Questions in Politics

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Questions in Politics Editorial Team

About the Georgia Political Science Association

Founded in 1968, the Georgia Political Science Association (GPSA) is the professional association for political science practitioners and educators in Georgia. Membership is drawn from the public, private, and academic sectors. We welcome members, attendees, participants, and students from around the world.

Questions in Politics is the official journal publication of the GPSA.

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Preface

It is with great pleasure that we present *Questions in Politics,* Volume X, as the official peer-reviewed publication of the Georgia Political Science Association. These papers testify to the diverse and impressive scholarship in GPSA and at the annual meeting.[1] The 2022 GPSA annual meeting in Savannah was a great success with scholars presenting research in all fields of political science. That breadth is reflected in the papers published in this volume, and we are certain that scholars will profit immensely from the knowledge contained in these pages.

About the Issue

Volume X contains seven peer-reviewed papers plus the undergraduate Pajari Award paper. This class of accepted papers is larger than the previous years, which can be attributed to 1) the quality of these papers and 2) the number of submissions we received. We organized the issue in the following manner: The McBrayer Award paper, presented to the best paper published in *Questions in Politics*, is first; next, we organize the papers by topic—political theory, scholarship of teaching and learning, comparative politics, and American politics—and we close with the Pajari Award winner for the best undergraduate paper.

The McBrayer Award winner for 2022, presented in 2023, was a difficult decision given the quality of the papers accepted for publication in this volume. However, one paper stood out for its originality and contribution to the discipline. That paper is "From Rebellion to Equality: The Rhetoric of Creedal Nationalism in Early American Abolitionist Movements," authored by Brian G. Smith. This paper explores the use of "creedal nationalism" to motivate and expand the abolitionist movement from the 1820s to the 1840s. Smith examines how "All men are created equal" evolves from the anti-monarchy claim to the near-sacred claim, espousing a civic equality from which American national identity can be defined. Using an original analysis from primary texts in American political development and thought, Smith's explication of creedal nationalism and its use in the early American Republic is original, insightful, and a significant contribution to numerous fields of political science.

The second paper in Vol. X is "QAnon as Gnosis: A Voegelinian Explanation and Solution," by Benjamin Clark. This paper analyzes the QAnon phenomenon through political philosopher Eric Voegelin's concept of Gnosticism. Clark's examination outlines the QAnon movement, its importance to modern American politics, and how their conspiratorial claims reflect a variant of Christian Gnosticism. An impressively detailed paper, scholars of American political thought, religion and politics, and political psychology will gain value from reading and citing this paper.

Turning to the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), we have two papers exploring this important area of empirical research. First, Zachary A. Karazsia's paper, "A Review of 'High Stakes Diplomacy': Fostering Effective Negotiation Skills through Experiential Learning," earned the GPSA 2022 Teaching Innovation Award. This paper assesses an original "High Stakes Diplomacy" multi-day simulation on several experiential learning components. Using pre-assessments, multiparty peer observations, and a post-assessment survey and debriefing to gauge learning outcomes and experiment validity, the post-simulation survey revealed that 83.3 percent of participants found the High Stakes Diplomacy simulation facilitated greater learning of the method of principled negotiation. This result reflects a 50 percent increase in student learning from pre-assessment levels. Instructors who want to explore this simulation will find materials at a link in this paper's acknowledgment section.

The second SoTL paper, "An Undergraduate Course on the Road to Law School and a Legal Career for First-Generation Students and Other Underrepresented Groups in the Profession," is co-authored by Mara Mooney, Antoinette France-Harris, and Joshua R. Meddaugh. This paper adds to the growing area of literature that focuses largely on valuable pipeline programs law school-driven "top-down" models and proposes a

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[1] To submit to *QiP*, papers must have been presented at the GPSA annual meeting the year of their submission.

complementary "bottom-up" model that has successfully been implemented at the authors' institution, which other undergraduate programs can adapt. Using data from student surveys, the authors address several issues that first-generation and under-served students face by having the undergraduate institution take a more active role in students' professional development.

Our next papers focus on comparative politics, specifically the French "radical right gender gap" and traditional and religious institutions' effects on constituent-representative relationships in twenty African states. Jamie Scalera Elliot and Alison M. Clifton research how Marine Le Pen's ability to moderate Rassemblement National (RN) rhetoric has legitimized its place as a mainstream French political party. Their paper, "Populism in Pink: How Marine Le Pen's Revised Rhetoric Closes the Radical Right Gender Gap," uses an original sample of French residents and citizens. Elliot and Clifton show that this party's success has allowed other far-right parties to close their gender gaps. The next paper is "African Traditional Authorities and Religious Institutions as Intermediary Institutions to Contact Members of Parliaments" by Jean Francois Koly Onivogui. This paper examines how the sometimes controversial traditional authorities and religious leaders impact the constituent-representative relationship in twenty African countries. Onivogui finds African citizens use more informal linking mechanisms, such as traditional authorities and religious leaders, than formal channels like the party to contact their representatives, which fills a gap by probing and substantiating the role of informal intermediary institutions.

Our last set of papers, which includes the Pajari Award for the best undergraduate paper presented at the annual meeting, focuses on American politics and public opinion. First, "The Influence of Institutional Trust and Conspiracy Ideation on COVID-19 Behaviors" is co-authored by a large team with Russell E. Luke as the lead author.[2] This paper examines the effect of conspiratorial ideation and institutional trust on COVID-19 mitigation behaviors. Using a targeted sample of a highly Republican area, the authors fielded a three-wave survey gauging levels of trust, conspiratorial ideation, and COVID-19 mitigation behaviors. The results strongly support their pre-registered hypotheses and suggest that institutional trust and conspiratorial ideation may be more complex in determining health behaviors than previously considered. Finally, the 2022 Pajari Award goes to Lisa Calvert for her paper, "Race and Political Affiliation on Cultural Issues: How Have Different Races Within Political Parties Affected the Individual's Political Attitudes on Cultural Issues." Calvert uses data from the 2018 General Social Survey to examine whether racial and political identities explain differences in political attitudes. In this wide-ranging paper, Calvert uses a variety of questions to probe various aspects of political attitudes in the United States.

Thanks to the Reviewers

As always, we are deeply indebted to the reviewers for Volume X. We received an excellent slate of papers for this volume, which required us to find an outstanding slate of reviewers. In addition to ourselves, each article received peer reviews from scholars whose expertise could speak to the quality and significance of the submitted manuscript. Our reviewers' expertise and suggested edits and revisions increased the quality of the work you see in this journal. Being a journal reviewer is often a thankless task, and—while it may not be much—we want to extend our heartiest "thank you" to our reviewers.

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[2] Sean Richey, a co-editor of *QiP*, is a co-author on this paper. Per *QiP* editorial guidelines and practice, Richey had no role in this paper's peer-review process. Ben Taylor oversaw all aspects of editorial process for this paper.

The reviewers and their affiliation for Volume X of *Questions in Politics* are as follows:

For those who present at the 2023 GPSA meeting, please consider submitting your work to *QiP*. To find more information about submitting to *QiP*, please consult the [GPSA website](). The deadline for submissions for Volume XI is December 31, 2023.

Sean Richey & Ben Taylor

Questions in Politics

From Rebellion to Equality: The Rhetoric of Creedal Nationalism in Early American Abolitionist Movements

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[1]Department of Political Science, Georgia Southwestern State University.
[*]McBrayer Award for the best paper presented at the 2022 GPSA Annual Meeting.

ABSTRACT

Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence contains Enlightenment-Era language of the right to rebel against a government violating natural rights. The most famous sentence of the resolution contains the phrase, "All men are created equal." The phrase morphed over time away from its original meaning as a self-evident assertion that God did not create Kings to rule. The document's language slowly turned into sacred language, embodying an American Creed concerning civic equality from which national identity could be defined. This study presents research that continues to refine the history of "Creedal Nationalism" in the United States by examining its construction in the public rhetoric of the abolitionist movements from the 1820s to the 1840s. Since identity and nationalist ideology are constructed through the cultural power of narrative, the development of the rhetoric and changing interpretations of language surrounding the idea of the American Creed has shaped American Political Development. These ideas remain central to the political conflicts in the United States today.

Introduction

A traditional ethno-cultural nationalism existed in the English colonies of the future United States for as long as there had been colonies. William Bradford, in his journal *Of Plymouth Plantation,* began bemoaning the threat to the racial and religious purity of his nation in the 1620s. In 1782, John Hector Crevecoeur published a collection of essays entitled *Letters from an American Farmer,* in which the third essay was entitled "What is an American?" This is precisely the question that nationalism as an ideology exists to answer. As a French immigrant, Crevecoeur portrayed America as an ethnic melting pot but wrote in an ironic style about the falsehood of a classless American society and the horrors of slavery (Crevecoeur 2009). American nationalists of his time had multiple overlapping sources of identity and a sense of community around which to coalesce a nationalist ideology. Competing local and national identities were built on the foundations of English imperial ideology, warfare against Native American nations along frontiers, colonial-era identity, and all the dynamics of post-colonial politics mixed in with constant immigration and the racial politics of slavery.

A competing American nationalist ideology began to coalesce around a new narrative of American identity after the War of 1812. In the patriotic fervor following the war, re-printings of the opening phrases of Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence proliferated on various merchandise.[1] Celebrations of July 4th had for decades served an important public political function, but the textual content of the Jefferson Declaration had been far less of note. Over the following years, labor movements, women's rights movements, and the abolitionist movement seized on the rhetoric in the Declaration as a central argument for their cause. The 18th century Enlightenment language of popular sovereignty and natural rights was repurposed to lay claim to an American version of nationalism which centered around a rhetoric of equality, what Lincoln eventually popularized across many speeches as the American Creed of "All Men are Created Equal" with inalienable rights. The narratives of identity that emerged in the public discourse constituted a Creedal Nationalism, a nationalist ideology conceiving the American nation as a community dedicated from its founding as open to allowing anyone into the public sphere as citizens. Only half a century after the start of the Revolution, an ideological struggle between competing nationalisms emerged as mythical history was constructed over the meaning of the Revolution and what it meant to be an American. This study presents research into the history of Creedal Nationalism in the United States by examining its public sphere construction in the rhetoric of the abolitionist movements from the 1820s to the 1840s.

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[1]Hereafter referred to as the Jefferson Declaration.

Nations and the Ideology of Nationalism

As the ideology of liberalism grew in popularity in 18th-century Europe and America, the notion of a country (as opposed to an empire or kingdom owned by a noble family) composed of "citizens" became embedded in both political discourse and mass identity. If the political legitimacy of government does not derive from divine sources, it derives from the will of the citizens. The ideology of liberalism begs the question, who should be the citizens, and what countries should exist that will belong to those citizens? Who should be in, and who should be out? Where should the borders be drawn to contain the citizens properly? Nationalism as an ideology provided an answer to that question, namely that the citizens of a country should consist of a nation, a group of people that exist distinctly (for some reason) from other groups of people. Nationalism asserted that each nation has the right to self-determination through having its own country. This function of nationalism as an ideology has continued through the formation of modern states in the 18th century, rebellion within multi-national empires in the 19th century, rebellion and state formation in the post-colonial world of the 20th century, and regional demands for independence in the 21st century. It also has always been used by traditional ethno-cultural nationalists to object to the presence within a country of people dissimilar to themselves, often manifesting as objections to immigration by people outside of the characteristics of what the nationalist believes to be their nation or ideologies supportive of excluding groups of residents of a country from the full rights of citizenship based on their lacking the proper ethno-cultural characteristics of the country's nation.

No matter how the political culture of a society defines the word "nation," the ideology of nationalism views the nation as the people with a right to self-determination, the right of citizenship, and the right to have a government dedicated to its benefit. Benedict Anderson's idea-based conception of the nation as an imagined political community, inherently limited and sovereign, is certainly where I, as a constructivist, begin looking for the origins, character, and influence of nationalist ideology (Anderson 1991). Anderson describes nationalism as being born out of cultural systems at the time of the decline of religious explanations for the legitimacy of political structures. Anderson tells a story of the decline of sacred language and the rise of secular language, unifying and bounding a new imagined community through its state administrative language and the capitalist-driven mass printing of vernacular books, newspapers being the longest form of book. For Anderson, administrative units created meaning in the post-colonial creole communities, driven into public consciousness through the work of capitalist newspapermen. For nationalism as a source of political legitimacy for the new United States, Anderson's origin story remains quite sound. As a source of political identity and its political use within public space, it is too late as an origin and fails to describe the public dynamics of the early Republic.

Waldstreicher (1997) argues nationalism is more than an ideology connected to the transmission of an idea of the nation, but rather is constructed through public acts in the content of public patriotism and discourse. Nationalism is created by the content and participation found in patriotic celebrations, festivities, parades, and public discourse in wide-ranging forms as toasts at dinner parties to the articles found in newspapers. Symbols and narratives shape the national identity, as does who is allowed to participate and who is not. As Homi Bhabha (Bhabha 1990, 2) argues, building on Anderson in *Nation and Narration*, the nation is a system of cultural signifiers that emerges from the narrative of its writings, "nation as a form of narrative – textual strategies, metaphoric displacements, sub-texts, and figurative stratagems." The nation is constructed through the continuous accumulation of public actions within the classical conception of Jurgen Habermas' (Habermas 1989) public sphere, political culture constructed within civil society rather than through political institutions. Nationalism in the early United States was not a uniting consensus around a new source of political legitimacy, but rather a set of activities over which competing groups were empowered to struggle for the identity of what it meant to be an American, regardless of the group's access to the power of political institutions.

A New Way to Conceptualize the Competing Types of American Nationalist Ideology

This study supports the introduction of Creedal Nationalist discourse within the public sphere as seen in the language and arguments of the abolitionist movement beginning in the 1820s. It is part of a research project into the origins and importance of Creedal Nationalism in American political development, focusing on labor, women's rights, and the abolitionist movements. It is a structural project designed to build out the multi-disciplinary discourse concerning Habermas' public sphere. The political landscape I seek to describe and explain is not the state's policy-making or the home's private life but the discourses of civil society. The goal is a travel guide to the dreams of Benedict Anderson's imagined communities during the myth-building years of the early United States as expressed in the public sphere. The causal power of language and symbols is assumed to be a constructivist view of the formation of ideology rather than just the influence of ideology acting through the transmission source of political culture acting on elections and legislation. *The language of nationalism does not create a national identity, but the language it creates the nation.* The role of civil society in forming an ideological narrative and the political identity that derives from it has a causal influence over defining citizenship and the function of the political sphere.

My ideological category of Creedal Nationalism is distinct from not only ethno-cultural nationalism but also the traditional category of civic nationalism in American political science. Within the American political development literature of the 20th

century, it has been common to assert "civic nationalism" as an alternative ideological category of nationalism present in America (Kohn 1944; Hofstadter 1948, Plamenatz 1973, 23-36; Gellner 1981, 753-776). Civic nationalism defined the nation as a group of people who believe in universal principles of the rule of law, political equality for all citizens, and democratic processes that support popular sovereignty. Proponents deride the historical myths inevitably contained in ethno-cultural nationalism in favor of universal truths of popular sovereignty. I join the chorus of critics in recent years questioning the usefulness of the category (Xenos 1996, 213-231; Yack 1996, 193-22; Keitner 1999, 341-351; Kaufmann 2000, 133-155; Kuzio 2002, 20-39; Spencer 2014, 666-673; Tamir 2019, 419-434; Larin 2020, 127-141). I assert the theoretical framework for civic nationalism was and remains ontologically indistinguishable from liberalism as an ideology. As a theoretical framework, it tells me nothing about the transmission of ideas and narrative discourse that construct the identities of citizens who do or do not properly belong within a nation.

On the Origins of American Creedal Nationalism

While I find the alternative theoretical formulation of *civic nationalism* conceptually empty, the two competing versions of nationalism in the United States in the early 19th century can still be found in competition in the 21st. The central hypothesis of my research project is that Creedal Nationalism developed as an ideology through public discourse by groups intending to broaden the claim to full membership of American society. The development of Creedal Nationalism in the public discourse grew as a narrative of myth-building concerning the increasingly sacred document produced by the Second Continental Congress during the war against Britain. All nationalism engages in myth building, an imagined current community tied to a historical past. Creedal Nationalism built an American nation that was born in narrative, using mythical and sacred language to lay claim to the purpose of the Revolution. It reinterprets the Jefferson Declaration's language from simply expressing the natural rights of self-governance that form the basis of the document's straightforward Enlightenment social contract claims. Creedal nationalism was expressed in public discourse, laying claim to the Jefferson Declaration as the superstructure of the United States and the foundational principles of what it means to be an American. Used by the Creedal Nationalists of the abolition movement, the language of the Creed becomes an argument, in and of itself, for the abolition of slavery, the right to civil equality under the law, opposition to the Colonization movement, the meaning of the Constitution, and the right of any person to be considered a member of the American nation.

This is very different from what the language of the Jefferson Declaration meant when it was written. The violent political cauldron of the early American republic had many contesting political ideologies, foreign policies, conceptions of federalism, battles over slavery, and competing identities. Various versions of Enlightenment liberalism prevailed over most of the conflicts, a rejection of the Divine Right of Kings in preference to the rule of law and citizenship as the foundation of a self-governing society. This is the language of natural rights found in Jefferson's Declaration and many of the other declarations of independence from the time and the various state constitutions and surrounding documents. The opening language of liberal ideology was so common that John Adams' supporters accused Jefferson of plagiarism. Jefferson responded that he had not been asked to write something original and that all uniformly and commonly held the ideas expressed. It was the language of contemporary philosophers such as Francis Hutchinson with doses of good old John Locke. Nobody, least of all Thomas Jefferson, would have suggested that the language in any way referred to racial equality or civic equality for all. It was a declaration of popular sovereignty, the right to rebel against a tyrant who damaged the natural rights of a society's social contract. It explicitly referenced the equality of men in a state of nature before forming a governed society. It was simply a document that was legally required to secure gunpowder and alliances from continental Europe well after the British Crown had declared total war against the colonies, treating them as a foreign combatant rather than mere rebels.

But racial and civic equality was precisely what the abolitionist movement in the early 1820s began to claim the words found in the document meant. Rhetoric became the basis of national identity, reconfigured from its original ideological meaning into a new conception of the nature of the American nation. The language became a part of what historian Pauline Maier described as the American Scripture, becoming the sacred language for Creedal Nationalists, particularly from the 1820s, as a founding principle of the country that guaranteed the equality of all people at the heart of the American polity. Maier even describes eulogies for Thomas Jefferson (and John Adams) in 1826 that verged on Christlike rising to God or, at the very least, sainthood as individuals who had bestowed sacred principles (Maier 1997, 189-192). For abolitionists, this included the inherent human equality in all things.

Some of the opponents of abolition in the early years of the country and opponents of Creedal Nationalism from the 1820s argued that equality in all its forms and meanings could only be claimed by those who were members of the society. If you were not a proper participant in the public sphere from the point of view of those making the argument, you were not entitled to this natural equality. This argument appears in the reasoning of those who fought over the Virginia Declaration of Rights content as risking a statement of the inherent rights of enslaved people. It supported continued inequality in political rights based on class despite a variety of these statements inside state constitutions. It appeared in the 1820s in arguments against the right of workers to form labor unions. It was naturally part of excluding women, allowing John Adams, for example, not to see

them in the public sphere and, therefore, not remember them when it became time to parcel out equality. Many others, such as Stephen Douglas during the Lincoln-Douglas debates, pointed out that the Jefferson Declaration did not mean what the Creedal nationalists said it did.

As Creedal Nationalism spread in the 1820s, the abolitionist movements quickly brought into the public sphere the arguments the ideology provided. The contrast to earlier arguments is stark. This study cannot do even the smallest justice to the history of abolitionist discourse. I will allow a few broad generalizations. For most of the 18th century, abolitionist narratives centered on slave resistance, from rebellion to legal suits and scatterings of religious arguments based on Christian scripture. The horrors of slavery acted in concert with Golden Rule-style objections of Quaker abolitionists, who also paired abolitionist arguments with a more general condemnation of the selfish pursuit of wealth and violence.

While many Enlightenment philosophers pontificated racist ideas of the superiority of the European race, slave rebellions, and slave legal actions seized on Enlightenment concepts of liberty and self-determination, the intelligentsia of Europe and America primarily debated which of the dominant racist theories were true. Even absurdly racist propositions by philosophers such as David Hume in his essay "Of Natural Characters" were paired with accepting the natural right of self-governance for what they saw as the inferior races (Immerwahr 1992, 481-482). Defenders of slavery regularly quoted Hume. However, even Thomas Jefferson subscribed to the idea of Francis Hutcheson that all men have the right of self-governance in the state of nature because God did not make Kings with greater moral virtue. Although Jefferson believed his slaves to be physically and mentally genetically inferior in every possible way to himself, he believed they were equally capable of the moral virtue that formed the foundation of the right to self-governance. These arguments were not about equal rights in a functioning society but mostly centered on the right to freedom when entering a non-slave country or city and debate over the slave trade, which became a cross-Atlantic dialogue as the 18th century evolved.

Pre-War of 1812 Abolitionist Narratives

As the Revolutionary period approached, breaking out of simply Quaker abolitionist-style arguments was Anthony Benezet's lengthy pamphlet *A Short Account of that part of Africa Inhabited by Negroes* in 1762. The pamphlet did use the same Quaker arguments attacking the pursuit of wealth based on the suffering of others (and the "Duty of Love to our Fellow Creatures"). Still, it combined it with an assault on the racist conceptions of African societies that supported pro-slavery ideologies (Benezet 1762, 5). He quotes traders and merchant factors, describing advanced civilizations, and makes pointed notes of a people with courts of justice, complex economies, and local governments that have no more right to sell people as a commodity than the slave traders have to buy them. He constructs a narrative to reverse the racist viewpoint and describes Europeans as barbarians descending on a civilized Africa. He finishes by quoting Enlightenment philosophers Francis Hutchinson and James Foster on the natural right to liberty.

Benezet's 1771 pamphlet *Some Historical Account of Guinea* was perhaps even more influential (Sinha 2016, 21-24). The bulk of the text is descriptive of the life and societies in West Africa and a history of the European slave trade, including a section describing the arguments of Bartolome de las Casas. Although an assimilationist who ran a school for black children, Benezet argued forcefully against the barbarism of the slave trade, which should end immediately, and for the emancipation of all slaves over a period that would be equitable for their owners. He admitted to the danger of the slaves being unleashed into society without proper time to gain in virtue (Benezet 1771, 138). He suggested upon emancipation, slaves be wards of the state in the same way as the homeless poor and their children are given education. Then, each family could be given a plot of land at the "uncultivated" edges of the most southern and western parts of the colonies (Ibid, 140).

Benezet's writings influenced his own community in Philadelphia and the anti-slavery community in England (Sinha 2016, 22). The abolitionist dialogue was decidedly trans-Atlantic. J. Philmore's slightly earlier anti-slavery book published in London in 1760, *Two Dialogues on the Man-Trade*, was a straight-forward assertion of the unity of the human species, the equality of man in the state of nature, and the cruelties and crimes inherent to slavery as un-Christian. Typical of the cross-Atlantic anti-slave trade arguments, the book argued from the presence of reason in the hearts of all men, regardless of race. Like cases in New England, existing law was being used to fight against slavery in the courts. Runaway slaves initiated cases in England and France that led to anti-slavery decisions. Granville Sharp was another prominent English abolitionist who won a decisive case in England and whose pamphlets were widely published in the American colonies in the 1760s and 1770s. The arguments relied on interpretations of the law and warnings of divine vengeance for those who violated the teachings of the Gospels.

Abolitionists, from William Dillwyn to John Wesley (Wesley 1775), drew on Benezet and argued similarly throughout the post-revolutionary period. Up to the end of the War of 1812, references to the language of the Jefferson Declaration were relatively scarce in public discourse, outside of reprinting without commentary in some newspapers around every 4th of July, a date which continued to grow as a general patriotic celebration. For example, within the database of the Library of Congress and the Internet Archive's digitized newspapers from 1777 to 1815, only a few references to the phrases of the Jefferson Declaration are used as the basis of an argument. They are not made regarding abolition or slavery in general. The arguments referencing the Creed use the words in their original meaning. For example, in 1805, US Congressman James Elliot

(1805) wrote a series of letters laying out his political philosophies and support for the Jefferson administration. However, technically, a Federalist, printed in the *Berkeley and Jefferson Intelligencier*, quoted the Jefferson Declaration as part of his argument that the US political system was properly constituted and should not become more of a European-style aristocracy or more democratic. Also in 1805, an anonymous essay writer to the *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser* labeled himself as "an old Whig" and quoted the Jefferson Declaration Creed, claiming they are the basis of all the laws of the country, referring to them as what should be the Creed of the United States. He asserted that as a foundational principle, the country should endeavor to protect them and never have a King or hereditary Senate (An Old Whig 1805). A final example is from a letter essay from US Senator Michael Leib (General Leib 1811) printed in 1811, which referred to the Jeffersonian Declaration language as a "political catechism … of republican faith." He used it not as an assertion of equality but of the right of a people to remove a government that does not serve its interests as part of an argument that US Senators should serve in a delegate style responsive to their constituents.

Creedal Nationalism in Public Abolitionist Narratives

Beginning in the 1820s, the abolitionist movement joined the early labor movements in laying claim to the increasingly sacred language of the American Creed. As the language became interpreted as meaning the inherent right to civil equality and citizenship for all men, the phrases in the Jefferson Declaration concerning liberty in the state of nature and the right to rebel upon the violation of the social contract morphed into an argument that all men are entitled to membership of the nation creating that social contract.

These arguments entered the public sphere in newspapers before dedicated abolitionist newspapers began widely circulating. For example, newspapers in the 1820s in Illinois were battling each other over slavery in the new state. In 1823, George Churchill, one of the editors of the *Edwardsville Spectator* and a member of the Illinois General Assembly, published a letter of his own in the newspaper speaking out against the people plotting with the support of Missouri for the Illinois Constitution of 1818 to be changed by convention to allow slavery formally. The Spectator's publisher was decidedly anti-slavery but cannot be described as an abolitionist newspaper (Harris 1903, 28-32). Illinois' admittance to the United States as a state required its constitution to nominally ban slavery. However, slavery was common in the territory; most white people were pro-slavery, and de facto slavery continued.[2] Amongst numerous other arguments, Churchill straightforwardly asserts that people who believe in the Jefferson Declaration principles know slavery is inherently wrong (Churchill 1823). The same newspaper in September printed a speech from a 4th of July celebration by the Reverend Isaac Newton Piggott that asserted the Jefferson Declaration was incompatible with slavery. Reverend Piggott (1823), arguing against Illinois changing its Constitution and including some fear-mongering about the danger of living around slaves, proclaimed in a convoluted argument that the Jefferson Declaration guaranteed all men equality and that slavery damaged not only the rightful equality of the enslaved but even the equality of white men in slave states.

Many examples of the re-purposing of the Creed appear in The *Spectator* as the state fought over the issue of slavery. In 1824, an essay with no by-line arguing against the slave trade was published on April 27. It argued that the American nation was a blessed people, enjoying prosperity, abundance, and equal treatment in civil rights under the laws of good government. The essay goes on to assert the Creed in the Jefferson Declaration is the strongest possible argument against slavery, so strong it counters any conceivable argument for slavery. The writer concludes from this the inherent wickedness of excluding people from the American nation based on the color of their skin (Anonymous 1824).

In just a few short years, the philosophical, legal, and national identity meaning of the Creedal text within the Jefferson Declaration was debated while the primary author was still alive. The writer of a letter to Maine's *Portland Gazette* in 1820 with the by-line of Philo Justicia (Son of Justice) comments that the people of the country are debating whether the Jefferson Declaration "means what it says, where it declares 'all men are created equal' … [but] others declare, that this means those only who are created with white skins and sleek hair (Philo Justicia 1820)." The author is attacking one of Maine's representatives to the US House who supported slavery being extended to Missouri because the Federal government did not have the authority to restrict it. The Son of Justice claims that the Jefferson Declaration empowers the US government to ban slavery wherever it wants. At the same time, a bill was introduced in the New York legislature in 1820, which stated that since the Jefferson Declaration's Creed was incorporated into the New York Constitution of 1777 and, therefore, that the NY Constitution was incompatible with slavery, all slaves would be immediately emancipated. "Pro-Colonization" organizations were formed to promote free blacks or all, referencing the Creed as a basis of the country that guaranteed equality of rights for all men as citizens, which was seen as unworkable and therefore necessitated their physical removal.

A shift in the ideological foundations of the anti-slavery arguments is quite noticeable within the newspapers dedicated to the abolitionist movement. As the 1820s progressed, there was a noticeable increase in the number of newspapers in print and the use of Creedal Nationalism within dedicated abolitionist publications. Arguably, the first such dedicated newspaper was

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[2]Called indentured servants and with restrictions on new slaves being brought to the state.

published as a lengthy monthly paper by Benjamin Lundy in 1820, an abolitionist Quaker who moved the publication location numerous times over its nineteen-year lifespan. Although technically a newspaper, the early printings self-described as more of a monthly magazine "containing original essays and selections on the subject of African slavery," as it said on its front page, which had more the appearance of a book front cover with only the title, Lundy's name as editor, the location of printing, the volume, and a quotation from the Jefferson Declaration of the Creed (Lundy 1821a, 1). Once the paper eventually moved to a more typical front page, it kept the Declaration quote below the banner name and publisher.

In the first issue of 1821, having moved to Tennessee from Ohio and increased the print run of the paper, Lundy had by page four declared that the Declaration's Creed was the "basis of our most excellent form of government" and that all the "fellow creatures, without distinction" of the country, deserve to live within it with the "blessings" of their equal rights (Lundy 1821b, 4). The examples from the *Genius* are too numerous to detail, but another example of the Declaration's Creed being used as a proclamation of the inherent right of all members of the American nation to equality in civil rights comes from an 1827 re-printing by Lundy of an old speech by Daniel Bryan, a member of the state Senate of Virginia speaking against the extension of slavery into new states. The speech, as printed in an article entitled "Virginia Patriotism," refers to the Jefferson Declaration as the "political creed" that they "as Americans" must follow. Daniel Bryan (Bryan 1827, 1) then asserts that the rights contained within the Declaration's Creed can only be taken away from an individual "for the punishment of crimes of which they are convicted." Senator Bryan then asserts that "human beings as absolute property" is inherently inconsistent with any political laws that could be created in a country whose sacred principles were those of the Declaration's Creed.

The explicit sacredness of the language of the Declaration and the national identity myth-making grew more common after the seemingly divine coincidence of the deaths of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson on July 4, 1826. The need to explain why the Jefferson Declaration's Creed was an argument against slavery decreased, the sacredness of the language used increased, and the framing of an American nation inclusive of all people within the country became more explicit. One of the most famous abolitionist newspapers, William Lloyd Garrison's *The Liberator*, began its first issue in 1831 with an essay by Garrison in which the entire argument quotes the Jefferson Declaration as the basis to assert the necessity for the immediate enfranchisement of all slaves. Then he apologized for ever suggesting gradual abolition.

Freedom's Journal was the first African-American published abolitionist newspaper, founded in 1827 primarily by John Wilk and others in New York City, with Samuel Cornish and John Russwurm as editors. By 1829, Samuel Cornish had split from the paper due to his opposition to Colonization as an answer to slavery. Cornish briefly published his abolitionist newspaper, *The Rights of All*, which, in its opposition to removing the enslaved from the American nation, was quite explicit in its expressions of Creedal Nationalism. For example, Cornish plucked from the pages of the *Greensborough Patriot* (the "paper of record" for Greensboro, NC from 1826-1922) on July 4, 1829, an essay written by its publisher William Swaim entitled "Declaration of Independence." Cornish (Cornish 1829, 6) introduces the piece by mentioning where it came from and that "Our friend Swaim must have felt a little of the fire of 76 – the same that animated that immortal *Jefferson*, when he hurled his political anathemas against the demon of Slavery, on that day." Swaim's (Swaim 1829, 3) essay begins:

> Fifty-three years ago this day, the most illustrious body of Statesmen that ever assembled under Heaven declared to a listening world . . . [independence]. This declaration . . . was based upon the broad principle "That all men are *created equal* and endowed by their Creator with the right of pursuing *life, liberty,* and *happiness*." Who, after reading these ever-lasting truths, and seeing them hung up in gilded frames throughout the United States – after witnessing the joyous enthusiasm that burns in the American heart, and hearing them repeated – [after all the people who fought for them] - we say who, after all this mass of concurrent testimony, staring him full in the face, would believe, for a moment, that a Slave would be permitted to breathe in this "LAND OF THE FREE, AND THE HOME OF THE BRAVE?"

The essay concludes by warning his neighbors of North Carolina that continued slavery will cause the United States to cease to exist like Rome before it and ends with the appeal that "we are unworthy the character of Americans, and a disgrace to the ancestors from whom we have descended if our "Boasted Patriotism" is to be terminated with our temporal existence!!" Swaim had joined the Manumission Society of North Carolina and studied printing under Benjamin Lundy in Baltimore at *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, eventually becoming the assistant editor of the abolition newspaper before returning home and running his general interest newspaper in 1829.

Other abolitionists in the late 1820s appealed directly to the slave population. One of the most dramatic and widely read was David Walker's 1829 pamphlet *Appeal, in Four Articles: to the Colored Citizens of the World, But in Particular, and Very Expressly, to Those of The United States of America*. David Walker was a leading free black abolitionist in Boston. The pamphlet was distributed heavily to the South and so effective and explicit in its call for rebellion that the state of Georgia and other southern states passed a law against the possession or distribution of the pamphlet in the state, with several states requiring the death penalty (Crockett 2001, 305-318). The rhetoric in his argument produces a narrative separating the "Americans" as a white nation, which had done more evil to his race than to other people in history. Walker bookends his pamphlet by referring

to the works of Thomas Jefferson. By page three, he is attacking at length the explicit racism in *Notes on the State of Virginia*. He ends his pamphlet with the Jefferson Declaration, pointing out the contradiction between slavery and the Creed. He quotes more of the Jefferson Declaration than most in the abolitionist movement and uses the extended language to issue a warning: "Now, Americans! I ask you candidly, was your sufferings under Great Britain, one-hundredth part, as cruel and tyrannical as you have rendered ours under you? Some of you, no doubt, believe that we will never throw off your murderous government and 'provide new guards for our future security (Walker 1830, 86).'"

Despite constantly constructing a narrative separating the American nation from the non-white people of the country, he explicitly references and quotes John Cornish's *Rights of All* newspaper and its arguments against colonization (Ibid, 76). He references the Jefferson Declaration by pointing out that Americans claim that the country's inhabitants enjoy equal rights (Ibid, 82). Other than the religious messages that God will not forever abide slavery, Walker's (Ibid, 79-80) central argument is that Americans should either abolish slavery and make black men equal citizens, or his people will do the same by force and God is on their side:

> Remember, Americans, that we must and shall be free and enlightened as you are. Will you wait until we shall, under God, obtain our liberty by the crushing arm of power? Will it not be dreadful for you? I speak Americans for your good. We must and shall be free, I say, despite you. You may do your best to keep us in wretchedness and misery, to enrich you and your children, but God will deliver us from under you. And wo, wo, will be to you if we have to obtain our freedom by fighting. Throw away your fears and prejudices then, and enlighten us and treat us like men, and we will like you more than we do now hate you, and tell us now no more about colonization, for America is as much our country as it is yours. – Treat us like men; there is no danger, but we will all live in peace and happiness together. For we are not like you, hard-hearted, unmerciful, and unforgiving. What a happy country this will be if the whites will listen. … And there is no doubt in my mind but that the whole of the past will be sunk into oblivion, and we, under God, will become a united and happy people.

The impact of the pamphlet was enormous, both as a critique within the slave states and as a Creedal Nationalist critique of the internal divisions within the abolitionist movement, particularly attacking the Colonization movement. Walker (Ibid, 62) asserts, "This country is as much ours as it is the whites; whether they will admit it now or not, they will see and believe it by and by." The *Appeal* also drew on history and logic to attack racism and the American nation's treatment of people with dark skin, regardless of free or slave status. The narrative is constructed as the title implies, as a direct appeal to black people of the United States, free or slave, that they should not wait for white people with power to change their status regarding being equal members of the American nation.

Throughout the 1830s, Creedal Nationalism continued to grow in its attacks on the Colonization movement, which sought to end slavery but separate the ex-slaves from the American nation. For example, in 1839, *The Voice of Freedom*, an abolitionist newspaper in Vermont, published David Camp's speech to the Orleans County branch of the Anti-Slavery Society on January 18, 1839. David Camp was the Vermont Lieutenant Governor and the manager of the Anti-Slavery Society in Swanton, VT. The speech opposed colonization and supported immediate abolition. He presented within the lengthy speech arguments for why the principles of the Anti-Slavery Society should "commend themselves" to statesmen, patriots, and Christians. The argument designed to be amenable to the statesman was that a country could be made greater by increasing its number of intelligent citizens that could help develop its resources, which abolition would achieve. His commending the Society's principles "To the Patriot," he argued:

> Would the patriot, the lover of his country, render that country worthy of his love? He would seek not only to make her beautiful, majestic, and glorious but also innocent, amiable, and virtuous. He would establish just and equal laws, banish oppression, fraud, and cruelty, infuse into her citizens a spirit of humanity, benevolence, brotherly kindness, charity, and a desire in each to promote the welfare of all. In these labors of love, the anti-slavery society would be both his pioneer and guide, for her grand object, is to remove the foulest stain from the national character and give efficacy to this national boast, "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that their Creator endows them with certain inalienable rights; that among these, are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness (Camp 1839, 1).

He asserts that abolition commends itself to the Christian to such an extent that it is so obvious that it does not need explaining. Then, he explains it, drawing on the decades of Christian abolitionist reasoning.

Competing Nationalist Narratives

The ideological assumptions of Creedal Nationalism are highlighted in the abolitionist discourse when set alongside those who did not share those assumptions. John Conant, a businessman and state legislator in Brandon, Vermont, describes in a letter to

the *Vermont Telegraph* in 1837 why he was an abolitionist. He says he is for truth, and the Declaration of Independence is divinely inspired, with the truth being the Creedal sentence. He goes on to say that the US Constitution is sacred as well and that "the great body of that convention saw the propriety of framing that sacred instrument in strict accordance with the declaration above, and that they were decidedly against the system of slavery, so repugnant to the rights of man and '*self-evident truth*,' and also to their better judgment and feelings (Conant 1837, 2)." He called for abolition with the slaves made free citizens of the states. He also makes the typical religious arguments after the Creedal is presented.[3]

In contrast, the powerful American politician and slave-owner from Kentucky, Henry Clay, famously only nominally favored gradual abolition and colonization to prevent people who were not white from becoming part of the American nation, not unlike Thomas Jefferson himself. In October 1842, while traveling to Indiana in his campaign to become President, Henry Clay was given a petition in front of a crowd that asked him to immediately emancipate his slaves due to the Creed in the Declaration of Independence. Clay addressed the crowd who had just heard him give a short speech published in numerous newspapers. Clay described how he did not like slavery and called it a great evil, but that the Declaration of Independence was merely a statement of some principles that apply when forming a society. However, the equality asserted within does not apply to equality in society. It could never be applied to women, minors, insane, etc. He mocks the assumption that the Declaration says anything regarding slavery and that the Constitution recognized the lawfulness of slavery. Further, he says it would be impossible to allow the two races to mix in the same country "that no human law could enforce a union between the races. [If it was tried], a contest would inevitably ensue between the two races: civil war, carnage, pillage, conflagration, devastation, and the ultimate extermination or expulsion of the blacks. Nothing is more certain (Clay 1842, 2)." He goes on to say things are getting better for slaves in general and that he treats his slaves so well that they are better off remaining his slaves.

Henry Clay's speech was consistent, naturally, with those of the prominent Whig pamphleteer writing under the name Junius from 1843 to 1844 and laying out the policies of the Whigs, with the fourth pamphlet of what they called the *Junius Tracts* praising and detailing the life of Henry Clay, candidate for President (Junius 1844, 49-64). Junius Tract number five was entitled "Political Abolition (Ibid, 65-80)." The pamphlet presented the Whig argument for "state's rights" concerning abolition and that it was unconstitutional and morally wrong for the United States government to abolish slavery politically. The first half of the pamphlet is dedicated to this position. The pamphlet then transitions to attacking the arguments of the abolitionist movement, starting with the meaning of the language of the Jefferson Declaration. It quotes the Creed and states that:

> [T]he purpose for which the Declaration was framed, and the object to which it was then applied, was to deny the divine right of kings and the claimed prerogatives of high birth and to assert and establish the right of a people to govern themselves. That the principles here stated . . . apply to slavery anywhere must be admitted. But there is no inconsistency in this Declaration, as it was applied by those who framed and adopted it; they had exclusive regard to the Colonies' relations to the British Crown and to the latter's tyranny over the former. . . . slavery is undoubtedly a wrong done to the natural rights of those enslaved, and the earliest possible emancipation, when unable to gain their freedom, will be contrived and effected for them by those who appreciate the value of the right (Ibid, 75).

Despite this faint nod to the violation of the social contract that took place sometime in the past, Junius immediately waffles. He says enslaving people is wrong, but righting that wrong now is complicated and will take a great deal of time. The pamphlet argues that slave states must decide for themselves when and how to eliminate slavery, that the abolition movement is deeply corrupt in its leadership and has actually made things worse for slaves, and that slaves aren't that badly treated anyway. Most of the rest of the pamphlet attacks the abolitionist movement as being too religious and that its religious claims to abolish slavery are necessarily a violation of the freedom of religion, the nation was founded on because it is the imposition through politics of one group's religious beliefs upon another's.

Crevecour asked, "What is an American?" The relevance of the narrative construction of what constitutes an appropriate member of the American nation between the competing rhetoric of the anti-immigration, ethno-nationalist Nativist movements and the abolitionist movement is self-evident. A nativist newspaper was founded in 1835 in Louisiana by John Gibson after leaving the job of editor of the New Orleans Argus after a disagreement over immigration (LSU Libraries 2022). Nativist movements, naturally, were ethnic nationalists who opposed abolition, at least without colonization. The name of the newspaper itself was the *True American*. A search of the Library of Congress digitized collection found no instances of "all men are created equal" in the *True American*.

In 1845, an abolitionist newspaper was created by Cassius Marcellus Clay in Kentucky, who called the newspaper *The True American*. Clay dedicated the newspaper, according to the banner, to Universal Liberty and Gradual Emancipation in Kentucky and was outspoken about the need for freedom of the press. Just three months after founding the paper, he published an editorial that argued the inevitability of abolition and an opposition to colonization, asserting the need for the emancipated to

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[3]John Conant was a very big fan of the founders.He named one of his sons John Adams Conant and another Thomas Jefferson Conant. T.J. Conant became a famous Biblical scholar.

have all the rights of citizenship and be seen as members of the same nation without prejudice. He references the founding documents as pronouncing "all men equal and having equal rights" as the basis for why the emancipated should have full and equal political rights, how unjust anything else would be based on the accident of skin color (Clay 1845, 3). Clay asserts at this point in his argument that all men being equal is declared in the Constitution, the Declaration Creed having become so associated with the discourse about the country's founding principles amongst creedal nationalists. After printing the editorial, known for often fighting duels, he bunkered down in his printing shop with guns and brass cannons to defend it. He was merely shut down through the court system and forced to move his printing operation to Cincinnati.

Conclusion: a Nation Built on Narrative

All nationalism is grounded in a mythological construction of ties to a historical past that is imagined as a community of people sharing some connection constructed through acts and discourse in the public sphere. Ethnic nationalism, as post-colonial literary theorists such as Bhabha highlight, is constantly reinventing itself through the ever-changing narratives it constructs to imagine a nation. In early 19th century America, a competing narrative of the nature of the American nation began to be expressed in the public sphere of newspapers and pamphlets explicitly supporting social movements that sought to expand the political and civil rights of people marginalized away from membership and full participation in public life, governance, and the economy. Labor, abolitionist, and women's rights movements developed a language constructed out of myths concerning what could be claimed during patriotic celebrations as a founding document of the country.

For the abolitionist movements, the Enlightenment discourse surrounding the social contract and liberty had always had direct relevance to the evil of slavery and, particularly, the slave trade. This discourse of basic liberalism expanded and changed into a nationalism based on a dialogue debating the nature of the American nation rooted in a repurposing of the language of rights and equality found in the Jefferson Declaration. The shift split the abolitionist movement and helped push along demands for emancipation, driving the anti-slavery movement to move beyond religious arguments and arguments based on a liberal right of self-governance. The narrative that all people are equal to each other as a basis of the American nation gave support in public debates against factions that were anti-slavery but saw freed slaves as incompatible with American society. Creedal nationalists constructed a nation that could imagine anyone belonging to the community. The struggle to create this national identity in American political development deserves to be remembered, despite the myth the identity itself constructs that the identity was present from the American Revolution itself. The competition between ethnic nationalism and creedal nationalism continues to shape the public dialogue hundreds of years after it began.

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QAnon as Gnosis: A Voegelinian Explanation and Solution

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the QAnon phenomenon through political philosopher Eric Voegelin's concept of Gnosticism. Gnosticism, says Voegelin, arises from a hostility to the existing world and a desire to reconstruct reality according to the Gnostic believer's preferences, leading to doomed attempts to create a pseudo-reality. This promised transformation is to be brought about by "Gnosis"—secret knowledge offering adherents liberation from a corrupt reality and a key to understanding the direction and meaning of history. Viewing QAnon as a form of "Gnosis" allows for an exploration of the psychological appeal of QAnon, a better understanding of the relationship of QAnon to Christianity and other non-Gnostic experiences of transcendent reality, an explanation of QAnon's resilience in the face of failed predictions, and lastly, a program for addressing the underlying causes of the pneumopathology—the disease of the soul—that gives rise to QAnon and other forms of Gnosticism.

Introduction

Since the anonymous poster "Q" appeared on a message board in October 2017, claiming to speak as a high-ranking official with access to classified information (Martineau 2017), the QAnon belief system has spread rapidly online despite several highly public failed predictions of future events. Given its virtual base and decentralized nature, exact figures on the number of adherents to QAnon are impossible. Still, based on the number of members of now-defunct Facebook groups devoted to expounding the theory, estimates can be in the millions (Roose 2021). Although there is a fair amount of divergence of views among various wings of the movement, the core beliefs of QAnon are relatively easy to identify (Roose 2021). The theory is premised around the central idea that a cabal of Satan-worshipping, pedophilic elites run a child-trafficking ring and exert strong control over American politics and media. Against this cabal, the theory also posits that former president Donald Trump is engaged in a long-running battle to expose this group and bring them to justice. This struggle between Trump and the corrupt elites is expected by QAnon adherents to soon culminate in a climactic revelation—an event referred to by them as "The Storm" or sometimes as the "Great Awakening" (LaFrance 2020)—that will finally pull the cover from this cabal and punish them for their offenses (Roose, 2021).

Through these anonymous posts, Q has focused on predicting future events. In one posting—or "Q drop" within the parlance of the movement (Rothschild 2021)—on August 19, 2018, he predicted the immanent arrest of Hillary Clinton and ensuing riots. Q has focused on predicting the coming revelation that would follow imminent arrests of leading members of this cabal, such as a series of predictions that John Podesta, chairman of Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign, would be indicted on November 3, 2018 (Rothschild 2021). Over time, as these and subsequent explicit predictions failed to come to pass, Q's predictions have tended to become more general (Rothschild 2021)—with open-ended injunctions like "Just wait until next week" or "trust the plan"—while still predicting a climactic moment at some yet-to-be-determined time in the future when the truth will be revealed and corrupt elites within the cabal punished.

Yet, despite these failed predictions of future events, belief in the QAnon theory continued to grow to the point that it has periodically inserted itself in American—and occasionally global—politics. At least two Republican members of Congress—Lauren Boebert of Colorado and Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia—have had to distance themselves from previous statements expressing at least tentative interest in the theory (Mathias, 2023). Trump himself was asked about the theory at multiple points during his reelection campaign in 2020 and responded, first by denying familiarity with the theory while acknowledging and expressing appreciation for their support for him (Coaston 2020), and later, when an interviewer asked whether he believed such a "Satanic pedophile cult" actually existed, responding that neither he nor she could know for certain (Rev 2020). After the election, some of the participants of the attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, were also QAnon supporters, including Jacob Chansley—the so-called "QAnon Shaman" known in large part for his outlandish costume during the incident (Feuer 2021)—and Ashli Babbitt—the woman shot by Capitol police officers trying to break through a barricaded door—who appears to have been a follower of the movement and wrote on Twitter the day before the attack that "the storm is here and it is descending upon D.C. in less than 24 hours" (Eustachewich 2021). Many QAnon adherents continued to

believe that Trump would retain the presidency until Biden's inauguration, an event that caused considerable upheaval in the QAnon online community (Brewster 2021). In 2022, 25 members of a far-right group in Germany based in part on QAnon beliefs were arrested for conspiring to orchestrate a coup of the German government (Bennhold and Solomon, 2022). Overall, then, QAnon has proved to be a belief system with both a wide appeal and an apparent durability even despite failed predictions of future events; moreover, at least some adherents of the system are deeply committed enough to it to engage in illegal or revolutionary activity to bring its promised "storm" to fruition.

Misinformation and "Fake News"; the Broader Context for QAnon

Belief in QAnon would seem to be related to a much larger political and social phenomenon. Viewed in the context of contemporary concerns over a perceived increase in "fake news" and the proliferation of misinformation and conspiracy theories, QAnon could be seen as simply a particularly stark example of a broader phenomenon. The broader issue of misinformation—and the question of what, if anything, can be done to counter it—has attracted a relatively high degree of political science research, shining light on some aspects of the phenomenon; for instance, it has been argued that belief in conspiracy theories is particularly tied to losing political campaigns (Uscinski and Parent 2014) and research in political psychology has pointed to "a range of psychological, political, and social factors" that contribute to belief in conspiracy theories (Douglas, Uscinski, Sutton, Cichocka, Nefes, Ang, and Deravi 2019, 3). Yet, there seems to be little agreement on how to counter such misinformation, with one source, for instance, noting that simply presenting misinformation consumers with more accurate information shows very little promise of overcoming belief in wrong information (Nyhan 2020, 231), and that warning viewers of the prevalence of "fake news" appears to increase a general skepticism toward truth claims in general, rather than misinformation in particular (233). In other words, combating the problem of misinformation appears to be more complicated than merely presenting potential consumers of misinformation with "the facts."

Moreover, little attention has been paid to conspiracy theories and misinformation from a political theory perspective—that is to say, little attention has been paid to how such theories operate ideologically and philosophically. There have been studies, going back at least to Richard Hofstadter's *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* (Hofstadter 1965), suggesting links between conspiratorial thinking and other comparatively mainstream ideologies—conservatism, in Hofstadter's instance. Contemporary scholarship is split on whether belief in conspiracy theories is more prevalent on the right than the left or if it attracts people on both extreme ends of the ideological spectrum (Douglas, Uscinski, Sutton, Cichocka, Nefes, Ang, and Deravi 2019, 11-12). However, the treatment of misinformation or conspiracy theories as ideological phenomena deserving of philosophical treatment in its own right has been lacking. This paper will attempt to rectify this by examining belief in QAnon as a philosophical phenomenon, and this philosophical analysis may indeed apply to many aspects of the broader phenomenon of misinformation and "fake news."

Explanations of the QAnon Phenomenon

In addition to scholarly treatment of the broader issue of misinformation and belief in conspiracy theories, the striking features of the QAnon theory—its surprisingly broad appeal and apparent durability in the face of failed predictions—have prompted a wide range of proposed explanations by media commentators attempting to understand its appeal to adherents. Among the various answers offered to explain the theory, some in the media have likened it to a video game (Daley 2020) or an offline alternate reality game (Warzel 2020) due to its addictiveness and level of immersive engagement, allowing adherents to become part of the unfolding mystery it presents. Another line of commentators explain the phenomenon through a more religious lens, picking up on the explicit religious overtones of the theory, its apparent draw to evangelical Christians, and the religious fervor it inspires among adherents to label it either "a new religious movement" (LaFrance 2020), a cult (Hassan 2021), or a form of Christian syncretism, blending elements of Christianity with other belief systems (Beaty 2020).

The last of these authors, Katelyn Beaty, writing for Religion News Service, concludes her article by briefly linking QAnon to an ancient heretical offshoot of Christianity, Gnosticism: a blend of Christianity with Greek philosophy and Zoroastrianism which emphasized a sharp opposition between the physical world and the spiritual world, the spirit and the flesh. Gnosticism was essentially dualistic, emphasizing the conflict between a good deity—who had created spiritual reality—and an evil one—who had created the physical world that believers found to be oppressive and constraining. To escape the confines of this physical world, viewed by Gnostics as evil, Gnosticism held out the prospect of liberation from this world by possessing secret divine knowledge, or *gnosis*. Beaty hinted that The QAnon belief system operated in the same way as a gnosis: a secret knowledge available to the select few who possessed it, allowing them to overcome the oppressiveness and corruption of the world and society around them.

A surprising number of other voices have also linked QAnon to Gnosticism. Seminary professor and blogger R. Scott Clark pointed to the enduring influence of Gnosticism and Manichaeism in exploring the appeal of conspiracy theories such as QAnon to Evangelical Christians (Clark 2020). Similarly, religion professor Timothy Pettipiece asserted the same thing in a piece for

The Conversation website (Pettipiece 2021). Academic and journalist Jeff Sharlet also proposed the connection in an essay for *Vanity Fair* (Sharlet 2020a) and a subsequent radio interview (Sharlet 2020b). The latter drew a response from a doctoral candidate asserting that QAnon and other conspiracy theories were much more closely related to Evangelical Protestantism than Gnosticism (Grieve-Carlson 2020). A report by the Public Religion Research Institute also described QAnon as containing "echoes of older movements within Christianity, such as Gnosticism" ("Understanding QAnon's Connection," 2021).

This idea of Gnosticism animating mass movements in the modern world may strike many readers as odd. Still, such was the analysis offered by 20th Century German-American political theorist Eric Voegelin. Like many thinkers who fled Nazi Germany, Voegelin's overarching philosophical project throughout his career was responding to what he saw as the crisis of modern Western society. For Voegelin, 20th-century totalitarian mass movements like communism and fascism were radical extensions of a deeper philosophical crisis that underlay Western society (Federici 2002, 13). Voegelin identified that crisis as essentially a spiritual crisis: the result of a long philosophical process that had cut off Western society from any conception of a transcendent reality beyond this physical world (xxvi), resulting in a loss of consciousness of transcendent reality (17). Voegelin described this loss of consciousness as a "spiritual disease" (17)) or *pneumopathology*—a disease of the soul (Voegelin [1968] 1997, 7)— and identified it as the same spiritual disease that gave rise to ancient Gnostic sects declaring the "essence of modernity" to be "the growth of Gnosticism" (Voegelin [1952] 1987, 126).

This paper will analyze the QAnon phenomenon through Voegelin's description of Gnosticism. It will be argued that the QAnon theory operates as a form of *gnosis*, promising adherents liberation from a corrupted reality through the promise of secret knowledge held by the select few. Viewing QAnon through this lens allows for an exploration of the psychological appeal the QAnon theory offers to its adherents, a better analysis of the relationship of QAnon to Christianity and other non-Gnostic experiences of transcendent reality, an answer as to why belief in QAnon can prove resilient in the face of many failed predictions of future events, and lastly, a program for addressing the underlying causes of the *pneumopathology*—the disease of the soul—that gives rise to QAnon and other forms of Gnosticism. This last consideration is significant because, as Voegelin was careful to point out, although Gnosticism is built around an attempt to reconstruct reality to fit the Gnostic adherent's wishes, this attempt does not succeed in changing the underlying, objective reality of the world around them ([1968] 1997, 73) but allows merely for the creation of a "fantasy" pseudo-reality that cuts off the Gnostic from the truth of being.

Gnosticism: Ancient and Modern

As has been said, Voegelin saw key elements of modernity as philosophically and spiritually connected to ancient Gnostic religious sects. In particular, Voegelin saw both ideological mass movements—for instance, fascism and communism—and dominant intellectual schools—positivism, scientism, rationalism, Freudianism, existentialism, etc.—as experientially related to Gnosticism (Sandoz 1997, xi). That is to say, adherents to such "isms"—as Voegelin liked to refer to them (Federici 2002, xxx)— share related experiences with ancient forms of Gnosticism; they experienced the world around them in similar ways.

Voegelin emphasized the distinction between two components of reality: that part of reality that exists beyond this physical world and history (the transcendent) and that part of reality that exists within the physical world and history (the immanent). Voegelin saw both as part of the truth of the structure of existence and saw genuine philosophy as marked by an openness to transcendent truth (Voegelin 1953). Conversely, Gnosticism resists transcendent reality (Voegelin [1968] 1997, 20).

Voegelin discusses the Gnostic hostility to the truth about existence—the "order of being" in his terminology—in his brief book *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism*, translated into English in 1968. There, Voegelin laid out a series of six defining characteristics of the Gnostic attitude:

1. Dissatisfaction with the surrounding world (which, Voegelin notes, is not surprising—we all have some reason not to be completely satisfied).

2. "The belief that the drawbacks of the situation can be attributed to the fact that the world is intrinsically poorly organized." (In other words, a belief that this dissatisfaction with the world is due to a deficiency in the world and not an inadequacy or fault on the Gnostic believer's part; the problem is that the world does not conform to our standards, not that we need to attune ourselves to some external truth).

3. The belief that salvation from the "evil of the world" is possible.

4. Following this, the belief that this salvation from the defects of the surrounding world means that "the order of being will have to be changed"—that is, the reality of existence will have to be transformed—through a "historical process." This is to say that the transformation that must occur will occur in, rather than beyond, world history. (This last point makes the Gnostic attempt at salvation distinct from the Christian view that, in Voegelin's words, "history will remain as it is" while redemption from the world occurs only in the transcendent, in the life to come).

5. This leads to what Voegelin calls "the gnostic trait in the narrower sense"—the distinctive feature of Gnosticism, ancient and modern: "the belief that change in the order of being lies in the realm of human action, that this salvational act is possible through man's own effort." (Again, the point of emphasis here is that this is not a task that is beyond human undertaking. Reality, in other words, is not a fixed standard for humans to accommodate themselves to or learn to work within. Rather, it is incumbent upon humans to fix the defects of reality themselves through direct action).

6. Lastly, if this salvational work is possible, the task of the Gnostic is thus to find the prescription for how to effect this transformation. "Knowledge—gnosis—of the method of altering being is the central concern of the Gnostic." What is required, therefore, in order for the defects of the order of being to be remedied, for salvation from the evils of this world to take place, is "the construction of a formula for self and world salvation" and the propagator of a Gnostic system thus presents themselves to the world "as a prophet who will proclaim his knowledge about the salvation of mankind" (Voegelin [1968] 1997, 59-60).

This review of the central features of Gnosticism—including a focus on the world's defects as it is and the need for redemption or salvation from the world's evils—immediately suggests a parallel with Christianity.

Such a parallel is not coincidental, as Gnosticism emerged as a reaction to Christianity (Voegelin [1968] 1997, 74-75). Voegelin's views on Christianity are complicated, particularly in light of his opposition to the Gnosticism that Christianity gives rise to. On the one hand, Voegelin viewed the Christian view of the transcendent God as an example of a healthy openness to transcendent reality; on the other hand, the experience of the transcendent that Christianity held forth to its believers is described by Voegelin as a difficult, if not impossible, one to maintain. Christianity offered a transcendent fulfillment for its believers. Still, this fulfillment could only be grasped through faith, and Voegelin notes that this "thread of faith, on which hangs all certainty regarding divine transcendent being, is indeed very thin" (74). Promising a transcendent reality and salvation from the evils of this world and then giving believers nothing more tangible within the physical world to grasp onto requires a heroic spiritual strength, and Voegelin subtly notes that "not all men are capable of such spiritual stamina" (74-75). Gnosticism, by contrast, presents a very appealing alternative, as it offers the believer a firmer grip on the transcendent than Christianity allows for (Voegelin [1952] 1987, 123-124). Whereas in Christianity, the believer's spiritual energy went to "the sanctification of life," Gnosticism allowed it instead to be "diverted into the more appealing, more tangible, and, above all, so much easier creation of the terrestrial paradise" (129). Voegelin thus suggests that the pull toward Gnostic constructs will likely always be strongly felt in Christian civilizations ([1968] 1997, 75).

The difference between Christianity and the manifestations of Gnosticism lies in the relationship of this world to the transcendent—to that higher reality beyond this world, beyond human action, and outside of human history. While Christianity looks to an ideal of eventual human perfection, of an experience of fulfillment and redemption in the *transcendent*—beyond this world and the reach of human action—, Gnosticism takes the Christian expectations of perfection and fulfillment and places them within the *immanent*—that is, it expects to achieve them in the here-and-now, within human history. In denying the distinct reality of a transcendent realm beyond the immanent, Voegelin argues, Gnostics reject the truth of existence. "All Gnostic movements," writes Voegelin, "are involved in the project of abolishing the constitution of being, with its origin in divine, transcendent being, and replacing it with a world-immanent order of being, the perfection of which lies in the realm of human action" ([1968] 1997, 68). Gnosticism thus manifests itself as an impatience with the imperfections of existence and a belief that a transformation of existence—of the "order of being," in Voegelin's terms—to alleviate these imperfections lies within the grasp of human action. What that transformation looks like will vary considerably between various forms of Gnosticism.

Voegelin noted that various forms of Gnosticism differed on the direction of this deliverance—on whether they offered the Gnostic believer a way *out from* the world and into the transcendent or a way of bringing the transcendent down into this world. Herein lies a major contrast between ancient and modern manifestations of the Gnostic impulse. Voegelin notes that in ancient Gnosticism, the deliverance from this evil world is done "through faith in the 'alien,' the 'hidden' God who comes to man's aid, sends him his messengers and shows him the way out of the prison of the evil God of this world" ([1968] 1997, 8). In other words, deliverance in ancient Gnosticism still required the help of a transcendent God who would help the Gnostic believer escape from the physical world and into a higher realm of existence. In modern Gnostic movements, however, there is no such transcendence out of this world; rather, the transformation and deliverance offered to man must take place within history on this plane of reality. As one Voegelin scholar put the shift: "Modern Gnosticism is especially distinguished from ancient Gnosticism by its renunciation of 'vertical' or other-worldly transcendence and its proclamation of a 'horizontal' transcendence or futuristic [perfection]—that is, intramundane or worldly salvific doctrines—as ultimate truth" (Sandoz 1997, xi-xii). In other words, whereas ancient Gnosticism attempted to overcome the evil of the immanent, physical world by escaping from it, modern Gnosticism attempted to overcome the evil of the world by transforming it and bringing about a perfection within immanent history itself. Modern Gnosticism thus takes the Christian image of a reality perfected and places it squarely within human history. In Voegelin's terminology, the transcendent is then *immanentized* or made immanent.

Two radical implications of the modern Gnostic attempt to remake the world according to a transcendent model of perfection may here be brought out. First, this transformation of the world within history endows the unfolding of the historical process itself with new significance. History can now be seen as having a meaning and a direction (Voegelin [1952] 1987, 119), as the darkness and oppressiveness of this world are removed through the workings of the historical process. Voegelin saw examples of this Gnostic faith in history at work in Enlightenment and early modern conceptions of the historical process, marking the growth of progress through history toward a future perfection (119). More radical expressions of the same idea can also easily be seen in the role that the unfolding historical process plays for Hegel or Marx in their respective transformations of reality. Thus, under Gnosticism, history can be read as having a discernible meaning—at least, to those who possess the *gnosis* or knowledge to understand its meaning. Voegelin insisted that such speculation on the meaning of history, however, was "a theoretical fallacy," noting that history can have no such observable meaning "because the course of history extends into the unknown future. The meaning of history, thus, is an illusion" (120). In other words, despite the Gnostic attempts to speculate about the direction of history and thus predict its final meaning as if they were looking already at its end, Voegelin held that such attempts were doomed to fail as the Gnostic speculators, themselves within history, had no sufficient vantage point to view or perceive history's direction or meaning. The question of why the Gnostic believer will nevertheless attempt to speculate about the meaning of history anyway will be addressed in a later section.

The second and even more radical implication is that this immanentization process— taking the transcendent aims of perfection and deliverance and transposing them into things that can be achieved in this world, the immanent—can easily produce revolutionary, even totalitarian, political movements. Modern Gnosticism attempts to bring about an earthly transcendence of sorts by taking the Christian hope of a transcendent reality—including hope in an *eschaton*, the final, culminating transformation and perfection of the world at the end of history with Christ's second coming—and bringing about the same transformation within history. The difference, again, between such Gnostic attempts and Christianity is that the Gnostic is not content to wait for a transcendent God to bring about this transformation but desires rather to bring it about on the Gnostic's terms and on the Gnostic's timeframe. It is in this sense that Voegelin describes modern Gnostic movements in one work as "the immanentization of the Christian idea of perfection" ([1968] 1997, 68). and in another as the "immanentization of the eschaton" ([1952] 1987, 188). Among the many manifestations of this particular impulse within Gnosticism are various millenarian religious movements and utopian totalitarian systems such as Marxism and National Socialism, all of which promise the reconfiguration of human nature and the radical transformation of society. Such radical attempts at immanentization can naturally manifest as revolutionary movements, as Gnostic adherents believe their dreams of a world transformed to be waiting just on the other side of a change in political regimes. Voegelin describes the revolutionary fervor of 17th Century English Puritans in this light:

> The Gnostic revolutionary... interprets the coming of the realm [i.e., the eschaton] as an event that requires his military co-operation. In chapter 20 of Revelation, an angel comes down from heaven and throws Satan into the bottomless pit for a thousand years; in the Puritan Revolution, the Gnostics arrogate this angelic function to themselves (145).

Like with attempts to discern the movement or the meaning of history, however, Voegelin holds that such attempts at establishing a kingdom of God on earth will not succeed. The overarching aim of these revolutionary Gnostic movements—"a change in the nature of man and the establishment of a transfigured society"—is impossible to realize (152). Their visions of a world remade may be mere "fantasy" (Voegelin [1968] 1997, 73), and the theoretical systems they construct a "dream-world" (Sandoz, xii), but the Gnostic dreamers' real-world impact is attested to by the human destruction left in their wake.

With these radical implications of modern Gnosticism being realized, we may return to discussing the common tendencies of Gnostic movements. Between ancient and modern Gnosticism, and even between various forms of Gnosticism within the modern world, Voegelin recognized that there would exist considerable differences in how the Gnostic tendency presents itself; it need not always take the form of revolutionary utopianism, although Voegelin saw such radical expressions as the most revealing of Gnosticism's true nature (Voegelin [1952] 1987, 152). To summarize the preceding section, three features common to all forms of Gnosticism may be noted here. First, Voegelin notes that in both ancient and modern Gnosticism, "Gnostic man must carry on the work of salvation himself" ([1968] 1997, 8), noting that this "labor of salvation" can take any number of forms. All of these forms, though, involve the individual freeing themselves from the constraints of the evil world and reconstituting themselves as required for their coming salvation—whether that transformation takes place within the soul of the individual Gnostic (8) in ancient Gnosticism or within the unfolding historical process, in modern. Secondly, all Gnostics find themselves hostile to the existing order of being, and the aim of all Gnostic movements is "the destruction of the old world and passage to the next" (8). Lastly, in ancient and modern Gnosticism, the "instrument of salvation" is the same: *gnosis* or knowledge (9). Voegelin notes that since, for Gnosticism, it is *agnoia*—ignorance—that "entangles" the individual within the corrupted world, it is through *gnosis* that the soul has the opportunity to "disentangle itself through knowledge of its true life and its condition of alienness in this world" (9). Thus, for Voegelin, the possession of *gnosis* or hidden knowledge offers its adherents not just knowledge in general, but knowledge of the following: the true nature of who the believer is, the true nature

of the corrupted order of the current world and its hostility to them, and the means of deliverance from their current oppression (7-8).

We might also add that, in modern Gnosticism, *gnosis* also provides both the means of transforming the current world and also the framework for discerning the true meaning and direction of historical events. We may further point out that this process of historical speculation must necessarily involve the prediction of future events; such predictions may of course be of varying degrees of specificity, but any speculation that fails to predict where history is going cannot in any meaningful sense be said to speak of its direction. Moreover, modern Gnostics do not see themselves as passive observers in history either, but the Gnostic desire to actively reshape reality leads to a view of history as "a closed process manipulated by the revolutionary elite—the few who understand the path, process, and goal of history as it moves from stage to stage toward some sort of final perfect realm (Hegel, Marx, Comte, National Socialism)" (Sandoz 1997, xii). This understanding of history by the revolutionary elite is *gnosis*. All of these functions, this paper argues, the QAnon conspiracy theory promises to provide to its adherents. Having already provided a brief summary of that theory, its history and its central tenets, in the introduction to this paper, a few brief additional points on the QAnon phenomenon bear mentioning; we may then proceed to an extended application of Voegelin's theory to explain an otherwise-puzzling phenomenon.

QAnon and Gnosis

One feature of QAnon that may contribute to its appeal is the flexibility of the system. Beyond the core set of QAnon beliefs already discussed, there is a surprisingly wide array of views held by QAnon adherents. Part of this is surely due to the often-cryptic nature of Q's postings, leading believers to draw their own inferences, as well as rely on the interpretations of influential secondary commentators who share their own interpretations of Q's messages with their online followers (LaFrance 2020). While the vision of a coming Great Awakening may unite them, QAnon adherents diverge on their focus, as well as their interpretation of various events; there exists, for instance, a variety of viewpoints on the identity of Q (LaFrance 2020). QAnon tends also to incorporate elements of other conspiracy theories, leading a podcast dedicated to the phenomenon to label it a "big tent conspiracy theory" (QAnon Anonymous 2018). This wide divergence among QAnon followers may contribute to the resilience of the theory: if an adherent is aware of the various interpretative factions within the movement, a disproving of any particular interpretation or prediction may lead the adherent to simply choose another faction, rather than quitting belief in QAnon altogether.

One other notable feature of the QAnon theory, likely relevant to a study of its appeal and spiritual nature, is its participatory quality. Adherents are exhorted by Q to study and apply his predictions themselves—"do your own research" (LaFrance 2020). They are also instructed not only to ignore traditional mainstream media sources, but to act as their replacement—"You are the news now" (LaFrance 2020). Put differently, QAnon demands of its adherents not passive obedience, but active participation. "QAnon is deeply participatory, in a way that few other popular conspiracy theories have been," writes Kevin Roose for *The New York Times*. "Followers congregate online to decode the latest Q posts, discuss their theories about the news of the day, and bond with their fellow believers" (Roose 2021). Such collaboration is not surprising, for many reasons: one can easily imagine that a sense of solidarity revolving around shared belief and shared purpose would fill an emotional need among adherents, particularly during the loneliness and isolation of the 2020 Covid-19 lockdowns when the movement rapidly expanded (Roose 2021).

But such solidary incentives for belief in QAnon are insufficient to answer a deeper question: what purpose does such a participatory element serve within QAnon? From the sceptic's point of view, one may see this requirement of active participation as either a fortuitous accident or a shrewd psychological ploy to encourage deeper engagement and belief. But from the believer's point of view, what purpose does participation by QAnon followers serve in the system of thought itself? The fact that Q is sharing these insights at all would suggest that he sees belief and participation with the system as a necessary component for its success, but exactly what it is that Q expects believers to contribute to the project is highly ambiguous. Adrienne LaFrance, in a long essay on the phenomenon for *The Atlantic*, summarized this paradoxical aspect of QAnon: "The eventual destruction of the global cabal is imminent, Q prophesies, but can be accomplished only with the support of patriots who search for meaning in Q's clues" (LaFrance 2020). LaFrance doesn't bring out the obvious question, but it is not at all clear what purpose Q's followers and interpreters have if the coming Great Awakening is already set to occur and—at least to some followers—is divinely preordained.

It is here that Voegelin's account of Gnosticism begins to help shape our understanding of the movement. For there is nothing internal to the QAnon theory that would, on its face, require active participation in the movement—Trump could just as easily expose the members of the cabal with or without their prior understanding of what he was doing. The possibility thus presents itself that Q is inviting his adherents into the same creative activity he is engaged in. They are not passive recipients or observers of the system he is creating; they are co-creators with him. When Q encourages his listeners to "do [their] own research," he is inviting them into participation in the same speculative activity that he is engaging in: participation in the act of studying history as it unfolds to understand its true nature, participation in the act of reconstructing the narrative of events to fit

their own understanding of their deeper significance. When he tells his listeners "you are the news now," he is not asking them so much to announce an external reality they have discovered, so much as to participate in the shaping of a new construction of reality as they would prefer it to be—the way his followers believe the mainstream media shapes and contorts reality to suit its own purposes. Q is inviting his listeners into participation in the reconstruction of reality. This will, of necessity, involve the destruction of the old reality, a reality seen by QAnon believers as corrupt and vile. QAnon appeals to these alienated souls who feel that the world and their country is not as it should be, and tells them that by possessing the right knowledge, they can make it whatever they want it to be.

It may be worth pausing here to dwell on the revolutionary nature and appeal of QAnon, for the claim in this paper that it offers its adherents the ability to participate in the reshaping of reality is not one that may be immediately apparent to the casual observer. It is true that the QAnon belief system, as developed in Q's postings, is far from a systematic account of history—on the level of Hegel or Marx, for instance—or an explicit and fully-worked-out conception of how belief in QAnon can lead to its followers' personal or collective redemption—on the level of other forms of ancient or modern Gnosticism. It is worth noting that some prominent secondary interpreters of Q may indeed have more fleshed-out systems of thought, particularly when, as has been emphasized, QAnon tends to adopt and incorporate elements of preexisting theories, including those adopting and borrowing from overtly religious systems of thought; for instance, Mark Taylor is a prominent QAnon theorist and self-described "prophet" who blends interpretations of QAnon with interpretations of Biblical end-times prophecies (Crossley 2021, 97). Many Christian adherents to QAnon appear also to have had a preexisting tendency, common in certain Evangelical circles, to draw links between Biblical end-times prophecies—in the Book of Revelation, for instance—and contemporary world events (LaFrance 2020). In other words, many participants in the QAnon phenomenon may indeed come to QAnon already having in place a much more fleshed-out system of belief that they incorporate Q's posts into.

Moreover, it is hard to overstate the radical nature of QAnon. For its adherents, it promises to open up to them the prospect of an alternative reality far from the one reported on in the mainstream news: a reality of clear delineations between good and evil, and one where history is moving toward a definitive goal, knowable to them but not to nonbelievers. The promise of the coming "storm" necessarily requires a speculation about the direction of history, and adherents are explicitly encouraged to engage with Q in that process of speculation by "doing their own research." The fact that this speculation is then carried out chiefly by secondary commentators—or their individual viewers—does not diminish the Gnostic nature of the reconstruction of reality being engaged in, even if each individual believer's speculation may not rise to the same level as a Hegel or a Marx.

This decentralized nature of the QAnon phenomenon—with individual believers being encouraged to fill in the considerable gaps through their own "research"—also gives an insight into a related question revolving around the asserted link between Gnosticism and QAnon: if modern Gnosticism calls for actively remaking the current evil world to make it align with the Gnostic theorizer's proposed vision, why are more QAnon believers not attempting to transform the physical world around them to enact this vision? This question is partially answered by noting that Q does call adherents to the theory to engage in some actions—e.g. "do your own research," "trust the plan," pray, etc.—,albeit not overtly political or revolutionary ones. Much of the Gnostic activity that QAnon followers are called to is on the level of theorizing alternative meanings of events as they occur, not on trying to change the material world. In fact, one can interpret Q's statements as communicating to believers that the work is being done for them by Trump and others, and they need only "enjoy the show"—a favorite rallying cry of Q's (LaFrance 2020); the call to research and critical inquiry is designed to liberate followers in their own minds—to lift their consciousness to see what Q is doing, not to change outward political structures. In other words, QAnon may offer its adherents something in between the promises of ancient and modern Gnosticisms: on one hand, an individualized and internalized deliverance from a false conception of reality, and on the other hand a transformed social and political environment rid of pernicious evil influences.

At the same time, it is hardly surprising that some QAnon adherents should choose to engage in such revolutionary action if they feel that existing political figures are unable, or unwilling, to bring about the "storm" without their prompting or their insistence—and thus we do see QAnon devotees occasionally attempting to take matters in their own hands, as on the January 6 attack on the Capitol and the 2022 attempted German coup, as discussed earlier. Finally, we may note again that Voegelin held that Gnosticism need not always manifest itself as a revolutionary movement, although he did see such manifestations when they did occur as particularly instructive as to the true nature of Gnosticism (Voegelin [1952] 1987, 152). In trying to understand the spiritual nature—in Voegelin's sense of the term—of QAnon, the willingness of its adherents to engage in violence to bring about their ends may be less important than other features: a sense of alienation from the world around them, a belief that relief from this alienation is possible through the possession of secret knowledge, and a hope for a remade world on the other side of a climactic struggle within history. These latter features QAnon certainly displays.

The Psychological Appeal of QAnon

This sense of hostility toward reality and a desire to remake it according to our own wishes is of course a key aspect of Voegelin's account of Gnosticism. Voegelin wrote that, among the various Gnostic experiences and symbols, the defining

feature was a feeling of alienation, a sense of not belonging in the world as it was experienced, and a desire to find a way back to another world to which we belong:

> The world is no longer the well-ordered, the cosmos, in which Hellenic man felt at home; nor is it the Judaeo-Christian world that God created and found good. Gnostic man no longer wishes to perceive in admiration the intrinsic order of the cosmos. For him the world has become a prison from which he wants to escape ([1968] 1997, 7).

Voegelin notes that for both pre-Christian Greek philosophy and in the Judeo-Christian conception of God, our experience of reality is a given: an external reality that is not under our control (35). The goal of Gnosticism, on the other hand, is to destroy what it perceives as a bad world and to replace it with a better one of its own creation (35). This requires, of course, that the structure of reality is not a given, but rather something that is within the power of humans to shape for themselves (35). But one may wonder why people would believe that the structure of reality is under their control, when their daily experiences with reality would suggest that the world is not under their control, that they are not able to make of it what they will. Where then does this desire to remake the world come from, when the desire itself is easily seen not to fit with reality?

One may ask a similar question about the QAnon believer: why would they be eager to participate in the reconstruction of reality or in speculation on the meaning of history when common experience tell them such reconstruction and such speculation are pointless? The simplest answer is to say that the attraction to this project is because they *desire* it to be true. In her essay for *The Atlantic*, LaFrance quotes a QAnon believer, Shelly, that she interviewed describing the appeal for her as soon as she first encountered the theory online: "For me, it was revealing some things that maybe I was hoping would come to pass" (LaFrance 2020). One may naturally ask why anyone would hope that the world is run by a secretive evil cabal. Shelly, according to LaFrance, is frustrated at the world as it is: schools, banks, the media, "even our churches are out of whack." To the alienated soul opposed to the reality around them, there is a *desire*, a hope, to remake the world. What then is the nature of this desire?

Voegelin finds the answer to this question by turning to the creator of another Gnostic system, Friedrich Nietzsche. In Nietzsche's concept of the will to power, the *libido dominandi*. Voegelin finds the key to the desire to overcome and remake the structure of reality as it currently exists. This will to power is tied to the Gnostic's desire to destroy what it sees as a corrupted reality and to create its own instead. To submit in humility to the structure of reality as it is—to acknowledge the natural limits on man and society as outside of their control—would require them to lay aside their visions of a transformed humanity, society, and politics (Federici 2002, 73). The will to power, then, triumphs over humility in the Gnostic defiance against the order of being; but, as Voegelin notes, the will to power has not actually triumphed—it gains no real power over the structure of reality, despite its rebellion against it:

> [T]he constitution of being remains what it is—beyond the reach of the [Gnostic] thinker's lust for power. It is not changed by the fact that a thinker drafts a program to change it and fancies that he can implement that program. The result, therefore, is not dominion over being, but a fantasy satisfaction ([1968] 1997, 73).

In other words, the will to power drives the Gnostic to rebellion against the order of being; the will to power "strikes against the wall of being, which has become a prison," (20) and in the process, the will to power is turned into "the will to intellectual deception" (19). When considering the spiritual hopes that believers have put into this dream-world Gnostic fantasy—a coming, climactic victory of good over evil, of a society and a world renewed, and of vindication for themselves and their fellow Gnostics against those who have doubted them—giving up this fantasy and submitting to the givenness of a reality that they find oppressive and corrupt is too much to do. Much more palatable is to allow themselves to be deceived, but deceived into believing something that, like Shelly, they were "hoping to come to pass."

The QAnon adherent, then, has been deceived. And deceived at multiple levels: at one level they have deceived themselves, at another level they have been deceived by the professional social media influencers who have introduced them to this theory, and ultimately by the original creator of this system, by Q. While allowing that Gnostic believers often are engaged in self-deception, Voegelin does not absolve the creators of Gnostic systems of moral responsibility, calling Marx an "intellectual swindler," who spread a view of reality he knew to be false, as evidenced by the fact he barred philosophical examination of his system ([1968] 1997, 19). Deeper than the self-deception of the Gnostic follower is the awareness, at least in the first propagator of the system, that the system is false; Q is not self-deceived, whoever it is knows that these predictions are not true and that he has no such inside knowledge of immanent arrests and secret cabals. Voegelin hypothesizes that at its core, as the Gnostic creator persists in his deception in full knowledge of its falsity, the *libido dominandi*, the will to power, carries the deception further down in rebellion against the idea of a transcendent reality beyond our control (22-23).

In addition to the will to power, another potential explanation as to the psychological appeal of QAnon lies in the degree of certainty it affords its adherents. Voegelin notes that the Gnostic constructs will constantly be colliding against the constraints of the constitution of being, which has not actually changed, despite Gnosticism's rebellion against it. Voegelin suggests that

the Gnostic believers are blinded to the problems with their systems through a desire to achieve "a certainty about the meaning of history and about their own place in it," which outside of the Gnostic construct is not possible ([1952] 1987, 122). The appeal of such certainty to QAnon believers is understandable: witnessing disorienting global events and distrustful of various institutions that in previous generations might be trusted to help make sense of the world, QAnon believers are hungry for a theory that clearly explains world events and offers a degree of certainty in an uncertain world. Beaty quotes one pastor who attributes the appeal of QAnon within his church to broader societal trends: the "death of expertise" and a sense that "nothing feels authoritative right now" and they will have to "find [their] own truth" (Beaty 2020). This degree of certainty is only offered within Gnosticism. As has been said, standing within the stream of history, we have no vantage point to ascertain the meaning or direction of history; Gnosticism offers its adherents the assurance of how history will play out in the end, and a confidence about what role they play in what would otherwise be an unfolding mystery. Philosophy too fails to deliver the certainty that Gnostic believers crave, as philosophy springs from a desire to perceive and orient oneself toward a transcendent truth that the philosopher realizes is outside of his control; the Gnostic, by contrast, seeks to dominate and seize control over the order of being (Voegelin [1968] 1997, 30).

Interestingly, this desire for certainty is echoed by a contemporary philosopher of Voegelin's, Hannah Arendt who, like Voegelin, was also a refugee from the Nazi regime. In her essay "Truth and Politics" in *Between Past and Future*, Arendt reflected on what was unique about the lies told by the Nazi regime. Such falsehoods, Arendt argued, went beyond "the traditional political lie" to something much larger: an attempt to reconstruct reality (Arendt 1968, 252). The goal of such lies was "not to flatter reality" as in traditional falsehoods, "but to offer a full-fledged substitute for it" (252). Traditional lies, smaller and more specific to particular facts, are eventually revealed by their incongruence with the larger "fabric of factuality," while Arendt noted that "big lies" amounting to the total reconstruction of reality by totalitarian regimes could be immune to such incongruencies:

> [I]f the modern political lies are so big that they require a complete rearrangement of the whole factual texture—the making of another reality, as it were, into which they will fit without seam, crack, or fissure, exactly as the facts fitted into their own original context—what prevents these new stories, images, and non-facts from becoming an adequate substitute for reality and factuality (253-254)?

This internal consistency is indeed key to the appeal of the new reality; as one scholar commenting on Arendt's theory explained the connection, "masses crave consistency in reality as a reassurance in the face of their loss of self-control and self-determination. Here ideologies fit the bill perfectly….Consistency is what the masses want; thence, as Arendt saw it, ideology is what they get" (Nelson 1978, 274). Thus, in calling QAnon believers to "do their own research," Q is inviting them into a construction of a reality that will—at least to adherents—certainly appear to be more consistent, predictable, and historically certain than the relative inconsistency and unpredictability of reality as it is perceived outside of the QAnon belief system.

This artificial, manufactured level of internal consistency and predictability—so much greater in a constructed ideology than in the comparatively inconsistent and unpredictable real world—thus draws believers in by seeming to be more rational and more plausible than actual reality. Arendt notes this paradoxical phenomenon in her essay "Lying in Politics" in *Crises of the Republic*:

> [L]ies are often much more plausible, more appealing to reason, than reality, since the liar has the great advantage of knowing beforehand what the audience wishes or expects to hear. He has prepared his story for public consumption with a careful eye to making it credible, whereas reality has the disconcerting habit of confronting us with the unexpected, for which we were not prepared (Arendt 1972, 6-7).

Thus, for Arendt as for Voegelin, ideological systems promise their adherents new realities that seem, to their adherents, to be more plausible and more rational than reality as it is understood outside of the belief system. Gnostic systems can indeed be constructed to fit exactly what seems most plausible to the adherents, and this artificial level of internal consistency fits with the certainty the Gnostic system provides its believers on the ultimate meaning of history, as it provides meaning to otherwise-disconnected events that can all be seen by adherents as pointing toward an established historical end point. Such certainty and such consistency are not available outside of the Gnostic system.

QAnon: Ersatz Religion

Voegelin argued that Christianity does not offer believers the same degree of certainty as Gnostic systems did. "Uncertainty is the very essence of Christianity," writes Voegelin ([1952] 1987, 122). Compared to the pre-Christian pagan "world full of gods," the world within Christian is "de-divinized," and the transcendent God of Christianity is much less tangible, accessible to the believer only through "the tenuous bond of faith, in the sense of Heb. 11:1, as the substance of things hoped for and the proof of

things unseen" (122). Against this faith in a transcendent God, as has been argued in a previous section, Gnosticism promises the establishment of a terrestrial paradise through "immanentizing the eschaton." The world is even further "de-divinized" by the Enlightenment and the advance of Gnostic doctrines such as positivism and rationalism that further separate modern people from divine reality; the spiritual void in their wake is filled by the "pseudo-religions" of modern ideological movements (Federici 2002, 55). It is thus that the modern world sees the rise of "immanentizing political religions" (55) that may have some superficial similarities to Christianity or other genuine experiences of the transcendent, but upon inspection the deliverance they offer is a purely intramundane one—one that takes place solely within this world, and one that it is within the possibility of humanity to bring about on its own.

Thus, despite the Christian symbolism on the surface of QAnon—Q will quote Christian scripture and instruct his followers to pray (LaFrance 2020)—, it is not difficult to see that the deliverance it offers is purely immanentized: the spiritual battle between the forces of light and darkness is synonymous with the conflict between Trump and the corrupt elites, the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth is initiated by sentencing corrupt elites through military tribunals. Even Q's references to scripture tend to impart an intramundane (i.e. within this world) reading to scriptures, as they seamlessly toggle between the Christian's spiritual struggle against sin with a supposed earthly struggle between Trump and Democrats. One example of this comes on April 8, 2020, a post by Q suggested that Democrats were deliberately promoting "mass hysteria" over Covid-19 for political gain: "What is the primary benefit to keep public in mass-hysteria re: COVID-19. Think voting. Are you awake yet? Q." The post then concluded with the Apostle Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil" (LaFrance 2020). In QAnon, in other words, scriptural commands are recast to fit the demands of an earthly political movement. It is possible too that some Evangelicals came to QAnon already prepared for such an immanentized reading of scripture through a previous practice of attempting to connect Biblical end-times prophecies in the Book of Revelation to contemporary political and economic events. Some QAnon believers, it seems, are eager to link the foretold "Storm" with Biblical end-times prophecies (LaFrance 2020). It should be remembered that Voegelin saw Gnosticism as permeating much of modern society; the fact that many Christians would have an easy time believing that human action could play some role in either accomplishing or hastening the eschaton is consistent with Voegelin's analysis.

The Resiliency of QAnon

In addition to the emotional investment Gnostic believers put into the movements and the degree of certainty that the Gnostic believer is offered, Voegelin describes other mechanisms that Gnostic systems will use to inoculate their followers against disbelief in the system when the Gnostic construct's "disregard for the structure of reality" ([1952] 1987, 173) leads to its falsehood becoming apparent (Federici 2002, 71). One such "technical device" offered by Gnosticism is what Voegelin labels, perhaps confusingly for some readers, a Gnostic *koran*—a "systematic formulation of the new doctrine" which keeps each adherent from adhering to their own interpretations and reorients them to a comprehensive "formulation of truth that would make recourse to earlier literature unnecessary" ([1952] 1987, 139). In a certain sense, "Q drops" do not seem to fit this standard, as they are not systematic or comprehensive, allowing considerable room for various interpretations of their meaning; a key part of the movement is, as we have seen, that Q invites believers into participation with him in the creation of his new body of knowledge. Moreover, it is not technically true that Q cuts off his followers from all preexisting belief, as QAnon tends to incorporate and borrow elements from various preexisting conspiracy theories. At the same time, Voegelin notes that this "codification of truth" serves as "the spiritual and intellectual nourishment of the faithful" (140) which does fit some descriptions of the QAnon treatment of Q's postings. It is perhaps questionable whether such a comprehensive, ready-made explanation of all events would be as appealing to these followers who are skeptical and distrustful of traditional authorities and whose preference for trusting "their own research" was presumably a prerequisite for the movement's appeal. On the other hand, it is possible that the uncertainty this distrust generates would leave some followers even more open to the certainty and psychological security that comes with having their "research" done for them.

A second way that Gnostic systems inoculate their believers against counter-argument from outside the system is through what Voegelin labels the "prohibition of questioning" ([1968] 1997, 15). In other words, the creator of a Gnostic system precludes adherents from asking certain questions that do not first buy into the basic presuppositions of the Gnostic construction, and thus problematic aspects of reality are dispensed with without argument. For instance, the positivist will not entertain questions about moral values. Voegelin gives the example of Marx, who dismisses problematic questions by declaring that "socialist man"—that is, the man who buys into Marx's presuppositions—does not ask himself such questions (17). Similarly, the QAnon believer is not likely to accept challenges to the system based on reporting by mainstream media sources, which they believe to be corrupt and, in at least some cases, part of the evil cabal of elites. Only by accepting certain premises first, in other words, is the Gnostic believer willing to entertain objections to their system. Put differently, one must buy into the Gnostic construct in order to criticize it. The result, according to Voegelin, is that the Gnostic construct proves itself to be remarkably unshakable: "the attitude is psychologically iron-clad and beyond shaking by argument" ([1952] 1987, 137). This

appearance of invincibility surely contributes to the sense of certainty that Gnostic adherents have in their system. But this degree of certainty is, of course, deceptive. The grasp on transcendent reality may appear firmer when it has been immanentized by the Gnostic system, but this is only because the transcendent reality itself has been lost.

The Recovery of Truth

Herein lies the difference between philosophy and Gnosticism, to Voegelin: philosophy does not pretend to possess knowledge itself, but only the love of knowledge (*philo-sophos*), whereas Gnosticism desires to possess, to control "actual knowledge," to use Hegel's term (Voegelin [1968] 1997, 29). Maintaining such a grasp of the transcendent is impossible: "the leap over the bounds of the finite into the perfection of actual knowledge is impossible. If a thinker attempts it, he is not advancing philosophy, but abandoning it to become a Gnostic" (29). It was the recovery of this love of knowledge, this openness to the existence of a transcendent reality that lies beyond our control that Voegelin saw as the only source for recovery in the modern world. This recovery of genuine philosophy, of a sense of the transcendent, is a tall order, but Voegelin saw it as the only solution to curing the "spiritual disease" at the heart of modern Gnosticism.

The solutions modern society itself offers up to cure the ills of such deformations of reality are not at all helpful, according to Voegelin. Voegelin pushed back, for instance, on the solutions offered by modern critics of Nazism. He argued, for instance, that offering up "ethical counter-propaganda" was not an adequate response to Nazism; Voegelin, of course, agreed that the Nazis had committed immoral acts and he disapproved of these acts, but argued that merely responding on the level of moral condemnation failed to address the deeper spiritual disease that gave birth to such actions (Federici 2002, 5-6). Similarly, Voegelin also argued against certain representations of Nazism as a return to the "Dark Ages" or a rejection of Enlightenment values (6)—an argument that is strikingly similar to LaFrance's description of QAnon as "a movement united in mass rejection of reason, objectivity, and other Enlightenment values" (LaFrance 2020). Voegelin, of course, saw such positivistic reliance on "facts" as but a different manifestation of Gnosticism—"the struggle against the consequences of Gnosticism is being conducted in the very language of Gnosticism," as genuine philosophical knowledge had been destroyed ([1968] 1997, xx)—and argued that it would have no hope of curing the hostility in the modern world toward the true nature of reality. Voegelin saw Nazism as the direct outgrowth of modernity, not a turning away from it.

For Voegelin, the only alternative was to present a genuinely true vision of reality, including transcendent reality, and for people in the modern world to orient their hearts to it. Perhaps the most discomforting part of Voegelin's analysis to the modern reader is his suggestion that the spiritual disease that manifests itself in murderous totalitarian regimes and transparently-false conspiracy theories is one that infects a large portion of modern Western society (Federici 2002, 10). In the Nazi lectures, delivered from Berlin in 1964, Voegelin suggested that the same spiritual conditions that had given birth to Nazism were still prevalent in German society 20 years later and had not been addressed; the reaction was so fierce that it prompted him to leave Germany a second time and return to the United States (9-10).

Voegelin's solution—that the crisis giving birth to QAnon and other Gnostic manifestations can not be addressed, except through a new acceptance of "the truth of man's spiritual existence" (17)—is no doubt a difficult solution to sell to modern people. The point, though, is not to return to Christianity or some other historical insight into transcendent reality, some past formulation of the truth of existence; rather, as Michael Federici puts it in his introduction to Voegelin's thought, "the true, the good, and the beautiful must be rediscovered and reconstituted in each historical age" (Federici 2002, 27). Nevertheless, past discoveries of truth—such as ancient Greek philosophy or Christianity—"can illuminate the present search for order" by helping to orient the philosopher toward transcendent truth (27-28). No doubt this recovery of order will not be an easy project. As has been said, the Gnostic attitude has considerable appeal when compared to the comparatively hard work of philosophical and spiritual attunement to divine reality (68). Voegelin notes, moreover, that in a culture that has already been spiritually depleted, resistance against the Gnostic temptation is even harder (69). As Federici describes the dilemma, "the impatience and idealism of the modern personality" make the prospect of Gnostic revolution through mass political action or through ideological conformity more appealing than the hard work of attaining virtue (69-70). Gnosticism's temptation of easy fixes, however, runs both ways: just as removing the evil and corruption from society is assuredly a harder task than simply storming the Capitol on January 6, 2021, so too recovering a healthy sense of the whole of reality and restoring a humility toward the constitution of being is a harder project than confronting QAnon believers with "the facts."

Nevertheless, Voegelin was optimistic about the opportunity for the recovery of truth. Gnosticism's "disregard for the structure of reality" makes it ultimately self-defeating in the long run (Voegelin [1952] 1987, 173). Despite the prevalence of Gnosticism throughout Western society, contemporary society contained healthy elements as well (176). Gnosticism, wrote Voegelin, "in spite of its noisy ascendancy, does not by far have the field for itself... the building-up of spiritual and intellectual resistance against Gnosticism in all its variants is a notable factor in our society" and may prove to be a decisive turning-point toward resolving the Western crisis (165). Through philosophy, the soul can turn in openness toward the truth of existence and so can again.

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A Review of 'High Stakes Diplomacy': Fostering Effective Negotiation Skills through Experiential Learning

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ABSTRACT

For some time, simulations have been used to understand the complexity of international relations and diplomacy. Many contemporary teacher-scholars believe using simulations, games, and strategic exercises is the most effective way to teach learners negotiation skills. This multi-day immersive setting allows students to develop character profiles and apply theory-driven strategies to a real-world diplomatic crisis. Develop the High Stakes Diplomacy (HSD) model of principled negotiation for use in international relations and diplomacy courses. HSD is an experiential learning simulation designed to educate learners on the perils of positional bargaining in international negotiation, enhance student leadership and followership experiences, and engender positive diplomacy skills. The High Stakes Diplomacy simulation, developed in January 2022, supports the application of experiential learning techniques for knowledge retention, student learning, student motivation, and theory-building. To assess learning, this study draws on Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning, which consists of four points of awareness: (1) concrete experience, (2) reflective observation, (3) abstract conceptualization, and (4) active experimentation. The frequentative negotiation rounds occurred across three 75-minute class sessions. The author used pre-assessments, multiparty peer observations, and a post-assessment survey and debriefing to gauge learning outcomes and experiment validity. The post-simulation survey revealed that 83.3 percent of participants found the High Stakes Diplomacy simulation facilitated greater learning of the method of principled negotiation. This result reflects a 50 percent increase in student learning from pre-assessment levels.

Introduction

Using simulations in international relations (IR) courses is not new. Scholars have developed and employed this form of experiential learning since the 1950s (Lantis 1998). Harold Guetzkow and his five colleagues created one of the earliest IR simulations, the Inter-Nation Simulation (Guetzkow et al. 1963). The Inter-Nation Simulation provides players with rules for mimicking the national decision-making structure of a nation-state and describing their capabilities in the international system. It incorporates domestic constraints on policymaking into the student experience (Coplin 1966). Since Guetzkow et al.'s experiential learning breakthrough, the development and use of simulations for IR courses have grown exponentially and have become a regular element of coursework (e.g., Lantis 1998; Thomas 2002; Wheeler 2006; Matzner and Herrenbrück 2017; Raymond and Sorensen 2017; Siegel and Young 2009; Brynen 2010; Hendrickson 2021; Schechter 2021).

One factor the simulations mentioned above have in common is their desire to educate students on applying international relations theory to real-world contexts. This simulation is different. The High Stakes Diplomacy (HSD) simulation uses contemporary international conflicts to apprise students of the tools of international negotiation. The benefit of this approach resides in its multi-day programmatic structure. Facilitators may substitute this crisis topic with another as they adhere to the multi-day learning architecture. This flexibility empowers facilitators to tailor topical content to their class needs.

Study Objectives

High Stakes Diplomacy obtained a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) experiential learning endorsement in April 2022 at the university where it was developed. QEP endorsements are awarded to experiential learning opportunities recognized as possessing "High Impact Practices," which significantly contribute to student success and growth. This study aims to investigate how using an in-class experiential learning game enhances knowledge comprehension of Roger Fisher and William Ury's (1981) method of principled negotiation. There are four central objectives:

- Study Objective 1: Teach students about the perils of positional bargaining and the danger of this approach to interparty relations.

- Study Objective 2: Demonstrate the utility and long-term benefits of principled negotiation as described by the authors.

- Study Objective 3: Connect the method of principled negotiation to real-world, high-impact events that concern war, peace, and diplomacy.

- Study Objective 4: Educate students on contemporary diplomatic crises through experiential and active learning techniques.

This simulation facilitates active learning of negotiation strategies "for students who [do and] do not respond well to more conventional approaches" in higher education (Newmann and Twigg 2000, 835). The following section defines the experiential learning model used to develop the High Stakes Diplomacy simulation and the research design. Section three introduces the simulation's format and multi-day structure, while the penultimate section reviews the study's results and highlights student experiences. Finally, this article concludes with a brief discussion of experiential learning and its implications for the future.

Experiential Learning and Diplomatic Negotiations: Applying David Kolb's Model

Over the past several decades, higher education has seen a multidimensional shift from lecture-based classrooms to "learner-centered environments" (Misseyanni et al. 2018, 1). The High Stakes Diplomacy simulation was developed using David Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model of knowledge acquisition. Kolb argues that learning is fundamentally broader than our contemporary understandings of the "school classroom." Most experiential learning models, including Kolb's, suggest that learning is rooted in a natural tension. Conflict ensues when existing beliefs, values, and concepts encounter alternative explanations, resulting in knowledge creation. Learning, at its core, is fundamentally a "process of human adaptation," wherein we broaden our knowledge, skills, and attitudes by confronting new facts and theories of change (Kolb 1984, 32). Kolb's model of experiential learning is composed of four central features: a concrete experience (CE), reflective observation (RO), abstract conceptualization (AC), and active experimentation (AE) (Ibid, 30). These features form the basis of HSD and this study's research design.

According to Kolb, effective learners must demonstrate four kinds of skills. First, learners must willingly enter new experiences without bias (CE). Introducing new experiences allows knowledge creation, ordinarily by challenging existing learner perceptions. This is often the largest hurdle in simulations: achieving buy-in from student participants. The second stage of the experiential learning process – RO – empowers learners to reflect on their new experiences from diverse perspectives. Reflection is an intellectual exercise that stimulates critical thinking in the learner. RO forces students to be aware of their actions vis-à-vis the simulation, helping them make astute observations about the quality of their decision-making process. Third, based on their reflections, the learner must develop "concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories (AC)" (Ibid). This stage allows students to comprehend the material and connect their actions in the simulation to the scholarly theory underpinning the exercise. Finally, the participant shall use these theories to inform future behavior (AE) by converting knowledge obtained in the simulation "to make decisions and solve problems" (Ibid).

The benefit of an active learning process, as described by Kolb (1984), is that the learner becomes a crucial part of knowledge creation compared to traditional lecture, where knowledge is merely transferred from instructor to student. Effective learning is achieved through this iterative learning process. With active learning simulations, the learner becomes an equal party to knowledge creation and may often discover new perspectives that would have otherwise been lost during traditional educational methods.

The High Stakes Diplomacy Simulation

High Stakes Diplomacy was developed to illustrate the many challenges of international negotiation present in our world today. This simulation was constructed in January 2022 during Russia's military buildup along Ukraine's northern and eastern borders. High Stakes Diplomacy was first playtested with students four days before the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Simulation Design
This simulation was developed for upper-division international relations and political science courses, where students understand global issues, the international system, foreign policy, and diplomacy. HSD was developed in accordance with a player-centric design process, meaning the simulation emphasizes learner experiences over procedural objectives (c.f., Fullerton 2014; Montserrat et al. 2017; Deterding et al. 2011). By deepening the simulation's realism and character composition, the exercise enables students to internalize learning outcomes by enhancing their educational adventure. Before implementation, the simulation underwent peer review by five content specialists and one teaching and learning professional. HSD adhered to Neves et al.'s (2021) design process; once the simulation reached viability, it was formally tested with students. The author playtested
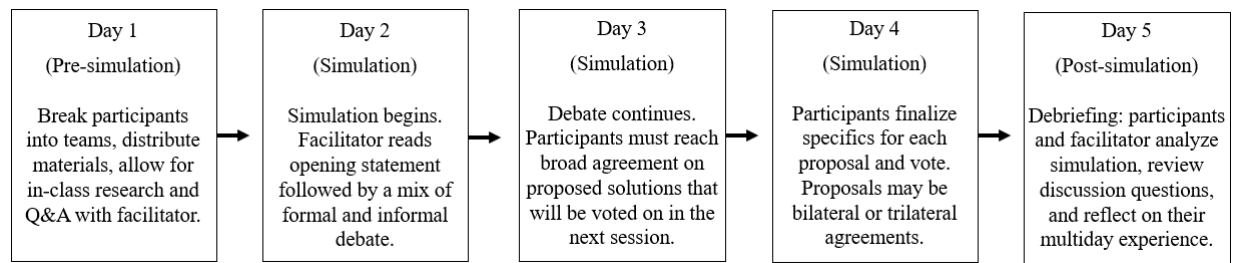
| Day 1
(Pre-simulation)

Break participants into teams, distribute materials, allow for in-class research and Q&A with facilitator. | Day 2
(Simulation)

Simulation begins. Facilitator reads opening statement followed by a mix of formal and informal debate. | Day 3
(Simulation)

Debate continues. Participants must reach broad agreement on proposed solutions that will be voted on in the next session. | Day 4
(Simulation)

Participants finalize specifics for each proposal and vote. Proposals may be bilateral or trilateral agreements. | Day 5
(Post-simulation)

Debriefing: participants and facilitator analyze simulation, review discussion questions, and reflect on their multiday experience. |

Figure 1. Phases of the High Stakes Diplomacy Simulation

HSD in an upper-division Model United Nations course at a public university in the southern United States in the spring of 2022.

HSD was built as a semi-structured team and individual negotiation. The simulation oscillates between formal team debate and informal breakout sessions that allow for one-on-one negotiations among participants. The simulation is intended for 12 to 18 participants and takes place over five 75-minute class sessions. Depending on the availability of time, the simulation may be shortened to three 75-minute class sessions if participants conduct external research before the simulation and the facilitator foregoes the debriefing session. Ideally, participants should read Roger Fisher and William Ury's seminal book, *Getting to Yes, Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (1981), between four and six weeks before the start of the simulation. For classes without this requirement, students should be exposed to Fisher and Ury's chapter one, "Don't Bargain Over Positions," during the same period. Advanced exposure to Fisher and Ury's method of principled negotiation forms the basis of the experiential learning objectives.

There are three team delegations: the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and the United States of America. Each delegation should be comparable in size. The facilitator should encourage each delegation to divide itself into two specialist teams. This subdivision allows each team to work directly with an opposing country during informal debate, where substantive progress is often reached. For example, the Ukrainian delegation would divide itself into "Group A and "Group B." The former would communicate with the delegates from the United States during informal debate, while the latter would converse with the Russian Federation. This division of labor enables participants to specialize in one country during the preparation and research phase.

On day one, each delegation and its members receive two documents. The first text provides country-specific instructions and background information on the delegation's primary, secondary, and tertiary goals. There are three initial tasks each delegation must address. First, the participants will select a chief negotiator to represent their delegation. This individual coordinates team actions during the research and negotiation phases. Second, each team must designate one player as the official notetaker for the proceedings. This student will use the facilitator-provided handout to record progress during formal and informal negotiations. The facilitator should reinforce to delegations that choose to divide themselves into two country specialist groups that they should select two notetakers to maintain a record of all discussions during formal and informal debates. After each day, the notetakers will return the handouts to the facilitator for review.

Finally, each delegation must construct a negotiation strategy based on their goals in the country's background guides. The country background guides list the country's strengths and weaknesses. For instance, some strengths of the Russian delegation include: (1) possesses the ability to mobilize up to 175,000 troops along Ukraine's borders with Russia and Belarus; (2) previous military success in annexing the Ukrainian territory Crimea; (3) controls much of the oil and natural gas exports to Europe; (4) negotiators are empowered to lie or cheat so long as they do not undermine or impede Russian President Vladimir Putin's geostrategic agenda. Some weaknesses include: (1) vulnerable to international financial sanctions, particularly if removed from the Swift banking system; (2) new sanctions could jeopardize the construction of Nord Stream 2, a natural gas pipeline to Germany, and reduce much-needed revenue; (3) war is financially costly, and Russia may not be able to subsidize a long war; (4) NATO may choose to arm the Ukrainian military with defensive and offensive weapons if war ensues posing a significant threat to Russian military equipment and personnel.

The second document players receive includes a simulation map detailing Russian military positions, the separatist-controlled areas of Ukraine, and the Russian annexed region of Crimea. Below the simulation map is a short description of the rules of procedure for the simulation, which the facilitator should review on day one. The author provides a complete compendium of the supplemental materials online for interested readers (see footnote one).

Simulation

This scenario introduces students to track-one and track-two interstate diplomacy. The simulation begins with formal negotiations and then oscillates between formal and informal debates. Each negotiation round is limited to 12 minutes. At the start of each day, the facilitator highlights the desired goals for the session. This is an important simulation component as

it keeps delegations on track for simulating each phase of an international negotiation. At the start of day two, the first day of negotiations, the workspace should be arranged into a square (or rectangular) table format. All three team delegations should be seated at one side of the venue, and the facilitator shall occupy the remaining position. Each delegation must be provided a designated private workspace for team meetings. If classroom space is limited, facilitators can reserve a spare classroom or use hall space, if feasible. The facilitator will first welcome all delegations to the international summit and read a pre-written script of opening remarks. This statement provides the historical and contemporary context for the negotiation. After the facilitator finishes opening remarks, round one begins with formal statements from each delegation. The chief negotiator typically speaks these remarks. Each speaker has three minutes to lay out their opening position. When time has concluded, the facilitator strikes a gavel to indicate a transition from formal to informal debate or vice versa.

HSD's semi-structured format allows players to experience the formality of interstate negotiations juxtaposed against the backroom, spontaneous nature of track-two diplomacy. During informal debate, the facilitator should continuously rotate around the workspace to oversee negotiations among players. It is useful to remind each delegation to divide itself into two specialist teams to allow for greater simultaneous discussions among all parties during these breakout sessions. Participants will find during day two, most parties occupy their hardline positions established during the formal debate. Players representing the Russian Federation will expectantly occupy the most intransigent perspectives. This means they will likely view opposing parties as hostile, continuously "demand concessions as a condition of the relationship," exhibit fiery rhetoric, become obstinate to change, make threats, and "try to win a contest of will" with the opposing groups (Fisher and Ury 2011, 9). After the second day, the facilitator should remind players to reflect on Fisher and Ury's three negotiation models and why they may have been unable to employ the method of principled negotiation.

At the start of the third day, the facilitator may allow for formal opening remarks at the beginning of the session, or they may move directly into informal debate regardless of how the previous session concluded. There are benefits to each approach, depending on the players' experience during the preceding day. If delegations could form tentative agreements on the previous day, beginning the new session with formal remarks may assist in clarifying the proposed agreements. However, and this is most probable, after day two, all parties will likely remain entrenched in their initial positions. In this scenario, the facilitator should begin with an informal debate at the start of the session to avoid further diplomatic entrenching by each team in their initial proffers. At the start of the session, facilitators should remind delegations that only those agreements reached in abstract form by the end of the class period may be discussed and voted on during the final day of negotiations. This time constraint forces delegations to make concessions by mimicking hard breaks in track-one diplomacy settings (Gino and Moore 2008). While many interstate negotiations fail, HSD aims to expose students to each phase of the negotiation process. This means the facilitator should ensure that some agreement is reached – in at least abstract form by the end of day three – to further the learning process on the final day of talks.

Depending on the participants' daily progress, the facilitator has four optional simulation crises that can be introduced as "breaking news updates." When employing these breaking news updates, the facilitator should strike the gavel and read aloud one of the optional simulation crises described in the online compendium. The breaking news updates are titled: (1) Drive a wedge between the U.S. and Ukrainian delegations; (2) Assassination attempt on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky; (3) NATO military mobilization; and (4) Germany's diplomatic rebellion against the U.S, Ukraine, and NATO countries. Each optional simulation twist forces players to adjust their negotiation tactics to a new diplomatic environment.

Day four marks the final day of negotiations. To maximize player experience, the negotiation days have been separated into two stages to emphasize different learning objectives. Stage one takes place during the first two days of negotiations. This phase exposes participants to the many struggles of international diplomacy. However, if left to their own volition, players will likely remain in the "debate" stage for most of the multi-day experience. Therefore, this simulation aspect is limited to the first two days. Day four is reserved for addressing the specific solutions agreed upon by the parties to the conflict and finalizing the details of the agreements. This time, division came about from the playtesting phase. HSD was simulated in February-March 2022 with 13 students. Players were asked to complete a questionnaire about their experience after the simulation. One question asked students to identify the major roadblocks to success they encountered. One main impediment to student success centered on the reality that most delegations occupied hardline positions for most of the simulation. As a result, the time allotted for conflict resolution was noticeably shorter than the time experienced in the debate stage. Based on this observation and student feedback, HSD was amended to reflect this two-stage format, which lengthens players' time for each simulation aspect.

Ideally, by the conclusion of day four, delegations should vote on several joint communiques between all or some of the negotiating countries. Only those joint communique voted on and approved by the signatories shall be recorded in the official proceedings and posted to the course webpage by the facilitator. The parties may sign bilateral or trilateral agreements, depending on how negotiations evolve. Any communique not agreed to and signed by delegations at the end of this session will be discarded.

Post-simulation

High Stakes Diplomacy is an experiential learning exercise designed to expose students to international diplomacy and conflict resolution challenges. Rarely are there clear "winners" in international relations. This simulation underscores the grueling nature of conflict resolution when confronting issues of war and peace. For many facilitators, the simulated experience is sufficient for teaching and evaluation. Some facilitators may want to "score" player experiences according to each team's ability to accomplish their primary, secondary, or tertiary goals. The scoring method can be accomplished during the debriefing session.

If desired, the facilitator can award points for each objective a delegation could insert into a joint communique listed in their country background guides. Teams earn one point for each tertiary goal accomplished, two points for secondary goals, and three points for primary goals. It is common for delegations to achieve more tertiary than primary goals because of the logrolling nature of negotiations. Additionally, this evaluation can ignite a class discussion of student experiences during the simulation. The post-simulation debriefing is a crucial step in conveying the utility of this exercise. This allows for an analytically rich discussion of why and how players chose a negotiation strategy and whether it was successful. The following is a sample of discussion questions facilitators may pose:

- How and why did your delegation select a chief negotiator and notetaker(s)?

- What qualities make a good chief negotiator and a good negotiator?

- How and why did your team prioritize specific goals in your country background guide?

- Having completed the simulation, what is your reaction to the differences between formal and informal debate? Which was most effective and why?

- Why was it difficult to use the method of principled negotiation?

- How did emotion factor into your negotiations? Was your delegation driven by a desire to "punish" the opposing team or accomplish your stated goals, and why?

Results

High Stakes Diplomacy (HSD) aims to enhance student learning of Fisher and Ury's (1981) approach to negotiation. HSD was playtested in a Model United Nations course at a regional comprehensive university in February-March 2022. All players were asked to participate in a pre-assessment activity, a post-simulation assessment and questionnaire, and a post-simulation debriefing. Of the thirteen student players, twelve completed the questionnaire. Students were asked a variety of questions about their experience. When asked how much they liked or disliked the simulation, 91.6 percent of respondents marked "like a great deal" and "like somewhat," with 75 percent marking the former category. This result corroborates previous research findings that tested student excitement in an American foreign policy and national security course where the use of simulations saw a 76.6 percent positive effect by students surveyed (Hendrickson 2021, 318). Students were also asked to rate the simulation's ability to resemble real-life negotiations. Seventy-five percent marked "very realistic" and "somewhat realistic." Finally, 100 percent of respondents indicated that they would like more of their classes to use similar active learning techniques.

When HSD was initially playtested, the negotiation phase lasted for two 75-minute class sessions. When asked to describe the ideal number of class periods, 75 percent of respondents indicated three days was the ideal timeframe. During the playtesting phase, HSD underwent a second peer review process by two content experts. Both reviewers independently corroborated the students' suggestions. Subsequently, it was determined that the preferred number of class sessions for negotiation would be three 75-minute meetings, along with separate days reserved for research and debriefing sessions. Therefore, HSD should ideally occur over five days, with one day reserved for pre-simulation activities, three for negotiations, and a final day for debriefing and a post-simulation wrap-up.

Approximately three weeks before HSD began, students were asked to complete a pretest assessment on their understanding and knowledge of Fisher and Ury's theory of principled negotiation. There were two components to the pre-assessment. The first was an in-class journaling exercise. Students answered the following questions: (1) What makes a successful negotiation? (2) What is the difference between hard and soft negotiation? and (3) What is the method of principled negotiation? Following this pre-assessment, students were divided into three four-person groups to test their ability to apply Fisher and Ury's negotiation approach to real-world negotiation case studies. Together, the written and oral examinations created a baseline assessment for each student's understanding and application of the method of principled negotiation.

Twelve of the thirteen students participating in the course completed the journaling task. All students could identify some of the scholarly literature's key competencies for successful negotiation. These include understanding the rules of engagement from the outset (Helmond 2020), seeking agreement on what is being negotiated before negotiations fully develop (Whitney

1983), the use of time and personality to accomplish one's goals (McCarthy and Hay 2015), negotiating with your partner's benefits in mind (Opresnik 2014), compromise (McCarthy and Hay 2015), be able to satisfy seemingly contradictory goals (Park et al. 2013), maintain an appropriate balance of power between all parties involved (Korda 2011), engage in active listening (Helmond 2020), understand there is no one size fits all solution to every problem (Schoen 2022), when possible, seek a win-win solution (Maddux 1986; Leritz 1994), ideally, come to a conclusion where all parties feel comfortable re-engaging in negotiations at a future time (Opresnik 2014), know what you want (Korda 2011), and understand how leadership plays into negotiation outcomes (Zohar 2015).

About half of the students struggled with defining hard and soft negotiation tactics. Most understood that hard negotiators treat their opponents as adversaries, while soft negotiators view the opposition as friendlier. Nevertheless, many students lacked a deeper understanding of the nuances of each approach—the most important pre-assessment question related to principled negotiation. Here, 75 percent of students could identify some of the central elements of Fisher and Ury's approach. However, only about one-third of all students possessed a high level of understanding. In other words, students were partially familiar with the theory behind principled negotiation but could not consistently replicate the model in the written and oral activities. Together, these assignments provided a baseline understanding of the desired approach and set the stage for the HSD simulation.

During the debriefing phase, students were asked whether High Stakes Diplomacy facilitated greater learning of Fisher and Ury's approach. Eighty-three (83.3) percent marked "Yes, a great deal was learned." One benefit of experiential learning is that students often learn more from their mistakes than successes. The excellent character performance of the students representing the Russian Federation and their persistent obstruction to the proceedings enabled the class to bring to life the real-world challenges of international diplomacy and the particulars of this contemporary international crisis. While all students were trained in Fisher and Ury's approach, students routinely found themselves caught in the heat of the moment and occupying defensive, sometimes intransigent negotiation positions. This almost innate, reflexive instinct largely prevented the delegations from working toward their mutual self-interests. HSD allows students to encounter the hostility of real-world negotiations in a controlled, safe environment where they are free to experiment without fear of punishment. This simulation allows players to build up negotiation "anti-bodies" that can be recalled at a future date when confronted with unyielding partners.

When asked in the debriefing questionnaire, what did you learn from the simulation? One respondent wrote, "I learned much about negotiating on a practical level instead of just using theory." This student disclosed that they also learned about the on-going political crisis in Ukraine, which they had little knowledge of. This is another benefit to the High Stakes Diplomacy model. Facilitators can amend HSD to address other contemporary international disputes if the simulation's multi-day procedure remains. Another student noted that we often associate success in negotiations with those who are the strongest party. This respondent said, "I learned that you may go into a negotiation as a strong country hard set on multiple ideals, but you may come out of it with nothing you first set out to do." If students were left to read about the perils of hard negotiation, they might not have reached this analytically rich understanding of negotiation and its many challenges. High Stakes Diplomacy connects theory-driven strategies to real-world events. This approach resonates with students and empowers them to be knowledge creators rather than memorizers.

Discussion

Applying experiential learning simulations to international relations and diplomacy courses has enormous potential. There are four broad implications of this study. First, this paper corroborates previous scholarly findings that show student interest and excitement in course content increases when instructors utilize simulations (see Hendrickson 2021). Students value non-traditional approaches to learning in their higher education journey, including active and experiential learning strategies. Moreover, this study confirms a positive correlation between simulation use and student engagement. Second, experiential learning techniques enhance knowledge retention and knowledge application. This was confirmed by the quasi-experimental research design and its findings. Pretests show that about one-third of students have an advanced understanding of the material before class discussion. Despite subsequent in-class explanations, most students could identify some key elements of Fisher and Ury's theory but not enough to qualify as being satisfactory. Posttests confirm that the simulation facilitated greater student learning of Fisher and Ury's theoretical framework and its applicability to real-world settings. As such, students possessed a deeper understanding of both theory and practice following the simulation.

The third implication is that simulations improve various primary and secondary skillsets students require to succeed in their careers. High Stakes Diplomacy prepares students for group-based and individual negotiations, allows students to become proficient in time management under crisis circumstances, and advances critical thinking and research skills while enabling players to build leadership and followership qualities. Role-playing enables students to apply theory-driven approaches to real-world diplomatic environments. Finally, while this study is based on the experiences of 13 students in one class, which limits its generalizability, it does affirm previous research findings that this type of educational milieu engenders a well-rounded, competition-oriented student capable of competing in the global environment today (see Grabinger et al. 1997).

KARAZSIA, 2023.

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An Undergraduate Course on the Road to Law School and a Legal Career for First-Generation Students and Other Underrepresented Groups in the Profession

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ABSTRACT

Data indicates that law school classes are becoming slightly more diverse, but questions remain regarding what can be done at the undergraduate level to foster a bridge for future aspiring law students that leads to increased representation in the legal field. The needle toward increased racial diversity in law school continues to move slowly, suggesting there are still holes to be plugged. Among the suggested areas for improvement in the literature, and the area in which the authors are focused, is the importance of undergraduate institutions providing "robust" advising and mentoring to at-risk students (Cochran and Walker 2021, 16). This work adds to the growing area of literature that focuses largely on pipeline programs, which are valuable, law school-driven "top down" models, and to propose a complementary "bottom up" model that we have successfully implemented at our institution, and which can be adapted by other undergraduate programs. This model attempts to address several issues that first-generation and under-served students face by having the undergraduate university take more of an active role in the continuum of a student's professional development. This role extends into the classroom in the form of practical, hands-on instruction, and actively involves faculty. While the scope of this work is not to solve the long-standing retention woes of many an undergraduate administrator, the authors do suggest a specific implementation plan to keep at-risk students engaged in their study and pursuit of a legal career.

Introduction

Data indicates that law school classes are becoming slightly more diverse, but it begs the question of what we can do at the undergraduate level for students who may be heading adrift in the academic sea. Assistance can and should come in various forms so students can make an informed and realistic leap to law school. Most undergraduate schools employ pre-law advisors to answer questions and guide law school hopefuls. (Graziano 2017, 62). Every year, LSAC hosts comprehensive, free law school forums for prospective students in major cities nationwide to help connect students and recruiters. Many law schools now run summer or weekend "pipeline" programs to attract potential students and give them a taste of the law school experience. (DiMola and Lowe 2017, 24). The California Bar Association has enacted an initiative to foster pathways between community colleges and law schools. (Cochran and Walker 2021, 16). Even some large law firms are beginning to reach out to colleges and universities to recruit talented students with potential much earlier in their academic careers than law school. (Jackson 2021). The idea is to mentor these students and foster a bridge that will lead them to future success in the law. Another recent development is the partnership between LSAC and Khan Academy to offer a free LSAT exam preparation course that complements the array of other resources offered by LSAC (LSAC.org 2022). Nevertheless, with all these wonderful options available, the needle toward increased racial diversity in law school continues to move slowly, suggesting holes still need to be plugged in. Among the suggested areas for improvement in the literature, and the area in which the authors are focused, is the importance of undergraduate institutions providing "robust" advising and mentoring to at-risk students (Cochran and Walker 2021, 16).

The existing body of scholarship is rich with studies that explore the myriad of challenges faced by first-generation and traditionally under-represented students at the undergraduate level. Conversely, the range of literature is burgeoning but still relatively new on improving the success of these more at-risk students as they apply to law school and begin their journey in a legal career. Our goal is to add to the growing area of literature that focuses largely on valuable pipeline programs law school-driven "top-down" models and to propose a complementary "bottom-up" model that we have successfully implemented at our institution and which can be adapted by other undergraduate programs. This model attempts to address several issues that first-generation and under-served students face by having the undergraduate university take an active role in a student's professional development continuum. This role extends into the classroom through practical, hands-on instruction and should actively involve faculty. While the scope of this paper is not to solve the long-standing retention woes of many undergraduate

administrators, we can suggest a specific idea that we have implemented to keep at-risk students engaged in their studies and pursuit of a legal career.

In three semesters of offering our for-credit course model, we have received unanimously positive feedback from students across majors that the course is valuable and has helped them to make more informed decisions in the law school application and admissions process. Our model is a comprehensive course that covers a wide variety of relevant topics, including, but not limited to, LSAT preparation, from study strategies to practice exams; the law school application process; guiding crafting law school resumes, personal statements, and addenda; discussions about how to select the most appropriate law school and life in law school; and, descriptions of the practice of law and various career options for those who possess a law degree.

Literature Review

The legal profession, and law school as the precursor to that profession, have made strides in becoming more inclusive and diverse (Li, Yao, and Liu 2020, 626), but budging the needle in a traditionally homogenous profession takes time and resources that legal educators and attorneys are still trying to identify and implement. As recently as 2015, the field of law was identified as the *least racially diverse* profession in the United States (Rhode 2015). According to the 2021 "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey," the legal profession is no longer the least diverse but *remains among the least racially diverse*, with the following breakdowns reported: Caucasian - 87.9%; Black - 5.4%; Asian - 4.7%; and Hispanic - 6.9% (some respondents reported identifying with more than one race). (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021). So, for example, while African Americans comprise 13.4% of the U.S. population, they disproportionately make up only 5% of all lawyers. (Manzi and Totenberg 2015). It is clear, therefore, that more work needs to be done. (Cochran and Walker 2021, 1).

The most current crop of law students with available matriculation data will be sitting for their bar exams in May 2024, so recent enrollment trends could contribute to more diversity in the profession, given the current pipeline of aspiring attorneys. According to the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC), the non-profit body that promotes access to legal education and provides resources to aspiring students, pre-law advisors, and law schools, the Class of 2024 is the most racially diverse class ever to enter law school. While minority matriculation will not necessarily lead to increased graduation or employment in-field, the breakdown for two minorities in the Class of 2024 for law schools is as follows: Black students are 10.0%, up from 9.7% in 2020, and 9.5% in 2019; and Hispanic students are 12.3%, down slightly from 12.4% in 2020, and up from 11.8% in 2019. (Krinsky 2021).

The Link Between Undergraduate Study and Law School

In addition to racial demographics, another challenge for law school admissions arises with "first-generation" college students, who we will define as students without at least one parent with a bachelor's degree. The number of collegiate first-generation students has risen and currently outnumbers traditional students. According to the Center for First-Generation Student Success, in the 2015-16 academic year, 56% of college students were first-generation. Of this 56%, the ratio of first-generation and traditional was inverted between Black and Hispanic students and White and Asian students. Black and Hispanic students had a higher percentage of first-generation students than traditional students (Black - 18% first-generation and 12% traditional; Hispanic - 25% non-traditional and 14% traditional). Conversely, White and Asian students had a lower ratio of first-generation to traditional within their demographics (White - 46% first-generation and 61% traditional; Asian - 6% first-generation and 8% traditional). (RTI International 2016).

First-generation college students across the demographic board are at a much higher risk of not completing college than their traditional, continuing-education peers. According to a Pew Research study, for Black students, the difference is a graduation rate of 57% for traditional students versus 21% for first-generation students. White student graduation rates are 72% for traditional, versus 29% for first-generation. Hispanic student graduation rates are 58% for traditional, versus 21% for first-generation. (Fry 2021). It is a significant problem that first-generation students are less than half as likely as their traditional peers to earn a bachelor's degree in all three demographics.

Another hurdle to overcome with first-generation undergraduates is that they tend to under-utilize services such as academic advising. For comparison, 55% of first-generation students, versus 72% of continuing-generation students, seek out professional advising. (RTI International 2016). This suggests that segregating academic advising in a silo is not reaching a broad enough audience. Further, a study by the Association of American Law Schools entitled "Highlights from Beyond the Bachelor's" found that first-generation undergraduate students are the *least likely demographic to report having been exposed in college to any information on graduate or professional degrees*. (AALS 1 2018). On top of this, when you factor in the outside commitments to work and family that at-risk students typically juggle, we began to think that rolling these types of support into a for-credit pre-law school course could complement the services provided in other areas.

Non-Traditional Students in Law School

Suppose law schools are committed to increased diversification. In that case, any potential breakdown in an at-risk student's academic inertia must be addressed at the undergraduate level to promote success in gaining entrance to law school and increased success when enrolled in law school. (O'Bryant and Schaffzin 2018, 922; Wilder 2003, 5). Some of the written feedback provided by law school professors in response to a 2017 survey to instruct pre-law advisors and undergraduate legal studies faculty is particularly enlightening:

> "The undergraduates I taught were largely first-generation college students (and many had family obligations that made complete focus on their classes difficult). Undergraduate pre-law programs need to have a more structured way to help students put together their application packet...and be more active in providing feedback on personal statements, assisting with letters of recommendation, and drafting a resume. This all needs to be part of a structured class."

> "The LSAT and GPA are by far the most important areas of focus. I do not know if there is any way to negotiate with Kaplan (a pricey LSAT-prep company) to create a for-credit LSAT class. (like law schools are doing with BarBri). This is the first step."

> "After spending eight years teaching law, I just finished a year at an undergraduate institution teaching in the pre-law program. I am a firm believer that if you are going to have something called a "pre-law" program, it needs to have a two-part focus: (1) helping students get into law school and (2) helping them in the first year of law school. If a pre-law program does not do that, then it is less than useless..."

(Frederick 2020, 53-54). Our experience over a combined forty years of teaching has shown that many of our non-traditional students either need to fully grasp the steps needed to gain admission to law school successfully or have only a peripheral understanding of the steps and feel overwhelmed by them. However, traditional students with parents who graduated from college or higher fare better in this process than students who need more exposure to or family knowledge of the system. (O'Bryant and Schaffzin 2018, 921). Interestingly, another study by AALS, which focused exclusively on law school, "Highlights from before the J.D.," revealed that over 50% of law students first considered law school before they even reached college. (AALS 2 2018, 2). Possibly due to a lack of information or support network, more at-risk students who identify law school as a goal, even early in their lives, tend to take themselves out of the race before realizing they are in one. By the time these students apply to law school as seniors, they are trying to overcome, at minimum, a poor grade point average that might preclude them from being admitted at all.

To illustrate, in 2020, less than one-quarter (22.5%) of all law school graduates were reported to be first-generation college students, and this figure was higher for non-white demographics: Black (35.9%), Hispanic (41.9%), and Native American (55%). Moreover, for first-generation students who make it to law school, their likelihood of success in bar passage and securing employment is lower than that of their traditional counterparts, leading to less opportunity after graduation. (Weiss 2021). According to the National Association for Law Placement, at-risk students who are typically minority and first-generation experience "stark and persistent" disparities in employment compared to continuing-generation graduates. (NALP 2021). Another concern is that law school matriculation at lower-tier schools is higher among at-risk student populations, potentially limiting options and making it harder to pay off student debt with lower-paying jobs secured after graduation. (Cochran and Walker 2021, 17).

As the number of first-generation students grows on college campuses, there has been a relative increase in their applications and acceptance to law school. However, more research needs to be conducted on their experiences in law school (O'Bryant and Schaffzin 2018, 930). One such first-generation law school student described her impression: "Being a first-generation college student in law school feels like standing on the periphery of a crowd, nearest the edge of a cliff. To everyone else in the crowd, it looks like you stand amongst them. Only you notice that your feet linger precariously closer to the ledge. Your margin for error feels narrow: one wrong academic or financial step, and you fall into the crevasse below." (Molina and LawProfBlawg 2019).

To look deeper at what she means, we must explore some of the challenges unique to our more at-risk student populations. These challenges often exist at the college and law school levels and may stem from the demands of work, family, financial strain, and lack of familiarity with graduate school. (O'Bryant and Schaffzin 2018, 914). At-risk students have also reported a lack of connection to their law school peers, with some reporting they suffer from "imposter syndrome" (feeling like they do not belong in law school). (Molina and LawProfBlawg 2019). It is also noteworthy that first-generation law students earn slightly lower LSAT scores than their traditional counterparts, so out of the gate, many of them will have fewer options for attending law school. (Henderson 2020). Moreover, a lower LSAT score can translate to higher law school loan debt since merit-based scholarships are based largely on LSAT scores. (Taylor 2016, 17).

Where We Fall on the Continuum of Legal Education

The remaining vein of research that informed the creation of our course derives largely from a thirty-year-old report by the ABA Task Force on Law Schools and the Profession, entitled "Legal Education and Professional Development – An Educational Continuum," which explored the "gap" between legal education and working in the legal profession (Clark 1993, 2). This report, commonly abbreviated as the "MacCrate Report," was ground-breaking for several reasons. However, for our purposes, it was the most impactful finding that a student's three years of law school is part of a larger spectrum in the student's professional development. Specifically, this continuum "starts before law school, reaches its most formative and intensive stages during the law school years, and continues throughout a lawyer's professional career." (MacCrate 1997, 749).

The MacCrate Report galvanized law schools and others in the legal profession to scrutinize barriers to entry to law school and to examine ways that law schools and the legal profession could become more responsible members of the legal education continuum. (ABA 2013, 3). According to Bordelon (2017), a less discussed but exciting area of potential lies in a student's years prior to entering law school, and these experiences can significantly influence the direction of a person's career. Cochran and Walker (2021, 1) maintain that barriers to success in law school for under-served students can be addressed through "robust pre-law support, LSAT and law school preparation programming..." And since "law schools rely on colleges to prepare their students," it would seem natural for law schools and undergraduate institutions to be in communication with one another. (Rozinski 2017, 1). Unfortunately, until recently, undergraduate schools have been left almost entirely out of these important conversations despite occupying a critical four years on a prospective law student's legal education continuum.

In its mission to promote more equitable access to law school, LSAC recently announced an upcoming initiative, the LawReady™ program, to develop a more holistic path to law school for traditionally disadvantaged students and improve undergraduate students' exposure to law school. (lsac.org 2022). Specifics of this program are still in the pilot phase, but it appears to be a "top-down" model where law schools will bring programs down to the university level. This paper's authors believe that our model, to be discussed in more detail below, could be an effective complement or supplement to the initiative. However, LSAC continues to clarify that the standardized Law School Admissions Test (LSAT), used in law school admissions for the past 70 years, remains the strongest predictor of law school success across all demographics. (Knezevich and Camara 2021). Therefore, although "alternate pathways" sound promising and could open doors to law school success, given that we know the LSAT is a strong predictor, the authors maintain that exposing undergraduates to the LSAT exam and life in law school and beyond, especially for under-resourced students, is still of critical importance for law school success.

Simulations, Experiential Learning, and Beyond

It is well-established that hands-on experience and practical problem-solving lead to improved confidence, an increased knowledge base, and a stronger pre-professional identity in undergraduate students (DiMola and Lowe 2017, 33; Jackson 2017, 837; Rozinski 2 2017, 90; Wollschleger 2019, 380). Two common methods employed for gaining practical skills are simulations and experiential learning. Simulations are approximations of the practice of real-world scenarios with reduced complexity completed to provide a high-impact learning experience for the students involved (Grossman, Compton, Igra, Ronfeldt, Shana, and Williamson 2009, 2096). This form of experiential learning, learning by doing (Kolb 1984, 21), creates learning environments that facilitate the acquisition of complex skills (Cook 2014, 751; Chernikova, Heitzmann, and Stadler 2020, 499). Many complex skills, such as leadership, written and oral communication, teamwork, and team building, must be improved in first-generation and underrepresented groups (Acevedo and Lazar 2022, 251) and are necessary for law school applicants and legal education. Consequentially, as we curated material for our pre-law course and envisioned its purpose on the legal continuum, we created a method that builds the previously mentioned skills by using a semester-long simulation with many experiential learning activities. By doing so, the authors are not only seeking to create active learning in legal courses (Kollars and Rosen 2013, 147). However, they are working to foster a greater understanding of legal actors (Woessner, Winters, and Kopko 2017, 226), the profession, and the skills necessary to becoming future practitioners. We wanted to strike a balance between LSAT preparation, preparing students for the law school application process, giving them a flavor of what law school is like, and pulling back the curtain to the extent we could on the practice of law itself. The culmination of this idea is a 15-week, for-credit course, which is a mix of simulation and heavy doses of experiential learning based on what we termed the "Bottom Up" model.

The "Bottom Up" Model

Once we view ourselves as an integral part of the larger picture, it opens our minds to creative solutions. We knew that our student population is predominantly minority-based, primarily first-generation, lower-income, and juggling more outside responsibilities than a traditional undergraduate. Knowing that students in these buckets do not typically seek out academic advising and may be overwhelmed by a graduate school system to which they have yet to be exposed, we approached our university to create a for-credit course entitled Pre-Law & Lawyering Skills. The goal of this course is to prepare students for success in the real world, which, in this case, is law school and a legal career.

Our institution began offering the Pre-Law & Lawyering Skills course in Spring 2021. Thus far, it has been delivered fully online for three semesters, with 82 students completing the class. The course is taught by a full-time professor in the Legal Studies program who possesses a Juris Doctorate and teaches in other programs, such as Criminal Justice and Political Science. As indicated in the course description, "This course helps students interested in law school to develop their skills in logical reasoning, reading comprehension, and analytical reasoning. Students will also learn about the law school admissions process, life in law school, and different career paths available to attorneys." Ultimately, we want to provide students with the relevant information they need to decide whether law school is the right and realistic choice for them.

The Pre-Law & Lawyering Skills course was designed to be cross-disciplinary and facilitate the learning objectives stated above. Related to the LSAT, students are expected to participate in the Khan Academy LSAT preparation course for at least one hour weekly since that exam remains pivotal to law school admission and success. In addition to reviewing the lessons and taking the simulated diagnostic tests, which are part of the Academy, instructors have students watch insightful videos related to the LSAT. The Khan Academy lessons help students to hone their logical reasoning, reading comprehension, and analytical reasoning skills. Each month, students must submit proof of at least four (**??**) hours of LSAT prep in the form of screenshots from the Khan Academy website. In addition, students are required to reflect on their progress monthly in an LSAT preparation journal. The instructor provides several questions to guide the reflective process so students can be held accountable and improve their communication skills. For example, students are prompted at the end of one month to self-reflect on questions such as: "1. How did you divide your drill time between types of LSAT questions?; 2. What study strategies are you employing (this relates to videos and articles about various study methods)? 3. Have you seen any improvement in your scores in any of the sections? 4. Regardless of scores, which sections do you feel most and least comfortable with, and why? 5. Do you think you spent your study time well this month, and how might you be more productive and efficient in your study time next month?" Research shows that this type of introspection assists students in developing good judgment, and journaling provides an excellent opportunity for reflection (Bess 2021, 535).

The course also includes seven learning modules aligned with the stated learning outcomes. Module 1 focuses on the first steps needed for compiling a successful law school application. Module 2 informs students about what law school admissions counselors seek in prospective students. In Module 3, students learn how to develop effective LSAT study strategies, while in Module 4, they learn about the importance of an effective law school resume and a compelling personal statement. Module 5 discusses diversity statements and addenda and explains when they may be warranted. In Module 6, students learn how to choose a law school and what to expect from law school life and classes. Finally, in Module 7, the students gain some exposure to law practice and various career options for those with a law degree.

Each learning module contains a variety of related experiential activities designed to promote student engagement with the content and interaction with their peers and instructor. Activities throughout the course include readings, videos, discussion board postings, resume and personal statement drafting assignments, and others. For example, in Module 2, students watch videos of mock law school admissions decisions. They are often surprised by the types of factors in an application package that cause an applicant to be accepted or denied. Moreover, as part of Modules 6 and 7, guest speakers are invited to present to the class on various topics. They include lawyers, law school students (some former students of our institution), and LSAC ambassadors. These speakers might talk about what life in law school is like or what the practice of law is like in various civil and criminal, public, and private sectors. Students can ask questions of these speakers and reflect on what they have gleaned from the interaction. We also arrange for students to attend an in-person or virtual first-year law school class to give them a flavor of the structure and content and how those classes differ from the undergraduate experience. Finally, throughout the semester, students receive frequent, substantive, and timely feedback from their instructor on submitted assignments, which is extremely helpful in providing the much-needed support and guidance critical in this bottom-up model.[1]

Results

In one of their final journal entries for the class, instructors gather student data regarding the usefulness of the Pre-Law & Lawyering Skills course. Students are asked to reflect on the following question: "Has taking this class changed your decision on whether you think you will or will not apply to law school? Explain." The following charts summarize the results gathered from students who have taken the course each semester since it was offered.

Most students indicated that the course was vital in making an informed decision about whether applying to law school was the right choice for them. Those who intend to apply to law school reported that the course helped to reinforce their commitment to do so and gave them the confidence to proceed. Moreover, it provided much-needed knowledge and resources to prepare for the LSAT and life in law school. Whether a student decided to apply to law school after the course, many students expressed appreciation for the realistic picture of the law school experience and the legal profession presented in the course.

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[1]The class size at our institution has maxed out at around 30 students each semester. Suppose an institution needs to scale the course to a larger enrollment of over 50 students in a section. In that case, we recommend utilizing a teaching assistant or adjusting the writing portion of the course to require personal statement outlines instead of full-blown personal statements.

Overall, the results indicate that the course accomplishes its goal of providing invaluable insight to students about the LSAT, law school application and admissions process, life in law school, and life and careers in the legal profession.

"Has taking this class changed your decision on whether you think you will or will not apply to law school? Explain."

Spring 2021 (27/34 journal entries submitted)

Student	More likely to apply to law school	Same	Less likely to apply	I found course useful in making decision	Interested in attending law school
Student 1		X		X	
Student 2	X, solidified decision			X	X More LSAT study needed
Student 3		X			
Student 4		X			X, more comfortable, more LSAT study needed
Student 5		X			X, still on the fence, but more realistic
Student 6		X			X, better prepared
Student 7	X encouraged decision			X	X, developed skills and info on apps
Student 8			X	X	
Student 9	X			X	
Student 10			X, too expensive	X	
Student 11		X			X
Student 12			X	X, changed time frame	X
Student 13			X, too much work		
Student 14	X, solidified decision			X	X
Student 15	X			X	X
Student 16	X, gave courage			X	X
Student 17	X, gained perspective			X	X
Student 18	X				X
Student 19			X, too much time, expense	X	
Student 20	X			X	X, did well in practice
Student 21			X		X, nervous re competition
Student 22			X, scores/age		
Student 23		X			
Student 24		X		X	X, will wait a bit due to $ and effort
Student 25	X			X	X, better prepared
Student 26		X			X, realistic view
Student 27			X, scary		

Fall 2021 (25/32 journal entries submitted) – see next page.

Student	More likely to apply to law school	Same	Less likely to apply	Useful in making decision	Interested in attending
Student 1		X			
Student 2	X			X, lot more info	X
Student 3		X			X
Student 4			X	X	
Student 5		X		X	X, more practical info
Student 6		X		X, great insights	X
Student 7	X			X, more motivated	X, have necessary tools
Student 8	X, reaffirmed decision			X, better understanding	X
Student 9		X			
Student 10			X, scared of failure		
Student 11			X, time and effort too much		
Student 12	X, reinforced decision			X	X, will be more prepared
Student 13	X			X, know how to study and apply	X
Student 14		X			
Student 15	X			X, realized amount of work	X
Student 16	X			X, more info on costs involved	X
Student 17		X		X	X, applied early and was accepted; couldn't have done it w/o class
Student 18		X		X, better idea of what to expect	X
Student 19			X, no passion		
Student 20		X		X, better insight to process	X
Student 21	X			X, more attainable than thought	X
Student 22		X		X, changed timeframe	X
Student 23		X		X, too much to juggle with small children	
Student 24	X			X	X
Student 25	X, confirmed decision			X, insightful info and good prep	X

Spring 2022 (13/16 journal entries submitted)

Student	More likely to apply to law school	Same	Less likely to apply	Found course useful in making decision	Interested in attending law school
Student 1		X		X, more LSAT prep needed	X
Student 2	X, enhanced desire			X, challenged and gave insight	X
Student 3		X		X, will work harder	X
Student 4			X, procrastinate too much		
Student 5	X			X, loved every part of class	X
Student 6			X, learning, researching and analyzing the law is not a passion	X	
Student 7		X			X, still in the middle
Student 8		X, personal life not in order			
Student 9		X		X, wealth of info	X
Student 10		X		X	
Student 11		X		X, helped to learn expectations	X
Student 12	X, solidified choice			X, more info about life in legal field	X
Student 13	X, more motivated			X	X

Limitations and Recommendations

While law school pipeline programs can present a valuable opportunity, it can be challenging for at-risk and first-generation students to devote time outside of school, work, and family to non-academic credit endeavors, no matter how valuable they may be. Even in a for-credit model like our Pre-Law & Lawyering Skills class, as indicated in the charts above, often, students are juggling work, family, and other personal concerns that cause them to postpone or abandon educational pursuits. Some students reported that while they are interested in applying to law school, they cannot commit to the substantial time and effort required to be admitted to and succeed in law school. Hence, some have decided to wait until later to apply and attend. Other students in the class recognized that they must do much follow-up work outside of the class to realize their dreams of attending law school.

Aside from the time investment, law school requires a significant financial investment, which may also be an insurmountable obstacle for at-risk and first-generation students to overcome. Attending law school represents a large financial expense for most. In their responses, some students indicated that they were unaware of the tremendous costs of law school until taking this course. Many of our students have struggled to complete their undergraduate studies due to financial concerns. The large financial burden of law school appears crippling to some. As a result, even though this course and others like it may assist with getting a student prepared for and admitted to law school, financial challenges may prevent a given student from attending or continuing law school.

The current Pre-Law & Lawyering Skills class model utilizes journaling and reflection to track students' impressions of their growth. While the focus of the course should not be solely on LSAT preparation, it was clear from the three semesters teaching the course that students spent the minimum amount of time in Khan. One future addition to the course will be a pre- and post-LSAT practice test to more accurately measure students' improvement in that area over the semester. Another challenge in offering this course was reaching a broad audience across majors. To be most successful, the faculty in other majors should be briefed on the value of the course so that they can encourage their majors who might be interested in law school to enroll in the course. Finally, while attorneys at our institution teach the course, it could be successfully taught by non-attorney faculty willing to consult and work with the pre-law advisors at their institutions.

Conclusion

Similar to the results of the Woessner, Winters & Kopko (2017, 236) simulation, our course had the added benefit of helping students identify whether they want to be lawyers or would prefer to work in other areas of the legal profession that do not require a law degree. Including hands-on activities in coursework also affords students more time to connect the dots of how the information they are learning applies outside of the classroom. By incorporating journaling into the course, this reflection can aid students in critically assessing their goals and the work they are doing to achieve these goals (Bess 2021, 536); regardless of major, students who are interested in pursuing law school will often gravitate toward courses that teach skills related to career readiness. (Carr 2020, 46).

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Populism in Pink: How Marine Le Pen's Revised Rhetoric Closes the Radical Right Gender Gap

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ABSTRACT

Marine Le Pen, the Rassemblement National (RN) party leader, made it to the second round of the French presidential elections in Spring 2017 and earned 33.9% of the vote. While she failed to win the presidency, the RN had gained substantial ground with French voters. In 2022, Le Pen again fell short of the Presidency but received an unprecedented 41.46% vote share. Even more surprising is that Le Pen and her party seem to be winning over women voters in France, as more and more women have been voting for the RN since 2017. Extant research suggests that men are much more likely than women to identify with far-right populist politicians, a finding called the "Radical Right Gender Gap." Here, we examine how Marine Le Pen's moderated rhetoric has worked to close this gap. We argue first that the recent European Union (EU) crises made far-right issues politically salient, thereby drawing the attention of a wider group of voters. Furthermore, Le Pen's ability to moderate the political rhetoric of the RN has legitimized its place as a mainstream party. We examine our expectations using an original pilot survey of a limited French residents and citizens sample. Our preliminary results based on this limited sample suggest that the RN has become a more serious contender in French politics. The party's success has allowed other far-right populist parties to close their gender gap.

Introduction

Marine Le Pen, the Rassemblement National (RN) party leader, made it to the second round of the French presidential elections in Spring 2017 and earned 33.9% of the vote. While she failed to win the Presidency, the RN had gained substantial ground with French voters. In 2022, Le Pen again fell short of the Presidency but received an unprecedented 41.46% vote share. Even more surprising is that Le Pen and her party seem to be winning over women voters in France, as more and more women have been voting for the RN since 2017 (Clement 2022).

Extant research suggests that men are much more likely to identify with far-right populist politicians than women, a finding that has been called the "Radical Right Gender Gap" (Betz 1994; Givens 2004; Mayer 2015; Spierings and Zaslove 2017; Mayer 2022). Here, we examine how Marine Le Pen's moderated rhetoric has worked to close this gap. We argue first that the recent European Union (EU) crises made far-right issues politically salient, thereby drawing the attention of a wider group of voters. Furthermore, we extend the arguments advanced among some scholars that suggest Le Pen's ability to moderate the political rhetoric of the RN has served to attract new voters to the party (e.g., Ivaldi 2015; Stockemer and Amengay 2015; Dumitrescu 2016). Finally, we investigate these questions using an original pilot survey to consider to what extent the RN has become a more serious contender in French politics and whether it has shown a way for other far-right populist parties to close their gender gap.

The initial results from our preliminary study show that voters who see Marine Le Pen as more moderate are more likely to view her positively. Our preliminary study also suggests moderate evidence for Euroscepticism and feminism as predictors of a positive perspective on Marine Le Pen. While our results do not confirm a closing of the radical right gender gap, they suggest ample room for continued efforts to attract more women to the RN party.

More broadly, we contribute to the emerging scholarship on the role of women in high-profile political positions, especially in far-right political parties. In Europe, an increasing number of women have assumed the role of chief executive in the past two decades, such as Angela Merkel in Germany, Magdalena Andersson in Sweden, Theresa May and Liz Truss in the United Kingdom, and Ursula von der Leyen as president of the European Commission. Additionally, several women have become leaders in far-right political parties, including Marine Le Pen. In 2022, Giorgia Meloni became the first female prime minister in Italy; her accomplishment is particularly noteworthy given that her leadership was made possible by forming a coalition between her far-right party, Brothers of Italy, and several other right and far-right parties (Di Donato, Wedeman, and Mortensen 2022). Given these important political developments, scholarship that examines the motivating factors for supporting women political leaders – especially women political leaders from the far-right – is essential today. While limited in nature, our study seeks to make a meaningful contribution to this nascent literature.

Our study proceeds as follows. First, we begin by defining populism and its connection to the far-right in Europe. Next, we evaluate the history of the Front National/Rassemblement National and how this political party has claimed ownership over many Eurosceptic issues, increasing its political relevance over time. Third, we discuss how the increased saliency of far-right political issues and the moderated rhetoric of the RN led to Marine Le Pen's electoral success in 2017 and 2022, thereby paving the way for an investigation into whether she can close the radical right gender gap. Then, we discuss our original pilot survey on French attitudes toward Marine Le Pen and her appeal to feminist perspectives. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of the implications of Le Pen's popularity for the future of far-right parties in France and throughout the EU.

Defining Populism and the Far-Right in Europe

Since 2015, many politicians who subscribe to a far-right ideology have taken on a populist tone, especially in countries in Europe and the United States. Populism has been defined as a "thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonist groups, 'the pure people' and 'the corrupt elite,' and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people" (Mudde 2015). Populism is not always right-wing in its political ideology; there has been a long history of left-wing populism in Latin America. Instead, what makes populism distinct is its focus on "the people" in conflict with "the elite."

In Europe, populism has primarily accompanied a right-wing political ideology. Scholars point to five key features of a far-right political ideology: "nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy, and the strong state" (Mudde 1995, 206). An anti-elite strategy fits better with right-wing political ideology in the EU because the EU traditionally stands for more liberal values such as open borders, free movement of people, human rights for marginalized groups, and extensive social welfare policies. Thus, these liberal policies can be more easily critiqued as elitist from a more conservative ideology.

Criticism of the EU does not always center on right-wing ideology, as there are examples of political parties that are critical of the EU from both the left and the right. This critical perspective of the EU is often labeled Eurosceptic. In the EU context, however, it is typically more common to see Euroscepticism, right-wing ideology, and populism combined by a single political party, as the combination of ideology and strategy fits this political context particularly well. An example of this Eurosceptic, populist, right-wing ideology in practice is the British referendum against membership in the European Union that was held in June 2016 and championed by the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). The outcome of this vote—commonly called Brexit—and the subsequent withdrawal of the UK from the EU in January 2020 were seen as a victory for those who rejected the EU as an elite institution and wanted to return the political power to the people. Therefore, in Europe, it makes sense for populist strategies to partner with far-right political ideology as a strong contrast to the European Union.

Such a movement has also swept through Europe in places like Austria, Hungary, and France, where far-right parties have achieved new levels of electoral success (Mudde 2015). In the case of France, the new strength of this far-right populist movement is perhaps the most significant. France has a long history of an established right-wing party in the RN. Still, the recent electoral successes of far-right parties in Europe and the US seem to have legitimized the RN and contributed to increased polarization within French society (Mammone, 2015; Armstrong, 2017; Mowat 2018).

The Rise of the Rassemblement National

On October 5, 1972, members of several fringe, far-right parties in France came together under the leadership of Jean-Marie Le Pen to establish a new political party named the Front National pour l'Unité Française, or the Front National (FN). Jean-Marie Le Pen united the various far-right movements by emphasizing two central issues: the need to stop the spread of communism and the disappointment over the loss of the Algerian War (Stockemer and Amengay 2015). Both of these issues threatened the core of French national identity for Jean-Marie Le Pen. However, it was difficult for the FN to distinguish itself from other right/conservative political parties early on. Consequently, the party performed poorly in elections at all levels from 1973-1984 and remained on the political fringe.

Before 1984, the FN had a pro-European agenda. The European Economic Community (EEC), established in 1957, had as one of its central goals the reintegration of West Germany into a democratic union with the rest of the democratic European continent. As such, Jean-Marie Le Pen saw the EEC as a guardian against the spread of communism, which fit his narrative for the party. Moreover, the strong actions taken by President de Gaulle in the 1960s meant that the EEC would not threaten French sovereignty. De Gaulle's actions surrounding "the Empty Chair Crisis" in the Council of Ministers had forced the EEC states to pass the Luxembourg Compromise in January 1966 that allowed any member state to veto policy that it believed would significantly damage national policy. Consequently, the EEC was seen by many French politicians as a safe place to pursue their international agenda.

However, by 1984, French President François Mitterrand had become one of the central champions of the European project, advocating for increased cooperation among the member states and a deepening power of the EEC institutions. He strongly supported the enlargement of the Mediterranean countries of Greece, Spain, and Portugal, which changed the power balance
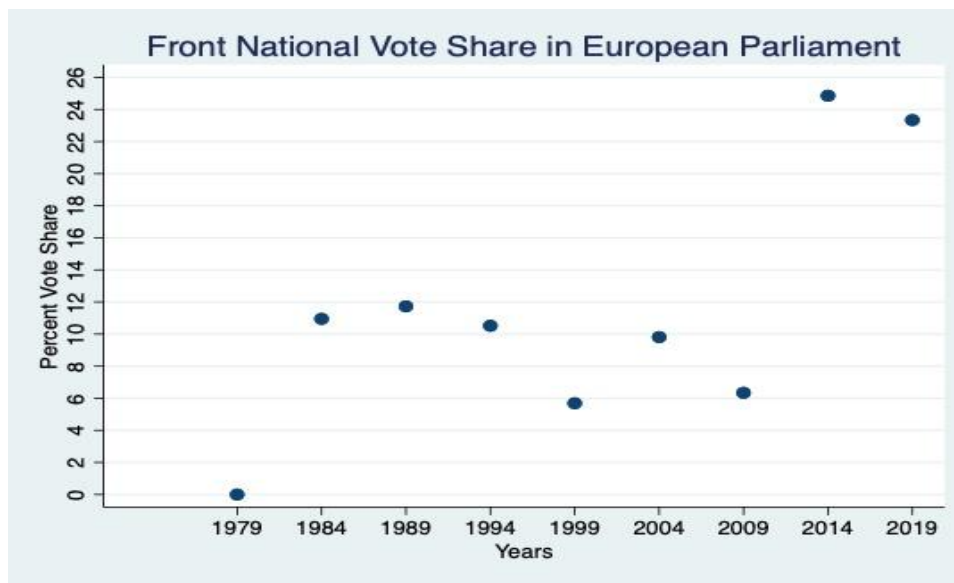
Figure 1. Front National Vote Share in European Parliament

between EEC members. Additionally, he was a strong advocate for the Single European Act in 1986, which significantly expanded the powers of the EEC by setting the idea of a single currency and a common foreign and security policy into motion. This deepening of European integration gave more power to the European institutions and forced member states, like France, to cede sovereignty in certain key policy areas.

At this point, the EEC became a threat to the FN, and the FN began to take on a distinctly Eurosceptic tone. The party that championed the need for a strong national identity and the retention of sovereign powers now had a foil in the EEC. As such, an electoral breakthrough occurred in the 1984 European Parliament (EP) elections, where the FN secured 10.95% of the vote share and a subsequent 10 seats in the EP (see Figure 1, Front National Vote Share in European Parliament).

With this new political focus and the brief shift to a proportional representation system in 1986, the FN finally achieved some electoral success in the National Assembly; the FN received 9.65% of the votes and sent 35 members to the parliament (see Figure 2, Front National Vote Share in National Assembly). The party base of the FN also saw growth as it attracted individuals from the moderate right political parties who were more Eurosceptic.

The Maastricht Treaty establishing the European Union in 1992 marked the most significant shift in the FN's view toward the European Union and its position in French politics. The EU would now include three "pillars" of common policy: a common economic policy to continue the work of the EEC, a common foreign and security policy, and a common internal justice policy to include free movement of persons within the EU and a common EU citizenship. Jean-Marie Le Pen says the EU would be "the end of France, the French people, its language and culture" (Goodliffe 2015, 334). From this point forward, the FN became France's most vocal Eurosceptic voice. Still, the vast majority of the FN's electoral success, albeit very small, was in the European Parliament, where a far-right, Eurosceptic political platform was seen as more relevant to French voters.

The period of *cohabitation* from 1997-2001, marked by a politically opposed president and prime minister, effectively weakened the power of the French president to decide upon European policy (Drake 2005, 7). In this period of weakness, the FN continued to gain ground with voters who expressed dissatisfaction with the European Union.

That support was enough to propel Jean-Marie Le Pen to the run-off elections for the president in 2002, a first for the FN and a significant surprise in French politics. In the first round, Jean-Marie Le Pen won 16.86% of the vote, which was barely enough (0.68%) to beat out Lionel Jospin of the Parti Socialiste (PS) to secure a second-place position and the runoff against the incumbent candidate Jacques Chirac of the Rassemblement pour la République (RPR) party.

This electoral success was unprecedented for the FN, but it was also extremely short-lived. Chirac overwhelmingly beat Jean-Marie Le Pen in the second-round election by 82.21% to 17.79%, the largest margin of victory ever in a French presidential election. In part, Chirac owed this victory to the support he received from most of the other political leaders in France who saw a Chirac presidency as much more palatable than a Le Pen presidency. While Le Pen did have an important moment on the national scene, his loss signaled that it was time to bring change to the party.

Still, the Eurosceptic feelings remained relatively strong in France. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the European Union moved forward steadily so that some elites believed it was time to write a constitution for the EU. In October 2004, representatives of the 25 member states of the EU signed the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (TCE) that would
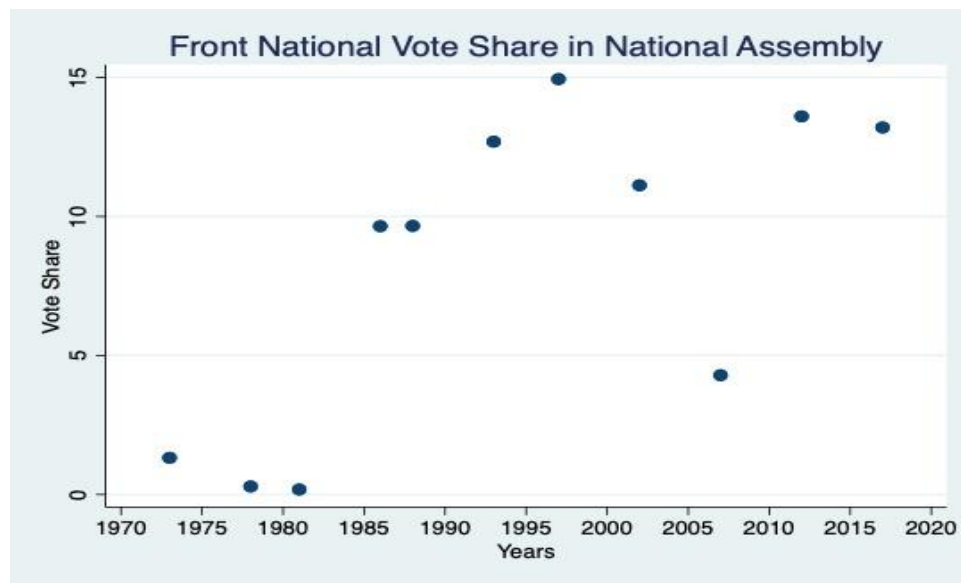
Figure 2. Front National Vote Share in National Assembly

greatly expand the powers of the EU. Given the significance of the TCE, many European leaders called for a direct vote on its implementation. French President Jacques Chirac supported the TCE but decided to hold a referendum in France to allow the people to decide if France should ratify the treaty. The referendum was held on May 29, 2005. The three major political parties in France all supported the TCE, including the Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP) under President Chirac, the Parti Socialiste (PS) under party leader François Hollande, and the Union pour la Démocratie Française (UDF) under party leader François Bayrou. Strong opposition to the TCE came from both the political left and the political right. On the left, leaders such as Jean-Luc Mélenchon viewed the neoliberal policies of the TCE as a challenge to the French economy, especially its services sector and workers unions. Opposition also came from the far right, where leaders like Jean-Marie Le Pen of the Front National saw the TCE as a threat to French national identity and a way to open the door to Turkey's membership in the EU. Ultimately, the public voted 54.67% against the TCE and only 45.33% in favor.

The referendum's outcome in France shocked the French political elite and the elite in the European Union, who had long seen France as a champion of the European Union. However, with the resounding referendum against the TCE and its defeat in the referendum in the Netherlands, the EU abandoned the TCE and implemented a trimmed-down version of the treaty in 2007. The message was clear, however, that the French people were no longer fully supportive of the EU and that opposition voices would have political influence. Moreover, this distrust was further strengthened by the fact that the EU went ahead with a version of the TCE in the Lisbon Treaty despite being voted down by citizens of two member states.

Still, even with this momentum, the FN performed poorly in national and European elections. The FN's vote share dropped dramatically in the 2007 national elections, with candidates receiving only 4.29% of the vote in the National Assembly, resulting in no seats in the parliament and only 10.44% of the vote share in the presidential election (see Figure 2). Similarly, the FN's performance in the 2009 European Parliament election was poorer than the cycle prior, with the party receiving only 6.34% of the vote, equating to a loss of 4 seats (see Figure 1).

Moreover, the political climate surrounding Jean-Marie Le Pen began to shift significantly. In 2016, lawmakers in France overturned his ability to claim legal protections from facing trial for hate speech, a protection he previously claimed while serving as an MEP (News Wires 2021). As such, Jean-Marie Le Pen faced trial in 2016 and was found guilty of the charge of denying crimes against humanity for his hate speech directed at Jews and regarding the Holocaust (News Wires 2016). Numerous other charges emerged about Jean-Marie Le Pen's rhetoric surrounding Jews, Muslims, and immigrants, to name a few examples, and he found himself embroiled in much political and legal controversy (News Wires 2021).

Capitalizing on these events, Marine Le Pen, Jean-Marie Le Pen's daughter, removed her father from the party and officially assumed leadership of the FN in January 2011. Since then, the FN - now the Rassemblement National - has noticeably shifted course. Still, whether these changes are sufficient to attract and retain a broad voting base to earn key electoral victories remains.

Marine Le Pen and the Radical Right Gender Gap

Scholars have identified an important pattern in who votes for radical right parties. This pattern, known as the "radical right gender gap," demonstrates that men are more likely than women to vote for radical right parties. According to the literature, this gap persists for several reasons. First, men are more likely to be blue-collar workers, whose position in the labor market tends to make them less supportive of a global economy; in turn, this vulnerable position in the labor market means that men are more likely to be receptive to the protectionist, anti-globalization economic goals of radical right parties (Betz 1994; Givens 2004; Kriesi et al. 2008). Second, men tend to have a stronger attachment to more traditional gender roles and gender stereotypes than women, who are more likely to subscribe to a general feminist ideology; traditional gender roles rather than feminist ideology are more closely aligned with the social policies espoused by radical right parties (Kitschelt and McGann 1995; Inglehart and Norris 2003). Third, men tend to be less religious than women, which suggests that men are less likely to be persuaded by arguments of compassion or inclusivity of people in need, like immigrants or other ethnic minorities (Mayer 2015). Fourth, men tend to have a greater overall involvement in politics, making them more likely to vote at all and more likely to vote for populist parties (Norris 1996; 2005; Spierings and Zaslove 2017). Ideology research suggests that men and women do differ in far-right ideology. However, given the same attitudes as men, women still have a significantly lower probability of translating these attitudes into votes for far-right parties (Hansen 2019). Finally, emerging research suggests that men are more risk tolerant and are more likely to vote for riskier parties, like populist radical right parties; women, in contrast, are more risk averse and, as such, prefer not to waste their vote on a riskier political party (Oshri et al. 2023). These factors are among the most prevalent contributing to the radical right gender gap.

Marine Le Pen presents an interesting challenge to the idea of a radical right gender gap in France, as she is now the leader of the foremost radical right party, the Rassemblement National. Moreover, her recent electoral successes in 2017 and 2022 suggest that Le Pen has done a better job of mobilizing her base and expanding it to include new voters.

As highlighted earlier, the recent crises in the EU have made Eurosceptic issues more politically salient in France, and these issues align with traditional issues of concern for radical right parties. Now, issues of unemployment and immigration (among others) are front and center for French voters. The June and July 2023 riots sparked by the police killing of a young man of North African descent provide further evidence of the salience of issues surrounding immigration and the plight of first and second-generation French citizens (News Wires, 2023). Polls from the summer of 2023 suggest that Marine Le Pen would beat Emmanuel Macron if the presidential election were held then; clearly, the political context in which a crisis is present impacts voters (New York Times, 2023). Moreover, the seeming inability of any government, be it the French government or the European Union, to resolve these challenges head-on further amplifies the voice of Eurosceptic parties, like the Rassemblement National.

Still, the shift in politically salient issues toward those more closely aligned with a radical right party does not guarantee electoral success for Marine Le Pen or any radical right leader unless those issues are connected to a broader constituency. We argue that this includes contacting women to close the radical right gender gap. Thus, Marine Le Pen's strategy of "normalization" has broadened her appeal to a wider base of voters, particularly women.

Since becoming the party leader, Marine Le Pen has emphasized 'normalizing' the party's image to broaden its appeal to voters who might agree with its critique of contemporary French society and policy solutions but were previously reluctant to vote for it due to its extremist reputation. Principally, this strategy of *dédiabolisation* (normalization) has involved ridding the FN of its most extreme followers, disavowing the antisemitism that had long been a staple of its discourse, and presenting the party as much more culturally tolerant than it had been under the leadership of its founder (Goodliffe 2016, 129–30).

The strategy of dédiabolisation can also be translated as de-demonization, which suggests that Marine Le Pen's strategy was not just about normalizing the political rhetoric of the FN but also about ridding the party of its evils (The Economist 2013). Chief among these tasks for Marine Le Pen was removing her father and his more extreme colleagues from the party. In this way, she could very clearly signal a shift in the party's direction even before adjusting her political rhetoric.

Scholars have suggested that five characteristics differentiate the RN under Marine Le Pen from the FN under her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen: "(i) self-labels itself a republican party... (ii) cites Republican figures such as Hannah Arendt ... (iii) economy, social protection and France's economic crises are at the center ... [along with principles of] *laïcité* and republicanism ... (iv) anti-elitist tone ... (v) young, dynamic and relatively attractive woman [as the leader]" (Stockemer and Amengay 2015, 375). Additionally, Marine Le Pen has reprioritized the traditional political concerns of the RN by giving "greater programmatic importance to economic issues, while de-emphasizing its cultural agenda" (Ivaldi 2015, 355). Cultural issues are still central to the RN's political platform, especially regarding anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiments. Scholars remark:

> There has been a shift in discourse and policy programs away from cultural and nationalistic issues and more focused on economic and social issues. . . . . However, even with this shift, the data show that the post-2011 FN gives significantly higher policy weight to cultural issues (e.g., religion, immigration, and security) and significantly less to economic and social issues than the typical mainstream party. Moreover, looking at particular policies, Dézé

(2012, pp. 148-155) points out that the 2012 party program deviated little or not at all from the traditional FN positions: the party still rejected other mainstream parties, immigration policies, the European Union, globalization, and advocated a very strong state (Dumitrescu 2016, 4).

Thus, Marine Le Pen has strategically made economic issues and broader security issues a more visible priority for the party, along with the cultural issues that play well in a climate of fear over terrorism and immigration, thereby capitalizing on the Eurosceptic political environment present in France today.

Evidence of the strategy of dédiabolisation can be further seen in examining the political platform, or manifesto, of the Rassemblement National. The Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) identifies political issues that are typically right-leaning and left-leaning and then constructs a score for a political manifesto based on these right and left dimensions, called the "RILE" score (Volkens et al. 2019). Right-leaning political issues include favorable mentions of the following terms and issues: the military, freedom, and human rights, constitutionalism, political authority, a free market economy, incentives, economic orthodoxy, welfare state limitations, national way of life, traditional morality, law and order, and civic-mindedness. Negative mentions of protectionism are also included in right-leaning ideology. On the other hand, left-leaning political issues include positive mentions of the following terms and issues: anti-imperialism, peace, internationalism, market regulation, economic planning, protectionism, controlled economy, nationalization, welfare state expansion, education expansion, labor groups, and democracy. Additionally, negative mentions of the military are also included in left-leaning ideology. Taken together, the scale on the right issues is subtracted from the scale on the left issues to create the RILE score that ranges from 100 to -100; higher, positive values are considered more right-wing, and higher, negative values are considered left-wing.

More recently, research has suggested that there may be issues with using CMP data in comparisons with other countries, which is called a country bias, and in comparisons across time, which is called time bias (König, Marbach, and Osnabrügge 2017). Such research has proposed alternatives to the RILE score, such as the Manifesto Common Space Score (MCSS), which considers both the country bias and the time bias and performs particularly well in cross-national time series comparisons of political party manifestos (Flentje, König, and Marbach 2017). For this project, we are not comparing the FN/RN to other right-wing populist parties but only to themselves, so we do not need to concern ourselves with the country-bias issue. However, we are interested in changes over time, so we have more closely examined the MCSS scores. What we find is that MCSS scores place the FN/RN at a consistent far-right position relative to all other parties in France, which is consistent with the claim we are making here based on the CMP data (König, Marbach, and Osnabrügge 2017 486). We also find that the overall MCSS score for all political parties in France remains close to zero or slightly negative for the period 1950-2010, meaning that all political parties in France were overall moderate or slightly left-leaning (König, Marbach, and Osnabrügge 2017, 482). Still, this overall trend does not account for the steep drop in FN scores; the most plausible explanation is that this trend results from changes in the party itself rather than an aberration in the data.

When considering the RILE score for the FN/RN (see Figure 3, Front National Manifesto Score), we can see values ranging from 28.49 to a high of 50.67. At the same time, Jean-Marie Le Pen was the party leader, indicating a high, right-leaning ideology. However, after Marine Le Pen became party leader in 2011, the RILE score dropped to 8.01 in 2012 and 5.81 in 2017. While some analysis has suggested that political parties in France have trended toward left-leaning ideology in recent years, a drop in score from 50.67 to 5.81 – 44.86 points – is difficult to ignore. The precipitous drop in RILE scores seems to indicate that the simplest explanation is usually the most obvious: Marine Le Pen's leadership has had a moderating effect on the party manifesto of the FN/RN.

With these strategic differences, Marine Le Pen has been able to move the rhetoric of the party a bit away from the extremes to reach a broader range of disenfranchised French citizens, which includes such diverse groups as lower-skilled workers, young adults 18-30 years old, adults 66 years and older, and women (Stockemer and Amengay 2015). In this way, she has connected with several communities that all feel left behind by mainstream parties. For instance, lower-skilled workers and youth are especially impacted by unemployment, which is an issue that has been unresolved by the main political parties. For many older French, the nostalgia for days when France was less diverse and more powerful globally has drawn them to the party. For women, Marine Le Pen provides a high-profile role model that encourages women to increase their participation in politics (Wolbrecht and Campbell 2007).

Still, whether these factors are enough to close the radical right gender gap, particularly in France, scholars have provided evidence that the radical right gender gap appears to be closing since Marine Le Pen assumed leadership over the RN before the 2012 election (Mayer 2015; 2022). However, the question remains as to what causal factors are driving this finding and whether it is temporary or representative of a more permanent shift in voting. Here, we argue that the two sustainable ways the gender gap can be closed are the association of key political issues with the RN and an acceptance of Marine Le Pen as a more moderate feminist politician.

H1: Voters identifying Eurosceptic issues as politically salient will view Marine Le Pen positively.

H2: Voters who see Marine Le Pen as more moderate will be more likely to view her positively.
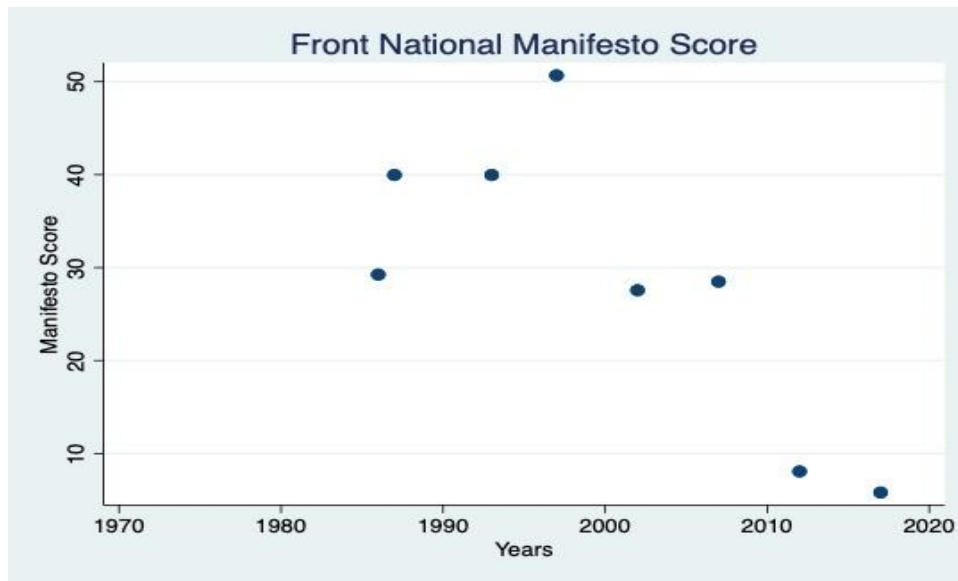
Figure 3. Front National Manifesto Score

H3: Voters who identify as feminists will be more likely to see Marine Le Pen as a positive representative for women.

Pilot Study Research Design

We test our theoretical expectations using an original survey of French citizens and residents from September 11 to October 31, 2022. We designed the survey as a pilot study to seek a small but representative sample to provide preliminary insights into our hypotheses. Our survey was approved by the Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board and was administered using Qualtrics. The researchers used personal contacts to begin the survey and snowball sampling to round out the sample.

In total, we had 28 respondents, all self-identifying as French citizens and residents. Our respondents come from a diverse set of regions across France, including Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (3), Ile-de-France (7), Normandie (2), Occitanie (2), Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (13), and Other (2). We report additional demographics about our respondents below when discussing our control variables. We administered our survey in French and then translated our results into English.

While we recognize the limitations of such a small sample size, we see value in these early empirical tests, as even preliminary insights can provide value in developing research areas. Pilot studies are particularly useful in survey research where the testing of a survey instrument can provide key insights for future revisions of the instrument and future recruitment strategies (Van Teijlingen and Hundley 2001). Thus, we proceed with the survey analysis below.

Dependent Variables

We asked respondents two questions about Marine Le Pen to serve as our dependent variables. First, we sought their opinion of Marine Le Pen (Q9) in an open-ended question. We designed this question as open-ended to capture the widest range of opinions possible. Our general expectation is that most respondents will have either a neutral or positive opinion of Marine Le Pen if she is working to close the radical right gender gap.

Then, we asked respondents if Marine Le Pen represents women well (Q22) to examine if Marine Le Pen is perceived as effectively closing the radical right gender gap. Again, we used an open-ended question format to capture the reasoning behind a respondent's answer.

Even though all of these questions were open-ended, we included a numerical tally of similar responses and reported them in our analysis along with comments directly from our respondents.

Independent Variables

Broadly, we are interested in two sets of independent variables. First, we wanted to know if individuals identifying Eurosceptic/right-wing issues as most important will have a positive view of Marine Le Pen. These variables help to capture the first part of our argument, which is that the RN has been able to attract voters due to the current political climate. So, we asked our respondents if they think France's membership in the EU is overall positive for France (Q15) and to identify the most pressing issue facing France right now (Q19).

Next, we sought to determine if Marine Le Pen has been able to moderate her rhetoric and if this new tone has attracted new voters, particularly women, to close the radical right gender gap. So, we asked if Marine Le Pen is more politically moderate than her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen (Q10), to determine if our respondents have bought into her attempts to moderate the party's rhetoric. Again, we used an open-ended question here to allow respondents to provide more context to their answers.

We also asked if our respondents identify as feminists (Q3) to determine if individuals identifying as feminists will be more likely to support Marine Le Pen as a woman in politics. In this question, we asked for a yes/no response.

Control Variables

We also include several control variables that might impact an individual's perception of Marine Le Pen, largely based on the expectations derived from the literature on the radical right gender gap. We first asked for gender identity (Q2), as the radical right gender gap finding would suggest that men would be more likely to support Marine Le Pen than women.[1] Our respondents are fairly evenly distributed concerning gender: 10 (37%) identify as male, 16 (59%) identify as female, and 1 (4%) did not respond.

Next, we asked for the respondent's age (Q4), as older voters are more typically supportive of radical right parties. We divide our respondents into two categories with nearly equal representation: 13 (48.15%) are under 40, and 14 (51.85%) are over 40.

Third, we asked for political party affiliation (Q11), as someone who identifies as more conservative would be more likely to shift their vote to Marine Le Pen than someone who identifies as liberal. Our respondents are fairly evenly divided among the major political parties in France, although none identify as members of the Rassemblement National. Eight respondents (29.63%) identify themselves as "other" or "no response;" we suspect that at least one of these respondents might be a member of the RN but did not want to identify as such. The breakdown of party affiliation from conservative to most liberal was as follows: 6 (22.22%) for The Republicans (center-right), 7 (25.93%) for Renaissance (center), 3 (11.11%) for the Socialist Party (center-left), and 3 (11.11%) for the France Insoumise (far-left).

We also asked for our respondents' level of interest in politics (Q8) to see if this impacts their beliefs about Marine Le Pen.[2] The majority of our respondents indicated a moderate interest in politics (15, 55.56%), with another 5 (18.52%) indicating a high level of interest in politics and 7 (25.93%) indicating a low level of interest in politics.

Method

Given the nature of our pilot study, our goal was to rely on qualitative measures and descriptive statistics to provide a framework for further analysis. Given the limitations in sample size, a more detailed quantitative analysis is not possible. To report our preliminary findings, we used content analysis to code themes in our open-ended survey responses. We also relied on summary statistics and cross-tabulation analysis to determine if there were any patterns in the relationship between our variables in this pilot survey.

Analysis

Our responses reveal some interesting patterns in French perceptions of Marine Le Pen. First, we asked respondents about their general opinion of Marine Le Pen (Q9). Perhaps unsurprisingly, our respondents were overwhelmingly negative about Marine Le Pen. Using cross-tabulation analysis, we found no support for H1 that political issues or H3 that feminist ideology had any effect on a respondent's opinion of Marine Le Pen. However, we found limited support for H2 regarding the impact of Marine Le Pen's ability to moderate her political tone vis-a-vis her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen (see Table 1). Here, we find that a respondent who sees Marine Le Pen as the same as her father is statistically more likely to have a negative opinion of her, which suggests that those who see her as more moderate are more likely to see her in a positive light. None of our control variables provided statistically significant differences.

All told, there were 20 negative comments about Marine Le Pen, 3 identified as positive, and 3 identified as neutral. Neutral comments included: "Extrême droite / Far right"; "C'est d'actualité / She's news"; and "Populiste / Populist". These comments are seen as neutral because they are factual statements.

Positive comments included: "C'est un leader politique charismatique / She is a charismatic political leader"; "Je pense que certaines de ses idées sont en adéquation avec la situation actuelle. Certaines personnes adhérent à ses idées par raz le bol de la politique actuelle, et également en réaction à l'augmentation de l'insécurité, du chomage... / I think some of her ideas are in line with the current situation. Some people adhere to her ideas because they are fed up with current politics,

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[1]We also asked if individuals identified as members of the LGBTQA+ community, which we also think is important to this story, given the RN's recent efforts to reach out to this community. Unfortunately, we only received a single affirmative response, so we are unable to generalize from this respondent.

[2]We also asked if our respondents voted in the 2022 presidential election in France. Since all but 4 respondents voted, we do not have enough variation to explore this variable as a predictor of our dependent variables.

Table 1. General Opinion of Marine Le Pen

	Negative	Positive	Unsure	Total
Rhetoric is the same as JMLP	11	0	0	11
Rhetoric different from JMLP	8	4	3	15
Unsure	1	0	0	1
Total	**20**	**4**	**3**	**27**
Pearson Chi-Square: 7.56*, sig. where $*p<0.05$; $**p<0.01$; $***p<0.001$.				

and also in reaction to the increase in insecurity [fear], unemployment…"; and "Je suis en accord avec certains de ses points politique notamment au niveau de la sécurité / I agree with some of her political points, particularly in terms of safety/security". Interestingly, while our statistical analysis showed no support for H1, the comments suggest that political ideas are a motivating factor for our respondents' positive views of Marine Le Pen. Given these responses, we can claim some limited support for H1.

Of course, it is impossible to list all 20 negative comments here, so instead, we will give a few representative examples: "Un loup déguisé en agneau / A wolf in sheep's clothing"; "Un cauchemar / A nightmare" and "Un danger pour la démocratie / A danger to democracy." While the comments are sharply negative, there is not much of a discernible pattern in motivation for these comments. Instead, many comments seem to point more toward Marine Le Pen's character and actions, which are more difficult to change, than her ideology or rhetoric, which is perhaps easier to address in attempting to close the radical right gender gap.

Next, we asked respondents if Marine Le Pen represents women well (Q22) to examine if Marine Le Pen is working to close the radical right gender gap. We found some interesting patterns in the answers to this question using another cross-tabulation analysis series. Again, we found no support for H1 or H3 concerning whether Marine Le Pen represents women well. However, we did find support for H2, suggesting that those who see Marine Le Pen as more moderate than her father also see her as representing women well (see Table 2). Again, these results speak to the influence of her political rhetoric on public perceptions of her and suggest that further moderating her rhetoric and distancing herself from her father could positively affect her ability to attract female voters.

None of our control variables provided statistically significant differences in means. However, we did find a pattern among women that might have been statistically significant had our sample size been larger. Whereas men overwhelmingly reported that Marine Le Pen did not represent women well, the women in our sample were more divided: 7 (43.74%) said she did not represent women well, 3 (18.75%) said she did support women well, and 6 (37.5%) were unsure. These findings suggest that there might be even further room for Marine Le Pen to close the radical right gender gap as many women might remain undecided about her as a political role model.

Table 2. Marine Le Pen's Representation of Women

	Not well	Well	Unsure	Total
Rhetoric is the same as JMLP	10	0	1	11
Rhetoric different from JMLP	6	5	4	15
Unsure	0	0	1	1
Total	**16**	**5**	**6**	**27**
Pearson Chi-Square: 11.10**, sig. where $*p<0.05$; $**p<0.01$; $***p<0.001$.				

Again, while most comments regarding whether Marine Le Pen represents women well were negative, the comments were

more moderated, as the statistics demonstrate. Most neutral comments read, "Je ne sais pas / I don't know." Again, these comments suggest that these respondents represent a group that could potentially be persuaded to support Marine Le Pen.

Positive comments include: "Plutôt oui : indépendante et modèle d'ascension / Yes somewhat [More or less]: [she is] independent and a model of ascent" and "C'est une femme de caractère qui a su mener une carrière conséquente malgré les critiques / She is a woman of character who has been able to lead a substantial career despite the criticism". In both examples, the respondents see Marine Le Pen as a role model, which fits our theoretical expectations in H3 about her ability to close the radical right gender gap. Thus, while our statistical analysis did not show clear support for H3, the open-ended comments suggest that those who see Marine Le Pen as a female role model are more likely to have a positive view of her.

Negative comments were generally shorter for this question, but some of the more provocative negative comments included: "Je ne peux pas imaginer être représentée par une fasciste / I can't imagine being represented by a fascist" and "Je ne pense pas que Marine Le Pen représente bien les femmes et surtout pas les femmes françaises, pour la raison suivante : elle ne recherche pas l'intérêt de ces dernières et recherche le sien propre. Elle a assis sa carrière politique sur la défiance de son prochain et a attisé la haine anti-raciale. Elle a développé une vision de la femme archaïque et patriarcale et les encourage à se cantonner à leur rôle de mère au lieu d'encourager l'égalité des genres sur le plan professionnel. / I don't think that Marine Le Pen represents women well, especially not French women, for the following reason: she doesn't seek their interests and seeks her own. She based her political career on distrusting one's neighbor and stirred up anti-racial hatred. She has developed an archaic and patriarchal vision of women and encourages them to confine themselves to their role as mothers instead of encouraging gender equality on a professional level." Interestingly, both comments raise the issue of political ideology and rhetoric. Again, these fit our theoretical expectations that Marine Le Pen will not be able to garner additional support without expanding her ideological base or moderating her political rhetoric.

In sum, our analysis of the pilot survey revealed some interesting preliminary findings. Our cross-tabulation analyses support H2 across both dependent variables, even with the limited data. Additionally, the open-ended comments suggest that H1 has moderate support when considering our respondents' general opinions of Marine Le Pen and that H3 has moderate support when considering our respondents' opinions of Marine Le Pen as a representative of women. Therefore, based on these initial findings supporting our hypotheses, we can conclude that further testing in a large-scale survey is warranted.

Conclusion

Marine Le Pen's recent electoral successes have solidified her role as a formidable figure in French politics. Her ability to articulate solutions to salient political issues in a more moderated tone has attracted a growing number of voters. Our preliminary research suggests, however, that there are some key limitations to her ability to close the radical right gender gap. While voters seem to respond to her distancing from her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, it is also clear that general opinions of Marine Le Pen remain largely negative, as do opinions about her ability to represent women well. Yet, the results from our pilot study also suggest that many undecided voters could be persuaded to support her and her party in future elections.

The persistence of the radical right gender gap in France might be a positive sign for those concerned about the overall impact of these parties on the future of democracy in Europe. Without question, radical right parties remain relevant in Europe with continued electoral victories in both national and EU elections. However, these parties face significant competing pressures of expanding their base while staying true to their core ideologies and strategies. For the RN in France, this will mean expanding its issues of concern and moderating its rhetoric enough to close the radical right gender gap - a feat that has yet to be fully accomplished.

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African Traditional Authorities and Religious Institutions as Intermediary Institutions to Contact Members of Parliaments

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ABSTRACT

The recent resurgence of traditional authorities and religious institutions in Africa has stirred a heated scholarly debate about the positive or negative roles these institutions might play in the African democratic process. Approaching this debate from the constituent-representative perspective in Africa, this article examines the extent to which the sometimes controversial traditional authorities and religious leaders impact the constituent-representative relationship in 20 African countries. Quantitatively analyzing cross-national Afrobarometer survey data with probit regression models, I find that African citizens use more informal linking mechanisms such as traditional authorities and religious leaders than formal channels like the party to contact their representatives. These so-called traditional channels that fulfill a social utility role toward ordinary citizens facilitate the connection between voters and their elected officials. More importantly, the article fills a gap in the literature by probing and substantiating the role of informal intermediary institutions as they strengthen ordinary citizens' weak political attachment to their political systems in Africa.

Introduction

The recent resurgence of traditional authorities and religious institutions in Africa has stirred a heated scholarly debate about the positive or negative roles these institutions might play in the African democratic process (Ayittey 1995; Mamdani 1996; Keulder 1998; Lawson 2002; Mattes 2007). In addition to their resurfacing, these institutions have become a safe place for citizens to confide in and communicate their political preferences to these institutions. More relevantly, citizens reach out more to their traditional or religious authorities than their elected officials when faced with political or social issues. From its first round of surveys in 1999 to the 9th in 2022, the Afrobarometer's successive survey rounds have shown this phenomenon. For instance, on average, whereas 37% of Africans reach out to their religious leaders and 29% of citizens contact their traditional rulers, only 12% contact their national representatives. Furthermore, there is wide variation among countries; while 35 % of Liberians contact their Members of Parliament (MPs), only 3% in Madagascar bother to do so. As for contact with informal leaders, 58% of Sierra Leoneans contact religious and 65% contact traditional rulers; in contrast, less than 5% contact traditional authorities in Cape Verde. For political scientists who know the centrality of a healthy constituent-representative relationship in a representative democracy, the absence of such a relationship, coupled with the omnipresence of these informal institutions in the African democratic process, should raise some critical questions about democratic accountability. Scholars are not alone in worrying; democratic practicians often wonder how African citizens could hold accountable an elected official who did not hear his constituents' preferences directly from them (Peter Veit et al. 2008, 10). However, while citizens' evaluation of their elected officials is crucial for democratic accountability, it is a secondary step in constituent-representative interactions. The first step of such a relationship is to investigate whether and how constituents relate to their elected officials across the countries examined.

The Research Question

Since empirical observations and survey data simultaneously report the lack of constituent-representative contacts and the quasi-omnipresence of traditional and religious authorities in the political sphere (Ribot 2002; Englebert 2002; Ubink 2008; Kyed 2007; and Bratton and Logan 2011, 2008), then the most pressing question becomes to wonder the extent to which are religious and traditional authorities useful to the constituent-representative relationship in the African democratic process? Answering this question requires a closer look at the debate in the literature about whether traditional institutions are necessary for the consolidation of African democracy. This debate pits two camps against each other: "Modernists" versus "Traditionalists." Traditionalists posit that African traditional authorities, organic emanations of the ordinary citizens, are the true representatives of the people, and as such, these informal institutions constitute the steppingstone of any successful democratic transition in Africa (Ayittey 1995; Keulder 1998; Lawson 2002). In stark opposition, modernists, led by Mamdani (1996), one of their most vocal proponents, counter that these traditional authorities are nothing but vestiges of colonial despotism and are antithetical to

any democratic development in Africa (Mamdani 1996, 18). As a result, traditional authorities and democratic institutions cannot coexist. A successful democratic reform in Africa ought to get rid of these institutions.

The Argument

I argue that traditional institutions are useful for democracy because they serve as a communication channel between citizens and their representatives. The existence of traditional authorities facilitates the two-track political participation of citizens in Africa. This side-by-side use of the two modes of political participation is using informal channels to reach out to formal institutions to increase citizens' input in their political communities. Specifically, compared to other factors purported to facilitate contact between citizens and their representatives, the combined effect of these two institutions stands out as the most powerful predictor of contacting Members of the Parliament. The idea of side-by-side or low and high road of participation is akin to that of the two-track political process in Africa. Amply explained by Manning (2002) in her analysis of the Mozambican peace process, the concept of two-track practice is a realistic description of political practices in Africa where informal institutions (often ignored or dismissed) complement formal ones. Similar to Manning's (2002) argument of the two-track implementation of the peace agreement in Mozambique, the two-track participation argument sheds light on a common practice yet benighted by the lack of academic interest (63-84).

To demonstrate this argument, I devise the following design. My primary dependent variable is citizens' contact with their members of parliament in Africa. My two primary independent variables are contacts of religious institutions and contacts of traditional authorities. I contrast the effects of these two primary independent variables (informal institutions) against the effects of the alternative hypothesis variables: contacts of party officials, voting, and citizens' partisanship, controlling for individual-level variables (demographic and socioeconomic) and country-level variables (electoral systems and country gross domestic product per capita). I also control for a potential selection bias caused by highly opinioned individuals who might contact traditional authorities and MPs. This makes the causal connection between traditional authorities and MPs spurious. Following the examples of public opinion studies in American politics, I control citizens with strong opinions by including the variable *closeness to a party* that captures individuals' ideological strength. The approach is strictly quantitative, and the data comes from the Afrobarometer Round 4. Post estimations of the logistic regression results support the hypothesized relationships that citizens who contact these institutions have a marginal effect of 4.3% more likely to contact their MP than citizens who do not contact their religious or traditional authorities. Even taken individually, contacts of religious institutions and traditional authorities remain remarkable indicators (albeit reduced) of contact of MPs (contacting religious institutions, 2.3% and contacting traditional authorities, 2%). In contrast, those who contact party officials are only 0.5% more likely to contact their MP. Unsurprisingly, weak party attachment is reflected by a negative coefficient of the variable party closeness on contact with MP (-2.4%). The finding on party closeness also resolves the potential threat of a selection bias and confirms the causal effects of these institutions. Another all-too-common finding in African behavioral politics is the quasi-exclusion of women; the coefficient of gender is predictably negative and highly significant (-2%). These findings are echoed in Afrobarometer surveys. On average, forty percent of ordinary citizens directly contact their religious leaders and twenty-nine percent their traditional authorities daily. In contrast, very few ordinary citizens directly contact their elected legislative officials from their districts. Practically, less than two out of ten ordinary citizens ever initiate such contact with their representatives. An overwhelming eighty-seven percent of the population lives in total isolation from their representatives. A quick computation shows that the rates of contact between citizens and their informal institutions are twelve-fold higher than that of the citizens-MP contacts. These rates of contacts vary across countries, with some countries displaying a higher rate of contacts, such as Botswana (20%), Kenya (19%), and Liberia (18%), and others showing abysmal rates of contact between citizens and their MPs including Madagascar (1%), Namibia (2%) Nigeria (4%). These figures indicate that informal institutions are more connected to ordinary citizens than formal ones.

Scope, Contirbutions, and Limitations

The article covers only the twenty countries from the Afrobarometer Round 4, including Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The rationale behind the choice of Afrobarometer round four stems from the richness of this round in representative-constituent-related topics in Africa. In addition to the common questions about types of contacts, this round allows the researcher to delve into the role expectations of citizens and parliament members across the continent. More importantly, the timing of the survey (2009) gives the investigator the unique opportunity to assess the extent to which the dyadic electoral connection between citizens and their elected officials has taken root two decades after the beginning of Peter Schraeder's (1995) calls "The Third Wave of democratization in Africa" (1161).

Although the subject deals with religious institutions and their relationships to political participation, it does not attempt to differentiate the distinct effects of each religious denomination on participatory activities. I focus strictly on the combined effects of the two informal institutions, African traditional authorities and religious actors, as they facilitate contact between citizens and their MPs. In other words, I skirt the debate about the comparative effects of mainline religious denominations'

"old missions" versus that of new Pentecostal or new charismatic churches or the debate about contrasting Christians versus Muslims regarding their respective effects on political participation. The article treats these informal institutions as non-state actors that are "linkage institutions" between the state and the society.

This article contributes to the legislative-constituent relationship in Africa by showing that formal channels of articulation of citizens' preferences do not render obsolete the channels of informal institutions. Despite the relatively small marginal effects of the principal independent variables (i.e., 4.31% of the combined effects of traditional authorities and religious institutions), the substantive meaning of these findings is twofold. First, the numerical substantiation of the linking mechanism between representatives and their constituents gives hope to democratic promotors and scholars. For democratic donors and democratic activists who endeavor on the field, these results suggest integrating African Traditional Authorities (ATA) in their democratic building efforts instead of antagonizing them. By integrating these structures, democratic promotors will help citizens convey their preferences to their Members of Parliament (MPs), albeit through informal authorities. The second importance pertains more to academia. The findings validate an existing phenomenon extensively investigated in other fields from qualitative approaches. Understandably, the reaction to these structures has been multiple. This article takes on the debate that opposes the two camps on the role of African Traditional Authorities (ATA) in the African democratic process. Acknowledging each side's point, I argue that this issue should not be an either-or matter. I contend that framing the debate that way amounts to a false dichotomy because traditional authorities are part and parcel of the African social fabric and its political DNA. Even though these institutions in many places on the continent have had a tarnished legacy and continue to be weaponized against their own very people, they cannot simply be ignored. My middle-of-the-road argument is to acknowledge them, train them, and use their popular legitimacy to disseminate democratic values. Mozambique has successfully attempted such an integration of traditional authorities. My argument is substantiated by empirical evidence from the Afrobarometer data. It shows that compared to formal institutions such as contacting party officials or education, the variables contacting African traditional authorities and religious leaders are the most powerful predictors of contact with MPs. Moreover, because these institutions are integral to the African social-political landscape, shedding light on this path increases the possibility of deepening the root of democracy by strengthening upward democratic accountability. Finally, the article contributes to the participation theory by identifying these institutions as modes of political participation. Consequently, their fate must not be confined to a false and rigid dichotomist relationship with democratic consolidation in Africa.

I divide the article into three parts. The introductory section frames the article. The second section elaborates on the theoretical framework of this chapter and comprises two subsections. The first subsection evaluates the existing literature on the political relevance of these institutions. Specifically, it critically examines supporting and opposing arguments in the academic debate about traditional authorities and religious institutions relating to the building of democracy in Africa. The second subsection presents my argument as a middle course between traditional and modernists. The third section consists of the empirical evidence that substantiates my argument.

Literature Review

The present literature review has three subsections. The first subsection sheds light on historical backgrounds and the debate about the resurgence of traditional authorities. The second subsection examines the different scholarly approaches used to analyze the political relevance of religious institutions. The third subsection is more pertinent to the research question. It reviews the state of the scholarly debate about whether traditional institutions fit in the picture of Africa's democratic development. I close these critical evaluations by pointing to gaps in the literature and the way to

Extant theories about the resurgence of Religious and Traditional Institutions

In this subsection, I report an empirical observation about the recent revival of religious and traditional institutions and the existing speculations about the causes of this resurgence. Although the issues of resurgence of these institutions deal only tangentially with the research question of this article, extant theories about resurgence provide a historical background that helps better contextualize the debate between *"Modernists"* and *"Traditionalists."* If anything, this resurgence speaks to the resilience of these institutions and their omnipresence in ordinary people' (Logan 2008, 2011). Reports from various surveys lend credence to this widespread phenomenon of the resurgence of religious and traditional institutions in Africa. According to the World Value Survey (WVS), Africa is the most religious continent in the world. Patterson (2015) reports that religious organizations take up the lion's share of non-state actors in every single country on the continent (43). Membership in religious groups has consistently soared, giving religious actors and institutions vast networks, resources, and time to increase their relevance politically, economically, and socially (2015, 40). The importance of religiosity is shown through the ever-swelling rate of memberships and the importance given to religious practices by members. According to the Afrobarometer, on average, 73.2% claim to be members of a religious group, and 80% claim that religion is very important. Of these members, nearly 75% are either active members or occupy a leadership position. Only one out of four surveyed declare not to be affiliated with any religious group (Afrobarometer Round 4, online analysis). The two monotheistic religions (Christians and Muslims)

dominate the religious landscape. These two major religious groups themselves comprise several subdivisions. For instance, among Christian religions, the Afrobarometer lists 23 subgroups including Apostolic Faith, Baptist, Calvinist, Church of Christ, Christian Church, Coptic, Dutch reform, Dutch Reformed, Evangelical, Independent, Jehovah Witness, Last Church, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Moravian, Mormon, Orthodox, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Quaker, Seventh Day Adventist, Zionist, and Zionist. The other mainline religious group, the Muslim, is divided into two major subgroups: Sunni and Shia. Each of these subgroups includes multiple brotherhoods, including Hamadiya, Ismaeli, Izala, Layenes, Mouridiya, Qadiriya, Sidiya, Tijania, Trabiya, Wahhabiya (Afrobarometer round 4). Like religious organizations, though less in magnitude, African traditional authorities have known a resurgence across the continent. Altogether, scholars and democratic activists have enumerated five potential causal factors undergirding these institutions' upsurge: state-centric theories, pre-colonial social organization, colonial legacy, the extent of countries' democratic consolidation, and the influence of international actors.

The nature of a pre-existing social structure before colonial penetration is presumed to be a source of the resurgence of parallel institutions, such as traditional and religious institutions in Africa. A group of African scholars categorized African precolonial political structures into two main types based on the extent of power concentration: centralized and decentralized governance (Onyejekwe et al. 2004). In the centralized type, the power structure is hierarchical, whereby an absolute power in the decision-making process dominates the monarch or chief at the top. The centralized system displayed a sense of collective resistance in Uganda (the Buganda empire), Lesotho, Botswana, and Ghana (the Ashanti). In contrast, in the decentralized type, the power structure was collegial, and all decisions were consensual. The decentralized systems consisted of groups of age sets, a conglomerate of small villages loosely tight together (Onyejekwe et al. 2004, 12). To illustrate, the decentralized types are roughly like the Delian League of the Greek city-state association in 478 BC with a weak enforcement power. Following the power structure, this argument infers that in places where power was highly centralized, traditional authorities resisted more colonial powers and new African states than in places where they were decentralized. With their hierarchical structure, these social organizations resisted total annulment often by going underground. These concealed organizations gained strength whenever the formal structure failed to exert its functions. Similarly, Englebert (2002) sees colonial legacy as a source of resurgence of traditional authorities (120). Unsurprisingly, the resurgence has happened more in Anglophone Africa than in Francophone or Lusophone parts. This institutionalist argument suggests that the British colonial model of indirect rule nurtured local powers. Consequently, in ex-British colonies, existing local and traditional institutions grew and were strengthened by the post-1990s winds of Africa's liberalization. Empirical observations show that despite caustic criticisms leveled at the British style of indirect ruling, traditional rulers have remained more politically relevant in ancient British colonies than elsewhere in Africa. Still, it is fair to point out that the difference in colonial legacy mattered more at the early ages of the independence of these countries (Lee and Paine 2016). After the 1990s' decade, virtually all African countries have witnessed a surge in the activities of these institutions, irrespective of the formal colonial power's style of administration (direct or indirect rule). The Afrobarometer's surveys show no difference in rates of ordinary citizens' contact with religious and traditional leaders among African ex-colonies. For instance, from Afrobarometer Round 4, contacts of traditional and religious leaders average 27.6% in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda (all ex-British colonies). The contact rate with traditional authorities averages 30% in Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Senegal (all former French colonies). This could mean that these institutions did not cease to exist even in the direct form of colonial rule, where the French brutally erased precolonial power structures; they merely went underground and resurfaced under democratic transition. Below, table 1 briefly summarizes the style of pre-colonial political organization, colonial rule, and the status of recognition of these institutions post-1990. By recognition, scholars mean the official acknowledgment of traditional authorities' existence and their jurisdictions' purview. These recognitions are usually couched in legal terms in countries' founding documents (constitutions or decrees). For instance, in Mozambique, the 2002 constitution acknowledges the existence of traditional authorities and defines their jurisdiction. In contrast, the latest Nigerian constitution of 1999 openly chooses to ignore traditional institutions (Iyeh Peter 2014, 136). Furthermore, authors have gone beyond the precolonial and colonial political structure to focus on the adaptability of these social structures to the newly independent African states' organization. The most known proponent of this contention is David Apter (1960), who divides traditional authorities into two categories: *"instrumental"* traditional authorities and *"consummatory"* ones (50). He defines instrumental traditional authorities as those who adapted swiftly to the new state's organizations, remained alert to signals of state failure, and seized upon those failures to reassert their existence. He cites the Buganda Empire as an illustration of instrumental traditional authorities. According to Apter (1960), despite adhering to Idi Amin's administration and living in a low profile, the Bugadan traditional authorities took advantage of the collapse of this regime to reassert itself. In contrast, *"consummatory"* traditional authorities easily gave in to the attractions of the new state's perks of power. They let themselves be captured by the states with the consequence of dismantling their core structure (Apter 1960, 61).

The fourth school of thought attributes causes of the resurgence of traditional authorities and religious institutions to failed African states (Ekeh 1975; Migdal 1998; Sklar 1999; Baker 2000; Herbst 2000; Ubink 2008). The underlying assumption is that a badly dysfunctional state leaves a void of services these institutions fill immediately. According to Bruce Baker (2000), state failure exhorts rival social organizations like tribal authorities to seize the opportunity and exert their "social control"

(26). This assumption would make us believe that war-torn countries are fertile grounds for traditional authorities to thrive. A variant of the state weakness premise is put forward by Herbst (2000). He contends that the failure of the state to project its power (due to countries' geography and weak demographic density) opens up opportunities for remote local and regional power centers to rally around one or several unifying dimensions of their identity, be it ethnicity, language, or history (124). Ubink (2008) adds that states have allowed traditional authorities to expand for state-centric interests (23). State motivations are self-serving when they attempt to associate with traditional authorities; they aim at gaining electoral legitimacy at a local level. States are also pragmatic actors in letting these institutions flourish. Ribot (2002) writes that states have learned that sidelining traditional authorities often antagonizes them and may amount to the failure of state-sponsored projects at a local level (16). More importantly, the state associates traditional authorities with undertakings to use them as linkage institutions to reach individual citizens. Taken to its logical conclusion, this state-centric argument suggests that traditional authorities would be silenced in strong states. Once again, the reality on the ground shows that most countries that have formally acknowledged these institutions are all relatively strong states. Examples include South Africa, Ghana, Botswana, Burkina Faso, and two previous countries torn by civil wars, Mozambique and Uganda. Furthermore, on the face of it, the state-centric logic comes intuitively. However, realities on the ground leave this assumption unsubstantiated. For instance, this assumption would make war-torn countries fertile ground for traditional authorities to thrive. Yet, as Englebert (2002) stresses, civil wars did not make traditional authorities emerge in Liberia, Zaire, Angola, or Cote D'Ivoire (The exception being in Sierra Leone, where the elders controlled the local civil defense units, the *Kamajors* during the Sierra Leonean civil war.

Scholars have attributed resurgence to international actors (USAID and international financial institutions (Ribot 2002; Englebert 2002; Ubink 2008; Kyed 2007; and Bratton and Logan 2011, 2008). The idea is that resurgence is an outcome of the applications of conditions attached to the aid package from external actors (usually the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank). Conditions for getting these development packages include stripping African states' budgets and encouraging decentralization and local governance. These Bretton Woods institutions have expanded their partnership beyond state actors to include traditional and local authorities. For instance, Ubink (2008) reports a partnership between the Asanteeman, the Abuakwa, and the World Bank in funding 5 million dollars for local projects in Ghana (11).

Resurgence as a signal of a failed national identity-building

Rejecting all the above speculations, scholars see the resurgence from a different vantage point: national unity (Bustin 1999, 2000; Chabal 1994). For these scholars, rather than indicating a thriving civil society, the resurgence of traditional authorities expresses a failure in making a unifying national identity. Bustin (1999) first pointed this out by comparing the Republic Democratic of Congo to Uganda, regarding how citizens in the two countries showed their attachment to their national identity. In Uganda, Bustin (1999) noticed that despite boasting a dynamic civil society and an uptick in the activities of traditional and religious institutions, the country remains bitterly polarized between major traditional authorities. In addition to these divisions along tribal or ethnic lines in Uganda, ordinary citizens display stronger allegiance to their tribal groups than to their national identity. Citizens primarily identify themselves as Buganda, Banyankole, Basoga, Langi, or as part of one of the 37 other ethnic groups. Bustin opposes Uganda in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). He observes that citizens in the DRC, a virtually collapsing state that has gone through cyclical civil wars since its independence, show more national pride than tribal loyalty (83). Bustin (1999) hypothesizes that when the nation-building project is on the right track, all communities inclusively feel less threatened and express less the need to be acknowledged (86). Corroborating this stance, Chabal (1994) adds that national identity building has succeeded in countries where the ethnic makeup is less lopsided (64). In other words, wherever one or two ethnic groups claim the status of ethnic majority, the ethnic dimension of citizens' identity becomes more salient, such as in Kenya, Rwanda, or Ethiopia. In contrast, when a country's ethnic makeup is fairly evenly distributed, constructing national identity is more successful because the emphasis is less on ethnic dimension than on national identity; examples include Cameroon, Tanzania, and Guinea (68).

At this juncture, one can retain that the resurgence of these institutions is a multi-causal, context-dependent, and undeniable phenomenon. Each of the listed causes above is a contributing factor. What is constant is the causal connection between the advent of democratic change and the resurgence of the continent. Although no statistical inference can be drawn from such a small sample of 20 countries, the temporal precedence of the advent of democracy and the subsequent formal recognition of these institutions is irrefutable. Many countries have formally mentioned and acknowledged the rights of traditional and religious institutions in countries' funding documents. For instance, Botswana formally acknowledged traditional and religious institutions in the 1960s, Senegal in 1978, Liberia in 1986, Burkina in 1987; Ghana in 1992; Lesotho (revamped constitution 1993); South Africa in 1994; Namibia (Act of 2000); Zambia, Zimbabwe in 2013. Since resurgence seems to have gained strength in the wake of the democratic transition in Africa, one is poised to ask these two questions: how have scholars approached the political relevance of these institutions, and to what extent do traditional and religious institutions contribute positively or negatively to the consolidation of democracy in Africa?

Overwhelmingly in the existing literature, the political relevance of religious and traditional authority has been approached

from a macro-level perspective. Scholars have focused on leaders' behavior and interactions with the state at national and local levels. An illustration is religious leaders' roles in the 1990s during National Conferences in Africa. Haynes (1995) cites the role of many bishops (for Christians) and *Ulemas* and Sheikdom (for Muslims) as presiding officers of national conferences (102). Because of these roles, many observant perceive these leaders as democracy advocates. However, Haynes (1995) levels a vitriolic criticism at religious leaders, accusing them of being part of the hyperclass that exploits the uneducated, gullible poor in Africa (90). His analysis, rooted in the Marxist theory of class struggle, ascribes leaders' involvement in national conferences to subterfuge to maintain the status quo. He denounces the unholy connection between the political and religious elites to create a hegemonic coalition that "milks" the proletariat (95). In short, according to Haynes (1995), religious leaders cannot be actors of democratic change in Africa.

A second theoretical criticism of the elite-focused approach targets its main underlying assumptions, which implies that differences in religious denominations lead to differences in political behavior. This approach traces its roots back to Max Weber's [1930] 1992's Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, in which he hypothesized a strong relationship between democracy, capitalism, and protestant ethics. Likewise, Paul Gifford (1998) sees "older missions" to be highly supportive of democracy (31). However, the relationship between democracy and religious denominations remains an unsettled debate. Cooper (1976) attributes pervasive anti-democratic sentiments among Catholics to the strong hierarchical structure of their denomination that mirrors authoritarian regimes (75). Similarly, Reid and McClendon (2016) write about some religious leaders who have used their sermons to preach political apathy or political indifference (1045). Examples include Sufism (an extreme branch of Sunni Islam) and Black Protestants in the United States (Frazier and Lincoln 1974).

Do these institutions play a role in political participation in Africa?

Several classical studies have investigated the role religious and traditional institutions play in political participation in and outside Africa (Verba, Schlozman, Brady 1995; McCauley and Boadi 2009; Manglos and Weinreb 2012; Cooke et al. 2015; Patterson 2015; Reid and McClendon 2015). Approaching this question from a micro-level perspective, Manglos and Weinreb (2012) find no difference among religious traditions regarding their effects on political interest (216). Manglos and Weinreb's (2012) findings contradict the prevailing conventional wisdom that makes some religious traditions superior to others in fostering democratic attitudes. They argue that when education is accounted for and coupled with religious memberships, this interaction variable significantly increases citizens' political interest in every religious tradition (214). McClendon and Reid (2015) tackle the impact of religion on political participation in Africa from a psychological vantage point. They conducted an experiment in Nairobi that exposed churchgoers to religious messages. They find that Pentecostal self-affirming religious messages act like a stimulant that motivates religious people to get involved in some otherwise intimidating political activities. Ellis and Haar's (1998) article relates to the psychological perspective. They seek the reasons behind the pervasiveness of religious discourses and their ability to speak to power in Africa. For them, religious discourse in Africa can be seen as a countervailing power that attempts to remedy social injustices in the community (185). By claiming access to the invisible world, religious experts serve as intermediaries at several levels in Africa. They convey people's preoccupations to the invisible spirits and political leaders. Since ordinary Africans believe in the interconnection between the visible and invisible worlds, citizens understand why every leader (and family) has his or her spiritual expert (marabout or medicine men). Anecdotic examples expound the disproportionate power these private marabouts have weighing in African presidents' national or personal decisions (189).

In addition to classical studies, participatory outputs of traditional and religious authorities are said to result from their interactions with the state. Scholars agree that these interactions are strategic in that each entity seeks to assert itself while trying to influence the other. Furthermore, the state-society relationship involving these intermediary institutions and the state is dynamic (Lawson 2002; Cooke et al. 2015; Patterson 2015). Overall, the general pattern of these interactions results in one or the combination of these four outcomes: cooperation, cooptation-capture, confrontation, and fragmentation of these institutions. When interactions result in cooperation, both the state and traditional or religious institutions seek to accommodate each other, and the level of political participation is said to be high (Cooke et al. 2015, 8). The state and the non-state actors respect the limits of their respective spheres of influence and accept compromise for stability (Cooke et al. 2015, 1-126). The telltale example is the cohabitation of the Sunni Brotherhood and the state of Senegal (Cooke 2015,10).

In contrast, when interactions between the state and these intermediary institutions result in a capture and (or) a co-optation of the intermediary institutions, the state displays an unmitigated objective to incorporate them into its structure. Various methods are employed to achieve the capture goal, including bureaucratization and appointment to a national office to control these alternative loci of power (Downie in Cooke et al. 2015, 18). Empirical observations show that co-optation is the most common outcome of interactions between the state and the traditional and religious actors and institutions in Africa. Usually, traditional authorities that have allied themselves with the reining power have fallen in disgrace in the eyes of their fellow citizens. Capture cases are more pronounced in South Africa, where public distaste for chiefs who collaborated with the Apartheid remains strong (Mamdani 1996; Ntsebeza 2002). The participatory output in the case of co-opted intermediary institutions is reduced. Like co-optation, disintegration dampens the participatory dividend of religious institutions as a block.

A case in point is the implosion of church groups that cohered to spearhead democratization movements in Kenya (Downie in Cooke et al. 2015, 18). Initially, religious institutions faced the state as a unified block that pushed for a democratic change (Throup in Cooke et al. 2015, 20). As the state embarked on the track of democratic transition, this shift unleashed individual ambitions, and differences in political interest appeared—competing ambitions from distinct ethnic or regional backgrounds opened divisions within and among religious institutions. Political competitions with a strong ethnic undertone have led religious groups to disintegrate along ethnic lines. This has diluted religious groups' influence on political participation (Throup in Cooke et al. 2015,29).

Confrontation is the most extreme outcome of these interactions. Clashes between the state and traditional and religious institutions were common during the early stage of the democratic transition in Africa in the 1990s. When these institutions involved themselves in the struggle for democratic change, mostly through National Sovereign Conferences, they faced ruthless authoritarian rulers who dreaded the ballot poll and would do anything to protect their entrenched interests (Diamond, 1992). Head-butts over values and governance were frequent everywhere on the continent, most notably in Kenya, Zambia, and Guinea. In Kenya, leaders of all Christian denominations, churches, and their congregations were at the forefront to demand democratic change. In Zambia, the catholic Archbishop faced off with Hastings after issuing a scathing criticism against ongoing human rights abuses in Zambian. His criticism sparked widespread outcry and contributed to the collapse of the dictatorship in Zambia (Patterson, 2015). In Guinea, Mgr. Robert Sarah, the youngest bishop at his consecration (34 years), boldly and repeatedly confronted the Guinean dictator Sekou Toure for his Kangaroo courts and Gulag-type prisons in Guinea. For this, his name was on a blacklist of people to be executed, only to be spared by the death of Sekou Toure (Christophe Le Bec, *Jeune Afrique*, 2014). All in all, when the outcome of the interactions between the state and these intermediary institutions is confrontation, the participatory output is understandably cut short.

Traditionalists and modernists diverge on how traditional authorities foster universal participation. Because democracy implies universal participation, traditionalists such as Keulder (1998) posit that the African tradition of community- gatherings is the quintessential expression of a genuine democracy. He maintains that this type of gathering is simple, costless, direct, and accessible to everyone. Not only is everyone welcome to participate, but these community-wide gatherings offer safer arenas where ordinary people freely express their concerns. Communication is simple, direct, and mostly done face-to-face. In this sense, they are kin to both the original Athenian direct democracy and to the American time-honored tradition of Town Hall meetings. Regarding how the *demos* express their will, Ayittey (1995), a consummate traditionalist, claims that popular will can be expressed in two ways: majority will and unanimity. Whereas Westerners use majority rule to determine the popular will, Africans voice their popular will through unanimity reached in community gatherings (1184). One benefit of consensual decision-making is its permanent use of persuasion to assuage the dissenting party ultimately. In contrast, the majority rule often crushes the losing minority. More importantly, the unanimous decision-making process involves everyone because only consensual decisions carry the day. While traditionalists welcome modernity, they claim that "modernization does not mean westernization" (Ayittey 1995, 1204).

Modernists such as Molustse (2004) and Mattes (1997) reject the premise of community-wide-gatherings as an authentic and all-inclusive participatory mode. According to them, neither the participatory mode in these fora nor the decision-making process is democratic. Rather, these community-wide gatherings are restrictive and exclusive, and their decision-making process is far from consensual. Using the example of the Botswanan version of the community-wide gathering, the Kgotla, Molustse (2004) denounces these male-dominated gatherings of tribal leaders that discriminate against women and the youth (162). As for the decision-making process, Mattes (1997) counters that decisions that are taken in these gatherings are not made through the free contentment of attendees. On the contrary, these decisions are arbitrary and are reached by "coerced consensus, "whereby obsequious deference deters the slightest opposition. Substantively, these decisions yield individual preferences for the community interest (5). He concludes that traditional authorities stand for values that are at best antithetical to democracy and, at worst, they represent a non-democratic form of governmen" (6).

The second point of disagreement is on the extent to which African traditional authorities are accountable to their people. For the modernist Mamdani (1996), the most telling characteristic of traditional leaders is their despotism. He claims that the institution of traditional leaders reverses the direction of democratic accountability: accountability of these chiefs is upheld upwardly and inexistent downwardly, turning them into unfettered despotic leaders (18). However, traditionalists have vigorously disputed this claim, asserting that African political systems have built-in checks and balances mechanisms that even the mighty colonial power could not uproot (Ayittey 1995; Keulder 1998). Like unanimity, institutions of accountability, transparency, and checks and balances have long been practiced in Africa. Ayittey (1995) writes that in Africa's precolonial political systems, no power was unlimited:"Kings and chiefs' behavior were ritually controlled; their movements were hemmed in taboos to curtail discretionary use of power"(1210). Although Africans lacked written constitutions, they had multiple tools to curb despotic behavior. Max Gluckman (1965) gives the example of the *Barotse* in Central Africa, and Mike McGovern (2014) cites the case of *Kokologui* of Loma in Guinea and Liberia. These checks and balances allowed a mechanism to divest culprit monarchs or chiefs using a distinct channel of communication. For instance, the Serere in Senegal played a unique

drumbeat tune to signal their leaders' impeachment and revocation (Ayittey 1991).

The third area of dispute is the source of legitimacy of these institutions. Modernists contend that African traditional authorities lack popular legitimacy because they soiled their hands by allying themselves with the dominating power. Traditional authorities have always been tools of reinforcement in the hands of the oppressor, be it the colonial rulers or the newly independent state's representatives (Mamdani 1996; West and Klock 1999; Ntesebeza 2004). In his book *Subjects and Citizens*, Mamdani (1996) aims at these institutions and brilliantly analyzes the power dynamic between colonial rulers and their local representatives. Mamdani (1996) maintains that the alliance's ultimate goal between the colonial power and traditional leaders was to segregate and exploit rural dwellers. For instance, the author details how tribal leaders in South Africa sided with colonial powers and with the Apartheid regime against their people. These chiefs and tribal leaders were strawmen who reinforced arbitrary laws and received perks for their actions (28). In the same vein, West and Klock (1999) accuse these traditional leaders of being self-serving agents who shift allegiance depending on who is in power (460). Power-starved traditional leaders' duplicity is exposed in their dealings with their people and formal leaders. Lawson (2002) sees them as "vote brokers" in villages (quoted in Logan 2011). Ntesebeza (2004) views traditional leaders as more feared than respected, like the proverbial Machiavellian prince. Traditionalists reject the above description.

For traditionalists, along with providing stability in a rapidly changing world, African traditional authorities draw their legitimacy from the well of stewardship and adaptability. They deserve respect and trust because they provide a vast array of socio-economic and cultural services. In response to the accusation that traditional authorities are disloyal to their own, Williams (2010) responds that modernists mistake African traditional authorities' adaptability for duplicity. According to him, this adaptability serves both traditional leaders and their communities because it allows the latter to "straddle easily two worlds" as they become the face of the nation at the local level and the face of their locality on the national stage (121). This has led Owosu (1996) to argue that in Ghana, traditional authorities have had a constructive relationship with formal leaders and are credited for bringing development projects to their communities (312). Finally, traditionalists claim that African traditional authorities serve as a moral reference that anchors society into a solid moral ground and provides a sense of stability in a rapidly changing world.

Not all scholars see these two loci of power as competitors with a zero-sum outcome. Many scholars have taken a middle ground and claim these two entities are complementary (Anyanwu 2005; de Sousa Santos 2006; Kyed 2007; Ubink 2008; Logan 2008, 2011). While acknowledging that traditional authorities still bear some non-democratic features and flaws, they contend that framing this debate into two starkly opposing sides is misguiding. In a study conducted in Limpopo Province, Anyanwu (2005) explores the complementarity between formal and informal institutions. Using a qualitative strategy, he draws from a case study the evidence that rural folks do not necessarily oppose formal and informal institutions. The author concludes that ordinary people in rural areas desire to see the two forms of authority work hand in hand (97). This collaborative working relationship becomes fruitful when traditional authorities are recognized and associated with government-sponsored projects in villages. Failure to associate traditional authorities with government-led health antagonizes them and results in a debacle of these projects (Trinitapoli and Weinreb 2012). Although using a different methodology, Logan draws a similar conclusion. Her studies focus on the causes of the resilience of traditional authorities and their complementarity with formal institutions in Africa. Using a large dataset and a quantitative method, Logan (2008, 2011) finds that formal and informal authorities derive their legitimacy from the same fountain. Moreover, citizens concomitantly perceive these two entities as the two faces of the same currency. Citizens' attitudes toward chiefs are nurtured by their attitudes toward formal authorities and vice-versa (4). Logan concludes that the two provinces of authorities cohabitate harmoniously, and a symbiotic relationship exists between them. In her view, society effortlessly integrates the two (2). Integrating informal institutions into the state's structure is concrete in Mozambique. According to Kyed (2007), this integration has proven beneficial for the state, traditional leaders, and their customers. The December 15, 2000 decree acknowledged traditional authorities and integrated them by revamping their mission and christening them as "*community authority*" (8). The result has been a dynamic and continual reshaping of the state-traditional authorities whereby this productive tension increases their respective accessibility (Kyed 2007, 25). de Sousa Santos (2006) reports "the growing activism" of these informal institutions, likening them to the burgeoning interest groups phenomenon in Africa (64). Taking a more realist approach to the roles of traditional authorities, Ubink and Kyed (2008) warn that traditional authorities need not be compared to other linkage institutions (interest groups) or given lofty goals as in matured democracies. In the investigation of their desirability in African democracy, one must take contextual reality into account. They claim that the primary goal ought to be the improvement of local governance (14).

The proposed answers to the above questions have contributed considerably to our knowledge. Elite approach (i.e., the macro level) analysis has uncovered the intricacies of state-society interactions and different outcomes. For instance, it has helped put a finger on the roles played by religious leaders during the democratic change in the 1990s. However, the elite approach misses the other aspect of the story- arguably the most important- namely, ordinary citizens' daily actions and attitudes. In the heavily elite-driven approach, commoners are left out. While such academic negligence was understandable before the advent of the Afrobarometer, the availability of fresh, reliable, and individual-level data on public opinion and attitudes in

Africa allows researchers to analyze how and why ordinary citizens relate or not to their democratic institutions. After all, as Bratton says, ordinary people are those who breathe life into democratic institutions (Bratton 2010, 6). Another advantage of the individual-level analysis is to test how theories on the micro-foundation of political participation in mature democracies travel in an African setting. For instance, existing theories examined above on participation channels are limited to formal venues such as contacting your local party official or basing your action on your partisan identity. Finally, in the debate between modernists and traditionalists, although those who choose the middle ground adopt a pragmatic posture, their position begs questions about the democratic utility of the complementarity between formal and informal institutions. Pragmatists leave unanswered the following question: To what democratic end do informal and formal work together? The present article fills these gaps.

Table 1. Status of Recognition of Traditional Authorities in the 20 countries.

	Countries	Regions	Governing Style and Period		Status and Recognition	
			Pre-colonial	Colonial	Pre-1990	2018
1	Benin	Francophone	Centralized	Direct rule	Banned	Yes
2	Botswana	Anglophone	Centralized	Indirect rule	Curbed	Yes
3	Burkina Faso	Francophone	Centralized	Direct rule	Banned	Yes
4	Cape Verde	Lusophone	Unknown	Direct rule	Unknown	Unknown
5	Ghana	Anglophone	Centralized	Indirect rule	Curbed	Yes
6	Kenya	Anglophone	Centralized	Indirect rule	Banned	No
7	Lesotho	Anglophone	Centralized	Indirect rule	Authorized	Yes
8	Liberia	American	Decentralized	—-	Authorized	Yes
9	Madagascar	Francophone	Centralized	Direct rule	Banned	Yes
10	Malawi	Anglophone	Centralized	Indirect rule	Authorized	Yes
11	Mali	Francophone	Centralized	Direct rule	Banned	Yes
12	Mozambique	Lusophone	Centralized	Direct rule	Banned	Yes
13	Namibia	Anglophone	Centralized	Indirect rule	Authorized	Yes
14	Nigeria	Anglophone	Centralized	Indirect rule	Banned	No
15	Senegal	Francophone	Decentralized	Direct rule	Authorized	Yes
16	South Africa	Anglophone	Centralized	Indirect rule	Authorized	Yes
17	Tanzania	Anglophone	Centralized	Indirect rule	Banned	Yes
18	Uganda	Anglophone	Centralized	Indirect rule	Banned	Yes
19	Zambia	Anglophone	Centralized	Indirect rule	Banned	Yes
20	Zimbabwe	Anglophone	Centralized	Indirect rule	Authorized	Yes

Theory

Why do intermediary institutions, traditional authorities, and religious institutions serve as conduits to connect citizens to their elected officials? I argue that these institutions link citizens and their MPs because of their indisputable social utility, allowing two-track political participation. Two-track participation in this article means the coexistence of formal (less used) and informal (more used) routes for citizens to convey their preferences. Informal channels of participation become the first conduits of citizens' concerns when other linkage institutions and the state suffer from pervasive weakness. Widespread institutional weakness of formal channels compounded by lack of genuine electoral connection between representatives and their constituencies gives no other choice to citizens to voice their concerns but to use what they are more familiar with, the closer traditional and religious institutions (Bratton et Al. 2005,134). In addition, traditional and religious institutions are proximate and highly visible in rural and urban areas. No matter how small or isolated communities are in Africa, edifices that house religious and traditional authorities are noticeable and present everywhere (Patterson 2015, 183). As actors with a perceived legitimacy in African society, religious and African traditional authorities provide an array of socioeconomic, political, and administrative services.

Traditional and religious institutions serve as intermediaries between citizens and their Members of Parliaments (MPs) because of their social stewardship in providing socioeconomic welfare (Anyanwu 2005, 97; Ubink 2008, 23; Patterson 2015, 175). Without a publicly funded welfare system, religious organizations are the primary caregivers in virtually all sub-Saharan

African countries. This basic healthcare provision covers benign illnesses and the deadliest pandemics, such as HIV and AIDS (Patterson 2015, 178). Trinitapoli and Weinreb (2012) report that the key to understanding the decrease in HIV prevalence lies in getting traditional and religious institutions on the board of public health campaigns (**??**). Patterson (2015) adds that faith-based organizations provide roughly forty percent (40%) of all healthcare services and help solve other societal problems for which the state has little or no response in Sub-Saharan Africa (**??**). Beyond tragic pandemic diseases, religious actors and traditional African authorities help coordinate and mobilize communities to implement routine health projects or immunization in rural and urban areas. These actors also motivate rural folks to participate in local development projects such as building roads and communal areas (McCauley and Boadi 2009, 8).

Religious and traditional institutions are conduits to reach out to MPs because they are instrumental in building and maintaining social peace in the community. The involvement of these institutions in peace-making activities is done at two levels in countries: First, in countries on the verge of social turmoil, traditional and religious institutions intervene to mend crumbling national unity by organizing National Days of Prayer. However, Cooke (2015) notices that some religious or traditional institutions can abuse their position to muffle a legitimate claim in the name of a purported national unity (Cooke et al. 2015, 5). Second, in post-civil war situations, traditional and religious institutions are frequently called upon at the negotiation table to serve in many capacities: as simple witnesses, active participants, or a neutral third party and moral guarantee of good faith in drafting peace settlements (Cooke et al. 2015; Patterson 2015). The roles traditional and religious institutions play in resolving conflicts are not limited to peacebuilding at a national level. At a community level, these local authorities are routinely more trusted and impactful. In the Afrobarometer rounds 1 and 2, nearly 28% of Africans rely on traditional and religious institutions to settle community disputes. This is three times higher than the 6.4% of those who choose the local courts to resolve conflicts. Perhaps the trustworthiness of these institutions also contributes to holding them in high esteem. In virtually all Afrobarometer opinions surveys, informal institutions (traditional authorities and religious leaders) are perceived to be more reliable and less corrupted than formal institutions.

The social utility of these institutions includes their administrative and political roles at a local level as well. Whether formal state institutions exist or not at the local level, it is here that traditional and religious institutions exert the most influence (Logan 2008, 2011; Ubink 2008). The involvement of traditional and religious institutions in local administration is more impactful in countries where this involvement is formally acknowledged, like South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, and Ghana. Although the extent of their power depends on contextual realities, there is a consensus that traditional authorities generally complete the following tasks: They control local resources, land allocation, and environmental protections (Ribot 2000; Ubink 2008; Williams 2010; Logan 2002, 2008, 2011). Scholars surmise that devoting these powers to local authorities is not benevolent. The state, or its representatives, purposefully leaves the micro-management of these complicated hot issues to traditional leaders at the local level. The reason behind this concession is to let traditional leaders inevitably tarnish their reputations (Williams 2010). Notwithstanding their involvement in local administration, these institutions play crucial political roles locally as a go-between and rallying force. As opinion leaders, traditional leaders are powerful tools of mobilization. For instance, religious actors led their flocks to be at the forefront of democratic struggles in the 1990s in Kenya. They achieved this role because they galvanized the masses and got their message recycled by their followers. In short, the mechanism can be summarized as the picture below shows. It is a three-step causal process that starts with citizens, then the intermediary institutions, and the MP at the end. I generated the following hypothesis from the above theory.

Hypothesis: Compared to citizens' contacts with formal institutions (party officials), citizens' contacts with informal institutions predict a greater likelihood of contacting members of the parliament.

Data and Methodology

The data used to probe the causal relationship is drawn from the Afrobarometer round 4. The Afrobarometer is a non-profit organization that researches public opinion and attitudes of ordinary citizens in Africa. It records how ordinary people relate to democratic institutions in different countries. Its main themes include democracy, governance, the rule of law, attitudes and behavior, and accountability.

Dependent Variable: Contact with Members of Parliament

The consistent question about contacts with one's MP in every round indicates the importance Afrobarometer surveyors attach to the constituent-representative relationship in Africa. In mature democracies like the United States, direct contact between citizens and their members of Congress is an enduring institution enshrined in the republic's founding documents. The sheer volume of these contacts bears witness to citizens' reliance on this venue to connect directly to their government despite the existence of alternative "linking institutions" (party, interest groups). According to Jacob R. Strauss and Matthew Glassman (2016) of the Congressional Research Services, since 2011, nearly four hundred million emails and twenty-two million postal mail are sent yearly to Congress (**??**). On the other hand, in every single country under investigation in this article, the rate of contact initiated by citizens to reach out to their legislative representatives is very low. Less than two out of ten ordinary
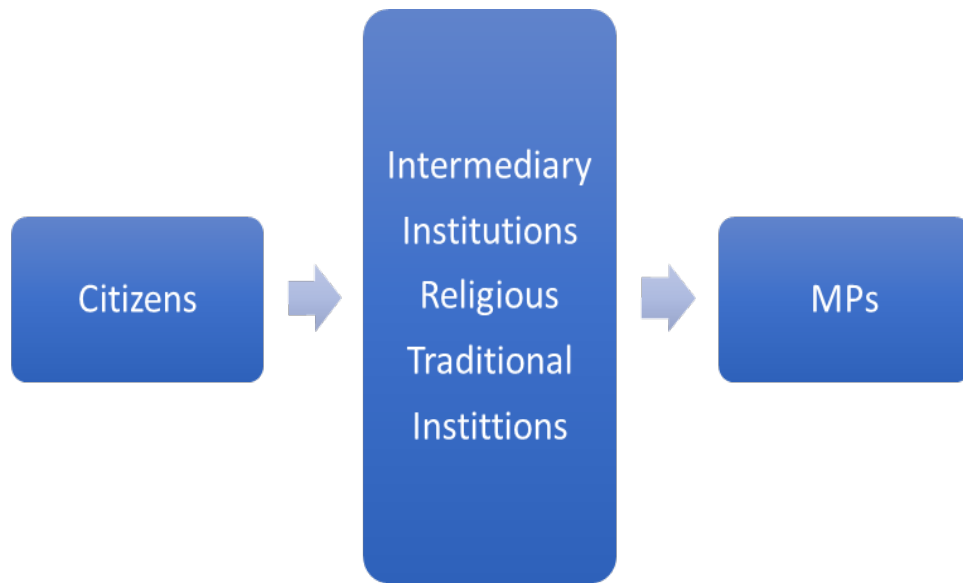
Figure 1. The Constituent-Representative Contacts with Intermediary Institutions

citizens ever initiate such a contact. Most of these contacts are done face-to-face. Although the question about writing to a representative is not asked in the Afrobarometer's surveys, one can surmise from the very small size (0.1%) of the surveyed that write to a newspaper that no one writes to her MP.

Table 2. Contact Members of Parliament

Category	BN	BTWNA	BFASO	CPV	GHANA	KENYA	LSTO	LIBE	MDGC	MLW
Never	89.60%	77.90%	88.50%	86.60%	84.60%	78.20%	87.00%	75.80%	97.70%	84.00%
Once only	4.60%	9.80%	3.60%	4.20%	4.20%	10.10%	6.10%	9.30%	0.80%	4.50%
Few times	4.10%	9.50%	4.80%	4.30%	6.10%	8.70%	4.60%	8.70%	0.80%	7.60%
Often	1.30%	2.60%	2.40%	2.10%	4.00%	2.80%	1.70%	5.60%	0.50%	3.40%

Category	MALI	MZBQ	NMBIA	NGRIA	SNGAL	S-AFR	TZNIA	UGD	ZMBIA	ZMBW
Never	87.40%	91.40%	96.20%	89.00%	91.00%	86.30%	83.90%	82.80%	84.40%	82.50%
Once only	4.60%	2.40%	2.40%	4.10%	1.60%	5.60%	6.50%	8.50%	6.80%	4.80%
Often	4.90%	3.20%	0.80%	4.50%	3.70%	5.10%	6.80%	5.90%	6.40%	8.30%
Few times	1.50%	1.50%	0.10%	1.30%	2.30%	1.10%	2.30%	2.50%	1.90%	4.10%

Independent Variables

Contacts of Religious and Traditional Institutions

Contacting religious leaders is probably the most widespread human interaction Africans get involved in outside the realm of the family. The pervasive religiosity could be assumed to cause a high contact rate with religious leaders. In the survey, the Afrobarometer enumerates nearly 23 religious denominations. Countries vary in types of religious denominational predominance. For instance, Christians form a large majority in Botswana, Benin, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The number of Christians and Muslims is roughly distributed evenly in Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria. Because the article's goal is not to gauge the individual effect of each religious denomination on political participation, no attempt will be made to engage in such an endeavor. The goal, instead, is to evaluate the impact of contacting any religious institution on the likelihood of contacting members of the parliament. In the Afrobarometer, contact with religious institutions takes on four ordinal values (Never = 0; only once=1; few times=2; often=3). For convenience, I recode this variable as a dichotomous variable by collapsing its values from 1 to 3 into 1. Another aspect related to religious affiliations is that 62% of those who claim membership are actively involved in religious organizations, either as leaders or active members. A cross-tabulation reveals that 39% of these active members in religious institutions declare having contacted their MPs.

Table 3. Contact Religious Leaders

Category	BN	BTWNA	BFASO	CAP V	GHAN	KEN	LESOT	LIB	MDGR	MLW
Never	62.20%	52.70%	62.90%	75.60%	54.10%	41.80%	62.60%	49.60%	84.40%	66.10%
Once only	7.40%	9.30%	7.70%	5.10%	10.60%	17.50%	10.30%	19.00%	4.00%	9.70%
Few times	19.40%	23.30%	16.20%	10.20%	19.70%	27.60%	15.60%	19.10%	7.60%	15.20%
Often	10.90%	14.70%	13.00%	6.80%	15.40%	13.00%	11.40%	12.20%	3.90%	8.90%
Category	MALI	MZBQ	NMBIA	NGRIA	SNGAL	S-AFR	TZNIA	UGD	ZMBIA	ZMB
Never	69.30%	59.30%	70.40%	52.80%	53.20%	74.70%	58.30%	42.20%	39.70%	49.50%
Once only	9.70%	7.50%	13.50%	13.00%	9.60%	8.60%	14.20%	18.00%	14.00%	6.90%
Few times	14.20%	14.50%	11.20%	22.90%	19.70%	11.90%	14.10%	25.90%	26.40%	23.20%
Often	6.50%	18.20%	5.00%	10.80%	17.20%	4.20%	13.30%	13.70%	19.80%	20.40%

Chikadibia Stanley Anyanwu (2005) defines traditional authorities as "individuals occupying communal and political leadership positions sanctified by cultural norms and values and enjoying the legitimacy of particular communities to direct their affairs" (2). They can be seen as the most important agents of socialization in rural and urban areas (Ubink 2008, 12). They occupy the space between families and the state and wield impressive social control by observing societal customs, norms, and rules. They wear two hats: civil and religious. Afrobarometer captures the importance of these institutions through the number of citizens who contact them daily. It is safe to assume that the presence of this question in every single one of Afrobarometer's surveys highlights the importance of this social relationship in African communities. Responses are captured as an ordinal level variable measured in five crescendo scales from (0) to (4). Varying from one country to another, response rates reach the highest level in Lesotho (58%) and the lowest in Cape Verde (0%). Over the years, the contact of traditional leaders across the twenty countries remains at 30%. I transform this ordinal variable into a dichotomous variable by collapsing the three values of any contact (only once, a few times, and often) into one value (1), and I keep the value of never as (0).

Table 4. Contact Traditional Rulers

Category	BN	BTWNA	BFASO	CAPV	GHAN	KEN	LESOT	LIB	MDGR	MLW
Never	72.70%	76.30%	71.00%	—	73.50%	57.00%	42.50%	72.00%	91.40%	63.30%
Once only	6.10%	7.40%	5.10%	—	6.40%	12.50%	10.20%	8.80%	1.60%	7.10%
Few times	13.40%	11.30%	11.10%	—	10.70%	18.70%	24.40%	11.50%	3.50%	17.40%
Often	7.50%	4.90%	12.10%	—	8.70%	9.60%	22.90%	7.70%	1.30%	11.60%

Category	MALI	MZBQ	NMBIA	NGRIA	SNGAL	S.AFR	TZNIA	UGD	ZMBIA	ZMBW
Never	60.30%	74.10%	77.30%	73.50%	72.80%	86.10%	84.00%	74.80%	70.10%	59.70%
Once only	9.20%	5.30%	9.70%	9.00%	3.90%	5.90%	3.20%	9.00%	7.60%	3.90%
Few times	19.40%	9.30%	9.70%	11.40%	10.80%	5.10%	3.60%	9.60%	14.10%	17.40%
Often	10.60%	10.60%	3.00%	5.20%	10.30%	1.90%	3.70%	4.70%	7.90%	16.30%

Voting

Voting is the most direct connection between citizens and their elected officials. It gives the constituent the inherent right to contact and hold the elected official accountable. In addition, voting for a candidate gives citizens an added reason to contact those who hold an office. Despite being a less information-rich act, voting for or against an elected official signals trust in the democratic process. In addition, voting for a candidate gives citizens an added reason to contact those who hold an office. In the Afrobarometer, the variable voted takes on seven nominal values. These values encapsulate a complex reality, including citizens' status regarding their voter registration, other structural barriers preventing them from voting, and their attitudes toward various voting acts. I transform the seven scale values into a dichotomous variable with 1=voted and 0= not voted for all other options.

Contact of Party Officials

As voting is the *par excellence,* the most direct individual dyadic connector between elected officials and citizens, the party is the collective channel through which citizens with similar policy goals and ideology achieve these goals. Schattschneider (1946) stated that modern democracy would not be conceivable without political parties. More than any other linkage institutions, formal and informal political parties theoretically are the best tools to aggregate and articulate citizens' preferences. Furthermore, structurally, the party should connect citizens directly to their members of parliament and the latter to their support base. As such, the party should be the greatest predictor of contact with MPs.

Table 5. Contact Influential Person (Party OR Government Agent)

Category	BN	BTWNA	BFASO	CAPV	GHAN	KEN	LESOT	LIB	MDGR	MLW
Never	94.60%	77.50%	93.10%	87.90%	86.00%	70.40%	89.90%	82.80%	99.10%	90.90%
Once only	2.10%	8.50%	1.90%	1.90%	4.50%	12.30%	4.10%	7.10%	0.30%	3.50%
Few times	1.60%	9.90%	3.30%	5.60%	5.90%	10.70%	3.00%	6.90%	0.30%	3.10%
Often	1.00%	3.80%	1.00%	2.70%	2.50%	5.50%	2.30%	2.80%	0.30%	1.60%

Category	MALI	MZBQ	NMBIA	NGRIA	SNGAL	S.AFR	TZNIA	UGD	ZMBIA	ZMBW
Never	85.80%	91.70%	79.40%	81.90%	92.20%	84.4.%	87.30%	79.30%	87.90%	88.90%
Once only	4.70%	2.60%	9.80%	6.90%	2.20%	5.30%	4.80%	8.40%	5.20%	2.80%
Few times	5.90%	1.80%	8.30%	7.90%	2.50%	6.00%	4.10%	8.20%	4.60%	4.90%
Often	2.30%	2.30%	2.20%	2.60%	1.70%	2.30%	2.70%	3.10%	1.80%	3.30%

Control Variables

To establish a clear causal linkage between intermediary institutions and contact with MPs, I control for two sets of variables. The first set of controlled variables consists of individual-level (demographic and socioeconomic) variables. The specified model includes education, age, residence, gender, and party identification.

The first control variable is age. Extant literature shows that age has a reverse-U-shape (hyperbolic) relationship with political participation (Verba, Scholzman, Brady 1995). This means that both younger and older citizens care less about getting involved in politics. The Afrobarometer records age as a continuous variable, from 18 to 90. For this study, I categorize age into four groups: young adults (18-39; adults (40-60); seniors (60-79); and older citizens 80.

The second control variable is Education. Education is widely seen as the most reliable indicator of political participation. The underlying assumption of this perception is that education allows citizens to climb the social and economic ladder; it is the quintessential tool for social mobility and the cognitive empowerment necessary for getting involved in public affairs. The modernization theorist Lipset (1960) and new behaviorists (Nie et al.1996; Norris1999) articulate the causal mechanism with the following three paths: the "*positional path*,""*the socialization path*," and "*the cognitive path*" (quoted from Mattes and Mughogho 2009, 2). "The positional path" links the educated persons with others through networks established during schooling. Through the "socialization path," educated people internalize societal values and codes of conduct to achieve their goals. Finally, the "cognitive path" endows educated people with a stockpile of skills, including practical abilities, understanding, and critical thinking, that boost their internal efficacy and allow them to navigate and participate in the political process (Mattes and Mughogho 2009, 2-23). In the Afrobarometer surveys, education is recorded as a continuous variable categorized into 12 groups. To better capture the distinct effect of different levels of education or lack thereof, I recode education as a trichotomous variable: Level one is coded 0 and captures all citizens with no formal education; level two is coded 1 for those having some secondary education, or graduated from high school; and level tree, coded as 2, regroups post-high school education attainment, including college and post graduate.

Another control variable is gender. Gender is traditionally coded as a dichotomous variable with female=0 and male =1. I follow the same convention. Compared to the established wisdom about gender and participation in mature democracies, the relationship between gender and political involvement in nascent democracies has also been counterintuitive. In mature democracies, political scientists revealed a *gender gap* before the feminist revolution of the 1970s and early 1980s. However, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) show in their voluminous survey that although men participate more than women, this difference is small and meaningless statistically (153). On the other hand, Norris (2003) found a difference in partisanship and ideological stances between men and women. Their study shows women leaning toward the democratic party with more liberal values than men. Yet Bratton andLogan (2006) find that these results do not hold in Africa. This inconsistency in findings warrants a new investigation specifically targeting women's contact with their MP in Africa.

The resource model pioneered by Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) views income as a powerful predictor of political participation. Because of the pervasiveness of low-income levels, I capture individual economic situations with the variable *gone without food*. In the model, the variable gone without food is a proxy variable that captures the income levels of surveyed subjects. Furthermore, the extant literature attributes great political participation to *residence*. In Africa and elsewhere, urbanites are seen as more politically sophisticated citizens than their rural counterparts. In the Afrobarometer round 4 surveys, this variable is coded as a dichotomous variable with 1 for rural folks and 0 for urban dwellers. I complete individual-level variables with respondents' party identification. The Michigan School of Social Psychology of Political Participation dubbed the party ID as the "*unmoved mover*," it is the centripetal force that crystalizes all motivations to participate in politics (Campbell et al., 1960). The Afrobarometer seizes this variable by asking respondents to indicate their closeness to political parties. The answers are recorded as dichotomous variables with 0= = no closeness and 1= = close to party.

To complete the model, I control for two contextual variables: the electoral system and the economic level of each country (GDP per capita). Following Kuenzi and Lambright's (2005) footsteps, I code the electoral system as a dichotomous variable (Single-Member-District countries are coded as =1) and (Proportional Representation countries are coded as =0). As for the GDP per capita, I log the value taken from the World Bank database. I run a series of logit regressions followed by a post-estimation using the marginal effect of listed variables in individual countries' data. I complement these individual regressions by using merged data where I control for electoral systems and countries' economic levels (GDP per capita).

Discussion

The goal of this project has been to assess the extent to which intermediary institutions (traditional authorities and religious actors) conjointly and individually serve as linkage institutions that connect citizens to their members of parliament. The relationship to be measured is the simultaneous comparison of the strength of the linkages between formal institutions and MPs. On the other hand, the strength of connection between the two informal institutions and MPs. I perform a multiple logistic regression in which I contrast the effects of contacting the two intermediary institutions on contacting MPs against that of contacting party officials, partisanship, and voting. These results hold after controlling for individual-level variables

Table 6. Results of the Logisitic Regression

Independent Variables	Coefficients/ Marginal Effects	P-Value
Combined Effects ATA+ Religious Leaders	0.431***	0.000
Contact Religious Leaders	.0231***	0.000
Contact African Traditional Authorities (ATA)	.0201***	0.000
Contact Party Officials	.0057***	0.000
Electoral Systems	.0227**	0.000
Party ID (Closeness to party)	-0.246***	0.000
Education	.0018*	0.013
Gender	-.0208***	0.000
GDP	-.0139***	0.000
Gone Without Food	-.0032*	0.029

Note: ATA = African Traditional Authorities. RI Religious Institutions.
N= 21519. Log-likelihood = -5694.6521. LR chi2(13) = 3113.23
Prob > chi2 = 0.0000, Pseudo R2 = 0.2269 (***) = P-value = (000).

(socioeconomic and demographic) and country-level variables (electoral system and GDP per capita). In Table 5, the combined effect of the two primary independent variables, contact with religious institutions and contact with traditional authorities, display a greater coefficient (4.31%). Substantively, nearly 4% of ordinary people who contact either one of these institutions are more likely to contact their MPs.

At first glance, these findings seem admittedly small but put in a contextual perspective, these results harbor a great beacon of optimism for strengthening the constituent-representative relationship across the twenty countries under investigation. The Afrobarometer surveys show that the political elite is vastly insulated from citizens. Although the scarcity of contact between citizens and their MPs is generally widespread among the twenty countries analyzed, this linking mechanism is practically absent in some countries. Examples of countries with the lowest rates of contact include Madagascar (0.8%), Namibia (0.8%), Mozambique (3.2%), and Senegal (3.7%). One way to highlight the substantive effects of these findings is to plug the marginal effects of the combined effect of these institutions into the current population and contrast it with the above rates. Figure 2 displays differences in the population size that would contact MPs through the ATA and those who would contact without these intermediary institutions in Madagascar.

In this analysis, *contacting religious institutions* is a strong predictor of contacting MP (.0231) with a high statistical significance (P-value=000 at 95% confidence interval). This means that those who contact their religious institutions are nearly 2.3% more likely to reach their representatives than those who don't. This finding is important from the perspective of the high rate of contacts of religious institutions in Africa (on average 50%). While contacting religious institutions comes out as a consistent indicator of contact with MPs, religious affiliations do not. This is understandable. Religious affiliations that capture the diversity or number of religious denominations are highly context-dependent. Membership in religious groups is not significant. This result echoes the findings of Manglos and Weinreb (2013), who found no individual difference in participation among denominational groups (212). The present results also support Reid's (2017) idea that contextual factors, including local and national factors, help shape the political behavior of religious members. She points to the difference in residence (rural or urban) as the driver of the difference in members' political behavior. For instance, rural folks who are catholic behave differently from the urban Catholics in Kenya and Uganda (944). These heavily context-dependent factors explain why differences within and across denominations cancel out the impacts on participation, lending credence to the statistical result of no significance.

As theorized, *contact with traditional authorities* does serve as a mediating institution for citizens to contact their MPs. The results displayed in Table 5 show that this variable has a positive and statistically significant (0.201 with a P-value = 0.000 at a 95% confidence interval). Essentially, this means that citizens who frequently contact traditional authorities have a 2% more chance to reach out to their MPs than those who don't. The relatively smaller coefficient of traditional authorities than religious institutions reflects their checkered history across Africa. In a final analysis, it is perhaps important to point out that despite showing an attachment to these institutions, Africans do not request the clock of African political development to be turned back. Overwhelmingly, Africans reject a system of government conducted by traditional or religious rulers, one-party rule, or military rule. Afrobarometer rounds 2 and 3 report that 89% prefer the democratic form of governance and reject all alternative forms of government that would supplant the democratic ones. The inclusion of country-level variables yields two
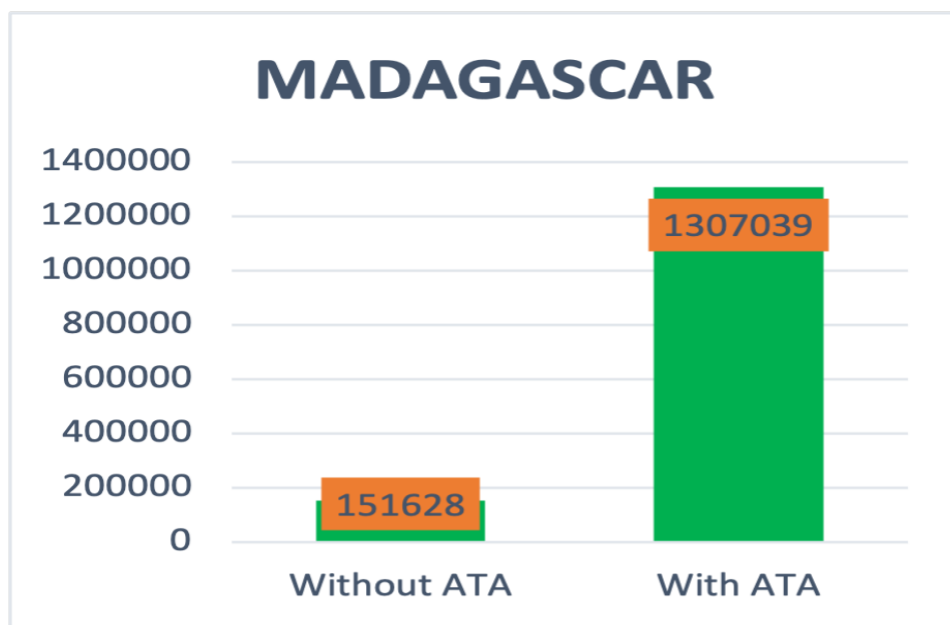
Figure 2. Contacting Officials in Madagascar

important findings. Firstly, as theorized by many scholars, electoral systems impact representative-constituents relationships. In Table 5, the variable electoral rule (a dichotomous variable) impacts positively the contact with MPs (.022). In a country with the electoral system of a single-member district, ordinary citizens have a 2.27% chance to contact their MP than in countries with any other electoral system. Secondly, unlike the electoral system, which has a positive coefficient, the country-level economic variable, the gross domestic product per capita, impacts contact with MPs (-013). This result also substantiates the conventional wisdom that a low level of economic development hampers political participation. Unlike informal institutions that positively impact bottom-up communication from citizens to their representatives, formal institutions display different pictures. Starting with contact with party officials, the coefficient is small but positive. This result is rather heartwarming for hopeful democrats in Africa (scholars, citizens, and activists). Conversely, party ID has a negative and statistically significant coefficient (-.024). Those claiming partisanship are 2.4% less likely to contact their MPs). This result is alarming because it signals a disconnect between ordinary citizens affiliated with political parties and their awareness that parties exist to facilitate bottom-up communication, among other functions. Unsurprisingly, neither voting nor residence affects whether citizens would contact their MPs.

Gone Without Food is a quantifiable yardstick of people's living standards regarding income in this article. It is what Amartya Sen (1999) called "the value of one's standard of living lies in living itself" (12). Because such a standard of living is low among those surveyed in Africa, the variable depresses the likelihood of contracting the MPs. In Table 5, the coefficient of the *Gone without Food* is negative and statistically significant(-.0032). Although specified as a single variable in the model, Afrobarometer uses this variable as an integrative part of an index variable called *Lived Poverty.* Lived Poverty is an experiential indicator measuring "how frequently people go without necessities during a year" (Mattes 2016,12). Finally, the variable *Education* positively impacts the dependent variable contact with MPs. With a positive and a statistically significant coefficient (.0018), the variable *Education,* albeit small, confirms the theory that citizens' socioeconomic status (SES) is a reliable indicator of their level of political engagement across the globe.

Conclusion

In conclusion, democratic waves in Africa have brought the rebirth of the most familiar and closest social organizations ordinary Africans know, religious institutions, and traditional authorities. Traditional authorities and religious institutions have known a revival across the continent for the last two decades. The Afrobarometer captures the importance of these institutions by measuring how many ordinary citizens contact them. Table 1, page 10 above, shows that resurgence has occurred in virtually every country irrespective of their colonial past. One can no longer dismiss these institutions as epiphenomena. If anything, their resurgence speaks volumes about their socioeconomic relevance in ordinary people's daily lives. Still, these institutions bear inherent non-democratic features such as the mode of selection, and sometimes, their ruling principles are shrouded in mysteries (Mattes 1997). Furthermore, in many places, these institutions have a tarnished reputation for collaborating with

successive extra-local powers (Mamdani 1996). Thus, the resurgence of these institutions raises a more pressing question about their fitness in the African democratic landscape. In response to this question, two camps have emerged. Recognizing the merits of each side, I have advocated a middle-ground position like other eminent scholars (Bratton and Logan 2008; Logan 2008, 2011). Yet, in this article, I go beyond mere speculation about traditional authorities' linkage role in connecting ordinary people to formal institutions to provide hard evidence about their role in constituent-representative relationships. Despite showing this tangible evidence, this investigation has some limitations. As mentioned previously, the scope is limited to the 20 countries in the Afrobarometer. Another limitation is that the lack of data (qualitative and quantitative) on both African traditional authorities and religious institutions cut short a more exhaustive comparison among countries under investigation. Specifically, except in a limited number of countries where the status of institutions is clearly defined and formally recognized (Botswana, Burkina, Ghana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Malawi, South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe), in many of them, the status is unclear (Benin, Cape Verde, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia). Future research would make a great theoretical contribution by focusing solely on each of these institutions and comparing them across countries.

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The Influence of Institutional Trust and Conspiracy Ideation on COVID-19 Behaviors

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ABSTRACT

In this study, we examine the effect of conspiratorial ideation and institutional trust on COVID-19 mitigation behaviors. We hypothesize institutional trust increases compliance with government-recommended behavioral changes to mitigate COVID-19. We further hypothesize that a general disposition towards belief in conspiratorial explanations decreases compliance with COVID-19 mitigation behaviors. Additionally, we posit that institutional trust mediates the relationship between conspiratorial ideation and COVID-19 mitigation behaviors. Based on a targeted sample of a highly Republican area, we fielded a three-wave survey gauging levels of trust, conspiratorial ideation, and COVID-19 mitigation behaviors. The results show strong support for our pre-registered hypotheses and suggest that institutional trust and conspiratorial ideation may play a more complex role in determining health behaviors than previously considered.

Introduction

Why did some people choose not to protect themselves from the COVID-19 pandemic before the widespread availability of vaccines? Many Americans resisted the adoption of preventative health behaviors despite consistent warnings and repeated messaging about the benefits of such measures, specifically masking and social distancing (Fazio et al. 2021; Fischer et al. 2021). These lifesaving behaviors are inexpensive and do not impose significant time constraints. The perplexing question is why people refuse to safeguard themselves and their families by adopting these inexpensive, easy-to-do behaviors. In this study, we examine the impact of conspiratorial ideation and institutional trust on the likelihood of adopting COVID-19 preventative behaviors in a targeted population known to be less compliant.

Public health experts routinely measure trust in government health institutions for predictive analysis of compliance based on research indicating higher institutional trust leads to greater compliance with mitigation measures and better public health outcomes (Rowe & Calnan 2006; Vinck et al. 2019; Tang & Wong 2005; Rubin et al. 2009; Oksanen et al. 2020).[1] Institutional trust has remained influential throughout the current pandemic in determining behaviors and attitudes related to COVID-19 (Caplanova et al. 2021; Pagliaro et al. 2021). Varied forms of trust, including institutional trust and trust in "governmental policymakers," predict vaccine intention globally and in the United States (Goldberg & Richey 2020; Latkin et al. 2021). Institutional trust is also shown to significantly impact the likelihood of belief in ideologically motivated conspiracy theories (Miller, Saunders, & Farhart 2016). Our research adds to this burgeoning literature by showing that COVID-19 mitigation behaviors are strongly correlated with institutional trust and identifies a potentially understudied factor contributing to both mitigation behaviors and institutional trust – conspiratorial ideation.

It is not only the case that some people believe in conspiracy theories while others do not; conspiratorial ideation forms a "monological belief system" that is associated with traits in the Big-Five personality typology, interpersonal trust, paranormal and supernatural ideation, and minority and/or perceived marginalized status (Goertzel 1994; Swami et al. 2011; Brotherington et al. 2013; Brader et al. 2013; Edelson et al. 2017).[2] This conspiratorial predisposition alters information processing and is shown to reduce compliance with public health recommendations and vaccination intention (Bertin et al. 2020; Marinthe et al. 2020; Romer & Jamieson 2020; Loomba et al. 2021; Oleksy, et al. 2021; Sallam et al. 2021; Winter et al. 2021; Pummerer et al. 2022). Those with a generalized propensity to believe anti-governmental conspiracy theories are unlikely to trust and take

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[1]https://ccp.jhu.edu/kap-covid/kap-covid-trend-analysis-for-23-countries/

[2]It is important to note that newer research questions this formulation of conspiracy ideation as monological, e.g., see Enders, Uscinski, Klofstad, Seelig, Wuchty, Murthi, Premaratne, and Funchion (2021).

advice from government-run health institutions, such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or the National Institute of Health (NIH; Einstein & Glick 2015). Individual psychological responses, such as uncertainty and anxiety, and contextual factors, such as an increase in misinformation present in the media environment, can contribute to the uptake of conspiratorial beliefs (Grzesiak-Feldman 2013; Kim & Kim 2021; De Connick et al. 2021; Larsen et al. 2021). Social media has proven to be an especially virulent vector of transmission for COVID-19-specific conspiracy theories, with exposure reducing the likelihood of compliance among recipients (Allington et al. 2020; Georgiou, Delfabbro, & Balzan 2020; Basch et al. 2021).

Most relevant for our research, recent studies suggest a significant relationship between conspiratorial beliefs, institutional trust, and COVID-19 attitudes and behaviors (Bierwiaczonek, Kunst, & Pich 2020; Havey 2020; Uscinski et al. 2020; Caplanova et al. 2021; Bruder & Kunert 2022; Pummerer et al. 2022). We follow Bruder & Kunert (2022) by examining the proposed mediating role of institutional trust between conspiratorial ideation and COVID-19 behaviors. However, the two surveys were fielded contemporaneously, and we focus on a subset of the population known to be less compliant than the general population (Bruder & Kunert 2022). Our focused approach provides greater insight into the factors contributing to low rates of mitigation behaviors and, thus, higher rates of COVID-19 infection amongst this targeted population (Chu et al. 2020). Our approach is complementary to broadly representative approaches, and the trade of specificity over generalizability is worthwhile where population subsets exhibit atypical behaviors. Approaches such as this may illuminate relationships unobservable to the public. They, therefore, may be of greater importance in developing strategies to induce greater rates of preventative behaviors amongst recalcitrant populations.

Hypotheses

We theorize that lower levels of institutional trust and higher levels of conspiratorial ideation will decrease the likelihood of individuals adopting COVID-19 mitigation behaviors — masking, social distancing, and encouraging others to socially distance. Additionally, we posit that institutional trust mediates the relationship between conspiratorial ideation and COVID-19 behaviors — higher conspiratorial ideation leads to lower institutional trust, reducing the likelihood of adopting COVID-19 mitigation behaviors. We maintain that conspiratorial ideation has a direct effect on the likelihood of mitigation behaviors, but much of this effect manifests in lower institutional trust.

Before fielding the survey, we preregistered our research hypotheses through the Open Science Foundation. Though the mediating effect of conspiratorial ideation through institutional trust is not explicitly included in the preregistered study information, our expectations are in line with our underlying theory due to the rapidly evolving nature and information on the pandemic at that time. This can be inferred from preregistered hypotheses 4 and 6, discussing the negative impact of conspiratorial ideation and the positive impact of institutional trust, respectively. Hypothesis preregistration is one component of the open science movement, attempting to introduce greater standards of transparency and replicability in the social sciences. The transparency provided by preregistration increases trust in social scientific findings and far outweighs the costs of doing so.[3]

Formally stated, our hypotheses are:

H_1: Respondents higher in conspiratorial ideation will be less likely to adopt appropriate COVID-19 mitigation behaviors than respondents lower in conspiratorial ideation.

H_2: Respondents lower in institutional trust will be less likely to adopt appropriate COVID-19 mitigation behaviors than respondents higher in institutional trust.

H_3: Institutional trust mediates the relationship between conspiratorial ideation and COVID-19 behaviors.

Data

We preregistered our hypotheses, survey questionnaire, and research methodology to test these expectations. We focus on a population with lower expected levels of COVID-19 mitigation behaviors: Republican voters in a highly conservative exurb of Atlanta.[4] Epidemiological research regularly focuses on specific geographical areas to examine pathogens' origins or rapid spread (Di Giallonardo et al. 2016; Dudas et al. 2017). We expect that geographically distinct regions characterized by lower rates of COVID-19 mitigation behaviors will contribute to the spread of COVID-19 to a greater extent than other comparable areas. This expectation derives from the recent findings that Republicans are less likely to comply with COVID-19 mitigation behavior (Allcott et al. 2020), are more likely to believe in COVID-19 conspiracy theories through increased conservative media consumption (Stecula & Pickup 2021), and are more likely than Democrats to believe in a variety of conspiracy theories

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[3]https://osf.io/wqha8/?view_only=5459e3685a994a93868f31bedd746256
[4]Exurb refers to distinct regions outside of a suburb; generally characterized by prosperous communities. Cobb County, GA.

(Havey 2020; Uscinski et al. 2020; Enders, Smallpage, & Lupton 2020; Enders & Smallpage 2019).[5] The lower rates of these behaviors in our sample, compared to the general public, are presented in the Online Appendix, Table A4.

This research uses the results of a survey fielded in an exurban county in Atlanta from September 2nd to October 7th, 2020, in three waves. This survey gauged respondents' reported mitigation behaviors for COVID-19. We chose this population for their atypical resistance to COVID-19 mitigation behaviors and strong partisan identification as Republican. Public health crises often propagate through definable populations at greater rates than the general public (Millett et al. 2010). Understanding the transmission patterns in these communities and thus developing population-specific mitigation efforts may provide a proportionally greater impact than interventions in the general public.

The survey proceeded as follows: Respondents were identified and contacted by Cygnal, a political polling firm specializing in reaching respondents in our area of interest, based on voting records to identify consistent Republican voters. Respondents agreed to participate for a monetary incentive – a five-dollar Amazon gift card upon completion of all waves. Respondents were sent a link to the survey via SMS or email. Respondents answered a series of behavioral and attitudinal questions regarding COVID-19, were given a treatment analyzed elsewhere, and closed with a series of demographic questions – age, gender, race, income, and education, among others. The second wave proceeded with the same format after a delay of two weeks, with the final wave fielded a week after the second. The first survey wave comprised 829 respondents, with 291 returning for the second and 181 for the third. The complete survey questionnaire can be found in online Appendix B.

The behavioral responses collected in the first wave form the outcome variables of interest for this research. Specifically, the survey asked respondents about their likelihood of masking, social distancing, and encouragement of others (family and friends) to mask and/or socially distance. Rather than examine each composite factor individually, we constructed an aggregate measure for COVID-19 behaviors. Each measure's composite elements correlate at moderate levels but not at the $\alpha \geq 0.7$ level desired to form additive or multiplicative indices with confidence. We instead perform confirmatory factor analysis to predict the latent measure of behaviors used in the analysis.[6] This predicted factor forms the outcome of interest for this research. This approach allows for a more holistic view of behaviors relating to COVID-19, which we view as theoretically preferable to individual outcomes. Notably, the results for the individual behavior measures are substantively identical to the combined results discussed below - see Online Appendix C, Tables C2, C3, and C4. Descriptive statistics for all measures used are presented in Online Appendix A, Table A1.

We used the multi-wave design to include three abbreviated psychometric batteries in the later waves. Conspiratorial ideation was measured via an abbreviated version of the battery developed by Brotherton, French, and Pickering (2013). Conspiracy ideation is important for fully understanding American politics, which has featured prominent conspiracy theories throughout its history (Knight 2003; Moore 2016). Illuminating the relationship between health behaviors and conspiratorial ideation may provide practical insights for harm reduction and mitigation strategies. This battery measures conspiratorial ideation along five subdomains – personal well-being, government malfeasance, extraterrestrial cover-up, malevolent global conspiracies, and information control. Conspiratorial ideation is theorized as longitudinally stable and domain-general – relatively static over time and capturing a propensity towards general belief in such theories beyond only those included in the battery (Brotherton, French, & Pickering 2013). The full conspiratorial ideation battery was prohibitively lengthy for our purposes. Thus, we excluded items related to personal well-being as the subject matter (COVID-19) would likely affect responses. We then selected eight items from the remaining four subdomains, over-selecting items in the government malfeasance and control of information subdomains. This was done to eliminate irrelevant or otherwise immaterial items for this study. We selected the remaining items based on their factor loadings in the original work. This battery's results form an additive index, with higher values indicating a higher value of conspiratorial ideation. The study's other measured psychological variables are beyond the scope of this research.

The survey also measured respondent's trust in public health institutions – both state and federal. We anticipate our sample – Republican voters in a state with a Republican trifecta of elected officials when the survey was fielded – will trust state institutions and their mitigation messaging over federal institutions, given the high politicization of federal institutions during the pandemic, such as the CDC and NIH. The state and federal institutional trust measures correlate at $\alpha = 0.526$, illustrating some disparity in trust; we therefore analyze these variables separately. Trust in state and federal institutions is measured on a 5-point scale, where higher values indicate higher trust.[7]

The demographic variables are included in the analysis to account for their influence, political ideology, and personal experience with COVID-19. Ideology is measured via the standard ANES 7-question battery, with higher values indicating more

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[5]This may be due to an increased prevalence of conspiratorial ideation among this population or more frequent media exposure that promotes such theories (Stempel, Hargrove, & Stempel III 2007; Zhao et al. 2020). Any explanation for this prevalence is beyond the scope of this research.

[6]Specifically, responses to the question: "Do you believe you or someone in your household, a friend, or a coworker has been infected with COVID-19 at any time?" Where 1 is 'No', 2 is 'Yes, but not confirmed via test,' and 3 is 'Yes, confirmed via a test.'

[7]Specific question wording: "I trust COVID-19-related news from official Georgia government sources, such as the Georgia Department of Public Health and the Governor's Office" and "I trust COVID-19-related news from official national government sources, such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH)".

conservative identification, though respondents only responded to 5 of these options. Ideology is included because existing and emerging research indicates a significant influence of ideology on conspiratorial beliefs and a stark partisan divide in responses to COVID-19 (Douglas et al. 2019; Allcott et al. 2020). Even though our sample consists almost entirely of Republicans (94%), ideological variability within Republicans may significantly impact responses. Those more conservative respondents may be less likely to engage in safe behaviors, as opposed to their less conservative counterparts. Personal experience with COVID-19 is measured as a trinary variable, where higher values indicate a higher level of personal experience, i.e., has personally witnessed the impact and severity of COVID-19.[8] We assume that respondents who have personally experienced COVID-19 are more aware of the dangers and expected to adopt mitigating COVID-19 behaviors. However, this question is not a focus of our research, and we include this measure to account for the influence of this potentially confounding factor on our outcomes of interest.

Methods

We examine the direct relationships between our preregistered hypotheses and our proposed mediation pathway – conspiratorial ideation affecting trust in public health institutions and, consequently, affecting COVID-19 behaviors. The direct relationships are analyzed through a series of linear regression analyses to identify the influence of conspiratorial ideation, institutional trust, and demographic variables on COVID-19 behaviors.[9] Conspiratorial ideation and institutional trust are also modeled as interaction terms to identify the mutual influence on COVID-19 behaviors. All models are robust to the linear regression assumptions, and post-estimation tests confirm the proper functioning of the specified models.[10] The only exception is that several models exhibited heteroskedastic residuals. We adopt the Efron (1982) calculation of 'robust' standard errors in these models to account for this heteroskedasticity. The Efron variant is optimal due to its greater ability to manage relatively low sample sizes (Long & Ervin 2000). This implementation is noted where used. We then test our third hypothesis through mediation analysis, first proposed by Baron & Kenny (1986) and more recently by Brader, Valentino, & Suhay (2008) and Bruder & Kunert (2022). This is done to test the proposed mediating effect of institutional trust between conspiratorial ideation and COVID-19 behaviors. The entire process and results are presented in the Online Appendix D. The relevant results are presented in Figure 2.[11] Of course, as with all survey research, these correlational results are open to critiques over omitted variable bias, endogeneity, and generalizability.

Results

Table 1 presents the coefficient estimates for the relationship of institutional trust and conspiratorial ideation on COVID-19 behaviors. These results provide strong suggestive evidence for Hypotheses 1 and 2. Respondents higher in conspiratorial ideation are less likely to adopt COVID-19 mitigating behaviors. Substantively, moving from the minimum to maximum value of conspiratorial ideation reduces the predicted likelihood of positive COVID-19 behaviors by roughly 2 units – out of a possible 3.[12] Respondents higher in institutional trust, both state and federal, are more likely to adopt COVID-19 mitigating behaviors. The effect size of federal trust is greater than that of state trust. This is expected given the Republican control of Georgia's politics and the conservative movement's common refrain about the desirability of devolution of powers to state governments. However, it was not explicitly hypothesized for the study. These effects are consistent when demographic measures, personal experience with COVID-19, and ideology are included in the analysis.

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[8] Specifically, responses to the question: "Do you believe you or someone in your household, a friend, or a coworker has been infected with COVID-19 at any time?" Where 1 is 'No', 2 is 'Yes, but not confirmed via test,' and 3 is 'Yes, confirmed via a test.'

[9] Although the composite measures used in factor analysis are ordinal in nature – five-item Likert scales – the resulting predicted factor is a normally distributed continuous variable. As such, linear regression and not ordered logistic regression is the most appropriate statistical approach for this analysis.

[10] The results of all post-estimation tests are available upon request.

[11] Stars signify statistical significance at difference α levels $*p < 0.1$, $**p < 0.05$, $*** p < 0.01$.

[12] See Online Appendix Table A1 for descriptive statistics of all variables.

Table 1. Effect of Conspiratorial Ideation and Institutional Trust on Predicted COVID-19 Mitigation Behaviors.

Conspiratorial Ideation	−0.513*** [0.057]	−0.446*** [0.080]				
Institutional Trust: State			0.155*** [0.045]	0.170*** (0.054)		
Institutional Trust: Federal					0.265*** [0.038]	0.276*** (0.049)
Female		0.234* [0.124]		0.109 (0.125)		0.122 (0.116)
Age		0.063 [0.079]		0.118 (0.084)		0.096 (0.079)
Income		−0.121 [0.080]		−0.089 (0.085)		−0.075 (0.079)
Education		−0.072 [0.103]		−0.062 (0.105)		−0.162 (0.100)
Ideology		−0.129** [0.062]		−0.281*** (0.073)		−0.144** (0.071)
Person of Color		−0.113 [0.178]		−0.065 (0.200)		0.032 (0.187)
COVID-19 Personal Experience		−0.037 [0.071]		−0.135* (0.081)		−0.086 (0.076)
Constant	1.339*** [0.140]	2.107*** [0.577]	−0.456*** [0.170]	0.928 (0.599)	−0.773*** [0.145]	0.260 (0.574)
N	203	154	314	149	314	148
Adjusted R^2	0.249	0.223	0.042	0.127	0.151	0.234

Note. Values presented are linear regression estimates. Dependent variable is predicted COVID-19 behaviors - coded such that higher values indicate a higher likelihood of behaving in line with scientific recommendations for COVID-19 transmission mitigation. Gender and race are dummy variables coded such that 1 denotes female and person of color respectively. Higher values of ideology denote more conservative responses. All other variables coded such that higher values indicate higher levels of variable name. Standard errors in parentheses. Efron (1982) variant standard errors in square brackets. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

Figures 1 and 2 present the estimates of the interaction effect of conspiratorial ideation and institutional trust on COVID-19 behaviors.[13] Both sets of coefficient estimates – for state and federal institutional trust interacted with conspiratorial ideation – are positive and statistically significant, with and without demographic factors, indicating their mutual influence on behavior and independent influence. Low institutional trust and high conspiratorial ideation levels result in the lowest predicted rate of positive COVID-19 behaviors. Substantively, this means that conspiratorial ideation exerts an additional negative effect on those lowest in institutional trust. Individuals who are low in institutional trust and conspiratorial ideation are more likely to adopt scientifically accepted mitigation behaviors than those who are low in institutional trust and high in conspiratorial ideation.

Having established the influence of conspiratorial ideation and institutional trust on COVID-19 behaviors, we next examine these variables' potential causal pathways. Our hypothesized relationship is that institutional trust mediates the relationship between conspiratorial ideation and COVID-19 behaviors. We examine this claim through mediation analysis. As illustrated in Figure 3, federal institutional trust partially mediates the negative impact of conspiratorial ideation on COVID-19 behaviors, while state institutional trust does not mediate this relationship. The indirect effect of conspiratorial ideation on COVID-19 behaviors is statistically significant, as indicated by Sobel's z-test, meaning that conspiratorial ideation contributes to lower federal institutional trust, contributing to lower compliance with COVID-19 mitigation behaviors. However, the indirect effect size – conspiratorial ideation through federal institutional trust in behaviors – is roughly 30% of the direct effect size

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[13]Full table omitted for aesthetic purposes. Reporting primary findings via format, coefficient (standard errors). Interaction of state institutional trust and conspiratorial ideation without demographics, 0.129 (0.044); interaction of state institutional trust and conspiratorial ideation with demographics, 0.131 (0.066); interaction of federal institutional trust and conspiratorial ideation without demographics, 0.127 (0.042); interaction of federal institutional trust and conspiratorial ideation with demographics, 0.130 (0.056). All reported coefficients are statistically significant at the $\alpha = 0.05$ level. See Table C1 in Online Appendix C for the full results.
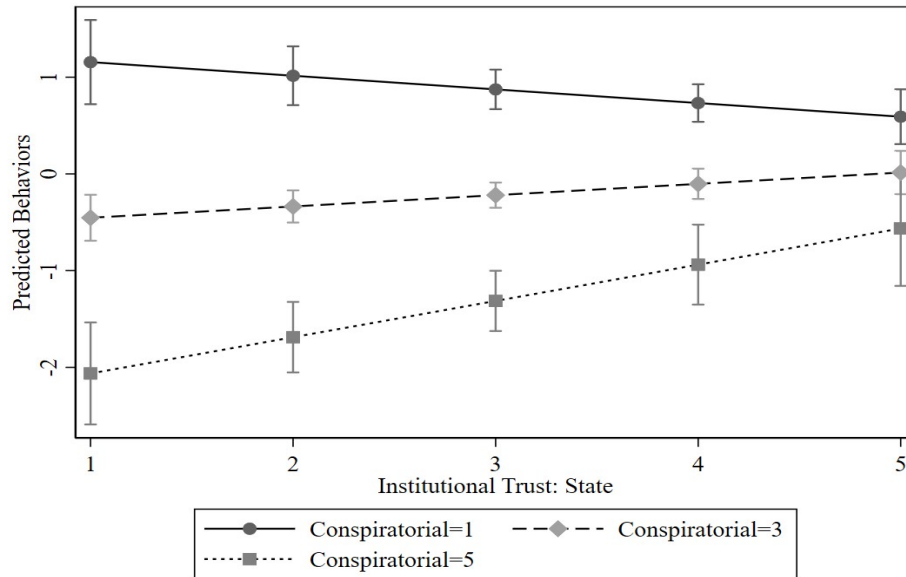
Figure 1. Interaction Effect of Institutional Trust and Conspiratorial Ideation on COVID-19 Behaviors, State Level
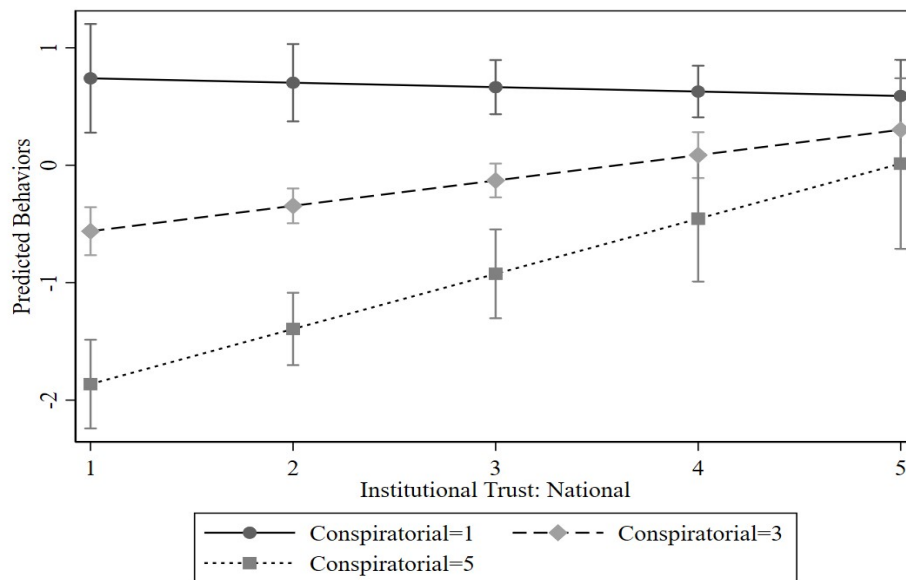

Figure 2. Interaction Effect of Institutional Trust and Conspiratorial Ideation on COVID-19 Behaviors, Federal Level
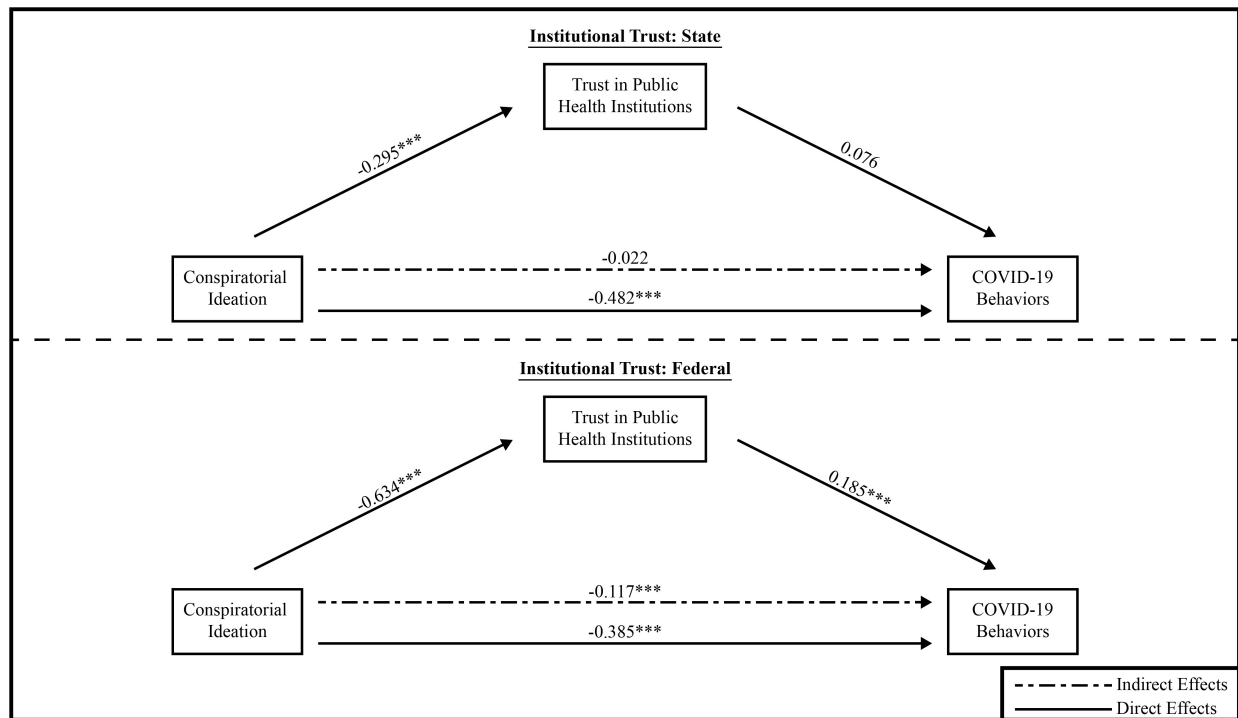
Figure 3. Effect of Conspiratorial Ideation on COVID-19 Mitigation Behaviors, Mediated by Institutional Trust

(conspiratorial ideation on behaviors). Therefore, we can conclude that while federal institutional trust is an influential factor in mediating the relationship between conspiratorial ideation and COVID-19 behaviors, most of this relationship lies in the direct effect of conspiratorial ideation.

Figure 3 illustrates that trust in state institutions does not mediate the effect of conspiratorial ideation on COVID-19 behavior. This further supports our decision to analyze state and federal institutional trust separately, as federal institutional trust appears to suffer from a distinct 'anti-Washington' sentiment among our sample. Any explanation for this sentiment is beyond this paper's scope.

Conclusion

Our results provide strong suggestive evidence that respondents higher in conspiratorial ideation and lower in institutional trust are less likely to adopt COVID-19 mitigation behaviors. This effect is robust where demographic variables are considered. We find that the preponderance of this relationship is due to the influence of conspiratorial ideation. However, a lack of trust in federal public health institutions also contributes to lower rates of COVID-19 mitigation behaviors. The disparity between trust in the state and federal public health institutions should guide future attempts to influence resistant populations – messaging from the CDC will be less efficacious than messaging from the Georgia Department of Public Health, for example. Future research should explore if this disparity is contingent on in-party control of state politics, as was the case in Georgia when the survey was fielded, or if this effect is exacerbated with out-party control of the federal government.

This research highlights the importance of combating conspiracy theories during public health crises. Many of these conspiracy theories are political, such as the origins of COVID-19 as a deliberate plot by the Chinese government or a globalist cabal enacted through 5G technology (Romer & Jamieson 2020; Bolsen, Palm, & Kingsland 2020). Psychological factors such as conspiratorial ideation may play a more significant role in determining health behaviors than previously considered, directly and indirectly impacting institutional trust. This underscores the need for a unified, multidisciplinary approach, marrying the foci of political science, psychology, and public health to understand the multifaceted nature of such problems better and develop holistic solutions. Future work in public health should deeply consider the influence of political attitudes and psychological factors on the likelihood of success in gaining compliance from the targeted audience.

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Race and Political Affiliation on Cultural Issues: How Have Different Races Within Political Parties Affected the Individual's Political Attitudes on Cultural Issues?

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ABSTRACT

While questioning how the American people view the ongoing cultural issues that surround us today, considering how these political attitudes differ among the races within these parties, if any, is essential. As analyses have occurred on the history of cultural issues, the effects of race on political polarization, and how race impacts polarization, we must identify how different races within parties view these topics. This analysis can help scholars better understand if the views on cultural issues vary by the individual's race or, more so, their political ideologies would be identified through the individual's political affiliation. With liberals commonly specifying as Democrats and conservatives typically identifying themselves as Republicans, the races within these groups can be analyzed. The results utilizing data from the 2018 General Social Survey showed that, without a political party, whites were typically the minor progress toward the dependent variables representing potentially marginalized groups but would be the most progressive after they aligned themselves with the democratic party. This information excludes the data from how white respondents felt about homosexual relations. The results ultimately call to question the impact of ideology on white and non-white Americans and how this can completely change their views on race-related cultural issues.

Introduction

Following its creation, the United States political system has lied on the backs of the existing and forever-changing racial orders that have divided its people.[1] These orders have governed how political ideologies and parties have aligned, leaving a largely moderate United States population to align themselves with two major political parties as they exercised their right to vote. However, this right initially belonged to white men and later white women as we entered the 20th century. Despite the several decades that had passed after its ratification, the Constitutional right to vote was granted and protected for all in the mid-20th century through the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In an age where political polarization has divided the Democratic and Republican parties, millions of people have been left to form their own opinions on different cultural issues, ultimately creating more division. With these cultural issues heavily emphasizing race, many have considered how polarization has impacted ideologies on these topics.

While questioning how the American people view the ongoing cultural issues that surround us today, it is important to consider how these political attitudes differ among the races within these parties, if any. This leads to the question: How do different races within political parties affect the individual's attitudes on cultural issues? As analyses have occurred on the history of cultural issues, the effects of race on political polarization, and the extent to which race impacts polarization, we must identify how different races within parties view these topics. This can help scholars better understand if the views on cultural issues vary by the individual's race or if their political ideologies would be identified through their political affiliation. With liberals commonly identifying as Democrats and conservatives typically identifying themselves as Republicans, the races within these groups can be analyzed.

Previous Literature

Race and Politics

The increasing presence of political polarization has led many scholars and researchers to fail to find a consensus on the cause of these changing extensions of the opposition of ideas in politics. While many believe and theorize that economic or class differentiations have mostly been attributed to this, they fail to consider a major potential cause of modern political unrest. This potential cause is race and its relationship with the origins of the dominating political parties witnessed today within the United States. Throughout the early history of the United States, this country has been built upon racial orders that have ruled in favor

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[1]Appendix available from author.

of American whites over non-whites (Olson 2008; King and Smith 2008). Racial orders are defined as foundational structures of economic and political status for those designated as having political identities in each historical era (King and Smith 2008). Eras that begin with slavery, to the adoption of sharecropping, then the founding of Jim Crow laws, to desegregation, and to where we are today.

Some argue that these orders and the history of the United States, dating back to the 1850s, have created this culmination of political polarization (Davis 1999). Beginning during the times of slavery and segregation, the United States witnessed the beginning of orders that ruled in favor of white supremacy; this paved the way for a society that made those who were non-white, particularly blacks, inferior. Though triumphs were later made during the civil rights movements, obtaining rights for black people led to a newfound resentment within those favored by the racial orders. Resentment then fueled the divisions between the Republican and Democratic parties as the Democratic party can be deemed as more "race-conscious," and the Republican party is deemed as the party that represented a "virtuous middle" that was ultimately less race-conscious (Olson 2008; King and Smith 2008). Cultural issues and policies began to be labeled as "liberal" or "conservative," making the viewpoints on race be categorized into two parties during an era where the issues of race were highly contested and debated.

As voting rights were granted to all after adopting the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Elmendorf, Quinn, and Abrajano 2016), racial solidarity was documented as participation rates increased for about fifteen years. Black political participation increased immensely throughout this era as legislation mandated and incorporated blacks within political institutions (Pinderhughes 1988). However, since the 1980s, this participation has drastically declined for the once exceptionally politically active group. Since this discovery, scholars still need to provide a significant correlation between racial solidarity and political participation, which many have been startled by. Despite this, scholars note that solidarity towards social matters is often observed among the black community (Chong and Rogers 2005). As parties began to identify themselves with different cultural issues, as mentioned previously, black unity began to take form through both militant and nationalism. Members of civil rights activist groups such as the NAACP or student unions are referred to as "militants ."Black nationalists have been noted to be more engaged in encouraging political activity and awareness. With a modest impact on voting and a significant impact on participation in political activities (including boycotts, protests, etc.), solidarity is important to note when analyzing the behaviors within a race (Chong and Rogers, 2005). A more recent study has researched the aftermath of the Obama administration; scholars have been able to conclude that the impacts of these racial orders and their response to the United States' first black President can be telling of the prevalence of the disputes between cultural and racial issues within the United States (McDermott and Belcher 2014).

Transforming Cultural Issues into "Culture Wars"

With the increased political polarization, scholars have noted a heavy presence of "culture wars". This phenomenon is defined as sharp and increasing divisions within American polity, specifically divisions within stances on various cultural issues (Muste 2014). As cultural issues and perspectives on them align themselves with specific political parties, individuals align themselves with parties, and more division occurs. Despite this division, scholars have identified the extent to which there are patterns of different preferences within each of the political parties. Some conservatives, identifying as Republican, may uphold traditional values while others may uphold traditional values while following the more "liberal view" regarding social policy. As Americans identify themselves along a political spectrum, this identification only equates to an equal understanding of every policy presented to them (Feldman and Johnston 2014). This is seen specifically in how individuals approach economic versus social issues. This makes ideology "multidimensional" rather than heterogeneous. Political scientists and psychologists have also identified shared traits among those within the two major political parties. Considering these, this makes ideology complex and how it reacts to cultural issues.

While assessing this polarization, some scholars believe that the responses triggered by the changing opinions on cultural issues should be limited to one solution for this issue. This perspective believes that if political figures and elites limited themselves or their brand to one specific opinion or idea, voters would be more likely to follow the views and decisions of the politicians or influencers in power (Layman and Carsey 2002). This perspective also shares the idea that rather than race or social group being the deciding factor within the polarization on cultural issues being the cause, the real cause is politicians and their contributions towards divisive politics. Though more scholars consider race and social group characteristics than not, it is important to consider all proposed perspectives. These social group characteristics are age, race, class, and gender (Muste 2014; Shaw 1997). If individuals identify with a demographic characteristic, their status with that trait will ultimately lead them to their views on a specific cultural issue. By measuring the individual's favorability of the different cultural issues, the researchers often used graphs to display the differences among the different social group characteristics. However, like the study that will be conducted, this study needs to focus on the exact differences between the social characteristics of political parties. Despite this, it provides a sound framework for the study conducted here, yet the social characteristics will be race and political affiliation.

Critical Review

Within the discussion of race and its impact on political polarization, an important critique is that as scholars propose race and its history as a catalyst for polarization, polarization itself has several causes; therefore, limiting it to one cause lacks merit. However, several scholars have called for recognizing race as one of many causes of our current polarization. It would be effective to see different studies identifying the extent to which race impacts the growing disparities within the political climate, as many today fail to see the existence of racial discrimination (Kim 2002). Many can identify an extent by acknowledging the racial order, its components, and its existence. Similarly, a critique only some of the sources discussed was that as the effects of the history of race impact the formation of political parties, it is important to note that while analyzing these origins, this does not limit every member who affiliates with those parties as being in favor or against the cultural issues that are much debated within the United States.

Scholars now acknowledge that polarization is a consequence of the history of race within America as it has developed into the nation we see today. When the absence of rights and the adoption of rights experienced by non-whites are considered, this has resulted in differences within the bipartisan system we rely on today within our elections. As these studies acknowledge the well-needed context to the issue of polarization, they do not consider the extent to which the polarization within their parties impacts specific races as this study will conduct.

Theory And Process

We all contain uncontrollable demographic characteristics that define us through age, gender, race, etc. As we study polarization between the major political parties within the United States, this study focuses on a main variable often not considered by researchers when addressing this topic: race. Studies have shown that race, while overlooked, greatly impacts the political systems we have today. This is due to this country's treatment of non-white people since its origins founded on a system of white supremacy. Trickling down to the mid-20th century, the divisions created by slavery, Jim Crow, segregation, and the opposition to integration caused the beliefs of the political parties to align and brand themselves as in favor of the newfound integration or opposed. Through the realignments, as one party became branded as in favor of "non-whites," this paved the way for the ideology's views on various cultural issues. The divisions between parties then led to the modern-day "culture wars" we see today as we assess people's attitudes toward various cultural issues. Through the noted existence of racial solidarity, we will analyze if races among different political parties have similar views on cultural issues despite their association with one of this country's two major political parties. If differences are noted, it is important to consider the effects of political parties and how the ideologies create more division and polarization.

Many studies have argued that polarization is far too complex for the cause to be narrowed down to one single variable. Many agree, but it is equally important to study and address causes that have yet to be as widely researched, discussed, or accepted. Though this study focuses on race as a cause for polarization, I accept the alternative theories that highly focus on social class differentiations with a focus on economics as the cause. All variables must be considered as we progress into a more divisive political atmosphere. Several studies have analyzed and specified the most prominent moments within the United States history that have created "racial orders" or a system that has favored whites over non-whites. Within this, the studies describe how this directly impacted major political parties and what it means to be "liberal" or "conservative" (Olson 2008; King and Smith 2008; Davis 1999). Studies like these are essential when analyzing how race plays a part in political polarization. Likewise, studies that analyze race theory and racial solidarity provide context to the behaviors of unity and nationalism among races. This translates into how races participate in politics (Chong and Rogers 2005). In this study, I will analyze how these major concepts tie together and create a catalyst for polarization.

Propositions

Cultural issues pertain to issues regarding the diversity and tolerance of issues pertaining to race, gender, sexuality, and more. Survey data allows for unbiased and reliable data with respondents randomly selected throughout the United States to test how races view these ideas. Any individual participating in the General Social Survey conducted in 2018 (GSS2018) was eligible to be documented in this study. This survey offers respondents questions that allow them to identify their race and the political party they most align with. These characteristics will be analyzed as we review their views on various cultural issues. In this study, the cultural issues will pertain to the tolerance of other religions, views on immigrants and immigration, aid to black Americans, and views on homosexuality and the LGBT+ community. This can help to identify the extent to which race impacts these decisions and how that relates to the political party the respondent most identifies with.

Data And Hypotheses

Data and Variables

As this study moves to analyze the differences between races' attitudes towards cultural issues within the two major political parties in the United States, the variable selection is important as I study the highly debated topic known as polarization. Using the General Social Survey conducted in 2018 (GSS2018), variables were collected to test the research question. This study requires two independent variables: race and party identification. Using the GSS2018 variables, "race" represents the race or ethnicity of the respondent, and "partyid" represents if the respondent thinks of themselves as a Democrat, Republican, Independent, or whatever ranging from 0-6. With zero being "Strong Democrat' and 6 being "Strong Republican," the lower the score, the more Democrat the respondent identifies themselves with. Having race and party identification as our causes, tests will be conducted to identify the correlation between the two and their views on cultural issues.

Culture wars have often been used to describe the increasing divisions within American polity about the polarization of cultural issues. As this study identifies the attitudes on cultural issues, dependent variables were selected based on survey questions from the GSS2018 database that pertained to race, sexuality, and religion. The first dependent variable is "Muslims," representing the respondent's attitude towards Muslims. Ranking from 1-5, the lower the score, the more positive the attitude towards Muslims is, and the higher the score, the attitude is more negative towards Muslims. The next dependent variable is "letin1a," which represents whether the respondent believes the number of immigrants to America should increase or decrease. Ranking from 1-5, the lower the number, the respondent believes the number should increase, and the higher the number, the respondent believes the number should decrease. The next dependent variable within this study is "helpblk", representing if the respondent feels that the government has a special obligation to help improve the living standards of black people due to the history of discrimination towards this group. With these survey questions, respondents have the option of selecting "Should help," "Agree with both," and "No special treatment ."The final dependent variable is "homosexual," which represents a respondent's views toward sexual relations between two adults of the same sex. On a scale from 1-4, respondents can choose "Always wrong" to "Not wrong at all."

The selection of these independent and dependent variables directly correlates to the research topic. By using the survey questions that identify the individual's race and political party identification, we can identify which races in which parties have certain views on various cultural issues. By selecting "Muslims," "letin1a", "help," and "homosexual" as the dependent variables, each question allows the respondent to give their opinion on a race, religion, or sexuality-based question. These questions all fall into the "cultural issues" category as they discuss topics that impact various minority groups within the United States. As the groups described in these questions have been disenfranchised by the racial orders created within the United States, they have become part of the phenomena known as culture wars. By identifying how races respond to these topics within their political parties, we can assess the correlation between race, political ideology, and attitudes toward cultural issues.

Measurement

All variables selected for this study have mutually exclusive, exhaustive, and relatively homogenous categories. The independent variables of the respondent's race (racecen1) and the respondent's party identification (partying) are nominal as their measurement level. Race and political parties are non-numerical and cannot be ranked. This makes these variables the lowest level of measurement available as they consist of categories that can only be compared by considering how many cases fall under each one. The dependent variables "Muslims," "letin1a", "help," and "homosexual" are all ordinal variables. These variables have scores or categories assigned by the GSS2018 database, allowing them to be ranked from high to low. It is important to note that ordinal variables can be limited because the exact distance from one score or category to the next is unknown.

Hypotheses

The ideas have been applied to test the predicted outcome by analyzing and applying the theories within the previous studies conducted and discussed. We use the respondents' race and political ideology to assess their political attitudes towards various cultural issues. Each dependent variable that discusses attitudes towards Muslims, immigrants, and immigration, aiding black Americans and homosexuals pertains to a current marginalized and minority group within the United States. With racial orders being a prominent component of this research paper, it is important to analyze where these variables fall within that system. As the dependent variables are all a part of different marginalized and minority groups, each member within these communities falls into different parts of the racial order. Though it is a spectrum, these groups stray further from an order prioritizing white supremacy. Non-white voters may resonate with this due to the proven existence of racial solidarity, which often can lead to minorities supporting other minorities in their political activity. This leads us to the first hypothesis:

H1: Non-white voters within the Democratic and Republican parties have political values in favor of the presented cultural issues.

However, considering the effects and impacts of one's political ideology and how that impacts decision-making regarding any policies, including cultural issues, is important. While assessing this, we must remember where the dominating political parties of Democrats and Republicans have fallen within the history of race orders, according to those theories presented. Along with this, and as previously mentioned, an individual's set ideology is both complex and multidimensional (Feldman and Johnston 2014). It is impossible for all people who identify as "conservative" or Republican and people who identify as "liberal" or Democratic to believe the same things within their political parties. Knowing that there are differences, it is important to note the strength of an individual's identification in the first place. Political scientists and psychologists have noted similar traits amongst those identifying with specific political ideologies. An example of a "robust" relationship is political conservatism, consciousness, and openness. Due to the potential of shared characteristics and theory presented regarding racial orders and where the parties have fallen on the spectrum regarding these orders, we believe that:

> *H2*: Non-white voters within the Democratic party will rule more in favor of presented cultural issues than the non-white voters within the Republican party.

Through the existence of complex theories such as the United States' racial orders, the existence of racial solidarity within political activity, and the complexity of political ideologies, these hypotheses hope to analyze the relationship between specifically race and cultural issues, and then race with the influence of political ideology and its impact on various cultural issues. With the selected independent and dependent variables, using the General Social Survey conducted in 2018 (GSS2018) will help identify these relationships.

Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

This study has an immense focus on race, specifically whites versus non-whites. Using the GSS2018 data, we can analyze the number of respondents who are white versus the respondents who are non-white. The use of a general frequency table can help to identify the demographic characteristics of the respondents. With 2348 respondents, 1693 were white, and 655 were non-white (with 385 respondents being black and 270 respondents being another race). The mean, median, and mode all fall within the respondent's likelihood of being white. The frequency table displaying this data can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Race

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
WHITE	1693	72.1	72.1	72.1
BLACK	385	16.4	16.4	88.5
OTHER	270	11.5	11.5	100
Total	2348	100	100	

As previously stated, a major focus of this study is the political attitudes towards various cultural issues by race. The data can be visually displayed using bar graphs to assess the different races' opinions towards the ordinal, dependent variables. The variables marked as "Muslims," "letin1a," "helpblk," and "homosexual" are being used to measure the respondent's political attitude towards that topic. In **Figure 1**, a bar graph depicts the relationship between race and the variable "Muslims." **Figure 1** helps to depict the differences in racial support for the religious group of Muslims. This graph shows clear differences between the races who feel "very positive" towards this group and "very negative." The second bar graph depicted in **Figure 2** displays how the respondents feel about the number of immigrants within the United States. With most respondents feeling neither negative nor positive, there are clear differences between who feels more positive and who feels more negative. The third bar graph, **Figure 3**, depicts how the respondents feel about aid to black Americans by race. This scale ranges to whether the respondent feels there should be an aid, feels they should not get aid or feels towards both options on a scale. The fourth bar graph, **Figure 4**, depicts the respondents' feelings towards homosexual sex relations. Once again, the respondents are separated by race, and their responses range on a scale. Finally, within **Figure 5**, the bar graph represents which races and where they identify themselves on a spectrum from Democrat to Republican. Here, we can see which races are Republican, Democrat, Independent, or between.

Bivariate Comparisons

An analysis of the measurements of associations between race and the various cultural issues can provide information on the strength of the relationship, the pattern and direction of the relationship, and a prediction of the value of the dependent variable.
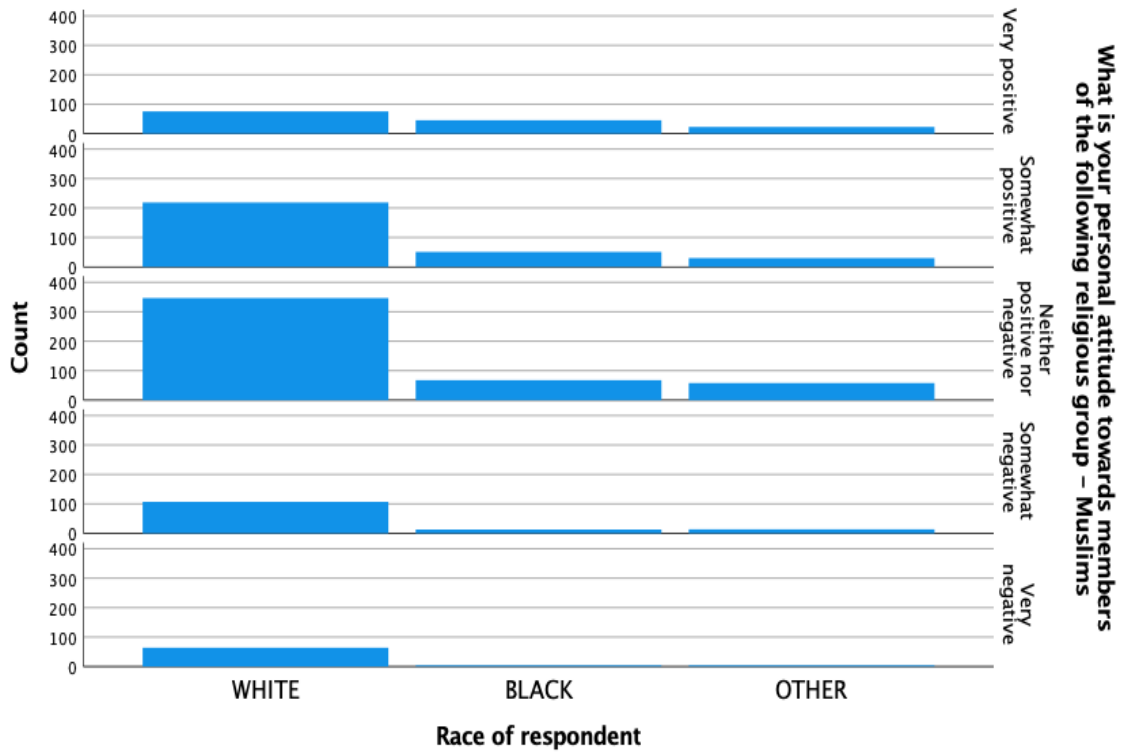
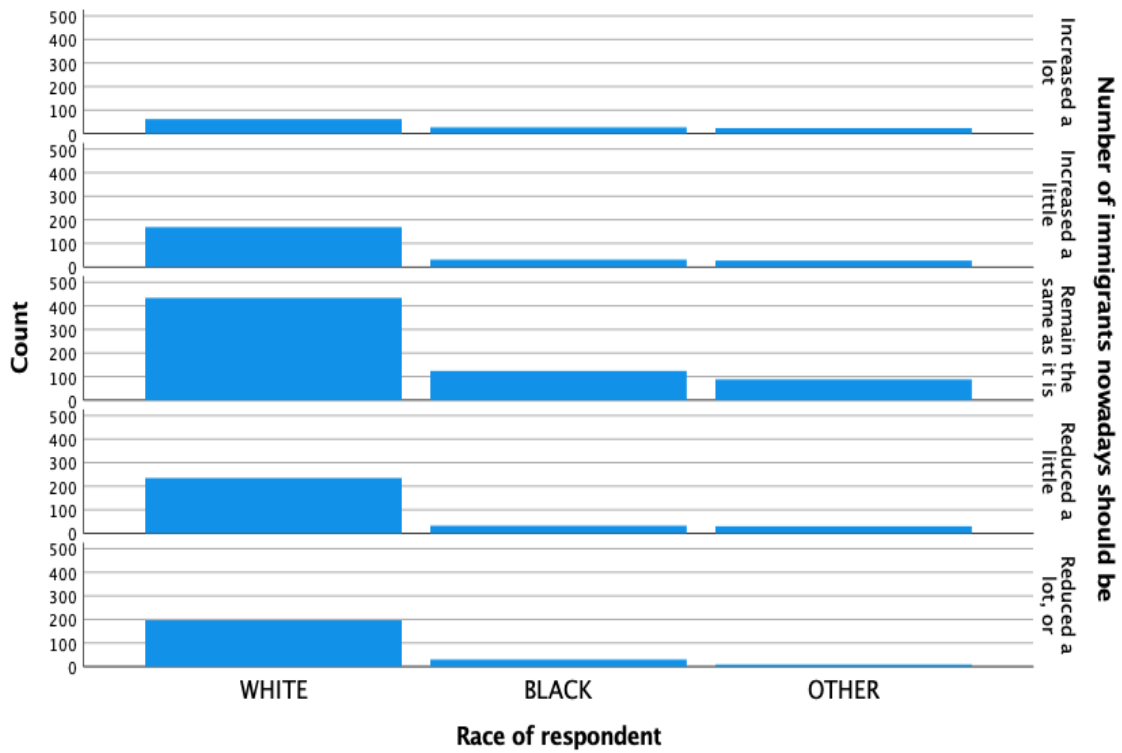**Figure 1.** Relationship between race and the variable "Muslims"

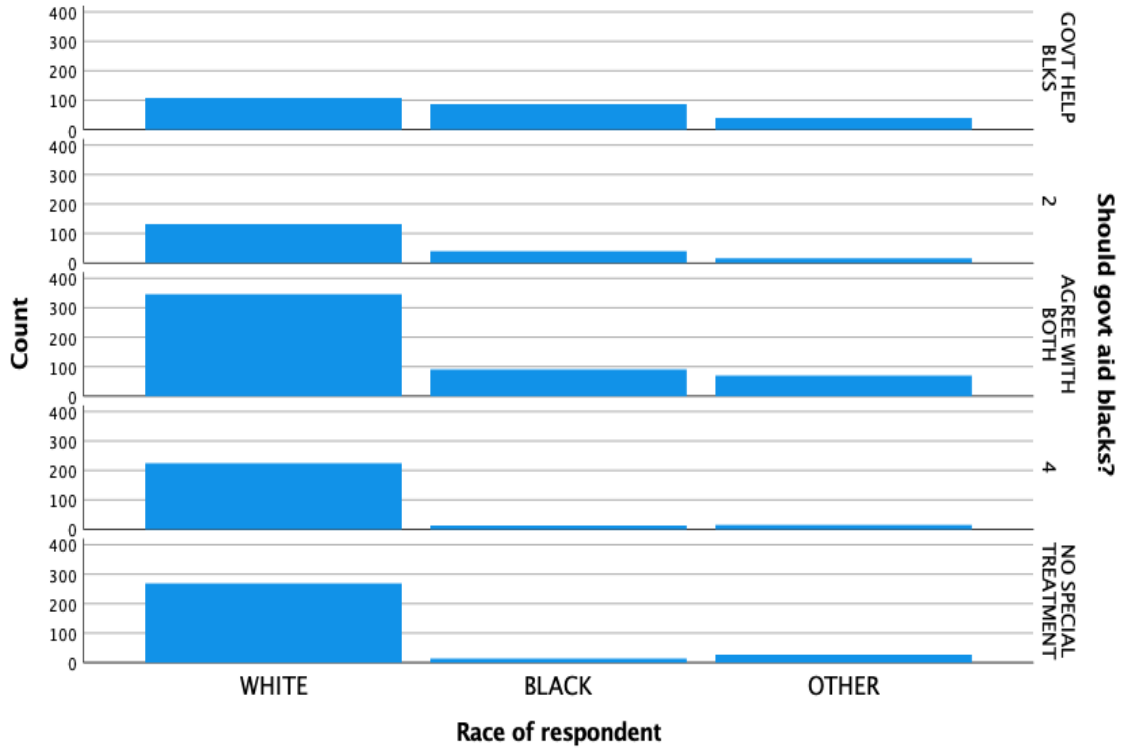**Figure 2.** How the respondents feel about the number of immigrants within the United States

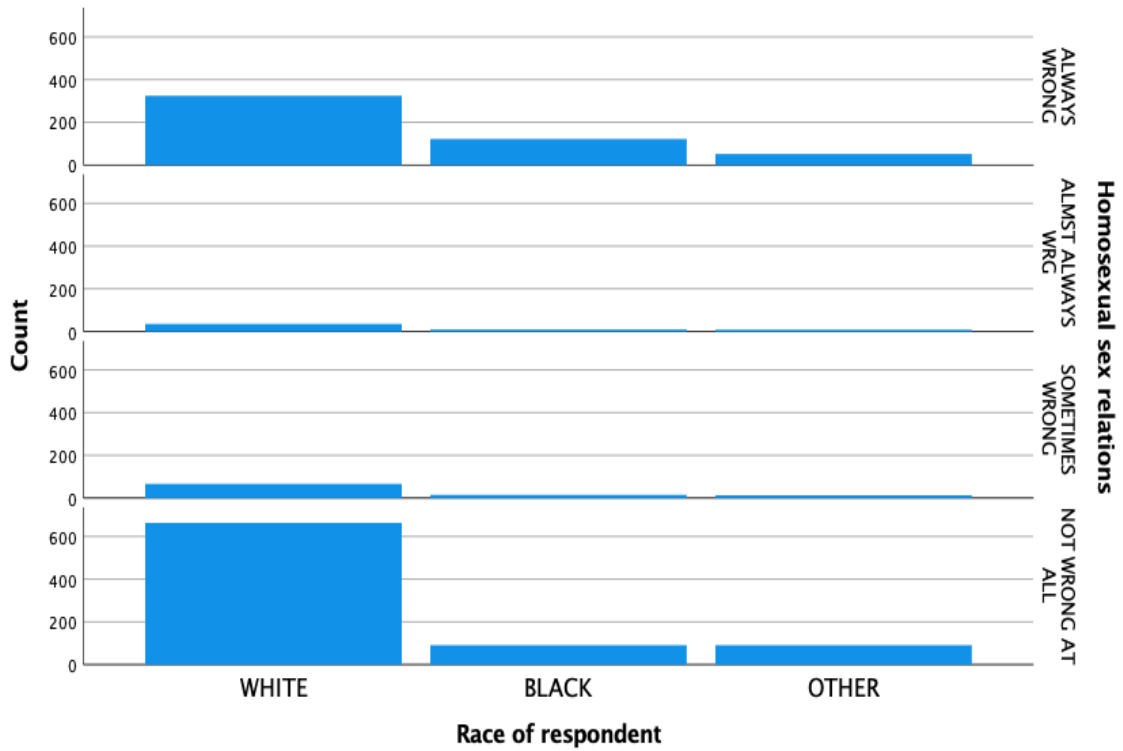**Figure 3.** How the respondents feel about aid to black Americans, by race

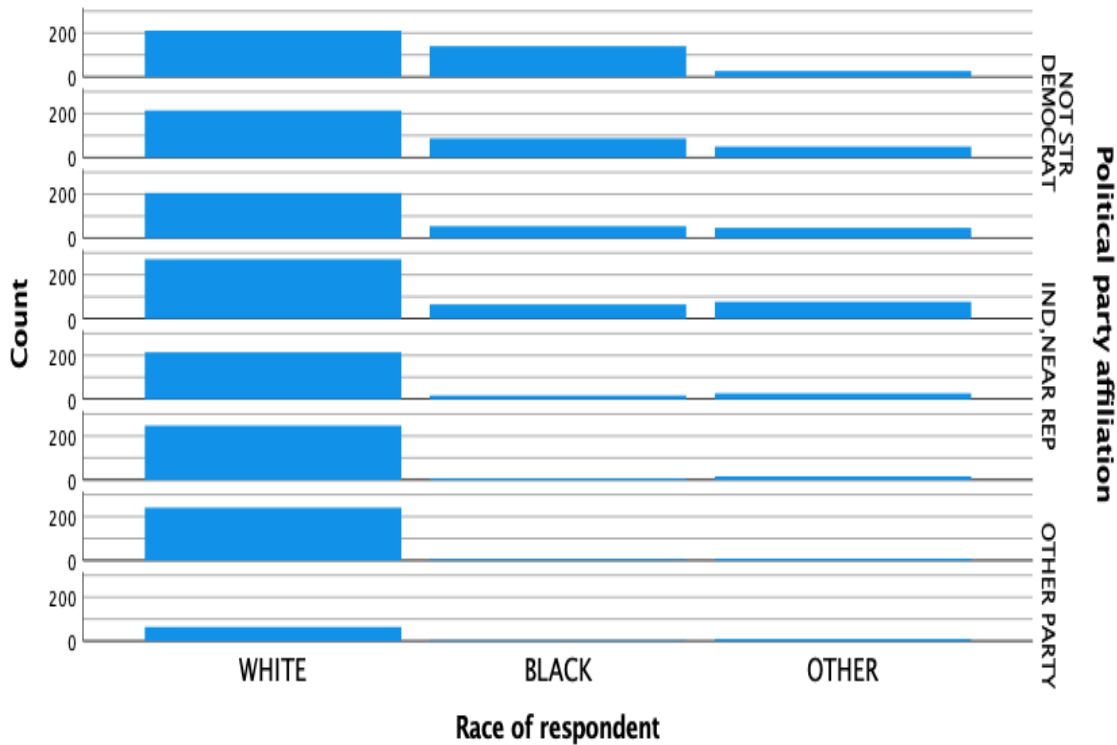**Figure 4.** Respondents' feelings towards homosexual sex relations

Figure 5. Party ID, by race

Namely, the variables being compared within the bivariate tables will be the independent variable of race and then "Muslims," "letin1a," "helpblk," and "homosexual." As race will be tested to cause the bivariate relationship and each dependent variable will be the believed outcomes of the bivariate relationship, we can begin a more thorough analysis of the relationship between the two ideas. By using bivariate tables to help better understand the relationship between the variables, the significance will tell us if the association exists, the strength will help to assess how strong the relationship is, and the pattern will tell the direction of the relationship. All these elements are crucial in conducting a thorough analysis of the variables. Within this study, the four bivariate tables and their Chi-Square tests will be labeled **Figures 7-14**, a table for each dependent variable.

The bivariate table in Figures 7-8 displays the relationship between "race" and the variable "Muslims." For a sample of 1124 respondents, there was a weak and significant relationship between race and the personal attitudes towards members of a religious group- Muslims (Chi-Square= 48.599, df= 8, Cramer's V= .147, p < .05). Within the bivariate table, 9.3% of white respondents felt very positive towards the religious group of Muslims versus the 25.3% of black respondents and 17.8% of respondents with a different race (other). Likewise, the black respondents were more likely to feel somewhat positive (28.0%) than the white respondents (26.9%) and "other" respondents (23.3%). White respondents were more likely to feel somewhat negative towards the religion of Muslims (13.2%) versus black respondents (7.1%) and "other" respondents (10.9%). Non-white respondents, specifically black respondents, are more likely to feel positively towards Muslims in comparison to white respondents, with a significant relationship.

The bivariate table, labeled as **Figures 9-10**, depicts the relationship between "race" and the dependent variable "letin1a". This dependent variable measures how the respondent feels the number of immigrants should be today. For a sample of 1520 respondents, there was a significant and weak relationship between race and the attitudes toward the number of immigrants within the United States (Chi-Square= 52.432, df= 8, Cramer's V= .131, p < .05). The bivariate table depicts that 5.7% of white respondents believe that the number of immigrants should be increased a lot versus 11.0% of black respondents and 13.5% of "other" respondents. Most respondents felt that the number of immigrants should remain the same. 18.0% of white respondents felt that the number of immigrants should be reduced, more than 12.2% of black respondents, and 5.1% of "other" respondents.

The bivariate table, labeled **Figures 11-12**, depicts the relationship between "race" and the dependent variable labeled "helpblk". This dependent variable measures the respondent's feelings about government aid toward black Americans. For a sample of 1493 respondents, there was a weak and significant relationship between race and the political attitudes towards government aid for black Americans (Chi-Square= 172.356, df= 8, Cramer's V= .240, p < .05). This table depicts that 10.0% of white respondents feel that the government should provide aid for black Americans versus 35.5% of black respondents and

23.8% of "other" respondents. This is compared to the 24.9% of white respondents who feel that black Americans should receive no special treatment versus 5.7% of black and 16.1% of "other" respondents. About 32.0% of white respondents, 37.1% of black respondents, and 41.7% of "other" respondents agree with both the aid and no special treatment towards black respondents. Though a weak relationship, the relationship between race and the "help" variable is the strongest of the 4 dependent variables being tested within this study.

The bivariate table labeled **Figures 13-14** depicts the relationship between "race" and the dependent variable "homosexual." This dependent variable measures the respondents' attitudes towards homosexual sex relations. For a sample of 1495 respondents, there was a significant and weak relationship between race and the attitudes towards homosexual sex relationships (Chi-Square= 47.622, df= 6, Cramer's V= .126, p < .05). The table shows that 51.3% of black respondents feel homosexual sex relations are always wrong versus 29.8% of white respondents and 31.5% of "other respondents ."60.8% of white respondents feel that homosexual sex relations are not wrong, versus 38.2% of black respondents and 55.2% of "other" respondents. This suggests a stronger need within the black respondents to feel that homosexual sex relations are wrong compared to the attitudes of white and "other" respondents.

Controlled Comparisons

To further the analysis within this study, it is imperative to assess the partial correlation between one variable (X) and variable (Y) to see how the relationship holds across categories or levels of a third variable (Z). As we have emphasized the importance of political ideology and the polarization of ideology, here is where we incorporate that variable within our studies on race. Using our independent variable (race) and the dependent variables ("Muslim", "letin1a", "helpblk", and "homosexual"), we will see the effects of the control variable "party". This will help to conduct a more thorough analysis of the variables for this study. The results were found in tables labeled **Figures 15-26**, and differences between the direct and partial relationships were reported.

For a sample of 1106 respondents, there was a weak and significant relationship between race and personal attitudes towards a specific religious group- Muslims, with the control variable being "strong democrat" as the respondent's political party affiliation (Chi-Square= 19.429, df= 8, Cramer's V= .230, p < .05). 36.1% of voters who identified themselves as "strong Democrats" and were white felt "somewhat positive" about "Muslims" versus 25.7% of black respondents and 25% of "other" respondents. As the party identification variables were introduced, more white respondents favored this " Muslim " category than the direct relationship that did not include party identification. For respondents that identify themselves as "Not strong democrat," there was a weak and not significant relationship between race and views towards "Muslims" with the added control of party identification (Chi-Square= 12.721, df= 8, Cramer's V= .189, p > .05). About 29.2% of "other" respondents reported that they were very positive versus 18.6% of black respondents and 7.2% of white respondents. This contrasts the direct relationship as the direct relationship shows that black respondents felt the most positive, with "other" respondents being the second most "very positive" and white respondents being the least "very positive." Along with this, 34.2% of white respondents reported that they are "somewhat positive" towards "Muslims" versus 32.6% of black respondents and 20.8% of "other" respondents. Though the difference is subtle, the direct relationship displayed black respondents being the most "somewhat positive" compared to white respondents. For the option of "neither positive nor negative," the partial relationship displays 41.4% of white respondents in favor of this option, contrasting the direct relationship, which stated that "other" respondents were more likely to feel "neither positive nor negative." For voters identifying themselves as "independent near democrat," there was a weak and not significant relationship between race and attitudes towards "Muslims" with the added control of party identification (Chi-Square= 7.312, df= 8, Cramer's V= .162, p > .05). 32.3% of white respondents reported being somewhat positive towards "Muslims" versus 26.9% of black respondents and 15.0% of "other" respondents. This subtle difference makes white respondents more likely to be somewhat positive towards "Muslims" versus black respondents, who are the most likely to be "somewhat positive" within the direct relationship. Respondents who felt "somewhat negative" were 20.0% "other" versus 8.6% of white respondents and 7.7% of black respondents. White respondents were most likely to feel "somewhat negative" within the direct relationship. For independent voters, there was a weak and not significant relationship (Chi-Square= 7.033, df= 8, Cramer's V= .130, p > .05) as black respondents were most likely to feel "very positive" towards "Muslim" with 17.4%, like the direct relationship. However, white respondents were least likely to feel very positive within the direct relationship. In the partial relationship, the "other" respondents were the least likely to feel very positive towards "Muslims" with 2.5%. For "somewhat positive," 17.4% of the responses were white respondents versus 21.7% of the black respondents and 25.0% of "other respondents." In the direct relationship, "other" respondents were the least likely to feel "somewhat positive," and in the partial relationship, white respondents were the least likely to feel "somewhat positive". 8.7% of black respondents reported that they feel "somewhat negative" about "Muslims" versus 7.5% of "other" respondents and 6.9% of white respondents. This contrasts the direct relationship as the direct relationship depicted white respondents as most likely to feel "somewhat negative". The partial relationship and direct relationship were identical for respondents who identified themselves as "independent near Republican" with a weak and not significant relationship (Chi-Square= 5.127, df= 8, Cramer's

V= .146, p > .05). For respondents who identified themselves as "not strong Republican," there was a weak and not significant relationship as 7.9% of white respondents felt "very positive" about "Muslims" versus 0.0% of black respondents and 16.7% of "other" respondents (Chi-Square= 5.465, df= 8, Cramer's V= .143, p > .05). This differs from the direct relationship as black respondents were most likely to feel "very positive". Within the partial relationship, "other" respondents were more likely to feel "somewhat positive" at 33.3% versus white respondents at 24.6%. For the partial relationships between the variable "race" and the variable "Muslims" with the control of "partyid", full results can be seen in **Figures 15-17**.

For a sample of 1498 respondents, there was a weak and significant relationship between race and personal attitudes towards the number of immigrants within the United States, with the control variable being "strong democrat" within party identification (Chi-Square= 24.751, df= 8, Cramer's V= .226, p < .05). About 15.3% of white respondents believed the number of immigrants should "increase a lot" versus 5.6% of "other" respondents. This slightly contrasts the direct relationship as the partial relationship now depicts white respondents as the second most likely to feel that the amount should "increase a lot," whereas "other" respondents were the second most likely within the direct relationship. 55.6% of "other" respondents believe the amount should "remain the same as it is" versus 47.3% of black and 36.6% of white respondents. The direct relationship displayed that black voters were most likely to believe the amount should "remain the same as it is." White respondents were least likely to believe the amount should be "reduced a little" in the partial relationship versus the direct relationship. 14.0% of black respondents reported that the number of immigrants should be "reduced a lot" versus 4.6% of white respondents and 0.0% of "other respondents." This is different from the direct relationship which stated that white respondents were most likely to believe that the number of immigrants should be "reduced a lot". For respondents who identify themselves as "not strong democrat," there was a weak and not significant relationship (Chi-Square= 4.248, df= 8, Cramer's V= .095, p > .05). "Other" respondents were least likely to believe that the number of immigrants should be "increased a little" within the partial relationship versus the black respondents being least likely within the direct relationship. 48.3% of "other" respondents believe the number of immigrants should "remain the same as it is" versus 46.8% of black and 44.4% of white respondents. Within the direct relationship, black respondents were most likely to feel the amount should "remain the same as it is." The partial relationship depicts that "other" respondents were the least likely to feel that the amount should be "reduced a little." In contrast, the direct relationship depicts black respondents as being least likely. 11.3% of white and black respondents believed the number of immigrants should be "reduced a lot" versus 6.9% of "other" respondents. The direct relationship depicts that white respondents were most likely to feel that the number of immigrants should be greatly reduced. For respondents who identify themselves as "independent near democrat," there was a weak and not significant relationship (Chi-Square= 7.064, df= 8, Cramer's V= .137, p > .05). Black respondents were the second most likely to be in favor of the number of immigrants being "increased a little." In contrast, the direct relationship displays them as being least in favor. "Other" respondents were the least likely to favor the number of immigrants being "remain the same as it is" in the partial relationship. However, they were the second likely to favor this within the direct relationship. The partial relationship shows that "other" respondents are most likely to be in favor of the number of immigrants being "reduced a little" and that black respondents are most likely to be in favor of "reduced a lot." In contrast, the direct relationship shows white respondents being most in favor. For respondents who identify themselves as independent, there was a weak and significant relationship (Chi-Square= 24.786, df= 8, Cramer's V= .212, p < .05). About 13.9% of black respondents believed that the number of immigrants should be "reduced a lot" versus 12.4% of white respondents and 1.9% of "other" respondents. The direct relationship contrasts this as white respondents were most in favor of "reduced a lot." For respondents who identify themselves as "independent, near Republican," there was a weak and not significant relationship (Chi-Square= 9.517, df= 8, Cramer's V= .168, p > .05). White respondents were most in favor of the number of immigrants being "increased a lot" and "increased a little," contrasting the direct relationship. "Other" respondents were the least likely to believe that the number of immigrants should be "reduced a little" or "reduced a lot" in the partial relationship. In contrast, the direct relationship shows black respondents being least in favor of these. For respondents identifying themselves as "not strong Republican," there was a weak and not significant relationship (Chi-Square= 4.405, df= 8, Cramer's V= .110, p > .05). White respondents were seen to be least in favor of "increased a lot" within the direct relationships but were most in favor of this within the partial relationship. Black respondents were least likely to favor "increased a little" within the direct relationship but most in favor of the partial relationship. The partial relationship depicts that "other" respondents were second most likely to favor "reducing" the number of immigrants. However, in the direct relationship, they were the least likely to favor this. **Figures 18-20** depict the full results for the partial relationship between the variable "race" and the variable "letin1a" with the added control variable of "partyid".

For a sample of 1479 respondents, there was a weak and significant relationship between race and personal attitudes towards government aids for black Americans with "strong democrat" as the control within the party identification variable (Chi-Square= 15.914, df= 8, Cramer's V= .181, p < .05). About 30.2% of black respondents "agree with both" versus 29.3% of white respondents and 27.8% of "other" respondents. This contrasts the direct relationship as it depicted the "other" respondents most in favor of this. In the partial relationship 11.1% of "other" respondents believe there should be "no special treatment" which differs from the direct relationship where "other" respondents were second most likely to feel this way, not the most

likely. For respondents who identify as "not strong democrat", there was a weak and significant relationship (Chi-Square= 31.142, df= 8, Cramer's V= .265, p < .05). About 31.5% of black respondents reported that they "agree with both", making them the least likely within the partial correlation, differing from the direct relationship where they were second most likely to feel this way. For respondents who identified themselves as "independent, near democrat," there was a weak and not significant relationship (Chi-Square= 14.355, df= 8, Cramer's V= .188, p > .05). The partial relationship reports that black respondents were most likely to "agree with both," contrasting the direct relationship which stated that "other" respondents were most in favor of this. "Other" respondents were also most likely to believe that there should be "no special treatment," contrasting the direct relationship, which states that white respondents favor this most. For respondents identifying as "independent," there was a weak and not significant relationship (Chi-Square= 12.828, df= 8, Cramer's V= .163, p > .05). Results did not contrast the direct relationship results. For respondents identifying themselves as "independent, near Republican," there was a weak and significant relationship (Chi-Square= 26.660, df= 8, Cramer's V= .281, p < .05). About 58.3% of black respondents "agree with both" versus 55.6% of "other" respondents and 28.8% of white respondents. This is different from the direct relationship as it stated that "other" respondents would favor this most. For respondents who identify themselves as "not strong Republican," there was a weak and significant relationship (Chi-Square= 19.005, df= 8, Cramer's V=. 234, p < .05). About 42.9% of black respondents "agree with both" versus 35.7% of "other" respondents and 33.6% of white respondents. The direct relationship states that "other" respondents favor this most. For respondents who identify themselves as "strong Republican," there was a weak and not significant relationship (Chi-Square= 13.935, df= 8, Cramer's V= .199, p > .05). About 40.0% of black respondents "agree with both" versus 20.0% of "other" respondents and 20.5% of white respondents. Once again, the direct relationship states that "other" respondents are most in favor of this. **Figures 21-23** display the full results for the partial relationship between the variable "race" and the variable "helpblk" with the added control of "partyid."

For a sample of 1477 respondents, there was a moderate and significant relationship between race and personal attitudes towards homosexual sex relations with strong democrat as the control within the party identification variable (Chi-Square= 62.878, df= 6, Cramer's V= .351, p < .05). About 4.6% of black respondents feel that homosexual sex relations are "sometimes wrong" versus 6.7% of white respondents and 11.1% of "other respondents." This contrasts the direct relationship as it stated that white respondents were least likely to believe this. For respondents identifying themselves as "not strong democrat," there was a weak and significant relationship (Chi-Square= 29.777, df= 6, Cramer's V= .257, p < .05). About 0.0% of "other" respondents believe that homosexual sex relations are "almost always wrong" versus 2.2% of white respondents and 3.8% of black respondents. This is different from the direct relationship as it stated that "other" respondents were most likely to favor this. 10.8% of white respondents believe homosexual sex relations are "sometimes wrong" versus 5.9% of "other" respondents and 3.8% of black respondents. The partial relationship states that white respondents are most likely to believe this, whereas the direct relationship states that white respondents are least likely to believe this. For respondents who identify themselves as "independent, near democrat," there was a moderate and significant relationship (Chi-Square= 36.514, df= 6, Cramer's V= .300, p < .05). About 5.9% of white respondents believe homosexual sex relations are "sometimes wrong" versus 5.4% of black respondents and 3.2% of "other" respondents. The direct relationship is different from this as it shows white respondents being least in favor of this. For respondents who identify themselves as "independent," there was a weak and significant relationship (Chi-Square= 14.151, df= 6, Cramer's V= .170, p < .05). About 0.0% of "other" respondents believe that homosexual sex relations are "almost always wrong" versus 2.7% of black respondents and 4.2% of respondents. The direct relationship contrasts this as "other" respondents were most in favor of this. For respondents who identify themselves as "independent, near Republican," there was a weak and not significant relationship (Chi-Square= 5.287, df= 6, Cramer's V= .126, p > .05). About 34.8% of white respondents believe that homosexual sex relations are "always wrong" versus 33.3% of "other" respondents and 20.0% of black respondents. While the partial relationship depicts the white respondents as most likely to believe this, the direct relationship depicts white respondents as least likely. The partial relationship displays that black respondents are least likely to believe homosexual sex relations are "almost always wrong." In contrast, the direct relationship displays black respondents as second most likely to believe this. While the partial relationship states that "other" respondents are least likely to believe "sometimes wrong," the direct relationship depicts them as most likely to believe this. As the partial relationship depicts black respondents to believe that homosexual sex relations are "not wrong at all," the direct relationship depicts them as least likely to believe this. For respondents who identify themselves as "not strong Republican", there was a weak and not significant relationship (Chi-Square= 3.406, df= 6, Cramer's V= .099, p > .05). About 16.7% of black respondents believe that homosexual sex relations are "almost always wrong" versus 5.0% of white respondents and 0.0% of "other" respondents. The direct relationship contradicts this as black respondents were the second most likely, not most likely. Next, black respondents were least likely to favor homosexual sex relations being "sometimes wrong," but in the direct relationship, they were second most in favor of this. For respondents who identify themselves as "strong Republican", there was a weak and not significant relationship (Chi-Square= 2.858, df= 6, Cramer's V= .095, p > .05). About 60.7% of white respondents believe homosexual sex relations are "always wrong" versus 50.0% of "other" respondents and 0.0% of black respondents. This differs immensely from the direct relationship, which states that white respondents are least in favor of this, and black respondents are most in

favor of this. Here, the partial relationship states that white respondents favor homosexual sex relations being "almost always wrong" and "sometimes wrong" when the direct relationship states that they are least likely to believe this. Finally, the partial relationship shows black respondents as most favoring homosexual sex relations being "not wrong at all." In contrast, the direct relationship depicts them as least likely to favor this. **Figures 24-26** depict the full results for the partial relationships between "race" and the variable "homosexual" with the added control variable of "partyid."

Conclusion

This study analyzed the relationships between race, political ideology, and various cultural issues to answer the question, "How have different races within political parties affected the individual's political attitudes on cultural issues?". With the help of previous studies that detailed the complexities of race within polarization and the impact of polarization on cultural issues, the ideas were combined through bivariate comparisons that analyzed the direct relationship between race and cultural issues and controlled comparisons that analyzed the partial relationship between race and cultural issues with party identification as the controlled variable. The findings are likewise complex as polarization is heavily debated due to its complexity.

For the direct relationships, there was a weak and significant relationship between race and each of the four dependent variables ("Muslims," "letin1a", "helpblk," and " "homosexual"). The variable "Muslims" with trends that displayed black respondents as the "most positive" towards this group and white respondents being the most likely to feel negative towards this group and the least likely to feel positive towards this group. For the variable "letin1a", most respondents gravitated towards the "remain the same as is" option, regarding the number of immigrants within the United States. White respondents were the most likely to select "reduced a lot" and were the least likely to select "increased a lot." The non-white respondents were more in favor of increasing the number of immigrants within the United States. For the variable "helpblk", most respondents chose "agree with both" regarding black aid. Black respondents were the most likely to favor aid for black Americans, whereas white respondents were the most likely to select "no special treatment." For the variable "homosexual", white respondents were the most likely to support homosexual sex relations versus black respondents who were the least likely to be in favor of this variable.

For the partial relationships, adding the control variable "partyid" affected the relationship between race and the various dependent variables in several ways. As the differences were discussed previously, there are some similarities between the trends within the partial relationship and the direct relationship. For the variable "Muslims," only respondents who identified as "strong democrat" and "not strong democrat" showed a weak and significant relationship. For the variable "letin1a", there was a weak and significant relationship for the relationships for respondents who identified as "strong democrat." For the remaining variables, there were more similarities between the relationships for "helpblk" and "homosexual". For the variable "helpblk," the respondents who identified as "strong democrat," "not strong democrat," "independent, Republican," and "not strong democrat" all had weak and significant relationships, like the direct relationship between race and the "helpblk" variable. For the variable "homosexual," respondents who identified as "independent, democrat," and "strong democrat" all had moderate and significant relationships. Those identifying as "independent" and "not strong democrat" displayed a weak and significant variable for the "homosexual" variable. Once again, this was like a direct relationship.

Based on these findings, both hypotheses within this study were partially supported and partially denied. Since the hypotheses specifically referred to the behaviors of races that identify themselves as "Democrat" or "Republican," to see if these hypotheses were supported, I will be only referring to the partial relationship results for respondents identifying as "strong Democrat" "not strong democrat," "not strong Republican," and "strong Republican." This is because the respondents confidently identified and aligned themselves with one of the major two political parties within the United States, which this study focuses on. For hypothesis #1, the variable "Muslims" supported the hypothesis except for respondents within the "strong Republican" category. For the "letin1a" variable, the hypothesis was only halfway supported with "strong democrat" and "not strong Republican" categories contradicting the theory. The "help" variable completely supported the hypothesis, whereas the "homosexual" variable completely contradicted the theory. With hypothesis #2 also being partially supported and partially declined, this hypothesis was more supported than hypothesis #1. The variable "Muslims" and " helpblk " completely supported this hypothesis. For the "letin1a" variable, all categories supported this hypothesis except for the "strong Republican" category. Though the "homosexual" variable also supported this hypothesis, black respondents were more inclined to be against this variable.

Implications for Theory

After researching previous studies, implementing descriptive statistics, and analyzing the bivariate and controlled comparison results, the data allowed me to note the flaws within my theory and what I learned. When the control variable of party identification was added to the relationships, this severely impacted the data received from the white respondents. This led to the parts of the first hypothesis that were denied. Likewise, the addition of party identification seemed to have made white respondents feel more progressive towards the cultural issues than without the control variable and just compared race and

the respondents' views on the cultural issues. This is seen within the white respondents who identified themselves as "strong Democrats" and "not strong Democrats." Once the respondents could identify themselves as such, they were more inclined to feel more positively towards the "Muslim" variable and favor increasing the number of immigrants within the "letin1a" variable. Without party identification, white respondents were more inclined to feel negatively towards Muslims and feel that the number of immigrants should be decreased. For both hypotheses, it was interesting to note how black respondents were the least likely to support homosexual sex relations when I theorized that non-whites would be more in favor of the cultural issues regardless of whether the issue focused on race, religion, or sexuality.

News Issues or Questions

New questions raised following the completion of this study are noting the importance of the relationship between white Americans and ideology, specifically the democratic party. The results showed that white respondents were typically the least progressive towards the dependent variables representing potentially marginalized groups without a political party but would be the most progressive after they aligned themselves with the democratic party. This excludes the data from how white respondents felt about homosexual sex relations. The results ultimately call to question the impact of ideology on white Americans and how this can completely change their views on race-related cultural issues. It was also theorized that non-white respondents would favor the presented cultural issues due to the present racial orders and the theory's impact on our behaviors. However, the results showed that the black and often the "other" respondents would be the least likely to support this cultural issue. For future studies, it would be important to analyze how minorities respond to cultural issues, only leaning towards race-based issues rather than sexuality. Regarding racial solidarity, it would be imperative that studies study the extent to which races only display solidarity towards their race and how the history of race relations within the United States has impacted that.

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