



Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

**INTERNATIONAL MASTER IN PEACE,
CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**



Master's Degree Final Project

America in Transition

Managing domestic affairs and creating a more effective global balance

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Castellon, October 2016





Keywords: Stability, Power, Establishment, Interests, Voting

Abstract

My project focuses on the recent demographic and political changes to American society and the country's place in global affairs since 1991. For the theoretical section of the project, I will go into detail over the reasons behind those changes, as well as their implications. This is important in understanding how to overcome the current and potential problems Americans face in their society, as well as their country's role in international affairs. The practical part of the project will be a student workshop that aims to increase direct dialogue between students of two different high schools in Washington DC. I have chosen DC it is racially diverse, it is where I currently live and it is also the nation's capital.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the University for the experience that I was fortunate enough to be involved in, as well as the patience of my supervisor, Alberto. Furthermore I would like to express my gratitude towards my mother and aunt, who have shared their wisdom with me over the years and in the previous few months when writing my final project.



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Introduction

In 2016 the US finds itself ethnically, racially, and politically more divided than ever before. In addition, the US is experiencing increasing difficulty in maintaining its role, assumed in 1991 at the fall of the Soviet Union, as the undisputed global superpower. How has this come about on both fronts, and what can be done to ensure that peace and stability are promoted both domestically and internationally?

Domestically, the US has undergone a remarkable demographic transformation in the last few decades. An increasingly diverse racial and ethnic population has put strain on the social fabric of the country and the ability of the state to represent the entirety of its populace. A crisis of identity in the two-party political system has resulted in extreme candidates from the right and left vying for the support of an increasingly divided nation in difficult economic times. This has hindered the ability of the government to function effectively.

During the same period internationally, the position of the US has been challenged by cataclysmic events, the result of which has also destabilised much of the globe. The central role of the US in international affairs is undergoing a major shift. A militarily and economically strong China, a resurgent Russia and a tumultuous Middle East have hindered the ability of the US to influence international affairs the way it once did.

The US must adapt to change as a multicultural country and as a member country of a global community. Managing both developments dexterously is essential to prevent instability from spreading at home and abroad. I will be approaching the thesis from a realist approach, which takes into account how groups can be expected to behave in a competitive



system. The goal in both areas can be summed up in one word; integration. How do the various ethnic groups of a nation pursue successful integration among themselves? How does a nation pursue reasonable integration in a global community?

The project is divided into three parts. The first will focus on the three major demographic groups in the US and their increasing frustration towards the domestic political system. The second part will go through the history of the US since 1991 when the country emerged as the only superpower, and its efforts to cement that role; as well as other powers' attempts to undermine it. The host of problems and potential solutions will be addressed in the third part of the project and its practical implementation. I will propose a program geared towards high school students. It will develop paradigm that will discuss and implement this notion of integration and inclusion in political life and the decision-making process of the country.

I have organised a collection of quotes from Carl Jung, in order to guide my thesis and to demonstrate how change comes from within the individual before it can be promoted effectively outwards. It was a key theme in the peace master program, and it can be applied on a personal, national and international level.

Domestic Transformations

Wholeness is not achieved by cutting off a portion of one's being, but by integration of the contraries – Carl Jung

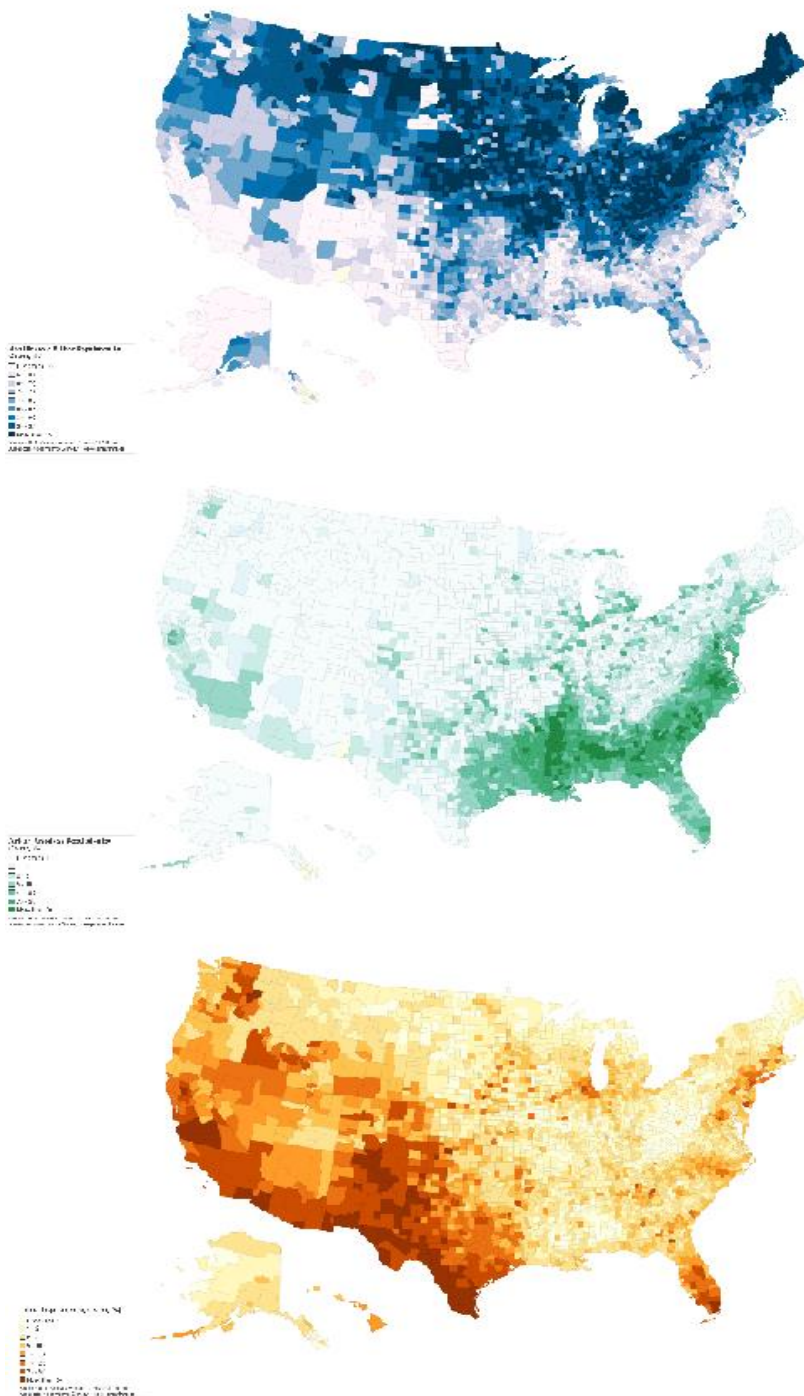
The major source for this part of the thesis will be Horowitz' 1985 book *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Evidence will be supported from a variety of statistics and maps supporting other arguments.

According to the US Census Bureau, the US had a total population of just fewer than 250 million people in 1990. Roughly 75.6% identified as white, 12.1% identified themselves as black and 8.9% identified as Hispanic/Latino. Together, they equalled 96.6% of that total population. By 2015, the US had grown to a total population of 320 million people, but that growth had not been equal among the three largest demographics. Whites now constitute 61.5% of that population, while Hispanics now make up 17.6%. Blacks have remained relatively constant at 12.3% of the total population – together they are 91.4% of the total population.

Whites, who largely defined American culture for two centuries, have seen their percentage of the total American population plummet, mainly due to lower birth rates and immigration. Hispanic, primarily Mexican immigration has resulted in the replacing of blacks as the second-largest racial minority. This has added to the racial complexity of a country which is yet to come to terms with the antagonistic history between whites and blacks. Figure one on the following page (US Census Bureau 2010) shows the population density of each

major racial group in the country. Whites are represented in blue, blacks in green and Hispanics in orange:

Figure 1 – Ethnicity in 2010 USA (2010 Census Bureau)



It can be observed that each racial group dominates in a certain area of the country. However, in the major cities and in their respective regions, white, blacks and Hispanics liberally intermingle. As the largest ethnic groups, the relationships they have with each other are extremely important to the successful management of US domestic affairs.

Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.

- Carl Jung

Racial tension is at the forefront of issues in the 2016 election, an election that has been further exacerbated by large parts of the voting public moving to the extreme left and the extreme right. There has also been a collapse of a robust political centre caused in large part by congressional gridlock which has in effect paralysed government.

So what is driving this?

Sources of division

“The features of an ethnically divided society conspire to impede the development of the full range of social relations among ethnic groups, and this affects its organisational structure in and out of politics” (Horowitz, 293).

The features identified by Horowitz include disparities in income, wealth, population size and collective history. Whites, who have long dominated the society of the US, have become increasingly aware of their shrinking population. Blacks have continued to display antipathy for a society that has historically marginalised them socially, educationally and

geographically. Finally, Hispanics feel a sense of alienation due to a hostile immigration system that has targeted illegal immigration from Mexico primarily. Yet all three have struggled to thrive in an economy which has improved for the upper classes and upper middle classes but stalled for the middle class and shrunk for the poor.

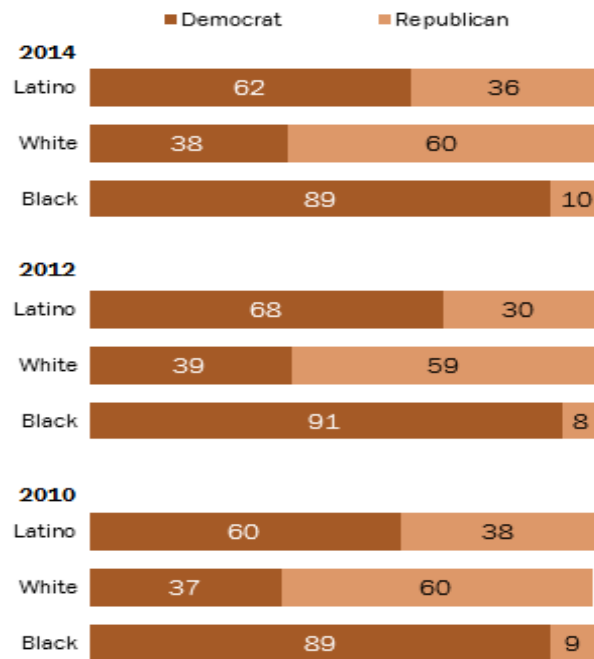
Chapter seven of Horowitz' book, *Ethnic Parties and Party Systems*, goes into detail regarding the rationale behind ethnic voting in democracies. Although there are no ethnic parties per se, data shows that ethnic favouritism is skewed towards one party or another. Blacks overwhelmingly vote for the Democratic Party, due to its public effort in the passing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, "which marked a dramatic shift in voting patterns that's still with us today" (Bates, 2014). Hispanics and whites are more centrist, though with a clear preferences. Hispanics tend to vote for Democrats as they are seen as less harsh on immigration laws. Whites vote predominantly for the Republican Party and are marginally the most centrist of all three major demographics. The next figure demonstrates the voting preferences of the three racial groups in the past few congressional elections.

Figure 2

FIGURE 1

Vote for Congressional Candidates in National Elections

% of each group who reported voting Democratic or Republican in their congressional district race



Note: "Other/No Answer" responses not shown.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2010, 2012 and 2014 National Election Pool exit poll results as reported by NBC News, New York Times and CNN, respectively.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

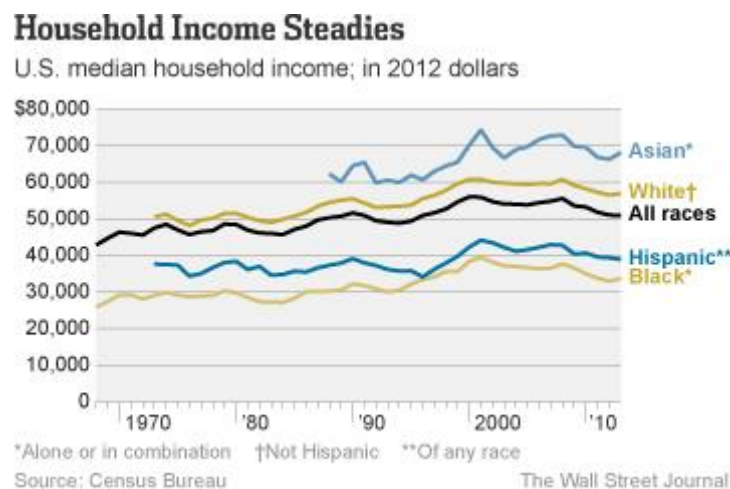
Concern over the direction of the country and the white population's decreasing ability to influence it has been evident in the Republican Party as it moved further to the right. Blacks have continued to vote Democrat, while Hispanics have remained solidly Democratic, despite it fluctuating the most. This is perhaps due to their recent emergence as a large voting bloc and the juggling of various national identities and concerns which make up the Hispanic vote.

This reflects each group’s expectation of the two parties to act in their interests. As political parties, both Democrats and Republicans have attempted to attract voters so that their party may dictate public policy. Horowitz explains on page 677 that this practice leads to consequences;

Preferential policies, to be sure, aim to reach deeper, to the very roots of intergroup hostility. But they fall short in two key respects. First, their social-class impact is usually skewed; and, second, they operate on the assumption that representational disparities alone are responsible for hostility between groups.

Democrats attempting to attract votes of blacks, Hispanics and liberal whites stand in contrast to the Republicans, who have attempted to maintain their voting base within white and conservative communities. By doing so, they have ignored the larger economic woes that Americans *collectively* face; though in various intensities as figure 4 shows.

Figure 3 – Household income by race



Economic stagnation and declining incomes have affected the lower to middle white class and the black and Hispanic population over the last eight years. Meanwhile, the economy has grown consistently for the upper middle class and the wealthy class, so much so that a “deeper income divide is developing between that top quarter or so of the population and everyone else” (Zumbrun, 2016). This disparity in economic growth in recent years is a concern for all racial groups according to a Pew Research Centre questionnaire.

Figure 4 – Most important problem by ethnicity

Most Important Problem -- Selected Responses by Race/Ethnicity

What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?

	The economy	Unemployment	The federal budget deficit	Immigration
	%	%	%	%
Whites	32	24	11	2
Blacks	24	36	3	1
Hispanics	37	24	5	10

January-June 2012

Despite Democrats and Republicans tendency to often focus on social issues such as immigration and gay rights, the real concern for voters remains the economy. Policies by both Democrats and Republicans supposed to resonate with their voter base have in fact ignored growing economic inequality, or the social-class skewing that Horowitz mentioned previously. Whites concerned with their decreasing share of the US population are contrasted by Hispanic concerns over immigration reform. Blacks continue to show their disdain for institutional and cultural racism that has culminated in the Black Lives Matter movement, but *all* are united in their concern over the economy. Politicians from both parties appeal to

divisive concerns in order to gather votes; but once in office, they discover that the fixing of these problems, the changing of these dynamics, and the finding of solutions are of far greater complexity than the rosy promises of election campaigns.

These promises, seen as empty, have hindered either party's ability to appeal to an increasingly diverse and frustrated voter base. This has been a central theme in this year's Presidential election, where populist candidates from Democrat and Republican parties have challenged the establishment control over the political system. The emergence of the fringe elements into the mainstream of the parties developed noticeably in Obama's first term. All three major racial groups have come to the notion that they are underrepresented and replaceable, and the political establishment has had to contend with challenges in the face of growing unpopularity of government.

The Republican Revolt

The first major convulsions to influence the Republican Party in recent years were the Tea Party protests. Beginning in early 2009, the protests were actually "born out of a rebellion against one of President Bush's signature policies: TARP, the bailout for Wall Street investment banks" (Zelizer, 2010) as the financial crisis was unfolding in 2008. The former Republican President's financial policies were complimented by Democratic President Barack Obama when he signed the American Recovery and Investment of 2009. Opposed to the borrowing and debt-ridden nature of the US economy and over fears it would worsen with the new legislation, populist Republican conservatives swept the 2010 midterm elections. Running on campaigns against government spending, the national debt and tax cuts, demonstrations were held across the country from 2009 to 2010. Though declining slightly in

popularity for the 2012 elections, the Tea Party personified the far-right's frustration against the Republican establishment.

The Democratic Revolt

Beginning in September 2011, far-left Occupy Wall Street protestors organised themselves and began manifesting in Zuccotti Park, Manhattan. Located in the heart of the New York financial district, the protests symbolised the left's disenfranchisement with the economic state of the country. Unlike the Tea Party protests, the protestors for the Occupy movement did not fundamentally identify with a major political party. However, their protests evoked major sympathy within the Democratic Party, and the hope that it would "turn into a liberal version of the Tea Party" according to the Huffington Post (Kim, 2011). Inequality, elitism and the power of corporations over national and international government policy were central themes to the protests. Eventually spreading across the country, and often in solidarity with protests across Europe and the Middle East, they occurred for months before tensions simmered down.

Nonetheless, both protests demonstrated very succinctly the similarity of concerns on both left and right. The economic disparity of the country was the basis of the protests; social issues formed significant but lesser platforms. Although Barack Obama would win re-election against Mitt Romney during the 2012 presidential election, populist protests on both sides would come to influence the 2016 election in an unprecedented way. The economy, which has grown at an annual consistency since 2009, has not benefitted everyone; there remains at the middle class and below a stagnant population.

Frustration Personified – the 2016 Presidential Election

The 2016 election has proven to be one of the most bizarre elections in American history, and has challenged traditional interpretations of left and right in American politics. After two populist revolts in both the major political parties, the US has, at this writing, arrived at an election with its two of its most unpopular candidates in history, running against each other.

Hillary Clinton, the establishment Democrat, had to fight off a tougher than expected run by an Independent Senator, Bernie Sanders, for the Democratic Presidential Ticket. He epitomised much of the frustrations of the youth who protested during and after the initial Occupy Movement, and eventually had to cede to her the nomination. However, the length of his campaign damaged Hillary's popularity within elements of the Democratic Party, such as the Occupy Movement, which "found an ideological ally" (Krieg, 2016) in Sander's campaign. It also had an effect on independent voters with no binding to either party, as Bernie Sander's campaign was often "beating Hillary Clinton among that group by 10 percentage points" (Hopkins, 2016).

Meanwhile, Donald Trump has emerged victorious as the Republican nominee for President. He has both established himself as a celebrity icon over decades, and an unpredictable financier of various enterprises. After clashes with the Republican establishment, he emerged victorious over all party challengers in the Republican primary elections. The ability to apparently finance his own campaign caused a coup within the Republican Party, and has upended the traditional balance of power between the voter base and the central establishment elements of the Party that first emerged during the Tea Party

protests. However, he has never been a politician and prior to this election, his support for Democrats and Republicans primarily depended on his business interests.

The lack of public faith in the viability of the two-party political establishment at the moment is extremely clear. Both Democrats and Republicans have struggled to gather the full weight of their voter bases. The former have formed an uneasy coalition around Hillary Clinton, while the latter has actually lost its identity to a celebrity businessman with no political experience.

A house divided against itself cannot stand – Abraham Lincoln

The country itself is at one of the most divisive moments in its history, and whoever wins the Presidential election in November will inherit the nation as the most unpopular President ever. How does a nation even begin to address such fundamental disagreements, disparities and divisions? This will be revisited in the practical part of the project at the end. Before then, the vast amount of issues facing the country and world on an international platform must be also be investigated. If we are to fix the calamity that American politics finds itself in, we must also understand the role of the US in the world. The past 25 years will provide a better picture on how to do that.

A Generation of American dominance

Every individual needs revolution, inner division, overthrow of the existing order, and renewal, but not by forcing them upon his neighbours under the hypocritical cloak of Christian love or the sense of social responsibility or any of the other beautiful euphemisms for unconscious urges to personal power. – Carl Jung

While the US is forced to grapple with its internal issues, the rest of the world will be coming to terms with the relative decline of the US in international affairs. I will be using Francis Fukuyama's 1989 paper *The End of History*, Paul Kennedy's 1987 book *The Rise and Fall of The Great Powers* as my major influential sources. Fukuyama's paper envisioned a world where the US, as the leader of liberal-democracies, would soon triumph completely and would not face any more serious challengers to it or the international system it maintained. Though idealistic, his vision was inherently flawed. Kennedy's book will be used to demonstrate how such a state of affairs would never come to fruition, in accordance with the realist interpretation of the constantly fluctuating power in international affairs. Finally, Kissinger's book *World Order* will be glanced at in terms of regional concepts of order. Far from a man of peace, Kissinger was a realist who understood global affairs better than almost anyone. Understanding his point of view is important to conveying it to others so that they may see the world in all its flaws. I will identify three distinct stages of the American-led global order that have defined world affairs from 1991 until today and how they have each altered that system.

The US will suffer the same decline as all hegemonic powers have throughout history, a key theme in Paul Kennedy's book. However, its overwhelming influence in international affairs makes it the centre of global stability. When the US military has been used for deterrence alone, it has helped result in the economic, social and political prosperity of formerly violent regions like Western Europe and East Asia.

In the decades after World War Two, when the American military presence expanded into those regions, it ushered in an era of economic prosperity, order and with minor exceptions, peace. Europe, the most violent continent for centuries, has enjoyed what has been hailed as the "long peace". Continental integration has only been recently upended, with economic and refugee crises helping to culminate in a British departure from the European Union. With exceptions in Korea and Vietnam, where American and Soviet interests clashed, East Asia has similarly enjoyed a measured peace and economic prosperity. Particularly since the end of the Cold War, East Asia has been able to experience an almost-unprecedented rise in economic security according to a World Bank report – "In 1990, a large majority – 60.2 percent – of people in the region lived in extreme poverty. In 2013, only 3.5 percent did" (Matthews, 2016)

Continuing and expanding that peace should be a global priority, considering the ever-increasing interconnectivity of social, political and economic entanglement globally.

The US economy has been declining as a percentage of the global economy since 1945, when it possessed "nearly half of global GDP... Though the US had disproportionate economic clout, its room for political and military manoeuvre was constrained by Soviet Power (Nye, 2015). As the rest of the industrialised world, such as Western Europe and

Japan, rebuilt in the following decades, the US lost much of that economic lead. However, the European countries and Japan were both militarily weaker, in contrast to the Soviet Union, upon which they relied on the US for protection against anyway.

When the Soviet Union fell and a weakened Russia emerged in its place, it appeared that the US was truly uninhibited on the world stage. There was no nation, or group of nations, that could effectively challenge the US militarily *and* economically. The rise of China's economy, as well as a capable military that has accompanied that rise, has helped to reverse that notion. It has actively worked against US interests in Asia in order to pursue its own, without actual violent provocations. Russia, loathe to accept its decline in power, has objected to and obstructed to American efforts to enforce US hegemony in what the Kremlin calls its "near abroad" – countries formerly part of the Soviet Union. Both powers resent American meddling in their own affairs, while many other countries resent Chinese and Russian meddling in theirs.

We cannot change anything until we accept it. Condemnation does not liberate, it oppresses. – Carl Jung

As the US continues its relative decline, other countries that have benefitted from the US-dominated system should be prepared to share the cost of it. Idealism envisions a group of states capable of managing the international system as equal investors in it. Realism forces one to attempt to understand the competitive and often violent nature of international relations personified by countries. Disparities in power, whether it is economic, political, military are an essential part of how countries interact with one another in the international system. Opening the way for diplomacy in various forms should be encouraged. Similarly,

providing an aura of inclusiveness to countries hostile to that system is paramount to its long-term viability, as well as the ability of those countries to get along cordially.

First Phase 1991-2001

“The state that emerges at the end of history is liberal insofar as it recognizes and protects through a system of law man's universal right to freedom, and democratic insofar as it exists only with the consent of the governed” (Fukuyama, 1989). Fukuyama's optimistic view of American liberal-democratic ideals negates the tendency of *all* capable countries to enhance their power in whatever way possible, a key theme in Paul Kennedy's book.

Upon the conclusion of the short-lived Gulf War in 1991, the United States seemed poised to take its place as the undisputed global power in international relations. Its professional military had easily prevailed against Iraq by ousting them from Kuwait. The US acted as the clear head of the international coalition and not even the Soviet Union could form any sort of regional balance against the Americans and their interests. After halting military operations in accordance with the UN resolutions, “for a brief period, the global consensus... seemed to vindicate the perennial American hope of a rules-based international order” (Kissinger, 315).

Great Power Relations in the 1990s

Later that year, the Soviet flag would be lowered over the Kremlin for the last time. In its place would emerge the Russian Federation, whose multitude of internal problems and vast decrease in power no longer posed a threat to American *global* ambitions. It would lose a

huge part of its former sphere of influence; a sphere that every powerful country depends on for its hegemony.

China, whose economy was only the 11th largest in the world in 1991 according to the World Bank, had suffered from mass protests not two years before, and was not in a position to challenge the US effectively even in its own backyard. Regional powers in Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere were in turn far too small to challenge the Americans; many of them also relied on American power for their own security.

American and Russian interests clashed during the Yugoslav Wars in the mid to late 1990s. The Americans supported the Bosnians and Croats to a degree, while the Russians supported the Serbians, which was at war with Bosnians and Croats. The US also sent forces to *deter* China militarily during the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996, after Chinese missile tests meant to intimidate Taiwan resulted in an escalation of tensions. Both Russia and China appeared to learn different lessons from the confrontations. Russia felt vindicated that the US was encroaching on Russia's territorial backyard, and would have to use its still significant military to enforce national interests. China did not have the inherent military capabilities to intimidate the US, but its economy was growing faster. It could work within the US-dominated global financial system, and eventually its economy would be large enough to challenge the US, not least in part to a higher military budget.

Though hedging itself against Russia and China, the US had failed to muster any sort of international coalition which upheld the same convictions of resistance to the historical regional powers.

As arguably the strongest powers in international relations (with vastly different capabilities), China, Russia and the US continued the natural state of competition characteristic of international affairs. However, they were all nuclear powers, and the prospect of *direct* war between them was unlikely. Over decades, much of East Asia and Western Europe had “developed” rapidly in peace. This was in part due to military protection by the US that prevented China and Russia from asserting themselves more aggressively. The US had emerged as the global hegemon in the 1990s, and it was essential for the US to assert and maintain that role. In return, it became an essential part of Russian and Chinese foreign policy to resist US infringement in their territorial backyards.

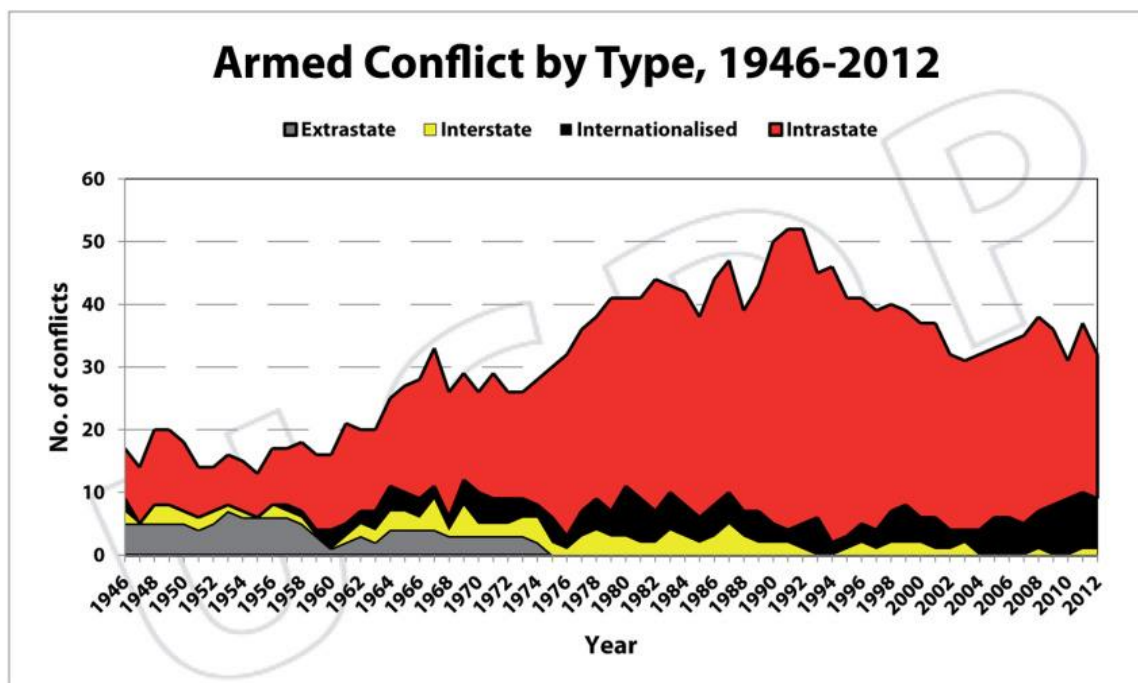
In the figure below, we can observe that intrastate conflicts declined rapidly after the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. The Soviet Union, a pillar of the international system of states, fought US interests in state proxy wars from the beginning of the Cold War till the end. Intrastate conflicts declined rapidly as that violent state of competition came to an end. Its fall stagnated in the early 2000s, at the same time internationalised conflicts began to rise.

Figure 5 Armed Conflict by Type

- “An **extrastate armed conflict** is a conflict between a state and an armed group outside the state’s own territory. These are mostly colonial conflicts.
- An **interstate armed conflict** is a conflict fought between two or more states.
- An **intrastate armed conflict** (also known as a civil conflict) is a conflict between a government and a non-state group that takes place largely within the territory of the state in question.
- An intrastate armed conflict becomes an **internationalized intrastate armed conflict** when the government, or an armed group opposing it, receives support, in the form of troops, from one or more foreign states” (Miss World Security, 2012)

The way conflict has changed since the US became the sole superpower is evident in declining intrastate conflicts and rising internationalised ones. Syria possesses elements of all four, adding another layer to overlapping global conflicts outside of American control.

Figure 5 – Armed conflict by type



(c) UCDP 2013

Second Phase – 2001-2008; Overstretch

The US on September 11 was unseated from its unilateral position as a global power and decimated by an entirely new kind of enemy. Global security has hung on a fragile thread ever since. The strongest state in the international system, the US' impressive military was less capable of contending with vaguely-defined enemies not represented by governments.

“Because it (the US) has so much power for good or evil, because it is the lynchpin of the western alliance system and the centre of the existing global economy, what it does, or does not do, is so much more important than what any of the other Powers decide to do” (Kennedy, page 535).

The second phase of American unipolarity unfolded as a result of the conflict between the US and a non-state actor. Deriving its legitimacy from its dedication to a confrontational and violent form of Sunni Islamic nationalism, Al Qaeda was an international terrorist group that had struck the US in its political and economic capitals. Though Fukuyama proclaimed in his paper that –

Islam has offered a theocratic state as a political alternative to both liberalism and communism. But the doctrine has little appeal for non-Muslims, and it is hard to believe that the movement will take on any universal significance. Other less organized religious impulses have been successfully satisfied within the sphere of personal life that is permitted in liberal societies

Fukuyama was right to assume that the Islamic doctrine had little appeal to many non-Muslims, but was wrong not to perceive the fact that for many Muslims, American doctrine

had little appeal to them. The desire to resist foreign elements in one's society is a human instinct. The Middle East, with or without Islam, would be no different.

Mainly-American forces were deployed by the tens of thousands across Afghanistan and Iraq, while other military operations across the wider Middle East and North Africa escalated as part of the War on Terror. The coalition in Iraq, led by the US, was extremely unpopular on a global scale. In an effort to spread liberal-democratic ideals and combat terrorism, the US isolated itself due to its overuse of power. Even among close allies, the US struggled to gather support in its loosely-defined mission. As Kissinger notes (page 319)–

With a striking idealism, these efforts were imagined to be comparable to the construction of democracy in Germany and Japan after World War Two. No institutions in the history of Afghanistan or of any part of it provided a precedent for such a broad-based effort. (Kissinger)

American policy-makers invaded Afghanistan and Iraq on the presumption that they would be “greeted as liberators” across the Middle East. This was shown to be ill-conceived notion; the countries they invaded were tribally organised from ancient times, incredibly divided, structurally weak, and crumbled as soon as chaos became the norm. These tribal systems were to reassert themselves outside the jurisdiction of the international state system as a uncontrollable source of contention in a short amount of time.

Because of this, the US became bogged down in Afghanistan and Iraq, as its military was unable to contend with tumultuous civil wars, particularly in the latter. The armed forces of the US easily overcame Iraqi *government* defences under Saddam Hussein; they struggled

in engaging with competing armed militias which moved swiftly into the chaos left behind. As Paul Kenney explained in 1987, “Bombers cost two hundred times as much as they did in World War II... Aircraft carriers are twenty times as expensive and battle tanks are fifteen times as expensive in world war II (Kennedy, page 443)”. The US was not fighting a state, yet it had continued an expensive arms build-up that appeared as if it was. Its powerful aircraft carriers that it had used to intimidate China in 1996 were ineffective against militias funded and armed by other countries, who could by no means offer a military capable of confronting the US directly. Attempting to keep an element of social order in Iraq and Afghanistan proved impossible, and led to hundreds of thousands of deaths (Sheridan, 2014, Taylor 2015).

The Middle East’s major powers (and Russia) could not take advantage of the chaos with American forces in large number there. Once the American forces were gone, strong and weak countries alike would have to contend with the power vacuum.

Russia and China

During this time, China’s economy continued to expand at an annual rate of over 10% (World Bank) from 2001-2008. By 2007, it would replace Germany as the world’s third-largest economy. Only Japan and the US possessed a larger national GDP, and were growing far slower.

Russia’s economy too had shown signs of improvement after years of chaotic transition to a capitalistic economy. Yet it was concerned with continual NATO enlargement in countries formerly under its sphere of influence. As a political/military institution that

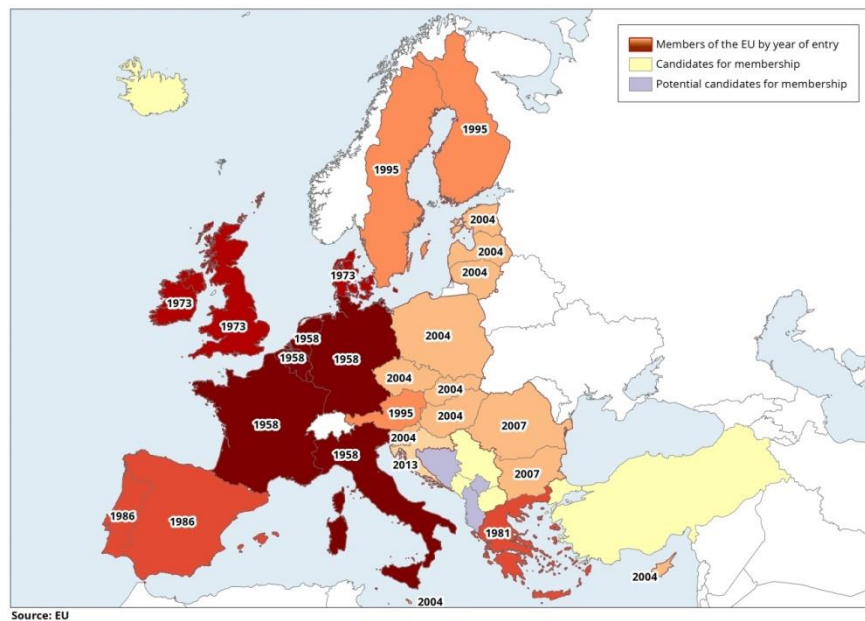
acted as a bulwark against the Kremlin for almost 50 years, NATO's continual growth was a source of anguish for Russian-American relations. Continuing growth in the European Union, a political/economic institution, was also deemed to be against Russian interests. Though the US was not a member of the EU, it is the leading member of NATO and Russia viewed these institutions with increasing animosity, as it became politically isolated on a continent it had formerly dominated.

Figure 6 – Enlargement of NATO



Figure 7 Enlargement of EU

ENLARGEMENTS OF THE EU, 1958 - 2013



Third Phase – 2008-Present Day Economic malaise and the era of uncertainty

War in Georgia

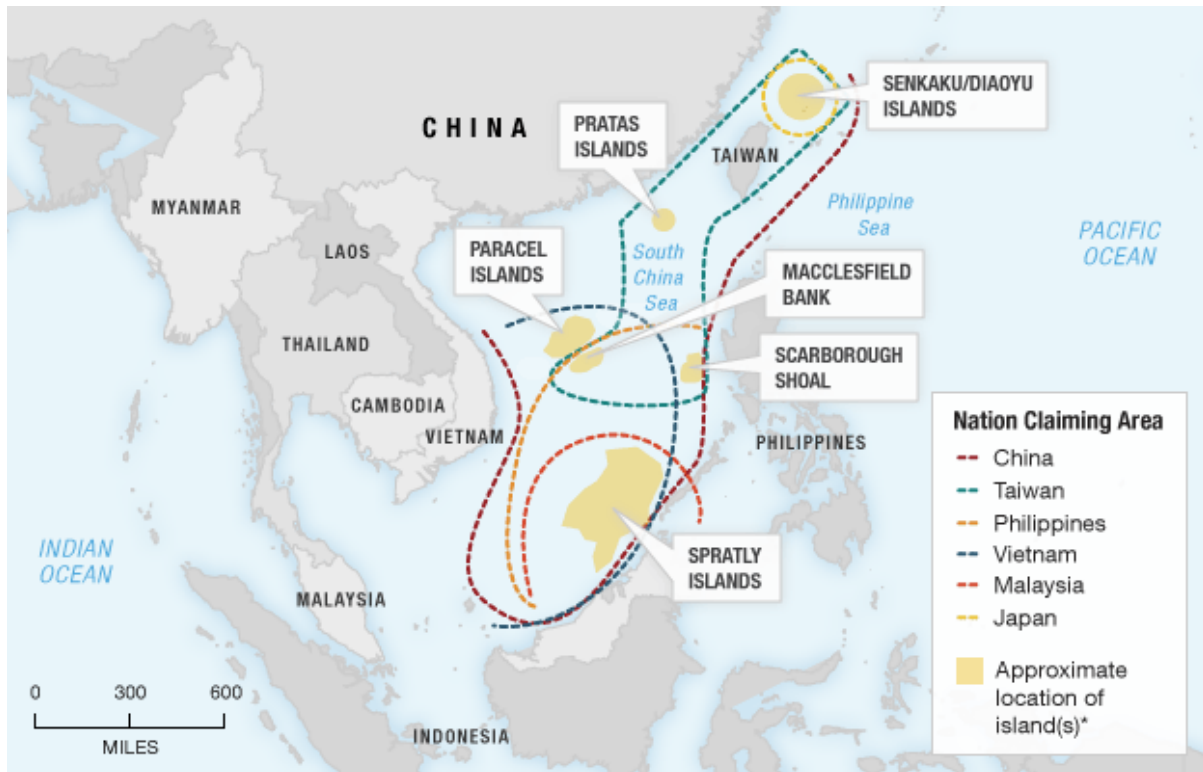
Two events in 2008 would signal the third and current phase of American unipolarity. As the world's eyes remained focused on Beijing for the Summer Olympics, Russia attacked Georgia on its southern border. Talks with between NATO and Georgia had caused alarm in Russia, which was already concerned with two previous rounds of expansion since 1991. The military operation they undertook was a serious affront to US global order. The US had not considered dealing with the prospect of Russia acting so boldly to ensure its interests; let alone against a country which was serving with US troops in Iraq.

Global Financial Crisis

A few months later, the Global Financial Crisis, which began on Wall Street, reverberated across the global economy. With it, a challenge to confidence in American economic power came at a time when its military power had been significantly tested and exhausted. Finally, China, which had held a successful Olympics, was able to manage the economic crisis effectively enough to emerge as the second largest national economy three years later, overtaking Japan in 2011 (World Bank).

China had truly arrived on the world stage, and now had the resources, at least economically, to compete with the US on a global scale. In China's backyard, the US was forced to step in and reassure its allies of its military commitments to them, as China became increasingly assertive. A number of islands that China claims along its coast have come under dispute among the other countries that claimed them; the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Japan. Taiwan, which is not recognised as a country in the international legal system, also claims a number of islands. None of these countries are strong enough to resist China without the US, should China wish to assert itself against them militarily or economically.

Figure 8 Spratly Islands Dispute



Middle East Civil War

The Arab Spring, which began at the end of 2010, threw the wider Middle East into chaos after the US had very briefly managed to stabilise Iraq. Begun with great optimism in the western press, the biggest effect of the Arab Spring has been the emergence of a Middle Eastern Civil War fought by proxy. From Libya to Syria, all of the regions' powers are locked in conflict with one another. Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey are the largest regional sponsors of the conflict, though their interests have come to a head particularly in Syria. Saudi Arabia and Turkey have all funded different non-state groups in the conflict, while Iran and Russia have come to the direct aid of the Syrian government by supplying their own military forces. The US is supporting various rebel groups in the country too, as well as

leading an intervention against the Islamic State, an off-shoot of Al Qaeda that is also prevalent in Iraqi territory. The US is fighting and funding groups whose provenance is murky; the amount of states involved in the Syrian conflict in particular is confounding.

Europe

The enormous amount of refugees as a result of this conflict has put strain on the territorial integrity of the European Union itself. It comes at a time when many parts of the continent are still yet to recover from the Global Financial Crisis. Finally, the US/Russian proxy war in Ukraine has further undermined the unity of the EU's member countries. Economic sanctions placed on Russia for its aggression in Ukraine by the EU have angered countries such as Hungary, whose economies are much more dependent on Russia trade.

The former polarity between Russia and the US still pertains, despite formal declarations of the end of the Cold War. Russian and American interests have resulted in war in Europe twice in the last two decades. The Yugoslav Wars and the proxy war in Ukraine were representative of the conflict which characterises the relationship between the US and Russia. The US has supported self-determination in European countries ever since the option to leave the Russian sphere of influence became clearer, while Russia has attempted to reverse that trend. Fukuyama was unable to envision this violent chase of national interests, when he proclaimed -

“Since the Second World War, European nationalism has been defanged and shorn of any real relevance to foreign policy, with the consequence that the nineteenth-century model of great power behaviour has become a serious anachronism” ...Russia and

China are not likely to join the developed nations of the West as liberal societies any time in the foreseeable future, but suppose for a moment that Marxism-Leninism ceases to be a factor driving the foreign policies of these states - a prospect which, if not yet here, the last few years have made a real possibility (Fukuyama).

Fukuyama could not envision a world where European nationalism, let alone Arab, Turkish or Iranian nationalism, could re-emerge and seriously undermine the regional influences of the US. When all of them began to exert themselves in tandem, the US was unable to control them. Meanwhile, the implementation of economic reforms created more capitalist economies in Russia and China; it did not prevent them from pursuing confrontational foreign policies against the leader of the liberal/capitalist world, the US. Unlike during the Cold War, there was no political/economic ideology that threatened liberal capitalism. However, authoritarian countries which adopted the capitalist economic model did not adopt the liberal values which the US also championed. Countries such as China and Russia have increased their military budgets, just like the Saudis and Iranians have increased theirs (SIPRI, 2016). Increasingly unsure of America's ability to dictate the military situation should an armed conflict occur, countries are positioning themselves for that reality.

Confronting China while acting against Russia in Europe and the Middle East (and attempting to keep some sense of regional order) has proven costly. Economically and militarily, the US has exhausted itself, and the rest of the world is watching as to how it will respond and whether it will be able to respond effectively. As has always been the case -

The international system was in constant flux. Ambition, self-interest and war were not simply the products of foolish misconceptions of which Americans could disabuse

traditional rulers; they were a natural human condition that required purposeful American engagement in international affairs. International society was like a frontier settlement without an effective police force”. (Kissinger, 2014)

The US cannot attempt to act as a global police force, as it remains, like all others, merely a country. However, it can influence world affairs in an unrivalled manner, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. It is geographically separated from the vast majority of the world’s conflict zones, and when it does not act violently, its balancing power is unrivalled.

For example, Vietnam, which fought a violent war with the US in the 1960s and 1970s, has a 78% favourability rating for the US, according to a Pew Research Poll. China received a 78% *unfavourable* rating just a year earlier from the same source. This implies a constantly fluctuating dynamic between countries in international relations and must be examined. Both China and the US have been at war with Vietnam as late as the 1970s. Former enemies, the US and Vietnam find themselves allied against a common adversary. This is because of China’s perceived threat to Vietnam’s territorial sovereignty and its threat to American implementation of regional order.

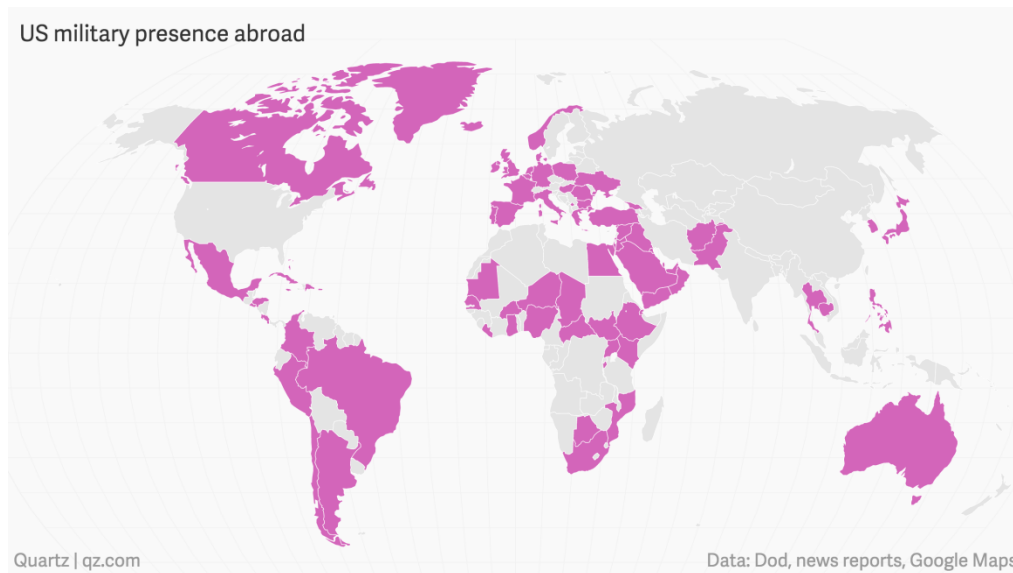
Future Prospects

Syria is an example of the complex power struggles emerging in around the Middle East and Europe. Meanwhile, disputes over islands between China and its neighbours have again brought the US to the forefront of Asian affairs. For decades, the US fought and

grappled with countries that sought to promote a different political-economic-social ideology from the liberal capitalist democracy proposed by the US. Now, capitalism has been embraced globally, yet liberal democracy has not. As the champion of liberal capitalist democracies proclaimed by Fukuyama, the US naturally faces a crisis in confidence. It was unable to reach Fukuyama's enormous expectations of ideological, military and political commitments envisioned in his paper.

As Paul Kennedy notes – “Like the British in 1815, the Americans in their turn found their informal influence in various lands hardening too, they found ‘new frontiers of insecurity’ whenever they wanted to draw the line. The ‘Pax Americana had come of age’ in 1945 (Pg. 359). Immediately after the Second World War, America required the wherewithal to counter the force of the Soviet Union. It was in a position to do so, but now finds the cost of maintaining that global presence increasingly costly and less beneficial. What is the benefit of the US being able to invade Iraq if it is impossible to keep it together afterwards? Furthermore, why should thousands of American troops die in tandem with hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, while the cost of maintaining such a military commitment is clearly unsustainable? Despite these notions, the ability of the US to prevent countries from engaging in direct war against one another remains strong. Its ability to prevent countries from engaging in proxy wars against itself and one another has proven less adequate.

Figure 9 – US military abroad



Not only has the US had to attempt to counter China and Russia, but it has also had to keep a sense of global order. Protection of trade roots, economic and military commitments has all put increasing strain on the US economy to continue its role as a director of global affairs, as it “might be legally obligated to defend countries containing 25 percent of the world's population” (Taylor, A).

Despite its status as a global hegemon, it will suffer the same fate identified in Paul Kennedy’s book; that all Great Powers, throughout history have risen and fallen. It needs to find common issues between itself and other powers, while also making countries less reliant on American military protection. It has made smaller states structurally weaker in being able to resist larger ones. The inevitable American departure in large numbers from across the world will make that fact more serious, depending on the rate and willingness of that departure.

Conclusion

This thesis is not advocating for the departure of American forces unilaterally on a global scale, at least not immediately. The chaos resulting from such a manoeuvre would surely put the world in an even more precarious state than what it is in today. Instead, the US must be aware of its growing limitations in order to hinder the interests of stronger states over weaker ones, as well as its ability to promote its own vision of global affairs. Working together with regional actors to prevent conflict is to the health of everyone. “There is a need to ‘manage’ affairs so that the *relative* erosion of the United States’ position takes place slowly and smoothly” (Kennedy, 534). If it happens quickly, other powers will take advantage of it, while if it happens too slowly, its inevitable decline will be larger and more apparent.

We live in a global system and must learn to coordinate more effectively. There have been many instances where the US has done wrong in the world. However, since 1990, as I previously mentioned, the amount of people living in poverty, particularly in East Asia, has come down dramatically. All that happened in an American-dominated system, in which China was forced to act accordingly. Bringing that type of prosperity outside of Asia and into countries where it is yet to occur should be a foreign policy goal, as it gives everyone a vested interest in the system. Russia has reacted more strongly against American efforts because of its exclusion from that system. Economically and politically, it is largely barred from interacting on a regional scale thanks to US efforts. Pressure is often needed in international relations, but only if it can bring people to the bargaining table.

The US military during the Cold War served largely as deterrence to the Soviet Union; non-state actors and smaller, weaker states have created their own means since then to wage

violent conflict in more indirect ways. The US maintains, however, a global military presence which, “Nonetheless, from another perspective, the American position is a very special one. It remains the decisive actor in every type of balance and issue”’. (Kennedy 535).

However, Kennedy is inherently wrong on one thing, and it is all the more obvious when taking into account the first part of my thesis and when his book was written – “this reference does *not* imply that the US is destined to shrink to the relative obscurity of former leading powers such as Spain or the Netherlands, or to disintegrate like the Roman or Austro-Hungarian Empires; it is simply too large to do the former and presumably too homogenous to do the latter” (Kennedy, 533).

The three major racial groups in the US first and foremost must begin to address their collective concerns and their concerns with each other; lest it risk a divided and possibly violent fate. Much like the Austro-Hungarian Empire merely a century ago, where it had “enormous regional differences in per capita income and output, which to a large degree mirrored the socioeconomic and ethnic diversities in a territory stretching from the Swiss Alps to Bukovina”. (page 219, Kennedy), the US too faces similar disparities. Like the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, the US rules over a linguistically, ethnically, religiously diverse group of people. Wealth is scattered in various concentrations across all these people, as well as regionally. So long as people feel less equal, the potential for social unrest remains certain. Not only must the country contend with the relations between the three largest ethnic groups, but also the growing demographic who belong to none of the three. How can the US act so certain and sure of itself abroad when it cannot understand the diversity of the people who make it up?

Issue of compromise dialogue and fostering mutual understanding and forging of compromise must take place on all levels the body politic. This begins at the very fundamental of individuals within communities – that is to say the most basic social entities. The earlier such developments can occur, the more beneficial they become for society at large.

"We cannot change anything until we accept it. Condemnation does not liberate, it oppresses." – Carl Jung

Practical Project

The forward thrust of the 1960s civil rights movement has stalled from economic stagnation, social intransigence and the absence of unifying leaders. Primarily Mexican immigration has further upended the often uneasy social cohesion between blacks and whites. Economically, the US has been unable to appease the concerns and needs of the poorer populations, which has resulted in a deadlocked political system that hinders any sort of progress. Greater dialogue between the diverse elements of the American population is needed in order to bridge the gap of constructed social divides that are exacerbated by economic detriment. Whether Americans like it or not, they are all citizens of a single country. Learning to live amongst one another and identifying and overcoming the multitude of social problems the society faces can only occur if efforts to overcome them become a shared-responsibility. Creating leaders in high school capable of bridging that gap is a necessary component for such a cultural evolution to occur, and for effective political participation to increase its impact.

Internationally, the US is coming to terms with its relative international decline. That decline is irreversible, but the US' central role in maintaining global stability remains unparalleled. Nonetheless, countries will naturally try to take advantage of the power vacuum, as the US is forced to acknowledge its inability to control world affairs the way it grew accustomed to for decades. Identifying issues of international concern and potential conflict zones is necessary. As the strongest actor in international affairs, the US has a responsibility to ensure the international system works well for everyone. For future voters, American students have a large say in directing the resources of the country in making that happen. Whether one can accept it or not, the US will remain as the strongest, most influential country in global affairs for the foreseeable future. Making young Americans aware of their huge role in international affairs and their potential in ensuring global peace and stability is a must. It is important for that to begin domestically first.

Goal

The goal will be the implementation of a workshop for understanding the various issues facing the US as a nation, as well as its role in the international community. These issues were addressed in the theoretical part of the paper, and I will be designing a workshop to be implemented in two different American schools so that they may help dictate public policy once they are old enough to vote. High amounts of participation and attendance are integral to the success of the program, as well as a committed high school leadership which can foster long term inter-school relationships. Conscious voters that can influence the political system of the US will be created by completion of the workshop only when one is registered to vote.

1. To gather groups of students together in a public space so that they may identify areas of public and international concern
2. Provide a platform for discussion in a secure environment
3. Identify places in which to improve domestic and international American policies
4. Consider alternatives
5. Discuss freely and constructively
6. 100% eligible voter registration
7. Long term personal relationships that can bridge socio-economic divides

Purpose

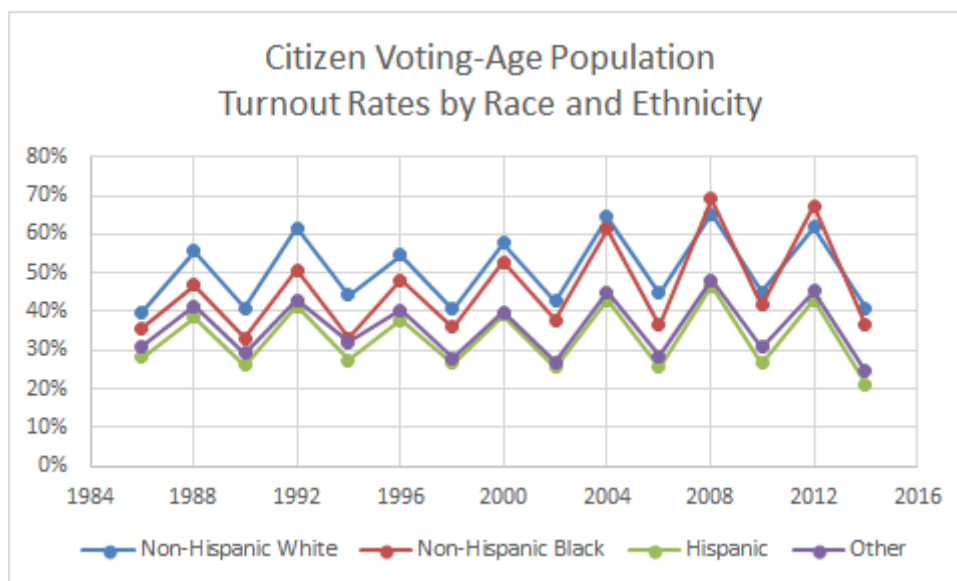
It is hoped that by the end of the project workshop (which will go on for eight weeks for roughly an hour and a half), students will have a much greater understanding of their place in their community and country, as well as the role of the US in international affairs. They will be enrolled to vote if they are eligible to, and must provide proof if they are to reach the requirements of the workshop. Providing information on how to register and helping them with that process will be undertaken by the teachers there.

Who are the beneficiaries?

The beneficiaries of this program will be high school students. Students in 9th to 12th grade will be the targets of the program, as they are the ones whose opinions are most susceptible to change, and the opinions that will guide the course of the country in its future. By the time they reach the end of high school, most of them will be old enough to vote and participate in the political process of the country. It is integral for them to be able to

understand the conflicts that are prevalent throughout national and international world, and how they might be able to overcome these divisions. The next figure reveals the voter participation rate in the elections from 1984-2016. Presidential elections always receive a spike, but even at their highest point, no demographic consistently votes higher than 70% for the total population. Encouraging political participation early will allow these numbers to rise across all demographics, so that young Americans will begin to dictate government policy in a fairer and more inclusive manner.

Figure 10 Voter Turnout by Race



The realist approach I employed in the theoretical part of the paper is to ensure that they recognise conflicts for what they are. Though sometimes realities may appear bleak, they are an honest representation of current power dynamics in national and international relations. By honestly talking about conflicts, disagreements, divisions and disputes, there

will be open dialogue which will allow real change. Making students observe and question how individuals, groups and countries interact within their respective systems is important to changing the negative aspects they can identify.

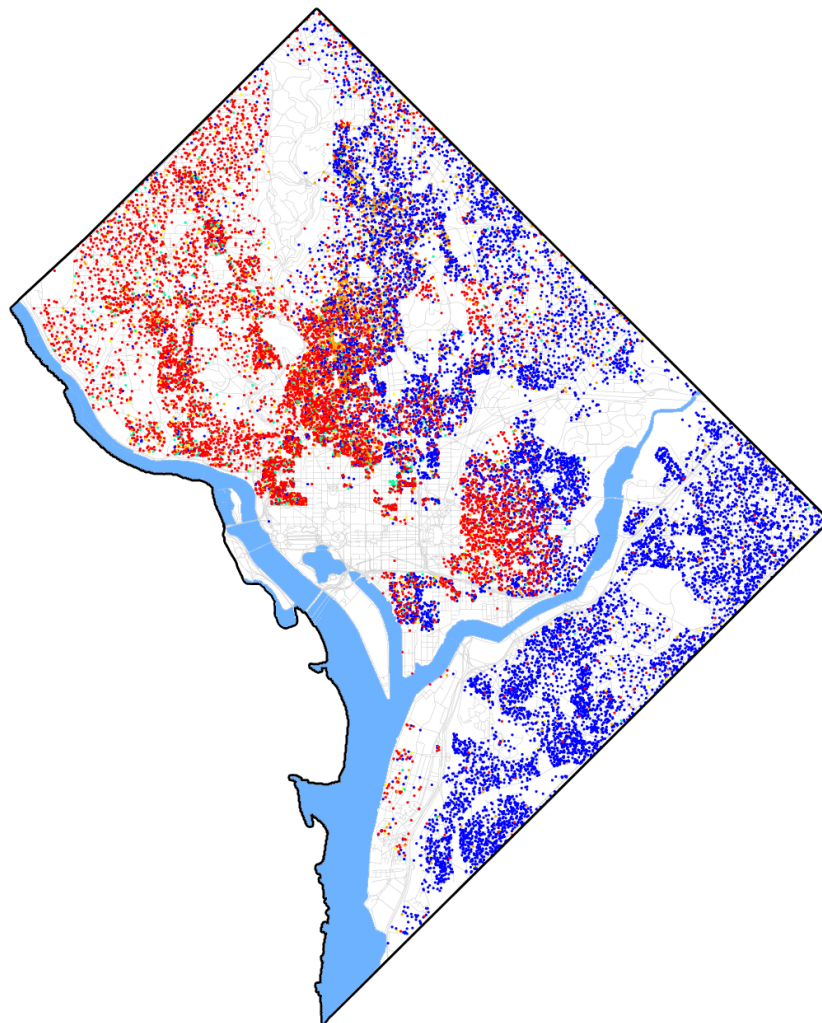
Ultimately, as they leave high school and transition into society as members capable of making independent decisions, the workshop will have given them a greater understanding as to how to interact peacefully in the country as individuals, so that productive policies can be implemented nationally and internationally. The beneficiaries will then include all of society, as the younger generation is aware of the issues the country faces. Being able to see past the often unspoken divisions that inhibit the full range of social relations between Americans of all classes, races, sexual orientations and histories is one of the key goals of the workshop. The forging of diverse social relationships early on in adolescent life will allow the possibility of such relationships to be implemented once outside of the workshop and high school.

How will it be designed?

In the US, there is a huge divide in public school and private school education. Often, it is based on ethnic lines, stemming from socio-economic status. The goal is to create an after school workshop where students from different public and private schools can begin to address their place in the nation, their history, their concerns, and their future amongst themselves. Getting students from different schools to participate in a weekly hour and a half workshop will help them understand different sources of opinions and realities.

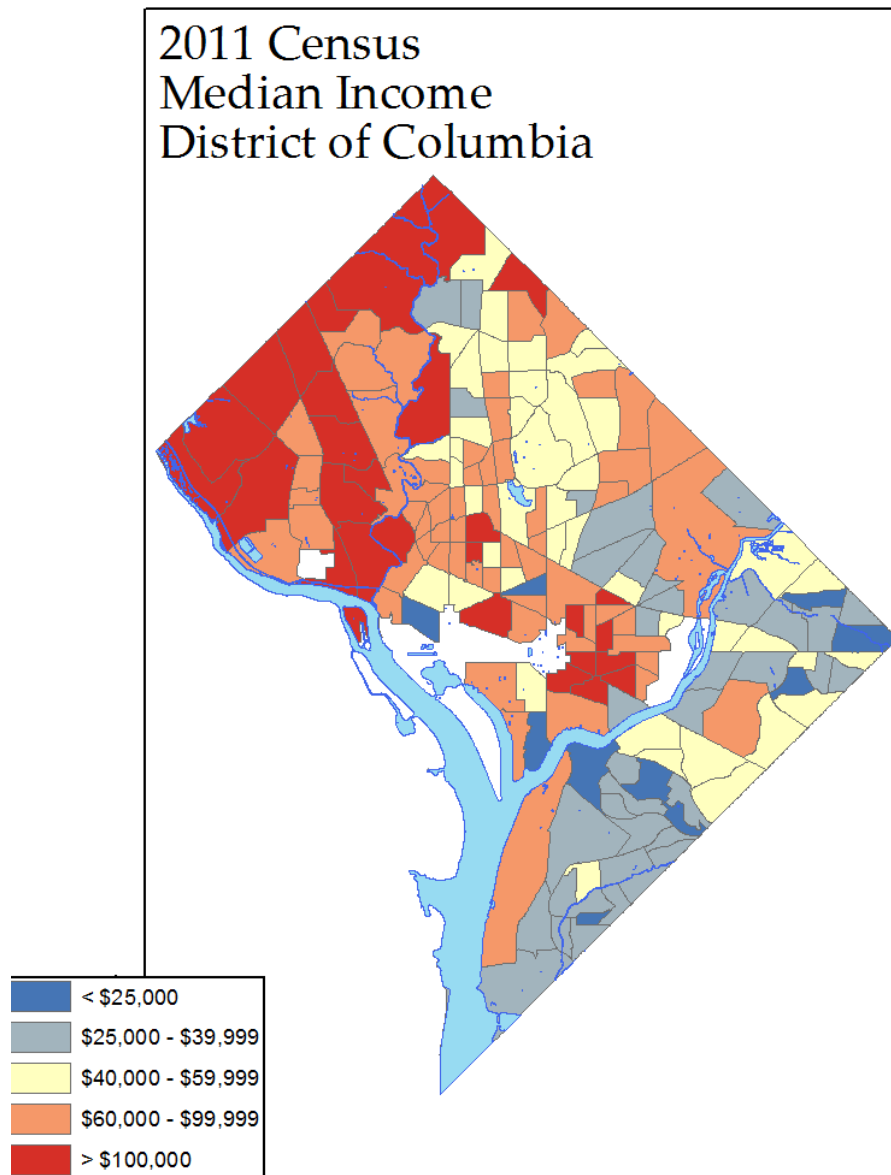
I am currently living in Washington DC, whose racial population is shown in the figure on the next page.. Blacks are represented in blue, whites are represented in red, and Hispanics are represented in yellow. Of the over 670, 000 residents of the city, 49% are black, 35.8% are white and 10.4% are Hispanic according to the US Census Bureau.

Figure 11 – Race density in Washington DC



The figure below shows income levels in the city.

Figure 12 – Income levels 2014



Clearly, it is a racially diverse city that is predominantly populated by whites and blacks, with a smaller yet significant Hispanic population. However, none form the majority population, adding to the complexity of the city. Income levels remain much lower in predominantly black areas, and this naturally has an effect on public education. In the richer, northwest DC there is St John's high school, a private school with a predominantly white student body. Anacostia high school, located in the blue south east, is a public school with a predominantly black student body. Once a week, groups of eight students from each school will meet in a Martin Luther King Jr Public Library in central DC for the workshop. A boy and a girl from each grade will attend for an hour and a half. Two teachers from each school will attend the program, in order to help mediate the workshop in a constructive manner.

Content

The idea of the workshop is to evoke discussions which might not normally take place, let alone between groups of people from vastly different backgrounds.

Some questions that might help to initiate conversation include:

- What do you hope to achieve in the workshop?
- What political party do you sympathise with and why?
- What areas of American society need more funding/attention?
- What areas of American society need less funding/attention?
- What is the greatest challenge your community/country/the world faces?

- What steps can you take/have you taken to improve race relations in your community/city/country?
- What obligations does the US have overseas which you support and why?
- What obligations does the US have overseas which you don't support and why?
- What would the local effect be if the US were to withdraw from a particular area?
- How could those effects be managed?
- How does it affect you?

These are just some of the questions that can be posed to initiate a conversation. What is hoped is that students themselves will begin to develop their own questions, as well as direct the conversation in a way that is inclusive and constructive.

Assessment

It will be difficult to assess the success of the program in statistical representations. Instead, the four teachers that will help conduct the workshop will be instructed to keep the conversations civil but provocative so that the effects of the workshop can be greater. Race relations in the US are an extremely sensitive topic, and the teachers there will need to maintain a cordial atmosphere. Increasing the voter registration of students is the primary statistical measure to define its success.

The success of the program will be based on an individual level primarily. Will the students from different schools interact with each other voluntarily *outside* the workshop? This will be the key in maintaining and promoting personal relationships that flourish outside of a formal setting. Changes in local politics as the amount of students that have completed the workshop program will be evident in future years, while it is hoped that adoption of the program by other schools will help lead to a change in the political, economic and social course of the country over time.

Cost

The teachers present will be working after class for eight weeks at a time, each school term (four times a year). Every term, they will receive a different group of students. \$100 dollars each for their efforts in fostering relationships and futures for the students is a fair amount, which will equal \$12000 dollars a year. Renting two buses (with drivers) to go to and from the two schools once a week will cost roughly \$400, and will be \$12800 per year, This makes the total cost of the annual program. This can be reached through private donations to the school, or through sponsorship by the schools or separate organisations. As a public library, it is free to visit, and its location is central to both schools.

Is it sustainable?

As long as there are students and teachers willing to learn about their differences and how to overcome them, this program will be indefinitely sustainable. The issues that are to be talked about in the program are unlikely to remove themselves from the public discussion anytime soon. This makes the workshop all the more important, so that there might one day



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be a scenario when it is no longer needed. Nonetheless, it remains a cross-cultural bridge that encourages positive dialogue, something that is of constant need in every society. So long as there is funding to allow it to happen, as well as dedicated members participating, its long term viability can be promised. I will end with a quote from Carl Jung which could be used for the program. Through it, we can promote a transformation that is positive.

The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed. – Carl Jung

John Ruehl

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