

Culture and Power
Term Paper
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**Creating a Culture of Intolerance -- Barriers to Student Activism at Notre Dame:
A Three Dimensional Power Analysis**

1. Introduction

“Radical thought is not tolerated on the Notre Dame campus, to the extent that, *ipso facto*, to be radical is to be wrong.” (Thomas Kirchner, 1966)

Free speech. Free press. Right to assembly. Right to form associations. A representative body with real power to make concrete decisions affecting the lives of students. Is this the Notre Dame 'family'? Is Notre Dame a model of democratic pluralism or controlled by a small elite? Are issues and preferences debated openly or are they distorted and real interests suppressed?

This paper will apply Lukes and Gaventa's work on power to examine which dimension(s) best apply to the past thirty years of student activism and non-activism at the University of Notre Dame. Dahl and other pluralists saw power as a field of open conflict. If they were correct one would find Notre Dame to be administered with the views of everyone taken fairly into account. This initial view was challenged by Bachrach and Baratz who theorized the existence of nondecisions that could be found in more subtle forms of conflict. They would argue that the critical issues at Notre Dame could well be suppressed before they came up for a vote. Finally Lukes extended the possibility of a power relation existing despite an absence of conflict. He viewed the ultimate exercise of power as that of the oppressor shaping the values of the oppressed group. Gaventa's work on Appalachia tried to empirically show that what Lukes had argued in theory was possible in practice. Lukes and Gaventa would argue that conflict might be so suppressed at Notre Dame that it is unnoticeable, except at rare times due to shifts in the power balance, glimpses of the fundamental underlying conflicts would emerge. Most critically, Gaventa did not arrogantly claim to be able to discover the underlying 'real interests' of the masses, but rather argued that their inability to freely choose them was adequate proof of injustice. Notre Dame approximately parallels the level of freedom in Gaventa's study of Appalachia, lacking the democratic mechanisms, but benefiting from freer speech as evidenced by the numerous bursts of student activism. As such one would expect that second and third dimensional effects would dominate at Notre Dame as they did in Appalachia. I shall focus on demonstrating how the administration has used all three dimensions of power to prevent the student body from freely choosing its own interests, and to try to create a culture of both apparent and real homogeneity to decrease the likelihood of conflicts that could disrupt the administration's control.

But why does the administration do this? Regardless of the propensity of incoming students towards activism, the existence, creation and reproduction of barriers by the administration should prove a useful tool in reducing, reshaping and eliminating student challenges to what is, arguably, an undemocratic community unrepresentative of students' (and faculty) interests. Thus the administration uses barriers to create a culture of intolerance towards activism. Its intent is to maintain control and follow a rational strategy of maximizing its institutional prestige. Notre Dame's reputation is dependent on the U.S. News and World Report rankings, which requires that it have the resources to compete with other universities. Notre Dame must therefore follow the wishes of conservative alumni and major donors who give the large sums of money that ensure its place among the best universities (Ex. Debartolo who gave \$33 million in 1989). However there is an underlying source of conflict, in that some of the students' interests conflict with those of the large donors. This conflict causes students to become activists and administrators to create and reinforce barriers to squelch the dissent (and maintain their position).

Firstly, I shall review the literature on power and the debate over different dimensions, and whether they can be empirically shown to exist. I shall do a theoretical overview of the three dimensions and examine the mechanisms that they may use, some of which will appear later in the examination of barriers at Notre Dame. Secondly, I shall digress into a brief examination of what student movement theory might say about why students are, or are not, active. Thirdly, I will explain the methodology used in developing a history of Notre Dame activism and how my personal background affects this study. Fourthly, I will examine the history of activism and apply different dimensions of power analysis to uncover and demonstrate common examples of barriers to activism. I will argue that Notre Dame activism has been opposed, reduced, and ultimately suppressed. Finally, I shall propose a framework for continuing research (using interviews and empirical work) on this topic that would further test my hypothesis of the existence of barriers and critical third and second dimensional power effects on students.

2. Literature and Theoretical Review

A. Defining Power

The issue of power, its definition and whether it is controlled by an elite or a plurality has resulted in much debate between political scientists and sociologists for over twenty years. In "The Concept of Power", Dahl defines power from the pluralist perspective as, "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would otherwise not do" (202-203). However theoreticians of the two other dimensions focus less on strict activity (or behavior), with the second dimensionists extending power to include A mobilizing bias to exclude B, and those of the third dimension including A shaping B's interests.

B. A Pluralist View of Power: P1

The debate starts with an initial charge by the elitists who argue that there exists a ruling elite, who despite being in minority, are able to command resources and power enabling their interests to prevail over those of the majority. Analysis of who holds community power are often at the center of the debate (see Dahl's book on New Haven, "Who

Governs”, 1961; Crenson *The un-politics of air pollution; a study of non-decisionmaking in cities*, 1971, Domhoff’s reply to Dahl: *Who Really Rules?*, 1978). So analyzing the situation at Notre Dame, as a community, fits very well into this tradition. C. Wright Mills’, *The Power Elite* (1956), is the most obvious proponent of the elitist position. Shortly after this book was published, Dahl (1958). Dahl argued that the elitist position was empirically difficult to prove and that the hypothesis of an existing elite was a truism (those who have the power are those who have the power) (463). He argued that direct conflicts resulting from different preferences were necessary to study power (464). His strict test was that: “A ruling elite, then, is a controlling group less than a majority in size that is not a pure artifact of democratic rules. It is a minority of individuals whose preferences regularly prevail in cases of differences in preference on key political issues” (464). Dahl believed that different groups controlled the decision-making in different areas, and thus there was not one ruling elite (465). He criticized elitist theorists for not distinguishing potential for power, with its actual exercise (and thus membership in the elite), noting that both potential for power and unity in exercise were necessary to achieve one’s aims (465). He concentrated his analysis on conflict ‘within the political system’ (466), a view that others (Bachrach and Baratz & Lukes) would later criticize.

Accordingly to Dahl, it is nearly impossible to disprove the existence of an elite (an apriori belief of the elitists who assume its existence with which he strongly disagrees) since all possible combinations of individuals must be examined, and this becomes impossible in all but very small populations (467). Interestingly, and seemingly very relevant to the case of Notre Dame, he admits to the limitation of his view in situations that fail to meet the pluralist – liberal democracy view,

...it might be objected that the test I have proposed would not work in the most obvious of all cases of ruling elites, namely in the totalitarian dictatorships. For the control of the elite over the expression of opinion is so great that overtly there is no disagreement; hence no cases on which to base a judgement arise. This objection is a fair one. But we are not concerned here with totalitarian systems (qtd. 468).

He argues that Mills is likely resting his argument on the existence of a false consensus with which Dahl disagrees (469):

... one might argue that even in a society like ours a ruling elite might be so influential over ideas, attitudes, and opinions that a kind of false consensus will exist—not the phony consensus of a terroristic totalitarian dictatorship but the manipulated and superficially self-imposed adherence to the norms and goals of the elite by broad sections of a community (qtd. 468).

In sum Dahl doubts the existence of an elite, and argues that even if it existed it could never be proved. Thus the entire usefulness of the term is destroyed, and he argues for researchers and theoreticians to instead focus on direct, visible power.

C. The Power of Exclusion: P2

In “Two Faces of Power” (1962), Bachrach and Baratz criticized both the pluralists for their limitation of power and the elitists (Mills, et al) for their bad theory, “...there are two faces of power, neither of which the sociologists see and only one of which the political scientists see” (qtd. 947). They were more skeptical than the elitists about the existence of the elite, and agreed with the pluralist critique that the assumption of an existence of an elite, its stability, and that not distinguishing power held to power exercised was unfounded (947).

Their critique of the pluralists rested on two issues. Firstly, that they ignored the “confining the scope of decision-making to relative ‘safe’ issues” (947). And secondly, their (admitted) failure to define what a ‘key’ political issue was (947). Bachrach and Baratz extended power’s definition, “. . . power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A” (qtd. 948).

Originally Schnattschneider had laid some of the ground-work for this second dimensional view when he wrote that, “All forms of political organization have a bias in favor of the exploitation of some kinds of conflict and the suppression of others because *organization is the mobilization of bias*. Some issues are organized into politics while others are organized out” (Schattschneider qtd. in Bachrach and Baratz 949).

Bachrach and Baratz criticized the pluralists for ignoring the *mobilization of bias*, and accused pluralist Polsby of unjustly assuming that there are key political issues debated in the political arena, since it was the equivalent of assuming there is no elite (949, 950). They viewed the ‘key’ issues as those that are a “challenge to the predominant values or to the established ‘rules of the game’” (qtd. 950). Research should first focus not on proving the existence of an elite or pluralist system, but on the ‘mobilization of bias’ and ‘non-decisionmaking’ – a middle path between the elitists and pluralists (952). If one did that, “Then, having analyzed the dominant values, the myths and the established political procedures and rules of the game, [one] would make a careful inquiry into which persons or groups, if any, gain from the existing bias and which, if any, are handicapped by it” (qtd. 952).

In a subsequent article, “Decisions And Nondecisions: An Analytical Framework” (1963), Bachrach and Baratz focussed on describing nondecision-making, which they defined as “the practices of limiting the scope of actual decision-making to ‘safe’ issues by manipulating the dominant community values, myths, and political institutions and procedures” (qtd. 632). An alternative definition was given in their book “Power and Poverty: Theory and Practice,” (1970), where nondecision-making is:

...a means by which demands change in the existing allocation of benefits and privileges in the community can be suffocated before they are even voiced; or kept covert; or killed before they

gain access to the relevant decision-making arena; or, failing all these things, maimed or destroyed in the decision-implementing process (qtd. 18-19).

Bachrach and Baratz defined power as “A power relationship exists when (a) there is a conflict over values or course of action between A and B; (b) B complies with A’s wishes; and (c) he does so because he is fearful that A will deprive him of a value or values which he, B, regards more highly than those which would have been achieved by noncompliance” (qtd. 635). Notably they excluded the possibility of A’s power causing B to modify its actions to a compromise position between B and A’s desires. Another possibility is that Friedrich’s ‘rule of anticipated reaction’ could cause the extent of A’s power to not be so observable since it could modify (reduce) its demands so as to ensure B’s compliance (635). To look for evidence of nondecisions one must examine:

“When the dominant values, the accepted rules of the game, the existing power relations among groups, and the instruments of force, singly or in combination, effectively prevent certain grievances from developing into full-fledged issues which call for decisions, it can be said that a nondecision-making situation exists” (qtd. 647).

D. Merelman’s Pluralist Critique of P2

Mereleman criticizes the second dimensionalists for trying to discover ‘false consensus’ in communities (or power relations), when it could not be proved empirically (453). He argued that the source of a ‘false consensus’ was just as likely to come from B as from A (as the elite might be influenced and take on the values of the masses), and that one could not determine from where it had come (454). Also he labeled Baratz, Bachrach, and others as neo-elitists, who were, despite their denial, working from the presumption of an elite (453). By requiring challenges to the ‘predominant values’ or ‘rules of the game’, they assumed that there was an elite who had created these values and rules who needed challenging (453). If only unimportant issues were being debated, it could *also* be due to the pluralists being right, that there was no elite to challenge with ‘important’ issues (463). Furthermore Merelman disagrees with the usefulness of the theory of ‘anticipated reaction’, since it can lead to a ‘virtually infinite regress’ (455). Who anticipated whom first?

Other limits to presumed elites (and the theory thereof) include the presence of external influences on the community (454), the chance of appealing to a higher body (456), the cost to elites of blocking the will of the masses (455), the notion that government neutrality favors elites whereas positive action should be required (as it is for the masses) (458). Appearances may deceive; for instance exclusion can be a tactic staged by the masses to gain a sympathetic upper hand over the ‘elite’ and is not always equivalent to powerlessness (459). For instance a group of protestors, not actually desiring to attend the meeting, could demand access to a closed meeting with the intention of getting media attention and gaining public sympathy when they show-up and are turned away at the door. This argument can be taken too far. Provoking repression can be a useful tactic only to the extent that repression does not rise to the level that it completely suppresses the resisting organization. For example in the case of many Latin American countries that had death squads during the eighties who killed protestors, it was clearly not the protestors' intent to

provoke that level of repression, but rather a decision of the powerful segments of society. A more convincing argument is that nondecision-making reproduces itself, creating cynicism and ultimately a breakdown in the body of authority (460), however this is preventable by means which Lukes defined in the third dimension. Overall Merelman has a powerful critique of neo-elitists, to which a reply can best be found in the actual evidence from Notre Dame.

E. The Power to Shape Interests: P3

Lukes criticizes both the first and second dimensional views of power and extends the definition in his book, “Power: A Radical View” (1974). He does not criticize the one dimensional view for automatically denying the possibility of an elite since he believes elites can be recognized by observing dominance in direct conflict (11). But he critiques it because it “involves a focus on *behaviour* in the making of *decisions* on *issues* over which there is an observable *conflict* of (subjective) *interests*, seen as express policy preferences, revealed by political participation” (italics in original qtd. 15). He agrees with Bachrach and Baratz’s extension of analysis to nondecisions, though contends that both they and the pluralists are still behavior-focussed and require observable conflict, if not at the political level, then at some level below that (19, 21). By contrast Lukes felt that, “the most effective and insidious use of power is to prevent such conflict from arising in the first place,” (qtd. 23) through shaping of B’s interests.

Unlike the pluralists, one of principal facets of Lukes’ theory is the likelihood of a ‘false consensus’ as a companion to the non-conflicts that he analyzes (24).

Here are some of the differences between the three different dimensional views of power, compiled from Lukes and others (Bachrach and Baratz 1963 and 1962, Dahl 1958):

First Dimension	Second Dimension	Third Dimension
liberal	reformist	radical
pluralism	maybe elites	elite(s)
value-free	claims other two are value-laden, but we’re neutral	value-laden
direct conflict	suppressed conflict	false consensus
wants (or interests)	suppressed wants	system distorted wants
legitimate authority	focus on non-decisions first	illegitimate / dominating authority

Lukes defines power as, “A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B’s interests” (34). He theorizes that ideology (partially) determines power definitions (35). Thus pluralists define it so to preclude their desired results, though Lukes is also guilty on that account since he assumes the existence of an elite.

Lukes admits there are some difficulties with his third dimensional view. Notably that there are an infinite possible number of nondecisions (38) and it is hard to know what to study, but this can be alleviated by looking for the extraordinary case that allows real interests to emerge and by examining reactions to perceived breaks (opportunities for resistance) in the 'normal times' (48). It is possible that what Lukes claims is the emergence of real interests is rather their change into interests that better meet his ideological based predictions. However if one can collect sufficient evidence of power balance shifts leading to resistance, it is more likely that that interests do not totally change as the oppressed increase their relative power and then quickly revert back to their original ones when they lose it. Like Lukes, this paper will examine the rare cases of student activism for evidence of alternative interests beyond the pluralist prescribed ones of complacency.

F. Gaventa's Study of Appalachia

Originally Lukes was treading on fairly thin ground since his theory lacking the strength of an empirical base. But Gaventa, in "Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley" (1980), did a case study which demonstrates how well Lukes' theory applies to a coal-mining town in Appalachia. Gaventa agrees with Lukes and is especially opposed to the pluralists for arguing that the apathy of the poor and powerless was actually acting within their own interest (7). His method was to analyze how the same people acted in different situations, both of location (striking examples of farmers in Saskatchewan who founded the socialist Canadian Commonwealth Federation vs. farmers in the US who were politically conservative) and time (that he applied in his book) to determine what their real, or a closer approximation of real, interests were (7, 8).

Essential to the study of different levels of power, especially in case studies, is the study of their mechanisms. The mechanisms used in the first dimension are the obvious tactics of effective mobilization of resources (money, staff, information, people, guns, etc) to win an issue in an open public arena. The second dimension is more discrete, as individuals may use the 'mobilization of bias' (such as symbols or rules) to resolve issues by nondecisions that maintain the status quo (14). As for the third dimension, the identification of mechanisms "... involves specifying the means through which power influences, shapes, or determines conceptions of the necessities, possibilities, and strategies of challenge in situations of latent conflict" (15). Lukes urged the "study of social myths, language, and symbols, and how they are shaped or manipulated in power processes" (15). And "of what is communicated and how it is done" (15). More succinctly, what makes B believe that A's interests are their own (15)?

Effects of the third dimension appear when B's repeated losing, causes B to lower its demands (17), stop challenging (16), and even take on some or all of the values of the oppressor: A (19). Ultimately B may not just misconceive its interests, but also mistake the proper target, if recognized might refuse to challenge the proper target (since doing so would be 'rocking the boat'), or try to oppose the target but not know how to proceed and what a better solution would be (20).

Gaventa argued that powerlessness and power are cumulative. So as A wins and B loses, A can use its accumulated power to push the conflict from p1 to p2 to p3 (22). However B can, by winning, also move from p3 to p2 to p1, by realizing its interests, challenging the rules of game / demobilizing or counter-mobilizing the bias, and developing own resources to bring the conflict to the p1 level (22, 24). Gaventa at this point does not justify this assumption, but in practice one does observe it, for instance in general activist work the radicalizing effect of participation is very noticeable.

Despite Merelman's critique, Gaventa argued that the proof of A's power can be found in it not needing to be exerted – that the status quo does benefit A (23). Thus we can look at inaction, particularly in cases of clear injustice (air-pollution in Gary, or homophobia at Notre Dame) as good places to find p3 (26).

I will be broadly examining the wide spectrum of activism at Notre Dame, since, as Gaventa correctly theorized, a win by B anywhere (central or more incidental to the 'key' issues) can generate momentum and strength allowing it to expand its scope, so A will ally with A' to oppose it and these apparently 'incidental' conflicts gain in importance (25).

One can identify the existence of p3 by using a historical analysis of how the status quo evolved, examining challenges (and the reactions of the powerful and powerless to them), what happened when A's power lessened or B's was increased through intervention of a third party, or contrast the case to a comparable situation to observe differing reactions (27, 28). If none of these possible mechanisms of p3 can be found, then it can be disproved, and for this case the interests of B must be assumed to match those of A (no false consensus)– and thus Gaventa noted, in disagreement with Merelman, that under those circumstances his theory could be falsified. Note that Gaventa did not believe that knowing B's real interests was necessary for the research to be fruitful (29). Rather just demonstrating that B was hindered in its ability to choose its own interests was adequate (29). This is what this paper shall try to do by noting how numerous administrative barriers have succeeded in stopping the spread of information and ideology. The blockage of information must have some impact on the development of average student's ideology and thus their actions. And to the extent that this hindrance is biased so as to prevent student activism, there is a clear intentional p3 effect at work.

In sum, a pluralist like Dahl would study who is exerting direct power at Notre Dame, hoping to find that different groups of people win on different major issues. However, Dahl would likely recognize that his theory does not completely apply to Notre Dame since it comes close to being a 'totalitarian system' (Dahl 468) to which his theory does not apply. Bachrach and Baratz would look for the presence and mobilization of bias leading to the suppression of decisions. From there they would ask who, if anyone, benefits from the nondecision-making. Finally Lukes and Gaventa would examine times when there was a shift in the power balance that allowed conflict to emerge

and analyze these events to learn what the oppressed group's real interests are. They would also investigate how victories at the other two levels, may have moved the level of conflict from p1 and p2 to p3.

3. Methodology and Bias

The inspiration for this paper lies in unrelated research about activism at Notre Dame that I did because I was and am deeply involved with campus activism and wanted to know more about what had happened before my time. Since the spring of 1998, I have been at the center of most student activism at Notre Dame as I was for my last couple years of my undergraduate career at Goshen College. My experiences at Notre Dame, Goshen College, and in the Student Environmental Action Coalition (where I am active on the National Council) are excellent background for drawing conclusions about what influences students to be active or inactive.

For material I skimmed through almost every Scholastic (weekly to biweekly student magazine) since the fall of 1965 (when Students for a Democratic Society organized the first major protest in DC and activism began at Notre Dame) to the present. I copied all the articles related to activism. I also skimmed through the daily student paper, *The Observer*, for the spring of 1991 (Gulf War and Students United For Respect), and during my time as a student from the fall of 1997 to present. In addition I copied articles on activism that were properly indexed from *The Observer* in the 90s. So the approach is very historical, using a laundry list of examples of varying forms of barriers (p1, p2 and p3) in an attempt to answer the question of why students are not active, and why those who are active are not more so. Combined with my personal experiences as an activist, I think this work provides a good, though obviously not complete, picture of student activism on this campus.

Whereas my bias is radical, it is both reinforced and justified by the 'facts' that a survey of media coverage gives. The media's bias varies. The reporters and opinion writers who wrote about activism tend towards liberalism, but the campus climate, late Sixties excepted, was conservative. Also, as I will show below, there is reason to believe that the media may have exercised self-censorship and thus there might be barriers that go unmentioned in the student press. It is also possible that many stories never even made it to the attention of the media, either since students were intimidated into not telling their story for fear of possible retribution (for instance if they were the victim of homophobic discrimination and did not want to publicly reveal their orientation), or because they felt that it would not make any difference. Often the activist issues were very mainstream, and generally the media editorials favored the activist position.

I should admit that while this paper focuses on barriers that should not be used to imply that there has been no dissent or student activism on campus as clearly the opposite has been true. Neither is the administration the monolithic evil figure as I may depict it – though this may often seem true.

The pluralists were biased in their presumption of an absence of elites as were the elitists by presuming the opposite (elites everywhere). My bias towards the presumption of an elite is less problematic in this particular case study of activism at Notre Dame, since the community does not even pretend to meet the pluralist democratic ideal and Dahl himself admitted that elites were more likely to exist in such conditions. As a campus activist I have experienced varying levels of administrative intransigence and cultural intolerance, experiences which make me better suited to understand the underlying issues and their implications. Unfortunately many of the real barriers have gone (and will still go) unreported. There is a series of rumors, some of which are true but are not publicized due to fears of university retaliation, pessimism that it will promote change, general apathy, or of fear of being 'outed' to one's parents and friends. Because my listing of barriers and examples is only partial, the findings in this paper are relatively conservative.

4. Student Movements

It is interesting to approach the question of why students were not active (or limited their activity) by first asking what would motivate them, and then looking at how barriers might affect these factors later in the paper. I think the clearest motivation is the desire to make an actual tangible change. Others include socialization (of friends and parents), fun, "*consciousness-raising, collective empowerment, polarization, and group decision-making*" (qtd. Hirsch 243). Barriers to activism limited students' ability to realize change and also created a climate wherein socialization effects of being active were often highly negative – this reducing levels of activism despite the 'obvious' need.

From the Sixties to the Nineties most scholars have agreed that identity politics have grown increasingly strong. Notre Dame activism followed this and other general trends in student activism, perhaps especially resonating with peace activism (due to Notre Dame's Catholic nature). The presence of barriers, when they are raised in a manner so as to directly conflict with a conscious raising about one's identity (most blatantly sexual orientation, though to a lesser degree for gender and race), must have a critical impact on identity activism. On the one hand encouraging it due to the high level of repression (or need), on the other hand trying to kill it at the source, most notably the in the case of trying to have it appear as if there are no gays/lesbians/bisexuals so that there will be no gay rights movement. Homogeneity, both real and prescribed, is a clear enemy of the most vibrant forces in student activism – identity politics. If all the students believe they are part of a homogenous Notre Dame Family, and that the motto: "We are ND!" includes them, then they are less likely to rebel against the administration's control.

5. History

During the past thirty years, Notre Dame students have been active and have consequently faced barriers, threats, or the brick wall of being powerless to seek the change they were advocating. From the suspension of ten students for peacefully protesting Dow in 1969, to the rejection of a decade of anti-apartheid activism, to the death by committee-

formation of Students United For Respect (SUFRR), to the refusal to recognize a lgb student group, to the harassment of WRC and PSA -- the administration has raised barriers that have hurt student activism, not permitted the student body to freely form their own ideology, and promoted a culture of intolerance.

A. Media Censorship

The University of Notre Dame is private and has great discretion over what it can choose to do on 'its' private property, regardless of the students who live there. One of those areas of discretion is the media. Specifically the media includes the campus daily newspaper: *The Observer*, the biweekly magazine: *Scholastic*, two student radio stations (WVFI – AM, and WSND – FM), and several unofficial publications.

According to the student handbook, duLac, unofficial publications need the approval of Student Activities – which in the case of first-time distribution implies a pre-approval of the contents (duLac 100). However the regular student media, "...should be free of censorship and advance approval of copy, and their editors and managers should be free to develop their own editorial policies and news coverage" (99).

In a p1 system there would be multiple sources of media with different owners who would compete to cover news stories, and nothing important would be excluded. Ideas would be out in the open for everyone to freely debate. By contrast, if one presumed a repressive institutional power, one would expect administrative interference with both the content and ultimate status of the publications. The administrative intent would be to discount, reduce, or remove material critical of itself, so as to create or reinforce a climate of apathy. If the administration could use its power to deny the existence of student groups or issues it opposed (Ex. GLND/SMC), then it would not have to deal with them. A possible implementation of the three dimensions of power would have p1 meaning a free media, p2 -- detectable censorship that would lead to suppressed stories (and conflict), and p3 would lead to internalized control – or self-censorship by the student editors. This paper will show how the administration has exercised and threatened to exercise censorship so as to maintain its control over the flow of information, and hypothesize that this has had a chilling effect on the student media beyond that of the information it was able to censor.

Pornography and Censorship Conference

One of the earlier examples of direct censorship were the events surrounding the Student Union Academic Commission's attempted conference on pornography and censorship, in February 1969. Ironically, on a tip from a South Bend citizens' group the conference itself was censored. While the students were trying to show a pornographic film, South Bend police intervened and took the film. In the ensuing conflict students threw snowballs at the police, who retaliated with mace and retreated to O'Shaughnessy. This example was noteworthy for the, very rare, intervention of South Bend police, their use of mace, and because one week after the incident Hesburgh issued a fifteen minute directive aimed at preventing further student unrest and ensuring administrative control. This case

showed that there was clearly a limit to a student's right to freedom of information (and activity in general) and that crossing the limit could result in a direct crackdown.

GLND/SMC

In the fall of 1985, WSND received a Public Service Announcement (PSA) advertising the existence of the unofficial group: Gays and Lesbians of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College (GLND/SMC). Since it met the PSA criteria of the station and was not "obscene or offensive", manager, Eileen Ridley, decided to play it. She later learned that the PSA had created a stir in the administration. So when it was submitted for replay in February, she first notified Student Activities. This led to a series of meetings with the Assistant Vice-President of Student Affairs who argued that GLND/SMC conflicted with the mission of the university. Ridley offered to include a disclaimer with the PSA and when this was rejected she resigned on principle because the administration was interfering with what she thought was meant to be a student run station.

The WVFI station manager also resigned, and soon after the newly chosen acting station manager for WSND was fired after the PSA was replayed. The administration denied that it was censorship and the Assistant Director of Student Activities took over operation of WSND.

This incident was one of the first in a long series of attempts by the unofficial GLND/SMC to increase its availability to students who would want to join, and by the administration to discourage all forms of publicity. By hiding the existence of an active gay and lesbian student-run group, the administration could try to control which views of homosexuality would be encouraged on campus and promote the image of a (almost purely) heterosexual student body. It could privilege its own interpretation of the Catholic teachings at the expense of alternatives that might be more accepting to same-sex sexual activity.

The student station managers clearly felt that their interests (of a free student media) were being attacked and were willing to stand-up for them, despite the possible penalty. Notably the administration won and administrative control was reinforced.

Erotica

In the fall of 1986, student arts and literary magazine: *The Juggler*, replaced one of its pieces of art and printed the disclaimer, "Original choice censored by the Office of Student Activities." That spring Scholastic printed a story about the incident along with originally censored work. In response, the Office of Student Activities removed that issue of Scholastic from distribution and suspended its publication. After negotiation Scholastic was allowed to resume. The piece was censored by the administration for being too sexually explicit, and even though the staff of the Juggler and Scholastic disagreed, the administration's definition prevailed. If student media is subject to the administration's definition(s) of 'offensive' (and what is 'fit to print'), then they must either internalize this

definition, or face the possibility of direct censorship and even closure of their publication. In 1990, Scholastic Editor Andrew Hilger noted of his position, “It always needs to be in the back of your mind that the university owns the magazine and can shut it down anytime” (qtd. in Weldon, 11). Regardless of the fact that the piece of art was not a direct challenge to the administration, it turned into a major issue since it indirectly challenged the administration’s power to decide moral issues. The conflict ended by showing that it was the administration that held ultimate control over the student media, and would at times exert it if the students did not internalize it for themselves.

The Gipper

In 1995, an anonymous Scholastic gossip columnist known as “The Gipper” focussed one column entirely on the administration. By the next issue, Scholastic had heard from the Office of Student Activities and was asked to reveal the Gipper’s identity. Scholastic refused and ran a protest message that week. The following issue Scholastic ran a very feisty editorial and the regular Gipper column, writing like they expected to be shut-down by the administration but *had* to stand-up for their right to free speech. Here was another case, besides that of the GLND/SM PSA, where students felt it necessary to risk their position for the right to a free student media. Interestingly the administration threatened, but never acted and Scholastic continued publication. Whether Scholastic practiced self-censorship after this incident is hard to know, but even when expecting to be shutdown the Gipper did not write another critical column on the administration. So there was probably a chilling effect on the media, at least in the short term.

B. Sixties

The ultimate threat for an organization is to lose its recognition (or not be recognized in the first place). In most cases that would mean the death of the organization, since running an unrecognized one takes a lot of work (since for example publicity is not permitted). One first instance of denying club status was with the attempt to form a Students for a Democratic Society chapter in the mid-Sixties at Notre Dame. Campus radical leader Lenny Joyce remarked, “We tried to get official administration approval from McCarragher. He said to do so he’d have to have a full membership list which both the FBI wanted and he wanted to give them. We said no” (qtd. May 12, 1967, McInerney). Furthermore Joyce claimed that the FBI had “contacted all my friends and acquaintances”, that he lost friends, and faced harassment. Stopping the recognition of a SDS chapter, did not prevent Notre Dame from experiencing a wave of activism during the Sixties. Though that which it did experience, was at times organized by unaffiliated radicals who would have formed a SDS chapter had they been allowed.

Also in the Sixties, a week after the censored Pornography and Censorship conference, Hesburgh issued his fifteen-minute declaration:

. . . Anyone or any group that substitutes force for rational persuasion, be it violent or nonviolent, will be given fifteen minutes of meditation to cease and desist. They will be told that they are, by their actions, going counter to the overwhelming convictions of this community as to what is

proper here. If they do not within that time cease and desist, they will be asked for their identity cards. Those who produce these will be suspended from this community as not understanding what this community is. Those who do not have, or will not produce identity cards will be assumed not to be members of the community and will be . . . treated accordingly by law. (qtd. Sarahan 1975)

According to Scholastic, President Nixon praised it, while Brown University Dean F. Donald Eckelmann argued, “You would need a completely intimidated student body to make that sort of statement and get away with it” (qtd. in Sarahan). Hesburgh’s declaration was clearly an attempt to gain an upper hand over the increasingly active student body.

That fall he had a chance to use it. On Nov. 18 1969, at 6am, South Bend police delivered a court injunction to four students to prevent them from protesting a Dow (maker of napalm) recruiter at the Placement Office. Protestors would now not only face internal judicial proceedings, but a possible \$500 fine and three-month sentence. Perhaps the court injunction was just intended to scare, since it was never used. Of the hundred students who protested peacefully despite the risk, ten were ultimately suspended. They appealed, but the issues of morality that they used in their defense were not permitted. The only debatable issue was whether they had broken the rule, not whether they had a higher moral calling to break it. With their only defense organized out of the judicial process, their appeal was denied. This was a very rare case of the administration being overtaken by the times (1969/70 was the most activist year at Notre Dame by far) and largely unable to contain protesters who were willing to demonstrate despite the existence of Hesburgh’s fifteen-minute rule and even the injunction.

C. AAN

For over a decade, the Anti-Apartheid Network (AAN) and other student/faculty activity tried to get the University to divest from South Africa. Despite ten years of activity, a period of weekly Friday noontime vigils, a special issue of Scholastic, 1200 signatures, and a 400-person protest, the University only partially divested. Even when Rev. Sullivan (of the famous “Sullivan Principles” for ‘ethical’ investment in South Africa) reversed his position and urged total divestment – Notre Dame persevered with its previous policy. It is very telling that the administration managed to delay and claim that it was trying to end apartheid too (by allying with corporations), and that the trustees, who decision it was, were completely unaccountable to the students and faculty. Arguing that the regular campus newspaper failed to cover the movement, students and faculty started an alternative progressive paper called *Common Sense*. Overall this was a perfect example of exclusion of students and faculty from the decision-making arena.

D. SUFR

In 1990/91 while implementing a plan to almost double the number of students of color in four years, Notre Dame witnessed the largest outpouring of activism on this issue since the Sixties. In the fall of 1990, an ad-hoc group of

students formed who felt they were being disrespected by the administration, and called themselves: Students United For Respect (SUFR). On Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day they presented a series of demands to Patty O'Hara, Vice President of Student Affairs, along with a time-line for her to respond.

This disrespect that the students felt was increased when O'Hara cancelled an open forum that she had agreed to attend, and replaced it with a private meeting that was only for leaders of recognized organizations (of which SUFR was not one). Said one SUFR member, Alicia Sierra, "She takes this small technicality and uses it as an excuse not to meet us on our terms. It is really a symbolic act, trying to show who is in control of the situation" (qtd. in Flynn, Jan. 30 1991).

Neither did SUFR feel that their demands were being heard and considered. In a letter to *The Observer* (Feb 22, 1991) SUFR leader Pedro Villegas wrote,

Each appeal has been met with the same noncommittal and disregard towards student grievances. In some cases, students have been summarily referred to slow and ineffective bureaucratic procedures already exhausted. Essentially, each appeal has been met by lip-service treatment, a lack of enthusiasm, and little action.

While the student push met with little administrative compromise or action on the demands, SUFR likewise faced difficulties gaining support from a homogenous student body. A March 22, *Observer* editorial, "It's time for SUFR to change its tune", recommended that "members have to stop making demands, and start doing their homework." The editorial implied that the students should do the administration's work for it. It uses the classic delay tactic of arguing that the protestors have not done enough research, and places the guilt for the lack of action promoting diversity on the students who were trying to change it (since they have failed to do 'their homework').

Eventually SUFR was very upset at the lack of administrative response and on April 17 they (anywhere from 60-150 depending on your source) peacefully occupied the Registrar's Office for eleven hours. Despite the demonstration being totally against duLac, they escaped punishment. They left before a 7pm deadline after having been advised about the possible consequences of staying (probably suspension or expulsion).

An *Observer* poll (telephone survey of 200 random people, Apr 23, 1991: 5) done a couple days after the sit-in showed mixed support for SUFR's demands (24.5% in favor, 32.5% against, 28.5% for some), but strong opposition to the means (65% against, 20% for). And this was despite the general recognition that the University was not "truly committed to cultural diversity". 32% of students thought it was, while 46% thought it was not.

In the days after the rally, attacks on SUFR dramatically increased. Bill O'Brien and Jim DiJoseph wrote, "SUFR, with its sidewalk scribbles and sit-ins, seems determined to divide this community." It was charged with being

confrontational, segregationist (against King), and wanting 'special treatment'. In their letters Parsons, O'Brien, DiJoseph, and Beaven all called for ignoring race as a better solution to racism than what SUFR was advocating. SUFR faced cultural intolerance and great misunderstanding.

As the year ended the movement (SUFR) declined. President Fr. Malloy established a "Task Force on Cultural Diversity" and SUFR became an official organization. Over the summer the director of the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (OMSA) was told to resign. Durgan felt he was being blamed for SUFR, "It is my feeling that they were looking for someone to be more an administrator [rather than] going with someone who was going to be there for the students" (qtd. Mitchell 5).

The next year SUFR was remarkably quiet, probably due to a combination of leadership graduating, students tiring of not seeing concrete changes from their action, cultural intolerance, and waiting for the task force's report. A year later the committee made its final report and some changes were made, but SUFR was by now dead.

The barriers that were present in this example are not obvious. One element that helps increasing their visibility is that the massive uprising of discontent in the spring of 1991 was not an aberration, but rather just a public display of a constant underlying tension which has also revealed itself in 1978 (protest on the steps of the Dome) and 1997/98. The fact that this keeps happening is a sign of a barrier either reoccurring or, more likely, never being adequately solved in the first place. In the late Sixties Notre Dame had 1% or 2% minority students, whereas by 1998 it was about 15%. This relative homogeneity reduces the chance of identity-related activism. Not only does homogeneity permit and promote racism, it also discourages resistance on the basis of numbers (more minorities -> greater chance of one or a group of them initiating activism), and reduces the chance of allies activism (whose tolerance and activism would be increased with greater interaction).

Some of the barriers to activism SUFR exposed was a denial of membership (students of color), space to operate, institutional support (multicultural center and staff), and diversity of faculty and administrators. SUFR wanted to create an autonomous OMSA, accountable only to President Fr. Malloy and the students – an alternative power base, which if permitted would have been a major shift in university policy.

SUFR challenged the white power structure and worked outside the administration's traditional frame of reference. They brought up 'key' issues and achieved some results, notably a great increase in awareness in the short run. However as evidenced by the fact that students in 1997/98 were still organizing and wanting a meeting with Fr. Malloy to make changes, this issue has not gone away. Overall the administration (and students) displayed a combined intolerance of SUFR's tactics, desired diversity, and disrespect for student power.

E. GLND/SMC

Paradoxically the best evidence of barriers and the best source of activism has been the administration's refusal to recognize a student run gay-lesbian-bisexual organization, or even to stop discriminating against homosexuals. The barriers that the administration has created have so enraged students that they face a constant and growing wave of student activism backlash.

The Catholic teaching on homosexuality is one of the prime motivators for this cultural of intolerance / homophobia. It says that orientation is moderately acceptable, but activity is sin. The catechism says both that homosexuality is "intrinsically disordered", but also calls that "Every sign of unjust discrimination in their [homosexuals] regard should be avoided." As with many issues, not all Catholics agree on one position, and neither do many Catholic institutions agree that refusing club recognition logically follows from the Church's teachings. Over thirty-five Catholic universities and colleges having recognized gay-lesbian-bisexual (and ally) student groups, so the administration of Notre Dame can make a choice without violating Catholic teaching.

The initial gay student group was started in 1970, though they really tended to be unobtrusive. A good example of p3 is that there was most likely a large period before the unofficial group formed that students did not even think of forming an organization, as homosexuals were almost all closeted until the Sixties. Many of the students then (and now too, though to a lesser extent), would have seen themselves as needing to be cured and have fully bought into the mainstream homophobia as intensified by the teachings of the Catholic Church. It was not until 1986 that they first applied for equivalent rights of a recognized organization (meeting space, right to advertise, etc). Vice President of Student Affairs Fr. David Tyson turned them down writing, "I must inform you that we cannot grant your six requests . . . it is our judgement that formal recognition of GLND/SMC carries with it an implicit sanction for a homosexual lifestyle which is not in keeping with the values of the University or the teachings of the Church" (qtd. in Keller 5, 6). Tyson referred them to the Counseling Center and Campus Ministries.

Student support has always been mixed. On the one hand students seem supportive of GLND/SMC recognition, but they also seem to be homophobic. Student support was measured for a Student Government Report to the Board of Trustees in the fall of 1990, and they found that 73% of frosh and 82% of seniors supported GLND/SMC recognition. Tolerance of homosexuality was more in lines with my theory of cultural intolerance, with 54% of frosh and 41% of seniors having a negative attitude towards it (Sept. 20, 1990, Scholastic: 12).

A telling example of the administration's policy of trying to suppress GLND/SMC was an advertisement that GLND/SMC ran in the Spring of 1991 which managed to circumvent the ban on advertising. Half of the ad was a large disclaimer saying, "This Group Is NOT RECOGNIZED By The University Of Notre Dame," and the other half implied what the group was, without giving its name, "No name. No logo. No 'semblance of an organization'." That's alright. You already know who we are. You already know we have monthly General Meetings and

Discussion Groups. And you already know that our address and our phone numbers are listed below.” But in general advertising was and still is difficult.

Possibly the first pro-gay rights demonstration was a coming out day rally / meditation on Oct. 11, 1991. About thirty people attended the event that was organized by World Peace Action Group and included at least one speaker from GLND/SMC. The organizers of the event received the following threatening letter from Asst. Vice President of Residential Life, William Kirk,

Under the provisions of du Lac, an unrecognized student organization does not enjoy the privilege of sponsorship of activities. If the event for which the World Peace Action Group has sought approval is in fact a vehicle for sponsorship by an unrecognized student group, the World Peace Action Group, as sponsors of the event, would be in violation of du Lac” (qtd. in Wiegand).

That same month, a GLND/SMC sponsored resolution urging Hall Presidents to declare their dorms ‘safe havens for homosexuals’ created much debate, but mostly failed to muster support. Stated Hall President Council co-chairperson Charlie James, “It (harassment of gay and lesbian persons) was never a problem in the dorms. I didn’t think it happened. The way I see it is that it’s not a problem, but that by bringing it into the light, it will become a problem.” (qtd. in Tate, Oct. 31, 1991). Late that spring, it was business as usual as the GLND/SMC application was denied, though it succeeded in receiving support from Faculty Senate.

All the while the University did not completely shy away from issue of sexuality. Asst. Vice-President for Student Services, Fr. Rocca, argued for individualized treatment, “the university is ready to assist them as individuals through ordinary channels, for example Campus Ministry and the University Counseling Center” (qtd. Crouch, 8) .By individualizing the ‘problem’ the administration was denying the right and need for students to organize on their own, reducing the chance of a movement and maintaining its control over the definition of accepted homosexual behavior.

The greatest uproar occurred when GLND/SMC was expelled on Jan. 23, 1995 from the Counseling Center where they had been meeting informally for nine years. On February 1, Graduate Student Council voted 21-0-2 against the expulsion and in favor of club recognition. On Feb. 8, Student Senate agreed voted 14-1-1. And later the Campus Life Council voted 13-2-1. The Hall President’s Council voted unanimous support. Clearly there was wide student and faculty support for recognition, though students and faculty lacked the power to make the decision so it did not happen.

On the ground, sixty students demonstrated on Feb. 2 and on Feb. 10 almost three hundred marched from Debartolo to the Main Building. Both demonstrations were not registered, and William Kirk reacted by writing a letter to Pax Christi and Amnesty warning them that their organizations could be put on probation or suspended if they held

another one. He also remarked that they “may have served as a vehicle for sponsorship by an unrecognized group” (qtd. Tyler 4), implying that they were acting as a front for GLND/SMC.

Pax Christi president Erika Effler commented, “We knew there were regulations, but we felt our way was the best way to do things. We felt that if we asked permission, the university probably wouldn’t let us march, and we thought it would be a little ironic to ask for permission to disagree with the object of the protests” (qtd. Tyler 1). “They went out of their way to find a reason to send that letter. It was a very intimidating letter designed to make us wary of doing anything else in support of GLND/SMC” (qtd. Mudry 5). And Amnesty co-president Gregg Behr voiced his concern, “It’s shocking that the University would send a letter of suspicion, basically a threatening letter prior to talking to us. We had no forewarning of the letter” (qtd. Tyler 1, 4).

As a result of the pressure, Amnesty and Pax Christi decided to register the next protest, though promising to hold it whether or not they got permission. Four hundred students rallied on March 2. Days later, Vice-President of Student Affairs Patty O’Hara wrote “An Open Letter In Response to the Campus Life Council Resolution Calling for Recognition of GLND/SMC.” She refused recognition and formed an ad-hoc committee to “advise me on how, apart from the recognition of GLND/SMC or another student organization, we can do a better job of meeting the needs of our gay and lesbian students.”

Meanwhile on March 7, Faculty Senate voted 30-3-4 in favor of recognition.

In a break with the tradition of banning GLND/SMC ads in the Observer, on March 24 they were able to print a full-page “An Open Letter to the Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s Community on Administration Policy towards Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals,” responding to the recent series of events.

That fall the Ad Hoc Committee made a series of recommendations that O’Hara accepted including, “That the Vice President for Student Affairs should raise to the University officers the issue of modifying the nondiscrimination clause that appears in University publications to include sexual orientation.” In her response she deflected the issue: “Raising this issue for discussion is obviously not a decision on the merits of this issue. I am sure that the officers will give this issue and all of its attendant complexities full analysis and discussion.” With the word ‘complexities’ she indicated the difficulties proponents of nondiscrimination would find over the next several years, lasting up until the present.

As a result of the committee’s work, the administration formed a Campus Ministry run group (Notre Dame Lesbians and Gay Students). NDLGS is run by a priest and a nun, and students interested in going must be pre-interviewed. Interestingly, NDLGS is one of the biggest advertisers in The Observer, running several ads a week. In terms of competition, the official university group which gets unlimited advertising (advertising is just a transfer from one

university department to another – and does not cost the university much since students are subsidizing the Observer anyway) has a clear institutionalized advantage over GLND/SMC. Yet despite administrative efforts to funnel possibly rebellious gays, lesbians, and bisexuals into the well-controlled group, most students go to the unofficial one which has a history of doing activism.

The other university compromise, was that in the Fall of 1997 (for the first time ever) it included sexual orientation in a major policy statement, releasing the Spirit of Inclusion calling for acceptance in theory but not providing any legal protection.

Just this March, the most openly gay priest on campus, and advocate of nondiscrimination and GLND/SMC recognition, Fr. David Garrick, resigned to protest the University's discrimination against himself and failure to include sexual orientation in its nondiscrimination clauses. It was interesting that he felt so discriminated against and unable to continue his ministry, that he was driven from the university. In response to his resignation there was an outpouring of support that culminated on Nov. 17, when the Academic Council voted in favor of including sexual orientation in the nondiscrimination clause by one vote (19-15-2). The ultimate example of administrative disrespect came on the last day of a student week of action in February 1999. Over a hundred people were participating at varying levels in a three-day fast (among other forms of action) hoping to affect the decision of the Board of Trustees who were meeting on Friday. That Friday, students learned that the decision had already been made in December by an unanimous vote of the University Fellows. The administration has failed to inform either the students or faculty that their activism would be without hope.

Meanwhile the unofficial student group, feeling a combination of discouragement from losses of the past, hopelessness about the future, and facing general cultural intolerance has changed its name from the politically charged 'GLND/SMC' to 'OUTreach ND'. It is also trying to distance itself from its activist past and since February 1999 it has not worked for recognition (as of November 2002). The shift of focus from recognition (widely seen as nearly impossible) to nondiscrimination, is a good example of Gaventa's argument about B reducing their objectives due to A's interference and domination.

F. WRC

Late in the Spring of 1998, several pro-lifers went into the office of the primary feminist organization on campus, the Women's Resource Center (WRC), and managed to procure pro-choice material including a pamphlet for an abortion clinic. They subsequently brought the information to the attention of Student Activities and a far-right campus newspaper: Right Reason. The Office of Student Activities first tried to interrogate WRC officers one at a time, but the WRC members refused and went as a group. After the semester had ended and students had left, Student Activities put WRC on a two-year probation, requiring them to remove all pro-choice (but not pro-life) material and attend regular meetings to ensure their compliance with the mission of the University and Catholic

Teaching. They were even informally warned, though the warning was later withdrawn, that they should remove all information that opposes Catholicism including information on sexual orientation, contraception, and more.

One example of the assault on the WRC was Aaron Kheriaty's Apr. 20 Observer column titled, "Bring Back the Slap, and Other Fragments". Pro-life conservative Aaron Kheriaty called for orthodoxy, "... I say, bring back the slap. Sure, it's not quite as warm and fuzzy as a hug, but it's a great wake up call to the Church militant. (Women's Resource Center, take note)" (qtd. Kheriaty 8). While Kheriaty was primarily referring to including the slap in a Catholic religious ceremony, the insinuation that women (or the WRC) deserved to be slapped is shocking and fits well into the general rhetoric and emotions of the time.

Women were only accepted into Notre Dame in 1972. Since then there have been nine or ten feminist organizations on campus – showing a remarkably short life span, perhaps due to the climate of intolerance towards feminism which the attack on the WRC provides a good example. The Women's Resource Center was founded Oct. 4, 1993 and run by student volunteers from a small room appended to the student government office when the administration refused to fund and staff a student proposed professionally run center.

The amazing thing is that WRC was not pro-choice, but split on abortion. The center provided information on both sides of the issue and was censored for it. The administration will not even allow student organizations to be neutral and thus help the student body to make an informed decision. Rather all information on abortion, must be slanted towards the Catholic teaching. While most pro-lifers have not argued for the removal of WRC, just wanting its submission, this is still problematic and an assault on both the major feminist organization on campus and free speech in general.

G. PSA

The Progressive Student Alliance (PSA) was started, by me, in February 1998 with the help of some research, personal contacts, and a very successful publicity blitz. A handful of people organized the publicity that drew fifty-eight people to the first PSA general meeting. Person after person introduced who they were and expressed interest in how they wished there was a liberal campus student organization. So we formed an organization to work for social justice both on campus and beyond.

The PSA managed to succeed by strategically breaking rules (or the spirit of rules) that would have prevented the founders from putting up seven hundred posters, distributing a couple thousand fliers, chalking campus, and even getting a room to meet. By contrast to the PSA's grassroots founding, Student Activities' model was for a small group of students to hold a private meeting and write a constitution which would then be approved by Student Activities (or not) if they saw the need for the organization to exist. It took Student Activities approximately six months to recognize the PSA.

Because the PSA was in an in-between stage of having applied for recognition and not having been accepted or rejected, the organization had to tone down its activities so as not to ruin its chances of being recognized. As such, the PSA did not publicly advertise its meetings and had all of its events sponsored by official student organizations. In fact during the spring almost all of the public student activism on campus was being organized by the PSA, but this was not obvious at first glance since our sponsorship was hidden. The Administration partially realized this, as can be seen from the time when they got campus security to hand-deliver a letter to me at 11pm the night before a demonstration that I had registered. The letter requested/required that there be not be any mention of unrecognized organizations at protest. PSA had organized the event, but we had to be invisible or face university discipline. Members had to face tough choices over what to say in our constitution, which was being scrutinized by Student Activities. After much debate, the members of the PSA ultimately agreed to include 'gay rights' as one of the issues we would work on in a forward to the constitution, and were very surprised that we were recognized in the fall since we had been actively challenging the administration's position on gay rights. Even after being recognized, the PSA must constantly decide between whether it should follow our beliefs and risk losing our club status, or follow the rules. We are clearly being prevented from activity and the information that the student body receives, is muted as a result.

Within two months of forming, the PSA started being attacked, probably for the challenge it poised to the status quo. The general harassment has allowed our opponents to define PSA on their terms, created a climate of intolerance towards any activism, pigeon-holed the PSA, shifted PSA members' attention away from social justice towards defending our reputation, discouraged both interested people from joining and lesser-interested people from attending our events.

In the first major attack on the PSA, Bradley Foundation funded conservative campus paper *Right Reason* (which disappeared at the end of the 1998/1999 school year) and an anonymous writer wrote the following:

Luckily for the administration, *Right Reason* is ever vigilant. We have planted a mole within the group, in a place its organizers would never suspect, and now have conclusive proof that the group should not be recognized in any way by the office of student affairs. (In fact, given the stated willingness of the PSA to violate university policy, it is questionable as to whether or not some of the founding members should have already been disciplined for malicious intent. Mr. Kreider beware.) (*Right Reason*, April 1998: 5)

After only several months of existence campus conservatives were busy planting a mole, issuing personal threats, and lying about the PSA. At the end of the article they printed a list of names of people involved in the PSA as a warning for the administration. The similarity to a 'hit-list' was very telling of the mentality behind the attack.

Since April, the PSA has been attacked by six columnists in *The Observer* and two more in *Right Reason*, all men. That all our attackers would be male is roughly a 1 in 256 probability and could stem from the fact that the PSA is opposed to the patriarchy that has traditionally ruled Notre Dame. Three of *The Observer* columnists included the Viewpoint Editor, an Assistant Viewpoint Editor, and an Associate Viewpoint Editor. These are the people who are responsible for editing, and more critically deciding what letters get printed.

On Oct. 7, Viewpoint Editor Eduardo Llull wrote in “The PSA, Student Senate, and The Blind Pursuit of Rights,” that, “Instead of advocating progressive change in a rational manner, they [the PSA] seem to blindly fight for anyone who screams loud enough about their rights being violated.”

Columnist Spencer Stefko first did a general attack in “Burger King, sex, ROTC, and Insane Clowns”:

But the Campus Clowns of the Fortnight Award goes to The Progressive Student Alliance in a tight finish. Do these clowns have a mute button? Are the vegetarian baby-killers really serious? Is this all a big joke? If I join, do I need to dress up for Halloween? They truly are a posse of insane clowns. Congratulations. (Stefko, Sept 18: 7).

And then Stefko later found time to play with the first two letters (he kept ‘alliance’) of PSA which he decided stood for:

“Perpetually Sauced, Particularly Senseless, Peculiarly Self-important, Pretty Stupid, Primitively Scattershot, Persistently Sappy, Presently Scatterbrained, Publicity Seeking, Preposterously Schizophrenic, Prodigiously Simple, Pleasantly Silent”

(qtd. Stefko, Oct. 8)

In “Be Not Afraid, The Truth Will Set You Free,” Sean Vinck tries to associate the PSA, the College Democrats, and GLND/SMC with the North American Man-Boy Love Association and reveals the PSA’s secret agenda:

“This debate has little to do with student rights – it’s the attempt of some left wing activists to undermine the moral foundations of our University. They seek to replace it with a secular institution guided only by relativism.”

(qtd. Vinck Oct. 13, 1998).

Brandon Williams (Sept. 14, 1998) and Dustin Ferrell (Sept. 30, 1998) both attack the PSA for believing that there is oppression on campus and tell members to work on other issues. By doing so they are denying the oppression that exists at Notre Dame, and the rights of those oppressed people to resist with support. They tell the PSA to work on another issue, but almost whatever issue the PSA chooses is derided as improper. The group’s charity (desire to assist other organizations and the oppressed) is portrayed as opportunism.

More humorously Wayne Lela wrote to the editor of Right Reason (Oct 1998), “Liberalism essentially is designed to appeal to our baser or lower natures, our animal and our emotional sides – not to our higher nature, or reasoning and logical side.” And also in that issue Anthony Castellino (Oct 1998) identifies the real source of our (“People Screeching Aimlessly”) agitation as our lack of BMWs, “If Notre Dame is the modern representative of the Bastille to the PSA and all those other leftist bourgeois who are still upset at mommy and daddy for not getting them a BMW when they turned sixteen, then I pity them because one day they will have to enter the real world.”

In October, after Right Reason came out with another three pages of articles on the PSA, it was getting to the point where most PSA members were feeling personally assaulted. The Progressive Student Alliance was being attacked primarily for daring to dissent and oppose the will of the administration. It was the act of dissent itself, rather than what we were dissenting, which attracted the most criticism. The PSA would express ideas in our weekly column and the counter-attack would generally debate the PSA, rather than the ideas we expressed. Also the PSA was attacked for not being avidly pro-life or for having members who pro-lifers accused or assumed were pro-choice. This was interesting since the PSA did not work on abortion related issues, other than supporting the WRC which was seen by everyone (both pro-life and pro-choice members) in the organization as a matter of free speech. The general pro-life crusade on campus is closely comparable McCarthyism.

The PSA organized two rallies last semester and another two this fall. Except when we opposed the US bombing of Iraq (in February), we have advocated for issues with high levels of student support. Issues like supporting Fr. David Garrick (a gay celibate priest and Notre Dame theatre professor), modifying the nondiscrimination clause, supporting free speech, and making Notre Dame a sweatshop-free campus are not radical. The PSA has intentionally chosen mainstream issues with wide support and yet still faces considerable harassment. Whereas some schools have weekly protests, a couple of demonstrations each semester is too much for many students at Notre Dame.

The administration benefits from having a group of conservative to far-right students who are willing to do its dirty work and take an extreme stance against the PSA and all campus activism. Students are far better suited for creating some forms of intolerance than administrators, who by the ‘dignity’ of their position must refrain from hurtling insults, though they can send authoritarian letters. On the other hand, the conservative right has a tendency of overplaying its hand, acting too racist/sexist/homophobic, and may well be driving people towards the PSA and/or from an apathetic liberalism to action. Interestingly in its first year of existence, the PSA was awarded most of our budget request: \$1200. This sum of money both funds our activism and increases the cost of losing organizational status. It remains to be seen whether the PSA will maintain its club status for long. As the organization selectively breaks rules that hinder its activities and spends much of its effort to oppose the administration’s policy on gay rights (*Note in 2000 PSA’s focus changed to sweatshops and workers rights in general which is possibly even more threatening as if the one to two thousand campus workers were to form unions or organize for a living wage, then it could cost the University several million dollars each year. The fact that workers have been prevented from organizing unions by

illegal University activity and that workers feel too intimidated to even talk about unions provides another example of intimidation at work.*), the possibility of losing recognition increases.

H. General Rules and Regulations

Beyond those mentioned in the previous section, there are several additional duLac rules that are barriers to activism. All petitions must be approved by the Director of Student Activities and signatures may only be collected in pre-approved locations at pre-approved times. Collecting signatures from friends in a dormitory is never permitted. To leaflet or distribute any information on campus, you need permission from Student Activities. A PSA member was cited for leafleting a football game without permission. If a student organization wants to sponsor an overnight trip they must bring a university representative. This implies that students are children who need adult supervision. Trips are unlikely to be approved if students would miss class. The trip rules, whether intentional or not, discourage students attending protests and conferences that are critical for training and networking. These rules are arbitrarily enforced. For instance, when activists chalk messages on the sidewalks it is more likely to get erased early in the morning while birthday greetings or corporate advertisements for textbooks.com will go untouched. In addition, PSA was banned from putting up posters for three months, because the organization put gay rights posters on the walls of buildings which had hundreds of other posters, but where posting is against university rules. Combined with a bureaucracy that requires contracts, advance notice, and multiple signatures to do many activities -- these rules are serious barriers to activism.

6. Future Research, an Empirical Framework and Limits

There are some serious limits to this paper. I make the case that there are numerous barriers to student activism. However while my research is based in historical evidence, I did not verify my hypothesis since to do so would have been beyond the scope of this paper. There are several possible empirical approaches. One would be to measure how variance in barriers at Notre Dame over time affects the level of activism. This would be difficult since activism varies a lot over time independent of barriers, so one would have to have variables measuring the external activist climate. In which you are doing a cross-school comparison, so you might as well do an explicit comparison of how barriers affect activism.

Likely Variables for Predicting Activism:

- political persuasion of self and/or parents (liberal, conservative, moderate, radical left, radical right, apathetic)
- have they participated in a demonstration / activist organization before?
- do they plan to participate in a demonstration / activist organization
- size of institution (small schools might accommodate more – though also greater chance of making a difference)
- private / public (this is also a sign of how many barriers they have)
- location (city / country, region)

Likely Variables for Reducing Activism (Barriers):

- number of unrecognized organizations
- funding
- number of political groups put on probation
- right to protest without warning (yes/no), distribute literature, freedom of press, etc
- #pages in student handbook
- number students / organizations suspended / otherwise disciplined
- student representation on board of trustees
- when governing bodies meet (board of trustees, etc)
- openness of meetings (can anyone come)
- availability of minutes

Outcomes:

- number / size of protests
- number / size of activist organizations
- activism vs. social service (ratio of people, ratio of organizations) (barriers -> more service)
- focus of activism: internal vs. external (barriers -> external focus)
- activists focus: fun socials vs. serious politicking (barriers -> fun socials)

Finally one could interview activists and non-activists to study how they are affected by the presence of barriers.

7. Conclusion

A p1 view of power would argue that the administration of Notre Dame represents a plurality of interests, including those of the students and faculty. If Notre Dame was close to the pluralist ideal, then traditionally oppressed groups (like members of GLND/SMC) would easily find someone in power willing to take on their cause. According to the p1 view GLND/SMC is not recognized because students do not want it to be. It would take campus apathy as a sign that students are content. A p2 perspective would criticize how students (and faculty) and their issues have been organized out of the main arenas of decision-making – which have always been held in the firm grasp of the administration. Students are not apathetic, but realistic as to their low chance of success and recognize that the administration will perilously delay attempts at change. The p3 perspective which I tried to apply would argue, as Gaventa did, that barriers created at the p2 level have led to an accumulation of surplus power by the administration which they have used to influence the beliefs and interests of students to their detriment. The administration has censored the student media, threatened student organizations, tried to ban GLND/SMC, made organizing difficult and sometimes impossible, suspended and threatened activist leaders, and generally used university tradition and Catholicism to build a homogeneous culture of intolerance.

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