

The ROHATYN CENTER *for* GLOBAL AFFAIRS
STUDENT ACADEMIC JOURNAL | VOLUME 6

MIDDLEBURY
JOURNAL OF
GLOBAL
AFFAIRS



2022

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Printed April 2022



Middlebury College
Rohatyn Center for Global Affairs



Foreword

We are pleased to present the *Middlebury Journal of Global Affairs*, Middlebury College's interdisciplinary undergraduate academic journal which highlights a broad range of global and international topics. Published by the Rohatyn Center for Global Affairs and managed by the Rohatyn Center's student advisory board, the journal is Middlebury College's only academic journal and an excellent opportunity for students of all disciplines to showcase their work. Highlighting the wide range and academic rigor of Middlebury College students, this year's journal covers topics from the Greek debt crisis to the American exercise of biopower in Puerto Rico. This year's pieces represent the finest and most rigorous work we received from our largest batch of submissions in recent memory and we are pleased to share them with our readers.

In its second year bearing the name the *Middlebury Journal of Global Affairs*, the Rohatyn Center's student publication seeks to give students a platform to highlight their exemplary work in global affairs. This year's journal returns to our original mandate of promoting scholarly, academic work at Middlebury College, choosing to forgo the creative works and translated works of previous editions. We see this departure not as a limitation of the journal, but as an opportunity to return to the journal's roots. We hope that this journal can serve as a platform for years to come to highlight and encourage the study of global affairs by our classmates across every discipline.

This year's edition of the *Middlebury Journal of Global Affairs* would not have been possible without the support of many at Middlebury College. I would particularly like to thank the Rohatyn Student Advisory Board, their enthusiasm and commitment to continuing and strengthening the legacy of this journal are truly unmatched and invaluable. A special thank you as well to Valerie Costello and the Middlebury printing services staff for their patience and guidance in making this journal a reality. Finally, I would like to thank the Rohatyn Center staff, particularly associate director Charlotte Tate, director Mark Williams, and operations manager Margaret DeFoor for their endless support of this journal and the study of global affairs at Middlebury.

As our campus, and the world more broadly, changes rapidly for yet another year, we hope that this journal can serve as a reminder of the enduring commitment of Middlebury College students to continued academic exploration. We hope their work serves as a reminder of the importance of continuing to engage globally, even when it may seem most difficult.

Sincerely,

Suria Vanrajah '22

*Director of the Rohatyn Student Advisory Board
Rohatyn Center for Global Affairs at Middlebury College*



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Olivia O'Brien '21.5

In the Name of Modernization: Racial Erasure, Biopower, and Systems of U.S. Control in Twentieth-Century Puerto Rico

Abstract

This piece explores the dark history of United States modernization projects in Puerto Rico during the twentieth century. It focuses on the policies associated with Operation Bootstrap, such as birth control and migration campaigns, which sought to maintain control over the Puerto Rican labor pool. This piece argues that the term “modernization” disguises the extractive relationship between the U.S. and Puerto Rico, as well as the ways these projects weaponized race, class, and gender to sustain this imperialist framework. It also unpacks how narratives of “overpopulation” were a way to erase the role of colonialism by creating social and economic disruption on the island, and instead placed blame on Puerto Rican reproduction.

Delia Mestre was raised in the eastern coastal lands of Puerto Rico mythologized as “La Perla del Oriente,” “The Pearl of the Orient” (Quintanilla 2004). Officially, “La Perla del Oriente” is called Humacao, a name derived from the name of the Taíno chief *Jumacao*, who once ruled the municipality. Surrounded by the Cerro and Labarbera mountains, Delia was quite literally nestled in the oyster shell of her village’s geography. The Antón Ruiz, Humacao and Candelero rivers, and the Frontera brook twist and flow into the Vieques Passage. Mangroves grow in red, white, and black (BoricuaOnline n.d.).

Delia lived and breathed the tragic irony of Humacao: her village was both a jewel treasured for its bountiful richness, and a site of struggle and suffering. The natural gifts of her environment could not fend off

malnutrition. Nor could it prevent young children from working in the sugar-cane fields. It could not equip the concrete homes in her barrio with indoor plumbing. The doctors and social workers that visited her community would tell her that her poverty was endemic to her fellow rural women. Their prescription for her suffering was simple enough: stop having children. These narratives snaked their way through Delia’s community and through similar farming towns across Puerto Rico. In the face of her suffering, Delia placed her faith in the medical authorities (Quintanilla 2004). Thus, in 1955, salvation arrived at “La Perla del Oriente” in the form of a magic capsule.

Unbeknownst to Delia was that this magic capsule was part of the early clinical trials in the development of the modern birth control pill. Humacao was a site for testing and improving the pill. Its form was imperfect, and

the bodies of Delia and other humaceñas were sacrificed as test subjects and, consequently, as potential casualties. Prior to its introduction in Humacao, synthetic estrogen and progesterone had only been tested on mice and rabbits. Years later, in a 2004 interview with *The Orlando Sentinel*, Delia and other humaceña women reflected on their unknowing participation in the pill's clinical trials. Aches, pains, depression—these were some of the side effects of the not-yet-for-sale, proto-pill. Many described their realization over the years that the consent they had given was in fact not consent at all (Quintanilla 2004).

To some, Delia's story may seem like a stand-alone blemish on United States history—an aberrant mistake made by its pharmaceutical companies. Yet a closer inspection of twentieth-century United States modernization projects in Puerto Rico suggests that this tragic tale fits neatly within the historical narrative.

Following Puerto Rico's first elections in 1948, Luis Muñoz Marín became the first governor. He came from a family entrenched in politics. His father served as the Secretary of State, Chief of the Cabinet for the Government of Puerto Rico, and member of the House of Delegates. Due to the location of his father's positions, Muñoz Marín received the majority of his education on the mainland at Georgetown Preparatory School in Washington, DC. Though educated in the far-off classrooms of the mainland United States, Muñoz Marín spoke confidently of his plans for the island. At first, Muñoz Marín had advocated for independence from the United States, until he was expelled from the Liberal Party. In the interest of preserving his political power, Muñoz Marín reformulated his vision.

In the aftermath of his political ostracisation, Muñoz Marín abandoned the cause for Puerto Rican independence. In an exact reversal of

his previously held convictions, he founded El Partido Popular Democrático (PPD), which sought to maintain Puerto Rico's status as a territory. He asserted that as a territory, Puerto Rico could receive foreign investment while simultaneously maintaining a degree of autonomy. “Pan, tierra, y libertad” (bread, land and liberty), were the promises of Muñoz Marín to the Puerto Rican people (Encyclopaedia Britannica n.d.). Muñoz Marín's defection, however, soon turned into cruelty. Puerto Rico's Law 53, known as La Mordaza, criminalized any activity that appeared to promote independence. Under the auspices of Muñoz Marín, Puerto Ricans couldn't even sing their national anthem “La Borinqueña” without fear of prosecution (LeBrón 2017).

Simultaneous to Muñoz Marín's sudden shift on the question of the island's status, policy architects on the mainland forged their own plans for the future of Puerto Rico. In the wake of World War II, during the 1950s and 1960s, Operation Bootstrap emerged as the United States' central economic policy in Puerto Rico. This program of so-called “modernization” purported to lift Puerto Rico out of its poverty by way of export-led industrialization and foreign private investment (Berman Santana 1998). If Puerto Rico could simply pull itself by the bootstraps, the American Dream would also be granted to its once-colony, now-territory of Puerto Rico. From his seat of power, the mercurial Muñoz Marín latched on to the golden promises of Operation Bootstrap and espoused the possibilities of modernization.

In order to attract foreign investors, Muñoz Marín worked to craft a marketable image of the island. This idealized, investment-worthy Puerto Rico, designed and sold by Muñoz Marín, was distinct from the mainland United States in one way in particular: race. Race, Marín declared, was nonexistent. Whereas racism seeped into all corners of

the social, economic, and political cultures of the United States, Muñoz Marín argued that Puerto Rico transcended such problems to the level of racial utopia. This post-racial image of Puerto Rico was codified into the demographic breakdown of the island during *el censo criollo* of the 1950s. During this census count, which Puerto Rico was permitted to conduct independently, the question of racial identification was eliminated. In the absence of the race question, Muñoz Marín believed he had done away with centuries of Puerto Rican history, wherein race and racism existed as meaningful constructs and systems (Florida 2020).

Yet despite Muñoz Marín's official pronouncement of the death of race in Puerto Rico, Operation Bootstrap depended on both the creation and manipulation of race as a real category. The core issue that Operation Bootstrap purported to solve was the problem of "overpopulation," a term that became a tool of United States political actors. This single word worked to erase the colonial history that created social and economic disruption on the island, and instead placed blame on Puerto Rican reproduction. It relied on the logic that Puerto Rican women were having children at a rate that strained the island's resources. Operation Bootstrap utilized the red herring of "overpopulation" to promote its economic strategy. Migration of Puerto Rican laborers to the United States mainland was one component of this strategy. In the name of modernization and progress, migration to areas like New York was promoted and facilitated to address the supposed issue of limited capacity on the island. In reality, migration relied on the colonial framework to serve the labor needs of post-World War II U.S. society (Berman Santana 1998, 109).

The mid-twentieth century migration programs out of Puerto Rico became a racialized process. On December 26th, 1942, Jaime Bagué and Commissioner of Labor Santiago Iglesias Jr.—two Puerto Rican officials—met with four North American functionaries to produce a report on Puerto

Rican migration to the United States. During this meeting, the committee defined the ideal migrant for U.S. labor needs. The report stated: "only white workers should be encouraged to migrate to Southern states although this policy should not be formally incorporated in any statements or documents." In the same breath, the report stated that the migrants should also be "younger, single, skilled workers whether proficient in agriculture or industry." The recommendations of Bagué, Iglesias, and the four functionaries would possess great power over the negotiation of race in Puerto Rico. By way of migration, the possibility of economic mobility was granted almost exclusively to white Puerto Ricans. Yet, despite this privilege, these migrants were fundamentally marginalized because of their status as a disposable workforce (Meléndez 2017, 41).

Operation Bootstrap utilized alternative ways to exact its control over the labor pool on the island of Puerto Rico. Birth control became a technology of biopower that enabled the control of bodies, all while disguised as a modernization project. The idea of birth control as a way to address supposed "overpopulation" echoed conversations that transpired earlier in the twentieth century. In 1932, Theodore Schroeder wrote a piece called "Porto Rico's Population Problem" for Margaret Sanger's *Birth Control Review*. Schroeder, a mainland writer, detailed the various problems with Puerto Rico, such as unemployment, disease, and overall poverty, and warned that such factors could lead to unrest on the island. Schroeder argued that birth control was the only solution. If Puerto Rico did not comply, Schroeder said that the U.S. would impose it by force. He went so far as to say that if Puerto Rico did not reduce its population on its own, the United States would intervene with military force (Briggs 2006, 77). The writings of Schroeder reveal the continued imperialist framework: birth control, in this context, was explicitly a stand-in for guns.

Premised on the progressive idea of "family planning," birth control campaigns that popped up in rural communities in Puerto

Rico during the mid-twentieth century were rooted in deception, racism, and classism. Working-class women and women of color became the targets of these eugenic birth control campaigns (Briggs 2006, 111). With the creation of new factories in Puerto Rico through Operation Bootstrap, birth control projects had the underlying goal of maintaining a disposable, non-childbearing female workforce. As a result, sterilization, commonly known as “la operación,” became such a common practice that between the 1930s and 1970s, around one-third of the Puerto Rican female population had been sterilized. Many of these women later expressed the lack of information surrounding the procedure (Andrews 2017).

The hospital social worker that visited Delia Mestre’s barrio in Humacao is a singular manifestation of the island-wide political and economic agenda to exert control over Puerto Rico. Laura Briggs, a feminist critic and historian of reproductive politics and U.S. empire, argues that “Puerto Rico was explicitly a “laboratory” in which development—foreign aid, industrialization (a.k.a. the “global assembly line”), import substitution, and population control—was being tested as a global policy” (Briggs 2006, 110). From the structural level to individual bodies, Puerto Rico became a petri dish for United States experimentation. All the while, the urgings of Luis Muñoz Marín reverberated throughout the island. The man who once supported Puerto Rican independence now gave the United States free rein to control the reproductive health of Puerto Rican women.

By 1962, when the birth control projects were in full operation in Puerto Rico, Muñoz Marín had been governor of the island for sixteen years. The sinister reality of Operation Bootstrap had long reared its ugly head under his unceasing reign. In the name of modernization, the creole elite supported the United States in exacting economic control over Puerto Rico. Emerging from the systems of colonialism and imperialism, “modernization” projects weaponized race, class, and gender as a way to sustain the extractive framework. In the face of this reality, young members of El Partido Popular Democrático came to believe in the value of officials’ term limits. Referring to themselves as the “twenty-tuos,” the group, which included Muñoz Marín’s own daughter, Victoria, suggested that he resign (Bernier-Grand 1995, 86). After years of supporting and propagating policy that simply created the illusion of Puerto Rican autonomy, Muñoz Marín’s authority was finally called into question.

Delia’s village of Humacao, lauded as the “La Perla del Oriente,” or the “Pearl of the Orient,” also goes by two other lesser-known names. “La Ciudad Gris” y “Los Roye Huesos.” In Spanish, these names translate to “The Gray City” and “Bone-Gnawers” (BoricuaOnline n.d.). These names perhaps complicate the vision of Humacao as purely a region of awe-inspiring biodiversity and natural beauty. They conjure Briggs’s idea of the “laboratory,” or rather a mortuary. “La Ciudad Gris” and “Roye Hueso” evoke the grotesque nature, darkness, and destruction that emerged from the violent project of modernization in Humacao and Puerto Rico at large.

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Qinwen (Rachel) Lu '23

Evaluating the Political Commentary of Chinese Artists

Abstract

In this research, I examine how modern and avant-garde artists in China engage in political commentary under the authoritarian regime. I found that artists use three primary methods: direct critique, metaphors, and cosmopolitanism. Using Ai Weiwei as a case study, I found that direct critique is the most effective method of political commentary, as it inspired public mobilization, received a heightened threat response from the government, and even altered the state narrative. I further explored the topic to discuss the effectiveness of artists' sphere of influence, and I argue that the artist is most successful under a loyalist sphere as opposed to the globalist sphere. Looking at artists under a government regime where freedom of expression is limited, my research offers insight into the strategic choices of artists to engage in activism.

The authoritarian regime in China has become increasingly repressive in recent years, and the counter-discourse against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) continues to be silenced. Since China's reform and opening in 1978, Chinese modern and avant-garde artists have pushed the envelope of censorship and propaganda to engage with new ideas, refusing to be silenced in their pursuit of freedom. Their artistic activism usually takes the form of social or political commentary, an act of disobedience against the mainstream party propaganda. These artists have taken on different methods of activism and have progressed as the country globalizes, taking their platform outside of China to an international audience. How, then, do Chinese artists challenge the authoritarian propaganda apparatus in China?

From the literature, there are three methods to express critique: direct critique, metaphors, and cosmopolitanism. This research assesses the effectiveness of each method. Direct

critique is most effective at penetrating the state propaganda because it more successfully mobilizes the public and heightens the threat perceived by the government.

Literature

As mentioned above, there are three methods that artists deploy to participate in political commentary in their artwork: direct critique, metaphors, and cosmopolitanism. Direct dissent is when an artist directly engages a message contradictory to the government's preferred narrative. Artists use the metaphor method to avoid censorship while conveying a subtle message that draws upon cultural or historical cues. Lastly, there is a growing emergence of cosmopolitan artists who have reached success on the global stage outside of mainland China.

Method 1: Direct Critique

Direct dissent is when an artwork speaks out

in direct opposition against governmental authorities. Artist Ai WeiWei used this method in his early works and most prominently in his second major photography series “A Study of Perspectives,” where Ai photographs himself giving the middle finger to significant monuments and institutions, with the first in the series shot at Tiananmen Square (Sikes 2013, 7). Ai used a similar method in “Dropping the Urn,” where the artist photographed himself dropping and defacing ancient Chinese ceramics (Sikes 2013, 8). Evan Sikes argues that Ai’s work offers reconfigurations of traditional notions of worship and veneration towards monuments and ancient artifacts in an attempt to offer subversive views on the political attitudes of the Chinese government (Sikes 2013, 15). Sikes argues that Ai challenges not only the freedom of expression but also the authoritarian practice of the Chinese government to dictate a singular perspective on the cultural and political significance of objects and institutions (Sikes 2013, 15). However, using direct dissent to protest is usually unsuccessful because it is easily recognizable as opposition and makes the artist a target of repression. For instance, Ai was arrested by the Chinese authorities under house arrest on March 3, 2011 for being a threat to national security (Sikes 2013, 18).

Similarly, O’Dea argues that contemporary art is an obvious target of the Chinese government because its unconventional creative singularity is in direct confrontation with authoritarian censorship (Tsokhas 2019, 168-169). Contemporary art is aligned with capitalist individualism and overtly opposes the collectivism of Maoist state socialism (Tsokhas 2019, 168-169). For example, in 2014 artist Guo Jian made a diorama of Tiananmen Square on the 25th anniversary of June 1989 and covered the public square with minced meat (Tsokhas 2019, 169). The police surrounded him and demanded that he destroy the work, and Jian was later deported to Australia (Tsokhas 2019, 169). While this method of dissent is direct and easily perceived, the artist can face severe consequences and will likely create a backlash.

Method 2: Metaphors

The second category is best characterized as metaphors or extended allegories, where artists draw on the symbolisms and alternative pathways to indirectly execute protest. Artists in the later stages of the cultural revolution used allegories extensively—a group of artists known as the “Hotel School” emerged and were criticized as “black painters” by the authorities, and these “black painters” used symbols in their artwork to critique the government (Galikowski 1998, 144). Maria B. Galikowski argues that “black painters” ventured beyond explicit political attacks and instead drew on “a whole range of rich cultural resources to question or make subtle comments on the processes of life” (Galikowski 1998, 148). One of the most significant artworks from the cohort is Huang Yongyu’s “The Winking Owl,” which uses animals as symbolism to satirize political realities (Galikowski 1998, 146). The owl is both associated with darkness for its nocturnal nature, and with the Western connotation of wisdom, and Galikowski argues that Huang uses the owl in this painting as a signifier of the Chinese intellectual (Galikowski 1998, 147). The owl’s wink draws upon the idiom “one eye open and one eye closed” (睁一只眼、闭一只眼), to demonstrate a sad reality for Chinese intellectuals who witness the uncontrollable political forces, but must keep quiet as a survival mechanism (Galikowski 1998, 147). Galikowski argues that Chinese artists are able to draw on extensive cultural metaphors to convey political messages instead of using crude and direct attacks on authorities (Galikowski 1998, 148).

In the era of the internet, netizens play an important role in metaphorical criticisms of the government, and they draw extensively on visual tropes. Ke Cheng Fang examines the role of memes, specifically the “Wo Ha” (Toad Worship) memes about former leader Jiang Ze Ming. After Xi Jinping took power in late 2012, the government used heavy-handed internet censorship that prompted a group of netizens to criticize the government through alternative

channels, including praising former leader Jiang's charisma and talent through various memes (Fang 2020, 44-45). Fang argues that Toad Worshipers use memes as implicit criticism by highlighting the laudable qualities of Jiang as a critique of Xi, such as contrasting Jiang's vivid expressions against Xi's rigid dullness (Fang 2020, 46). Further, Fang argues that the use of Jiang as a ridiculous meme serves to deconstruct the rigid party-state system, where traditionally leaders are viewed with reverence as God-like figures (Fang 2020, 49-50). However, memes of Jiang are a counter-discourse from within the system that paints the leader as fodder for irreverent internet memes (Fang 2020, 44-45).

Science fiction is another arena that uses allegory as a tool of political expression. Liu Cixin is China's most prominent contemporary science fiction author whose books have reached global acclaim. Li Guangyi argues that Liu's science fiction is successful for its creation of a "third-world" that is intertwined with China's historical and material heritage, an intimate combination of allegorical imagination and reality (Li and Isaacson 2019). Liu draws upon a shared experience of hardship to express Chinese national sentiment while imagining the "third-world" as engaging in a never-ending struggle in pursuit of freedom (Li and Isaacson 2019, 8). Li recognizes that the resistance of the "third-world" sometimes ends in failure, which furthers the tone of despair permeating Liu's literary expression (Li and Isaacson, 8). In effect, Liu's use of science fiction allows him to portray an imaginary world that more closely approaches the true image of reality.

The downside of this method is that it requires the artists to have a firm grasp on the cultural and societal contexts within China and demands an understanding audience to carry out the intended political critiques. However, using metaphors is also a powerful tool for conveying a subtle political message while appearing loyal to the authorities.

Method 3: Cosmopolitanism

Since the 1990s, the emergence of Cynical Pop and Political Pop movements in China has come to represent contemporary Chinese art in the Western art market and has reached much success. Preece recognizes that Western curators and collectors are the gatekeepers of the lucrative international art market, and therefore favors the narrative of the liberation of artists breaking free from the oppressive state (Preece 2014). Preece argues that market demands incentivize Chinese avant-garde artists to cater to Western ideologies of freedom, democracy, and capitalism; increasingly, Chinese artists are pigeonholed into this singular narrative dominated by Western values (Preece 2014, 35). As a result, the threat of these avant-garde artists to the Chinese government is dissolved by their market value, and the government even uses these artworks as a demonstration of soft power, to flex its appeal to overseas visitors and appear less conservative (Preece 2014, 36).

Aihwa Ong identifies that artwork most provocative to state censorship in China simultaneously appeals to the art boom of avant-garde art, and that "state repression seems to intensify the global commercial interest in forbidden Chinese art" (Ong 2012, 474). Ong builds on the book *Empire* by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri who invoke Immanuel Kant's notion of cosmopolitanism, that global capitalism prompts cultural institutions to desire liberation of national identities and yearn for cosmopolitan freedom (Ong 2012, 474-475). To achieve such cosmopolitanism, there has been an influx of Chinese artists setting up studios abroad and attracting western galleries and publicity. Therefore, while an international audience widens the scope of the artist and can invite outside critique of the Chinese government, Preece argues that avant-gardists' threat to the Chinese government is dissolved by the market value. Ong suggests in her research that the perceived threat is diminished by the cosmopolitanism of these artworks and artists.

Argument

Using Ai Weiwei as a case study, this work examines how the artist uses the three methods and evaluates their effectiveness. The effectiveness of the artists' political commentary is examined in two ways: social mobilization and government response. Both social mobilization and government response reflect the artists' penetration of the state propaganda; strong social mobilization shows that the artwork has given the public reasons to protest, and a strong government response demonstrates the state's heightened threat perception.

Sunflower Seeds (2010)

Ai's 2010 artwork "Sunflower Seeds" (*Image 1*) is an example of the artist using the metaphor and cosmopolitanism method in the globalist sphere. Exhibited at Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, the installation consists of a field of life-size porcelain seeds displayed as a continuous rectangular field, while the public was encouraged to interact with the seeds by walking on them (Tate 2010). The artwork uses the metaphor method to invoke several layers of messaging. On the surface, the imagery of small porcelain seeds making up an entire field evokes the relationship between the individual and the collective. With a Chinese historical context in mind, the seeds are also symbols of the Cultural Revolution, as it was common to characterize Mao as the sun and the people as faithful sunflowers turned towards him. Through this metaphor, the artist conveys the sense of hope and disappointment of the time (Weaver 2020). Additionally, the small individual seeds that build the vast field evokes an analogy between the self and the collective in Chinese society, articulating the tension of freedom and repression common to Ai's artwork. Without using direct dissent, Ai's artwork uses metaphors as an alternative pathway to display his attitude towards the reality of the time. The artwork also uses the cosmopolitanism method in its appeal to the western market. Such a large-scale, experimental installation is awe-inspiring and

innovative in its artistic form that follows the practices of contemporary western art and is particularly attractive to the art market. In its Sotheby's auction, the artwork was sold for £3.50 per sunflower seed.

While western art critics quickly connected the artwork with its Chinese cultural context, most were impressed by the universality of its messaging. Art critic John Jervis suggests that Ai's artwork is not prescriptive to one context, and instead hints at universal questions of obligations, values, strengths, rights, and materialism in society (Jervis 2019). Such interpretation points to the shortcoming of the cosmopolitan method, that its political messaging is easily diluted into a universal context devoid of the highly dynamic Chinese cultural background. The methods metaphor and cosmopolitanism used in this artwork foil the artist from censorship. For example, the Chinese website ARTSPY reported on the exhibition without mentioning its underlying political messaging and focused instead on the artistic techniques behind the project and its purported market value. As a result, in evaluating its effectiveness, this artwork neither drove social mobilization nor faced significant backlash, due to the subtlety of its messaging that weakened its political critique.

Remembering (2009)

In his career, Ai experimented with different methods and spheres of exposure. In his 2009 installation "Remembering" (*Image 2*), Ai uses the method of direct critique to engage in political commentary. The Remembering project was conducted in a loyalist sphere because Ai gathered a group of 100 Chinese netizens to set up a "citizens investigation team" into the Sichuan earthquake, who followed him to the crisis area and conducted interviews with the victims' families (Ai 2018). Although the exhibit took place internationally, the project originated within China and was a direct confrontation with the Chinese authorities.

Ai is direct in his dissent against the Chinese

government's practices, and his response to the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake is representative of the artist's use of performance and visual art to express critique. In 2009, Ai made the project "Remembering," an installation of 9,000 backpacks to spell out the words "她在这个世界上开心地生活过七年" (For Seven Years She Lived Happily on this Earth), accompanied by his documentary "So Sorry" that accounts his personal investigation into the earthquake (Haus der Kunst 2009). Ai also documented the victims of the catastrophe, including the names of 5,000 schoolchildren, on his blog (Haus der Kunst 2009). This series was exhibited at Haus der Kunst, in Munich, Germany, where Ai took refuge after he was assaulted by police officers in China, an incident which Ai documented on camera (Haus der Kunst 2009). Ai's artistic philosophy is deeply rooted in Maoist and Marxist traditions shaped by his experience growing up during the cultural revolution. Ai uses the idea of "批评、自我批评" (criticism and self-criticism), a term advocated by the Communist Party during the revolutionary period to encourage open discussions of differences amongst members (Sorace 2014, 399). In practice, the party authorities seldom practice criticism and self-criticism but use it as a tactic of repression against dissenters. Ai explicitly calls out this hypocrisy by exercising the idea to its fullest extent, as demonstrated by his personal investigation into the Sichuan earthquake to reflect the government's lack of transparency and responsibility.

With "Remembering," Ai uses the method of direct critique. As the government had strictly censored investigation into the earthquake, these citizen investigators even risked being arrested along with Ai (Ai 2018). During the project, Ai's blog was blocked by Chinese censors, he received official inquiries to review his finances, cameras were installed outside of his house, and the police visited his mother to ask about his activities (Ai 2018). The government's response demonstrates the severity of Ai's threat. Further, Ai was also successful at changing the government's own narrative, as the state later released an official

list of victims from the Sichuan earthquake, reflecting the effectiveness of Ai's activism. In 2011, he was detained by the government for tax evasion and the artist was under house arrest for 81 days (Grammaticas 2011). Ai claims that his arrest was politically motivated for his criticism of authoritarianism and censorship (Ai 2018). The government's harsh response against Ai demonstrates his ability to disrupt the state propaganda apparatus, affirming the effectiveness of Ai's activism. However, this equally demonstrates the limitations of the direct critique method that makes artists vulnerable to censorship and repression.

Comparatively, direct critique stands out as the most effective method. "Remembering" successfully exposes the government's propaganda, offers an alternative narrative, and drives social mobilization. However, the artist faced severe repression. In "Sunflower Seeds," the metaphor method diluted the political message of the artwork, and the cosmopolitan method directed the commentary away from the Chinese government. Meanwhile, such expressions protect the artist from repression. Therefore, in evaluating the effectiveness of each method to engage in political commentary, direct critique appears to be most successful.

Discussion

The case study of Ai Weiwei evaluates the opportunities and limitations of each method and demonstrates the versatility of the artist in utilizing these methods throughout his career. The case study also shows that the effectiveness of the critique extends beyond the method employed and should also consider the sphere of exposure that the artwork engages with. I identified two spheres of exposure: the globalists and the loyalists. Artists within the globalist sphere identify as international figures, and the loyalist sphere works within the Chinese system. The two spheres offer different platforms and political realities for the artist to practice political commentary. The effectiveness of the artists' political

commentary is examined in two parts: social mobilization and government response. Both social mobilization and government response reflect the artists' penetration of the state propaganda; strong social mobilization shows that the artwork has given the public reasons to protest, and a strong government response demonstrates the state's heightened threat perception.

Artists using the globalist sphere dilute their Chinese national identities and instead consider themselves international figures. Many of these artists left China as émigré artists and have reached international acclaim. In 1979, a group of rebellious artists and poets known as the Stars Group exhibited their work outside of the China Art Gallery after they were denied exhibition space (Weaver 2020). Frustrated by the political realities that limited their creativity, many of the Stars artists began fleeing China in the 1980s (Weaver 2020). Ma Desheng, a founding member of the Stars, fled for Switzerland and later settled in Paris (ArtAsiaPacific, n.d.) Ma is known for his visual and sculptural manipulations of stones, which he associates with the Taoist philosophy of harmony (ArtAsiaPacific, n.d.) He often portrays a series of stones stacked atop each other, showing that each stone is individual, but together form a relationship of interdependency and understanding. Ma does not shy away from his artwork's implications of Chinese politics. He said in an interview, "The Communist Party claims its own freedom, but doesn't give freedom to others" (AC Films 2018). Ma's commentary suggests that the authoritarian regime dictates the stones to exist only in a stack without freedom as individuals. However, Ma followed up the interview by broadening his commentary to a global space, positioning himself as an international artist and not a Chinese political critic. Ma said, "Politics should not be limited to the relationships between people, and between countries. Like this, we will never transcend anything. We should go towards a bigger space—the earth, the universe—in order to look for real freedom. Then, it will be beautiful" (AC Films 2018). Ma invokes

the border crossing, the international value of his artistic presence, and the distance away from China allows him more freedom to make social and political commentary.

Ma is a cosmopolitan artist because he is no longer a Chinese national, he exhibits exclusively outside of mainland China, and his interviews position him as an international presence. While Ma's success in calligraphy, sculpture, and other pictorial practices has influenced other modern artists, his presence as an activist has not directly invoked social mobilization. Ma admits that he is not interested in being an "inconvenience" to China or the Communist Party and prefers to pursue his practices by simply creating and being happy (ArtAsiaPacific, n.d.). The Chinese government has not directly exercised repression against Ma or responded to his work since he left China, and he has a small presence on the Chinese internet. On Baidu Baike, a Chinese encyclopedic page, Ma is described as an émigré artist skilled in calligraphy and sculpture with no mention of the Stars group or his activism (BaiduBaike, n.d.). Ma's lack of presence in the Chinese media shows that the government can easily dismiss him as a non-threat. Under such evaluation, Ma's political commentary is ineffective in penetrating the state's propaganda because he fails to mobilize the public or present himself as a significant threat to the government.

Artists in the loyalist sphere either exhibit within China, or they are in a direct confrontation with the Chinese government. A monumental example is the China/ Avant-Garde exhibit in February 1989 in the National Art Gallery. From an artistic perspective, the exhibit hoped to demonstrate the emergence of a new generation of artists since the Cultural Revolution. The political intention of the exhibit was demonstrated by its logo of "No U-Turn" an endorsement of Deng Xiaoping's opening and reform policies, and modern art was China's first step in opening up to the world (ArtAsiaPacific, n.d.). Due to their cultural and political weight, the

artworks went through a tedious vetting process conducted by the Ministry of Culture, and any artwork explicitly displaying dissent would be forbidden (ArtAsiaPacific, n.d.). As a result, artists could only use metaphors to convey political messaging. For example, the artwork “Dialogue” by exhibition and performance artist Xiao Lu supposedly demonstrated the miscommunication between men and women but could also be read as accusing the government’s failure to listen to the people’s calls for democratic reform (Colville 2021). During the exhibit, Xiao Lu shot her own artwork with a military pistol (Colville 2021). Wang Guang Yi exhibited his artwork “Mao AO,” a portrait of Mao Zedong superimposed in a grid by the artist, and viewers could have interpreted this seemingly innocuous portrait as restricting Mao within the grids and eliminating his larger-than-life status (Colville 2021).

This exhibit fit the criteria of the loyalist approach as the artworks were exhibited in China after screening by the state authorities while also conveying subtle political messages. To evaluate its effectiveness, this exhibit was successful in driving mass mobilization, as most historians associate this exhibit with inspiring subsequent pro-democracy protests from young people across the country. Some art historians called Xiao Lu’s gunshots “the opening shots of Tiananmen” in hindsight, alluding to the mass student protest at Tiananmen Square in June of that year (Colville 2021). The government responded with caution as the exhibit was heavily guarded and shut down twice during its two-week showing (ArtAsiaPacific, n.d.). More significantly, the protests that followed eventually led to the bloody crackdown on pro-democracy protests at Tiananmen, and this use of violence shows the high level of threat perceived by the government (ArtAsiaPacific, n.d.).

Throughout his career, Ai has engaged with both the globalist and the loyalist spheres. Like other émigré artists, Ai reached global acclaim by exhibiting at international shows and

found increased freedom outside of China, however, unlike émigré artists, Ai does not distance himself from China and his loyalties remained because he centers his work on Chinese commentary and collaborates with the government on state-sponsored projects. For the 2008 Olympics, Ai collaborated in the design of the Bird’s Nest stadium, signaling of his allegiance with the state (Ong 2012). Ai believed his design represented emptiness and the absence of traditional notions, whereas the state saw it as a container of Chinese culture, so Ai refused to attend the Olympics due to this misappropriation (Ong 2012). Ai’s participation in government projects and his commitment to Chinese philosophy make him a direct confrontation of the state and impossible to dismiss. As a result, Ai faces harsh government response.

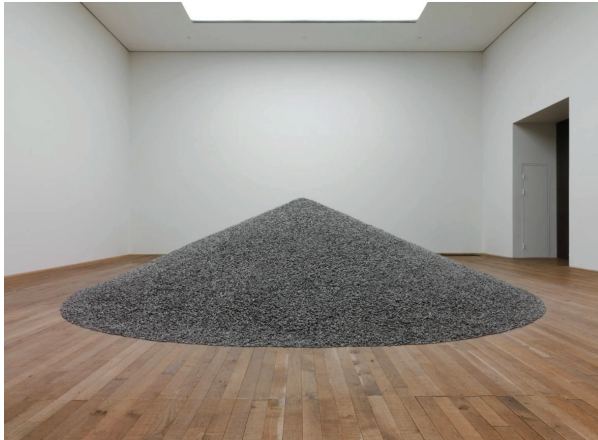
Conclusion

This research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of Chinese artists when engaging in political commentary. The literature synthesized three methods: direct critique, metaphors, and cosmopolitanism. Using Ai Weiwei as a case study, direct critique is the most effective method of political commentary, as it inspired public mobilization, received a heightened threat response from the government, and even altered the state narrative.

Ai uses the three methods in two spheres to approach his activism: the loyalist and the globalist sphere. Artists are adaptive in using the two approaches and they are selective in using the three methods. Artists’ political commentary is most effective in the loyalist sphere. This research offers insight into the methods and approaches used by Chinese artists and found that artists make strategic choices in their political commentary depending on prior experience, historical context, and artistic subject. At a time when artistic freedom seems dire and limited, this work offers a more complex and dynamic outlook on the political commentary of Chinese artists.

Images

Image 1 (Tate Modern)



Ai Weiwei, Sunflower Seeds, 2008, porcelain (Tate Modern, London)

Image 2 (Khan Academy)



Ai Weiwei, Remembering, 2009, backpacks on the facade of the Haus der Kunst (Munich)

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Grace Carroll '22

Putin, Populism, and Foreign Manipulation: The “New Normal” of Russian Influence in Cyberspace

Abstract

In a world increasingly reliant on technology, cybersecurity engineers can scarcely keep up with the demand of emerging threats. Democracies such as the United States have learned year after year that malicious foreign governments can and will expose the flaws in the systems that allow democracy to flourish, and yet, solutions are few and far between. Autocracies like Russia use tools of virtual reality to exploit civil liberties, such as free and fair elections and the right to free speech. Russia has long been a threat to democracy, but this paper aims to explain how Russia's history of democratic backsliding created an environment conducive to President Putin's consolidation of power and subsequent manipulation of foreign countries through cyberwarfare.

After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia experienced brief democratization followed by the lengthy autocratic regime of President Vladimir Putin. Under his leadership, Russia has endured a backsliding of liberal values, including freedom of speech and the press and the eradication of free and fair elections. Putin based his campaign on the restoration of former national pride, and also manipulated the public's discontent with a fickle economy and changing social sphere. His populist ideology and platform helped him to emerge as the only viable candidate in the 2000 presidential election, and he subsequently won in a landslide.

Since assuming power, Putin has enacted a series of laws and fostered a culture conducive to democratic backsliding in Russia and abroad, including the Foreign Agents Law, the abolition of term limits, and the targeting of political enemies through ostensibly

legitimate means. Through the omnipresent surveillance techniques employed by the Russian government and the FSB (formerly known as the KGB), Russians endure highly restricted civil liberties with virtually no hope of an elected opposition. However, in recent years the threat of democratic backsliding has not only plagued Russia, but also international counterparts including, but not limited to Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Germany. Each of those countries represents a facet of Russian interference in a unique way: Ukraine as an example of tangible consequences on critical infrastructure, the UK and US as cases of electoral interference through disinformation campaigns, and Germany as a model of prevention through deterrence and national and cultural values. Through election manipulation, cyberattacks, and the widespread dissemination of disinformation via social media, Russia has become a powerhouse of interference in the affairs of foreign democratic countries. This

paper will attempt to utilize these case studies to answer the question: How has Russia evolved into an autocratic state, and why does Putin continue to target foreign democracies?

Putin in Power

“A decade ago the United States worried about the re-emergence of a Russian empire. Today, however, the probability of a resurgence of a new Russian empire is low... This threat only becomes real if a dictator returns to the Kremlin.” - Michael McFaul, 2004

Very few civilizations have experienced such a rapid onset of democratization and even more sudden authorization than Russia in the past twenty years. The country’s mercurial regime changes have made it the focus of many scholarly works, including some perennial debates. Some experts argue that because Russia never experienced an era of liberal democracy on par with that of the United States or Western Europe, it does not qualify as a case of democratic backsliding. I argue that the process is too complex for the gatekeeping perpetrated by metrics and indices; disqualifying Russia as a stagnating autocracy erases the nuanced history and multifaceted nature of the Russian identity.

To be clear, by many standards Russia is not, and has never been, a democracy. Even with the efforts for *glasnost*, or openness, at the close of the 20th century, Russia never achieved a level of liberal democracy that met the standards of the V-Dem Index, a data-driven approach to conceptualizing and measuring democracy. Rather, the historical events leading up to the turn of the century entailed a relaxation of tyrannical policies, followed by a stark decline in those civil liberties. These developments are reflected in Haggard and Kaufman’s graphs (*Figures 1 and 2*). In Figure 1, the Liberal Democracy Score does not approach the threshold which deems Russia a liberal democracy. However, the

Electoral Democracy Score (*Figure 2*) depicts Russia as breaching the electoral democracy threshold in the mid- to late-1990s, according to some sources, indicating that while Russia presented some aspects of electoral democracy such as free and fair elections, the civil liberties and freedoms associated with liberal democracy are not wholly represented during the time period. Regardless of whether Russia meets the thresholds of electoral and liberal democracy, it is evident from both indices that Russian democracy took a swift downturn in the year 2000. This is likely due to the rise of Vladimir Putin in the same year.

Before delving into President Putin’s tenuous and checkered election and subsequent administration, one must examine the context that not only allowed, but encouraged an autocrat to assume control of the state. *Figure 3* puts the rise and fall of electoral and liberal democracy indices in historical context. Readers will note the sharp increase in freedoms in 1991, the year of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, followed by a modest but steady decrease until the year 2000, in which Putin was inaugurated president. The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 was a catalyst for civil unrest, as the former Soviet states tried to rebuild an ineffective and failing government system. What ensued thereafter was what some scholars referred to as “brief experiments with pluralism which were never institutionalized and fizzled out within a decade” (Oliker 2017, 16). For Russia and its counterparts, this entailed some contentious elections and efforts for transparency as President Mikhail Gorbachev “began to reveal the crimes of the Bolshevik era... and soon *demokratizatsiya* (democratization), if not democracy itself, was on the agenda” (Sakwa 2011, 517). In addition to the openness of *glasnost*, Gorbachev also championed *perestroika*, the reform of Communism which simultaneously made affiliation with Russia more attractive to the Western world while also infuriating Russian nationalists who viewed the reform as deeply

offensive. Gorbachev's policies led to increased polarization among the Russian people, dividing the working class and Communists from the elite and the ultra-nationalist political right. Political polarization compounded by evolving social movements and a weakened economy created a perfect storm in which Vladimir Putin could effectively assume power.

The Rise of Putin

The now-famously narcissistic and self-aggrandizing autocrat maintained a much more modest appearance during his initial campaign. Putin's disposition as a dynamic and charismatic leader in addition to his ability to "present himself as a bridging figure set apart from parochial views" made him an ostensibly perfect candidate for the 2000 presidential election (Oliker 2017, 9-10). While Putin's personality was indispensable, his bid for power "coincided with the start of a decade of growth" (Oliker 2017, 9). The economic prosperity that saturated Russia during Putin's early years reinforced the idea that he was exactly what the country needed. In fact, when Putin ran for re-election in 2008, his win reflected "the preferences of the majority of voters", albeit "neither free nor fair" (Sakwa 2011, 522). Putin was also beloved for his nationalist ideologies, two of which were "presented from the outset: a stated desire to rebuild a strong Russian state and narratives of national humiliation and a desire to return to the world stage" (Haggard and Kaufman 2021, 160). Putin based his campaign on the restoration of former national pride, and also manipulated the public's discontent with a fickle economy and changing social sphere. His appeals to the Russian people as a champion of national identity and of traditional values have earned him the title of populist by some, although the term itself is debated. His platform of "nationalism with elements of xenophobia" bears a resemblance to textbook populism, yet Oliker differentiates the two, arguing that "Putin by no means came to power on a populist platform – he came to power in large part because he was

anointed by his predecessor and there was no viable alternative" (Oliker 2017, 16). In short, Putin's ascent to the presidency may have been based on traditionally populist rhetoric, but he also represented the strongest and most cohesive candidate of the 2000 election. Putin also held the advantage of acting as a prominent figurehead as prime minister under Boris Yeltsin during the apartment bombings of 1999 (see *Figure 4*). The terrorist attacks, which were blamed on the Chechen ethnic minority, killed 307 people in their homes and surrounding communities. Russians were outraged at the attacks and the tense political environment "provided a pretext for the second Chechen war" while Putin's adamant and sturdy response "catapulted [him] into the presidency" (Satter 2016).

The atrocities that occurred in Moscow, Buynaksk, and Volgodonsk were horrible, but even more horrible are the allegations that Putin and the Federal Security Service (FSB) had staged the attacks themselves in order to unite Russians against a common enemy, with President Putin leading the crusade. If the attacks really had been an inside job (which, according to many sources, including Satter, they almost certainly were), they were effective; Putin became the face of resilience, and the tragedy had a rally-around-the-flag effect. By presenting himself as the poster child of anti-terrorism, Putin was subsequently "elected president easily" (Satter 2016). Deceptive attacks orchestrated to sway public opinion are awful, but unfortunately nothing new for autocracies, as they are a way to rig elections without even touching the ballots. The apartment bombings represented one of the first instances of democratic backsliding under Putin's regime.

Concentrating Power

Since assuming power, Putin has made tremendous efforts to create a surveillance state and consolidate power by deplatforming the Duma (Russian parliament) and weaponizing the FSB. At the beginning of his third term in 2012, Putin championed the

Foreign Agents Law, which “required NGOs to turn down funding from abroad... and [therefore] weakened a core component of civil society” (Oliker 2017, 10). The Foreign Agents Law was intended to quash the protests that preceded his legally-dubious third term by eliminating financial support and resources utilized by his opponents. Putin also reinstated targeted prosecutions, which effectively silenced dissidents and potential threats to his power. The Kremlin was also particularly malicious towards journalists, with several prominent reporters mysteriously murdered or missing since Putin’s third term, and the “Committee to Protect Journalists had identified Russia as one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists” (Haggard and Kaufman 2021, 173). With rapidly dwindling freedom of speech, targeted attacks, and an inability to receive foreign support, enemies of Putin both domestic and abroad were incapable of coalescing an opposition movement.

When Putin first took office, the law in Russia dictated a two-term maximum for presidents. This standard is typical of democracies as it encourages the peaceful transition of power and weakens the presidential chokehold of any singular individual. However, Putin found a way to circumvent this rule through a move known as “castling.” In chess, castling is a term for the staging of one’s pieces so that the player may make two moves in one turn as one piece “jumps” over the other. In politics, this is applied through the use of a puppet leader, so that members of a party with the same political agenda may occupy multiple high-ranking offices. Russia held “an informal contest” to elect Dmitry Medvedev as president, with Putin ostensibly stepping aside with his role of prime minister while still pulling the strings from a separate, yet still powerful role (Kiyon 2020). Thus, Putin “has served as the de facto head of state since 2000” (Kiyon 2020). This strategy is representative of Putin’s abilities as a Russian ruler in general. In a recent lecture, expert Timothy Frye labeled Putin’s regime a “personalist autocracy”, or an autocracy based around one easily identifiable

individual. While Putin maintains significant power in this way, he is “not omnipotent... and faces many tradeoffs and challenges” (Frye 2021). While he was able to maintain power for over two decades, he still could not do so in an obviously illegitimate way. Similarly, he “must strike a delicate balance” of whether to “manipulate, lie, or cheat too much or not enough” (Frye 2021). If the Russian administration acted with abandon, international actors and potential opponents would have ample grounds to intervene. However, if the administration was overly transparent and maintained honest electoral security, they would run the risk of losing said election. Therefore, while Putin has the reputation of an all-powerful dictator, he must constantly defend his position in order to maintain it.

The autocrat is now famous worldwide for his often-outrageous publicity stunts which focus on hyper-masculinity and play at the idea of sex appeal in the media. Many infamous photos depict him interacting with wild animals or doing rugged outdoor activities, often shirtless (see *Figure 5*) (Rollins 2015). Part of Putin’s personalist autocracy, borrowing from Frye, involves the image and constant branding of the autocrat in order to reaffirm his qualifications in the public eye.

Autocrats often manipulate their image in order to control the narrative within which they are portrayed and discussed in the media. While some of this is done explicitly for vanity and ego, some political actors maintain their public persona strategically. In the below quote, Professor Greg Simons of Uppsala University in Sweden describes how and why Putin’s character and reputation are so vital to his control of power:

“In this particular political environment – Russian president and foreign publics – there is the element of the Russian nation as the workforce (its people, policies and lifestyle/ functioning – the politico-social “construction blocks” of the society) that act in the capacity as active shapers of the image and brand of

the country and its leadership. The Russian leader determines the nature and quality of the internal and external relationships through their words and actions (real and perceived).” (Simons 2019, 311)

The power of media and political governance have a symbiotic relationship in which both benefit through the shaping of the “brand” of the country and its political rulers. The idea of a personalist autocracy demands the idiosyncratic characteristics of a strong and capable leader, and Putin is more than happy to play the part. Studying how Putin is portrayed in the media also demonstrates how delicate the autocrat’s status truly is. If public image is as vital to Putin’s regime as his administration clearly believes, then there is some legitimacy to his decades in office. If the autocrat were rigging national elections, it would not matter whether the public adored him or not, as the outcome would remain the same regardless. Putin’s desperation for national admiration and approval is indicative of a regime that must maintain a tenuous balance between electoral democracy and outright dictatorship in order to stay in power. The primary electoral interference, it would seem, is reserved for other countries.

Electoral Interference

Since the Mueller report found Russia guilty of interfering in the United States’ 2016 presidential election, Americans and international leaders alike have been forced to contend with the validity and security of democratically-held elections. Disinformation created and disseminated by Russia has widely been blamed on social media companies, inadequate legislation and regulation on part of the so-called “technocrats,” or social media users who are too uneducated or too biased to correctly identify information as false. In fact, the entity held least responsible for electoral interference is often Russian leadership, including President Putin. Despite the inescapable proof provided in the Mueller report, American Republicans continually “undermine investigations into Russian

election interference” and go to great lengths to maintain peaceful relations, rather than undertake a proportional retaliatory stance (Haggard and Kaufman 2021, 32). Without timely and punitive consequences for Russian interlopers, democracies can be certain that foreign influence will become a hegemonic force in national elections and cause a substantial threat to global security.

Russia’s history of electoral influence is extensive, to say the least (Tennis 2021) (Michel 2019). Due to the overwhelming abundance of knowledge and material surrounding Russia’s interference in US elections, this case study will chronologically focus on the instances of Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Russia’s cyber attacks against these nations are “brazen, malicious, and grand-scale,” and stray far from the stealth authoritarian tactics now typical of modern autocracies (Polyakova 2018). The departure from more traditional and subtler offensive tactics means that there is very little precedence for actions, and many national leaders fear retribution or retaliation because they either are hesitant to fan the flames of international tension, or they realize that Russia’s prowess in cyberspace makes them a formidable enemy, and do not wish to enter a war they cannot win. With Russia as a leading actor, this case study shall demonstrate how the nexus of cyber warfare and traditional politics can prove fatal for democracies.

Ukraine

Russia’s history of experimental tampering with Ukraine has led scholars to label it a “bellwether” or a “test-lab” – a harbinger of the tricks Russia has up its sleeve for major Western rivals (Polyakova 2019). In 2014, Russia began launching cyberattacks against Ukraine in an effort to sway an electoral outcome, using tactics such as “information warfare, cyberattacks, the use of energy supplies for political ends, and the export of corruption” (Polyakova). More specifically, Russia manipulated a poorly-guarded cyberspace in order to alter the voting results.

Given its international status as a cyber-warfare juggernaut, it is truly remarkable that Russia's attempt was "narrowly defeated" by Ukrainian cyber experts just minutes before the fraudulent results were to be announced live (Clayton 2014). Russia's failure, however, did not deter the country from continuing malware attacks. The very next year, Ukraine's power grid was taken down in a "brilliant" and "sophisticated" attack that caused a blackout for almost a quarter-million civilians (Zetter 2016). Sandworm, a Russian cyber military unit within the GRU (Russia's chief intelligence office), was named responsible for destabilizing the power grid. The Sandworm Team demonstrated that cyberwarfare has the capacity not just to steal data or frustrate government network users – malware attacks can also cause tangible damage for thousands of civilians.

Ukraine, for its part, has attempted to establish anti-corruption institutions to ward off similar attacks; however, due to the nation's failure to "reform its judicial sector," these institutions are either "compromised or under constant political attack" (Polyakova 2019). Clearly, Russia has no qualms regarding interfering in the affairs of Ukraine, even using it as a guinea pig for its attacks against larger world superpowers. Echoes of the voter fraud debacle and power grid hack have both been discovered in the United States, the former in the 2016 presidential election and the latter in a similar attack targeting an American power grid. Neither of those incidents were catalysts for any sort of consequences for Russia, and Putin's hackers continue to use technological tactics of manipulation in order to stoke fear and uncertainty in its political enemies.

The United Kingdom and the United States

While eastern European blocs are often known for compromised electoral integrity, many Western countries wrongly consider themselves immune to tampering. The refusal to acknowledge vulnerability to attacks can be attributed to hubris, but equally culpable is the desire for deniability – politicians who

win elections either don't want to know if the election was rigged, or do know and attempt to hide proof. For instance, U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson "tried to block the publication" of an independent committee that provided a "damning" report asserting that Great Britain was the successful target of Russian bad actors (Ellehuus 2021). Former U.S. president Donald J. Trump upheld a similar stance, going to extreme measures to defend his victory in 2016, even going as far as to oust then-director of the FBI James Comey.

Through the use of personal data mining and social media bots and trolls, the Facebook feeds of prospective voters in both countries were algorithmically flooded with content and advertisements intended to shape users' perspectives in a now-familiar cyber-warfare tactic (Polyakova 2018). Hence the political outcomes of two of the most important democratic processes in 2016 – the U.K. and U.S. elections – were compromised in one fell swoop of Russian meddling. One important distinction is that the British voting process is "done entirely on paper," which many would previously argue made it impenetrable for cyberattacks. Rather than target the outcome directly, Russian bots launched an "influence campaign" on social media, flooding future voters with disinformation and misleading commentary (Sabbagh et al. 2020). The United Kingdom's susceptibility to Russian cyber interference proves a counterexample to the predominant theory that cyberspace exists in a vacuum – even when an election is entirely analog, the outcome can still be determined by digital overreach.

The attacks targeted at the United States and the United Kingdom also make the case for a reexamination of how society – especially first-world countries – views national security. The aforementioned misconception of impenetrable defense is now antiquated. In a world that is increasingly data-driven, traditional defensive strategies such as missiles, tanks, and naval bases are less important, and though physical security is still vital, cybersecurity is becoming more of a central

issue. The success of cyberattacks on the U.S. and U.K. demonstrate the need for heightened cybersecurity measures within these governments, including updated policy and regulations to keep up with the extraordinarily fast pace of the cyber sphere. In order to maintain the same robust defense that have characterized powerful Western nations for the past century, the importance of strengthening cyberdefense must be recognized.

Germany

The case of Germany represents an unlikely success story, and provides an example of how a country may succeed against malware without a superior cybersecurity system. In 2015, Russia launched a cyberattack with the aim of “collecting documents ahead of the federal elections” that prevented access to files and the exchange of emails for all members of the German Parliament (Tennis 2021). The Bundestag scandal, as it is now known, resulted in “16 gigabytes of sensitive information [being] stolen” (Schwartz 2017). The European Union, for its part, “imposed sanctions... on two Russian intelligence agents and a unit of the GRU over their involvement in the hack” (Morris 2021). However, these retaliatory measures did not deter Russia for long, as “Germany’s intelligence service warned in July that there had been ‘intensive attacks’ by the Ghostwriter [hacking] group since February, speculating that it could be preparing for ‘hack and leak’ operations” (Morris 2021). A hack and leak operation is when a hacking group steals data or other proprietary information from an organization with the intent of leaking it to the public, either in whole or with minor fraudulent adjustments that may further damage the reputation or optics of the organization. Russian cyber-attackers “favor hack-and-leak operations” because the tactic has a “greater impact on the outcome of elections, especially if deftly timed” (Tennis 2021). By sitting on the information until it becomes most useful, hackers can inflict the most damage by releasing the stolen data at an opportune time.

Many suspected that the sixteen gigabytes stolen during the 2015 Bundestag would resurface as a smear campaign in the most recent parliamentary elections of late September. However, the German election resulted in the Russian-backed Alternative for Germany (AfD) party losing, having “only received 10.3 percent of the vote” (Szabo 2021). So how did Germany manage to stop the spread of disinformation propaganda, where so many other countries had failed? Germans tend to “rely on mainstream television and other media for their political information,” explains Szabo. “The concept of free speech in Germany really refers to responsible free speech, and efforts to spread disinformation or to undermine democracy are not tolerated.” German national culture prioritizes dedication to the truth, and supplies no market for highly partisan or polarizing media like Fox News in the United States. Without a captive audience for conspiracies, hacking groups have no fertile ground for the spread of disinformation, and therefore cannot effectively influence elections to the same extent as they can in the United States or the United Kingdom. Germany has certainly not always had this perspective – after the horrors of the Holocaust and World War II, reconstructors of national identity committed to recognizing the innumerable harms of extremist rhetoric, and the German national consciousness has since been devoted to mainstream rhetoric, with no room for “fake news” (Scott 2018). Overarching characteristics and the predominating culture of German voters demands full attention to the truth. Therefore, social media trolls and bots that have large impacts in other countries are not as effective in Germany. The country can be used as a success story, demonstrating that a democracy need not have the most advanced cybersecurity or defensive tactics if its voters can protect themselves from erroneous and irrational information.

Ramifications

The lack of repercussions imposed against the Kremlin for foreign interference has

allowed Putin's Russia to act with impunity. The country maintains innocence in all cases of Western influence despite a plethora of evidence, saying "that it never interferes in foreign elections and will never do so" (Morris 2021). Without substantial bureaucratic reform, comprehensive and thorough legislation, and a dramatic shift in security policies, democracies should expect to see a rise in foreign electoral influence no matter how much or how little technology is involved in the voting process. And much like autocratic regimes learn from each other about how to suppress free speech and consolidate power, authoritarians take cues from one another on how to affect electoral outcomes, too.

For example, China is "a quick study" when it comes to disinformation campaigns, and the country has recently improved its "online influence campaigns" (Taylor 2021). While Chinese disinformation tactics used to be easily identifiable due to its characteristic "spammy behavior and rudimentary execution", the newer tactics are more "well resourced [and] carefully planned," undoubtedly copying Russia's more sophisticated techniques (Taylor 2021). Though China has yet to make a grand-scale assault on democracy like Russia, when it comes to election tampering, it's clear that "everyone is doing it, even if their effectiveness has yet to be conclusively demonstrated" (Taylor 2021). Before the digital era, autocratic regimes would hardly have dared to overstep in foreign affairs in such a blatant and intrusive fashion. Now, it seems to be an evolving trend that will only become more technologically advanced and sophisticated moving forward. This is exceptionally dangerous for countries like those in the West that are traditionally unflappable in the face of offensive measures. With an exposed chink in the armor such as that of the poor cyber defense mechanisms, first-world countries should be very afraid of how authoritarian regimes will exploit said weaknesses for their own personal gain. For example, *Figure 6* provides evidence that the United States and Western democracies

were the primary targets of the infamous SolarWinds hack of 2020, or perhaps were the least equipped to defend themselves against it. The SolarWinds hack was particularly nefarious because, unbeknownst to the company, its software updates sent out to users contained the malware; in other words, the call was coming from inside the house. The SolarWinds incident set a new precedent: companies themselves could neglectfully contribute to the security breach through international actors. Russia and the West have found themselves in a new age of the Cold War which uses data and information instead of nuclear particles, but this time, the autocrats have the upper hand.

Conclusion

While the scope of Russia's omnipotence in cyberwarfare may seem daunting, there are many reasons to keep hope alive. This paper already examined how Germany's culture of commitment to truth has kept the country safe from disinformation campaigns, but there are other ways to deter against foreign influence, too. Plenty of scholars have proposed potential solutions to the foreign influence epidemic. Some, such as Maggie Tennis of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), argue that "enlisting social media companies to weed out disinformation and trolls, and empowering institutions to train voters in media literacy and online security will help negate foreign influence." Others, like Stephen Haggard and Robert Kaufman, argue for "an all-hands-on-deck approach by governments [and] increased cooperation among democracies." In any case, repairing trust between social media companies, the government, and the people is no easy task, and without an effective and timely shift towards addressing cybersecurity policy, anti-state leaders and populists will have the road to power paved for them. While most democracies do not have the technological power to halt the invasion of cyberspace, they do have the ability to address polarization and government dysfunction and redefine how the power of free speech is often usurped

by malicious actors to undermine freedom and liberty. Western countries must view influence via cyberattack as the most pertinent threat to democracy, because as of now they are unprepared and unequipped to retaliate effectively against offensive actors. Technocrats and government leaders must cooperate, rather than point fingers at one another, in order to maintain the same level of defense that democracies have historically upheld in the face of potential autocratic intervention.

Figures

Figure 1 (Haggard and Kaufman)

Figure Russia.1 Liberal Democracy Scores in Russia, 1990–2019

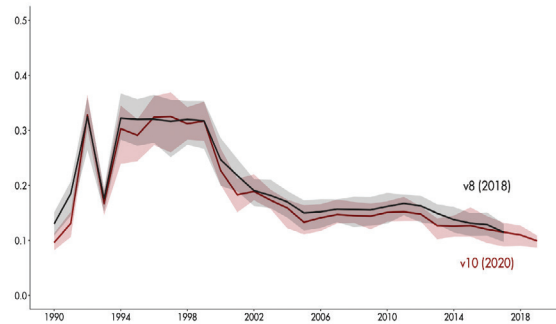


Figure 2 (Haggard and Kaufman)

Figure Russia.2 Electoral Democracy Scores in Russia, 1990–2019

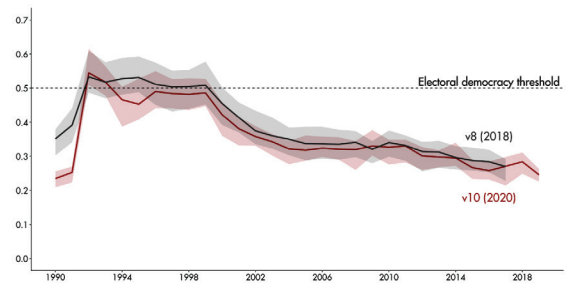


Figure 3 (V-Dem; markups are author's)

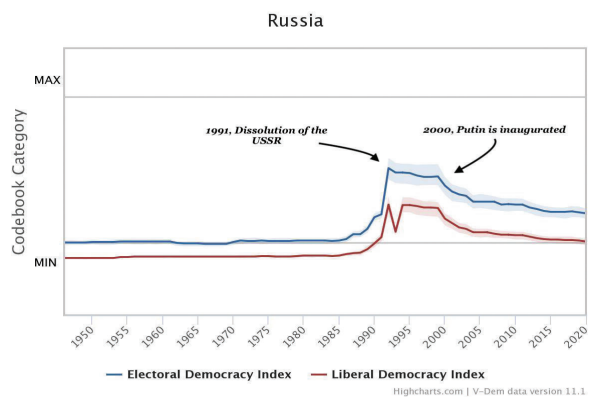


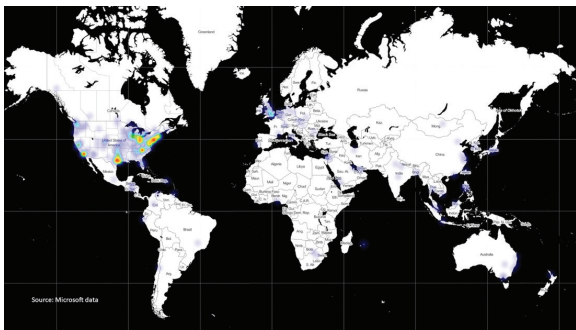
Figure 4 (Hudson Institute; depicts massive destruction caused by apartment bombings)



Figure 5 (Reuters; Putin's shirtless horse-back riding prowess is often documented in Russian media.)



Figure 6 (Microsoft Data; shows that the SolarWinds hack primarily targeted the United States and Western Europe)



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A Proposal for a Childhood Nutrition Education & Supplement Program in Southwestern China

Abstract

In the last two decades, China has made substantial efforts to combat childhood malnutrition, decreasing the childhood stunting rate by more than 50 percent. Despite the progress, data suggests that the urban-rural disparity remains an obstacle in delivering health equity, with obesity rates also on the rise. While the government and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have created several nutrition intervention programs in the past, none of them targeted preschool-aged children besides a few county-level experiments. Therefore, a new program should be created to provide nutrition support for children three to six years old. This program will request funding from the central government to recruit NGO workers to participate in nutrition education and direct nutrition intervention. The program will distribute nutrition supplements and educational materials through kindergarten programs and local clinic networks. In this way, the program will guide rural children to develop healthy eating habits that will benefit them for life.

Malnutrition, which encompasses undernutrition (e.g. stunting, underweight), overweight, obesity, and other forms of improper nutrition by the World Health Organization (WHO), has been identified as a “global burden” on the development of individuals, families, communities, and countries (World Health Organization 2020). In particular, malnutrition that occurred during childhood years can significantly delay children’s development and lead to long-term health and social consequences such as poor cognition, low wages, and decreased productivity (Stone 2012, 402). To combat global malnutrition, the WHO included several related goals in its 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs aim to achieve a 40 percent reduction in stunting rate (proportion of children

suffering from chronic undernutrition) for children under five years old and reduce childhood wasting to less than 5 percent while simultaneously seeing no increase in the childhood overweight rate (Huang et al., 2020, 2).

In the decades before the SDGs, China had made significant progress in reducing the prevalence of childhood malnutrition as the country developed economically. From 1990 to 2016, for children under five years old, the prevalence of stunting, wasting, and underweight were reduced by 58.7 percent, 53.4 percent, and 69.2 percent, respectively (Yang et al. 2020, 1). One cause of these reductions was economic development. Statistical analysis shows that higher GDP per capita can reduce the absolute undernutrition

rates and partially alleviate the nutritional inequity between urban and rural areas (Wu & Qi 2016, 582). Families with higher incomes can afford more diversified diets and better fulfill the nutritional needs of their children. In addition, the Chinese government also set up several nutrition intervention programs prior to the SDGs, though the specific effects of these programs should be subjected to further evaluations.

Despite the progress, large numbers of children are still living in suboptimal conditions and face severe undernutrition. Analysis of the UNICEF 2016 data shows that about 8.4 percent and 12 percent of the children from eleven economically disadvantaged provinces suffered from stunting and all kinds of undernutrition (Zhang et al., 2018). It is also evident that both the economic developments and government programs created before the 2010s failed to decrease the percentage of children that are severely malnourished (Huang et al., 2020, 5-6). As a result, most of China, except the eastern provinces, will not be able to reach the Chinese national nutrition plan's goal of reducing the stunting rate to below 7 percent by 2030 if the current policies continue (Yang et al., 2020, 6). More alarmingly, the rate of overweight and obese children is also on the rise in China. From 1990 to 2016, the overweight rate for children one to four years old increased by 88.9 percent, and their obesity rate doubled (Yang et al., 2020, 3). Continuation of this trend will prevent China from achieving the SDGs. Therefore, given the dual challenges of undernourishment alleviation and decreasing the overweight rate, new nutrition intervention programs are in urgent need in China.

Geographical Disparity

Malnutrition disproportionately threatens children from the less-developed western provinces in China. For instance, stunting,

wasting, and underweight rates were 1.47, 1.50, and 1.96 times higher in western China than in eastern China (Yang et al., 2020, 3). Rural-urban nutrition disparity also exists within these provinces. According to the government of Yunnan, a southwestern province, rural children in Yunnan are three to four times more likely to be underweight than their urban counterparts (People's Government of Yunnan Province 2016). Rural residents typically have lower incomes and lower levels of education than urban residents. Consequently, the household monthly expenditure on children's food falls behind, leading to limited dietary diversity, usually lacking protein and healthy fatty acids (Jiang et al., 2018, 6). Conversely, the more well-educated and affluent families, while capable of feeding their children with sufficient meat, dairy, and nuts, fail to incorporate enough vegetables in their diets (Jiang et al., 2018, 6). This also partially explains the growing overweight child rate in China's rural areas as simple economic improvements do not teach parents how to structure a balanced diet. Parents shift from one extreme to the other as their incomes increase and more nutrition education is necessary for children and families living in rural western China.

Current National Policies & Evaluations

During the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) era that lasted from 2000 to the early 2010s, the Chinese government has created eight major nutrition intervention programs, as shown in *Figure 1*. The target audience, implementations, and effectiveness of these programs were all debated among the officials and scholars.

Target Audience

Examining the audience of these nutrition intervention programs shows that most of these programs target childbearing-age women, infants, or compulsory education

students. There thus is an age gap in the coverage of these programs: children three to six years old were excluded from almost all of the current programs. However, research shows that this period is indeed essential for children to develop healthy eating habits (Jiang et al., 2018, 1). Preschool education is not compulsory in China and is not widely available in many regions, which can discourage the government from initiating a nationwide preschool intervention program (Huang et al., 2020, 10).

Program Implementation

Interviews of program participants reveal mixed attitudes toward their implementations. Many of these programs were organized by international NGOs such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP), and the International Life Science Institute (ILSI). Participants praise their professional experience and innovative solutions (Huang et al. 2020, 8). In contrast, purely government-run programs oftentimes lack knowledgeable professionals (Huang et al., 2020, 9). Many officials involved in the intervention programs also have expressed their concerns about insufficient funding as the financial burden falls onto the local authorities (Huang et al., 2020, 9).

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of these programs is difficult to measure for several reasons. First, the majority of these programs were created toward the end of the MDGs era and only limited data is available for analysis (Huang et al., 2020, 7-8). Second, these nationwide programs do not have enough monitoring personnel to report individual or regional health development trends (Huang et al., 2020, 9). Also, none but the Happy Ten Minutes program focuses on childhood overweight and obesity rates, indicating the existing program's inability to achieve the SDGs (Huang et al., 2020, 10).

Besides the MDGs programs, the Chinese government also initiated the groundbreaking nationwide School Feeding Program (SFP) in 2012. However, studies show that this program did not achieve its desired goals after three years: body mass index and rate of anemia (another index of undernutrition) remain at the same levels, likely because the foods provided by the SFP regularly failed to meet the micronutrient requirements (Wang et al., 2020, 7). Hence, simply providing food to the undernourished population is not enough; nutrition planning and monitoring are needed.

Preschool Nutrition Intervention Case Studies: Xundian and Hebei

While there is no large-scale nutrition/development intervention program in place for preschool children, several experimental programs do exist in selected regions. The China Development Research Foundation launched an early childhood development pilot program in Xundian County, Yunnan in 2010, covering children zero to six years old. The program provided nutrition packages for infants six to twenty-four months old and established village kindergartens in impoverished areas (China Development Research Foundation 2012, 11-12). Participating in this program led to reductions of underweight, stunting, and anemia among infants and a 36 percent average increase in cognitive performance among preschool children (China Development Research Foundation 2012). Another program targeting food knowledge through a game was launched in Hebei Province. Children in this program learn about balanced diet plates and are encouraged to consume more fruits and vegetables (Cheng et al., 2020, 75). Organizers of this program have found it helpful for preschoolers to form their recognition of various foods, a key step toward healthy dietary habits (Cheng et al., 2020, 75).

Policy Recommendation

Evaluations of the existing programs indicated the presence of a policy gap. Preschool,

three to six years old children living in rural areas are still among the most vulnerable groups to malnutrition, yet they are currently not covered by any nutrition intervention programs except the experiments mentioned above. Learning from the experience of previous nationwide programs and regional experiments, it would be most reasonable to start a pilot program in Yunnan, a province with high need and willingness to intervene in childhood nutrition. Located in southwestern China, Yunnan is plagued by rural-urban nutrition disparities and high rates of absolute malnutrition (China Development Research Foundation 2012, 5). The province has also hosted several similar nutrition intervention programs before, including the Xundian experiment, and the local families are potentially more enthusiastic toward innovations in nutrition intervention. While Yunnan was chosen as the starting location, this program should be expected to expand to other neighboring western provinces, such as Guizhou and Guangxi, after successful trial runs.

Figure 2 identifies several key aspects of the proposed intervention program. The program will consist of two major elements: nutrition supplements and nutrition education. A new NGO will create nutrition supplement packages consisting of dairy products and vitamins along with interactive education booklets teaching parents and children how to structure a balanced diet. These items will be distributed via the village kindergarten networks and the local clinic networks. Considering the low enrollment of kindergarten in rural China (74 percent in Xundian), the latter method is especially important (China Development Research Foundation 2012, 5). Previously, local clinics in Yunnan were involved in distributing nutrition packages for infants so village doctors might have already developed connections with the families (Wang 2013). Thus, adopting this network could then facilitate the distribution of both educational materials and nutrition supplements.

In order to ensure the effective implementation of this program, three parties—the NGOs, the local authority, and the central government—must collaborate and perform their assigned duties (see *Figure 3*). As the evaluations show, local authorities appreciate the professional knowledge of the NGOs, while the NGOs rely on the local healthcare network for program implementations. The central government is also likely to finance this project. For the 2021 fiscal year, the Ministry of Finance of the People’s Republic of China (MoF) has allocated more than 86 million yuan supporting preschool education programs in Yunnan (2020). The MoF also increased their investments in the nutrition package program from 100 million yuan to 500 million yuan, illustrating their commitment to supply nutrition interventions in rural China (China Development Research Foundation 2016). Each stakeholder therefore should have the motivation to work with each other.

Policy Implications

By including both nutrition intervention and education, the program aims to immediately nourish the next generation and help them develop life-long healthy eating habits. The supplement package will contain dairy products, which are under-consumed in rural China and can effectively reduce the stunting rate (Duan et al., 2020, 1). The education component of the program is also pertinent to achieving the SDGs. The literature highlights the importance of parent and child nutrition education, calling it a “major determinant for reducing childhood undernutrition,” (Yang et al., 2020, 7). Indeed, education will also enable children and parents to construct a balanced diet and prevent obesity due to a lack of nutritional understanding.

Figures

Figure 1 (Selected nationwide nutrition intervention programs during the MDGs)

Program	Target Population	Implementation Duration
Nutrition package for 6-24 months infants	Infants aged 6-24 months in rural areas	Since 2012
Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD)	Infants aged 0-3 years in rural areas	Since 2013
Improving nutrition, food safety and good security for China's most vulnerable women and children	The high-risk population of 1.2 million children and women of childbearing age	2009-2013
Supplementation of folic acid to prevent neural tube defects	Women in the period of 3 months before pregnancy to the first trimester of pregnancy	Since 2009
Nutrition improvement program for rural compulsory education students	Compulsory education students (grades 1 to 9) in rural area	Since 2011
Milk plan for student in China	Primary and middle school students in the urban area	Since 2000
Baby-friendly hospital	Pregnant women, lactating women, and baby	Since 1992
Happy ten minutes	Primary students	Since 2012

Figure 2 (Key components of the proposed intervention program)

Key Components of Intended Intervention Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders: international NGOs, local government, central government • Location: Yunnan, China • Content: nutrition education for parents and children; direct nutrition supplements in the forms of dietary products, vitamins, etc. • Implementation Plan: dual distribution via kindergartens and local clinics

Figure 3 (Stakeholders and responsibilities)

NGO	Local Government	Provincial/Central Government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional guidance and training • Design implementation plans with local health professionals • Connect to the industry to find adequate supplies of nutrition supplements • Create education materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with the local clinical networks (village doctors, etc.) and kindergartens to distribute education materials, nutrition supplements, and monitor the daily operations of the program • Allocate funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide sufficient fundings for the implementation of the program • Be prepared to evaluate the program and replicate it in nearby regions if successful

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Michael Eller '24

A Story of Two Colonies: A Comparative Analysis of the Economic Impact of British and French Colonial Rule in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire

Content Note:
Colonialism

Abstract

This comparative study seeks to explain the effects of different colonization methods on present-day economic affairs in former West African colonies. I seek to compare French “direct rule” which prioritized forced assimilation, and British “indirect rule” which focused on utilizing existing indigenous institutions. I will answer the question of how these different methods of colonial rule impact economic conditions in both formerly British-colonized Ghana and French-colonized Côte d'Ivoire. In explaining the economic development of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, my analysis on colonial systems in their former colonies concludes that the British method of indirect rule created a better economic forecast when looking at factors such as capital investment, capital flight, and the strength and flexibility of economic institutions. Such a comparative analysis seeks to establish the long-lasting effects of colonial legacies in formerly colonized nations.

Introducing the Economic Effects of British and French Colonization in West Africa

Looking at the history of colonization by European powers, a similarity that such powers have in common is their efforts in attempting to increase their country's wealth and power on the global stage. Examining France and the United Kingdom during this time period and their efforts to colonize many countries in West Africa, we can see examples of expanding territory and access to resources through the French colonization of Côte d'Ivoire and the British colonization of Ghana. Although Ghana and

Côte d'Ivoire both became colonized and liberated from colonial subjugation within relatively the same time period of history, the differentiating economic status between the two countries in which Ghana supersedes Côte d'Ivoire brings attention to the impact of colonial rule on economic development in the two countries. I argue that the choice of direct rule by the British in colonial Ghana created the opportunity for more successful economic development than the choice of indirect rule by France in colonial Côte d'Ivoire.

In this paper, I plan to answer the question of whether or not colonial rule matters for past,

present, and future economic development. By first establishing a pre-colonial comparison between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire in terms of geography and indigenous composition, this will allow me to look at the impacts of different styles of colonization on economic development without wondering whether pre-colonial conditions caused such results in which Ghana's economic development is higher than that of Côte d'Ivoire's. I will then introduce the culture of colonization during the late 1800s and first half of the 1900s and differentiate between the philosophy of French and British colonization along with the similarities of their choices in arbitrary border creation for their colonies. After establishing the French and United Kingdom's decisions in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana's colonization, I will introduce the idea of French "direct rule" which prioritized forced assimilation, and British "indirect rule" which focused on delegating and utilizing existing indigenous institutions. The analysis of different methods of colonial rule brings me to examine economic effects in liberated Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire such as capital flight, the strength and sufficiency of economic institutions, and the effects of capital investment. Such analysis calls to attention the advantages of British versus French colonial rule in former West African colonies and leads me to a conclusion that explains the economic divergence between the two former colonized states of the same time period. Although my argument explains how indirect rule in Ghana by the UK created economically better conditions than France's choice of direct rule in Côte d'Ivoire, I conclude my analysis by clarifying that although such benefits of British colonization exist relative to French colonization, such benefits must be looked at with caution when thinking about the still existing impact of colonial legacy on such countries.

Similarities between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire

In order to compare the colonial legacies of the UK and France in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, it is important to establish a similarity comparison between the two countries so that diverging economic outcomes can be looked at as the result of differing French and British colonial types of rule. Looking at geography, both countries are situated in West Africa and share borders with both the Atlantic Ocean and with one another, with Côte d'Ivoire being in the west, and Ghana being in the east. The geographical terrain between the two countries is also comparable to the north as both are composed of "small, rolling hills" with the remaining geographical subsections of the rest of each country not being very mountainous (Nordas 2008). Secondly, when looking at the period under which Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire were held under conditions of European colonization, although colonized by different countries, both Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire were colonized during the same period with Ghana being under official British control from 1902 to 1957, and Côte d'Ivoire under French subjugation from 1893 to 1960 (BBC News 2020; France 24 2010). Lastly, when looking at the indigenous makeup of both countries we can see that today there are more than 60 ethnic groups in both Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, with the pre-colonial structure of power in the two countries oriented towards that of the Akan ethnic indigenous group as having the most influence (U.S. Department of State 2021) (U.S. Department of State n.d.). Indigenous peoples held significant importance in the region's pre-colonization governing structures because local indigenous tribal rulers exercised administrative control over their peoples (Gagne 2020). In establishing the above similarities between the two countries, this gives me the ability to evaluate British and French colonial policies and their impacts on economic development.

Colonial Systems

When analyzing the colonial history of

Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, we can see that the similarities between British and French colonial systems concerned the simultaneous goal of increasing wealth, power, and prestige (Athow & Blanton 2002). Another commonality between the two different methods of colonization is the creation of arbitrary administrative borders without regard for the indigenous population that habited in such geographical areas before European arrival (Miles 2015). Pre-colonization, indigenous people, such as the Akan people who were the most populous tribe of the region, were not constrained by such artificial borders created by the French and the British. By creating borders without regard for the individuals who were native to West Africa, the British and the French prioritized their accumulation of wealth and prestige over indigenous peoples' administrative structures and cultures (Athow & Blanton 2002). Despite these similarities in the process of colonization in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, after looking at specific methods of colonial subjugation on such African colonies, we can see that the methods of carrying out resource extraction greatly differed due to the different colonial styles of the British and the French.

The French colonial organization characteristics were based on the idea of creating a "greater France through colonial assimilation into the "superior" French culture" (Athow & Blanton 2002). Through following nationalistic narratives with historical French Revolutionist ideology, methods of French colonization worked to integrate indigenous populations into French culture by enforcing a shared French language, culture, religion, and education system (Athow et al. 2001). These assimilation policies adopted by the French introduced the French idea of superiority and disregard for indigenous ways of life in the colonies. As a result of these French beliefs, the choice of using direct rule in colonial Côte d'Ivoire was used.

Looking at the British motivations behind

colonization, the British believed that native Africans were "essentially different" than Europeans and that such assimilation strategies would not work (BBC n.d.). Additionally, the British recognized the costliness of having large-scale direct administration, the fear of hostility and revolutions from subjugated populations, and the already existing indigenous institutions that were capable of effective governance in Colonial Ghana (Gcerevision Cameroon 2018). When looking at the above British narratives about colonization in West Africa, it can be understood why the British used indirect rule in Ghana.

Contrasting French and British Colonial Rule: Direct vs. Indirect Rule

Through recognizing the broad differences in how France and the United Kingdom governed their colonies, it is important to establish the structural differences between French direct rule and British indirect rule. Such diverging choices of colonial administration, as I analyze in the following section and the economic development section, can be used to explain the differences between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire's economic systems.

French Direct Rule

The French system of direct rule can be defined as the French government taking absolute control over Côte d'Ivoire's pre-colonial administration and institutions (Athow et al. 2001). In doing so and in following discipline with tendencies to assimilate natives to French culture, the process of French colonization considered Côte d'Ivoire and other French colonies in West Africa "as mere provinces overseas" (Boahen 1986). In creating systems of rule in Côte d'Ivoire, the French government "stripped local chiefs of their historic influence and power, marking them as subordinates to the French administrators (Athow et al. 2001). By enacting such a system, the French assumed superiority in their Parisian-based institutions and replaced the already existing

and established indigenous institutions that natives of Côte d'Ivoire were used to being governed by. In doing so, rule of law and administration in the colonies was enacted and enforced from Paris rather than through the local systems of power.

In looking further at the implications of French direct rule on native populations in Côte d'Ivoire, it can be seen that the French government tried to completely erode the role and respect for native tribes (such as the Akan people) chiefs by making the existing chief responsible for tax collection and mobilization of slave labor for French cash crops (Broussalian 2015). Such a process created disdain toward both the pre-colonial chiefs and the French institutions. As the French viewed indigenous polities and existing institutions as an obstacle to resource extraction, such a form of direct rule was used in order to assimilate the indigenous populations to the assumed dominant French style of life and governance.

British Indirect Rule

British indirect rule in its West African colonies can be looked at as a process that used "existing tribal structures and traditions as conduits for establishing rules and regulations while English officials worked behind the scenes" (Gagne 2020). This laissez-faire structuring of colonial institutions in Ghana had the intention of UK involvement in Ghana not holding goals of assimilation, but instead being that of economic stability (Athow & Blanton 2002). The British method of indirect rule, in contrast to the French form of direct rule, allowed local tribal rulers and elites to directly administer the indigenous populace and to establish control of the geographical territory that now belonged to the UK. The benefits of this method of colonial subjugation were that the United Kingdom saved money on administrative costs as they did not have to finance superfluous quantities of British soldiers toward delegating in Ghana. Additionally, not trying to assimilate British institutions into already existing ingenious

ones created less resentment and opposition to British decision-making in Ghana (Gagne 2020). Instead of holding direct "on the ground" control in Ghana, British authorities allowed the continuation of indigenous tribal institutions and culture, with the exception of holding a veto power as a last resort for decision-making in the British colony (Gagne 2020). In establishing the difference between British economic institutions and rule of law to that of the existing tribal ones in Ghana, it can be seen that the UK viewed its colonies as separate establishments to the continental UK and did not foresee the benefits of such assimilation processes that the French government had used in Côte d'Ivoire.

Results of Analysis: British Strategy over French Strategy for Economic Development

The analysis of French direct rule in Côte d'Ivoire and British indirect rule in Ghana leads me to the conclusion that the British government's decisions of utilizing indigenous institutions and treating colonies as separate entities from the continental UK have created stronger economic conditions in liberated Ghana than that of liberated Côte d'Ivoire. By observing the differences in capital investment during the period of colonization, capital flight from Côte d'Ivoire to Ghana, and the direct versus indirect methods of rule's role in the creation of sufficient and flexible economic systems of the two liberated countries, I will further argue in the strength of British colonial structures over that of the French.

Capital Investment

When analyzing the capital investment that the United Kingdom and France put into colonial Africa, it can be seen that the UK invested more than ten times than France did into its colonies (Gagne 2020). Capital investment can be defined as the financial expenditures that a government or a business makes in order to purchase assets such as land, machinery, and buildings (Ward 2021). The overwhelmingly higher British contribution to its colonies draws me to the conclusion that the British

viewed its colonies as both a current investment in the form of resource extraction and also as a future form of capital return in the long run. By investing money into colonial Ghana, the United Kingdom created better infrastructure and other forms of non-residential investment (machinery, factories, technology, roads, etc.) that made post-liberation Ghana in a better infrastructure situation than that of Côte d'Ivoire.

Capital Flight in the form of Labor Transfers

In recognizing the creation of arbitrary borders due to France's and the United Kingdom's colonial claims in West Africa, it is important to recognize the indigenous people who habited on the land before European arrival. As the French form of direct rule was stricter with assimilation practices and with abolishing indigenous institutions in Côte d'Ivoire than that of the British's indirect rule in Ghana, many indigenous people fled Côte d'Ivoire for Ghana during the colonial occupation period with the hopes of better conditions and a higher quality of life (Anarfi et al. 2003). Such quantities of people fleeing Côte d'Ivoire for a new life in British Ghana can be seen in the 1931 Ghana census that recorded 61.9% (196,000 out of the total 290,000) of the non-Ghanan born population being from colonies in French Africa (Anarfi et al. 2003). As a result of the economic success and welcoming of indigenous institutions in Ghana, many indigenous people of Côte d'Ivoire also fled to Ghana post-liberation (Anarfi et al. 2003). Although capital flight is traditionally looked at as a transfer of financial capital from one state to another, I further expand this definition to include human capital as part of the labor force. This capital flight from Côte d'Ivoire to Ghana of individuals both during and after France's colonization of the area created a stronger Ghanaian workforce and provided Ghana the human capital via labor to contribute to bettering Ghanaian infrastructure via the UK's capital investments.

Strength of Institutions in Ghana vs.

Côte d'Ivoire: Economic Sufficiency and Flexibility

When thinking about the diverging theories of how the United Kingdom and France viewed their colonies as either self-sufficient separate entities or with the goals of forced assimilation, along with the use of existing indigenous institutions against European ones, I recognize the strength of the United Kingdom's strategy in creating a stronger post-liberated West African state in terms of economic flexibility and economic self-sufficiency. In this thought process, I bring to attention the advantages of using indigenous institutions as such systems were favored by native Ghanaian populations. As the United Kingdom ruled indirectly and allowed more flexibility relative to France's Côte d'Ivoire, such indigenous institutions were able to succeed and evolve to economic circumstances post-colonization (Miles 2015). On the contrary, post-liberation after Côte d'Ivoire's independence from France, indigenous institutions that were used by native people of Côte d'Ivoire were not used. As France retreated from its former colony, this left Côte d'Ivoire in a situation in which Côte d'Ivoire remained reliant on France and its institutions for economic development (Athow & Blanton 2002). As France created a linkage of dependency during its occupancy of Côte d'Ivoire through the use of direct rule, post-colonial Côte d'Ivoire struggled to establish institutions that catered toward its local economic problems and long-term development goals (Athow & Blanton 2002).

Looking at the usage of British indirect rule in which economic institutions were not bureaucratic and instead were deliberated by local indigenous chiefs, we can also analyze the use of social welfare in both countries. In Ghana, the national government "promotes building relaxed social systems that rely upon the extended family or village" in contrast to Côte d'Ivoire's usage of "dismantling those traditional structures in favor of more formal bureaucratic structures" (MacLean 2002). Although both countries utilize social welfare systems, the usage and strength of

traditional tribal structures (as a result of the UK's indirect rule) in recognizing need and distribution are both more efficient and more receptive of the public than that of Côte d'Ivoire's bureaucratic system (MacLean 2002). Therefore, some of the differences in the economic institutions and self-sufficiency of both Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana can be attributed to France's and the United Kingdom's colonial methods of rule.

Significance and Lasting Post-Colonial Legacy

In recognizing the results indicating that the UK's colonial systems in Ghana created a better economic outlook than that of France's in Côte d'Ivoire, I come to the conclusion that such an argument is supported by variables such as capital investment, capital flight, and the relative strength and flexibility of post-colonial institutions. However, an argument that arises when analyzing these results concerns itself with the many different variables that determine the economic "success" for a country. Although my study uses such factors as listed above, other individuals who study the political and economic effects of colonization may refer to different aspects of economic success, such as the relative use of oil rents in following the argument that countries who depend on oil rents are linked to lower state and economic stability (Arezki & Brückner 2009). As Ghana has a larger portion of its GDP from oil rents compared to Côte d'Ivoire, one might hypothesize that Côte d'Ivoire may hold a better economic status (The World Bank 2021). Such a hypothesis along with the use of analyzing the colonial effect on other economic indicators and variables that measure economic success and development within a country should be further evaluated in further comparative studies of analysis.

Although there may be other factors that explain the economic development of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, my comparative analysis of British and French colonial systems on its former colonies concludes that the British

method of indirect rule created a better economic forecast when looking at factors such as capital investment, capital flight, and the strength and flexibility of economic institutions. This comparative study is useful to explain the effects of different countries' colonization methods on present-day economic affairs within former colonies. By establishing similarities between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire in terms of geography and pre-colonial indigenous makeup, I can analyze the economic effects of colonization without establishing causality to relatively influential pre-colonial factors. A comparative process such as this reminds us of the long-lasting legacy of colonialism, calls attention to economic development strategies of possible application to colonially-established institutions, and helps explain the present-day economic conditions in formerly colonized Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

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Ben Lahey '21.5

The Greek Debt Crisis and the Problem of Depression-Prevention

Abstract

As Greece enters its second decade of debt crisis and depression, hindsight reveals that austerity—offered in 2010 as the cure for unsustainable debt—has impoverished the country and worsened its debt burden. In this paper, I argue that while popular analyses of the crisis conclude that austerity failed, the more meaningful takeaway from the Greek debt crisis is that no policy response could have succeeded. The macroeconomic models which inform modern policy-making neglect the influences of capitalism and the people on the acceptable range of policy options and thus cannot provide solutions for all crises as Keynes once hoped they would.

The Greek Depression is a rejection of the best hopes of modern political economy. Since WWII, technocracy has been the dominant form of the capitalist state; recessions are tamed, financial crises frozen, booms fueled, and growth sustained. At best, macroeconomics since Keynes has reached the heady euphoria of Robert Lucas' 2006 proclamation that “the central problem of depression-prevention has been solved,” and at worst there have been failures for which hindsight reveals theoretical alternatives—a larger stimulus package, more skillful management of the interest rate, any number of targeted policies. Technocracy remains legitimate because to intellectuals unaffected by crises, theoretical frameworks can be updated and solutions offered in hindsight.

There were no solutions to the Greek crisis. By the time George Papandreou's center-left government realized in 2009 that previous governments had concealed tens of billions of euros in unsustainable public debt, Greece's only choices were to accept bailouts from Europe and the IMF, or default and exit the

Eurozone. Bailouts came on the condition that Greece drastically reduce government spending to decrease its debt burden. A decade of wage, pension, and social insurance cuts amidst persistent unemployment has accelerated—if not caused—Greece's slide into the worst depression experienced by any OECD country since 1933. Analysts of the Greek crisis generally conclude either that the trio of bailout deals negotiated with Europe and the IMF would have been successful if not impeded by public and political opposition (Papaconstantinou 2016), or alternatively that the bailout deals were built on flawed economics which would have contracted the economy even if implemented perfectly (Blanchard and Leigh 2013; Galbraith 2016; Stiglitz 2016).

I argue that critics are right to call the bailout measures counterproductive, but that there is a more troubling takeaway from the Greek crisis. The post-war political economy strives for a complete model of the economy which will light the path to Keynes' vision of “economic bliss” (Keynes 1930, 75),

where the worst tendencies of capitalism are neutralized by apolitical, technocratic management. The Greek experience reveals a pair of constraints on Keynes' vision. First, technocratic institutions are subordinate to the rules of capitalism and cannot always subdue it. The European Union and the IMF, for all their technocratic expertise, could not have saved Greece without restructuring the European system or forcing private entities to forgive billions of euros in Greek debt at the onset of the crisis. Such a radical approach was prohibited by the technocracy's own rules and by fear of backlash from international markets. Second, Greece shows that apolitical management is unrealistic because rational people will refuse painful policies, even if those policies are justified by intellectual exercise. Technocratic political economy is therefore constrained by a compromise between what is acceptable to capitalism and what is acceptable to the people. The policies allowed by this compromise might be successful in general, but sometimes, like in Greece, they are not enough to avoid economic meltdown. The technocracy's attempt to navigate opposition between these forces will tend to favor the constraints of capitalism. The Greek case exhibits this favoritism in the European technocracy's rejection of a 2015 referendum against austerity and in the subsequent imposition of European power over Greece's policy-making process.

Technocratic management rests on the belief that a scientific approach to macroeconomics can moderate the business cycle by surveying capitalism from a birds-eye view and tweaking where necessary. These tweaks need not be economically Keynesian; rather management in the "Keynesian spirit" as used here holds that "if you leave [the economy] to me, I will take care of it" (Mann 2017, 54). I will continue to use "Keynesian" in this sense, as Geoff Mann does in *In the Long Run We Are All Dead*, to describe intellectual management of capitalism in general; policies like fiscal consolidation are then "Keynesian" in this sense, even if Keynes and the ever-vigilant arbiters of What Keynes Really Meant

(Robinson 1962; Minsky 1975) would disagree.

Management in the Keynesian spirit assumes that technocracy can subordinate capitalism, and the Greek crisis reveals exceptions to this assumption in the powerlessness of both the Greek and European technocracies to reverse the debt crisis. Greece's technocracy was powerless by design as members of the European Union are subject to monetary policy enacted by the European Central Bank (ECB). Lacking monetary sovereignty, Greece could only pay off its debts the old-fashioned way: budget cuts and bailouts. As the Troika—the technocracy formed by the European Commission, the ECB, and the IMF—was the only body ready to give Greece a bailout package, they held complete control over the negotiations. The deal the Troika dictated to the Papandreou government in 2010 provided Greece the funds to avoid default on the condition that it enact structural reforms, austerity, and privatization to bring the annual deficit to from 11% of GDP to 3% by 2014. Both the Papandreou government and Greek opposition parties saw such a reduction as absurd, even designed to fail (Papaconstantinou 2016; Galbraith 2016).

Could the Troika have taken another course to save Greece? Stiglitz (2016) argues that the European system is too rigid and too monetarist to have effectively prevented the crisis, but offers that within the system as it was in 2010, the answers were debt restructuring and a more "inclusive capitalism" (2016, 317). Debt restructuring was not considered in the first two years of the crisis since Greece's spreads were already high due to the threat of restructuring. Troika-enforced haircuts for Greek bondholders would have solidified the idea that Greek bonds were worthless—restructuring is generally treated as soft default for a reason (Reinhart and Rogoff 2011, 80). An inclusive capitalism, in Stiglitz's view, would have seen the Troika promoting growth in the Greek economy as opposed to focusing on decreasing the debt burden. In 2021, it should be clear that Stiglitz is at least *intellectually* correct: a decade of austerity has

left Greece's debt-to-GDP ratio much higher than it was in 2010 (Stiglitz 2016, 5). A decade of pro-growth stimulus would have at least decreased the debt-to-GDP ratio via GDP growth. Beyond the macro effects, the stimulus route would have averted a decade of poverty, brain drain, and social disintegration caused by austerity.

A key constraint on technocracy exhibited during the Greek crisis is that even though Stiglitz can provide intellectually correct solutions to the crisis, these solutions could never have been implemented. Even if the Troika in 2010 had less faith in the stimulative properties of austerity, it is hard to imagine any part of the European system agreeing to a massive stimulus package for a country on the verge of sovereign default. Convincing European politicians to support the bailouts was already extremely difficult *with* provisions that Greece would be punished for its perceived profligacy (Papaconstantinou 2016); it seems unrealistic that even with intellectual backing the Greeks could have negotiated a non-punitive, pro-growth package. German chancellor Angela Merkel's infamous suggestion to Papandreou "why don't you sell your islands?" in lieu of a European bailout belies the unwillingness of the technocracy to send money to Greece.

More importantly, it is not certain that international markets would have accepted a solution that did not involve budget cuts. Markets viewed Greek bonds as incredibly risky, so an essential piece of the recovery was convincing buyers that Greece was not going to default or soft default via debt restructuring. Market appeasement is a psychological game: Greek credit spreads fell, briefly, after the first bailout passed but soon rose higher than before. Greek bonds were downgraded to junk status one month later (Papaconstantinou 2016, 105). Surely markets appreciated the 2010 bailout deal, but market behavior is often driven by narratives (Akerlof and Shiller 2010; Shiller 2019) and the credibility of the narrative that Greece would escape default, absent an indefinite Troika backstop, rested on

concrete actions towards debt reduction. Given that an indefinite backstop was off the table in 2010, the Troika could not seriously offer Greece a growth package without austerity provisions, for markets would see insufficient short-term action on the debt and would very likely retaliate. Both the Greek and European technocracies were being held hostage by the market: Greece's debt was unsustainable and alternatives to austerity were unacceptable because markets deemed it so.

Figure 1 shows the credit spread of Greek bonds against German bonds since 2005, with the dates of bailouts and other interventions indicated. Markets were not satisfied with even the most conservative, market-friendly interventions, so the spreads in *Figure 1* should be seen as a baseline that other options like earlier restructuring or austerity-less stimulus would have far exceeded in the short run.

Greece did come to an agreement with the Troika to restructure a portion of its debt in 2011, erasing about €100 billion of debt in a day. *Figure 1* shows that this approach ended up being more of a band-aid than Greece would have hoped, but Stiglitz (2016, 280) and Sandbu (2015, 200) argue that it would have been much more effective if implemented at the onset of the crisis. The market-related issues with this approach have been established, but it is important to add that such a radical solution is only sensible for Greece in retrospect. Any country would take the medium-term credit risk of a soft default to avoid a decade of depression, but that was not a realistic choice in 2010. The use of restructuring in 2011 underscores how serious the crisis became in only a year, and the reaction of credit spreads to restructuring in *Figure 1* shows temporary success.

Amidst rising spreads, the Papandreou government and its successors continued to implement austerity in pursuit of market satisfaction. The Papandreou government embodied Mann's conception of Keynesian spirit as a belief that "civilization is a bourgeois project" (2017, 118). The Keynesian utopia

is managed by highly-educated technocrats, not politicians or the people; after all Keynes believed that “politics is continuously distorted by the inescapable fact of poverty” (Mann 2017, 56). If the technocracy is not sufficiently skilled, then poverty will leak into politics and the people will demand a change in management. This is the form of political economy present in most capitalist countries since WWII.

There is an asymmetry inherent to Keynesianism in this sense. The public will accept sweeping bureaucratic management when it stands to gain something – direct relief, shorter recessions, easy credit – but when the ostensibly-scientific management prescribes austerity it will lose legitimacy. It is well known that Keynes’ suggestion of fiscal expansion in busts and consolidation in booms tends to be abandoned as soon as booms start – no one wants to “take away the punch bowl just as the party gets going,” in the words of ex-Fed chair William Martin. If macroeconomic policymaking is an approximation to science—as Keynes and the modern political economy see it—then people must act rationally and largely individualistically. Rational, individualistic people would never accept austerity in return for smaller credit spreads and the future well-being of the representative household.

It is difficult to fault Papandreou for playing ball with the Troika, but Papaconstantinou’s memoir makes it clear the government was comfortable taking a hacksaw to the budget without consideration for the Greek people. Large-scale privatization of public utilities was at first taboo due to “ideology” and “patronage” (2016, 182), but as the crisis continued and the Greek people became even less able to absorb utility price hikes, Papaconstantinou spearheaded selloffs in water, energy, transportation, and other essential services. “We seemed to be safe from the main opposition accusing us of selling out the country,” he writes, celebrating limited pushback from Greece’s right-wing parties. When the government proposed pension cuts

—reneging on past employment contracts—Papaconstantinou disparaged a leftist colleague for asking the finance minister to exhibit more “social sensitivity,” writing that “someone has to foot the bill” (2016, 155). The government was certain it could handle the debt if opposition parties and the people stayed out of it. To Papaconstantinou, economic management must be cold, calculating, and unwavering in the face of the distractions of growing poverty.

Research since the crisis has revealed that Papandreou and many of his successors were in large part the impoverishers. *Figure 2* gives indexes of Greek government expenditures, the unemployment rate, electricity prices, and GDP per capita with the fourth quarter of 2009 set to 100. The extremity of change in the unemployment rate makes the other series seem more moderate; note however that government spending and GDP per capita both declined to 60-70% of their 2009 values while utilities like electricity became 60% more expensive concurrent with privatization. As many authors have pointed out, the tight correlation between government spending and GDP per capita suggests a fiscal multiplier of at least one.

At what point on the steady course of the youth unemployment rate to 58% did the good-faith efforts of the Papandreou government to work within the European system become “economic policy as moral abomination” (Galbraith 2016, 1)? The Greek government must be afforded that the world’s most skilled technocrats agreed to slash government expenditures would both shrink the debt and stimulate the economy by decreasing state involvement in domestic markets. Blanchard and Leigh argue convincingly that the IMF probably assumed Greek budget cuts would have a fiscal multiplier around 0.5, meaning that government spending cuts would stimulate private sector activity on net. Blanchard and Leigh show that fiscal multipliers in Greece and other countries on the “EU periphery” were, in reality, closer to 1.5, meaning that

budget cuts rippled through the economy and decreased private sector activity on net.

Therefore, under a popular yet mistaken understanding of government financing, the Troika forced the Papandreou government and their successors to sacrifice the Greek economy and the Greek people in pursuit of stimulus, debt reduction, and good credit. The Greek people responded with protests, general strikes, and several terror attacks as the government cut wages, pensions, and access to utilities amidst depression (Papaconstantinou 2016; Galbraith 2016). Papaconstantinou remembers being “shocked” to hear from a journalist that he was the “most hated man in Greece” (2016, 131). Such an intense public response should have been expected given that the technocracy’s own economic frameworks would deem the people completely irrational for not responding this way.

The public uprising against Greek technocracy culminated with the shock victory of Greece’s self-proclaimed radical leftist party SYRIZA in 2015. The SYRIZA government was led by PM Alex Tsipras and finance minister Yannis Varoufakis, who had both campaigned as alternatives to the existing technocracy who would challenge austerity and fight back against the Troika (Galbraith 2016).

Even though Tsipras was eventually forced to continue the austerity programs, his election represented a second constraint on technocracy. The Greek people were dissatisfied with the technocracy in 2015, and in such an environment electoral victories by populist parties became achievable. Papandreou and his successors had gone too far and in doing so created the perfect target for charismatic politicians like Tsipras and Varoufakis. Popular resentment against austerity was so strong that Papandreou’s center-left party fell from majority governance in 2009 to a string of single-digit vote shares since 2015 (Galbraith 2016, 150).

Tsipras staged a referendum on future austerity programs in July 2015, in which the

Greek people voted resoundingly against any new austerity. Galbraith characterizes the referendum as a move by SYRIZA to show the world how deeply the Greek people rejected austerity and to place the “moral burden on Europe” (2016, 152). The Troika did not accept surrender, and in fact, returned to Greece days later with harsher bailout conditions. With nowhere to turn, Tsipras shepherded this harsher deal through parliament despite Varoufakis’s resignation in protest.

The terms of the post-referendum bailout deal indicate a direct acknowledgment by the Troika of the constraint placed on technocracy by popular outcry, and an attempt to sweep this constraint aside. The bailout required that “the Greek government must get approval from [the Troika] before introducing ‘relevant’ legislation... as of now, Greece is no longer an independent state,” wrote Galbraith after Greece accepted this new deal (2016, 151). Varoufakis described this imposition by the Troika just weeks after a public referendum against the Troika as a “complete lack of any democratic scruples on behalf of the supposed defenders of Europe’s democracy” (Galbraith 2016, 153). Lines had been drawn: the European technocracy recognized the threat the Greek people posed to its legitimacy and eliminated that threat.

The Greek crisis reveals two constraints on the power of modern technocracy. First, technocratic management must operate within the bounds of capitalism—in the Greek case this ruled out debt restructuring and other non-austerity solutions until much later in the crisis. Second, technocratic management is to some extent accountable to public backlash and there are some policies that will not be accepted by a rational people—in the Greek case this constraint meant the dissolution of Papandreou’s party and the rejection of future austerity in the 2015 referendum. However, when these two constraints come into conflict as they did in Greece, the demands of capital will prevail. The European technocracy chose to strip the Greek people of a great degree of their popular sovereignty instead

of considering “radical” solutions—as if the Troika’s decision to cripple democracy in its birthplace was in no way radical.

The Greek crisis is a grim reminder of the limits of Keynesian technocracy to neutralize capitalism’s worse tendencies. It does not mean technocracy has failed as a whole, or that it is useless, or that Keynes was wrong to dream of “economic bliss.” However, the wrong takeaways from the Greek crisis—simply that austerity does not work or that the Greek people were just too petulant—obfuscate the utter failure of technocratic management to provide *any* acceptable solution to the crisis. No new parameter of the stochastic process could make the technocracy’s macro model complete, for the real world requires that it is not. The central problem of depression-prevention cannot be solved.

Figures

Figure 1: Perceived Risk of Greek Debt as Spread Between Greek, German 10-Year Bonds

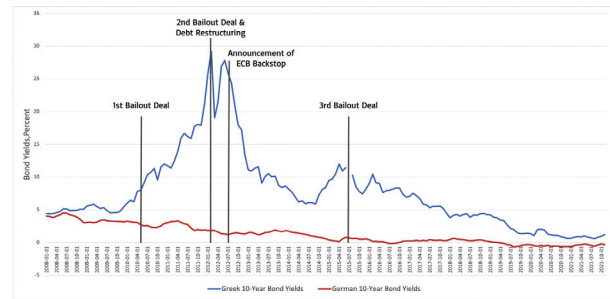
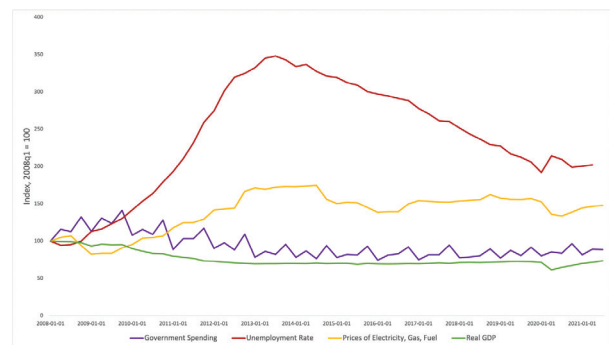


Figure 2: Macroeconomic Indicators for Greece, 2008-2021



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