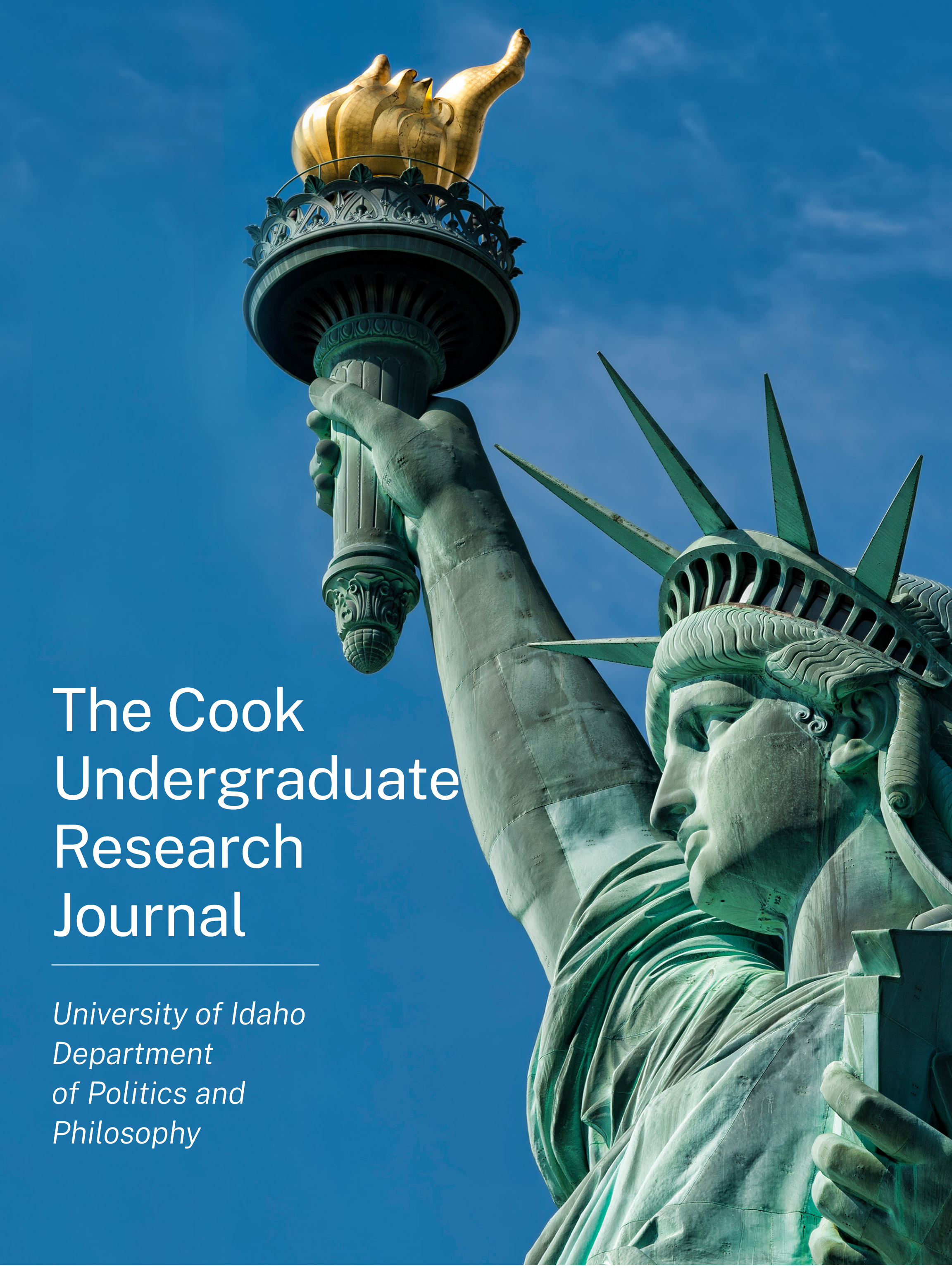

The Cook Undergraduate Research Journal

University of Idaho Department of Politics and Philosophy

University of Idaho

Volume 2
Spring 2025

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the second volume of the Cook Undergraduate Research Journal (CURJ), a scholarly platform dedicated to the dispersion of cutting-edge research and innovative perspectives within the field of political science. CURJ strives to facilitate an open dialogue and knowledge exchange among scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to better understand the complexities of political systems and their impact on society.

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Ideological analysis, political thought, and philosophical underpinnings of political systems.

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Our distinguished editorial team, composed of undergraduate political science students, ensures a thorough peer review process to maintain the highest standards of academic rigor and ethical publishing. We are committed to upholding academic integrity and ensuring that research published in CURJ is credible, insightful, and contributes to the advancement of political science.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to give a special thanks to every member of our editorial board for thoughtfully reviewing the submissions for this publication. We could not have accomplished as much as we did in such a short period without you. We would also like to thank Drs. Markie McBrayer and Florian Justwan for the administrative assistance in getting this student-led publication up and running.

Sincerely,

Kira Haile, *Editor-in-Chief*

Jacob Bindley, *Reviewer*

Bergen Kludt-Painter, *Reviewer*

Clara Johnson, *Reviewer*

The Outcomes of Truth and Justice Processes on Contemporary Democracy in Argentina and Brazil

Nolan Kelly

Abstract

The research goal of this paper is to examine the impact of truth and justice processes on contemporary democratic values. I anticipated countries with a stronger truth and justice process in a post-authoritarian period will also have higher levels of democratic value among the general populace. The usage of a qualitative comparative case study between Argentina and Brazil was employed to reach a result. Process tracing was used to showcase the causal linkage between variables. It determined that stronger truth and justice processes resulted in increased democratic values relating to these two countries. In Brazil, which had a weaker process, there was higher tolerance for coups among the populace. In contrast, the truth and justice process in Argentina has become central to modern democracy, it's widely believed by civil society more should be done in Brazil. Future qualitative research should select different cases to eliminate the alternative explanation of economic differences. A quantitative study using regression analysis could test the relationship between the variables in this study using many cases around the world.

Introduction

With the election of Jair Bolsonaro in 2018 came a flood of comments about Brazil's authoritarian past. The most direct being during the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff when Congressman Bolsonaro stated, "for the memory of Colonel Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra, the terror of Dilma Rousseff, for the army, for Brazil, and God above everyone, my vote is yes" (Bevins, 2023, pg. 212). Dilma Rousseff was herself a victim of torture under the dictatorship and Bolsonaro used this political opportunity to dedicate his vote to her torturer. This event led to my interest in investigating the truth and justice process in Brazil and Argentina, which occurred during the transition from authoritarian to democratic government. At the time, commissions were established by the government to investigate crimes committed by the armed forces. How these processes occurred varied, which led me to ask what effect does a strong truth and justice process have on the proliferation of democratic values in a modern democracy?

Previous literature focused on why democratic values differ across societies. Some scholars state that civil engagement and socialization through school or parenting is the cause of increased democratic values in some societies (Badescu et al., 2004; Morduchowicz et al., 1996; Kołczyńska, 2020; Miklikowska, 2011; Murtaza and Ali Akbar, 2020; Finkel and Ernst, 2005). Other scholars assert that democratic values have occurred because of institutional influence through democratic government structures (Besley and Persson, 2017; Ticchi et al., 2013; Fournier, 1999; Thomas, 2021). This research falls into the last school of thought, as a truth commission is a democratic institution which influences proliferation of democratic values. There is a lack of literature that examines the relationship between those factors. I will fill that gap by including the central roles of the military and civil society in this process.

I expect countries with a stronger truth and justice process in a post-authoritarian period will also have higher levels of democratic value among the general populace. These institutions punish the breaching of democratic norms and reconcile the truth in a transparent manner. There is more legitimacy in new democratic institutions because these commissions occur in civilian courts, that are open to the public and deliver real justice. Past crimes are reconciled in a public setting.

To test this theory, I employed a comparative case study using a method of difference model. I compare the experience in Brazil and Argentina with the truth and justice process. I tested the quality of these processes using several metrics: the number of people prosecuted for crimes under the dictatorship, amnesty laws, reparations programs, and position of the military. I tested for proliferation of democratic values using several metrics: support for democracy, support for a coup, statements from civil society, politicians and people involved in the commissions, and rhetoric from the military and government officials about the past. I found there was support for my theory and hypothesis that a stronger truth and justice process leads to more widespread democratic values. Through process tracing, I found that Argentina, which had a stronger process, had more widespread democratic values than Brazil, which had a weaker process. Both cases had similar levels of support for democracy, but there was higher tolerance for a military or executive coup in Brazil.

Literature Review

The first camp claims civil engagement and socialization as the cause of increased democratic values. Badescu et al. (2004) examine participation in civil society as leading to increased trust and tolerance in the system. They find that being an active decision-making member of an NGO increases an individual's perspective that they can influence the political landscape (Badescu et al., 2004). In other words, states with higher engagement in civil society have more widespread belief in democratic values (Badescu et al., 2004). Morduchowicz et al. (1996) examines educational programs to encourage democratic values in a newly democratic state. They researched a school newspaper program in Argentina that attempted to encourage civic engagement and political dialogue at a young age. They found people who participated were more knowledgeable on political subjects and held beliefs aligned with democratic values (Morduchowicz et al., 1996). Kołczyńska (2020) examines the relationship between "education, democratic values, and political trust" (pg. 1). Increased education results in higher levels of personal alignment with democratic values. This is not the same with all systems, but the relationship is most acute in strong democratic systems (Kołczyńska, 2020). Similarly, Murtaza and Ali Akbar (2014) find that educational institutions are a vital component in distilling democratic values in the Pakistani context. Their research focused on commitment to democratic values within this population. The age and geography of the student affects their commitment to democratic values. For example, eighth-grade students have higher commitment to democratic values than lower grades, while students in urban areas have higher commitment than rural areas (Murtaza & Ali Akbar, 2014). According to Finkel and Ernst (2005), civil engagement inside and outside schools influences democratic values. They examine the usage of programs in South Africa to encourage democratic engagement after the end of Apartheid (Finkel & Ernst, 2005). The previous examples occurred during political transitions in those countries. There is a strand of literature that emphasizes the socialization of democratic values that begins with parenting choices rather than school. Miklikowska (2011) asserts that democratic parenting results in support for democratic values as an adult. This strand merges political science with principles in psychology. While socialization of democratic values through civil society and education is convincing it's limited in explaining broader societal views. Institutional influences are more convincing in that respect.

This camp subscribes to the notion that development of democratic values has occurred because of institutional influence. This influence can be seen in government structures and systems. Besley and Persson (2017) find that there is a bipartite relationship between democratic values and institutions. States with an entrenched democratic system have increased support for democratic values (Besley & Persson, 2017). Countries with longer histories of democratic institutions result in consolidation of democratic values (Besley & Persson, 2017). Ticchi et al. (2013) mix institutions with socialization in the parenting unit. This is valuable because it explains the passage of values through generations (Ticchi et al., 2013). Furthermore, it takes a more systematic approach by relating to institutional factors and not solely socialization.

Much of the literature focuses on institutions on the domestic front, though state institutions influence international democratic values as seen in research by Fournier (1999). Some democratic countries decide to implement explicit support for democratic values in their foreign policy (Fournier, 1999). This is strategically important for democratic states to promote these values as it contributes to democratic consolidation. International institutional support for democratic values prevented authoritarian revival (Fournier, 1999). Like Fournier, Thomas (2001) asserts NGOs central role in supporting democratic values abroad. The institution of the NGO works with burgeoning democracies to encourage continued democratization (Thomas, 2001). This relates to the competition between democratic and authoritarian institutions.

The strength of the institutional camp is the ability to examine societies fully. The correlation between democratic institutions and democratic values is strong (Besley & Persson, 2017). The civil engagement and socialization camp can be influenced more by outside factors and covers a broad area. The institutional camp fits best with independent variable. Further, I have not seen the study of truth and justice processes in relation to differing levels of democratic value across states in existing literature. I seek to understand that processes linkage with democratic values by asking: What impact does a strong truth and justice process have on proliferation of democratic values in modern democracy?

Theory and Hypothesis

There has been a lack of literature which examines the effect transitional commissions have on democratic values in society. These commissions are important in the transitional period between authoritarian and democratic systems. This fits with the school of thought which emphasizes institutions' effects on societal values. Truth and justice commissions are institutions set up to punish figures who committed human rights violations through legal means in a post-authoritarian government. Truth and justice commissions are a central part of transnational processes from democratic to authoritarian period. The following research will account for the military and civil society's role in the transitional period. Because of this my area of focus is broader than solely the commission. The analysis will not only examine the active period of the commissions, but the long-term societal ramifications of these institutions. This is the concept of the truth and justice process which is referred to throughout this article. Broadening the focus allows for a qualitative study which accounts for the role of the military and civil society groups in relation to the commission over a multiple decade period.

I anticipate countries with a stronger truth and justice process in a post-authoritarian period will also have higher levels of democratic value among the general populace. I expect this because truth commissions try to build a political culture opposed to violent political action and supportive of human rights (Bakiner, 2014). These bodies seek to get justice for the victims of human rights violations. Further it builds legitimacy in the newly democratic government. This happens because civilian courts are open to the public and deliver real justice from an independent judiciary (Ocampo, 1999). That differs from internal military investigations which aren't transparent; and raises the likelihood of corruption to influence the results. States with a stronger truth and justice commission will have higher proliferation of democratic values than states with a weaker commission.

Research Design

To test the hypothesis, a comparative case study will be employed using a method of difference model. This model will compare two cases, Brazil and Argentina which are comparable because both are in Latin America and had an authoritarian period in the later part of the 20th century. They had commissions but there is variation in how they were applied. In a 2015 poll, 70% of Argentinians said they prefer democracy while 54% of Brazilians prefer democracy (Gallo & Gugliano, 2020). This demonstrates that while both are democracies there are differences which should be studied.

The independent variable is the strength of the truth and justice process. The concept of this process is the broad-based effort by democratic societies to reconcile its authoritarian past. The commission is a major part of that process. There are several metrics that measure the strength of the commission's mandate and wider societal impacts. The first is the number of people prosecuted for crimes under the dictatorship because of the commission's findings. The second is the presence of amnesty laws which could prevent criminal proceedings. The third is reparations programs for victims. These metrics come from the United States Institute of Peace, which conducts reports on the cases. The last is the military position during the transitional period, and the position they left power in and their involvement during the truth and justice process.

The dependent variable is the proliferation of democratic values in society. The first metric is the percentage of people who support democracy. The second is support for a military coup and executive coup under certain conditions. I measure these metrics using a survey conducted by LAPOP (Latin American Public Opinion Project) on democracy in Latin America (American Barometer, 2021). The third are statements from civil society, politicians and people involved in the process' assessment of their affects on democracy. These statements are collected through news articles, reports by civil society groups, and academic papers. Lastly, there is rhetoric from military and government officials about the authoritarian period, said statements come from speech transcripts and news reports.

For this research, I have employed three control variables: economic evaluators, political system, and perceived corruption. The first control variable is GDP, GDP per capita, and Gini index; the data of these evaluators comes from the World Bank database which has tracked these statistics since 2000 (World Bank, 2024). Low-economic growth or severe income inequality could result in differences in the proliferation of democratic values. The second control variable is existing government type in the cases. This comparison of systems comes from the CIA factbook (2024). Different government structures may influence how represented people feel by their elected democracy. The third control variable is the perceived corruption index from the Transparency Organization (2021). If citizens perceive their country as having high corruption it could lower support for democracy. Brazil and Argentina have similar levels of perceived corruption and governance structures. The case selection rules out those two alternative explanations. There are economic and population differences with the chosen cases that could influence differences in the dependent variable.

Process tracing will be conducted by retrieving statements regarding the commissions and differences in democratic values in my cases. I am looking for statements that indicate my hypothesis is correct and there is a casual linkage between truth and justice processes and proliferation of democratic values. I will look at statements from politicians, actors involved in this process, military officials, and civil society groups about the impact that these commissions had on their respective societies. If actors state that a strong truth and justice process has made democracy stronger and inversely statements that link a weak process to issues with modern democracy, my hypothesis is correct.

Results

Argentina (1976-Present)

Between 1976 and 1983, Argentina experienced a violent authoritarian period. This period of state terrorism resulted in the death and disappearance of 30,000 people (Kaiser, 2015). The context characterizing the regime's fall is often described as a transition by rupture. There was a loss of legitimacy after the Falkland War with the United Kingdom, international pressure, and worsening economic conditions. Argentina's armed forces were in a comparatively weak position (Gallo & Gugliano, 2020). Following the election of Raul Alfonsín came a push for a criminal process against the military. The National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (CONADEP) was established. The assistant prosecutor during the trial and future ICC prosecutor, Luis Moreno Ocampo (1999) said, "nowhere in the world was it common to put generals on trial." (pg. 682). CONADEP found that the armed forces had committed acts of systematic state terror and in most of the cases faced punishment via prison sentence (Ocampo, 1999). This commission was conducted in a civilian court and was open to the public. This legitimized the newly democratic judiciary. He states that "the combined effect of court hearings and its coverage by the media had a significant impact on society that cannot be erased or ignored" (Ocampo, 1999, pg. 687). The blanket of secrecy was broken, and victims were able to obtain justice for crimes committed against them. The facts and findings of the commission were published in books, movies, and media. Organizations like Moms of the Plaza de Mayo pushed the government to search for the missing people. During the dictatorship they were a well-known oppositional force, and they continued their operations as key part of civil society in Argentina. These Moms felt the commission had not gone far enough in its prosecution and campaigned for its expansion. They organized in response to the commission (Vegh Weis, 2022).

Argentina faced political realities caused by military pressure, which led to a phase of impunity. There were military uprisings known as Carapintadas that pressured the government to limit their investigation. This pressure culminated in the policy of Carlos Menem pardoning military leaders (Nowak, 2007). Ocampo (1999) describes this as Menem laying, "the cornerstone for impunity in Argentina" (pg. 687). The collective memory created as a result CONADEP trials developed into a force which promoted democracy through civil society groups. During the 2003 elections, Menem decided to reenter the political realm and faced Nestor Kirchner. Kirchner framed himself as the anti-Menem, running on political reforms (Peruzzotti, 2010). Central to this was annulling the immunity law and reopening investigations into human rights' violations. Kirchner's campaign collaborated with civil society organizations who sought to continue the truth and justice process (Peruzzotti, 2010). Argentina's congress repealed the immunity laws, and the military once again faced legal sentences. Since then, 1,000 people have been convicted (Vegh Wies, 2022). There was a push for a reparations program for victims of state terror (United States Institute of Peace, 2018). Alejo Padilla, a federal judge, underscores the importances of this: “the production of truth and knowing the reasons why the extermination was carried out in Argentina also reinforce the possibility of maintaining the democratic system” (Bertoia, 2024). Having a proper process has protected the democratic system in its current form. According to Pablo Parenti, head of a missing children unit, the process in Argentina is unique in the world. He goes on to say, “This process ends with justice, it does not end with impunity. And this validity is what is defining in our democracy” (Bertoia, 2024). He directly correlates the results of the commission as central to modern democracy.

Brazil (1979-Present)

The military governed Brazil between 1964 and 1985. This authoritarian period resulted in the death of 434 people. The use of torture was widespread, with the number of cases varying from 30,000 to 50,000 (Jeantet, 2019). Unlike Argentina, Brazil’s military was in a stronger state when giving up power. Experiencing economic growth, the military initiated the transitional period on their own terms (Gallo & Gugliano, 2020). In 1979, an amnesty law was passed to prevent prosecutions of military officials involved in acts of state terrorism (Goes, 2013). The government hoped that this act would create amnesia over the dictatorship’s human rights’ violations (Goes, 2013). Reparation programs were established in the 1990’s, but when independent from formal prosecution it was often perceived as “trivializing the crimes” (Goes, 2013, pg. 86).

In 2011, President Rousseff instituted a commission, making Brazil the last to do so in the region (Macron, 2013). In a ceremonial speech she stated that “What we are doing here, in this moment, is celebrating the transparency of the truth of a nation that is forging its path to democracy, but which still has a meeting planned with itself” (Rousseff, 2012) Her statement suggests that she views a truth commission as a vital part of a transition to democracy. The amnesty law prevented anyone from facing legal consequences for acts committed during the dictatorship (Marcon, 2013). The commission recommended that the law be overturned. In 2010, the Brazilian supreme court upheld that the amnesty law was constitutional (Marcon, 2013). The Brazilian military was resistant to this process and made it difficult to obtain related documents. The president of the commission, Pedro Dallari said of the military, “The armed forces need to step forward and accept that they were responsible for these killings and tortures,” (Charner, 2015). He goes on to say if the military doesn’t do this, “there will always be doubts surrounding their commitment to democracy” (Charner, 2015). The military has not apologized for the dictatorship and claim it wasn’t a coup yet a broad-based uprising against the communist threat in Brazil, and because of this the military commonly commemorates the dictatorship’s historical past (Band Jornalismo, 2019). José Carlos Dias, the justice minister, warned about the threat of the attitude of the military, by saying, “I feel frightened again. I want to live in a democracy.” (Savarese & Jeantet, 2021). These conditions have weakened Brazil’s truth and justice process. Atila Roque, the director of Amnesty International Brazil, stated that “it’s vital that Brazil brings to justice those responsible for the serious human rights violations of the past. We must break the past cycle of impunity that fuels ongoing torture, extrajudicial executions, and enforced disappearances in the present” (Amnesty International, 2014).

According to Freedom House (2021), which measures indicators of democracy, Brazil is a 74/100 while Argentina is an 84/100. There is a ten-point differential between the chosen cases. There have been differences in support for democracy in these cases previously. The Freedom House scale is widely accepted as a means democratic right and freedoms. In a poll by American Barometer, which asked individuals in South America about their views of democracy, both Argentina and Brazil were more supportive of democracy than neighboring states (American Barometer, 2021). In the survey they asked: "democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?" (American Barometer, 2021). Support for democracy is measured by respondents' answers to that question. In Argentina, 69% of people support democracy while in Brazil 67% support democracy (American Barometer, 2021). These results are similar, but Argentina has slightly more support for democracy than Brazil. The same poll asked individuals if they would support a military coup if corruption was high. There was a significant difference in responses, with 30% of people in Argentina saying they would support a coup. In Brazil, 38% agreed that if corruption was high, they would support a seizure of power by the military (American Barometer, 2021). This can be seen in Table 1.

capita, and the Gini Index are used. The Gini Index is a measurement of income inequality in countries. On the index 0 is perfect equality, while 100 is perfect inequality.

In 2021, Brazil's GDP was $1.65 trillion, and Argentina's GDP was $487.9 billion (World Bank, 2021). The GDP per capita was $8,166 in Brazil and $10,639 in Argentina. The Gini Index in Brazil is 52 and in Argentina it's 42.4 (World Bank, 2021). Brazil has a larger economy and population than Argentina which affects the difference in GDP and GDP per capita. Brazil experienced worse income inequality than Argentina that year. The economic differences between the two countries may impact the different levels of support for democracy. This is a downside to the chosen cases, which doesn't completely rule out the aforementioned possibility.

I found that my hypothesis is largely true. The stronger the truth and justice process is the more support for democratic values will exist. While there are similar levels of support for democracy in Argentina and Brazil, there was a notable difference when it came to support for a military and executive coup, with Brazilians having higher support for both. The results indicate this was caused by a weak transitional process in Brazil. I found quotes which demonstrate that Argentina's process has created its modern democratic system. While in Brazil, there is a grim attitude about the behavior of the military, which the people interviewed link to the weak truth and justice experience. The possibility of economic differences between Argentina and Brazil cannot be ruled out as a major factor in support for democratic values.

Cases	Support for Democracy	Support for Military Coup	Support for Executive Coup	Commemoration by Military	Democratic Values
Argentina	69%	30%	16%	No	Stronger
Brazil	67%	38%	25%	Yes	Weaker

Table 1: Measurements of dependent variables in each case

In 2021, Argentina and Brazil ranked the same on the corruption perception index (Transparency Organization, 2021). This indicates that corruption itself does not explain the gap between the two cases. In Argentina, the military apologized for its past. In Brazil, however, issues with commemoration remain. The weakness of the Brazilian process in punishing the armed forces has resulted in that outcome today. Support for an executive coup is 16% in Argentina and 25% in Brazil (American Barometer, 2021). While the preference for democracy may be similar, support for a military of executive coup has notable variation in the cases. Argentina and Brazil both have presidential systems (CIA factbook). This does not explain the differences in the dependent variable. To assess the economy that year, GDP, GDP per

Discussion and Conclusion

My hypothesis ascertains that a strong truth and justice process would lead to increased proliferation of democratic values. I found that my hypothesis was supported from my results. I found that Argentina, which boasted a stronger truth and justice process, had more support for democracy, less support for coups, and which centralizes the search for truth as a cornerstone of democracy. In Brazil, which had a weak truth and justice process, I found less support for democracy, more support for coups, and quotes concerning the military's commitment to democracy. These differences in the results suggest that my hypothesis is supported, though I could not rule out economic differences with my chosen case studies. It was not explicitly mentioned as a cause in the process tracing, but that alternative explanation cannot be dismissed. An interesting outcome of my results was the higher tolerance for military and executive coups in Brazil. My findings fit broadly into the literature whose emphasis is on institutions as an influence on why democratic values differ across states, transitional justice and, democracy in Latin America.

The implications of my findings are that the way truth and justice processes are conducted influences contemporary democracy. A state policy of amnesia, as seen in Brazil, has negative ramifications on modern democracy. The strength of the Argentina case was that process started early and has continued to occur. In Brazil, it started late and was unable to overcome institutional barriers. Argentina's case should be the model for other states in transition. Argentina's experience became a cornerstone of their political system and collective identities. Brazilian leaders should once again make the truth and justice process a political priority.

There are a few limitations to the research, the first being that economic factors are a potential explanation for my results. It would have been ideal to eliminate this control variable in the case selection, and future research should examine that causation more closely or find cases that eliminate it as alternative explanation. There are many economic and social disparities in Latin America which could influence the proliferation of democratic values. As a result, despite the possibility of the alternative explanation, my case selection did an adequate job of demonstrating the relationship between the variables. Another limitation was I could not account for the role of the media. News media coverage on the truth and justice process as a potential purveyor of democratic values was understudied in this research. A press that is free and able to report on these processes is likely to be an influential factor.

Future research should look at similar variables in different societal contexts, using a case study model. Examining transitional periods in other Latin American states, or in the Asian and African context, could eliminate the alternative explanation of economic differences. A quantitative methods study examining the relationship between truth and justice commissions and support for democracy would do a better job of eliminating control variables. Using regression analysis would clarify the relation of the variables in this study.

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Property Tax Implications on Levy Passage Rates in Idaho

Martha Smith

Abstract

Levies are largely under-studied despite their importance for primary education, specifically in rural Idaho. Originally, I proposed that as property tax rates increase, voters would be more apt to vote against the levy. To determine whether taxation makes a community more likely to pass a levy, I ran a multivariate regression analysis that included 387 supplemental levies accompanied by demographic statistics and property tax rates based on the county the district office was located in. The only statistically significant independent variable results that I found were the urban and rural property tax rates. As the rural tax rate increased, the levy passage rate decreased, and as the urban tax rate increased, the levy passage rate increased. This finding prompts an interesting conversation around Idaho education policy and can serve as a starting point in analyzing long-term education policy themes in Idaho.

Introduction

On May 21st, 2014, I posted on Facebook, "Anybody hear anything about the levy!??" As an eleven-year-old, I should've been more concerned with my spelling test, the cute boy in my math class, or whether we would have 15 extra minutes of recess. Instead, I worried about funding in our rural school district in Kooskia, Idaho. At the time, my mom was the elementary school librarian and we relied on her employment for health insurance. If the levy failed, she would've been out of a job, along with several other paraprofessionals at the school. Our district spans thousands of acres of National Forest, which is not taxable and, as a result, we rely on supplemental levies to fund us. There is little predictability on what the results will be from these levies. The inconsistency that accompanies levies affects the school district, families, and, most importantly, the students. Thus, exploring what factors affect Idaho levies can lead to better planning for school districts and better educational outcomes for students.

There is little scholarship on levies in Idaho. In general, supplemental levies and bond levies seldom have relevant literature, but Idaho specifically has almost no work done in this field. Most research has occurred in Ohio or Michigan and pertains to strategies for administrators to take on. The three main camps in the literature argued that different factors play the largest role in successful levies. First, a scholar argues that the specifications of the levy like financing and the number of times a levy has been run are overarching themes that determine the result of a levy (Bower, 2010). Another points to school boards and community leaders playing the largest role in levy results (Holt, 2006). Finally, another scholar claims that characteristics of the community at large like age, income, and the number of students they have in school (Rubinfeld, 1977).

When I began, I wanted to find out if there were factors that would have a statistically significant impact on supplemental levies in Idaho. To evaluate the likelihood that a levy will pass I hypothesized that higher (lower) rural and urban tax rates will decrease (increase) the in-favor vote percentage of Idaho levies independent of other demographic characteristics like income, religious affiliation, or educational attainment.

To test this, I ran a multivariate regression with levy approval percentage as my dependent variable. I obtained a public records request from the Idaho Department of Education outlining every levy run in Idaho between 2019-2023. From this, there were 387 supplemental levies to test. I then paired the county demographics obtained from various state entities to the county in which this district office of each school district was located. It is important to note that each school district is not located perfectly within a county. To control for population demographics, I included the median income, the percentage of white and Christian individuals, percentage of the population who voted for Trump in the 2020 election, and the percentage with a bachelor's degree in each county as independent variables. I also included a dummy variable for when the levy occurred indicating if it was a presidential election, the midterms, or off-cycle to account for influxes in voter turnout. Finally, I included the urban tax rate, rural tax rate, and the number of years the levy would run for. These all acted as independent variables in my analysis.

My original hypothesis was found to be partially true because the statistically significant variables were the urban tax rate, the rural tax rate, and levies that were run for two-year periods instead of 1 or 5. According to my regression results, as the urban tax rate increased by 0.1% the support for levies would increase by 2.52%. Rural tax rates performed in the opposite direction when both were run in the same regression. As the rural tax rate increased by 0.1%, approval for levies fell by 1.99%. When the regression was run with one or the other, urban tax rates increased levy support by 1.276% for every 0.1% increase in tax rates and rural tax rates also increased levy support by 1.549% for each 0.1% increase. Finally, levies that ran for two years instead of one increased the approval of levies by 3.14% in the regression that included both tax rates.

Literature Review

School levies play a dominant role in the longevity and quality of education for a variety of reasons. Public schooling relies primarily on local tax dollars, and for some educational institutions, students and professionals alike rely on the passage of levies for basic improvements. Other districts run bonds to build new facilities. The literature surrounding school levies is sparse in many parts of the country, but the majority of observational research is located in Michigan and Ohio. Among this literature, the majority of the scholarship is written from a strategy point of view for school administrators rather than explaining what characteristics determine or enhance the likelihood of a school district passing their levy.

Among the available research, the largest collections of scholarship surround three main ideas. First, scholars argue that the characteristics of the levy itself are most influential. This includes the time the levy will run and how much it is requesting. This research closely aligns with the literature surrounding strategies for school administrators as previously mentioned. Next, scholars point to community leaders and the school board as the most important factor. Finally, others point out that the characteristics of the community like median income and age have a more profound effect. This portion of the literature varies between urban and rural environments.

The first camp I will be discussing has to do with the specifications of the levy itself. Decisions on how to present the levy, when it will run, and how much the district is asking for all to contribute to the likelihood, or the lack thereof, of a levy passing. Predictably, financing is one of the most influential factors in determining if a levy will pass. As the dollar amount of the levy increases, the likelihood of the levy passing diminishes (Bowers, 2010). Furthermore, as enrollment increases, the likelihood of a levy passing increases (Bowers, 2010). The literature has some disagreement on this subject, but most scholars indicate that rural areas have a more difficult time passing levies (Bowers, 2010). The presentation and communication of the levy is an important indicator of whether it will fail. Previous literature indicates that a levy is most likely to pass on its first attempt. After that, the likelihood of passing starts to diminish (Ehrenberg, 2004). In the same vein, the communication of what the levy is passing for and how it will be utilized is an important educational resource for communities and tends to affect the passage (Theobald, 2002).

The second camp I located is that some scholars argue the individuals within the community have more of an impact on levy results. For instance, districts observed in Ohio indicated that highly engaged community members had a positive impact on the passage because of their ability to create a sense of urgency (Ingle, 2012). Furthermore, when community members chair the school board or action group, it is shown to be more effective than an administrator or someone employed by the district (Ingle, 2012). An overarching theme found in the literature was that the elected board, community members, and local media had to be in support of the bond to succeed and should be involved early in the process (Holt, 2006).

Finally, I found that some argue that the demographics of the community in which a levy or bond takes place have the most profound impact. Although previous literature has limitations and competing opinions, more recent literature indicates that older populations produce marginally lower support (Harris, 2004). In addition, similar literature indicates that voters act in ways that align their self-interest regarding income and children in school and less about the specifications of the levy itself (Rubinfeld, 1977).

The methods or ideas surrounding the passage of levies vary greatly between districts and the empirical evidence of these indicators is sparse and clustered among few states. In addition to this, the verbiage of levy and bond are used interchangeably. I see this as an inconsistency in the literature that creates confusion for the reader. Levies, in most areas, are used for learning support while bonds are primarily run to build new buildings. I will be specifically researching supplemental levies because they have different implications. Finally, the empirical research makes no mention of the state of Idaho. In my research, I hope to close this gap and present research that helps to make sense of Idaho's education climate. Through this, I hope to find more predictability for Idaho's supplemental levies.

Theory and Hypothesis

Idaho is a largely understudied state, especially considering subjects surrounding education. As a result, there is little known about Idaho's education landscape concerning the passage or failure of levies. The literature surrounding the predictability of levies is lacking in general and I was unable to find anything on Idaho or similar states. In my research paper, I hope to close this gap to more clearly understand the passage levies and, in turn, explore the factors that structure public buy-in to public education in Idaho.

Given Idaho's ideological battles surrounding public education and its reach, the scholarly work surrounding levies plays a key role in the longevity of our public education, particularly our rural communities that have less taxable land. To evaluate the likelihood that a levy will pass I hypothesize that higher (lower) rural and urban tax rates will decrease (increase) the in-favor vote percentage of Idaho levies independent of other demographic characteristics like income, religious affiliation, or educational attainment. I anticipate pre-existing property tax rates to influence voter decisions more so than other factors.

Republican voters tend to prefer less government overreach and lower tax rates. As tax rates increase, I predict that the support for levies, and other additional tax burdens, will decrease. Idaho has an overwhelming majority of Republican voters and I predict the effect of rural and urban tax rates will decrease levy approval percentages. In addition, I predict voters will react the same to higher or lower tax rates regardless of where they reside in Idaho.

Data and Methods

Case Selection

I hypothesize that the passage of levies is dependent upon pre-existing rural and urban tax rates. The universe of cases here is the total number of supplemental levies put before voters from 2019 to 2023, which led to a total of 374 observations received from the Idaho Department of Education.

Measurement

The measurement of these variables will be evaluated as continuous variables in a multivariate regression analysis. To test my observations, I will be utilizing the in-favor vote share of levies in Idaho between 2020-2023 as my dependent variable. These observations will range from 0%-100% and were derived from the Idaho Department of Education.

Next, I will be evaluating property tax rates in Idaho as an independent variable. In each county, there is a rural and urban property tax rate. Urban tax rates range from 0.545% to 1.896% while rural tax rates range from 0.303% to 1.232% (Idaho State Tax Commission, 2022). These tax rates can be found in the 2022 Annual Report, produced by the Idaho State Tax Commission and available online. The amount an Idahoan can expect to pay in taxes for a levy is determined by a county's property tax rate applied to the assessed value of their property and then multiplied by the levy amount. My final independent variable will be the Republican vote share in the 2020 election, which I have located from Fox News live election tracking software. The Republican vote share election results range from 30.03% to 87.9% in each county.

My independent variable controls in this regression include the median income, religious affiliation, and educational attainment in each county. These will allow me to separate additional variables that would inflate or deflate the variables I am seeking to evaluate. First, median income ranges from $48,088 in Clark County to $71,749 in Blaine County, according to the US Census. This will be an effective way to control how income will influence levy voting. Second, religious affiliation, a metric reported on by the Public Religious Research Institute, ranges from 40% in Blaine County to 78% in Franklin County. This control will help account for the demographics of Idaho Counties and help to describe the populations with more nuance. Next, educational attainment will be measured by the percentage of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher according to the US Census. The highest percentage of individuals with a bachelor's degree is Teton County at 30% and the lowest percentage is Owyhee County at 8%. This will allow my study to account for the educational background of the community. Next, I will be including a dummy variable for when the levy occurred to determine if it coincided with the presidential election, the midterms, or off-cycle of either. Finally, I will include a variable to determine if there is a difference between 1-year, 2-year, and 5-year levies.

Methodology

To evaluate my hypothesis, I will be running a multivariate regression analysis to see if my dependent variable, the "in favor" vote share of Idaho levies, is negatively or positively affected by the urban and rural tax rates. I will also use control variables in my regression analysis to account for demographic characteristics, timing, and the length of time the levy will run. This will allow us to predict the likelihood of a levy passing in Idaho and determine which factor plays more of a role. To accomplish this, I took all supplemental levies and applied the county the district office resides in as their demographic control variables. School districts do not perfectly align with counties and, as a result, there were some that I had to make a judgment call on what county to put them in.

Results

Levy Results in Idaho between 2019-2023			
Dependent variable:			
APPROVAL %			
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Percent Trump in 2020	0.03	-0.10	-0.04
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Percent with a Bachelor's	0.10	-0.21*	-0.07
	(0.12)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Percent White & Christian	0.04	0.22*	0.15
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.12)
Urban Tax Rate	25.15***		12.76***
	(4.87)		(1.72)
Rural Tax Rate	-19.85***	15.49***	
	(7.30)	(2.65)	
Levies ran for 2 years	3.14**	0.73	2.15
	(1.52)	(1.50)	(1.49)
Levies ran for 5 years	-8.67	-7.08	-8.58
	(10.78)	(11.14)	(10.87)
Off-Cycle Elections	1.74	2.61	2.26
	(3.25)	(3.36)	(3.27)
Presidential Election	-6.79	-7.30	-6.49
	(6.92)	(7.15)	(6.98)
Median Income	-0.0001	0.0001	-0.0000
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Constant	49.70***	47.89***	44.84***
	(10.47)	(10.82)	(10.40)
Observations	382	382	382
R^2	0.17	0.10	0.15
Adjusted R^2	0.14	0.08	0.13
Residual Std. Error	10.65 (df = 371)	11.01 (df = 372)	10.74 (df = 372)
F Statistic	7.33*** (df = 10; 371)	4.85*** (df = 9; 372)	7.20*** (df = 9; 372)
Note:	*p<0.1; >**p<0.05; >***p<0.01		

Based on this regression, we can see that the only significant variables are the urban tax rate, the rural tax rate, and the number of years for which the levy is requested. Otherwise, the rest of the variables are insignificant. From this, we can see that as the urban tax rate increases by 0.1%, the percentage of levy approval increases by 2.51%. Contrastingly, an increase in the rural tax rate by 0.1% results in a 1.98% decrease in the approval of levies. Ran separately, urban tax rates increased levy support by 1.276% for every 0.1% increase and rural tax rates also increased levy support by 1.549% for each 0.1% increase. Finally, levies that have a two-year period are 3.1% more likely to be passed. The R squared in this regression is 0.14, meaning that the predictive power of this model is fairly poor. However, we do garner some important findings.

To test for multicollinearity in the regression I ran, I ran a VIF test. In this test, none of the variance factors were above 5, meaning that the model did not have multicollinearity. Second, I tested for outliers and my Bonferroni p-value came back insignificant, meaning that I did not have any outliers. Finally, I ran a Breusch-Pagan test that warranted results that suggested my model did have heteroskedasticity within my model.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this test did provide partial support for my hypothesis. Originally, I had anticipated that higher tax rates would decrease levy support for both urban and rural taxes. The results warranted contradicting results. As the urban tax rate increased, the percentage of approval also increased, but as rural tax rates increased, the percentage of approval decreased. Partisanship and other demographic characteristics had no statistically significant results.

The previous literature surrounding levies in general warranted mixed results. These results coincide fairly well because they indicate that demographics are largely not a reliable method of predicting if a levy will pass. Rather, levies are a local issue and it is difficult to predict local changes, attitudes, and influence. A limitation of this study is that there is little predictability for the influence that community members hold in levies.

These findings could demonstrate a difference in how rural and urban environments view government oversight in Idaho. When run together in the same regression, urban and rural tax rates perform in opposite directions. In urban communities, the approval percentage increases as tax rates do. This could be the result of an acceptance of government influence through elected officials and political dialogue. Alternatively, in rural communities, as tax rates increase we see a decrease in approval percentage, which could be a rejection of government oversight and additional tax burdens. The results demonstrate a difference in ideology between urban and rural environments that could span past just levy approval percentages.

In the future, it would be useful to more carefully pair school districts with counties. In my analysis, I primarily selected the county that the main school district building was located in. This warrants a level of inaccuracy that could be improved by evaluating what county the majority of the school district land is in. In addition, adding a time variable to the regression analysis would help to account for overarching themes in Idaho education and politics.

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Grassroots Campaigns and the Election of the 2020 U.S. House

Jacob Bindley

Abstract

The campaign finance landscape has undergone substantial changes in the last two decades. Grassroots campaigns, funded by small donations (those under $200), have become a talking point for many politicians. This paper investigates the current relationship between types of campaign contributions and candidate electability with a focus on the 2020 U.S. House. In the paper, I utilized a multivariate regression to investigate the relationship between a candidate's type of financial backing and vote share in their race. I found that as a candidate increased their backing from small donors, their vote share in the election generally decreased. However, at the highest ends of the small donor spectrum, candidate vote share increased. Nonetheless, candidate incumbency and total campaign donations raised remain the most important factors in predicting electoral success. Overall, this research is crucial to understanding what sources of monetary support politically effective campaigns utilize.

Introduction

Since the 2010 Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United v FEC,* campaign finance has been a main focal point of American political study. Candidates running for all types of offices often accuse opponents of being backed by corporations and PACs (Evers-Hillstrom, 2020). In 2020, then-candidate Senator Bernie Sanders financed his entire presidential campaign through small donor funds (Arbour, 2020). Furthermore, both Democrats and Republicans often seek the favor of small donors and attempt to ward off accusations of being financed by Big Pharma, oil, business, etc. Consequentially, presidential, gubernatorial, and Senate candidates are publicly scrutinized for sources of funding (Evers-Hillstrom, 2020). However, candidates for the U.S. House often avoid these inquiries. Candidates running in districts with a lower media presence frequently dodge questions about their campaign financing (Evers-Hillstrom, 2020). This begs the question: what effect do small donations have on House candidates' electoral success?

An overview of the relevant literature finds two distinct camps regarding questions about campaign finance. The first camp views large donors as the most influential in predicting electoral outcomes. Scholars studying large donors explain that these sponsors often seek favor with candidates and look to protect their interests through large donations (Fleisher, 1993; Barber et al., 2016). The literature finds that candidates backed by large donors vote in similar ways to the donors' interests. The second camp focuses on small donors and the types of candidates they support. Most often, small donors contribute to the ideologically extreme candidates. However, other scholars in the small donor camp have found that these types of donations contribute to success in tight electoral contests. Consequentially, the literature regarding the research question of electoral success is divided.

With the success of candidates like then-Senator Obama in 2008, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in 2018, and Senators Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders in the last couple of decades, grassroots efforts have proved to be somewhat successful. However, regarding races for the U.S. House, individual support for a candidate may play a larger role in electoral success than solely monetary donations. Whether through the persuasion of family members, passive campaigning around acquaintances, or active volunteering in their local area, small donors may expand support for a candidate in multiple ways. As such, I theorize that small donors have a larger influence on political outcomes than their donation's value. Therefore, I am hypothesizing that as the percentage of small donations for a House candidate increases, the vote share a House candidate receives will increase as well.

In this paper, I compiled data on every House candidate in the 2020 cycle. Data concerning campaign finance came from opensecrets.org, a group that advocates for more financial transparency in politics. Total donations, total from small donors, and percent from small donors were all part of the report. Likewise, candidate race/ethnicity, gender, incumbency status, and party affiliation were also considered. Additionally, the statewide turnout for voters was compiled. In the experiment, I ran a multivariate regression that compares all the previously mentioned independent variables against candidate vote share in the election. The independent variable of focus for the paper, the percentage of small donors, was found to have a non-linear and polynomial relationship with vote share. As the percentage of donations from small donors increased, candidate vote share decreased. Later, the relationship flipped. When the percentage of small donors reached 70-75%, candidate vote share subsequently increased. Furthermore, the variables gender, incumbency, and race were found to be statistically significant. Candidates who were women, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, and/or incumbents all saw corresponding increases in vote share. Overall, the results proved consequential in investigating the relationship between small donors and House candidates.

Literature Review

What effect do small donor campaign contributions have on candidate success? Some scholars regard wealthy donors and corporate money as having the most influence in election cycles. These donors seek personal access to and influence over political candidates (Austen-Smith, 1995). In contrast, other scholars contend the bulk of small donor money in elections flows to candidates seen as outsiders (Culberson, 2018). This school explains that small donor contributions limit the power of party insiders in selecting candidates for general elections

Wealthy Donors and PAC Influence

A large portion of the scholarship focused on campaign finance sees wealthy donors and political action committees (PACs) as holding the levers of power in elections. According to previous studies, campaign funds often represent the largest predictor of electoral success (Alexander, 2005). Outcomes in competitive races are more dependent on campaign funds than party support (Alexander, 2005). Specifically, Alexander (2005) found a positive correlation between a candidate's vote share in an election and the level of PAC donations the candidate accepted.

As a result of successful electoral outcomes, political candidates are more susceptible to wealthy donors and PACs (Kalla & Broockman, 2015). Because of electoral success, large donors hold a disproportionate level of access to candidates (Barber et al., 2016). Furthermore, a PAC's policy stances play a deciding role in congressional voting by a PAC-supported candidate (Fleisher, 1993). The idea of campaign donations granting direct ties to candidates is widely supported, and only grew after the 2010 *Citizens United* U.S. Supreme Court decision (Austen-Smith, 1995; Kalla & Broockman, 2015). Before the decision, the majority of campaign funds were raised through a small group of individuals (Overton, 2004). During the 2000 presidential election, this group comprised less than 2% of the voting population (Overton, 2004). However, this power disparity only increased after 2010. The 2010 *Citizens United* decision allowed private citizens and corporations to spend unlimited amounts of money through PACs (Kalla & Broockman, 2015). In the 2012 general election cycle that followed, this type of political spending rose to over $1 billion (Kalla & Broockman, 2015). Because large donors successfully influence candidates, this source of funds remains constant in electoral cycles (Barber et al., 2016). According to the large donor school, with electoral success predicated on campaign funding, large donors remain a constant in politics and gain insider access to candidates.

Small Donors and Grassroot Campaigns

Another contrasting theory about campaign funding exists in the relevant literature. Scholars explain small donor contributions primarily contribute to outsider candidates. For reference, small donor contributions are defined as $200 or less (Arbour, 2020). Beginning in the 2008 presidential election with then-Senator Barack Obama, a shift toward small donors materialized in some campaigns (Wilson, 2009). His campaign reported that 91% of their funds were financed by donations of $100 or less (Wilson, 2009). Obama's mobilization of small donors amounted to over 2.5 million individual contributors (Wilson, 2009). Often called a grassroots campaign, this trend of relying on small donors continued beyond 2008 (Arbour, 2020). For instance, in the 2020 Democratic primaries, Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders each drew on almost exclusively small donor contributions (Arbour, 2020).

Research into small donor funding has found two common themes: increased polarization among candidates and a high prevalence of political outsiders gaining these resources (Johnson, 2010). To start, after analyzing the amount of small donor funding to candidates and cross-examining the ideology of candidates, prior research concludes the more ideologically extreme a candidate is, the more small donors they draw financial support from (Johnson, 2010). A secondary study found a similar result, small donors drive politicians toward more extreme views (Culberson, 2018). With the more extreme candidates utilizing small donor contributions, a significant power shift has impacted political parties (Arbour, 2020). As candidates draw support from sources unrepresentative of the party establishment, political parties have lost power over their nominating processes (Arbour, 2020). However, while small donors contribute to more extreme ideological preferences, they are also crucial to success in competitive races (Culberson, 2018). Therefore, the grassroots school contends that small donor contributions impact electoral success for more extreme candidates (Culberson, 2018).

Research Gap

While both schools of thought give different reasons for electoral success, large donors and small donors, respectively, there is a gap of knowledge in the existing literature. The scholarship on large donors primarily focuses on PAC access to candidates and the policy implications of PAC money. The available data also focuses mainly on presidential contests, not congressional races. Finally, the conclusion that large donors decide electoral outcomes was based on data from the early 2000s, and as mentioned, the rise of grassroots campaigns has changed this landscape. Similarly, the literature on small donor campaigns focuses mainly on primary contests, not general elections. This second school also focuses on the growing extremism of candidates with small donor funding, not the electoral outcomes for the candidates. For these reasons, the following research will focus on the effect of small donor contributions on candidate success in congressional races.

Theory and Hypothesis

To reiterate, scholars researching campaign finance and electoral results fall into two distinct camps. Some scholars contend that large campaign contributions through PACs are crucial to gaining preferential access to candidates. The research done in this arena investigates campaign donations through mainly a presidential-election lens. Alternatively, scholars in the second camp explain small contributions (under $200) as increasing polarization in primaries and flowing to the more ideologically extreme candidates. While scholars in both camps may be correct, a significant gap in the relevant literature exists. An examination of congressional races and electoral outcomes based on donor type is lacking across the discipline. Thus, the missing link between small donor contributions and electoral success requires investigation. The following research will spotlight congressional races to provide a large and diverse data set for analysis. With 435 individual election results in each 2-year cycle, there will be a large sample size to investigate. This research will also contribute significantly to the existing literature on small donor funding by shifting the electoral venue. Whereas prior research focused on party primaries as they related to small donors, the following research will focus on the congressional level. Overall, the following research fills a knowledge gap and sparks additional discussion.

This paper theorizes that as small donor contributions (x) increase, congressional candidate success (y) also increases. A multi-faceted rationale drives this theory. As shown in prior election wins, those of President Barack Obama, Senator Bernie Sanders, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, etc., small campaign donors can propel political success (Wilson, 2009; Arbour, 2020). There are multiple explanations for small donors moving the electoral needle. Perhaps the more small donors a candidate has, the larger and more energized the candidate's supporters are. For example, if someone donates money to a candidate, it is logical to say they will also vote for the candidate at the ballot box. A wide base of small donors likely represents an equally sized voting base. Furthermore, while corporations have large sums of money to spare on political efforts, the average American does not. As such, the funds are disproportionally more vital to these people. Therefore, it is rational to characterize an individual supporter donating hard-earned money as energized and enthusiastic about a specific candidate. The energetic supporter may also attempt to persuade family, friends, and neighbors to support a candidate. They also may be more likely to volunteer for the candidate, growing the candidate's outreach efforts. Thus, an individual small donor may multiply support for a specific candidate. On a separate note, a large swath of small donors may help dispel certain political ads. Since many politicians fund attack ads against opponents for receiving PAC funding and corporate money, a candidate with a significant base of small donors may dodge the ads (Arbour, 2020). As a result of a more widespread and energized voting base combined with the ability to defend from campaign finance-related attack ads, small donors increase electoral success. To test this theory, the following hypothesis will be investigated: *as the number of campaign contributions under $200 increases for a House candidate, the House candidate's percentage of the two-party vote share increases.*

Research Design

Case Selection

To test whether campaign contributions affect candidate success, every 2020 U.S. House of Representatives race will be analyzed. In this case, small donor contributions represent the independent variable and affect the dependent variable: House of Representatives candidate success. To specify the variables: small donations are $200 or less, and candidate success is the percentage of the two-party vote share a House candidate receives. Continuing, the 2020 House had 435 individual seats up for election. The top two candidates by vote share in all 435 electoral races will be examined. Thus, the total cases to be analyzed in this paper will be the 870 candidates for the House in 2020. To ensure the proper districts have been analyzed prior to redistricting after the 2020 U.S. Census, a compiled report of all Congressional districts in August of 2020 will be cross-referenced (Congressional District Maps, 2020).

Measurement

To accurately measure my independent variable, the number of campaign contributions under $200 for a House candidate, two sources will be utilized. The first source, opensecrets.org, provides a comprehensive list of U.S. electoral candidates in different election years, along with their campaign funding sources (2024). The Open Secrets website will be used to examine the funding from small donors that 2020 House candidates received. The organization breaks down campaign donations into categories, and one category already exists for donations under $200. The second source, the Federal Election Commission, will be used when Open Secrets data does not exist for a specific candidate or House race (2024). Additionally, to measure my dependent variable, a House candidate's percentage of the two-party vote share, two sources will be referenced. The first, Ballotpedia, is an online encyclopedia of information on American politics (2024). Ballotpedia draws information from published electoral results from each state's election office. The second source will be each state's Secretary of State webpage. All previously held election results are compiled on the websites that correspond to this office.

On top of the independent and dependent variables, five variables will represent the controls of this paper's analysis. They are voter turnout, candidate gender, the race of the candidate, candidate party affiliation, and incumbency status. Voter turnout will be measured utilizing each state's Secretary of State website. The websites provide voter turnout data as well as election results. Candidate gender will be defined by available information on a candidate's campaign website and past biographical statements made by the candidate. The categories for gender will include male, female, and other. The racial ethnicity of a candidate will also be defined utilizing the two previous sources, campaign websites, and personal statements regarding race. Race will be categorized according to the U.S. racial data collection standards: as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2015). Additionally, a candidate's party affiliation will be determined from electoral results on the related Secretary of State website. Finally, the incumbency status of a candidate will be examined by looking at the prior electoral cycle race results. For this information, Ballotpedia will be referenced, as prior electoral results are compiled concisely while still being drawn from an accurate source.

Methodology

To accurately test the relationship between my independent variable, the number of campaign contributions under $200 for a House candidate, and my dependent variable, a House candidate's percentage of the two-party vote share, a multivariate regression will be utilized. By using the regression model, the magnitude of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables will be found. Specifically, the regression will uncover if the relationship is statistically significant, the direction the variables move together, and the impact of an increase or decrease in small campaign donations on the vote share gained or lost by a candidate.

Results

Multivariate Regression

Dependent variable:		
Candidate Vote Share		
	(1)	(2)
Total Raised (Millions)	0.30**	0.29**
	(0.14)	(0.13)
Percent from Small Donors	-0.36***	-0.37***
	(0.08)	(0.08)
Percent from Small Donors Squared	0.003***	0.003***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Turnout	-0.09	-0.07
	(0.06)	(0.06)
Gender (Women)	1.73*	1.96**
	(0.91)	(0.90)
Asian	6.02	5.78
	(6.64)	(6.57)
Black/African American	5.99	5.49
	(5.70)	(5.64)
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	27.35**	27.44**
	(12.46)	(12.33)
White	3.23	3.11
	(5.63)	(5.57)
Hispanic/Latino	1.82	1.70
	(5.79)	(5.73)
Indian American	-0.51	-0.59
	(6.89)	(6.82)
Arab American	9.32	9.21
	(6.71)	(6.64)
Party (Republican)	1.35	1.47*
	(0.86)	(0.85)
Party (Independent)	4.47	4.50
	(6.44)	(6.38)
Incumbency	21.38***	21.44***
	(1.06)	(1.05)
Constant	47.05***	45.79***
	(6.70)	(6.64)
Observations	781	780
R^2	0.58	0.59
Adjusted R^2	0.57	0.58
Residual Std. Error	11.08 (df = 765)	10.97 (df = 764)
F Statistic	71.05*** (df = 15; 765)	73.16*** (df = 15; 764)
Note:	*p<0.1**p<0.05***p<0.01	

After running my first multivariate regression, the above results were found. My dependent variable was the vote share a House candidate received in the 2020 Congressional cycle. The multivariate regression uncovered that the independent variables: total donations raised by a House candidate, percent of donations raised from small donors, candidate race (Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander), and incumbency of the candidate, all are statistically significant. Total donations had a p-value of 0.02711 and a coefficient of 0.3, meaning that for every million dollars that donations increased, vote share increased by 0.3%. Percent of donations from small donors had a p-value of 0.00000224 and a coefficient of -0.36, meaning for every 1 percent of donations raised by small donors, vote share decreased by 0.36% on average. The independent variable of candidate race (Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander) had a p-value of 0.0282 and coefficient of 27.35. This means that when a candidate's race was Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, vote share increased by 27.35% on average. Incumbency was also statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.000 and a coefficient of 21.38. In other words, if a candidate was an incumbent in the race, their vote share increased by 21.38% on average. This regression had an R^2 value of 0.5821, meaning that the regression accounted for 58.21% of the variance in my dependent variable, vote share.

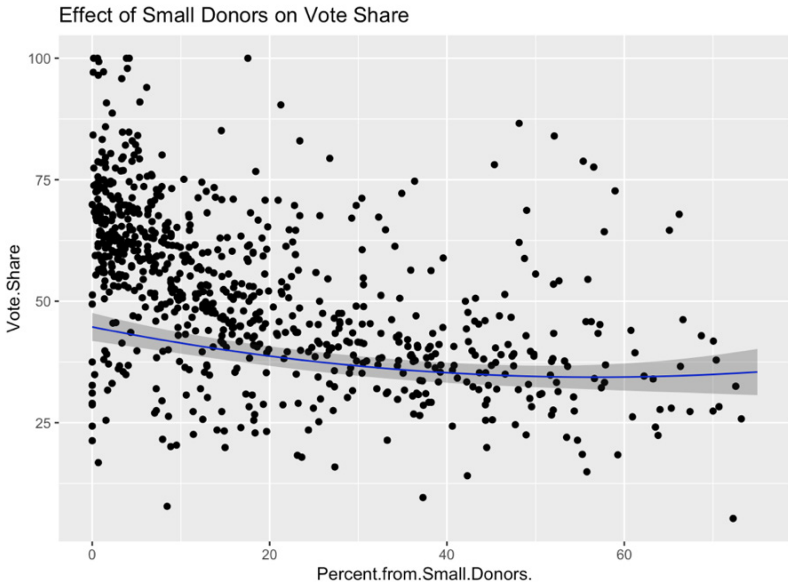
After running my first regression, I ran an outlier test. The test revealed that candidate 53, Dana Cottrell (R) from Florida's 11th Congressional District was an outlier. I then ran a second multivariate regression excluding Cottrell. The following independent variables were found to be statistically significant: total donations raised by a House candidate, percent of donations raised from small donors, candidate race (Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander), and incumbency of the candidate. Total donations raised had a p-value of 0.028 and a coefficient of 0.29. For every additional million dollars raised, vote share increased by 0.29%. Percent of donations from small donors had a p-value of 0.00000116 and a coefficient of -0.37. For every additional 1% of donations from small donors, vote share decreased on average by 0.37%. Candidate gender (woman) was also significant, with a p-value of 0.029 and a coefficient of 1.96. When a candidate was a woman, vote share increased by 1.96% on average. Candidate race (Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander) had a p-value of 0.026 and a coefficient of 27.44. When a candidate was Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, vote share increased by 27.44% on average. Incumbency was once again statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.000 and a coefficient of 21.44. Incumbents saw their vote share increased by 21.44% on average. The R^2 for this regression was 0.59, thus the model accounted for 59% of the variance in my dependent variable, vote share. This model had a 1% increase in the R^2 value; thus, it performed slightly better.

I also conducted a VIF analysis with my data to test for collinearity. As shown below, all the independent variables that were tested under VIF had a value under the maximum threshold of 5. This means none of the independent variables had a collinear relationship with my dependent variable, vote share.

VIF Test

	GVIF	Df	GVIFDf))
Total Raised (Millions)	1.17	1	1.08
Percent from Small Donors	12.24	1	3.50
Percent from Small Donors Squared	10.42	1	3.23
Turnout	1.04	1	1.02
Gender	1.19	1	1.09
Race	1.19	7	1.01
Party	1.17	2	1.04
Incumbency	1.80	1	1.34

Additionally, both of my multivariate regressions included a test for nonlinearity. This test was conducted on the independent variable, percent from small donors. The



test squared the variable and found it to be statistically significant. In the first regression, the p-value was 0.0049 and coefficient was 0.003. In the second regression, the p-value was 0.0043 and coefficient was 0.003. The relationship is somewhat nonlinear. This means there were slightly better returns as percent from small donors increased, which corresponds with the graph shown belowThe above model shows a polynomial relationship between my independent variable, percent from small donors, and my dependent variable, vote share. The line reveals that the effect of small donors on vote share varies on a spectrum. On average, when percent from small donors is near 0, vote share is about 45.7%. Towards the middle of the graph, when percent from small donors hits 40%, vote share drops to an average of 40%. At the end of the graph, when percent from small donors reaches 75%, it corresponds with a slightly higher vote share. Higher percentages of vote share corresponded with lower small donor percentages, then tapered off. The relationship between the two variables is nonlinear.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results found in the above models did not support the hypothesis of the paper. As a reminder, the hypothesis was that as the number of campaign contributions under $200 increases for a House candidate, the House candidate's percentage of the two-party vote share increases. As shown by the coefficient of -0.37, candidate vote share decreased by 0.37% when small donor contributions rose by one percent. Also, as previously mentioned, the results are nonlinear. The relationship between the two variables became positive at higher ends of small donorship. In other words, small numbers of grassroots donors did not affect vote share; higher numbers decreased it, and the highest numbers saw vote share gains. The results were also consistent with general trends in American electoral politics. First, candidates that were women performed better in the cycle than men. This finding is consistent with prior studies that found that women candidates are generally overqualified for the positions they seek relative to their male counterparts (Fulton, 2018). Shifting gears, a candidate's incumbency status, and the amount of money raised were both vital to increasing vote share. Incumbents, on average, saw their vote share increase by 21.4% compared to non-incumbents. Consistent with trends following the *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision, the more money a candidate raised, the higher the percentage of the vote they received (Kalla & Broockman, 2015). Specifically, in the 2020 congressional general elections, every additional million dollars raised equaled a vote share increase of 0.29%. As such, most of the findings tie back to the relevant literature regarding campaign finance.

As a quick aside, the candidate race being Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander was statistically significant and very consequential for increasing vote share because of a lack of data. Only one candidate in the 2020 congressional cycle identified under this category and ran for Hawaii's 2nd seat. The candidate, Kai Kehele, won 63% of the vote in the election; thus, the results were skewed in the category.

Circling back to the literature review, the results of the paper support previous scholars' findings concerning campaign finance. Alexander (2005) found that political outcomes depend more upon candidate funding than party support. The 0.29% vote share increase for every additional million dollars aligns with this finding. Similarly, Alexander (2005) found that increasing levels of PAC donations lead to increases in vote share. Alexander's finding corresponds with the majority of the previously shown polynomial graph. The dip in vote share as percentages of small donorship increased reflects the opposite effect occurring with large donors. Moreover, the polynomial relationship between small donors and vote share aligns with the literature regarding polarization and extremism. Johnson (2010) found the majority of small donor funds go to the most ideologically extreme candidates. Additionally, Culberson (2018) found that small donors are driven primarily by ideology. Other pieces of literature correspond with the findings, instead opting for labeling ideologically extreme candidates "outsiders" (Arbour, 2020). Either way, the results of this paper reflect the prior literature on small donors and extremism. For example, candidates like Jim Jordan and Matt Gaetz received some of the highest percentages of small donations. These representatives align with the most extreme wings of their respective party, as part of the House Freedom Caucus (DeSilver, 2023).

Implications and Limitations

The implications of my findings are twofold. First, candidate success remains highly dependent upon large donors and raising the most campaign funds possible. The results support the theory that campaign funding has remained largely the same since the 2010 *Citizens United* decision. As such, candidates will likely continue to draw support from PACs and private businesses instead of the American public. Until the mobilization of small donors equates with consistent political success, these trends will remain in place. Additionally, the second implication of the paper deals with political extremism. Over the last decade, political extremism and ideological polarization have gripped the United States. Small donors may play a significant role in the polarization of the present Congress. As discussed, small donors give to the most ideologically extreme candidates. These candidates have also been largely behind much of the congressional divide. Therefore, until small donors represent more moderate positions, candidates who receive most of their funds will continue to be politically extreme.

Additionally, there are a few possibilities for why the findings did not align with the hypothesis of the paper. Limitations included case selection and data collection. To fully investigate electoral outcomes, an analysis of Senate candidates would have been a welcome addition to the research. Likewise, with a two-person contest for every House seat, a maximum of 870 candidates would run in a full general election. However, whether it be through lack of an opponent or lack of funding information, only 780 candidates were able to be analyzed. There are various reasons for this disparity. Some districts had incumbents running unopposed, while others faced opponents with such small support that they lacked donor information on opensecrets.org. However, the main reason for the lack of support for the hypothesis remains the political ideology of donors. With small donors representing the extreme ends of the political spectrum, it is unlikely they would donate enough to moderate candidates to boost vote share. Moderate candidates do not mobilize these types of voters as much as ideologically extreme candidates do. Furthermore, campaigns dependent upon small donors are easily out-fundraised by PAC-backed opponents. As money buys political advertisements, interviews, and other forms of voter outreach, the candidates with the largest donors often fare the best.

Future Research

There are a few key questions posed by the findings of the paper. First, the analysis did not consider voter profiles. As the Federal Election Commission requires donors to disclose certain types of info, an analysis of the geographic location of donors (i.e. urban vs. rural) and the frequency of donor behavior are both feasible. When a small donor contributes to a campaign, is it a one-time gift or part of an overall pattern in their financial and electoral behavior? Also, do these donors represent the electorate in any substantive way? Future research could focus on the frequency of voter contribution and the candidates they voted for over time. Finally, the research in this paper focused solely on the 2020 House elections. Additional research may reveal new donor trends in the 2022 midterms and the upcoming 2024 cycle. An overview of all House race funding from 2010, after the January *Citizens United* ruling, to the present, would be vital to expanding campaign finance knowledge.

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Patriotism and Crime: A Study on how US Patriots Affect Crime

Gage Purdom

Abstract

While America has always been a very patriotic country, recent events within the United States political sphere and actions by self-proclaimed patriots have led to scrutiny over what the word patriotism represents. Researchers have begun to think that patriotism is a negative towards American society, and have shown possible correlations that link patriotism to negative societal traits such as racism and bigotry. This is due to the fact that patriotism often arises within the majority group of a society, which can lead to ill feelings towards the minority groups when they do not share the same patriotic values as the majority. What has not been explored is the effect that patriotism has on crime. This study hypothesizes that high levels of patriotism can lead to higher levels of crime. I used data from the American National Election Survey (ANES) to create my variable for patriotism, and used data from the FBI database to create my variable for crime rates. After running a multivariate regression analysis, my results actually found the opposite of my conclusion, indicating that patriotism actually leads to lower levels of crime. On face value, this can be used to argue that patriotism is a benefit to society, but likely it also means that there is no perfect way of measuring patriotism. To get a better understanding of the actual societal impacts of a patriotic society, a better metric for measuring patriotism needs to be developed than the one used in this paper.

Introduction

In 2022, viral images were displayed across the internet showing a group of masked men on their knees and handcuffed in Northern Idaho. These men were part of an organization called the Patriot Front, an alt-right white supremacist hate group, and were allegedly planning on disrupting a local pride event at the time of their arrest in Coeur D'Alene, Idaho. These individuals represent an extreme viewpoint in American politics, but their use of patriotic symbols is extremely interesting. America has an interesting relationship with patriotism. The pledge of allegiance is still said in many public schools and the national anthem is still sung before all sporting events, but academics are conflicted on whether or not patriotism is a good thing. Scholars argue that patriotism leads to an increase in racism (Ishio, 2010) and can harm democratic function if it is fostered to the extreme (Kahne & Middaugh, 2006). Patriotism is also dangerous when combined with alt-right viewpoints, as seen by a rise in alt-right crime in recent years (Konieczny, 2022). Some scholars even argue that patriotism is simply a tool used by governments to retain control over its citizens; patriots are less likely to participate in non-traditional democratic activities such as protesting (Zhai et al., 2023; Rooji et al., 2012). However, no research has outright said what the effect that patriotism has on crime. The main indicators of crime are poverty (Weatherburn, 2001) and income inequality (Choe, 2008), and it is unclear in the research what the effect of a highly patriotic population has on crime rates in any particular state. This paper attempts to fill this gap, and postulates that high levels of patriotism in a state leads to high levels of crime in a state. This is due to how patriotism affects the way that citizens view their neighbors: patriots are much more likely to group themselves in with other patriots which can lead to distrust towards people outside of their group (Parker, 2010). This could potentially lead to patriots to be more willing to commit violent and criminal acts towards less patriotic people. Likewise, patriots often view that their status in American society is constantly under threat, viewing themselves as victims of a changing American culture (Wamsler, 2022). This could potentially lead to patriots feeling like they are backed into a corner, and be more willing to act both violently and criminally against an American society that they have less and less respect for. To test this, I ran two separate multivariate regression analysis, testing the effect that patriotism has on both violent and property crime. This test used data from the FBI database to create a variable for crime rates and will use a survey question from the American National Election Survey (ANES) to quantify patriotism levels for each of the 50 states. This test showed that the hypothesis of this paper was incorrect, and actually found support that patriotism actually leads to lower crime rates, contrary to the hypothesis of this paper.

Literature Review

The literature shows that the main indicator of crime in the United States is high levels of poverty; the main perpetrators of crime are often individuals who are at or around the poverty line, indicating that areas with a larger percentage of people below the poverty line tend to have more crime (Weatherburn, 2001). This can be further aggravated by the presence of robust income inequality in an area, which can create perceptions of poverty amongst those who aren't below the poverty line and further worsen the perception of poverty for those who are actually below the line (Choe, 2008). However, this only tells part of the story. More recent research shows a fractured home life also leads to increases in crime. Many criminals are brought into crime due to poor upbringing and neglectful or overburdened parents. Likewise, a child born into a fractured home may be more likely to commit criminal acts when they are older (Weijer, 2015). Other research shows that population density can also be a predictor of crime, as high density allows more opportunities for criminals (Harries, 2006).

While it is generally agreed upon that patriotism naturally occurs in most nations, there is less consensus regarding its implications and effects. Scholars on this topic generally fall under two main schools of thought. The first of these camps, and perhaps the most prevalent, is the view that patriotism is generally a negative trait for nations to possess. In other words, its function is archaic and harmful to society. Most of this research compares patriotism to nationalism and argues that modern patriotism carries many of the same negative consequences that are traditionally associated with nationalism. In America, scholars in this camp generally associate patriotism with racism, pointing to the fact that white Americans are much more likely to be patriotic than minorities within the United States (Ishio, 2010). Thus, it can also foster negative feelings in the majority towards minorities, which can lead to an increase in racism and bigotry (Parker, 2010). In turn, the result can be a rise in far-right thinking, which if left unchecked can lead to an increase in alt-right crime (Konieczny, 2022). Studies have also shown that developed countries are less likely to be patriotic than less developed countries, as governments of less developed countries can sometimes use patriotism as a tool to retain power over their people (Ariely, 2016; Zhai et al., 2023). Similarly, patriotic citizens are less likely to participate in non-traditional political participation, such as protesting or civil disobedience, which can act as essential tools for democratic nations (Rooji et al., 2012).

The second school of thought is the thought that patriotism is positive for society. Most of this research is done on the thought that a form of patriotism is necessary for good citizenship, and that patriotism should be lightly encouraged or at least accepted by scholars for its positive contributions to society. Scholars in this camp point to the fact that patriotism by nature encourages pride in the place in which they reside. This pride makes them more likely to participate in various civic engagements and be more active members of their communities in comparison to less patriotic people (Richey, 2011). Scholars argue that the civic involvement that is shown in patriots is necessary for good citizenship; since good citizenship should be cultivated and encouraged, being patriotic shouldn't be discouraged (Primoratz, 2009). These scholars would say that patriotism isn't blind loyalty towards a government. Rather, it is a commitment to cooperate with fellow citizens and neighbors, which is a good trait for societies to have (Soutphommasane, 2012). Likewise, patriotism in the face of crisis can be essential for a nation; the "we" before "me" mindset can be extremely important for a developed country. Scholars point towards the good feelings that came in the wake of the September 11th attacks, using it as an example of how patriotism can be used for the betterment of a nation (Sander & Putnam, 2010).

While there is a plethora of research done on the causes and effects of patriotism, there is very little in one specific area: the way that patriotism affects crime rates. Given scholars' discoveries of significant effects associated with patriotism, such as potential increase in right-wing behavior, it stands to reason that patriotism could have a negative effect on crime rates. By doing so, it could offer additional support in the ongoing debate regarding patriotism, and more clearly show exactly the effects that patriotism has on society in one very clear variable that will surely affect most people.

Theory and Hypothesis

As seen in the literature review, other scholars have shown the effects that patriotism has on society at large. While some scholars don't agree on the exact scope of these effects, it is largely agreed upon that extreme patriotism, which some scholars call "blind patriotism" (Schatz et al., 2009), has largely negative effects on society. This type of patriotism manifests in people with the thinking "My country right or wrong". This has been shown to lead to increases in racist behavior (Parker, 2010) and has large scale negative effects towards the wellbeing of democracies in general (Rooji et al., 2012). However, an effect that hasn't been examined in the literature is the effect that patriotism has on rates of crime. The purpose of this paper is to fill this gap, and to investigate how patriotism affects crime.

In this paper, I will be hypothesizing that extremely high levels of patriotism will lead to increases in crime. The rationale that I will be using to argue this point has to do with how blind patriots respect their fellow citizens and their governments. Blind patriotism is associated with increases in racist behavior (Parker, 2010) and declines in democracies (Rooji et al., 2012), so it can be reasonable to think that patriotism leads to higher rates of crime. Blind patriots' loyalty to their country might be unwavering, but their commitment to their fellow citizens might be less strong. This is especially true if their fellow citizens are not as patriotic as the patriot in question. If this is the case, then this could result in increases in crime; blind patriots might be willing to justify their crimes against non patriots in the same way that they justify the crimes of their nation. Patriots often view themselves as members of an "in" group, and have a very clear understanding about the "out" group (Ishio, 2010). However, as more and more patriots feel like their "in" group is under threat from the "out" group (Wamsler, 2022), more and more patriots could result to violence to protect their place in society. States with higher patriotic populations could feel increasingly marginalized by "out" groups, which could result in an uptick in crime in the state as a whole. The other negative effects of patriotism also could contribute, such as the fact that patriotism can often lead to racist and bigoted behavior (Konieczny, 2022). This leads to my hypothesis, which is that states with higher percentages of people who view their country to be superior to others are more likely to experience high rates of crime in comparison to states with low percentages of people who view their country to be superior to others.

Case Selection

To test my hypothesis, I will be running a multivariate regression. This test will show the effect, if any, that patriotism has on crime rates on the state level. This means that I will be comparing data from all 50 states. If my hypothesis is to be believed, then there will be a correlation between states with high crime rates and states with high levels of patriotism. I have decided to run this model on data from the state level because data at the state level is both the easiest to procure and is the most complete and accurate. I will also have several control variables in this model to further strengthen the test. These control variables will be population density, poverty, income inequality, divorce rates and median household income. I will also only be comparing the fifty states in this model; US territories such as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have been excluded from this model. This has been done as these territories are often outliers on many data points due to their unique nature in the US: the District of Columbia is obviously skewed on factors such as population density due to its very small size. Puerto Rico is also much poorer in relation to the states; this could skew the data on factors such as median household income poverty.

Measurement

In this model, patriotism will be used as the independent variable and crime rates will be used as the dependent variable. I will be measuring my independent variable by using a survey question from the American National Election Study (ANES). I will first be using the survey's location data to group respondents into different states. I will then look at respondents' answers to the following question: "'The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like Americans.' Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with this statement?" (American National Election Survey, 2023). ANES gives respondents a score for this question: a 1 for "agree strongly", a 2 for "agree somewhat", a 3 for "neither agree nor disagree", a 4 for "disagree somewhat", and a 5 for "disagree strongly" (2023). ANES scores each respondent based on which number they choose; I will be using these scores to formulate the variable for patriotism. I will then average out each state's respondents scores, giving me a number I can use for the whole state; this means that the lower the number the higher the patriotism score for the state. In theory, a number closer to one will imply that the state has a higher number of blind or extreme patriots that generally cause negative societal effects, but this cannot be explicitly controlled for with this survey question.

I will be measuring my dependent variable from statistics from the FBI Crime Data explorer. Specifically, I will be using the FBI's estimated rate per 100,000 residents for both violent crime and property crime (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2022). I will be using an estimate as each state has different rules for law agencies reporting crime; the FBI fills these holes with an official estimate. I will be using the rate per 100,000 residents instead of a raw number to better balance the states with high populations and low populations (2022). Violent crime and property crime will be measured separately. These two types of crime were chosen as they are the most serious types of crime that are reported and are the types of crime that I am most interested in observing.

As stated earlier in the paper, I will also be using five control variables to help legitimize my findings. These variables were chosen based on the fact that they are all common indicators of high crime in the literature. The variables are population density, poverty rates, income inequality, divorce rates, and median household income. Divorce rates were added as a control to attempt to represent the effects of a fractured home life on crime. To measure population density, I will be using data from the US Census Bureau, in which population density is measured by the amount of people in a square mile (United States Census Bureau, 2020). To measure poverty, I will be using data from the US Census Bureau that measures the percent of people below the poverty threshold in each state averaged out over a three year threshold between 2020 and 2022 (United State Census Bureau, 2022). The US Census Bureau has two separate indexes to measure this, the official poverty index and the SPM poverty index. The official poverty index only measures cash resources, while the SPM poverty index also includes non-cash benefits and subtracts (2022). These two indexes will be coded as separate variables. Income inequality will be measured using the GINI coefficient for income inequality from the US Census' 2019 ACS 1-year estimate (United States Census Bureau, 2019). This coefficient tracks income inequality, with a 0 representing perfect equality; the higher the number the greater the inequality (2019). Divorce rates will be using data from the US Census' 2023 ACS 1-year estimate, which tracks the divorce rate of per 1000 women over the age of 15 (American Community Survey, 2023). Finally, median household income will be measured by data from the US Census's 2022 ACS 1-year estimate (United States Census Bureau, 2023).

Methodology

My model's purpose is to find correlation between patriotism and both violent crime and property crime. I will be running two separate multivariate regressions, with the first testing the effect that my value for patriotism has on violent crime. This test will also include control variables that will control for common predictors of violent crime. The second will be testing the effect that my value for patriotism has on property crime, while also including the same control variables as the violent crime test. Any correlation found will be represented in a regression table in the results section of this paper. For conciseness, these two tests will be shown as two separate columns on the same regression table.

Results

Table 1

Patriotism and Crime Table		
Dependent variable:		
	Violent.Crime.Rate	Property. Crime.Rate
	(1)	(2)
Patriotism	9.31	1,064.92**
	(117.75)	(430.71)
Population.Density	-0.16*	-0.87***
	(0.09)	(0.31)
Official.Poverty	40.76***	40.98
	(14.69)	(53.72)
SPM.Poverty	-4.03	51.43
	(18.55)	(67.85)
Income.Inequality	204.33	3,703.74
	(1,574.97)	(5,761.08)
Divorce.Rates	5.85	98.49*
	(15.28)	(55.89)
Median.Income	0.01	0.01
	(0.004)	(0.01)
Constant	-593.14	-5,839.73*
	(867.51)	(3,173.28)
Observations	50	50
R^2	0.39	0.38
Adjusted R^2	0.29	0.28
Residual Std. Error (df = 42)	126.18	461.57
F Statistic (df = 7; 42)	3.90***	3.74***
Note:	*p**p***p<0.01	

Table 2

Patriotism and Crime		
Dependent variable:		
	Violent.Crime.Rate	Property.Crime.Rate
	(1)	(2)
Patriotism	12.35	1,026.08**
	(115.61)	(425.53)
Population.Density	-0.16*	-0.91***
	(0.08)	(0.31)
Official.Poverty	38.62***	68.37*
	(10.74)	(39.55)
Income.Inequality	4.85	6,252.42
	(1,264.61)	(4,654.76)
Divorce.Rates	5.12	107.79*
	(14.74)	(54.25)
Median.Income	0.01*	0.02
	(0.003)	(0.01)
Constant	-487.23	-7,192.94***
	(709.20)	(2,610.40)
Observations	50	50
R^2	0.39	0.38
Adjusted R^2	0.31	0.29
Residual Std. Error (df = 43)	124.78	459.28
F Statistic (df = 6; 43)	4.64***	4.31***
Note:	*p**p***p<0.01	

As seen in Column 1 of Table 1, official poverty and population density are both significant in relation to the dependent variable of violent crime; official poverty has a positive relationship while population density has a negative one. This means that as the percentage of people under the official poverty line grows, the violent crime rate will rise, and as a state's population density grows, the violent crime rate will decrease. Specifically, for every one percentage increase in poverty, there will be approximately 40.76 more cases of violent crime in that state. Likewise, for every 1 increase of people per square mile, there will be approximately 0.16 less cases of violent crime in that state. Patriotism is not significant for this measure; there is no significant relationship between patriotism and violent crime according to this data. For this measure of my dependent variable, my hypothesis is null.

As seen in Column 2 of table 1, the variables patriotism and population density are significant in relation to the dependent variable of property crime: patriotism holds a positive relationship towards property crime while population density has a negative one. For every increase of my patriotism index by 1, there will be approximately 1064 more cases of property crime in that state; for every 1 increase of people per square mile, there will be approximately 0.87 less cases of property crime in that state. These results are a bit deceiving, as an increase in a state's patriotism score actually means that the state is less patriotic. Therefore, decreases in patriotism lead to increases in property crime under this model. This goes in direct contrast to my hypothesis; while there is a correlation between patriotism and crime, it is the opposite relationship than the one I predicted.

To further test the accuracy of my results, I ran a VIF test to examine if there was any collinearity present in my paper. This test showed that the variables Official Poverty and SPM Poverty both experienced some collinearity, which wasn't very shocking considering they are measuring the same thing. As Official Poverty had more significance towards the model, I elected to run a second test with only Official Poverty. It is possible that the inclusion of SPM poverty was muddying the results, so I elected to drop it from my second test. Thus, Table 2 shows the results of the same test with the exclusion of the variable of SPM poverty. This changed some values of the magnitude of certain variables, but did little in terms of significance besides making Official Poverty significant for property crime. The next test run was an outlier test to see if any outliers were present in my model. While there were no significant outliers, Mississippi and Tennessee were the closest for violent crime; Idaho and Washington were the closest in terms of property crime. To be thorough, these four states were dropped from their respective models. I then ran a separate test without those four states, and the results of this test are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Patriotism and Crime		
Dependent variable:		
	Violent.Crime.Rate	Property.Crime.Rate
	(1)	(2)
Patriotism	-32.00	1,188.34***
	(101.56)	(392.29)
Population.Density	-0.16**	-0.77***
	(0.07)	(0.27)
Official.Poverty	47.77***	62.44*
	(9.66)	(34.19)
Income.Inequality	-491.21	4,000.12
	(1,119.12)	(4,050.94)
Divorce.Rates	-4.63	127.53**
	(13.11)	(48.42)
Median.Income	0.01**	0.01
	(0.003)	(0.01)
Constant	-174.00	-6,328.41***
	(625.63)	(2,326.61)
Observations	48	48
R^2	0.52	0.44
Adjusted R^2	0.45	0.36
Residual Std. Error (df = 41)	108.88	395.96
F Statistic (df = 6; 41)	7.52***	5.33***
Note:	*p**p***p<0.01	

The results of Table 3 show that the variable of Divorce Rates becomes significant in relation to property crime, and made patriotism much more significant in relation to property crime. Finally, a breusch-pagan test was run to test for heteroskedasticity. This test proved to be insignificant, implying that the model is largely homoscedastic.

These results show that my hypothesis is incorrect. In terms of violent crime, there is no significant correlation between violent crime and patriotism; other factors such as poverty indexes and population density are greater predictors of violent crime. However, patriotism was a predictor of property crime, which ran in line with my hypothesis, though the relationship was the opposite of my original prediction.

Discussion and Conclusion

The result of this test was very surprising. While my hypothesis was correct to assume there was correlation between patriotism and crime rates, the direction of this correlation was counter to what I hypothesized, and counter to much of the literature on the subject. While there has been little literature written on the relationship between patriotism and crime, most of it predicts that patriotism's affect on society will be a negative one, in contrast to the findings of this paper (Ariely, 2016; Konieczny, 2022; Rooji et al., 2012). While it is possible that this new finding is a new found benefit of patriotism that has been neglected in previous literature, I also believe that there were limitations to my study that don't paint the full picture on this subject. While ANES is a nationally representative survey, the question I used had a fair amount of responses who either did not respond or refused to respond. This created a bit of a disparity in the number of respondents each state had, possibly leading to inaccurate results. The ANES question I used also failed to account for blind patriotism, as it only tested for a much more general form of patriotism. As I established in the literature review, blind patriotism is the most damaging type of patriotism (Schatz et al., 2009). It not being tested for likely hid some of the effects that arise from that type of patriotism. Further testing will have to find a better way to test patriotism to more accurately account for blind patriots. Patriotism is an imprecise quality to study. Patriotism can manifest itself differently in different people; patriotism can also differ in terms of magnitude, and there is more nuance to being patriotic. A state with a high level of patriotism according to my study might not have a correlated amount of extreme or blind patriots that I hypothesized cause increases in crime. However, it could also be true that the sense of community that arises from patriotism prevents crime from arising: while negative thoughts and feelings may arise towards the “out” group, the sense of community that patriots feel prevents these feelings from being violent. To further prove this research on the relationship between patriotism and crime rates, a better way to measure patriotism must be used to garner the most accurate results. Further research could also be done to examine if this patriotic correlation holds true on the international level, or if it is exclusive to the United States.

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