

LEVITAS

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Hitlerjugend: Children, Film, and Genocide

Danny Bean

Foreword

It is exciting to see this latest edition of *Levitas*. It's been five years since the journal was last published, and when I wrote the Forward to that edition, I began by noting that "[W]e live in extraordinary times." In hindsight, that sentence was clearly an understatement, even naïve, perhaps. Little did we know that just a few short months later the world would be locked down in a global pandemic that caused millions of deaths and continues to plague us even as 2023 moves into its spring months. A number of democracies around the world, including most recently, Brazil, India, and the United States, have continued to see rising illiberal, anti-democratic forces engage in acts designed to undermine liberty, equality, the free press, judicial independence, the rule of law, and the fundamental basis of democracy—the ballot box. Intense weather events churned up by the continuing effects of climate change have forced countries to reexamine their environmental policies—or not. Most disturbingly, since the last edition of *Levitas*, in America, we have seen a United States President impeached twice, indicted once with more indictments potentially coming, and our nation's shrine to democracy—the Capitol—attacked by a mob falsely believing the 2020 election had been rigged and stolen. In short, the last edition of this journal seems like a different world away, except that it's the same world with even more challenges than were noted at that time. And it's the same world in which our students are studying political science, always trying to understand and make sense of the tides of political events as they wash over us in a seemingly ever-increasing intensity of impact. The articles in this volume are excellent examples of how our students have thought and written about some of these political events. I commend them to you. Enjoy!

Rob Baker, Advisor, *Levitas*

During the process of identity development, there is no more formational period than adolescence (Voigtländer and Voth 2015: 7931). It is at this stage that one's mind can begin to be shaped through the process of indoctrination, or the imposition of ideas and particular societal views. Hitler well understood this, as exemplified by his reference to children as "material" (qtd. in Bartoletti 2005: xii). The Führer perceived the vast political potential in children being shaped into blind devotees to the Nazi cause, and he created the *Hitlerjugend*, or the Hitler Youth, "an organization of teenagers dedicated to Adolf Hitler" (ibid. 2), to harness their "natural energy and drive" (ibid. xii). The Hitler Youth program indoctrinated German youth with nationalistic ideals to make them willing accomplices to the genocidal policies of the fascist Third Reich. The film *Hitler Youth Quex* exemplifies the role of film in instilling this spirit in children through its emotionally manipulative tactics, creating a dichotomous adversarial relationship between the Aryans and the putative enemies of the German state.

I. The Hitler Youth

A. History

The history of the Hitler Youth reflects the goal of indoctrination. The organization was founded in July 1926 (Stachura 1976: 332), with Kurt Gruber bring appointed Reichsführer, or leader, at its inception (ibid.). Under Gruber, the Hitler Youth experienced a "slow rate of expansion and organizational inefficiency," which resulted in Gruber falling out of favor with National Socialist leaders (ibid. 333). And, under Gruber's leadership, the different branches of the Hitler Youth enjoyed "provincial autonomy," which Nazi officials viewed as an "absence of harmony and unity of purpose" (ibid. 334). This directly conflicted with Hitler's vision of the Hitler Youth as the training ground for future Nazis, provoking further criticism of Gruber. Due to this criticism, Gruber became "impervious to advice or suggestions for improvements in [the

Hitler Youth]," and thus became more difficult for the National Socialist leaders to control (ibid.). As a shift to more centralized authority occurred throughout Germany in 1931, Gruber launched the September Action, "a massive propaganda drive to boost recruitment to the HJ with numerous demonstrations, rallies, and marches throughout the country" (ibid. 336). The attempt failed. Gruber was dismissed from his position due to his "weak administrative practice and vacillating leadership" (ibid. 337), although this is likely not the only reason he was replaced as Reichsführer; Gruber's "professed social revolutionary outlook and genuine attachment to 'socialism' in National Socialism" placed him in direct opposition to Hitler's embrace of nationalism through fascism (ibid. 342). Therefore, Gruber may have been dismissed on ideological grounds. This theory is supported by the timing of the dismissal; Gruber was "only one of a multitude of leftists who were expelled from the HJ between September and December 1931" (ibid.). His political inclinations posed too large a threat to the dissemination of Nazi ideology, and allowing him to retain his position thus became too risky. The two primary motivations behind Gruber's dismissal represent his failure to properly indoctrinate Germany's children; on the one hand, he was not able to attract a large enough membership to ensure National Socialism became widespread. On the other, his own leftist inclinations made him a danger to the dissemination of Hitler's fascist worldview.

Baldur von Schirach was appointed Reichsjugendführer the day after Gruber's dismissal (Stachura 1976: 343). Von Schirach was a prime candidate in that "his political outlook was... largely dominated by nationalist and anti-semitic precepts" and he was an "able, hard-working organizer" (ibid. 344). He therefore encompassed and fully supported the Nazi agenda—he "came to symbolize the HJ's almost religious worship of the Führer" (ibid.)—and possessed the skills necessary to expand the organization's membership; he corrected both of

Gruber's defects. He proved effective at growing the organization, as "nearly 50 percent of all German youth, age ten to eighteen" were members of the organization by 1935 (Bartoletti 2015: 49). Of course, this was aided by Nazi intimidation and compulsory membership laws, but von Schirach's ability to establish numerous branches with the requisite administrative efficiency to handle this mass influx is testimony to his organizational abilities. He had readied the Hitler Youth for its indoctrination mission.

In 1935, Hitler introduced the *Reichsarbeitsdienst*, or Reich Labor Service. Members "cleared forests and drained swamps, creating land for farming and other useful purposes" (Bartoletti 2015: 105). Upon graduation, boys were required to spend a six-month term in the organization. And, in 1936, girls were asked (but not required) to volunteer for service in the organization. 1937 saw an increase in "paramilitary training" for boys in the *Hitlerjugend*, who trained in the army, air force, and navy (ibid. 113-4). In 1939, after the war began, boys and girls were required to perform labor service for one year (ibid. 107). Hitler was preparing a cheap labor force of loyal soldiers meant to construct the infrastructure that would prove fundamental to the future success of the Third Reich. This is perhaps best represented by the message above summer infantry camp gates: "WE ARE BORN TO DIE FOR GERMANY," which reinforced the self-sacrificial ideal of the Nazi government (ibid. 117).

During the war, the Hitler Youth became fundamental to the operation of the German state. When the Winter Health campaign was launched, they "[collected] money, winter coats, wool sweaters, gloves, hats, socks, and blankets" for soldiers and families in German-occupied territories (Bartoletti 2015: 140). During air raids, the Hitler Youth checked houses for signs of light that might alert the bombers and "tended small children, passing out food, milk, and toys" in the bunkers (ibid. 150-1). The Hitler Youth thus functioned in noncombat roles as enforcers of the National Socialist status quo and caregivers for the defenseless among them. They showed compassion to those they agreed with or those deemed too young to know better and withheld mercy from those they did not.

As the war waged on, the Hitler Youth were recruited as fighters for the German army. The young boys training in the German air force were enlisted as Flak Helpers who "attempted to shoot down enemy aircraft during air raids" in 1943 (Bartoletti 2015: 216). The 12th *SS Panzer Grenadier Hitlerjugend Division*, or SS-HJ, was also formed in 1943, with members serving as soldiers in the war (ibid. 245). While service was supposedly voluntary, testimony from Hitler Youth revealed more coercive methods; some were threatened with "execution" for refusal to enlist (ibid. 246). The Hitler Youth were known as some of the most aggressive soldiers on the battlefield, with Hitler claiming "[they] fight more fanatically than their older comrades" (qtd. in ibid. 244). And, after Hitler's suicide, some Hitler Youth planned a failed last stand against the Allied forces in Munich, highlighting the extreme loyalty they had to the Nazi agenda (ibid. 275-6).

In the aftermath of the war, von Schirach admitted to having "miseducated and misled the German youth" (qtd. in Bartoletti 2015: 283). At the Nuremberg Trials, the Hitler Youth were not tried, with the court ruling they had been "betrayed, deserted, and sacrificed" by the Nazis (ibid. 284). The Allies instructed German civilian courts to hold "'de-Nazification' trials" to identify ardent Nazis (ibid.). And Hitler Youth were "forced to view documentary films of the death camps" (ibid. 286). While the children were not punished by the international court, they were confronted with the reality of their complicity.

Germany's territory was divided between the U.S., Britain, and France and the Soviet Union after the war, with the former gaining control of the West and the latter gaining control of the East (Bartoletti 2015: 295-6). The Soviet Union established a communistic government in the east, which saw a large influx of children join the FDJ, a Communist youth association (McDougall 2008).

B. Structure

Structurally, the Hitler Youth was meant to accompany Nazi policies that emphasized the supremacy of the Aryan race and the need for

racial purity, playing a fundamental role in the indoctrination process. When describing his ultimate objective for the movement, Hitler claimed that "in a short time [the youth] will know nothing else but this new community," referring to the establishment of the Thousand Year Reich (qtd. in Miller et al. 2018: 194). In a similar vein, Baldur von Schirach, the leader of the Hitler Youth for the majority of its duration, explained that "the best Hitler Youth, irrespective of rank and office, is he who completely surrenders himself to the National Socialist worldview" (qtd. in ibid.). The objective of the organization was therefore clear from its inception: to create the soldiers who would ensure the perpetuity of the Third Reich and its goal of achieving the dominance of the master Aryan race. This is similar to Hannah Arendt's conceptualization of total domination, which "[eliminates]... spontaneity itself as an expression of human behavior" (Arendt 2000: 119). The children were supposed to shun their individuality and become the predictable—or, more precisely, controllable—assets of the Nazi empire that would ensure not only that Germany maintained its dominant position within the international hierarchy, but that Hitler's goal of racial purity would be pursued after international domination was achieved. Far from being seen as children, the Hitler Youth became Hitler's "material" for crafting an enduring legacy (qtd. in Bartoletti 2005: xii). To ensure this scheme could be enacted to the utmost success, young boys would be inducted into the *Jungvolk* and young girls into the *Jungmädel* once they reached the age of ten. The induction ceremony occurred yearly on Hitler's birthday: April 20th (ibid. 27). When they were 14, boys transferred to the *Hitlerjugend* (HJ) and girls to the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (BDM) for further indoctrination and military preparation (ibid. 19).

To enact his program of racial purity, Hitler instituted a special screening process for German youth looking to join the organization. Children had to receive an *Ahnenpass*, a "stamped and signed official document that proved [their] racial heritage," and had to "prove that they were healthy and had no hereditary diseases" (Bartoletti 2015: 31). Disabled children could join the Disabled and Infirm Hitler Youth if they had an *Ahnenpass* and their disability

wasn't hereditary. Jews were completely excluded (ibid.). Children were forced to prove their physical fitness in a series of tasks: they "ran races, threw baseballs, swam, and performed gymnastic stunts" (ibid. 33). For the boys, the passing of courage tests was rewarded with a dagger bearing the inscription "BLOOD AND HONOR" (ibid.). The military drills within the organization were meant to instill a "leadership principle" that promoted blind obedience to authority (ibid. 35). Boys were trained in military tactics, while girls learned to become "good wives and mothers" (ibid. 36). On December 1st, 1936, Hitler passed a compulsory enrollment law, which was reinforced by a stricter law passed three years later (ibid. 49). Hitler's goals therefore became obvious; he wanted to produce a generation of warriors and wives that would preserve his legacy and maintain the racial purity of the Third Reich, and no qualified child was to be immune from his systematic methods of indoctrination.

When it came to schools, Hitler sought to ensure Nazi ideology would not only not be contradicted, but would also become commonplace. He introduced new subjects and imposed increasingly greater requirements for physical education (Bartoletti 2015). And he "blacklisted" books considered to be un-German in content from libraries and required reading materials (ibid. 72). In describing the changes he made to the German education system, Hitler clarified that he wanted a "violently active, dominating, intrepid, brutal youth" (qtd. in ibid. 68). Therefore, the alterations to the system of schooling were meant to further mold the minds of the children so they would blindly follow the Führer and later enact his genocidal policies without question. Soon, "even casual banter or a joke about the war or Adolf Hitler was considered treason" (ibid. 224), displaying the lengths Hitler was willing to go to to ensure the blind devotion of the youth and citizens in general.

Hitler Youth held important leadership positions within the Nazi Party, especially during the later half of the war. The *HJ-Streifendienst* "[arrested] children and teenagers who broke the law" (Bartoletti 2015: 116). By pitting children against each other, the Nazis promoted a policing of German citizens that ensured conformity with Nazi principles. There

was also the *Waffen-SS*, which “supplied guards for concentration-camp duty” (ibid. 121). And, toward the end of the war, Hitler Youth were appointed as “*Volkssturm* leaders;” the *Volkssturm* was a “homeland militia” meant to fend off the Allies’ invasion of Germany (ibid. 261). Membership in the Hitler Youth therefore offered career advancement opportunities that were not extended to ordinary citizens, increasing its appeal.

II. Indoctrinating Children

Nazi attempts to indoctrinate the Hitler Youth encompassed the process of “attitudinal change,” which transformed the attitudes of the children through intense psychological and physical means (Miller et al. 2018: 194). The Nazis preyed upon “individuals’ desire to conform with group opinion,” which is rooted in human psychology (ibid.). Since Hitler had “[eliminated] all other youth groups except for the Hitler Youth,” the Hitler Youth became the only state-sponsored organization in which children could fulfill this need (Bartoletti 2015: 44). In the pursuit of conformity, Hitler had effectively ensured that group cohesion could only (legally) be found within the Hitler Youth. Once inside the organization, children faced intense hardships meant to “sink costs”—“forced marches, dangerous ‘courage tests,’ sleep and food deprivation, and unofficial hazing” (Miller et al. 2018: 194). Beyond merely representing the torturing of children for the purpose of saving money, such methods weathered down the spirits of the children and pushed them farther toward Arendt’s (2000) totally dominated individual. Likewise, the cruel methods also instigated “dissonance reduction,” in which “individuals prefer to believe in the cause they sacrificed for rather than believe they suffered for nothing” (Miller et al. 2018: 194). The barbaric treatment of Hitler Youth members further indoctrinated them by convincing them that they were being neglected in pursuit of a greater good: the Hundred Year Reich.

To induce this attitudinal change, the Nazis primarily relied upon education. In 1931, under orders from Hitler, *Schulungsbrieife* (educational letters) were sent to Hitler Youth members to inform them

of the “‘officially approved’ tenets of National Socialism” (Stachura 1976: 341). Likewise, 45 of the 105 pages of the Hitler Youth Manual were devoted to “racial ideology” (Voigtländer and Voth 2015: 7931). Hitler attempted to eliminate ideological nonconformity—which had been introduced under Gruber’s leadership—in pursuit of the production of ideological puppets of the Nazi Party. Hitler eventually introduced the subjects of “racial science and eugenics” to German curricula to further emphasize the status of the Aryans as the master race and teach children how to preserve racial integrity (Bartoletti 2015: 62). The entire curriculum was altered to “convince the young of the importance of race and the inferiority of Jews, blacks, etc.” (Voigtländer and Voth 2015: 7931). Hitler enlisted schoolteachers to indoctrinate children with Nazi ideology, and those who resisted “were dealt with harshly” (ibid. 58). National Socialist ideals became commonplace as they were uncritically taught in the sanctuary of supposedly impartial knowledge, the schoolhouse. To approach total domination, the education was, according to Hans-Georg Bartholomai, “tough, authoritarian, completely undemocratic, and nowadays completely inconceivable” (qtd. in Figiel 2014: 123). The goal was simple: “to prepare [them] for a heroic death” in service of the “race of lords” that were the Germans (ibid.). The Nazi education system was designed to strip away individual identity and instill a self-sacrificial instinct in children that would make them beyond complicit in genocide; they would become willing co-conspirators.

Hitler’s tactic of manipulating the state education system was not peculiar in Germany; since August and September 1914 there has been a movement toward *Kriegspädagogik*, or war pedagogy, which was ultimately designed to “[cultivate] love for the Fatherland and willingness to sacrifice for the national cause” (Donson 2006: 339). During World War I, war literature depicting Germans as “ruthless and bloodthirsty” exploded, teaching young boys that the German soldier was one who embraced a type of savagery in battle that spared no prisoners (ibid. 345). This sparked production of *Kriegsschundschriften*, or war penny dreadfuls,

which featured male protagonists that were “fiercely patriotic, hyper-masculine and fully committed to the war” (ibid. 346). While the peak of production for this literature was during the Great War, it would have been available to children living in post-World War I Germany. Therefore, the glorification of violence and self-sacrifice which became fundamental to Nazi education emerged during World War I and serves as a prime example of the efficiency of education as a means of indoctrination.

In addition to education, the family is a particularly powerful socialization agent that played a role in the Hitler Youth organization; Alfons Heck attributes his affiliation with the Third Reich to “his parents, along with his apolitical grandmother and his Nazi schoolteachers” (qtd. in Sahrakorpi 2020: 88). The families of the Hitler Youth “[knew] that they [were sending] their children to places, where they would go through an effective indoctrination” (Figiel 2014: 120). In other words, the families knew exactly what was going to occur within the Hitler Youth organization, and they enrolled their children anyway. However, it may not be entirely fair to judge parents on these grounds. The Hitler Youth had a particular appeal due to its promotion of “discipline, physical fitness, diligence, pursuit of excellence, pride in national heritage, and a sense of purpose” (Bartoletti 2015: 40). Therefore, parents may have enrolled their children for the character-shaping benefits that existed outside of the arena of indoctrination. Additionally, failure to abide by the compulsory enrollment laws could result in “[parents’] children [being] taken from them” (ibid. 49). The decision to refuse enrollment came at a heavy cost.

The family may have also helped reinforce the positive messages concerning Nazi ideology that were being produced during the indoctrination process, with nobody “[giving children] reason to think anything bad about the Nazis” (Figiel 2014: 120). The family replicated the dissemination of information that reinforced the educational ideals of the Hitler Youth and therefore helped prepare the children to become willing participants through the “renunciation by the individual of their right to express their opinion” (ibid. 114). As individual opinion was sacrificed, the family became an insurance policy

ensuring the children understood the values that would allow them to thrive under National Socialism.

Media also served as an indoctrination method; Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi Propaganda Minister, understood the immense potential of film in this regard. He orchestrated a Hitler Youth film campaign for the sole purpose of indoctrinating the children of Germany, who needed films for “moral and intellectual development” (Goebbels 1941: 37). He embraced the “pedagogical character” of film that made it such a powerful weapon in shaping the minds of the youth (ibid. 41). Therefore, the Nazi Party was determined to capitalize upon the propagandistic purposes of state-sponsored film that could instill German youth with the values they needed to become full-fledged servants of the nation. Goebbels of course also tied the film project into the fascist narrative, claiming that “the purpose of art must also be to serve the nation to the fullest” (ibid. 40). Beyond functioning as mere entertainment, film as art must also perpetuate Nazi ideology and construct an indisputable fascist narrative that promotes the goals of the state above all else. Goebbels’s film campaign was initiated with *Hitler Youth Quex*, a film about Heini Völker, a Hitler Youth member with a difficult family life who meets an unfortunate fate after he chooses the Hitler Youth over the “Reds.” (Rentschler 1995: 24). Hans Steinhoff served as the director, although von Schirach was an honorary director. It premiered on September 11th, 1933 and reached an audience of over 20,000,000 (Baird 1993: 504, 510-1). The enormous size of the audience suggests the significance of the film as a tool for indoctrination.

III. *Hitler Youth Quex*

The film opens at an apple stand. Two boys attempt to steal an apple and are chastised by the owner. Encouraged by a man from the streets, a riot breaks out over the possibility of the boys being sent to jail. In the commotion, a different man is hurt and is escorted back to his apartment by Stoppel. Once in the apartment, this man asks his wife for beer money. She claims to have none, which sends the man into a rampage. He begins ransacking the apartment in search of the funds. At this point we

are introduced to Heini Völker, who works at a local printing shop. He is given a 1-mark tip for his work and returns to find his parents, the aforementioned man and his wife, in the middle of their dispute. He secretly slips the mark to his mother, who then gives it to Heini's father. As Heini's father leaves to buy his beer, Heini is introduced to Stoppel, who is revealed to be a Communist youth organizer. Heini and his mother hear the music from a nearby fair, and Heini is reminded of his desire for a knife. He asks his mother for money to buy a lottery ticket, and she obliges. Heini goes to the fair, and he loses the raffle. Stoppel appears again and consoles Heini, inviting him to join a hike with the Communist Youth. Heini accepts.

Heini accompanies the group on the camping trip, witnessing a slight altercation at the train station in which a Communist youth throws the stolen apple from the beginning of the film, which he has just taken a bite out of, at the face of a Hitler Youth. While attempting to retaliate, the Hitler Youth is ordered by his commander to stop. When Heini arrives at the campground, he becomes disenchanted with the Communist Youth, especially after receiving an unwanted kiss from Gerda. He sneaks off and is attracted to the Hitler Youth camp, where the children sing the Hitler Youth anthem. He is caught and accused of spying. After being chastised, he flees to the woods where he sleeps on the ground. After waking the next day, hiding from Stoppel, and seeing the Hitler Youth go swimming, Heini returns home.

At home, Heini informs his mother of his weekend exploits and begins singing the Hitler Youth anthem. His father overhears, storms into the kitchen, and forces Heini to sing the Communist anthem, boxing his ears as he does so. At school, Fritz, the leader of the Hitler Youth division Heini observed, invites Heini to dinner at his house. Heini obliges and meets Ulla, Fritz's sister. They invite Heini to join them at the Heim, their new clubhouse. Heini, not having a house key, is dismayed at the fact that he will likely not be able to join. At the apartment, Stoppel convinces Heini's father to enroll the boy in the Communist Youth. Upon Heini's return, he is informed that he is to report to the Communist Local that night and is given a house key.

On his way to the Heim, where he has decided to go instead of the Communist Local, Heini is pulled to the side by Stoppel, who informs him of an impending raid. A Hitler Youth has been scolded for neglecting his duty watching the door, and, after returning to his position, is able to inform the others of the raid. An altercation ensues, and the windows of the Heim are shattered. Heini is arrested and, when questioned by the police the next day, is released home to his mother. As he is leaving the station, he encounters the Hitler Youth, who believe he is a traitor (he was described as a Communist by the police).

Once he returns home, Heini is congratulated by Stoppel and informed of a plot to blow up the Hitler Youth headquarters. Heini reports that he will inform the Hitler Youth. Heini calls Fritz and Ulla, but Fritz, convinced that Heini is a double agent working for the Communists, dismisses his warning. Heini calls the police, who do not take the threat seriously. As Heini searches for Stoppel to convince him to call off the plot, there is an explosion; it is implied that Ulla informed the Hitler Youth of the Communists' plot, and that Nazis blew up the Communists' dynamite. Heini returns home whistling the Hitler Youth anthem.

Stoppel stops by Heini's apartment and finds Heini's mother, whom he informs of Heini's treachery. The mother begins to fear for her son's safety. Stoppel departs after making a thinly veiled threat. Upon Heini's return, his mother begs him to make amends with Stoppel. Heini refuses, knowing he has earned a spot within the Hitler Youth. Distraught, his mother allows him to go to bed and, after deeply contemplating the situation, turns on the gas from the stove.

Heini awakens in a hospital bed. The Hitler Youth visit and apologize for believing he was a traitor. Heini is then informed of his mother's death. The Nazi district leader, Cass, and Heini's father come to visit him at the same time in the hospital. Cass offers Heini a spot with the Hitler Youth. Heini's father begins an argument that he ultimately loses. He is escorted from his home district and housed with Grundler, another Hitler Youth who has slowly been falling under Gerda's influence. Grundler gives Heini the nickname *Quex*, short for quicksilver. The two fight over the name, and

Cass refers to Heini as *Quex* in the aftermath. Stoppel returns and asks Heini to leave the organization, which Heini refuses to do, even after he is offered the coveted knife from the fair.

Heini, despite knowing the danger he will put himself in upon return to the Communist district, decides that he must fulfill his duty of distributing leaflets. It is here that he witnesses Grundler and Gerda destroy the original pamphlets. Heini, Fritz, and Ulla print off more pamphlets at the printing press where Heini used to work. Ulla gives Heini a kiss. As Heini is distributing the pamphlets, he encounters the Communists. He flees to the deserted fairgrounds, where he hides inside one of the tents. He accidentally runs into a mechanical drumming monkey, drawing attention to his location. We hear Heini scream as his Hitler Youth division enters and discovers his corpse. Heini lies on the ground with the knife beside him, indicating that he has been stabbed. As he dies, he uses his last breath to begin uttering the lyrics to the Hitler Youth anthem (Steinhoff 1933; Bateson 1980: 24-6).

A. Key Scenes

There is perhaps no scene more powerful in the film than the ending one, or that of Heini's death. Heini becomes immortalized in the Hitler Youth anthem itself. As he utters the beginning verse, which translates to "our flag means more than death," the departure of his spirit is accompanied by "a waving flag" and marching Nazis (Rentschler 1995: 35). Heini's corpse becomes a "medium for a movement" which seeks to glorify "human sacrifice" (ibid.). Heini's decision to return to the Communist district and to distribute Nazi leaflets becomes commendable, and he becomes the model Hitler Youth through his self-sacrificial action. However, per Nazi ideology, the focus cannot remain on the individual for too long, and Heini's death leads way to "several converging columns of marchers... [taking] up the chorus of the song which Heini began" (Baird 1983: 509). Heini's individual sacrifice leads to the collective good, and he therefore occupies a flattering space within the public narrative as the victim of an unnecessary violence that led to the future prosperity of the nation. Of course, the use

of violence against people and children in general is ironic in a Nazi propaganda film, seeing that "German mass killings of Jews" were a key component of the Final Solution proposed at the 1942 Wannsee Conference (Bergen 2016: 247). The euthanasia program that specifically targeted disabled children also displayed a lack of concern for violence against children, and thus the use of Heini as a figure of pity is ironic ad absurdum (Bartoletti 2015: 170). However, such techniques were masked from the general public, with one Hitler Youth reporting that he "refused to believe the Nazis would systematically murder people" (Bartoletti 2015: 162). While invoking disgust at violence against children, the Nazis were espousing an ideology that actively promoted ethnic cleansing as a means of achieving racial purity. Nevertheless, the visceral emotion invoked in the audience as they watch Heini use his last breath to begin singing the Hitler Youth anthem became a powerful symbol that succeeded in stirring disgust and generating support for the Nazis.

The contrast between the Communists and the Hitler Youth at the train station and the campground becomes essential in understanding the oppositional nature of the film. There is a clear contrast between the "ragged, disorderly Communists and the neat, disciplined Nazis," meant to reflect their different organizational styles (Bateson 1980: 30). This is in turn linked to the values of the groups, with the "motley attire" of the Communists serving as an "outward sign of inner degeneration," and the Hitler Youth dressed in "orderly, colorful uniforms" that represent their vibrancy and vitality (Baird 1983: 502). The Communists are thus seen to occupy a realm of inefficiency and corruption that poses a danger to the youth and does not produce well-mannered adults. This is perhaps best seen in the child that robs the apple stand and then throws the apple at one of the Hitler Youth. The child is undisciplined, a criminal, and simply rude. In contrast, the Hitler Youth who controls himself at the behest of the commander becomes a representation of the wonders of the discipline worked by the Hitler Youth. Their uniforms also come to represent the value of conformity, which is not seen in the Communists.

Individuality is thus a tumor that must be excised for the sake of order and obedience.

In her scenes, Gerda becomes the embodiment of the moral depravity of the Communist ideology. She uses her “erotic wares” to seduce Grundler and tries to do the same with Heini (Baird 1983: 507). Her sexuality is “devoid of Germanic refinement, not to mention soul” (ibid.). Her body becomes a transactional object that she uses to manipulate others, exemplified by her claim that she does not like Grundler when she is instructed to begin flirting with him (Steinhoff 1933). Heini’s resistance to this temptation represents the ascetism of the ideal Hitler Youth, which stands in sharp contrast with Grundler’s weakness. Grundler becomes so absorbed by the possibility of sex that he is willing to betray the Führer. The acting upon of physical desires is therefore tantamount to treason, as it places the wants of the individual above the needs of the nation. Fascist ideology leaves no room for these sexual games.

The symbolism of the coveted knife is best understood in this individual versus collectivist framework, and the scene at the fair is important to this understanding. The tool becomes an object of Heini’s desires because it is something that he coveted for its usefulness to him personally. However, the knife offers no benefit to the nation as a whole, and thus only serves to fulfill individualistic impulses. Thus, Heini’s rejection of the knife after joining the Hitler Youth becomes a representation of his utter and complete indoctrination. His acceptance of fascist ideology leads him to shun his former selfish impulses in pursuit of the good of the nation, or the dissemination of Nazi ideology through the distribution of leaflets. However, Heini is not allowed to get off this easy. Rather, the object of his individualistic desires becomes the very weapon that kills him. His former impulses come back to haunt him and lead to his destruction. The message is clear: an inability to abide by the nationalistic edicts of the state will result in destruction.

Heini’s interactions with his family can be seen as one master scene that represents the transition from the family of origin to the future family. Heini is “[closed] off” from his family of origin, rendering him both vulnerable and amorphous, ready to be

forged into the ideal Nazi soldier (Bateson 1980: 44). It is only through this separation, which is finalized through Cass’s ideological victory over the father, that Heini is able to join the Hitler Youth and realize his true role as a Nazi martyr. He has already been separated from his mother through her death, and he had been undergoing ideological separation from his father leading up to Cass’s victory; his father’s abusive treatment during the singing episode in the kitchen and threat to kill him if he joined the Nazis at the beginning of the film are prime examples. Once the isolation is complete, Heini is able to join his future family. In this family, there is “a courtship between two mercurial beings stripped of the outward manifestations of sex differences and symbolically equated as brother and sister,” represented by Heini and Ulla in the film (ibid. 46). This family is bound by comradeship rather than sexual attraction and the product of its manifestation, a vision more conducive to the Nazi vision of conformity and that aligns with Cass’s notion of our Germany. While heterosexual couplings still exist—and even with sexual undertones—the bonds formed exist due to a shared German ancestry. The incestuous act that then occurs between these two units thus becomes a means of maintaining the purity of the bloodline espoused under Nazi ideology.

The conversation between Cass and Heini’s father plays a pivotal role in the film. Commonly understood as a “fight for the young hero’s mind,” the conversation becomes a battle between Nazi and Communist ideologies (Rentschler 1995: 32). The way in which the film lingers on the father, who “hunches down, his hands tightly gripping a hat between his legs,” and Heini, dressed in pajamas with a cane, creates a scene “displaying wounded sons of Germany in need of help” (ibid. 33). It is in this symbolism that the unfitness of the Communist ideology in preparing the youth for the world is displayed. Therefore, Cass becomes a necessary disciplinary figure that will provide salvation for the valuable resource found within the nation’s youth. The dialogue also becomes important, as Cass ultimately reminds Heini’s father that he was born “in *our* Germany” (ibid., Steinhoff 1933). It is here that the Nazi claim to ownership of the land becomes clear. What the Communists do not

understand is that they too could belong to the Aryan master race that is attempting to revitalize the Earth’s population. Cass’s nationalistic invocation therefore reflects a strategy of cohesion through nationality meant to bind Germans together. The efficacy of this approach is evidenced later in the film, as Heini’s father repeats the conversation to a comrade, this time assuming Cass’s role. The profundity of the realization of shared origin and entitlement to Germany therefore becomes a primary factor in constructing loyalty to the Nazis and the Hitler Youth, who are fighting to bring about a pure Fatherland.

The confrontation between the Hitler Youth and the Communists at the Heim is another key scene, as the utter and complete chaos brought about by the altercation begins to consume the narrative. However, looking at the film retrospectively, there is one element that stands out as patently absurd: the use of the shattering of windows as a means of vilifying the Communists. Vandalization of Jewish businesses was a common part of pogroms, “a word derived from the Russian for ‘riot,’” or brutal attacks on Jewish citizens and businesses that were commonplace in Nazi Germany (Bergen 2016: 16). On the night of November 9th-10th, the Nazis even enacted a pogrom referred to as Kristallnacht, which literally translates to “the night of broken glass” (ibid. 107). And “many Hitler Youth joined in the attacks on Jews and Jewish property” (Bartoletti 2015: 86). Therefore, the destruction of property was not a concern for Nazi leaders. Of course, since Jews were depicted as “subhumans” (Bartoletti 2015: 160) and threats to German posterity, this violence could become justified as a means of protecting the country. Therefore, the shattering becomes detestable in that it occurred due to instigation from the Communists, and not in the mere destruction of the building. This is highlighted when the scene is placed in context; the Hitler Youth are merely singing when the “Reds” launch the assault, and the visible aesthetics of the shattering therefore become symbolic of the attack on peace and tranquility created by the Nazi organization. The Communists become disruptive to this objective and therefore pose a threat to the security of the nation through their animosity toward the National Socialist agenda.

B. Heini Völker vs. Herbert Norkus

One of the more notable elements of the film is its distortion of reality to fit more neatly into the Nazi narrative.¹ Heini is based upon the actual youth Herbert Norkus, who was killed by communists while performing his duties as a Hitler Youth. Initially, Norkus was forbidden from joining the group by his mother, who feared both the group and the Communists, commonly known as “Reds.” After her passing due to illness, Norkus’s father allowed him to join the Hitler Youth, hoping it would “lift his son’s spirits, help him make new friends, and instill a sense of discipline in him” (Bartoletti 2005: 3). Norkus worked distributing leaflets as part of the Nazi “propaganda blitz,” placing him in direct threat of confrontation with the “Reds” (ibid. 4). On January 24th, 1932, Norkus was ambushed by a group of Communist youth, who “[stabbed] him six times,” leading to his death (ibid. 6). His last known words were “Help me. I’ve been attacked” (ibid.).

Given this reality, the choice of Norkus as a film subject becomes clear. Norkus became a national icon after his death, receiving an “elaborate military funeral” that included a 24-hour guard of honor (Bartoletti 2005: 8). Likewise, January 24th was declared “a national day of commemoration for all fallen Hitler Youth” (ibid. 9). The film producers thus selected a subject who firmly resided within the public consciousness and represented the destruction of innocence perpetrated by the “Reds;” Herbert Norkus was the martyr of the Hitler Youth. The film also preyed on the extant rivalry between Communists and the Hitler Youth, who often engaged in “bloody street fights” (ibid. 2). Therefore, Goebbels capitalized on this fear and the unfortunate fate of Norkus to create a sense of disgust surrounding the Communists and to promote the moral superiority of the Aryans comprising the Hitler Youth. In these manners, Goebbels was able to use the existing social climate to create a propagandistic film meant to promote the Hitler Youth. And it worked; Alfons Heck specifically notes the role the film played in drawing him to the organization as a child (HBO 1991).

¹ All aspects of the historical account of Herbert Norkus are adapted from the introduction to Bartoletti 2005, pages 1-11.

The differences between the film and reality display the strategies the Nazis used to shape children into loyal soldiers and instill fascist impulses in them. In this film, Heini's father is a member of the Communist party and adamantly demands that his son join the International Communist Association (Steinhoff 1933). This diametrical opposition between the two becomes a key focus of the film, as it presents a conflict between the "Reds" and the Nazis. Thus, using the existing antagonism and history of violence between the two, Heini becomes the perfect representation of the struggle between communism and fascism for control of the child's mind. Likewise, Heini's mother becomes the more sympathetic parent in the film, and, rather than dying from an illness, she dies in an attempt to kill both herself and her son (ibid.). Her internal conflict comes to a head after Stoppel threatens Heini, and her homicidal actions become an attempt to protect Heini. However, in attempting to kill her child, she also becomes monstrous insofar as that she is both snuffing out an innocent life and, in fascist terminology, robbing the state of a potential worker. She neglects her duty to the state as a reproductive vessel meant to produce the future generation that will carry on the Hundred Year Reich. In doing so, she pays the ultimate price and dies.

The alteration of the past in terms of Heini's death create an antagonism toward the "Reds" that also promoted the Nazi agenda. When Heini is killed, it is by a group of adult men (Steinhoff 1933). By pitting adults against children instead of children against children, the murder becomes all that more sinister. A clear power imbalance emerges, and the adults become guilty of both homicide and abusing their superior status in their violence against children. The "Reds" are morally depraved under this conceptualization, and thus lack honor. Likewise, Heini's last words are lyrics (ibid.), rather than a declaration of attack. While this strategy seems confusing at first, as a declaration of attack places more blame upon the perpetrators, the goal of reinforcing Nazi values adds clarity: The goal was to produce a "spirit of self-sacrifice" among the children so they would act as blind warriors for the Nazi regime (Bartoletti 2005: 19). Additionally, the visual aspect of the film already made the attack clear

to the audience, who therefore did not need Heini's affirmation of the events they had just witnessed. The song that had served as the pivotal moment of confrontation between Heini and his father therefore both invoked memory of the struggle with the "Reds" and glorified the Nazi agenda in the minds of the children.

IV. Counterarguments

In their study on indoctrination and coercion, Miller et al. (2018) examined the two as substitutes for each other, with "more of one [requiring] less of another" (189). Therefore, it could be that, rather than being indoctrinated during their time in the Hitler Youth, German children felt coerced to participate in the group. In other words, "primary unit cohesion" could have forced the children to participate in such atrocities and to be willing to sacrifice their lives in combat (Shils and Janowitz 1948: 291). While this seems unlikely given the extreme efforts Hitler and the Nazi Party went to to ensure that the children would become the willing accomplices of the National Socialist regime, it is lent some credibility by the fact that, in private, German soldiers expressed some hesitancy toward Nazi ideology (Miller et al. 2018: 195). However, Miller et al. (2018) found that the Hitler Youth's "military commanders needed fewer punishments to motivate them to fight," displaying their internalization of indoctrination (ibid. 210). The children became such willing participants in the fight for German domination that they required less punitive encouragement to risk their lives in battle than their peers who had not been trained in the Hitler Youth. If coercion had been the primary factor in this process, the discrepancy would be minimalistic and negligible at best. Instead, Miller et al. (2018) found that "an individual should expect to receive one fewer punishment in their career for every 20 months spent in the HY" and that "1 year in the HY was associated with a six percentage point reduction in the probability of being punished" when controlling for other factors (ibid. 207-8, 199). And, building upon Voigtländer and Voth's (2015) research, Miller et al. (2018) argues that the "'Hitler Youth Generation' continued to show traces of Nazi ideology even after the war when such views

were discouraged or actively suppressed by the West German state" (ibid. 210). Therefore, the inculcation of Nazi ideology existed even when it was not actively promoted, suggesting a full embrace extending beyond mere group cohesion. This is perhaps best exemplified through the response of a Hitler Youth when asked if he were in pain: "Yes, but this is not important. Germany must be victorious" (qtd. in Bartoletti 2015: 160).

The indoctrination theory must also contend with the "large-scale transition of Hitler Youth members into the FDJ," or the Free German Youth, a communist organization, in post-war Soviet East Germany (McDougall 2008: 32). This in and of itself does not discredit the indoctrination hypothesis, although the large influx of former Nazis into a group led by their antagonists, the "Reds," is puzzling at first glance. McDougall (2008) identifies four factors that both align with the indoctrination hypothesis and explain the mass conversion: age, cadre experience, the appeal of a communist group in post-Nazi Germany, and the amnesty agreement. "The vast majority of those who became active on the FDJ from 1946 onwards were the youngest of the Hitler Youth generation," or those who had the least exposure to Nazi indoctrination (ibid. 35). These children were "more susceptible to ideological 'reorientation'" due to their young age and often had negative "recollections of the HJ" due to the involvement with the war (ibid. 36). The children who flocked to the FDJ both had experienced the horrors of battling for Nazi Germany. This negative practical experience made the children more hesitant to embrace Nazi ideology, as they automatically associated it with the scenes of war. Additionally, they had less exposure in general to the constant barrage of National Socialist propaganda meant to turn them into perpetual Nazis. In terms of cadre experience, former Hitler Youth had more "hands-on experience" that made them better suited for leadership positions in the FDJ; the Communist government was therefore willing to look past their embrace of fascism in the name of promotions for the sake of efficiency (ibid. 38). Hitler Youth were offered upper positions in the group, contributing to its appeal. The FDJ had other appeals rooted in

the "social, cultural, and leisure opportunities that it provided for young people," ranging from concerts to hikes to its unisex membership (ibid. 37). Unlike the Hitler Youth, the FDJ was more relaxed and therefore offered a greater appeal to children who had just survived a war. The 1947 amnesty laws, extended to those born after January 1st, 1919, "essentially exempted the vast majority of young East Germans from the ongoing denazification process," under the theory that the Hitler Youth generation was "too young to be held accountable for Nazism" (ibid. 31). Therefore, the children were able to operate with relative autonomy in their choice to transition into the FDJ. It "ensured for the Communists a certain degree of loyalty to the postwar status quo" (ibid. 32). The amnesty agreement thus operated as a political compromise between the Hitler Youth and the new Communist government; in exchange for their exculpation, the children were incentivized to join the FDJ and promote the power status of the new East German government. More than just exculpation, the youth also received "the possibility of personal advancements" and were able to fulfill their "duty to help out," which harkens back to their training to fulfill their duty in the Hitler Youth (ibid. 39). The mass conversion of former Hitler Youth members to the FDJ therefore does not contradict the indoctrination theory, but rather presents both the downfalls of Nazi methodology and their appeal to the Communist government. Of course, not all Hitler Youth joined the FDJ, and Werewolves, or "surviving groups of anti-Soviet former HJ... members" were formed (ibid. 32). This group "sabotaged army vehicles, pouring sand into gas tanks... deactivated land mines and used the bombs to blow up vehicles... [and] destroyed communication lines, supply depots, and other important enemy installations" (Bartoletti 2015: 261-2). The resistance to the newfound Soviet command represents the success of widespread indoctrination in a subset of the Hitler Youth, and therefore lends credence to the indoctrination hypothesis.²

² There has not been much research into the percentage of Hitler Youth that joined the Werewolves. However, the existence of the term suggests that there were enough members for the group to be recognized as a coordinated and organized resistance movement.

To create a future Germany that would be blindly loyal to his vision of the Hundred Year Reich and to preserve his legacy, Hitler and other top Nazi officials specifically focused their energies on the process of brainwashing youth. Goebbels relied on a film campaign that kicked off with Hitler Youth Quex to instill a self-sacrificial solidarity within the organization. To do so, he had to distort the reality of Nazi practices and the National Socialist agenda to mask German atrocities. He also played into fearmongering through the invocation of the powerful story of Herbert Norkus, which already lived within the national imagination. The result of this process was (typically) the transformation of children into perpetrators, or, at the very least, bystanders. Given this history, it would be easy to claim that we should not target this demographic for purposes of indoctrination. However, as former Hitler Youth member Alfons Heck notes, “children are like empty vessels; you can fill them with good, you can fill them with evil, you can fill them with hate, and you can fill them with compassion” (HBO 1991). Thus, it is impossible to completely prevent the indoctrination of children. Instead, it would seem more practical to assume a policy of positive indoctrination, or, borrowing Heck’s terminology, attempting to fill children with good and compassion. The Hitlerjugend is therefore both a warning of the potential to create monsters out of children and a guidebook of sorts for the means of shaping children’s identity and minds in more constructive directions that foster basic human empathy and understanding.

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Unethical Holocaust Depiction in *Hunters*

Lucas Hummel

In David Weir's conspiracy drama web television series *Hunters*, a small cadre of Jews (including three Holocaust survivors) and Jewish allies hunt, torture, and kill undercover Nazis in an alternate version of the 1970s United States, eventually uncovering a massive conspiracy by said Nazis to establish a Fourth Reich in the United States and a cover-up (by the federal government) of the Nazis' entrances to America. In this fictional portrayal of Nazi hunting in the United States, the eponymous Hunters face (and kill, for the most part) both real and fictional Nazis, including Wernher von Braun and Eva Braun, and uncover (and foil) a plot by an underground network of escaped Nazi war criminals to kill millions of American people of color through the introduction of poisoned corn syrup into supermarkets in historically un- or underserved communities while being hunted themselves by a FBI agent (*Hunters* 2020a).

Though macabre and off-center in its fictional depiction of postwar Nazi hunting, real-life conspiracies to facilitate the escape of Nazi war criminals and officials, and the Holocaust itself, *Hunters* advances positive rhetoric and claims surrounding the Holocaust and its aftermath, such as the false equation of vengeance and justice, the horrifying effects of violence on the self, and the mirroring of the enemy while executing violent vengeance. Acknowledging this, it is also fair to claim that *Hunters* does not depict the Holocaust and its aftermath in a way that engenders understanding about its causes, violence, or effect beyond what the casual viewer already understands as a result of the show's messaging (which is problematic due to the show's alternate history lens).

The scope of particularly atrocious violence in the Holocaust and the fates of the perpetrators, collaborators, and organizers of such violence has become a focal point in academic analysis of and cultural interest in the Holocaust, with the experiences of those brutalized by the Holocaust, exploits of Nazi hunters like Simon Wiesenthal, and government

programs facilitating the flight of Nazi scientists to the United States like Operation Paperclip being central to much of the media produced about the Holocaust. Indeed, all three of these aspects are crucial to the narrative of *Hunters*. However, fictionalization and sensationalization of the source material distorts the truth of the very situations being portrayed. In its good faith attempts to shed light on the very real atrocities and issues that make up the bulk of Holocaust and Holocaust aftermath study, *Hunters* undermines its own claims to veracity by fictionalizing the brutalization of Jews in Auschwitz, the extent of the presence of Nazis in postwar America, and sensationalizing the acts of Nazi hunters.

Fictionalizing Holocaust Violence

The most tragic false depiction of the Holocaust in *Hunters* is the fictionalization of the atrocious violence and brutalization faced by Jews in the Auschwitz concentration camp. The most extreme example of this fictionalization comes in episode 1, "In the Belly of the Whale," during a flashback of Ruth, the protagonist Jonah's grandmother, experience in Auschwitz. In this scene, a Nazi guard named Heinz Richter reconstructs a game of chess using Jews as the pieces, requiring that the Jews (including Ruth's younger sister) kill each other in order to "take" the other "piece" (*Hunters* 2020b). As a plot device, this flashback serves to render Richter's killing later in the episode more personal to both the viewer and Jonah and establishes the emotional link between a desire for violent vengeance and personal (or familial) history, especially as related to the Holocaust. However, its completely fictional nature also serves to undermine the truth and reality of the actual, historical violence against Jews during the Holocaust.

For example, the average viewer may actually believe the human chess game is based in historical fact because of the precedent set by past documentary-style depictions of the Holocaust.

However, there is no historical basis for the human chess game (or much of the Holocaust violence depicted). This lack of historical basis can undermine the claims that *Hunters* makes concerning the effects of the Holocaust on the individual and provide argumentative fuel to Holocaust deniers by presenting the Holocaust in an untruthful way, allowing a certain amount of room for interpretation that ought not to be allowed when discussing the Holocaust. This error is especially egregious when one considers the fact that actual evidence of horrific violence in the camps and ghettos is present and available for use in advancing a narrative about the effects of the Holocaust, such as the evidence provided in Zofia Nalkowska's *Medallions* and Doris Bergen's *War & Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*.

In *Medallions*, for example, there are many instances of violence that are first- or secondhand accounts from those involved (either as victim, collaborator, or bystander) in the Holocaust in Poland, each being collected by Nalkowska through her work on the Polish Communist government's Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes in Auschwitz. In one such account, a Jewish survivor of the Holocaust details the atrocities in Ravensbruck concentration camp, stating that "they tortured us with injections, they did experiments on women, cut open wounds" (Nalkowska 2000, 11) and that some of the women forced to spend the night in standing cells at the camp would do so in the presence of corpses and would resort to cannibalism of those corpses to survive (ibid., 14). Another example of actual violence committed during the Holocaust is detailed by another survivor (this time of Majdanek), who states that,

(the Germans) celebrated New Year's by shooting sixty-five people. From my house, I was the only one left that still lives. At six A.M., they fired on the streets, in the snow. They broke into apartments. I tried to escape. I jumped out the window. I thought I had killed myself. And I got a shot in the eye. (ibid., 32)

These two examples are representative of the rest of *Medallions*, in that they tell the first- or secondhand stories of victims of the Holocaust in a direct and unsentimental manner.

Similarly, Bergen's *War & Genocide* also recounts (in less personal detail) acts of violence committed against Jews during the Holocaust. This depiction, unlike Nalkowska's, is aided by photographs as well as general summaries of the violence endured by survivors and victims. For example, Bergen (2016, 220) utilizes a photograph of Bogumila Babinska after having been wounded during a medical experiment conducted by Nazi doctors to partially tell her story of survival. Further, the author shares that concentration camp officials "frequently put kapos known as homophobes in charge of gay prisoners" (ibid.), forced adult Roma to strip in front of their own children (ibid.), and recounts that "the SS men in Majdanek were known as sadists who enjoyed killing children in front of their mothers and forcing prisoners to engage in deadly 'sports'" (ibid., 259). Throughout *War & Genocide* (especially in the latter half), Bergen recounts personal and mass stories of suffering at the hands of the perpetrators of the Holocaust.

Both of these literary examples provide direct evidence of atrocious violence perpetrated by Nazis and their collaborators during the Holocaust, which could have, in addition to other examples of atrocious Nazi violence, been utilized as a solid base for *Hunters*'s depictions of Holocaust violence. Instead of depicting a Nazi camp guard conducting a horrific singing competition where the process of elimination is execution (*Hunters* 2020c), the series could have instead depicted camp guards brutally executing the same number of people on a Jewish or secular holiday and maintained historical accuracy while not utilizing a survivor's specific story. This lack of authenticity or accuracy not only lends itself to the negative purposes mentioned above, primarily meaning the denial of the Holocaust, but also constructs a fictional version of the world for the series.

This fictionalization distorts the truth with such expert subtlety that the viewer need not suspend all disbelief, only some. For instance, the series does not demand that the average viewer believe its more outlandish plot points (i.e., the corn syrup plot or the survival of Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun), but rather presents itself in such a way (via the inclusion of historical facts, directly or as inspiration, in the

depictions of Operation Paperclip and some of the hunted Nazis, as well as the appearance of real historical figures, such as Wernher von Braun and Simon Wiesenthal) that the depictions of Holocaust violence appear related to the historical truth to the average viewer. This fictionalization negatively affects the public's understanding of the Holocaust and upholds a fictional version of the Holocaust. The series's fictionalization of the Holocaust and its aftermath also negatively impacts the public's understanding of another issue addressed in the show: the extent of postwar Nazi immigration (legal and illegal) to the United States.

Fictionalizing Postwar Nazi Immigration

In *Hunters*, it is claimed that the United States government (especially NASA) has been infiltrated by Nazis brought to the United States after the end of World War II. This claim further implies the involvement of said Nazis in the Watergate scandal and President John F. Kennedy's assassination (*Hunters* 2020d), the presence of Nazis in prevalent rightwing political circles (*Hunters* 2020e), and that Huntsville, Alabama is primarily a town of and for the escaped Nazis (*Hunters* 2020e), among other implications surrounding the extent of postwar Nazification in the United States. However, historical analysis of Nazi immigration to the United States advances a different thesis.

The most prevalent historical program the series addresses concerning Nazi immigration is the United States government's Operation Paperclip, in which Nazi scientists and other officials (who were generally not from the SS-Death's Head units which operated the concentration camp nor involved directly in the atrocities of the Holocaust) were ferried to the United States to advance American technological interests in the budding Cold War. The most visible of these scientists was Wernher von Braun, an engineer and SS member who had developed the V2 rocket and helped develop intercontinental ballistic missiles and spacecraft launch vehicles for the United States and whose fictional execution by the Hunters is depicted in the show (*Hunters* 2020f). In general, *Hunters* treats Operation Paperclip with an extremely

conspiratorial attitude, advancing the claim that the operation was carried out without the knowledge of much of the American government.

Historian John Gimbel, however, argues that this thesis ignores the system which enabled Operation Paperclip and similar actions and undermines the truth: the "emphasis on conspiracy, cover-up, and the deviousness of the War Department...bash the Pentagon, but give little or no attention to the broader base of the policy" (Gimbel 1990, 442). His argumentative emphasis on the national awareness of this program on the federal level implicates the rest of the Truman Administration in the selective vetting of Germans deemed to be former Nazis, with Gimbel (1990, 442) going so far as to argue that many aspects of the program "received the approval of the president." Gimbel also argues that American interests taking precedence over denazification rules was noticed by others in the government as early as December of 1946, with the Office of Military Government for Greater Hesse reporting that a United States agency in Germany "employed a former Nazi party member, paid him a monthly salary, and furnished him with a billet" (ibid., 447), and that resistance against the program actually came from within the State Department and not the Department of Defense (Gimbel 1990, 450-451). Clearly, Operation Paperclip was not a closely held secret that those within government were unaware of.

However, Operation Paperclip is depicted as a vast conspiracy (opposed by the War Department) that had moved thousands of Nazis (including SS-Death's Head members) to the United States, changing their names and leaving the FBI in the dark. In reality, according to Gimbel, the FBI knew what was happening, the War Department advocated for the relocation of Nazi scientists, and the Nazi associations of these scientists were not concealed but instead downplayed by the United States government. While acknowledging that there was some form of postwar conspiracy to ferry Nazis to the United States, Gimbel's work rebukes the conspiratorial attitude taken in *Hunters* towards Operation Paperclip for ignoring the greater structures within government that allowed the existence and execution of the program.

While the Operation Paperclip narrative in *Hunters* is somewhat based in truth, the addressing of illegal Nazi immigration to the United States is almost entirely fictional.

Hunters opens with the exposure of Undersecretary of State Biff Simpson (played by Dylan Baker) as a Nazi war criminal at a backyard barbecue (Hunters 2020b), resulting in the execution of all of the guests by the Nazi. Simpson, like most of the Nazis involved in the underground plot to establish the Fourth Reich, immigrated to the United States illegally in the postwar era. This aspect of the narrative, similarly to the exaggeration of Operation Paperclip, is a distortion of the truth and, unlike Operation Paperclip, is not based in historical fact, as evidenced by sociologist Ieva Zake's 2010 essay on the extent of illegal Nazi and Nazi collaborator immigration to the United States in the American Latvian community. In this essay, Zake contends that the network of Nazis and collaborators who immigrated to the United States illegally was actually much smaller than what was contended by American Nazi hunters and the Office of Special Investigations (OSI).

Zake contends that the information American investigators of illegal war criminal immigration presented was factually inaccurate, claiming that the investigators were given false information by officials from within the USSR who, at the same time, "concealed some information and distributed misinformation" and shared "lists of alleged Latvian war criminals and descriptions of their supposed deeds" which would later be "rejected as unreliable by the American courts" (Zake 2010, 96). Additionally, Zake argues that because only two Latvian immigrants accused of being war criminals "were shown to have misinformed the immigration authorities about their activities during World War II" (ibid.), the argument that "Nazi war criminals, including those from the Baltic countries, had come to the United States by the thousands" (ibid., 97) was factually inaccurate and misleading. According to Zake, there is not and never was a secret network of thousands of Nazis and Nazi collaborators facilitating illegal immigration into the United States.

Hunters's depiction of Operation Paperclip and a network of Nazis secretly plotting against the

United States is massively conspiratorial in nature. However, like the show's depiction of Holocaust violence, there are several aspects that are believable to the average viewer. For example, it is believable (given the show's explanation of Operation Paperclip) that a Nazi scientist who had worked on perfecting Zyklon B as a weapon of mass murder would be working at NASA in the 1970s (Hunters 2020b). However, it is extremely unlikely that this is the historical truth, since war criminals were explicitly excluded from Operation Paperclip and most scientists recruited had been a part of the V2 program with Wernher von Braun (Gimbel 1990, 445). This historical ambiguity and subtle deception negatively impact the public's understanding of the issue at the heart of Operation Paperclip, much like the fictionalization of Holocaust violence discussed above, and instead shifts the focus away from the truth and towards conspiracy.

This shift towards conspiracy encourages ignorance towards systematic failures and the true dangers of Nazification in the United States on the part of the viewer. Firstly, it displaces the blame for Operation Paperclip from the Truman Administration to seemingly independent actors within the intelligence community. This displacement of blame leads to a misunderstanding of the role played by the whole of the federal government (with President Truman as its leader) in facilitating Operation Paperclip, making the program seem like it was something other than a national anti-Communist endeavor. This is the farthest claim from reality, with the power structures from the Office of Military Government for Greater Hesse to the Office of the President acknowledging, understanding, and, at times, advocating for the undermining of denazification efforts if such undermining suited American interests. Further, the show's focus on actual, historical Nazis instead of American neo-Nazis and/or fascist sympathizers removes the conflict from current American discourse for the viewer. Firstly, it implicitly frames the Nazi infiltration as a thing of the past, as most (if not all) of the ferried Nazis would now be deceased and no longer exerting influence on American society. Secondly, it encourages the average American viewer to blame negative political shifts and government programs (like the CIA's MKUltra) on Operation Paperclip and Nazis who

immigrated to the United States legally or illegally, effectively establishing an othered group in society that can be used as a scapegoat to avoid addressing the actual structural issues within American society and government that enabled those negative events. By offering an easy explanation rooted in some historical truth, *Hunters* encourages ignorance of current issues plaguing the United States.

Sensationalizing Nazi Hunting

Similar to the show's depiction of Nazi immigration is the show's depiction of Nazi hunting, in that it is based on some semblance of truth but is also highly fictionalized and sensationalized. In *Hunters*, Nazi hunters quite literally hunt Nazis, often finding, torturing, and killing them in the name of revenge and outside the purview of the law, while in reality Nazi hunters' work was and is primarily administrative, involving painstaking investigation to confirm a Nazi's identity, working with authorities to apprehend said Nazi, and then prosecuting them in order to either put them in jail or strip them of citizenship. One of the clearest examples of actual Nazi hunting in the United States is the career of former director of the OSI, Eli Rosenbaum.

Becoming involved in the OSI (whose job it is to investigate possible Nazis and Nazi collaborators living within the United States) immediately after graduating Harvard Law School, Rosenbaum "worked as a litigator for the OSI, prosecuting Nazi war criminals and collaborators" (Legge, Jr. 2011, 278). After parting ways with the OSI in 1984, Rosenbaum became general counsel for the Jewish nonprofit World Jewish Congress (WJC), where he investigated and exposed former Austrian President Kurt Waldheim's past involvement with the Nazi party and in deportations of Jews from Greece and Yugoslavia during the Holocaust (Legge, Jr. 2011, 278-279). After serving as general counsel for WJC, Rosenbaum returned to the OSI as deputy director and eventually director. Of Rosenbaum's performance as director of the OSI, a report by the Simon Wiesenthal Center states that "the OSI, currently headed by Eli Rosenbaum... conducted the most successful program of its kind in the world and has been a

model of proactive investigation and prosecution of Holocaust perpetrators" (Legge, Jr. 2011, 282). As a celebrated Nazi hunter, Eli Rosenbaum (and his career) exemplifies the type of work done by actual Nazi hunters.

In contrast, *Hunters* features sensationalized Nazi hunting characterized by its violent nature. This fictional form of Nazi hunting involves some serious, truthful aspects, such as the necessity of confirming a Nazi's identity before executing them and the interviewing of "thousands of survivors" in order to understand the crimes committed by Nazis living in the United States (Hunters 2020c). Further, the series was accurate in its depiction of the government's opposition to non-OSI Nazi hunters like Simon Wiesenthal (Lipstadt 2016, 111) and Wiesenthal's own opposition to Jews who only "wanted 'vengeance'" (Hunters 2020f; Lipstadt 2016, 111). Despite this accuracy, the show's depiction of the Hunt (as it is referred to in *Hunters*) is over-the-top and primarily fictional, with the eponymous Hunters serving as judge, jury, and executioner for every Nazi they find (unlike reality).

Hunters also makes a factual error concerning Nazi hunting in its depiction of Wiesenthal as the moral center of American Nazi hunting, a stance that Holocaust scholar Deborah Lipstadt would most likely counter. In her book *Holocaust: An American Understanding*, Lipstadt (2016, 111) argues that Wiesenthal had a "somewhat uneven relationship with the facts." She argues that Wiesenthal does deserve credit for "generating media attention to the issue of war criminals" but "repeatedly aggrandized his own record by heavily inflating the number of perpetrators he caught" (ibid.). Further, she argues that he "claimed credit for actions in which he had little, if any, role," with the most notable action being the capturing of Adolf Eichmann in South America (ibid.). Additionally, Wiesenthal has a complicated and slightly controversial history concerning the victim count of the Holocaust, advocating on behalf of "ahistorical figures" such as "eleven million victims, six million Jews and five million others" (ibid.). Far from being the morally greatest of all Nazi hunters, Wiesenthal is actually immoral in his pursuit of Nazi war criminals because of the way he

falsified his own record and place in history. While his wrongdoings are not as morally repugnant as the brutal methods of the Hunters and we should recognize that he did important work in gaining international recognition of Nazi war crimes, we should acknowledge that Wiesenthal's actions do skew immoral nonetheless.

Defending *Hunters*'s Depictions of the Holocaust

The three examples above (the fictionalization of Holocaust violence, the falsified extent of postwar Nazification in the United States, and the sensationalization of Nazi hunting) are the three most notable (but far from only) instances of *Hunters*'s narrative undermining its own claims and messages concerning human nature and the effect of the Holocaust and its aftermath. There are, however, some positive instances in the show where the claims made are supplemented by dialogue or general plot points. For instance, the show excels at exposing the parallels between those who desire violent vengeance and those that the vengeance is being dealt upon.

In exposing these parallels, the show essentially establishes the Hunters as mirrors of the very Nazis they are hunting. The group of Jewish and Jewish-allied non-Jews dehumanize the Nazis they persecute, viewing them as subhuman and unworthy of normal human values like mercy. In this vein, they treat them in a way that degrades them as humans, subjecting them to horrible torture, ranging from forcing them to consume feces prior to execution (*Hunters* 2020e) to passing electricity through their body at an incredibly high voltage (*Hunters* 2020f). While these tortures are not exactly the same in nature as the torture endured by Jews in the concentration and death camps of the Holocaust, it is very similar in its extreme and degrading nature. In persecuting Nazis, the Hunters become the very same grotesque shells of humans they think they are protecting the world from.

This mirroring is especially prevalent in the series's depiction of Meyer Offerman, a purported Holocaust survivor and the ringleader of the Hunters. As the ringleader, Offerman pushes the Hunters

further and further into the realm of chaotic and nihilistic violence, arguing that they must "bring God's justice to (the Nazis') doorstep" and that they must also "instill fear, send a message. Let them know, not again" (*Hunters* 2020b). Offerman also pushes Jonah, who claims to be his grandson, to become more violent and exact in executing the Hunters' perverted form of justice. This culminates in Jonah capturing and bringing to Offerman his torturer at Auschwitz, a Nazi doctor named Wilhelm Zuchs (*Hunters* 2020h). In an admittedly odd twist ending, it is revealed that the real Offerman had been murdered in his sleep by Zuchs and that Zuchs had been pretending to be Offerman for the duration of the series (*Hunters* 2020h). This direct exemplification of mirroring in the series exemplifies how violence against an enemy in the name of vengeance will ultimately result in the mirroring of that enemy.

Hunters also makes important claims (backed by evidence in the show) about what it means to be Jewish in the wake of the Holocaust. To Meyer (actually Zuchs), it means to remember the long list of tragedies endured by the Jews (*Hunters* 2020b). However, to the rest of the Hunters and other Jewish characters in the series, being Jewish means being able to maintain hope, see the light and life in negative experiences, and being able to connect with Jewish history (*Hunters* 2020e). While this definition of Jewishness may be inaccurate, it is important that the series rejects the definition of Jewishness as one of suffering.

This definition centered around Jewish suffering renders Jews as a collective as nothing but the continual victims of historical "miseries and persecutions," which would, according to Lipstadt (2016, 115), "overshadow, if not obliterate, the vast array of positive and laudatory accomplishments that mark Jewish history and culture." Thus, it is extremely important that *Hunters* advances the concept of a positive Jewish identity as compared to the dangerous and "lachrymose" identity railed against by Jewish scholars like Salo Baron (ibid.). Otherwise, a new generation of Jewish and non-Jewish viewers may perceive a Jewish identity built solely upon suffering and exploitation.

Additionally, the series pitches a significant positive claim that violence (and the indiscriminate use of extreme violence) can degrade the self to the point of one no longer recognizing themselves as who they once were, with the example of Jonah's progression from selling marijuana to his high school classmates to being (for lack of a better term) a murderer when he ultimately shoots Zuchs instead of forgiving him (*Hunters* 2020h). The Jonah of the beginning of the series referred to the Hunt as "murder" (*Hunters* 2020b) but has been transformed, especially by his actions during the torture of von Braun (*Hunters* 2020f), into what he would have deemed a murderer. The show also advances the idea that this degradation of self is not entirely irreversible, with Jonah deciding to let the American neo-Nazi who killed his friend be arrested by the FBI instead of killing him on the spot (*Hunters* 2020g). Like the previous two instances of positive messaging above, *Hunters*'s advancement of the idea that extreme violence can degrade one's sense of self serves as a cautionary tale against pursuing violent vengeance.

Though dissimilar when compared to the latter three examples of overtly positive messaging, the three examples of negative messaging (i.e., the fictionalization of Holocaust violence, the exaggeration of Operation Paperclip and Nazi immigration to the United States, and the sensationalization of Nazi hunting) discussed above are not entirely without the same good intentions that are behind the more positive messaging in the show. There is only concrete evidence of these good intentions being behind the fictionalization of Holocaust violence, but the good intentions behind both the exaggeration of Nazi immigration to the United States and the sensationalization of Nazi hunting may be inferred through the utilization of context.

Shortly after the release of *Hunters* on Amazon Prime Video, the fictionalization of Holocaust violence, especially the human chess board scene, was heavily criticized by the Auschwitz Memorial, with the Memorial arguing that the show's depictions of the more extreme violence in Auschwitz was "not only dangerous foolishness and caricature. It also welcomes future deniers" (Ramos 2020). The Memorial, however, also conceded that the lesser, more personal

violence depicted in the Auschwitz scenes were more accurate. In response to the Auschwitz Memorial's statement, showrunner David Weil released a statement to Deadline, in which he stated,

I made the decision that all of the concentration camp prisoners (and survivors) in the series would be given tattoos above the number 202,499. 202,499 is the highest recorded number given to a prisoner at Auschwitz. I didn't want one of our characters to have the number of a real victim or a real survivor, as I did not want to misrepresent a real person or borrow from a specific moment in an actual person's life... And why did I feel the need to create a fictional event when there were so many real horrors that existed? After all, it is true that Nazis perpetrated widespread and extreme acts of sadism and torture – and even incidents of cruel "games" – against their victims. I simply did not want to depict those specific, real acts of trauma. (2020)

Indeed, Weil's intentions seem pure in his fictionalization of Holocaust violence because he truly did not want to mistreat or misuse specific stories of survivors or victims in the process of depicting an alternate history group of extremely violent Nazi hunters.

Further, the showrunner's intentions seem to be at least well-informed (even if misguided) concerning the extent of postwar Nazi immigration to the United States. These intentions can be corroborated by the previously discussed administrative profile of Eli Rosenbaum (which conflicts with previous evidence offered by sociologist Ieva Zake), where it is stated that "many Nazi collaborators entered the United States illegally and in fact became citizens" (Legge, Jr. 2011, 276) and that "the wartime activities of many of these individuals were unknown to federal officials" (Legge, Jr. 2011, 276-277). It is slightly reasonable to infer from this evidence, and the previous evidence that the series was designed to be respectful of the Holocaust, that Weil did not exaggerate in the name of spreading conspiracy theories but was making a concerted effort to reveal the truth (that some Nazis were indeed ferried to the United States and that some also utilized the postwar chaos to start new lives in the United States).

In the same vein, it can be argued that Weil did not go about sensationalizing Nazi hunting just for the sake of sensationalizing Nazi hunting. Speaking to David Opie of Digital Spy, Weil stated that the depiction of the Hunters as comic book-esque superheroes was, definitely wish fulfilment, for sure, and catharsis for sure. I think as a young Jewish kid growing up on Long Island in New York, there are feelings of wanting to be powerful. You rarely see Jews depicted as superheroes; as having might and strength...but to have power to reclaim your place and get justice for your ancestors is definitely a wish fulfillment. (2020)

Acknowledging Weil's childhood wish for Jewish superheroes, it is also reasonable to infer that Simon Wiesenthal's difficulty with the truth was known to Weil, as someone who researched Nazi hunting in the process of creating the series. The falsity of some of Wiesenthal's Nazi hunting (which was one of the closest things to an act of a Jewish superhero at that time) may have inspired Weil to take a more sensational and comic book-like stance as it pertains to the Hunters.

Conclusion

Despite the good intentions behind the poor messaging and instances of positive messaging, *Hunters* still does not depict the Holocaust and its aftermath in an overly respectable, ethical, or truthful way. Even the purely positive messaging in the series can be perverted by the average viewer's interpretation of unclear or too nuanced claims being made, in a way that is similar to other satirical and/or alternate history depictions of the Holocaust (direct or indirect).

For example, Quentin Tarantino's 2009 film *Inglourious Basterds* utilizes the same mirroring message to effectively criticize the eponymous group of Jews exacting revenge on Nazis (*Inglourious Basterds* 2009). However, this message is often lost on viewers because of both the alternate history aspect of the film and because of the extreme subtlety used to advance the message itself. While *Hunters* is not quite as subtle as *Basterds*, it is important to note that it can easily be lost on the average viewer that the

message is even there because it is never explicitly argued for.

Similarly, the message of a positive Jewish history may escape the grasps of some viewers because the series is so utterly bleak and extreme in its depictions of retribution and violence that there seems to be little hope for anything at all. From the audience's vantage point, it is hard to imagine a future within the *Hunters* universe that does not involve the suffering and misery promulgated in the negative, misery-centric version of Jewish history. After all, Jonah's hopes of connecting with his Jewish grandfather were crushed once it was discovered that the man thought to be Meyer Offerman was in fact Meyer Offerman's torturer. Because of the use of bleak and extreme violence as a device to further the plot, the series negates its own message of Jewish hope and connection with history.

Additionally, any of the show's positive messaging surrounding violence is immediately undermined by its glorification of violence against the enemy. While the series takes an anti-violence stance, violence perpetrated by the protagonist Jonah is portrayed in such a way that it is easy and almost necessary for the audience to connect with him as a hero in order for the plot to advance. Essentially, he may become a murderer, but he is murdering Nazis and those who are evil, so his violence is justified. Though this may not have been Weil's intended message, it remains the message transmitted to the audience because Jonah does indeed do heroic things (like stop a genocidal plot by the Fourth Reich).

In addition to the positive messaging being undermined, it can be argued that the good intentions behind the poor messaging are also negated by the very fact that the messaging is negative. For instance, it can be, should be, and is argued by sites like the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Auschwitz Memorial that the fictionalization of Holocaust violence is tantamount to spreading misinformation about the Holocaust. While David Weil may have only intended not to mistreat the stories of victims of the Holocaust, he inadvertently did a disservice to those victims by caricaturizing the extreme violence inherent in the concentration and death camps of the Holocaust. He could have simply

adapted a story from a survivor or a "game" that Nazi camp guards would "play" instead of completing fictionalizing accounts, which may provide fuel to current and future Holocaust deniers.

Similarly, the reality of the effects of exaggeration and sensationalization of both postwar Nazi immigration and Nazi hunting undermines the good intentions associated with both, though not as much with the sensationalization of Nazi hunting, as sensationalizing Nazi hunting simply adds entertainment value and tweaks the message sent by the action. Concerning postwar Nazi immigration, the exaggeration (though well-intentioned) influences the audience's image of current neo-Nazi and pro-fascist sentiment, trivializing those sentiments and making them seem and feel less dangerous.

Similarly, the sensationalization of Nazi hunting can trivialize the largely administrative work that actual Nazi hunters (now just war criminal hunters as humanity moves further into the 21st century and further from the Holocaust and World War II), transmitting to the audience that the work they are doing is unimportant and unexciting. This can endanger these already-limitedly supported real-life hunters' missions and livelihoods.

While the web television series *Hunters* attempts to depict the Holocaust in a meaningful and respectful way, it ultimately falls short. Through the fictionalization of Holocaust violence, the exaggeration of postwar Nazi immigration, and the sensationalization of Nazi hunting, the series depicts a caricatured version of the Holocaust and its aftermath in which escaped Nazi war criminals plot another genocide and violence comparable or equivalent to Nazi violence is justified. Ultimately, *Hunters* is an unethical depiction of the Holocaust because it deeply fictionalizes the aftermath of the horrific violence endured by Jews in that unparalleled tragedy.

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Preventing Future Terrorist Attacks: Bush Administration Policies, National Security, and Public Response

Sydney Lamb

Introduction

Bush Administration Policies, National Security, and Public Response

September 11th, 2001, is a date that changed the way the United States viewed national security and terrorism. The attack on the World Trade Center brought terrorism to the forefront of American consciousness and the concept of safety was obliterated in one swift attack. This event gave the Bush administration a way to make their mark in United States history textbooks as citizens looked to them, anticipating their response. The response for the Bush administration came in the form of legislation and a declaration of war, swearing vengeance for the Americans who lost their lives that day. The declaration of war against "the terrorists and those who harbor them,"³ would have unintentional lasting implications on the American psyche.

Following the immediate aftermath, the American people came together to support each other in a time of dire crisis and chaos; however, as the days passed by and more information of the attacks became available to the public, many Americans grew anxious as they imagined terrorists lived among them. This anxious energy and sense of uneasiness were only heightened with the passage of the USA Patriot Act, which occurred just forty-five days post-9/11. The implications of this act were felt within the Muslim American community and were protested by librarians across the nation. The passage of the Homeland Security Act followed around a year after the attacks, which only added fuel to the fire of American vengeance. These acts had different effects on the public, but they were supported at the federal level to prevent future terrorist attacks, which is a topic I thought needed to be discussed further. Throughout this research, I

have sought to investigate the federal legislation top officials in the Bush administration supported, and how that legislation served as a safeguard to prevent future terrorist attacks. Two of these policies were the USA Patriot Act and the Homeland Security Act, which were unopposed in the immediate aftermath, but in the years following 9/11, these policies have been contested by many public entities as their constitutionality is questionable.

Bush & National Security

Following the attacks on 9/11, President Bush had to act swiftly in his response, as he had to prevent mass hysteria from breaking out across the nation. His resolution for the attacks on the World Trade Center was to ask Congress to declare war on the terrorists who sponsored the attacks, and the nations that supported them. This immediate response was further supported in the days following 9/11 as Bush requested that Congress agree to increased funds, to promote military support, and to pass legislation that was created with counterterrorism at the center. He sent Congress a strong message in his speeches to the American people stating that, "the forces of global terror cannot be appeased, and they cannot be ignored. They must be hunted and they will be defeated. We will not wait for further attacks on innocent Americans. The best way to protect the American people is to stay on the offensive at home and on overseas."⁴ This call to action resonated with a Congress that wanted to work together to create a safer United States and were willing to put aside their differences to do so, and it served as a point of accountability for Bush who had to succeed in protecting the American people.

Bush set three key goals following the attacks; keep the terrorists from attacking again, express that the war to come was unlike others we had seen

³ Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2010.

⁴ Bush, George W. 2003. "Homeland Security." *Presidents & Prime Ministers* 12 (5): 2-34. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=12157721&site=ehost-live>.

previously, and help the areas impacted by the attack to make sure the economy was stable.⁵ These goals were at the forefront of Bush's mind as he articulated his course of action to those within the administration. His second goal was met with the resolution of war declared against the terrorists, but the first goal was more finicky than that. To keep the terrorists from attacking the nation again, Congress would have to continue to work as one to pass legislation that would introduce counterterrorism strategies. The Bush administration would have to act swiftly to pass legislation following the attacks on 9/11 when emotions were strong, and when Congress still felt the pressure of accountability from the American people.

This pressure from citizens motivated Congress to pass a massive piece of legislation only forty-five days after the attacks, the USA Patriot Act. There was also pressure from the president who just days following the attack, posed the question, "how can we possibly assure our citizens we are protecting them if our own people cannot talk to each other?"⁶ This question referred to the inability of law enforcement agencies and intelligence agencies from sharing crucial pieces of information. This division between the two agencies was remedied in the USA Patriot Act, which allowed the two agencies to mingle and share information. The act also expanded the powers of the executive branch, which were minimized after the Watergate scandal. With the passage of the USA Patriot Act, the executive branch was more powerful than it had been in years. The sections that detailed executive power were broad enough to allow the president extralegal abilities that would be used to uproot any terrorist threats domestically, or in foreign nations.

Another piece of legislation that was enacted and passed was the Homeland Security Act, which was passed just a year after 9/11. Bush expressed his pleasure with the Act being passed stating that, "the Act restructures and strengthens the executive branch of the federal government to better meet the threat to our homeland posed by terrorism. In establishing

⁵ Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. New York: Crown Publishers, (2010): 140.

⁶ Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. New York: Crown Publishers, (2010): 160.

a new Department of Homeland Security, the Act for the first time creates a federal department whose primary mission will be to help prevent, protect against, and respond to acts of terrorism on our soil.⁷ Bush expressed in detail the power that this act granted the executive branch and how that power would be used to create a safer United States and protect the American people. The establishment of the Department of Homeland Security created another set of provisions that granted the president extralegal powers.

Cheney & National Security

Vice-president Dick Cheney also held a unique position in his response to 9/11. Cheney focused on supporting President Bush in his reactions to the attack. In the immediate aftermath, there was no obvious dichotomy in their beliefs and feelings about the attack. Cheney tended to piggyback what Bush stated, as he made speeches that used Bush's words for guidance. Cheney noted that from the beginning, "the President made clear that the terrorists would be dealt with and that anyone who supports, protects, or harbors them would be held to account...the United States had captured or killed hundreds of Al-Qaeda...In Iraq, they dealt with a gathering threat, and removed the regime of Saddam Hussein."⁸ Cheney supported these efforts to eradicate the terrorist threats by military action. His support did not end there, Cheney also felt the pressure to have the same views on the policies Bush supported in response to 9/11.⁹ This support was found in speeches the president made where he lumped Cheney into his thoughts about the USA Patriot Act and the Homeland Security Act. Cheney and Bush worked as a cohesive unit with no significant difference in opinions as it related to the policies created following 9/11.

⁷ Bush, George W. 2002. "Statement on Signing the Homeland Security Act of 2002/ November 25, 2002." *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* 38 (48): 2092. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=8737527&site=ehost-live>.

⁸ Cheney, Dick. 2004. "Seeing Our Cause to Victory." *Vital Speeches of the Day* 70 (23): 711-14

⁹ Warsaw, Shirley A. *The Co-Presidency of Bush and Cheney*. Stanford: Stanford Politics and Policy, 2009.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=297635&site=ehost-live>

Cheney also gained extralegal power following the attacks on 9/11 as many people were too invested in eradicating the terrorist threat to care about how it was done. Cheney expressed that in addition to military power, there would have to be work done on "the dark side" and "in the shadows of the intelligence world" where work would be done discreetly and without any questions.¹⁰ These expressions of secretive work may raise an eyebrow now, but in the weeks after the attacks, the inexplicit mention of extralegal power was shrugged off. This shadowy work came in the form of secretive executive orders signed by President Bush, and in sections of the USA Patriot Act that went unnoticed by Congress. That may serve as one of the reasons why Cheney was in support of the policies that Bush supported, if these policies gave him more power, who was he to complain.

Rice & National Security

Condoleezza Rice played a unique role in easing Americans' concerns regarding terrorist threats to the United States. As the National Security Advisor under President Bush, her position required her to brief him on current threats to national security. Missing such a huge threat to national security on 9/11 left Americans largely unsatisfied in her performance as the National Security Advisor, which meant Rice was under serious scrutiny in the months following 9/11. As more information about the attacks and the hijackers become more accessible, the American people asked for answers as to how such a high-level threat went under the radar for so long, especially as her briefings became publicized. One briefing that was declassified had a title that read, "Bin Laden Determined to Attack Inside the United States," which was prepared for Bush on August 6th, 2001, just under a month before the attack. Rice claimed that it was just a "historical" document and contained no "actionable" intelligence, despite its damning title.¹¹ This did argument did not hold strong

¹⁰ Anderson, Terry. *Bush's Wars*. New York: Oxford University Press, (2013): 75.

¹¹ CongressDaily. 2004. "Rice Testifies Before 9/11 Commission," April 8. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=23847409&site=ehost-live>.

against the media that demanded answers as to how terrorists could enter the country and have active communication with the terrorist organizations they belonged to overseas, without being flagged by any counter-terrorism agency.

Rice also found it difficult to identify terrorists even at the level of intelligence she was receiving because the concept of something being imminent was subjective. As Rice stated, "the biggest problem we have had since September 11th-given the shadowy nature of terrorist networks, proliferation and the links between the two - is that you never know when something is imminent. You have to begin to change your notion of "imminent."¹² Rice was seen as deflecting responsibility, which may hold a bit of truth; however, there was no way to tell when an attack would occur, even with threats of imminent danger. The 9/11 National Commission even confirmed this, although there were briefings and threats that were on the radar, there was no real way to tell the exact date, time, and location of an attack.¹³ Since there was no real way to tell when the attack was going to happen, Rice escaped some accountability for America's unpreparedness for the attacks. Rice opted to look to the future instead by focusing on promoting the counterterrorism strategies outlined in the USA Patriot Act and the Department of Homeland Security Act.

Powell & National Security

Colin Powell served as President Bush's Secretary of State, whose main role was to advise Bush on his policies as they relate to foreign affairs. He had experience in government under Reagan and H.W. Bush, President Bush's father. Powell was seen as a more diplomatic fellow who would sometimes stray from what the President promoted, but with the attacks on 9/11, it was important for the administration to echo what Bush was promoting, even if they did not believe the decisions being made were the best for the country.

¹² Rice, Condoleezza and Gardels, Nathan. "It Depends on What You Mean by Imminent Danger." *NPQ: New Perspectives Quarterly*, February 26, 2004. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5842.2004.00657.x

¹³ National Commission On Terrorist Attacks Upon The United States. *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, (2004): 263.

Of course, his disdain for certain aspects of his time in office would not be exposed until long after he no longer served as Secretary of State.

One notable moment in Powell's time as Secretary of State was his address to the United Nations when he presented the claim that Iraq was harboring weapons of mass destruction; Powell stated "weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists or states that support terrorists would represent a mortal danger to us all. So, we must make the United Nations even more effective. And we must build even closer international cooperation to keep these weapons out of the hands of terrorists."¹⁴ Powell supported the efforts by the Bush administration to eliminate terrorist threats, so it was unsurprising that he would speak on behalf of the United States and encourage other nations to support the United States in these efforts. He was adamant that Iraq was a threat to not just the United States, but to all nations around the world who could be subject to the devastation caused by these weapons.

Powell encouraged members of the United Nations to do more in preventing terrorist threats. Powell stated in his address:

We all need to do more. And we need to coordinate our efforts better. Many international organizations, at regional and sub-regional level, are already working to counter the terrorist threat. These organizations have an important role to play in helping their member states fulfill their counter-terrorism obligations. Now is the time for these groups to talk to each other, to exchange information, and to coordinate their activities for maximum effect."¹⁵

This speech was direct and emphasized the importance of global collaboration to prevent the spread of terrorism. Powell's words struck leaders of other nations who wanted to take a strong stance on the role the United Nations had in Iraq. If there really were weapons of mass destruction or terrorists were being sponsored by Iraq, then the United Nations had

¹⁴ Powell, Colin L. 2003. "Ridding The World Of Global Terrorism." *Vital Speeches of the Day* 69 (8): 230. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=9060446&site=ehost-live>

¹⁵ Powell, Colin L. 2003. "Ridding The World Of Global Terrorism." *Vital Speeches of the Day* 69 (8): 230. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=9060446&site=ehost-live>

to act to defend the freedom and safety of peoples of all nations. Powell was succinct and to the point, and his speech shadowed Bush's principle of us versus them, for if the nations that were in the United Nations did not support the United States, then they were against the United States and sided with terrorists.

The Patriot Act

In the aftermath of 9/11, the pressure was on for Congress to pass a bill that would include substantial provisions to give intelligence agencies and law enforcement agencies the ability to communicate with each other. This communication was limited prior to 9/11 to uphold the separation of federal and state power, but the Bush administration found it crucial to have the two interact. Therefore, when the USA Patriot Act was introduced, the Bush administration made sure that there was a section that allowed this wall between the two organizations to be removed. When the Act reached Congress, it included a section that allowed federal officials greater authority to track and intercept communications, both for law enforcement and foreign intelligence-gathering.¹⁶ This section expanded the power of these two agencies, law enforcement agencies and intelligence agencies now had the ability to share information freely in the name of national security.

Another vital objective of the USA Patriot Act was to further close our borders to foreign terrorists and to detain and remove those within our borders. There were sections outlined in the bill that created new crimes, new penalties, and new procedural efficiencies for use against domestic and international terrorists.¹⁷ These procedures included new surveillance and intelligence measures that granted government officials the ability to investigate those suspected of terrorism as they deemed necessary. These new and improved procedures were met with resistance from one large group of concerned citizens, librarians. They were concerned with how the

¹⁶ "PATRIOT Act Overview." 2004. *Congressional Digest* 83 (9): 258-88. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=15914687&site=ehost-live>.

¹⁷ "PATRIOT Act Overview." 2004. *Congressional Digest* 83 (9): 258-88. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=15914687&site=ehost-live>.

government could interact with their patrons and how these procedures would invade the privacy of these citizens. The USA Patriot Act held strong against these protests as its main purpose was to counter terrorism, thus the concerns of librarians were not considered with any care.

The USA Patriot Act expanded the powers of the executive branch, but it did not exceed legal provisions. The act did not grant the administration the right to wiretap people without a court order, but Bush signed a secret executive order that authorized the government to eavesdrop on international calls and emails sent by American citizens without a court warrant.¹⁸ This was at the discretion and direction of Bush as the Act required a court-ordered warrant, even if this warrant was obtained by a reluctant judge. The USA Patriot Act served as a way to counterterrorism, yet the use of the Act in the years following 9/11 showed that the Act served to give more power to the executive branch. Overall, the Act enabled the executive branch unprecedented and broad powers while reducing the powers of Congress and the judiciary who served as checks to this power.¹⁹ This expansion of executive power was a new concept as these powers were limited following the Watergate scandal with President Nixon, but it seemed necessary to give Bush more sway in how the United States would respond to terrorist threats.

Homeland Security Act

Following 9/11, there was a great demand for Congress to pass a bill that would give the Bush administration the ability to prosecute and hunt down terrorists that had any ties to the attacks. The American people were willing to give up their privacy to ensure that terrorist threats were detected, and these factors created the perfect scenario for the Homeland Security Act to be created. The Homeland Security Act created a new department within the executive branch with the goal of preventing terrorist threats in many levels of American life. There were many

¹⁸ Anderson, Terry. *Bush's Wars*. New York: Oxford University Press, (2013): 75.

¹⁹ Buky, Michael. "Patriot Games: Taking Liberties." *Social Alternatives* 25, no. 3 (2006): 32-37. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=23450609&site=ehost-live>.

sectors of United States national security that needed protected, and the Department of Homeland Security created agencies to help cover these areas.

The constitutionality of the Homeland Security Act came into question with the concepts of cruel and unusual punishment that came into being with the detainment of suspected terrorists in Guantanamo Bay. Although the CIA was not under the Department of Homeland Security, the two groups worked together to find any domestic terrorists that could have infiltrated the United States. People who criticized the Department of Homeland Security only did so after accusations of torture were published. However, Bush denied these allegations of torture as he claimed that about a third of the hundred terrorists captured were questioned using enhanced techniques, three of these terrorists were water boarded. These techniques were only used to help prevent another attack from happening on U.S soil.²⁰

These techniques as allowed under the Homeland Security Act were not considered cruel and unusual under the eighth amendment because there was no immediate threat of death, yet as these practices became known to the public, many protested these acts of interrogation.

One final branch of American life that was impacted by the formation of the Department of Homeland Security was airports. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is an agency within the Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for screening passengers before they board public flights. This agency was created as the hijackers were able to infiltrate the airplanes without much resistance, so airport security standards needed to be revised. The TSA created screening programs to prevent passengers they deemed potential threats from boarding flights. These programs, known as CAPPS I, CAPPS II, Registered Traveler and the new Secure Flight, were criticized in the months following 9/11 as people claimed that these programs enabled racial profiling. Critics posed that these programs are inherently biased against passengers with connections to areas of the world whose behavior or policies conflict with the interests of the United States, specifically the Middle

²⁰ Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2010.

East.²¹ This profiling was not foreseen by those who approved the bill, but its implications were felt by those targeted in the years following 9/11, and these effects are still being widely debated today.

Librarians

The public response to Bush administration policies was fairly positive and many of the public accepted that these acts would make America safer; however, there was one group of the American public who strongly opposed the USA Patriot Act, librarians. This disdain mostly stemmed from Section 215 of the USA Patriot Act, which granted the FBI the ability to review what books citizens were checking out from public libraries. Librarians have long fought against any legislation that would infringe upon the rights of their patrons. The right to privacy was an issue that librarians had to deal with as law enforcement agencies wanted to check the records of what books have been checked out. This was not a new issue; however, the urgency of the attacks led to the USA Patriot Act being passed in Congress without much resistance. The constitutionality of the bill was only questioned by Congressmen after the bill had been passed.

However, for librarians, they immediately noticed some concerning features of the bill that would have an impact on their patrons. They spoke out staunch protest of the act as the American Library Association (ALA) Council adopted a resolution that declared sections of the USA PATRIOT Act as a present danger to the constitutional rights and privacy rights of library users. They urged the United States Congress to provide active oversight to the implementation of the USA PATRIOT Act and to amend or change the sections of these laws and the guidelines that threaten or abridge the rights of inquiry and free expression.²² Librarians have long fought to keep libraries safe and free from government interference, and the sections of the USA Patriot Act

seemed familiar to bills Congress had tried to pass in the years before 9/11, but now there was a dire need for security so those who would have opposed those provisions in the past now supported them.

Two main provisions of the act that impacted libraries were Section 215 and Section 217. Section 215 allowed federal agents the ability to seize any tangible thing that held relevance to terrorist investigations with a court-ordered warrant. Section 217 allowed any government employee the ability to conduct electronic surveillance of United States citizens.²³ These two sections were seen as threats to civil liberties by librarians across the United States who did not want government officials or law enforcement agencies looking at the records of their patrons. Librarians were encouraged by the ALA to avoid creating unnecessary patron records and other records that were not integral to the operation of the library and to avoid putting patron information in public view.²⁴ These guidelines were meant to combat officials from acquiring these records that were intended to be private. The librarians and ALA worked diligently to uphold the principle of privacy within public libraries.

Muslim American Community

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, America was able to come together under one cause to aid those affected by the terrorist attacks. However, after just a few weeks a wedge was formed between non-Muslim communities, and those communities that practiced Islam, or was profiled as looking Muslim. This divide began after the terrorists were reported on and were fueled by presidential speeches in which President Bush consistently portrayed the U.S. cause as “one designed to enhance the values of freedom, religious tolerance, and a belief in progress while castigating the terrorists as ‘evil-doers’ who practice ‘a fringe form of Islamic extremism.’”²⁵ Despite

these speeches that cast guilt upon innocent Arab and Muslim communities, Bush also expressed his concern for these communities. Bush said that he was worried about the backlash that Arab and Muslim Americans would face as he was made aware of the harassment that had increased against those who resembled Middle Eastern descent.²⁶ However, this concern was only spoken and was never acted upon with the right amount of concern to prevent people from experiencing this harassment. Rather, the actions of the Bush administration seemed to encourage the American people to seek out those who would pose a terrorist threat.

While these speeches enacted harm on the Muslim American community, the real harm came in the form of policies that singled out those who were within the Muslim community or looked as if they were. The Bush administration worked diligently to create policies that would inhibit terrorist attacks from happening on American soil unfortunately, these policies would be used to target people who looked to be from Arab or Muslim communities, even if that was not their initial intent. In a poll given to American citizens following 9/11, 40 percent of survey respondents believed that Islam advocated murder and terrorism, while 44 percent said that the 9/11 attacks represented the feelings of Muslim Americans toward the United States.²⁷ This skewed perspective of these communities was further perpetuated in the legislation passed and was demonstrated in the way the Acts were used within those communities.

The USA Patriot Act was passed forty-five days after the attacks on the World Trade Center, and its effects were felt by those within Muslim and Arab American spaces. The Federal Bureau of Investigations gained a substantial amount of power from the USA Patriot Act to investigate potential terrorists, with their main interest lying in airports. In a poll given to the American public a few weeks after 9/11, 55 percent said they opposed any policy that would single out Arab-Americans for special

scrutiny at airport check-ins.²⁸ However, this was not considered when the USA Patriot Act and the Department of Homeland Security were implemented and enabled law enforcement and security agencies to partake in racial profiling when searching for potential terrorists. Furthermore, the TSA that was responsible for security screenings had programs that targeted passengers with connections to the Middle East, as aforementioned in the section on the Department of Homeland Security.

Bush said that he was concerned with the backlash that Arab and Muslim Americans would face as he was made aware of the harassment that had increased against those who resembled Middle Eastern descent.²⁹ However, this concern was only spoken and was never acted upon with the right amount of concern to prevent people from experiencing this harassment. Rather, the actions of the Bush administration seemed to encourage the American people to seek out those who looked like or acted like terrorists, and following 9/11, those that looked and acted like terrorists were those who looked like the hijackers, Muslim Americans.

Congressmen

Following the aftermath of 9/11, Congress was able to overcome their differences and tension from the 2000 election to work as a cohesive unit that supported Bush’s response to the attack. Congress reflected the sentiments of the American public and sought justice for the death and destruction that had occurred on our soil. This anger and desire for justice overruled any bitterness felt between the two parties, they now intended to work together as one to protect the American people from future attacks. Immediately following the attacks, Congress passed a resolution of war against terrorism, they also supported an increased budget for the military to find those responsible for the attacks and bring them to justice. As stated by Democratic Senator from

21 Kleiner, Yevgenia S. “Racial Profiling in the Name of National Security: Protecting Minority Travelers’ Civil Liberties in the Age of Terrorism.” *Boston College Third World Law Journal*, January 2010. <https://lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1012&-context=twlj>

22 “PATRIOT Act Overview.” 2004. *Congressional Digest* 83 (9): 258–88. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=15914687&site=ehost-live>.

23 Foerstael, Herbert N. *Refuge of a Scoundrel: The Patriot Act in Libraries*. Westport: Libraries Unlimited, (2004): 57.

24 Foerstael, Herbert N. *Refuge of a Scoundrel: The Patriot Act in Libraries*. Westport: Libraries Unlimited, (2004): 81.

25 Crotty, William J. *The Politics of Terror: The U.S. Response to 9/11*. Evanston: Northeastern University Press, 2016.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1090872&site=ehost-live>

26 Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. New York: Crown Publishers, (2010): 141.

27 Crotty, William J. *The Politics of Terror: The U.S. Response to 9/11*. Evanston: Northeastern University Press, 2016.

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28 Crotty, William J. *The Politics of Terror: The U.S. Response to 9/11*. Evanston: Northeastern University Press, 2016.

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29 Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. New York: Crown Publishers, (2010): 141.

South Dakota, Tom Daschle, on the Senate floor September 15, 2001, “Today we are not democrats or republicans. We are Americans.”³⁰ This quote was taken as Senators considered passing a bill that would allocate 40 billion dollars to the Bush administration’s recovery efforts and to their efforts to find the terrorists responsible. The Democrats expressed their support for Bush’s response and cast aside political differences to ensure America would be safe. Republican Senator John McCain echoed the sentiments of Democrats stating, “To see this mission through, Congress should encourage the President to use all necessary means to overcome and destroy this enemy...”³¹ The Democrats and Republicans had set aside ideologies in the name of national security and public safety just days after the attack, but as legislation was introduced in Congress the decisions would not be as unanimous.

One such piece of legislation was the USA Patriot Act, which passed through Senate which was passed with just one nay vote. The only one vote against the USA Patriot Act in the Senate was from Senator Russ Feingold.³² Many other Senators across both parties agreed that the bill needed to be passed quickly as the threat of another attack loomed. Feingold held steady as he believed that the bill should have been adequately reviewed and amended before being voted upon. Feingold stated, “I was told that a unanimous consent agreement was being offered with no amendments and no debate. They asked me to give unanimous consent. I refused.”³³ Feingold was the only Senator that could foresee the issues with passing such a hefty bill in such a short time frame. If other Senators took issue with the Act,

³⁰ Daschle, Tom, et.al. “Democrats: Should the Congress Approve Emergency Funding and Military Force in Response to the Terrorist Attacks?” *Congressional Digest*, September 14, 2001. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=5502769&site=ehost-live>

³¹ McCain, John, et.al. 2001. “Republicans: Should the Congress Approve Emergency Funding and Military Force in Response to the Terrorist Attacks?” *Congressional Digest*, September 14, 2001. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=5502770&site=ehost-live>.

³² American Library Association. “Chronology of the USA PATRIOT Act, 2001.” *Advocacy, Legislation & Issues*, March 21, 2007. <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/chronology-usa-patriot-act-2001>

³³ Rothschild, Matthew. 2002. “Russ Feingold.” *Progressive* 66 (5): 29–34. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=6593972&site=ehost-live>.

they did not express that with their vote but instead expressed their regret for passing the Act in the months and years after it was implemented.

In 2002, Bush Democrats only held one key issue with the Department of Homeland Security Act, which was that it did not have any provisions for the employees of the Department of Homeland Security to create labor unions.³⁴ Otherwise, the bill was widely accepted as a necessary effort to prevent future terrorist attacks. Congressmen could overlook some of the questionable sections of the Act for the sake of eliminating terrorist threats, and they only spoke out about the inability of the employees to form unions. Only after the Department of Homeland Security began to target those that were perceived to have ties to terrorist groups, mainly Arab and Muslim Americans, did Senators take issue with the law. Unfortunately, this opposition would be too late to have any impact on how law enforcement and the FBI used the Act.

Foreign Nations:

The response that foreign nations had to Bush administration policies began with full support and empathy as the United States did not usually experience such brutal attacks on their own soil. As the footage of the attacks made global news, the fear of terrorism was felt in the hearts of peoples of all nations as many were familiar with that type of devastation occurring within their country. Nations that were part of the United Nations were approached by the Bush administration that sought to have these nations support their goal of ending terrorism on all fronts and for all nations. No other nation wanted to feel the pain and grief that they were familiar with when a terrorist attack claimed lives and pushed their citizens into lives of fear. The United Nations paid heed to Bush’s plan for countering future acts of terrorism as he mobilized the United States military to expunge terrorist organizations and the nations that would back them.

These nations took the word of Bush when he expressed that his goal in Iraq was to build a new

³⁴ Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. New York: Crown Publishers, (2010): 156.

home for freedom and democracy, which was one of the keys to the victory against terror. He called upon other nations to help the United States aid Iraq in building a free nation, which would serve to benefit all nations.³⁵ This statement was accepted by many nations who expressed great sympathy for the United States, but it especially resonated with Western nations that supported democratic forms of government. These nations had lived through the Cold War and felt the fear of the spread of communism, thus they understood that action must be taken to stop the spread of terrorism. There was a sense of urgency following 9/11 and with Bush’s language of if you are not with us then you are against us, many nations were quick to support the Bush administration’s request for help.

The United Nations also took the word of Secretary of State, Colin Powell, when he expressed that they needed support to remove weapons of mass destruction from Iraq.³⁶ The United Nations was willing to set up sanctions to prevent Iraq from harboring these weapons of mass destruction. The United Nations had dealt with concerns of chemical and nuclear weapons in Iraq in 1994 when the UNSCOM (United Nations Special Commission) destroyed Iraq’s known chemical weapons and production equipment and neutralized Iraq’s nuclear program.³⁷ The idea that Iraq could harbor such dangerous weapons was believable because members of the United Nations had seen it just years before in Iraq under Saddam Hussein.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the legislation created in response to the terrorist attack on 9/11 established new counterterrorism strategies that could help safeguard United States national security and reassure

³⁵ Bush, George W. 2003. “Homeland Security.” *Presidents & Prime Ministers* 12 (5): 2–34. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=12157721&site=ehost-live>.

³⁶ Powell, Colin L. 2003. “Ridding The World Of Global Terrorism.” *Vital Speeches of the Day* 69 (8): 230. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=9060446&site=ehost-live>.

³⁷ Bryan, Wright. “Iraq WMD Timeline: How the Mystery Unraveled.” NPR. NPR, November 15, 2005. <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4996218>.

the American public that they could live a life free from terror. Two of those policies that were supported by the Bush administration were the USA Patriot Act and the Department of Homeland Security Act. These laws also stirred up controversy in the public realm with librarians strongly opposing various sections of the USA Patriot Act that infringed upon a person’s right to privacy. The Muslim American community, and individuals who were assumed to be part of the Muslim American community, were ostracized and persecuted as terrorist threats under the USA Patriot Act and under the Department of Homeland Security Act. However, both Acts were passed with relatively little opposition by Congress. Foreign nations also supported Bush’s response to terrorism as they did not see the implications of supporting a war with no explicit enemy. These nations had felt the fear that Americans felt on 9/11 and wanted to prevent this fear from spreading, so they were willing to listen to the Bush administration’s ideas for preventing terrorism or preventing weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of terrorist groups that could wreak havoc on their communities. The heightened emotions post-9/11 paired with an administration that sought vengeance, created the perfect scenario for the passage of these two bills. While these bills were virtually unopposed when they were created, as they were used those who had supported the legislation spoke out against them.

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Measuring Attitudes Toward the Death Penalty

Caroline Marlow

I. Introduction

Throughout my studies in politics, one issue that has always grabbed my attention is the prison system in the United States. In relation to the prison system, the death penalty is an important part of this machinery. The death penalty has long been controversial with Supreme Court cases like *Furman v. Georgia* (1972) (later overturned), *Atkins v. Virginia* (2002), and *Roper v. Simmons* (2005), which secured rights for mentally disabled and minors from being subjected to the death penalty. With many other prison reforms in the 1980s and 1990s, the reforms left a heavy impact on the criminal justice system. These changes instigated conversations about issues within the system, one of those issues being the death penalty. I found that there were many systematic issues within this part of criminal justice in the US. More particularly, any times, there were innocent victims sitting on death row for multiple years that were later proven innocent or exonerated. This issue started many initiatives such as the Innocence Project that works to free innocent people that have fallen victim to the justice system. In recent years, there has been a push to move away from the death penalty in individual states, as well as a push to reform the criminal justice system.

I had seen previous statistics, news, case studies, and more that led me to believe there were five major components that affected these attitudes: partisanship, religion, age, gender, and race. I predict that Democrats will show lesser support than Republicans. I predict that Catholics or Evangelical Protestants will show stronger support for the death penalty than Lutherans or Jewish people who tend to be more progressive. Likewise, I predict that age will follow a similar pattern. Older people will be more likely to support the death penalty. I predict that men will be more likely to support the death penalty than women. I predict that white people will support the death penalty more than black people, especially

because the death sentence has disproportionately been applied to racial minorities.

II. Literature Review

A. Partisanship

Historically, the death penalty has been a contentious issue in the United States. Attitudes about the death penalty “play a very direct, practical role in the administration of capital punishment” (Haney and Zurbriggen 2022, 1). It has been the focus of several Constitutional cases for decades. Overall, the majority of Americans favor the death penalty, 64% of Americans asserted in a Pew Research study that when “someone commits a crime like murder, the death penalty is morally justified” (Pew Research Center, 2021).

In this section, I explore the relationship between partisanship and death penalty attitudes. Political party and partisanship are analyzed by breaking down how attitudes were formed based on their political history and affiliations. Since September of 2019, both the Republican and Democratic parties have seen a decrease in support for the death penalty. However, Republicans have significantly more agreed-upon support than Democrats. In the last twenty years, there have been a number of reforms banning executions in blue states but there is now an “emergence of Republican lawmakers as champions of death penalty repeal legislation in red states” (Jones 2018, 223), showing a newer division between Democrats and Republicans on the criminal justice system. As of April 2021, 77% of Republicans support the death penalty for persons convicted of murder versus Democrats with only 46%. The partisan disparities differ however when race is considered. For example, 72% of Republicans believe that white and black people are equally likely to be sentenced to the death penalty for committing similar crimes while a mere 15% of Democrats support that statement.

Furthermore, only 39% of Democrats agree that the death penalty has a deterrent effect whereas 59% of Republicans support this statement (Pew Research Center, 2021). Based on these findings, it is evident that there is overwhelming support to conclude that Republicans greatly embrace the death penalty more than Democrats. Republicans tend to support the death penalty more because their party, historically, more closely campaigns on issues on criminal reform.

Additionally, another study conducted by Ramirez (2013) asked respondents which party they thought did a better job of dealing with crime in general. The poll reported 52% of their respondents view both parties as equal in how they deal with crime in 1994, dropped to 21% in 1996, and increased again to 38% in 1998. However, the Pew studies show a smaller number of respondents sharing those views. In 1998, only 11% of respondents viewed the parties as equal and further declined to 9% in October of 2006. Over time though, “roughly equal percentages of the public favored one party over the other” (Ramirez 2013, 1019), however, Ramirez (2013) also states there is an equal mix of support for both the Democratic and Republican parties on this issue. This means that support for the death penalty regarding parties used to have more equal results but in recent years, the literature has found a shift towards political polarity based on party issues.

Strong Republican support and wavering Democratic support can be explained by anticrime political strategies that date as far back as the 1960s. Jacobs and Carmichael (2004) argues that “Republicans have deliberately used law-and-order campaign appeals to furtively appeal to voters who resent minorities” (257). This means that Republicans more than Democrats have taken advantage of their supporters who harbor negative feelings towards minorities. For example, the Republican Nixon administration has even admitted that they purposely employed these tactics to gain votes focused on crime. Furthermore, Jacobs et al. (2004) shows that capital punishment has been found to be more likely to be legal when there is strong Republican control of Congress and when Republicans have

used this issue repeatedly in their state campaigns. Historically, Republican candidates have long preyed on their voters to succumb to anti-crime policies aimed against minority groups. Strong Republican support also simply derives from the extra attention Republicans draw to crime, whereas the majority of Democrats have not focused their campaigns and talking points on crime issues. This results in lower support for harsher punishments, based on violent crimes, among Democrats.

A public opinion poll data showed support for the “conclusion that people’s attitudes about the death penalty are not determined by their [political] beliefs in its deterrent effectiveness” (Ellsworth and Gross 1994, 19). This is interesting as it seems to suggest the opposite of what most would expect would affect beliefs towards the death penalty. Instead, further research drew more attention to emotional reasons or based on what people think of as moral or immoral, rather than partisanship. However, another time-series study was done by Jacobs and Carmichael (2002) “conservative values and Republican strength in the legislature have equivalent effects” (109) meaning that a strong Republican presence seems to enhance the likelihood of a legal death penalty showing a difference in Democratic party support. Thus, political beliefs do have a significant role more than an emotional basis unlike Ellsworth et al. (1994) argues. Lastly, another study based on party ideology found a correlation between political parties and support for the death penalty. Jacobs et al. (2004) suggests “political conservatism, a stronger Republican party, explain whether a state ever used the death sentence” (249) further supporting the findings based on the Pew Research Center. In conclusion, in the past twenty years, there has been a shift to show a stronger divide between parties when looking at support for or against the death penalty. Statistically, Republicans overwhelmingly support the death penalty while Democrats view it as more problematic.

B. *Heini Völker vs. Herbert Norkus*

In this section, I explore the relationship between religion and death penalty attitudes. I

predicted that religion would differ in terms of which religions supported the death penalty. I hypothesized that more conservative religions would have a better support base for capital punishment. Throughout the literature, there is an obvious difference in attitudes about the death penalty based on religion. One mock trial scenario that investigated whether religious factors were related to the death penalty showed that one's religious group could predict how they would feel about death penalty sentencing verdicts (Miller and Hayward 2008). Miller et al. (2008) found that when controlling for other demographics and attitudes about the death penalty, religious factors prove to have a significant relationship. For example, the study found Catholics to be less likely to support the death penalty than Protestants and found Jews are more lenient than Christians. Statistically, Protestants seem to support the death penalty more than other religious groups. Miller et al. (2008) found that Protestants are the most likely to support the death penalty with Catholics secondly most likely. The least likely group is Judaism. Berinsky (2012) also found that different religious groups differentiated. 100% of Mormon respondents favored the death penalty, as well as 79% of Evangelical Protestants, favored it with very similar findings amongst Mainline Protestants and Black Protestants. It is safe to group all branches of Protestants together based on tiny margin differences. However, this is a stark difference when compared to only 64% of Jews supporting the death penalty and 66% of Catholics supporting the death penalty. This shows further support for the conclusion that Protestants support the death penalty more than other religious groups.

Many religious groups draw their opinions from their political beliefs or parties. Evangelical Protestants are heavily conservative Republicans and most Jews are Democrats (Berinsky, 2012) which partly explains their difference in attitudes about the death penalty. Berinsky (2012) argues though that their political beliefs actually cannot solely be the cause. Instead, Catholics show a lower level of support for the death penalty because the Catholic Church opposes the death penalty. Likewise, Mormons support the death penalty the most because of their conservative church

teachings. This information is not wholly definitive, but it can draw many explanations, such as political party does play a major role in religious beliefs towards the death penalty.

Similarly, Anderson, Lytle, and Schawdel (2017) found that at the beginning of the twenty-first century, "both groups of Protestants were more likely than Catholics to support the death penalty" (852). The first sets of data from 1974 showed more Catholic support for the death penalty but in the last fifty years, there has been a steady decrease in Catholic support. This means that these changes in religious effects show that "support for the death penalty has become a disproportionately White, Protestant perspective" (Anderson et al. 2017, 857). These findings are consistent with the recent findings of Berinsky (2012) showing profound support for the death sentence from Protestants more than any other religious group.

Furthermore, how devoted one is to their religion also seems to make them more likely to support the death penalty. Those who believe more in a literal interpretation of the Bible show stronger support for the death penalty. Berinsky (2012) found that voters with low religiosity practices are more likely to vote for a political candidate based on secular talk rather than religious talk. Likewise, voters with high religiosity practices are more likely to vote for a political candidate if they also show more religiosity in their values rather than for their political opinions. Many Protestants do believe more in what the Bible preaches in a literal sense which correlates to what was previously discovered in studies about which groups support the death sentence. In conclusion, both religion and religiosity are important to consider. Different religious groups do show a difference in their support for the death penalty. However, these groups also tend to vote differently based on how political candidates show their religious values in their political beliefs with white protestants who practice their faith more showing more support for the death penalty over any other group.

C. Age

In this section, I explore the relationship between age and death penalty attitudes. Many studies analyzed young ages versus middle ages or senior ages. In one study's findings, "age has been found to be positively associated with death penalty views, with older individuals much more likely to support the death penalty" (Lambert, Camp, Clarke, Jiang 2011, 578). Overall, younger people tend to be less supportive of capital punishment than older people. That finding was consistent across all studies. This is believed to be related to the general progressivism found in younger ages. In recent years, there have been more findings of wrongful convictions and attention drawn to the core issues within justice systems. Lambert et al (2011) argues that because older people are less likely to hear about new issues evolving in the justice system, this could explain why younger people seem to be more aware and involved. In this experiment, students were given random essays that either addressed the lack of deterrence effect, the possibility and frequency innocent individuals were sentenced to death, or a control essay that discussed reasons why to punish criminals. With all three essays, younger students (ages 18-48) reported less ideological change than older individuals after being presented with more information. This shows that younger people are more stubborn or certain in their beliefs about the death penalty than older people meaning that younger people are more against the death penalty than any other group. This makes sense with the recent wave of progressivism and that older people experienced the years of peak criminal reform in the 1980s and 1990s.

In another study by Ramirez (2021), public support for capital punishment wavers when considering age. Like the study above, Ramirez (2021) also found that younger people are less supportive of the death penalty than adults. However, it is "less clear if people differentiate based on age about who deserves to be executed" (Ramirez 2021, 1934). Lambert's findings were also unclear about what issues they feel deserve the death penalty, but it is largely evident that young people, ages 18-29, are

more progressive on this issue though. In conclusion, both studies proved that older people tend to believe that certain crimes or demographics deserve the death penalty more than other offenders, but younger people tend to be apprehensive of the death penalty regardless of what crimes are committed. This conclusion also makes sense because younger people more closely identify with progressive ideals that would reject the death penalty.

D. Gender

In this section, I explore the relationship between gender and death penalty attitudes. Gender proved to have a significant effect on attitudes supporting the death penalty in many studies meaning the attitudes between males and females are highly different. A meta-analysis of 23 studies constructed by Kandola and Egan (2014) found "males more inclined to pro-death penalty attitudes than females" (49). However, Kandola and Egan (2014) brought attention to the possibility that females and males feel differently about the death penalty because females are "psychologically higher in extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism" (48). Males tend to support the death penalty because of retribution instead of deterrence and this could point to a sense of gender-based social hierarchy. This shows that men typically believe in punishment more than females and it has resulted from societal conditioning. This helps to explain why the experiment resulted in a significant difference between genders. However, Kandola et al. (2014) also considered the likelihood that this support could stem from males having higher rates of conservatism which parties, as proven before, play a significant role in this issue as well. Gender shows a difference in attitudes due to societal factors as well as their link in differences between parties, too.

In Lambert's 2011 study, gender was another factor considered in their experiment. In the part of the deterrent effect essay randomly assigned, "women were about 39% more likely to change their view about the deterrent effect of the death penalty" (586). The deterrent effect means that with such a harsh

sentencing as the death penalty, more people will be deterred from committing severe and violent crimes. This means that women were found to actually be more likely to not support the death penalty after reading more information about the deterrent effect. However, in the other two essays, gender did not have a significant effect on change in views after reading the essays, surprisingly. The literature strongly suggests that men are more likely to favor the death penalty, but it is important to note that both genders reported an equal change after being presented with the information in the essays. Overall, women are less likely to support the death penalty than men due to societal conditioning but both genders are affected when presented with other information.

Furthermore, a study done by Cochran and Sanders (2009) found that “women who supported capital punishment were characterized by a similar profile as men who supported it” (525). This means that women who supported the death penalty tended to be white, married, conservative, and had high incomes, all qualities that more men share than women share. Thus, women who came from a background of a higher societal standard did not see the other issues surrounding the death penalty as other groups of women, who were treated as lesser than, may have seen. Cochran et al. (2009) argues that the gender gap in attitudes towards the death penalty stems from a difference in traditional gender roles, experiences in life, and feminist consciousness, similar to what Kandola et al. (2014) argued. Attitudes about the death penalty are very well linked to high levels of support from men because women experience a gender gap that is “simply a manifestation of these continuing gender inequities in status attainment” (Cochran et al. 2009, 527). This means that those gender inequities women face such as traditional gender roles, gender norms, and socialization practices all are reasons why there is lower support for the death penalty from women than men. In conclusion, societal factors explain why studies result in a gender gap or that there is overall lesser support for the death penalty from women than from men.

E. Race

In this section, I explore the relationship between race and death penalty attitudes. Race is the most significant variable discussed in the literature. This influence on attitudes by race was measured by support for the death penalty based on racial demographics but also measured based on how criminal offenders are historically sentenced differently because of their race. There are many studies that support the significance of the key role that race plays. One study resulted in the conclusion that “Survey studies show that racial animus toward Blacks is correlated with people’s support for the death penalty” (Ramirez 2021, 1932) even after accounting for other factors. This means that strong racial biases against people of color are connected to a higher rate of support for the death penalty, while black people have a lower rate of support. This provides further support as to why there is a divide between races. These differences are strong and presented in another study done by Parker, Horowitz, Morin, and Lopez (2015). They showed that statistically, only 13% of black adults approved of the death penalty versus a 28% reporting agreement from white adults. This study, however, included a possible choice as “Depends” meaning respondents could choose if they felt the death penalty should only be supported on a more case-by-case basis. 59% of black adults supported this as well as 52% of white adults. The difference is smaller, but this does show that white people are more adamant about the application of the death penalty.

Similarly, in another result from Ramirez (2013), there was more support to conclude that white people favored the death penalty more than black people. This study was conducted from 1994 through 2002. Beginning in 1994, 83% of white people favored the death penalty but that percentage dropped to 73% by 2002. Likewise, only 57% of black people favored the death penalty in 1994 and that percentage dropped to 45% by 2002. This shows that there is a similar decrease in support but historically, black people have always shown a higher disdain towards the death penalty. These findings are also supported

by recent studies by the Pew Research Center (2021). 54% of black people agree that the death penalty can be justified when someone commits murder and 67% of white people agree. This shows a profuse amount of support for why we find a difference in black and white attitudes towards the death penalty.

Furthermore, after analyzing the death penalty in literature, it is important to also take note that Black and Latino offenders were shown to be more likely to receive the death sentence than White offenders. Results of a study by Ramirez (2021) concluded that white individuals harboring animosity toward diverse groups are more likely to find them more deserving of capital punishment than an equivalent white offender. “Glaser, Martin, and Kahn (2015) find that people are more likely to convict a Black offender than a White one, when primed about the death penalty as a potential sentence, but they do not specifically ask about the application of the death penalty” (Ramirez 2021, 1932), showing again more support in findings based on racial animosity. Even more so, Pew Research Center (2021) found that only 12% of black people believe that white and black people are equally likely to be sentenced to the death penalty for committing similar crimes whereas nearly the majority, or 49%, of white people agree with that statement showing the stark contrast in how differently the death sentence is applied. The difference in the application of the death penalty connects to the racial animosity presented above to explain the divide in opinions between white and black communities.

To further analyze how racial groups view how the death penalty should be sentenced, a conjoint experiment conducted within the same study by Ramirez (2021) was able to break down variables to determine what makes individuals feel an offender is deserving of the death penalty. Gang affiliation and prior convictions for violent crimes tend to show more support for deserving a death sentence. Statistically, throughout the nation’s history, there has always been a disproportionate amount of people of color in jail for both of those factors leading to the findings based on race. Most recent findings have

concluded that “Black Americans are incarcerated in state prisons at nearly 5 times the rate of white Americans” (Ramirez 2021, 1932) with more than half the prison population as Black people in twelve states, and seven states have a black to white ratio larger than nine to one.

Another study conducted by Ellsworth et al. (1994) reported that a Gallup poll from 1991 also found the same findings that race played a key role in who was sentenced to the death penalty and who supported capital punishment. The poll reported that “Black respondents were considerably more likely than Whites to agree that these forms of discrimination take place” (Ellsworth et al. 1994, 19). This means that black people are more likely to think discrimination in sentencing occurs, justifying their lower levels of support for the death penalty. This study was done in the mid-90s during a peak in attitudes about support for the death penalty and tougher consequences on crime. During this time, there was also a heavy focus on the government to being harder on crime and drugs making this issue a highly popular one in society which is why this study is of importance in research.

Similarly, two more studies found the same results. Jacobs et al. (2002) found that “racial or ethnic threat theories suggest that the death penalty will more likely be legal in jurisdictions with relatively large black or Hispanic populations” (109). Once again, there is a significant amount of data and research showing large disparities amongst races in all areas. Another set of studies reported by the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner released information about how the death penalty is “imposed upon the poorest, most powerless, most marginalized people in the society” (Simonovic 2014, 99). More than half of those that receive a death sentence are in a racial minority as well as a societal minority. In conclusion, the literature suggests that white people favor the death penalty more than black people with largely different rates and there is massive support to conclude that black people are disproportionately sentenced to the death penalty than white people.

III. Methodology

To explore attitudes toward the death penalty, I chose to use a dataset from Pew Research Center conducted during July 27th through August 2nd, 2020. I will be running bivariate and multivariate analyses on this dataset to draw conclusions about the interactions between these variables: partisanship, religion, age, gender, and race. I will be analyzing if the respondents agree with the death penalty as my dependent variable. My independent variables will be those five mentioned above. I will re-code the dataset to exclude any respondents that refused to answer. First, I will be running a bivariate to explore the relationship between the variables compared to partisanship. I omitted the refusals from all of the five variables. Also, I will be re-coding sex, religion, and race to be nominal measures since the answers hold a value, but age will be ordinal.

First, the respondents were asked to identify their sex. The answer choices were Male or Female with Female being the higher value.

Second, the respondents were asked about their age category with the choices being 18-29, 30-49, 50-64, and 65+. 65+ was the higher value.

Third, respondents were asked about their religion with the choices being Protestant, Roman Catholic, Mormon, Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Atheist, Agnostic, Other, or Nothing in particular. Nothing in particular was omitted from the data. The choices range from western religions to eastern religions. However, in order to interpret the data, I created three dummy variables. I used the Protestant (Transform 3), Catholic (Transform 4), and Mormon (Transform 5) responses as the three.

Fourth, respondents were asked what their race was with the choices being White, Black or African American, Asian or Asian-American, Mixed Race, or some other race, this being the higher value. However, in order to provide more concise data, these responses were recoded to only include White and Black or African American with Black or African American as the higher value.

Lastly, respondents were asked about their party identification with Republican, Democrat,

Independent, and something else as the choices. Something else will be omitted from the data to obtain more concise conclusions. I will be re-coding this question to have Republican as the lower value, then ranging to the higher value as Independent, and then Democrat.

However, the question about the death penalty: Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?, labeled as DTHPNLTY, will be the dependent variable. The answer choices for this question are: Strongly favor, Somewhat favor, Somewhat oppose, and Strongly oppose with strongly oppose as the highest value. These responses were re-coded to Strongly favor and Somewhat favor to be combined into the higher value, so as to represent support. Somewhat oppose and Strongly oppose were combined into the lower value, as to represent no support. Collapsing the values into two responses changes it into a dichotomous variable so that I could run a binomial logistic analysis.

IV. Data Analysis and Interpretations

As shown in Table 1, the results of whether the respondents favored or opposed the death penalty showed that the median for the results was 2. This means that the median respondent answered that they somewhat favored the death penalty. There is more support than opposition but not by much, with 58.1% on the supporting side. These are the original results before they were transformed as mentioned previously. I expected for the results to show a more even split between sides than one side showing overwhelming support.

Next, I conducted a correlation matrix between the independent variables and dependent variable. As shown in Table 2, all of the independent variables were significantly related to attitudes toward the death penalty. Race, sex, the religion dummy variables, and party were all negatively related while age was positively related. I expected to find significance in these five variables given the scholarly literature.

I then conducted a binomial logistic regression, or multivariate analysis, between the

independent and dependent variables. As shown in Table 3, sex, the religion dummies, and party affiliation proved to be statistically significant. Sex was negatively related to the death penalty, meaning that females are less likely to support the death penalty than males, even after introducing controls. This is also supported by the literature. Religious denomination was statistically and significantly related to the death penalty in all three areas. The Protestant, Catholic, and Mormon variables were significant and showed that respondents in these three religions were more likely to support the death penalty, even with other controls. This is mostly consistent with what the literature found. The literature showed that Protestants, Catholics, and Mormons have a stronger support base for the death penalty than Jewish people or even Buddhists. Party affiliation also has a statistically negative relationship with the death penalty. Democrats are less likely to support the death penalty than Independents and Republicans. This is also consistent with what the literature discussed. However, neither race nor age were significant in this model.

I was concerned that the partisanship variable might be affecting the others. So, as shown in Table 4, I omitted the party variable in my next multivariate model, which made age, sex, religion, and race statistically significant. Since race and age were significant in the correlation matrix (Table 2), I wanted to see if party was absorbing their significance. Because younger people and people of color are more Democratic or independent, it makes sense that party would absorb age's power as well as race. These results that showed a statistically significant relationship, matched what I had predicted after removing party.

With age having a positive relationship with death penalty support, this means that the older a person is, the more likely they are to support the death penalty. Once again, this correlates with what the literature found.

Sex was found again to have a negative relationship with the death penalty meaning that females are less likely to support the death penalty than men.

Religious denomination was found again to have a relationship with the death penalty meaning, that Protestants, Catholics, and Mormons are more likely to support the death penalty.

Lastly, race was found to be negatively related to the death penalty, meaning that black people are less likely to support the death penalty than white people. This is also consistent with the literature discussed as the death penalty is disproportionately applied to people of color, leading to a higher amount of disdain for capital punishment. Removing the party caused race to be significant because people of color are overwhelmingly Democratic (or independent), which the part variable was absorbing.

Overall, these findings in the data are consistent with the findings of the literature. A young female person of color who is Democratic and not Protestant, Catholic, or Mormon is less likely to support the death penalty. An old male white person who is Republican and Protestant, Catholic, or Mormon is more likely to support the death penalty.

V. Conclusion

The death penalty continues to create a controversial atmosphere in the sphere of politics and criminal justice. As a young person myself, this issue has been one of many on the forefront of new political focus and action. After headlines drawing attention to the consequences of the criminal justice system, one of those the death penalty, my interest was piqued. The Central Park Five case was one of many that showed a very weak point in United States history and broadcasted an all-too-common failure of the court system. Five black teenage boys were arrested for a crime they did not commit and spent years in prison. They were later exonerated after the real murderer confessed. However, during their case and after, many called for the death penalty sentenced. Had they been sentenced to death, this would be far from the first time innocent people were wrongly sentenced, thus leading me to research to understand the attitudes about the death penalty.

Support for or against the death penalty is very much explained by the independent variables.

Throughout the literature and data, it is suggested that five major variables play a key role in attitudes about the death penalty: age, gender, religion, party, and race. The data was mostly consistent with my own predictions based on the scholarly literature once age and race were controlled for. In the future, I would research how geography affects death penalty attitudes by comparing states to their overall ideologies to see if there is a correlation between the parties and state values. I expected that age would go hand-in-hand with the others due to the correlation in age groups between parties, which played a large role. It was found that older people tended to have more conservative values and younger people tended to have more progressive values, which meant that older people would be more likely to support the death penalty. Age does still have an influence on attitudes, but not nearly as much as the other variables. The more progressive a young female person of color is who is not Protestant, Catholic, or Mormon, the less support they will have for the death penalty. Likewise, the more conservative an old male white person is who is Protestant, Catholic, or Mormon, the more support they will have for the death penalty.

Table 1₃₈

Predicting Death Penalty Support

Descriptives

	DTHPNLTY_W71
N	5500
Missing	5501
Mean	3.42
Median	2.00
Mode	2.00
Standard deviation	10.2
Minimum	1
Maximum	99

Frequencies

Frequencies of Death Penalty Support

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Strongly favor	1377	25.0 %	25.0 %
Somewhat favor	1817	33.0 %	58.1 %
Somewhat oppose	1218	22.1 %	80.2 %
Strongly oppose	1027	18.7 %	98.9 %
Refused	61	1.1 %	100.0 %

38 Pew Research Center. "American Trends Panel Wave 71". July 27-August 2, 2020. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/dataset/american-trends-panel-wave-71/>.

Table 2₃₉

Dependent vs. Independent Variables

Correlation Matrix

		Death Penalty Attitude	Age	Race	Sex	Religion	Political Party
Death Penalty Attitudes	Kendall's Tau B	—					
	p-value	—					
Age	Kendall's Tau B	0.050 ***	—				
	p-value	<.001	—				
Race	Kendall's Tau B	-0.086 ***	0.068 ***	—			
	p-value	<.001	<.001	—			
Sex	Kendall's Tau B	-0.067 ***	0.064 ***	0.076 ***	—		
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	—		
Religion	Kendall's Tau B	-0.110 ***	0.144 ***	0.127 ***	0.055 ***	—	
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	—	
Political Party	Kendall's Tau B	-0.353 ***	0.071 ***	0.218 ***	0.083 ***	0.191 ***	—
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	—

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

39 Pew Research Center. "American Trends Panel Wave 71". July 27-August 2, 2020. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/dataset/american-trends-panel-wave-71/>.

Table 3₄₀

Significance of Independent Variables' Support for Death Penalty

Model Fit Measures

Model	Deviance	AIC	R ² _{McF}
1	4076	4092	0.132

Model Coefficients – Death Penalty Attitudes Multivariate

Predictor	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Intercept	2.1027	0.2365	8.892	< .001
Mormon	0.5216	0.2568	2.031	0.042
Catholic	0.6378	0.1098	5.807	< .001
Protestant	0.7301	0.1056	6.915	< .001
Age	0.0641	0.0402	1.594	0.111
Sex	-0.2299	0.0776	-2.964	0.003
Race	-0.0474	0.1352	-0.351	0.726
Political Party	-0.9376	0.0511	-18.337	< .001

Note. Estimates represent the log odds of "DTHPNLTY_W71 - Transform 1 = 1" vs. "DTHPNLTY_W71 - Transform 1 = 0"

40 Ibid.

Table 4₄₁

Significance of Independent Variables' Support for Death Penalty

Model Fit Measures

Model	Deviance	AIC	R ² _{MCF}
1	4870	4884	0.0513

Model Coefficients – Death Penalty Attitudes Multivariate

Predictor	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Intercept	0.6493	0.2011	3.23	0.001
Age	0.0837	0.0363	2.31	0.021
Sex	-0.3127	0.0700	-4.47	< .001
Mormon	1.3132	0.2301	5.71	< .001
Catholic	1.0118	0.0981	10.31	< .001
Protestant	1.2717	0.0924	13.77	< .001
Race	-0.8511	0.1195	-7.12	< .001

Note. Estimates represent the log odds of "DTHPNLTY_W71 - Transform 1 = 1" vs. "DTHPNLTY_W71 - Transform 1 = 0"

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Russian Influence on Conservative America

Racheal Vargo

Abstract

In recent years, Russia has used various measures to influence American politics. One group that has been targeted is conservative America. This essay examines two channels through which Russia infiltrates American politics: religion and guns. As Russia tries to situate itself as a conservative global power, many citizens and religious leaders on the Religious Right have considered Russia and Putin an ally. Russia also has connections with conservative organizations, such as the Home School Legal Defense Association and the World Congress of Families. As for guns, Russia has culminated years' worth of connections to target the National Rifle Association to assert its influence. This type of influence and infiltration can have damaging effects on America and its democracy.

Introduction

The 2016 election was not the first time Russia interfered with United States elections, and this interference goes back to the Cold War. During these years, the Soviet Union strategized a global campaign called 'active measures', in which the United States was the prime target (Jones 2019). The goal was to influence United States elections. This interference started with the 1964 election, with the Soviet Union organizing a disinformation campaign against Republican Barry Goldwater (Jones 2019). In the 1968 election, the Soviet Union offered Democrat Hubert Humphrey direct help in his campaign, even offering money, to defeat his opponent, Richard Nixon (Jones 2019). In the 1976 Democratic presidential nominations, the Soviet Union favored Jimmy Carter over Henry Jackson. As a result, the Soviet Union tried to discredit Jackson, falsely claiming Jackson was a closet gay. In the form of forged FBI papers, these claims were made by the Soviet Union to American newspapers (Jones 2019). In 1984, the Soviet Union focused on ensuring that Ronald Reagan

did not serve another term. The Soviets bolstered their efforts in many ways, working with groups such as the Communist Party of the United States, the United States Peace Council, and the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship (Jones 2019).

While Russia has been interfering in presidential elections in the past years, they have expanded its reach into other sectors of the United States, such as non-governmental organizations and civil society. In order to achieve this multifaceted influence, Russia relies on "information warfare, cyber operations, destabilization of political movements, and direct targeting of voters" (Lamond 2018). However, Russia no longer seeks to influence or support the Democratic Party. Specifically, Russia has had an increasing influence in conservative America. This is not just limited to politicians. For example, in their study, Hjorth and Adler-Nissen (2019) found that "ideologically conservative users are significantly more likely to follow disinformation accounts, compared to liberal users" (69). The study also discusses that conservatives "retweeted Russian troll accounts 31 times more often than liberals in the 2016 election campaign" (69).

These types of interference can result in many consequences. Russian interference can lead to an increase in far-right and extremist groups (Butt and Byman 2020). Consequently, this can lead to increased violence, which divides society, increases polarization, and undermines social cohesion (Butt and Byman 2020). Consequently, this can "undermine U.S. foreign and domestic policy" and contribute "to a decline in American global power and influence" (Jones 2019). By using these methods, Russia has created distrust within the American public (Wigell 2021). This distrust causes democracy to be viewed as unmanageable and corrupt (Wigell 2021). Furthermore, it decreases the appeal of democracy while increasing the appeal of other forms of government, such as authoritarianism (Butt and Byman 2020).

However, there are other ways, not just through digital means, in which Russia seeks to influence American politics. In recent years, Russia has created an inseparable relationship with the church, which acts as an arm of the state. Therefore, Russia can use religion and religious organizations through the church to access, infiltrate and connect with conservatives in the United States. Russia also uses prominent conservative issues and organizations, such as the National Rifle Association, in order to assert its influence in American politics.

Religion: Church and State

Before examining how Russia uses religion to infiltrate American politics, it is essential to understand the relationship between Russia's Church and State. The Orthodox Church is a highly influential institution in Russia and abroad. Orthodox Christian is the predominant religion in Russia, with around sixty-three percent of the population identifying as such (United States Department of State 2021). Legally, the Russian Orthodox Church has provisions for its so-called 'special role,' in "history and the formation and development of its spirituality and culture" (United States Department of State 2021). Of course, given the church's prominence, the government works closely with the Russian Orthodox Church, more closely than Russia's other religious organizations (United States Department of State 2021).

The leader of the Russian Orthodox Church is the profoundly conservative Patriarch Kirill, who allegedly was a former KGB agent (Jenkins 2017). Kirill is closely aligned with Putin, to the dismay of many. For example, Pope Francis stated that Kirill was turning into Putin's altar boy (Horowitz 2022). Perhaps this raises the question of the close alliance between the church and state. One reason comes from Kirill himself, who wanted to expand the church's influence (Horowitz 2022). Kirill was able to "sell the concept of traditional values, the concept of Russkiy Mir [greater Russian world], to Putin, who was looking for conservative ideology" (Horowitz 2022).

In 2011, Kirill called for a more complementary relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state (Horowitz

2022). Over time, the distinction between the Orthodox Church and the state became less defined as the government began "speaking about traditional values" (Horowitz 2022). However, due to this relationship, the Orthodox Church has ended up in "captivity" (Horowitz 2022). Perhaps both institutions have an influence on each other, as many church officials have ties to political elites in the government. However, the government asserts its influence on the church more than the church on the state. In other words, the church most likely does what the state wants it to do. For example, the Orthodox Church has many functions, such as "dissemination of information in the interests of the Kremlin, support of pro-Kremlin political projects, collection of information and high-ranking politicians, support of military conflicts in the interests of the Russian Federation, and traffic of illegal goods" (Robert Lansing Institute 2020). Since the church acts as an extension of the state, the church assists in the spread of the pro-Kremlin agenda and anything else that will benefit the Kremlin's image. The Orthodox Church has also been known to support the government in controversial military conflicts. For example, the church preached religious and spiritual reasons for the 2014 invasion of Ukraine (Horowitz 2022). As a result, the Russian government can use the Orthodox Church as an institution of influence.

Russia as a Global Conservative Power

At first glance, it may seem odd that an alliance between the US Religious Right and the Russian Religious Right seems possible, especially given the previous examples demonstrating Republicans' distaste for the Soviet Union. However, two events pushed these two groups together.

Under the Obama Administration, the Democratic president tilted the country towards the left, especially in regard to issues such as same-sex marriage (Helderman and Hamburger 2017). This caused frustration and alienation in many of those on the right, especially the Religious Right, who had traditional views on marriage. A few years earlier, Vladimir Putin was back in office, but this time with a noticeable twist in conservative ideologies,

thus tilting the country towards the right (Robinson 2020). While there are many types of conservatism in Russia, one relevant type of what some scholars call Orthodox/Slavophile Conservatism (Robinson 2020). This idea dates back to 1815 with Aleksandr Sturdza, who argued that the only belief to carry out Christian values and principles is Orthodoxy (Robinson 2020). However, this idea is still persistent in present-day Russia. The idea is that the West is in moral decline, and it is "Russia's mission to save the West from itself by preserving religious faith and true values of Christianity" (Robinson 2020, 15). This is exacerbated by the post-Soviet Union religious revival and 'Orthodox boom' (Michel 2018). Those who were frustrated under the Obama Administration looked towards Russia and Putin as an ally (Helderman and Hamburger 2017). This could also explain the pro-Russian rhetoric in recent years (Helderman and Hamburger 2017). Putin wanted himself and Russia to be seen as the world leader in conservatism, thus placing Russia to be seen as the "go-to country for Western classical conservatives" (Robinson 2020, 11).

According to Robinson (2020), this mission gives Russia an international agenda. In order to engage in and achieve this agenda, Russia has created a transnational approach, seeking to influence the right across the globe, including the United States. He goes on to explain that the Orthodox/Slavophile conservatism views Russia in a broader Christian civilization. Because of this, some scholars view a struggle between "the forces of liberalism and the forces of tradition within both communities" (17). In other words, conservatives in Russia and the United States share similar enemies and beliefs, making Russian influence a central goal to achieve. Russia has already succeeded in some aspects. For example, American conservatives and the Religious Right increasingly consider Russia as a model (Jenkins 2017). Many see social policies, such as LGBTQ+ rights, women's rights, and marriage, being traditionally played out in Russia, and many conservatives want this too (Yousef 2020). Nevertheless, there are still many ways in which Russia has influenced the Religious Right.

Conversions

Plenty of evidence illustrates the relationship between the Religious Right and Russia. One way Russia is influencing the United States is through Orthodoxy itself. Sarah Riccardi-Swartz's twelve-month study looked at how "socially conservative views of morality factor into the decision process for American converts to the Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia (ROCOR)" (2018). Partly due to Putin's emphasis on conservatism, this can influence those in the United States. Riccardi-Swartz found that the converts found a "politically conservative ideological haven" in Russia. For example, the converts agreed with the anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment and legislation in Russia. The study also found that these converts believed morality to be lacking, almost absent, in the United States, and they wanted morality to be restored by any means possible. Interestingly, she finds that this conversion could be viewed as a political act, combining both the spirituality and political ideology of Putin and the Orthodox Church. This demonstrates how politically tied the Church and state in Russia are. While some may think Russia seeks to influence the political elites of the United States, influencing the population is effective as well. The Religious Right has had a presence in politics in recent years, especially in regard to the Republican Party. For example, President Trump may have received over eighty percent of the white evangelical vote in the 2016 election (McVicar 2018). Russia could use disinformation tactics and other active measures to sway support for another Republican candidate.

Religious Leaders

Another way to influence the Religious Right is through religious leaders. In the United States, the Religious Right looks toward the Republican Party, while the Russian Orthodox Church looks toward Putin. Perhaps these shared beliefs and 'enemies' made cooperation between the two a necessary means. One of the Orthodox Church's top diplomats, Metropolitan Hilarion, has visited the United States on many occasions, meeting with conservative

religious leaders. In 2011, Metropolitan Hilarion met George W. Bush and gave a speech at Catholic University of America and Ballas Theological Seminary, two prominent religious institutions (Burgess 2018). A few years later, in 2014, he was back in the United States, attending influential Evangelical and Southern Baptist Minister Billy Graham's 96th birthday party (Burgess 2018). This relationship between Russia and the Grahams would be an important one.

Franklin Graham, son of Billy Graham, also has connections to Russia's Orthodox Church. Franklin Graham, a supporter of Trump, has already established connections with Russia and the Orthodox Church, even meeting with Putin for forty-five minutes in 2015 (Helderman and Hamburger 2017). Franklin had nothing short of praise for the Russian leader, stating Putin was "protecting traditional Christianity" (Michel 2017). However, there may be a political motive behind Graham's relationship with Russia. Graham has stated that the Obama Administration has contradicted God's teachings by pushing LGBTQ+ agenda, further stating that Russian morality is greater than that of the United States because of not passing pro-LBGTQ+ policies and agenda (Jenkins 2017). It is clear that Graham's political motive was against President Obama.

Another project to come out of Graham's relationship with Orthodoxy was the World Summit in Defense of Persecuted Christians, held in Washington, DC, in 2016 (Burgess 2018). A key speaker at the event was Republican Vice President Mike Pence (Jenkins 2017). This illustrates not only the connection between religious leaders of the United States and Russia but also how these connections reached the highest levels of leadership in the United States.

Religious leaders having these kinds of relationships can be dangerous. People like Franklin Graham are very influential in the religious realm and, at the same time, can be influential in the political realm. Religious leaders can mobilize many people, including at the polls. As demonstrated with the converts, the Religious Right can contribute a significant portion to the vote. Religious leaders can also be used as pawns by the Russians, with leaders

constantly praising the country and further enabling Russian influence.

Homeschooling

In addition, Russia is seeking to influence is through homeschooling. While homeschooling is a recent trend in Russia, it is apparently a Christian Right practice in America (Stoeckl 2020). One of the most prominent homeschooling organizations in the United States is the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), which happens to be a right-leaning religious group. A legislative analyst who works for the Coalition for Reasonable Home Education states that the HSLDA "has pretty much always existed in part to create that next generation of soldiers for the religious right to train up kids to take over in politics" (Michel 2019). It is clear to see why Russia would seek to influence through this organization.

The HSLDA global outreach director, Michael Donnelly, attended the 2014 World Congress of Families conference in Moscow and met with Russian Orthodox leaders (Michel 2019). The HSLDA also sponsored the Global Home Education Conference in Moscow, which included several Russians who were sanctioned by the United States (Michel 2019).

The HSLDA is yet another way in which Russians look to infiltrate American politics. However creative the approach may be, perhaps the most influential organization for engaging in American politics is the World Congress of Families.

World Congress of Families

Conservative historian, Allan Carlson, received a phone call from Russian sociologist Anatoly Antonov, who wanted to discuss some of Carlson's well-known work about family policy (Michel 2018). From January 15-22, 1995, Carlson traveled to Russia. While he was there, he met Ivan Shevchenko. Shevchenko, the chairman of the Orthodox Brotherhood of Scientists and Specialists, wanted assistance in "organizing/recruiting for an international conference" (Michel 2018). Carlson also confessed he wanted a

"conference of fairly compatible 'profamily' groups from across the globe, to serve as a kind of informal Congress of Families with the purpose of (1) defining the common pressures on families in modern countries, vis-à-vis state and economy, and (2) drafting an 'appeal' or 'declaration' to the governments of the world, including common demands" (Michel 2018).

This meeting laid the groundwork for what would become the World Congress of Families (WCF), a "transnational nongovernment organization that promotes a traditional, heterosexual family model and conservative gender roles" (Stoeckl 2020, 223). However, some designate the WCF as an LGBTQ+ hate group, with the goal of "halting the spread of LGBT rights overseas in the name of the defense of the 'natural family'" (Barthélemy 2018). Interestingly, while Russia is considered a central component of the WCF, initially, the Orthodox Church was not. It was not until 2006, when the WCF became associated with the Moscow Patriarchate's Commission for the Family, Protection of Motherhood and Childhood, that the Orthodox church would increase involvement in the WCF (Stoeckl 2020).

Over time, the WCF would see participation from many elites in Russia. After its founding, the two main sponsors of the WCF were Konstantin Malofeev and Vladimir Yakunin, both of whom have connections with the Orthodox Church as well as the Kremlin (Stoeckl 2020). Malofeev eventually became the vice director of the World Russian People's Congress, which operated under the Orthodox Church (Stoeckl 2020). In attendance at WCF-related events has been Russian politician Yelena Mizulina, who has championed anti-LGBTQ+ rights (Stoeckl 2020). These connections demonstrate not only how closely aligned the WCF is to the Orthodox Church but also how closely connected the church is to the Russian state. As a result, the church can be seen as another political actor for Russia, another extension of the state that the government can use in active measures and influence campaigns.

Another figure who has gained considerable influence in the WCF is Alexey Komov, a business consultant turned representative of the organization.

Having been introduced to the WCF in 2008, he can be credited for the increased activity and "intensification of Russia activity inside the WCF" (Stoeckl 2020, 228). Komov not only has influence within the WCF but abroad as well, with connections to the HSLDA and Alliance Defending Freedom, two prominent conservative organizations in the United States (Barthélemy 2018). This also demonstrates Russia's potential influence on America. Connecting with prominent organizations such as the Alliance Defending Freedom is another way the Russians seek to access entry points into American politics.

Interestingly, the WCF is not theological in content; its policies do not match up with traditional Orthodoxy views. For example, traditional Orthodoxy champions celibacy and asceticism, not the family policy promoted by the WCF (Stoeckl 2020). This illustrates that the Orthodox Church saw an opening for influence as well. Given the close relationship the Russian chapter of the WCF has with its American counterpart, as well as the relationship between church and state, the church viewed their partnership as a way to influence American politics. The WCF most likely draws in many influential, religious, American conservatives. As a result, the WCF offers another direct connection between powerful Russians and powerful conservative Americans.

Many people were moved by the post-Soviet Union's religious revival. One such American Tennessee lawyer, G. Kline Preston IV, was amazed and attracted to Putin through the building of churches and the return of Christianity (Michel 2018). Throughout his various trips to Russia, he met a man named Alexander Torshin. Preston would eventually be the connecting link that led to another influence campaign on the United States.

National Rifle Association

Another way in which Russia seeks to influence the United States is through the National Rifle Association (NRA). The NRA is a gun rights advocacy group with considerable influence in lobbying politicians, especially the Republican Party. As a result, Russia was able to take advantage of this close relationship. There are numerous reports

that the NRA received funding from Russia, leaving some to conclude that the NRA is a ‘foreign asset’ to Russia (Mak 2019, Senate Finance Committee 2019). However, this relationship did not happen overnight. Over the years, Russia has deepened its ties with the NRA, dating back to 2011.

In 2011, David Keene, former president of the NRA, was introduced to Russian senator Alexander Torshin (Helderman and Hamburger 2017). Torshin, who had close ties with Vladimir Putin, would become a top official at the Russian Central Bank, holding the title of deputy governor (Helderman and Hamburger). However, Torshin had another close contact: Maria Butina. Butina was a special assistant to Torshin (Clifton and Follman 2018). Seeking to create a pro-gun movement in Russia, Butina established Right to Bear Arms in 2011 (Clifton and Follman 2018). From here, Torshin, Butina, and various members of the NRA had numerous contacts and meetings. Both parties would attend the other’s conventions. For example, in 2012, there was an NRA convention in Moscow, followed by a convention in Houston a year later attended by Torshin (Clifton and Follman 2018). In 2013, Butina and Torshin invited David Keene to a fashion show that was sponsored by Right to Bear Arms. The show focused on clothing designed for carrying concealed weapons (Helderman and Hamburger 2017). Another significant and controversial event occurred in 2015.

In December, NRA representatives including David Keene, Pete Brownell (future NRA president), Joe Gregory, Jim Liberatore, Arnold and Hilary Goldschlager, and David Clarke traveled to Russia to attend a “meeting with senior Russian government officials,” tour “Russian arms manufacturing companies and meet Right to Bear Arms members (Senate Finance Committee 2019, 17). Not in attendance was NRA President Allan Cors. Initially, this caused panic. The trip would not happen unless it included senior levels of the NRA, as it would “demonstrate Torshin’s American connections to the Russian government” (Senate Finance Committee 2019, 25). Brownell, under pressure, eventually replaced Cors, thus demonstrating that there were still high-ranking representatives on the trip (Senate Finance Committee 2019). Out of desperation to get

high-ranking officials, Butina also offered to arrange a meeting with ‘Russia’s highest leader,’ most likely Putin (Senate Finance Committee 2019).

Using the NRA was the first step in infiltrating American politics. While Butina and Torshin have a gun rights organization in Moscow, it was mainly used to create a connection with the NRA. As he testified to the House Intelligence Committee, Glenn Simpson stated, “The most absurd [thing] about this is that, you know, Vladimir Putin is not in favor of universal gun ownership for Russians. And so it’s all a big charade, basically” (Clifton and Follman 2018). Ties with the NRA served as another motive for Butina and Torshin, specifically in order to gain access and deepen their ties with other conservative organizations. In an email, Butina lays out her strategy, stating that “a major U.S. political party would likely obtain control over the U.S. government after the 2016 elections” and the party “is traditionally associated with negative and aggressive foreign policy, particularly in regards to Russia. However, “now with the right to negotiate seems best to build relations” (United States Department of Justice 2018, 5-6). Butina later goes on to write that the “central place and influence in the party” is the NRA, which she notes is “the largest sponsor of the elections to the U.S. Congress, as well as a sponsor of the CPAC conference and other events (United States Department of Justice 2018, 6). Butina and Torshin succeeded in this aspect. As a result of ties with the NRA, Butina was able to attend events with the Council for National Policy, the National Sporting Good Wholesalers Association, the National Prayer Breakfast, and the Safari Club International (Senate Finance Committee 2019). Organizations such as the Council for National Policy are highly prestigious. The membership-based organization meetings occur only three times a year behind closed doors (McVicar 2018). Not only did Butina gain access to these events, she and Torshin were also able to make connections with Republican Party leaders and candidates. By establishing “back-channel lines of communication” within conservative organizations, “these lines could be used by the Russian Federation to penetrate the U.S. national decision-making apparatus to advance the agenda of the Russian Federation” (United States Department of Justice 2018, 4).

This idea of penetrating the decision-making apparatus explains the accusations that Russia funneled money through the NRA. These accusations resulted in an FBI investigation focusing on whether or not Torshin used the NRA to funnel money to Donald Trump’s 2016 presidential campaign (Meyer 2018). This money may also have been funneled through “entities not required to disclose their funding sources” (Meyer 2018). The NRA was Trump’s largest donor, giving around \$30 million during his campaign (Meyer 2018).

Conclusion

Russia has used two channels to influence conservative America. The lines of separation between the church and state have been indistinguishable in recent years. The Russian Orthodox Church acts as an extension of the Russian state, as it does whatever the state wants it to. While conservatives used to look at Russia with disdain, they now view Russia and Putin as an ally. As the United States tilted left under the Obama Administration, Putin tilted Russia to the right, causing many frustrated under the Obama Administration to view Russia as an ally in conservatism. As a result of this, there have been some American conversions to Russian Orthodox. These converts, who converted as a political act, view Russia as a ‘political haven,’ as they believe morality exists at higher rates in Russia than in the United States. However, it is not just the public who are influenced by Russia and Orthodoxy but religious leaders as well. American religious leaders, such as Franklin Graham, have ties to powerful and influential members of the Orthodox church and the Russian government. Russia also uses the prominent right-wing group Home School Legal Defense Association in order to advance its interests. Despite homeschooling not being a widely prevalent practice in Russia, Russia will seek to infiltrate the organization, as it will give them access to influential conservative Americans. Similarly with the World Congress of Families, the Russians seek to infiltrate the organization to have access to influential American conservatives and organizations. As for

guns, Russians have cultivated connections with the NRA to allow them to gain access to high-profile Republicans and conservative organizations, as well as funnel money through the organization to use during the 2016 election for Donald Trump.

These influence campaigns pose a harmful consequence for America and its democracy. Many wealthy democracies have faltered in recent years, including the United States. Its citizens are displaying tendencies that are less aligned with democracy and more aligned with authoritarianism. However, influence campaigns can play a part in this. Russia has sought to influence the United States for various reasons. These campaigns can pit Americans against each other and create a sense that democracy is nonfunctional. This results in the idea that authoritarianism is better than democracy, which Russia seeks to achieve. These campaigns can also move policy in favor of Russia. For example, an infiltration of the NRA led to access to prominent conservative meetings, as well as money used to support Donald Trump. Having Trump elected was a way to serve Russian interests. If nothing is done to stop Russian influence campaigns, it can lead to a decrease in democracy, as well as democratic deconsolidation.

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