



*(Cover) Photos from Asilah, Morocco. June 2023. Asilah is a small city 46 km south of Tangier, a popular beach destination in Morocco. A new highway has diverted tourism away from Asilah, but the city maintains its natural and historical beauty.*

*Photographed by Arman Karbassian, sophomore majoring in Peace, War, and Defense and Contemporary European Studies with a minor in Persian.*

*(Above) March 2023. Blarney Castle, in the Republic of Ireland, houses the famous Blarney Stone. If a person kisses the stone, which can only be reached by hanging upside-down, they gain the gifts of eloquence and persuasiveness. Photographed by Campbell McClellan, first-year Political Science and History (United States concentration) double major.*



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# **ABOUT THE CAROLINA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ASSOCIATION**

The Carolina International Relations Association (CIRA) is UNC's leading international affairs club, engaging students on the global issues of today. CIRA is devoted to fostering critical thought, discussion, and debate on current international issues, stimulating creative and effective responses to them, developing the analytical, communicational, and team building skills of its members and the broader university community.

We aim to work towards combating international crises that threaten peace and security, social and economic progress, and fundamental human rights. Through our branches and social opportunities, there are a variety of ways to get involved. If you are interested in learning more about what we do, please visit our website at <https://uncira.org/>. At this link, you can also subscribe to our listserv.

# FROM THE EDITOR

UNC and the international community navigated through challenging times this fall. At Carolina, the student body faced a campus lockdown for multiple hours. For the international community, new conflicts arose while old ones persisted. But for both the events at home and globally, we held steadfast to the belief that the lessons of the past would guide insights for the future. The Fall 2023 issue of *The Journal of Foreign Affairs at Carolina* focuses on this spirit. This publication is dedicated to leveraging insights from the past to better inform the present and future. Selected research offers policy recommendations aimed at improving the status quo.

This note would not be complete without acknowledging the students and organizations who dedicated their valuable time to JFAC. I extend my appreciation to the Carolina International Relations Association (CIRA) for their continued guidance and support. Special thanks go to President Siddharth Reddy, Vice President Nupur Joshi, Directors of Oversight Caroline Hoover and Brenner Cobb, and Treasurer Rishi Kulkarni.

In addition, this journal represents one of JFAC's fastest editing and design cycles. We were also proud to witness a significant increase in blog contributions compared to last year. I express my deep gratitude to JFAC's meticulous executive team for actualizing this progress. Thank you to Bevin, Güzin, Jemimah, Daniela, Chloe, and Nicole.

Lastly, thank you to JFAC's staff editors, design editors, and blog contributors for their indispensable contributions. Their work is imperative to upholding JFAC's mission: to publish excellent undergraduate research on global affairs and current events. Their unwavering dedication propels JFAC towards continuous improvement and growth.

Sincerely,  
Michelle Liu

Editor-in-Chief

# DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed in the papers are the author's own and do not reflect the views of the Carolina International Relations Association (CIRA), the Journal of Foreign Affairs at Carolina (JFAC), or their affiliates.

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# The Lost Color Revolution of Belarus

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**Skyeler Jackson**

*Skyeler Jackson is a Senior at UNC. They are a double major in Political Science and Global Studies with a minor in Data Science. Skyeler has had an interest in international affairs since high school, and they have taken many classes at UNC that are about different governments all over the world and international institutions. Skyeler took Undivided Europe in the Spring of 2022. They were in this course when the war in Ukraine began, and they wrote this paper to better understand Belarus's motives in assisting Russia in its invasion when a retaliation from the rest of Europe was imminent.*

The Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmitro Kuleba warned of the dangers that were bound to arise from Russia's relationship with Belarus<sup>1</sup>. He states, "We understand that if Russia absorbs Belarus in one way or another, we will have 1,000 kilometers of additional danger to our sovereignty and territorial integrity."<sup>2</sup> His warnings rang true when Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko allowed Russian troops to amass and attack from the Belarusian border of Ukraine. How did this relationship between Putin and Lukashenko become so strong? It started with Belarus' disputed presidential election in 2020 when Lukashenko supposedly won by over 80 percent<sup>3</sup>. The people of Belarus and the West questioned the validity of the election, sparking weeks of protests in Minsk. The world thought another color revolution was underway and Lukashenko would surely be ousted,

as seen in the Orange Revolution of Ukraine. When the government detained thousands of oppositionists, the dream of democracy seemed to be lost. As the West condemned the silencing of the democratic movement and civil society, Belarus required a support system, which was and still is provided by Russia.

What are the causes of the protests in Belarus and have these protests been successful? In this essay, I will work to answer this question by analyzing the history of the Belorussian protests since 2020. I will also provide examples of the opposition's successes in Belarus along with the failures of the democratic uprising. International relations also play a significant role in the successes and failures of the Belorussian opposition; thus, I will ask how international institutions, such as the EU, and other influential states, like Russia, have contributed to or hindered the would-be color revolution in Belarus. I will

also address how Belarus became a puppet state of Russia and whether this dynamic will change in the future. I will start by asking what the history of Belarus's relationship with Russia is and the incentives Belarus has for continuing the relationship. I will also question how the war in Ukraine will impact this relationship and prolong the relationship further.

In this paper, I will argue that Belarus will likely continue to be a puppet regime for Russia and not turn toward democracy. There are three reasons that validate this perspective: the protests in Belarus have had little success at expelling Lukashenko and instilling democracy thisWest, the isolation from the West has continued to strengthen ties between Russia and Belarus, and the war in Ukraine will only further isolate Belarus while making Lukashenko even more subservient to Putin. However, the protests in Belarus have been successful at creating solidarity not only in Belarus

but with Westwest as well. This will help lay the foundation for democracy if Lukashenko is ever ousted from power. Until this ousting occurs, I do not predict that there will be a change of course in the regime.

I will draw on several journals about Belarus and its geopolitical standing. Additionally, I will use several news articles from different sources such as NPR and Euromaidan Press. My most useful resource throughout my analysis has been a timeline created by The Foundation of Robert Schuman, that lays out the series of events in Belarus after the 2020 elections.

This paper will be divided into six sections. In the first section, I will explain how the protest movement arose in August 2020 after the controversial election of Alexander Lukashenko. Second, I will bring to light the successes and failures of the opposition efforts in Belarus. Third, I will dive into the role of international institutions, such as the EU, and how they have contributed to the opposition effort in Belarus. Fourth, I will analyze the relationship with other international actors such as Russia, who have helped to hinder democratic unrest. Fifth, I will conclude with an analysis of Lukashenko's relationship with Putin during the war in Ukraine. Sixth, I will conclude with my hypotheses about the future of Belarus and its rather bleak prospects.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF PROTESTS**

As worsening living standards in Belarus became prominent, a push for democracy arose

through protests and grew quickly; however, it would soon come to a halt and lessen the likelihood of a democratic state. These protests first developed with the presidency of Alexander Lukashenko. First elected as the President of Belarus in 1994, Lukashenko won the election by promising economic success during a time of economic crisis in Belarus<sup>4</sup>. Lukashenko managed to end hyperinflation and restore economic growth by altering the current economic policy<sup>5</sup>. Economic rejuvenation came to a screeching halt in 2010, causing years of stagnation and anti-worker social reform<sup>6</sup>. In 2020, it became clear with the jailing of opposition figures that the civil rights of citizens, especially workers, had eroded significantly<sup>7</sup>. Protests began to break out in June of 2020 during Lukashenko's mismanagement of the Covid-19 pandemic<sup>8</sup>. Lukashenko claimed that coronavirus was a psychosis and that it could be cured by vodka and a sauna visit<sup>9</sup>. The protests in Belarus were suppressed by the force of the Belarusian government, namely the OMON or the riot police<sup>10</sup>. As the political climate became more intense in Belarus with the release of the election results, the protests also rose in intensity despite the attempts to suppress them.

According to The Foundation of Robert Schuman's timeline of protest since the 2020 election, the number of protests increased significantly after the 9 August announcement of the 2020 election results. Lukashenko had defeated the opposing candidate, Svetlana

Tsikhanouskaya, by 80.23 percent<sup>11</sup>. Given the rising public discontent for the Lukashenko presidency, the election was assumed to be rigged. In polling stations where the votes were cast more fairly, Tsikhanouskaya received up to 80% of the votes<sup>12</sup>. The people of Belarus flooded into the streets of Minsk, and approximately 3,000 people were arrested<sup>13</sup>. They began to demand a stop to the violence and a new election<sup>14</sup>. These demonstrations continued, resulting in the killing of two people by the fourth day of protest<sup>15</sup>. On 14 August the European Ministers of Foreign Affairs declared the ballots falsified<sup>16</sup>. This only fueled the demonstrations: on 16 August, 100,000 people protested in Minsk<sup>17</sup>. This was considered the largest protest rally in Belarusian history<sup>18</sup>. Tsikhanouskaya, from her residence in Lithuania, called for indefinite strikes by the Belarusians<sup>19</sup>. The people of Belarus proceeded to organize strikes and continued to protest<sup>20</sup>.

Protests were consistently held on Sundays with thousands of people demonstrating. By 6 September, more than 600 people had been arrested<sup>21</sup>. On 15 November, there was a demonstration held in honor of a man who had been beaten by police in opposition clothes, where over 1,000 people were arrested by the police<sup>22</sup>. The arrest of an oppositionist journalist Roman Protassevich and his partner Sofia Sapega occurred on 23 May during an airplane hijacking<sup>23</sup>. This event prompted a series of condemnations and consequences imposed by

international actors and the EU<sup>24</sup>. Protests and strikes continued although not as populated due to the cold climate<sup>25</sup>. As the number of arrests increased and the laws allowed harsher treatment towards demonstrators, the protests unfortunately began to dwindle out<sup>26</sup>.

### **SUCCESSSES AND FAILURES OF THE OPPOSITION**

The protests after the 2020 election succeeded in creating a collective democratic identity in Belarus; however, the protests failed to bring about changes in the Lukashenko regime. After 9 August, a feeling of solidarity descended upon Belarus and lasted for months<sup>27</sup>. The opposition was able to sustain strong support for new free and fair elections, government accountability, and the freedom of those arrested for political reasons. The opposition was also successful at remaining peaceful during protests, even when faced with brutal riot police<sup>28</sup>. (Minchenia) Through these protests, Belarussians have consolidated a functioning political identity<sup>29</sup>. Thus, a stable foundation was created for a democratic society if a regime change were to occur in Belarus.

Although the foundation was laid for democracy, Lukashenko refused to build on it and a democracy failed to arise. During the protests, no political action was taken to compromise on behalf of the Belarusian government. Instead of this, Lukashenko responded to the calls for democracy with suppression, which was made easier with

the support of Russia which lessened the amount of elite defections. Lukashenko completely disregarded civil rights and even worked to permit harsher punishments for protesters as he signed a law on 8 June subjecting those who protested up to 6 years imprisonment<sup>30</sup>. The protests seemed to push Belarus farther away from democracy as Lukashenko frantically looked for solutions to a would-be color revolution. He found a solution through eroding the little democratic norms left and completely turning his back on the international actors and institutions of the West. Therefore, the protests failed to set Belarus back on track to democracy and rather drove it further down the road towards autocracy.

### **SUPPORT OF INTERNATIONAL ACTORS AND INSTITUTIONS**

The support of international actors and institutions has helped to promote collective action; however, this support has not been successful in cultivating democracy due to policy of isolation towards Belarus and the Belarusian ideology. The Baltic states and several post-communist states such as Poland and Ukraine have advocated for the oppositionists and democracy in Belarus through policy and action. Lithuania provided a haven for the oppositionist candidate Tikhanosvkaya after the election of 2020<sup>31</sup>. This allowed for Tikhanosvkaya to continue being the leading voice of the opposition and further collective action inside and outside of Belarus. The prosecutor general of Lithuania began a

preliminary investigation on Belarus for war crimes and crimes against humanity<sup>32</sup>. Additionally, the Baltic states have blacklisted and banned Lukashenko and several other Belarusian officials from entering their state, and demonstrations have been held in Kiev and Warsaw to show support for the opposition in Belarus<sup>33</sup>. Although these efforts are symbolic and help with collective action, they have done little to help ground democracy in Belarus.

The EU has also made a concerted effort to help establish democracy in Belarus and bring an end to the Lukashenko regime by means of policy. The EU has been interested in relations with Belarus since the fall of communism, with Belarus seeming to be on its path to EU relations until Lukashenko was elected<sup>34</sup>. As a result of his election and Lukashenko's relationship with Russia, the EU has been rather hesitant in courting Belarus<sup>35</sup>. The EU asserted that the election of Lukashenko in 2020 was neither free nor fair and thereby refused to recognize him as president<sup>36</sup>. Upon this assertion and in the wake of democratic protests, the EU has tried to incentivize democracy by placing sanctions on Belarus that will only be lifted when democracy is respected and human rights are guaranteed<sup>37</sup>. The EU has also offered monetary incentives such as three billion euros of economic support and investment if Belarus becomes democratic<sup>38</sup>. The Belarusian government has continued to ignore the recommendations of the EU even after several warnings

to release political prisoners and return to the path of democracy<sup>39</sup>.

Compared to other post-communist states, EU leverage seems rather ineffective in Belarus because of the institutional, transactional, and geopolitical boundaries<sup>40</sup>. Due to the lack of an institutional framework for the civil rights and civil society of democratic oppositionists, there is a significant boundary drawn between the EU and Belarus<sup>41</sup>. This boundary is common amongst many post-communist states before EU accession. So, why is Belarus different? Belarus has strong ideological commitments to its values which makes Europeanization a huge domestic cost that Lukashenko is not willing to pay<sup>42</sup>. Belarus also has transactional boundaries with the EU, which can be seen in the increasing number of sanctions imposed on Belarus by the EU since 1996<sup>43</sup>. The EU has tried to isolate Belarus to cripple the state and create a need for support from the EU; however, the reverse effect has occurred. Belarus has used this isolation to form other geopolitical relationships. The most prominent relationship Belarus has is with Russia, which has constructed a seemingly unbreakable boundary between the EU and Belarus. For all of these reasons, the EU has shown that it lacks leverage in Belarus and thus has not been able to hinder the regime of Lukashenko or help bring about democracy in Belarus.

### **RELATIONSHIP WITH RUSSIA**

Belarus has developed close ties with Russia, which have only

strengthened over time as Belarus has become increasingly dependent on Russia. This bond has allowed the puppet state that is Belarus to become an accomplice to the war in Ukraine and further delineate itself from democracy. Since its separation from Russia in 1991, Belarus has maintained close political and economic ties with Russia<sup>44</sup>. However, the relationship has not been without its faults. Lukashenko, for a time, pitted Russia and the EU against each other. While also trying to keep his Western options open, Lukashenko entered into an agreement with Russia called the Union State of Russia and Belarus. This agreement consisted of several formal agreements that created deeper economic integration and foreign policy coordination between the two states<sup>45</sup>. Although Belarus was clearly in a tight bond with Russia, it continued to leverage foreign relationships and slightly push back against Russia. One of Lukashenko's most prominent transgressions towards Russia was his failure to recognize South Ossetia, Abkhazia, or Crimea<sup>46</sup>. This frustrated Putin but did not worry him, as he predicted that the 2020 election would make Belarus more dependent on Russia<sup>47</sup>. Putin was right.

After the 2020 election, Lukashenko faced complete isolation from the EU and other Western states, which created more of an incentive to strengthen ties with Russia. Putin offered Lukashenko a \$1.5 billion dollar loan for economic aid and Russian security officers to help suppress the revolution<sup>48</sup>.

At that moment, Lukashenko completely turned his back on the West and chose the only option left to him: Russia<sup>49</sup>. Lukashenko became a puppet of Russia, as evidenced by Lukashenko's announcement of changes to the constitution, giving him more power over the Belarusian government<sup>50</sup>. This was clearly inspired by Putin's constitutional changes in 2020<sup>51</sup>. Through actions such as these, it is clear that as Belarus has restored its bond with Russia, it has further reduced the possibility of democracy.

### **IMPLICATIONS OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE**

The Russian invasion of Ukraine had further undemocratic implications for Lukashenko's regime while also further entrenching Belarus in its relationship with Russia. After the two states reinforced their ties, Putin took advantage of the situation and called in a favor: assistance in the invasion of Ukraine. On the 10th of February in 2022, Russia brought 30,000 troops onto Belarussian territory for "drills"<sup>52</sup>. This act was a strategic move on the part of Putin in that he was able to occupy Ukraine and Belarus in order to ensure that the Belarusian constitution would be adjusted to his liking<sup>53</sup>. Russia was also able to prop up the puppet state with their military, creating an even greater threat to the opposition<sup>54</sup>. Although demonstrators have taken to the streets in Minsk to protest the war, democracy in Belarus continues to be crushed by brute force, now with the help of the Russian military<sup>55</sup>.

On February 24th, Russia

launched an invasion of Ukraine from Belarusian territory. The complicity of Belarus in the war in Ukraine had far-reaching repercussions on the account of the EU. As the sanctions on Belarus increase and become more ambitious, Belarus will become more dependent on Russia. The EU placed trade restrictions on Belarus and excluded Belarus from the SWIFT financial messaging system<sup>56</sup>. These consequences have only encouraged further entanglement with Russia, as almost all of the remaining ties with the West have been cut. As a result, Belarus has now become a puppet state of Russia, with no hope in sight that the EU will be able to use its influence to establish a democracy.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I argue that the democratic prospects of Belarus remain bleak and have only worsened over time. This fact is because the government of Belarus has consistently suppressed democratic ide-

als to retain power for over 20 years. The illusion of democracy in Belarus was realized in the falsified election of 2020, as pro-democracy protests began to break out on a mass scale. These protests were suppressed and achieved little political success; however, they succeeded in creating collective action and a cohesive political ideology. If Lukashenko were to be ousted, the democratic foundation preserved and nurtured by the opposition would prove instrumental to the country's restructuring. But, the likelihood of regime change remains low as relations with the West have worsened and those with Russia have become inextricable. This can be seen in Lukashenko's indifference towards the political and financial benefits offered by the West and EU, which has only further isolated Belarus and left it with few options. Putin was able to offer Lukashenko the support he needed, resulting in closer ties and a means to establish a Russian puppet state.

Through this establishment, Putin orchestrated an attack on Ukraine that created an international backlash against not only Russia, but also its complicit neighbor, Belarus. Belarus was then further isolated from the West, pushing it further into its dependence on Russia and further away from democracy.

Based on my research, I expect little change to occur in Belarus in the coming years as the trend of isolation and puppetry persists. I predict that Russia will continue to prop up a Belarusian puppet state so as not to exacerbate the international repercussions by possibly attempting to annex Belarus. Therefore, Lukashenko is likely to remain in power for years to come. Nevertheless, if Ukraine can defeat Russia, I believe their perseverance will be felt and will have the potential to find the color revolution that was thought to be lost in Belarus.

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*June 2023. The sun peeks out from behind the Roosevelt Arch in Yellowstone National Park. An inscription on the arch reads: For the Benefit and Enjoyment of the People. Photographed by Campbell McClellan, first-year Political Science and History (United States concentration) double major.*



*Ukrainian flags fly against a backdrop of the Fernsehturm Berlin. This television tower, constructed in Berlin's popular Alexanderplatz, served as an icon of East Berlin during the Cold War. Since German reunification, the tower has been seen as a symbol of a united nation. Following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Germany has emerged as a leader of Western support for the embattled nation and Ukrainian flags can be seen throughout the capital of Berlin. Taken in July and August 2023, during a personal trip to Germany.*

*Photographed by Brenner Cobb, sophomore Peace, War, and Defense and Contemporary European Studies major and German minor.*



# Assessing The Efficacy Of Varying Intervention Forms In Stabilizing African States With An Application To Mali's Security Landscape

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**Zane Mehta**

*Zane Mehta is a junior majoring in Political Science and Peace, War, and Defense at UNC Chapel Hill. Their primary interest area is the PRC, with information and influence operations being relevant sub-foci. They initially submitted the Mali report as my term paper for "Africa and International Conflict" with Professor Navin Bapat, and they cannot recommend the course enough. The instruction and research portions of the course were highly rewarding, and Zane found both to be impactful on my broader academic growth.*

Given the gravity of Mali's fraught security environment and the level of interplay between adversarial actors, this research paper seeks to assess the performance of peacekeepers in previous and ongoing crisis stabilization efforts to form an empirically grounded and theoretically oriented argument advocating for a preferable form of intervention. The capabilities of major actors in Mali will be assessed based on a dual survey of quantitative and qualitative literature to generally estimate and compare the potential peacekeeping performance and implications of varying intervention styles. The primary actors examined are the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission

in Mali (MINUSMA), the Malian Armed Forces (FAMA), French-led Operation Barkhane forces, and the Wagner Group.

The deteriorating Malian security landscape currently contends with several key problems, with little internal consensus surrounding crisis stabilization efforts. The state faces an intensified political crisis following the installment of a new military government in a 2021 coup d'état led by Vice President Col. Assimi Goïta<sup>1</sup>. The second coup in two years saw members of the transitional government, such as Prime Minister Moctar Ouane and President Bah N'Daw, detained, similar to that of the military takeover they oversaw in 2020<sup>2</sup>. The 2021 coup initially enjoyed popular internal support, with the former adminis-

tration widely perceived as abusive due to allegations of "summary executions, enforced disappearances, and incommunicado detentions by government security forces<sup>3</sup>." However, support waned drastically following Goïta's renegeing on promises to transition to a civilian government that would hold "free and fair parliamentary and presidential elections by February 2022<sup>4</sup>."

There are two significant implications of the 2021 coup concerning Mali's security situation. Among these are the regional responses on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the heightened level of cooperation between the junta government and the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group, as well as the junta's subsequent rejection of Western military assistance. Regarding ECOWAS, the

regional bloc heavily sanctioned the military junta, contributing to deepened political isolation due to the closure of shared borders, the freezing of Malian state assets in foreign banks, and trade reduction measures that have disproportionately harmed Mali's impoverished civilian populations<sup>5</sup>. Additionally, the transitional government declined to cooperate militarily with ECOWAS forces in confronting the region's Islamist threat. This factor significantly reduces the ability of Mali's government to control its security situation without seeking foreign intervention.

Politically and economically isolated following international responses to the 2021 coup, Mali's junta government sought a military assistance agreement with the Wagner Group, a shadowy Russian PMC. Despite diplomatic drive by the French and urges from African and Western partners to discourage the transitional government from entering an agreement with the Wagner Group, a deal was finalized in December 2021<sup>6</sup>. Demonstrations in favor of Russian military and Wagner Group interventions were held in Bamako, the Malian capital, in the months preceding the agreement's signing<sup>7</sup>. Reiterating these sentiments, Mali's defense ministry spokesman claimed, "[public] opinion in Mali is in favor of more cooperation with Russia given the ongoing security situation<sup>8</sup>." However, fears surrounding jeopardized international funding and support for the Malian Armed Forces, due to its newfound ties to the Wagner

Group, were soon realized through the complete cessation of French developmental aid and suspension of military assistance from the United States<sup>9</sup>.

The heightened level of cooperation between Mali's military junta and the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group raised alarms in the West, with the transitional government rejecting offers of continued assistance from ECOWAS, MINUSMA, and the French-led coalition in containing the Sahel region's extensive Jihadist presence. Military support from valuable former allies in the Global War on Terror was rejected mainly at the outset of sanctions directed toward the military government, a body openly perceived as illegitimate by most neighboring countries and several former allies in the West, notably France<sup>10</sup>.

Following the 2021 coup, Mali's military junta immediately moved to suspend the rotation of The United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA), a vital peacekeeping contingency involving an estimated 13,000 military personnel tasked with ensuring stability and "preventing terrorists from taking hold in Northern Mali, a significant concern, especially during the current political turmoil<sup>11</sup>." However, MINUSMA ultimately avoided expulsion from the country and the mission was slated to end on June 30, 2023<sup>12</sup>. Additionally, the military junta demanded the immediate withdrawal of roughly 2,400 French-led Operation Barkhane forces from the country, reducing the capabilities of a mul-

tinational counterterrorist coalition in a region frequently characterized as the "new epicentre of Islamist terrorism<sup>13</sup>."

The junta's insistence that Western military partners exit the country under murky "national security" rationale undermines the efficacy of such forces in confronting Islamic State and Al-Qaeda adjacent groups. This creates an especially stark development given Mali's weak security infrastructure and limited military capacity to effectively address such threats alone<sup>14</sup>. Moreover, the forced withdrawal of Operation Barkhane members, coupled with the junta's embrace of the Wagner Group, represents a multifaceted breakdown in diplomatic relations between Mali's transitional government and the French, as well as the G5 Sahel Joint Force, a multinational body that "provides an institutional framework to promote development and security within its five member countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger." This breakdown is primarily demonstrated by the expulsion of G5 representatives and the French ambassador to Mali following French foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian's public characterization of Mali's military junta as "out of control" and illegitimate<sup>15</sup>." Such a breakdown in relations echoes the French Government's sentiment that "Mali's transitional government is an untenable counterterrorism partner" that "is unwilling or unable to address the growing web of security and governance issues in the country<sup>16</sup>." Furthermore, French

President Emmanuel Macron condemned the diplomatic failures as a “coup within a coup”<sup>17</sup>.

Post-coup political destabilization, in addition to other unfavorable geopolitical conditions, left Mali, an already impoverished state located in Africa’s highly contentious Sahel region, increasingly susceptible to complete governmental collapse amidst a failure to contain an expanded Islamist presence, renewed fighting between ethnic militias, and widespread abuses by intervening forces. Furthermore, the withdrawal of Western allies and the introduction of Wagner Group forces in Mali exacerbated these security issues. Given Mali’s current conditions, a brief description of these interplaying factors and an examination of the actors involved in crisis stabilization efforts sets the stage for assessing each group’s potential peacekeeping performance.

### **PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT**

Given the intricacies of navigating Mali’s fragile security post-coup and the challenges associated with evaluating the performance of varying intervention styles, key indicators of success must be defined. While the performance assessment for each respective actor focuses on the ability of a given force to act in a peacekeeping role, ‘peacekeeping’ in this context veers from traditional definitions in that it may be more accurately described as peace enforcement. A delineation between these definitions is significant in that the latter best suits the current con-

ditions in Mali, as ‘peace-enforcement’ presumes “the use of military assets to enforce a peace against the will of the parties to a conflict when, for instance, a ceasefire has failed”<sup>18</sup>. This differs from traditional definitions of peacekeeping, as the term broadly describes maintaining peace agreements between conflicting groups with no implicit guarantee of military force. Considering the relatively weak nature of past Malian peace agreements, poor credibility amongst the actors involved, and intensified violence, the capacity to use military force as a means of imposing peace between unwilling actors will be stressed as both an objective and requirement of any intervention.

The enduring question of how success should be defined in peacekeeping is central to the recommendations formed from the findings of the performance assessment. Per Diehl’s criteria for assessing the efficacy of peacekeeping operations, “[the] utility of peacekeeping operations can be adequately evaluated by observing whether they (1) limited armed conflict, and (2) promote conflict resolution”<sup>19</sup>. The first criterion, the extent to which a mission limits armed conflict, will be evaluated based on the duration between initial deployment and the signing of a peace deal. The second criterion, which describes the ability of a force to bring an end to a conflict at large, will be held constant across each of the actors being examined. This criterion acts as a constant in that none of the actors have been able to fully resolve the crisis in Mali due to con-

founding variables such as relatively short deployment lengths in the case of Wagner Group and hastened withdrawals in the instances of MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane. Such quantitative criteria will form a basic analytical framework for examining the capacity of each actor to stabilize the situation in Mali. For this analysis, a qualitative level will also be included to supplement quantitative findings and more accurately inform the final recommendations of this analysis, as such a quantitative framework may not apply to all actors.

### **MINUSMA AND UN PEACEKEEPING**

United Nations peacekeepers have had a complex legacy and enduring role in developing African states. African states have hosted over thirty UN peacekeeping missions since 1960 and currently host about 50,000 personnel supporting various missions<sup>20</sup>. Today, UN peacekeepers in Africa often work with regional partners to address issues involving development, foreign aid delivery, crisis stabilization, and other crucial affairs. However, while proponents of UN peacekeeping contend that such missions protect vulnerable civilian populations in times of crisis, widespread criticism of UN peacekeeping missions has arisen due to well-documented abuses perpetrated under the pretext of humanitarian support.

Though MINUSMA, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, has drawn down in terms

of funding and personnel following the 2021 coup and its partial withdrawal, the efficacy of the third largest ongoing UN mission can be more accurately assessed through a historical examination of the mission's progress and stated objectives<sup>21</sup>. MINUSMA was established by Security Council resolution 2100 in April 2013 to "support political processes in that country [Mali] and carry out a number of security-related tasks<sup>22</sup>." The impetus for passing Security Council resolution 2100 was the 2012 Tuareg Rebellion, an inter-communal conflict primarily impacting the country's North which contributed to the internal displacement of upwards of 350,000 Malians by June 2013<sup>23</sup>. Additionally, the mission entails an approved budget of \$1,262,194,200 for the 2021 fiscal year<sup>24</sup>.

MINUSMA began operations on July 1, 2013, and was directly involved in fostering reconciliatory dialogue and negotiations between the Malian government and two ethnic militias, the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) and the Platform of armed groups (the Platform)<sup>25</sup>. As a result, several rounds of negotiation gave way to the 'Accord pour la paix et la réconciliation au Mali issu du processus d'Alger' [Accord for peace and reconciliation in Mali emanating from the Algiers process], formally signed on May 15, 2015, by a total of four parties to the conflict<sup>26</sup>. Unfortunately, while the non-comprehensive peace agreement was intended to resolve lingering hostilities stemming from the 2012 Tuareg Rebellion, the es-

tablished ceasefire was violated by rebel factions linked to the CMA within a matter of weeks, limiting prospects of sustained peace<sup>27</sup>.

Though factors that contributed to the resumption of hostilities following the breakdown of the 2015 agreement are relevant in assessing the peacebuilding abilities of MINUSMA, this analysis focuses on the potential ability of a peacekeeping force to stabilize a crisis; in that stabilization is defined by the ability to reach a peace deal rather than sustaining it. Therefore, per Diehl's criteria for evaluating the utility of peacekeeping operations, the duration between MINUSMA's initial deployment and the finalization of a peace deal will act as the primary quantitative measure of the UN mission's capacity to stabilize Mali<sup>28</sup>. Given this framework, the duration between MINUSMA's initial deployment (July 2013) and the signing of the February 2015 peace agreement is 683 days, a figure that will be compared with other actors to assess potential peacekeeping performance.

Regarding abuses perpetrated by UN peacekeepers in African states, the United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II) is a relevant case study. UNOSOM II, the second UN-backed intervention in Somalia in the 1990s, was tasked with stabilizing the country's security situation to facilitate humanitarian aid delivery following the devastating 1991 Somalian Civil War<sup>29</sup>. However, the strategic goal of apprehending General Mohamed Aidid, the head of the Somali National

Alliance (SNA), blurred the lines between the mission's stated humanitarian intentions and its manifestation as a comprehensive military operation involving over 20,000 armed UN personnel. Of these UN personnel, 1,167 formed a U.S. Army Quick Reaction Force (QRF)<sup>30</sup>. The QRF soon became the subject of international criticism following the Abdi House raid, an incident colloquially known as "Bloody Sunday" in Somalia due to its disastrous outcome<sup>31</sup>. Following the deadly 1993 SNA attack on Pakistani UN peacekeepers, the American QRF, assisted by UN military planners, conducted a botched raid on an alleged SNA compound that resulted in at least 210 civilian casualties according to a subsequent investigation by the International Committee of the Red Cross<sup>32</sup>. However, the United Nations and the U.S. contested this casualty count amid a media fallout, claiming that all Somalis killed were legitimate military targets. Public outrage ensued, as this claim directly contradicted the results of the 1994 UN inquiry describing the shortcomings of UNOSOM II, with the commission condemning U.S. tactics as "incompatible with basic tenets of peacekeeping<sup>33</sup>."

While UNOSOM II represents a broader military failure for the United States due to the highly publicized Battle of Mogadishu and the Black Hawk Down incident, the role of UN military planners and peacekeepers in facilitating such U.S. military operations is intentionally obfuscated. Consequently, the actions of the QRF undermined

the humanitarian mission of UNOSOM II in that Somali public opinion shifted dramatically in favor of the SNA, with the U.S. and UN being characterized as neocolonialist occupiers following the Abdi House raid<sup>34</sup>. Deteriorating views toward UN peacekeepers in the period following the raid are encapsulated in Brauman's commentary that "[f] the first time in Somalia there has been a killing under the flag of humanitarianism<sup>35</sup>."

Though UN peacekeeping missions may have negative connotations in states such as Somalia due to incidents like the Abdi House raid, public opinion toward the UN is decidedly more positive in Mali. While the MINUSMA peacekeeping force is perceived as weak and ineffective at managing the country's instability, polling from 2019 suggests that 65% of Malians living in Bamako and the country's other regional capitals favor an extended MINUSMA presence<sup>36</sup>. The results of this polling are not astonishing, considering that nearly 88% of respondents claim to have significant fear surrounding steepened rates of terrorist attacks<sup>37</sup>.

According to Fortna's analysis of UN peacekeeping efficacy in *International Intervention and the Duration of Peace After Civil War*, case studies measuring the performance of peacekeeping missions are often "hampered by [a] lack of rigorous testing of the effectiveness of these interventions<sup>38</sup>." However, working under the "hypothesis that peacekeeping contributes to more durable peace and the null hypoth-

esis that it does not make peace significantly more likely to last," Fortna presents an empirically-backed argument that supports the findings of previous studies on the subject<sup>39</sup>. Chiefly, Fortna's analysis of the relationship between peacekeeping and the duration of peace finds that "it is likely that the relationship between peacekeeping and the duration of peace changed with the end of the Cold War" in that the primary purpose of peacekeeping post-Cold War shifted to a goal of reducing civil conflict through peacebuilding<sup>40</sup>. Peacebuilding, in this sense, is contrary to the traditional observer and enforcement missions, such as MINUSMA<sup>41</sup>. Moreover, *Institutionalizing Peace: Power Sharing and Post-Civil War Conflict Management* finds "weaker evidence that observer missions and enforcement missions improve the chances for peace, but, surprisingly, that traditional peacekeeping has no effect on the chances for peacebuilding success<sup>42</sup>."

Notably, Fortna's findings are similar to the conclusions reached by *International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis* (2000), a study which finds that "multilateral, United Nations peace operations make a positive difference," particularly when missions have "extensive civilian functions, including economic reconstruction, institutional reform, and election oversight<sup>43</sup>." One oft-cited criticism of the MINUSMA observer mission is a lack of extensive civilian involvement, one factor that has negatively impacted Malian per-

ceptions of the mission in recent years. Moreover, increasingly hostile public and governmental perceptions of MINUSMA have likely influenced, to a varying degree, the transitional government's decision to partner with outside actors, such as the Wagner Group. This finding is supported by polling by Mali's National Institute of Statistics, which identifies a 16% decrease in support for the UN mission in Mali between 2019 and 2021<sup>44</sup>. Additionally, Malian critiques of MINUSMA range from perceptions that the mission lacks efficacy to "protect the population against violence from armed groups" to conspiracy theories asserting that peacekeepers are "in cahoots with armed groups, contributing to an inflated cost of living<sup>45</sup>." Additionally, MINUSMA's commitment to the process of "Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR)," outlined in section 3 of the 2015 peace agreement, has weakened significantly in that enforcement is no longer seen as feasible due to the unwillingness of FAMA forces and militants in cooperating with MINUSMA inspections<sup>46</sup>.

Withal, the security situation in Mali currently constitutes a crisis warranting an enforcement mission, a type of peacekeeping operation authorized under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The key distinction between Chapter VII-sanctioned missions and more frequent Chapter VI operations, such as MINUSMA, is the bypassed requirement for the explicit consent of belligerent parties to intervene<sup>47</sup>. A revamped MINUS-

MA-style crisis stabilization effort in Mali would likely require a peace enforcement designation so that the requirement of obtaining approval from the UN-critical transitional government and Islamist-aligned parties could be waived. However, the limitations of a hypothetical second UN mission in the wake of intensified terrorist violence are numerous and would prevent adherence to the ideal conditions for deployment identified by Johansen. For instance, UN peacekeepers could not reasonably “be deployed in relatively invulnerable settings in which they can easily detect violations and completely separate the combatants,” given the precarious conditions in Mali, especially considering frequent attacks on peacekeepers<sup>48</sup>. Based on these factors, a UNOSOM II-style deployment in which a QRF operates alongside a more comprehensive peacekeeping force as a military contingent could satisfy the requirement for enhanced protection amidst increased violence against peacekeepers<sup>49</sup>. Additionally, a military contingency could operate independently in pursuit of counterterrorism objectives. This requirement comes following MINUSMA’s designation as the most dangerous UN mission to date, with 281 personnel killed since July 2013<sup>50</sup>.

## **REPUBLIC OF MALI ARMED FORCES**

Mali’s Armed Forces (FAMa) consist of the Republic of Mali Army, Air Force, and National Guard, each of which is subordinate

to the Ministry of Armed Forces and Former Combatants (MoAF)<sup>51</sup>. State security forces are selected from units of the National Guard and the National Police Service’s Gendarmerie wing, a paramilitary force tasked with maintaining internal order and territorial integrity<sup>52</sup>. The U.S. Army War College estimates that roughly 19,000 personnel actively serve in the Malian Armed Forces. However, up-to-date information on the FAMa is limited due to its partial collapse and restructuring effort following strategic failures in quelling the 2012 Tuareg Rebellion<sup>53</sup>. Regarding the FAMa’s technical capabilities, researchers found that its inventory “consists primarily of Soviet-era equipment, although in recent years it received limited quantities of mostly second-hand armaments from a variety of countries; since 2010, the leading suppliers have been France, Russia, and the United Arab Emirates<sup>54</sup>.” Despite a characterization by the U.S. Department of State as being “underpaid, poorly equipped, and in need of rationalization<sup>55</sup>,” the FAMa, “along with other government security and paramilitary forces, has conducted multiple major operations against militants in the eastern, central, and northern parts of the country; with up to 4,000 troops reportedly having been deployed<sup>56</sup>.”

Prior to the 2021 coup, the FAMa was involved in internationally-coordinated counterterrorism efforts and military development programs led by France and the United States<sup>57</sup>. Largely lacking in comprehensive training and mod-

ern arms, the FAMa achieved little success in confronting Mali’s militant presence alone, as demonstrated by a generally inept performance against rebel forces in 2012, which threatened a complete military collapse<sup>58</sup>. Furthermore, a lack of operational success drove FAMa leadership to seek out external offers of military assistance, formerly through participation in the G5 Sahel counterterrorism effort and other joint initiatives. However, following the 2021 coup, the military junta announced its withdrawal from the G5 Sahel task force, jeopardizing cooperative efforts in the Sahel on regional security issues<sup>59</sup>. Isolation resulting from the most recent coup led FAMa leadership to engage with the Wagner Group, with the pair entering a controversial military assistance agreement in late 2021<sup>60</sup>.

The Malian Armed Forces are deeply unpopular amongst Malians due to an extensive record of abuses perpetrated against the civilian population. In particular, instances of Gendarmerie-facilitated forced disappearances of journalists and critics of the transitional government have raised widespread criticisms of the FAMa’s human rights record<sup>61</sup>. Purportedly widespread corruption also hindered the FAMa’s ability to maintain order, with the Global Organized Crime Index suggesting that “Mali’s security forces are undermined by corrupt networks, some of which are linked to organized crime<sup>62</sup>.” Additionally, MINUSMA personnel have described being “gravely concerned by the deterioration of security and

human rights” stemming from “a poisonous climate marked by suspicion and mistrust, with a continuous narrowing of civic space, the hardening of the Malian transitional authorities, and a malaise that does not spare international partners<sup>63</sup>.”

Furthermore, the Directorate of State Security (DSGE) has been implicated in directing upwards of 11 forced disappearances and 22 summary executions of regime critics and members of the Peuhl ethnic minority in the Sofara region<sup>64</sup>. In a June 2020 incident that drew international ire, heavily-circulated cellphone videos depicting Gendarmerie personnel arbitrarily arresting “presumed terrorists<sup>65</sup>” per a government communiqué, sparked protests and a subsequent crackdown that left 11 demonstrators dead and 140 injured<sup>66</sup>. Deadly crackdowns on dissent, mainly executed under the authority of the DSGE, have increased in frequency, decreasing public trust in the FAMa and law enforcement agencies while exacerbating credibility issues<sup>67</sup>.

In addition, the FAMa’s partnership with the Wagner Group exacerbated Mali’s already-fraught human rights situation, as the PMC has a well-documented disregard for international norms regarding the treatment of civilians and enemy combatants<sup>68</sup>. While an in-depth examination of the Wagner Group will be presented further in this paper, the group’s structurally limited oversight and heightened legal deniability appear to encourage abusive behaviors by FAMa personnel operating under the auspices of Wagner

PMCs. In one such instance corroborated by a MINUSMA report, at least 50 civilians were executed in a ‘counterterrorist sweep’ conducted by a joint force of FAMa personnel and Wagner operators<sup>69</sup>. The characterization of this partnership as detrimental is reinforced by a report by the UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, which indicates a 47% increase in documented human rights violations by the FAMa between August 2021 and January 2022. This dramatic increase is a statistically significant finding in a volatile period which saw the September 2021 introduction of Wagner Group advisors to the country<sup>70</sup>.

Due to issues surrounding low personnel numbers, lacking military capabilities, and poor credibility amongst the populace, the FAMa has been evaluated as having poor potential to serve in a peace enforcement capacity. While the FAMa had limited involvement in the 2015 accords, the peace deal is widely perceived to have failed due to an unwillingness to enforce the agreement, as well as “three interlinked issues: (1) its failure to engage all actors contributing to instability, (2) its limited geographic scope, and (3) limited commitment and political buy-in from its signatories and guarantors<sup>71</sup>.” Seeing that the primary mission of the FAMa is to maintain internal stability, its failure to effectively implement the 2015 Algiers Accord agreement speaks volumes about the efficacy of this force, suggesting a weak commitment to its stated mission. It becomes chal-

lenging to measure the effectiveness of the FAMa using the criteria presented by Diehl, as the duration between a particular FAMa operation and the implementation of a peace agreement is not necessarily calculable. Given that an official FAMa campaign with the implicit goal of reaching a peace deal was not underway before the signing of the 2015 agreement, the assessment conducted on a qualitative basis will serve as the primary measure of the FAMa’s potential efficacy in a peace-keeping role.

### **OPERATION BARKHANE**

Operation Barkhane was a French-led joint counterterrorism effort undertaken by France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and several other European and African partners<sup>72</sup>. In addition, the G5 Sahel, a regional counterterrorism contingency consisting of personnel from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Niger, and Mali, was heavily involved in providing troops and forward operating bases in support of Operation Barkhane<sup>73</sup>. However, the FAMa withdrew from the G5 Sahel initiative in August 2022 following Mali’s 2021 coup, which influenced a considerable lapse in cooperation with former regional partners. Operation Barkhane was directed from a French command and control center in N’Djamena, Chad<sup>74</sup>, and involved 4,300 troops, 2,400 of whom were deployed in Mali<sup>75</sup>. The primary targets of Operation Barkhane were militants affiliated with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Nusrat al-Islam, Ansar Dine, and the Islamic State in

the Greater Sahara (IS-GS)<sup>76</sup>.

The operation began on August 1, 2014, as a continuation of the 2013 French military intervention in Mali, or Operation Serval<sup>77</sup>. Operation Serval, an earlier counter-terrorism effort authorized under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2085, had the stated goal of “the full restoration of Mali’s constitutional order and territorial integrity<sup>78</sup>.” While relatively limited in scope, Operation Serval is generally regarded as effective in that it “appears to have been successful in halting Mali’s collapse and safeguarding French regional economic assets<sup>79</sup>.” However, significant swaths of Malian territory (>30%) were still under the control of separatist elements and militant groups in early 2014, with many of these groups aligning with Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, as well as Boko Haram<sup>80</sup>. While the central objective of Operation Serval did not differ from that of Operation Barkhane, the latter provided expanded funding and personnel numbers to bolster France’s existing presence in the Sahel in response to territorial gains by Islamist groups<sup>81</sup>. Moreover, Operation Barkhane acted as a ‘surge,’ or an influx in military personnel and assets intended to overcome the limitations of Operation Serval while preparing the FAMA for a handover of military responsibilities. Regarding funding, Operation Barkhane entailed operational costs averaging nearly €1 million per day, a significant increase in expenditure from Operation Serval<sup>82</sup>.

Abuses perpetrated by Op-

eration Barkhane personnel in Mali are well-documented, though media attention directed to such atrocities has been limited at best. Such abuses often come in the form of sweeps and airstrikes that appear to indiscriminately target civilians, usually conducted under the pretext of counter-terror operations based on circumstantial rationale<sup>83</sup>. For example, in a high-profile 2014 incident that drew condemnation across Africa, 100 civilians were killed in an airstrike in the Bounti locale while attending a wedding, a grave human rights violation according to a subsequent MINUSMA assessment<sup>84</sup>. Additionally, Operation Barkhane has been criticized as perpetuating *Françafrique*, a social theory prevalent in France’s former African colonies, such as Mali and the members of the G5 Sahel, which frames the French sphere of influence in Africa as a form of continued neocolonial oppression<sup>85</sup>. The popularity of beliefs related to this theory is echoed by 2019 Mali-Mètre responses suggesting that “based on experiences with colonialism and post-colonial legacy, many Malians think that countries like France do not have Mali’s best interests at heart<sup>86</sup>.”

Public perceptions of Operation Barkhane, prior to Mali’s 2021 coup, do not appear to vary widely across political backgrounds and geographical regions, per polling data. Additionally, widespread characterizations of the operation as a ‘forever war’ likely influenced the Macron government’s decision to withdraw from Mali<sup>87</sup>. While Operation Serval enjoyed substantial

public support in Mali due to initial successes in stabilizing the country’s North, reactions to the larger-scale Operation Barkhane were decidedly different. A 2019 study examining Malian political attitudes deemed Operation Barkhane “moderately unpopular,” with 56% of respondents opposing the mission due to perceived violations of sovereignty, reports of human rights abuses, and allegations of *Françafrique*<sup>88</sup>.

Similarly, French critiques of Operation Barkhane have drawn comparisons between the extended mission and the United States’ experience with protracted conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. In one study, polling by researchers affiliated with Strasbourg University found that approximately 65% of French citizens disapprove of continued military involvement in the Sahel, with an additional 9% of respondents declining to take a position on the operation<sup>89</sup>. According to French sources, Operation Barkhane claimed the lives of approximately 2,800 militants across various insurgent groups<sup>90</sup>. However, the influence of such reporting on domestic and Malian perceptions of the mission is unclear.

Following withdrawal demands by Mali’s transitional government, Operation Barkhane concluded in November 2022, giving the operation a total length of about 8.5 years<sup>91</sup>. While the operation was mostly lauded as successful in French media, France’s withdrawal from Mali and reduced presence in the Sahel have been detrimental to regional security. An observable



security implication of the withdrawal is indicated by steadily increasing terror attacks in Mali in the wake of France's exit<sup>92</sup>. Failing to follow up on the successes of Operation Serval, Operation Barkhane was a costly counterterrorism effort initially described as "François Hollande's African adventure" by critics<sup>93</sup>. The shortcomings of Operation Barkhane mainly center on France's abject failure to secure Malian hearts and minds, coupled with an indeterminate impact on the influence of militants in the region after nearly a decade.

Given the duration between the signing of the Algerian Accords peace agreement and Operation Barkhane's November 1, 2014, initial deployment, a deal was reached within 110 days of France's introduction to the Malian conflict. However, a possible limitation of this evaluation exists in that Operation Serval began one year before Operation Barkhane, limiting the efficacy of this assessment solely on quantitative grounds. Negating external factors that may have decreased the duration between the start of Operation Barkhane and the signing of a peace deal, the 110-day figure is shorter than that of MINUSMA. Nevertheless, according to the findings presented, Operation Barkhane was assessed as marginally more successful than MINUSMA on a qualitative basis.

### **THE WAGNER GROUP**

The Wagner Group is a Russian private military company (PMC) based in Saint Petersburg,

Russia. The paramilitary organization has been characterized as a network of mercenaries by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point<sup>94</sup>. However, alternate analyses have suggested that Wagner is a clandestine wing of the GRU, Russia's Directorate of Military Intelligence<sup>95</sup>. The organization was cofounded by Yevgeny Prigozhin, a deceased Russian oligarch with ties to President Vladimir Putin, and Dmitry Utkin, a former GRU officer<sup>96</sup>. While Prigozhin acted as the PMC's most public-facing element prior to his death in 2023, he generally operated in a limited capacity as a liaison between Putin, GRU leadership, and Wagner's commanding officers<sup>97</sup>.

The origins of the Wagner Group are somewhat unclear, as the group is defined by structurally limited oversight and accountability; thus, blatant ties to the Russian MoD can be concealed officially. This concealment of connections to the Russian government is central to Wagner's ability to operate under a level of deniability, with the group often undertaking roles that could create an enhanced risk of international incidents should the MoD be directly involved. Moreover, the Wagner Group's primary purpose appears to be the aggressive pursuit of the Kremlin's geopolitical objectives under the cover of plausible deniability<sup>98</sup>.

Furthermore, Wagner operates in a legal gray area, as private military contracting is illegal in Russia under Article 359 of the 1996

Russian Criminal Code<sup>99</sup>. Despite this legal challenge, Wagner personnel have been observed training and operating alongside conventional-Russian troops in Syria and Ukraine and may have received 'black-budget' funding and material assistance from the MoD<sup>100</sup>. Such joint efforts complicated the group's attempt to cultivate a public image as independent of the Russian state.

Prior to the 2022 Russia-Ukraine Conflict, Wagner predominantly sourced personnel from elite Russian military units such as the VDV and Spetsnaz, as well as some regular infantry units. Wagner Group forces in Mali, like those in Burkina Faso and Syria, appear to draw mainly from these elite units, as opposed to those utilized in the Ukraine Conflict, which are supplemented by conscripts and Russian prisoners due to immense losses<sup>101</sup>. The effects of altered personnel sourcing on Wagner's capacity to stabilize the security situation in Mali are unclear. However, the group's performance in similar areas of operation may shed light on such capabilities.

The Wagner Group began operations in Mali in December 2021 following the implementation of a military assistance agreement between the organization and Mali's transitional government in September 2021<sup>102</sup>. Following Mali's 2021 coup and the withdrawal of Operation Barkhane forces from the country, the transitional government was financially and politically isolated, and the FAMa lacked the military

capacity to stabilize the crisis. Thus, the transitional government sought external partners, a development reiterated by Malian PM Maïga's claim that "The new situation resulting from the end of Operation Barkhane puts Mali before a fait accompli – abandoning us, mid-flight to a certain extent – and it leads us to explore pathways and means to better ensure our security autonomously, or with other partners<sup>103</sup>." Referencing said 'partners,' the military assistance agreement entails monthly payments of approximately 6 billion CFA francs (~\$9.5 million) in exchange for Russian-made military assets, advisory and enhanced training for the FAMa, and counterterrorism support involving between 500-700 personnel<sup>104</sup>. However, Wagner personnel have frequently been observed in more forward roles by engaging Islamist militants and Tuareg separatists and perpetrating extensive war crimes against the Malian populace<sup>105</sup>.

Regarding abuses perpetrated by Wagner Group forces in Mali, the operation has been described as entailing a "mounting humanitarian cost," as "[in] the first quarter of 2022, civilian fatalities in the conflict were greater than in all of 2021<sup>106</sup>." Additionally, an investigation by the French government found that "at the end of March, FAMa, assisted by Wagner troops, massacred more than 300 civilians in the central Malian town of Moura during a five-day siege, making the attack the worst atrocity in the decade-long conflict in Mali<sup>107</sup>."

Furthermore, the group's activities have been compared to those of the region's Islamist militants, with nine separate massacres between December 2021 and March 2022 attributed to Wagner personnel<sup>108</sup>. Moreover, a MINUSMA request to the UN Security Council for an investigation into the Moura Massacre was blocked by Russia, raising tensions and reinforcing ties between the group and the state from which it seeks to maintain distance<sup>109</sup>.

Despite extensive reporting on atrocities perpetrated by the Wagner Group in other African theaters, such as Libya and the Central African Republic, the group retained a significant level of Malian public support early in its entrance to the country. This early public support is primarily demonstrated by coordinated rallies supporting Russian intervention in the run-up to France's departure<sup>110</sup>. However, public support for the Wagner Group appears to have declined significantly in the one year following the organization's entrance. For example, following a March 2022 massacre in Gossi, French newspaper *Le Figaro* featured interviews with local Malians, with one resident stating, "[we] live in fear. We fear Wagner much more than the terrorists, really. The terrorists, they have never come to destroy a market<sup>111</sup>." Moreover, initial public support for Wagner may be attributed to the extensive, coordinated Russian disinformation effort in the Sahel aimed at discrediting stabilization efforts undertaken by the French govern-

ment and MINUSMA, per a report by the African Center for Strategic Studies<sup>112</sup>.

While the primary role of the Wagner Group in Mali is to fulfill the terms of the military agreement reached with the transitional government, PMCs have acted successfully in controlling escalation management, if not in stabilizing crises, previously in Africa. The Wagner Group's mission in Mali has been marred by widespread war crimes, such as frequent massacres and rape of civilians, as well as a failure to stabilize the crisis<sup>113</sup>. However, not all PMC operations in Africa have failed to enforce peace like Wagner. For instance, Executive Outcomes (EO), a South African PMC, actively operated alongside government forces in two African conflicts, the Angolan and Sierra Leonean Civil Wars, defeating UNITA rebels in Angola and RUF insurgents in Sierra Leone<sup>114</sup>. In the case of Angola, EO rapidly suppressed UNITA forces following attacks on government leadership and mining infrastructure, contributing heavily to a short-term imposed peace that allowed for national elections to be held<sup>115</sup>. Additionally, EO operations in Angola influenced the Lusaka Protocol, a reconciliatory effort that reduced hostilities significantly<sup>116</sup>. While the current security landscape in Mali differs vastly from those of Sierra Leone and Angola in the mid-1990s, more successful approaches by PMCs to peace enforcement can, and should, be used to better inform the planning and implementation of

ongoing PMC operations in the region.

Given that a peace deal has not been reached since the Wagner Group arrived in Mali, the efficacy of the organization's operations must be assessed on a qualitative basis, as the quantitative framework cannot be applied in the absence of a peace agreement. Based on the Wagner Group's poor human rights record and contributions to increased violence against civilians, as well as a failure to regain control of Mali from the widespread militant presence, the organization has been assessed as having virtually zero capacity to stabilize the country's security situation<sup>17</sup>. Contrarily, this analysis suggests that any continued presence of Wagner personnel in Mali will be detrimental to the Malian security landscape.

### **FINDINGS**

Two recommendations have been derived from the findings established through the performance assessments for the respective intervention styles. First, any peacekeep-

ing effort or humanitarian mission in Mali should operate alongside a military contingency; thus, the delivery of aid can be facilitated safely in the wake of increased attacks on MINUSMA personnel. Additionally, the military contingency should operate with the primary objectives of regaining control from militant groups and providing protection to peacekeepers and humanitarian aid workers. Second, a greater effort at securing hearts and minds should be undertaken to increase credibility amongst the populace and reduce militant groups' influence. Furthermore, psychological operations should be conducted to subvert the power of militant groups in areas they control and to positively influence the public perception of intervention by external forces.

The Wagner Group and the FAMA have been determined to contribute to a worsened security situation, making them non-preferable candidates due to their low capacities to stabilize the crisis in Mali. However, MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane, the two alter-

nate missions evaluated, were also found to have significant shortcomings which hindered their abilities to stabilize the situation in Mali. Despite some successes, the two latter missions ultimately failed to foster increased stability, regain substantial territory from militants, or alleviate the country's widespread humanitarian crisis. Per the quantitative criteria for assessing potential performance in a crisis stabilizing role, Operation Barkhane appears the most successful in that it influenced the signing of a peace deal in a shorter duration than MINUSMA. However, the quantitative framework for evaluating such performance did not apply to the analyses of the Wagner Group or the FAMA, possibly limiting the accuracy of this conclusion based on less rigorous statistical backing. Although, the qualitative analyses of these actors support the conclusion that Operation Barkhane was relatively more successful than the other interventions in its potential capacity to stabilize the security situation in Mali.

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(Above) March 2023. A crystal clear view from the Cliffs of Moher in the Republic of Ireland.

Photographed by Campbell McClellan, first-year Political Science and History (United States concentration) double major.





*(Above) A street in the Altstadt (old town) section of Möckmühl, Germany. Situated within the Heilbronn district in Baden-Württemberg, Möckmühl exemplifies the German Fachwerkhaus (half-timbered) architectural tradition. Taken in July and August 2023, during a personal trip to Germany.*

*Photographed by Brenner Cobb, sophomore Peace, War, and Defense and Contemporary European Studies major and German minor.*



*(Above) While seemingly depicting an unremarkable path through a grassland, this photo depicts part of an area that was once a US army installation during the height of the Cold War. What is now a park known as Heilbronner Waldheide was once Fort Redleg, which housed Pershing Ia and Pershing II intermediate-range nuclear missiles during the 1980s. A missile fire that claimed the lives of several American servicemen in 1985 sparked demonstrations in the adjacent city of Heilbronn against the continued stationing of the missiles at this site and contributed to overall public debate over the continued deployment of the Pershing II system in West Germany. The Pershing II missiles were removed and destroyed following the negotiation of the INF Treaty between the US and the USSR. Taken in July and August 2023, during a personal trip to Germany.*

*Photographed by Brenner Cobb, sophomore Peace, War, and Defense and Contemporary European Studies major and German minor.*

# Conjoined Threats: Examining the Interconnectivity of Hate Crimes and Right-Wing Terrorism

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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the western world, a pressing security issue has emerged, threatening the livelihood of many nations' most vulnerable populations. Right-wing extremism has experienced an alarming surge in the past decade. From 2014-2020, deaths from right-wing terrorism rose 709%. Today, hate crimes account for 100% of deaths from ideological terrorism globally.<sup>1</sup> These staggering figures do not even convey the true extent of right-wing extremism, as many incidents are unreported.<sup>2</sup> This discrepancy exists for two central reasons. The first is that the average

victim or bystander may not know what constitutes a terrorist attack. The second is because right-wing terrorism flies under law enforcement's radar. The western world's current terrorism infrastructure is not suited to investigate and prevent far-right attacks.

A central dilemma in the effort to combat right-wing extremism is the relationship between hate crimes and terrorism. Many scholars have debated whether hate crimes and terrorism are "close cousins" or "distant relatives."<sup>3</sup> This paper aligns with an understanding of these crimes as closely related and often fluid rather than categorically different. Understanding hate crimes and

terrorism as fluid acts is particularly important because of the influence far-right terrorist bodies have on hate crime activity.

Right-wing terrorists operate outside many norms of modern terrorist organizations. The far-right does not serve as a "weapon of the weak" against a powerful enemy.<sup>4</sup> Nor do extremist organizations take credit for terrorist attacks. Additionally, there is a lack of hierarchy and centralized planning of attacks within global right-wing networks. Instead, right-wing organizations produce vast amounts of propaganda and misinformation in public forums, allowing individuals to explore and "educate" themselves on far-right ideologies.<sup>5, 6</sup> This propa-

ganda often showcases fringe beliefs within current political discourse. Individuals radicalized in these far-right spaces plan and execute terrorist attacks on their own – even without formal membership to an extremist group. However, a much larger portion of those exposed to right-wing propaganda do not turn to violence but internalize the hateful and dangerous values espoused in these spaces.<sup>7</sup> These individuals are primed for spontaneous calls to violence, as shown in conservative European protests.<sup>8</sup> This is a tactic of right-wing terrorism largely unexplored by counter-terrorism efforts.

As far-right extremism increases in the West, world leaders must consider how right-wing actors have largely avoided prosecution. Right-wing terrorists can evade counter-terrorist infrastructure by being misidentified as hate crimes.<sup>9</sup> Law enforcement and counter-terrorist efforts could combat this unique threat by understanding the true interconnectivity between hate crimes and far-right terrorism.

### **DEFINING HATE CRIMES**

A hate crime is defined as a criminal act motivated by the perpetrator's prejudice towards the victim(s) real or perceived identity group.<sup>10</sup> As Professor of Criminal Justice Colleen Mills and her research team explains, this activity is particularly menacing because hate crimes “attack notions of democracy, equality, human rights” that are vital to western society.<sup>11</sup> Such acts will often elevate levels of fear, mistrust, and insecurity in a com-

munity larger than the immediate targets.<sup>12</sup> This aspect of hate crime shares similarities with terrorism. They also attack the core values of societies and incite widespread fear, as discussed below.

In the western world, hate crimes have increased yearly. Between 2021 and 2022, incidents of hate crime increased 11.6% in the United States and 26% in England and Wales.<sup>13,14</sup> This trend continues throughout the West, with nearly every database on hate crimes showing an annual increase in incidents. In Europe, the largest targets of hate crimes are migrants, with notable attacks on refugee camps and resettlement homes. America, with its distinct and terrible history of anti-Black racism, sees African Americans as the main target.<sup>15</sup> However, exact figures for hate crimes are impossible to find, as there are numerous discrepancies in how hate crimes are reported. Many victims and witnesses do not report hate crimes, leaving them unprosecuted. Furthermore, in the European Union (EU), “only eight member states record crime motivated by the victim's (perceived) sexual orientation.”<sup>16</sup> Such inconsistencies in reporting mean that the true rate of hate crimes and their targets is unknown, putting western states at a disadvantage for combatting an issue that so directly attacks core values of democracy and freedom. To properly combat the growing issue, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (EUAFR) suggests that the EU should require member states to standardize hate

crime policy and publish data on the number of hate crime reports, police records, and convictions.<sup>17</sup>

Hate-motivated activity often reflects an extremity of current political discourse on the right. For example, from 2021-2022 abortion clinics in America saw a 231% increase in burglaries, 229% increase in stalking, and a 100% increase in arson as the pro-life movement became a central pillar of the Republican agenda.<sup>18</sup> This relationship between mainstream public discourse and hate crimes indicates the starting point for many soon-to-be-radicalized individuals. Director of the German Institute on Radicalization and De-Radicalization Studies Daniel Koehler puts the onus on right-wing politicians for increasingly hateful rhetoric and discourse that inspires extremists. He writes, “the ambivalent standpoint for far-right parties toward violence, as well as their racist and xenophobic propaganda were conducive to right-wing terrorism.”<sup>19</sup> The consistency of right-wing media in radicalizing hate crime perpetrators also lays the foundation for law enforcement to monitor and prevent future crimes. Through analysis of right-wing mass media and political discourse, counter-terrorist forces can predict the next targets of a fringe extremist internalizing this rhetoric.<sup>20</sup>

There is an important distinction to be made between the scope of criminal acts that can be categorized as hate crimes and those that cannot. Hate crimes can be soft violence (e.g., a hate symbol painted in a public space) or kinetic (the

use or planned use of violent force against a target). Data suggests that both soft and kinetic hate crimes positively correlate to an increase in violence and far-right activity.<sup>21</sup> Because hate crimes are under-reported and under-prosecuted, it is essential that law enforcement and policy makers increase the public's understanding of what constitutes a hate crime and how to report such incidents.

### **DEFINING FAR-RIGHT TERRORISM**

Various governments, counter-terrorism organizations, and academics have different definitions for what constitutes terrorism. Overall, these definitions require 5 characters: (1) politically motivated, (2) violence or threat of violence, (3) intentional targeting of civilians, (4) incite fear in a broader group, (5) perpetrated by a non-state actor.<sup>22, 23</sup> Far-right terrorism easily fits this definition.

There are two central political motivations for far-right terrorism: racially motivated white supremacy and anti-government movements. In the United States, these two categories make up 85% of far-right terrorism attacks since 1990.<sup>24</sup> White supremacy groups like the Proud Boys in the United States and the National Socialist Underground in Germany are the face of the far-right movement, touting neo-Nazi, anti-immigration, misogynistic ideologies that turn heads and headlines.<sup>25</sup> Anti-government groups share an affinity for firearms and explosives with their white supremacist counterparts but are made

up of surprisingly diverse members. Unexpectedly, anti-government organizations like the American "Patriot" movement have seen a steady rise in African American membership. The increase in far-right conspiracy theories online, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, has likely contributed to the radicalization and recruitment of new members to far-right anti-government groups.<sup>26</sup> International destabilization and economic crises often increase radicalization. This was only exacerbated by an international quarantine, wherein many people relied on the internet, the home base for far-right propaganda and misinformation, to socialize. Despite their diverse membership, anti-government right-wing groups are very passive toward racism and white supremacy in far-right groups on- and offline. This passivity reflects the "salad bar" of extremism on the far-right, where members can choose from many targets, such as people of color, women, immigrants, or government officials. Many options can also cause a rabbit hole effect, wherein members like shooter Ethan Miller hate "everyone and everything," as he wrote in his manifesto prior to killing himself and two others at a grocery store in Bend, Oregon.<sup>27</sup> The breadth of far-right values is important to note. They may appear like distinct ideological factions, but in reality, these far-right values exist within the same threat landscape of radicalized right-wing beliefs.

Right-wing terrorism has many unique characteristics that

challenge counterterrorism efforts. Terrorism is often referred to as a "weapon of the weak."<sup>28</sup> This phrase exhibits the upward nature of most terrorist attacks, in which the perpetrators are a minority or subjugated group using terrorism to attack a much more powerful enemy (e.g. attacks against an apartheid government). White supremacist right-wing terrorism does not fit this mold. White supremacist extremists attack downward or laterally, almost never in an upward fashion. The main targets of these far-right organizations are minority groups (downward targets) and general civilians (lateral targets). This element of right-wing activity is arguably more insidious than the traditional use of terrorism as a weapon of the weak because the targets are often a nation's most vulnerable populations and fundamental notions of equality and basic human rights.<sup>29</sup>

Right-wing terrorism further breaks the mold of traditional terrorism because organized right-wing extremist bodies rarely take credit for attacks. Most terrorist groups will use the media frenzy around a terrorist attack to publicize their ideologies and hopefully gain new membership. Right-wing organizations do not claim responsibility for far-right terrorism in the same manner as jihadist terrorists and other premier organizers of terror.<sup>30</sup> This reflects how far-right actions are "message crimes" and the distinct path to radicalization for many right-wing actors. Right-wing terrorism often incites fear in a community and serves as a "warn-

ing” to the targeted population. As such, far-right groups do not need to claim credit for their action to get their message across. Scholars have defined this kind of violence as “message crimes.”<sup>31</sup> Another reason that right-wing organizations do not claim credit for terrorist attacks is because far-right terrorists are usually stray dog actors who are not explicitly working with a larger organization to plan and prepare their attack.<sup>32</sup> Right-wing groups benefit significantly from this structure. By not claiming credit for terrorist attacks, far-right groups can continue to operate outside the purview of the law, avoiding unwanted attention and a possible crackdown on activity.

Stray dog perpetrators sometimes post manifestos online before launching their attack, as in the case with the 2019 Christchurch shooting in New Zealand and the 2022 Tops Market shooting in Buffalo, New York.<sup>33</sup> Within both of these now infamous manifestos were references to the Great Replacement Theory, a white supremacist conspiracy theory that claims white society is being replaced by immigrants, Muslims, and people of color, in a “genocide by substitution.”<sup>34</sup> This theory is incredibly racist and xenophobic, with deep ties to anti-Semitism. The Great Replacement Theory has been a keystone to recent far-right terrorist attacks, reflecting on a key motivation for right-wing terrorists: defense. Right-wing extremists often believe that they are acting to “defend their turf” or neighborhood, whether from a minority group or

an overbearing government.<sup>35</sup> The perceived threat these extremists believe they are defending against is bogus, but such motivations are important to understanding the nature of right-wing extremism and radicalization.

The final distinctive quality of far-right extremism this paper addresses is its hierarchical structure or lack thereof. Unlike familiar forms of terrorism, far-right organizations rarely have defined leadership structures that plan and carry out attacks.<sup>36</sup> Instead, far-right organizations have a segmentary and decentralized structure for propagating violence.<sup>37</sup> As the Anti-Defamation League explains in its catalog of right-wing terrorism in America: “all of the perpetrators and alleged perpetrators... have ties to extremist ideologies, but not all of them actually have had connections to specific extremist groups... Even when extremists are connected to specific groups, they rarely commit their actions at the direction of the group.”<sup>38</sup>

This individualized radicalization allows far-right organizations to have transnational reach with propaganda across many western countries. This “leaderless resistance” can then radicalize many actors without providing explicit guidance on how to launch an attack.<sup>39</sup> Instead of receiving plans from organized groups, radicalized right-wing extremists turn to past attacks to inspire their actions. Behavioral pathologists term this concept of decentralized radicalization and call to action a “behavior con-

tagion.”<sup>40</sup> This explains why many far-right actors write manifestos that tout similar ideals and commit their acts in similar fashion despite not sharing membership with an extremist organization. The reality of the right-wing terrorist machine is that it exists without a strong hierarchical structure but still spreads vast amounts of propaganda internationally. Around the western world, those exposed to far-right propaganda “educate” themselves, join and engage in forums, and see each other as inspiration for their own tactics.<sup>41</sup>

However, some members of online forums and other echo-chambers do not radicalize to the point of terrorism but remain active in right-wing spaces, sowing disdain for minorities or the government. Organized right-wing militias recognize this and manipulate situations to spontaneously radicalize non-militant extremists to violence. Koehler terms this phenomenon “hive” terrorism. He explains that right-wing militant organizations manipulate conservative protest movements to incite violence in large crowds and remain hidden. This terrorist tactic can encourage non-militant protestors to spontaneously join the violence. In almost all definitions, terrorism requires planning and preparation from actors. The spontaneous nature of certain actors in these protests-turned-terrorism deeply blurs the lines between terrorism and hate crime.<sup>42</sup> Following this trend of gray space between hate crime and terrorism, this paper explores a key

strategy of right-wing extremists that counterterrorist measures have underestimated.

### **INTERCONNECTING HATE CRIMES AND FAR-RIGHT TERRORISM**

Scholars have debated the relationship between hate crimes and terrorism, arguing whether these two acts are “close cousins” or “distant relatives.” This paper’s findings align with an understanding of hate crimes and right-wing terrorism as “close cousins.” Furthermore, the delicate differences between hate crimes and far-right terrorism and our dependence on labeling extremist right-wing activity as one or the other limits our understanding of tactics and strategies distinctive to right-wing extremism. By recognizing the interconnectedness of hate crimes and right-wing terrorism, the West can develop counter-terrorism strategies molded to this unique threat.

The intent and effect of a hate crime is the same as right-wing terrorism. Both hate crime perpetrators and right-wing terrorists are motivated by hatred towards similar scapegoats (immigrants, minorities, people of color). Both acts seek to terrorize a broader group.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, hate crimes and right-wing terrorism both fall under the category of “message crimes,” wherein the message of an act is understood without the actor(s) taking credit.<sup>44</sup> Both acts are often carried out by decentralized stray dog actors that carry out far-right agendas, who are often acting on their own accord rather than working with a larger

organization.

The central characteristic academics cite for differentiating between hate crimes and right-wing terrorism is the lack of planning, preparation, and resources required to commit a hate crime.<sup>45</sup> However, scholars recognize that right-wing activity can be confused for spontaneous hate crimes. Annalies Pauwels, a Belgian researcher on counterterrorism, reflects on this conundrum in the 2019 Global Terrorism Index: “Right-wing terrorists have a history of not claiming responsibility for their attacks as their message is often straightforward... their violent acts are frequently considered isolated and near-spontaneous incidents.”<sup>46</sup> This nature of far-right attacks as “near-spontaneous” explains how law enforcement can wrongly prosecute terrorists with only hate crime charges. Right-wing terrorists spend less time planning and preparing attacks than other terrorist actors. This reality blurs the line between what should be prosecuted as solely a hate crime and what is deserving of “the extraordinary levels of public, political, and law-enforcement attention” associated with terrorism.<sup>47</sup>

Mills and her research team at John Jay College of Criminal Justice proved that an increase in hate crime activity, soft or kinetic, increases the likelihood of right-wing activity and terrorist attacks.<sup>48</sup> When individuals are exposed and desensitized to far-right media online, they are more likely to commit violence against targeted groups, even in a spontaneous nature. Once

a hate crime (of any nature) is committed, members within that community of similar ideologies can be inspired to commit crimes of their own, increasing the likelihood of a fatal attack. This study shows the need for law enforcement to increase resources in investigations of right-wing networks on- and offline, particularly in areas with high-levels of hate crimes.<sup>49</sup>

Organized far-right groups recognize the influence of the spread of their propaganda and misinformation online. They understand that many non-members are sympathetic to incredibly xenophobic, racist, and dangerous beliefs but have not radicalized to the point of terrorism. This wide-spread, international group is much more likely to “spontaneously” commit a hate crime than your average civilian. The tactics displayed in European protests prove that organized terrorist groups understand the numbers and power of this nonviolent sympathizer population. As a result, militants plan terrorist attacks at protests and rely on non-members to join in on the violence when exposed to the thrill of a protest turned riot.<sup>50</sup> How can these tactics be defined? Surely, they are a form of terrorism. But what of the people who spontaneously join in on a planned terrorist attack? With the understanding that organized far-right groups explicitly use these tactics, hate crimes can be aligned as a strategic part of right-wing organizations. Through the spread of misinformation and propaganda, far-right organizations rely on radicalized parties to com-

mit spontaneous hate crimes rather than planned attacks. This allows far-right organizations to further their mission to intimidate, eliminate, or “defend their turf” from minority populations all while evading “government crackdown.”<sup>51, 52</sup>

This labeling problem can have serious repercussions in efforts to combat far-right terrorism. In his policy analysis for counter-terrorist measures against right-wing groups, Koehler reflects that “the hate crime label can have the side effect of misrepresenting the true extent of far-right violence and terrorism.”<sup>53</sup> Failing to prosecute terrorist strategies with terrorism charges deflates figures on right-wing violence, creating inaccurate threat assessments and underfunding in efforts to counter right-wing activity.<sup>54</sup> It is essential to recognize the interconnected nature of hate crimes and far-right activity to fight this increasingly prevalent threat.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The findings in this paper lead to many policy suggestions to help combat far-right terrorism in a thorough manner tailored to the specific nature of right-wing extremist activity. The emphasis should be put on three central changes to the current counterterrorism infrastructure that would increase the west’s ability to fight far-right activity.

1. Increase efforts to report hate crimes throughout the western world. There is not a unified approach to hate crime reporting, prosecution, or research among western countries. This suggestion

includes educating the general population about the various natures of hate crimes and how to report them to law enforcement. Furthermore, as inspired by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, European Union members states and leaders of the western world “should adopt legislation... to publish statistical data pertaining to hate crime.”<sup>55</sup> Additionally, in a less public mode, participating countries should compare hate crime activity to analyze the international spread of right-wing extremism online.

2. Law enforcement and counter-terrorism units should follow the current trends in political discourse to identify targets of the next right-wing attack. Right-wing extremists follow mainstream political discourse and often begin their path to radicalization within the mass media. This explains why bias-motivated crimes against immigrants increased following the 2016 American election, in which Republican political candidates espoused anti-immigrant opinions that fueled extremists’ call to action.<sup>56</sup> More recently, the repeal of *Roe v. Wade* in America has increased hate crime incidents against abortion clinics.<sup>57</sup> These trends in right-wing activity can serve as a crucial tool to prevent and combat future incidents. This paper calls for an increase in investigations into trends in fringe political discourse and right-wing forums to predict the nature of – and prevent – the next far-right extremist violent crime.

3. Increase comprehension of the interconnected nature of

hate crimes and far-right terrorist networks. Organized neo-Nazi and anti-government groups produce vast amounts of propaganda, misinformation, and conspiracy theories. Through the global reach of the internet, this media can desensitize many people to radical xenophobic, racist, and dangerous ideologies. Some of these groups radicalize to the point of committing terrorist acts on their own, as is the case with the Christchurch massacre, the El Paso shooter, and the Buffalo shooter. However, a large population becomes desensitized to extremist ideologies but do not plan or prepare terrorist attacks. Right-wing extremists rely on these sympathetic populations to commit hate crimes, spontaneously join riots, and defend radical action by others. This strategy is unique to right-wing terrorism and has been largely overlooked by counter-terrorist efforts. Prior studies have recognized the positive correlation between hate crimes and fatal right-wing activity.<sup>58</sup> This paper recommends further investigation into the use of hate crimes as a central tactic of international far-right extremists.

Far-right terrorism poses an increasing threat to western countries. This form of terrorism is unique to others and thus requires measures adapted to the manner that far-right activity operates. These policy suggestions are fit, based on research and literature from professionals in the counter-terrorism field, to fight the persisting and growing threat of right-wing violence.



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*(Above) June 2023. March 2023. People walk on a crowded Galway street as various international flags wave above. Photographed by Campbell McClellan, first-year Political Science and History (United States concentration) double major.*

*(Right) March 2023. The back side of the United States Capitol building; the front was undergoing renovations at the time of our visit and was obscured by scaffolding. Taken during UNC Global's Washington Week trip over Spring Break 2023.*

*Photographed by Brenner Cobb, sophomore Peace, War, and Defense and Contemporary European Studies major and German minor.*



# After ‘The Long, Dark Night of Neoliberalism<sup>1</sup>’: Leftist Models of Redistribution During Latin America’s Pink Tide

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## **ABSTRACT**

**L**atin America has a persistent history of concentrated wealth and income, remaining the most unequal region in the world. Legacies of historical colonial exploitation and contemporary structures of economic dependency are partly responsible for the region’s current position. In the 2000s, the turn to left governance during the pink tide era, however, represents a unique period for the region in which trajectories of poverty and inequality were altered. While evidence shows an aggregate reduction in both poverty and inequality, what of its cross-national variation? Using data between 1995 and 2020, alongside the case studies of Brazil and Chile as moderate Left governments and Bolivia and Ecuador as contestatory Left governments, this

work shows that the contestatory regimes are associated with greater and more immediate reductions of both measures. Moreover, this work suggests further research is needed to clarify the relationship between social investment and social consumption policies, not in the supremacy of one over the other, but in their complementary bond in shaping inequality.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Latin American experience with poverty and inequality often seems difficult and incurable. The region has a long and persistent history of concentrated wealth and privilege. To this day, Latin America remains the most unequal region in the world with recent Gini Coefficient estimates placing income distribution as high as 46<sup>2</sup>. This is in contrast to the Organization for

Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) country average of 31 in 2019<sup>3</sup>. The prevalence of poverty likewise plagues the region to a large degree. In 2021, 32 percent of people living in Latin America were living in poverty and almost 14 percent of those were living in extreme poverty<sup>4</sup>. Latin America’s present situation is rooted in the legacies of historical colonial exploitation and modern structures of economic dependency. However, while inequality and poverty are ongoing challenges for the region, there has been some recent progress. At the end of the 1990s, Latin America underwent significant political shifts. This period, known as the pink tide, saw a turn to Left governance and as such, confronted international economic models. Following a wave of democratization in the 1980s,

Left parties ascended to power in many prominent Latin American countries. Upon taking power, these governments signaled the desire to change the trajectory of income inequality and poverty within their respective countries. In fact, there is evidence that both were successfully reduced during this period.

This work explores the politics and outcomes of redistribution during this unique period of Latin American history. First, what was the result of redistributive policies of certain pink tide Left governments for poverty and income inequality? To what extent did this new direction disrupt the path of disparity, and of the collection of social policies used, which can be argued to be most causally effective? Secondly, during this period, there emerged two observable models of Left governance – moderate Left governments and contestatory Left governments. Comparing these two models, which was most effective at reducing levels of inequality and poverty? How were these two models distinct from one another, and what were the differences in their outcomes?

To examine these questions, recent experiences in four Latin American countries, serve as case studies—Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Ecuador. All of these countries were a part of the Left wave that swept Latin America during the pink tide and can be used to represent two distinct Left models. Brazil and Chile both saw dual leftist leaders attempt redistribution during this period: Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff in

Brazil, and Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet in Chile; all constitute a moderate Left approach. Conversely, in Bolivia and Ecuador, Evo Morales and Rafael Correa pursued a much more radical path and are described as contestatory Left governments. All of these governments either introduced new social programs or expanded preexisting ones to combat inequality and poverty.

The primary objective of this work is to first focus on the assemblage of policies used by each country and identify which were most effective at reducing both measures. Additionally, there is a suggested emphasis on the distinction between social investment and social consumption policies for future research. This work argues that a unique, and potentially systematically theorized complementary bond exists between the two sets of policies that deserve greater study.

## LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORY

### *Historical legacies and dependency*

The roots of Latin America's disparity have both historical and contemporary determinants, with the historical legacies of the past still informing and shaping its present. In fact, any analysis devoid of the contexts of colonialism will be insufficient in explaining the region's current situation. The current political and economic composition of Latin America is deeply rooted in the colonial mercantilist project – i.e., the economic-political arrangement that was designed by colonizing powers to extract re-

sources. There, the Spanish and Portuguese crowns set up authoritarian economies oriented towards exports through trade monopolies and property controlling land grants<sup>5</sup>.

This, then, created a very path-dependent trajectory for Latin America. Since the economy was set up in an export-driven way, the development of internal productive capacity was heavily constrained. In addition, most of the goods that made up the colonial economy left little potential for subsidiary industrialization<sup>6</sup>. With the mining of metals, goods were simply extracted from the ground and shipped overseas. Agricultural products – bananas, for example – are grown, harvested, and then exported. While there was some subsidiary production in the way of animal husbandry – sheep to wool, and cattle to hides – this was small by comparison. The unequal distribution of land that came with the colonial structure helped to further cement an unequal distribution of wealth and power that still persists to this day<sup>7,8</sup>.

With the implementation of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI)<sup>9</sup> in the 1930s, the region attempted to shift this direction of dependency. To emphasize internal domestic development, Latin American governments created protected domestic markets through tariffs, import quotas, investment in state enterprises, and tax incentives<sup>10</sup>. This approach did produce some economic gains but had problems with altering the lasting legacies of dependency. The primary issue

regarding the ISI model was Latin America's international balance of payments. As raw material exports are insufficient in raising adequate revenue for continued industrialization, international borrowing created multiple balance of payments crises. This cycle of debt and crisis eventually resulted in prescriptions from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in an effort to help stabilize economies but further exacerbated inequality and dependency going forward<sup>11</sup>.

Since the mid-20th Century, scholars have theorized differing models of dependency for the region. While dependency is conceptualized in various ways, many suggest that the legacies of colonialism and the hegemony of the international order create a level of dependency between Latin America and the Western powers<sup>12131415</sup>. Markets in the region are still export-dominated and, thus, vulnerable to international pricing and exogenous shocks. International actors also use economic and political power as a means of leverage to influence domestic decisions, and strategic alliances between foreign and domestic actors create linkages that favor international interests<sup>16</sup>.

### *Welfare Agenda: Investment, Social policy, & Redistribution*

There is a robust body of literature detailing the relationship between social welfare policies – i.e., the welfare state – and inequality<sup>171819</sup>. In general, policies comprising the welfare state can be categorized in one of two ways, those of social investment and

those of social consumption. Both are designed to mitigate the risks of market forces, yet social investment – e.g., education, childcare, and active labor market policies – is specifically capable of strengthening human capital development<sup>20</sup>. Consumptive policies, on the other hand, act as a means of income support and poverty reduction; public transfers traditionally associated with the welfare state's social safety net – e.g., unemployment insurance and income assistance – largely fit this distinction. In other words, social investment seeks to compensate for future market disruptions by increasing an individual's capacity to participate in the labor market, while social consumption aims to address the immediate needs of individuals facing current disruptions.

Concerning the distinction between investment and consumption, debate exists among scholars and policymakers regarding the precise prioritization of an active versus passive welfare state, or predistribution versus redistribution<sup>21</sup>. While preliminary findings suggest the advantageousness of investment, especially regarding education, for evolving macro-level economic transitions, nuanced caution is still necessary. Some, in advocating for the preeminence of investment policies over public transfers to address market inequalities, have endorsed the substitution of consumption with that of investment. However, others have warned that overemphasizing to the point of replacement ignores that even the impacts of investment can still be depressed

by prior legacies of poverty and inequality<sup>2223</sup>. Therefore, traditional means of welfare support should be used alongside newer policies of investment. It is also worth noting that the push for a predistribution agenda, in lieu of traditional welfare state support, further suggests the hegemonic role of a neoliberal-economic ideology.

Regarding welfare policy regimes, prior research has shown that generous welfare states and expansive social policies shape income distribution and reduce poverty<sup>2425</sup>.<sup>26</sup> In advanced capitalist economies, countries with highly universal and generous programs (the Nordic's) usually have lower levels of inequality. In contrast, more market-based schemes and less generous welfare regimes (the United States) tend to have higher levels of inequality. Latin American social welfare policies, however, took on a slightly different path. While social spending and taxation have been influential in shaping income distribution in advanced capitalist countries, their effects in Latin America are mixed<sup>272829</sup>. To begin, the impact of social spending is different for different kinds of programs, and in different labor market settings. For example, social security spending tends to be regressive in Latin America; since benefits are tied to contractual employment, informal workers are therefore excluded. Huber and Stephens (2012) cite estimates of informal workers in the region, indicating that they make up about 45 percent of the population of eight major Latin American countries.

Education and health spending, however, is shown to be much more progressive. In line with the social investment literature, both are also key components of a human capital framework<sup>30,31</sup>. Education, for example, has the potential to facilitate the acquisition of skills and depending on how this is structurally distributed, can help to reduce inequality<sup>32,33,34</sup>. The ‘how’ of distribution is important, however. Particular education is more redistributive than others, and public provisioning can determine the distributive impacts<sup>35,36</sup>. This same distinction between public and private can be implied about health-care spending as well. On the consumptive side, public cash transfer programs have poverty-reducing qualities<sup>37,38</sup>. Since poverty levels are directly linked to inequality and potentially depress the impacts of investment, income assistance, and direct cash payments are important for redistribution. Moreover, conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs also contribute to the complementary bond between investment and consumption in another way. The conditional nature of certain programs further aids in educational and health outcomes through the investment in a country’s people, or its social infrastructure. The Brazilian Bolsa Família program, for example, is conditioned on children’s school attendance and periodic medical checkups<sup>39</sup>.

Social policies depend on two things in order to have the most redistributive impact: durable revenue sources and adequate

coverage<sup>40</sup>. In Latin America, both have posed problems for welfare agendas. Firstly, Latin American tax burdens are much lower than those of advanced capitalist economies. Direct income taxes tend to be low, partly due to high participation in the informal work sector<sup>41</sup>. This informalization also poses a problem for contributory programs. Thus, it posits that the accrual of benefits can be limited in such an environment.

### *Democracy, Partisanship, & Power*

The Democratic experience has been associated with a higher incidence of redistribution and the development and implementation of particular social policies; this relationship can be observed in the advanced capitalist world and in Latin America. Huber and Stephens<sup>42</sup> (2012), as well as Pribble<sup>43</sup> (2013), provide evidence to suggest a positive association between redistributive social policies and the duration of democracy in Latin America. The “master key” behind the mechanism of this relationship is the balance of class power interests and more precisely the balance of power resources. As a political project, democracy has been the primary vehicle for class interests, especially for the bottom. Democracy enables the lower classes to voice their interests electorally and wield power through organized effort – both being decisive power resources<sup>44</sup>. If society can be thought of as clusters of power, then democracy offers a way for those clusters to compete.

Traditionally, the class struc-

ture is determined by the distribution of private property and other capital, as well as one’s relation to the means of production as either a buyer or seller of labor. In a democratic context, political parties are the way class interests are then translated into governance. Historically, Left parties have been the primary political actors responsible for redistribution, and poor and working-class groups have been key Left party constituencies. Huber and Stephens<sup>45</sup> show that a higher prevalence of left parties in government, and for a longer cumulative period of time, resulted in more generous welfare states.

While there is some debate about how best to classify classes in Latin America, it is safe to say that a broad distinction between upper- and lower-classes reveals starkly unequal groups<sup>46,47,48,49,50</sup>. Yet, Left parties in Latin America have been less successful in comparison to their European counterparts in exerting significant governing power; structural barriers in the region have proved unfavorable. Fragmented party systems with a lack of party discipline, a preponderance of clientelist patronage, weak labor unions, and unregulated campaigns all make it difficult for organized lower classes and Left parties to win recurrent elections over time<sup>51,52</sup>. More plainly, building policy frameworks takes time; Left parties and related coalitions need to be able to win repeated elections and hold power for extended periods of time.

### *A Novel Path: Through Pink-Colored Glasses*



Around the end of the 1990s, a significant shift occurred in Latin America. Known as the pink tide, leftist governments began to take power in the region. During the “lost decade” of the 1980s, cycles of debt crises saw the expansion of neoliberal reforms. In an effort to stabilize economies, IMF interventions prescribed an overall shrinking of the state: markets were liberalized and deregulated, programs and enterprises were privatized, with others narrowed in scope<sup>53</sup>. By the beginning of the 90s, neoliberalism had taken a firm hold on the region. The results increased economic growth, but with an uneven distribution of gains and increased volatility<sup>54,55</sup>. By the end of the decade, growing popular discontent laid the groundwork for Left candidates. Beginning with the 1998 election of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, by the mid-2000s a majority of the region’s governments were headed by leftist leaders. Even Chile, the heart of Latin America’s neoliberal experiment, took part in this leftward shift. This popular expression of the demand for social rights suggested a frustration with neoliberal failures and a history of colonial and conservative authoritarian rule<sup>56</sup>.

Ideologically, this leftward turn was a move toward a more inclusionary society; social equality, fairness, and the desire for progress are at the foundation of leftist political expression<sup>57</sup>. With this shift there also came an experimentation in social policy. While all of the Left governments of the pink tide represented this new governing vision,

governments variably implemented differing social policy sets. This variation can be conceived of as divergent Left models, in which scholars have theorized a complex multidimensional classification<sup>58,59</sup> to that of a dichotomous typology<sup>60</sup>. For its utilitarian simplicity, this work uses the latter distinction of two models while also acknowledging that, like most features of the sociopolitical world, a spectrum of incidence does exist. Moderate Left regimes emphasized pragmatic incrementalism, while contestatory Left regimes were a more radical challenge to the preexisting order, desiring rapid change.

The theoretical assumptions that build the following hypotheses rest upon the proven power of redistributive social policies in shaping income distribution, the Left being the primary vehicle for those policies, and the potential counterbalancing legacies of domestic and international distributions of power. In the Latin American context, particular policies have been shown to be more redistributive than others. Work by scholars points to investment in education and health as being redistributive, although with a lag<sup>61,62</sup>. In addition, cash transfer programs can be highly redistributive, with the effects felt much more quickly.

As Left parties are traditionally the greatest advocates for redistributive social policy<sup>63</sup>, it is inarguable that the advancement of social policy in the early 2000s is partly due to this left turn. But of the two Left models, moderate and

contestatory, which model was most effective in reducing poverty and inequality? Intuitively, one would venture that the most leftist governments, the contestatory, would do a better job. However, given the legacies of neoliberalism embedded within domestic and international structures, and the configuration of these power distributions, this may not be the case. No matter the degree of leftism presented, all new governments faced this challenge. However, in assessing immediate versus long-term impacts, the sheer force of the contestatory administrations should not be discounted. From these assumptions, the following hypotheses are posited:

H1: Redistributive social policies of Left governments during the Latin American pink tide, in contrast to the prior neoliberal period, resulted in the reduction of poverty and inequality, and, H2: In Latin America, contestatory Left governments decreased poverty and inequality at greater, and more immediate, rates than the moderate Left governments.

## **DATA & RESEARCH DESIGN**

A mixed methods approach is used to examine the above hypotheses, combining quantitative cross-sectional analysis, between the years 1995 and 2020, with a qualitative case study of the two main varieties of Left models of redistribution. The governments of Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff in Brazil, along with Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet in Chile serve as moderate Left cases. In contrast,

the Evo Morales government in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador are two cases for the contestatory Left.

Inequality and poverty are operationalized as dependent variables, while various social policy programs serve as independent variables. Inequality is calculated as the Gini Coefficient of per capita income distribution in the country as a whole. Poverty is measured as the percentage of the population with a household per capita income living below the poverty line. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>64</sup> defines this as the “cost of covering their food and other, non-food basic needs.” Both measures are taken from various years’ publications of ECLAC’s Social Panorama of Latin America<sup>65,66,67,68,69</sup>.

Based on prevailing literature, certain social policies are more redistributive compared to others. As such, public education and health expenditures, as well as CCT programs, are utilized here as independent variables. Education and health expenditures—i.e., social investment—are calculated as a percentage of the GDP for each country; both variables reflect public, as opposed to private, spending, since public spending is shown to be more redistributive in the literature. Each of these measures is taken from ECLAC’s Social Panorama of Latin America<sup>70,71,72,73</sup>.

CCT programs—i.e., social consumption—are measured as the percentage of the population they cover. While expenditures can be

important proxies for the size and strength of programs, they can also be misleading. Thus, coverage data is used to gauge the impact of cash transfers on the population. This measure is taken from the World Bank’s Atlas of Social Protection: Indicators of Resilience and Equity (ASPIRE) Data Set<sup>74</sup>. A point of clarification regarding the classification of CCT programs in this work as consumptive: As noted above, the conditional nature of CCTs can have investment oriented features and therefore occupy a liminal space somewhere between consumption and investment. Accordingly, Garrizmann and colleagues<sup>75</sup> argue that cash transfers can also execute investment functions, specifically noting CCTs in this way; however, they also highlight work showing that the effects of CCTs are somewhat limited to the short term: their influence on reducing intergenerational transmission of poverty and inequality is weak and their long term effectiveness is largely dependent on state capacity and the quality of public services<sup>76,77</sup>. This means that absent a broader investment strategy facilitating the development and mobilization of workers’ productive capacities, poorer and lower skilled populations will necessitate the use of CCTs permanently. Given these dynamics, and the fact that the logic of investment is geared towards the long term, I classify CCTs as largely facilitating consumption.

### *The Moderate Left: Brazil and Chile*

In the fall of 2002, Brazil elected Luiz Inácio ‘Lula’ da Silva to

the presidency, succeeding centrist President Cardoso. Lula went on to win re-election in 2006 with very high popularity. In 2011, Lula’s Chief of Staff, Dilma Rousseff, was then elected to the Brazilian presidency. Around the same time in Chile, Ricardo Lagos was elected president in 2000, serving until 2006. Subsequently, Michelle Bachelet, a cabinet minister in the Lagos administration, served as president from 2006 until 2010 and again from 2014 to 2018. Both political duos governed as moderates and pragmatically worked to reduce inequality in their countries<sup>78,79</sup>.

For both countries, this pragmatism was partly the product of institutional constraints. In each case, the Left was slowly “de-radicalized” by past experiences<sup>80</sup>. During the early 1970s, the Socialist Allende administration was severely opposed by an antagonistic international community, domestic business elites, and right-wing political interest<sup>81,82</sup>. Following a bloody military coup in 1973, supported by the United States CIA, Augusto Pinochet instituted a military dictatorship that was in power until 1990. The Pinochet administration, with the aid of U.S. economists, ushered in a strict neoliberal economic model, sharply shrinking the state and advancing privatization. Opposition to the government was largely leftist in nature; most leftist parties were initially banned, with other parties to follow later<sup>83</sup>.

In Brazil, a fragmented party system rife with clientelist patronage, a market-oriented approach

set out by Cardoso, and a similar historical pattern to that of Chile influenced the da Silva and Rousseff administrations<sup>84</sup>. In 1964, a military dictatorship was established, also supported by the United States, and lasted until 1985. As in Chile, the Brazilian experience was markedly right-wing in the political and social sense. While the government suppressed many parts of civil society, left parties and labor were of particular focus. In fact, while debated by historians, assertions of an “alleged communist threat” were used as a justification for the coup that produced the dictatorship. Given these circumstances, moderate governments largely stayed within institutional frameworks. Instead of outright rebellion, leaders respected opposition and sought consensus. This meant that the forwarded policy agenda was more of a continuation with gradual reform and expansion, rather than a radical break. There was no wholesale confiscation of the means of production, widespread land reform, nor substantial tax reform<sup>85</sup>.

In general, the policy agenda of the moderate left pursued “non-controversial goals” of alleviating extreme poverty, rather than substantial structural reform<sup>86</sup>. Income transfer programs, especially CCTs, were a significant part of that agenda. In Brazil, da Silva inherited the popular Bolsa Escola (later Bolsa Família) program from Cardoso, which provided income support for families living below a certain income. Da Silva created a unified system for beneficiaries, added a

conditional aspect, and expanded benefits and coverage. Between 2003 and 2006, coverage increased by an average of about three million families each year<sup>87</sup>. Under Lagos in Chile, Chile Solidario was established entitling a small cash benefit conditioned on children’s school attendance and medical checkups<sup>88,89</sup>. While the program was targeted, Bachelet later proposed its expansion.

While Brazil marginally increased expenditures, Chile made significant expansions in both areas. Under Lagos, a concerted move toward universal health care resulted in the program, Universal Access with Explicit Guarantees (AUGE)<sup>90,92</sup>. The plan was designed to cover a certain number of illnesses and be funded through a solidarity fund. Even though domestic opposition scaled down much of the original plan, it did increase expenditures and represented a more universalist approach. Bachelet later expanded upon the program to cover more illnesses and instituted the Chile Creco Contigo program for children<sup>93</sup>. Education reform was likewise difficult for Lagos and Bachelet. Difficulties in this arena also stemmed from the Pinochet period. Nonetheless, expenditures were increased significantly, small reforms were enacted, and preschool was expanded—much of which was during the Bachelet administration<sup>94</sup>. The addition of educational attendance and health checkup conditionalities for CCT programs, in Brazil and Chile, likely contributed to higher expenditures and outcomes.

### *The Contestatory Left: Bolivia and Ecuador*

In December of 2005, Evo Morales shocked the world as a broad-based coalition ushered in his landslide victory in Bolivia. The following year, Rafael Correa was elected to the presidency in Ecuador. Both leaders are broadly characterized as contestatory leftists. While the moderates maneuvered within their respective institutional constraints, Morales and Correa aggressively challenged their opposition and, at times, superseded legal parameters<sup>95,96</sup>. Upon taking office, both Morales and Correa initiated a series of institutional reforms that resulted in new constitutions, consolidated executive power, increased state intervention in the economy, and intensified political polarization<sup>97,98</sup>.

Bolivia and Ecuador also faced differing historical legacies that partly account for their divergent approaches. While Bolivia also experienced repressive regimes in its pre-democratic years, their configurations were different and their relationships to international hegemonic power differed. Bolivia’s military dictatorships, while still authoritarian, were comparatively much more leftist. In the 1930s, left-wing and labor union opposition was instrumental in the subsequent establishment of “Military Socialism” in the country<sup>99</sup>. In contrast, Ecuador’s authoritarian regimes were much more right-wing, and similarly aligned with Chile and Brazil. However, Bolivia and Ecuador have both been described as institution-

ally weak countries. While Brazil's party system is heavily fragmented, Chilean and Brazilian constitutional bureaucracies are fairly institutionalized.

In general, the policy set used by the contestatory governments was similar to that of the moderates but with some notable differences; cash transfer programs, for example, became a central pillar of the Bolivian and Ecuadorian agendas. In Bolivia, the programs Bono Juancito Pinto and Renta Dignidad were designed for school-aged children and the elderly respectively, and in 2007 constituted nearly 2 percent of GDP<sup>100</sup>. In Ecuador, Correa almost doubled the benefits for the Bono de Desarrollo Humano and the Bono

de Vivienda programs<sup>101</sup>. Like the moderate governments, Morales and Correa also increased public spending. Their deviation, however, was that much of this investment was in the way of traditional hard infrastructure, whereas Brazil and Chile invested heavily in education and health—human infrastructure. In Bolivia, for example, public infrastructure investment made up about 60 percent of all investment in 2007<sup>102</sup>. Nevertheless, both Correa and Morales steadily increased education and health expenditures, although much more slowly than their moderate counterparts.

### FINDINGS

As Tables 1 and 2 show, between the years 1995 and 2020, mar-

ket income inequality and poverty decreased in all countries. Individually, Bolivia saw the greatest reduction in inequality and Ecuador had the sharpest decline in its poverty rate. Collectively, the moderate Left governments of Brazil and Chile had an average 10.1-point reduction in inequality, while the contestatory governments reduced inequality by 9.7 points—there is not much difference between the two. Poverty reduction, on the other hand, is starkly different. Bolivia and Ecuador reduced poverty by an average of 28 points, whereas Brazil and Chile had a collective reduction of 12 points. Clearly, the contestatory governments were much more

**Table 1: Market Income Inequality, Gini**

|         | <u>1995-2000</u> | <u>2001-2005</u> | <u>2006-2010</u> | <u>2011-2015</u> | <u>2016-2020</u> | <u>Variation</u> |
|---------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Bolivia | 59.1             | 58.7             | 52.9             | 47.3             | 43.9             | -15.2            |
| Brazil  | 63.9             | 61               | 57.7             | 53.2             | 53.2             | -10.7            |
| Chile   | 55.9             | 50.7             | 50               | 46.3             | 46.5             | -9.4             |
| Ecuador | 49.8             | 52.6             | 50.2             | 45.5             | 45.6             | -4.2             |

Source: ECLAC, *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2021*; On the basis of publications.

**Table 2: Poverty, % of Population**

|         | <u>1995-2000</u> | <u>2001-2005</u> | <u>2006-2010</u> | <u>2011-2015</u> | <u>2016-2020</u> | <u>Variation</u> |
|---------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Bolivia | 61.4             | 63.2             | 48.2             | 40.1             | 39.6             | -21.8            |
| Brazil  | 36.7             | 37.6             | 28.6             | 16.7             | 25.3             | -11.4            |
| Chile   | 21.7             | 18.7             | 12.6             | 17               | 9.7              | -12              |
| Ecuador | 59.9             | 49.5             | 41.5             | 26.8             | 25.1             | -34.8            |

Source: ECLAC, *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2021*; On the basis of publications.

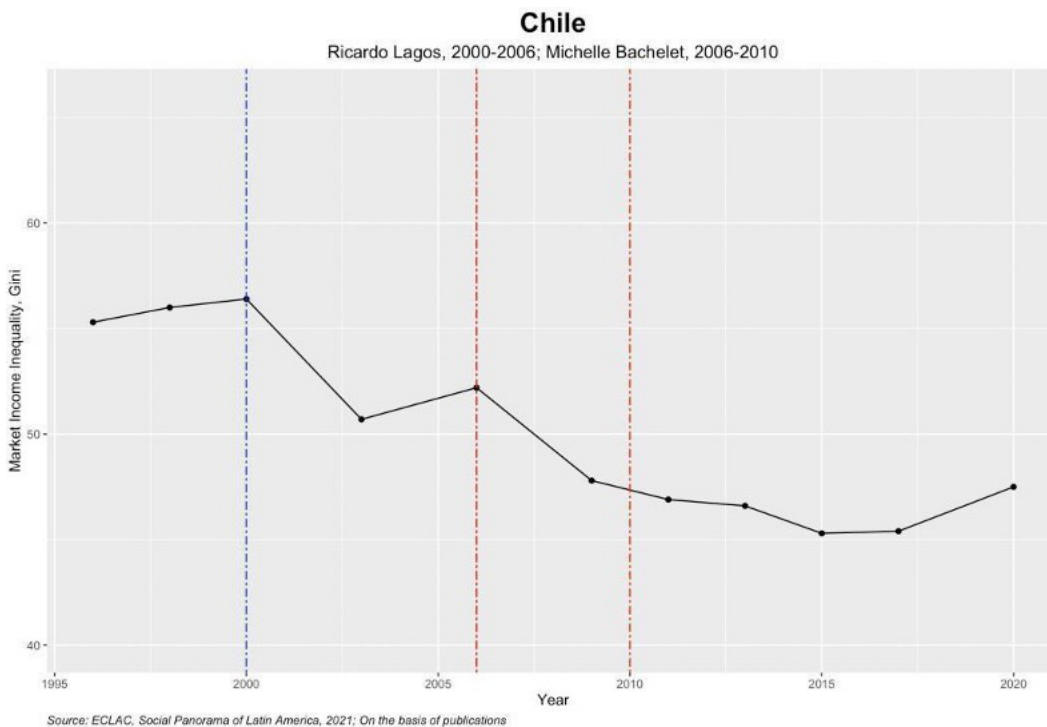
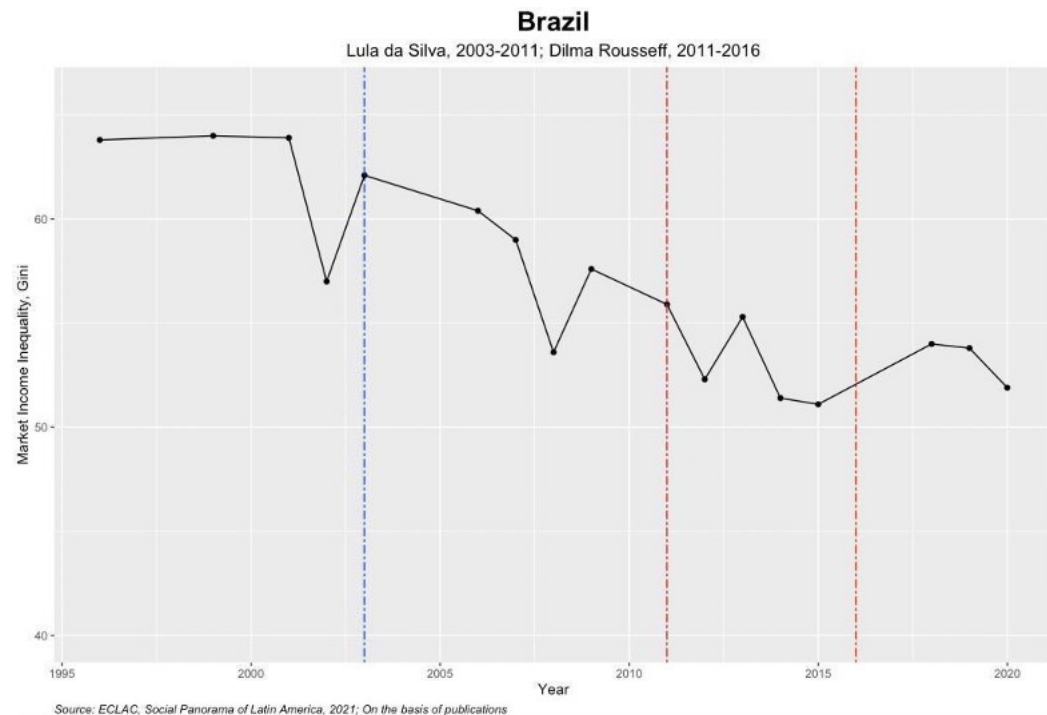
‘quantitatively’ successful in alleviating poverty.

Interestingly, in 1995 Ecuador had the lowest measure of inequality, yet had the second highest level of poverty; unfortunately, this meant that there was simply a

more equitable distribution of meager income. Indeed, while income distribution may not have been as unequal as in other countries, this comparatively low inequality mattered little to a population in which a majority were in poverty. What

is also evident is that for moderate governments, there was a slow but gradual reduction in inequality; this mirrors the pragmatic nature of their reforms. In many ways, the extreme decline in poverty rates in Bolivia and Ecuador is quite re-

**Figure 1: Market Income Inequality, Gini**



markable. In 1995, both Bolivia and Ecuador had very high rates of poverty with well over half of their populations living below the poverty line. In Bolivia, as shown in Table 1 and Figure 2, there was a steep drop in poverty around 2006 when Mo-

rales took office. Likewise, Ecuador saw a sharp decline around the beginning of Correa's presidency.

(For Figures 1-6, reference lines indicate the start and end of Presidential tenures for the given leaders. In the case of Chile, the start

of Bachelet's second term in 2014 is not indicated.)

**Figure 1: Market Income Inequality, Gini**

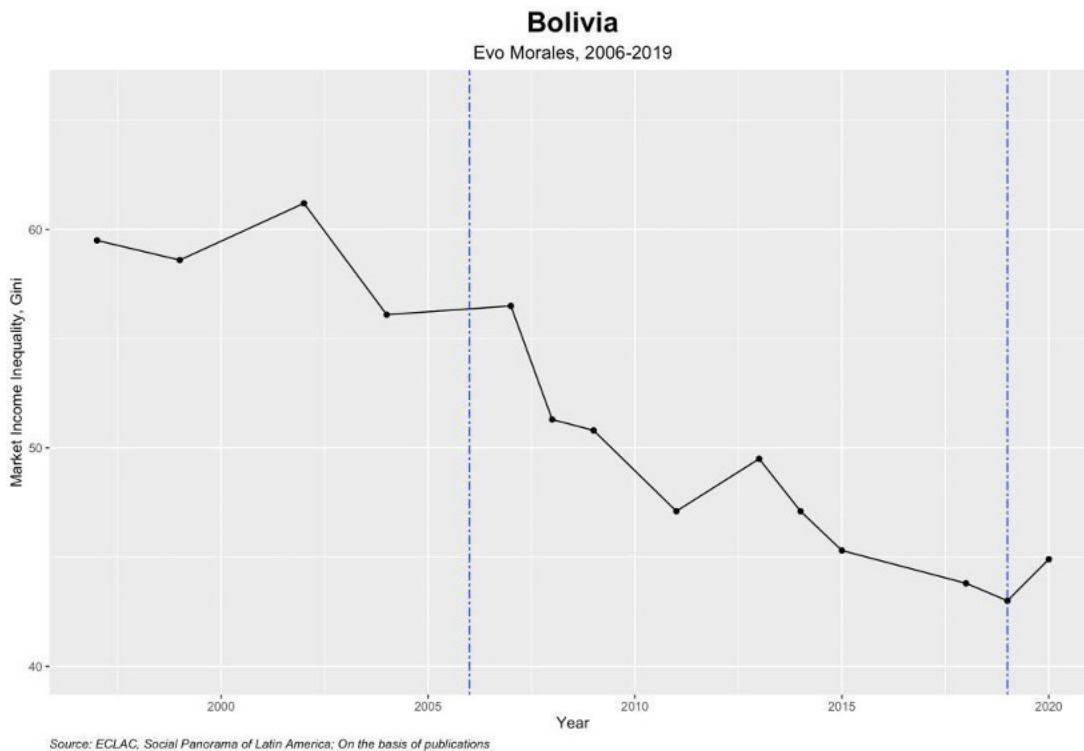
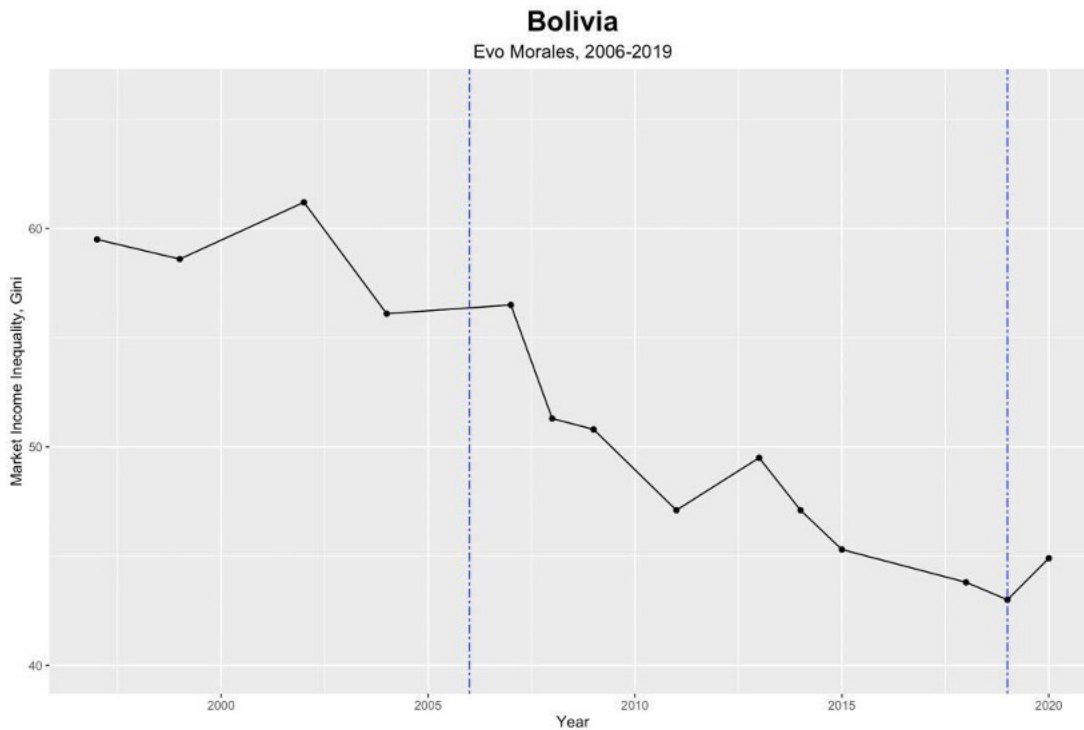
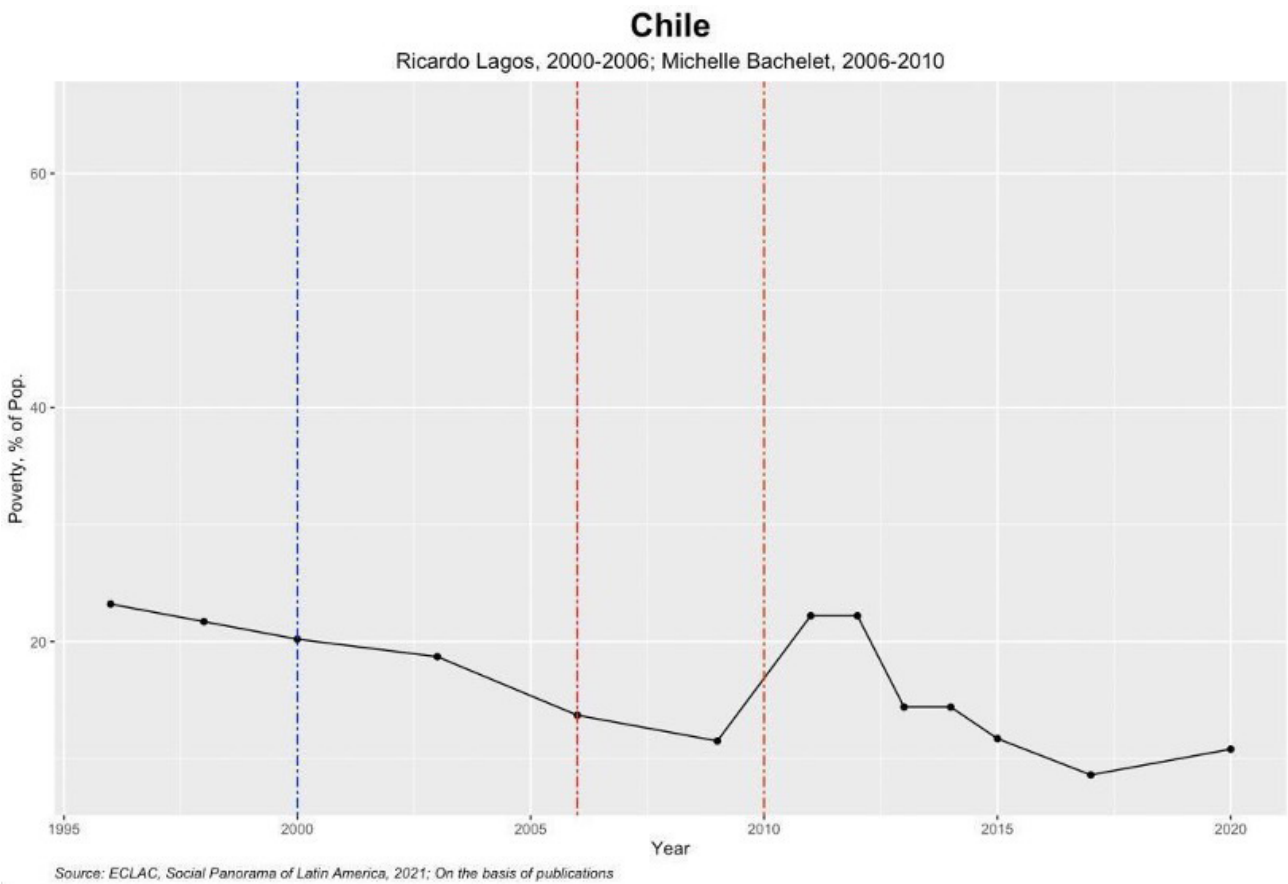
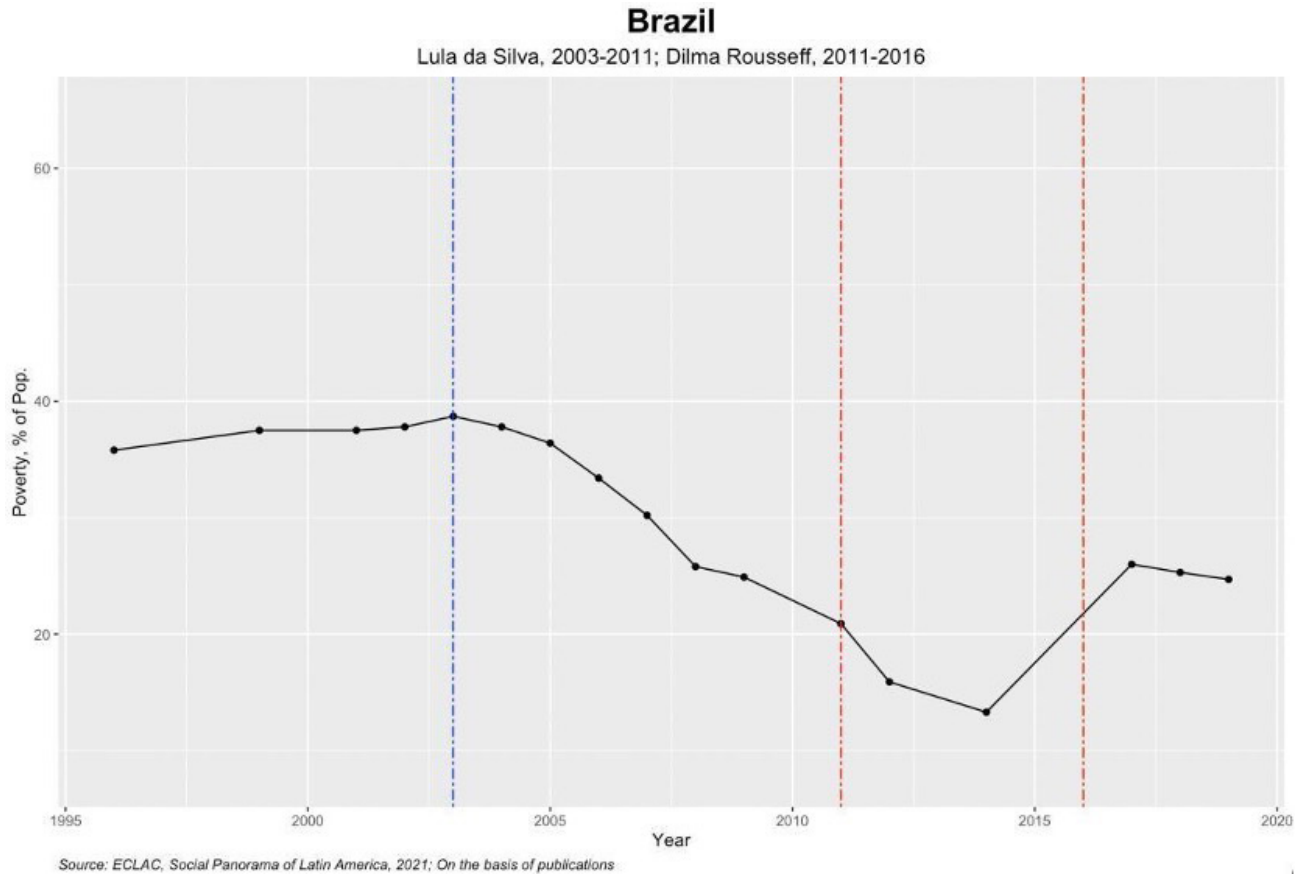
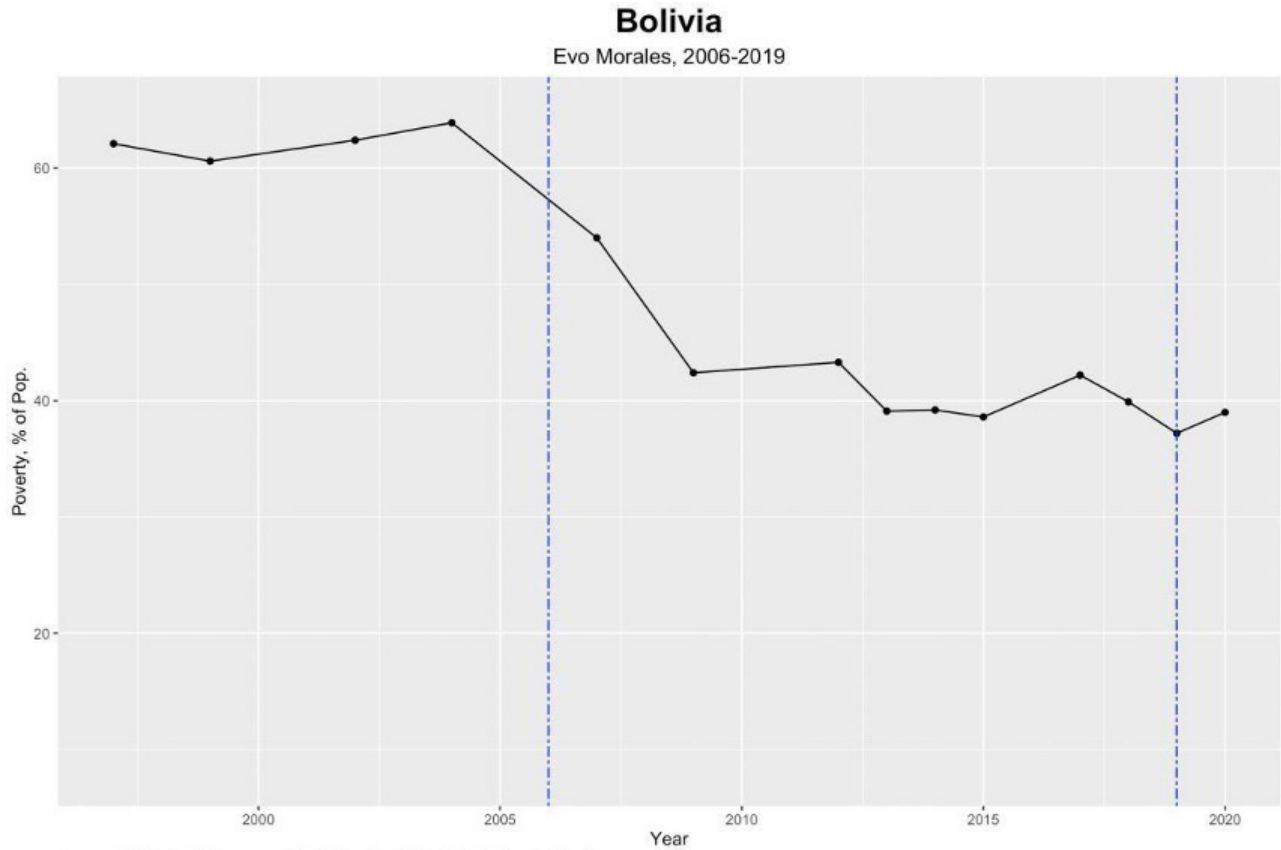


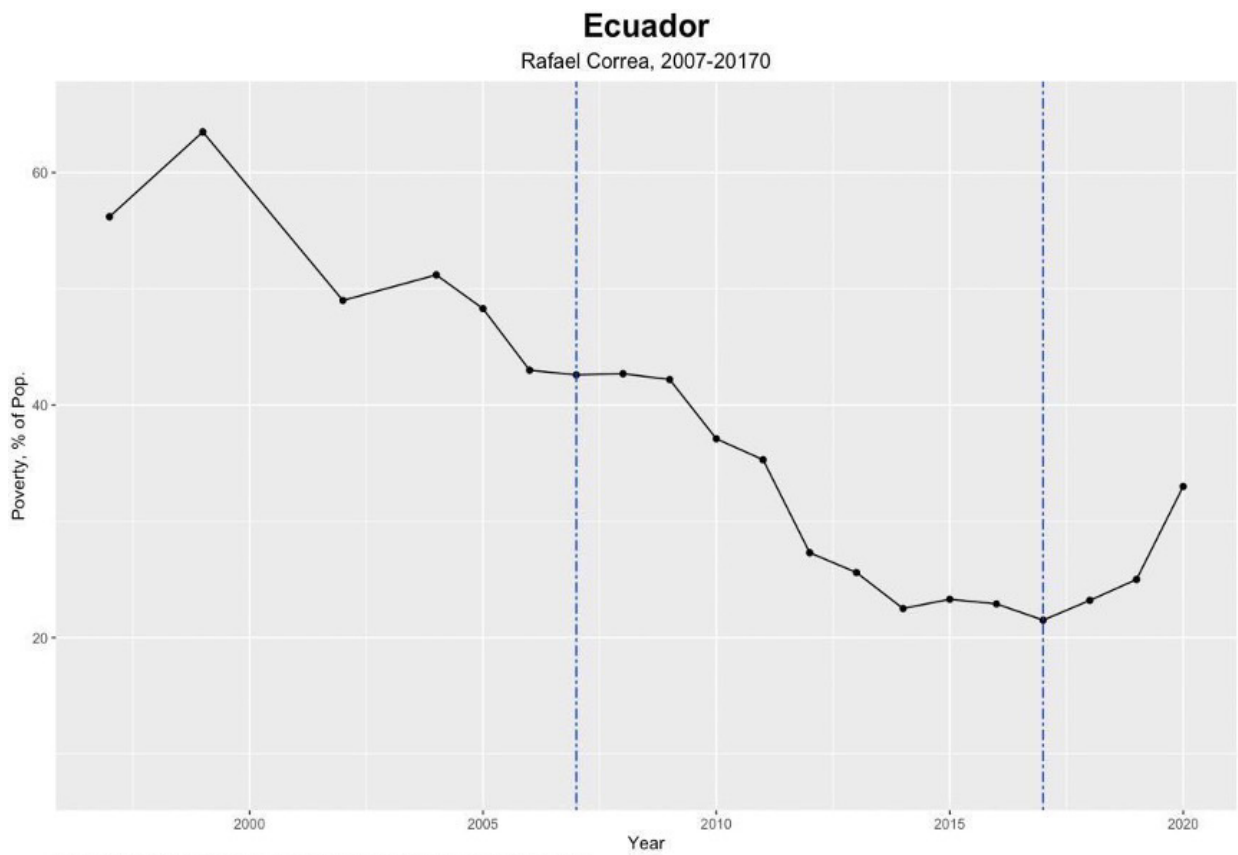
Figure 2: Poverty, % of Population



**Figure 2: Poverty, % of Population**



Source: ECLAC, Social Panorama of Latin America, 2021; On the basis of publications



Source: ECLAC, Social Panorama of Latin America, 2021; On the basis of publications



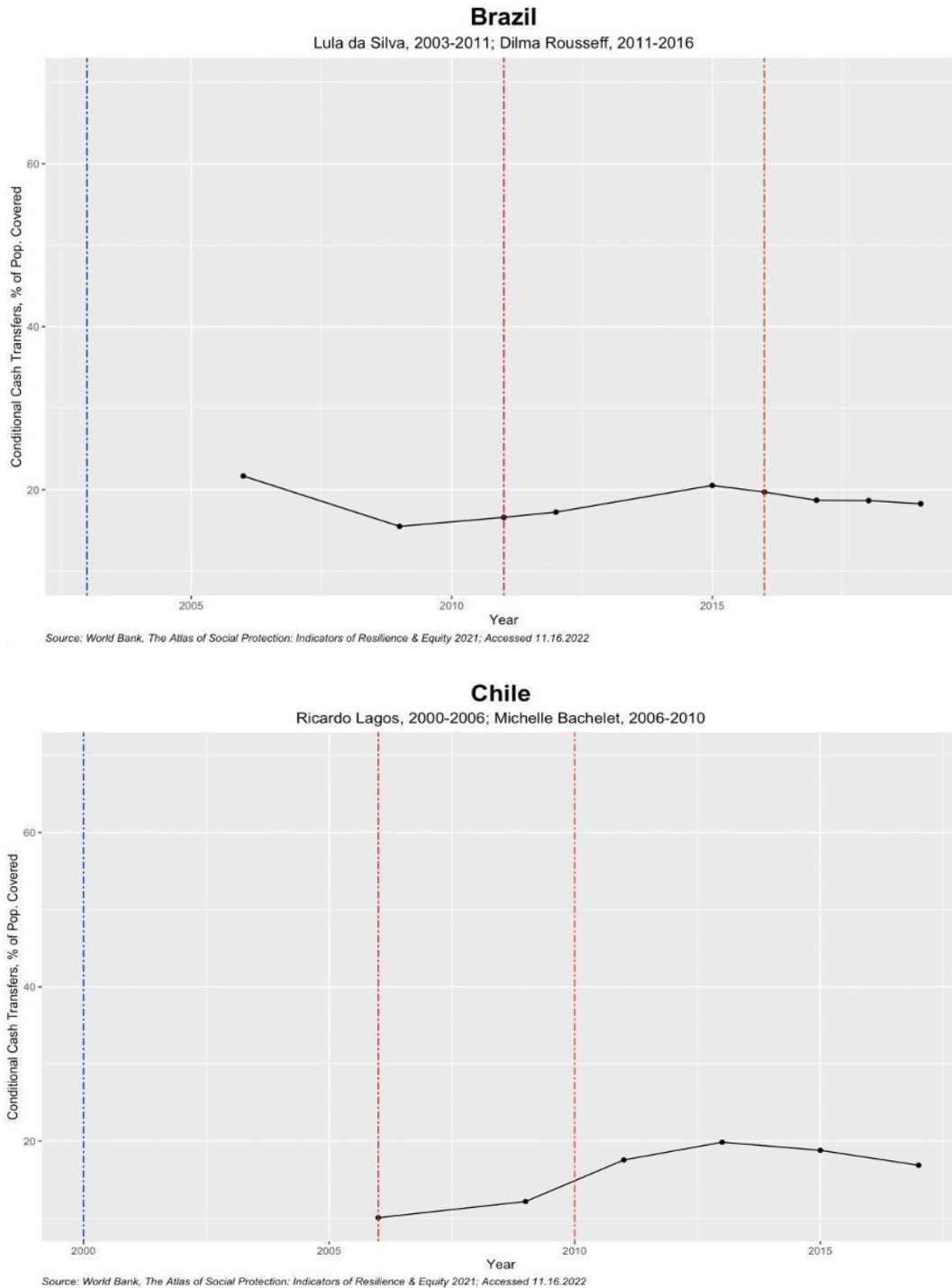
For the moderate government of Chile, there appeared to be a steady decline, followed by an uptick before the end of Bachelet's first term. Brazil had a similar situation, with an increase in poverty towards the end of Rousseff's term. These findings suggest support

for the posited hypotheses of this work. The data show that there was in fact a reduction in both poverty and inequality in all four countries. Moreover, taking the case studies of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Ecuador alongside the data, it is clear that this reduction was in large part be-

cause of the redistributive policies implemented during this time.

Next, the various policies used by the new Left governments are examined. As discussed, while both models used cash transfer programs for redistribution, the contestatory governments relied on this

**Figure 3: Conditional Cash Transfers, % of Population Covered**



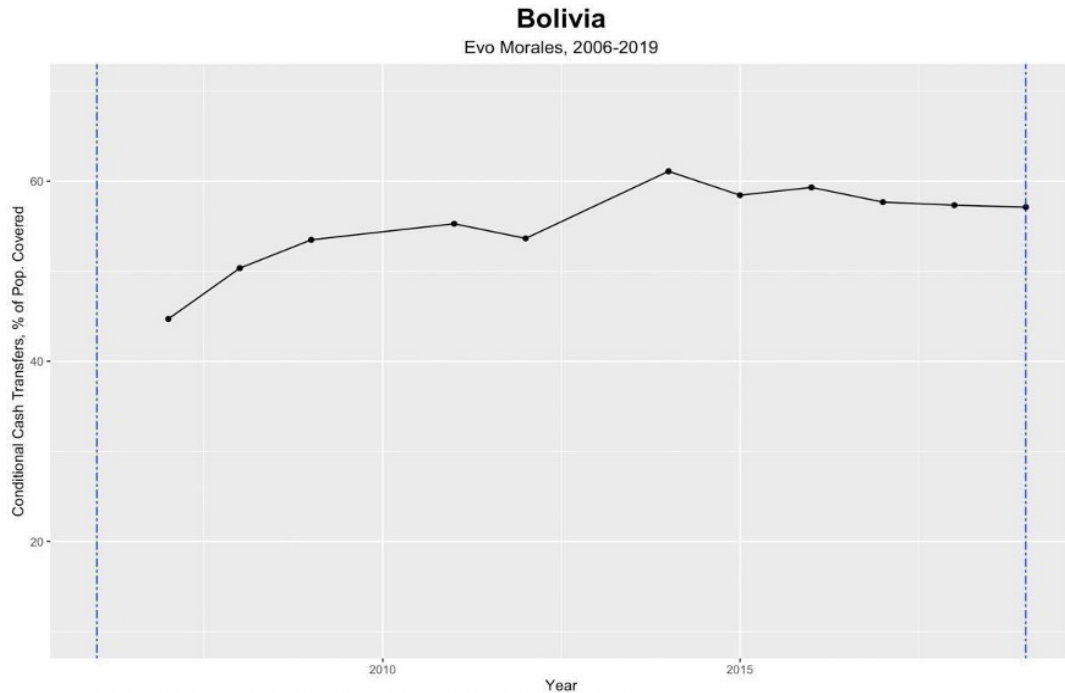
much more heavily. Figure 3 shows the percentage of the population that was covered by various CCT programs in each country. Bolivia and Ecuador had the largest percentage of their populations covered by these programs—Bolivia being the highest, reaching well over 60

percent at its peak. Looking again at the sharp decline of poverty in Bolivia and in Ecuador, this graph helps to explain this phenomenon. In addition, while the data is limited, estimates for the percentage of the population that is covered by the social safety net as a whole, not just

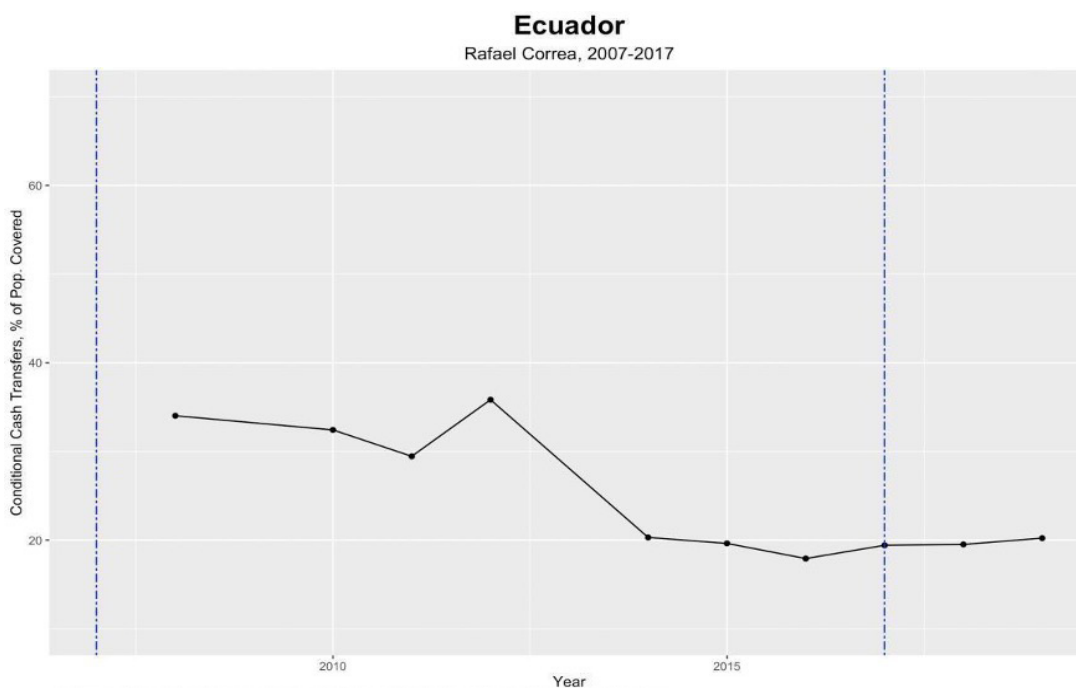
CCT programs, follow this same trend. Between the years 1995 and 2020, the contestatory governments covered about 63 percent of their populations with the social safety net, while the moderate governments covered about 40 percent<sup>103</sup>.

Regarding investment in hu-

**Figure 3: Conditional Cash Transfers, % of Population Covered**



Source: World Bank, *The Atlas of Social Protection: Indicators of Resilience & Equity 2021*; Accessed 11.16.2022



Source: World Bank, *The Atlas of Social Protection: Indicators of Resilience & Equity 2021*; Accessed 11.16.2022

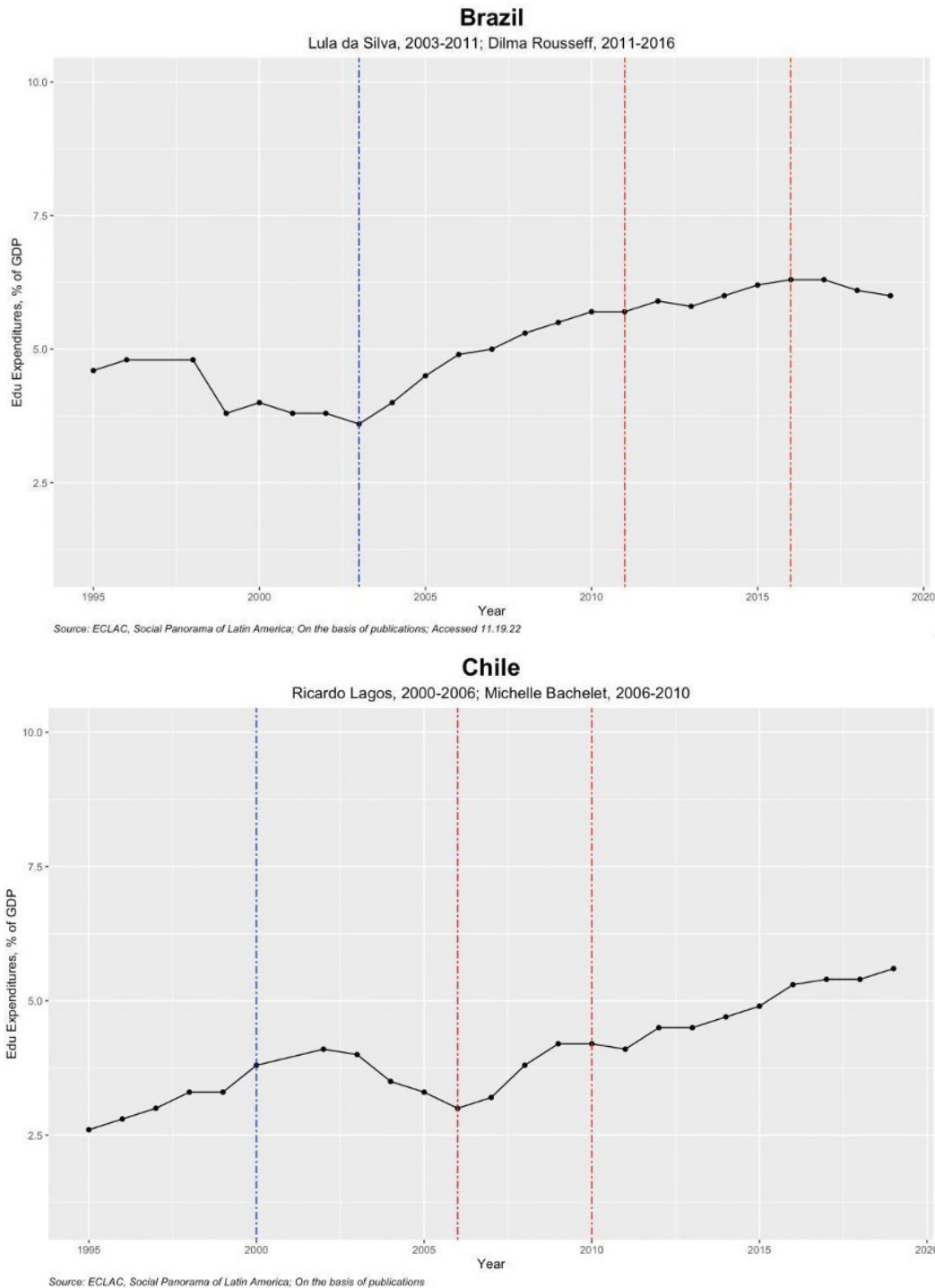
man capital development, the majority of the literature contends that moderate governments did a better job at increasing spending on education and health. Looking at Figures 4 and 5, this is not so obvious. Instead, there is a lot more nuance. In terms of education spending, the moderate governments spent an av-

erage of 5 percent of GDP between 1995 and 2020, while the contestatory governments spent about 6 percent. The average for Bolivia is fairly high (7-point average) and Ecuador rivals both Chile and Brazil at times. This may be due to the emergence of new social campaigns in the two former countries. Inspired and par-

tially funded by the Venezuelan and Cuban governments, these ‘missions’ were civic-military campaigns that brought resources to rural and remote areas to improve literacy and health<sup>104</sup>.

Apart from the outlier of Bolivia, education expenditures for Brazil, Chile, and Ecuador are very

**Figure 4: Public Education Expenditures, % of GDP**

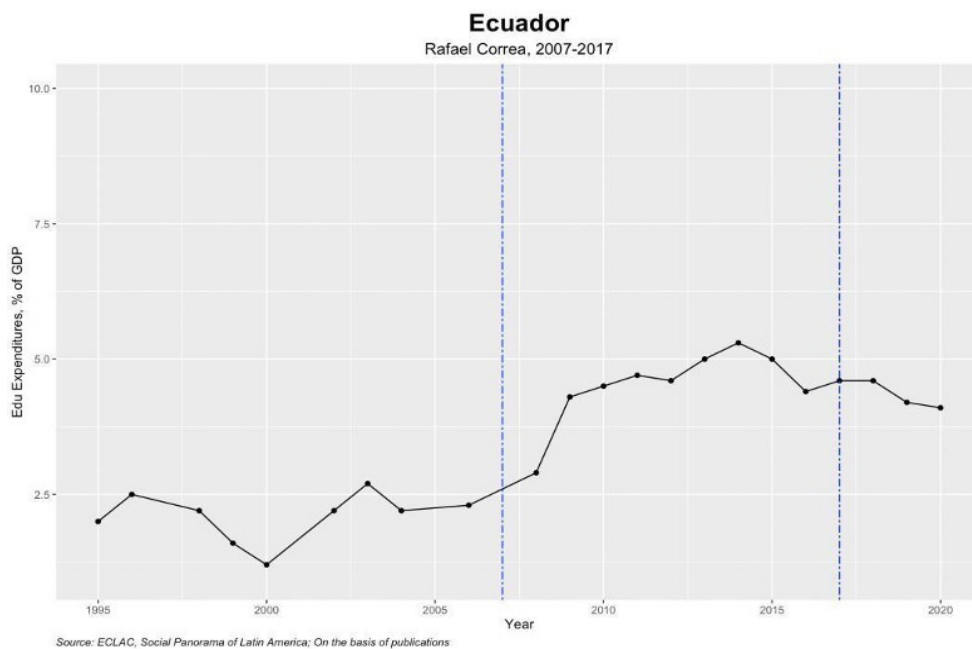
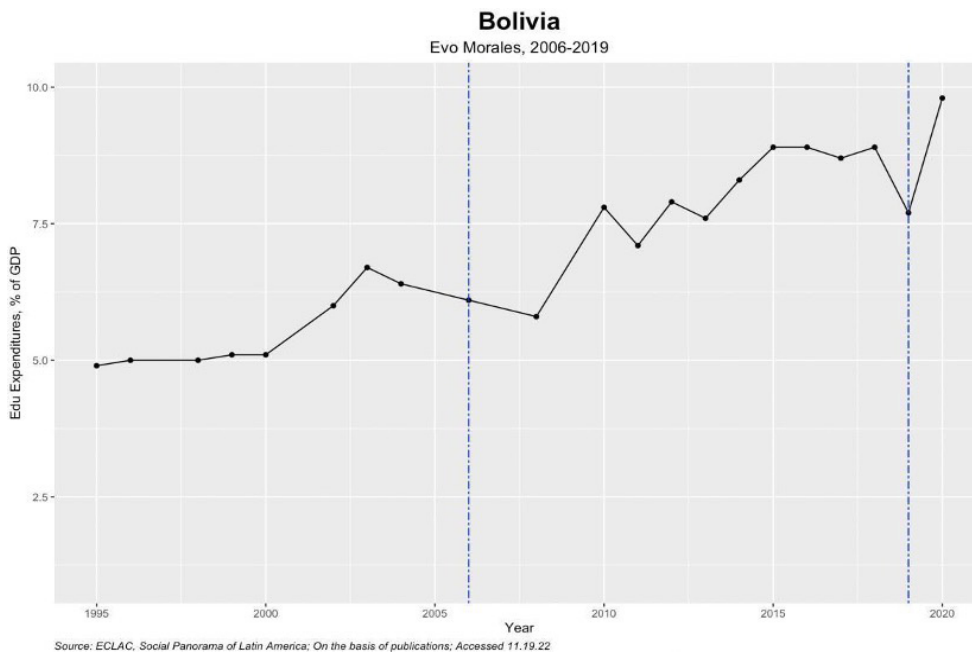


comparable. However, there is a clear difference in health expenditures; the moderate governments spent more on health measures than did Bolivia and Ecuador. In Chile, the implementation of AUGE is evident in the graph. The initial fifty-six covered illnesses were phased in by 2007, and in 2010 the Bachelet

administration committed to the coverage of 80 illnesses. While Brazil had a substantial increase around the beginning of Lula's first term, Brazil and Chile are relatively similar in terms of their overall spending. The same can be said comparing Bolivia and Ecuador, only in the opposite direction. While both

countries have made some progress in health expenditures, they are both much lower compared to the moderate governments. The sharp increase in Bolivia is likely due to the launch of the Unified Health System (SUS) by Morales towards the end of his first term.

**Figure 4: Public Education Expenditures, % of GDP**



**Figure 5: Public Health Expenditures, % of GDP**

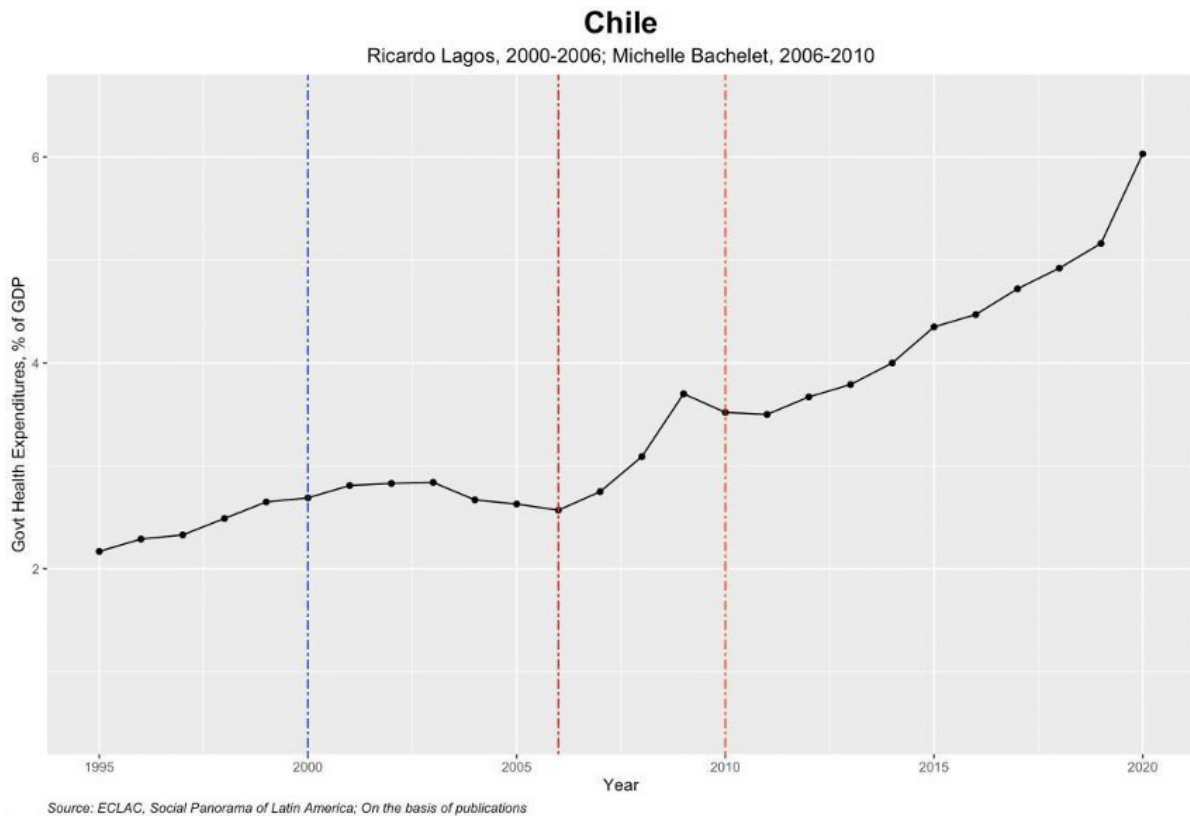
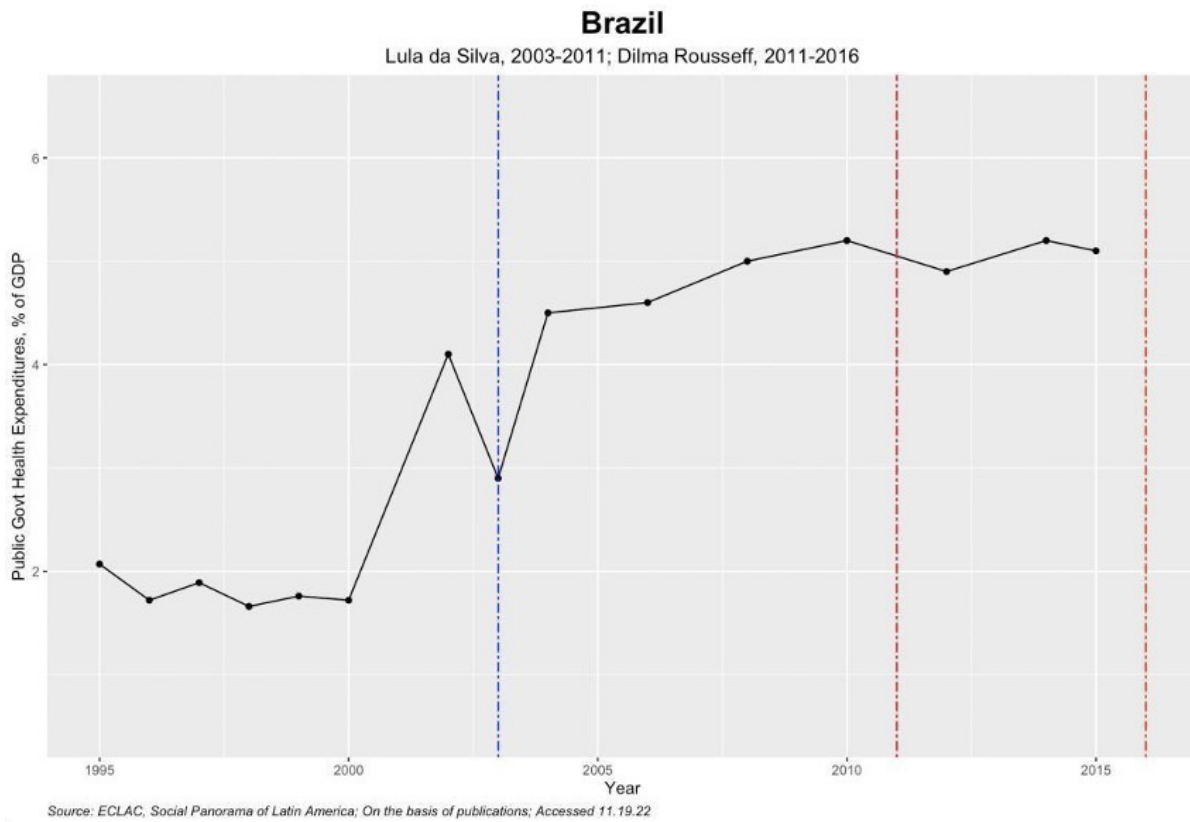
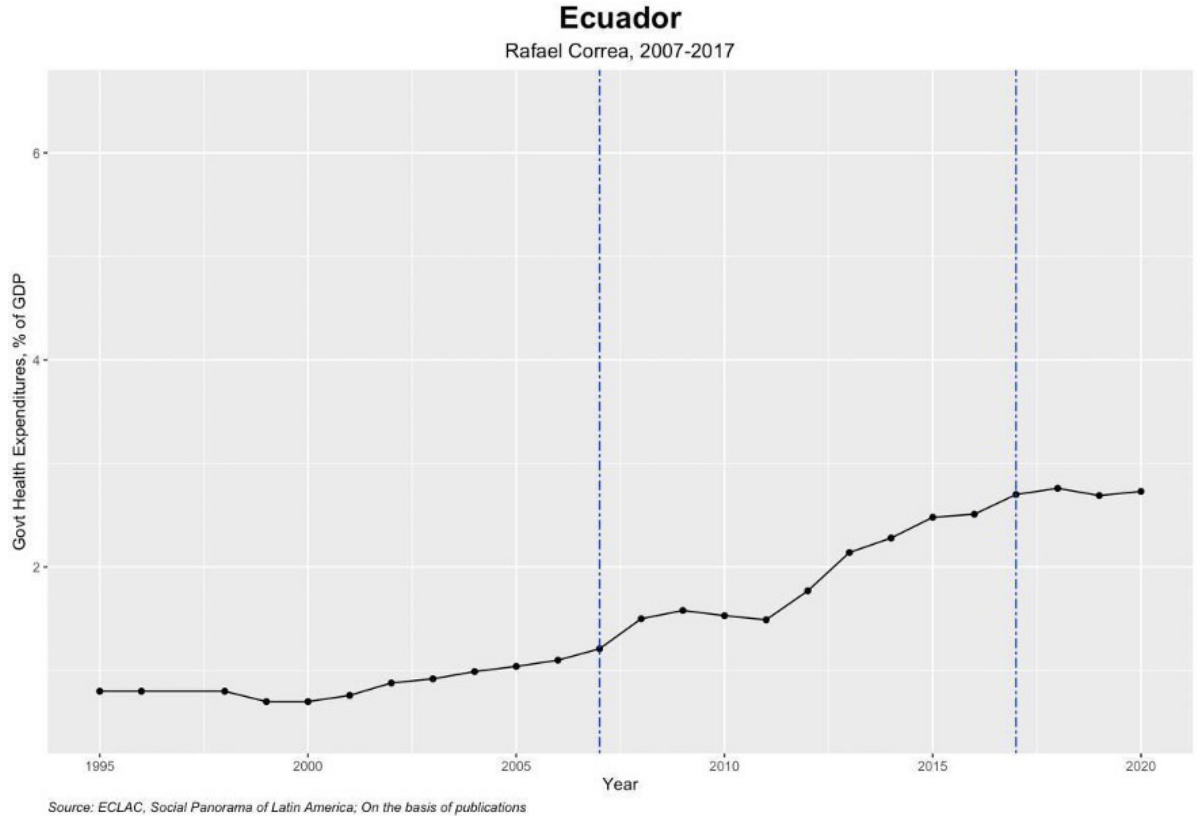
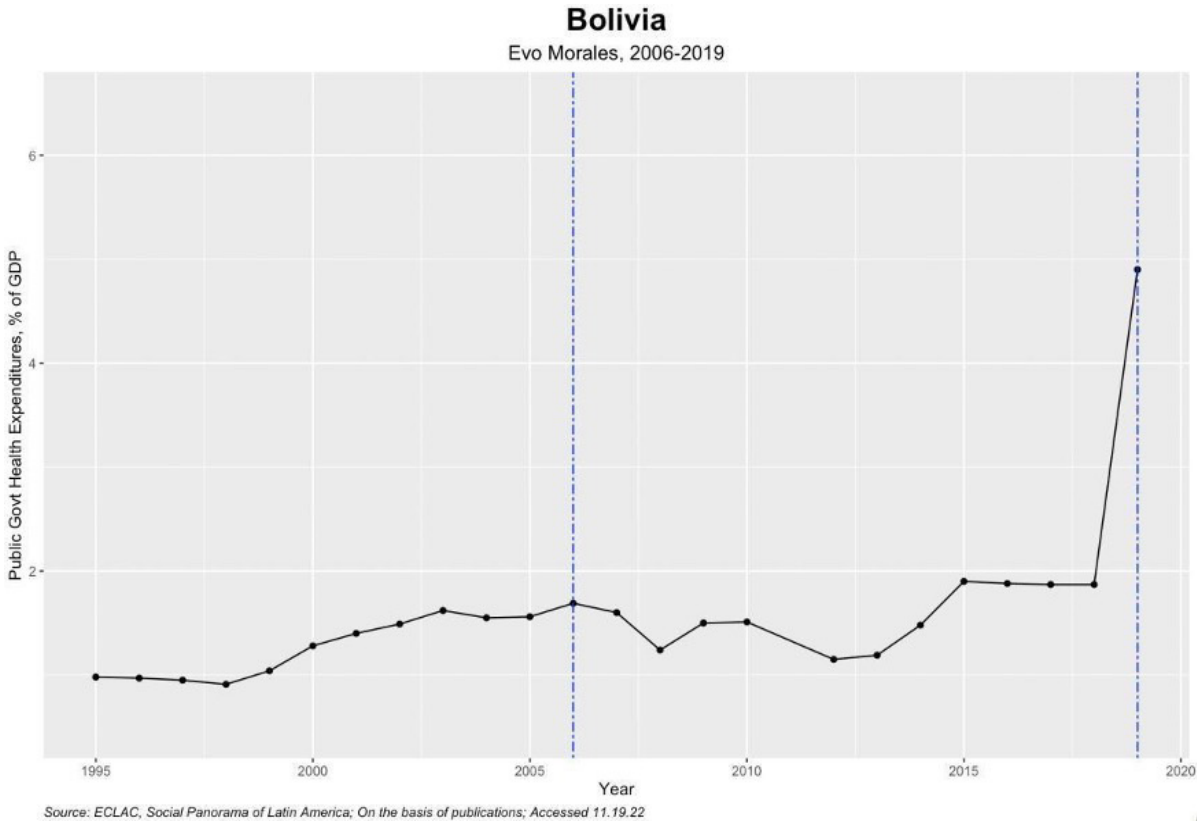


Figure 5: Public Health Expenditures, % of GDP



## DISCUSSION

During the pink tide, the change in political will allowed governments to experiment with different redistributive social policies; most governments during this period attempted some degree of social redistribution. One approach, taken by Brazil and Chile, largely accepted domestic and institutional parameters and opted for a gradual, pragmatic path. In contrast, Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador chose to directly challenge institutional constraints, whether they be domestic or international; extralegal, or legal. It is also clear at this point that all four governments were successful in reducing poverty and inequality. While this is true across the board, there are certain differences. Bolivia, for example, lowered its measure of inequality by 15 points, while Ecuador reduced poverty by more than 50 percent. There are also divergent poverty and inequality outcomes between the two leftist models. While there is certainly nuance to be acknowledged, the immediate consequences of the contestatory social policy regimes are supported by the data and cannot be denied.

The data show a comparable reduction in inequality between the two, but the contestatory countries did much better at reducing poverty levels. Despite the widely recognized strength of neoliberal legacies and power distributions of domestic and international currents, the contestatory governments brazenly swam against the prevailing con-

straints. In doing so, they produced empirically observable results for both measures of poverty and inequality that rivaled their moderate counterparts. While the international neoliberal order, and the power centers that it represents are the sea in which all countries swim, the historical experiences of these four countries are slightly different. Chile and Brazil, for example, have had much more fraught experiences with the forces of neoliberalism and more concrete bureaucratic parameters. These contrasting legacies likely contributed to the ability of Morales and Correa to implement their agendas more vigorously than Chilean and Brazilian leaders. Whereas the conceptions of Chilean and Brazilian leftists were colored by previous experiences, Bolivia and Ecuador were not as prepossessed. Their historical experiences allowed some, more than others, greater ideological experimentation. Less constrained, the leaders of the latter countries were able to push further, even if those actions were at times deemed legally questionable.

The primary difference between moderate and contestatory governments is in the central mechanism of their redistributive social policies. Moderate governments relied on social investments via education and health expenditures. Conversely, the contestatory leaders did better through cash transfers – social consumption. While investments in education and health certainly shape inequality and poverty, their effects are generally felt

with a time lag. It simply takes more time for the returns of these investments to come to fruition. Direct cash benefits are obviously much more immediate. Social infrastructure investment is a more long-term form of investment, whereas putting money in people's hands is felt in the short-term. This, then, raises the question of durability in relation to funding and the long-term impacts of social investment versus consumptive policies. Which form of social intervention will prove more effective in the long run in addressing poverty and inequality? This empirical question emerges for future research.

The findings of this work raise important questions about the durability of the era's social policy legacies. One set of countries invested more in human capital while the other emphasized raw material income redistribution. Moreover, the contestatory government's reduction of poverty at more than double the rate of the moderate governments (28 to 12 points) suggests the poverty-alleviating power of social consumption policies. The moderate governments, in contrast, implemented greater investment policies while also increasing income assistance. This resulted in a comparable reduction in inequality to that of Bolivia and Ecuador. Given that previous research implies a connection between poverty and inequality, as well as the depressive impact of past poverty on the potential for current investments, this further suggests that there is a recognizably struc-

tured relationship between the two sets of welfare state policies – social investment and social consumption. In other words, both must be used in tandem in order to have the most qualitative influence on outcomes. What’s more, the precise balance between the two sets of policies will be unique across countries depending on current levels of poverty and investment deficiencies. I propose that there is a complementary bond between social investment and social consumption, wherein a detectable framework can be explicitly theorized in the future; indeed, recent work indicates a basis for this distinct research agenda<sup>105106</sup>.

Concerning funding, the commodities boom of the 2000s increased government coffers substantially. This was especially true for Bolivia and Ecuador with their abundance of natural gas and oil. Relying on export revenue without

investing in human infrastructure or initiating structural tax reforms leaves one vulnerable and perpetuates legacies of dependency. As international commodities markets shifted in the 2010s, governments faced difficult choices as revenue dropped. Looking at inequality, one can see a leveling off and even a slight increase around 2015 in all countries. In this sense, perhaps the moderate governments may be better positioned structurally. With the end of the commodities boom, spending became unsustainable, citizens became disenchanted, and so went the pink tide; the region then swung back to the right. Going forward, this recent history in Latin America presents a unique opportunity for scholars to further examine welfare states in the region and the partisan influence on social policies. How have newly empowered conservative governments approached

the novel and somewhat infantile redistributive policies instituted during the pink tide? How durable have those policy sets been in the face of theoretically hostile political interests and shifting market outlooks?

Finally, within the last year, a second potential pink tide has emerged. Once again, a majority of Latin American heads of state are now leftists. Colombia elected its first leftist president, Evo Morales’ party regained power in Bolivia, and the famed original pink tide leader, Lula, ousted right-wing President Bolsonaro in Brazil. Similar to the first wave, popular sentiment is unhappy with inequality and neoliberal constraints. However, unlike in the early 2000s, there is no commodities boom. Paradoxically, the coming years represent fertile grounds for scholars, yet challenges for leftist leaders in Latin America.

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*Above: Photographed by Chandler Haneke, senior majoring in Global Studies and Geography.*

# Comparative Case Study: Analyzing Population Control Policy Responses in India, China, and Vietnam

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**R**apid population growth has been a global policy priority for governments and authorities throughout history, as population control policies often encompass the solution governments choose to address their unsustainably high levels of overpopulation. This is especially true in Southeast Asia, a region whose countries have experienced extremely high relative population growth rates<sup>1</sup>. This paper examines the population control policies enacted by three countries in the region: the forced sterilization campaign launched by India in 1975,

the one-child policy implemented by China in 1979, and the two-child policy codified by Vietnam in 1993. These countries were selected based on key commonalities relevant to population growth measurements, as well as their location in Southeast Asia. This paper seeks to assess the effects of each of these policies on a variety of outcomes using a difference-in-difference analysis, evaluating certain variables at benchmark periods relative to each policy implementation.

While each policy seems to correlate with trends of lower fertili-

ty, birth rates, and slower population growth rates, it is unclear if these effects are the result of uncontrollable external factors, such as migration patterns, economic contexts, or natural fertility rate convergence. These policies can also correlate with unintended large-scale effects on the national populations and demographics of these countries, such as an aging dependent population and an increased male-to-female ratio.

## **POPULATION GROWTH**

Overpopulation continues to threaten both the environmental health of the planet and economic

wellbeing of entire regions as global populations approach numbers that cannot be sustained by the natural cycles of resource replenishment<sup>2,3,4</sup>. Overconsumption of resources can lower overall quality of life by leading to public health threats<sup>5</sup>, land and food scarcity<sup>6</sup>, along with negative environmental impacts, such as increased carbon emissions and food and fresh water shortages<sup>7,8,9</sup>. Certain countries hold extremely high fertility rates due to deeply entrenched cultural norms and levels of development<sup>10</sup>. For these reasons, some governments have used reactionary policies to control population growth rates, primarily by decreasing the nation's total fertility rate (TFR)<sup>11,12</sup>. International actors, such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization, have historically analyzed, advised, and collected data on these national policies and their effects.

The predominant policy solutions countries have taken are (1) sterilization campaigns, (2) mandatory restrictions on family size, and (3) contraceptive distribution/advocacy campaigns. Long-term analysis of sterilization campaigns and restrictions on family size has demonstrated their ability to successfully reduce population growth by decreasing national TFRs<sup>13</sup>. Existing bodies of work, however, are wary of accrediting the total decreases in TFR to these policies, as researchers cannot remove their individual effects from potentially

natural demographic transition cycles and fertility convergence<sup>14,15,16</sup>.

Such broad policies have a variety of unintended and variable side effects. Amidst patriarchal cultures, expectations to bear a son, and restrictions on the allowed number of children, many women resort to sex-selective abortions or female infanticide<sup>17,18</sup>. India and China's adoption of their respective population-control policies saw rates of female infanticide increase significantly, with the countries' respective ratios of male-to-female births becoming further distorted through an excess of males<sup>19,20</sup>.

Existing literature also considers the ethical implications of such policies. Most researchers posit that incentivizing sterilization through monetary, social, or other forms of gain is coercive<sup>21</sup>. The enforcement of such policies disproportionately affects and even targets marginalized groups, such as ethnic minorities, people living in poverty and rural areas, and people affected by chronic diseases/disabilities<sup>22,23</sup>. More aggressive population-control policies, especially those that employ coercive practices, are inherently sexist, effecting vast consequences on women's mental and emotional health<sup>24,25</sup>.

Researchers have also found that both policy measures, when in effect for periods of ten or more years, result in considerable shifts in cultural norms. Surveys of desired family size before and after imple-

mentation showed that the national average decreased significantly<sup>26,27,28</sup>.

Due to these unintended effects, researchers have been unable to reach a consensus on how to best approach population control. This research project will attempt to fill this gap by examining various key outcomes through a difference-in-differences approach applied to a comparative case study of countries with these policies implemented. These key outcomes include total fertility rates, national population growth, crude birth rates, age-dependency ratios, sex ratios at birth, and the age composition of national female populations. This analysis will compare these outcomes amongst three separate countries' approaches: India's forced sterilization campaign, Vietnam's two-child policy, and China's one-child policy.

## CASE COUNTRY POLICIES

In certain Asian countries, high TFRs have resulted in extremely high population growth rates<sup>29</sup>. As a result, the governments of these countries have made TFR reduction and family planning a policy priority.

India has experienced rapid population growth in the past 60 years: its national population grew from approximately 350 million in 1947 to about 1.16 billion in 2009<sup>30</sup>. The government considered overpopulation to be a primary contributor to pressing issues such as widespread poverty and food

insecurity<sup>31</sup>. Given this conclusion, India directed resources towards family planning and welfare, eventually expanding the project into the “Health Department-operated, Incentive-based, Target-oriented, Time-bound and Sterilisation-focused programme” (HITTS) from 1965 to 1974<sup>32</sup>.

In contrast to historical approaches to population control that targeted women, such as those deployed in China and Vietnam, India advocated vasectomies, or male sterilization, as the primary means of fertility regulation. One 2007 study reported that 8.26 million vasectomies were performed in a twelve-month period from 1974 to 1975<sup>33</sup>. Most vasectomy recipients were illiterate, low-income, and from lower castes. These goals were supported by national initiatives such as local mass-vasectomy camps<sup>34,35</sup>.

The government of China prioritized family planning and population control due to concerns that the growing population, scarcity of resources, and young age structure would hinder the country’s development goals<sup>36</sup>. They promoted a “later marriage, longer birth spacing, fewer children” campaign from the late 1950s, with visual propaganda increasingly posted throughout the early 1970s<sup>37</sup>.

In 1979, China implemented its one-child policy, which codified a one child restriction and introduced, among other aggressive tactics, compulsory sterilization<sup>38</sup>.

From 1980 to 2014, 107 million women were sterilized— and like India, many of them were non-consensual or coercive. Fifty to sixty percent of Chinese women were not told the purpose of their sterilization operation until as late as 1997<sup>39</sup>. In 2015, the CCP announced that the one-child policy was replaced with a two-child policy due to a low projected increase in population growth, the negative demographic effects on the country’s aging population, and worldwide appeals from scholars and media<sup>40</sup>.

Vietnam’s history of population control policy is similarly long and cyclical. The government first officially issued a decree on birth control in 1988, encouraging couples to limit family size to two children by delaying marriage, delaying childbearing until after the age of 22, and spacing childbirths three to five years apart<sup>41</sup>. This approach was modeled after China’s “later, longer, fewer” campaign. In 1993, Vietnam, like China, codified and implemented its one-to-two-child policy as law, rather than suggestion<sup>42</sup>. The country chose to enforce a policy that allowed up to two children after seeing the enforcement struggles and adverse effects of the one-child policy in China. The 1990s saw the strictest enforcement of such population policies, during which the country also experienced rapid socioeconomic growth and political restructuring<sup>43</sup>. Vietnam’s approach is notably cyclical, changing its population control policy in reactionary

measures to its policy’s effects on its population composition and demographics.

All three countries share similar reasons for enacting these policies and infringing on citizens’ rights to family planning through sterilizations (India), restrictions on family size and spacing (Vietnam), or a combination of both (China).

### **CASE COUNTRY METRICS**

The case countries examined include China, Vietnam, and India. These countries were chosen because of their historical implementation of population control policies, as well as certain commonalities shared in relevant features and metrics, to better control for other influencing factors and more accurately measure the effects of the policies.

Table 1.1 depicts comparative statistics and characteristics that are relevant to overpopulation and its policy response. The historical population growth rates of the case countries<sup>44</sup> are among the most rapid in the world. The socio-political and geographical positions reflect similarities in the countries’ regional surroundings. The level of development<sup>45</sup> demonstrates that each country is growing its own national welfare. The number of immigrants<sup>46</sup> and the percentage of immigrants within the overall national population<sup>47</sup> both mark sources of non-fertility-associated population growth.

### **POLICY OUTCOMES**

In evaluating these policies,

|                                   | China                          | Vietnam                        | India                          |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Historical Population Growth Rate | High                           | High                           | High                           |
| Geographical Postion              | Borders land and body of water | Borders land and body of water | Borders land and body of water |
| Sociological Position             | Borders multiple countries     | Borders multiple countries     | Borders multiple countries     |
| Level of Development              | Less developed                 | Less developed                 | Less developed                 |
| Birth Preference                  | Son preference                 | Son preference                 | Son preference                 |
| Reigion/Continent                 | Eastern Asia                   | Southeastern Asia              | Southern Asia                  |
| Number of Immigrants              | 1,039,675                      | 76,767                         | 4,878,704                      |
| Immigrant % of Population         | 0.07%                          | 0.08%                          | 0.35%                          |

Table 1: Comparative statistics and characteristics for China, Vietnam, and India.

this paper will analyze several key outcomes including the total fertility rate (TFR), national population growth rate, the crude birth rate, the old-age dependency ratio of the population, and the male-female sex ratio at birth.

First, total fertility rate refers to the average number of children that each woman gives birth to throughout her childbearing years<sup>48</sup>. It is also policymakers' primary target to reduce population growth. Second, the national population growth rate is the annual average rate of change of population size for a given country, during a given year<sup>49</sup>. Third, the crude birth rate measures the number of births occurring within an area during a given year<sup>50</sup>. As each of these indicators is positively linked to/inherently

correlated with population growth, these outcomes are estimated to decrease as a result of the population control policies when measured/evaluated before and after policy implementation.

Fourth, the old-age dependency ratio is the ratio of dependents that have aged out of the working-age population (people older than 64) to the working-age population (people ages 15-64)<sup>51</sup>. This outcome allows us to better understand the effects of age composition on the population as a result of such policies. The ratio is estimated to increase after policy implementation in the three countries, as the policies are intended to decrease the birth rate. A higher ratio means that there would be fewer people entering the workforce to replace the

older dependents aging out of the workforce at the same rate. Since the policies in China, Vietnam, and India intend to decrease the birth rate, implementing those policies will increase the ratio, which indicates that the rate of workers entering the workforce will not catch up with the rate of dependents aging out of it.

Fifth, this paper will also examine the male-female sex ratio at birth due to the prevalent cultural phenomenon of son preference in China, Vietnam, and India. The ratio indicates how many boys are being born compared to girls<sup>52</sup>. The sixth and final outcome being examined is the age demographics of the national female population, measured as a percentage of females aged 0-14<sup>53</sup>. The final two outcomes allow insight into how restrictions



on children and family size exacerbated son preferences. Both variables are expected to increase, as the cultural reaction to these policies often resulted in sex-selective abortions and female infanticide.

One key assumption is that migration patterns (both in and out of the country) stay constant

throughout the difference-in-differences analysis, as this is a source of population growth that could alter each of these variables.

### CASE COUNTRY POLICY RESULTS

The data analysis for these outcomes is primarily quantitative, evaluating metrics of each outcome/

variable both before and after policies were implemented in each country. Line graphs using data points from years in each country have been generated for each outcome. On these graphs, the year of policy implementation is marked for a visual representation of the effect on outcomes before and af-

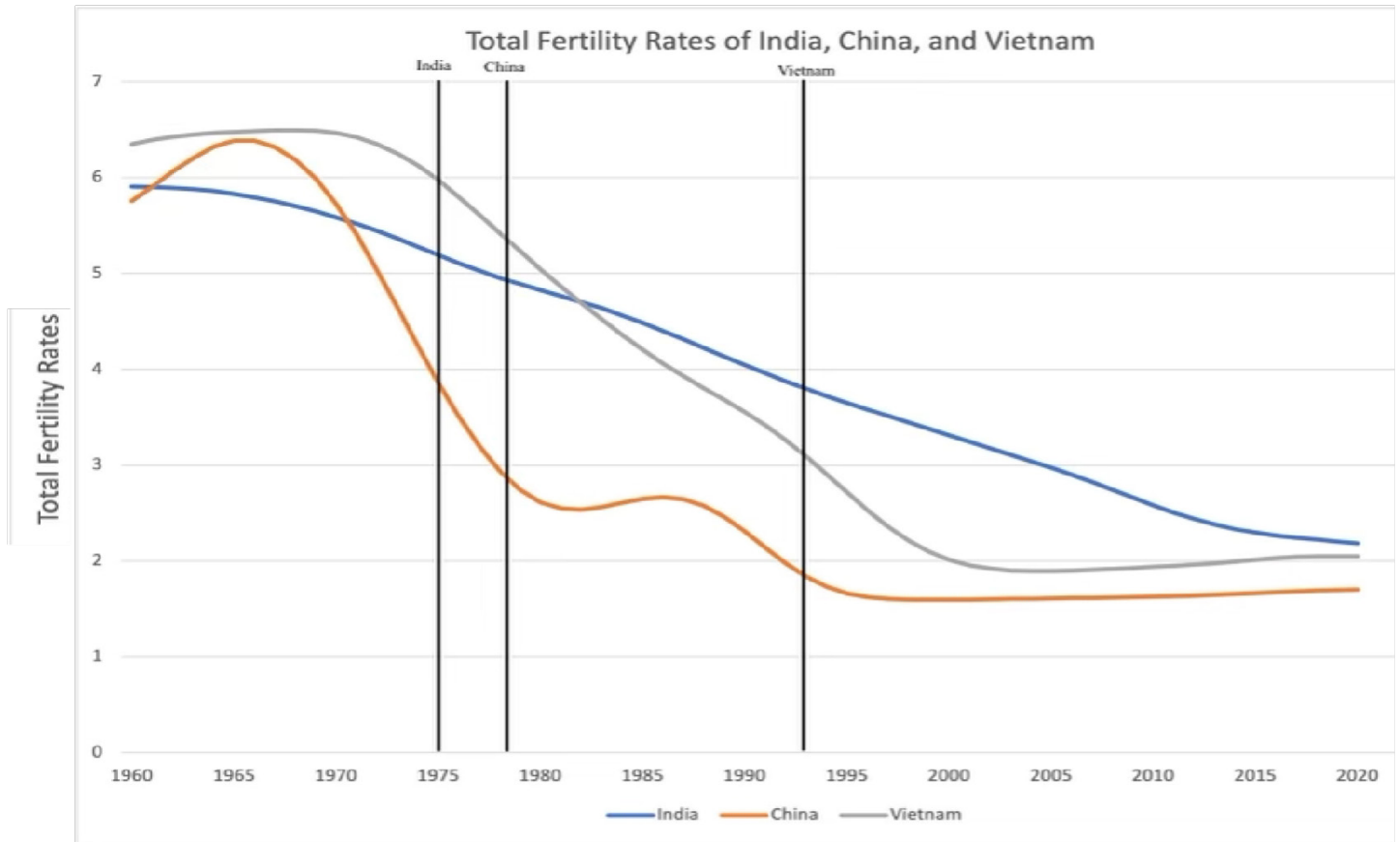


Figure 1: Total Fertility Rates of India, China, and Vietnam. Data from the World Bank database.

ter implementation. These years are 1975 for India's forced sterilization campaign, 1979 for China's one-child policy, and 1993 for Vietnam's two-child policy.

As demonstrated by Figure 1, each country's TFR after implementation was lower than before implementation. Utilizing a difference-in-differences design, each TFR was evaluated for the year be-

fore policy implementation and five years after. India experienced a 8.84% decrease (TFR of 5.363 in 1984 before implementation reduced to a TFR of 4.889 in 1990 five years after), while China experienced a 19.97% decrease (TFR of 3.2 in 1978 to a TFR of 2.561 in 1984) and Vietnam experienced the most decline with a 30.92% decrease (TFR of 3.415 in 1978 to a TFR of

2.359 in 1998). However, the slopes of the lines remain relatively similar, indicating that the actual rate of decline remained primarily the same after policy implementation. This could indicate a larger correlation with past population control efforts, as well as allude to fertility rates naturally converging due to increased development. As such, it is unclear how much of this population reduc-

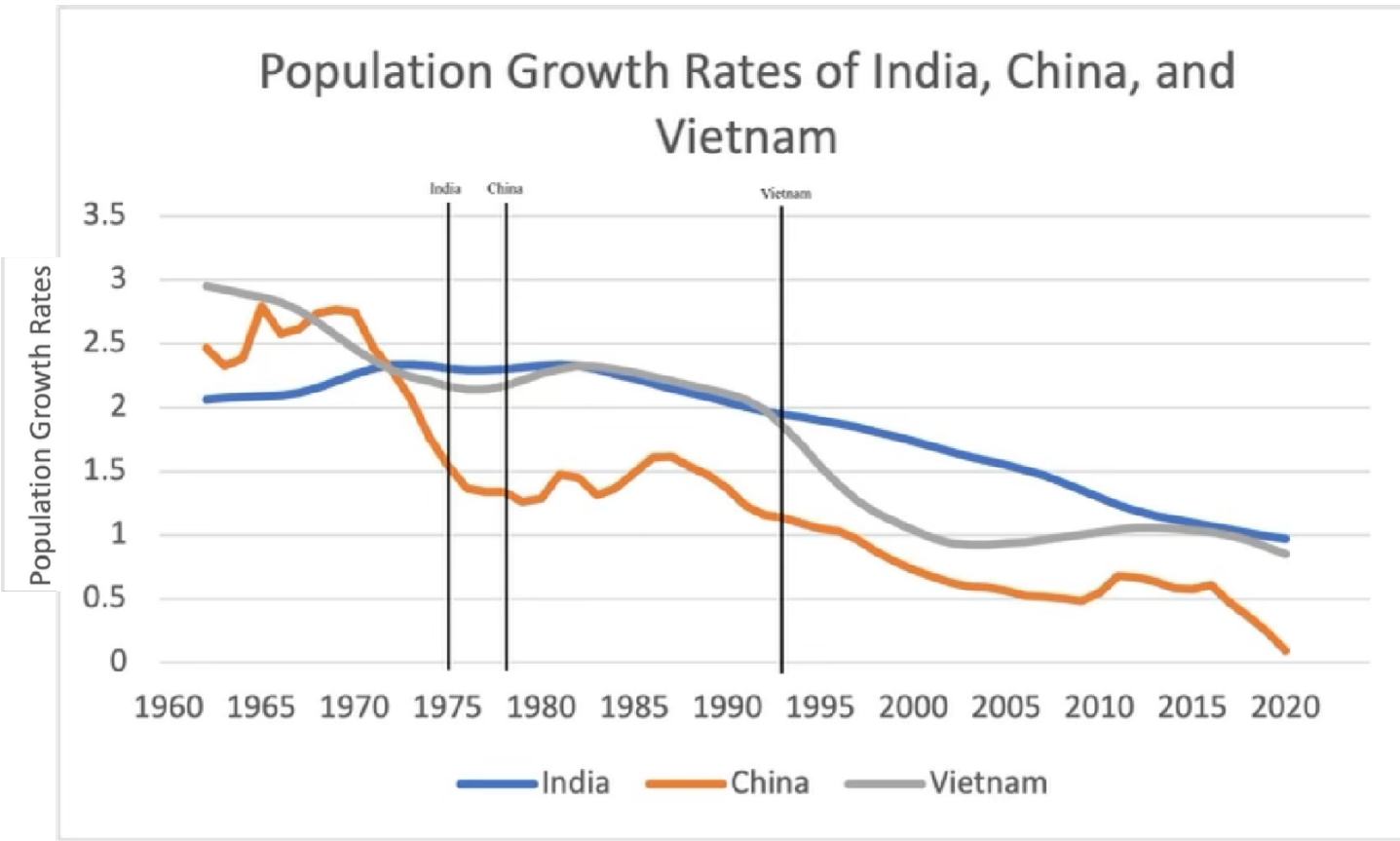


Figure 2: Population Growth Rates of India, China, and Vietnam. Data from the World Bank database.

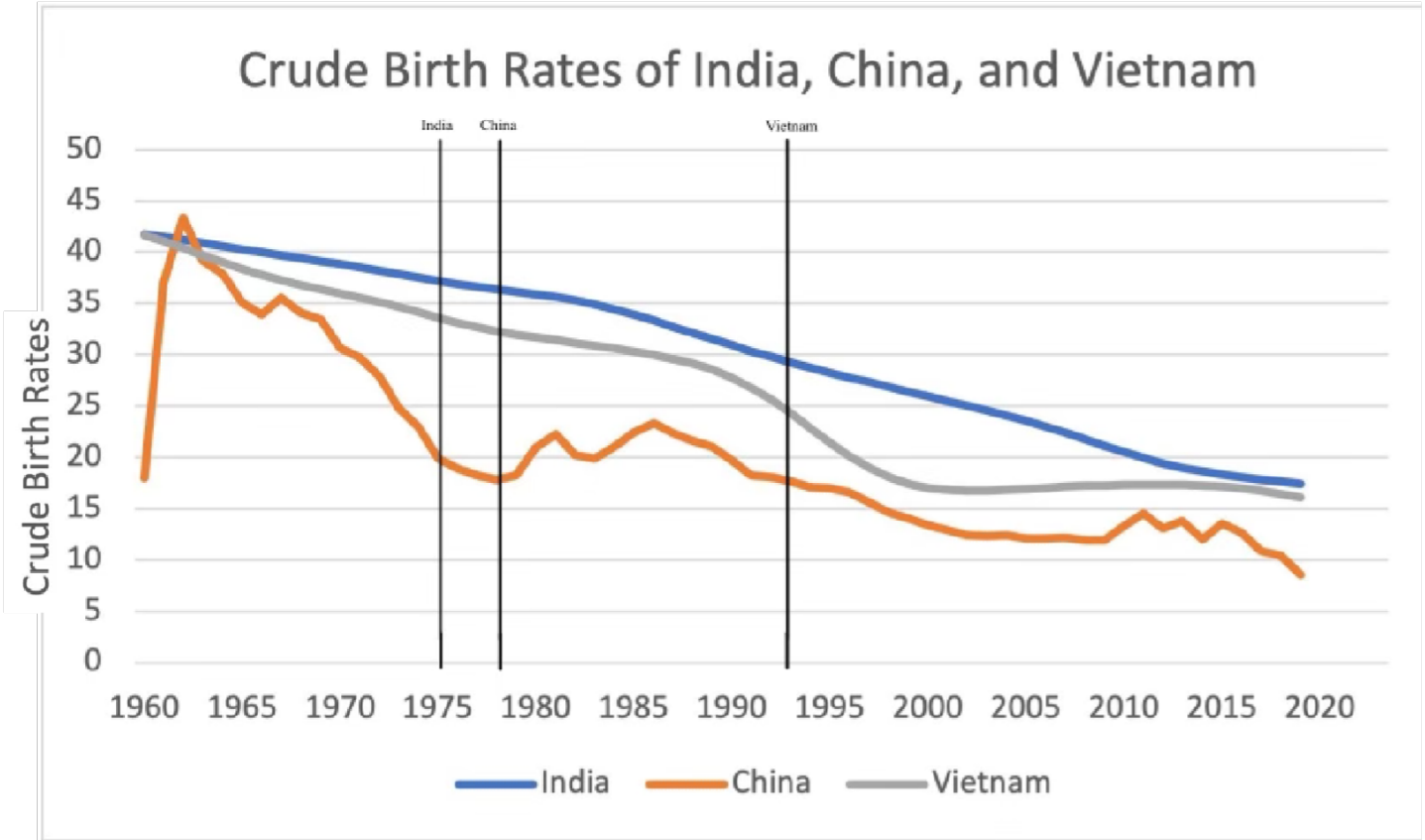


Figure 3: Crude Birth Rates of India, China, and Vietnam. Data from the World Bank database.

tion is actually attributable to these policies.

**POPULATION GROWTH RATE (PGR)**

As seen in Figure 2, each case country similarly experienced decreases in population growth rates (PGR) after policy implementation. From one year before policy implementation to five years after,

India experienced a 0.96% decrease (from a PGR of 2.286780592 in 1974 to a PGR of 2.309521943 in 1980), China experienced a 1.95% decrease (from a PGR of 1.338182338 in 1978 to a PGR of 1.312068761 in 1984) (although experiencing significant fluctuation right after, most likely due to political/civic unrest and lack of compliance in the beginning, the

growth rate decreased overall), and Vietnam experienced the greatest decline in PGR with a 38.61% decrease (from a PGR of 2.061828203 in 1992 to a PGR of 1.265726153 in 1998) in population growth rates. The slopes of the lines, however, allude to a more unstable relationship, with the rates fluctuating despite policy implementation. This

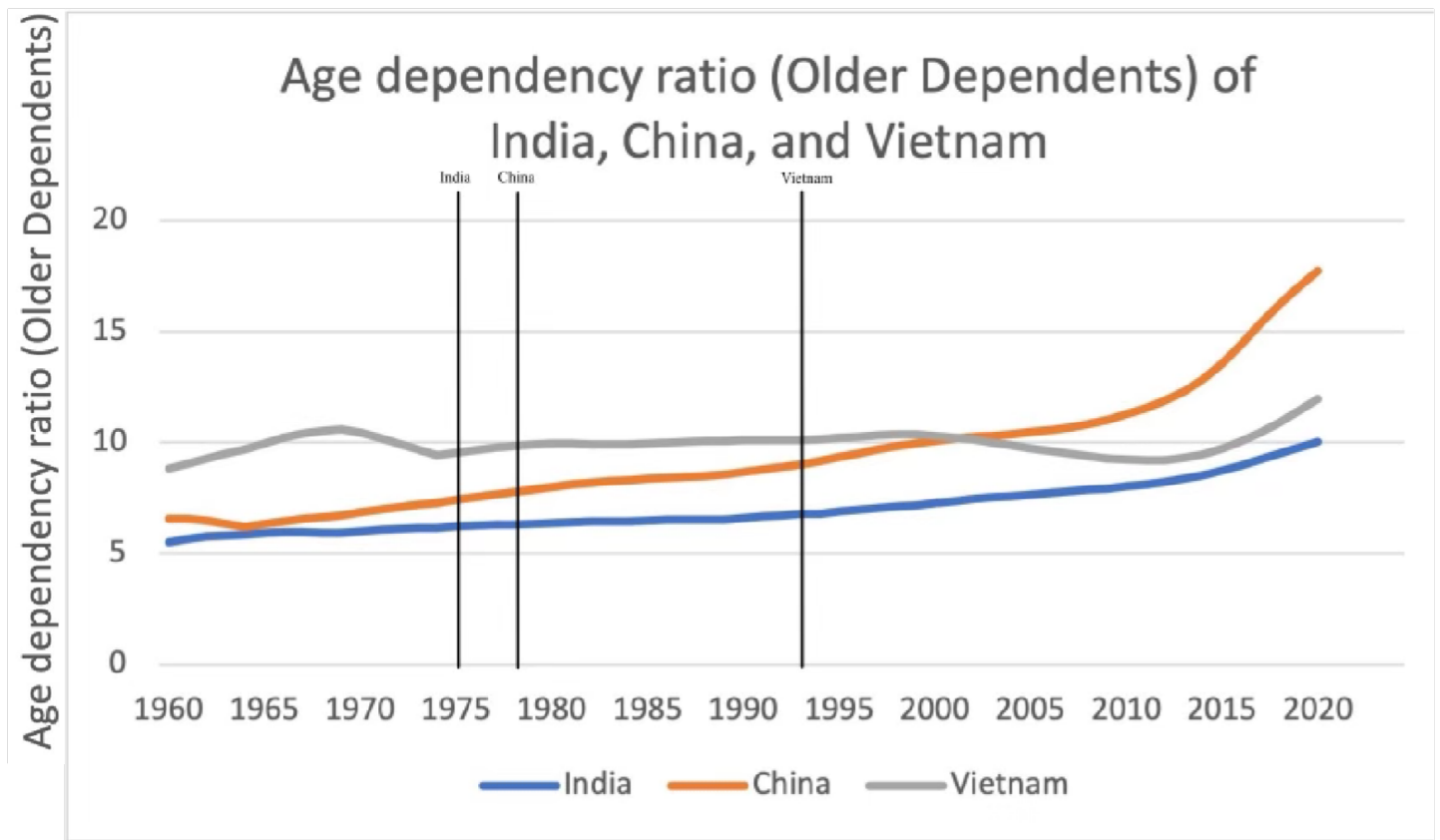


Figure 4: Age Dependency Ratio of Older Dependents of India, China, and Vietnam. Data from the World Bank database.

could indicate that the relationship between policy implementation and population growth rates may be uncorrelated, possibly due to influxes of immigration or non-compliance.

**CRUDE BIRTH RATE (CBR)**

As seen in Figure 3, these countries' crude birth rates (CBR) depict an overall downward fluctu-

ating trend. From one year before policy implementation to five years after, India experienced a 4.49% decrease (from a CBR of 37.866 in 1974 to a CBR of 36.167 in 1980), China experienced an increase of 9.04% (from a CBR of 18.25 in 1978 to a CBR of 19.9 in 1984), and Vietnam experienced the largest decrease of 29.20% (from a CBR of

26.804 in 1992 to a CBR of 18.976 in 1998) in crude birth rates. The most aggressive policy, China's one-child policy, saw periods of fluctuation after implementation (leading to the increase between the two benchmarks of evaluation) but exhibited an overall negative trend. India and Vietnam have negative slopes, even pre-policy. However, China's CBR

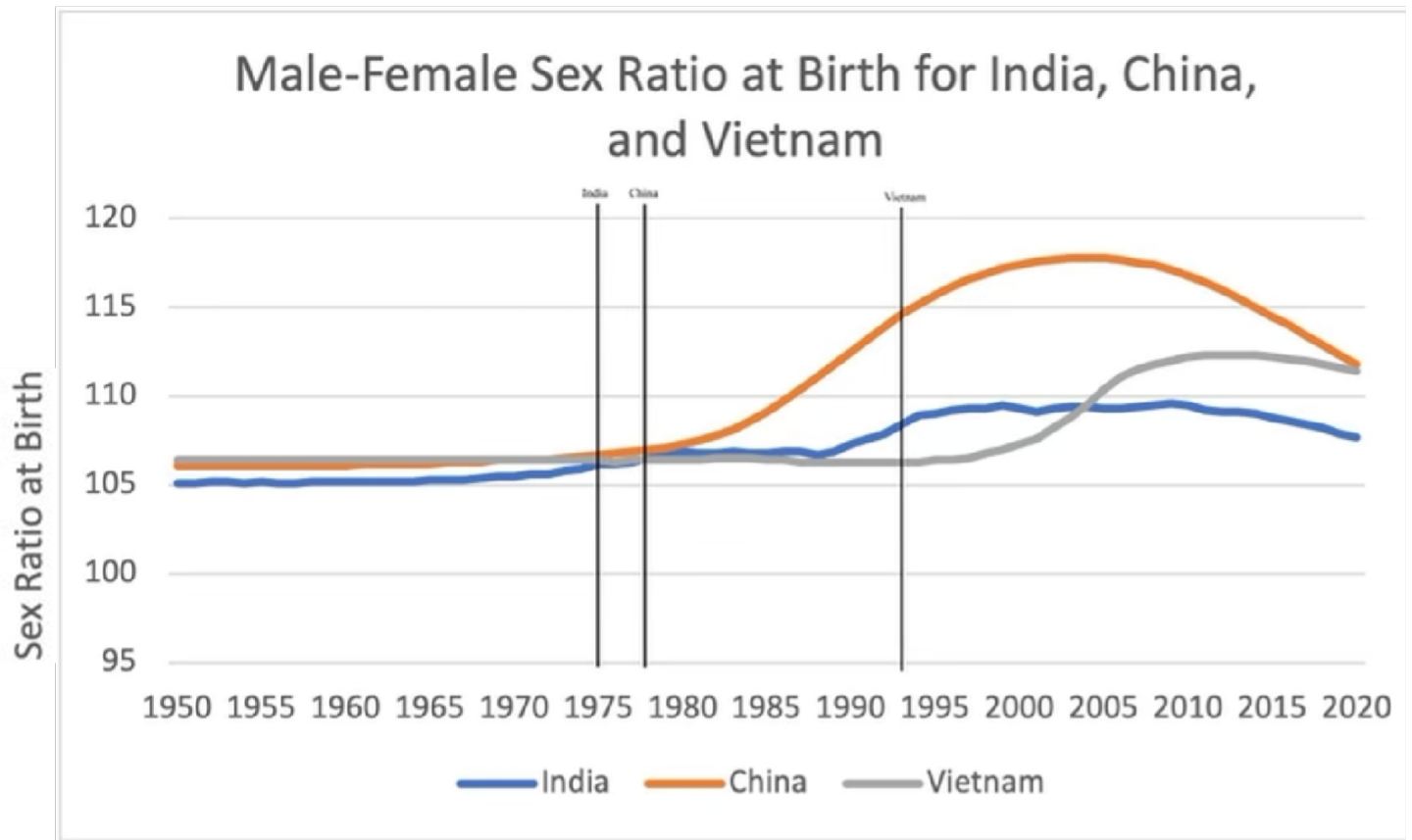


Figure 5: Male-Female Sex Ratio at Birth of India, China, and Vietnam. Data from the World Bank database.

appears to be more volatile throughout, with data points fluctuating throughout the years — perhaps due to the longer focus on family planning by the CCP and non-compliance in the early stages of the policy.

### **AGE-DEPENDENCY RATIO OF OLDER DEPENDENTS (EADR)**

This indicator, the age-dependency ratio of older dependents (EADR) is slow to change in the population as it involves the shifting of age composition and demographic of the overall population as a result of policy, which is not instantaneous. For this reason, this outcome was evaluated for the year of policy implementation and then

evaluated again 25 years later. As seen in Figure 4, India experienced a 22.99% increase (from an EADR of 6.161430698 in 1975 to 7.577916983 in 2000), China experienced the largest increase of 32.48% (from an EADR of 7.776098289 in 1979 to 10.30183178 in 2004), and Vietnam experienced a 3.56% increase (from an EADR of 10.1006228 in 1993 to 10.45971711 in 2018) in the age-dependency ratios of older dependents between the two benchmark times of evaluation. The most aggressive policy, implemented by China, resulted in faster and more severe aging of the overall population than the other policy approaches.

### **MALE-FEMALE SEX RATIO AT BIRTH (SRB)**

As seen in Figure 5, the male-female sex ratios at birth (SRB) following the implementation of each policy had periods of increase, most likely due to the son preference phenomenon present in each case country. From the year of policy implementation to five years after, China experienced the greatest increase of 1.03% (from an SRB of 107 in 1979 to an SRB of 108.1 in 1984), India experienced a 0.76% increase (from an SRB of 105.9 in 1975 to an SRB of 106.7 in 1980), and Vietnam experienced an increase of 0.19% (from an SRB of 106.3 in 1993 to an SRB of 106.5 in 1998). These unnatural increases in males born per females could have resulted from female feticides,

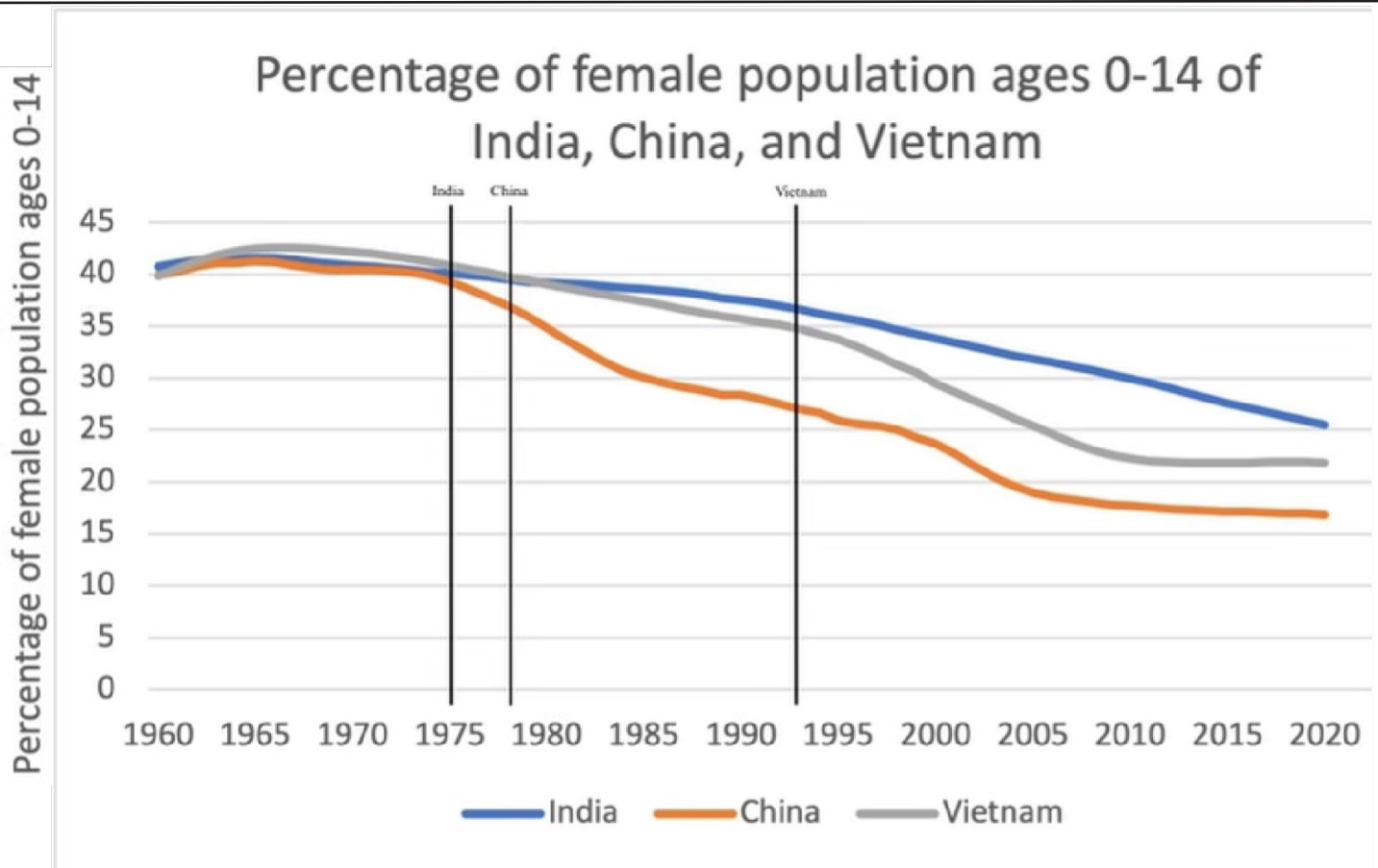


Figure 6: Youth Composition of Female Population of India, China, and Vietnam. Data from the World Bank database.

such as through sex-selective abortions or hidden rates of female infanticide.

The cultural phenomenon of familial preference for sons manifested itself most aggressively in China, due to the country’s one-child policy, and least aggressively in Vietnam, due to its two-child policy. The CCP repealed the one-child policy in 2015 — at which point in Figure 5, an increasingly negative slope returns to a more natural sex distribution. This further demonstrates the policy’s correlation with the increased ratio of males born to females.

### YOUTH COMPOSITION

#### OF FEMALE POPULATION (YCF)

Similar to the age-dependency ratio indicator, the percentage of the national female population that is aged 0-14 years old (YCF) takes time to appear in the population as it involves shifting the age composition of the female population, which is not instantaneous. For this reason, this outcome was also evaluated for the year of policy implementation and then evaluated again 25 years later. As seen in Figure 6, China saw the largest decrease of 44.65% (from a YCF of 36.91671357 in 1979 to a YCF of 20.43354016 in 2004), India saw the smallest decrease of 14.83%

(from a YCF of 40.18451121 in 1975 to a YCF of 34.22566389 in 2000), and Vietnam saw a decrease of 37.61% (from a YCF of 35.11343753 in 1993 to a YCF of 21.90755288 in 2018). Like with the other gendered outcome, sex ratios at birth, China saw the largest decrease, most likely due to the son preference and aggressive policy restriction on family size leading to a “generation” of severe gender asymmetry present now<sup>54</sup>.

#### LIMITATIONS

One critical limitation of this analysis is that the nature of the research does not allow for complete isolation of the outcomes. Giv-

en the outcomes are observed and collected from databases analyzing the historical metrics of countries, there is no way to isolate the effect of the policies themselves on the metrics. Instead, the effects seen are the culmination of various factors that could contribute to an increase or decrease in any given outcome. This limitation means that the shifts in outcomes seen in this analysis could result from natural fertility rate convergence (a theory in which countries naturally converge to a lower fertility rate upon economic development)<sup>55</sup>. This also limited the similarity of cases, as each country has its own specific historical and political context, as well as cultural norms and events influencing it. One noteworthy example of this is the intense political restructuring/shift that accompanied Vietnam's two-child policy implementation<sup>56</sup>.

Another limitation of this analysis is that there is an assumption that these policies affect only the frequency of births and pregnancies to influence population growth. In reality, these policies could also affect the health of births

and pregnancies. For example, these policies could have reduced the scarcity of resources, allowing more people access to safe birthing and thus reducing infant mortality rates. This, in turn, could increase population growth, effectively decreasing the perceived effect that the policy actually has on reducing growth.

There is also a lack of data on Vietnam compared to the other two countries, which limited the ability to analyze each country's national trends holistically for a longer period of time. There is also a crucial limitation of the difference-in-differences analysis design as each policy happened in different years with different global contexts.

### CONCLUSION

Population control has been a highly relevant and significant piece of government administration throughout history, especially in Southeast Asia, as threats and worries of overpopulation have become increasingly common. This paper evaluates policies enacted by three countries — India's forced sterilization campaign of the 1970s, China's one-child policy of 1979, and Viet-

nam's two-child policy of 1993 — under different metrics to analyze the effects, both intended and unintended, of these policies on their countries' populations and demographics.

Although each policy seems to be correlated with reducing the rate at which populations grow, these results are inconclusive due to the inability to isolate the effect of the policies from other factors that play a role in determining the population growth rate. Additionally, each of these policies may have correlations with other unintended effects due to the prevalence of a son preference in each country, such as distorted sex ratios at birth and fewer women in each country.

Future analyses could weigh different criteria against one another to determine holistically the best course of action for population control policies, such as the efficacy of these policies at reducing population growth, cultural impact, cyclical, ethicality, etc., as well as the costs and needs of each policy in different countries.

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# Monroe & Manila: The Best And Worst Of US Pacific Diplomacy Pre-World War One

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The story of the United States of America, from its founding to World War I, is largely one of expansion, as we first moved west across the continent and then expanded the outermost border of American hegemony (our defensive line or “forward defense line”) into the Pacific. Since Astoria, Oregon became America’s first toe-hold on the Pacific coast in 1811, access to and defense of trading ports on that ocean have been of utmost importance. As the US has sought both to expand and to defend its holdings in the Pacific, it has had to use not just military might but diplomacy—sometimes well and sometimes poorly. Here, I will address both the diplomatic triumphs of President Monroe and John Adams leading up to the Monroe doctrine and its application to the West Coast in the early 19th century, and President McKinley’s disastrous conquest of the Philippines later that same cen-

tury. I will look at the key decisions made in both cases, why they were made, and what caused them to either succeed or fail. Finally, I will compare both cases and consider what the US can learn from its history.

## **PART 1: THE MONROE DOCTRINE**

The Monroe Doctrine was a position expressed in President James Monroe’s address to Congress on the 2nd of December, 1823. In the address, he declares that “the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers.”<sup>1</sup> This bold statement is often thought of and referred to solely within the context of Latin America, but in truth both its motivation and its effects can be seen clearly in the Pacific.

John Quincy Adams—a man of great diplomatic experience—be-

came Monroe’s Secretary of State in 1817. His job, and that of Monroe’s, was to defend and push forward America’s western line of defense. By this point in time, the US had recently acquired the Louisiana Purchase; however, the Mexican-American War would not occur until 1846, meaning meaning that California, Nevada, and Utah were not yet a part of the nation, as well as sections of Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and Wyoming. Additionally, Astoria, Oregon, previously the nation’s only claim on the Pacific coast, had been taken by the British.

In his quest to eliminate European threats to infringe on American interests and territory, Adams, according to Michael Green, “judged exactly the right timing and level of bluster needed to push back first the British, then the Spanish, and finally the Russians.”<sup>2</sup> Green is referring first to the half-win for the US at the Anglo-American Convention which extended the US-Can-

da border to the Rocky Mountains (but ceded some of the American Missouri Territory). Then, to “push back” the Spanish, the Adams-Onís treaty required Spain to give up any claim to the Pacific Northwest. Finally, the Russo-American Treaty of 1824 divided American and Russian territory at 54°40’, giving Russian-claimed Oregon country over to the United States. Through these treaties, America defended its grip on the west coast and secured its forward defense line in the Pacific, a line it would continue to push back.

<sup>3</sup>

The US accomplished these feats through a strategic combination of military, diplomatic, and ideational tools. The American victories at the Anglo-American Convention best highlight their use of military coercion, where the threat of military action was used to great effect. The American build up of naval power through the 1816 “Act for the Gradual Increase of the Navy of the United States” and the American show of power through sending the *Ontario* to the British holding of Astoria each factor into the British decision to cede at least some claims in North America. Additionally, the British were eager to avoid a third war with the US, the War of 1812 having just concluded in 1815. As Green notes, “the European powers could not be certain of American restraint, nor how their rivals would exploit a conflict with the Americans to their own advantage in the larger concert of power that characterized diplomacy in the Old World at the time.”<sup>4</sup> Britain had to

constantly keep in mind its status in relation to other European powers, and could not necessarily afford to continue to waste resources across the Atlantic.

Adam’s and Monroe’s diplomatic abilities are best highlighted when considering their dealings with Russia, and Adams in particular was well-prepared for this role, having been the first US minister to that country. Russia had threatened American interests by expanding as far down as San Francisco and establishing outposts on the Sandwich Islands. Czar Alexander I had also banned foreign vessels in the Pacific above 51° latitude, hurting American trade and fishing in the northern Pacific (such as just below Alaska). In response to what Adams and Monroe considered infringements on American rights to territory and Pacific access, the US put out the Monroe Doctrine. This doctrine was included in President Monroe’s seventh address to Congress in December of 1823.

But why did the Doctrine work? Why did the Russians back off? There were a number of factors at hand in the internal Russian debate on whether to face the US militarily. On one hand, the Czar had a certain fondness for America and when protests erupted over his edict banning foreign ships in the Pacific Northwest, he lifted some of his restrictions. Russia was also in debt, and a military conflict would have exacerbated their economic fragility. On the other hand, the Russo-American company, chartered by the Russian emperor in 1799 to con-

duct trade and establish settlements, had long been asking the Russian government for better funding for the defense of their ports and outposts; if they came under significant military threat this funding would be granted.<sup>5</sup> All these factors would impact how Russia responded to the Monroe Doctrine.

What it really all came down to, however, were the interactions between and recommendations of three prominent Russians at the time: Count Arakcheev, Count Nesselrode and General Pozzo di Borgo.<sup>6</sup> Each of these men had an influence on the Czar’s final decision to pull back and sign the 1824 treaty, and Adams understood both them and the system of Russian bureaucracy. This allowed him to advise Monroe to take the well-calculated gamble of a firm stance against European infringement through the Monroe Doctrine.

It is clear that through a combination of military and diplomatic power, Adams and Monroe achieved significant gains on behalf of the growing United States. But beyond just material returns, the Monroe Doctrine also helped establish the US’ place in the world and among other major powers. American territory will keep expanding, the Monroe Doctrine declared, and we will not tolerate any infringement upon our interests.

## **PART 2: THE FILIPINO-AMERICAN WAR**

The spring of 1898 saw the beginning of the Spanish-American War, after the explosion of the USS

Maine. Through this war, the US became involved in both the Cuban War for Independence and the Philippine Revolution, our involvement in the latter eventually morphing into the Filipino-American War. US military action in the Philippines, from fighting the Spanish to fighting the Filipinos, was a spectacular disaster, militarily, diplomatically, economically, and reputationally.

The Filipino-American war resulted in 4,200 American deaths and 2,900 wounded and cost the US \$400 million.<sup>7</sup> Economically, the US did not recoup this cost through its acquisitions. Looking back on when Spain owned the islands, it can be estimated it made only around \$300,000 a year in profits, according to the anti-imperialist billionaire Andrew Carnegie in his 1898 article in the *American Review*.<sup>8</sup> Despite the Philippines' use as a refueling station for American ships, the islands were decidedly not worth the cost of the war. Furthermore, even once Theodore Roosevelt declared the war officially over in 1902, the cost of keeping the islands continued to climb as guerrilla attacks persisted.

The war in the Philippines was the first overseas war America had ever fought. Despite eventually winning, first against the Spanish and then against the Filipinos, the US was woefully unprepared to fight on the Philippines, which aggravated costs and death tolls. Major General Wesley Merritt, whom President William McKinley selected to command the US forces in the Philippines, knew little about the

climate there, relied on outdated maps, and for all intents and purposes went into the islands blind.<sup>9</sup>

The US army also entered the Philippines without a clear goal in mind. Disagreements in Washington and within the military command and President McKinley's unwillingness or inability to set concrete strategic priorities both contributed to this lack of clarity.<sup>10</sup> Was the aim merely to take Manila? To establish dominance over the whole territory? To back the Filipino fight for independence or to offer the islands back to Spain in exchange for other concessions? Conflict carried on across the Pacific with all of these questions unanswered.

The breakdown of communications between Washington and the American diplomats in the Philippines and Hong Kong further complicated this obscurity of purpose. McKinley in Washington was hesitant to provide any guarantee of Filipino independence, worried of losing the islands as a bargaining chip with Spain – a chip he did not end up using, given that the Spanish were never offered back control of the islands. Meanwhile, American bureaucrats in Hong Kong were in contact with the expatriate Filipino rebel Emilio Aguinaldo, helping him purchase guns and ammunition and making vague promises of US support for an independent Filipino people. Washington never endorsed these promises, and moreover, the contact between McKinley and those in Hong Kong and the Philippines was sporadic at best. McKinley did eventually order no

promises of independence be made to the Filipino people, but this order was largely ignored and came far too late.<sup>11</sup> When the US eventually decided to keep the islands as colonies, it was breaking its promises in the eyes of Aguinaldo, who would later become the leader of the Filipinos in the Philippine-American War.

In terms of the discourse in the US as a whole, the Filipino-American war was controversial. However, most discussion of strategic costs and benefits was clouded over by arguments colored by rampant racism against the Filipinos. Imperialists desired the islands to bring civilized, Christian values to the “uncivilized” Filipino people, while anti-imperialists worried about the influx of non-white Filipino immigrants by allowing the Philippines into the Union. Both arguments, aside from being morally despicable, were also largely bereft of any realistic strategic thought.<sup>12</sup>

This viewpoint of the Filipino people as lesser also translated into reprehensible action. While there is great contention and rampant misinformation regarding Filipino deaths, the total number—including all those dead from violence, disease and famine – likely reaches into the hundreds of thousands.<sup>13</sup> The United States also engaged in widespread torture in the Philippines, including beating, slow hanging, and the water cure.<sup>14</sup> In April of 1902, four witnesses of the use of the water cure testified before the Committee on the Philippines, shocking the American public with the severity of the methods their government

had used.<sup>15</sup> In addition to losing men and money overseas, the US also walked away with a damaged reputation due to everything from the scandal over the American use of torture to the American discomfort with owning colonies.

Michael Green points to “Self-Determination Versus Universal Values” as a key tension in the history of American-Asian relations.<sup>16</sup> A big question in American foreign relations has always been: interfere to (at least namely) spread the ideals of freedom and democracy or protect the right of countries to choose their own government? In the case of the Philippines, the United States decided against allowing Filipinos the right to self-determination, something the country has been forced to reckon with in its history as an imperialistic nation.

The US also had countless alternatives to this drawn-out war with little to no pay off. Perhaps the

best one would be supporting the Filipino pursuit of independence. By still forcing the Spanish off the islands, the US could have defended its nationalistic pride and restrained Spanish power. Doing so also would have warned other countries such as Japan or Germany who may covet the Philippines’ resources that the US was willing to defend the Filipino right to self-determination. Finally, using the ill-fated connections that existed between American diplomats and Filipino revolutionaries, it may have been possible for the US to negotiate for a port on the islands for refueling purposes.

### CONCLUSION

Both Monroe and McKinley had the same broader mission during their presidencies: expand and protect the American forward defense line in the Pacific. Monroe and his Secretary of State achieved their goal of defending American continental expansion through an

astute understanding of European powers, clear communication with each other and with powers abroad, and the setting of concrete goals. McKinley, in contrast, wasted American money and manpower by engaging in an unnecessary conflict with Filipino rebels, following an egregious communication deficiency between himself and American representatives in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War. Good diplomacy relies on understanding your own officers and representatives, as well as understanding those abroad with whom you are trying to communicate. Monroe and Adams realized this; McKinley did not.

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*(Above) Here you see the Campanile, an iconic bell tower on the quad at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. Legend states that if a student passes beneath the bell tower while it tolls, they will automatically fail their exams.*

*Taken by Campbell McClellan, first-year Political Science and History (United States concentration) double major.*



*(Above) A view of Bad Wimpfen, a small town on the outskirts of Baden-Württemberg's Heilbronn. Captured from the top of the Blauer Turm (blue tower), first constructed in the 12th and 13th centuries and since added to multiple times. Standing over 40 meters tall in its current iteration, the tower is home to one of Germany's only remaining tower keepers who continues a centuries-old tradition of living at the top of the tower, which was once advantageous as it enabled early warning of advancing hostile groups. Today, the tower keeper serves as a resource for visitors interested in the tower's history. Taken in July and August 2023, during a personal trip to Germany. Photographed by Brenner Cobb, sophomore Peace, War, and Defense and Contemporary European Studies major and German minor.*