjoyed both biology and political science, but ultimately decided on majoring in political science because it allowed her to incorporate science into her degree path, whereas the hard sciences had limited opportunities to get involved in government.

During her time at Cal Poly, Stacy was very engaged with the campus community and extracurriculars. She joined the Pi Sigma Alpha honors society, was an Executive Board Member of the Undergraduate Law Association, and became the President of the Undergraduate Law Association. She was also a College of Liberal Arts ambassador and an executive board member. She was a member of the Cal Poly democrats, queer student union, and Black Student Union. Moreover, she worked 40 hours a week at grocery stores, Woodstock's and SLO Brew. Stacy tried out mock trial for a year, which helped her decide she was not cut out for litigation.

Stacy began her internships in college, first working as an intern for the Honorable Judge Martin J. Tangeman in San Luis Obispo. It was interesting for her to see how judges can, in a very broad way, influence law. But once again this experience guided her away from litigation towards transactional law.

By her second year at Cal Poly, Stacy knew she wanted to go to law school. She cites the skills she acquired in her political science classes: distilling the important information from dense texts, thinking through arguments in Professor Matthew Moore's classes, and learning to be skeptical about research that was cited in her readings.

Her interests in Science, Technology, and Society were nurtured by her internship after college. She had a very well-defined interest in the fields of privacy and cybersecurity and took 2 and a half years between Cal Poly and law school to make sure she could include STS in her future after law school. Stacy worked as a legal assistant at a law Firm called Sheppard Mullin working with a team of attorneys in patent prosecution. The immediate team she worked with focused on pharmaceuticals, cloud computing software technology, and designs of AI and machine-learning software.

In her first year at Columbia law school, Stacy learned a lot about her own resilience by balancing the demands of her new schedule. She is a member of the Black Law Students' Association; the Science and Technology and Society group, the First-Generation Professionals group and Empowering Women of Color at Columbia Law School. One challenge she faced was the transition from Cal Poly political science classes to her law school classes at Columbia which are graded on a harsh curve.

Stacy had a summer legal internship with the FCC after taking an administrative law class during with first year of law school. She learned how law interacts with policy, specifically how regulations are created and passed, which further propelled her towards a career in privacy law.

Currently, Stacy is a 2L taking Professional Responsibility; Unfair Competition and other topics; public health law and social justice; a seminar in anonymity and privacy; and Organizational Misconduct. Last semester, she did an externship, working with the Knight First Amendment Institute, whose goal is to reimagine the First Amendment, so it is fitting to current times and technology. The Knight Institute initiated a lawsuit against former President Donald Trump for blocking critics on his Twitter account, as doing so would constitute a public official blocking citizens' access to government speech. This experience solidified Stacy's dream of working in an uncharted field of the law.

In a decade, Stacy sees herself working either at a law firm doing privacy work, at the Federal Trade Commission, or a policy advocacy group like the Electronic Privacy Information Center or the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

Her advice for current political science students is to explore something outside the field of law that you find interesting. Having a minor in another discipline can widen your career choices immensely after law school.

Stacy experienced a culture shock coming from the Bay Area to Cal Poly. Growing up in a diverse community, she believes that Cal Poly is suffering from a lack of diversity within the student and faculty populations. Stacy took Reproductive Politics during her final year with Professor Jennifer Denbow and enjoyed her intersectional teaching style that focused on the ways that autonomy and consent intersected with the subjugation of black women. If more classes were taught in this way in the Political Science department, Stacy believes that Cal Poly students would benefit immensely, because diversity breeds creativity

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