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Charlie Hollis Whittington

Charlie Hollis Whittington graduated from Coastal Carolina University in May of 2017 with a Bachelor of Arts in political science with a minor in sociology. In Fall 2017, Charlie began working toward a master's in public policy at Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy. Charlie has multiple areas of research interests, including public opinion, the judiciary, public policy, quantitative methodology, social justice, and Marxist political economy. Charlie's specific topics of study are Marxist political economy and the decision-making structure of economic distribution and production, as well queer studies and transgender oppression. Charlie has worked as a special projects assistant through Coastal Carolina University's Edgar Dyer Institute of Leadership and Public Policy and as a research assistant for the Congressional Management Foundation in Washington, D.C. In April 2017, Charlie's study "The Emergence of Leaders: State Supreme Court Justices" was awarded second place for Oral Presentations at the Coastal Carolina University Undergraduate Research Competition.

The Effects of Military Budget on American Perception

Abstract

How do Americans' perception of a state formulate based on the state's military expenditure? Conventional research theories indicate that Americans might feel a shared political culture with other democratic nations. Such feelings of solidarity may engender Americans' trust and favorability of some states' military development, but provoke negative feelings toward others. Using data mostly from Gallup and the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, this study examines Americans' attitudes toward major states' in the world (vis-à-vis military expenditure).

Keywords: clash of civilizations, democratic peace theory, military expenditure, public opinion, political culture

How do Americans perceive other states and why do Americans perceive those states accordingly?

The importance of this question (and the answer) extends to all ends of the society. Public opinion is one of the driving forces behind public policy outputs and actions of political officials. Scholars have found that the regime-type of a state shapes public perceptions around the idea of the welfare state (Bean and Papadakis, 1998; Jakobsen, 2011). Moreover, intrinsic theories exist arguing that political culture incentivizes cooperation or military conflict among states (Huntington, 1993; 1996). Even though the discourse surrounding this topic dates back to Kant's Perpetual Peace of 1795, there are identifiable gaps in the literature. The dearth of the literature is the impetus for this research project.

This study is organized into four sections. The first section is the literature review which discusses the conventional research of regime-type, political culture, and American perception development of foreign states. Following the literature review, the theoretical framework is delineated. The theory of this study connects regime-type and political culture to security threats Americans potentially develop from increases in military expenditure of nondemocratic and non-Western states. Through this connection, the independent variable, dependent variable, and the hypotheses of the study are provided and advanced. Briefly, this study uses military expenditure of a state as the independent variable and American favorability of a state as the dependent variable. The next section is the analysis, which contains information about the data as well as the quantitative tools and methods employed to answer the research question. This study found that military budget is significant to the positive views Americans

have of states over time regardless of regime-type and political culture. Although this study has offered a new method of understanding on how Americans develop feelings of other states, it has made uncanny some of the once clearly defined theories in the scope of democratic peace, regime-type analysis, and political culture.

Current Research and Theories

Two theories dominate the literature regarding perception development of foreign states. The first theory posits that the regime-type of a state shapes how the public of one state views a state. The second theory argues that the culture of a state molds the perceptions that the public of one state has about another. The below literature review assesses the nature of these two theories.

Regime-Type

The regime-type of a state has been accredited as a factor that shapes perceptions of foreign states. According to Cohn (2012), principles and norms, or general beliefs and standards, of behavior that guide relations in specific areas are fused into regime-type. The result: States with similar regimes are compelled to increase their gains through cooperation. Gains from cooperation may be economic benefits, increases in political influences, or even military support. Cohn (2012) argues that regime-type leads to implicit economic cooperation and the development of international organizations. Lacina and Lee (2013) and Maoz and Abdolali (1989) report evidence of this claim. They found that democratic regimes usually do not conflict with one another.

If states are willing to cooperate with states of, generally, the same regime-type, then does that indicate that the public supports those states as well because of the similar regime-type component?

Scholars have studied perception development of states based off of regime-type. Bean and Papadakis (1998) looked at how members of multiple states viewed the welfare regime-type. They sampled individuals from Australia, the United States, Great Britain, West Germany, and Italy. They found that members of the public, relatively, did not favor welfare services from different types of welfare regimes. Particularly, states labeled “liberal” such as Australia and the United States had less public support of the welfare regime (Bean and Papadakis, 1998). In other words, the individuals of liberal states did not perceive states of different regimes favorably. Furthermore, Jakobsen (2011) found in a study that regime affects the attitudes of individuals and how they view welfare regimes. The study assessed individuals’ adoption of cultures and values in different types of regimes. The regime-types analyzed in the study were Liberal, Conservative, Social-Democratic, and Eastern European. The study determined that

the values of Liberal countries shape perceptions of Conservative countries. However, the results for Eastern European countries were divided insofar that mass attitudes did not correlate among all of the Eastern European states. Jakobsen (2011) suggests that these results are the result of how close an Eastern European state is to Western European states.

Political Culture

Culture has been attributed to perception and opinion development. Huntington (1993; 1996) developed the Clash of Civilizations Theory, identifying that conflict is prominent between states with different political cultures. In terms of public perceptions, Mason (2004) found contrary evidence to Huntington's (1993; 1996) theory. According to Huntington (1996), Russia is an Orthodox state and the United States is a Western state. Accordingly, Americans would necessarily view Russia unfavorably. However, Mason (2004) found that most Americans have a favorable opinion of Russia. Using a Gallup survey, Yatani and Bramel (1989) found evidence in public opinion that supported the nature of Huntington's (1993; 1996) theory. They discovered that Americans developed increasing feelings of anti-Sovietism. However, anti-Sovietism feelings decreased from 1983 to 1989 (soon before the collapse of the Soviet Union). Yatani and Bramel (1989) attributed the decline of negative views to changes in the Union's leadership. Perhaps, the Union's politics and culture changed similar—if not the same—to the United States' that led to more favorable views than hostile views of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless: The impact of political culture on perception development is uncanny due to the differing research findings among scholars.

Theoretical Framework

The normative approach to the democratic peace theory posits that democratic nations tend to avoid military conflict with one another. The origins of the normative approach to democratic peace theory trace back to Immanuel Kant in his *Perpetual Peace*. Kant argued that states with democratically based political systems avert from engaging in military conflict with one another. Farnham (2003) claims that regime-type (e.g., democratic or nondemocratic) potentially leads states to be perceived as a threat or lead to military conflict between two states.

How do democratic states such as the United States perceive other democratic states and why?

Maoz and Russett (1993) suggest that democratic norms pose as political constraints preventing two states from engaging in military conflict with one another. Hence,

democratic states avoid military conflict with one another. Furthermore, democratic states (such as the United States) generally have the same goals of spreading their democratic ideologies across the globe. For two democratic nations to engage in military conflict with one another is irrational. On the contrary, democratic states will view non-democratic states unfavorably. Members of democratic states are unable to develop a collective identity, a shared feeling of belonging to a group, with non-democratic states (Mello, 2014).

This study's theoretical model extends the reach of the normative approach to the democratic peace theory. Huntington (1996) formulated the clash of civilizations theory, which claims that cultural differences lead to conflict between two states. As previously noted, regime-type (whether a state is democratic or nondemocratic) may indicate whether states perceive other states as a security threat. Possibly, the way citizens of a state perceive another state is determined by more than the binary regime-type typology of democratic and nondemocratic. Citizens of a state, such as the United States, may develop opinions about other states based on differences or similarities in political culture. Subsequently, Americans may develop feelings of security or insecurity if they differ or share a political culture, respectively.

There are eight political cultures: Western, Latin American, African, Islamic, Sinic, Hindu, Orthodox, Buddhist, and Japanese, of which the United States is considered Western (Huntington, 1996). It logically follows, then, that the American public develops a collective identity with other Western states because of their shared sets of values and norms. A collective identity would engender American trust and a positive perception of other Western states as well an absence of significant security threats. These theoretical developments articulated are advanced further.

Political culture and regime type of a state are linked to how positively or negatively Americans perceive a state. As a result, Americans may develop feelings of security or insecurity about a state based on that state's political culture and regime-type. The base of analysis of the normative approach of democratic peace theory focuses on military conflict. Extending the scope of the democratic peace theory along with the clash of civilizations theory encompasses the effect regime-type and political culture has on Americans' feelings of other states' military expenditure. The perception Americans develop may develop because of feelings of security or insecurity based on the political culture and regime-type of a state. In terms of military development, Americans may accept and even encourage high military expenditure of states with Western political cultures and democratic regimes. Contrarily, Americans would perceive high military expenditure of states as a security threat.

Therefore, the two hypotheses of this study are:

H1: Democratic states, states with a Western political culture, Japan, and Israel are seen positively by Americans, and thus will reflect a positive relationship between military expenditure and how favorable Americans view that state.

H2: Nondemocratic states, states with a non-Western political culture, are seen negatively by Americans, and thus will reflect a negative relationship between military expenditure and how favorable Americans view that state.

Analysis

Data

To test the two hypotheses of this study, data was collected from multiple sources for the dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable is American perception of other states, represented by American favorability trends of states. Favorability trends were gathered from the Gallup website. Americans surveyed were asked what their overall opinion was of a given country. The choices available to Americans were very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, and very unfavorable. For this study, scores of very favorable and mostly favorable were combined to represent the perceptions Americans have of other states (see Table 1 for descriptive statistics of favorability trends).

American favorability trends were collected from 1991 to 2014 for Canada, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Iran, Israel, Japan, South Korea, and Russia. North Korea was initially among these states but was removed due to an insufficient amount of data for military expenditure. Some years included more than one instance of polling, and so the mean favorability was figured for those years of countries with more than one instance of polling. The states listed were used because they would yield a sufficient amount of observations and provide for a diverse group of states in terms of regime-type, political culture, and military expenditure to test the two hypotheses.

The independent variable is a military expenditure of a given state. The data for military expenditure was collected from the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database. The military budgets of the eleven countries are calculated in constant United States dollars (2011) to control for inflation. The SIPRI Military Expenditure Database obtained data on military expenditure using from the following sources: (1) from official government documents and publications or a questionnaire that was completed by the state government; (2) sources that cited data from the government

of the state, such as NATO and the IMF, and; (3) other reliable secondary sources such as specialist journals or newspapers.

There are also two control variables. The first control variable is the political regime. Data for political regime came from the POLITY project. The polity scale delineates the extent that a state is democratic or nondemocratic. According to the scores, negative ten is the least democratic and positive ten is the most democratic (see Table 2 for polity score descriptive statistics). Polity is the only control variable ultimately included in the analysis because of the second control variable, political culture, lacks sufficient variation. A dummy variable is used to represent the binary relationship a state has with the United States regarding political culture. States with political cultures considered hostile to the United States maintain the value of zero, while states with political cultures considered a friend to the United States were given the value of one. The hostile states ($v = 0$) are China, India, Iran, North Korea, and Russia. The friendly states ($v = 1$) are Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Israel, and Japan. The hostile or friendly statuses of states were determined using Huntington's (1993; 1996) analysis on the class of civilizations.

States labeled hostile are categorized by Huntington (1996) as non-Western political cultures. States labeled friendly are categorized by Huntington (1996) as Western—or for states that are non-Western that are friendly (Israel and Japan), maintain the kin-country relationship with the United States. That is, Israel and Japan have external or unique political relationships with the United States that different political cultures do not traditionally influence Israel-United States or Japan-United States hostility.

Results

This study took a quantitative approach to answer the research question and to test the two hypotheses advanced. Since the empirical test examines data points for 11 countries over 24 years, panel data analysis is employed to examine the cross-national time-series data. The fixed-effects model captured the time-invariant factors that are unique to individual states. This choice is confirmed by the Hausman test, where the null hypothesis is rejected ($\chi^2 = 8.60$). For the regression analysis, there are two models that separate states as democratic and nondemocratic. The two models represent states that Americans are intended to view either favorably (democratic) or unfavorably (nondemocratic).

The results are shown in Table 3. These results are only halfway promising (Table 4 represents average favorability to conceptualize the intensity of the favorability scores' in relation to the causality scores).

The first hypothesis (democratic model)

H1: Democratic states, states with a Western political culture, Japan, and Israel are seen positively by Americans, and thus will reflect a positive relationship between military expenditure and how favorable Americans view that state.

Supported

The results for the democratic model indicate that for every one percent increase of military expenditure in democratic states, there was a 6.06 point in American favorability. The strength of this relationship is significant. Among the democratic states were Israel, Japan, South Korea, Russia, and the Western States. The results support and align with the theoretical foundation of this research paper: states with similar political cultures do not engage in military culture. These results suggest that Americans do not perceive a security threat from the military expenditure and growth of other Western states and friendly states. Indeed, Huntington's (1993) argument that military conflict between Western states is an unlikely situation stands to live another day. Americans have high favorability of Western states simultaneously as those Western states increase military expenditure.

For every one point value change in polity of democratic states, there was a 4.34 point increase in American favorability. The significance of these results appears weak but confirms a positive relationship between polity and favorability. Thus, the validity of the normative approach to the democratic peace theory is supported. Furthermore, research that examines the effect of regime-type on public opinion are also supported (Bean and Papadakis, 1998; Farnham, 2003; Jakobsen, 2011; Lacina and Lee, 2013). Probably, democratic-oriented states with increasingly high military budgets are perceived by Americans as buffers. The militaries of these buffer states indicate the engenderment support for democracy and democratic ideologies that overall reinforce collective identity Americans develop with other states (Mello, 2014).

The second hypothesis (nondemocratic model)

H2: Nondemocratic states, states with a non-Western political culture, are seen negatively by Americans, and thus will reflect a negative relationship between military expenditure and how favorable Americans view that state.

Rejected

Instead of the predicted negative relationship between military expenditure and American favorability, the relationship was positive and possessed strong significance

levels. For every one percent increase in the nondemocratic states' military budget, favorability rose 2.86 points. Non-Western states were seen favorably, despite their cultures were not the same as the United States, or fell under the kin-country syndrome umbrella.

The results also indicate that for every one point value change in polity, there was a 0.40 increase in favorability. The states in the nondemocratic model were nondemocratic on the polity scale. Nondemocratic states were expected to yield a negative relationship with regard to polity and favorability. However, the results demonstrate that nondemocratic states are viewed favorably. Research about the conflict between two different political regimes and the results of this study are at odds with one another (Farnham, 2003; Lacina and Lee, 2013). This analysis rejects the claim that democratic states will have conflict with nondemocratic states or that Americans will view nondemocratic states unfavorably.

Kin-Country Syndrome States

States such as South Korea and Russia are perceived more favorably by Americans as military expenditure increases. The results also support Huntington's (1993) concept of the kin-country syndrome: Americans do not view states such as Israel and Japan unfavorably because the military development of Israel and Japan indicates support of the United States. In essence, the military development of Israel and Japan is seen as valuable in the time of heated military conflict between the United States and hostile states.

Conclusion

Statistically speaking, the military budget is linked to increases in American favorability of a state. This study has attempted—and has to some extent—filled one of those gaps. No study has attempted to use military expenditure as an explanatory variable of American favorability, making this study the first of this nature.

No study is perfect; for the sake of space and time, this study was unable to test every possible determinant of American perception. If scholars seek to mimic this study, specific attention should be paid to the shortcomings in methodology and research of this study. First, control variables were lacking; thus, scholars should identify more control variables in analysis for the future. For example, research should consider controlling for world events such as the September 11 terrorist attacks, the war in Iraq, the Great Recession of 2008, and rise to power status of states (i.e., China, BRICS economies). These periods of time may have skewed the data because of increases in security threats or despair of various sorts. Moreover, future research should attempt to incorporate more states in both models—but

particularly the nondemocratic model—for a larger number of observations and sounder analysis.

The following are general conclusions of this study: First, Americans will perceive other democratic, Western, and kin-country states favorably. Second, in terms of military expenditure, American favorability, and the results of this analysis, the United States does not “clash” with non-Western states. Third, this analysis suggests that the impact regime-type or polity have on American favorability are ambiguous. Fourth, Americans potentially perceive another states’ military growth as positive because of some perceived positive externality or benefit (i.e., economic, cultural, social).

Thinking onward, cultural divisions are potentially starting to blur: After all, the world is globalized (Lake, 2008). A globalized world has created a more connected world. For example, states are more economically connected; therefore, the increase in military expenditure of a state—exclusive of regime-type or political culture—represents globalization and modernization. For Americans, globalization and modernization means more economic opportunity.

Tables

Table 1: Favorability Trends

<i>State</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Average</i>
Canada	86	96	91
China	33	48	41
France	47	79	67
Germany	63	89	78
Great Britain	81	91	88
India	47	75	66
Iran	6	17	11
Israel	47	72	63
Japan	46	82	70
South Korea	47	65	56
Russia	34	66	51

Source: Gallup. Note: Average is not average of maximum and minimum.

Table 2: Polity Trends

<i>State</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
Canada	10	10
China	-7	-7
France	9	9
Germany	10	10
Great Britain	10	10
India	8	9
Iran	-7	3
Israel	9	10
Japan	10	10
South Korea	6	8
Russia	3	6

Source: The POLITY Project.

Table 3: Standard Regression Analysis on American Favorability

	Democratic Model	Nondemocratic Model
Independent Variable		
Budget	6.06 (3.499)*	2.86 (.974)***
Control Variable		
Polity	4.34 (1.308)***	.40 (2.210)
Model Information		
F	(9, 144) = 24.48***	(1, 28) = 120.26***
R-Squared	0.511	0.676
Observations	n = 156	n = 32

Note: Standard error in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

Democratic (df = 155); Nondemocratic (df = 31)

Table 4: Favorability Averages of Regime-Types

Regime-Type	Average Favorability
Nondemocratic	26
Democratic	70

Source: Gallup. Nondemocratic states: China and Iran. Democratic States: Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Israel, Japan, South Korea, and Russia.

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