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From the Editors: It was with great satisfaction that we released the 2008 and 2009 volumes of the Illinois Political Science Review. It is with relief and a sense of accomplishment that this third volume, officially the 2011 version, under our editorship is belatedly presented. Two major changes have taken place in the production of the IPSR that we hope will increase the quality of the Review and its accessibility to a wider audience. First, the Board of the Illinois Political Science Association has agreed to change the IPSR to a biennial journal published every odd year. This is intended to allow us to more effectively peer review and examine more submissions from our colleagues. The IPSR is an entirely voluntary production and the two-year cycle will allow for a fairer and more comprehensive review. It also opens the door for some even year special-themed editions that we believe will be exciting opportunities for our colleagues to interact on a single topic.

We hope that any concern over the delay in some publications that are accepted early will be met by the second change. You are currently reading the first fully online version of the IPSR. This may seem simplistic to the reader, but as the editors, we can say this streamlines the publication process immensely. Once the complete journal is assembled it goes straight to the public. And it will be archived for future reference by political scientists across the country. So, the two changes create quality enhancement and increased accessibility.

As always, we are very grateful to all the scholars who submitted manuscripts for review. It is without doubt that the hardest part of this job is sending emails of regret, but we are better for every manuscript we read. In addition, another round of thanks to our peer reviewers who give us their valuable time to read and comment on manuscripts submitted and who make our life so much easier and we hope our colleagues' academic work stronger.

While we love receiving academic work from outside of Illinois, we are also proud that the review process resulted in this issue being 100% Illinois. As teaching professors, we are also pleased to have in this issue a wonderful article by Connie Mixon of Elmhurst College concerning the political thicket that is remedial education at the postsecondary level. She is joined by Professors Boeckelman, Day, and Lee examining the influences on the vote for Black candidates in Illinois. Considering the recent news of a Navy Seal rescue of aid workers in Somalia, it is also timely that Ryan Hendrickson examines the constitutional line between congress and the president on piracy. Finally, with a special *mea culpa* and thank you for your patience, we have Professors Walsh, Patterson, and Hardy examining the effects of negative chain emails on the Obama presidential election (that is the 2008 election and the *mea culpa* should now make sense).

We look forward to future issues of the IPSR and are certain that the annual Illinois Political Science Association Conference will continue to provide high quality scholarship for publication. As we say goodbye to our final issue of the IPSR, we will not pretend the labor and legwork will be missed; however, it is with absolute sincerity that we say we will miss the incredible opportunity this has offered us to read the insightful, thoughtful, at times brilliant work of our colleagues across the state and beyond. Thank you, thank you, and thank you – and now – to the issue!

2011 Volume 14 Contributors

Keith Boeckelman is Professor and Interim Chair in the Department of Political Science at **Western Illinois University**. His research interests focus on state and local government policy issues and Illinois politics. He has published in a variety of political science journals, and is co-author of the book *Barack Obama: The New Face of American Politics*.

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Phillip Hardy is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at **Benedictine University**. His research interests include media, political campaigns, political learning, and religion and politics. He recently completed two collaborative studies, one which examines technology usage, social media, and political discourse among young people, and another which looks at the political preferences and goals of activists associated with the Occupy Chicago movement. Dr. Hardy is also an associate with the Center for Civic Leadership at Benedictine University, a non-partisan organization that aims to educate, engage, and promote service opportunities among high school and college-age students.

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Constance A. Mixon is Director of the Urban Studies Program at **Elmhurst College**, where she also serves as an Instructor of Political Science. She is currently completing her Ph.D. dissertation which examines public policy, funding and the provision of post-secondary remedial education at community colleges. Prior to joining Elmhurst College in 2010, she earned a tenured Professorship of Political and Social Sciences at the City Colleges of Chicago. In 2001, she was named the Illinois Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. She is the co-editor (with Dick Simpson) of *Twenty-First Century Chicago*.

Brian Glenn Patterson is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at **Benedictine University** and teaches social statistics, physiological psychology and social psychology. His main area of research specialization investigates how the media portrayal of the ideal body shape for men and women affects a person's body image and self-esteem. His primary focus is on the specific gender and ethnic differences in the effect. He has also recently added a secondary interest in political psychology. He is particularly interested in the psychology of how voting decisions are made and how our attitudes towards candidates can be changed by the media.

Mary Barbara Walsh is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at **Elmhurst College** and teaches courses in American Government and Political Philosophy. She specializes in liberal and feminist political thought. In recent years, Dr. Walsh has also conducted research on pedagogy and postmodern understandings of politics, and is currently completing research on gender stereotypes in state judicial campaign advertisements. Her work has been published in the *Review of Politics*, and will appear in the journals *Politics and the Life Sciences* and *Polity*.

**Who Is Barack Hussein Obama?
Examining the Effects of Chain Smear Emails on
Citizen Attitudes in the 2008 Presidential Campaign**

Mary Walsh, Elmhurst College

Brian Patterson, Benedictine University

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Barack Obama combated claims about his religious affiliation and patriotism while campaigning for the 2008 Democratic Presidential nomination. The inaccuracies and rumors Obama faced are significantly different from those candidates have encountered in the past; the major medium of distribution of this misinformation is no longer the leaflet, newspaper, radio or TV, but, rather, partisan websites and chain emails which have the capacity to “go viral.” This study incorporates the content found in a common Obama smear email and his campaign’s response to it into an experiment that addresses the following questions: What affect did the chain emails have on American opinion about Barack Obama? More importantly, how might these types of slanderous messages persuade recipients to change their votes? And, did the Obama campaign’s rebuttal neutralize the effect of the chain emails? We conducted an experiment to examine the affect of Internet rumors on citizen attitudes, beliefs, and intended vote choice. Exposure to the smear email negatively affected recipients’ attitudes about Obama on two character traits, morality and caring, as well as their overall evaluations of him measured by a feeling thermometer. No significant relationship was observed between exposure to the negative message and intended vote choice. The impact of the smear email on citizen opinion was not observed among subjects who encountered both the email and the campaign’s rebuttal.

Introduction

“Fictions and symbols,” wrote Walter Lippman, are an “important part of the machinery of human communication... [they] determine a very great part of men’s political behavior” (1922: 6, 11). This is certainly true of American voters - when evaluating candidates, their parties, and their policies, voters are bombarded by the types of fictions and symbols Mr. Lippman described in his classic work, *Public Opinion*. In American political campaigns these fictions and symbols can take the form of personal attacks, fear appeals, and misinformation; such fear-arousing communications are commonplace in presidential contests (Calantone and Warshaw 1985). While the major

medium of distribution of this misinformation was once the leaflet, newspaper, radio or TV, increasingly political communications of this sort are conveyed via partisan websites, blogs, and chain emails.

Fear campaigns in U.S. presidential elections are as old the Republic itself (Cummins 2007; Jamieson 1992; Swint 2008). By the time of the first genuinely contested presidential election in 1796, supporters of both Thomas Jefferson and John Adams engaged in concerted and often vicious mud-slinging and personal attacks. Adversaries smeared Adams as an anti-democratic monarchist with “hideous hermaphroditical” characteristics, while opponents of Jefferson labeled him a pro-French, bible-burning, prostitute-supporting dreamer. These types of shallow attacks are ubiquitous in American presidential elections. From rumors during the 2000 Republican presidential primaries about John McCain and an illegitimate black child to the 2004 “swiftboating” of the Democratic presidential nominee, John Kerry, contemporary American presidential contests continue to be colored by misinformation and tawdry fables.

Throughout the 2008 presidential primaries and general election, a flurry of rumors about Barack Obama’s religious background and his family’s ties to radical Islam persisted on the Internet, primarily through forwarded emails, as well as on conservative websites. Chain emails passed along fictitious information about Obama’s religion (e.g., that he was hiding his Muslim faith and extremist views) and behavior as a Member of Congress (e.g., he refused to face the flag when the pledge of allegiance was recited; he was sworn in as a U.S. Senator using the Holy Koran) while questioning his loyalty to the United States. The obvious aim of the anonymous emails was to create

public alarm about Obama and to define him as a risky choice who, because of his religious and ethnic “otherness,” could not be trusted to serve in the Oval Office.

As Calantone and Warshaw (1985) point out, candidates in presidential elections “are frequently called dangerous by detractors who seek to induce fear among voters” (1985: 627). This usually involves raising concerns about a candidate’s patriotism, race, and/or religion. “We vilify opposing candidates and out-groups in ways that manifest primal needs and invite primitive responses,” notes media scholar Kathleen Hall Jamieson (1992: 65). In the case of Obama, he and his campaign worked diligently to counteract the Internet rumors about his religion and patriotism by posting a “facts” page on his website and using the press to try to dispel the attacks. The mainstream media spent some time investigating the emails and clarifying Obama’s religion and lineage. But, in the aftermath of the general election, several important questions remain. First, were the emails effective in changing the public’s opinion of Barack Obama? And, by extension, did potential voters who encountered the email change their vote as a result? Finally, did the Obama campaign’s rapid and aggressive response to the rumors negate their effects?

In the present study, experimentation is utilized to examine the consequences of electronically disseminated character attacks during the 2008 presidential race. The impact of these smear emails on voters’ attitudes and beliefs about Barack Obama, as well as their intended vote choice, is systematically studied, as well as the persuasion effects attributed to a new and increasingly common vehicle for political communication, chain political emails. Scholars know very little about how this form of attack on a political figure might influence citizen opinion and behavior vis-à-vis the target candidate. Using undergraduate students from a small, liberal arts college in a

suburb of Chicago, experiments were conducted that randomly exposed some subjects to the Obama email, others to the Obama campaign's denial, and a third group to both. The paper proceeds with a review of the extant literature, followed by a discussion of testable predictions, methodology, results, and discussion.

Message and Receiver Properties: Elites, Voters, and Presidential Campaigns

In their important work on the public's collective ability to form and sustain meaningful, "real" opinions about a host of policies, Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro point out that "the quality of information the public receives matters... It is important to judge, as best we can, whether the information that produces opinion changes is generally true or false, enlightening or misleading" (1992: 34). Page and Shapiro were focused on Americans' policy preferences, but their statements could as easily have been about evaluations of candidates for elected office. They warned of the tendency of elites and other sources to manufacture false information and propaganda to manipulate public opinion. Zaller similarly echoed, "the political information carried in elite discourse is...never pure...it is unavoidably selective and unavoidably enmeshed in stereotypical frames of reference" (Zaller 1992: 13).

Presumably, citizen vulnerability to elite propaganda is contingent upon specific predispositions, including their prior beliefs, level of knowledge and interest in political affairs, and party identification. Public opinion scholars have been debating the civic wisdom of the American people for decades. Some hold that the public is disinterested and poorly informed about political affairs (see Zaller 1992), ideologically innocent (McClosky 1964), and virtually devoid of substantive political knowledge (e.g., Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). Others contend that the public, while neither

ideologically savvy nor in possession of vast stores of political knowledge, can reach sound political decisions by relying on heuristics, shortcuts, and low-information rationality (e.g., Graber 2001; Popkin 1994; also see Page and Shapiro 1992).

Additionally, studies of motivated skepticism have shown that people with strong prior beliefs about an issue or candidate who encounter both consistent and contradictory information will dismiss the contradictory evidence while seizing on the consistent evidence (Kuklinski et al. 2000; Peffley and Hurwitz 2007: 998; Taber and Lodge 2006).

Campaigns aim to influence voters of all stripes, from the highly informed and attentive to the more apathetic and detached, by influencing how citizens evaluate candidates. Campaigns can emphasize candidates' positions on the issues (i.e., issue advertising), their personal images (i.e., image advertising), or combinations of the two (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995; Kahn and Kenney 1999: 53). Additionally, they may emphasize the positive aspects of their own campaign, or "go negative" on their opponent. While processing campaign information, voters make evaluations of candidates and personal traits play an important role in their evaluations (Druckman et al. 2004; Funk 1999; Kinder 1986). Political psychologists have identified four traits or personality characteristics that matter most to voters: competence, strength (i.e., leadership), trust (i.e., integrity), and warmth (i.e., empathy) (Druckman et al. 2004; Funk 1999; Kinder 1986). Some scholars identify competence and strength as "performance-based" characteristics and trust and warmth as "interpersonal" characteristics (Druckman et al. 2004: 1208). These types of candidate trait evaluations have been shown to influence vote choice in presidential elections (Kinder 1986; Miller and Shanks 1996). There has been limited research, though, into how these specific traits feed into an overall evaluation, such as candidate feeling thermometer scores

(Funk 1999). And, importantly, scholars know very little about the ways negative personal attacks impact specific trait-evaluations.

There is an extensive literature examining the consequences of traditional negative campaign advertisements on citizen attitudes and behavior (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995; Geer 2006; Goldstein and Freedman 2002; Kahn and Kenney 1999). Research has shown that personal attack advertisements are more likely in competitive contests (Kahn and Kenney 1999: 93; but see Geer 2006: 68), and some scholars have concluded that negative ads result in demobilization of the electorate (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995), but others have found no such relationship (Geer 2006). It is commonly assumed that stereotypes, fear appeals, and deceptive messages pervade these types of personal attacks (Jamieson 1992), but the evidence is mixed. Kahn and Kenney's study of ads in senatorial contests found that negative personal attacks were observed 14 percent of the time (1999: 89). But Geer's research showed that personal attacks occurred just 4 percent of the time in presidential campaign ads during the period 1960 to 2000. He also found that overall negative appeals were used modestly, in 8 percent of nearly 10,000 appeals (2006: 68).

While there has been much study of negative television campaign commercials, political scientists currently know very little about Internet-based political communication (but see Bordia and Rosnow 1998; Stempel et al. 2007). Scholars are only beginning to understand the role of the Internet in American elections. Writing in the 1990s, W. Russell Neuman anticipated a new mass media technology that would "blur the distinction between mass and interpersonal communications" (Neuman 1991, cited in Graber 2006). Political campaigns, organized interests, enthusiastic citizens, and others have turned to this medium to mobilize, fundraise, and communicate about

politics. A host of communication tools are at the disposal of these individuals and groups, from Facebook to YouTube, and virtually all national campaigns are using the World Wide Web to raise funds, disseminate information, network with supporters, and shape public opinion about candidates and their challengers. Doris Graber suggests that this new medium, the Internet “allows average individuals...to make their voices heard in the public arena. Individuals and groups...can now reach widely dispersed audiences throughout the United States and most parts of the world.” But, she warns, “their messages can be constructed to inform or *deceive*, to rally people *for good and bad causes ...*” (Graber 2006: 363, italics added).

The Internet appeals to both campaigns and citizens because it offers an inexpensive, fast communication medium for transmitting political information, but there is a downside to this type of access. As Graber points out, “The public benefits from a richer marketplace of ideas but is harmed when messages are based on misinformation or deliberate deception, *often fueled by hate*” (2006: 365, italics added). Andrew Chadwick likewise warns of the potential for online character attacks, noting “The Internet perhaps intensifies preexisting trends toward... “feeding frenzy” and “attack” styles of journalism ... including[ing] gossip and rumor as news” (2006: 1274).

Internet rumor-mongering is a relatively novel practice and the little research that exists on the topic indicates that the circulation of Internet rumors about presidential candidates began to flourish during the 2004 presidential contest. One such message falsely asserted that, if reelected, George W. Bush was intent on reinstating the military draft. Another attacked John Kerry for lying about wounds he incurred while serving in Vietnam. The most common medium for transmitting these “facts” about candidates has been chain emails, often from anonymous sources.

Characterized by “urgent and frightening messages... a tendency to blame mainstream media for not telling the real story... and false, misleading, utterly bogus, and completely off-base claims” these email communications were nonetheless rampant during the 2008 presidential campaigns (Robertson 2008).¹ The Annenberg Public Policy Center’s Fact Check website reports that of 31 emails circulated about Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, only two contained completely accurate information. People can easily circulate these types of messages to wide swaths of people using bulk email lists, adding additional commentary to the original message as they see fit.

But are these “urgent and frightening” messages consequential to Americans’ political views? Are they capable of swaying public opinion in the way, for instance, campaign advertisements do? The very small body of work on the effects of fear appeals indicates that fear-arousing communications reduce the target candidate’s vote but can be negated by a denial and counterattack (Calantone and Warshaw 1985). In more general terms, negative information has been shown to have a powerful effect on citizens’ evaluations of presidential candidates (Lau 1982) and public policies (Cobb and Kuklinski 1997). Scholars have hypothesized that negative information has a stronger impact than positive information because (1) people are more motivated to give heed to negative information as a cost-avoidance or loss-aversion mechanism; and (2) negative information is less common than positive information and, therefore, stands out (Lau 1982: 372). Voters may be particularly susceptible to messages that address a candidate’s race (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Mendelberg 2001), religion, or patriotism

¹ March 18, 2008 FactCheck.org at the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. http://www.factcheck.org/specialreports/that_chain_email_your_friend_sent_to.html.

(Jamieson 1992). And, source credibility could influence the amount of trust a recipient has in new political information (Druckman 2001; Lupia 2000).

People receive communication and argument from a host of sources – friends, family, coworkers, religious leaders, political elites. Political arguments shape the ways citizens view the political world. Political persuasion – the process of changing an individual’s beliefs, attitudes, or behavior – is about communication and argument (Cobb and Kuklinski 1997; Petty and Cacioppo 1986). Potentially, this communication may shift an individual’s (1) belief about a candidate, for instance that Bill Clinton was a draft dodger; (2) attitude about a candidate, for instance the way one more broadly feels about Clinton; and (3) behavior toward a candidate, most notably one’s vote choice.

Research has demonstrated that when citizens encounter a single, unopposed message, their opinion tends to shift in the direction of that message (Cobb and Kuklinski 1997; Zaller 1992). But, when faced with competing “pro” and “con” messages, opinion change is less predictable. We argue that chain political emails and the target’s response to them represent competing attempts at persuasion. We treat the Obama email as a negative / “con” message attempting to sway voter attitudes, beliefs and behavior away from Obama. The campaign’s rebuttal represents a countervailing attempt to neutralize the impact of that smear email. A central aim of this study is to consider the impact of these competing messages on recipient opinion and behavior.

Testable Predictions

To test our hypotheses about the effects of exposure to the Obama chain email, we developed an experiment that utilized content from the most common of the Obama messages (see Appendix A), as well as the campaign's denial of the rumors (see Appendix B). As described in greater detail in the method section of this paper, undergraduates were randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions: (1) control; (2) email exposure (see Appendix A); (3) email and campaign rebuttal exposure (see Appendices); and (4) campaign rebuttal (see Appendix B) exposure alone. We borrowed from the existing literature on negativity and persuasion to construct a series of testable hypotheses regarding the potential effects of exposure to the Obama email or the Obama campaign's rebuttal to it. We assume that the email fear appeal about Obama represents a negative message about him. Further, we treat the campaign's rebuttal as a counter-acting message. Four hypotheses were tested in our experiment:

Hypothesis 1. Voter preference will show a significant effect, such that exposure to the con/negative message (i.e., the Obama email) will reduce the likelihood of an intention to vote for the target (i.e., Obama) relative to the control group. In addition, those participants exposed to the rebuttal in conjunction with the Obama email will demonstrate no change in vote choice relative to the control group, while those who read the rebuttal only will show a higher intention to vote for Obama, relative to the control group.

Hypothesis 2. An evaluation of the traits voters report as important in a presidential candidate (morality, caring, knowledgeable, strong leader, honesty, and intelligent) will show a significant pattern such that exposure to the con/negative message (i.e., the Obama email) will result in lower trait evaluations of the target (i.e.,

Obama). In addition, exposure to the Obama email followed by the Obama campaign's counter attack will cause no net change in trait evaluations towards Barack Obama compared to the control group. We theorize that exposure to both messages will result in a cancelling out of any negative opinion change about Obama. Finally, exposure to the Obama campaign's counter attack alone will cause a "boomerang" effect, especially among Democrats, resulting in higher trait-specific evaluations of Barack Obama.

Hypothesis 3. Exposure to the email should effect the warmth of feelings participants report towards Obama. Moreover, exposure to the email and rebuttal should negate the above effect. Feelings towards Obama, as tested using a feeling thermometer, will show a significant interaction effect pattern similar to that of the trait ratings.

Hypothesis 4. It is predicted that the pattern predicted in Hypothesis 2 will remain even among those who report an intention to vote for a candidate other than Obama.

Procedure

197 subjects participated in the primary experiment, which was conducted between late February and mid-April 2008. All of the subjects were undergraduates at a small liberal arts college in Chicago's western suburbs. The college's Institutional Review Board (IRB) granted permission for our investigation. To recruit participants, we sent bulk emails to faculty and students, posted fliers on campus, and made in-class announcements. The individuals who agreed to participate in the study read and signed an IRB-approved consent form that explained that their participation was voluntary and anonymous and that the results of the study would be presented at professional conferences and

published in academic journals. Subjects were initially told that the study was about political learning and opinion formation.

A total of four treatments were used in the experiment. In each condition, participants read a set of instructions detailing the steps involved. A short pre-test questionnaire was administered, containing standard demographic items, a party identification measure, four religiosity items, and an eight-item political knowledge index. After completing the pre-test, each subject read the content of their randomly assigned treatment (i.e., prototype).²

Across experimental conditions, we manipulated the source and type of information about the presidential candidates. We created four conditions that looked at the effects of exposure to the Obama smear email, as well as (in conditions three and four) the campaign's rebuttal:

Condition 1 (control): This treatment contained photos and the names of the three remaining presidential hopefuls – Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, and John McCain. No additional information was provided.

Condition 2: The second treatment consisted of a printed copy of a widely circulated email containing misrepresentations of then Senator Obama's religious background. The email, titled "Who is Barack Hussein Obama?," also claimed that Obama refuses to recite the Pledge of Allegiance, turns his back to the American flag, and does not place his hand over his heart during the Pledge.

Condition 3: The third treatment contained the same copied email found in condition 2, followed by a "know the facts" rebuttal printed off the Obama's campaign

² Copies of pretest and posttest questionnaires, as well as experimental conditions are available upon request.

website. The campaign’s rebuttal refutes many of the alleged details offered in the smear email.

Condition 4: The fourth treatment consisted of the “know the facts” page from Obama’s website. This webpage was designed to address lingering rumors about Barack Obama’s faith and patriotism.

Following exposure to their randomly assigned treatment, each subject completed a lengthy posttest. The posttest contained: (1) a feeling thermometer rating for each of the presidential candidates; (2) a presidential trait measurement (i.e., do you agree that candidate _____ is moral, caring, knowledgeable, a strong leader, honest, intelligent); (3) a question about intended vote choice; and (4) an open response thought listing exercise. Upon completion of the posttest, subjects were debriefed and informed of the exact nature of the study.

As Table 1 indicates, there was a relatively even distribution of subjects across the four conditions, ranging from 46 to 54 subjects. 124 women and 72 men participated in the study. 73.5% of the sample was Caucasian, and a preponderance of subjects (85.6%) were between the ages of 18 and 24. Overall more subjects self-identified as Democrats or Independents leaning Democrat (n=106) than Republicans or Independents leaning Republicans (n=45), while 43 reported being Independents with no preference.³

³ Several one-way ANOVA tests of treatment condition on party ID, ideology, age, and race were not significant (all p-values greater than .05). This demonstrated that randomization across conditions was successful and all groups were similar at the start of the experiment.

Table 1: Intended Vote Choice, Feeling Thermometer Score, and Trait Analysis Across Experimental Treatments

	Condition 1	Condition 2	Condition 3	Condition 4
	(Control) n=54	(Email) n=50	(Email+Rebuttal) n=47	(Rebuttal) n=46
% Vote Obama	50%	54%	52%	60%
Feeling Thermometer				
<i>Mean</i>	6.38	6.06*	7.00	7.78
SD	3.20	3.25	2.89	2.18
Interpersonal Traits				
<i>Moral</i>				
<i>Mean</i>	1.90	1.71*	2.30	2.03
SD	0.692	0.642	0.564	0.537
<i>Cares</i>				
<i>Mean</i>	2.04	1.72*	2.05	2.22
SD	0.683	0.734	0.605	0.660

*significant at the .05 level

Table 1 (continued): Intended Vote Choice, Feeling Thermometer Score, and Trait Analysis Across Experimental Treatments

	Condition 1	Condition 2	Condition 3	Condition 4
	(Control) n=54	(Email) n=50	(Email+Rebuttal) n=47	(Rebuttal) n=46
% Vote Obama	50%	54%	52%	60%
Performance Traits				
<i>Knowledge</i>				
<i>Mean</i>	1.90	1.95	1.95	1.70
SD	0.692	0.575	0.647	0.723
<i>Strong Leader</i>				
<i>Mean</i>	1.96	2.14	2.03	1.80
SD	0.743	0.608	0.628	0.687
<i>Honesty</i>				
<i>Mean</i>	3.29	3.05	3.41	3.33
SD	0.683	0.825	0.595	0.656
<i>Intelligent</i>				
<i>Mean</i>	1.85	1.66	1.74	1.58
SD	0.618	0.526	0.595	0.594

*significant at the .05 level

Results

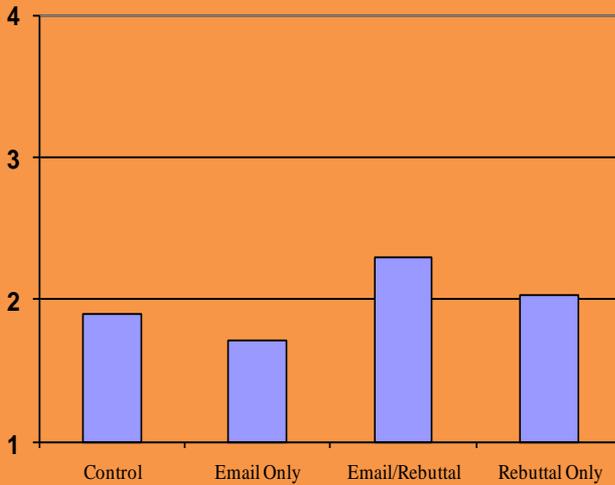
In order to test Hypothesis 1, participants were asked “If the election for president were held today, for which candidate would you vote?” The names of Hillary Clinton, John McCain, and Barack Obama were provided as choices, as well as space to write-in a different candidate. A chi-square analysis showed that exposure to the smear email did not effect subjects’ intended vote choice. Across all four conditions, the percent of participants who reported that they would vote for Obama was around 55% (See Table 1 for exact values). Although exposure to the “Who is Barack Hussein Obama” chain email does not appear to have had an effect on voting, several important effects were observed.

Hypothesis 2 made predictions about the traits voters consider when choosing who to vote for in a presidential election. Scholars have demonstrated that voters examine four broad dimensions – competence, integrity, leadership, and empathy – when evaluating presidential candidates. These dimensions are captured in surveys by asking respondents to rate how well specific traits describe a candidate. These are morality, caring, knowledgeable, strong leader, honesty, and intelligent. We find that the Obama attack email caused individuals to express varying degrees of support for statements about morality and caring.

A Oneway ANOVA conducted to test the responses of the participants to the statement “Barack Obama is moral” was found to be significant, $F(3, 164) = 6.632, p = .000$ (see figure 1). Those participants that read the email alone indicated *less* agreement ($M = 1.71, SD = .642$) with the statement when compared to participants who read only the rebuttal ($M = 2.03; SD = .537$), those participants who read the

rebuttal as well as the email (M = 2.3; SD = .564) and the control group (M = 1.90; SD = .692). Finally, the participants who read only the rebuttal showed more agreement with the statement than did the participants who read both the rebuttal and the email and those participants in the control group.

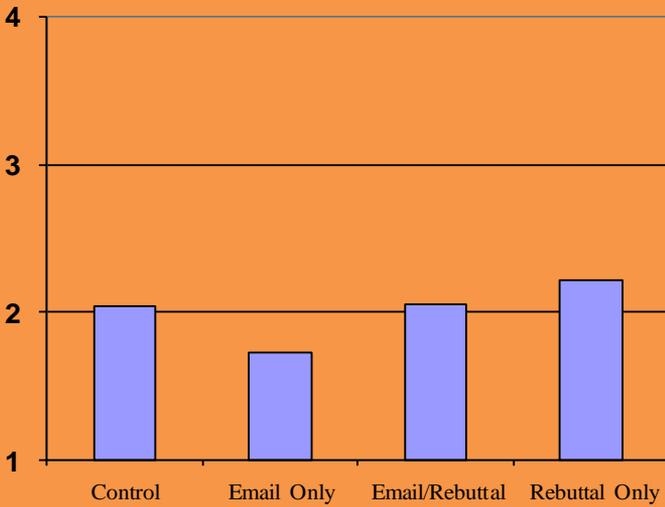
Figure 1: Participant Agreement with "Obama is Moral"



A second analysis conducted on the levels of agreement with the statement "Barack Obama really cares about people like me" also found a statistically significant effect $F(3, 166) = 4.074, p = .008$ (see figure 2). A similar pattern that was found in the analysis of the "moral" statement was found in the analysis of the "caring" question. Those participants who read only the email (M = 1.72; SD = .734) showed significantly less agreement than did the participants who read the email and rebuttal group (M =

2.05; SD = .605), those who read the rebuttal only (M = 2.22; SD = .660), and the control participants (M = 2.04; SD = .683). There were no significant differences between the latter three groups.⁴

Figure 2: Participant Agreement with "Obama Really Cares About People Like Me"

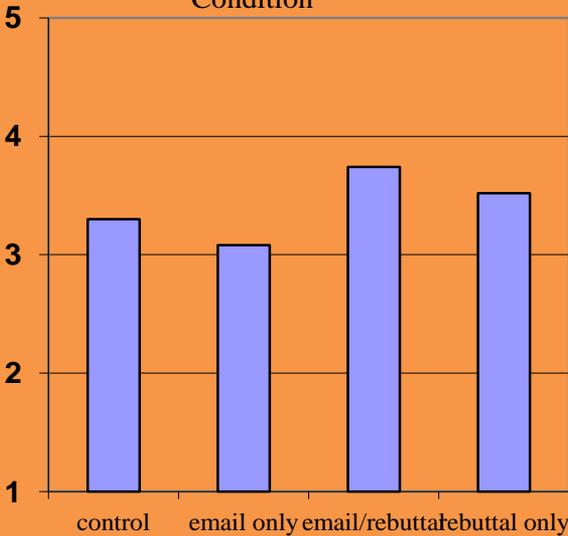


Hypothesis 3 required an examination of the participants' reported preferences for Obama. A one-way ANOVA conducted on feeling thermometer scores for Obama was found to be significant, $F(3, 190) = 2.988, p = .026$ (see Figure 3). Those participants who read only the email reported feeling thermometer scores (M = 6.06, SD = 3.25) significantly lower than the participants who read the email and rebuttal (M =

⁴ One-way analysis of the other four traits (Knowledge, strong leader, Honesty, and intelligence) had similar patterns emerging, but the analyses proved not to be significant (p-values of .273, .139, .109, and .143 respectively).

7.00, SD = 2.89) and those that read the rebuttal only (M = 7.78, SD = 2.18; both comparisons are significant at the 95% confidence interval). In addition, both the email and rebuttal group and the rebuttal only group were significantly higher than the control group (M = 6.38, SD = 3.20; sig. to the 95% CI). The email only group was not significantly lower than the control group. Subjects who read the campaign's response to the Internet rumors appear to have warmer feelings about Obama than those people who read the chain email.

Figure 3: Reported Feelings Towards Senator Obama by Condition



One possibility, however, is that the pattern is a result of the characteristics of the sample in which we were using. In each of the four conditions more than fifty percent of the participants reported that they would vote for then Senator Obama if the election were held at that time. Thus, the pattern could be an artifact of the nature of

this particular sample. To test this possibility, and to address Hypothesis 4, the above analysis on the feeling thermometer which asked participants about their preference for Obama was rerun on only the ninety participants who said they would not vote for Obama if the election were held at that time. A one-way ANOVA conducted on feeling thermometer scores for Obama was found to be significant, $F(3, 86) = 5.25, p = .002$. The pattern was found to be identical to that of the full sample analysis (see Figure 4). Therefore it appears that the pattern is not a result of the characteristics of the sample.

Discussion

Are chain emails that attack specific candidates for high office effective in eroding support for certain candidates? More importantly, do these types of chain email messages succeed in frightening away voters from particular candidates? In the present study, we have attempted to study the impact of this relatively new type of political communication on citizens' preference for presidential candidates and intended vote choice. Certainly, few political observers or analysts would disagree with the claim that the Internet has changed American politics in countless ways. From Howard Dean's stunning Internet-based fundraising machine in the 2003-2004 Democratic primaries to the viral home video made by a wounded soldier and his father in support of John McCain, the pronounced and lasting impact of the World Wide Web on the political world cannot be disputed. What is less clear, however, is the degree to which Internet-based rumors, which float around in the blogosphere and ricochet throughout personal inboxes, impact American elections.

Our results suggest that these types of personal candidate attacks can have an affect on citizen preferences. The findings of our study indicate that exposure to the

Obama chain email caused a diminished sense of empathy and morality associated with Obama; scholars have shown that these two traits are important dimensions to voters in Presidential elections. No such affect was observed among “performance- based” traits, such as competence and strength. These findings are consistent with earlier research on presidential character traits (see Druckman et al. 2004). We also observed a negative impact on overall feeling thermometer scores upon exposure to the chain email. There was no apparent relationship between chain email exposure and intended vote choice. Although no apparent affect was seen on voting, we believe our results provide evidence, albeit limited, of the power of this type of communication to influence citizen opinion.

Our findings also suggest that campaigns are well-served to aggressively combat the types of “urgent” messages that pervade the World Wide Web. Our experiment revealed that campaigns have the potential to not only neutralize these types of attacks, but also to gain ground in terms of citizen assessment of the candidate. Note that subjects who were exposed to only the rebuttal and those who were exposed to both the email and rebuttal scored Obama significantly higher on the feeling thermometer than the control group. Not only did thermometer scores for Obama increase among subjects who read the “facts” page created by his campaign, subjects in this same treatment indicated more agreement with statements that Obama “cares” and is “moral,” indicating that this type of campaign correction may actually shore up support for the candidate.

Limits and Opportunities

Our experiment was designed to mimic existing conditions of political communication via email as closely as possible. We confronted a number of threats to external validity, however. First, we did not attempt to transmit the email electronically; subjects instead received a printed copy of the message. By doing this, we were able to control both the content of the email and limit the risk of the chain email spreading beyond the experimental setting. As a result, we were not able to exactly duplicate the experience of receiving a message electronically forwarded from a personal contact. Second, this experiment does not account for source credibility, for example the effect of opening a chain email that has been forwarded by a family member or coworker (see Druckman 2001). The subjects for this study were all undergraduate students at small liberal arts college outside Chicago. This may limit the applicability of the conclusions to a more general population, although research does indicate that undergraduates often essentially mirror the population as a whole and that this is certainly a good place to start (Sears 1986). Moreover our sample consists of a majority of Democrats; the effects may be more pronounced if we had more Republicans in the sample. The impact of the email attacks on a Democratic candidate may be even greater in a population with a more accurate representation of Independent and Republican citizens who may be more susceptible to the negative message.

The timing of the experiment itself also contributes to the limits of the study. The experiment was conducted in late February and mid-April 2008 during the Presidential primary season. The impact of this form of negative attack may be more pronounced when the political environment is one where candidates from two opposing

parties are actively campaigning against each other. In other words, the influence of these negative emails may vary when the pervasive political discourse - - and voter choice - - is one focused on the broad ideological differences between candidates of two different parties. The impact may be diminished (or at least altered) in a primary season where two candidates from the same party, who share many of the same concerns and issue positions, are in contention.

Finally, the study looks at only one form of cyber-rumor (that conveyed by email) and at only one particular attack email (against Obama). Had we expanded the study, to include perhaps two such email attacks, one for example against McCain and one against Obama in the General Election, our results may have accounted better for the influence of party, race and other factors. But this would have, at the least, demanded twice the number of subjects, time and resources.

In sum, these are preliminary results that we hope will contribute to the growing body research on Internet and electronic political communications. Indeed, there are many opportunities for future research investigating the Internet as a vehicle for disseminating fear-based communications and character attacks. First, in future elections, investigators could look for the emergence for these types of chain emails, and analyze the frequency and content of the messages. While the present study considers only the potential impact of viral electronic messages, we were not able to incorporate an important trait of electronic messaging – source credibility – into this research. Presumably emails sent from reliable sources stand a better chance of being read and embraced by recipients than mail from unknown or less respected sources. Scholars should attempt to integrate this characteristic into future studies specifically

examining chain emails that attack political candidates. Subsequent research should also investigate the tone and quantity of rumors on highly partisan blogs and websites (e.g., *The Daily Kos*, *Little Green Footballs*), as well as the mainstream press, to see when and how online rumors about candidates are subsequently covered in traditional media. (Note that the email message used in this experiment garnered considerable coverage in the mainstream press.)

Candidates themselves are well aware of the Internet rumors that surround their campaigns. Political scientists might also consider how campaigns deal with this new reality, how they monitor the web and conduct “rapid response” strategies to dispel Internet rumors. They might also measure the effectiveness of different candidate strategies and different response techniques and timing. Finally, researchers might compare attacks based on attributes such as gender, religion or race with the susceptibility of certain subpopulations to such attacks via the Internet. With the expanded use of the Internet across generations and by campaigns, we can anticipate the proliferation of these types of messages in upcoming contests - - - a reality that poses many questions for those interested in democratic political communication and many opportunities to explore the relationships involved in this type of communication.

Appendix A. Original Chain Email About Barack Obama

Who is Barack Hussien Obama?

>

> Very interesting and something that should be considered in your
> choice.

>

> If you do not ever forward anything else, please forward this to all
 > your contacts...this is very scary to think of what lies ahead of
 > us here in our own United States...better heed this and pray about
 > it and share it.

>

> We checked this out on "snopes.com". It is factual. Check for
 > yourself. < BR>Who is Barack Obama?

>

> Probable U. S. presidential candidate, Barack Hussein Obama was born
 > in Honolulu, Hawaii, to Barack Hussein Obama, Sr., a black MUSLIM
 > from Nyangoma-Kogel, Kenya and Ann Dunham, a white ATHEIST from
 > Wichita, Kansas.

> Obama's parents met at the University of Hawaii . When Obama was two
 > years old, his parents divorced. Hi s father returned to Kenya .
 > His mother then married Lolo Soetoro, a RADICAL Muslim from
 > Indonesia.? When Obama was 6 years old, the family relocate to
 > Indonesia . Obama attended a MUSLIM school in Jakarta . He also
 > spent two years in a Catholic school.

>

> Obama takes great care to conceal the fact that he is a Muslim. He
 > is quick to point out that, "He was once a Muslim, but that he also
 > attended Catholic school."

>

> Obama's political handlers are attempting to make it appear that
 > that he is not a radical.

>

> Obama's introduction to Islam came via his father, and that this
 > influence was temporary at best. In reality, the senior Obama
 > returned to Kenya soon after the divorce, and never again had any
 > direct
 > influence over his son's education.

>

> Lolo Soetoro, the second husband of Obama's mother, Ann Dunham,
 > introduced his stepson to Islam. Obama was enrolled in a Wahabi
 > school in Jakarta .

>

> Wahabism is the RADICAL teaching that is followed by the Muslim
 > terrorists who are now waging Jihad against the western world. Since
 > it is politically expedient to be a CHRISTIAN when seeking major
 > public office in the United States , Barack Hussein Obama has joined
 > the United Church of Christ in an attempt to downplay his Muslim
 > background. ALSO, keep in mind that when he was sworn into office he
 > DID NOT use the Holy Bible, but instead the Koran.

>

> Barack Hussein Obama will NOT recite the Pledge of Allegiance nor

- > will he show any reverence for our flag. While others place their
- > hands over their hearts, Obama turns his back to the f lag and
- > slouches.
- >
- > Let us all remain alert concerning Obama's expected presidential
- > candidacy.
- >
- > The Muslims have said they plan on destroying the US from the inside
- > out, what better way to start than at the highest level - through
- > the President of the United States , one of their own!!!!
- >
- > Please forward to everyone you know. Would you want this man leading
- > our country?..... NOT ME!!!

**Appendix B. The Obama Campaign's Rebuttal to the Chain Email Rumors
(from www.barackobama.com/factcheck)**

NEWSWEEK: "Dueling chain e-mails claim he's a radical Muslim or a 'racist' Christian. Both can't be right. We find both are false. If these two nasty e-mail messages are any indication, the 2008 presidential campaign is becoming a very dirty one. One claims that Obama is 'certainly a racist' by virtue of belonging to Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ, which it says 'will accept only black parishioners' and espouses a commitment to Africa. Actually, a white theology professor says he's been 'welcomed enthusiastically' at the church, as have other non-blacks. Another e-mail claims that Obama 'is a Muslim,' attended a 'Wahabi' school in Indonesia, took his Senate oath on the Koran, refuses to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and is part of an Islamic plot to take over the U.S. Each of these statements is false. These false appeals to bigotry and fear remind us of the infamous whispering campaign of eight years ago, when anonymous messages just before the South Carolina primary falsely accused Republican candidate John McCain of fathering an illegitimate child by a black woman."

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST: "'Trinity UCC is rooted in and proud of its Afrocentric heritage,' [Rev. John H. Thomas, the UCC's general minister and president] said. 'This is no different than the hundreds of UCC churches from the German Evangelical and Reformed stream that continue to own and celebrate their German heritage, insisting on annual sausage and sauerkraut dinners and singing Stille Nacht on Christmas Eve. Recognizing and celebrating our distinctive racial-ethnic heritages, cultures, languages and customs are what make us unique as a united and uniting denomination.' While Trinity UCC is predominately African American, it does include and welcome non-Black members. The Rev. Jane Fisler-Hoffman, Illinois Conference Minister, who is white, has been a member of the congregation for years."

PROMINENT JEWISH LEADERS: "As leaders of the Jewish community, none of whose organizations will endorse or oppose any candidate for President, we feel compelled to speak out against certain rhetoric and tactics in the current campaign that we find particularly abhorrent. Of particular concern, over the past several weeks, many in our community have received hateful emails that use falsehood and innuendo to mischaracterize Senator Barack Obama's religious beliefs and who he is as a person. These tactics attempt to drive a wedge between our community and a presidential candidate based on despicable and false attacks and innuendo based on religion. We reject these efforts to manipulate members of our community into supporting or opposing candidates."

JEWISH U.S. SENATORS: "Over the past several weeks, many in the Jewish community have received hateful emails that use falsehood and innuendo about Senator Barack Obama's religion and attack him personally. As Jewish United States Senators who have not endorsed a candidate for the Democratic nomination, we condemn these scurrilous attacks. We find it particularly abhorrent that these attacks are apparently being sent specifically to the Jewish Community. Jews, who have historically been the target of such attacks, should be the first to reject these tactics. We won't dignify these falsehoods by repeating them in order to refute them. Instead, we will express our outrage at these tactics, which are being used to demonize a good and decent man and our friend and colleague. Attempting to manipulate voters into supporting or opposing one candidate or another based on despicable and fictitious attacks is disgraceful. These false and malicious attacks should not be part of our political discourse."

OBAMA IS NOT AND HAS NEVER BEEN A MUSLIM

Los Angeles Times: The Rumors About Obama Are "False And Vile." The Los Angeles Times wrote in an editorial, "That the rumors are false and vile is self-evident...Presidential candidates of both parties have a duty to denounce not only the smear against Obama but the bigotry that underlies it." [[Los Angeles Times, 12/3/07](#)]

Obama Spokesman Robert Gibbs Issued A Statement Explaining That "Senator Obama Has Never Been A Muslim, Was Not Raised As A Muslim, And Is A Committed Christian." "Obama's campaign aides have emphasized his strong Christian beliefs and downplayed any Islamic connection. The Illinois senator was raised 'in a secular household in Indonesia by his stepfather and mother,' his chief spokesman, Robert Gibbs, said in a statement in January after false reports began circulating that Obama had attended a radical madrasa, or Koranic school, as a child. 'To be clear, Senator Obama has never been a Muslim, was not raised a Muslim, and is a committed Christian who attends the United Church of Christ in Chicago,' Gibbs' Jan. 24 statement said." [[Los Angeles Times, 3/16/07](#)]

HE NEVER ATTENDED A RADICAL MUSLIM SCHOOL

CNN Reporter: I've Been to Madrassas in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and Obama's Indonesian Elementary School Is Nothing Like That. On January 22, CNN Reporter John Vause reported, "I came here to Barack Obama's elementary school in Jakarta, looking for what some are calling an Islamic Madrassa, like the ones that teach hate and violence in Pakistan and Afghanistan.. I've been to those Madrassas in Pakistan and Wolf, this school is nothing like that." [CNN, Situation Room, 1/22/07]

Indonesian Embassy Says That Besuki School Attended by Barack Obama "Has Never Been an Islamic Madrassah Type of School."

A letter from the Indonesian Embassy stated that "Sekolah Dasar Negeri Besuki in Menteng, Jakarta, Indonesia has always been a public school. It has never been an Islamic madrassa type of school." [Letter From Ambassador Sudjadnan Parnohadiningrat to Senator Barack Obama, 1/25/07]

Time's Joe Klein: Attacks On Obama's Elementary School Are "Laughable" Given the Moderate Form of Islam Practiced in Indonesia, Especially in Those Days. Time's Joe Klein wrote, "The effort to slime Barack Obama has begun in the slimiest possible way." Describing attacks on Obama's elementary school, Klein wrote, "Now, this is nonsense of course. Obama's stepfather was not a Muslim extremist (among other things, he worked for Shell Oil). Obama attended public school for two years in Indonesia, in addition to the two years he spent in catholic schools--although, as Obama's staff points out, Indonesia is a Muslim country, so the public schools undoubtedly reflect the dominant religious culture. The notion that the Obama's school was a Wahabi madrasa is laughable, given the moderate form of Islam practiced in Indonesia, especially in those days." [Time Blog, 1/22/07]

OBAMA IS A PRACTICING CHRISTIAN

Obama Has Been A Member Of Trinity United Church Of Christ For Twenty Years.

Monroe Anderson stands up for Reverend Wright's ministry, "For the past two decades, Barack Obama has been a faithful member of the congregation at Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ." [Chicago Sun-Times, Monroe Anderson, 3/25/07]

Obama Reads The Bible, Finds Time to Pray On Campaign Trail. The Chicago Sun-Times wrote, "Obama says he reads the Bible, though not as regularly as he'd like, now that he's on the campaign trail. But he does find time to pray. 'It's not formal, me getting on my knees,' he says. 'I think I have an ongoing conversation with God... I'm constantly asking myself questions about what I'm doing, why I am doing it.'" [Chicago Sun Times, 4/5/04]

Obama Held His Personal Bible When He Was Sworn-In As A U.S. Senator. "...Even before the makeshift office was up and running in the basement of a Senate building, even before he raised his hand Tuesday to take the oath of office as the junior senator from Illinois, Barack Obama was already a political rock star and a celebrated new face

in Congress. He arrived Tuesday, his first official day in the Capitol.... In the circles he runs in now, celebrity status is checked at the cloakroom door...When it was finally time to take the oath, he held his personal Bible, as family from as far away as Kenya watched from the visitors' gallery above. His daughters, Malia, 6, and Sasha, 3, in velvet dresses and patent leather shoes, bounced in their chairs when he looked up and waved." [Los Angeles Times, 1/5/05]

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Influences on the Vote for Statewide Black Candidates in Illinois

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African American candidates have struggled to win statewide elections in predominantly white electorates. Illinois has been an exception to this trend, however, as black candidates have won 10 statewide general election contests. This paper asks what determines the success and failure of black office seekers in Illinois. Using county level data, the effects of variables including race, income, education, partisan strength, and incumbency on support for black candidates in statewide elections are examined. The results find that party is the strongest determinant of county-level vote. They suggest that black statewide candidates enjoy levels of partisan support similar to, although slightly weaker than, comparable white candidates. In many cases, black candidates enjoy an even stronger incumbency advantage than do their white counterparts, however. Black contenders also do better in less-white and less-educated counties, although the latter effect is most apparent in lower profile contests. Willingness to support black candidates in the Illinois electorate has increased since the first African American statewide candidate ran in 1976.

INTRODUCTION

Although the number of black elected officials skyrocketed after the civil rights era, African American candidates have found it difficult to win statewide elections. With a few recent exceptions, such as Barack Obama and Deval Patrick, top offices such as governor and U.S. Senator have been especially elusive (Jeffries and Jones 2006; Frederick and Jeffries 2009). Most recently, for example, Johnny DuPree, a black contender for governor of Mississippi lost by a 20 point margin in 2011. Of course, deep South venues may be particularly inhospitable to statewide African American candidates.

This paper, by contrast, focuses on Illinois, a state where black candidates have been relatively successful. In fact, by some accounts, it has elected more black

statewide candidates than any other (Franke-Ruta 2004). The paper uses county-level data to examine the contextual factors associated with the success or failure of black candidates, focusing on socioeconomic and political variables, including race, income, education, and partisanship. The paper also compares black candidates to similarly-situated white statewide office seekers, and examines voting patterns for African American statewide candidates who run as incumbents.

As of 2011, black candidates in Illinois had won ten statewide general election races. Six other black candidates lost statewide elections, including Alan Keyes in his 2004 Senate race against Barack Obama. Confining the analysis to one state allows us to control for state-specific political dynamics, while, in turn, considering major contextual factors that determine success in statewide elections.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As noted above, while black candidates have made great gains in attaining elected office since the 1960s, they have struggled to win in predominantly white jurisdictions. Some research suggests that this trend stems from whites' reluctance to vote for black candidates (Terkildsen 1993). On the other hand, the full extent of white hesitance is unclear. Sigelman et al. (1995) found, based on an experiment in Tuscon, that white voters are not "color blind," but that the electability of minority candidates depends on personal characteristics and ideology as much as race. Campaign style is also important. Black candidates who run "deracialized" campaigns by focusing on race neutral issues such as the economy and avoiding specific racial appeals are more likely to get elected (Persons 1989; Jones and Clemons 1989; Citrin, Green, and Sears 1990; Gillespie 2010).

Similarly, African American candidates who can project a moderate, non-threatening image, and have political experience are also more apt to be successful (Frederick and Jeffries 2009). Moreover, Sonenschein (1990) contends that the prospects for minority candidates varies by region, and are the most promising in larger, more diverse states outside the South.

Perhaps most relevant to this paper is research that focuses on how the socioeconomic and demographic composition of particular venues shapes support for or opposition to black candidates. Since the success of African American candidates depends, at least in part, on the support of black voters, we would expect that areas with higher African American populations will provide more votes for black candidates (Frederick and Jeffries 2009). At the same time, there is good reason to believe that areas with large proportions of whites are less likely to support black candidates. The inter-group contact theory suggests that whites residing in less diverse areas have fewer opportunities to come in contact with members of racial minority groups (Branton and Jones 2004; Oliver and Mendelberg 2000). As a result, positive attitudes about blacks may not develop among whites, leading, in turn, to an unwillingness to support minority candidates. This dynamic will be especially salient if a low level of racial diversity interacts with low socioeconomic status, due to a perception of heightened racial competition over limited resources. By contrast, well-educated whites may be more willing to vote for black candidates (Frederick and Jeffries 2009). In short, then, areas with high percentages of whites, and low levels of education, and income should be least supportive of black candidates.

A somewhat contrary theory, however, holds that a high concentration of African Americans engenders greater white hostility, and higher levels of white mobilization against black candidates. This dynamic suggests that the proportion of blacks in a jurisdiction may be negatively related to support for black candidates, and, by implication, the percentage of whites positively so, at least up to a point (Giles and Buckner 1993). This phenomenon may be more apparent in the South, however. In addition, the willingness of whites to support black candidates over time may change, both because racial attitudes evolve, and because the types of candidates who run change. With respect to the latter point, recent research suggests that African American candidates who grew up after the Civil Rights era, many of whom were educated in and are used to working in predominantly white settings, adopt “deracialized” campaign styles that whites may find less threatening (Gillespie 2010).

BLACK CANDIDATES IN ILLINOIS: BACKGROUND

Through 2010 black candidates won ten statewide general election campaigns in Illinois, although two people, Roland Burris and Jesse White, account for eight of these victories. Barack Obama and Carol Moseley Braun also won statewide elections. Four other candidates, Cecil Partee, Earlean Collins, Robin Kelly, and David Miller won primaries, but lost their general election bids. Carol Moseley Braun also lost her U.S. Senate reelection bid in 1998. The 2004 U.S. Senate race included two African American candidates, including, in addition to Barack Obama, the only black Republican statewide contender in Illinois, Alan Keyes. The black general election candidates for statewide

office in Illinois are listed in Table 1, along with their vote percentages. Winners are shown in bold.

Table 1 – List of Black General Election Candidates in Illinois with Vote Percentage

<u>Candidate/Office (Year)</u>	<u>Vote Percent</u>
Partee – Attorney General (76)	37.2
Burris – Comptroller (78)	53.5
Burris – Comptroller (82)	64.4
Burris – Comptroller (86)	61.3
Burris – Attorney General (90)	51.5
Moseley-Braun – Senate (92)	53.3
Collins – Comptroller (94)	41.1
White – Secretary of State (98)	55.5
Moseley-Braun – Senate (98)	47.4
White – Secretary of State (02)	67.9
Obama – Senate (04)	70.0
Keyes – Senate (04)	27.1
White – Secretary of State (06)	62.8
Kelly – Treasurer (10)	45.3
Miller – Comptroller (10)	40.9
White – Secretary of State (10)	69.9

DATA

The dependent variable in the analysis is the percentage voting for the black candidate by county. Four contextual variables are included as independent variables, percent white, county per capita income as a percentage of state per capita income, percent with a bachelor’s degree, and percentage of the county Democratic vote for president or governor in the respective election.⁵ These variables reflect those in prior research using county level data to assess the impact of racial voting patterns (Bejarano and

⁵ The party data for 1986 combine the results for the Democratic Party and the Illinois Solidarity party. The Democratic gubernatorial nominee, Adlai Stevenson III was forced to run on the Solidarity party ticket after Lyndon LaRouche-backed candidates won some races in the Democratic primary that year.

Segura 2007). Data for percent white are from the nearest year to the election, for which data are provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. The income variable is a measure of a county's percentage of statewide per capita income in Illinois, based, again, on data for the year nearest the relevant election. In addition, a variable is included to measure incumbency, and a year variable to gauge change over time. Finally, dummy variables for the individual candidates are included. (In the model, Obama is the excluded variable). These variables provide measures of candidate quality or characteristics, relative to Obama.

The use of county-level data, of course, raises ecological inference issues. However, in the absence of individual-level polling data counties provide a useful unit of analysis, as counties are both "politically relevant subdivisions" and "contextually relevant environments to their inhabitants" (Seabrook 2009). Many classic works of political science have sought to understand the racial dynamics of state and regional politics by using county-level data (Key 1949). More recently, other works have used county or parish level data, either alone, or in combination with other data sources, to assess the racial dynamics of statewide elections (Bejarano and Segura 2007; Skinner and Klinkner 2004; Giles and Buckner 1993).

FINDINGS

We begin by looking at an OLS regression, shown in Table 2, with percentage of the vote as the dependent variable, and the independent variables discussed above. As the table shows, three of the four contextual variables are statistically significant predictors of the percentage of the county vote for black candidates. Areas with more whites are less

likely to support black candidates, as the group contact theories discussed in the literature review predict. The socioeconomic indicators are somewhat mixed. Income is not a statistically significant predictor of the vote. Meanwhile, somewhat contrary to expectations, lower levels of education predict a greater vote share for black candidates. It is possible that less educated voters are less aware of a candidate's race, especially for down ballot contests, but it is hard to draw conclusions at this point.

There is a strong relationship between top of the ticket Democratic vote and that for black candidates, suggesting that they are not losing the party support that their white counterparts enjoy. This dynamic will be explored further in a later section of the paper. The results also show that black candidates enjoy an incumbency advantage, and that, over the years, black candidates electoral prospects have improved. With respect to the latter, for every year since 1976, black office seekers have received an additional 0.384 percent of the vote. To put this in perspective, a black contender running in 2010 would receive 13.44 percent more votes than the same candidate in 1976.

The model presented in Table 2 also shows that black candidates vary in their vote-getting prowess. This point is further illustrated in Figure 1, which shows the relative effectiveness of candidates, using Obama as the standard. The figure shows that Burris was essentially Obama's equal, holding the other variables constant, but that other candidates were much less so. At the extreme, the drop-off for David Miller was about 25 percent.

To further explore patterns in the county-level vote for black candidates, we conducted a separate OLS regression for each candidate, incorporating the four basic contextual variables – race, income, education, and party. Table 3 shows the results. In

general, less of the variation for Jesse White is explained than is true for other candidates. Clearly, as the previous analysis shows, the best single predictor of the county level vote is the party variable. The percent white variable is only statistically significant in Carol Moseley-Braun's two elections, as well as Jesse White's initial run for Secretary of State in 1998, the same year Moseley-Braun lost her reelection bid.

Table 2 – Regression Analysis of Factors Predicting County-Level Vote Received by Black Democratic Candidates

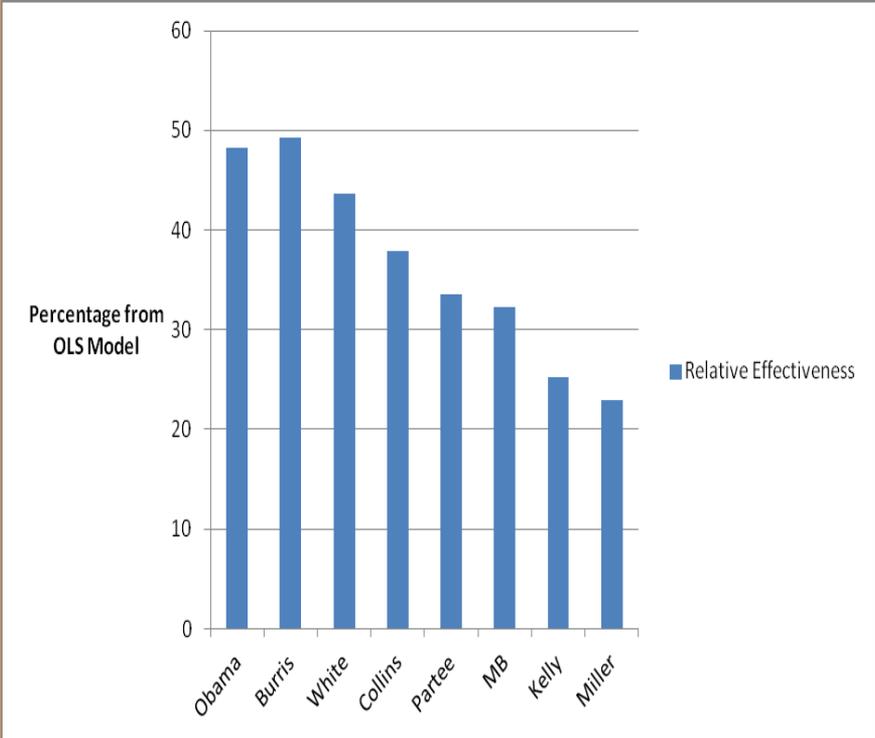
Independent Variable	Coefficient (UnStandardized)	Standard Error	t-Statistic
% White	-.162	.032	-5.06**
Income	.004	.02	.20
% Bachelor's	-.195	.045	-4.33**
Democratic Vote	.401	.023	17.435**
Incumbent	2.941	.606	4.853**
Year (Measure of Time)	.384	.071	5.408**
Partee Dummy	-14.699	2.315	6.349**
Burriss Dummy	.937	1.862	.503
Mosley-Braun Dummy	-15.987	1.31	-12.203**
Collins Dummy	-10.424	1.393	-7.483**
White Dummy	-4.617	.957	4.842**
Kelly Dummy	-23.042	1.244	-18.523**
Miller Dummy	-25.412	1.244	-20.428**
Constant	45.379	5.912	7.675**

** p ≤ .01

F = 190.222**

Adjusted R-Square = .617

Figure 1: Candidate Comparisons – Relative Effectiveness Among Black Candidates



Interestingly, the signs for this variable differ in Braun’s two races. In her initial run for the Senate, the percent white in a county was positively related to her vote totals, while in her re-election bid in 1998, the opposite was true. Possible reasons for this variation are discussed in a later section. Moseley-Braun in her two races and White in 1998 were the only candidates to show a positive, statistically significant relationship between the income variable and county level vote. For three other contests, the relationship was negative and statistically significant. Three candidates,

Kelly and Miller in 2010 and Collins in 1994 showed a negative, statistically significant relationship between education levels and vote share. Perhaps it is no coincidence that these were among the lowest profile races under consideration, with, arguably, the weakest candidates. By contrast, in more high information contests, such as Obama's and Moseley-Braun's first Senate races, or most of Burris' and White's reelection bids, education had a positive impact on vote share, although the relationship was not always statistically significant.

In two cases (1998 and 2010) multiple black candidates ran. In 1998, the county-level vote patterns for Carol Moseley-Braun and Jesse White were strikingly similar, although White ran ahead of Moseley-Braun in total votes. In 2010, Miller and Kelly show somewhat similar patterns, while those for Jesse White differ, especially on the education variable.

COMPARISON WITH WHITE CANDIDATES

The results so far suggest a very strong relationship between the overall Democratic vote and the vote for black Democratic candidates. This relationship suggests that black candidates in Illinois are relying on party support to get elected. Not surprisingly, then, in bad Democratic years (e.g. 1994, 2010), they are less likely to succeed. Nevertheless, in order to draw more definitive conclusions, it is necessary to compare black candidates with similarly situated white Democratic contenders. Using the criteria of whether the candidate in question was running for an open seat, against an incumbent, or as an incumbent, as well as taking into account the comparability of the office, it is possible to identify comparable candidates in eight of the races discussed above.

Table 3 – Results of Regression Analyses of Factors Predicting County-Level Vote Received by Individual Black Candidate

Cndidte/Yr	Independent Variable (Standard Error)				
	% White	Income	% Bachelor's	Democratic Vote	Adj R-Square
Partee '76	-.118 (.126)	-.017 (.067)	-.230 (.189)	.744** (.133)	.419
Burris '78	.006 (.064)	.049 (.034)	.215* (.102)	1.059** (.062)	.807
Burris '82	.114 (.088)	-.046 (.045)	.183 (.128)	.904** (.077)	.645
Burris '86	.010 (.095)	.110* (.055)	-.068 (.136)	.574** (.094)	.412
Burris '90	-.028 (.065)	-.164** (.038)	.184 (.098)	.931** (.062)	.806
Moseley-Braun '92	.091** (.032)	.049* (.020)	.022 (.049)	.944** (.034)	.903
Collins '94	-.077 (.051)	-.116** (.031)	-.345** (.082)	10135** (.059)	.850
Moseley-Braun '98	- .306** (.065)	.134* (.052)	-.155 (.108)	.332** (.040)	.498
White '98	-.245* (.087)	.251** (.070)	-.184 (.145)	.413** (.054)	.452
White '02	.073 (.067)	-.033 (.050)	.111 (.102)	.488** (.070)	.345
Obama '04	.069 (.051)	-.008 (.036)	.166* (.070)	.962** (.050)	.838
White '06	.064 (.117)	.027 (.084)	-.052 (.170)	.542** (.080)	.355
Kelly '10	-.031 (.059)	-.046 (.039)	-.263** (.075)	.952** (.052)	.818
Miller '10	-.046 (.047)	-.035 (.031)	-.244** (.059)	.805** (.043)	.840
White '10	.064 (.072)	-.010 (.048)	.102 (.091)	.547** (.067)	.516

*p ≤ .05; **p ≤ .01

Specifically, Michael Bakalis, the Comptroller candidate in 1976 is comparable to Cecil Partee. Jerome Cosentino, the Treasurer candidate in 1978 and the Secretary of State candidate in 1990 is comparable to Roland Burris in those two elections. Neil Hartigan, who ran for re-election for Attorney General in 1986 is comparable to Roland Burris, who also ran for re-election as Comptroller that year. Nancy Drew Sheehan, the Treasurer candidate in 1994 is comparable to Earlean Collins. Dan Hynes, who was elected Comptroller in 1998, and won reelection in 2002 and 2006 is comparable to Jesse White in those same years. In five of these cases, Bakalis (76), Hartigan (86), Sheehan (94), Hynes (98), and Hynes (06), the white candidate ran ahead of the African American candidate statewide. In the other three cases, the black candidate ran ahead of the white contender. Table 4 shows that the votes for the white and black candidates are highly correlated. Of course the various candidates discussed are running in very different eras from the perspective of racial attitudes and public acceptance of minority office seekers more generally.

Table 4 – Correlations Between County Level Vote of Black Candidate and Comparable White Candidate

Partee – Bakalis (76)	.838**
Burris – Cosentino (78)	.930**
Burris – Hartigan (86)	.922**
Burris – Cosentino	.874**
Collins – Sheehan (94)	.968**
White – Hynes (98)	.771**
White – Hynes (02)	.869**
White – Hynes (06)	.607**

**p ≤ .01

Another way to look at this relationship, however, is to compare the correlations between the corresponding black and white candidates and the top of the ticket candidates. In seven of the eight cases, (1994 was the exception), there was a stronger correlation between the top of the ticket Democrat and the white candidate than with the comparable black candidate. In other words, white candidates are generally better able to capture the party “base” than are their black counterparts.

BLACK CANDIDATES AS INCUMBENTS – FURTHER EXPLORATION

The results reported earlier in Table 2 show that black candidates benefit from incumbency effects. The experiences of Carol Moseley-Braun, Roland Burris and Jesse White provide an opportunity to further assess this dynamic. Both Burris and White picked up substantially more votes in running for re-election than the initial election, with Burris’s vote totals increasing by a 10.9 percent margin between 1978 and 1982, and White’s increasing 12.4 percent between 1998 and 2002. By contrast, white State Comptroller Dan Hynes’ margin increased by only 4.6 percent, running for initial election and reelection at the same time as White. Both Burris and White increased their vote shares in 101 of the state’s 102 counties between their first and second elections. Again, by contrast, Hynes gained ground in 87 counties and did worse in 15.

Unlike Burris and White, Moseley-Braun lost her bid for re-election, dropping 8.1 percentage points between 1992 and 1998. The latter election became more racialized than her initial bid for office. Because of her high profile involvement in racially-charged issues like the confederate flag, some white voters came to see her as less attuned to the state’s problems (Kenney and Hartley 2003, 205). In an almost

mirror image of Burris and White's performances, Moseley-Braun's percentage of the vote fell in every county, but one, although she did improve in Cook County, the state's largest with over 40 percent of the population. Her biggest drop-offs were in relatively rural counties, especially in the southern half of the state. In correlating the difference in her vote between 1998 and 1992 with the major independent variables in this study, we found a negative correlation with percent white ($r = -.231$), and a positive correlation with income ($r = .221$), education ($r = .201$), and percent voting for the Democratic gubernatorial candidate ($r = .129$). All but the last relationship are statistically significant at the .05 level. In other words, counties with the greatest numbers of whites were most likely to show the biggest swing against Moseley-Braun, while those with higher levels of education and income turned against her less dramatically.

It is also interesting to compare White's performance as an incumbent to a non-incumbent black candidate in the same election. To so we compared the difference between the percentage of the vote White received in 2010, when elected to his fourth term as Secretary of State to that of David Miller. Miller was a first time candidate for statewide office, who had a background somewhat similar to White's as a state legislator. The difference variable was correlated positively correlated with percentage white (.208), income (.258), and education (.318), while negatively correlated with percentage voting for the top of the ticket Democrat (-.312). These results suggest that African American incumbents do better among whites, and in areas with high socioeconomic status than do first time candidates, but that they become less dependent on areas with strong Democratic votes.

CONCLUSION

As the U.S. population diversifies, and racial attitudes evolve, the number of minority candidates running for statewide office is likely to expand. Looking at statewide black candidates in Illinois, we have found that they are successful to the extent that they are able to capture the Democratic vote that all statewide candidates running on the party ticket garner. Nevertheless, black candidates do not appear to enjoy quite the same level of party support that comparable white candidates do. The aggregate analysis shows that African American candidates also do better in less white counties and those with lower levels of education. The latter pattern is more apparent for non-incumbents and lower-profile candidates, however. As noted above, although our data cannot provide conclusive answers, it is worth pondering how widespread the awareness of the race of candidates is among voters of varying education levels.

Looking at the results for individual candidates, it appears that socioeconomic context becomes less important after 1994. In addition, the electorate in Illinois shows a greater willingness to support black candidates over time. The findings also suggest that, once elected, black candidates often enjoy a greater incumbent advantage, unless high profile racial issues emerge during their terms of office.

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Somali Pirates, the American Military and the U.S. Constitution: Congressional Oversight Without Responsibility

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Modern piracy off the coast of Somalia has resulted in a heightened American military presence in the Indian Ocean. During the Obama administration, American military personnel have been engaged in anti-piracy operations, including hostage rescue efforts of American citizens and foreign nationals, and the use of force on a number of occasions. This paper examines the degree of congressional oversight of these operations. The U.S. constitution suggests a strong oversight role for Congress in monitoring and determining how to address piracy challenges, as does the early history of the United States. The research presented here, however, finds that despite an increasingly active American military in these waters, Congress has largely deferred to the commander in chief and the Department of Defense. While some members of Congress have sought policy change, most remain unengaged on American Naval and piracy matters, which provide President Obama and the Pentagon considerable discretion to conduct foreign and military affairs independent of congressional scrutiny.

Introduction

Global security threats and challenges continue to evolve, arguably well beyond the imaginations of what many thought possible only a decade ago. From the threat of nuclear destruction during the Cold War, to today when challenges like cyber-security, Mexican drug gangs, international terrorism and instability in Libya, all result in very different ways to think about global security. The rapid increase in pirating off the coast of Somalia and deep into the Indian Ocean, however, is a novel threat that was especially difficult to fathom in its current scope only a decade ago. Today, the administration of U.S. President Barack Obama maintains that pirating “constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.” (Obama 2010; see also Nightingale 2011). The Somali pirate challenge has also resulted in a number of decisions from the U.N. Security Council, which has authorized the use of force against the pirates. On a number of occasions, American

military forces have also been used to rescue hostages, prevent additional pirate attacks, and kill pirates in special forces operations. These developments represent a dramatic change in how American military personnel are being used abroad, and raise important and new constitutional questions over the authority to use force.

The U.S. Constitution states that Congress shall “...define and punish Piracies and Felonies Committed on the high Seas” (U.S. Constitution, Article 1, Section 8). While many would have guessed that this line in the constitution would have little relevance in the 21st century, it is now clear that Somali pirates have gained unexpected prominence in American foreign and security policy. In this context, the Constitution suggests an important regulatory role for the U.S. Congress, and in no way implies that piracy is to be handled singularly by the Commander in Chief. This article examines Congress’s role in exercising this facet of the American constitution vis-à-vis the commander in chief and maintains that Congress has largely abdicated this responsibility to the president. This practice of legislative deference generally squares with how members of Congress often deal with military matters and the United States’ use of force abroad. Congress is interested in piracy, but only on the political fringe, and does not seek a serious or substantive role in shaping American military actions in the Indian Ocean. The article begins with a short discussion of the major military actions taken by the United States against pirates during the Obama administration, follows with a brief discussion of the constitutional history of American responses to pirating threats. It concludes with an analysis of the congressional-executive interactions over Somali pirating threats.

Somali Pirates and the American Military

One of President Obama's first international military incidents that had the potential for tremendous political unpredictability came in April 2009, when the American ship, the Maersk Alabama, was captured by Somali pirates and resulted in Captain Richard Phillips being held hostage. After a number of days of negotiations, and when the U.S. military maintained that Phillips' life was in jeopardy, three U.S. Navy SEALs simultaneously fired on three Somali pirates, killing them instantly and rescuing Phillips (U.S. Department of Defense 2009).

This incident, however, was only the beginning of American military efforts against the pirates. One year later, the USS Nicholas, which was on patrol in the Indian Ocean, came under fire from a pirate skiff. Upon returning the fire, the USS Nicholas pursued and caught the skiff. American forces eventually went aboard and captured three pirates. The USS Nicholas then sunk the skiff, and located the pirates' mother ship, where two additional pirates were captured (U.S. Africa Command 2010). In the same month, the USS Ashland was similarly fired upon by pirates, which also responded by firing of two rounds, and resulted in a fire on board the pirate skiff. The pirates abandoned the skiff by jumping into the water, where U.S. military personnel then rescued the pirates (U.S. Navy 2010).

American forces have also come to the rescue of foreign nationals being held hostage. In September 2010, two dozen Marines boarded the German owned Magellan Star, rescuing the crew and overtaking all of the hostages. Lt. Col Joseph R. Clearfield, the commanding officer of the operation, noted: "It was a combination of speed and overwhelming force" that led to the successful operation (Whitlock 2010).

Another quite dramatic use of American military personnel against Somali pirates came in March 2011, when four U.S. Navy warships responded to a hostage situation, where four Americans were being held on a yacht. After four days of negotiations, a “rocket-propelled grenade” was fired toward the USS Sterett, one of the American warships in the vicinity. In response, U.S. Navy Seals boarded the yacht, where the Seals found all four hostages killed. During a search of the yacht, two pirates were killed by the Seals, one by gunshot and another by knife (U.S. Department of Defense 2011). In another rescue effort in early 2012, U.S. Navy Seals killed nine Somali pirates who had taken hostage an American and a Danish aid worker. In this military operation, the Navy Seals landed by parachute near the Somali village of Galkayo, and successfully freed the aid workers through the use of force (Gettleman, Schmitt and Shanker 2012).

In part, the United States’ ability to respond to these pirating actions is due to the actions of a variety of international organizations, as well as heightened attention from U.S. Central Command. In January 2009, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command created Combined Task Force (CTF) 151 in an effort to more effectively police the Gulf of Aden, where pirating is especially rampant and also the route for approximately 11 percent of the world’s oil shipments. CTF-151 works with partner states to patrol these waters and focus exclusively on anti-pirating operations (Ploch et al 2011, 25). Such operations occur within the context of United Nations Security Council Resolutions, which initially authorized the use of “all necessary means to repress acts of piracy and armed robbery,” in June 2008. In addition, the U.N. Security Council authorized member states and other organizations who act at the request of Somalia’s Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to use all necessary means to repress piracy within Somalia. Both

resolutions were extended through 2011 (Ploch et al 2011, 19-20). In addition, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization oversees a small anti-pirating operation that remains in place today, and the European Union manages its own anti-piracy mission as well, Operation Atlanta, which has included naval, air and troop contributions from some 26 different states (Garrett and Hendrickson 2009, 9-13; EU NAVFOR News, 2010).

Thus, the international response to piracy has grown significantly in scope, which includes a meaningful American military presence. Across the first three years of the Obama administration, the American military response to the pirate issue has been considerable, and has involved the killing of pirates on a number of occasions, and the rescue of foreign nationals. While the United States has been called upon in different instances to respond to individual acts of piracy, these actions have all occurred in a specific region of the world, where the United States has deployed and coordinated military assets in place to combat such threats. In this respect, it would be a mistake to refer to such operations as ad hoc or simply responses to emergency situations, but rather should be viewed in the context of a coordinated and sustained military presence abroad.

Constitutional History of Anti-Pirating Operations

The U.S. Constitution notes that Congress shall “...define and punish Piracies and Felonies Committed on the high Seas,” though the founding fathers spent virtually no time debating aspects of this congressional power (U.S. Constitution, Article 1 Section 8). James Madison’s notes on the history of the Constitutional Convention provide little record of meaningful dialogue on piracy and the founding fathers’ views of it; this issue

was barely discussed in Philadelphia, which also extends to the Federalist Papers that similarly provide virtually no insight on piracy and the management of this threat (Madison 1987; Federalist Papers 1961, 265-266). However, historians provide some perspectives on how this power was later interpreted by Congress and the presidents in America's first trials with pirates.

One early indicator of constitutional perspective on piracy came from America's first secretary of state, Thomas Jefferson, who in 1790, was forced to deal with Barbary pirates. Jefferson noted that it was Congress's responsibility to determine how the United States should deal with the pirates, whether it should be warfare, the distribution of tributes, the payment of ransoms, or any other policy. Jefferson maintained that it was Congress who was to direct and then the president would implement congressional directives (Fisher 1995, 25).

Upon becoming President, Jefferson later sent American Naval forces to the Mediterranean in 1801 to protect American shipping interests, who were being attacked by pirates. Upon reaching the region, U.S. forces engaged in direct military action against the pirates. In the aftermath of this conflict, Jefferson returned to Congress to inform them of these developments and to seek their guidance on future interactions with pirates (Fisher 1995, 25). This particular exercise of presidential power as commander in chief has generated considerable scholarship. War powers expert Louis Fisher (1995, 25) notes that on the day before Jefferson became president, Congress gave the president authority to create a "naval peace establishment" to patrol against piracy, and in this regard, Congress clearly authorized the president to take military action against the pirates. Jefferson, however, focused on the difference between

defensive and offensive military action and maintained that defensive military actions could be conducted without explicit congressional approval, but that offensive actions clearly required congressional authorization. Thus, when the Navy eventually used force, Jefferson maintained that the actions were authorized.

Other historians maintain that the emphasis of Jefferson's actions should be placed on the directives given to the U.S. Navy when they arrived in the Mediterranean, which provided the Navy with some discretion in determining how force would be used against the pirates, which also implies that the Jefferson administration was more broadly defining his powers to authorize the Navy to use force as necessary (Turner 1991, 60-61; Sofaer 1976, 212). Regardless of the particular emphasis placed by historians on this issue, what is clear is that Jefferson saw himself limited by the Constitution in fighting pirates, and upon the use of force, returned to Congress for guidance and direction. The result was that the President and Congress had a formal exchange of views on this issue, resulting in explicit authorizations to use force in these particular circumstances. Like his predecessor, President James Madison similarly sought approval from Congress to use force against pirates (Worthmuth and Firmage 1989, 24, 64).

Another instructive historical example is from the administration of President James Monroe, who had an extensive dialogue with Congress over the threat and management of piracy. Congress oversaw and authorized a number of anti-piracy operations in the West Indies; force against pirates was used in a number of instances during his presidency. Yet in an especially poignant remark, Monroe noted: "Whether those robbers should be pursued on land, the local authorities be made responsible for

these atrocities, or any other measure be resorted to suppress them, is submitted to the consideration of the Congress” (quoted in Wormuth and Firmage 1989, 156). During his administration, on January 30, 1823, Congress made “permanent law” that the president could use public vessels to respond to piracy threats and actions. Congress has since made revisions to this Act since 1823, though little change exists in the language that permits the president to use public vessels to suppress piracy (quoted in Elsea and Grimmet 2011, 7).⁶

Though there were a number of additional American military incidents with pirates after the Monroe Administration, including uses of force in Sumatra in 1827, the Ivory Coast in 1843, and in near Hong Kong in 1855, the piracy threat was much reduced from the 1830s to the modern era. As Europe became more stable, American and British anti-pirating cooperation increased, and as the incentives decreased for foreign states to sponsor piracy, this threat reduced dramatically (Wombwell 2010, 48-9, 108). In addition, the emergence of steamships, which were much faster and better armed than pirate ships, posed a significant threat to pirates (Lehr 2011, 204). What remains clear, however, is that piracy as a threat to national security interests were not dealt with unilaterally by the president, but rather were evaluated and voted upon by Congress, often on a case-by-case basis. Though Jefferson may have exceeded his authority as commander in chief against the Barbary pirates, he nonetheless returned to Congress for their oversight and authorization to use force, as did Presidents who followed. Congress certainly empowered the President in 1823 with the authority to use force against pirates as needed, which would imply that President Obama today does have

⁶ See also Title 33, Chapter 7, § 381.

authority to use military force against pirates, especially given that Congress has amended Title 33 of the United States Code on a number of occasions, and thus has reiterated the original language that was made “permanent” in 1823. Yet at the same time, as the previous evidence suggests, American constitutional history also indicates a clear understanding that Congress was intended to be intimately involved in use force questions surrounding piracy.

Moreover, from the 1820s up until the 1880s, presidents and members of Congress who adopted “antinaval” policy positions dominated the political discourse. Members of congress, and Presidents John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson especially, actively promoted a very limited role for the American Navy, and were clearly skeptical about the potential virtues of a big Navy, which would ostensibly invite new national security threats with potentially limited gain. In these years, Congress demonstrated its ability to shape American naval policies, and thus implicitly, how the Navy would be used abroad (Symonds 1980, 231-5). In sum, the history of congressional involvement in anti-piracy operations, and more generally in monitoring the role of the American Navy is significant.

One additional legal aspect of modern piracy to recognize is that international law governing piracy is far from clear. In highlighting this problem, Pham (2010) notes that America’s closest allies have very different ideas on how to handle piracy in general, and more specifically, what to do with pirates upon capture. Though some may argue that “piracy,” much like “terrorism” is by definition wrong and therefore automatically worthy of military response, such a view is rather simplistic, and certainly does not square with the assorted legal practices that are employed in the region and by

the United States' partners to address piracy challenges. Much remains unclear on how to handle pirates and what rights they may have (Kraska 2009). Thus, a good case can be made that Congress's role to "define and punish piracies" applies in this new age of modern piracy, which is novel in its threat to American interests, has entailed multiple occasions when force has been used, and yet remains surrounded with tremendous international legal ambiguity.

Congressional Involvement in Modern Piracy

Though some modern scholars maintain that Congress has been an active participant in use of force decisions for the United States, the majority of academic and journalistic research suggests that Congress defers to the leadership of the commander in chief, often abdicating its congressional war powers constitutional authority (Gagnon and Hendrickson, 2010; Ricks 2009; Moss 2008; Bacevich 2008; Schonberg 2004). In many respects, this practice of congressional deference to the commander in chief, especially with regard to the use of force, remains the pattern today with President Obama's anti-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean.

For most members of Congress, the issue of piracy is given little policy attention; few national legislators have taken up this issue and sought to push American actions on piracy in new directions. One exception to this general pattern is Congressman Ron Paul (R-TX), who has been more novel than others in suggesting solutions to this problem. Paul maintains that Congress should exercise its constitutional powers to issue "Letters of Marque and Reprisal" to private citizens such that they could independently use force to destroy and kill the piracy threat. Paul maintains that the

U.S. Navy is presently unable to patrol against these kinds of threats, and that the authorization of private individuals to use force would prove to be a far greater deterrent to the pirates (Fox News Transcript 2009). Speaking in support of Paul's proposal, Eli Lehrer noted: "If we have 100 American wanna-be Rambos patrolling the seas, it's probably a good way of getting the job done (quoted in Lovely, 2009)."

Similarly, another member of Congress, Frank LoBiondo (R-N.J.) chairman of the House Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, has also introduced legislation to grant legal immunity to civilians who use armed force upon being attacked by pirates. Merchant mariners would be permitted to harm or kill pirates, and be free from any legal prosecution (Congressional Record 2009, H11722). In the Senate, Mark Kirk (R-IL) has also been especially aggressive in calling for stronger military and naval efforts to combat piracy. Kirk has advanced his ideas, which he called the "Decatur Initiative," named after Lieutenant Stephen Decatur. Decatur helped recapture and then destroy the USS Philadelphia in 1804, which had been taken captive by pirates in Tripoli. Decatur's daring actions eliminated the possibility that the U.S.S. Philadelphia could be used against the United States. Kirk similarly wants the Navy to be increasingly empowered to use force against Somalia pirates, and has introduced his ideas on more than one occasion in 2011 (Congressional Record 2011, S1173, S3150).

Others who have expressed concern over piracy include former Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI), who in 2009 called for greater international cooperation to address the piracy threat, though expressed his skepticism of military solutions to the problem (Congressional Record 2009, S12410). More recently, Congressman Ted Poe (R-TX) also expressed concern over the growing piracy threat, though mostly just issued a warning

to the pirates with implied threats against more intense military action, without specific or new policy proposals advanced (Congressional Record 2011, H1595).

During the Obama presidency, a few committee hearings have been held on the piracy challenge.⁷ Moreover, in the aftermath of the successful use of force against pirates in 2009 when Captain Phillips was captured, the House of Representatives commended the U.S. Navy Seals' efforts (Congressional Record 2009, H4590-4594). In this respect, Congress is clearly aware of the piracy challenge, and committee activity certainly suggests a degree of legislative interest.

Yet despite the various congressional activities that have been identified above, a good case can be made that Congress is not carrying out its constitutional duties to "define and punish Piracies and Felonies Committed on the high Seas" in a manner that squares with meaningful oversight of the executive branch. Rather, Congress's actions comport largely with how it chooses to exercise its war powers, which entails providing the commander in chief with significant, if not all-empowering discretion in determining how and when force is used abroad. The question of the president's perceived authority to use force against pirates has not been challenged by either chamber of Congress. Congress's limited oversight and interest in piracy has a number of negative constitutional and political implications.

First, as was established previously, international law on piracy, if it can be referred to in that manner, is far from clear (Pham 2010; Kraska 2009). Though State and Defense Department officials, as well as some members of Congress, frequently make sweeping references to piracy as a "universal crime under international law," it is

also clear that widespread disagreement exists over how to handle pirates, and what “rights” a pirate may have.⁸ Countries vary significantly on this aspect of international law. In reality, there appears to be little that is “universal” from an international legal perspective. Due to such legal ambiguity, it makes sense for Congress to more meaningfully exercise its explicit constitutional power in its interactions with the president, especially given the Obama administration’s ongoing willingness to use military force as a policy tool against the Somali pirates.

Related to the following point is the existing international legal authorization on piracy, which is best exemplified by action taken by the United Nations Security Council, which has approved the use of force. This intervention from the United Nations is interesting for at least two reasons. First, the Security Council’s actions suggest that, again, international law is not clear on piracy and the use of force. If piracy truly was a “universal crime” against all, which then implicitly would permit military force to be used against pirates, why then is UN Security Council action even necessary? Thus, the Security Council’s actions help support the idea that international law is not clear on piracy, and states are not automatically permitted to use force against them. Second, upon America’s entry into the United Nations, Congress passed the United Participation Act of 1945, which occurred after a range of congressional committee hearings. The legislative history of this Act clearly established that Congress did not give away its checking power to the president if the commander in chief wanted approval to

⁷ See U.S. House of Representatives, Africa, Global Health and Human Right, and Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade, Joint Subcommittee Hearings (2011); U.S. House of Representatives, Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee Hearing (2011a)

⁸ For example, see statements made by Chairman LoBiondo, Rear Admiral Kevin S. Cook, and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Amend in the U.S. House of Representatives,

use force through the United Nations. American membership in the United Nations did not eliminate Congress from its constitutional role to check the president, and in this respect, a United Nations Chapter VII authorization to use force invites congressional intervention, oversight, and ultimately domestic approval (Fisher 1997; Glennon 1991; Berger 1991).

Apart from the legal and constitutional reasons for heightened congressional involvement in piracy, it is also clear that American military actions against pirates can generate bilateral tensions with close allies. Perhaps the best example of this came after the death of Wu Lai-yu, the captain of a Taiwan fishing vessel that was captured by Somali pirates in 2011. He was killed when the USS Stephen W. Groves, who had come to the vessel's assistance, engaged military with the pirates who had overtaken this vessel. Upon his death, Wu Lai-yu was buried at sea, though the Taiwanese government was not notified of the burial until ten days after the incident, all of which generated considerable tension between these normally very close allies (Hsui-chua 2011). While the American military actions *may* be fully justifiable, it is also clear that Congress's absence from such debates again suggests a degree of foreign policy abdication on this issue, in which President Obama and the Department of Defense fully control American foreign policy.

Though some members of Congress and perhaps the Obama administration may retort that current American law permits the president to use American ships in anti-pirating operations, it is also not self evident that the basic "law" shaping this argument, much of which was written in 1823, is appropriate for the scope of modern

Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee Hearing (2011a), all of whom made nearly identical remarks regarding international law and piracy.

piracy. International legal ambiguity, actions from the United Nations Security Council, and the general constitutional notion of checks and balances--especially against the commander in chief—all ostensibly justify greater congressional oversight on this issue.

Moreover, the question remains open under existing American law over how much force the commander in chief could use against pirates, and whether or not the president could legally and constitutionally wage war against them, as some commentators have suggested (May 2011; Boot 2011). It seems unlikely that existing American domestic anti-piracy law is the equivalent of a Gulf of Tonkin Resolution against pirates, which would then permit the president to use as much force as he pleased. Yet it is also clear that presidents since World War II and now in the aftermath of the September 11 strikes--in a non-partisan fashion--have increasingly asserted wide authority to use force without congressional oversight, which is present again with President Obama's military actions in Libya. Obama maintained that his military actions in Libya did not merit congressional authorization and were not subject to the laws under the War Powers Resolution (Fisher 2011). Thus far, Obama has similarly suggested that his actions against pirates do not merit congressional oversight (Hendrickson, 2010). Though it seems unlikely in the immediate near future that Obama would significantly increase anti-pirating operations in the Indian Ocean, it is also true that the Obama administration has identified piracy as "an unusual and extraordinary threat," which therefore would ostensibly benefit from much closer congressional oversight and increased scrutiny. Greater legislative oversight not only has political advantages to help clarify existing law, but also squares more closely with the constitutional principles of checks and balances.

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A Persistent Problem: Postsecondary Remedial Education

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Frequent claims that public K-12 schools have failed to adequately educate their students and that this has produced a college student population in need of remediation at the postsecondary level is at the center of many contemporary and often contentious debates about education policy in the United States. Nearly one-third of all new college freshmen enroll in at least one postsecondary remedial education course. At community colleges, remediation rates are significantly higher. Rather than an individual problem, lack of preparation for higher learning and training has come to be viewed as a collective problem in need of corrective public policy action. Using the State of Illinois as a case study, this paper presents evidence that public policies aimed at the amelioration of the problem of postsecondary remedial education have primarily focused on the widely accepted cause of the problem: public K-12 schools. This paper further examines the politics which undermine the provision and effectiveness of college remediation.

INTRODUCTION

College readiness and success have received a great deal of attention in recent years.

While students may meet high school graduation requirements or obtain the equivalent of a high school diploma in the form of a GED, many are not prepared for college coursework and many fail to complete degree programs. This, according to the Center for American Progress (2008), has resulted in a higher education “readiness problem...Students are not ready for college, colleges are not ready for students, and public policy, long focused on making college more affordable, is not yet ready to take on the complex challenge of ensuring people successfully complete college degrees and transition into rewarding careers...” (Soares and Mazzeo, 2008, p.2). It is further feared that failure to “ensure students’ readiness for postsecondary education and the labor market threatens to slow American productivity, lower our standard of living, and widen the gulf between rich and poor” (Achieve Inc., 2005, p.5).

The Alliance for Excellent Education estimates that “85 percent of current jobs and almost 90 percent of the fastest-growing and best-paying jobs require some postsecondary education” (Alliance for Excellent Education). Given these estimates, concerns have arisen regarding the ability of the United States to fully meet future labor demands. In a *New York Times* editorial arguing that the political and economic dominance of America is coming to an end, due in part, to an “education gap,” Thomas Friedman (2005) wrote that “the dirty little secret that no C.E.O. wants to tell you” is that American businesses are “not just outsourcing to save on salary. They are doing it because they can often get better-skilled and more productive people than their American workers” (Friedman, 2005).

Although higher education is, in part, an economic investment, there are significant other benefits associated with higher education and training for both the individual and society. However, for many people and state legislators in particular, the success of higher education is frequently measured by its ability to prepare students for careers. As a result, lack of preparation for higher learning and training has come to be viewed as a collective problem in need of corrective public policy action. According to Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, & Kolstad (1993),

“In the past, the lack of ability to read and use printed materials was seen primarily as an individual problem, with implications for a person’s job opportunities, educational goals, sense of fulfillment, and participation in society. Now, however, it is increasingly viewed as a national problem, with implications that reach far beyond the individual. Concerns about the human costs of limited literacy have in a sense, been overshadowed by concerns about the economic and social cost” (p.x).

In a speech to the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in March of 2009, President Obama stressed the importance of education to “the nation’s long-term

prosperity” and argued that “education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity and success, it is a prerequisite” (Jackson, 2009). Bob Wise, former Governor of West Virginia and current President of the Alliance for Excellent Education, has argued that “there is a national interest in ensuring that all students have the academic preparation, easy transition, and financial tools necessary for success in postsecondary education” (Alliance for Excellent Education).

Because many new college freshmen are unprepared for advanced education and training in the United States, colleges and universities have found it necessary to “remediate” many of their new students. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) defines postsecondary remedial education as, “courses in reading, writing, or mathematics for college students lacking those skills necessary to perform college-level work at the level required by the institution” (NCES,1996, p.2).

Illinois State Senator Edward D. Maloney (D, IL-18), who serves as the Chair of the Illinois Senate Higher Education Committee stated, “we know that remediation in college is a large and growing problem” (IBHE, 2007). As detailed in Table 1, in the fall of 2000, the NCES reported that 28% of all freshmen at public colleges and universities enrolled in at least one remedial level course. This number was significantly higher at 2-year colleges, where 42% of incoming freshmen enrolled in at least one remedial level course. In 2012, Illinois Lt. Governor, Sheila Simon reported that 46% of community college students in Illinois enrolled in at least one remedial course (Simon, 2012).

Although Table 1 and the Lt. Governor’s report present data related to the number of college freshmen enrolled in remedial coursework, it is important to recognize that many more college students need remediation than those who are

enrolled. Enrollment alone does not measure need. For example, a student who learns that their placement test results indicate that they are not college ready may not enroll in the needed remedial courses. Remediation numbers increase significantly when one examines the need for remediation as determined by placement scores (Mixon, 2006).

When asked about the need for college remediation, Bob McCabe, Executive Director of the National Alliance of Community and Technical Colleges, suggested “that the actual figure is closer to 80 percent” at community colleges (Pulley, 2008). At the City Colleges of Chicago (CCC), which is one of the largest urban community college districts in the nation, the numbers support McCabe’s assertion. In 2007, 60.8% of new CCC students failed to place at college level in reading; 72.5% failed to place at college level in writing; and 91% failed to place at college level in mathematics (CCC Vision 2011, p.11). Figure 1 summarizes these findings at CCC and indicates that the annual estimated cost of remediation at CCC is \$22.3 million dollars.

While remediation is provided by nearly every college and university in the United States, very little is known about it (Roueche & Roueche, 1999). It “remains an understudied component of higher education. Early research on remediation has been mainly descriptive, simply comparing the outcomes of students in remediation to those not in remedial courses” (Calcagno, 2007). “Research about the effectiveness of remedial education programs has typically been sporadic, underfunded, and

Table 1: Percent of Entering Freshmen Enrolled in Remedial Courses

Year & Institutional Type	Number of entering Freshmen (in thousands)	Percent of freshmen enrolled:			
		Reading	Writing	Math	Total
2000					
All institutions	2396	11%	14%	22%	28%
Public 2-year	992	20%	23%	35%	42%
Public 4-year	849	6%	9%	16%	20%
Private 4-year	497	5%	7%	8%	12%
1995					
All institutions	2100	12%	16%	22%	28%
Public 2-year	936	19%	24%	32%	40%
Public 4-year	721	8%	11%	17%	21%
Private 4-year	389	5%	7%	8%	12%

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES 2000

inconclusive” (Merisotis & Phipps, 2000, p. 75). Furthermore, research related to postsecondary remedial education has overwhelmingly been conducted by those within the discipline of education. By contrast, this paper examines the problem of postsecondary remedial education from the perspective of a political scientist, using a case study analysis of state policies related to postsecondary remedial education.

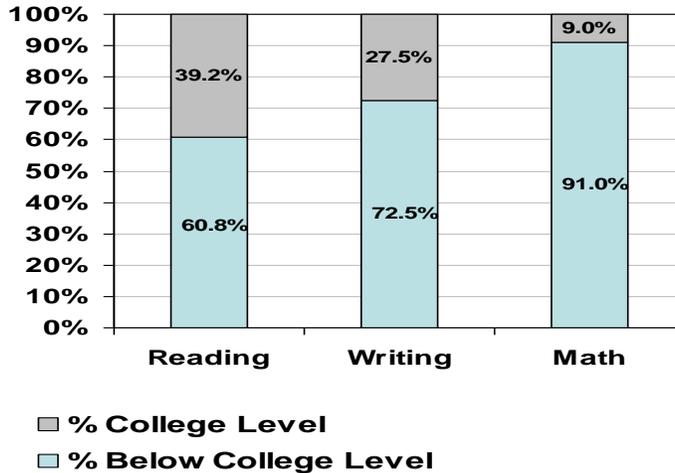
John S. Dryzek (1983) defined policy design as “the process of inventing, developing and fine-tuning a course of action with the amelioration of some problem in mind” (Dryzek, 1983, p. 346). Using the state of Illinois as a case study, this paper presents evidence that public policies aimed at the amelioration of the problem of postsecondary remedial education have primarily focused on the widely accepted cause of the problem: public K-12 schools. This paper further argues that the actual provision of postsecondary remediation and assessment of effectiveness at the college level seems to be an afterthought – if a thought at all.

THE PROBLEM

Postsecondary remedial education “came under attack in the policy environment of the 1990s” (Heller, 2002, p.5). At the heart of the debate about college remediation are questions and assumptions about who can and should benefit from a college education. “For many policymakers, instead of providing a path toward educational opportunity, remediation in college came to represent the failure of the K-12 system, the erosion of

Figure 1: Remediation at City Colleges of Chicago (CCC), FY07

Percentage of CCC First-Time Test Takers Who Scored At or Below College Level on Placement Tests, Fall 2006



Students Enrolled	16,206
Credit Hours	107,553
% of Total Credit Hours	10.0%
Faculty	365
Remedial Sections	1,473

**Annual Cost (est.)
\$22.3 Million**

SOURCE: City Colleges of Chicago: *Vision 2011*

standards at American colleges and universities, and the inefficient use of economic resources” (Heller, 2002, p.5). Believing that higher education should not be in the business of providing remedial coursework, many policymakers and universities have addressed the problem by refusing admission to students who are not prepared for college work. These actions are typically based on the premise that if four year institutions refuse to admit students who are not prepared for college work, the market will force public K-12 schools to improve.

Former Interim President of CUNY’s Bernard M. Baruch College, Lois Cronholm, said that remedial courses had a “devastating effect” on her institution. The solution she proposed and enacted was eliminating remedial education courses from Baruch College. Following her action, the entire CUNY system stopped admitting remedial students. Cronholm’s explanation was that,

“when precollegiate institutions know that public colleges and universities have justifiable standards that they hold inviolate, K-12 schools will behave toward public institutions as they do toward private colleges and universities – and adjust their standards to insure the ability of their students to attend. When students and families see that public colleges and universities mean business about reforming the system, they will know what they must demand of the schools and themselves. And we will return public higher education to its rightful role in securing the American dream for future generations” (Chronholm, 1999, p.B5).

Attacks like Chronholm’s on postsecondary remedial education are usually framed by those who support remediation, as an attack on access to college. They contend that policies, like those at CUNY, which “prevent students who need remedial/developmental work from enrolling in four-year colleges...greatly reduce the likelihood that such students [will] ever obtain bachelor’s degrees” (Attewell et al.,

2006, p.887). Supporters believe that postsecondary “remedial education programs are essential to open access to higher education, crucial to national economic development, and can be effective if appropriately organized, managed, and delivered” (Zhang,1999). As such, they often “draw attention to the fact that students of color, students from less affluent families, and students for whom English is a second language are greatly overrepresented in remedial courses” (Attewell et al., 2006, p.887).

Supporters of postsecondary remediation believe that higher education serves as a democratizing force and that “a continued commitment to basic skills education is needed if American higher education is to remain a vehicle for offering hope and opportunity to disadvantaged Americans, especially immigrants and members of minority groups who make up a disproportionate number of remedial students” (Cooper, 1999, p.2). In the words of Alexander Astin (2000),

“The education of the so called ‘remedial’ students is the most important education problem in America today. This is more important than educational funding, affirmative action, vouchers, merit pay, teacher education, financial aid, curriculum reform, and the rest...providing effective ‘remedial’ education will do more to alleviate our most serious social and economic problems than almost any other action we could take” (p.130).

While Astin and other supporters have argued for increased attention to the provision of “effective remedial education,” this charge has yet to be addressed by policymakers. “Unfortunately, while debates for and against have been vociferous, the effectiveness of these programs has not been visible as an issue” (Grubb, 2001, p. 1). Donald Heller and Deborah Schwartz (2002) found that state policies regarding postsecondary remedial education have focused on one or more of approaches listed below:

- limiting the number of remedial students accepted for admission;

- limiting the time allowed for students to complete remedial courses;
- limiting remedial courses to community colleges;
- limiting funding for remedial education; and
- implementing stricter admissions and/or placement standards at four-year institutions (Heller, 2002, p.6).

A review of state level postsecondary remedial education policies in the United States for the purpose of this paper found that all of the above policies are still utilized, in addition to numerous states, including Illinois, having recently adopted policies and programs which seek to align high school student preparation with college admission and placement standards. None of these policy solutions address the provision and/or effectiveness of postsecondary remedial education and despite these public policy solutions, the problem of postsecondary remedial education persists.

FRAMING THE PROBLEM: A STORY OF DECLINE

Problems like postsecondary remedial education do not come into existence by themselves. Rather, someone has to identify that there is a problem, define what the problem is, explain what caused the problem, and then frame the problem within a context that provides meaning and understanding. This process is made possible by the use of narratives. Maarten J. Hajer (1995) contends, “whether or not a situation is perceived as a political problem depends on the narrative in which it is discussed” (p.44). In Part II of *Policy Paradox*, Deborah Stone (2002) provides a useful description of “how problems are defined and demonstrated in politics.” She argues that “narrative stories provide explanations of how the world works...[and] definitions of policy problems usually have a narrative structure; that is, they are stories with a beginning, a middle, and an end, involving some change or transformation” (p.133-134).

One of the frequently used narratives Stone refers to is the “story of decline.”

This narrative is especially relevant and applicable to the issue of postsecondary remedial education. Stone describes the “story of decline” in the following manner: “In the beginning things were pretty good. But then they got worse. In fact, right now, they are nearly intolerable. Something must be done” (Stone, 2002, p.138). As detailed below, this is the narrative that is most often used to define and frame the problem of postsecondary remedial education.

In the beginning things were pretty good...

It is assumed from the way remedial education has been framed in the policy discourse that there was once a “golden age” when all students who entered the academy were well prepared for postsecondary work. While it may be true that students were at one time better prepared for college work, one must remember that education was previously limited to only the upper class. Even by 1940, only half the country had graduated from high school (Rushefsky, 1996, p.264). While the common perception is that remedial education is a new problem, American colleges and universities have been offering what is now termed “remedial education” for over one hundred years. Remedial education is “arguably as old as American higher education” (Breneman,1998, p.4). In the 1630s, Harvard College provided Latin tutors for incoming students and the first comprehensive college remedial education program was offered at the University of Wisconsin in 1849 with “remedial courses in reading, writing, and arithmetic” (Breneman,1998, p.4).

But then they got worse...

Discussions about the need for remedial education typically include what Diane Ravitch (2000) calls the “great meltdown” of the intellectual purposes of education that occurred after World War II and continues through the present day. It was at this time that access to higher education was expanded through public policies like the G.I. Bill and affirmative action for women and minorities. Critics of remedial education have argued that the resulting increase in student diversity yielded more students lacking in college level skills and that this has negatively impacted the quality of higher education and placed a financial drain on the institutions that provide remediation.

According to Stone (2002), the story of decline almost always includes “a recitation of facts or figures purporting to show that things have gotten worse” (p.138). J. Martin Rochester (2002), a political science professor and vocal critic of remedial education, does just that when he states that “from 1967 to 1997, the average composite SAT score fell in the United States” (p.17). While a decline in SAT scores is frequently used as an indicator and cited as evidence of public school failure and the resulting need for college remediation, what is typically left out of this discourse is the fact that more students are taking the SAT than ever before. Deborah Stone (2002) reminds her readers that what is “far more important than the actual number of a measure is how the measure is interpreted” (p.169). “When only a few students take the SAT, those students are likely to be people with strong high school records, who are trying to get into ‘the best’ colleges. In contrast, when a larger proportion of students take the SAT, that proportion will include more students with weak high school records, who are merely hoping to qualify for some kind of higher education” (Berliner, 1995,

p.17). What Rochester and others leave out of their story of decline is that when more students take the SAT exam, average scores will naturally decline.

Right now, they are nearly intolerable...

An article in *Time* magazine announced that “more than 600,000 of the freshmen who arrived at U.S. Colleges are taking at least one remedial reading, writing or math class...Taxpayers spend approximately \$1 billion a year on the classes” (Cloud, 2002, p.1). Stone (2002) states that “persuasion as a policy instrument rests on giving people information and letting them make up their own minds” (p.262). In the case of postsecondary remedial education, “facts” are frequently used to persuade others that there is an intolerable problem. However, “facts” may not present the full story and they are often taken out of context. For example, the \$1 billion dollar figure cited in the *Time* article sounds astronomical, yet it accounted for only 1% of the overall higher education budget in the United States (Phipps, 1998).

Without the context of history or overall expenditures, critics of postsecondary remedial education have cited declining test scores, rising enrollments in remedial classes, and anecdotal observations from administrators and professors as evidence of the now “bad” the problem of remedial education is. “These evidential strands are combined in rhetorically powerful ways to spark alarm and anger – in legislators, in academics, in the public” (Rose, 1989, p.198).

Something must be done...

Stone (2002) further argues that “policy stories use many literary and rhetoric devices to lead the audience ineluctably to a course of action” (p.145). Most of the policy stories about postsecondary remedial education place blame for the problem with public K-12 schools. Edelman (1988) contends that the explanation of a problem is “likely to strike a large part of the public as correct for a fairly long period if it reflects and reinforces the dominant ideology” (Edelman, 1988, p.17). Blaming public K-12 schools for the postsecondary remedial education problem strikes the public, policy makers, and even educators as correct. “Cries of ‘double billing’ - paying a second time to teach students what they should have learned in high school - echo in legislative chambers” (Clayton, 2002).

METHODOLOGY

Because of the perception that “something must be done” about the problem of postsecondary remedial education, many states have enacted public policies aimed at the amelioration of the problem (Heller, 2002; Soares and Mazzeo, 2008). To gauge whether or not Illinois state legislators have accepted the premise that the need for postsecondary remediation is caused by the failure of public K-12 schools, an archival analysis of Illinois state legislation identified by the Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) as impacting and/or being of interest to Illinois community colleges from 2000-2010 was undertaken.

The ICCTA was created in 1970 and serves as the primary advocacy group for Illinois community colleges. The ICCTA represents community colleges “before

legislators and public officials” and “monitors the Illinois Community College Board, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, the Illinois State Board of Education, the Joint Education Committee, the U.S. Department of Education, and other government agencies.” The ICCTA also “tracks state and federal legislation and legislative committees” (ICCTA).

Yin (1993), defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p.13). Utilizing a case study approach, identification of proposed legislation impacting and/or being of interest to Illinois community colleges from 2000-2010 was obtained by the author of this paper from the electronic records of the ICCTA. These electronic records included “ICCTA Action Alerts,” posted on the ICCTA website (<http://www.communitycolleges.org>) and email messages to Illinois community college representatives. Collection and analysis of the ICCTA data took place from June of 2009 through June of 2010.

As a result of action by the Illinois General Assembly in 1979 (P.A. 081-803), community colleges are designated as the primary providers of postsecondary remedial education in the state of Illinois. Although Illinois has not passed legislation prohibiting four-year colleges and universities from offering remedial courses, community colleges are the only recipients of state funding for remediation (ICCB). As detailed in Table 2, Illinois ranks 3rd among the states in community college enrollment, with 48 community colleges located throughout the state, within 30 community college districts (ICCB). In 2005, 64% of all undergraduates in Illinois attended a community college.

Presley and Gong (2005) found that nearly three quarters of under-prepared college students in Illinois attended a community college during the 2002-2003 academic year. As detailed in Figure 2, only 11% of under-prepared students attended a public four year college or university. As most students who need remediation in Illinois attend a community college and as community colleges are the primary providers of postsecondary remedial education in Illinois, legislation impacting and/or of interest to Illinois community colleges is an appropriate unit of analysis for this study.

Of the 55,176 bills introduced in the Illinois General Assembly from January of 2000 through May of 2010, the ICCTA identified 338 bills as impacting and/or being of interest to Illinois community colleges. Figure 3 provides a summary of the number of bills impacting and/or being of interest to Illinois community colleges from 2000 to 2010, by year.

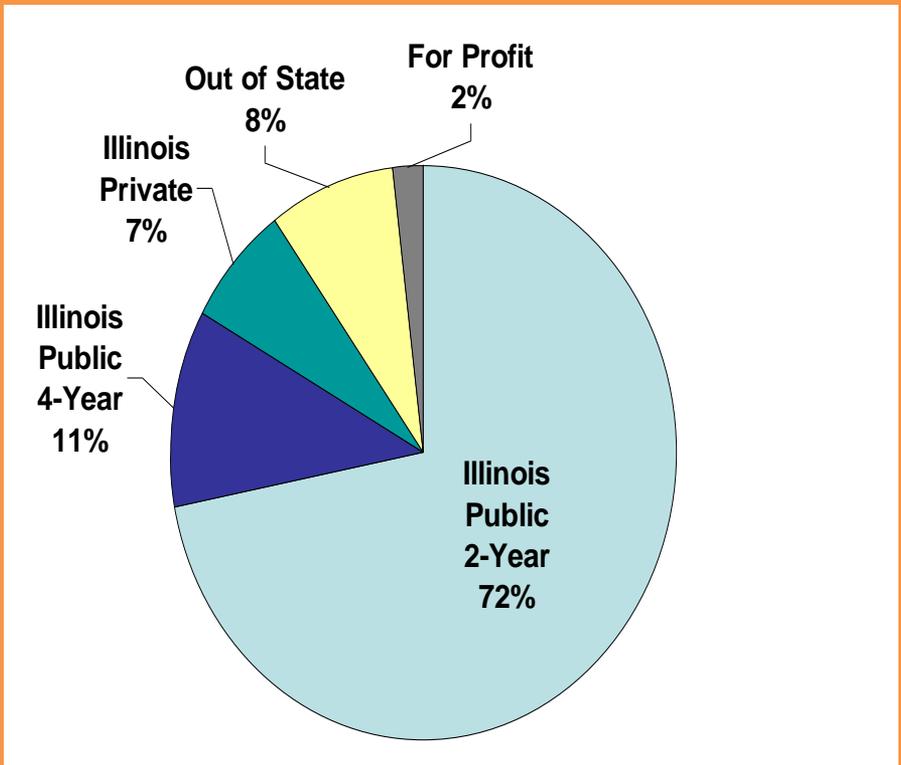
Upon collecting bill numbers and bill titles from electronic ICCTA records, content analysis of bill summaries, and if needed, the entire bill, was conducted. This process of content analysis and tracking was accomplished by the author of this paper through legislative records maintained by the Illinois General Assembly (<http://www.ilga.gov>). To facilitate legislative analysis and tracking, bills were classified by the author of this paper into seven (7) content categories irrespective of year, such categories following the data themselves. The seven content areas identified and utilized for coding purposes in this study are detailed in Table 3. A summary of the number of bills by coded content area is detailed in Figure 4.

Table 2: 2005 Enrollment in Public 4-Year and Community Colleges by State; Number of Public Community Colleges per State

STATE	PUBLIC 4-YEAR ENROLLMENT (2005)	PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENROLLMENT (2005)	TOTAL PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION ENROLLMENT	% OF ALL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE	NUMBER OF PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN STATE
California	609,397	1,398,758	2,008,155	70%	113
Texas	537,844	543,491	1,081,335	50%	64
Illinois	202,325	352,824	555,149	64%	48
Florida	371,553	277,446	648,999	43%	54
New York	354,914	271,308	626,222	43%	36
Michigan	290,001	215,585	505,586	43%	31
Arizona	120,020	200,845	320,865	63%	20
North Carolina	196,248	200,507	396,755	51%	60
Washington	106,333	190,423	296,756	64%	35

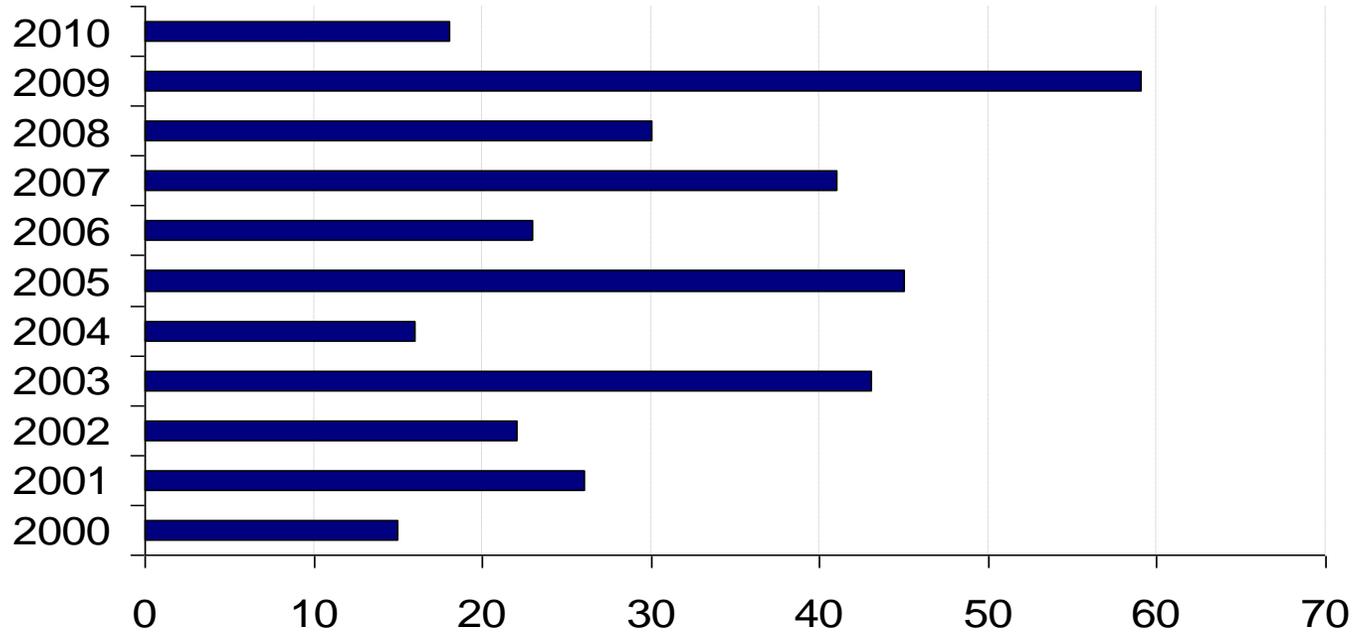
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education

Figure 2: College Type of Not/Least Ready Students in Academic Year 2002-03



Source: *The Demographics and Academics of College Readiness in Illinois*. Illinois Education Research Council, 2005.

Figure 3: Bills Introduced in the Illinois G.A. Impacting and/or of Interest to Illinois Community Colleges 2000-2010* By Year (n=338)

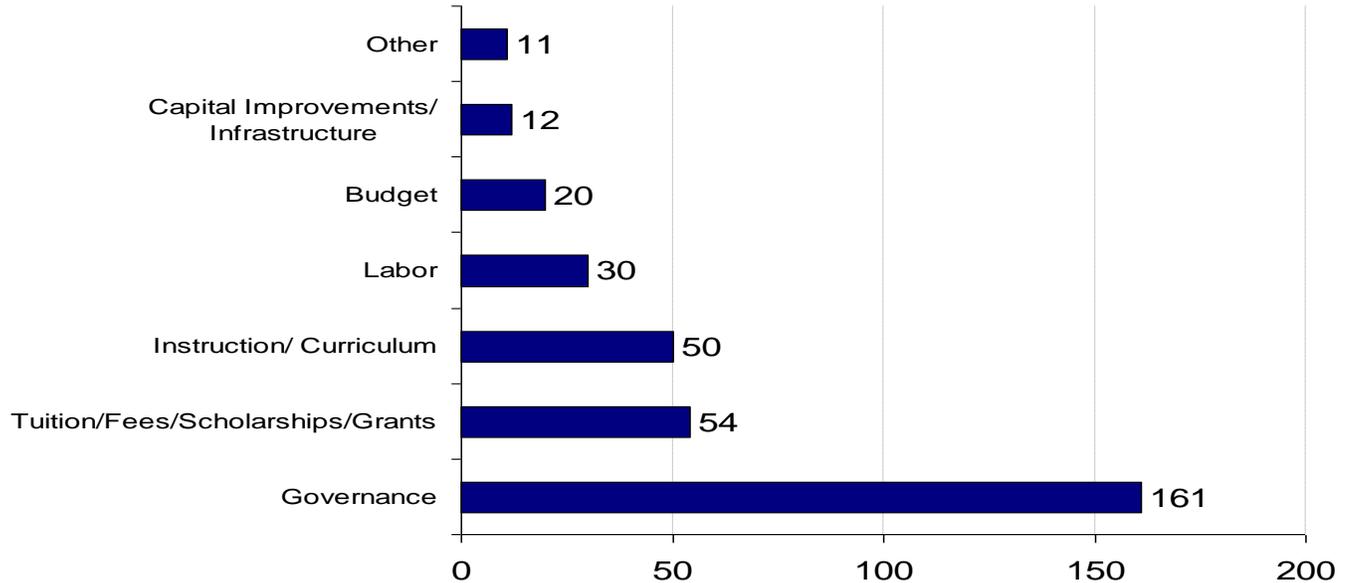


*As identified by ICCTA

Table 3: Content Areas and Descriptions

Content Area	Description
Governance	<i>Bill addresses rules and regulations which impact the governance and operating procedures of Illinois community colleges.</i>
Labor	<i>Bill addresses issues which impact Illinois community college labor relations.</i>
Instruction/Curriculum	<i>Bill addresses instruction and curriculum of Illinois community college programs.</i>
Tuition/Fees/Scholarships/Grants	<i>Bill addresses student tuition, fees, scholarships and grants at Illinois community colleges.</i>
Budget	<i>Bill addresses budgetary issues, including tax revenue, impacting Illinois community colleges.</i>
Capital Improvements/Infrastructure	<i>Bill addresses capital improvements and infrastructure at Illinois community colleges.</i>
Other	<i>Bill content not covered by other coded content areas.</i>

Figure 4: Bills Impacting and/or of interest to Illinois Community Colleges* by Coded Content Area: 2000-2010 (n=338)



*As identified by ICCTA

FINDINGS

Of the 338 bills identified by the ICCTA as impacting and/or being of interest to Illinois Community Colleges from 2000 through 2010, 50 bills addressed issues of instruction and curriculum. Of those 50 bills, 8 were identified by the author of this paper as addressing the problem of postsecondary remediation. The following provides an overview of these 8 bills and the outcome of each.

1. **SB 575:** Introduced in 2005. Makes changes to the Illinois K-12 public school code by adding “course prerequisites to receive a high school diploma” (SB 575). This bill passed in the Illinois Senate with a vote of 56-0 and in the Illinois House with a vote of 104-10. SB 575 became Public Act 094-0676.
2. **SB 2225:** Introduced in 2006. Original title was *Board of Higher Education: University Remediation*. As introduced, SB 2225 amended section 9.07 of The Illinois Board of Higher Education Act (P.A. 89-450), to add “under the guidelines, if a State university determines that a student needs remedial coursework, then the university must require that the student complete the remedial coursework” (SB 2225).

SB 2225 also amended Section 35 of The Illinois Higher Education Student Assistance Act (P.A. 92-45) by expanding eligibility for the state Monetary Award Program (MAP) to students demonstrating financial need who are enrolled in remedial coursework.

SB 2225 passed the Illinois Senate by a vote of 52-0. Upon reaching the House, SB 2225 was amended numerous times in committee and on the House floor. In the end, the final bill deleted everything after the enacting

clause, including the original Senate provisions requiring remediation at state universities and MAP funding for students enrolled in remedial courses.

The final bill, which became Illinois Public Act 94-1056, amended section 39 of the Illinois Higher Education Student Assistance Act (P.A. 92-45) to create the Monetary Award Program Plus Program (MAP Plus). MAP Plus, as created by this statute, provides grants up to \$500 per academic year “which do not need to be repaid, for Illinois residents who do not receive a [MAP grant](#) and whose families' adjusted gross incomes are less than \$200,000 in the applicable tax year” (ISAC).

- 3. SB 313:** Introduced in 2007. This bill was the original version of SB 2225. SB 313 contained the same two provisions as SB 2225 regarding university remediation and MAP grant funding. During Senate floor debate, the bill's sponsor and author, Senator Edward Maloney (D-18), amended the bill to remove the provision for expansion of MAP grant funding benefiting college students enrolled in remedial coursework. The final version of SB 313 only amended section 9.07 of The Illinois Board of Higher Education Act (P.A. 89-450) to add “under the guidelines, if a State university determines that a student needs remedial coursework, then the university must require that the student complete the remedial coursework before pursuing his or her major course of study.” (SB 313). SB 313 bill passed the Illinois Senate by a vote of 58-0. With little debate and no amendments, SB 313 passed the Illinois House with a vote of 113-0. SB 313 became Public Act 095-0272.

4. **SB 858:** Introduced in 2007. Titled *College and Career Readiness Pilot Program*, this bill requires the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) to create a three year pilot project with the goal of reducing the need for remedial coursework by aligning high school math, reading and writing with entry-level college-credit courses offered by community colleges. The bill was approved by the Illinois Senate with a vote of 51-0 and passed the House with a vote of 100-0. SB 858 became Public Act 095-0694.

5. **HB 1648:** Introduced in 2007. Titled *P-20 Council*, this bill amends the School Code and the Board of Higher Education Act requiring the State Board of Education to create a P-20 Council, to begin the process of aligning educational programs from pre-kindergarten through grade 20. HB 1648 passed the Illinois House with a vote of 116 to 0 and proceeded to the Illinois Senate. On the floor of the Senate, the HB 1638 was amended to establish an “Illinois P-20 Council” which “will develop a statewide agenda that will move the State towards the common goals of improving academic achievement, increasing college access and success, improving use of existing data and measurements, developing improved accountability, promoting lifelong learning, easing the transition to college, and reducing remediation” (HB 1648). HB 1648 was approved by a vote of 56-0 in the Illinois Senate. When the bill returned to the Illinois House, a motion to concur with the Senate version of HB 1648 was filed. The Illinois House unanimously approved (87-0) the Senate version of HB 1648. HB 1648 became Public Act 095-0626.

6. **HB 4621:** Introduced in 2008. Titled *Higher Education University Automatic Admissions*, this bill requires public universities to accept any student who graduates in the top 10% of his or her high school class and “to determine whether the applicant may require additional preparation for college-level work or would benefit from inclusion in a retention program” (HB 4621). HB 4621 was assigned to the Illinois House Higher Education Committee and failed to make it out of committee by a vote of 3 to 10.
7. **HB 150:** Introduced in 2009. Titled *21st Century Scholars Program*, this bill “creates the 21st Century Scholars Act to provide an incentive for low-income students in the 8th grade to improve their academic preparation for postsecondary education...” (HB 150). HB 150 passed the Illinois House with a vote of 115 to 0. HB 150 failed to make it to the floor of the Illinois Senate prior to the end of the 96th General Assembly session in January of 2011.
8. **SB 3705:** Introduced in 2010. SB 3705 is a reauthorization of the *College and Career Readiness Pilot Program*. When asked why this reauthorization was necessary, the bill’s sponsor Senator Edward Maloney (D-18) stated that "universities want first-year students who are prepared for college-level work...When students are prepared for the rigors of a university education, they don’t need to take costly remedial courses that don’t even count towards graduation requirements. Eliminating remedial classes saves schools and families money" (Senate Democrat News, 2010). SB 3705 passed in the Illinois Senate with a vote of 56 to 0 and in the Illinois House with a vote of 82-30. SB 3705 became Public Act 096-1300.

Of the eight bills identified by the ICCTA as impacting and/or of interest to Illinois community colleges, and coded for the purpose of this study as pertaining to postsecondary remediation, six became law and two failed. This seems, at least on the surface, to indicate that Illinois legislators do consider the need for postsecondary remediation a problem and have taken corrective public policy action aimed at amelioration of the problem. As predicted however, the corrective public policy actions taken in Illinois have primarily focused on the widely accepted cause of the problem: public K-12 schools. Accordingly, the effect has been public policies which address this cause.

ILLINOIS POLICY SOLUTIONS: CAUSE AND EFFECT

Of the six postsecondary remediation bills which became law, four focused on improving K-12 education and/or aligning K-12 and college curriculum to reduce the need for college remediation:

1. SB 575 added “course prerequisites to receive a high school diploma” (SB 575);
2. SB 858 created the College and Career Readiness Pilot Program, which “partners community colleges with local high schools to ensure that college-bound students will be ready to begin their studies with little-to-no remedial coursework” (College Readiness, 2010);

3. HB 1648 established the Illinois P-20 Council which is “responsible for establishing a statewide agenda that better integrates all levels of learning in Illinois” (IBHE, 2010); and
4. SB 3705 was a reauthorization of the *College and Career Readiness Pilot Program*.

The remaining two postsecondary remediation bills which became law (SB 2225 and SB 313), along with one of the bills which failed (HB 4621), provide important insight about postsecondary remedial education in Illinois. SB 2225, which became Illinois Public Act 94-1056, started out as addressing the provision of remediation at the college level by requiring remediation at state universities and increasing state MAP funding for students enrolled in remedial college coursework. In the end however, the final law contained none of the original provisions, and created an entirely new MAP program (MAP Plus) for middle and upper class students, who are less likely to need remediation.

SB 313, which was a reintroduction of the original version of SB 2225, became Public Act 095-0272 on August 7, 2007. The final Act however, only required that “if a State university determines that a student needs remedial coursework, then the university must require that the student complete the remedial coursework before pursuing his or her major course of study” (SB 313). Provisions which would have allowed MAP grants to be used by students enrolled in remedial college coursework were once again removed prior to final passage. Nothing in the final Act enhances the provision of postsecondary remediation or requires evaluation of its effectiveness.

Furthermore, it does not require universities to provide remedial coursework. The Act only requires students to complete remediation “before pursuing his or her major course of study” (SB 313).

Two of the bills identified by the ICCTA as impacting and/or of interest to Illinois community colleges, and coded for the purpose of this study as pertaining to postsecondary remediation failed to become law. HB 150 “creates the 21st Century Scholars Act to provide an incentive for low-income students in the 8th grade to improve their academic preparation for postsecondary education” (HB 150). This bill also focused on the accepted cause of the problem of postsecondary remediation: public K-12 schools.

HB 4621 which also failed to become law, was the only bill examined in this study which might have enhanced the provision of postsecondary remedial education. HB 4621 required public universities to accept students from the “top 10% percent of the student's high school graduating class” (HB 4621). The bill further required universities to “determine whether the applicant may require additional preparation for college-level work or would benefit from inclusion in a retention program” (HB 4621). By requiring public universities to accept students from the top 10% of their graduating class, universities would as a result, have to provide remediation for some of these students. The failure of this bill again solidifies the role of community colleges as the primary providers of college remediation in Illinois.

As demonstrated by this analysis of legislation in the Illinois General Assembly, it is clear that policymakers have focused on placing blame for the problem of postsecondary remedial education with public K-12 schools. As a result, very little has

been done through public policy, to change or improve remediation policies and procedures at the college level.

REMEDIAL: WHAT IS IN A WORD?

The provision of remediation at the college level has become “one of the most controversial aspects of higher education today. Policymakers and politicians wonder why students, most of whom have already been given a free public education, need to be re-educated at taxpayer expense” (Hasselbach, 1999, p.29). This controversy played itself out on the floor of the Illinois Senate in 2007, when State Senator Edward D. Maloney (D-18), was forced to amend SB 313. During floor debate, Senator Maloney removed SB 313’s provision for the expansion of MAP grant funding for needy students enrolled in remedial coursework, in order to salvage other parts of the bill.

The language and terms used to frame the postsecondary remedial education problem affects how the issue is perceived and responded to. Stone (2002) states “that the way we think about problems is extremely sensitive to the language used to describe them” (p.249). The term “remedial education” has a negative connotation and as a result, our willingness to allocate scarce higher education dollars to those in need of remedial courses is “conditioned by the societal perceptions of the people who are going to benefit” (Rochefort,1994, p.23).

Postsecondary remedial education students are often depicted as individuals who cannot learn, lack motivation and are not worthy of higher education. A retired college professor commented that “going to college is an utter waste of time for those students who have emerged from high school neither literate nor numerate, with

cultural forces revolving around hip-hop and body piercing and with zero interest in changing their behavior” (Reeves, 2003, p.6).

Designating students as “remedial has powerful implications in education – to be remedial is to be substandard, inadequate – and, because of the origins of the term, the inadequacy is metaphorically connected to disease and mental defectiveness” (Rose, 1989 p.209). “Just as in medicine one gives a ‘remedy’ to cure an illness, so in education there must be something ‘wrong’ with the student who needs to be ‘remedied’” (Astin,1998). The negative portrayal of students benefiting from the provision of postsecondary remedial education does not leave taxpayers and policymakers eager to provide them with more of their already limited funds.

This is true in Illinois. Analysis and evaluation of state budgetary allocations for Illinois community colleges from 2005 to 2010 was completed to further enhance this case study and to gain a richer and more clearly articulated understanding of postsecondary remedial education in Illinois. The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) receives budgetary allocations on a yearly basis from the Illinois General Assembly. These allocations are then distributed through grants to the 48 community colleges in Illinois utilizing credit hour funding formulas for six categories of community college instruction: Baccalaureate; Business; Technical; Health; Remedial; and Adult Basic/Secondary Education (ABE/ASE).

Despite state policies which make community colleges the primary providers of postsecondary remedial education, the State of Illinois has failed to provide adequate funding. In each of the past five years (2005-2010), postsecondary remedial education at Illinois community colleges has received the lowest ICCB credit hour grant rate of any

category. In 2010, community college remediation received an ICCB grant of only \$14.40 per credit hour. The highest funded category in 2010 was health, which received \$90.56 per credit hour from the ICCB. The average ICCB credit grant for all six categories of instruction was \$39.24 in 2010. Through funding priorities, policymakers and taxpayers in Illinois are telling students in need of postsecondary remediation that they are not as important as other students. In real monetary terms, these students are told that they are worth less than half of the average community college student, as measured by ICCB credit hour grants. Policymakers also discourage Illinois community colleges from providing increased and more effective postsecondary remedial education by limiting the funds available. Thus, Illinois state policies which shift postsecondary remediation to community colleges combined with decreased funding for remediation, have the consequence of limiting access to postsecondary education altogether, especially among traditionally underrepresented groups (Mixon, 2006).

“All things being equal, people we like and find attractive and pleasant seem to get more help” (Rocheftort,1994 p.23). Table 4, which details ICCB credit hour grants by category from 2005 through 2010, provides insight as to who “gets more help” at Illinois community colleges.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES AS AN ADVOCACY COALITION

Most public policy debates center around differing causal beliefs. In the case of postsecondary remedial education, as supported by the archival legislative content analysis presented in this paper, there is little, if any debate about the cause of the

problem. Public K-12 school failure is the accepted causal factor. As a result, public policy designs which attempt to fix, reform, and align public K-12 schools prevail. This is a much too simplified resolution to a complex problem. Although these policies may (or may not) succeed in reducing some of the need for college remediation; it is unlikely that the need for remediation can be completely eliminated, whatever the level of commitment.

Weible and Sabatier (2005), found that within a policy subsystem “stakeholders compete over whose policy objectives are translated into governmental policy” (p.181). There is no ideological competition among stakeholders within postsecondary remedial education. This results in a consensus supporting restricted strategies of policy implementation. Although these strategies have primarily focused on blaming and reforming public K-12 schools, Kay McClenney, Director of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement at the University of Texas at Austin says that community colleges and legislators must

“Forget about who to blame...Once students approach your doors, they are yours. We hope they aren’t revolving doors, which is what happens when we fail to deal adequately and efficiently with remedial education. ... Developmental education needs to be acclaimed as the highest of priorities at the institutional, at the state and the federal policy levels.” (Pulley, 2008).

Despite the fact that students who are required to take postsecondary remedial coursework are far less likely to complete a college certificate or degree program, conversations about how to improve the provision and effectiveness of college remediation are few and far between, even among community college leaders (Adelman, 2004).

Table 4: Illinois Community College Board Credit Hour Grant Rates by Category: FY 2005-2010

Year	B.A.	Business	Technical	Health	Remedial	ABE/ASE	Average
2005	\$21.72	\$27.90	\$59.26	\$94.88	\$18.68	\$56.87	\$33.63
2006	\$19.31	\$27.02	\$61.05	\$89.33	\$13.82	\$46.37	\$31.20
2007	\$19.06	\$23.62	\$59.36	\$91.56	\$15.78	\$56.23	\$31.97
2008	\$18.61	\$22.98	\$61.65	\$97.19	\$16.01	\$51.42	\$32.87
2009	\$20.04	\$23.00	\$55.31	\$94.09	\$16.49	\$51.97	\$33.04
2010	\$19.41	\$29.96	\$55.39	\$90.56	\$14.40	\$56.45	\$39.24

SOURCE: Illinois Community College Board

The only real major debates about postsecondary remedial education have focused on who, if anyone, should provide college remediation and who is to blame for the problem.

To better understand the politics which undermine the provision and effectiveness college remediation, it is important to remember that only two of the eight bills addressing postsecondary remediation that were examined in this study recognized the significant role that community colleges play in providing remediation. State Senator Edward Maloney's (D-18) SB 575 and its reauthorization bill, SB 3705, were the only bills which made any reference to community colleges. Although community colleges are reluctant *de facto* providers of postsecondary remediation in the United States, they are nonetheless, responsible for providing the bulk of remediation in higher education (Kozeracki, 2002; Soliday, 2002, Mixon, 2006). Unfortunately, their marginalized status also means that "many of these programs are fractionated, uncoordinated and voluntary, or are not in the main stream of college offerings" (Zeitlin, 1996, p.27).

An article in *Community College Week* by John Pulley described the problems of remediation at community colleges.

"Many students who enroll in community colleges, perhaps most, are unprepared to do college work. Public two-year institutions have struggled for decades to remediate students. They have succeeded at times, but mostly those institutions have failed...Many influences have contributed to the chronic failure of remediation efforts – including insufficient funds, lack of leadership, inadequate research — but the primary culprit has been the absence of a compelling impetus to do better. Simply put, the country's major economic, political and educational institutions long ago learned to live with a disturbingly high level of fundamental academic failure. Over time, the systemic inability to bring underachieving students up to academic speed was accepted and, ultimately, institutionalized" (Pulley, 2008).

As Pulley (2008) argues above, community colleges have failed in any imaginative way to deal with the problem of postsecondary remedial education. Instead, they act as if the problem has been “dumped” upon them. Rather than spearheading the formation of a policy advocacy coalition lobbying for increased funding and more effective policies, community colleges have enabled policymakers to focus on the perceived cause of postsecondary remediation: public K-12 schools. Due to the lack of an effective community college policy advocacy group, there is little “compelling impetus to do better” at providing postsecondary remedial education.

Building on Truman’s (1951) assertion that groups form and mobilize, when it is in their interest to do so, Baumgartner and Jones (1993) argue that the “mobilization of interests appears to play an important role in determining policy images, venues, and outcomes” (p.184). Community colleges have yet to mobilize interests and stakeholders which could “play an important role in determining” postsecondary remedial education “policy images, venues, and outcomes.” As a result, postsecondary remedial education remains defined as a problem caused by the failure of public K-12 schools; rather than as a solution to a persistent problem.

Community colleges are the logical actors to lead a policy advocacy coalition for postsecondary remedial education. With resources for the task, community colleges have an incentive to not only provide remediation, but to do an effective and efficient job of it. Students who successfully complete remediation are then eligible to enroll and pay for baccalaureate, certificate, and degree programs at community colleges.

Further research related to this topic will attempt to solve a puzzle that emerges from the literature on public policy. Most public policies of long standing and with a significant resource base have come through a political process involving interest groups, lobbying, and ultimately, the formation of stable policy coalitions that continue to guard and champion continued funding and innovation. Despite its longevity, postsecondary remediation education is an interesting exception. Community colleges in Illinois have been the designated providers of postsecondary remedial education since 1979. Hence, it may be hypothesized that this exception is the result of community college failure to take an active interest in promoting postsecondary remedial education, and that no other policy entrepreneurs have yet to take up the cause. In the absence of such a political process, the usual mechanisms for corrective action or innovation, or even minimal judgments about policy success or failure, are absent. This has left postsecondary remedial education in a sort of limbo, with nowhere to go but continued stasis as a persistent problem.

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