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PoliS

***Carleton Journal of
Political Science***



**Edition I
Democracy & Autocracy**

To the Carleton College Political Science/International
Relations Department and our advisor Dr. Tun Myint:

Thank you

Dear Reader,

We are proud to present the inaugural issue of *PoliS: The Carleton Undergraduate Journal of Political Science*. The release of this issue coincides with the official opening of Carleton College's new political science building, Hasenstab Hall. Both the journal and the building share a common mission of providing a home for students engaged in the rigorous and innovative study of political science for years to come.

Emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, tensions in the global sphere have revealed both the resilience of countries and the crumbling of political structures. In light of national and international events threatening the status quo of political systems, connections, and conflicts, this first issue explores themes of "Democracy and Autocracy."

We have selected four recent graduates' pieces which employ diverse research methods to examine women's activism, political campaigns, totalitarianism, and foreign involvement. It is our hope that each piece invites you to expand your conceptions of democracy and autocracy: where one becomes the other, and where the definitions seem to blur together.

Our goal is for PoliS to spark new questions, ignite curiosity, and open discussions within and beyond our community. We hope you enjoy this inaugural issue.

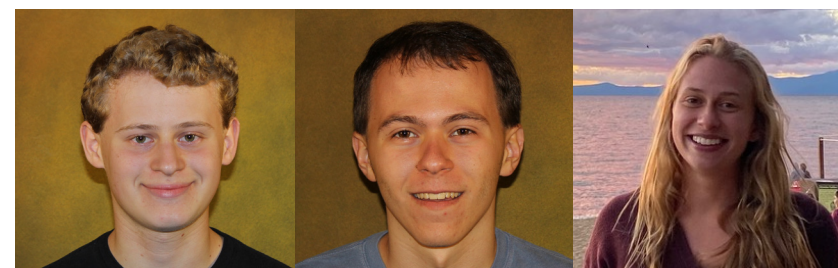
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Post-War Patriarchy in Paradox: The Conflicting Roles and Expectations of Women's Mobilization in Post-Conflict Lebanon

Rose Delle Fave

Abstract

This study examines the roles played by Lebanese women in the reconstruction of their society after the 1975-1990 sectarian civil war. These roles are examined through a literature focused on women's mobilization, seeking to counter understandings of women as victims. This paper asks how the postwar environment created opportunities for women's mobilization and the advancement of rights, ultimately highlighting the paradoxical role of Lebanese women excluded from the political process while undertaking capacity-building projects towards that process. This study demonstrates that movements for women's empowerment and the post-war reconstruction efforts go hand-in-hand, while also delineating how grassroots organizations can provide social support and political agency. It concludes by suggesting that women's mobilization provided empowerment, societal reconstruction and state services, placing the subaltern at the heart of the political and societal processes in the years following the civil war.

I. Introduction

In late October of 1992, the Arab Center for Studies on Development in Montreal hosted a week-long conference titled "Pour Le Liban," or, "For Lebanon." At the event, Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr, Director of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW), presented a paper about the effects of the 1975-1990 Lebanese Civil War on women and children. Dr. Abu Nasr argued that, throughout the war, women had held together not only their own families but the whole of Lebanese society itself: "What women achieved was to hold together the collapsing structures of the Lebanese society. They patched up the lack of adequate social and medical services by volunteering to work in social welfare organizations both national and international" (Abu Nasr 1992, p. 18). The war officially ended with the Taif Agreement in 1989, but this rescuing role played by women in organizations continued long afterwards, as community organizations and NGOs led by women continued to fill gaps left by the state in areas of economic reconstruction and social rehabilitation.

This situation prompts the question -- what were the effects of the war on sparking women's mobilization in post-

conflict Lebanon? In a war where women played a wide variety of active roles both in support of and in combat with local militias, what roles were women given (or not given) in the post-war and peace building process? In this paper, I examine how a lack of state support during the post-war societal rehabilitation process contributed to the political mobilization of women in Lebanon. I argue that although women were excluded from the official peace building processes in Lebanon, and, in many ways, were specifically disadvantaged by them, it was women's organizations that stepped up to fulfill the responsibility required from civil society in areas where the government failed to provide adequate support. As a result, women's organizations held a paradoxical position in Lebanon during the post-war period. At this time, there was an explosion of women's activism but limited capacity for widespread change because organizations had to simultaneously work with and against the state in their actions and advocacy. In light of these circumstances, many women's organizations undertook capacity-building projects to promote individual women's economic and social empowerment. In this way, Lebanese women exercised their political agency in the post-war period even as they were excluded from state institutions. These findings contribute to existing literature which explores the relationship between the end of internal violent conflict and the emergence of movements for the improvement of women's rights.

II. Conceptual Framework: Women's Mobilization in Post-Conflict Environments

The destructive effects of war have long been studied for their gendered dynamics and their disproportionate impacts on the lives of women. However, less scholarly attention has been paid to some of the unexpected opportunities that violent conflict can produce by disrupting societal norms and creating openings for change. A growing field of research has recently emerged which explores the theory that conflict can be a catalyst for mass mobilization (Blumberg 2001, Tripp 2015, Hughes & Tripp 2015, Berry 2017, Berry & Lake 2017). More specifically, much of this existing literature examines the ways in which war creates opportunities for women to mobilize for their collective rights in post-conflict society. Scholars have found that, as a result of wartime dynamics, women take on many new roles in society including as combatants, community organizers, and heads of households, blurring the lines between the public and private spheres and creating new opportunities for their participation in post-war society (Gurses et al. 2020, Berry 2017, Deiana 2016, Tripp 2015, Hughes and Tripp 2015). As a result, these studies

suggest that post-conflict contexts create a launchpad for women to organize around their rights, and some have even shown that women see more political representation in post-conflict states than in similarly situated countries which have not had the same violent experiences (Tripp 2015, Hughes and Tripp 2015).

There are multiple factors contributing to post-war increases in women's mobilization. In many cases, women mobilize in the immediate aftermath of war out of necessity, to provide for critical humanitarian and material needs (Deiana 2016, Berry 2017). But that short-term organization does not explain the more formal gains that women can make in post-conflict society. Most explanations derive from the massive disruptions that violence causes to societal norms and political institutions, creating openings for the reconfiguration of power in gender relations. Berry (2015) argues that the demographic, economic, and cultural shifts associated with wartime lead to an increase in women's political engagement because of their increased participation in public spaces. Tripp (2015) finds that longer wars are more likely to produce greater gender change because more intense conflict causes deeper social disruptions, creating more points of entry for women into public spheres. Hughes and Tripp (2015) posit that periods of conflict resolution bring about new institutional structures that reconfigure institutions and make openings for women to voice their demands, including "peace talks, constitution making exercises, new electoral commissions, and truth and reconciliation processes" (p. 1531). In addition, this "renegotiation of internal governance," specifically after civil wars, tends to focus on fostering broad political inclusion in a way that can easily be expanded to include women (Berry and Lake 2017).

Evidence shows that the international context in which the conflict is resolved is also important for the success of women's rights campaigns (see e.g., Hughes and Tripp 2015; Tripp 2000, 2015). Conflicts resolved after the 1995 Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women were much more likely to see increases in women's political representation in their aftermath (Hughes and Tripp 2015). The 1990s saw the birth of a huge transnational feminist movement, leading to the creation of such important frameworks as the Beijing Platform for Action, the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and UN Resolution 1325, which established the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. Berry (2017) highlights the significance these international frameworks had in post-conflict Rwanda for transforming the community-based organizations created by women to address critical material needs: "With the

arrival of international actors attuned to gender equality, many informal organizations formalized, positioning their founders as powerful community leaders on issues like refugee return, postwar justice, and peace building” (p. 832). The arrival of international and legal frameworks for women’s rights, combined with the institutional disruptions that allowed for their domestication, created an entry point for the improvement of women’s rights in post-conflict states.

However, Tripp (2015) points out that international advocacy for women’s rights must first be preceded by the domestic mobilization of women’s movements in order to be successful, as local women’s movements are best positioned to take advantage of the political openings created by war-time disruptions. Without the support of existing grassroots movements, it is unlikely that international frameworks for the improvement of women’s rights could take hold. Blumberg (2001) finds that such grassroots and local-community movements in El Salvador gave women key organizational skills that helped them mobilize for their rights post-conflict. In this way, it seems that a combination of international support and local-level action is best for improving women’s rights post-conflict.

This field of research is essential to balance out narratives in the broader literature which perpetuate gender stereotypes by examining women only as victims of war, neglected by the state and disproportionately affected by gender-based violence (Berry and Lake 2017, p. 338; see also Sjöberg and Gentry 2015; Abu-Lughod 2002). These narratives neglect women’s political agency and invisibilize the important roles they play during and after conflict. Further, Koens and Gunawardana (2020) argue that in order to recognize the full scale of women’s post-war engagement, their political participation must be considered on a continuum. Traditional masculinist definitions of political participation only acknowledge the work of women in formal state institutions, but Koens and Gunawardana show that women also engage in significant informal community participation. Looking at post-war Sri Lanka, the authors find that their Tamil women interviewees engaged in a broad range of political activities, including direct appeals to formal politicians, advocacy politics with NGOs and local organizations, and everyday politics in their villages and households (Koens and Gunawardana 2020, p. 17). Recognizing a broader view of women’s political participation allows us to see all of the ways in which women exercise their agency in post-war societies.

It is clear that post-conflict environments are conducive to the mobilization of women, whether their actions be for

immediate material aid or for broader institutional reform. Increasingly, however, some scholars have drawn attention to factors that act in the opposite direction, hindering women’s ability to transform immediate post-war mobilization into actual long-term gains. Berry (2017), for example, argues that a post-conflict return to status quo curtails women’s gains in the aftermath of conflict, “as the masculine ethos of military victory denies women their place in the post-war transition, and the patriarchal gender order is once again established” (p. 832). Similarly, Deiana (2016) finds that institutionalised approaches to peace building which rely on consociationalism tend to reproduce gender exclusion and dampen the effects of gender opportunity that one would otherwise expect to come from conflict (p. 100). Gurses et al. (2020) shows quantitative evidence that while war does disrupt societal norms in a way that promotes women’s political rights, the same causation is not shown to be true for women’s economic and social rights. As a result of these scholars’ findings, more research is necessary to explore the relationship between short-term women’s mobilization and long-term actual gains for women’s rights in post-war contexts.

III. Examining the Post-War Context in Lebanon

Much of the existing literature on women’s mobilization post-war has focused on post-conflict states in Africa and Europe, with a few extending to Latin America and South Asia (Berry 2017, Deiana 2016, Tripp 2015, Blumberg 2001, Koens and Gunawardana 2020). However, little scholarly work has applied these theories to Middle Eastern states that are recovering from internal conflict. Middle Eastern conflicts are notable for their multifaceted nature, the involvement of numerous non-state actors, and the importance of Islam in many of the conflicts (see Gurses et al. 2020 on the relevance of ideology). As such, applying this theory to Lebanon may give insight into how this context can affect the post-war opportunities created for women.

The Lebanese context also offers unique characteristics that make it interesting for a post-conflict analysis of gender and mobilization. For example, after the 1975-1990 conflicts, Lebanese society did not see any of the official processes of truth and reconciliation one has come to expect after civil wars, nor the extensive documentation and investigation of war-time crimes that would accompany it. Knudsen (2005) cites the post-conflict political atmosphere as a potential cause for this: “The main reason why national (and grassroots) reconciliation was never on the agenda was due to the Syrians which did not want the Lebanese factions to reconcile, seeking to manipulate them for

political ends in its quest for control over Lebanon" (p. 15). Syria's military presence in Lebanon had been justified by the 1991 Treaty of "Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination" and lasted until the Cedar Revolution in 2005. The lack of official response could also be attributed to the precarious relationship between armed groups as the peace accords were drawn, and a corresponding desire on behalf of everyone not to risk rehashing old wounds. In the place of a typical reconciliation process, Larkin (2012) writes that, "Lebanon's post-conflict [sic.] transition was forged around what some critics have termed a 'state-sponsored amnesia' encouraged through the culmination of a general war amnesty in 1991, media censorship laws... and the complete absence of criminal tribunals" (p. 5). With official policies aimed at collective silence, Lebanon lacked many of the institutional opportunities that Hughes and Tripp (2015) argue post-conflict reconstruction usually creates as the entry points for women's voices into formal political participation.

The lack of official narrative in Lebanon also obfuscates the memory of women's contributions to post-conflict society. Lebanese American University student Yassmin El Masri cites a personal interview with Joumana Merhi in which the Director of the Lebanon Branch of the Arab Institute for Human Rights argues that "the role played by women both during the war and in the immediate post-war period has not been adequately documented and is therefore at risk of being lost from collective memory" (El Masri, 2017, p. 125). While there is significant literature written about the history of feminist movements in Lebanon, little of this scholarly work is aimed at exploring the direct relationship between women in civil society and the role they played immediately post-conflict.

Research Questions

With the above context in mind, this paper seeks to fill some of the gap in the literature by bringing to light the actions of and obstacles facing women's advocacy organizing in Lebanon after 1990. In exploring the role of women's organizations during post-war reconstruction, I will address two central questions: Did the postwar context in Lebanon create opportunities for mobilization to promote women's rights? Did it create opportunities for the actual, long-term advancement of those rights? In pursuing this analysis, I hope to bring recognition to the varied and essential roles that Lebanese women played in rebuilding their society after violent conflict.

IV. Theory and Methods

This paper provides an in-depth case study examination of the mobilization of women in Lebanon after the end of the 1975-1990 conflicts. The Lebanese case is particularly interesting because disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) in Lebanon occurred mostly within civil society without government or third party guidance, which meant that social ties and local organizations played an especially important role in the reintegration of fighters and the recovery of society in general (de Clerck 2012). The paper seeks to apply existing theories about the relationship between the end of internal conflict and increases in women's mobilization to the case of post-war Lebanon.

The study focuses on the activities of women's organizations in Lebanon after the signing of the Taif Agreement in 1989 and until the Cedar Revolution in 2005. The focus on NGO and community organizations as a measure of women's engagement is important because of the lack of representation of women in Lebanon's formal state institutions. As Hughes and Tripp (2015) show, it is unlikely that a post-conflict state which negotiated its new systems of internal governance prior to the Beijing Conference 1995 would see the same gains in women's political representation as those states that achieved conflict resolution after the launching point of the transnational feminist movement. This is clearly the case in Lebanon, where, since 1991, women have only been able to occupy 3% of seats in the nation's parliament (Avis 2017, p. 14). However, as Koens and Gunawardana (2020) argue, seeing women's political participation on a continuum from formal to informal activities can help paint a better picture of how women exert their political agency in post-war societies. As a result, I will focus not on formal participation of women in state institutions but instead on the organizing efforts of the hundreds of women activists, NGOs, and community organizations that emerged in the years following the end of the civil war in Lebanon. It should be noted, of course, that after 1995, many of these organizations were heavily influenced by the introduction of international and legal frameworks. But the nature of this in-between, transitional context is also helpful for understanding the burdens and obstacles facing Lebanese women's organizations, as many of them took on significant work in pressuring the state to adopt these international models for institutional reform.

This analysis takes the form of a qualitative case study, consulting and analyzing scholarly sources, NGO reports, and primary documents. First, it situates the post-war period of women's mobilization within a broader context of the history of

women's activism in Lebanon. Next, it examines the failures of the Lebanese government in its post-war institutions and lack of official peace building programs, highlighting especially the ways that women were placed at a disadvantage in these processes. Then, it explores the role that women's organizations played in "filling the gap" in the state's response by promoting peace and the reconstruction of society. This section takes a special look at how capacity-building programs allowed organizations to promote women's empowerment in spite of discriminatory personal status laws and women's exclusion from state leadership positions. Finally, it looks at some of the obstacles, both institutional and internal, that women's organizations faced in the post-war period. Throughout this analytical process, I argue that although women were excluded from the official peace building processes in Lebanon, women's organizations played an essential role in the country's post-war recovery. However, this unofficial involvement of women was not enough to secure their equality, and women's rights in Lebanon continue to be hindered by the institutions adopted post-war by a political system from which they were largely excluded. These findings reveal the significance of how context-specific political factors can limit the long-term actual gains from women's mobilization in post-conflict societies. Nevertheless, these post-war mobilization efforts lay important foundations for future women's movements to advance an agenda for gender-equality, especially when they succeed in domesticating international frameworks for women's rights, as was the case in Lebanon in the late 1990s.

V. Background: History of Women's Activism in Lebanon

Post-conflict mobilization in Lebanon did not occur in a vacuum of women's activism, as Lebanon has a long history of women playing active roles in civil society. Scholars such as Stephan (2012; 2014) and Daou (2015) have defined the history of feminism in Lebanon as occurring in four distinct "waves." The earliest forms of Lebanese women's activism was through the work of charitable organizations, "*al-jam'iyyat al-khayriya*," in the late 1800s, which focused on women's participation in public life through education and vocational training (Stephan 2012, p. 115). By the 1920s, Lebanese society saw the proliferation of a number of women's associations who had also begun publishing their own magazines. However, participation in these groups was largely limited to women in elite circles and the upper classes, often who had familial connections or were able to form their organizations as a branch of men's associations (Daou 2015, p. 59).

The first distinct wave of Lebanese feminism arose in the 1940's, in the wake of Lebanese independence. This generation of women focused on women's political rights, placing their liberation struggle in parallel with the broader movement establishing national independence. However, women still had to struggle against sectarian leaders and men who wanted to keep women out of the political sphere. The Lebanese Council of Women (LCW), created as an umbrella organization of several smaller women's associations, was founded as a result of this struggle in 1952 and witnessed some success when they pressured the government to extend voting rights to all women in February of 1953 (Stephan 2014). The second feminist wave followed in the 1960s, in the context of defeat in the 1967 war between Israel and Egypt which sparked a "laboratory of political movements" in Lebanon that brought about new schools of thought and inspired new feminist organizations to form (Daou 2015, p. 62). These new women's organizations focused on promoting a leftist political agenda, though they were never independent of their affiliated political parties. It was during this period that the Lebanese state first started to take advantage of the work that women's organizations did to fulfill social needs that the state failed to meet for itself. As Daou (2015) explains, in the late 1960s "Chehabist" period, "The Lebanese government was trying to fulfill its social functions and found in the associations, especially those of women, a way to help solve its social dilemmas" (p. 61). When the civil war broke out in 1975, this burden of social responsibility fell further onto women's organizations, as those which were able to remain active then shifted their focus towards providing humanitarian aid to the victims of war.

This paper will focus on what these scholars identify as the "third wave" of Lebanese feminism, which occurred in the wake of the civil war after its end in 1990. Throughout the 1990s and until around 2005, this post-war period of Lebanese feminism focused largely on legal reforms and the domestication of international frameworks for women's rights. In 1990, a Human Rights Association delegation headed by feminist activist Laure Moghaizel convinced the government to adopt a clause into the Lebanese constitution which recognized the state's commitment to the International Declaration of Human Rights (Stephan 2014). As a result of these efforts, feminist organizations during the 1990s were able to place their struggle within the broader context of human rights, and they were given a useful legal claim for the basis of demanding equality. During this period, new terms appeared including "positive discrimination," "gender based violence," and "full citizenship," which connected the women's

rights advocacy networks in Lebanon to the broader transnational feminist movement that arose after the 1995 Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women (Daou 2015, p. 63). The remainder of this third wave period of activism focused on institutionalizing women's rights reforms and convincing the Lebanese government to adopt such measures as gender mainstreaming and the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Scholars have since identified a fourth wave of Lebanese feminism, which began with the radicalization spawned by the Cedar Revolution in 2005. Also known as the Spring Revolution, this period of mass protest followed the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and eventually forced Syria to withdraw from its occupation of Lebanon. During this revolutionary period, a new feminist focus was born out of the work of a burgeoning LGBT movement which demanded attention to the then-overlooked issues of sexual and bodily rights in Lebanese society (Daou 2015, p. 64). The women's organizations that formed in this period focused on addressing issues such as gender-based violence, sexual harassment and assault, and women's right to pass their nationality down to their children. The existence of this fourth wave leads to a definition of the "post-war period" of Lebanese women's activism as that which spanned from the end of the civil war in 1990 until the Cedar Revolution in 2005.

By focusing on the "third wave" of Lebanese feminism, this paper aims to shed light on the particular and often paradoxical positions played by women's organizations in the wake of the civil war. This period is interesting for its contradictions. A society which saw renegotiated social relationships as a result of wartime disruptions turned its back on women and quickly returned to the patriarchal status quo of power sharing along sectarian lines. At the same time, that society was still dependent on women's organizations to provide humanitarian aid and contribute to healing the fabric of society. Within this context, we now turn to an analysis of what shaped women's mobilization during this post-war period and what obstacles hindered their success.

VI. Analyzing the Factors Shaping Women's Mobilization in Lebanon's Post-War Environment

A. Effects of the State's Post-conflict failures on Women

The civil war in Lebanon came to an end under the precarious conditions of the Taif Agreement, signed in October 1989, which established political reforms based on shared power between the country's religious sects. The peace accord also called for the disarmament of all the militias involved in the conflict,

although Hezbollah refused to surrender its arms. Yet, the Taif Agreement was the furthest extent of the Lebanese government's efforts in offering any official policy for DDR. As Knudsen (2005) writes, "there was no post-war reconciliation process, truth commissions, public apologies or other forms of public conciliation processes ... When the civil war ended, it was hoped that the Taif Agreement itself would redress war time divisions and end sectarian animosity" (p.15). The lack of state guidance for economic, social, or sectarian rehabilitation meant that these needs often had to be filled by civil society. Karamé (2009) highlights how this was an inherently gendered process in Lebanese society: "The women—mothers, sisters, wives—played a central role in the social reintegration, whereas the men—fathers, brothers, uncles and male cousins—were the agents of their economic reintegration" (p. 510). Within these gender roles of peace building, it is not surprising that the association between women and social reintegration meant that women and women's organizations came to play a major role in serving civil society. During the post-war period, the failures of the Lebanese state produced two major yet contradictory effects on the role of women in society: 1.) an overreliance on women to heal society both within the family and within social work in NGOs, and 2.) the institutionalization of sectarian power-sharing which reproduced gender inequalities in the social sphere. As a result, post-war society was simultaneously dependent on women's work and actively diminishing the value of those very same women.

Lebanese women played an essential role as caretakers in the aftermath of the civil war, a role which society had come to expect and even demand from them. As Abu-Saba (1999) explains, "the system of patriarchy has set up a dichotomy in which too often only the woman's life and psyche are organized around serving the needs of others ... In a war-saturated environment, how natural then that women should reach out to help others in satisfying needs for security, identity, well-being, and self-determination" (p. 38). The primary social location in which Lebanese women had to rise up and meet these needs was within the family. Joseph (2004) examines how family relationships shifted in the post-war period in a small village near

Beirut, reporting that the violence and instability of the war had intensified Lebanese citizens' reliance on their families for security and protection (p. 272-273). Sitt Rabab, an NGO leader, describes in an *Al-Raida* interview how women became the backbone of the family during this time of instability and familial reliance: "Men used to leave their houses without knowing if or when they would ever return. Women, on the other hand, were the

ones to unite and nurture the family. They were the ones responsible for providing the necessities of life; such as water, fuel and a sense of normality and stability" (Khudr 1995, p. 17). Despite all of the work they did to maintain the family structure, however, women's labor in the transitional period after the war went unpaid and unrecognized (Salameh 2014). Instead, it was taken for granted that women would fill the family's needs in areas where the state should have provided assistance.

Even beyond the basic material needs of the family, women served as caregivers to the most vulnerable members of their society. Salameh (2014) describes how women became the providers of social services in the absence of State programs:

Although the family unit is positioned as the frontline caregiver and takes over the social and health responsibilities of the inadequate State, women's labor in the family sphere remains unrecognized and is considered a 'duty' and 'responsibility.' Consequently, women carry the burden of numerous caregiving services to children, older persons, and family members with special needs, which otherwise should be the burden of the State. (p. 5).

This emphasis on all the duties required of women in the wake of conflict explains why Joseph (2004) reports that among villagers near Beirut, "The refrain repeated was that mothers are 'burned out' and 'nervous'" (2004, p. 272). Mona Khauli, the National Director of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), explains that this burn-out also extended to the NGO sector, where women's organizations were overwhelmed by the demand for humanitarian aid. Khauli observes that this drain on women's energy and resources put a huge strain on their ability to continue giving in the post-war period: "If people are not giving as much now as before, it is because they are tired. We are drained physically, financially, and emotionally. We carried a very big load during the war, as women and as Lebanese citizens. Each one of us was fulfilling five jobs instead of just one" (King-Irani 1995, p. 27). I will return to a more in-depth examination of women's organizations and humanitarian work in the following section.

Meanwhile, as the lack of social services from the state was disproportionately burdening Lebanese women, the state's post-war institutional arrangements also placed women at a disadvantage. The power-sharing arrangement of the Taif Agreement institutionalized sectarian divides in Lebanese society, marking a return to the patriarchal status quo. As Deiana (2016) finds, institutional approaches to peace building that rely on

consociationalism tend to reproduce gender inequalities in post-conflict societies. This is observably the case in Lebanon, where the power-sharing agreement vested leaders of religious sects with oversight on all "personal status affairs," asserting that to do so was, "To ensure the principle of harmony between religion and state" (Taif Agreement, 1989, p. 6). By giving power over Personal Status Laws to religious leaders, the Lebanese state guaranteed that all matters relating to the family, marriage, divorce, inheritance, child custody, etc. were under the jurisdiction of religious courts, with different rules applying to different sects. Avis (2017) argues that such a legal structure creates a buffer between the citizen and the State, in which the State no longer has to fulfill its responsibility of guaranteeing equal rights to all citizens (p. 2). According to Salameh (2017), personal status laws legalized religious institutions' discrimination against women, thus positioning women as, "second-class citizens, treating them as minors in decisions related to governing their own rights" (p. 2). Civil rights leader Laure Moghaizel gives an example of how inequality across religious laws led to inequality in the aftermath of conflict: "many people died leaving behind a large inheritance controversy. There is no inheritance between Moslems and Christians, i.e. a Moslem man cannot bequeath his possession to a Christian wife. The State gets it all. We had many court cases, where nothing could be done" (Livingstone 1992, p. 20). In this way, the religious power-sharing institutional structure adopted by the Lebanese government after the war perpetuated patriarchal systems that discriminate against women.

Both the over reliance on women to heal society and the Taif Agreement's return to a patriarchal status quo deeply affected women's position in society after the war. However, the post-war context still did create spaces for social experimentation that allowed women to experience some positive change. As Joseph (2004) finds, the post-war family environment was filled with contradictions, including that the war had intensified the need for family while also undermining the ability of familial relationships to sustain their pre-war power dynamics. Joseph writes that, "These contradictions opened spaces for experimentation within family relationships, particularly around the codes organizing gender and age-based relationships" (2004, p. 273). In this context, many women got paying jobs, thus increasing the independence in husband-wife relationships, daughters experienced more openness and freedom from their fathers, and there was more equality in brother-sister relationships where there had previously been one-sided authority (Joseph 2004). Mona Khauli explains that the war had also given women more

power within themselves, as many became economic heads of households upon the loss of husbands and fathers, and even women's providing of social services translates to a form of social power (King-Irani 1995, p. 30). It is within this paradoxical context of experimentation and discrimination, newfound power and patriarchal status quo, that women's organizations mobilized to pursue change in Lebanon.

B. Role of Women's Organizations in Peace building and Reconstruction

Even as the state was failing to support women, women's organizations stepped up to fill the gaps left by the lack of state-led reconstruction programs. Stephen (2014) explains that, "Women's organizations that had been set up for peaceful struggle in the public sphere for civil rights were transformed by circumstances into agencies that disperse welfare services to the refugees and war victims" (p. 3). Within this work, however, many organizations took advantage of the post-war social shifts to create projects that would help women improve their own lives. This section will focus on a handful of these capacity-building programs that organizations created to help war-affected women (see Table 1). These projects largely took shape under two missions: 1.) women's economic empowerment (IWSAW, Society of Lebanon the Giver, and the Working Women League of Lebanon); and 2.) women's socio-political empowerment (YWCA). In training women with new career and life skills, these organizations simultaneously contributed to women's empowerment, economic reconstruction, and societal peace building. All of this work took place even as women were excluded from and discriminated against by official institutions. In this way, women's capacity-building programs reclaimed space for women to become purveyors of their own destiny in post-war society.

In her 1999 article, "Human needs and women peace building in Lebanon," Abu-Saba documents the activities of a handful of women's organizations that contributed to reconstruction and peace building efforts. One example she points to is the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW). IWSAW was one of those organizations that completely shifted its efforts in response to the needs from the war, as the Institute reports that it, "evolved from a strictly academic institution during the war years to become a provider of outreach and assistance programs for women" (IWSAW 1996, p. 8). Beginning in 1988, IWSAW created a number of income-generating projects meant to assist women who had been displaced or otherwise affected by the war and who lacked both

Name of Women's Organization	Category of Work	Post-war Projects
Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW)	Economic Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income-generating projects: training courses in knitting, hair-dressing, factory sewing, flower arrangement, secretarial skills • Basic Living Skills Program: taught about family planning, health, child care, home management, civic education, nutrition, environmental awareness, legal rights
Society of Lebanon the Giver	Economic Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income-generating projects: classes in tailoring, hand and machine embroidery, hair-dressing, flower arrangement • Awareness campaigns about women's right to economic opportunity launched in rural areas where organization faced conservative values
Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)	Political Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Training Programs: preparing women to become parliamentary deputies; trainings in leadership, initiative, planning, technical skills
Working Women League of Lebanon (WWLL)	Economic and Political Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness campaigns: encourage women to join syndicates, attend lectures, debates, and training sessions about women's rights as wage earners • Legal reform: targeting labor laws that discriminate against women related to pension, retirement age, maternity protection, child care facilities, sexual harassment

Table 1: Capacity-Building Projects Undertaken by Lebanese Women's Organizations in the Post-War

basic resources and social support networks. Over 700,000 Lebanese had been displaced during the war, a phenomenon which disproportionately affected rural women; therefore, IWSAW's goal was to help these displaced women develop marketable skills to sustain their families and be integrated into

the labor force (Abu Nasr 1992, p. 17-18). The first iteration of the program focused on knitting skills, given the high demand for clothing and the fact that many women already had some basic knowledge of the handicraft (IWSAW 1996, p. 8). The second version of the program started in 1990-1991, targeting a new generation of displaced women aged 15-21 whose education had been disrupted by the war. This younger generation received vocational training in, “hair-dressing, secretarial skills, flower arrangement and factory sewing. IWSAW organized between nine to twelve courses in these fields each year” (IWSAW 1996, p. 8). In addition to these income-generating projects, women who participated in IWSAW’s trainings also received help with job placements and participated in the Basic Living Skills Program, which educated women on topics such as, “family planning, health, child care, home management, civic education, nutrition, environmental awareness and legal rights” (IWSAW 1996, p. 9). By providing women with skills to earn a living and support their families, IWSAW hoped that its income-generating projects would provide economic and social benefits to individual women as well as to their communities as a whole (IWSAW 1996, p. 8).

Other organizations took on similar income-generating projects to help improve the lives of women in post-war society. For example, Hayat Wahab Aslan founded the Society of Lebanon the Giver in 1990 with the goal of empowering women to become economically independent. Wahab Aslan explains that the NGO established a training school for rural women to learn handicrafts and help them “live with dignity,” offering classes in “tailoring, hand and machine embroidery, drawing on tissue, hairdressing, make-up sessions, and flower arrangement” (Wahab Arslan 2020, p. 3). The founder notes that while working in rural areas, the organization had to be very mindful of more conservative social norms and patriarchal mentalities: “To help in this regard, we launched awareness campaigns surrounding women’s rights. We emphasized through these campaigns that human rights apply to all human beings and that any woman is eligible to enjoy economic opportunities” (2020, p. 3). In adopting this approach, the Society of Lebanon the Giver tapped into the “third wave” Lebanese feminist mentality which sought to put the local women’s movement in parallel with the contemporaneous international movement for human rights.

Abu-Saba (1999) also examines the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), which sought to empower women politically by running consciousness-raising programs about the lack of women represented in Lebanese Parliament (p. 45). The YWCA drew attention to the fact that the only women in legislative

positions were there because of their familial ties. This issue is especially salient considering the lack of women’s representation in the official peace-negotiating process and the subsequent disadvantages women experienced. For YWCA, the best way to improve women’s social status was to prepare them for power. Mona Khauli, the National Director of the YWCA in 1995, explains that the divisions deepened by war in Lebanon made the country more autocratic than democratic, thus stripping all Lebanese individuals of their power: “The fact, that politically, our society is so feudal and so narrow means that even in the men’s world, most men have no power ... This is not a matter of male or female: it’s a matter of power, and in our society both sexes are lacking in power” (King-Irani 1995, p. 28-29). To empower women in this context, YWCA began a series of Leadership Training Programs. In these programs, YWCA sought to make its trainees, “capable of becoming a parliamentary deputy, because we follow the parliamentary system and we train our younger members to lead, to take the initiative, to plan agenda – all the things that are so important to working effectively in an institutional structure” (King-Irani 1995, p. 29). Empowering women to take on leadership positions is one way that women’s organizations sought to take advantage of social shifts and undermine the patriarchal arrangements of post-war state institutions. By the 1998 elections, 78 women had won seats on municipal councils in the country, which was a vast improvement from the five seats women had won in the last elections before the war (Ghattas 1998, p. 2).

The Working Women League of Lebanon (WWLL), founded in 1994 under the umbrella of the Lebanese Women’s Council, represents an organization that bridged the pursuit of women’s economic and socio-political empowerment. Iqbal Doughan, one of the founders of WWLL, explains in an interview for *Al-Raida* how the organization sought to empower the working women who were caught between their roles as mothers and as workers with little help from the family to help lighten their burden (Sfeir 1998, p. 45). Doughan highlights the WWLL’s consciousness-raising work, through which, “working women are encouraged to work, join syndicates, and actively participate in the public sphere. At the same time, it is involved in awareness campaigns where it organizes training sessions, lectures, and debates and attempts to secure better relations between working women in all institutions” (Sfeir 1998, p. 44). In addition to this awareness and capacity-building work, the WWLL also engaged in political activism to amend discriminatory labor laws related to pension, retirement age, maternity protection, child care facilities, and sexual harassment (Sfeir 1998, p. 44). For example, the

organization targeted laws that allowed professions to hold the retirement age for men at 60 or 64 years while meanwhile women's retirement age was 50 or 60 years. In its work advocating for the rights of working women, the WWLL sought to fight patriarchal norms and secure women's participation in the labor force, a factor which had increased in the post-war years as a result of demographic and social shifts.

In addition to promoting women's economic, social, and political empowerment in the face of other forces that tried to revert to the pre-war patriarchal status quo, many women's organizations also played a significant peace building role in Lebanese society. For example, IWSAW incorporated within its income-generating projects a strategy for healing some of the sectarian tensions that lingered after the conflict ended. As Abu-Saba writes:

[The IWSAW projects] brought together women from East and West Beirut, Christians and Moslems, to learn skills in handicrafts and sewing that could bring them an income. Built into the program was training about tolerance, understanding, mutual respect, and friendships among the different sects. From their experience with these groups, IWSAW developed a Peace Education Curriculum that was then used in each of its development programs. (1999, p. 48)

In a post-war context where the government did very little to resolve sectarian tensions, these programs served a monumental purpose of building solidarity among women from different backgrounds. As Joseph (2004) explains, sectarian divides in Lebanon ran so deep that, "There were Christian women in their thirties in Yusfiyyi who reported never having met or held an extended conversation with a Muslim" (p. 277). The Lebanese Council of Women (LCW), an umbrella coalition for a large number of women's organizations, served a similar division-crossing function. Women's rights activist Esther Qamar reveals that, in her opinion, "What was good about the Women's Council was the fact that it brought together women from different sects, parties and beliefs, and there was agreement among ourselves" (Qamar 1998-999, p. 91). Mona Khauli notes that the YWCA programs also built solidarity across class divides. Citing the Mother's Committee for the Day Care Center at Ain Mreisseh as an example, Khauli says that, "At any given time, you will have on this same committee the illiterate maid, who has her child here; the belly dancer who entertains in the night-club next door; and top

executive secretaries working in the biggest governmental ministries. There women sit together on one committee as equals to plan the welfare of their children ... Discovering this gives them a sense of self-esteem" (King-Irani 1995, p. 30). By bringing together women of many different backgrounds, women's organizations in the post-war period played the peace building, solidarity-producing role that the government failed to fulfill in regard to social reconstruction.

C. Obstacles Facing Women's Rights in the Post-War Period

It should be noted that the role played by women's organizations in fulfilling the needs of civil society post-conflict was not necessarily one that those organizations would have chosen. Several scholars have pointed out how this role placed women's organizations at a significant disadvantage in promoting their usual goals of expanding women's rights. Stephan (2014) explains that women's rights activism, which had been at work in Lebanese society since the beginning of the 20th century, came to an effective standstill during the civil war as "activist energy turned to trying to negotiate a peace and end the debilitating and ferocious violence" (p.2). This lack of progress continued into the post-war years, as Mitri (2015) summarizes: "Filling the void - left by the collapse of the state in the 1975-1990 Civil War ... meant that tremendous amounts of resources from these organizations, both human and financial, were mobilized mainly to provide services and fill gaps in governance, which could have been dedicated to enhance mobilization and collective political action" (p. 8). This drain on resources means that even though there was a period of increased mobilization after the war, women's organizations in Lebanon could not reach their full potential of advancing women's rights agendas. Mitri argues further that the post-war period created a "mutual dependency relationship" between NGOs and the government (p. 14). This positioning means that, even today, women's rights activists are exasperated, as one activist at the organization ABAAD says that, in Lebanon, "NGOs do the work of the government" (ABAAD, personal communication).

In post-war Lebanon, women's rights were not given high political priority. This was common in Middle Eastern states at the time, as Abul-Husn (1992) comments that the women's movement was perceived as sexually biased and not nationalistic, so it was considered secondary to other post-conflict problems such as economic crises, geopolitics, and displaced populations (p. 2). As a result of these circumstances, women's organizations in Lebanon faced great difficulty in achieving actual institutional reform. One

major victory in the post-war period occurred when women's rights activists convinced the Lebanese government to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1997. Even then, however, the Lebanese state insisted on "three reservations that denied CEDAW jurisdiction over personal status laws, questions of nationality rights, and highly patriarchal penal code" (Kingston, 2013, p. 97). These stipulations prevented women's advocacy groups from achieving radical legal reform. For example, Salameh (2014) posits that the government's decision to uphold personal status laws was a direct obstacle to the adoption of a family violence law (p. 20). In this way, the post-war state further institutionalized patriarchal norms and hindered the advancement of women's rights in the country.

Some scholars argue that an additional obstacle to the success of women's organizations in the post-war period lay in their own organizational structures. As Mitri (2015) writes, "This period coincided with the end of the Cold War era and its subsequent massive funding from Western donors to local NGOs, seeking to implement post-Cold War liberal policies such as 'democratization' or 'good governance,' in which women's rights seemed to be an unavoidable component" (p. 3). While this is seemingly a good thing, and Lebanese organizations did benefit from these newfound transnational connections, scholars point out that the new reliance on external donors led to the "NGO-ization" of the local women's movement. Alvarez (2009) defines NGO-ization as the process in which many states in the 1990s promoted particular "rhetorically restrained, politically collaborative" practices among feminist organizations in a way that officially sanctioned the movement for women's rights but also dampened its more radical demands (p. 176). In Lebanon, that meant the creation of state institutions to address women's rights as part of the government's commitment to the 1995 Beijing Resolution. The most notable of these were the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) and the appointment of Gender Focal Points in all ministries and public institutions (Avis 2017, p. 9).

Salameh criticizes these institutions for existing within the very patriarchal institutions that the women's movement sought to challenge. For example, the NCLW was created to monitor the application of CEDAW and enhance gender equality; however, being a state-driven structure, it is, "directly affiliated with the sectarian system, which continuously perpetuates gender discrimination and conflicts with the CEDAW convention itself" (Salameh 2014, p. 14). Salameh argues that NGOs in the post-war

period either negotiated within the state's patriarchal institutions, thus dampening and distorting their feminist demands, or engaged in project-based programs aimed at attracting outside funding which set up a top-down system of experts and beneficiaries/victims (p. 16). As a result of these organizational structures, Salameh says that, "These hierarchical patterns turn women organizations into exclusive spaces for experts and professionals, leaving no room for other women, especially working class women, to join the decision-making and strategic planning process. Likewise, women are turned into victims, rather than being part of a platform where women's voices and experiences can be raised and shared" (p. 15). In this way, NGO-ization in the post-war period may have hindered the growth of more radical, grassroots organizing and perpetuated an acceptance between women's organizations and patriarchal state institutions. Nonetheless, Alvarez (2009) argues that being overly critical of NGO-ization ignores much of the "crucial movement work" that these NGOs performed. Therefore, it is important to recognize that although Lebanese women's organizations did not attempt to radically reform patriarchal state structures in the post-war period, these NGOs still achieved vital work in promoting women's empowerment and creating social change during the process of reconstruction.

VII. Conclusion

Women and women's organizations played essential roles in Lebanon after the civil war ended in 1990. In the war's immediate aftermath, women provided humanitarian and social services both within their families and within community organizations that were transformed out of necessity to give such aid. This mobilization also produced programs of economic recovery, with organizations such as IWSAW, the YWCA, and Society of Lebanon the Giver launching income-generating projects for war-affected and rural women. These programs empowered women with the tools to direct their own lives in the post-war environment while also promoting peace building by bringing together women of different backgrounds. After the 1995 Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, Lebanese women's organizations found themselves empowered by their international connections to tackle legal reforms, such as convincing the government to ratify CEDAW in 1997 (though it did so with stipulations about personal status laws, nationality rights, and the penal code). Lebanese women were able to achieve all of this despite the fact that not a single woman was involved with the negotiation of the Taif Agreement, and women comprised less

than three percent of the seats in Parliament in the post-war decade. As a result, it is clear that the post-war environment did initiate a wave of women's mobilization in Lebanon, even as this mobilization occurred outside of formal political institutions.

As the immediate effects of the war began to wane at the end of the 1990s and into the early 2000s, new women's organizations emerged which built off of the mobilization and empowerment efforts of the earlier post-war groups. Stephan (2014) refers to these organizations as "a bridge between the third and fourth waves of Lebanese feminism" (p. 5). One such NGO is the Collective for Research and Training on Development-Action (CRTD-A), initiated in 1999 and registered in 2003, which focuses on the development of local women's groups and community organizations by providing "on-going and context specific training and capacity building" in areas of gender and socio-economic empowerment, as well as leadership and public participation (CRTD-A, n.d.). This can be seen as a continuation of earlier organizations' capacity-building projects, though on a larger scale. A different organization, KAFA (Enough Violence & Exploitation), founded in 2005, shows the shift in focus that occurred at the tail end of the post-war period, as this and other organizations emerged with the specific mission of ending gender-based violence in Lebanon through advocacy, lobbying for legal reform, and offering social and legal services to those affected by the issue (Stephan 2014, p. 5). The emergence of organizations like CRTD-A and KAFA shows that even though Lebanese women were excluded from state institutions in the post-war period, their mobilization efforts were essential in laying the foundation for future organizations to tackle a gender equality agenda.

Recently, Lebanon has been in crisis again as ongoing mass protests sparked in 2019 combined with the 2020 Beirut explosion and the COVID-19 pandemic have caused widespread economic and social instability. I spoke with an employee of ABAAD, an NGO established in 2011 to fight gender-based violence in Lebanon and the MENA region, about how the obstacles facing women's activism in Lebanon have changed over the thirty years since the end of the civil war. Throughout that time, he said, some years were better than others for pushing a gender agenda. However, in the last few years, the country's political priorities have shifted as economic and political insecurity mean that much of Lebanon's population is struggling just to meet their basic needs. As a result, he told me that among gender-oriented organizations, "Now we think we are less on the proactive side, more on the reactive side" (ABAAD, personal communication).

While the NGO worker I spoke to maintains that it is always the right time to prioritize gender equality, Lebanon's current situation raises an important question about the longevity of post-war women's mobilization. At what point does the post-conflict activist energy around women's rights begin to wane? Though the fourth wave of Lebanese feminism is usually considered as distinct from the immediate post-war women's movement because of its shift in focus, the movement which started after the Cedar Revolution in 2005 may be seen as an expansion upon the earlier mobilization. Therefore, we may only now be beginning to see that mobilization begin to falter, as it is displaced by the crises of the past few years. Future research could better articulate the long-term effects of post-war women's mobilization in Lebanon and its possible disruption by current events, while also exploring more generally the point at which women's post-conflict mobilization begins to fade.

Despite their paradoxical position of holding no official power in the state while also being heavily relied upon for services the state did not provide, women in Lebanon succeeded in mobilizing to reconstruct society and empower one another. Women's organizations especially took advantage of the post-war social shifts to help women exercise their political agency within informal arenas. This finding confirms Koens and Gunawardana's (2020) argument that women's post-conflict mobilization should be viewed on a continuum and not exclusively within masculinist definitions of who constitutes a political actor. In looking beyond their participation in state institutions, we can begin to document and recognize all of the essential work that Lebanese women contributed to their society as it healed itself from the civil war.

Appendix

Abbreviations

CEDAW = Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination
Against Women
CRTD-A = Collective for Research and Training on Development-
Action
DDR = disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration
IWSAW = Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World
LCW = Lebanese Council of Women
NCLW = National Commission for Lebanese Women
NGO = non-governmental organization
WWLL = Working Women league of Lebanon
YWCA = Young Women's Christian Association

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Red and Blue, Stars and Stripes: The Partisan Design of Political Logos

Arlo Hettle

Abstract

Party identity and the brand associated with it can be both an important tool and a potential hindrance for candidates. Thus, candidates must make decisions about when and how to express their partisan identity. One way in which partisan identity can be displayed is through visual elements such as candidate logo design. This paper studies the political logo as a tool to express and perceive partisan identity. It analyzes the visual elements of 1,657 Congressional logos, examining differences in logo color, font, and symbol usage by party. To determine whether these differences are understood by voters, a survey asking 118 respondents to identify the party of a random sample of 24 logos is conducted. Respondents are generally successful at correctly identifying the party to which a logo belongs. These findings suggest that visual elements like logos are a tool that candidates should utilize as they build their own brand and decide the extent to which they want to embrace or shy away from their partisan identity.

I. Introduction

The launch of a campaign is a familiar sight. A candidate speaks in front of a crowd of cheering supporters, each one waving signs and wearing stickers emblazoned with that candidate's logo. When Elizabeth Warren launched her campaign for president, she made her logo a distinct shade of mint dubbed "liberty green," as an homage to the values upheld by the iconic statue. Kamala Harris's logo featured red and yellow colors evocative of the 1972 campaign of Shirley Chisholm, the first African American woman to run for the nation's highest office. Joe Biden's logo featured traditional patriotic colors and the "E" in the candidate's name turned into three red stripes in symbolic representation of the American flag. Though they may seem small and even trivial, the decisions made around these logos by candidates and their teams before the campaign officially begins are the product of substantial and strategic thought. Behind the scenes of the political stage, extensive campaign and party organizations craft not just a policy platform that will appeal to the minds of voters, but an entire image and brand that attracts voters' hearts. A variety of components work together to create a candidate's brand image, which can be derived from a multitude of forms, such as the candidate's political advertisements, websites, or logo design.

This paper seeks to better understand the strategic development of a candidate's image by analyzing their logos and the public's perception of them. I expect that candidates will design their logos in a way that reflects the varied political landscapes in which they are competing. I anticipate that there will be clear differences in the ways that Democrats and Republicans reflect the ideals of the two parties in their logo designs. I believe that candidates will decide whether or not to embrace their party identity in their logo design based on factors like their district's competitiveness and their ideological positioning. I expect that surveyed voters will be able to successfully distinguish between the logos of different political parties.

To test my hypotheses, I analyze a database of candidate logos collected from the 2018 and 2020 Congressional elections. I find that logo color, font, the use of patriotic symbols, and the use of state-specific references are significant predictors of a candidate's party identity, but that logo design is too broad a measure to understand a candidate's unique political positioning without a larger context. Understanding that there are partisan differences in the elements of logo design, I then conduct a survey with 118 respondents to examine whether these partisan elements are understood by voters when faced with the task of identifying the party of a logo. This survey is necessary to begin to analyze whether the differences in the ways the two parties design their logos are understood by the public. I find that respondents are generally successful at placing the logo with the correct party. Respondents who are more knowledgeable about politics and White respondents have the most success at the task. I also find that certain elements of logo design, in particular the color red, appear to play a role in how respondents interpret the party of the logos. Logos, by being instantly understandable but surprisingly complex, provide a new lens with which to analyze how candidates display their party identity and how voters perceive political messages.

II. The Party Label

There are a variety of tensions candidates face when they begin to make choices about how to brand themselves, tensions that are at the center of much debate within political science. In almost every respect, candidates benefit from being affiliated with political parties. A party label provides an easy way for candidates to quickly convey their policy stances to voters and parties give candidates a built-in organization to help with the logistical and financial challenges of campaigning (Aldrich 2011, Woon and Pope

2009). Voters, in turn, rely on the party label to make their choice, particularly when they are unsure about a candidate's precise issue positioning (Woon and Pope 2008). Partisanship also continues to be an important factor in voter behavior (Bartels 2000). However, the individual candidates and the websites, advertisements, and other materials that their campaigns distribute still have a crucial role to play. The parties historically had greater power over candidates because they controlled the resources—like the ability to mobilize voters and party ballots—necessary for victory. However, in 1960, the shift to candidate-centered elections began, and campaigns focused on building and operating campaign operations independently from the party (Wattenberg 1991). This caused voters to start weighing candidates on a more individual level, requiring the candidates to become more personally appealing (Aldrich 2011). In modern electoral politics, candidates must walk a fine line of using their party identity to their benefit as a way to cue voters of their policy positions and to capture the guaranteed support of their base, while still maintaining an individual identity that is distinct enough from the party to win over outside voters. This candidate-centered environment empowers campaigns to deviate from the party brand if the need exists. After all, candidates face different pressures to separate themselves from or conform to their party. For example, candidates that compete in more competitive or moderate districts may take ideological positions that would not align with the standard view within their party. As such, candidates must decide what kind of campaign they want to run: coalition-seeking and party-oriented or factional and personality-based (Bernstein and Dominguez 2003). Once candidates have come to this decision, they should display their party identity only in situations where it will benefit them electorally (Neiheisel and Neibler 2013). Given the various pressures on candidates to both highlight and minimize their party identity, there will likely be differences in how candidates—even those from the same party—display their party identity through aspects of their visual design, like their logo.

III. The Importance of the Visual

The visual is an often underlooked aspect of campaigning. Campaigns carefully curate their events to achieve the best-looking shots for brochures and advertisements and to come off well on television news (Schill 2011). This kind of image manipulation by campaigns to boost their “curb-appeal” can lead to tangible electoral results (Rosenberg et. al 1991, Westen 2007). Even such superficial things as the attractiveness of a candidate

can have important consequences on voter attitudes. Candidates perceived as attractive will outperform unattractive candidates even when accounting for policy and platform differences (Rosenberg et. al 1986, Olivola and Todorov 2010, Hart 2011). The visual is usually considered a piece of voter perception separate from voters' evaluation of policy brand. The visual instead contributes to the valence image, the non-ideological perceptions that nonetheless play an important role in shaping decisions (Butler and Powell 2014). While the research on the importance of visuals in campaigning is largely limited to images of candidates and their events, all of this suggests that other visual aspects of campaign branding, like candidate logos, can also shape voters' perceptions. However, visual symbols and their effects are an area largely overlooked by political scientists (Schill 2011).

IV. Logo Perception:

While logos have been overlooked as a visual element in political science research, the logo is ubiquitous as a branding tool in other consumer realms, providing better insight into their use in politics. Branding in the business world is thought of as “a person's gut feeling about a product, service, or organization” (Neumeier 2004). The logo is one visual manifestation of this brand and, in the political realm, should contain the sentiments and associations the campaign wants to reflect onto the candidate (Thomas 2010). Logos are seen as a way for customers to understand the benefits of interacting with a brand as well as being visually appealing representations of a company in their own right (Park et. al 2013, Soomro and Shakoor 2011). Rather than a description of what a company does, a logo is a tool that conveys the attitudes and values of a company (Adir et. al 2014). Logos, in their usage on yard signs and campaign materials, contribute to increased name recognition, which can be linked with candidate support, particularly in low-information elections (Kam and Zechmeister 2013). As potential voters go about their business, they encounter political logos on yard signs and stickers around their community, shaping their first impression of a candidate. Unlike campaign advertisements shown directly to voters, logos are socially embedded which means their effects can be more difficult to distill (Maske et. al 2019). The logo as displayed through yard signs, for instance, can indicate an enthusiasm gap by showing that more members of a community are publicly supporting one candidate over another, but this does not always translate into electoral results (Moskey and Sokhey 2012). Yard signs can provoke emotional reactions like anxiety, pride, and anger in onlookers, which may be shaped by the visual

content of the sign (Maske et. al 2019). While a logo is not a persuasive tool in the same way that an advertisement or a solicitation from a volunteer would be, it is still a factor that shapes how candidates are perceived.

V. Existing Logo Research:

The research done on candidate logos has largely focused on Barack Obama's transformational and revolutionary logo in 2008. Obama's logo was able to garner the recognition and immediate understanding traditionally reserved for ubiquitous brand logos like the Nike swoosh or the Apple symbol (Seidman 2010, Banet-Weiser 2012). Voters understood that the sunrise was emblematic of the “hope” and “change” that Obama promised (Thomas 2010). The logo was plastered on all of Obama's campaign materials, advertisements, and social media, which helped Obama create a unified image that stuck in the minds of voters (Seidman 2010, Zavattero 2016). This unique, candidate-centered brand that Obama built around his logo helped him to succeed with voters outside of his party and aided him in achieving electoral victory (Parker 2012). Obama shows that logo design in the context of a presidential election can be used as the foundation for a unique brand that helps separate the candidate from the party. However, the existence of such a phenomenon has yet to be studied in the contexts of more local elections, like congressional races.



Figure 1. Barack Obama's 2008 Logo

In recent years, scholars have begun to call for more research on the kind of design present in political logos (Billard 2016). Part of the challenge is a lack of theoretical framing. Lupton (2001) suggests that, particularly in the realm of political communication, designers are working “intuitively rather than intellectually”. However, such claims are made without data and only serve to limit the type of research being done. Taking Billard's suggestion that researchers should examine how political ideologies are displayed through typographic design, Haenschen et. al (2021) perform a content analysis of interviews with logo designers and find that there are typographic differences based on factors like partisanship, competitiveness, gender, and

incumbency. Williams et al. (2022) analyze visual and textual elements of logo design based on gender and find that there are differences in the way male and female politicians use color, display their names, and incorporate issue appeals. There have also been some recent non-comprehensive explorations of political logo design from popular media sources which provide further credence to the idea that there are partisan differences in logo design (Smith 2020, Schwarz 2021, Alacantha 2018, Campbell-Dollaghan 2018, and Noe 2018).

VI. Contributions

In this paper, I first explore whether there is a difference in how candidates from the two parties design their logos. The presence or absence of this partisan difference can help to illustrate a way that candidates are communicating ideological information to potential voters. I then explore whether candidates use this important aspect of their brand as a way to affirm their partisan identity or to emphasize their independence. I hope to build upon the theory that candidates will display their partisan identity in different ways depending on the unique pressures of their district and whether they want to appeal to their party or the opposing party. In order to see how these partisan differences are perceived in the electorate and what aspects of their designs are understood as most partisan, I conduct a candidate logo identification survey. My paper can add to the burgeoning field of work on the visual aspects of politics by helping to illuminate if partisanship plays a role in visual design and whether those partisan differences are understood by the public. While the case of Barack Obama shows that design can benefit individual candidates, there is little work that analyzes broad design choices through a partisan lens.

VII. Hypotheses:

Logo Data Analysis Hypotheses

First, I explore the design elements present in Congressional candidate logos. While the decision-making process behind a logo is complex, I expect to see clear partisan differences in logo design because of the extreme polarization that is a feature of modern American politics (McCarty 2019).

Hypothesis 1: There will be clear differences in logo design between Republicans and Democrats

First, I expect party logos to have distinct color schemes. Although red and blue have only been standardized as proxies for the Republican and Democratic parties since the 2000 election, the associations between those colors and the two parties have become ingrained in the minds of the American people since then (Enda 2012, Drum 2004). The correlation of red with Republicans and blue with Democrats is seen in the names of the online fundraising platforms ActBlue and WinRed and media platforms like the conservative-leaning RedState. As such, I expect that the logos of Democrats will more prominently feature the color blue and Republicans will feature the color red.

Hypothesis 1a: The logos of Democrats will feature the color blue more often than the logos of Republicans.

Hypothesis 1b: The logos of Republicans will feature the color red more often than the logos of Democrats.

The two parties are also distinguished in their approach to patriotism, so I expect this to visually manifest in the logo design of Republicans and Democrats. Gallup data from July 2019 found that 76 percent of Republicans said they are proud to be American, while just 22 percent of Democrats said the same. Patriotic symbols are an often-used element in logo design, and the incorporation of these can cause voters to extrapolate that the candidate is also patriotic. When candidates stand next to flags, for example, voters make causal associations with the values that they associate with the flag and that candidate (Barry 1997). Not only that, but exposure to the flag acts as a means of polarization, heightening people's partisan identities (Chan 2017). As politicians understand the differing views Americans have about patriotism, I would expect that Republican logos will feature patriotic symbols more often than Democratic ones. Another symbolic representation that is common in political logos is a reference to the state where the candidate is running. Since I anticipate that Democrats would shy away from the kind of patriotic appeals preferred by Republicans, utilizing the imagery and symbolism of the state in which they are running may be a method to fill that creative void. Therefore, I expect that Democrats will more often feature specific references to the state in which they are running.

Hypothesis 1c: The logos of Republicans will feature patriotic symbols more often than the logos of Democrats.

Hypothesis 1d: The logos of Democrats will feature state-specific symbols more often than the logos of Republicans.

I expect to find clear partisan distinctions in values visually reflected in candidate logos. Democrats seek to promote equality through social change, while Republicans prefer that the status quo be upheld (Carney et. al 2008). These differing value sets can be expressed in graphic design, with certain typographies conveying a sense of tradition, while others feel comparatively modern. Research has found that serif typefaces—which are characterized by decorative strokes at the end of letters—were viewed as more ideologically conservative than sans serif typefaces (Haenschen and Tamul 2019). Therefore, I expect that Republican logos will be more likely to use a serif typeface than Democrats.

Hypothesis 1e: The logos of Republicans will feature serif typefaces more often than Democrats.

While these first hypotheses are related to differences in logos between parties, there is also the possibility that logos within the parties are designed differently depending on the candidate's competitive environment. I expect to see legislators from safe districts and legislators who largely vote with their party to design logos in a way to signal their partisan identity. On the other hand, I expect that candidates from competitive districts or candidates who often vote differently from their party will try to design logos in a way that does not draw an explicit partisan connotation.

Hypothesis 2: Candidates in competitive districts will design their logos differently than candidates in safe districts.

Hypothesis 3: Ideological moderates will design their logos differently than more ideologically extreme candidates.

Some candidates make the decision to openly include their party identity in their logo, such as adding a phrase like “Democrat for Congress” or “Proud Constitutional Conservative”. I expect that these candidates will be running in uncompetitive environments where being identified by their party would be advantageous. However, I do not anticipate candidates of one party to feature this explicit partisan messaging on their logos more than candidates from the other party.

Hypothesis 2a: Candidates in safe districts will explicitly

feature the name of their party in their logo more often than candidates in competitive races.

Logo Survey Hypotheses

Following my analysis of the design patterns of Congressional logos, I conduct a survey with a sample of these logos to see if respondents can correctly identify the candidate's party. This survey thus becomes a test of the power of recognition for a party brand. I expect that voters will be generally successful at distinguishing the party identity of candidates based on their logos.

Hypothesis 4: A majority of survey respondents will correctly identify the party of a candidate after seeing that candidate's logo.

I anticipate that some logos will be easier to identify the party of than others. Although respondents will likely be unaware that there are partisan differences in logo design, I nonetheless expect that logos that conform to their party's design standards when it comes to color, font, and symbolism will be more strongly

	Dependent variable:				
	Red (1)	Blue (2)	Font (3)	Patriotic (4)	State.Specific (5)
DW.NOMINATE	1.176*** (0.325)	-1.260*** (0.340)	0.745** (0.292)	0.480* (0.282)	-1.492*** (0.389)
CPVI	0.014 (0.009)	0.010 (0.009)	-0.010 (0.008)	0.009 (0.008)	0.044*** (0.011)
Constant	-1.030*** (0.086)	1.302*** (0.089)	-0.586*** (0.074)	0.051 (0.071)	-1.606*** (0.094)
Observations	855	855	855	855	855
Log Likelihood	-473.610	-448.831	-557.555	-578.843	-370.741
Akaike Inf. Crit.	953.221	903.662	1,121.111	1,163.686	747.483
Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01					

Table 1. Logo Elements by DW-NOMINATE and CPVI

identified as belonging to their party than those that deviate from the established party brand.

Hypothesis 5: Logos that contain design elements associated with a party will be more strongly identified as belonging to that party.

VIII. Logo Data

I. Methods

To test my expectations surrounding the overall design elements of logos, I analyzed the logos of the major party congressional candidates for the 2018 and 2020 elections using the database compiled by the Center for American Politics and Design. There were 1,657 logos in total. Logos were individually coded for color, symbol, font, use of state imagery, and explicit partisan mentions. Other factors, including gender, whether the candidate was elected, and how many years the official served if they won were also recorded.

First, to test whether there are partisan differences in logo design, I examined individual elements of logo design against the legislators' party identification. Then, I sought to test the theory that candidates will decide whether the appearance of their logo should conform with their party or portray their independence based on the partisan makeup of their district and, for elected members of Congress, their ideology.

To understand the partisan makeup of the candidates' districts, I used the Cook Partisan Voting Index (CPVI). The CPVI score measures how strongly Republican or Democratic a congressional district is based on how the district voted in the last two presidential elections as compared to the national average of the party vote split. For example, a district with a CPVI of D+12 would be considered 12 points more Democratic than the nation as a whole. While this is a good indication of how competitive a district is, it does not measure the ideology of the candidates themselves. Therefore, for elected members of Congress, I supplement the CPVI with their DW-NOMINATE score. The DW-NOMINATE score is a measure of a legislator's ideological position in relation to the other members of the legislature. DW-NOMINATE scores place legislators along a spectrum based on their ideological extremity with a score of -1 being the most liberal and a score of 1 being the most conservative. While DW-NOMINATE scores are useful in comparing legislators to each other, they are an imperfect measure. This is because DW-NOMINATE scores are a measure of roll call votes, which means they only include a legislator's opinion on the topics that the party

leader decides that Congress will vote on (McCarthy 2011). Furthermore, DW-NOMINATE scores are aggregated over time, so newer legislators have fewer votes included in the calculation of their score. I created logistic regression models of the various logo elements against the CPVI and the DW-NOMINATE scores.

II. Results

Test 1. Partisan Nature of Logo Elements

Figure 2 shows the differences in partisan usage of the various logo elements based on my initial coding of the candidate logos. These findings align with the theoretical framework and show that Republicans use the color red, serif fonts, and patriotic symbols more often in their logos, while Democrats more often use the color blue and state-specific language or symbolism. Both parties have a relatively small number of candidates that explicitly brand themselves with their party identity in the logo, and it does not appear to be significantly favored by one party. These initial graphs indicate that there are clear differences in logo design between Republicans and Democrats. This means that I can confirm Hypothesis 1 and its various sub-hypotheses.

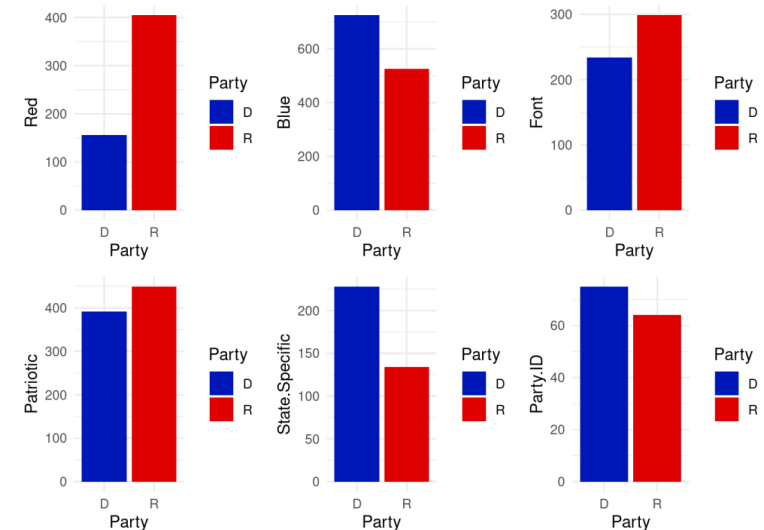


Figure 2. Logo Elements by Party

Test 2. Party Defying or Party Signaling

Now, I have established that there are clear differences between the two parties' logos in terms of color and design. I next want to examine whether these logo elements are indications of ideology or the environment in which politicians are running. Table 1 shows the results of logistic regression models where each of the partisan elements was examined against the DW-NOMINATE and CPVI scores.

Each of these elements was correlated with DW-NOMINATE, with more ideologically conservative candidates being more likely to use the color red, serif fonts, and patriotic symbols, and more liberal candidates being more likely to have logos with the color blue and state-specific references. Odds ratio tests further confirmed these findings. A one-unit increase in DW-NOMINATE, or a candidate moving from moderate to extremely conservative, increases the odds of them having a logo that predominantly features the color red by 220% and decreases the odds of them having a predominantly blue logo by 72%. CPVI, on the other hand, was less strongly correlated with these logo elements. The only element that had a significant relationship was state-specific symbolism. This relationship did not go in the expected direction, as I would anticipate that the relationship would be negative since there are more Democrats with these symbols than Republicans. However, according to this model and the odds ratio test, a 1 unit increase in the Republican makeup of a district means that a logo is only 5% more likely to feature a state-specific symbol, which means this is not a very significant finding.

I can also examine whether candidates within each party use their logo as a way to signal their allegiance to their party or as a way to display their relative independence. The previous tests indicated that there are aspects of the political logo that are differentiated between parties. Now, I am testing whether the same is true within each party. Tables 2 and 3 show logistic regressions of the logo elements against the DW-NOMINATE and CPVI scores within the Democrats and Republicans.

These inconsistent findings cast doubt on the theory that candidates are taking their specific district and ideological positioning into account when designing their logos in any uniform way. If all or most candidates were being that strategic with their choices, then I would expect that those with the most party conforming logo scores would be the candidates in the safest districts or the ones with the ideological positions most in line with that of their party. This means that I can reject Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3. What the results indicate instead is that, within the parties there are not clear correlations in the usage of logo

elements. These logo elements thus appear to be partisan separators rather than sources of inner-party differentiation.

III. Discussion

The finding that there are differences in how the two major parties design their logos has important implications in developing a better understanding of party brand and how visual and design aspects are used in creating that party brand. The differences in color, font, and symbolism as well as the partisan distinction between logo score and district partisanship/legislator ideology all help to indicate the presence of two distinct visual party brands. This means that voters should generally be able to use the elements of logos as a partisan identifier, and thus as a way to glean some insight into candidates' ideological and policy positioning. The survey I conduct in the following section shows that voters do indeed have this ability. Much of the previous understanding of partisan differences in color, symbol, and font has been theoretical, but these findings show that these theories are generally true. Candidates and the consultants working for them are taking these theories of the implications of design into account when creating their logos. The party brand as a visual brand is thus something being actively cultivated and maintained through the design choices that candidates and their teams are making. Although the current candidate-centered environment gives campaigns agency to embrace or avoid their party, in the visual realm, on average, they are choosing to embrace it. Candidates are not forced to bear the full weight of the party label, but in many cases, they are choosing to do so. This could speak to the strength of the party brand and the desire of candidates to be associated with their party.

The inconsistency between DW-NOMINATE scores and the CPVI is one interesting discovery. Why is it that ideology is better for understanding logo design than district competitiveness? One possibility is that there is a stronger ideological element to design than a strategic one. It is possible, for example, that more conservative candidates are drawn to the color red or to the use of patriotic symbols in a way that is not reflected when looking at the competitiveness of their district. Another possibility could stem from the fact that there are a smaller pool of logos included when analyzing DW-NOMINATE scores because they are only given to elected members of Congress. Perhaps the logos of these members of Congress are more strategically designed. The CPVI captures all candidates running, but many Congressional candidates are in long-shot races with little chance of winning. They might not have the time,

	Dependent variable:				
	Red (1)	Blue (2)	Font (3)	Patriotic (4)	State.Specific (5)
DW.NOMINATE	-1.579 (1.273)	2.323* (1.332)	-0.190 (0.988)	0.056 (0.890)	-2.751** (1.220)
CPVI	0.022 (0.014)	-0.001 (0.013)	-0.021** (0.011)	0.013 (0.010)	0.074*** (0.015)
Constant	-2.010*** (0.423)	2.578*** (0.461)	-1.140*** (0.327)	-0.086 (0.289)	-1.723*** (0.396)
Observations	450	450	450	450	450
Log Likelihood	-193.181	-190.540	-276.359	-306.182	-197.931
Akaike Inf. Crit.	392.362	387.080	558.719	618.364	401.863

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 2. Democrat Logo Elements by DW-NOMINATE and CPVI

	Dependent variable:				
	Red (1)	Blue (2)	Font (3)	Patriotic (4)	State.Specific (5)
DW.NOMINATE	0.619 (0.682)	-0.858 (0.715)	-0.737 (0.674)	-0.316 (0.682)	1.579 (0.981)
CPVI	0.014 (0.014)	0.010 (0.014)	0.014 (0.014)	-0.001 (0.014)	-0.001 (0.019)
Constant	-0.707** (0.329)	1.051*** (0.343)	-0.114 (0.313)	0.615* (0.323)	-2.588*** (0.513)
Observations	405	405	405	405	405
Log Likelihood	-276.761	-253.445	-275.632	-270.712	-164.826
Akaike Inf. Crit.	559.522	512.889	557.264	547.423	335.651

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3. Republican Logo Elements by DW-NOMINATE and CPVI

the funding, or the acumen to hire a consultant to design a strategically optimal logo (Haenschen et. al 2021).

While the first finding establishes that there are visual party brands, the second finding shows that candidates are not being as strategic with their use of these party brands as the theoretical work would suggest. Neiheisel and Neibler (2013) posit the idea that the party label is employed only in situations when it is strategically optimal. If the logo is a way to display a party label by proxy, then the same level of strategic thinking should be utilized. However, this does not appear to be the case. In the aggregate, candidates have cultivated partisan brand images, but on the individual level, there is not the consistency that would be expected if partisan signaling through logo design was a top priority of campaigns. In theory, it would be strategic for a Republican legislator in a competitive district to adopt some aspects of Democratic logo design as a way to signal their bipartisanship and help secure their election and vice versa. But this does not appear to occur in any systematic way.

One complicating factor in this analysis may result from the relative recency with which design has become an important part of politics. Taking Barack Obama's 2008 logo as the first example of true candidate-centered logo design means that Congressional campaigns have only had around 10 years to adopt these concepts. Not only that, but established members of Congress who are less worried about their electoral strategies often do not change their logos once elected, which means that they would not be responsive to trends in design and the shift to distinguished party brands. To demonstrate this, Table 4 shows the change in the percentage of Democrats with serif typefaces in their logos as the length of their time served in Congress increases.

This table shows the trend of Democratic logos employing sans serif fonts is relatively new, as it is far more common to find long-serving Democrats with serif logos. This indicates that logo design may continue to conform to certain standards as the newer generation of candidates puts a greater emphasis on their visual branding. However, it is also possible that the kind of Obama-esque branded individual campaign that places a high priority on having a well thought out logo design is still largely relegated to presidential runs and not congressional races.

<i>Hettle</i>	
Dependent variable:	
Font	
Years.Served	0.051*** (0.011)
Constant	-1.326*** (0.158)
Observations	450
Log Likelihood	-267.818
Akaike Inf. Crit.	539.636
Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table 4. Serif Logos by Democratic Incumbency

IX. Logo Survey

I. Methods

With this understanding that there are partisan distinctions in the ways candidates design their logos, it is now important to understand whether those differences are perceived by voters. Strategic decisions about logo color, font, and symbolism may be concentrated among an elite subsection of political graphic designers and campaign managers and have little practical impact. On the other hand, voters may be using logos as partisan indicators consciously or subconsciously. If a voter really can look at candidates' yard signs or buttons and—without knowing anything else about them—identify their party, that would be a powerful piece of information for logo designers to understand.

To test this idea, I gave 118 respondents found using Amazon Mechanical Turk a survey to measure their logo identifying ability. Each participant was asked to measure the same random sample of 24 logos. Ten of these were the logos of

Hettle

Republicans, ten of these were the logos of Democrats, and four were logos for imaginary Congressional candidates designed by me using the partisan elements identified in the previous section. Two of the imaginary logos were designed using the elements associated with Democrats and two for Republicans. These logos are meant to represent the kind of work a designer would make if they were attempting to incorporate all of the ideas about partisan symbolism. They also act as reference points for how idealized representations of logo design are perceived in comparison to the actual logos that candidates have created.

The table below shows a summary of the design elements present in these logos. Images of the 24 logos can be found in the appendix. As the table indicates, the random sample of logos conforms to the larger trends found in congressional logos, with

Party	Using Red	Using Blue	Using Serif Font	Using Patriotic Symbols	Using State-Specific Symbols
Republican	83%	67%	41%	50%	25%
Democrat	0%	83%	8%	17%	33%

Table 5. Proportion of Elements in Survey Sample

red, serif fonts, and patriotic colors used to greater degrees by Republicans, and blue and state-specific symbols more common among Democrats.

For each logo shown, respondents were instructed to guess the party the candidate belongs to using a six-point scale, with the possible responses being “Strongly Republican”, “Likely Republican”, and “Somewhat Republican”, along with the same three options for Democrats. The participants were then asked a series of questions about their political interest and knowledge, as well as providing some standard demographic information. For political interest, respondents were asked how much they are following the campaigns around the upcoming election and how often they pay attention to the day-to-day happenings of the government. For political knowledge, respondents were asked four multiple-choice questions that assess their basic knowledge of governmental processes and contemporary politics. The correct and incorrect responses to these questions were aggregated into a total political knowledge score. For demographic questions, the respondents were asked to self-identify their race, gender, highest

level of education, and income. They were also asked whether they identified as a member of either political party and to place themselves ideologically on a seven-point scale. The results of this survey are helpful in examining how the partisan information transmitted by the logo is understood by an onlooker in a vacuum.

II. Results

In aggregate, respondents were generally successful at identifying the correct party for the logos. Respondents were able to give each logo a score on a six-point range, with -3 being strongly Democratic and 3 being strongly Republican. The graph below shows the average of the ratings given by all the respondents to each logo by party.

As this figure shows, each logo belonging to a Democrat had an average score on the Democratic side of the spectrum, as did every Republican logo, except for one Republican logo which received a perfectly neutral score of zero. This means that respondents overall were successful in determining the party to which logos belonged and allows me to confirm Hypothesis 4.

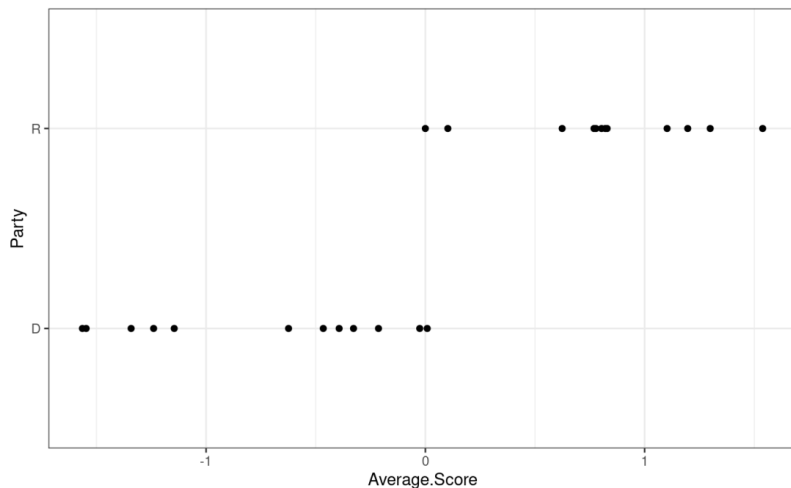


Figure 3. Average Rating of Survey Logos by Party

However, within this generally accurate performance, there was a great deal of variation, with some logos on either side being ranked over a point and a half more strongly identified with their party than those in the center. One possible explanation for this

variation is that respondents were either implicitly or explicitly factoring some of the previously discussed partisan elements—like color, symbol, and font—into their decision calculus when identifying the logo's party. To test this, the tables below show two regression models of the logo's average score based on the elements it contained.

The first model includes the correct party as a variable, which is highly significantly correlated with the average score, providing further credence to the general success respondents had

Dependent variable: Average.Score		Dependent variable: Average.Score	
PartyR	1.031** (0.449)	Red	1.216*** (0.278)
Red	0.344 (0.454)	Blue	-0.354 (0.287)
Blue	-0.154 (0.271)	Patriotic	0.114 (0.337)
Patriotic	0.276 (0.310)	Font	0.441 (0.309)
Font	0.176 (0.300)	State.Specific	-0.094 (0.302)
State.Specific	-0.011 (0.272)	Constant	-0.286 (0.284)
Constant	-0.602* (0.289)		
Observations	23	Observations	23
R2	0.763	R2	0.684
Adjusted R2	0.674	Adjusted R2	0.592
Residual Std. Error	0.516 (df = 16)	Residual Std. Error	0.578 (df = 17)
F Statistic	8.572*** (df = 6; 16)	F Statistic	7.374*** (df = 5; 17)
Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01		Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table 6. Average Score by Logo Elements

Table 7. Average Score by Logo Elements (no Party)

in identifying the party for that logo. The second model removes the variable of party to focus more on the logo elements. In the absence of party, the presence of the color red becomes the most powerful explanatory variable, with a logo featuring that color getting an average score 1.216 points more strongly Republican than one without. The other logo element variables were correlated in the expected direction, but with milder effects. None had as much statistical significance as the color red. This gives some credence to Hypothesis 5, but suggests that some partisan

elements of logo design, like red, serve as stronger cues than others like font or patriotic symbolism.

It is also useful to understand which types of respondents were more successful at the task of correctly identifying the logos. Respondents were asked to rank each logo on a six-point scale. These responses were turned into a dummy variable based on whether they placed the logo on the side of the scale associated with the party. Those dummy variables were added together to get a total correctness score. Table 8 shows the results of a regression model of this correctness score against various demographic variables. Political knowledge, interest in following campaigns and elections, and race were all significantly correlated with correctness. A VIF test confirmed that there was no multicollinearity in these results. Someone who scored one point higher on the political knowledge questions would be expected to get .833 more questions correct.

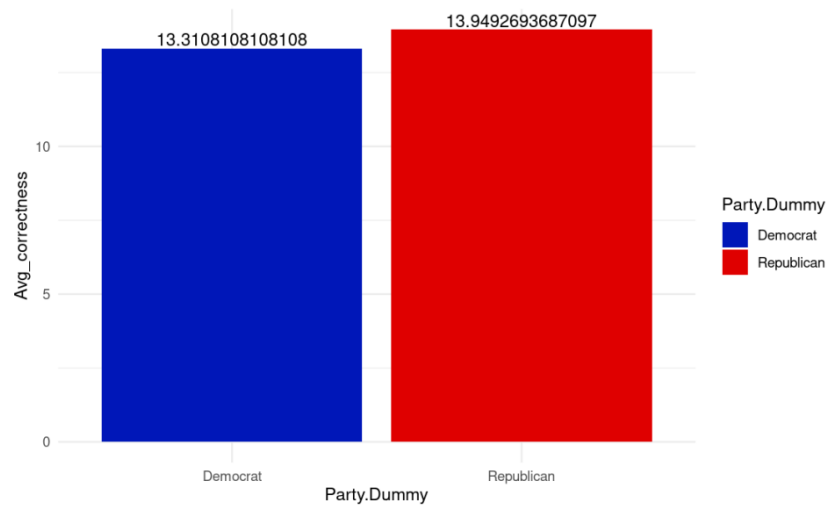


Figure 4. Correctness by Party

However, in a surprising finding, someone who expressed one more degree of enthusiasm in following campaigns and elections would be expected to get .86 more questions wrong. In this sample of respondents, knowledge of government and civics was not associated with interest in campaigns or the day-to-day affairs of the government. The only demographic factor that was significantly associated with performing more successfully in identifying logos was race. Someone identifying as white would be expected to get 1.5 more questions correct than someone who was

not white. This is also a surprising finding, particularly as other demographic factors like income, education, party affiliation, ideology, and gender were all not significantly associated with greater performance in identifying logos. To further confirm that there is not a difference in logo identification ability based on party, I removed independents from the sample and compared the average correctness score of Democrats and Republicans. As the graph below shows, respondents of either party performed fairly evenly on the survey, with Republicans scoring just .6 points better on average than Democrats.

III. Discussion

This finding, that the party of 24 random candidates could be correctly identified just by their logo is an important one with

many implications. The logo takes on new importance when it is thought of as an information-generating tool rather than just a visual representation of a candidate's name. This is especially true for down-ballot candidates. These candidates, who are not getting the extensive media coverage of more big-ticket races, have an opportunity in their logo to convey symbolic information that could serve to cue voters to their political persuasions. While existing research discusses visual elements of politics as fitting in with the valence image of a politician, separate from their policy positions, these findings complicate that idea (Butler and Powell 2014). Logos may be shaping a politician's valence image, but they are also symbols of partisan identity, which in turn provides policy cues. The phrase "yard signs don't vote" is oft-repeated by budget-

	Correctness
Political.Knowledge	0.711** (0.314)
FollowingCampaigns	-0.881** (0.403)
race_recodedWhite	1.497** (0.648)
Income	-0.209 (0.143)
FollowingGovernment	0.004 (0.491)
Education	-0.267 (0.295)
pid7	-0.080 (0.244)
Ideology	0.269 (0.259)
GenderMale	0.077 (0.537)
Constant	13.764*** (1.624)
Observations	101
R2	0.223
Adjusted R2	0.146
Residual Std. Error	2.612 (df = 91)
F Statistic	2.896*** (df = 9; 91)

Table 8. Correctness by Demographic Factors

conscious campaign staff. But with an understanding that a logo can convey far more than just a candidate's name, the yard sign suddenly becomes an opportunity for campaign staff to actively shape the public's perception of a candidate.

While not every element that appears more commonly in the logo of one party or the other was associated with the partisan appearance of the logo, the association between the prevalence of the color red and the Republican Party is striking. The findings of this survey suggest that if respondents were to see two logos, identical in every way except that one had the color red, they would rank the red logo over an entire point more strongly Republican on a six- point scale. It would be an oversimplification, but perhaps a prudent one, to say that if a candidate wants to come off as more conservative, they should make their logo red and if they want to come off as more liberal, they should stay far away from the color. Given that red has only been associated with the Republican Party for twenty years, this suggests that there could be even more room for these color associations to ingrain themselves in the minds of onlookers (Edna 2012). Of course, other elements can be added to make a red logo appear even more conservative. While they did not have the same explanatory power as the color red, patriotic symbols and serif fonts were still associated with more Republican-seeming logos in the eyes of survey respondents.

It is somewhat surprising then that the color blue does not have the same innate association with the Democratic Party as Red with Republicanism. Data from the full slate of Congressional logos provides one explanation for this: there are many more Republicans that use the color blue than Democrats who use the color red. From a design standpoint, this makes sense. A dark color like blue is easier to see on a white background. Furthermore, many Republicans, in their attempts to curate a patriotic image, use both red and blue in their logos. Many Democrats, on the other hand, will pair blue with other colors like green, purple, or yellow. However, it is still interesting that the uninitiated logo consumer would somehow innately understand this.

Although these findings certainly provide credence to anyone arguing in favor of effortful logo design, there are also important impracticalities to how this research was conducted. In this survey, respondents had no information about the candidate besides their logo and a clear motivation to think deeply about the extent to which that logo belonged to a certain party. In the real world, nobody is evaluating candidates in an information vacuum or deeply pondering the perceived partisanship of a logo as they

drive by a yard sign or see a sticker. And yet, the fact that people did well at this assignment even though they were largely going off gut feeling shows that the implicit messages within logo design are being understood and processed by the people who regard them. Consumers are used to encountering logos and to making value judgments of the companies whose logos they see. To ignore that principle when designing a political logo would be an oversight.

The contradictory nature of who was most successful at identifying logos provides further evidence that the partisan messages within logos are not just a game by and for political elites. Although this survey was taken by a small sample of people and some of this may be statistical noise, the disconnect between political knowledge and political interest is nonetheless striking. If both of these factors were associated with stronger performance on the survey, it would suggest that partisan logo design is a sort of "Easter egg" for people who are already attuned to the political realm. However, it seems that interest in elections and government does not improve people's ability to identify logos. Instead, the perception of these partisan labels appears to be more of a heuristic, based on symbolic factors rather than a depth of knowledge that would come from a deep study of politics. Political knowledge was significantly associated with better performance on the survey, but other factors that one would expect to be correlated with political knowledge, like education or income, did not have the same significant trend. It is possible that political interest had a negative effect on performance because respondents who care more about politics overthought their responses and would have been better off trusting their innate understanding.

The finding that whiteness was strongly associated with better performance on the survey is another interesting and somewhat surprising finding that is worth considering more deeply. It is possible that this is just a product of the small sample of people who took the survey on this particular occasion and would not be replicated if the same survey was given to another group. It is also possible that this speaks to certain kinds of cultural narratives displayed in logos that white respondents more readily pick up on (Barnard 2005). The geographic segregation that much of the country is under means that logos are often being made for a potential constituent base that is largely made up of people of one race. A candidate in a rural Midwestern district is likely primarily appealing to white voters, as compared to a candidate running in a majority- Black district in the South, for instance. This means designers may not be considering how to make a logo with cross-cultural appeal. Barack Obama's designers, for instance, emphasized that they wanted to create a logo that

would be appealing regardless of cultural context, which could be a reason why that logo was so successful (Thomas 2010). It is important not to read too much into a finding like this from a small sample, but it also suggests that the relationship between race and perception of partisan graphic design should be explored more deeply.

X. Linking Discussion

The quantitative analysis of Congressional logo elements and the logo survey build off each other to create a new understanding of the logo as a tool in party brand building and candidate identity expression. The analysis of the 2018 and 2020 Congressional logos is a representation of the current field of political graphic design. It shows an environment built around partisan distinction, with clear differences in how candidates choose to express elements of their partisan identity. At the same time, it shows an environment where the choice to express partisan elements is not being made in the strategic way that would be theoretically expected. Candidates are not universally designing logos to reflect the competitive environment where they are running. The survey adds to this by helping to prove to candidates and campaigns that these choices are being perceived by the electorate. Even those without a great deal of political acumen can look at a logo and identify the party it belongs to with far more accuracy than if they were guessing blindly. This means that designing a logo in a way that reflects the partisan image a candidate wants to portray, whether that be of a Republican, a Democrat, or an ambiguous image that plays to voters on both sides of the aisle, should be a task of the utmost importance. Although the logo may be a small factor in the large scale of a campaign, these two studies demonstrate that even the smallest factors hold implications in this current branded era.

XI. Qualitative Analysis

The results of the logo data analysis and the logo survey reveal that many factors go into designing a logo and influence how that logo is perceived. A more substantial analysis of a few logos can help to put these results in context. Therefore, I will conduct a qualitative analysis of four logos that were shown to survey respondents. These are the logos of Delina DiSanto, Jeffery Beeler, Dana Balter, and Nicole Malliotakis. These logos were chosen as they were most and least strongly identified as belonging to their party.

This qualitative analysis demonstrates how although there are logo design elements that are associated with Republicans and

Democrats in the aggregate, it is not until an individual logo is examined more deeply that these elements can be better understood. This analysis also displays the ways in which candidates are successful or unsuccessful with using the logo as a tool to match the partisan environment where they are running.

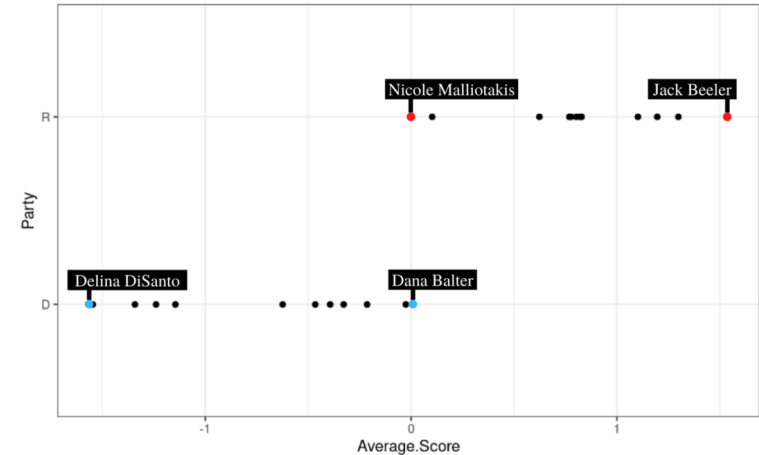


Figure 5. Logos for Qualitative Analysis

Delina DiSanto, a 2020 candidate from Arizona's 4th district had the logo most associated with the Democratic Party. Respondents gave it an average rating of -1.55, with a score of -3 being the most strongly Democratic. The logo features the candidate's first name in a bold purple sans serif font. At the bottom, the year 2020 is displayed in yellow, surrounding a star that gives off yellow light, possibly to evoke the sun associated with DiSanto's home state. DiSanto's logo is a good example of how just because an element is normally associated with a party does not mean it always carries that association. While the star is an example of a patriotic symbol that would typically be associated with the Republican Party, clearly, respondents did not interpret the star in



Figure 6. Delina DiSanto (D-AZ)

DiSanto's logo in that way. Perhaps evoking a sunrise gives the star a less overtly patriotic tone. The sunrise has further associations with the Democratic Party, thanks to Barack Obama's logo. DiSanto's logo has a clear femininity to it that could also help it connect to the Democratic party. My data on logos shows that female candidates were more likely to use the color purple in their logos. Schwarz (2021) also found in his interviews with designers that they favor using the first names of the female candidates they work with to help ensure that people do not assume the candidate is male. However, DiSanto's logo may also be an example of one that could be designed in a more strategically optimal manner. DiSanto ran a difficult race, in a district with a CPVI 22 points more Republican than the nation as a whole. Her logo so clearly identifying her as a Democrat could turn people against her even before they engage with her on a policy level.



Figure 7. Jeffrey Beeler (R-WA)

On the other side of the aisle, the logo of the 2018 candidate for Washington's 1st District, Jeffrey Beeler, had the most Republican-presenting logo of the sample, receiving a score of 1.58 out of 3. Beeler's logo has his last name in all capital letters in a large, white, sans-serif text over a red background with a small blue wave at the top. Below his last name, "for Congress" is written in blue text with a thin white outline. Below that, "Results, Not Excuses" is written in white italicized text. As the previous section showed, the presence of the color red was a clear indication to respondents that the candidate was a Republican. However, the fact that Beeler's logo was seen as so heavily Republican—even with the absence of a more traditional serif font or the overt patriotic symbols found in other logos—could be attributed to the "Results, Not Excuses" slogan. While this slogan itself could be employed by members of either party, when coupled with the heavy red background, it may give people associations with conservative values. In the case of Beeler, who was running in a fairly competitive district with a CPVI 6 points more Democratic than the nation as a whole, a more partisan neutral logo may have benefitted him electorally. However, his usage of a slogan in his

logo design, which is uncommon, is a strategy that could be employed more by candidates who have a message they want to display. Since voters come into consistent contact with a logo through seeing yard signs and buttons, including a slogan in a logo would be a powerful way of engraining that message in voters' minds.

The Democratic candidate in New York's 24th district, Dana Balter, had the Democratic logo that was least associated with her party. With an average score of 0.01, Balter's logo was



Figure 8. Dana Balter (D-NY)

essentially neutral in identification. Balter's logo features her full name in all capitalized letters in a navy font. "For Congress" appears below in a smaller all-capitalized purple font. The same purple color is used to make stripes in the form of a curved flag coming out of "Dana" and an array of stars extending from "For Congress" to a gray representation of the state of New York, which fades to white in a gradient. Balter's logo seems to be a good fit for her partisan environment. She was running in a highly competitive district, only three points more Republican than the country as a whole. A logo like this, which has a neutrality that would likely alienate few people, is ideal to attract the swing voters she would need to win. The combination of the more Republican-coded stars and stripes and the more Democratic-coded state-specific symbolism adds to the logo's partisan ambiguity. The choice of darker blues and purples, rather than the bright purples and reds seen in the most party-identified logos, further helps to make the logo feel less polarizing.

Nicole Malliotakis, the Congresswoman from New York's 11th district, had the least Republican-identified logo of the conservative candidates in the sample. Respondents gave it an average score of 0. Malliotakis' logo is simple, with her full name stacked over "For Congress" in all-capital letters. Her first name is slightly larger than her last name and is in red, while her last name is in a light blue, and "For Congress" is in navy. All are in the same bold sans-serif font. At 41, Malliotakis is relatively young for a member of Congress, and her logo, with its bright colors and modern design, contains a youthful energy. While the logo features Republican-associated red, the choice of the vibrant blue

that is of a similar hue to the Democratic Party's logo, rather than a more traditional dark blue, contributes to its partisan ambiguity. Malliotakis was in a fairly competitive seat, seven points more Republican than the country as a whole. But she has positioned herself as a relative moderate, with a DW-Nominate score of 0.26, which makes her one of the ten most liberal Republicans in Congress. She was endorsed by the Log Cabin Republicans, who support Republicans in favor of LGBTQ+ rights and has only a 33% favorability rating from the NRA (Log Cabin Republicans 2021, VoteSmart n.d.). Her partisan-neutral logo is a reflection of the moderate image she seeks to convey.



Figure 9. Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY)

XII. Conclusion

This research on logos is a testament to the idea that no aspect of a campaign can be too small to hold political meaning and a substantial piece of evidence that partisan brands are deeply prevalent and recognizable. Though the logos of the 2018 and 2020 Congressional candidates were designed separately, taken together, they represent a partisan visual language that conveys itself through font, color, and symbol. However, this visual language does not just exist in the abstract. The survey I conducted showed that people perceive these differences in how the two parties visually represent themselves and were generally successful in identifying to which party a logo belongs. The partisan brand is thus both an idea understood in the policy and electoral decisions that candidates make as well as the tangible aspects of their campaign like their visual design.

This new understanding of the differences in the logo design of Republicans and Democrats is only scratching the surface of the information that these under-studied symbols could hold. Two factors largely missing from my statistical analysis of logo design that could have important implications are race and gender. As the individuals serving in the United States government become more diverse, it is possible that there would be observable differences in the colors and symbols used by male or female candidates and white candidates or candidates of color.

Another factor missing from this analysis is the presence of consultant networks. As campaigns outsource their design and media operations to corporatized consulting firms who often



Figure 10. George Bush and John Kerry 2004 Logos

perform these roles for multiple campaigns at the same time, it would be interesting to examine whether these logo designs come out with more homogeneity than those designed by different firms. Finally, more study should be done on how logos are perceived by the public. Understanding the thought process that people take when analyzing a logo and seeing if these results would be replicated with a new sample of logos would both be interesting and valuable next steps.

In the midst of the 2004 presidential election, noted graphic designer Steven Heller (2004) penned a piece condemning the design choices being made by the campaigns of George Bush and John Kerry, who had strangely similar and equally bland logos. This graphic monotony, Heller wrote, “is indicative of the short-sightedness that undermines the American electoral process.” The election of Barack Obama that was fueled, in part, by a unique brand that his campaign built with his logo at the center proved Heller right four years later. In the years since Obama's election, a greater number of candidates are creating unique logos that serve as representations of their campaigns in the minds of the American voter. Though the research on candidate branding and design is as undeveloped as many of the current logos of the House of Representatives, the possibilities for examining this burgeoning aspect of campaigns are exciting. Heller proclaimed that “political campaigns should be an occasion for raucous pageantry, not dreary mediocrity.” With every election cycle, more candidates are adopting this mentality.

Appendix



Figure 11. Melvin Harvey (R-Fake)



Figure 12. Sarah Anderson (R-Fake)



Figure 13. Ryan Bell (D-Fake)



Figure 14. Lisa Weeks (D-Fake)



Figure 15. Dana Balter (D-NY)



Figure 16. Ted Deutch (D-FL)



Figure 17. Delina DiSanto (D-AZ)



Figure 18. Kara Eastman (D-NE)



Figure 19. Todd Litton (D-TX)



Figure 20. Dave Loebsack (D-IA)



Figure 20. Dan McCready (D-NC)



Figure 21. Chris Pappas (D-CT)



Figure 22. Jamie McLeod-Skinner (D-OR)



Figure 23. Gwen Moore (D-WI)



Figure 24. Jack Beeler (R-WA)



Figure 25. Andy Biggs (R-AZ)



Figure 26. Jim Bognet (R-PA)



Figure 27. Mike Bost (R-IL)



Figure 28. Tim Burchett (R-TN)



Figure 29. Agnes Gibboney (R-CA)



Figure 30. Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY)



Figure 31. Gary Palmer (R-AL)



Figure 32. Dino Rossi (R-WA)



Figure 33. Jennifer Zinone (R-NJ)

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Resisting Totalitarianism: A Critical Humanistic Sensibility in the Work of Hannah Arendt and Tzvetan Todorov

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Abstract

Elements of totalitarianism and ideology remain a growing presence in our socio-political fabric. Increasingly, the political parties, social movements, and institutions of our time are becoming perpetrators (and victims) of a deformed political ethos worldwide. It is thus crucial to identify the manifestations of totalitarianism in the present and to both articulate and encourage forms of resistance. This paper invites into conversation two thinkers of the twentieth century: the Bulgarian-French writer Tzvetan Todorov (1939-2017) and the German-American political theorist Hannah Arendt (1906-1975). Both thinkers' biographies and bodies of work offer models of resistance against ideology through a *critical humanistic sensibility* – a mode of political existence and judgment that defends its openness to the world's complexity and to the rich and concrete presence of other human beings – one that never reduces lives, histories, or identities to an algorithm, calculation, stock phrase, cliché, slogan, or iron law of biology and history. This sensibility, a combination of Arendtian thinking/world-building and Todorovian humanism, can respond to the responsibility placed upon us by modernity: that of caring for the world, for a meaning and unity that are forever fragile and in need of perennial tending, that cannot come into being other than through engagement with one another.

I. Introduction

The totalitarian threat to politics

I wonder if I have hit upon a new plague of modern times, a strange disease that thrives in different forms but is in principle the same. Automatic systematized thinking, the idolization of ideologies, screens mind from reality, perverts our understanding and makes us blind. Ideologies too raise the barricades, dehumanize men and make it impossible for them to be friends notwithstanding; they get in the way of what we call co-existence, for a Rhinoceros can only come to terms with one of his own kind, a sectarian with a member of his particular sect (Ionesco 1964: 207).

Eugène Ionesco, Notes & Counter Notes

In the Romanian-French playwright Eugène Ionesco's 1959 play, *Rhinoceros*, individuals who submitted their reason and individuality to ideological certainties metamorphosized into gargantuan, green-skinned, stampeding rhinoceri. In his play, Ionesco, disturbed by the darkness that descended upon Romania during the twentieth century, aimed to "denounce, to expose, to show how an ideology gets transformed into idolatry, how it seeps into everything, how it reduces the masses to hysteria, how an idea, which was reasonable enough for discussion at the start, can become monstrous when leaders ... use it as a powerful stimulant, a strong dose of which has a malignant and monstrous effect on the 'people,' turning them into a hysterical mob" (Ionesco 1964: 209). Chillingly, Timothy Snyder, warns in one of his latest works that today "the rhinoceri are roaming through our neurological savannahs" (Snyder 2017: 70).

Indeed, elements of totalitarianism and ideology remain a constant and growing presence in our socio-political fabric. Increasingly, the political parties, social movements, and institutions of our time are becoming perpetrators (and victims) of a deformed political ethos worldwide; they seize upon governed populations that remain vulnerable to manipulation and alluring propagandistic reductions. An undeniable rise in polarization has arrived coupled with a rise in partisanship, whose symptoms have surfaced in an unyielding wave of populism and xenophobia worldwide (Pew 2017). In his last work, the late Amos Oz describes that today, the perils of extremism and fervor are inescapable as we melt ourselves (and the surrounding world) down completely until "assimilated in the body of the nation, faith, or movement" (Oz 2018: 38). Within this osmosis lurks a disturbing host of casualties, the most insidious of which is perhaps the wholesale forfeiture of individual and critical thought – the yielding of one's own selfhood.¹

Thus, the human condition endures a particular psychological continuity, one that – for good or ill – bridges us through a common humanity with those of our past. Regardless of our preferences, we harbor the very vulnerabilities to rhinoceric

¹ For Oz, this is the common thread between all forms of fervorous conformity. As he elaborates, it is the "childish element in people's souls, the element that so longs to merge, to crawl back into a warm womb, to once again be a tiny cell inside a huge body, a strong and protective body – the nation, the church, the movement, the party, the team fans, the groupies – to belong, to squeeze in with a crowd under the broad wings of a great father, an admired hero, a dreamy beauty, a sparkling celebrity, in whose hands the worshipers deposit their hopes and dreams, and even their right to think and judge and take positions" (*Dear Zealots*, 18).

possession that our forebears did: our otherwise unavoidable and healthy inclinations to simplify the complexity of our existence, escape from reality when unhappy or in distress, and belong to a particular identity/community can become pathological, ultimately deforming into the totalitarian and mob-driven monstrosities witnessed throughout the twentieth century. Due to our persistent predisposition to the lure of the rhinoceros, it is crucial to identify the manifestations of totalitarianism in the present and to both articulate and encourage forms of resistance.

In this paper, I invite into conversation with one another two thinkers of the twentieth century: the Bulgarian-French writer Tzvetan Todorov (1939-2017) and the German-American political theorist Hannah Arendt (1906-1975). Both thinkers' biographies and bodies of work beautifully offer themselves as invaluable models of resistance against ideology through what seems to be a *critical humanistic sensibility* – a mode of political judgement and existence that defends its openness to the world's complexity and to the rich and concrete presence of other human beings, never reducing their lives, histories, or identities to an idea or ideology, to clichés and slogans. Both thinkers endured moments of political crises plagued by totalitarian perversions of the political ethos – and it is undeniable that their work reflects these crises in a remarkable fashion; the sociopolitical contexts surrounding their biographies inevitably left each of them continuously searching for a way to, in both their everyday lives and work, resist totalitarianism and ideological thinking. The events of their lives made it clear how fragile the political realm is, how easily the unattended plants of our imperfect garden of humanity can wilt, how rapidly and mindlessly the fungus of evil can spread throughout the world.

Hannah Arendt warned that our vulnerability to succumb to totalitarian solutions would linger in modern politics so long as societies persist in rendering their individual citizens as *superfluous* masses (a label she applies to both the victims and perpetrators of totalitarian measures).² In resistance to totalitarianism, Arendt aimed to retrieve from the Western tradition and history experiences of what can be deemed *authentic*

² Forced to flee to Paris with her mother after an encounter with the Gestapo in the early 1930's, Arendt began her life anew in France for seven years, only to be sent to an internment camp in anticipation of German invasion in 1940. Fortunately, Arendt managed to escape France, arriving in New York City in 1941. In 1951, ten years after escaping war-plagued Europe, Arendt published her landmark study, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, ultimately prompting what still remains today a rich field of inquiry into the phenomenon of totalitarianism.

politics. Contrary to the destruction of the public realm by totalitarian politics, in authentic politics, citizens convene in a state of freedom and equality as co-builders of the world to articulate common interests, values, and concerns. Ultimately, Arendt embarked upon a project to answer the question that would haunt her until the day of her untimely death: “could the activity of thinking as such, the habit of examining whatever happens to come to pass or to attract attention ... be among the conditions that make men abstain from evil-doing or even actually ‘condition’ them against it” (Arendt 1981: 5).

Having escaped communist Bulgaria, Tzvetan Todorov translated his exile into the role of a moderator and mediator between different ideas and cultures, always devoted to think and judge in ways that respect the nuance of the word and world.³ In this role, Todorov found inspiration in his conception of critical humanism – a compass that devotedly orients, and re-oriens us to think and act not in the service of an ideology, party, or science, but for the sake of the *other*, through which, alone, humanity is cultivated in us. I argue that if, as Arendt hopes, thinking can become a strategy to resist totalitarianism, it has to acquire a more substantial humanistic dimension, which conjugates the demand to care for the *world* with that of caring for the *others*. It is the work of Todorov that can provide the tools for thus developing and completing Arendt’s conception about the ability of thinking to resist totalitarianism, not just in times of crisis and emergency, but in what seems to have become an endemic feature of today’s politics: its persistent vulnerability to totalitarian and ideological disfigurations.

II. Part 1: Hannah Arendt

It is chiefly for the sake of complete consistency that it is necessary for totalitarianism to destroy every trace of what we commonly call human dignity. For respect for human dignity implies the recognition of my fellow-men or our fellow-nations as subjects, as builders of worlds or cobuilders of a common world. No ideology which aims at

³ Todorov, a native of Sofia, fled Bulgaria in 1963 to Paris at the height of the Cold War and the peak of communism in the Soviet Block. The experience of totalitarianism, in particular that of the camps, marked both Todorov’s initial indifference to politics and his later attempt to rethink democratic politics from a humanistic perspective. He considered himself an ‘*homme dépaycé*,’ an estranged man who both endures and enjoys a particular outsiderness, “a state that allows him to perceive what too much familiarity would have prevented him from seeing” (Todorov, Tzvetan. *Duties and Delights: The Life of a Go-between*. Seagull Books Pvt Ltd, 2008, ix).

the explanation of all historical events of the past and at mapping out the course of all events of the future can bear the unpredictability which springs from the fact that men are creative, that they can bring forward something so new that nobody ever foresaw it (Arendt 1973: 458).

Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*

Dark Times

Hannah Arendt often described the moment of her existence as one of *dark times*. She begins her book, *Men in Dark Times*, with a portrait of the German critic and playwright, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing – a man who endured an archetypically shadowed period himself in the 18th century. Arendt warns early in her piece that “the world lies between people, and this in-between ... is today the object of the *greatest concern* and the most obvious upheaval in almost all the countries of the globe ... *the public realm has lost the power of illumination which was originally part of its very nature*. More and more people in the countries of the Western world, which since the decline of the ancient world has regarded freedom *from* politics as one of the basic freedoms, make use of this freedom and have retreated from the world and their obligations within it. This withdrawal from the world need not harm an individual ... *But with each such retreat an almost demonstrable loss to the world takes place; what is lost is the specific and usually irreplaceable in-between which should have formed between this individual and his fellow men*” (my italics) (Arendt 1968: 11). For Arendt, the “irreplaceable in-between” is the world itself. As she writes, “wherever people come together, the world thrusts itself between them, and it is in this in-between space that all human affairs are conducted” (Arendt 1968: 106). In this sense, we are world-disclosing beings – and politics is the very process of world-building. Arendt describes that “strictly speaking, politics is not so much about human beings as it is about the world that comes into being between them and endures beyond them ... the more peoples there are in the world who stand in some particular relationship with one another, the more world there is to form between them, and the larger and richer that world will be” (Arendt 1968: 176). For Arendt, we nearly hold a responsibility across generations – a responsibility to nurture a degree of permanency, continuity, and stability for posterity within the public realm, within the world between us.

The public realm’s loss of illumination constitutes a period of *dark times*. As Arendt writes, “history knows many periods of dark times in which the public realm has been obscured and the

world become so dubious that people have ceased to ask any more of politics than that it show due consideration for their vital interests and personal liberty ... [they] have probably always been inclined to *despise* the world and the public realm, to *ignore* them as far as possible, or even to *overleap* them ... in order to arrive at mutual understandings with their fellow men without regard for the world that lies between them” (Arendt 1968: 12). This perception of politics and of one’s (lack of) responsibility to it is, in essence, *the* antithesis to what Arendt believed herself: never turn your back on politics, *especially* when it seems to turn its back on you; to do so is to turn your back on the world, forfeiting yourself along with it. While many might reduce the role of politics to that of protecting individual liberty and the private sphere of interest and action, Arendt’s insight into the meaning of politics cautions that when the public realm (preserved by our venture into it, our interchange with one another) lacks cultivation, our private lives gradually wilt alongside it. Venturing into politics and common life – realms saturated with the challenge and diversity posed by *others* – thus fulfills a dimension of our condition that privacy and solitude alone can not. Our treasured private lives are inextricably bound to political life – both of which are ultimately constitutive to one another, and to the very constitution of our humanity.⁴ To Arendt’s (notional) dismay, today, *we* too exist in dark times – times darkened by ideology and typified by a phenomenal retreat from politics, resulting in the accelerated shrinkage and desertification of the world between us. It is for this reason that I invite Arendt into the conversation of this paper. In the wake of the political horrors endured in her century, Arendt ventured not *away* from politics, but *towards* it – she did not attempt to dispose of this realm, but rather sought to better understand it, and even dared to *defend* it.⁵ In her *Introduction into Politics*, Arendt seeks to address the prejudices “that all of us who aren’t professional politicians have against politics.” These (modern) prejudices, she writes, “indicate that we have stumbled into a situation in which we do not know, or do not yet know, how to function in just such political terms” (Arendt 2009: 96-97). Because politics, for Arendt, occurs in moments of world creation, self-constitution, and is synonymous with freedom, any threat

⁴ Politics for Arendt, then, is more than just the protection of one’s private sphere: it is also about the freedom to participate in the public realm, the protection, thus, of *political* as well as individual freedom, that is, the freedom to appear to others, speak, and think with them.

⁵ She sought to defend it against two groups of individuals: 1) those who, upon losing faith in politics, retreat from it; and 2) those who dove headfirst into the political realm, only to ideologically twist it in a totalitarian direction.

facing it is of a great magnitude and poses severe implications. Indeed, Arendt deemed the threat of politics disappearing altogether as the greatest. “*The danger*,” Arendt warns, “*is that politics may vanish entirely from the world*. Our prejudices⁶ invade our thoughts; they throw the baby out with the bathwater, confuse politics with what would put an end to politics, and present that very catastrophe as if it were inherent in the nature of things and thus inevitable” (my italics) (The Promise of Politics, 96-97). What, then, is *politics* for Arendt – and what is it that would put an *end* to politics? In this vein, Ned O’Gorman employs a useful distinction that I will adopt (with some adjustment⁷) hereafter: that between *authentic* and *twisted* politics (Politics for Everybody, 3).

What one discovers alongside Arendt is that there is no way to resist twisted politics other than through authentic politics – it is a threat that can not but be dealt with politically – with *more* politics – better politics – authentic politics. For Arendt, such a politics, it seems, can only be protected against its host of prejudices and (often totalitarian) distortions through a particular combination of thinking, judgement, and imagination. There is then a striking fragility intrinsic to politics, a frailty that demands protection against threats and cultivation towards its ideals; it is this insecurity and maintenance that additionally predisposes us towards the allure of the “secure” absolutes offered by totalitarian politics.

⁶ Arendt does not deem these prejudices to have arisen out of nowhere – rather, “these judgments and prejudices arise from a mistrust of politics that most certainly is not unjustified” – for in both her time, and ours, those who want less politics have suffered a twisted version of it – many, if not most, have endured a casualty of disfigured politics (*The Promise of Politics*, 152). Her argument for authentic politics is strengthened by the grievances of those who have suffered from twisted politics.

⁷ In *Politics for Everybody*, O’Gorman suggests that “at the heart of Arendt’s approach to politics is the insistence that politics is a basic human capacity, and that it can be done more or less authentically.” Authentic politics, for him, “is the quintessential everyday art of relating in freedom as equals, and rather than being the problem, it is part of the solution to our political myopia, malaise, and malevolence” – a solution to the less authentic, twisted political forms that are colonized by theatrics, a war-by-other-means mentality, and abusive rhetoric. Channeling Arendt, O’Gorman seeks to “defend the dignity of politics in the age of its infamy” by bringing to the attention of his readers the way in which authentic politics is, inevitably, our only escape from its twisted alter-ego (O’Gorman, Ned. *Politics for Everybody: Reading Hannah Arendt in Uncertain Times*. University of Chicago Press, 2020, 4, 12.) I alter O’Gorman’s categories in that I lend more attention to Arendt’s conception of thinking, which I deem to be as (if not more) constitutive to authentic politics as Arendt’s notions of judging and imagination.

The Fragility & Meaning of Politics

In Arendt's view, politics is not a solid achievement but rather exists in fleeting moments – like the flickering of a light – when individuals venture into the public realm and meet in a state of freedom and equality to exchange thoughts in view of articulating common interests, values, and concerns. As Arendt explains, “politics as such has existed so rarely and in so few places that, historically speaking, only a few great epochs have known it and turned it into a reality ... only in them has the meaning of politics – in both the benefits and the mischief that come with it – been fully manifested” (*Politics for Everybody*, 119). Freedom and politics, for Arendt, are synonymous: “the meaning of politics,” she writes, “is freedom” (*Politics for Everybody*, 108). Because politics is so inextricably tied to our freedom, politics is *not* a means to an end (freedom). It is *the* end – an end to be cooperatively striven for on the part of *everyone*.⁸

There is a constitutive fragility to authentic politics that makes it particularly prone to being twisted. Colonized by totalitarian features, *twisted* politics is both the *result* and *cause* of the prejudices that disfigure the authentic politics described above. One of the many prejudices that twists politics is its instrumentalization, which abusively kneads politics into an instrument of sorts – a simple means to an end (opening the door to a wide array of insidious ends that threaten our freedom and equality). Politics conceived as warfare similarly threatens an authentic political ethos. To redirect her readers away from conceptions of politics as a winner-take-all game of brute force, Arendt reconstructs the original moment from which the Western political tradition sprang: the Greek and Roman experience. According to this period, politics is not about coercion, demands, and submission, but rather about persuasion, the ability to speak with and listen to each other, to woo one another's consent with openness and humility, as well as with consideration and respect

⁸ As O'Gorman writes, “the world is full of powerful people who promise, in one way or another, to engineer or enforce our freedom. This fact worried Arendt a great deal ... Human freedom in human community is always *political* freedom: ‘Freedom exists only in the unique intermediary space of politics’ ... For Arendt, any dream of freedom apart from a dream of politics is a recipe for tyranny of one kind or another, be it the tyranny of technology, of markets, of history, of states, of selves, or of the sciences. Human freedom can be realized only politically, and ultimately democratically, as we related to one another as equals apart from force or violence. Freedom therefore depends on politics, and politics on our understanding, and indeed our imagination, of freedom” (*Politics for Everybody*, 115).

for the other's existence and opinions.⁹ “Violence begins where speech ends” (Arendt 2011: 308) – and where speech ends, politics – along with the very world in which we are situated – vanishes. In contrast with both an instrumental view of politics (where others are seen as means in the realization of the rulers' ends) and the image of politics as warfare, Arendt conceives of politics as “based on the fact of human plurality ... [which] deals with the coexistence and association of different men [who] organize themselves politically according to certain essential commonalities found within or abstracted from an absolute chaos of differences” (*The Promise of Politics*, 93).

While totalitarian politics perverts the public employment of language in a violent direction, authentic politics restores the depth of language and its ability to capture nuance and complexity in thinking and acts of judgment. For Arendt, language's ability to illuminate the world in its reality and particularity is dependent upon our resistance to the deployment of clichés, stock phrases, and automatised, standardized codes of expression. Political judgement is founded upon our ability to *think* and pay attention to the particular with a generous range of vocabulary to choose from.¹⁰ Authentic politics, in short, cultivates the richness of language and imagination to reflect the plurality of the world and to facilitate understanding and communication across differences and particularities.

The foundational totalitarian danger to authentic politics that Arendt targets is that of ideology – of *-isms* of any kind, which pose an incalculable threat to human freedom and dignity so constitutive to authentic politics itself. At their core, ideologies assume “that one idea is sufficient to explain everything in the development from the premise, and that no experience can teach anything because everything is comprehended in this consistent

⁹ Speech, as understood by the Greeks, was exclusively propositional and persuasive. As Arendt describes, “here the meaning of politics, in distinction to its end, is that men in their freedom can interact with one another without compulsion, force, and rule over one another, as equals among equals, commanding and obeying one another only in emergencies – that is, in times of war – but otherwise managing all their affairs by speaking with and persuading one another ... to speak in the form of commanding and to hear in the form of obeying were not considered actual speech and hearing” (*The Promise of Politics*, 118).

¹⁰ To this idea, O'Gorman quotes the Polish poet Adam Zagajewski (who sprung from a totalitarian system himself), “nouns and verbs are enough for soldiers and leaders of totalitarian countries’ ... ‘The adjective,’ by contrast, ‘is the indispensable guarantor of the individuality of people and things ... What color is to painting, the adjective is to language.’ ... to judge the matter politically calls us to try out a generous range of words so as to think – to think with others, and as much as possible to think the particular” (*Politics for Everybody*, 66-67).

process of logical deduction. The danger in exchanging the necessary insecurity of philosophical thought for the total explanation of an ideology ... is not even so much the risk of falling for some usually vulgar, always uncritical assumption as of exchanging the freedom inherent in man's capacity to think for the straitjacket of logic with which man can force himself almost as violently as he is forced by some outside power (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 473).

As outlined in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, our vulnerability for these ideological deformities, is, in part, inspired by our desire to master and order what is a disordered and distressingly unmasterable world – one of irreducible, unpredictable, and irreversible thoughts and actions – a world plagued by *contingency* and *inconsistency*.¹¹ Many are thus likely to find (non-ideological) thinking and judgement – which reject infallibility and tend towards an embrace of complexity and paradox – far less alluring than the total explanation of propaganda, and of the ideology it metastasizes. As Arendt describes, “what the masses refuse to recognize is the fortuitousness that pervades reality. They are predisposed to all ideologies because they explain facts as mere examples of laws and eliminate coincidences by inventing an all embracing omnipotence which is supposed to be at the root of every accident” (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 351-352).

¹¹ This, we find, is of particular importance to Arendt, who deems unpredictability, natality, and spontaneity the very features that distinguish us as human beings. As she writes, “what stands in opposition to all possible predetermination and knowledge of the future is the fact that the world is daily renewed through birth and is constantly dragged into what is unpredictably new by the spontaneity of each new arrival. Only if we rob the newborn of their spontaneity, their right to begin something new, can the course of the world be defined deterministically and predicted” (*The Promise of Politics*, 126). Under the grip of totalitarianism, then, “simply because of their capacity to think, human beings are suspects by definition, and this suspicion cannot be diverted by exemplary behavior, for the human capacity to think is also a capacity to change one's mind” (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 430). The totalitarian system, she writes, “[strove] to organize the infinite plurality and differentiation of human beings as if all of humanity were just one individual ... [in which] each and every person can be reduced to a never changing identity of reactions, so that each of these bundles of reactions can be exchanged at random for any other.” To this end, the camps served “the ghastly experiment of eliminating, under scientifically controlled conditions, spontaneity itself as an expression of human behavior” (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 438).

This search for consistency finds its illusory solution in political aestheticism,¹² in both aesthetic fictions and scientific formulas, which capitalize on our ceaseless search for order and “understanding,” be that through algorithms, calculations, stock phrases, clichés, slogans, or iron laws of biology and history. As Arendt writes, “the ‘collectivism’ of masses was welcomed by those who hoped for the appearance of ‘natural laws of historical development’ which would eliminate the unpredictability of the individual's actions and behavior” (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 346).

Political aestheticism reared its head in Nazi propaganda – sweeping the eager masses into the movement – positioning them to act in perfect harmony with the (fictional) ‘laws’ of history and biology (it is in this way that the prophecies¹³ of political fiction ‘proved’ themselves right). “With such generalizations,” Arendt describes, “totalitarian propaganda establishes a world fit to compete with the real one, whose main handicap is that it is not logical, consistent, and organized” (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 362).

In addition to the totalitarian art of politics, whose allure is its salvific rendition of a world relished in consistency and obedience to historical and biological law, Arendt also targets a hyper-rational politics that eases its indigestion of contingency through formulaic, algorithmic systems of thought. In *Lying in Politics*, Arendt reveals how twisted politics can disfigure political judgement and illumination into a system of pure calculation –

¹² I use this phrase with George Kateb's work on aesthetic fiction in mind, which offers insight into the processes which shape the plastic-art of politics – what he calls “political aestheticism” – the seduction of the vulnerable masses (masses naturally averse to contingency, inconsistency, and fortuity) by totalizing bio-historical laws/mythologies that eradicate life of its plurality, complexity, and ambiguity. Kateb claims that all belief has its roots in “aesthetically compelling falsehoods and unwarranted beliefs.” One's ardent subscription to such beliefs is driven by a “quest for meaning ... satisfied by comprehensive and aesthetically compelling fictions or stories” (Kateb, George. “The Adequacy of the Canon.” *Political Theory* 30, no. 4 (2002): 493). The aesthetic quest for meaning is sustained by and finds its answer in propagandistic political mythology. Kateb, though, goes too far in his dismissal of the quest for meaning; as I will discuss throughout this piece, it is not the *quest* for meaning that is to be dismissed, but rather the *capture* of it. Humanity's relationship with meaning understood as a quest is, indeed, encouraged by Arendt and Todorov alike – but political aestheticism never offers a search, it rather promises absolute, total possession of meaning. The ultimate intention of political aestheticism is to make the world perfect by design and, to this aim, anything (all human beings, including the perpetrators) can become a means to the final end.

¹³ As Arendt explains, “The propaganda effect of infallibility, the striking success of posing as a mere interpreting agent of predictable forces, has encouraged in totalitarian dictators the habit of announcing their political intentions in the form of prophecy ... Mass leaders in power have one concern which overrules all utilitarian considerations: to make their predictions come true” (*The Origins of Totalitarianism* 349).

one that claims to reliably yield a “logical middle-of-the-road ‘solution’” within a set of other options (Arendt 1972: 12). This machine of algorithmic thought, convinced of its own success in eradicating contingency, forces the complexity and particularity of political judgements into a set of mutually exclusive, Manichaean choices.¹⁴ There is thus a particular conceit central to the hyper-rationality displayed by those Arendt deems ‘number-crunchers’ and ‘problem-solvers’ – those who abortively impose order on the world, to domesticate it with numbers, algorithms, formulas, and “scientific methods.” This is what O’Gorman calls *proceduralism* – the substitution of “behaviour” for human action, where “formulas [take] the place of thinking the particular and rules [take] the place of cooperation, trust, and other forms of social solidarity” (proceduralists do not *judge*, they calculate) (Politics for Everybody, 73).

Arendt warns that in the absence of conversation with one another, the public realm (the world) rapidly darkens, shrivels, and vanishes. With its proceduralism and ideological penchant, twisted totalitarian politics disintegrates fields of appearances – the spaces where citizens can encounter and communicate with each other. Such isolation and atomization results in the radical division of both individuals and groups from one other, which conveniently serves the aims of totalitarian domination, propaganda, and ideological manipulation. The whole sector of communal relationships in whose framework common

¹⁴ As Arendt writes, “reason’s aversion to contingency is very strong: it was Hegel, the father of grandiose history schemes, who held that ‘philosophical contemplation has no other intention than to eliminate the accidental.’ Indeed, much of the modern arsenal of political theory – the game theories and systems analyses, the scenarios written for imagined ‘audiences,’ and the careful enumeration of, usually, three ‘options’ – A, B, C – whereby A and C represent the opposite extremes and B the ‘logical’ middle-of-the-road ‘solution’ of the problem – has its source in this deep-seated aversion. The fallacy of such thinking begins with forcing the choices into mutually exclusive dilemmas; reality never presents us with anything so neat as premises for logical conclusions. [This] kind of thinking ... [diverts] the mind and [blunts] the judgment for the multitude of real possibilities” (*Crises of the Republic*, 12).

sense¹⁵ makes sense is lost. Individuals are reduced to a state of spiritual and social homelessness that primes them for propagandistic manipulation¹⁶ and ultimately undermines the very possibility of authentic politics, and of the citizens’ very humanity.

Arendt warns that politics will remain vulnerable to totalitarianism menaces so long as society sustains its production of what she called *superfluous* people¹⁷ – individuals ripe for seduction by ideology and perpetration of banal evil. Twisted politics is populated by those who “skid only over the surface of events” – by those she calls “nobodies” (Arendt 2003: 101). Such individuals fail to constitute themselves as moral persons, a failure encouraged by the totalitarian destruction of freedom and solitude, and hence of one’s ability to think – to engage in dialogue with oneself, examine one’s life, and draw out the meaning of one’s actions. The colonization of politics by totalitarianism renders it

¹⁵ This point is crucial: for Arendt, it is from “common sense” that the *realness* of reality arises. We can track her notion of common sense back to her engagement with the Greeks; in her piece on Socrates, Arendt writes, “the world opens up differently to every man according to his position in it ... the ‘sameness’ of the world, its commonness (*koinon*, as the Greeks would say, ‘common to all’) or ‘objectivity’ ... resides in the fact that the same world opens up to everyone and that despite all differences between men and their positions in the world—and consequently their *doxai* (opinions)—“both you and I are human”” (*Promise of Politics* 14). As she writes, “it is the inter-subjectivity of the world, rather than similarity of physical appearance, that convinces men that they belong to the same species” (*The Life of the Mind*, 50). Arendt thus calls the active network of *intersubjective* communication between citizens, their communal comprehension of the world (not “subjective fantasy and arbitrariness,” nor “something absolute and valid for all”) the mysterious “sixth sense” of common sense. In short, common sense fits all of the other five senses into a sixth sense, a common sensibility. It is a way of sharing and feeling the same reality, which alone makes communication and world-building activities possible.

¹⁶ In her work, Arendt examines the escape into fiction, a specialty of the spiritually and socially homeless in twisted political regimes. As she writes, “totalitarian propaganda thrives on this escape from reality into fiction, from coincidence into consistency ... The masses’ escape from reality is a verdict against the world in which they are forced to live ... human beings need the constant transformation of chaotic and accidental conditions into a man-made pattern of relative consistency ... the result of their atomization, of their loss of social status along with which they lost the whole sector of communal relationships in whose framework common sense makes sense. In their situation of spiritual and social homelessness, a measured insight into the interdependence of the arbitrary and the planned, the accidental and the necessary, could no longer operate” (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 352).

¹⁷ It is critical to note that Arendt deems *both* perpetrators and victims of banal evil *superfluous*. Both fall prey to banal evil in their own distinct ways, as Arendt describes, “radical evil has emerged in connection with a system in which all men have become equally superfluous. The manipulators of this system believe in their own superfluousness as much as in that of all others, and the totalitarian murderers are all the more dangerous because they do not care if they themselves are alive or dead, if they ever lived or never were born” (*The Origins of Totalitarianism* 459). Arendt ceases to describe totalitarian evil as *radical*, as she initially did in the *Origins of Totalitarianism*, transitioning to *banal* after her experience at the Eichmann Trial.

nearly impossible to preserve that space of freedom where one can become oneself. In short, central to totalitarian politics is the destruction of *freedom*: to move, to think, to speak with each other – it is a destruction of *individuality*, central to which is the ability to think and judge (which cannot be dissociated from speech and hence from language).

Authentic politics, however, is populated by those who resist the allure of aesthetic and scientific reductions of language and reality, those who are rooted in their “thoughts and remembrances,” who have constituted and continue to constitute themselves as moral persons (Arendt 2003: 101). Authentic politics thus requires individuals who remain open to the contingency and complexity of reality, who do not replace particulars with abstractions, but retain their humanistic critical sensibility, that is, their ability to interpret and understand a particular event/phenomenon in its uniqueness and novelty, thus making its truth communicable to those who hold different opinions.

For Arendt, in resisting the totalitarian destruction of communication between individuals and consequently of their common sense, the durability of our freedom and world entirely rests upon our ability to non-coercively converse with one another in the political realm. The stakes could not be higher, for, as Arendt describes, “if someone wants to see and experience the world as it ‘really’ is, he can do so only by understanding it as something that is shared by many people, lies between them, separates and links them, showing itself differently to each and comprehensible only to the extent that many people can talk about it and exchange their opinions and perspectives with one another, over against one another. Only in the freedom of our speaking with one another does the world, as that about which we speak, emerge in its objectivity and visibility from all sides” (Arendt 2003: 107) To engage in authentic politics thus means to recognize the value of an other’s positionality to the meaning of one’s own; it demands that we engage in a common endeavour – that which *must* be common, and *not* solitary – if we wish to succeed in grasping (as best we can) the totality of our existence, of the human condition. Such an ambition demands our encounter with one another in freedom and equality, in a space where we persuade, woo, and listen to one another rather than coerce or obey. Ultimately, the disclosing of our world includes the cultivation – the realization, actualization – of our own humanity. Arendt describes that each and every one of us becomes a person through *both* the activity of solitudinous thought, and that of world-creation between men and women. As she writes, “Man, as

philosophy and theology know him, exists—or is realized—in politics only in the equal rights that those who are most different guarantee for each other” (The Promise of Politics, 94). We should keep in mind that, though politics requires a sense of togetherness and solidarity, thinking, solitude, and withdrawal from the world too are crucial.

Resistance & Thinking

It was the encounter with Adolf Eichmann (the “architect of the final solution”) during his 1961 trial in Jerusalem that ultimately inspired Arendt to explore the ways that totalitarian disfigurements of the political realm can be resisted through the activity of thinking. As she writes, “clichés, stock phrases, adherence to conventional, standardized codes of expression and conduct have the socially recognized function of protecting us against reality, that is, against the claim on our *thinking attention*, which all events and facts arouse by virtue of their existence. If we were responsive to this claim all the time, we would soon be exhausted; the difference in Eichmann was only that he clearly knew of no such claim at all” (The Life of the Mind, 1981, 160)

Arendt urges us to acknowledge that modernity has delivered us something *new* – maybe not Eichmann¹⁸, but at the minimum, many around and beneath him – this novelty of the twentieth century was a peculiar disconnect between *action* and *thought*, the inability to perceive the meaning of an action being taken. Such a disconnect is a sort of moral hemiplegia, an affliction dealt by the allure of abstraction – whether that be the “process,” the “system,” one’s duty, algorithms, statistics, forces of biology, forces of history, mythologies and political aesthetics. It never crosses the mind, amidst the haze of abstraction and one’s devotion to it, that “behaviour” is human action, that “statistics” are individuals, and that aesthetic propaganda is a substitute for reality.¹⁹

As Arendt writes of Eichmann, “his inability to speak was closely connected with an inability to *think*, namely, to think from

¹⁸ Veritable mountains of scholarship since the publication of *Eichmann in Jerusalem* has surfaced in recent years, disputing Arendt’s depiction of Eichmann as an archetype of banal evil. See “Stangneth, Bettina. *Eichmann Before Jerusalem: The Unexamined Life of a Mass Murderer*. Vintage, 2014” and “Lipstadt, Deborah Esther. *The Eichmann Trial*. Jewish Encounters, 2011”.

¹⁹ The obscurity of the very texture of reality rendered through propaganda is unutterably powerful. As Hitler writes (with shocking transparency) in *Mein Kampf*, it is through “propaganda [that] even heaven can be palmed off on a people as hell and the most wretched life as Paradise” (Hitler, Adolf. “The Art of Propaganda.” *The New York Times Magazine*, June 22, 1941, 3.)

the standpoint of somebody else. No communication was possible with him, not because he lied but because he was surrounded by the most reliable of all safeguards against the words and the presence of others, and hence against reality as such ... It was sheer thoughtlessness – something by no means identical with stupidity – that predisposed him to become one of the greatest criminals of that period” (Arendt 2006: 187-188). We must ask ourselves what Arendt means by thoughtlessness – by Eichmann’s *inability to think*. Arendt’s conclusion – one often misinterpreted – can, upon examination, offer the most urgent of insight into the relationship between totalitarian evil, thinking, and politics. For Arendt, the activity of thinking is both the source of conscience and a capital form of freedom that can help preserve the world (the public realm) in dark times. In the following (and final) subsections of this chapter, I theorize a general picture of what *thinking* actually is for Arendt, through a discussion of three archetypal thinkers from which she drew inspiration in conceptualizing thinking as resistance to totalitarianism.

Socrates

It is perhaps in her response to Gershom Scholem’s critique-laden letter that Arendt most explicitly elaborates upon the notorious subtitle of *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (‘A Report on the Banality²⁰ of Evil’). As she writes, evil “can overgrow and lay waste the whole world precisely because it spreads like a fungus on the surface. It is ‘thought-defying’ ... because thought tries to reach some depth, to go to the roots, and the moment it concerns itself with evil, it is frustrated because there is nothing. That is its ‘banality’” (The Jewish Writings, 471). In an attempt to counteract the modern phenomenon of banal evil, Arendt theorizes what she calls *Socratic morality* – an activity of solitudinous thinking that cultivates “the self as the ultimate criterion of moral conduct” for use politically as an emergency measure in times of crisis. Like the aforementioned fungus, “evil is a surface phenomenon, and instead of being radical, it is merely extreme. We resist evil by not being swept away by the surface of things, by stopping ourselves

²⁰ This marks a profoundly pivotal moment of adjustment in Arendt’s thought. The change was sparked by Arendt’s attempt to take seriously the glaring contrast between the unprecedented atrocities of the twentieth century and the mediocrity of those who executed them. With the case of Eichmann, Arendt deemed our task to reconcile “the dilemma between the unspeakable horror of the deeds and the undeniable ludicrousness of the man who perpetrated them” (*Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 54). To make sense of this mismatch, Arendt ultimately rejected the formerly central idea of *radical* evil proposed in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, suggesting, rather, that “evil is not radical, going to the roots (*radix*), that it has no depth” (Arendt, Hannah. *The Jewish Writings*. Schocken, 2009, 479).

and beginning to think, that is, by reaching another dimension than the horizon of everyday life” (Responsibility and Judgment, 104). Thinking, as Arendt understands it, is not only an emergency measure, something to be employed in a moment of crisis. Socratic thinking can not be fast-forwarded or spontaneously kicked into gear when needed at any given moment of crisis, but is rather a *perennial* activity, a lifelong project (something increasingly urgent in today’s world, where the present moment always surfaces as one of crisis) – the long-term cultivation of the mind, self, and conscience.

For Arendt, thinking can empower individuals to resist the sweeping shallowness of evil because to *think* means “to be with myself and to judge by myself ... [to] speak with myself about whatever happens to concern me ... Thinking and remembering ... is the human way of striking roots, of taking one’s place in the world into which we all arrive as strangers. What we usually call a person or a personality, as distinguished from a mere human being or a nobody, actually grows out of this root-striking process of thinking” (Responsibility and Judgment, 97-98, 100). Our ability to think is thus fundamental to our depth – for it is through thought that we constitute our very being, our humanity. Thought is “an activity that has certain moral results,” she urges, “namely that he who thinks constitutes himself into somebody, a person or a personality” (Responsibility and Judgment, 105). It is through such thought that one can dive into the depths²¹ of their being – that one can resist the seductive winds of the surface – the winds of abstraction, totalizing ideology, reductive slogans, clichés, and stock phrases – the consolatory “safeguards against the words and the presence of others” that Eichmann abandoned himself to, to the detriment to his humanity, and that of his victims (Eichmann in Jerusalem, 49, 287-288). In this sense, with Socratic morality, Arendt offers Socrates as an archetype of the *moral* person (a somebody) – one with a conscience, one who thinks and does not

²¹ Arendt thus urges her readers to move “in the dimension of depth, striking roots and thus stabilizing themselves, so as not to be swept away by whatever may occur—the Zeitgeist or History or simple temptation. The greatest evil is not radical, it has no roots, and because it has no roots it has no limitations, it can go to unthinkable extremes and sweep over the whole world” (*Responsibility and Judgement*, 95). As she writes, “If he is a thinking being, rooted in thoughts and remembrances, and hence knowing that he has to live with himself, there will be limits to what he can permit himself to do, and these limits will not be imposed on him from the outside, but will be self-set ... limitless, extreme evil is possible only where these self-grown roots which automatically limit the possibilities, are entirely absent. They are absent where men skid only over the surface of events, where they permit themselves to be carried away without ever penetrating into whatever depth they may be capable of” (*Responsibility and Judgement*, 95).

fail to face himself, his actions, and their meaning – as antithetical to the *nobody* who unthinkingly perpetrates banal evil.

One reason Arendt theorizes the connection between thinking and morality is that, as she puts it, today “no one in his right mind can any longer claim that moral conduct is a matter of course” (Responsibility and Judgment, 61). Arendt, urging that we not take conscience for granted, responds by making a distinction between Socratic morality (discussed above) and morality understood in “legal” terms, as law-abiding. Distinct from the morality continuously derived from one’s self-constitution, awareness, conscience, and autonomy as a moral person, morality conceived after a model of *legality* is reduced to rule-following, where to be moral is to obey the rules, laws, customs, or conventions – all of which can turn on a dime unquestioningly.²² Arendt was deeply haunted by the reality that the “Nazi doctrine did not remain with the German people, that Hitler’s criminal morality was changed back again at a moment’s notice, at the moment ‘history’ had given the notice of defeat.” What this reversal signals is that the twentieth century endured a “total collapse of ‘moral’ order not once but twice” – and it is this swift departure from and return to ‘normality’ that reveals the lethality of morality conceived after the model of legality (Responsibility and Judgment, 54). It is not the *content* of the moral law that counts, but *obedience* to that law – the fact that the *source* of morality, of any given moral judgement, value, or principle, is derived from a rule/law rather than the autonomous self. Such is the consequence of morality as rule-following, where morality compels nothing beyond obedience to a command. The Germans who ‘lived with themselves,’ who “intact and free of all guilt ... never went through anything like a great moral conflict or a crisis of conscience ... never doubted that *crimes remained crimes even*

²² For Arendt, the ultimate danger arises “out of the desire to find results that would make further thinking unnecessary. Thinking is equally dangerous to all creeds and, by itself, does not bring forth any new creed” (*The Life of the Mind*, 176). A state of political and moral affairs founded upon the *obligation* of legality rather than the *self-evidence* of thought shields “people from the dangers of examination, it teaches them to hold fast to whatever the prescribed rules of conduct may be at a given time in a given society. What people then get used to is less the content of the rules, a close examination of which would always lead them into perplexity, than the possession of rules under which to subsume particulars. If somebody appears who, for whatever purposes, wishes to abolish the old ‘values’ or virtues, he will find that easy enough, provided he offers a new code, and he will need relatively little force and no persuasion ... to impose it. The more firmly men hold to the old code, the more eager will they be to assimilate themselves to the new one, which in practice means that the readiest to obey will be those who were the most respectable pillars of society, the least likely to indulge in thoughts, dangerous or otherwise, while those who to all appearances were the most unreliable elements of the old order will be the least tractable” (*The Life of the Mind*, 177).

if legalized by the government ... they did not feel an *obligation* but acted according to something which was *self-evident* to them even though it was no longer self-evident to those around them. Hence their conscience ... had no obligatory character, it said, ‘This I *can’t* do,’ rather than, ‘This I *ought* not to do’” (my italics) (Responsibility and Judgment, 78). The ‘ought’ here is necessarily tied to something *extrinsic*, from the outside, something entering as a command – it is anchored in something compulsory, the product of automatic obedience to what is the authority or law. ‘Can’t,’ on the other hand, is something derived from the I, it suggests a literal inability rendered in one who asks, ‘would I still be able to live with myself if I obey this law?’

Prefiguring, perhaps, the need to deem the activity of thinking as not just an emergency act but an everyday art, Arendt considers the Socratic examination of life, the activity of thinking, as coextensive with life itself. Indeed, as she concludes, “to think and to be fully alive are the same, and this implies that thinking must always begin afresh” (*The Life of the Mind*, 178). Whenever roused, Socrates’ winds of thought, Arendt writes, “undo, [and] unfreeze, as it were, what language, the medium of thinking, has frozen into thought ... thinking inevitably has a destructive, undermining effect on all established criteria, values, measurements of good and evil ... These frozen thoughts, Socrates seems to say, come so handily that you can use them in your sleep; but if the wind of thinking, which I shall now stir in you, has shaken you from your sleep and made you fully awake and alive, then you will see that you have nothing in your grasp but perplexities, and the best we can do with them is share them with each other” (*The Life of the Mind*, 174-175). Intrinsic to living an examined life, where the individual constitutes himself as a moral person and conscience becomes the source of moral precepts, is the critical ability to continuously reconnect (abstract) concepts and (general) rules to the concrete human and living experiences whose meaning they tried to grasp in the first place. In sum, to think for Arendt is to critically reveal the limits of existing concepts/rules and attempt to make them richer in their articulation of the world’s complex and intersubjective reality, as well as its phenomenal or appearing nature.

Not only did Socrates, for Arendt, reveal the constitution of oneself as a moral person through the activity of solitudinous thought – but he was the first to embody the *citizen thinker*. Socrates refused public office and retirement into private life, instead venturing into the marketplace, amidst the sea of *doxai* (“*doxa* was the formulation in speech of what *dokei moi*” – of “what appears to me” – an understanding of the world “as it opens

itself to me”) (The Promise of Politics, 14). “What Plato later called *dialegesthai*, Socrates himself called *maieutic*, the art of midwifery: he wanted to help others give birth to what they themselves thought anyhow, to find the truth in their *doxa*” (The Promise of Politics, 15). Socrates never sought to offer an answer, an ideology, or a compelling case to believe in one thing or another, he only sought to make the city and its citizens more *truthful* – to understand and communicate between the differing ways in which the world opened itself up to the citizens of Athens – and to cultivate the common world between these differently positioned citizens.²³ Socrates pursued the activity of thought in the agora, he *performed* it, engaging, and thinking with others around him. What Socrates actually did, Arendt describes, “was to make public, in discourse, the thinking process – that dialogue that soundlessly goes on within me, between me and myself; he performed in the marketplace the way the flute-player performed at a banquet. It is sheer performance, sheer activity” (Arendt 1989: 37). In this sense, Socrates is the figure from which Arendt draws out not only thinking in solitude with *oneself*, but also thinking in *public* – thinking in its world-opening sense, as the pursuit of one’s responsibility for the world and its plurality of opinions.

However, there is a problematic way that thinking, as understood from Arendt’s encounter with Socrates, interacts – or rather clashes – with the public realm/world. While liberatory, Socratic examination is also undeniably destructive of the very realm of politics that Arendt believed was about the world that comes into being between human beings and endures beyond them. As she warns, “the ‘pillars of the best-known truths’ ... today lie shattered; we need neither criticism nor wise men to shake them any more” (Men in Dark Times, 10). These pillars of truths are simultaneously the pillars of the *political* order – and Arendt urges that the *world* – not the individuals who inhabit it – “needs such pillars in order to guarantee continuity and permanence, without which it cannot offer mortal men the relatively secure, relatively imperishable home that they need. To be sure, the very humanity of man loses its vitality to the extent that he abstains from thinking and puts his confidence into old verities or even new

²³ For Arendt, in so doing, Socrates illustrated “the one [traditionally] outstanding virtue of the statesman” – to understand “the greatest possible number and variety of realities—not of subjective viewpoints, which of course also exist but which do not concern us here—as those realities open themselves up to the various opinions of citizens; and, at the same time, in [to] able to communicate between the citizens and their opinions so that the commonness of this world becomes apparent. If such an understanding—and action inspired by it—were to take place without the help of the statesman, then the prerequisite would be for each citizen to be articulate enough to show his opinion in its truthfulness and therefore to understand his fellow citizens” (The Promise of Politics, 18).

truths, throwing them down as if they were coins with which to balance all experiences. And yet, if this is true for man, it is not true for the world. The world becomes inhuman, inhospitable to human needs – which are the needs of mortals – when it is violently wrenched into a movement in which there is no longer any sort of permanence” (Men in Dark Times, 10-11). It is difficult, Arendt urges, for us to enjoy the advantages granted by Socratic examination – by a thinking that transcends pillars, props, standards and traditions – without being situated in a habitable world, one that, while shaken, is actively nurtured.

Our pillars are shattered – what do we do now? Arendt asks. What Arendt presents here is crucial: as moderns, we face a fundamental tension between the freedom of thinking and the permanence of the world. This tension places two burdens on us: 1) a heightened awareness of the fragility of meaning and the pillars of the world, and 2) an increased awareness of our responsibility for meaning, and for the perpetual restoration of pillars in the quest for meaning. We thus face what is a modern issue – one that started with Socrates – and one that ultimately requires from us a particular *responsibility* and *care* for the world, which cannot be fulfilled unless we engage in critical thinking, an activity that is simultaneously an ongoing anticipation of the dialogue with others.

This idea is captured by the Czech philosopher, Jan Patočka. For Patočka, the foundational act of modernity is the shaking (initiated by Socrates) of the absolute/natural truth and meaning that is given and granted by the world. However, Patočka urges that the result of our condition is *not* meaninglessness, but rather an increased responsibility for meaning and truth. As he writes, “the result of the primordial shaking of accepted meaning is not a fall into meaninglessness but, on the contrary, the discovery of the possibility of achieving a freer, more *demanding* meaningfulness ... That new possibility of relating to being in meaning which consists not in a predetermined, precepted answer but in questioning, and that precisely is philosophy ... In the historical epoch human kind does not avoid what is problematic but actually *invokes* it, promising itself from this an access to a more profound meaning than that which was proper to prehistorical humanity” (Patočka 1996: 63). Modernity thus forces us to rethink our responsibility for meaning -- to reconsider conceiving it not as a possession, but rather as a continuous quest, an always problematic yet still achievable meaning.

Yet, this demanding relationship with fragile meaning renders us more vulnerable to the allure of absolute truth, to

ending the quest for meaning in favor of the capture of it (at the same time, the freeing of thinking and shaking has also led some moderns to deny all meaning and renounce the for it). It is in this sense that moderns are in danger of reverting to Patočka's pre-historic age of passively accepted meaning, and thus being captured by the idea of capture itself (that meaning can be won once and for all and delivered to us consistently and totally through the dogmatic ideologies, parties, and narratives that plague our times with their totalitarian pull). This captivation ultimately signals a rejection of the Socratic shaking of meaning and Arendtian thought in exchange for sheer and unreflective obedience to given rules (as that of Eichmann and of other agents of banal evil). Yet, the fact that meaning and truth cannot be captured once and for all does not exclude the possibility of a relative stability and permanence of the world and its pillars, that is, of some truths that can orient individuals in the public realm. What matters is that we *not* seek absolute capture and instead bear the demanding nature of our being (the freedom to create and care for meaning), invoke the problematic, and live in *pursuit* of truth and meaning rather than in *possession* of it (this defense of some orienting trajectory towards meaning/stability amidst the fragility and incompleteness of the world parallels Todorov's "universalism of itinerary" explored in Part II).

The lesson of Socratic thinking is that the burden of modernity (and of modern authentic politics) is to find the right balance between shattering and preserving pillars, between the corrosive activity of critical thinking and care for the stability of the world and for its ability to illuminate the affairs of human life. To address this tension and pursue this balance, the remainder of this section will discuss Arendt's rendition of Lessing's conception of criticism and vigilant partiality, and Jaspers' notion of spatial thought. Having inhabited a world threatened by dark times, these realized the power of independent thought to resist the darkening of the world *and* the responsibility we each harbor to defend its permanence from shrinkage and extinction; in short, they understood, articulated, and encouraged the world-building ability of critical thinking, which will allow us to transcend the reach of the Socratic examined life.

Lessing

Similar to Socrates, Arendt considered the German playwright Lessing to be an example of what a critical and

independent thinker should be.²⁴ One reason was that for Lessing (as for Socrates) the quest for final solutions and absolute truths spelled the end of politics and thought. Lessing "explicitly renounced the desire for results, insofar as these might mean the final solution of problems which his thought posed for itself; his thinking was not a search for truth,²⁵ since every truth that is the result of a thought process necessarily puts an end to the movement of thinking. The fermenta cognitionis which Lessing scattered into the world were not intended to communicate conclusions, but to stimulate others to independent thought, and this for no other purpose than to bring about a discourse between thinkers" (*Men in Dark Times*, 10). 'Radically critical' and 'completely revolutionary' with respect to the public realm of his time, central to Lessing's conception of criticism was his notion of *Selbstdenken*, or independent thinking for oneself. He expressed explicit rejections of the tyranny of reasoning, sophistry, and fanatically consistent systems of thought – "he not only wanted no one to coerce him, but he also wanted to coerce no one, either by force or by proofs" (*Men in Dark Times*, 8). As Arendt reports, Lessing "declared in all seriousness: 'I am not duty-bound to resolve the difficulties I create. My ideas always be somewhat disjunct, or even appear to contradict one another, if only they are ideas in which readers will find material that stirs them to think for themselves'" (*Men in Dark Times*, 8).

While Lessing shared Socrates' insistence on the importance of criticism and independent thinking, he was also moved by a pronounced care for the world and preservation of its plurality of opinions. His thought was thus not purely critical or destructive – his position was rather one of construction, creation, and cultivation in the public realm. Lessing deemed the plurality, diversity, and inconsistency of man as the very features that make him human – and to seek a form that is otherwise is to seek the destruction of the world and of humanity. More than Socrates, Lessing maintained a more explicit and responsible connection between thinking and the world itself. Lessing's "criticism," Arendt writes, "is always taking sides for the world's sake, understanding and judging everything in terms of its position in the world at any given time. Such a mentality can never give rise to a definite world

²⁴ Indeed, with a direct reference to the 'wisest of men' himself, Lessing followed "those whom he once half ironically called 'the wise men' who 'make the pillars of the best-known truths shake wherever they let their eyes fall'" (*Men in Dark Times*, 11).

²⁵ Arendt is referencing a particular notion of "truth" conceived as absolute, tyrannical, and final.

view which, once adopted, is immune to further experiences in the world because it has hitched itself firmly to one possible perspective.” His critical spirit “remained indebted to the world, never left the solid ground of the world ... he never allowed supposed objectivity to cause him to lose sight of the real relationship to the world and the real status in the world of the things or men he attacked or praised” (Men in Dark Times, 7-8).

Arendt is taken by Lessing’s shocking *lack* of “objectivity,” accompanying with it what she describes as his forever *vigilant partiality*. His partiality had “nothing whatsoever to do with subjectivity because it is always framed not in terms of the self but in terms of the relationship of men to their world, in terms of their positions and opinions” (Men in Dark Times, 29). It is significant that Arendt deliberately avoids describing Lessing’s thought as objective, choosing instead to deem him a practitioner of vigilant partiality. This is, perhaps, because Lessing never abandons the position of conversation – he is always engaged, in the middle of dialogue – he never pulls himself out of this ongoing discussion so as to allow his view of others’ opinion and of himself to objectify, to lose their subjective, personal, *doxa*-like being or nature, to lose their life. With this engagement, Lessing was thus partial, but he embodied a partiality that served only to care for the preservation and articulation of the world’s diverse *doxai*, a diversity threatened by dark times. More than anything else, Lessing feared the unity of a single truth that, in his eyes, would result in the destruction of the world; to live in singularity, in total unity, would be to deny the very essence of politics – “the fact of human plurality” (in this spirit, Arendt quotes Kafka, who echoes Lessing when he writes “it is difficult to speak the truth, for although there is only one truth, it is alive and therefore has a live and changing face”) (Men in Dark Times, 28).

Central to Lessing’s critical sensibility and care for the world is the primacy that he assigns to *friendship* in political life. Arendt’s attraction to this conception of friendship can be traced as far back as the ancient Greeks. As she writes, friends, “by talking about what is between them, it becomes ever more common to them. It gains not only its specific articulateness, but develops and expands and finally, in the course of time and life, begins to constitute a little world of its own which is shared in friendship ... Socrates seems to have believed that the political function of the philosopher was to help establish this kind of common world, built on the understanding of friendship, in which no rulership is needed” (The Promise of Politics, 16, 18). In this sense, it is in the space between individuals, the space through which discourse is exchanged, that the world becomes more

common, and more *human*. In consonance, Arendt writes in her piece on Lessing that “however much we are affected by the things of the world, however deeply they may stir and stimulate us, they become human for us only when we can discuss them with our fellows ... We humanize what is going on in the world and in ourselves only by speaking of it, and in the course of speaking of it we learn to be human” (Men in Dark Times, 25).

For Lessing, then, discourse is tied to our humanity – to our ability to both humanize ourselves and the world. Thus, friendship is far more important than any truth that one possesses or seeks to possess. As Arendt writes, “any doctrine that in principle barred the possibility of friendship between two human beings would have been rejected by his untrammelled and unerring conscience. He would instantly have taken the human side and given short shrift to the learned or unlearned discussion in either camp. That was Lessing’s humanity” (Men in Dark Times, 78). What Arendt tries to capture here is the importance of never allowing an idea, truth, or ideology entrap and thus blind one to the *human* presence of another individual – a trap that compromises our own freedom and spontaneity, our ability to see beyond and outside the often tyrannical compulsion demanded with which rational truth and expertise can act upon us and force us to the point at which we surrender our autonomy. Like Arendt, Lessing was deeply humanistic in how he conceived of the political realm and operated within it. The encounter between people in public life as equal, with respect, and in friendship – with a certain knowledge and affection for one another – with a generous openness for their mutual humanization, is what mattered most to Lessing. And such an interaction and exchange of *dokei moi* is only possible in a political realm that values the very plurality and diversity that both characterize and constitute humanity, and thus demand cultivation and protection.²⁶ To better articulate this humanistic dimension of the activity of thinking and of our care

²⁶ As Arendt writes, “because Lessing was a completely political person, he insisted that truth can exist only where it is humanized by discourse, only where each man says not what just happens to occur to him at the moment, but what he ‘deems truth.’ But such speech is virtually impossible in solitude; it belongs to an area in which there are many voices and where the announcement of what each ‘deems truth’ both links and separates men, establishing in fact those distances between men which together comprise the world. Every truth outside this area, no matter whether it brings men good or ill, is inhuman in the literal sense of the word; but not because it might rouse men against one another and separate them. Quite the contrary, it is because it might have the result that all men would suddenly unite in a single opinion, so that out of many opinions one would emerge, as though not men in their infinite plurality but man in the singular, one species and its exemplars, were to inhabit the earth. Should that happen, the world, which can form only in the interspaces between men in all their variety, would vanish altogether” (Men in Dark Times, 30-31).

for the world, I join Arendt in a turn towards our final thinker, Karl Jaspers.

Jaspers

The thread of Arendt's thought that articulates a connection between humanism, thinking, and care for the world is central to her resistance to twisted politics. In articulating it, Arendt drew much inspiration from her dearest mentor and friend, the German psychiatrist turned philosopher, Karl Jaspers – the only figure I examine in this section who actually lived within a totalitarian system. Jaspers reacted to the rise of Hitler and Nazism “neither by retreating into his own philosophy, nor by negating the world, nor by falling into melancholy” (Men in Dark Times, 78). Jaspers “always stood entirely alone and was independent of all groupings ... The magnificence of this position ... is precisely that without representing anything but his own existence he could provide assurance that even in the darkness of total domination,” reason could survive. “What Jaspers represented then, when he was entirely alone, was not Germany but what was left of humanitas in Germany” (Men in Dark Times, 76).

In continuity with Socrates, and even more so with Lessing, Jaspers assigned a striking primacy to dialogue and encouraged an activity of thinking that never lost its humanistic opening and its care for the world. The dimension of Arendt's work which insists that truth can only exist in thought with others is largely shaped by Jaspers, who emphasises what Arendt deems the *communicative* nature of truth. It is only through communication with others that truth reveals itself – it is thus not self-evident, not secured nor captured, but rather, exists in fleeting moments of dialogue and exchange. As Arendt writes in her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, “in the words of Jaspers, truth is what I can communicate. Truth in the sciences is dependent on the experiment that can be repeated by others; it requires general validity. Philosophic truth has no such general validity. What it must have ... is ‘general communicability’” (Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy, 40). Truth thus needs to be communicated, uttered, revealed, and listened to – this precisely, is the general communicability of truth – “only in communication between contemporaries as well as between the living and the dead does truth reveal itself” (Men in Dark Times, 85). It is imperative that Truth's communicative nature be accommodated well in spaces of appearances in which dialogue

between citizens can be nurtured in public (the health of truth is thus contingent upon the health of the public realm).

Not only does *truth* exist in communication with others, but the very activity of *thinking* can not exist, in its fullest potentiality and depth, in solitude alone. Given that Arendt had once deemed Jaspers “the only successor Kant has ever had” in every respect, it is not misguided to read her work on Kant in such a way that provides us a deeper understanding of Jaspers himself (Men in Dark Times, 74). As Arendt writes, “Kant is aware that he disagrees with most thinkers in asserting that thinking, though a solitary business, depends on others to be possible at all: ‘... we may safely state that the external power which deprives man of the freedom to communicate his thoughts *publicly* also takes away his freedom to *think*, the only treasure left to us in our civic life and through which alone there may be a remedy against all evils of the present state of affairs’” (Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy, 40-41). Strikingly, Arendt complicates the story by rejecting the dichotomy of pure solitude and sheer sociability, choosing instead to intertwine the two. Indeed, Arendt urges in her readers the ability to talk with others *and* with themselves, to recognize the deep interconnection between thinking/solitude and the public/plurality/communication (between freedom of communication and freedom of mind). In one of her most beautiful passages, Arendt illustrates, using Jaspers' marriage and the spirit of his very being, a model for the realm of human affairs (my italics):

[Jaspers' marriage] has proved that two people of different origins ... could create between them a world of their own. *And from this world in miniature he has learned, as from a model, what is essential for the whole realm of human affairs.* Within this small world [he] unfolded and practiced his incomparable faculty for dialogue, the splendid precision of his way of listening, the constant readiness to give a candid account of himself, the patience to linger over a matter under discussion, and above all the ability to lure what is otherwise passed over in silence into the area of discourse, to make it worth talking about. Thus in speaking and listening, he succeeds in changing, widening, sharpening – or, as he himself would beautifully put it, in *illuminating* (Men in Dark Times, 78).

Like Socrates, who constantly reconnected concepts to the experiences that triggered them, and Lessing, whose partiality never lost sight of the concrete plurality of the world, Jaspers

resisted abstractions that veil the complexity of reality. As Arendt writes of Jaspers, “in this space forever illuminated anew by a speaking and listening thoughtfulness Jaspers is at home; this is the home of his mind because it is a space in the literal sense of the word ... Jasper’s thought is spatial because it forever remains in reference to the world and the people in it, not because it is bound to any existing space ... his deepest aim is to ‘create a space’ in which the *humanitas* of man can appear pure and luminous. Thought of this sort, always ‘related closely to the thoughts of others,’ is bound to be political even when it deals with things that are not in the least political; for it always confirms that Kantian ‘enlarged mentality’ which is the political mentality *par excellence*” (Men in Dark Times, 78).

Jaspers found his resistance to the allure of reductive abstractions and archimedean standpoints in his conception of *spatial thought* – an activity of thinking that pays attention to the particularity of factual truth – to its situatedness, its relation to other people, the surrounding events, circumstances, witnesses and testimony. While intersecting with Lessing’s vigilant partiality, Jaspers’ spatial thought adds a dimension of mobility to navigate the world of opinions with an enlarged mentality,²⁷ with a flexibility of perspective that allows one’s mind to remain adaptive to the happenings of the world. Thinking back to Arendt’s first major work, we find in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* an initial sketch of the anti-totalitarian nature of thinking’s flexibility and spontaneity; she writes, in reference to the categorization of populations under totalitarian rule as ‘suspect’ to secret police, that “simply because of their capacity to think, human beings are suspects by definition, and this suspicion cannot be diverted by exemplary behavior, for the human capacity to think is also a capacity to change one’s mind” (The Origins of Totalitarianism, 430).

²⁷ When in conversation with Jaspers or Kant, Arendt often speaks of this *enlarged mentality*, an augmentation of the mind through a particular humanistic *imagination*. As she describes, it is “the notion that one can ‘enlarge’ one’s own thought so as to take into account the thoughts of others. The ‘enlargement of the mind’ ... is accomplished by ‘comparing our judgment with the possible rather than the actual judgments of others, and by putting ourselves in the place of any other man.’ The faculty that makes this possible is called imagination ... Critical thinking is possible only where the standpoints of all others are open to inspection. Hence, critical thinking, while still a solitary business, does not cut itself off from ‘all others.’ To be sure, it still goes on in isolation, but by the force of imagination it makes the others present and thus moves in a space that is potentially public, open to all sides; in other words, it adopts the position of Kant’s world citizen. To think with an enlarged mentality means that one trains one’s imagination to go visiting” (*Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*, 42-43).

As Arendt writes, “no one can help us as [Jaspers] can to overcome our distrust of [the] public realm.” Jasper’s conception of the public, political realm is infused with a curious spiritual element – what the Romans called *humanitas*: “By that,” Arendt describes, “they meant something that was the very height of humanness because it was valid without being objective ... *Humanitas* is never acquired in solitude and never by giving one’s work to the public. It can be achieved only by one who has thrown his life and his person into the ‘venture into the public realm’ – in the course of which he risks revealing something which is not ‘subjective’ and which for that very reason he can neither recognize nor control. Thus the ‘venture into the public realm,’ in which *humanitas* is acquired, becomes a gift to mankind” (Men in Dark Times, 73). In the spirit of Lessing, Arendt speaks again not of objectivity but of partiality, of being *valid* rather than objective. Nevertheless, *humanitas* is not subjective, it instead has an exemplary validity. Through a discussion of Jasper’s *humanitas*, Arendt nurtures her ongoing project to unfold a conception of thinking in terms that preserve its conversational, communicative, living nature. She rejects notions of truth in which its worldly dimension is lost, where it is reduced to something “objective” that can exist independent and outside the realm of communication or to something that is discovered through introspection *alone* and thus totally contained to the subject/self in ways that do not require dialogue. The accent of Arendt’s treatment of thinking remains fixed on the in-between, on what is proposed as meaning, and offered as an example to further inspire thinking and building of the world. Those who enter the realm of *humanitas* “recognize one another, for then they are ‘like sparks, brightening to a more luminous glow, dwindling to invisibility, alternating and in constant motion. The sparks see one another, and each flames more brightly because it sees others’ and can hope to be seen by them” (Men in Dark Times, 80).

There are regions of Arendt’s thought that can begin to ease us into recognition of the power of what should be considered *humanistic* thinking to resist totalitarianism. In examining the Roman origins of humanism, Arendt describes that to Cicero, for “the true humanist neither the verities of the scientist nor the truth of the philosopher nor the beauty of the artist can be absolutes; the humanist, because he is not a specialist, exerts a faculty of judgment and taste which is beyond the coercion which each specialty imposes upon us. ... This humanism is the result of the *cultura animi*, of an attitude that knows how to take care and preserve and admire the things of the world ... As humanists ...

[w]e can rise above specialization and philistinism of all sorts to the extent that we learn how to exercise our taste freely” (Arendt 2006: 225). The humanist’s mind is thus cultivated to tend and take care of the world. Such care is not just enabled by Lessing’s vigilant partiality, but also by Lessing’s friendship and Jaspers’ *humanitas*, that is, the ability to transcend the reduction of thinking to expertise alone, to just one truth, one idea, one identity. Such care is possible when thinking is a form of taste (of critical sensibility) where the human(istic) thinker knows and feels, has the taste and the imagination to choose his company and to care for it, never allowing ideas/truths to detract one from this activity of creating a web of caring relations with other human beings.

Ultimately, Socrates, Lessing, and Jaspers are antidotes to the thought that proliferates in totalitarian, twisted political settings, ideological and totalizing thought that assumes archimedean standpoints “outside” the realm of particularity, and ultimately, outside the realm of reality – be they procedural, mythological, statistical, and aesthetic. With these three thinkers, Arendt is able to make clear that the world’s permanence is fragile and vulnerable, and its meaning more demanding of our responsibility. She articulates and encourages the importance of politics and of world-building activities, which require a type of thinking that is both critical and spatial, as well as the vigilant partiality to nurture the plurality of the public realm. Still, Arendt’s conception of authentic politics leaves room, perhaps, to speak more about how to constitute oneself as a moral, human, person – as one who can bear this responsibility and remain open to the urgency of the task. In the next section, I invite into conversation Tzvetan Todorov, who can reveal to us the importance of critical humanism and the experience of exile to authentic politics – of knowing how to live a meaningful human life that is resistant to the totalitarian tendencies of contemporary democratic societies.

III. Part 2: Tzvetan Todorov

A maxim for the twenty-first century might well be to start not by fighting evil in the name of good, but by attacking the certainties of people who claim always to know where good and evil are to be found. We should struggle not against the devil himself but what allows the devil to live – Manichaean thinking itself (Todorov 2016: 125)

In the opening chapter of a recent collection of essays Tzvetan Todorov, Maxime Goergen notes that “the refutation of Manichaeism is arguably the most striking trait of his highly reflective body of work” (De Berg 2020). Todorov once identified this very thread himself, confirming that the “refusal of Manichaeism is the main message [he] would like to get across to [his] readers” (Duties and Delights, 328). Why Manichaeism? – how does dualistic thought become the ultimate target of one’s life’s work?

As Todorov writes in the epilogue of a collection of interviews, “I realized that I had lived in more ways than one as a ‘go-between’ [*Passeur*: a ferryman, a conveyer, but also a smuggler]. After having crossed borders myself, I have tried to ease the way across borders for others: firstly, borders between countries, languages and cultures, then between fields of study and scientific disciplines in the humanities, but also borders between the common place and the essential, the routine and the sublime, material life and spiritual life. In debates, I aspire to the position of mediator. Manichaeism and iron curtains are what I like least” (Duties and Delights, 410).

Indeed, what Todorov likes least is the totalitarian logic of Manichaeism and scientism (coercively dichotomic: us vs. them, right vs. wrong, good vs. evil, friend vs. enemy) – logic similar to the grip of ideology and *-isms* that Arendt so fiercely confronted in her work. Engaging with Todorov’s thought, one can palpably sense his visceral aversion towards simplification of all kinds – towards the abusive reduction of issues related to ethics, politics, and history. Accordingly, the sensitive reader too feels his gentle compassion – and *hope* – for the humbly complex, unsettlingly volatile, and infinitely fragile entity that is humanity. One ultimately discovers, above all else, a man who wants to live according to nuance in an era resistant to it.²⁸

What Todorov offers in response to our era’s totalitarian disfigurations of human life and general resistance to nuance

²⁸ As Catherine Portevin writes of Todorov in the foreword to her collection of interviews with him, “the man is courteous and open, but there is a cautiousness and secrecy about him that make him harder to figure out than one might think. One thing is certain, though, and that is his search for accuracy and lucidity (he would say, more completely, ‘for truth’); and this may sound dull to some people, but it seems to me that this search is of greater urgency today than the clear-cut spectacularity of Manichaeism. ‘Although we live in an era that is resistant to nuance,’ Roland Barthes declared at the end of his life, ‘I want to live according to nuance; now, there is a teacher of nuance, literature.’ Tzvetan Todorov would not disclaim this ambition” (Duties and Delights, xi).

(aesthetic/scientific renditions of twisted politics, as understood by Arendt), is what he calls *critical humanism*. Todorov's project to reinvent humanism springs from his experience under totalitarian rule in Bulgaria, and from his rejection of religious and collective absolutes. As he writes, humanism "refuses to seek any other justification for loving human beings or loving an individual. The ultimate purpose is the human being, not God, not the harmony of the cosmos and not the victory of the proletariat" (*Duties and Delights*, 243). Todorov, with careful attention paid to the particular and a new meaning of universalism, ultimately chooses the absolute of the individual life (situated within common life), and the art of living it. We will begin our journey with Todorov by engaging with his dissection and refutation of Manichaeism, a route that will complement and build upon Arendt's exploration of twisted politics in Part I.

I will start my section on Todorov by discussing his criticism of Manichaeism and scientism, two significant totalitarian features that mar democratic politics today. I will then unfold Todorov's conception of critical humanism, a promising corrective to these totalitarian tendencies in contemporary societies. This is followed by a sketch of the main components of Todorov's notion of a "universalism of itinerary," which represents his attempt to propose a non-coercive and non-totalizing way of thinking/dialogue, as a corrective to Manichaeism, scientism, and anti-humanism. The chapter will end with an exploration of the kind of conditions from which a humanistic imagination and critical sensibility can flourish.

Manichaeism & Scientism

Marked by his time under totalitarian communist rule in Sofia, much of Todorov's work consistently seeks to resist – with the revelation of nuance – the reductive, dichotomic thought that typifies the ideological colonization of politics and memory described earlier by Arendt. Todorov's devotion to complexity often takes its form in historical examination. One of the greatest threats that readers often find him critical towards is the abuse of memory and history through dualistic thinking. "History comprises very few pages written in black and white only," (Todorov 2010: 90). Todorov writes in a critique of the reduction of nuanced history to pure moral judgements of 'positive' and

'negative.'²⁹ As he describes, "no moral benefit can accrue from always identifying with the 'right side' of history; it can only arise when writing history makes the writer more aware of the weaknesses and wrong turns of his or her own community" (Hope and Memory, 145). Here Todorov urges for a critical engagement of history, for one that, more than anything else, reveals something about what it means to be human, a specific type of narrative which he calls "exemplary history."³⁰ He thus resists the inclination to merely identify the 'right side' of history, laud oneself for this supposed historical examination, and enjoy the (false) moral fruit that one thinks himself to have earned. The practitioner of such an exercise is what Todorov deems the *moralizer* – one who prides themselves in being able to discern good and evil in simplistic, absolute terms. Todorov emphasizes this to his readers, arguing that "heroes do not transmit their virtue nor do victims lend their halo to those who admire them, whatever the latter may hope: there is nothing heroic about admiring a universally recognized hero. It would rather be the opposite, because self – righteousness is the enemy of action"

²⁹ As he explains, "I'm interested in cases when good and evil are not positioned along predictable lines ... Clear-cut monolithic situations do not teach me anything. My feeling is that they do not enable me to really penetrate into the secrets of human conduct ... This is why I am attracted to ambivalent, indecisive and complex episodes in history ... This tendency probably comes from the fact that totalitarian politics is grounded in a Manichaeian outlook on the world which divides humanity into friends and foes – the former to be defended in all circumstances, the latter to be eliminated at all costs. Seeing evil in good and good in evil does not, however, mean that all values are indistinguishable and that all choices are equivalent. That would be falling into the opposite extreme of nihilism and the refusal to judge. I would like to continue exercising judgement but, at the same time, avoid the ease of pleasing certitudes" (*Duties and Delights*, 327-8).

³⁰ One of Todorov's favorite genres is what he calls 'exemplary history' – a particular combination of precise historical reconstruction and meaningful narrative construction. In an interview, Todorov once quoted his companion in my paper, "Arendt said: 'No philosophy, no analysis, no aphorism, be it ever so profound, can compare in intensity and richness of meaning with a properly narrated story.' It seems to me that, from this point of view, an historical narrative possesses the same power as a novel. I add the term 'exemplary' to indicate that I am not restricting myself to reconstructing the events. It is a reminder to the readers that the past has something to teach them about the present ... The meaning of historical events is not inherent to them ... Meaning and values are brought to events by human beings asking questions" (*Duties and Delights*, 203, 340). As he writes in the epilogue to *The Conquest of America*, "If we are ignorant of history, says another adage, we risk repeating it; but it is not because we know history that we know what to do. We are like the conquistadors and we differ from them; their example is instructive but we shall never be sure that by not behaving like them we are not in fact on the way to imitating them, as we adapt ourselves to new circumstances. But their history can be exemplary for us because it permits us to reflect upon ourselves, to discover resemblances as well as differences: once again self-knowledge develops through knowledge of the Other" (Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, 254).

(Hope and Memory, 145). The moralizer, fueled by a potent blend of unctuousness and piety, effortlessly divides humanity (both historically and contemporarily) into mutually exclusive categories of good and evil – reducing the study of history, scoring its exemplary potential fruitless (while betraying the experience of all involved). Here Todorov recognizes a novel totalitarian element of politics: our proclivity to judge history and its actors through the lens of moralistic Manichaeism.

History and contemporary politics are not able to, nor should they be coerced into supplying us heroes to worship or enemies to detest. For Todorov, as for Arendt, politics and world-building activities are to a large extent about how societies remember their past. If we indeed seek to continuously and productively transition societies into the future, there is a profound need for them to *remember* – and to remember in a particular way that is conducive to healing and constructive of future coexistence. Far from assisting in this endeavour, Manichaeism instead serves to perpetuate what Arendt deems a totalitarian distortion, the conceptualization of politics as war by other means that reduces political agency to the exclusive duality of us vs them, good vs evil, friend vs foe.

Most critically, in Todorov's eyes, to make this mistake – to mutate any historical or contemporary episode into a battle between a noble 'right' and monstrous 'wrong' side of history – is to endure a fundamental confusion regarding the very nature of humanity itself. As Todorov urges, "the only chance we might have of climbing a moral rung would be to recognize the evil in ourselves and to struggle against it" (Hope and Memory, 144). In *Facing the Extreme*, Todorov emphasises Solzhenitsyn's articulation that "the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either – but right through every human heart – and through all human hearts" (Todorov 1997: 136). "Today," he writes, "when everyone recognizes the humanity of the victims, it is not enough to be able to say, 'We are human like them.' We must also grapple with the more problematic comparison, between ourselves and the executioners, and be prepared to say, 'They are human beings like us'" (Todorov 1997: 136).

Indeed, Todorov urges his readers to recognize this consistency, the universality that bridges humanity – that bridges you and I – to those we fear being associated with. As he writes in his essay, *Memory as Remedy for Evil*, "The memory of the past will serve no purpose if used to build an impassable wall between evil and us, identifying exclusively with irreproachable heroes and

innocent victims and driving the agents of evil outside the confines of humankind ... The memory of the past could help us in this enterprise of taming evil, on the condition that we keep in mind that good and evil flow from the same source and that in the world's best narratives they are not neatly divided" (Todorov 2009: 447-462)

For Todorov, another – and perhaps the greatest – totalitarian threat posed to human autonomy and humanism itself is that of *scientism*, an *-ism* that is strikingly reminiscent of the algorithmic thought and bio-historical determinism that Arendt resisted so consistently in her defense of authentic politics. A disturbing host of dangers are contained within scientism's set of theses.³¹ Totalitarian adherents to the scientistic doctrine view the world's obedience to strict social and biological laws as exhilarating; these laws, if understood, can ultimately be mastered in such a way as to unfold paradise on earth (this is a form of scientistic national aestheticism, where human freedom can be "resurrected"³² by science). To the scientistic totalitarian, "the world is entirely homogeneous, entirely determined, entirely knowable, on the one hand; but on the other, man is an infinitely malleable material, whose observable characteristics are not serious obstacles to the chosen project. Everything is given and at the same time everything can be chosen: the paradoxical union of these two assertions comes by way of a third, according to which everything is knowable" (*Imperfect Garden*, 23). For the same reason that Arendt warned against the tyrannical nature of

³¹ Scientism harbours three theses: 1) the adherence to a deterministic vision of the world; the reign of forces that actually drive individuals is absolute – from webs of biological causality, to socio-historical laws, and hidden psychic influences – perceived freedom of the individual is simply an illusion; 2) science need not only describe what exists, but "the inexorable linking of causes and effects can be thoroughly known, and modern science is the royal road to this knowledge ... [it] can envisage that another reality, better adapted to our needs, might emerge from the same laws"; and that 3) "values follow from the nature of things" and our ethics and politics can and should be founded upon the results of science – the ultimate generator of values (Todorov, Tzvetan. *Imperfect Garden: The Legacy of Humanism*. Princeton University Press, 2009, 21-22).

³² As Todorov describes, "not satisfied with describing what exists but searching for the mechanism that produced it, scientism can envisage that another reality, better adapted to our needs, might emerge from the same laws. Freedom, formerly reduced to zero, is here reborn; but it can exist only thanks to the mediation of science. He who has penetrated the secret of plants can produce new ones, more fertile and nourishing; he who has understood natural selection can institute artificial selection. We need not be satisfied with existing means of communication, we need not accept that rivers flow in one direction to no purpose, we will prolong the span of human life. Knowledge of existing conditions leads to technology, which allows the manufacture of improved existing conditions. There is a temptation to extend the same principle to human societies: since we know their mechanisms, why not engineer perfect societies?" (*Imperfect Garden*, 21).

rational Truth in the political realm, Todorov is not only fiercely critical of scientism's eradication of human indeterminacy/agency, but also of its totalitarian substitution in the realm of human affairs of coercion for persuasion and fact for opinion. As he writes, "scientism does not eliminate the will but decides that since the results of science are valid for everyone, this will must be something shared, not individual. In practice, the individual must submit to the collectivity, which 'knows' better than he does ... [and] can enlist these laws to run the world as they think best ... acting for the benefit of nature, humanity, a certain society, not of the individuals being addressed" (*Imperfect Garden*, 24).

Under scientific totalitarianism, the individual thus becomes an instrument for the collective, which itself is in service of the social and biological laws that govern our existence. Todorov identifies the threat of this doctrine that lurks within democratic societies today, writing that "our time has become, in many respects, one of forgetting ends and sacralizing means ... It seems that the mere fact that something is possible means that it has to become a reality" (In Defence of the Enlightenment, 125). With the sanctification³³ of technocracy and bureaucracy, "politics then becomes a domain on which we consult experts, and the only debate is over the choice of means, not ends ... every problem must find a purely technical solution" (*Imperfect Garden*, 30). The "expert" – from the economist, sociologist, and psychologist, to the politician and moralist (the "intellectuals," Todorov calls them) – "replaces the sage as purveyor of final aims" (*Imperfect Garden*, 30).

It is in resistance to scientific totalitarianism (elements of which are present in the democratic societies of our day), Todorov turns to a humanism that stresses our freedom and responsibility for articulating the ends of our actions. What is an end, after all? It imparts direction and meaning to what one does, it designates a sense of the kind of world one wants to live in. Such ends, for both Arendt and Todorov, are not to be imposed in a top-down fashion (by a wise philosopher or benevolent ruler), but rather surface freely through our interactions, our worldbuilding encounters and conversations with one another (authentic politics, for Arendt, generative of *sensus communis*). Todorov's invitation into dialogue about ends is thus a profound recognition (and defense) of the human freedom and responsibility we have to, as Arendt would say, perennially build a *world* – to humanize ourselves, the

³³ This obsession of means over ends is, in some sense, a way of prioritizing form and structure over meaning and world, an ultimately anti-humanistic and anti-political sensibility (in Arendt's sense as well).

world we inhabit, and ultimately, to discover and deepen the condition of our humanity, our understanding of what it means to be human.

Critical Humanism

In resistance to the totalitarian threats of ideology and Manichaeian thinking, and apart from religious absolutes and collective ideals, Todorov offers what he calls *critical humanism* – a framework to humbly guide the realm of human interchange, a fundamental set of values and attitudes that, ultimately, make us human, that define humanity. Central to Todorov's conception of humanism is its unity of a trio of pronouns (and their respective natures): the universality of the *they*, the finality of the *you*, and the autonomy of the *I*.³⁴ In essence, this can be translated as the following: "I must be the source of my action, *you* must be its goal, *they* all belong to the same human race." Under the spirit of humanism, the human being is conceived, at once, as both the *starting* point and *end* point – the source of knowledge and deeds, the goal and destination of acts (Duties and Delights, 238). Broadly speaking, humanism's three traits (which, combined, form what he calls a 'human nature,' hence, it is an anthropology) are: 1) the belonging of *all* men and women to the same biological species; 2) their *interdependence* for survival and consciousness; and 3) their relative *indeterminacy* (*Imperfect Garden*, 235). Humanist morality (a set of values that conform with this "nature") urges for the "recognition of equal dignity for all members of the species; the elevation of the particular human being other than me as the ultimate goal of my action; [and] finally, the preference for the act freely chosen over one performed under constraint" (*Imperfect Garden*, 231).

Todorov's conception of humanism, a continuation of the work of his French predecessors (Montaigne, Rousseau, and

³⁴ Todorov elaborates, "I use an opposition here familiar to theorists of language between the personal (I, you) and the impersonal (the "third person"), on the one hand; and between *ego* and *alter* on the other—for it is clear that the man who is the end (the goal) of my actions is not myself but an other (humanism is not an egotism). What guarantees the unity of these three features is the very centrality granted to the human race, embodied by each of its members: it is at once the source, the goal, and the framework of its actions ... Every human being, whatever his other characteristics, is recognized as responsible for what he or she does and deserves to be treated as an end in him or herself. I must be the source of my action, *you* must be its goal, *they* all belong to the same human race. These three characteristics (which Kant called the three 'formulas of one and the same law') are not always found together; a particular author may retain only one or two of them, and mingle them with other sources. But only the uniting of the three constitutes humanist thought, properly speaking" (*Imperfect Garden*, 30).

Constant),³⁵ is a minimal anthropology, morality, and politics – *not* a doctrinal panacea³⁶ to address all human needs (spiritual, economic, scientific, etc.). Humanism is less of a doctrine to obey than a *compass* to humbly “guide the analysis and action of the world of human interchange, within which all others are situated.” Moreover, it constitutes a particular sensibility, a way of looking at oneself and others, of positioning oneself in the world and of taking the right distance from it and its occupants (while thinking about, approaching and interacting with them) (Imperfect Garden, 235). In this way, Todorov is interested “in a more fundamental reform that each person must undertake for himself or herself. For Todorov, at least, the lessons of modernity would appear to call less for active *engagements* in specific times at specific moments, than for a new individual responsibility *toward* the ‘other,’ and not away from that ‘other’” (Golsan 1998: 47-53). As a compass that is meant to help us orient in the world, critical humanism resembles Arendt’s notions of vigilant partiality and spatial thought – more precisely, it evokes the same agility of spirit to imagine and understand, but also to grow and transform the life of one’s mind (akin to Kant’s enlarged mentality). From both Arendt and Todorov’s perspective (that of the humanist), what matters most is the ability to alter the way one sees the world and navigate the perspectives and *doxai* of others. While both would agree that humanism is ultimately about *us*, about the possibility of engaging in worldbuilding, Todorov goes further in his emphasis of the

³⁵ As Todorov maintains, “the great lessons of the classic humanists, if only we make the effort of understanding what they meant, remain pertinent. This is my wager: I believe that the thinking of these authors from the past has greater present-day relevance than the morning newspaper. They allow us to step out of our automatic responses, to go beyond appearances and into the innermost depths of the present. For this purpose we must not lock them into their specific historical context. We have to believe in our common humanity and, thus, in our capacity to enter into a dialogue with them across the centuries. Dwarves, we can stand on the shoulders of giants – such is our privilege as readers” (*Duties and Delights*, 266). Todorov’s relationship with history discloses the glowing embers of his humanism and pursuit of the real, of the depths, beyond automatic, superficial thought.

³⁶ Todorov is very careful, in several contexts, to emphasize the humility intrinsic to humanism, which “sets a framework, but it does not tell us how to fill it. It teaches us that it is better today to live in a society that grants equal rights to all its members, that promotes the expression of their will and prevents the individual from being reduced to the role of an instrument, of a bolt in a machine. However, just as it does not define a political approach, conforming to its requirements does not guarantee a happy and fulfilled life. Humanism does not teach us why certain experiences are so deeply moving, why a landscape or a piece of music can transport us into ecstasy. Humanism does not impart meaning to each individual life or fill it with beauty, and this contact with meaning and beauty, this communion with beings and with nature, is precisely what makes life worthwhile. Humanism may not do all that, but it doesn’t promise to either. So let us accept it for what it is” (*Duties and Delights*, 264).

importance of *thou*, of considering not just the world, but the other as the goal of my care.

The paramount reform of the individual that Todorov aims to inspire – the steering of the *I* towards the *thou* – is, perhaps, the most profound element of his reinvention of humanism as a form of resistance to totalitarianism and ideology. What Todorov ultimately seeks to explore through his humanistic project is how the *other* is constitutive to *oneself*.³⁷ For him, the meaning of one’s existence and the cultivation of one’s very humanity can only be arrived at through concrete encounters with another human being.³⁸ Central to humanism, then, is the concession of our incompleteness, our need of the other, for their gaze, for the sake of our meaning and humanity (we are reminded here of Arendt’s notion of friendship which, inspired by the Greeks, is intertwined with politics in that it is contributive, if not necessary, for world-building and the humanizing cultivation of *sensus communis*, our

³⁷ On this front, Todorov is heavily influenced by his reading of Rousseau, to whom sociality is fundamental to humanity. As Todorov describes, “the shaping of our identity ... starts when we notice the existence of others, of others looking at us, when we acquire an awareness of this. Human beings who think they are alone are not quite human yet. Those who, on the contrary, recognize the existence of others, are stepping at the same time into the world of morality since, henceforth, they can do good or evil and such notions only have meaning in relationships between individuals. They are also joining the world of freedom – because the practice of good and evil presupposes that I am free to choose – and the world of language and culture, shared with other human beings. For Rousseau, individuals without an awareness of the self and the other, without morality or freedom, without language or culture – in short, without social life – are not really human” (*Duties and Delights*, 249).

³⁸ While deeply shaped by Rousseau, this particular region of Todorov’s work is also populated by the thought of Mikhail Bakhtin. In his book devoted to the Russian thinker, Todorov translates Bakhtin’s coined neologism, *vnenakhodimost’*, literally “finding oneself outside,” with a Greek root as *exotopy*. Todorov quotes Bakhtin, who wrote that “the chief matter of understanding is the *exotopy* of the one who does the understanding – in time, space, and culture – in relation to that which he wants to understand creatively ... In the realm of culture, *exotopy* is the most powerful lever of understanding. It is only in the eyes of another culture that the alien culture reveals itself more completely and more deeply (but never exhaustively...)” (Todorov, Tzvetan. *Mikhail Bakhtin: the Dialogical Principle*. Vol. 13. Manchester University Press, 1984, 99, 110). As Todorov writes, “the outside gaze is more lucid and more penetrating than the indigenous” (Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Morals of History*. University of Minnesota Press, 1995, 3). Todorov’s application of Bakhtin’s *exotopy* is not confined to the realm of inter-cultural encounters, understanding, and judgement, but too is found in the world of inter-human interchange, the sphere of sociability, where one’s humanity is constituted, or found, outside of themselves, and in the other; in short, the other is the way to oneself (the other is a *necessary* element of self-constitution, though not a wholly *self-sufficient* one, for Todorov’s humanism also holds an treasured place for solitude in human life).

ability to sense the realness of being).³⁹ Indeed, for humanists it is vital to acknowledge that our true selves are not entirely within us – further intertwining the *I, thou and we* – we are each perpetually unfinished and in the making, fundamentally social yet still individual. Deeming our sweetest existence both *collective* and *particular*, Todorov's humanism chooses a path of tension – of trying to be oneself (resisting rabid collectivity) while simultaneously engaging with the unavoidable presence of the social in oneself and in others. Humanism thus affirms the freedom of the individualists while, at once, protecting both solitude and common life; it attempts to transcend the dichotomous choice between extreme individualism and ideological collectivism, both of which pose as deep threats to political and civic life.

Todorov is careful to distinguish critical humanism from its naive and prideful perversions – infusing it with a particular moral and intellectual humility that are ultimately central to the humanist framework and strikingly resistant to Manichaeism and totalitarianism. In defense of our indeterminacy and liberty, humanists “affirm that man is not nature's slave, not that nature must become his slave” – critical humanism thus fundamentally resists notions of humanity's complete mastery of biological or historical processes (an explicit rejection of scientism). Beyond this, Todorov clarifies, “nor are we to conclude that the possibility of intervening in our fate leads inevitably to an infatuation with utopias, the desire to build paradise on earth – which ... is more likely to resemble hell ... By affirming the role of liberty in man, the humanists know that he can use it in the service of good – but also of evil. The construction of a city in which evil would be excluded plays no part in the humanist project.” (*Imperfect Garden* 37). Indeed, Todorov's humanism “rejects the dream of a paradise on earth, which would establish a definitive order ... [and] envisages men in their current imperfection and does not imagine that this state of things can change; it accepts, with Montaigne, the

³⁹ Todorov invites into conversation Rousseau, who “writes: ‘absolute solitude is a state that is sad and contrary to nature: affectionate feelings nurture the soul, communication of ideas enlivens the mind. Our sweetest existence is relative and collective, and our true self is not entirely within us’ Solitude is not contrary to the state of nature but to the nature of man such as he really exists, that is, in society ... Rousseau affirms rather euphorically that a part of the self resides in others. Our happiness is therefore that of a social being; even from an egoistic point of view, the ‘other’ is indispensable. Society, then, is not a lesser evil, a supplement; it is the source of qualities that do not exist without it. And communication is, in itself, a virtue” (Todorov, Tzvetan. *Frail Happiness: An Essay on Rousseau*. Penn State Press, 2010, 58).

idea that their garden remains forever imperfect.” (*Imperfect Garden* 236)

What all humans have in common, for Todorov, is our freedom – not guaranteed liberty, but the potentiality for freedom, for *moral* freedom in particular.⁴⁰ As Todorov writes, “the humanists do not ‘believe’ in man, nor do they sing his praises ... modern humanism, far from ignoring Auschwitz and Kolyma, take them as a starting point. It is neither proud nor naive” (*Imperfect Garden*, 232-3). Humanists are thus careful to not idealize or romanticize man, but they do believe in the *perfectibility* of human beings through education and immersion in sociability.

In tandem with humanism's moral humility is a particular intellectual humility that resists the historical and biological laws discovered by the devotees of scientism; Todorov, quoting Montaigne, relays that “the world is but a school of inquiry,” with success lying in the *attempt*, “agitation and the chase are properly our quarry ... we are born to quest after truth; to possess it belongs to a greater power.” Echoing Montaigne, Todorov urges that “men must be blamed not for failing in their search for the truth, but for renouncing it.”^[40] At its heart, Todorov's humanism is rooted in the imperfection that so defines humanity; imperfection is intrinsic to his humanism precisely because Todorov resists the inclinations of totalitarian political regimes to render the world (and its inhabitants) in a state of perfection, in the name of some absolute good, value, or principle. *Imperfect Garden*, his book devoted to humanist thought, borrows its very title from Montaigne, who embracing incompleteness and finitude, concluded, “I want death to find me planting my cabbages, but careless of death, and still more of my unfinished garden.”^[41] A shared thread found throughout both Arendt and Todorov's portrayal of totalitarianism is its characteristic urge to render the garden of human life perfect (and to do so at all costs, human sacrifice included), a thread which they both resist. Yet, as Todorov warns, “the garden can be worked but it can never be turned into an Eden.”^[42]

⁴⁰ As Todorov articulates, “humanism is not a sentimentalist ideology, but neither can it be grounded in a radically pessimist anthropology. Its conception of human beings is of indeterminate beings on a moral level, that, constantly in need of others to affirm their own existence, they can contribute to their happiness as to their misfortune; that they possess a degree of freedom in their choices, and that they are therefore responsible for the good and the evil that they do ... When humanists give pride of place to love, it is not because the object of love is always perfect but because loving someone is the best one can do. In the mother's love for her child, the child is not the one who is admirable but the love” (*Duties and Delights*, 244).

———In the name of freedom, critical humanism resists the illusion that truth can be captured, as it tries to avoid the compulsion of “expertise.” A part of humanism’s freedom then, paradoxically, is the acceptance of one’s imperfection and incompleteness – it is only this humble recognition that allows one to remain open to, and indeed seek, further conversation with the other. Freedom, in this sense, cannot be enjoyed by oneself, but only in the company of others, to the extent that the *I* is intertwined with the *thou*; as with Arendt, freedom flickers in the middle of *our* discussions, as we tend to our garden, it flourishes in the in-between of our engaging, entangled, alive, and fortunately unfinished conversations (rather than in some complete end, a state of perfection). Critical humanism thus breathes most freely when we focus our attention on the immediate moment of immersion in the cultivation of the garden of our human life with others (Arendtian world-building) and when we fully tend to the promise of our finitude, thus keeping at bay the temptation of absolutes and the closing of our life project.

Since Todorov emphasizes the imperfection of the human garden while simultaneously defending the prospect of human perfectibility, it comes as no surprise that he anchors critical humanism to what he calls an “universalism of itinerary.” The universalism of itinerary, which stresses the quest for truth rather than its capture, is central to his overarching endeavor to build the common horizon of *we*, of shared humanity. Through his approach to universalism, Todorov gives more reality and substance to Arendt’s idea of the world while connecting it more articulately to our humanity and the ethos of conversation that authentic politics needs.

Rethinking Universalism

“Sisyphus’s stone never stops tumbling down,” Todorov reminds us, “but the fate of Sisyphus is not a curse; it is simply the human condition, which can never be definitive or perfect ... [which consists in] converting the relative into the absolute, of building something solid out of the most fragile materials.”⁴¹ While Todorov’s humanism is fiercely antithetical to the disturbing dehumanization of totalitarian regimes and fanatical purity of

⁴¹ Both absolute relativism and ethnocentric/abstract universalism are forms of Manichaeism because adopting either perspective necessarily implies the embrace of a truly dichotomous problem that presents mutually exclusive solutions. In Todorov’s eyes, we need not submit to what he deems to be a fictitiously dichotomous choice. As we will find, Todorov resists radical separation that rejects intersections or the notion of a common horizon, of universal, non-coercive values.

racial and ideological classes, it also rejects the abundant excesses of relativism that denies any notion of our capacity to, or legitimacy in, judging at all (across cultures, and beyond). His humanism aims to sustain, at once, the recognition of a universal humanity and a respect for human diversity; he thus offers his readers what is a profoundly crucial balance – an appreciation for dissonance, for a difference that *resists* totalizing thought but *still* invites bridges and attempts to facilitate mutual illumination and understanding (through the endless work of cultural translation and mediation), even if partial. It is a humanistic appreciation for diversity that rejects Manichaeism thought – be that absolute relativism or absolute universalism (Imperfect Garden, 236)– and ultimately amounts to a particular sensibility that Todorov formulates, a conception of a non-totalitarian, non-totalizing and non-ideological way of thinking.

As Todorov asks, “how can we simultaneously get rid of the dangers of perverted universalism (of ethnocentrism and scientism alike) and those of relativism? We can do so only if we succeed in giving a new meaning to the universalist requirement” (Todorov 1993: 390). Most of Todorov’s attention to this question is devoted in his work, *On Human Diversity*. Largely in conversation with Claude Lévi-Strauss, Todorov outlines two conceptions of universalism found in the French anthropologist’s work: 1) “starting-point” universalism, rooted in the determined biopsychological identity of the species; and 2) “end-point” universalism, which is the “project of a universal state with a homogenous population” (*On Human Diversity*, 74). Apart from the choice of a deterministic universalism that ignores differences, and a voluntarist and unifying universalism, he is able to draw a third conception from Lévi-Strauss’s work, what Todorov chooses to call a “universalism of itinerary.” He describes that such a universalism focuses “not on starting points or destinations but on the approach adopted (on method). If I succeed in communicating successfully with others, I have to imagine a frame of reference that encompasses their universe and my own. Aspiring to establish dialogue with ‘others’ who are increasingly remote, we must indeed postulate a universal horizon for our search for understanding, even if it is clear that in practice I shall never encounter universal categories – but only categories that are *more universal* than others” (*On Human Diversity*, 74).

Todorov’s universalism of itinerary is not anything static or captured, but a process – a method, approach, or orientation – the provisional result of dialogue between individuals, cultures, and thus disparate values that both avoids relativism and the rejection

of truth and the impossibility to judge between different universes of meaning. However, the truth of the universalism of itinerary appears here as a horizon of a common search, and not as a possession or a final conclusion. “The universal,” Todorov writes, “is the horizon of understanding between *two* particulars, we shall perhaps never attain it, but we need to postulate it nevertheless in order to make existing particulars intelligible” (On Human Diversity, 12). As Todorov clarifies, the universalism of itinerary refers not to “the fixed content of a theory of man, but to the necessity of postulating a horizon common to the interlocutors in a debate, if this debate is to be of any use. Universal features derive in fact not from the empirical world, which is an object of observation, but from the workings of the human mind itself” (On Human Diversity, 74). Viewed from the perspective of critical humanism and in its itinerant form, universality is “an instrument of analysis, a regulatory principle allowing the fruitful confrontation of differences, and its content cannot be fixed: it is always subject to revision” (On Human Diversity, 74). Thus, it is not the content of any one culture or society that can be deemed universal, in Todorov’s eyes. “If we understand universality in this way,” Todorov explains, “we rule out any shifting away from universalism toward ethnocentrism or scientism (since we refuse to set up any particular content as a norm), but we still avoid falling into the trap of relativism, which renounces judgment, or at least transcultural judgment. It is universality itself, in fact, that gives us access to absolute values. What is universal is our belonging to the same species: that is not very much, but it is enough to serve as a basis for our judgments” ((On Human Diversity, 391). Todorov makes an effort here that this goes beyond mere relativistic recognition of the complexity and incompatibility of values.⁴² Additionally, the critical humanist’s universalism of itinerary proves to be more than a method – it rather shows that the work of postulating a common horizon requires the constant forging of the language and values that can keep the protagonists of dialogue together in their common project, that prevents them from getting lost or disconnected from one another. Rather than exclude the possibility of universality, Todorov’s critical humanist serves as a moderator, mediator, and translator who actively constructs and weaves together a

⁴² In this sense, Todorov takes a step beyond that of thinkers like Isaiah Berlin, who, even as a value pluralist, is still a “minimalist in his universalism” (Goodheart, Eugene. “Tzvetan Todorov’s Humanism.” *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée* 31, no. 2 (2004), 187). Berlin acknowledges a plurality of values, but, in essence, is not as *constructive* as Todorov is, who endeavour to construct a common horizon for interlocutors in the debate of values/meaning to enter a dialogue.

commonality (a shared horizon and language) for articulating common interests, thinking and judging – for learning to be human through our interaction, our speech with one other. In short, she is an important agent in the disclosure of the world, in Arendt’s sense, a facilitator in the work of co-building. The critical humanist thus plays a crucial role in humanizing both the world and its builders, akin to the enterprises of Lessing and Jaspers, as depicted by Arendt.

Todorov’s universalism is a product of his fear of the rejection or the assimilation of difference that results from disfigured notions of universalism and the refusal of engagement with it that arises from relativism. As with Arendt, for Todorov, an absence of difference would entail an absence of meaning – it is difference itself that perennially invites and requires interpretation, the ongoing act of understanding and interpretation that is too rich to be totally grasped or brought to closure. It is clear that Todorov’s pursuit of universals is not meant to be completed – he urges that we not relativistically reject conversations about universals, but, rather, that we *attempt* them, and never stop. What is actively granted by critical humanism’s universality is a fragile unity, founded upon diversity, always to be revised and never to become final and totalizing.

Where relativists or value pluralists see only contradiction and incompatibility, Todorov sees translation and mediation – which is where his humanism lies – because through translation and mediation we can improve, enhance, and expand our humanity, rather than remain somehow tragically caught in the unresolvable conflict. Where absolutists see enclosure and assimilation, Todorov sees a fragile unity in the making, which requires a critical humanistic sensibility that does not allow any of us to arrest the search and entrap it in one project, ideology, or identity. Thus, he opens the door to a form of political judgement that pays careful attention to *dokei moi*, the position and perspective of all, but it is a judgement that is valid not only within one’s individual world – one that cuts across different cultures, values, and worldviews. For Todorov, this common horizon is not a given but an *ongoing* construction, which requires dialogue, interpretation and understanding of diversity. Universality and humanism for Todorov are a form of criticism – an ability and a mobility of mind – a way of judging opposed to “totalizing thought” (The Morals of History, 137). The humanist works between and through differing individuals and cultures – he is a

interpersonal and intercultural⁴³ translator, one who critically creates the language and common horizon of universality that the interlocutors in the debate need. The values of humanism are thus particularly adept at bridging *doxai*, values, perspectives and at constructing the common horizon that we need in order to be able to meaningfully encounter another, be it between individuals or culture.

Exile & Imagination

In this paper, I have remained concerned with drawing out a particular political sensibility from the work of Arendt and Todorov, what I call a *critical humanistic sensibility*. In this final section I explore under what conditions such a manner of living and thinking can flourish. How can one live their life as an individual with care for the world – as one who can encounter others in a manner proper to authentic politics, with a critical sensibility and humanistic imagination?

For Arendt, thinking is an activity that takes place on a threshold – caught between appearance and disappearance, presence and withdrawal, past and future, action and spectation – and insofar as we engage in thinking, we actualize or experience a fundamental feature of what it means to be a human being: to exist between worlds as a question asking being. Due to their positionality between worlds, Arendt herself often praised the role of the *pariah* – a potential critic of existing arrangements and mediator between different worlds – as one conducive to the activity of thinking and humanistic care for the political realm. Inspired by the German-Jewish poet, Heinrich Heine, Arendt writes that “the pariah is always remote and unreal ... he stands outside the real world and attacks it from without ... [Heine] was able to avoid becoming a doctrinaire and [kept] his passion for

⁴³ Culture, in Todorov’s sense, is broader than typically connoted. As I write this, I am a Jew from California studying in Minnesota – here alone lies a multicultural trio within my identity. As Todorov responded in one interview, “I am not completely Bulgarian myself any more nor am I entirely French like other people; I am a hybrid. But this mix is not peculiar to exiles alone ... We are all cultural hybrids. Certain cases are simply more visible and more telling than others” (*Duties and Delights*, 181). Elsewhere, he writes that “every individual is multicultural; cultures are not monolithic islands but criss-crossed alluvial plains. Individual identity stems from the encounter of multiple collective identities within one and the same person; each of our various affiliations contributes to the formation of the unique creature that we are. Human beings are not all similar, or entirely different; they are all plural within themselves, and share their constitutive traits with very varied groups, combining them in an individual way” (Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Fear of Barbarians: Beyond the Clash of Civilizations*. University of Chicago Press, 2010, 54). Thus, when I speak of cross-cultural discovery, I speak, at once, to both inter-personal encounters within localities (Californians and Minnesotans, Republicans and Democrats) and inter-cultural interaction between societies, civilizations, nations, or religions.

freedom unhampered by fetters of dogma ... he viewed life through a long-range telescope, and not through the prism of an ideology, he was able to see further and clearer than others” (Arendt 1994: 107). The role of the pariah thus grants one a particular freedom to look at the world and see it in a way that others do not and can not, to constructively criticize it from a position of what Todorov and Bakhtin would call *exotopy* (see footnote 131), from a revelatory outsideness and with a freedom of movement reminiscent of Lessing’s criticism and Jaspers’ spatial thought.

Arendt’s threshold thinker, the actor-spectator, (Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy, 69), the pariah, is what Todorov would call a go-between, an intermediary, a being in transition – one who embraces her incompleteness and becoming, akin to the humanist’s imperfect garden (*Duties and Delights*, 391). He suggests that such a position of thought emerges amidst the experience of *exile*, which gives one the vantage point of pariah-like outsideness. Along similar lines, Todorov offers us his self-conception of what can best be translated as the ‘estranged man’ (*l’homme dépaycé*), or what he alternatively deems a *marginal centrist* (*Duties and Delights*, 407). Simultaneously without and within, this exilic condition is one that Todorov himself experiences as “something enriching, not impoverishing” (*Duties and Delights*, 147). Such marginality can arise through an array of paths and need not be arrived at through exile alone. As Todorov explains, “when I talk about singularity, I am not only thinking of the status of foreigner. It can result from crossing social barriers or simply from a personal path in life that, for various reasons, leads the person outside the norm. Montesquieu was perfectly French ... [but through] reading and travelling, [he] put himself into the other’s place and see himself from the outside ... we gain from self-detachment, because it enables us to become more aware of ourselves. And this consciousness is precisely what sets our species apart in the living world” (*Duties and Delights*, 181). In this sense the exilic refers to what the Polish sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman, deems an “attitude and life strategy” – a “spiritual rather than physical mobility” (Bauman 2013: 209).

For Todorov, the exilic condition allows one to exist as a cultural mediator and translator between separate horizons of meaning – as someone who escapes, as Arendt would describe, the compulsion of absolute truth/meaning. Caught between worlds yet participating in each, the go-between is doubtful of any attempt to capture truth/meaning, yet still remains profoundly compelled that the quest for them is central to any fully lived human life. Such an individual thus engages the gaze of the other – an other

who becomes constitutive to one's own self-understanding and humanity. This is the humanistic potential harboured within the position of the exile, the intersection of our otherwise parallel gazes into a dialogue that resists the totalitarian temptation to eradicate diversity and reduce the world under one monochromatic and tyrannical truth.

It seems that such a potential – that of humanism, of a common horizon and orientation – is precisely what Todorov seeks to, more than anything else, both defend and realize in his entire body of work. While predating his explicit work on humanism, what is perhaps Todorov's greatest defense of the humanistic potential (and exigency of it) is found in his *first* major work, *The Conquest of America*. This particular episode of exemplary history (what Todorov deems “the most astonishing encounter in our history,” that of the Europeans and indigenous Americans in 15th and 16th centuries), suggests that an ambiguity has lurked since the dawn of modernity: a pair of potentials simultaneously appeared, that of totalitarianism and humanism. *The Conquest of America* illustrates this very ambiguity, and more importantly, Todorov offers a humanistic construction to encourage realization of exotopy in the political realm by providing a survey of archetypes – through the characters of the encounter between Europe and the Americas – of *unsuccessful* (totalitarian driven) and *more* successful (marked by the development of a humanistic sensibility) stories of understanding, of cultural translation and mediation that increase our ability to converse across differences and engage in world-building activities.

As Bauman echoes from the work of “the greatest cultural anthropologist of our time,” Lévi-Strauss, “just two strategies were deployed in human history whenever the need arose to cope with the otherness of others: one was the *anthropoemic*, the other was the *anthropophagic* strategy. The first strategy consisted in ‘vomiting’, spitting out the others seen as incurably strange and alien ... The second strategy consists in a soi-disant ‘disalienation’ of alien substances: ‘ingesting’, ‘devouring’ foreign bodies and spirits so that they may be made, through metabolism, identical with, and no longer distinguishable from, the ‘ingesting’ body ... If the first strategy was aimed at the exile or annihilation of *the others*, the second was aimed at the suspension or annihilation of their *otherness*” (Bauman 2013, 209).

While these precise categories are absent from *The Conquest of America*, nearly every character in the encounter between the Europeans and indigenous Americans falls into one of

them (and at times, both). The medieval Columbus, guided by his delusions, prophesies, and blinding prejudices, embodied both of Lévi-Strauss's strategies of encounter. Unable to fathom the simultaneous existence of alterity and humanity, Columbus could only assign something/someone as different *or* human. Since the coexistence of different *and* human was an impossibility for him, when confronted by alterity, he either disalienated the Indians or denied their humanity (it is interesting to note that Montezuma was strikingly similar to Columbus in this way. Since Aztec culture and ritual blinded him to the possibility of human alterity, he deemed the conquistadors to be non-human). The Spanish priest, Bartolomé de las Casas, epitomized anthropophagism – along with his imposition of Christianity and memorable defense of Indian sacrificial ritual, Las Casas believed in human equality to such an extent that he extinguished all notions of human alterity. He shared a distributive love, levelling all, draining humanity of its diversity and content – of its unique and unparalleled constellation. The Spanish shipwreck, Gonzalo Guerrero, was what one could consider a reverse anthropoemist. Upon his unplanned arrival on the shores of Yucatán Peninsula, Guerrero completely converted to the local culture – having (ritually) deformed his body, married a local woman, raised a family, and thoroughly adopted Indian language, customs, religion, and manners, Guerrero experienced a complete identification with the other – he annihilated his own roots, the very alterity from which he was born.

It appears that only one character managed to transcend Lévi-Strauss's dichotomy – and by doing so, he revealed and realized the potential of humanism, cultivating the universality of the *they*, the foundation of the co-building so central to an authentic politics based on the fact of human plurality. Cabeza de Vaca, a shipwrecked Spaniard forced to live among a community of indigenous Americans, endured extreme integration into their culture, dressing as they dress, eating as they ate, and working as a doctor within the tribe. Throughout, de Vaca managed to simultaneously maintain his European identity while fighting for the freedom of the Indians when they encountered European Christians. As revealed by his story, de Vaca is perhaps the closest individual to what Todorov calls the ethnologist that we observe in this encounter – he who “contributes to the reciprocal illumination of one culture by another, to making us look into the other's face ... [to] know the other by the self, but also the self by the other” (*The Conquest of America*, 199). De Vaca was altered in his encounter with alterity itself; perpetually surrendered by “the

others,” he never became an Indian, but was no longer a Spaniard. In his description of how the Europeans deceived him (who had promised not to aggress the indigenous Americans), he speaks of three groups: the Indians, the Christians, and *we* – a *we* “external to both worlds, though having experienced both from within” (Ibid, 241).

Humanistically, de Vaca cultivates a dialogue, a process of cultural interpretation and hybridization – suddenly, an incipient ‘*we*’ emerges, which exists between ‘*us*’ and ‘*them*,’ or rather cuts across their divide: something along the lines of a universalism of itinerary thus begins to take shape. What de Vaca achieves here reveals to us the humanistic potential that Todorov attempts to illustrate, that of navigating between *anthropoeism* and *anthropophagism*, of reaching the fragile possibility of constructing a common horizon where dialogue is possible, where the other is recognized as a different equal who is constitutive to one’s own humanity. With the story of de Vaca, Todorov thus reveals the humanistic potential harboured within the ability of the exile, the shipwrecked, the estranged one, to humanize – to translate and cultivate a humanistic sensibility.

It is worth noting that the subtitle of Todorov’s book is *The Question of the Other*, and again remembering that, for Arendt, politics is “based on the fact of human plurality” – it is thus a realm constituted by and dependent upon the meeting of a plurality of *Others*. What de Vaca managed to do was inhabit and cultivate the transformative middle space where the world is thrust between us, and we become human. To nurture this space is to avoid either placing the other irretrievably outside one’s own universe of meaning or reducing them to that familiar world (my ‘humanity’); in this space one seeks a knowledge of the Other that leads not to manipulation and domination, but to the increase of our humanity. Characterized by its encounters between Others, this space is intrinsically *political* – it is the realm of transformation akin to Arendt’s in-between that defines the world: a space that cannot be reduced to any one side/position from which the world appears to me/my group/my culture, a space whose center (and meaning) is always in the making, a moving web of interactions, and an ongoing process of negotiation, translation, and humanization.

IV. Conclusion: A Critical Humanistic Sensibility

Polemos is not the destructive passion of a wild brigand but is, rather, the creator of unity. The unity it founds is

more profound than any ephemeral sympathy or coalition of interests; adversaries meet in the shaking of a given meaning, and so create a new way of being human – perhaps the only mode that offers hope amid the storm of the world: the unity of the shaken but undaunted (Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History, 43).

Jan Patočka, Heretical Essays

“Could the activity of thinking as such ... be among the conditions that make men abstain from evil-doing or even actually ‘condition’ them against it?” In response to the question posed by Arendt herself in my introduction, I argued that the activity of thinking (properly understood) *can* empower individuals to resist the totalitarian features that linger today in modern politics. I sketched how, in Todorov’s view, our vulnerability to both abstract universalism and scientific aspirations of world perfection accompanied the arrival of modernity. However, so too appeared a glimmering humanistic potential – that of a particular orientation towards others and the very realm of politics itself: the prospect of a humanistic sensibility, one which acknowledges the gaze of the other as intrinsic to the constitution of the *I*, and the resulting creation of a language that can speak to *our* world, a world we are building together, one we can humanize with one another across differences, so as to keep the darkening and desertification of the world at bay.

Such world-building requires the Socratic craft of critical thinking, an art that takes form through a conversation that I have first with the plurality of the world in my solitary self. Though, as I suggested, Socratic thinking is not moved enough by care for the world and its pillars that grant us an orientation and permanence (such pillars are increasingly imperative amidst what Bauman calls “liquid modernity,” our age of late modernity where non-commitment, non-engagement, and non-responsibility for the world are standard). If Arendtian thinking is to become a reliable strategy of resistance to totalitarianism, it needs to acquire a more

substantial *humanistic* (care for both the world and others)⁴⁴ and *exilic* (the pursuit of exotopy, forms of pariah-like marginality that estrange one from their given universe of meaning and make them available for the work of cultural mediation and translation) dimension.

To inject this humanistic spirit to the Arendtian activity of thinking, I turned to the work of Todorov – whose critical humanism, “universalism of itinerary,” and conception of a go-between contribute to Arendtian world-building a sensibility that can nurture a language of communication across different universes of meaning and frameworks of interpretation (a skill that is increasingly pressing in our multicultural societies). To embrace and actualize the exilic/marginal in our life can be considered an attempt to express the deeper existential modern condition of those who, as Patočka puts it in the epigraph, are *shaken but undaunted*. Modern existence is marked by the shaking of given meaning and of the essential pillars of the world that give it stability. At the same time, as I argued in Part I, from the standpoint of authentic politics, we need a stable world in which we can orient and articulate our common interests and humanity. Such a condition places a tremendous responsibility on us: that of caring for the world and its meaning, for a meaning and unity that are forever fragile and thus in need of perennial tending, that cannot come into being other than through engagement with and care for other human beings.

The travail requires *imagination*, or as Arendt echoes from King Solomon, an “understanding heart” that humanizes the other and world while simultaneously keeping them in perspective and at the distance that the freedom of thinking requires. This, Arendt insists, is all that “makes it bearable for us to live with other people, strangers forever, in the same world, and makes it possible for them to bear with us ... Imagination alone enables us to see things in their proper perspective, to be strong enough to put that which is too close at a certain distance so that we can see and understand it without bias and prejudice, to be generous enough to bridge abysses of remoteness until we can see and understand

⁴⁴ “Humanism,” Todorov writes, “asserts that we must serve human beings one by one, not in abstract categories” (*Imperfect Garden*, 234). Todorov’s humanistic sensibility is deeply rooted in his preference for the particularity of others and the world as opposed to grande abstractions, values, or ideologies. Referencing the 20th century ideologues of communism, he noted that “they overlooked the concrete results – what was happening in ordinary people’s lives. They were willing to immolate people on the altar of humanity. That is why I hold so dearly to the opposite attitude: I am more concerned with *individuals* than with *groups*, and I am wary of big words like Peace, Justice or Equality. I’m always looking to see the price that will be paid for them and the realities they dissimulate” (*Duties and Delights*, 30).

everything that is too far away from us as though it were our own affair ... Without this kind of imagination, which actually is understanding, we would never be able to take our bearings in the world. It is the only inner compass we have” (Essays in Understanding, 322-323).

In the epilogue of *The Promise of Politics*, Arendt likens the totalitarian disfiguration of politics to the desert; as she writes, “the modern growth of worldlessness, the withering away of everything between us, can also be described as the spread of the desert.” Indeed, Arendt insists metaphorically, we already “live and move in a desert-world” (*The Promise of Politics*, 201). Our sandy condition is sometimes visited by sandstorms in the form of totalitarianism, “in which false or pseudo-action suddenly bursts forth from deathlike quiet, present imminent danger to the two human faculties that patiently enable us to transform the desert rather than ourselves, the conjoined faculties of passion and action” (*The Promise of Politics*, 202). What is threatened by totalitarianism is our ability to forge “life-giving oases” – to flourish in the fragile yet invigorating realm of authentic politics. It is only with the perseverance of living in doubt (of not fully escaping the desert for the oases), of enduring “the passion of living under desert conditions” by tending to politics, that we can resist both escapism and totalitarianism (thus avoiding adjusting ourselves to the conditions of desert-life) – that we can build the absolute from the relative, creating shimmering oases in otherwise torrid, abrasive desert conditions. As Jerome Kohn writes in his introduction to Arendt’s *The Promise of Politics*, “this is our predicament, in which only the roots we are free to strike, providing we have the courage to endure the conditions of the desert, can make a new beginning. In analogy to the way trees in the natural world reclaim arid land by sinking their roots deep into the earth, new beginnings can still transform the desert into a human world” (*The Promise of Politics*, xxxii). But such transformation is never final nor absolute; the humanistic sensibility is accustomed to what Patočka calls “life unsheltered, a life of outreach and initiative without pause nor ease” (*Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, 39), it acknowledges, and indeed flies off the perch of our shipwrecked condition, with an equal recognition that our garden – our own and others (our and their humanity) – will forever remain imperfect, wilting amidst the dry air of the inescapable desert, but at the same time, breathing in the refreshing mists drawn from our oases.

I conclude my paper by evoking the figure and story of a close friend of Eugène Ionesco, the Romanian playwright with whom I opened this paper. Mihail Sebastian was a Jewish-

Romanian novelist, playwright, and journalist who chronicled and confronted the perils of totalitarianism during the interwar period in Romania. One of the early humanists that inspired and fortified Sebastian in his attempt to resist the rhinocerization of Romanian intellectual and political elites, as well as that of the Romanian society at large, was Michel de Montaigne, a thinker treasured by Todorov in his own reconstruction of critical humanism. In a radio conference entitled *The Immortal Montaigne*, broadcasted on November 25, 1935, Sebastian urged his listeners to take Montaigne's manner of thinking as a model for preserving their humanity, for being able to resist the fixed ideas and sweeping rhinocerization of his time. In what was clearly a political act, Sebastian embodied the critical humanist, that is, someone who was moved, in the manner of Lessing and Jaspers, by respect for the freedom and dignity of others, by a particular care for the world – resisting its gradual darkening and drawing oases of meaning in the middle of the expansive desert.

Sebastian's humanism speaks powerfully to the promise that thinking harbours to resist the growing totalitarian tendencies that twist our politics today. Such thinking, Sebastian points out, is an act of watching yourself "with lucidity, with calm, without fanaticism, without intolerance, without the desire to flatter yourself, without the desire to humiliate the other – with the only concern of knowing yourself and, if possible, of correcting yourself"(Sebastian, Mihail, *Opere*, VI, 962). It is an activity devoid of the asperities of intellectual intolerance,⁴⁵ which does not impose its free will on anyone but rather engages the interlocutors in a friendly conversation. "It is the thinking of a man who is searching ... It is a way of conversing, first with yourself, then with other people, so that you can come closer to a truth that will always remain impossible to pin down, mobile, still on the horizon" (*Opere*, VI, 962). Like Arendt, we stand today surrounded by the rubble of our shattered meanings and truths; the only way for us to strike roots, to draw oases within our darkening public realm is to, with an always dawning freedom,

⁴⁵ As Sebastian describes Montaigne, "[He] does not have this asperity. He loves too much his own freedom of thought to not respect yours. 'If I follow a guide other than my unadulterated and free will, then I am worthless.' And this free will does not take precedence over yours. Montaigne does not try to impose it on anyone – and above all not on the reader with whom he converses in a friendly manner, with whom he shares thoughts that are, from the very beginning, exposed to mistake. Montaigne does not possess commanding certainties. He does not know infallible truths. His thinking is made of doubts, attempts, hesitations. It is the thinking of a man who is searching. The act of writing is for him nothing else than an exploration. It is a way of conversing, first with yourself, then with other people, so that you can come closer to a truth that will always remain impossible to pin down, mobile, still on the horizon" (*Opere*, VI, 963).

embrace this undaunted and humble activity of a humanistic thinking and sensibility – one which remains oriented towards the other, ready to, alongside them, endure the passion of living under desert conditions and of tending to the imperfect garden of our human life.

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Justified Cause? Assessing the Humanitarian Outcomes of U.S. Foreign Aid and Intervention Since the Cold War

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Abstract

This paper investigates the effects of U.S. foreign aid and humanitarian intervention on the human rights conditions of recipient and host states. It uses linear regression models to suggest that the extent of an intervention impacts the degree to which the human rights conditions of a target state can either improve or decline in the years following an operation. Building on this quantitative analysis, the author presents Afghanistan and Syria as case studies which provide valuable insights into how the dynamics of aid delivery, intervention, and human rights interact in contexts inhibiting human rights protection. Analysis of the Afghan case highlights how institutional fragility and religious tensions can impact potential human rights progress. The case study of contemporary Syria delineates how internal conflicts and external pressures after the 2015 escalation of U.S. and Russian interventions intensified the humanitarian crisis. The findings of these case studies are then used to refine the paper's regression models, to which variables representing internal and external pressures, corruption, and religious tension are added. The results of the new models indicate that greater amounts of reliable economic aid, material supplies, and cooperation from independent humanitarian organizations positively affect human rights conditions in recipient states, while military aid is associated with deterioration in human rights conditions and social reform indicators.

I. Introduction

In 1823, the Monroe Doctrine first openly asserted the preeminent and unilateral claim of the United States to hegemony in the Western hemisphere (Gilderhus, 2006). Eight decades later, Theodore Roosevelt ambitiously claimed that the U.S. had a "moral mandate" to enforce proper behaviors among nations (Lipset, 1996). The world has thus seen an increasingly active U.S. participation in the international society in a variety of ways: some were confrontational and hostile in nature, with others being more indirect and milder in their methods (Aidt & Albornoz, 2011). Ushered by President Bush's New World Order narrative in 1990, the scope of foreign policy has expanded much more broadly for the United States as a prosperous global superpower. This unique

post-Cold War hegemonic position has facilitated frequent military and economic actions to build, promote and secure peaceful and democratic governments overseas. Humanitarian motives, in particular, have replaced the threat of communism expansion since the 1990s to become the primary reason for U.S. foreign interventions (Choi & James, 2016; Dixon, 2019). However, the efficacy of the U.S. efforts have long been questioned and debated among professional scholars as well as the general public domestically and internationally (Humpage, 1999; Dell & Querubin, 2018).

This study utilizes both explicit statistical models and qualitative case studies to explore the research question: Do U.S. foreign aid and humanitarian intervention bring positive impacts to the human rights of the recipient or host states? To approach this question, I propose multiple linear regression models that suggest the extent of intervention exerts significant impacts on how much a target state's human rights conditions could either improve or decline in the years following the operations. Case-based explorations, in the context of Afghanistan and Syria, provide additional evidence of control variables from institutional, socioeconomic, and international relation perspectives. My resulting refined models demonstrate the relationship between the scales of current U.S. foreign assistance and the states' future human rights: specifically, more economic aid and less military aid are the major factors associated with good human rights conditions of the recipient states, with negative abuse of military resources more likely to overshadow any progress of human rights from Western guided economic reforms. The findings of this study offer rich theoretical implications to policy makers in terms of how to avoid potential pitfalls of wasting critical resources and to maximize the positive influences of foreign aid and intervention on human rights. The paper ends by proposing future research directions and outlining constructive ways to create a favorable condition for humanitarian missions to make a difference in the long run.

II. Human rights Norms, Aid Giving, and Interventions

As Cold War ideological rivalry diminished as a legitimating doctrine for intervention (Morales, 1994), the complexity and diversity of the goals of U.S. foreign aid and intervention expanded widely. Choi and James (2016) identify human rights, democracy promotion, and counter-terrorism as the most prominent issues in the contemporary U.S. foreign and security policy. Their study subsequently illustrates that the

United States is more likely to engage in military campaigns for broader humanitarian reasons rather than for its own national security interests. The humanitarian motive, in specific, refers to a set of reasons for intervention aimed at stopping or reversing a humanitarian crisis such as massacres and abuses of civilians, forced displacement of populations, large-scale sexual violence, or other significant violations of human rights (Walzer, 2008; Sharp & Blanchard, 2016). Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1948 and the establishment of International Year for Human Rights in 1968 (McCaffrey, 1992; Lillich, 1969), much attention has been given in the U.S. foreign policies to the violation of human rights and concrete measures to address this urgent and serious problem worldwide.

The international human rights norms are closely related to the U.S. government's foreign aid programs. Scholars have long recognized that aid could serve as a strategic instrument of statecraft and foreign policy interactions, used to promote various donor countries' foreign policy interests (Dietrich & Murdie, 2017), for example facilitating economic cooperation and democratic political reforms (Hook, 2008; Bearce & Tirone, 2010). Existing research in the field has conducted multivariate quantitative and qualitative studies to examine the linkages between states' past human rights practices and the amounts of bilateral assistance they obtained from the United States (Poe, 1990; Lebovic & Voeten, 2009). The majority of the previous literature on U.S. aid has attempted to figure out the power of human rights in the decision-making rationales behind the distribution of economic and military assistance. According to Cingranelli and Pasquarello's research on U.S. foreign aid to Latin American countries (1985), the importance of human rights and political freedom considerations in the bilateral aid decisions has steadily increased since the mid-1970s. Neumayer (2003) further confirmed and expanded the claim that the respect for human rights plays a significant role for most donors as the gatekeeper at the aid eligibility stage. In contrast, fewer experts have focused on discussing the actual changes in human rights after the distribution of resources, nor has any consensus regarding the issue been reached. Fortunately, an increasing volume of literature in the past decade has been dedicated to filling in the blank and analyzing the outcomes of specific aid giving programs (Regilme, 2018; Cole, 2012), with most of these contemporary research pointing to an eventual democratic decay in those recipient states

that raises widespread and continuing human rights abuses by both state and nonstate actors.

Intervention through direct deployment of military forces abroad, as a seemingly more forceful foreign policy option in response to human rights crises, has been argued as necessary by liberal hawk advocates usually for its benefit of quickly limiting the spread of conflicts and minimizing suffering (Choi, 2013). Foreign policy analysts evaluating U.S. led interventions in the post-Cold War era, especially based upon humanitarian causes, have also concentrated more on the role of the host state's human rights status in triggering a potential intervention, rather than its subsequent changes after an intervention had occurred (Robert, 1993; Tasioulas, 2009). Questions regarding the legitimacy of intervening sovereign states for humanitarian reasons, in particular, have been the core of most literature on analyzing these interventions (Reisman, 1990; Walling, 2015), while the impacts brought by the interventions to the local societies in the long run have often been overlooked. Several in-depth case studies of geopolitical hotspots since 2000 have found that U.S. interventions, although often undertaken with the justified moral responsibilities and genuine aim of preserving human rights norms, in fact served to undermine efforts to build a sustainable human rights culture in those regions (Mertus, 2001; Peksen, 2012; Valentino, 2011; Murdie & Davis, 2010). Nevertheless, their findings, which are exclusive to certain temporal and geopolitical contexts, have not led to the formation of a generalizable conclusion on how the human rights conditions of post-conflict states would evolve after the U.S. intervened.

Despite more and more efforts being invested to advance the understanding of human rights as an indispensable issue among the U.S. foreign policy priorities, little evidence has been found to support the existence of a substantial correlation between aid or intervention and observable improvement of human rights afterward. Indeed, this theoretical gap has caused many academic scholars and policy makers to disagree on what type of leadership role the United States should assume in response to humanitarian crises overseas. Hence, this paper is an attempt to unravel the effects of aid and intervention and examine the validity of three essential hypotheses from different theoretical backgrounds through robust statistical modeling techniques and detailed case studies.

III. Theoretical Hypotheses

Choi and James's assertion of America's heavy priority for human rights is based mostly on liberal international theory. Most

liberals argue that the goal of a typical humanitarian intervention should be to protect the victims of human rights violations, with an underlying purpose to preserve the established international liberal norms and moral values rather than for pursuing narrow national interests (Choi, 2013). Supporters of this theoretical approach emphasize the non-destructive, cooperative and reciprocal aspects of humanitarian interventions, which are supposedly undertaken to enforce the good will of the international community (Ayoob, 2002; Tesón, 2001) as well as to encourage rogue states to develop more acceptable human rights institutions (Goldsmith, 2001). Jones and Tarp, for example, have found in their analysis that more stable flows of aid have a largely positive and moderately significant association with institutional outcomes in human rights protection (2016). The hypothesis, consistent with this liberal point of view, predicts that active usage of U.S. aid and intervention would be a justified and effective tool of foreign policy that deters rogue states with poor human rights records and creates better living conditions and social environment for the victims (Pearson Baumann & Pickering, 1994).

Some scholars, for example the dove minority among liberals, have put forth their criticism that the proactive U.S. involvements, even well intended and prepared, usually generate undesirable and sometimes chaotic political, economic, and social consequences, which in fact threaten the liberties and freedoms of the U.S. and foreign citizens (Humpage, 1997; Coyne & Hall-Blanco, 2016). Furthermore, a neorealist international relations perspective regards countries as unitary actors with given preferences for maximizing their own utility without regard to the welfare of other actors (Neumayer, 2005). From this theoretical foundation, all interventions are defined as coercive interference in the internal affairs of another state, likely involving the use or threat of force and debilitating economic coercion, causing the more serious deterioration of human rights (Donnelly, 1984; Magesan, 2013). Large scale humanitarian interventions and aid, especially pertaining to military and strategic purposes, could contribute to the rise of state repression by enhancing the state's coercive power and encouraging more repressive behavior (Peksen, 2012). For scenarios in which aggressive Great Powers confront with each other and recipient states are uncooperative towards the U.S., realists argue that supplying aid and forcible interventions only weaken regional security and corrode the overall indigenous political structures needed for preserving righteous human rights institutions and national wellbeing

(Goldsmith, 2001). The recent examples of this pattern, including Libya and Syria which are substantially worse than they were before the United States and its NATO allies began to intervene, show the consistent and devastating failures of the U.S. led international humanitarian missions in addressing their key objectives (Carpenter, 2020). According to Valentino (2011), the most problematic side effect of U.S. aiding of defenseless civilians is that it inevitably involves empowering certain local armed factions claiming to represent these victims, groups that are responsible for major and flagrant human rights abuses of their own.

In addition, realists also argue that for reelection-minded members of Congress, armed humanitarian interventions are usually high-risk and low-return compared with other domestic policies (Schultz, 2003). Intervention is a domain where there is little electoral advantage in claiming credit for policy initiatives among constituents, but there is a danger of being blamed if things go badly (Kull, Destler, & Ramsay, 1997). Thus, the desire to avoid the reputational costs for potential failures results in legislators' incentives toward frequent opposition and inaction when genuine support for the continuation of foreign aid and intervention is most needed. Consequently, the execution of human rights missions overseas often suffers failure when the Congress initially supported the causes for which the aid is used to address but could not reach consensus of augmenting the foreign assistance budget later (Dietrich, Hyde & Winters, 2019). The hypothesis that generalizes the concepts of the realists suggests that, without sufficient motivations, strong resolve and domestic support to initiate fundamental changes and actively contribute in the long term, most of the U.S. aid and humanitarian intervention offer only minimal, if not counterproductive, improvement to the recipient or host state's human rights status.

Finally, constructivists recognize human rights as both an emerging element of international laws and, more importantly, an accepted norm in the practice of international relations (Cardenas, 2004; Barkin, 1998). One notable case is that the United States, in the immediate aftermath of the Gulf War, adopted a liberal interpretation of Security Council Resolution 688 to justify the creation of safe havens in northern Iraq. Although both Russia and China had grave misgivings about the legality and morality of the intervention, there was very little outright opposition to the use of force in international society due to the established norm of "humanitarian exception" (Bellamy, 2004). In this sense, the United States, as the leader of the Western democracies, is obliged to support and assist human rights declarations worldwide, but

meanwhile it has to ally with dictatorships and transitional regimes out of strategic foreign policy interests, resulting in a mixture of successes and failures in solving human rights crises in the recent decades (Moravcsik, 2000). Constructivists in general also view the results of foreign interventions to be long and variable, meaning that there is no accurate mapping of interventions to immediate ramifications in domestic liberties or freedoms without analyzing the processes of interaction (Coyne & Hall, 2014). The exact impacts could differ when the United States is hostile, supportive or neutral toward the target government. Its theoretical hypothesis would distinguish different incidents and factors of U.S. aid and intervention by looking at the foreign policy goals, external threats and identities of the two parties (Katzenstein, 1996), and seek to provide a diversified and fluctuant portfolio of the outcomes.

As portrayed in the above sections, the conflicting theoretical stands and the current absence of conclusive research on resolving the true effects of foreign aid and intervention on the states' human rights call for the need of an in-depth exploration into this topic. The outcomes of this research paper should provide valuable insights for policy makers and analysts who seek to estimate the human rights effects of a wide variety of institutional changes and foreign policies including economic and military aid, humanitarian intervention, structural adjustment and democratization.

IV. Empirical Strategy

In order to systematically investigate the effects of U.S. foreign aid and intervention on the status of human rights in the recipient or host states, my research first takes a large N statistical approach to the question. The two main quantitative sources employed are the U.S. Military Aid and Recipient State Cooperation (USMARSC) data set collected by Sullivan, Tessman and Li in 2011 and the CIRI Human Rights data (Cingranelli & Richards, 2014). In addition, the Quality of Government (QOG) Institute and International Country Risk Guide (ICRG) provide state level data related to control variables in the analysis.

In 2006, Dr. Sullivan and her team took an insightful look at the impacts of U.S. military aid on the recipient state behavior toward the United States, accounting for the effects from economic aid and military interventions as control variables. Their finding points out the counterintuitive outcomes that military aid significantly reduces recipient states' cooperative foreign policy behavior towards the United States. Their publicly accessible data

set consists of the annual observations of 184 unique country dyads formed by the United States and a foreign state between 1990 and 2005, a period which largely coincides with the post-Cold War era and early years of the War on Terror. Accounting for missing values of certain dyads and unspecified recipient states in some years, there are 2586 dyad-year observations available in the panel data set, thus giving a detailed record of U.S. aid and interventions in these 15 years.

Sponsored by the National Science Foundation, Cingranelli and Richards created their CIRI Human Rights Dataset containing standards-based quantitative information on government respect for 15 internationally recognized human rights in more than 200 countries, annually from 1981 to 2011. It includes evaluations of government practices with respect to a wide range of human rights issues, such as physical integrity, civil liberties and women's suffrage.

Cingranelli and Richards documented 2,569 EMP indexes for 171 countries across a 17-year period. The unit of analysis that results from the combination of these two data sets is one dyad-year case. The basic structure of the dyad, a two-actor interaction, is often regarded as a useful simplification for multiple key questions in the field of conflict and foreign policy research (Diehl & Wright, 2016). The response variable draws from the latest version of the Empowerment Rights Index from the CIRI data set. This is an additive index constructed from the foreign movement, domestic movement, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly & association, workers' rights, electoral self-determination, and freedom of religion indicators. It ranges from 0 (no government respect for these seven rights) to 14 (full government respect for these seven rights).

The independent variables are designed to portray different aspects of U.S. foreign aid and intervention. In terms of the foreign aid, there are both amounts of U.S. economic and military aid offered to a state in a given year measured by constant 2006 U.S. dollars from the USMARSC data set. The magnitude of a direct intervention is assessed by the number of American troops stationed in the country at the given time. Due to the highly right skewed distribution of the above variables, the subsequent multiple regression models use data after natural logarithm transformation to better reveal the potential statistical relationships between them.

Control variables are a significant component of the model to account for extra variations in the responses. The concept of the constructivists envisions a complex and entangling structure

Country	year	EMPindex	logmilitaryaid	logeconomicaid	logtrps	CINC_score	allies	demsrc	loggdps2000	corruption	religion	external	internal	sep11
Turkey	1990	5	6.574378	3.0919425	8.385489	0.012260	1	1	11.85084	2.000000	3.000000	8.250000	5.916667	0
Turkey	1991	8	6.886123	5.8452821	8.755107	0.013555	1	1	11.86006	2.416667	3.000000	8.750000	6.166667	0
Turkey	1992	6	6.516785	1.0647107	8.481566	0.013493	1	1	11.91818	4.000000	3.750000	10.000000	7.666667	0
Turkey	1993	7	6.461624	5.5759492	8.306472	0.014117	1	0	11.99554	4.000000	3.666667	10.333333	8.166667	0
Turkey	1994	7	6.274574	0.4700036	8.313362	0.015339	1	0	11.93944	4.000000	4.000000	10.833333	7.500000	0
Turkey	1995	8	6.120956	5.3490105	8.043021	0.015432	1	0	12.00887	3.666667	4.000000	9.500000	7.250000	0
Turkey	1996	9	6.282080	3.7704594	7.980386	0.016223	1	0	12.07658	2.000000	3.583333	9.083333	7.416667	0
Turkey	1997	8	5.374352	3.3843904	7.960324	0.016808	1	0	12.14918	2.000000	3.000000	9.583333	7.000000	0
Turkey	1998	7	2.066863	2.6246686	7.831617	0.017053	1	0	12.17963	2.000000	3.000000	8.250000	4.250000	0
Turkey	1999	6	2.965273	2.0918641	7.746301	0.017169	1	0	12.13139	2.000000	3.916667	9.250000	4.250000	0
Turkey	2000	5	1.667707	1.0647107	7.804396	0.015605	1	0	12.20240	2.583333	4.000000	9.500000	7.666667	0
Turkey	2001	5	1.131402	1.7917595	7.675082	0.014609	1	0	12.12451	2.833333	4.000000	8.541667	8.375000	0

Table 1. Example Data set of U.S. aid and deployment in Turkey

regarding the outcomes of foreign aid and intervention based on states' identities and foreign policy goals. As a result, I incorporated several country level factors that summarize the recipient state's political and socioeconomic status. The level of democracy, the most salient characteristic of a regime's identity, is measured by QOG's democratic index and included in the model as most existing studies posit and identify a linear and negative relationship between democracy and the violation of human rights (Davenport & Armstrong, 2004). To describe the country's economic power, I used the value of GDP per capita measured in constant USD in 2000 to represent the productivity of the state on an individual scale. The Composite Index of National Capability, denoted as CINC score, is a measurement of the national strength created by J. David Singer for the Correlates of War project, which is employed for being more fitted to the perception of the overall state power beyond GDP (Singer, 1980). The score is derived from an average of percentages from six components, which are the country's total population, urban population, iron and steel production, primary energy consumption, military expenditure, and military personnel (Rauch, 2017). Lastly, in order to represent the state's foreign policy orientation, I placed the relationship with the U.S, which is indicated by the existence of any formal alliance treaty recorded by USMARSC, into the model. These variables are designed to better explain the targeted government's actions on coping with its domestic human rights issues. Therefore, it is necessary to include these variables in order to build a comprehensive multivariate model.

The final dyadic data set incorporates 15 variables from USMARSC, CIRC, QOG and ICRG. An example data set for Turkey is shown in Table 1. After accounting for missing entries, there are up to 1,804 cases ranging from 1990 to 2006. Most variables are quantified into numeric variables, while *allies*, *demsrc* and *sep11* are categorical variables with 2 levels.

V. Modeling Empowerment Rights Index

Multiple linear regression models have long been applied in quantitative Political Science and International Relations research to summarize how the mean of the outcome changes with the values defined by a linear function of explanatory variables (King, 1986; Box-Steffensmeier & Jones, 1997). Ideally, the goal of this research is to build a model that is able to estimate the changes of a state's future human rights situations based on current levels of U.S. aid and intervention. Therefore, the regression-based statistical method is an appropriate tool for analyzing the variables of interest, which are mostly measured in numeric forms, in this study.

Since the humanitarian outcomes of distributing aid and conducting interventions are usually revealed a certain period after they are executed, it is important to take the span of time into consideration when constructing the model. In order to comprehensively analyze the motivation, execution, and long-term impacts of any U.S. actions, I joined Sullivan's data and the EMP index of recipient states at different time points from CIRI data set. Specifically, for a particular dyad's foreign aid or humanitarian intervention, I matched the levels of aid or intervention with the state's EMP index ranging from zero to seven years after the action. At each time point after the U.S. action, I calculated the difference of the EMP indexes between that of the current year and the year when aid or intervention happened to reflect the changes in the state's human rights conditions. For instance, one of the dyads in the data set documents 86.5 million USD economic aid to Haiti in 1990. To observe its impacts on Haiti's human rights in 1997, I will use the difference of the EMP index between 1990 and 1997 as the response variable, defined as

$$\Delta EMP = EMP_T - EMP_{T-X}$$

Therefore, a typical multiple regression model used in the study is:

$$\Delta EMP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \log(\text{militaryaid}) + \beta_2 \log(\text{economicaid}) + \beta_3 \log(\text{troops}) + \beta_4 \log(\text{GDP2000}) + \beta_5 \text{CINC-score} + \beta_6 \text{allies} + \beta_7 \text{democracy}$$

The exact response variable varies when different approaches are considered for the model. In the subsequent section, I first present four time points which are one, three, five and seven years after the aid or intervention. The changes of EMP index focus on revealing how aid and intervention affect the level of improvement or deterioration of human rights. Afterwards, my analysis looks into the lagged EMP index, rather than year-to-year

difference, defined as $EMP_{\text{Year } Y}$ where Year Y is the number of years after the operations. By modeling the EMP index in zero, three and five years following the occurrence of the actions, I expect to analyze what human rights conditions would be like after interactions with the U.S. The corresponding multiple regression model structure is:

$$EMP \text{ index}_{\text{Year } X} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \log(\text{militaryaid}) + \beta_2 \log(\text{economicaid}) + \beta_3 \log(\text{troops}) + \beta_4 \log(\text{GDP2000}) + \beta_5 \text{CINC-score} + \beta_6 \text{allies} + \beta_7 \text{democracy}$$

Notice that for consistency, the corresponding control variables in these models are always selected at the time when the analyzed U.S. aid and intervention took place since we are mostly interested in their long-term lag effects on human rights, controlling for other conditions.

VI. Analytical Results.

Exploratory data analysis (EDA) is a commonly used procedure in previewing the breadth and complexity of models for subsequent statistical hypothesis testing (Behrens et al., 2012). In this study, it provides an overall picture of the distributions of response variables of interests as well as key explanatory variables. First of all, the average EMP index of all states that the U.S. has offered aid or intervened exhibits a deteriorating direction of recipient states' human rights conditions over time as shown in Figure 1. This preliminary trend supports the neorealist hypothesis of a likely counterproductive result of U.S. aid and humanitarian interventions.

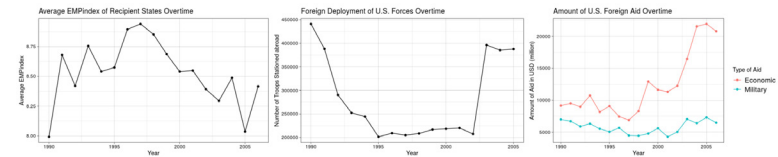


Figure 1. Distributions of the Main Variables of Interests across the time span of this study. Average EMP index maintained between 8 and 9, with consistent drop since 1999. Both aid and deployment of forces rapidly increased after 9/11.

As for explanatory variables, the foreign deployment of U.S. forces for humanitarian interventions shows a sharper decline immediately after the end of the Cold War. This phenomenon,

when put into a greater historical context, is consistent with the transforming power dynamics in the 1990s. For example, the major post-Cold War drawdown of U.S. troops in Europe occurred soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when hundreds of thousands of American soldiers were brought home from Germany and Asia (Kane, 2004). The total number of foreign deployments hit its lowest point in 1995, and remained a stable trend at this relatively inactive level until 2002, the year right after the tragic event of September 11 attacks and Bush's declaration of War on Terror. Scholars have attributed the drastically increasing presence of American troops around the globe in numerous countries for the past two decades to a variety of reasons, including fulfilling the needs of multilateral military operations during the War on Terror, supporting humanitarian missions, and securing America's geopolitical interests in strategically important regions (Dalby, 2003). Moreover, more recently developed linear and nonlinear forecast models of troop levels agree that total deployed U.S. troops will return to a downward trend before the mid-century (Kane, 2016).

The amounts of U.S. foreign aid, on the other hand, have shown a different trendline from the end of the Cold War to the early 21st century. The pattern of the steady and sizable increase of

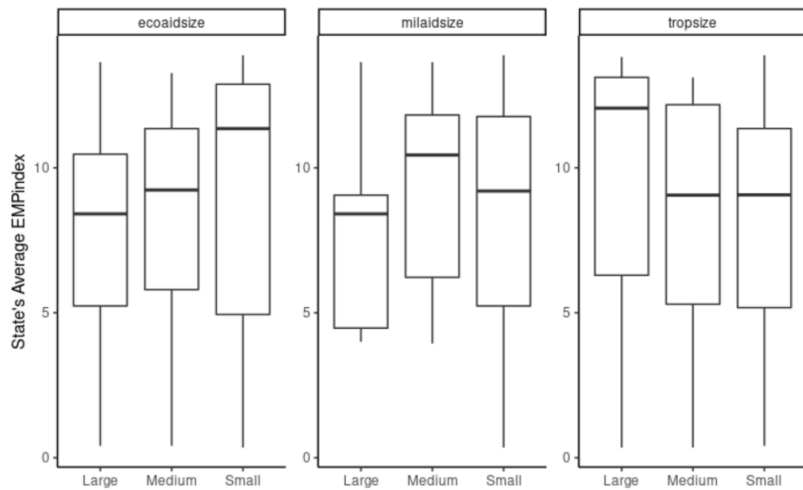


Figure 2. EMP index at Different Levels of Aid and Intervention. Notice that this EDA has not taken control variables into account.

economic aid per country that began in the mid 1990s and ultimately peaked in 2005 has been referred to as the “War on Terror's effect” on the aid budget by Fleck and Kilby (2010).

Shortly after the series of terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, President Bush's administration sent Congress an antiterrorism bill that lifted many restrictions on aid and resources transfers to foreign governments in cases where such assistance could “help fight terrorism” (Sullivan et al., 2011). Fleck and Kilby's empirical research on the political economy of the U.S. aid allocation agrees on the trend exhibited in my graph, and they further contributed the soaring aid levels to the substantial development funds for the reconstructions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other important allies (notably Pakistan and Jordan) during this period. In contrast, military aid has been a more conservative and constrained area. Sullivan argues that the U.S. tends to use military assistance more as a leverage to compel recipient state's cooperation. Despite more military operations taking place after 9/11, foreign policy analysts have found that military aid may not be effective at eliminating or disarming terrorist groups, thus raising concerns of mounting new arms transfer agreements (Bapat, 2011).

The next phase of my EDA process divides all recipient or host states in the data set by the levels of three major predictors (size of economic aid, military aid and the number of troops stationed) and computes in each category the average EMP index

	Dependent variable:			
	1 year EMPindex difference (1)	3 year EMPindex difference (2)	5 year EMPindex difference (3)	7 year EMPindex difference (4)
logmilitaryaid	0.010 (0.030)	-0.009 (0.036)	-0.042 (0.040)	-0.055 (0.044)
logeconomicaid	-0.001 (0.023)	-0.001 (0.027)	0.017 (0.030)	-0.009 (0.033)
logtrps	0.031 (0.021)	0.043* (0.026)	0.072** (0.028)	0.101*** (0.031)
loggdp2000	-0.038 (0.029)	-0.044 (0.035)	-0.051 (0.039)	-0.050 (0.042)
CINC_score	1.273 (3.232)	1.938 (4.001)	1.843 (4.418)	0.123 (4.824)
allies	-0.009 (0.097)	0.064 (0.117)	0.022 (0.129)	-0.073 (0.142)
demsrc	-0.041 (0.099)	-0.048 (0.119)	-0.018 (0.132)	-0.175 (0.144)
Constant	0.304 (0.254)	0.240 (0.305)	0.146 (0.336)	0.0004 (0.367)
Observations	1,680	1,678	1,681	1,683
R2	0.002	0.003	0.005	0.008
Adjusted R2	-0.002	-0.002	0.001	0.004

Table 2. The Multiple Regression Output of EMP Change Model

of states at the time when aid giving or intervention took place. The plots in Figure 2 below show that states that were given large annual economic or military aid, which is defined as having a total

Dependent variable:			
	EMPindex in Current Year (1)	EMPindex 3 Years Later (2)	EMPindex 5 Years Later (3)
logmilitaryaid	-0.283*** (0.061)	-0.265*** (0.061)	-0.285*** (0.060)
logeconomicaid	0.223*** (0.045)	0.194*** (0.044)	0.175*** (0.044)
logtrps	0.005 (0.042)	0.060 (0.042)	0.063 (0.041)
loggdp2000	-0.242*** (0.058)	-0.328*** (0.057)	-0.348*** (0.055)
CINC_score	-26.648*** (6.398)	-20.722*** (6.405)	-19.120*** (6.367)
allies	3.768*** (0.195)	3.794*** (0.195)	3.827*** (0.192)
demsrc	4.551*** (0.199)	4.462*** (0.200)	4.463*** (0.199)
Constant	8.488*** (0.502)	9.200*** (0.488)	9.369*** (0.473)
Observations	1,701	1,748	1,780
R2	0.465	0.453	0.452
Adjusted R2	0.463	0.451	0.450

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3. The Multiple Regression Output of Future EMP Model

amount exceeding one billion USD over 15 years, tend to have worse human rights conditions than those what were given smaller allocations of aid, while larger deployment of the U.S. troops (over 1000 personals) usually happens in states with more promising human rights conditions.

With a basic understanding of the underlying patterns of variables, my study proceeds to the construction of the first set of multiple regression models. As presented in Table 2, this is a model with the difference in EMP indexes as the response and eight explanatory variables. The results of the models fitting differences in one, three, five and seven years are shown below.

According to the output of this series of models, it could be observed that none of the variables appears to be significant when predicting the change of EMP index one year after the actions. However, as we move on to three years later, the size of stationed troops becomes statistically significant to the response at the 5% threshold, and its significance shows gradual increments as the

time span is adjusted to five and seven years later, while military and economic aid stays insignificant. Considering the positive coefficients of this variable, the models indicate a long-term effect of the presence of American troops to the improvement of human rights in the local regions. A quantitative interpretation of the coefficient states that every doubling of the troop deployment size is associated with an around 0.1 increase in the positive change of the EMP index of the host state over a seven-year period.

Admittedly, the substantive significance of troops, although positive, is not as strong as its statistical significance. Nevertheless, the implication is that, since a big factor change is more easily achieved with small numbers, deployment at the early stage has a particularly strong effect on the improvement of human rights, suggesting that immediate humanitarian interventions could exert observable impacts on the crisis. As the existing size of personnel gets larger, the marginal benefit of deploying more troops into the area quickly dissipates.

After establishing a statistically significant relation between the magnitude of intervention and changes in human rights conditions, I furthered this analysis to explore the potential links between aid and recipient states' EMP index. In the next part of the model construction, I use the present and future EMP indexes as direct responses rather than differences between them.

Under new response variables, the multiple regression models, shown in Table 3, confirm the role of current human rights practices in the allocation of U.S. aid. The amount of aid given could also be an important determinant of how the country's human rights situation is going to turn out in three or five years afterwards. Specifically, every 100% increase in economic aid from the United States is associated with a 0.194 rise of the recipient state's EMP index in three years, after accounting for other factors. What appears to be surprising is the reverse relationship between the amount of military assistance and future EMP index. For example, when holding other variables constant, every 100% increase in military aid is associated with a 0.285 drop of the recipient state's EMP index in five years, as opposed to the liberal hypothesis which predicts a beneficial effect of the continuing and more active U.S. military assistance to the recipient states.

Researchers analyzing aid allocation have given their field observations as the potential explanation for this discrepancy between types of aid. Dube and Naidu's study of U.S. military aid and political violence in Colombia (2015) yielded a similar finding: the increase of military assistance leads to differential increases in paramilitary attacks and homicides. They remark that foreign

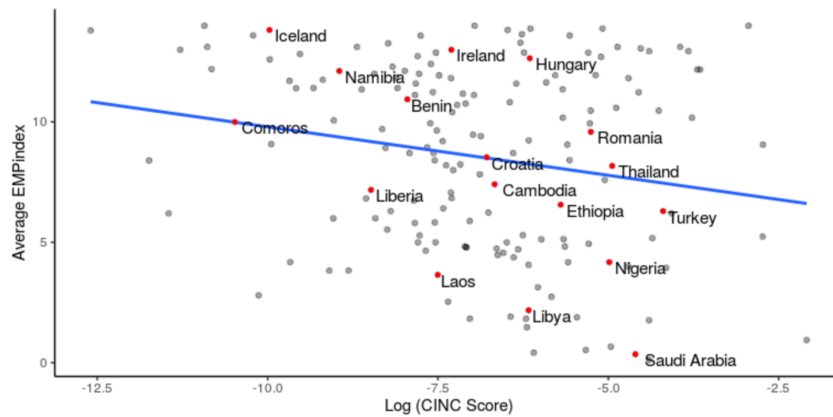


Figure 3. Average EMP index of Recipient States from 1991 to 2006 versus Log CINC Scores: CINC scores are indicators of a country's overall national powers. Though a log transformed version, a higher value still means stronger strength.

military assistance may strengthen armed non-state actors and instigate civil conflicts, undermining domestic political institutions. Economic aid, on the other hand, exhibits a more persistently positive influence on long-term national growth and could serve as a useful instrument in the promotion of international human rights standards (Cunliffe, 1989).

These claims in particular are where the decade-long controversy between the contemporary liberal hawks and doves resides, with the former justifying military humanism in the name of protecting freedom, human rights and democracy, even when it is often pursued unilaterally by a self-appointed imperialist power (Ahn, 1998; Bartholomew & Breakspear, 2004). The doves, as a product of the post-Cold War peace, focus on more constructive, economic, and mutually-beneficial negotiations to resolve international conflict and have opposed the increasingly militant role of the U.S. in the Gulf War, NATO intervention of Kosovo and full invasion of Taliban-held Afghanistan (Starr, 2007). While this research's findings also align with the positive effects of the peaceful aid approach promoted by doves and growing volumes of literature in international relations, doves remain as the minority in the development of liberal humanitarianism and internationalism.

It is worth pointing out that the regression models presented in Table 3, although bearing strong statistical

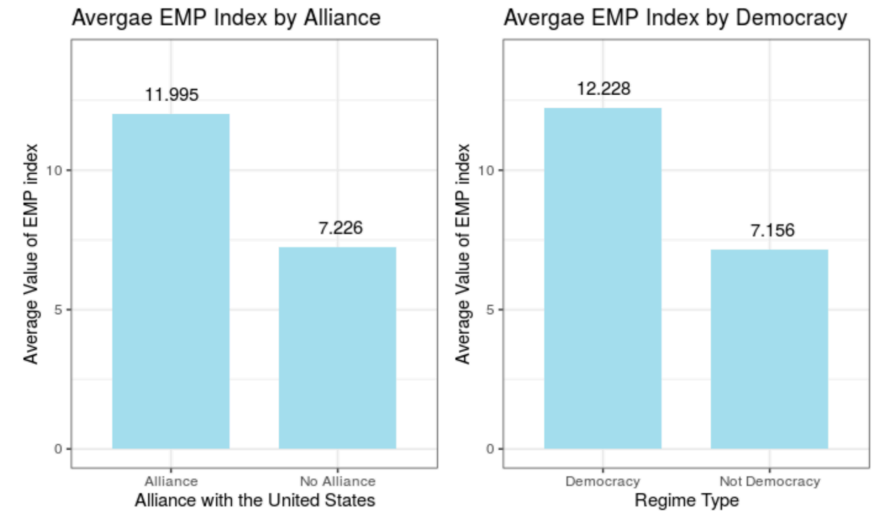


Figure 4. Average EMP index of Recipient States vs Foreign Policy Orientation

significance for aid-related variables, do not provide enough evidence for a robust causal relationship between aid and EMP index. In other words, aid is not necessarily a direct cause of a good or bad EMP index in the coming years. It is again important to be aware of how human rights initially play a role in the decision making process of aid allocation, especially at the gatekeeping stage: nations with poor and unstable human rights records often were excluded (Cingranelli & Pasquarello, 1985; Omelicheva, 2017), as clearly stated in the Foreign Assistance Act in 1974: “No security assistance may be provided to any country the government of which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.” For the approved countries with relatively better or praised human rights practices and political stabilities, it is natural for them to remain at good levels of human rights afterwards regardless of how much U.S. aid has been offered. Therefore, we should remain cautious with the quantitative evidence and carefully interpret the correlation between significant variables.

Moreover, the control variables also provide us with some valuable insights as to how other factors can be associated with human rights conditions. A state's socioeconomic powers, as measured by its annual GDP in constant 2000 USD and the CINC score after natural logarithm transformation, show a negative correlation with the average EMP index in Figure 3. A higher level

of economic prosperity and national strength, accounting for the effects of other variables, are in fact detrimental to states' future human rights conditions. Consistent with neorealist concepts outlined in previous sections (Peksen, 2012), growing powers are likely to encourage states to conduct coercive actions against human rights, contributing to the descending EMP index.

Last but not the least, more aspects of constructivist ideology are also proven to be very significant indicators of human rights in this model. The national role conception stipulates that the identity, political orientation and existing interactions with others motivate state actors to act in conformity with their respective norms (Holsti, 1970). As demonstrated in Figure 4, both alliance and democracy are positively correlated with higher EMP index, confirming the constructivist hypothesis: states that ally with the United States and agree with the established Western democratic norms have both strategic and moral interests to invest in the promotion and protection of human rights. To verify and extend the applicability of these findings, I then focus on employing qualitative methodologies to examine human rights developments of two post-conflicts states, Afghanistan and Syria, both of which are notable receivers of substantial U.S. aid and military presence.

VII. Qualitative Case Studies

A. Case 1: Afghanistan (2001-2009)

As illustrated in Figure 1, the September 11 attacks marked one of the most critical watersheds in the history of U.S. foreign policy. With broad bipartisan agreement on the moral and geopolitical significance of aid and interventions overseas, the levels of aid and interventions expanded sharply in comparison with the post-Cold War decade (McBride, 2018). The case of Afghanistan, as a country which observed a steady rise of U.S. troop presence and aid, both economically and militarily, immediately after 9/11, represents the American foreign influences on post-war, developing ally states in the early 21st century.

After the toppling of the Taliban regime at the end of 2001 and the establishment of diplomatic cooperation between the UN and major local factions (Chesterman, 2002), the country experienced the decade-long rule of the internationally backed interim government of Hamid Karzai. Evoking the post-World War II Marshall Plan, the Bush administration began its ambitious endeavor in the efforts to facilitate the reconstruction of Afghanistan in 2002. The U.S. Congress appropriated over \$38

billion in economic, humanitarian and infrastructure assistance to Afghanistan over the decade after 9/11 (Hooker & Collins, 2015). Meanwhile, in response to terrorism and insurgency, the military presence, led by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), increased to a staggering degree. Figure 5 also shows that the Afghan government received rising foreign military aid in training and equipping the national army and police

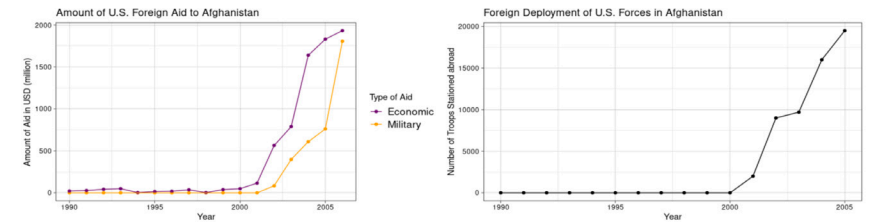


Figure 5. U.S. aid and troops deployment to Afghanistan from 1996 to 2006: Both saw dramatic rises in the years immediately after 9/11 with generally more allocation of economic aid.

According to the empirical results of analysis in Section VI, Table 2, such rapid increase of initial U.S. military presence in the region would usually be linked to improvements of human rights in following years. Economic and military aid are associated with positive and negative subsequent human rights conditions respectively, though, as the models in Table 2 suggest, the negative effect of more military aid allocation overshadows that of economic aid. For Afghanistan, however, the influx of foreign economic aid continuously exceeded the growing amount of military aid in face of security challenges. Therefore, it is worth exploring how empirical results could apply to the complexity of post-9/11 Afghanistan.

Human Rights Protection on Institutional Basis

The Afghan governance framework during this period could generally be described in terms of pluralism, where different normative systems such as tribal customs, shari'a (Islamic law), constitutional laws and principles deriving from existing international standards of human rights coexisted (De Lauri, 2013). On January 25, 2004, as a positive step towards legitimacy and democracy, a new 162-article Constitution of Afghanistan was ratified and signed into law by Karzai. The new constitution included a variety of commitments to internationally recognized

human rights and institutional mechanisms to ensure their protection (Rubin, 2004). Economic aid played an indispensable role in this process of promulgating regime stability and government laws as nearly 90% of Afghanistan's 2005 budget was externally funded, reflecting the war-torn country's institutional dependence on international donors (Ghufran, 2006).

In contrast to economic aid that mainly encouraged community-based structures and initiatives for peace, anti-poverty and national growth, the U.S. military assistance and direct counter-insurgency operations sparked more controversy in their real contributions to the UN peacebuilding task (Suhrke, 2012). In spite of strong foreign resources and military presence, the long fragmentation of Afghanistan authority was unable to guarantee sustainable peace and security of citizens across its territory (Rubin, 2006). The increase in budgets maintaining the deployment of U.S. troops and a sizable Afghan Security Force was not only poorly supervised and plagued by bureaucratic corruption and profitable private businesses, but also proved to be instigative and ineffective against the Taliban resurgence, with mounting attacks, civilian casualties and army's attrition (Chaudhuri & Farrell, 2011; Livingston & O'Hanlon 2012). The weakness of the security apparatus had thus inflicted serious threats to maintaining functional human rights institutions and protecting basic human security of civilians in the region.

Human Rights in the Clash

With continuing economic and military support, there had been some active progress in enhancing human rights by both government ministries and non-state actors, for example the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) that played an instrumental role in building provincial reconstruction teams (Sajjad, 2009). Unfortunately, though there appeared to be strong *de jure* support for human rights by state laws, the concerns by critics were that vague and conflicting provisions in the western-style constitution along with their interpretations and executions limited the *de facto* realization of such rights (Sadat, 2004; Houlihan & Spencer, 2017). When conflicts arose from tribal and Islamic traditions, especially religious and women's rights, both economic aid and foreign troops stationed were powerless in helping local Afghans in need to properly assert and secure human rights.

With a clear commitment to respecting a wide range of civil, political, economic and social rights and prohibiting forced labor, torture, and other inhumane punishments, the Afghan

constitution deliberately underestimated the necessity of religion freedom for the Hindu, Sikh and other minorities (Sadat, 2004). While most Afghans belong to either the Sunni or Shi'a Muslims, the constitution does not guarantee non-Muslim citizens the right to dissent with Islamic beliefs or interpretations, nor does it have any explicit declaration of equality between religions, resulting in dominance of shari'a over state laws in guiding local policies and judicial decisions. Despite enormous economic and military resources invested to reinforce the rule of law and basic human rights from judicial reform, most citizens, spread across 34 provinces, have been relying on the judgements of trusted elders and religious leaders, or even the Taliban in remote regions, in forming biased and harsh community-based resolutions (Singh, 2019). The discrimination was exacerbated by religious extremists and warring factions in rural areas where economic influences and military powers projected by the U.S. were further weakened.

Given wide international attention and assistance, the condition of Afghan women in the post-Taliban era had undoubtedly been improved. The Afghan Women and Children Relief Act of 2001 was a major development emphasizing the human rights of Afghan women and girls. The efforts of a coalition of U.S. women's groups led by the Feminist Majority resulted in the allocation of \$60 million for programs for Afghan women and girls and \$5 million for AIHRC in 2003 (Samar, 2019). Within the administration, women also started to voluntarily vote, contest parliamentary elections and win seats (Ghufran, 2006), raising hopes to strengthen the property rights and reduce the marginalization of women and young girls.

However, with little success in reconciling the Islamic law with modern international women's rights standards, the reality of most Afghan women throughout the first decade after the Taliban regime was still struggling, urgently calling for more equal access to education and career opportunity, gender parity, and upward mobility (Cole, 2003; Shah, 2005). With the absence of public service and security, females were in fact largely excluded from the social benefits of international economic aid and instead suffered from high maternal mortality rates, poor and inaccessible health care, and lack of financial independence (Alvi, 2012). The efforts for promoting justice and gender equality could even incur more tragedies, as women who helped consolidate and expand aid programs were subject to more threats, intimidations and violence by discriminatory gangs, criminals and extremists (Chishti, 2011).

Lessons from Afghanistan

While the neoconservatives and liberal hawks appraised the success of the U.S. in ousting the Taliban from power in 2001 (Casla, 2018), the case of post-9/11 Afghanistan illustrates the failure of abundant international aid and decade-long military deployment to foster a market-centered, self-sufficient democracy. Although arguably there had been significant improvement of human rights for many Afghan citizens after Taliban's rule, the basic human rights of the vulnerable groups, for instance religious minorities and females, were still challenged and often violated due to deteriorating social stability, staggering socioeconomic disparity, limited enforcement of state laws and dominance of Islamic doctrines in most aspects of life.

As Bizhan points out, the War on Terror led by the U.S. focused on short-term objectives and delivering quick results, especially on winning the hearts and minds domestically and abroad (2018). Therefore, it is easy to overlook how the aid distribution and outcomes were deeply entangled in counter terrorism and peacebuilding politics. Without a peaceful, collaborative and equal environment, foreign resources and troops could not exert desirable influences on the recipient states, particularly post-conflict and multireligious nations.

This case study adds more valuable insights to the dynamics of aid, interventions and human rights by revealing that when both economic and military aid increase rapidly and substantially, negative impacts that often resulted from corruption, social and economic disparity, and incompatibility between western ideologies and local customs could counteract any positive progress made to recognize and protect human rights. Military presence, with the lack of local cooperation and support, would also be quickly exhausted from insurgency and demonstrate diminished impacts on human rights betterment than empirical predictions.

B. Case 2: Syria (2010-2019)

Although the U.S. Congress mandates that foreign aid should be used in a manner that distances the U.S. from regimes which consistently violate the human rights of their populations, evidence has shown that aid helps the survival of autocrats more than democrats (Regan, 1995; Yuichi & Montinola, 2009). As a non-aligned country whose human rights has been considered egregiously poor among many international observers (Human Rights Watch, 2016), the Syrian Arab Republic under Bashar al-Assad's regime is one of the most recent and developing examples in evaluating the impacts of U.S. aid and intervention strategies.

To some extent, it resembles some similarities to Afghanistan as a protracted, internationalized conflict fought between multiple armed parties, including government and rebel militants backed by different states, and transnational actors. However, with Russia's open involvement in supporting the incumbent government and multilateral consensus on combating the Islamic State (ISIS), the case of Syria symbolizes considerable Western efforts to employ soft interventions, namely more humanitarian assistance, limited military operations, and material and political support, in order to establish a "good" brand of rebel governance in the Middle East (Carnegie et al., 2021).

In as early as 2013, the UN described Syria as "the worst humanitarian disaster since the end of the cold war" (LaFranchi, 2013). For a country of approximately 22 million people, the bloody and prolonged civil war has resulted in over 200,000 casualties, 7.6 million internally displaced persons and an additional 3.2 million refugees internationally (Berti, 2015; Price et al., 2015). As tension and violence intensified, the Obama Administration began to expand sanctions against the regime and its supporters, while providing both non-lethal material supplies and intelligence to the Syrian opposition (Sharp & Blanchard, 2012). Today, the United States claims to be by far the largest donor of humanitarian assistance to the Syrian crisis. Since FY2012, it has allocated nearly \$5.6 billion to meet humanitarian needs using existing resources from global humanitarian accounts and some reprogrammed funding (USAID, 2016). These programs, often described as civilian stabilization or local governance, mostly took place in opposition-held areas as a major component of broader American efforts to advance its policy objectives in Syria.

Interestingly, there has always appeared to be little U.S. public support for the escalation of war or to sustain a large-scale military intervention in Syria (Dixon, 2019). Even after the controversial chemical weapons attack that killed over 1,400 people in Damascus on August 21, 2013, the U.S. had refrained from external military interference (Glanville, 2014). While the coalition forces have been launching missiles and airstrikes against both terrorist networks and Syrian government forces since 2014, the U.S. has kept only a limited number of contingency troops on the ground consisting mostly of special operation forces (Humud et al., 2016).

In summary, Syria serves as a distinct case in this project for its unique mechanism: the U.S. troops not only were scarce in number, but also garrisoned for mostly training and rescue missions. Foreign aid concentrated heavily on non-state actors,

such as various rebel factions and the U.S. backed Kurdish forces. Theoretically, previous regression models predict that with the lack of democracy and dwindled military presence, economic aid alone is unlikely to enhance human rights protection in the entire region. Nevertheless, it is worth examining whether international awareness and emphasis on the humanitarian crisis and the U.S. support of the rebel governance rather than a hostile regime could alter the outcomes of the decade-long operations.

Human Rights Dilemma of Soft Intervention

Ever since protests and armed confrontations initially erupted, many health-care workers and professionals in Syria have been deliberately targeted and became frequently victimized or exiled, leading to the rapid collapse of the country's public health system (Fouad et al., 2017). The declining economic and agricultural activities, harsh winter, and sieges around large civilian areas also caused nationwide famine and malnutrition (Taleb et al., 2015). All these conditions pointed to the immediate need to restore people's rights to life, health and personal security. On the positive side, the quick establishment of humanitarian safe zones amid the flood of refugees mitigated the crisis, where America, Europe and neighboring countries of Syria collaborated on supplying and distributing aid directly to the displaced people in the border regions (Akbarzade & Mackey, 2018). A study by Carnegie et al. (2016) demonstrates that with steady supplies, aid significantly boosted citizens' perceptions of the local governing body supported by the U.S.

Unfortunately, aid traffic in conflict zones was challenging due to the complex situation of Syria. Despite billions of assistance funding being appropriated by the U.S, the majority of resources had been limited to relatively stabilized areas and parts of remote provinces directly across the border from the refugee-hosting countries (Grisgraber & Reynolds, 2015). According to the U.S. congressional report in 2016, an estimated 5.5 million Syrian people in besieged and hard-to-reach areas were blocked from lifesaving aid delivery due to regional violence and insecurity, government and opposition interference, the closure of key border points, bureaucratic procedures, and resource shortfalls (Humud et al., 2016). Besides official efforts, independent humanitarian organizations were also difficult to operate, even in the country's most populated city of Aleppo, which was repeatedly overrun by militants. As a result, the basic health and safety of millions of Syria's homeless or forcibly displaced citizens were still in jeopardy.

In addition to the lack of access to food, shelters, and health care services, both the U.S. and the UN Human Rights Council have admitted that during the Syria conflict, systematic and forceful violations of international humanitarian law (IHL), particularly war crimes, have been widespread among all parties (Sharp & Blanchard, 2012; McCormack, 2016). Little progress were made to prevent, stop or deter the indiscriminate attacks, mass executions, sexual violence, torture, and detention of civilians (Nebehay, 2018). The usage of incendiary, toxic and chemical weapons that are widely prohibited or condemned by IHL, as well as brutal and lasting siege warfare, further exacerbated the deterioration of human rights of the civilian population (Van, 2016). These increasing reports of crimes against humanity not only delegitimized all warring factions involved, but also cast doubt on the capability of U.S. military presence and assistance.

Humanitarian Response amid Strategic games

Since 2015, the insecure and impoverished living conditions of most Syrians and the involvement of foreign and regional powers, including Russia, Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, triggered new debate over whether soft intervention could effectively protect human rights and American interests in Syria (Khouri, 2018). With the preceding failures in achieving desirable human rights improvements in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, there was a high risk that active or aggressive attempts would drag the U.S. into a more extensive and futile involvement later (Borghard, 2013). Cautionary aid programs, on the other hand, were unable to tip the scales to the rebel governance's advantage against government forces. In the later stage of the conflict, neither authorizing the CIA to train moderate rebels nor increasing food and medical aid provided promising solutions to the worsening humanitarian crisis (Hamid, 2015).

As situations evolved, the main opposing alliances forming from substantial Western and Russian commitments added new complexities and difficulties to humanitarian missions in Syria (Heydemann, 2020). Rebel belligerents, for instance the loosely structured Northern Alliances cooperating with the U.S, were highly factionalized and divided across multiple fronts and fighting groups (Hashemi & Sahrapeyma, 2018). The prospect of military aid and intervention could lead the competing rebels to escalate violence and provoke atrocity, threatening the safety of civilian population and wearing out efforts against transnational terrorism (Ekşi, 2017).

The Great Power politics in Syria negatively affected human rights relief in more aspects. While the U.S. strategies had to be more restricted due to concerns of infringing on Syria's sovereignty and fueling diplomatic tensions, independent human rights NGOs also saw more obstacles and potential risks without sufficient institutional assistance (Elkahlout & Elgibali, 2020). The access, support and feedback for humanitarian NGOs were tampered with by long approval processes (Hemsle, 2019). Reduced aid delivery due to donors' disappointment with current political transition, main supply routes being cut off by conflicts, and deadly attacks on the medical facilities and personnel were common in government-controlled and opposition-held areas (Zarocostas, 2016). According to the World Bank, the delayed reconstruction and resource shortage caused all prices and unemployment to increase strikingly near warzones while poverty rates more than doubled, reflecting the deepened mismatch between the U.S. aid and millions of fragile Syrians in desperate need of humanitarian assistance.

Lessons from Syria

The U.S. strategies taken in the first few years of the Syrian war aimed to enable better local governance and regional allies to take root in the transitional period immediately after the envisioned departure of President Bashar al-Assad's regime (Brown, 2018). Under this liberal objective, sporadic military engagement and generous aid distributions were capable of winning early appreciation for the U.S. backed opposition forces and helped facilitate local stability in certain parts of the country. The deep struggle and antagonistic relations between the Sunni majority and the Alawite minority (Tan & Perudin, 2019), however, were not actively dealt with and continued to instigate serious human rights abuses by state and non-state perpetrators.

When the initial goal essentially turned out to be impracticable after Russian intervention, the aid programs, along with arming and training of rebel fighters, gradually started to serve realist geopolitical interests more than humanitarian purposes. Consequently, throughout the decade since fighting broke out, though the world witnessed the triumph over ISIS in battlefields, the fundamental human rights crisis in Syria was not addressed by rounds of aid, leaving most of its population facing security threats, resource scarcity and poor living standards to this day.

This case study first agrees with the scholarly consensus on the ineffectiveness of U.S. strategies to politically and materially support a stable rebel governance in the long run without a

feasible and cost-effective plan to ensure its survival or self-sustainability. It further indicates the limitation of the existing models that exclusively focus on the repercussions of American aid and interventions and lack the components that account for actions of other major foreign donors that may have differing foreign policy objectives in the recipient country. The conflicting strategic interests and concerns of great powers, in the context of Syria, are wasteful of critical resources to refugees, obstructive to the international coordination of humanitarian assistance, and thus devastating to any potential development of human rights protection in the region.

VIII. Model Refinement

The lessons of Afghanistan and Syria provide rich content and theoretical insights into how the dynamics of aid, intervention and human rights are entangled and what other complexities of the situations could inhibit human rights protection. These findings shed new light on the regression models built in the previous sections. Based on the insights from both case studies, I investigate the additional variables that may contribute to more variations in human rights.

As my exploratory data analysis and multiple established studies have suggested, 9/11 was a critical turning point of U.S. foreign policies that not only led to the declaration of War on Terror, but also ushered a series of evolutions in political alliances, institutional arrangements and practices, and strategic developmental implementations across the world (Howell & Lind, 2009; Miles, 2012; Shahzad et al., 2020). As Dixon (2019) argues, the liberal hawks have often used the human rights based narrative to legitimize and promote foreign aid and interventions. Therefore, adding a *sep11* variable to differentiate aid and interventions before and after 9/11.

In the case of Afghanistan, institutional fragility and religious tensions added serious impediments to any potential progress of human rights. The Syrian civil war reflects a worsening humanitarian crisis that has been intensified by both internal conflicts and external pressure after the escalation of U.S. ground actions and Russian airstrikes in 2015. In order to account for these factors, I used the International Country Risk Guide (ICRG), a data set comprised by PRS researchers and published online that covers over 140 countries in the past 40 years (2017). For each of the four variables, *internal*, *external*, *corruption* and *religion*, ICRG conducts the corresponding risk assessments by measuring a rating that ranges from 0 to 12. A higher score indicates low risks associated with this aspect. For example, a risk score of 10 for

internal conflicts means a relatively stable domestic environment; a risk score of 2 for corruption means very high risks of corruption that threaten the political and financial systems.

Furthermore, in both cases, dramatic increases in economic and military aid at the same time are frequent, making it worthwhile to examine whether an interaction effect exists. Qualitative studies have shown that the negative effects seem to be more pronounced, but the previous regression models produced higher positive coefficients for economic aids. Therefore, having an interaction term is meaningful in unraveling their interdependency.

The updated model with newly incorporated explanatory variables is shown below.

$$\text{EMP index}_{\text{Year } Y} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \log(\text{militaryaid}) + \beta_2 \log(\text{economicaid}) + \beta_3 \log(\text{troops}) + \beta_4 \text{sep11} + \beta_5 \text{allies} + \beta_6 \text{democracy} \\ + \beta_7 \text{internal_conflict} + \beta_8 \text{external_conflict} + \beta_9 \text{corruption} + \beta_{10} \text{religion} + \beta_{11} \log(\text{militaryaid}) \times \log(\text{economicaid})$$

New Perspectives on Aid, Intervention & Human Rights

As the improved regression model illustrates, newly added variables such as external conflicts (mainly affected by foreign pressures), corruption levels, and religious tensions have strong statistical significance to the recipient country's future EMP index, while military aid and internal conflicts are less important after accounting for other variables. Both statistical and substantive significance of economic aid have major improvements when keeping more environmental factors constant, suggesting that its direct positive effects on human rights should be acknowledged. The interaction of military and economic aid is significant and negative, which aligns with the scenario of post-9/11 Afghanistan. When observing rises in both types of U.S. assistance to recipient countries, the negative impacts of the inappropriate usage of military resources would be likely to aggravate the challenges of humanitarian missions. These results cast more doubt on the rationales of liberal hawks and their aggressive interests in transforming non-democratic states and defending liberal principles in the name of human rights.

Similar claims have also been put forth by scholars criticizing the repeated ineffectiveness of aid and interventions when entangling with national security interests in the region (Bearce & Tirone, 2010; Winters, 2010; Elayah, 2016): aid and interventions fail to initiate targeted economic and social reforms for a wider population because donor governments lack the credibility to hold recipient state actors accountable due to

strategic goals and unchecked and corrupt local bureaucrats were more interested in securing their positions and profits.

	Dependent variable:		
	EMPindex in Current Year (1)	EMPindex 3 Years Later (2)	EMPindex 5 Years Later (3)
logmilitaryaid	-0.146* (0.080)	-0.114 (0.079)	-0.112 (0.080)
logeconomicaid	0.431*** (0.044)	0.445*** (0.044)	0.424*** (0.045)
logtrps	-0.189*** (0.032)	-0.183*** (0.032)	-0.182*** (0.032)
allies	2.843*** (0.170)	2.833*** (0.169)	2.893*** (0.170)
demsr	2.863*** (0.163)	2.681*** (0.162)	2.778*** (0.163)
internal_conflict	0.012 (0.037)	0.018 (0.037)	0.002 (0.037)
external_conflict	0.330*** (0.045)	0.216*** (0.045)	0.186*** (0.044)
corruption	0.617*** (0.065)	0.677*** (0.064)	0.638*** (0.065)
religion	0.653*** (0.060)	0.679*** (0.060)	0.668*** (0.060)
sep11	0.166 (0.150)	-0.165 (0.149)	-0.543*** (0.150)
logmilitaryaid:logeconomicaid	-0.018 (0.016)	-0.031** (0.016)	-0.036** (0.016)
Constant	-1.703*** (0.460)	-0.868* (0.457)	-0.236 (0.456)
Observations	1,776	1,794	1,804
R2	0.596	0.586	0.584
Adjusted R2	0.594	0.583	0.581

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 4. The Multiple Regression Output of Refined Future EMP Model⁴⁶

Meanwhile, 9/11, as a pivotal time point, signifies an interesting time dependency in this model, as its coefficients turn from positive to negative as we look into longer time spans. The

⁴⁶ Newly added variables are risks of internal and external conflicts (0-12), risks of corruption (0-6), risks of religious tensions and tensions (0-6), before or after Sept.11, and the interaction between military and economic aid.

positive coefficient in the current year model corroborates the gatekeeping role of human rights in the post 9/11 period, meaning that more aid distribution is associated with better current human rights conditions. After several years, however, it is predicted that aid and intervention usually cause worsening humanitarian crises, as compared with operations conducted before 9/11.

In addition, the models offer strong theoretical proof about how the effectiveness of aid and intervention may be impacted by political and social factors. In Figure 6, the increasing risks associated with corruption, religious tensions and external conflicts, namely diplomatic pressure, economic sanctions and restrictions, territorial disputes, and cross-border conflicts, can adversely affect any positive humanitarian improvement to the local communities. Religious tensions possess the highest substantive significance, often showing a strong obstructive force against humanitarian work. Corruption risks expand quickly once the level reaches a certain threshold, causing serious threat to constant aid flows and humanitarian resources. The coefficient of external conflicts decays as time span extends, which is reasonable as current risks to international and cross border conflicts are less likely to be impactful after more than five years, whereas bureaucratic corruption and religious hostilities exert more enduring influences on the local communities.

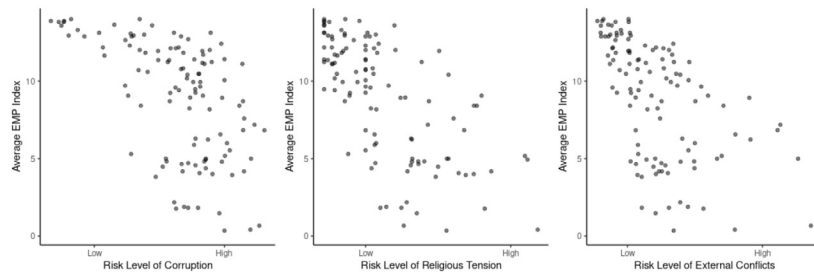


Figure 6. Higher risks from corruption, religious tensions and conflicts significantly inhibit any potential progress of human rights protection.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ The exploratory data analysis of corruption and religious tensions seems to imply an exponential or quadratic relationship. The process of fitting multiple regression models, however, shows that the nonlinear pattern is not significant when accounting for other factors.

In summary, the influences of U.S. foreign aid and interventions on human rights vary substantially across countries. Arguably, my models establish several significant factors that explain the variations of effects: The provision of economic and military support to a functional governing body matters, especially in situations where basic supplies and safety are in jeopardy, while the regime type, alliance, external conflict, domestic corruption and religious tensions also contribute extensively to human rights conditions and could either create a favorable local environment that facilitates improvements or blocks genuine efforts to protect human rights.

IX. Direction of Future Research

Several weaknesses and limitations of the current models should be acknowledged. As the "U.S. Military Aid and Recipient State Cooperation" data set records aid and intervention that took place all around the world, it should not be considered as a set of independent and identically distributed random variables; in other words, multiple occurrences in certain states or periods are not completely random events. Aid and human rights records of a single country may be better grouped together and analyzed using linear mixed-effects models to avoid model heteroscedasticity. The endogeneity of the inherently correlated data, although undermining one of the key regression model assumptions, is also mostly inevitable in the quantitative research of foreign policies as well as other major areas of comparative politics.

The use of the Empowerment Rights Index in the models implies that the analysis only takes a limited number of human rights into account, while the scope of human rights in real life is far broader. Several additional human rights such as the right to privacy, fair trial, and freedom from torture, slavery and discrimination are not well incorporated in the evaluation of EMP index. The quantified annual score also lacks the specificity of clarifying which human rights are in threat, adding risks of overgeneralizing the true levels of human rights.

Causality is another potential vulnerability of regression models. Although it is attempting to claim a causal link in which human rights conditions are dependent upon U.S. actions like aid-giving or intervention, we should be careful about interpreting the statistical outcomes, which only guarantee a close quantitative association between variables of interest. Meanwhile, the values of

adjusted R^2 reported by the models hint at more unexplained variation in the changes of future human rights conditions. More

sophisticated models and case studies should be conducted to better reveal how states' human rights develop under various factors.

X. Conclusion

Relying on the comprehensive collection of data, reports from multiple sources and detailed human rights records, along with statistically robust analytic tools, this research sheds new light on both the short-run and long-run effects of U.S. foreign aid and humanitarian interventions on the human rights of recipient or host states, specifically in physical security, freedom of speech and assembly, workers' rights, electoral self-determination, and religious liberty. In particular, the results point to the complex nature of aid-giving and humanitarian interventions and offer support to a mixture of theoretical stands, with stronger evidence leaning towards neorealist and constructivist hypotheses. As suggested by the multivariable models, the level of U.S. involvement is the most influential factor in determining the changes in human right conditions in the long run. The initial presence of military personnel for humanitarian relief missions is justified and could bring positive impacts to the

Major Factors Affecting Human Rights of Recipient States

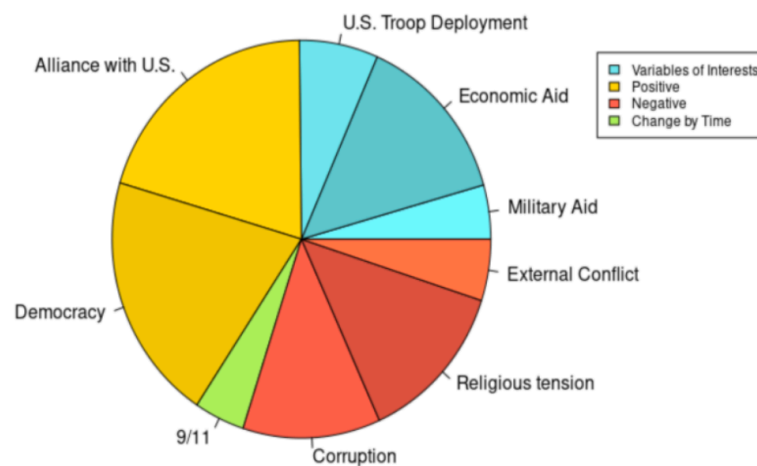


Figure 7. Significance of explanatory and control variable to the

extent of improvements, though the marginal benefit of subsequent deployments quickly decays in comparison to the early stage of intervention.

The models further confirm the gatekeeping role of human rights in the decision-making of aid allocation and establish a significant relationship between amounts of current U.S. foreign aid and the states' human rights records in the following years, strengthening the notions of liberal internationalism in general. Greater amounts of reliable economic resources, material supplies and cooperation from independent humanitarian organizations are associated with more promising human rights in the recipient states. The military aid, on the contrary, is found to be negatively associated with human rights and weakens economic and social reforms through their interactions. The rationales emphasize the role of foreign military assistance in instigating domestic tensions and political conflicts between armed factions, often resulting in uncontrollable and undesirable consequences for human rights victims, a phenomenon that is partly in juxtaposition with a realist understanding of foreign aid and intervention.

As shown in Figure 7⁴⁸, a systematic examination of control variables in the multivariate models not only validates most perspectives from constructivists in explaining the complex nature of aid and intervention, but also points out new possible directions in future research. The socioeconomic powers of states, counterintuitively, are stronger among aid recipients with worse human rights records, which could be explained by rogue states' enhanced confidence in resorting to violent and coercive means. The national role of a state is essential when constructing its behaviors. Certain national identities would facilitate willingness to conform to the international human rights norms as alliance with the U.S. and functioning democratic political institutions show positive correlations with better human rights conditions. The risks of recipient states in face of continuing institutional corruption, historical religious tensions, and external foreign pressure due to the power struggles of international rivals are the major barriers that restrain well-intentioned aid and intervention from realizing their full positive potential.

⁴⁸ Among the variables of interest, economic aid and the early stage of troop development exhibit the most positive impacts, whereas military assistance and protracted interventions are linked to less desirable consequences.

The complexity and variability of rational and non-rational actors' choices bring practical difficulties for arriving at a definitive and accurate description of the way in which human rights conditions are shaped and affected. The ongoing debate between and sometimes within various schools of political theories will continue as Americans walk into the third decade since the end of the Cold War and 20 years after waging the War on Terror. Amid the renewed crises in national security, public health, economic globalization, natural resources, and climate changes in recent years (McAdam, 2020; Forman & Kohler, 2020; Evans et al., 2020), emerging threats to human rights around the globe are undoubtedly rising at an unprecedented pace, calling state leaders and international organizations for actionable solutions regarding the violations. As the United States is facing more imminent challenges from both great power competitions and transnational threats, aid and interventions are still by far the most important strategic approach to uphold the U.S. led international order and advocate the idea of liberal democracy and sound human rights norms worldwide. The findings observed from models and case studies in this paper illustrate how aid and intervention could be employed effectively and possess the potential to become the foundational groundwork for more in-depth studies of constructing foreign policies and supporting human rights protection in the contemporary world.

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