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A THEORY OF MUSIC AS POLITICAL RESISTANCE

By

Ian Daniel Walker

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts
in Political Science
in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Mississippi State, Mississippi

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By

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This thesis began as a curiosity about the correlation between politics and music. Closer inspection revealed that there is an absence of literature discussing the relationship between the two. The vacuum in the literature allows this adaptation of John Kingdon's Streams Theory to serve as a theoretical framework through which the relationship between music and politics can be viewed. Upon applying this theoretical framework, the case study genres identified paint a picture of resistant music arising as a function of government action, social climate, and large-scale events that affect the streams identified. In short, government action, social climate, and large-scale events combine at times to augment the streams which can lead to convergences that can lead to the creation of both socially and politically resistant musics. Evidence of the functionality of this theory can be found in case studies of musical genres from the 1950s to the 1990s.

DEDICATION

The work that I've done on this thesis is dedicated to my parents, my family, and my friends. Without the continuous support and upbeat attitudes of my mother, father, sisters as well as friends like Jarod Hanes, Rick Aguilar, Jack Cauthen, Javier Rodriguez, Justin Bennett, and Kari Grillis, the quality of my attitude would have been wane at several points during the process of this thesis. Further, I need to express my gratitude to my proofreaders Carolyn Huff and Jessika Goff for whose time and effort I'm very much indebted.

The actual research here is dedicated to all those who are interested in music but are unsure that it can be used in an academic fashion. I submit that as long as you are creative, music can be used in just about any way.

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I would be remiss if I did not give proper credit to several influences on this thesis. Several close friends aided in the brainstorming of the actual resistant music lyrics. Jack Cauthen, Halley Strickland, Javier Rodriguez, Nicole Stutzman, Sudeep Misra, and Stephanie Grady all proved to be indispensable in helping my creativity flow as well as helping to give me ideas in terms of where to look for the lyrics I needed to prove my points.

Above all else, my most sincere gratitude belongs to Dr. Mary McThomas. She has served as my committee chair but has also performed in a great many more roles than that; she has acted also as my educational mentor, professional counselor, quality-assurance supervisor, and even a pressure release valve at times. In addition, she has had nothing but positive words, and has guided me with kid gloves when necessary while cracking the metaphorical whip at others. At no time throughout the whole process of writing this thesis, though, has there ever been anything but a constructive, reassuring attitude, and for that I am very grateful.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Within many intellectual realms, the subject of music does not often arise. Sociology and ethnomusicology are among the few that study music with any frequency. The discipline of political science is no different; the topic of music is relatively untouched as well. There is something powerful about music, though. I would venture to guess that most people, even scientists that study the hard sciences or social sciences, are likely to admit to a favorite genre or song, and often listen to music while preparing the intellectual work that they create.

It is curious that there exists such a dearth of published inquiry into music in general. The effects of music have been written about on occasion within political science, most often in the subfield of political theory. One of the few examples dates back to Plato's *Republic*, where Plato briefly discusses the idea that music can have both positive and negative effects on a society. Plato states late in Book III that the training of the Guardian class should limit exposure to music to certain harmonies. "The mixed or tenor Lydian and the full-toned or bass Lydian...The Ionian...and the Lydian..." should be banished for having little or no military use (as their harmonies are soft, or express sorrow) while "the Dorian and Phrygian are the only ones which you have left [that have military use]..." and should thereby be promoted (Plato, 253). Outside of this canonical text, however, there are really no other investigations into any aspect of music. But the cooptation of music by modern political movements (including popular music used

during political campaigns) begs the question: what is the dynamic between music and politics? Further, what is the effect of music on politics, or is it that politics and political events affect music? Especially important to politics and the study of political science is the effect music might have on political resistance. However, deciphering which way the effects flow (whether music affects politics or vice versa) has seemingly not been of utmost importance to the discipline, as the dearth of research would suggest. As a result of the gap in the research, I will attempt to create a theoretical framework based on John Kingdon's Streams theory, through which the interaction between music and politics can be viewed. More specifically, I will discuss how the interactions between politics, events, and social climates can combine to create opportunities for both socially and politically resistant musics to be generated by identifying the "streams" they are a part of, as well as what causes swells in these streams.

Literature Review

The existing literature on the subject of music and political movements is sparse and rather deficient. It appears that while almost all of the authors have approached the question of music in a different fashion, they usually end with a similar conclusion. Specifically, it seems as though the authors of the literature are satisfied to provide *examples* of the effect, but never really delve into the crux of *why* music is influential on political movements (or vice versa). For example, in order to provide examples of resistant music, the literature often cited musicians like Bob Marley, Jimi Hendrix, and Joe Hill, as they often created music that was politically resistant in nature (Brown, 2007; Eyerman & Jamison, 1998). Furthermore, in the literature, specific genres were identified as protest genres; namely, 1960's protest and anti-war music, the blues, 1980's

American rap and R&B music as well as reggae, newer rap styles in Burma, popular music around the world, punk, and the music created by the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) in the early 1900's in America (Brown, 2007; Kong, 1995; Keeler, 2009; Fischlin & Heble, 2003; Eyerman & Jamison, 1998). However, despite the citation of resistant musicians, no author ventured even a guess as to *why* the artists' music was resistant and why resistant genres exist at certain times and not others; no author ventured that it could be a combination of politics and larger events that create a higher probability for new resistant music to arise.

Very common to the literature was a focus on culture. For the most part, the literature that discussed culture explicitly painted culture in music as a norming agent. More specifically, music can create norms of political and social behavior. In this way, in the literature, pop music and pop culture can be either good or bad things (Blau, 1988; Kong, 1995; Keeler, 2009; Fischlin & Heble, 2003; Fox & Williams, 1974; Eyerman & Jamison, 1998). More specifically, culture can either help keep resistant music from springing up (as in Singapore) or can help spur resistance (in the case of Burma) (Kong, 1995; Keeler, 2009). Musical culture was also mentioned in the literature as being a vehicle of cultural dispersion. From this point, a few of the authors suggested that dispersion of culture in this fashion aids in social and political movements against repression (Keeler, 2009; Fischlin & Heble, 2003; Eyerman & Jamison, 1998; Fox & Williams, 1974). In a similar vein, the issue of cultural 'gray-out,' or the dilution of some cultures at the expense of more prevalent cultures (as a result of dominant western culture being present in less developed countries), is also discussed within the literature (Stokes, 2004). In still other sources, culture (via music as an art form) is discussed as a unifier, as an identifier, as a source of a collective repertoire, which can function to

polarize or inflame the indignation of the targets and thus be involved in the interaction between music and politics (Keeler, 2009; Fischlin & Heble, 2003; Kong, 1995). For example, “An authentic folklorist [or keeper/disperser of local culture] can be as dangerous [to a political regime] as a patriot holding a gun...” (Fischlin & Heble, 2003). In this way, the literature regularly points to the powerful effect music can have, but never attempts to answer any questions of why. An acknowledgement of music’s potential power can be seen in the case of Singapore where culture is contrived by a governmental ‘defense’ organization in order to create an ‘us versus them’ mentality in order to defend against any other, subversive cultures that might incite resistance; specifically “‘national’ songs commissioned and encouraged by the state in the ‘Sing Singapore’ programme, promoted by the Psychological Defence Division of the Ministry of Communications and Information...” (Kong, 1995, 448). Clearly the literature acknowledges the raw power that music can have, but, as previously mentioned, does not ever discuss causality. In short, in response to music as a source of energy for political movements, many authors viewed the issue as a cultural phenomenon to be discussed but not explained.

Another common theme in the literature was the idea of globalization of music and concepts of who owns the means of production as well as instances of alienated labor and fetishization, though admittedly much less often than culture. In some cases, it is because of the domination of the western, industrialized world that occurrences like cultural gray out are possible (Stokes, 2004). In other, more positive cases, globalization is viewed as a disseminator of culture, which allows some social or political movements fresh ammunition in their struggle, as is the case in Burma (Keeler, 2009). Or by a different perspective, globalization of music and its positive and negative effects are

viewed as a result of those that own the money to spur production of music—youth (Fischlin & Heble, 2003; Eyerman & Jamison, 1998). Another common theme in this area is the idea of alienation of labor via those who control the means of production. While some traditional musics are ‘sampled’ (essentially stolen without legal obligation to pay royalties), record labels are able to distribute bits of traditional culture without any legal resistance from the indigenous peoples they ‘borrow’ from (Stokes, 2004). This practice of sampling or exploitation by the owners of the means of production is not solely a core/periphery battle; take the case of Chuck Berry in the United States.

“A salient example would be the songs written by the great rock and roll composer Chuck Berry (like “Maybelline,” “Johnny B. Goode,” “Roll Over Beethoven,” and “Sweet Little Sixteen,” which were all Top Ten Hits) for which he was paid only a few hundred dollars, despite the millions of dollars they have generated and continue to generate in music publishing. The artist/musician was disposable once the record company and music publisher owned the notation, which was traded for currency and exchanged like currency...” (Turley, 2001).

Berry was essentially alienated from his labor and the notation of the music fetishized, in much the same way as internationally ‘sampled’ music. Thus music was used as an example of-but was not central to-a larger political and economic struggle.

Another theme found in the literature is the feeling that music can be a social catharsis. Especially in reference to the blues and to protest music more generally, there is the idea of the liberating effect of music. Music is often referenced as a vehicle for the socially or politically demoralized to be expressive and satiate psychological needs for venting sad and/or possibly mournful thoughts about their current plight, or even help some musicians and/or listeners to feel less marginalized in society (Fischlin & Heble, 2003; Brown, 2007; Blau, 1988).

Similarly present in all of the literature is an acknowledgement of the effect that music can have. In the case of Singapore, through their protest and parody musics “[t]he hegemony of elite culture...has been challenged...” (Kong, 1995). Comparable nods to the power of music are found interwoven into the rest of the literature as well, but the causality behind them are lacking. For example, according to Rebel Musics, music is “a ‘prime cause of unwanted mass behavior.’” (Fischlin & Heble 2003). Yet, there was no attempt to explain what causes the rise in resistant music itself which then leads to mass behavior. In a similar vein, the power of music is noted, but only in the effects; essentially, music and art are necessary to social movements and change in that “habitus...serve[s] to reconstitute the collective identity and to initiate new generations in traditions of protest and dissidence.” (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998). However, in only one source of the literature is there an explicit statement as to exactly why music has such a great influence. To quote the folk/protest singer Joe Hill, “A pamphlet, no matter how good, is never read but once, but a song is learned by heart and repeated over and over; and I maintain that if a person can put a few cold common sense facts in a song, and dress them up in a cloak of humor to take the dryness off of them he will succeed in reaching a great number of workers who are too unintelligent or too indifferent to read a pamphlet or an editorial on economic science.” (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998). In essence, Hill is attributing the success of music as a political resistance tool to the nature of music as accessible and catchy as opposed to more intellectualized means of political suasion. It appears, though, that despite such a succinct statement about the root of music’s success as a political tool, there is more to it than just the nature of music.

In a more comprehensive way, the literature is deficient in one large aspect. Upon completing either a book or journal article, one resounding question always circulated:

Why? All of the sources made claims and tested them somehow, but always fell short by offering only examples of politics in music or protest music genres; the literature never delved into causality. Clearly music does have an effect on the individual and on society, as all the literature sought to prove. But why does music have an effect? What about music lends itself to swaying human sentiments? Most importantly here, the question of why resistant music arises in the first place is very much left unanswered.

A brief discussion is required before jumping headlong. First, it needs to be noted that this is specifically about *resistant musics* as a result of the confluence of what I call streams. The term “resistant music” in the context of this paper is used to denote genres of music that have the tendency to resist either political or social status quos. For example, pop music throughout history has served more to further establish social mores, while rock ‘n’ roll has served to challenge them. Further, it should be noted that this thesis does not seek to identify causes or effects of general protest, regime changes, or why random popular musical genres arise. All of these topics are beyond the scope here.

Second, the issue of timing of the case studies should be addressed. In some circles, the culture of various decades is shown as including a few years on either side of the turn of the decade. For example, the 1970s can include, in some instances as far back as 1967 or as far forward as 1983. However, though there are elements of continuity within all the case studies below, this theory will focus on the meat of the decades combined with the resistant genre that originated within that decade. In essence, I have created ‘genre-decades’ that roughly correspond to the decade in which the genre was created without having to quibble over exactly when that decade began.

Third, for clarity’s sake, the terms ‘musico-political opportunities for resistance’ and ‘musico-social opportunities for resistance’ are almost synonymous. As a result, for

simplicity's sake, I will generally use musico-political opportunities for resistance throughout this paper to mean either of the two. Only during the case studies found below will I differentiate the two (so as to delay differentiation until a more complete discussion of the terms can be completed). Furthermore, to avoid any confusion, it should be noted that the shortened version of either term will generally be musico-political opportunity or musico-social opportunity.

In short, the causal and theoretical gaps in the research have prompted me to create an adaptation of John Kingdon's Streams theory that helps explain the creation of genres of resistant music. This establishes a causal linkage between politics (and events and social climate) and music, and thus helps to fill the hole that exists in existing research.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

My theory of resistant music uses John Kingdon's theory as a framework. My theory recognizes three independent streams that are subject to swells as a result of various events and influences. Further, once swells occur, convergence of the streams is possible, creating periods of time when resistant music can emerge. Several of these aspects are somewhat analogous, and as such, a brief review of Kingdon's theory is necessary before thorough discussion of my theory can begin.

The basis of Kingdon's theory is derived from his landmark theoretical work Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies. The versions I have reviewed were the original publication of the book and the second edition. Using the first edition seemed paramount as I was most concerned with obtaining his theory and not so much the data that he used to develop it. Upon close inspection, though, the two versions are identical in both theory and much of the data. The first edition was published in 1984 and is based on his interviews and case studies conducted from 1976 to 1979. The second edition uses the same theory, and simply "uses some events from the 1980s and 1990s to illustrate the workings of the theory and to show that the original concepts continue to be useful for understanding contemporary events."¹ In both editions, Kingdon repeatedly addresses the fact that his work is not a roadmap to outline how action is taken or how choices are ultimately made. Further, he warns that his theory is not intended for use as an

¹ Kingdon, John W. Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies, 2nd Edition. 1994. Pg. xiii

explanation of why authoritative decisions are made. His book is specifically about agenda setting and alternative specification. In essence, the research and the theory Kingdon developed around it is supposed to do no more than help explain why items rise and fall on the governmental agenda in the United States and how the alternatives float around in what Kingdon calls a “policy primeval soup.”²

Bearing Kingdon’s warnings about actual decision-making processes and his purpose, he describes players involved in the agenda setting and decision-making, both inside and outside of formal government structures. From there, he moves into what he describes as streams: the problems, policy, and politics streams specifically. The problems stream includes events and information that reveal a problem exists that requires attention. The policy stream involves the alternatives and solutions to problems that swirl around in his “policy primeval soup” (to be discussed later). Finally, the politics stream incorporates those factors within the political process that affect both decision-making and agenda-setting. For example, public mood and committee chairmanship affect how the agenda is set, and ultimately what decisions are made. Following discussion of his streams, Kingdon outlines what he calls ‘policy windows,’ or short periods of time that lend themselves to rapid action by the otherwise slow mechanisms of government.

Kingdon first outlines the major players within the formal government system that hold sway and affect the federal agenda. These players, in a general sense, include the administration, civil servants, and Capitol Hill. Within these large groups exist a few smaller groups. For example, within the larger group labeled the administration, there exists the President, his cabinet, and the President’s advisers. Also within government

² Kingdon, John W. 1994. Pgs. 116-7

are the civil servants, and, as one might guess, members of Congress. And while every member of Congress plays a role, there are a few specific members that affect the agenda more profoundly and with more frequency. Actors like the Senate Finance Committee chairman, and other members of important committees and sub-committees (such as Weighs and Means, Rules, etc.) hold more sway than other Congressmen and women. This is so because certain committees are in control of important aspects of the agenda-setting process; specifically chairpersons such as the Rules Committee chair determine the ultimate voting rules on certain bills, and also hold the power of persuasion of their fellow committee and Congress members. Congressional staffers also play a larger than expected role in agenda setting as they often control the flow of information that congressional agenda-setters (like the Speaker of the House, or Senate majority leader) receive. Further, in a similar way to staffers, congressional aides are found throughout Congress in highly important offices like the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). The CBO estimates budgets for new programs among its other duties. Estimates of cost for new programs are of vital importance to those hoping to pass a new measure.

The other type of player is the actor that works outside the formal auspices of government. These types of actors include interest groups, researchers, academics, consultants, the media, and the public, which is represented by public opinion. All of these actors are as self-explanatory as those within government. More specifically, players like researchers affect the agenda by shining light on serious problems facing the nation and providing solution alternatives. A perfect example of this is the research that has been done on infrastructure decay and how big a problem it will become if no action is taken promptly. For example, Kingdon notes, "...bridge collapses focus attention on

highway infrastructure deterioration.”³ Essentially, a focusing event (which will be discussed below) like the major bridge collapse that occurred in 2007 in Minnesota⁴ required the researchers to identify causes and begin looking for similar problems, so that similar events might be avoided. An important factor outside of government, which has a similar counterpart in my theory, is public opinion. Public opinion is often referred to by Kingdon as a sort of nebulous thing that some politicians feel comfortable citing as their reason for placing one item on the agenda at the expense of another. The public mood, via politician citation, then, would hold sway enough for certain players to skew the agenda in their favor (in my theory, the social climate of the time functions in similar fashion). With all the players identified, the process streams (or the crux of Kingdon’s theory) become easier to understand, and also set up a context to understand my adaptation.

We turn now to the first of Kingdon’s streams: the problems stream. The problems stream is basically what its name suggests; it is comprised of several possible elements, but essentially, the problems stream serves to show actors that a problem exists that requires attention. Some of the elements of the problems stream include: indicators, focusing events and crises, and feedback. Indicators are regular, specific tests or markers of the performance of a program or of the general state of a certain aspect of life or society. Often, these indicators reveal deficiencies that require legislative attention. Focusing events and crises are of a different nature, but affect the agenda in a similar fashion. These events can include instances like budget crises, disasters, or any other event that draws attention to a problem that exists within the U.S. (such as the collapse of

³ Kingdon, 1994, pg. 95

⁴ Cnn.com article, foxnews.com article, newyorktimes.com article. All articles discussed the bridge collapse in 2007 in Minnesota. This is exactly what Kingdon termed a focusing event.

a major bridge). These focusing events shine a fevered attention that often leads to bandwagoning in the name of safety and requisite rapid action. And finally, feedback is what politicians and other decision-makers receive in response to various plans of action. For example, if a particular course of action was chosen for Medicare, and despite achieving the desired results also resulted in several negative externalities, feedback would be funneled back to the appropriate decision-maker (in this case, the Secretary or under-Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare). In short, the problems stream exists as the process that shows authorities that there indeed is a pressing problem that requires their immediate attention.

The policy stream is not as much involved in the agenda as it is in the arena of alternatives. The policy stream is described by Kingdon as a “policy primeval soup.” Basically, in the policy stream, ideas and alternatives to problems circulate among academics, experts, and policy entrepreneurs and are constantly rethought, recombined and redeveloped. One might be able to consider this process stream akin to a Millian marketplace of ideas where through a collision of ideas the better, more feasible ones float to the top while the other, less feasible ones fade. At any rate, the policy stream exists to provide the decision-making actors options for when a problem gains enough prominence to be acted upon.

Finally, the politics stream consists of all of those political processes that affect operations in Washington. For example, things like “public mood, pressure group campaigns, election results, partisan or ideological distributions in Congress, and changes of administration”⁵ can change the politics stream, for better or worse. Any changes in the politics stream can profoundly affect the agenda. Things like public mood affect the

⁵ Kingdon, John W., 1984, pg. 145

politics stream simply because elected officials are accountable to their constituencies, and as such, must try to reflect the public's desire or face possible retribution at the polls in the following election. Pressure group campaigns also serve as a means to affect the politics stream by influencing the way politicians perceive a given issue. Election results often can affect the politics stream as an election of several members of the former minority party to Congress can be interpreted as a voter mandate for increased conservatism or liberalism. And finally, similarly to elections in Congress, any change in administration can seriously affect the agenda, specifically if a Republican defeats a Democratic incumbent or vice versa. Overall, the politics stream is the process stream that affects the agenda by affecting most of the major players inside government.

From an overview of Kingdon's streams, we now turn to his policy window. It is important to remember that according to Kingdon, each of the three streams is independent and usually flows free of the other two. However, at times, random variables can cause a convergence of two or more streams. In these times, which are usually very fleeting, what is created is a policy window. By Kingdon's definition, policy windows are "the opportunities for action on given initiatives." (Kingdon, 1984, 166). In short, the stars align and a window opens that combines an indication of something that requires attention with the right political setup and the right policy solution to be chosen. In these policy windows, huge amounts of legislation, or even a few landmark laws can be created. A perfect example of this was the clamor over nationalized healthcare that overtook America during Barack Obama's first few years. A noticeable rise in healthcare costs coupled with a new Democratic supermajority in Congress and a liberal President (the problems and politics streams) were met with the recycled idea for a comprehensive national health plan (policy stream). Despite the

outcome of this healthcare bill, what is important here is that this example is a perfectly characteristic of the functioning of government within Kingdon's theoretical framework.

It should be noted that the above is a very brief treatment of what is a very useful and seemingly accurate theory of public policy. And despite my rather terse treatment, all that one needs to understand my theory is present. It is from this theory that my theory takes its structure and essentially creates three streams that can converge and create a policy window-type occurrence for politically resistant music.

Now that a basic, working level of understanding has been built on Kingdon's theory, I feel that it is necessary to introduce my adaptation. Though I have incorporated the basics of Kingdon, I have applied it to music as political protest and have investigated this correlation through case studies of resistant genres that have arisen over the past sixty years. For example, my theory is comprised of three streams as well: the events stream, politics stream, and social or climate stream. Furthermore, this theory functions similarly in relation to Kingdon's policy windows which, in the context of politically resistant musical genres, I refer to as a musico-political moments of resistance. It is important to note that very much like in Kingdon's theory, the streams here are also independent and free flowing. Below are descriptions of each stream and these musico-political moments of resistance.

The events stream is the stream that runs through general society and includes many of the major events that affect society as a whole. This stream can include global events, as well as domestic happenings. For example, during almost every decade since 1941, the U.S. has been involved in some sort of armed conflict. Some of the American involvement in armed conflicts proved to have more of an impact on the events stream than other conflicts. This is because the spectrum of such conflicts that are involved in

the events stream include both major conflicts such as Vietnam as well as more minor ones like the U.S.'s involvement in Grenada. Besides global events, domestic events are also involved in the events stream. For example, desegregation in American schools as a result of the 1954 landmark Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*⁶ is a prime example of a domestic event that affects the events stream. In light of the few events outlined already for the events stream (wars, manifestations of racism, etc.), one might be inclined to believe that the events stream involves very negative components. However, it should be noted that events within this stream can be either positive or negative; though negative events seem to have a tendency to promote resistant musics more readily, perhaps because they seem to stand out more or evoke stronger emotions. Desegregation and economic booms are perfect examples of positive events that can affect the events stream while civil rights slayings such as those of Emmett Till⁷ or of Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney during 1964's Freedom Summer in Philadelphia, Mississippi are examples of the negatives that shock the nation and affect the events stream. It seems that larger events are easier to identify and rally around. However, as in the case of desegregation, large, long-term processes are also included. In short, both large "focusing events"⁸ and longer, more gradual processes are in play as factors involved in amplifying the events stream. Selected examples of the influences on my streams can be found in table 2.1 below.

Next, similar to Kingdon's politics stream, my politics stream includes factors that are present within the political system of the time. Such factors can include local,

⁶ 347 U.S. 483 (1954)

⁷ For those not familiar, Emmett Till was a young, African-American man murdered and thrown into the Mississippi River in 1955. Controversy surrounds the case to this day, but more than likely Till was lynched for no more reason than because his skin was black.

⁸ According to Kingdon, a focusing event is often "a crisis or disaster that comes along to call attention to the problem." (Kingdon, 1984)

state, or national government happenings. However, for the most part, in my theory, more visible government action makes a larger impact, and as a result is usually the culprit causing the politics stream to swell. Other factors that can impact the politics stream are things like: escalation of an unpopular war (despite public outcry), landmark legislation (like the Civil Rights Act of 1964), public scandals (like Watergate), Supreme Court decisions (*Brown v. Board*, *Griswold v. Connecticut*, *Roe v. Wade*⁹), or even international matters (such as the Iran hostage situation).

It is at this point that I must digress slightly into a short discussion of the difference between the events and politics streams and just how the social stream fits. Despite the fact that a fuller treatise of each stream and the accompanying ‘window’ will be found below, the issue of clarity begs a short discussion. To begin, without a doubt, both streams can lay claim to nearly identical occurrences, but the main difference exists as a result of the component parts of a larger event. For example, the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board* had several impacts. The actual decision that the Justices made in *Brown* would affect the politics stream; however, the subsequent desegregation in U.S. public schools would affect the events stream. The difference here is that though both are technically events, one emanates from government, and the other is merely something that people are forced to deal with. Another prime example of a larger issue is the war in Vietnam. The very existence of the war impacted the events stream, specifically because it was a very unpopular war. However, the decision by Lyndon Johnson to step up bombing and troop deployments affected the politics stream. Often these two streams can overlap (obviously when they share a larger event) and can result

⁹ *Brown* was noted earlier. *Griswold v. Connecticut* 381 U.S. 479 (1965). *Roe v. Wade* 410 U.S. 113 (1973). The more important cases that impacted the politics stream will be discussed more in depth below.

in the creation of a resistant musical movement; however the convergence of these two streams on one event is not always the case.

The final stream here is what I call the social or climate stream. At times within the American sphere, the social climate functions as a facilitator or even a promoter of new genres of resistant music. The causality of this social climate is not pertinent to the discussion here, nor is it material to the theory; what is important in terms of this theory is that it exists and creates a suitable environment for the musical movement to establish at least a fledgling following. For example, items belonging to the previous two streams can create a climate conducive to politically resistant music. However, this causality does not detract from the existence of the appropriate climate, and thusly is of very little import to the theory as a whole.

The social climate in the 1960s in the U.S. seemed to favor resistance to just about any source of authority, and as a result, created an ideal environment for the potent protest rock music of that decade. Similarly, the 1970s had a very experimental air, due perhaps in part to the air of distrust of government (which could be residual from the 1960s) or possibly to the increasingly prevalent use of recreational drugs. Regardless, what is important in this case is that the air of experimentation (or the climate of acceptance of that experimentation) allowed experimentation in the musical arena which created a hugely popular and resistant movement called disco. Disco, though not normally referred to as a resistant genre, had several resistant aspects. For example, disco resisted traditional, established sexual morality and practices in both content and the dancing that accompanied it. Note that disco was resistant in its own way and that it was not necessarily vocal in its resistance. There need not be an explicit statement of rebellion for a resistant music to be considered as such. Nevertheless, the climate existed

for the other streams to converge and create disco. In short, the social or climate stream is a bit nebulous. It involves a public mood or social climate that is at times hard to identify, but nonetheless exists. Often times it is not until later that the climate is identifiable; but such is the benefit of hindsight. For further clarification of the influences on the climate (and the other streams), see table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 Selected Influences on the Streams

Politics Stream	Events Stream	Climate Stream
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jim Crow Laws • Vietnam War • Watergate Scandal • Supreme Court decisions. <i>(Roe, Brown, etc)</i> • Civil Rights Act 1964 • Voting Rights Act 1965 • Executive Order (Central High in Arkansas) • Reaganomics, or supply-side economics in the 1980s¹⁰ • Failure of full integration <i>(i.e.-Boston)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic boom or bust • The return of African-American soldiers from Europe • Slayings of civil rights leaders and workers • Desegregation in public schools • Poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global challenge to authority and authoritarianism • Governmental distrust • Climate of experimentation • Direct opposition and defiance of government • Climate of apathy

¹⁰ In the case of 1980s rap, two factors from two different streams can lay claim to poverty. However, Reaganomics emanated from government and strained poverty, while poverty already existed in the cities. In essence, Reaganomics made life more difficult for already difficult lives. Therein lies the distinction; that Reaganomics was a governmental action, while the already existing poverty in urban areas was not, hence, their location in two different streams within this theory.

With a confluence of two or more of these streams, musico-political moments of resistance, which are similar to Kingdon's policy windows, are created. In short, here, musico-political moments of resistance are a convergence of at least two streams. From that convergence springs forth a newly contrived musical genre that is particularly resistant. This new music is often very vocal in its resistance (as in the case of 1980s rap music); though the new genre does not necessarily need to be explicit in its resistance (as in the case of disco).

As is evident now, there are similarities between Kingdon's and my theories. We postulate that there are three streams involved, share a political stream, and ascribe to the existence of a window of time that exists in which actualization of some kind of action is possible, if not probable. Further, the general feel and way the theories work are similar. It is in these only that our theories are similar. It is important to remember that our theories operate in different realms. Kingdon's theory functions in the realm of public policy, and mine does not. The theory I have created here mainly functions as an observation into the causality of the creation of resistant music, which, to a certain extent, belongs to the realm of the general public. It is this resistant music that is of particular import to political scientists because these rebellious genres can lead to political instability and unrest (especially in the cases of the 1960s protests or 1980s riots). Further, Kingdon and I differ in how our 'windows' operate. In Kingdon's view, the policy window is nothing more than an opportunity for accomplishment of policy prerogatives in government. Here, the 'window' serves as an impetus to the creation of a rebellious music; more of a prompting than just an opportunity. This 'window' seems more akin to a fan pushing events along than just a window allowing them to happen.

Thus, my theory explains why they have occurred in the past and helps to predict when such appearances of musico-political moments of resistance may occur in the future.

CHAPTER III

THE EVENTS STREAM

The previous chapter contained a general overview of the components of my theory, as well as a few similarities between my theory and that of John Kingdon, from whose theory I derived my theoretical framework. In essence, there are three streams that come together and create an opportunity for a rebellious musical genre to be created. In this chapter I will discuss in much greater detail what I call the events stream. The events stream contains any event¹¹ that affects the populace at large; it can contain both domestic events and larger, more global events. Furthermore, it can include both positive and negative events.

Domestic issues seem to have the largest effect on the events stream within the U.S. Examples abound for events that have affected the events stream in the past. However, it seems that the most potent events are those of either an economic or a racial category. The economic situation of the time is possibly the most highly influential. Certain events within the economic cycle heavily influence the events stream. For example, poverty, often as a result of economic events (like recession or depression), has a tendency to breed discontent, and as a result, political resistance in the form of rebellious music. Furthermore, when people are employed, they have less time to be rebellious. It should be noted though that slow economic times are not always

¹¹ I use the term event to mean any happening that affects more than just isolated groups. Selected examples of these events can be found in the table in Chapter 2. More detailed description of the events will be found below.

responsible for affecting the events stream. In fact, prosperity and economic boom can also cause the events stream to swell. The reason for this is that at times in U.S. history, prosperity has prompted claims by rebellious musicians and laypeople alike to criticize the opulence of the increasingly wealthy upper classes; despite the fact that some of these rebels are of the upper class. A related division exists, though, in how absolute and relative wealth affect the events stream. For example, from time to time, both poverty and a wide wealth gap are responsible for affecting the events stream. Specifically, in the case of rap originating in the 1980s (which will be discussed further below), absolute poverty and the subsequent inability to rise economically were directly responsible for affecting the events stream. By contrast, in the case of grunge music (discussed below as well), relative deprivation and growing wealth gaps were targets of criticism and were the culprits as a result. Stagflation of the 1970s, high unemployment, recession, depression, etc. are all domestic economic events that can have a striking effect on the events stream. However, domestic economic events are not always the only factors involved. Consider the protest music that characterized the 1960s as an example; in this case, the economy was relatively small in comparison to other intervening variables such as racial strife and war (though it should be noted that the protests of the 1960s were largely facilitated by the prosperity of the 1950s, as it was often students that participated).

Racial events are no less potent. It appears that the inherently insulting and demeaning nature of the racial strife in this country has been a powerful motivator to the creation of resistant music. Specific events here are what we are concerned with.

Regrettably, within U.S. history there has been no shortage of specific events to cause the

events stream to swell. Events like desegregation, beginning in 1955¹², caused a widespread impact in the lives of both white and black students. The forced exposure of the races as a result of desegregation in an important social institution such as schooling serves to shake up the social stratification, and as a result is not only a rather large event in the context of a whole century, but also caused the events stream during that time to expand. Other events related to racial strife that shook the nation include assassinations, riots, and other senseless slayings. For example, the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and Robert F. Kennedy shook the nation. As a result of these assassinations, those involved in the Civil Rights movement during the time felt as though the overall movement was dealt several substantial blows as their black leaders as well as powerful white supporters (the Kennedys) had been killed. However, despite the negative impact of senseless crimes on the movement toward equality, any morale losses felt as a result of the assassinations actually seemed to have caused the events stream to swell in the context of this theory. In this way, my theory differs from Kingdon's; in his theory, morale losses spur decreases in policy output. Here, though, the events are what matter, and as a result, events that create tension or spur morale losses are often responsible for also spurring the creation of resistant musics. Other, related racial events stunned the country and caused the events stream to swell, as well. For example, the horrific killing of a Chicago teen in Mississippi, Emmett Till's murder, or the murders of three young people in 1964 in Philadelphia, Mississippi were so barbaric that they not only caused the events stream to swell, but even elicited serious FBI investigation and subsequent federal prosecution. Even events not nearly as

¹² *Brown v. Board* was handed down in 1954. However, desegregation did not actually begin until 1955 with the ruling in *Brown II* that stated it should be done with "all deliberate speed."

powerful as the taking of a human's life can affect the events stream. Consider, as an example, civil unrest in the form of sit-ins, riots, and the like. Though civil unrest is not nearly as patently offensive to human sensibilities as the taking of a life, it is enough of an issue to garner national attention and subsequently affect the events stream. Essentially though, major racial events are usually very highly charged and as a result have an effect on the events stream.

As previously mentioned though, the events need not be solely domestic. Global events such as wars, terrorism, Cold War tensions, or even injustices (often human rights violations) in other countries can lead the events stream to grow. Wars have affected the events stream in the United States since probably the Civil War. However the war I will begin with is World War II; primarily because it seems that newly contrived resistant musics began to be a more regular occurrence (with a new one originating roughly every decade) after the close of WWII. WWII and the various subsequent military actions that the U.S. has been involved in since, have caused selective rises in the events stream. For example, in almost every decade, the U.S. has been involved in some sort of conflict. Beginning with our starting point of WWII we move forward to the 1950s with the Korean War. The 1960s belonged to the Vietnam War. The 1970s saw interventions in Cambodia and Laos. The 1980s included incursions in Nicaragua and Grenada. And the 1990s and 2000s have seen wars in Iraq and other nearby Middle Eastern countries. It should be noted here that some of these military actions have had more pronounced effects while others have not. That is to say that all of the above excursions (and ones not included here) can, and most likely have, affected the events stream. However, the degree to which each war has affected the events stream varies greatly. For example, the Korean War had only a marginal effect on the events stream while larger, more involved

wars like WWII and Vietnam had noticeable effects. In fact, in some cases, military action is eclipsed in importance to the events stream by other events; specifically Cambodia, Laos, Nicaragua, and Grenada were all overshadowed by economic events. Global events like the conflicts previously mentioned, can cause several different effects, though two are most prominent. First, there might be an outpouring of support for government, as in WWII. Or, the inverse may occur, and outright protest of the war can also occur, as in Vietnam. The social effects are not so much of a concern here though; the social effects would be more likely to affect the social or climate stream (which will be discussed later). For the intents and purposes here, the concern is mainly that there was a large, global event that would affect the events stream.

Other events such as terrorism or Cold War tensions could potentially also affect the events stream. For the most part though, I would be more inclined to believe that they affect the social or climate stream because they affect the thinking and behaviors of the populace (in much the same way that the *social effects* of wars are more likely to affect the climate stream). However, the effect of the specific events cannot be denied. As a result, selected events within the Cold War could have caused the events stream to swell. For example, the Cuban Missile Crisis is a perfect example of a global event that occurred solely because the U.S. and U.S.S.R. jockeyed for strategic positioning. The tension that gripped the country was palpable and as a result affected the events stream as a sort of focusing event that existed within the larger scope of a tense social climate. Terrorism functions nowadays in the same way; especially in the wake of the September 11th attacks in 2001. The ‘bad guy’ has shifted from the invisible Soviet KGB agent to Muslim terrorists in many respects. In short, whether it be a Cold War related event or one linked to terrorism, tension would affect the climate stream while the related events

are sure to affect the events stream, and ultimately affect the generation of resistant music.

In short, almost any event *can* have an effect on the events stream, provided that it affects either large numbers (such as the whole country in the case of a presidential assassination) or specific groups (as in the case of poverty and the urban population) within the population. At times it seems that the differences between the events and other streams seems to fade. What is important to note is the origination and overall effect of each instance; these are what define which stream lays claim to which incident. For example, racial issues might belong to either politics or events. However, the origination (whether it started as a result of governmental action) or the effect, whether it was a large event that affected the populace (such as poverty in inner-cities), helps to differentiate between the streams. The differentiation of these two streams, despite their similarities, is essential to this theory in that distinguishing political action is material to the creation of politically resistant music. In other words, it is necessary to trace the extent of political events, as they seem to be the most significant to the generation of politically resistant music. The next chapter will discuss the politics stream, which will help to further differentiate the streams.

CHAPTER IV

THE POLITICS STREAM

The politics stream is the next stream for discussion. This stream is comprised of political happenings emanating from sources that exercise governmental authority. In short, governmental happenings are responsible for affecting the politics stream. These governmental happenings can include local, state, or national level politics; however, it should be noted that local and state level politics are less likely than federal politics to cause the politics stream to swell enough to join with another and create a resistant genre. The reason for this is that federal happenings create more of a stir and receive more attention than the smaller level politics. Furthermore, federal politics affect more of the nation, and as a result, have a far wider-reaching impact. Only a few examples of state-level politics have had a wide enough impact to affect the politics stream. For example, Proposition 13 was an initiative passed in California in 1978. California's 'Prop 13' limited inflationary property tax increases to no more than 2% per year. Lawmakers nationwide viewed the passage of this initiative as a taxpayer revolt and thought that raising taxes to pay for unnecessary programs was politically unpalatable. As a result, Prop 13 sent a ripple throughout the politics stream. Prop 13 and the few other smaller-level governmental actions are somewhat anomalous, and as a result do not require further discussion as they generally do not create a big enough stir to prompt resistant music. The regional effects are often felt, but usually fail to create a large enough uproar. As a result, national events are much more unifying and will receive the attention here.

These occurrences incorporate all three branches of government nearly equally; the President, Congress, and the Supreme Court are all similarly involved.

The executive branch's involvement in the politics stream is extensive. Primarily, this is because the president is not just a figurehead, but tends to be alone in the sharing of his responsibility for any failure or success (though at times every aspect of government becomes a scapegoat). However, several areas of an executive nature have affected swells in the politics stream: police action/war, executive orders, scandals and international events among other things have all had impacts on the political arena in America, and subsequently on the politics stream. In terms of police actions or wars, the most notable one to affect the politics stream in relation to resistant music is the war in Vietnam. Though conflict in Vietnam reaches as far back as Dwight Eisenhower, I begin with John F. Kennedy and follow it through Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon. During the Johnson administration, steady war escalation accompanied steadily rising public and governmental discontent. This discontent came to a head and was manifested by what was arguably the most vocal oppositional music genre: protest music of the 1960s. The escalation during this time period represents exactly the type of political action that affected the politics stream in such a way that a resistant musical genre arose. It should be noted that events affecting the politics stream are more apt to prompt the creation of resistant musical genres if they inspire discontent from the general public. And though both large and small conflicts *should* affect the politics stream, the effects of minor conflicts have not really helped to create musico-political opportunities for resistance. For example, the U.S.'s interventions in Nicaragua, Grenada, or Jamaica pale in comparison to more major conflicts like World War II and Vietnam. In the context of

this theory, the latter are much more likely to make the politics swell enough to cause a confluence with another stream and generate a music that is resistant.

Executive orders are also involved in the president's realm of affecting the politics stream. From a historical perspective, though, there are fewer executive orders that had wide-ranging effects than wars and police actions. However, a few notable ones have made a large enough impact to be mentioned here. The best example of an executive mandate that would create ripples in the politics stream occurred in 1957 with E.O. 10730. This order mandated the cessation of the obstruction of justice and sent federal soldiers into Little Rock, Arkansas to forcibly desegregate Central High School.¹³ This is precisely the type of order that would affect the politics stream. Despite only affecting a small number of people directly, the action proved to be a larger statement to the nation that desegregation was the order of the day, and it would be enforced martially if the need presented itself. This specific incident, by virtue of its controversial nature, influenced the creation of protest music in the 1960s by being a matter of a larger issue of racial inequality that plagued the nation at the time. Such racial protest music can be seen vividly by the Sly & The Family Stone song, "Don't call me ni**er, whitey."¹⁴ In it the lyrics state, "Don't call me ni**er, whitey/ don't call me whitey, ni**er." However, as previously mentioned, there were only a few executive orders that were relevant and wide-ranging enough to merit affecting the politics stream. As such, executive orders are quite potent in their effects on the politics stream. But in terms of the generation of

¹³ According to ourdocuments.gov. This site provides pictures of government documents for reference purposes.

¹⁴ Finding the lyrics to this song proved to be a bit difficult. However, full lyrics can be found at songlyrics.com.

resistant musics, it is important to remember that the enactments of the very important ones are so sparse that it really boils down to timing.

Scandals in the executive branch seem also to have a large effect on the politics stream. Scandals like Nixon's Watergate, Clinton's Whitewater and Monica Lewinsky scandals, as well as Kennedy's reputed affairs all had the potential to impact the politics stream. The reason, though, is not necessarily because they affected the discourse of politics. These events did affect the politics at the time, if for no other reason than because they damaged the president's credibility. However, it seems to me that these events served a larger purpose in that they cast a shadow of distrust on the government. A population that cannot trust their most visible politician (the president) seems more prone to resist against 'them.' Scandals like Watergate slapped Americans in the face and inspired distrust in Nixon, who eventually was forced to resign before being impeached. Nixon's antics were in addition to the distaste and distrust of Lyndon Johnson (both because of the escalation of Vietnam and because some conspiracy theorists accuse him of the assassination of John F. Kennedy); all of which resulted in enough of a swell to affect the creation of both the protest music of the 1960s and disco in the 1970s. As such, politics in the U.S. saw a beginning to a general air of distrust; as a result, each successive political event has swelled the politics stream and helped it to reach a confluence with at least one of the other two streams.

International political events also can have an impact on the politics stream, though the effect is usually quite small or even indirect. In truth, there are a great many that *should* have affected the politics stream. However, only a small number actually did, and the effect is usually somewhat removed. As such, certain large events like the Cold War (especially specific events under the umbrella of the Cold War), and international

events that damaged the U.S.'s diplomatic reputation (such as Carter's handling of the 1979 Iran hostage situation, or Reagan's Iran-Contra affair) had an effect on the politics stream. Larger international political incidents like the Cold War should have had an effect on the politics stream but actually, had a much larger effect on the events and climate streams. Specific high-profile incidents like the Cuban Missile Crisis (events under the umbrella of the Cold War) did affect the politics stream, as they affected how politicians acted and, depending on the chosen actions, cast either a positive or negative light onto the respective administration. However, by and large, the majority of the effects of the Cuban Missile Crisis affected the events climate streams most.

Furthermore, the Iran hostage situation was one of the few international events that affected the politics stream; however, its effects were indirect. For example, the Iran hostage situation occurred in 1979 when the U.S. embassy was overrun and Americans were taken as hostages for over a year. Much of the blame for the length of time that Americans were kept as hostages is attributed to President Jimmy Carter's foreign policy style. As Gaddis Smith said, "President Carter inherited an impossible situation—and he and his advisers made the worst of it."¹⁵ Essentially, Carter was caught between two opposing voices: that of his National Security Adviser and his State Department.

Ultimately Carter opted to act very carefully, and only responded with moral suasion and economic sanctions. The result of such action was a crisis that lasted 444 days.¹⁶ The crisis' net effect was to detract confidence from the presidency. This affected the generation of punk music by ultimately causing a conservative political swing that punks

¹⁵ This quotation was taken from an article written about Jimmy Carter for WGBH-Boston, an affiliate of PBS.

¹⁶ The information found on this subject was attained via the Jimmy Carter Library's online document database and the article for WGBH, previously cited.

rebelled against. In short, the Iran Hostage crisis and a few specific incidents under the category of the Cold War were the only international events that had even a noticeable effect on the politics stream in any of the case study genres (to be found below).

Generally other political events have much larger effects on the politics stream.

The executive branch is not alone in its effect on the politics stream, though. The Legislature has had its own instances where some of its actions have prompted the politics stream to swell. Most often, the legislative branch affects the politics stream via legislation. However, at times, in much the same way that the Presidency has affected the politics stream, scandals in Congress can further the feeling of distrust in the government. That effect is usually less prominent in Congress due to the fact that there are 535 members; in essence, the large numbers of individual actors seem to serve as a diffusing factor. That is, since rarely one person is totally responsible for whatever scandal, the blame is spread to all members. One exception to this generality presents itself quite largely: The McCarthy hearings in the 1950s. Joseph McCarthy's obsession with communism expanded far enough to cast a dark shadow on Congress and an even darker one on himself. However, this type of scandal is rare and as a result, as previously stated, legislation is by and large the main source of the Legislature's impact on the politics stream. Specific landmark legislation is probably the largest source of legislative impact on the politics stream. For example, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 caused huge swells in the politics stream. Their far reaching effects are precisely the types of actions by Congress that would create enough of a stir in the populace and in the politics of the time to cause a convergence of at least two streams. Similarly, the nationalized healthcare plan (discussed in chapter 2), though heavily diluted in its final draft, is a perfect example of legislation that affects the politics stream.

What is important in this case is the clamor and fiery political rhetoric that surrounded its passage and followed it into the 2010 midterm elections and was partially responsible for unseating several Democrats in Congress. It is this type of legislation that creates swells in the politics stream and usually is part of a convergence that leads to a resistant music. This was not the case in 2010, or throughout the 1990s and 2000s. As will be discussed later, it seems that the burden on the streams for creation of a new, resistant music is higher as of late. In short, large, landmark legislation is usually the cause of a swell in the politics stream by the legislative branch; although scandals can at times be responsible.

The judicial branch is another large source of swells in the politics stream. Landmark cases often serve as the impetus for large increases in the politics stream. The oft-cited case of *Brown v. Board of Education* is probably the best example of a court case that has drastically affected both politics in the U.S. and interactions between individuals and between the government and the populace. Cases similar to *Brown* also had similar effects (such as the *Brown II*¹⁷ ruling) on the politics stream. Desegregation cases were not the only cases decided by the Supreme Court that would affect the politics stream. Many cases dealing with reproductive rights are not only landmarks in the scope of American history but also affected the politics stream. Cases like *Griswold v. Connecticut*¹⁸ or *Roe v. Wade*¹⁹ also had huge impacts similar to *Brown*. In *Griswold*, the Court ruled that the decision to use contraception was a private choice within a marriage (though it was not until 1972's *Eisenstadt v. Baird*²⁰ decision that officially applied the

¹⁷ 349 U.S. 294 (1955). *Brown II*, as it is often referred to, was essentially the directives from the Supreme Court as to how schools should be desegregated. A phrase cited frequently from it is "with all deliberate speed."

¹⁸ 381 U.S. 479 (1965)

¹⁹ 410 U.S. 113 (1973)

²⁰ 405 U.S. 438 (1972)

Griswold decision's ruling to unmarried couples) and thus legal. In a related vein, *Roe* legalized abortion, though it left many restrictions on it. The common theme in all three cases is that of personal freedom and privacy. Because of their emanation from government, all of the aforementioned cases and their decisions helped to enlarge the politics stream and, as a result, aided the creation of resistant musical varieties; specifically disco as a result of the cases of reproductive rights. In addition to the previously mentioned cases, there are a great deal more cases that have affected the politics stream; cases covering many aspects of life from criminal procedure²¹ to flag burning²². The Supreme Court, then, can have a rather large effect on the politics stream.

The politics stream, then, is one of the widest and most heavily influenced streams in this theory. Because of the wide variety of sources of influence, from all the branches of government to global events, the politics stream is one of the most susceptible to influence and swells. Incidentally, because of the widespread and pervasive effects felt by moves within the government sphere, it is also one of the most potent streams in terms of pushing for the generation of resistant music. As a result, the politics stream is one of the most essential to this theory and the one most apt to prompt resistance in the form of physical protest, or, as this theory suggests, through music.

²¹ *Miranda v. Arizona* 384 U.S. 436 (1966)

²² *Texas v. Johnson* 491 U.S. 397 (1989)

CHAPTER V

THE SOCIAL OR CLIMATE STREAM

The third and final stream involved in this theory is the social or climate stream. This stream is mostly concerned, as the name would imply, with the social climate of the time period in question. The cause of the social climate that would make this stream swell (essentially facilitating the creation of a resistant musical genre) is not relevant in the same way that the causes of the Vietnam War are not relevant to my theory. The mere presence of an appropriate atmosphere is all that really matters here. In some cases, that which helps create a suitable environment is delayed by several years. For example, racial disparities that existed (really, since the founding of the country) were made more volatile by World War II. Note that African-American soldiers in World War II returned from battle with leadership skills, some money and an idea of the irony of “fighting the world's worst racist, Adolph Hitler, in the world's most segregated army.”²³ And even though the causality is visible, it is not so important; rather, the important aspect was that the social climate of the time was conducive to creating a rebellious music. As a result, the conditions of decades of racial disparity coupled with the new conditions of the 1940s began to lead to the proper climate for rock ‘n’ roll music to emerge in the 1950s.

The bulk of the influences on the social/climate stream come from conditions that exist before the time of the swell of the climate stream that creates confluence. The rest are present during the time period in question. Conditions such as racial or economic

²³ Quoted by Lisa Krause from a story by Stephen Ambrose in National Geographic.

disparities that exist for long periods of time affect the climate stream. Though always present, in the cases of the 1950s, 1960s or 1980s, the degree of the economic and racial disparities that existed were enough to create conditions favorable to producing a social climate apt to spawn social or political resistance. Furthermore, the presence of a strong counter culture can create similar conditions. In some cases, the hangover of a strong counter culture from other decades or genres can affect the climate stream later. For example, the climate of resistance created during rock 'n' roll's origination (generally the 1950s), morphed to fit the changing times of the 1960s, but was nevertheless a result of the previous resistant genre. That same climate, though adapted to suit the 1960s, lingered further and, during the 1970s, was further molded and helped to create disco. In short, the climate of protest that originated in the 1950s changed several times and lasted close to twenty years. It could be argued, as well, that this climate of protest even morphed and existed through the 1980s and into the early 1990s (where the last resistant genre I identified ended). As a result, the general climate of protest that aided in the creation of three (or possibly more) resistant genres did so by changing over time and adjoining either one or both of the two other streams to create a musico-political opportunity. This hangover effect within the theory creates a feeling of continuity that at times can cause problems with clarity. More specifically, a hangover climate can create confusion when differentiating the streams in each resistant genre. For example, when examining the 1970s, it would be easy to mistake a climate of protest that is hanging over from the 1960s. However, it may very well have been that climate from the 1960s that helped to create the appropriate climate for protest in the 1970s. In short, the hangover effect that climates can have is an issue to be aware of.

Other influences on the climate stream include things like drugs and the related drug culture or mores and standards that lent themselves to rebellion. Drugs played a large role in two of the case study genres (and could arguably have been involved in another). For the 1960s, an air of experimentation existed, possibly prompted by the increased use of recreational drugs. The increasing use and prevalence of marijuana, LSD, and other hallucinogenic drugs during this time ran counter to the moral standards of the day, and also is very likely to have contributed to the overall air of experimentation that existed. This resistant and experimental climate is just the kind to create a swell in the social stream, which eventually lead to the politically resistant music of the 1960s. In similar fashion, the drug culture that existed in the 1970s and the increasing use of cocaine and other ‘party’ drugs helped fuel resistant disco music. It should be noted that the climate stream is not explicitly political and can, therefore, lead to social but not necessarily political resistances. This distinction will be discussed below.

Mores and social standards also created fluctuations in the climate stream by creating conditions against which people could resist. In sort of a circular manner, the existence of social standards or mores (or the expansion of acceptable behaviors) during some of the case study genre-decades has created openings for resistance, and the creation of a climate of resistance. For instance, the climate that allowed the creation and expansion of disco during the 1970s was influenced by the Supreme Court decisions (as was previously mentioned, the other streams can aid in creation of appropriate climates) relating to reproductive rights (to be discussed more in depth in the case studies below). This expansion of sexual rights led directly to the increased exercise of personal sexuality and resistance to previous sexual standards, and even possibly to more open attempts to push sexual boundaries. Similarly, the presence of social standards amenable to Jim

Crow in some geographic areas created standards against which African-Americans (and some whites) could resist through music. As a result, the mere presence of standards or mores can create conditions against which groups resist. These resistances can create swells in the climate stream that lead to confluences that create musico-political opportunities for resistance.

In short, several factors can affect the climate stream. The other streams can have a decided effect on the climate stream by creating conditions conducive to an appropriate social climate for resistant music to arise. Racial or economic conditions also can create the appropriate social conditions to affect the climate stream. Further, even the presence of certain social standards can create favorable conditions to create swells in the politics stream. To be particularly clear, two disclaimers should be made. First, the climate stream has somewhat of a nebulous nature. More specifically, the presence of an appropriate social climate is often noted for the 1960s; and the causes for that social climate could have been many. However, as has been previously discussed, causality is not as important as is the presence of the climate. Second, the nebulous nature of the climate stream leaves it susceptible to hindsight. More specifically, at times, hindsight seems to be a better identifier of the appropriate climate than does any other source. For example, with the 1960s, the climate of political protest could be well cited by many both during and after that time. However, that of the 1950s was not quite as overt or tumultuous in its resistance and as a result was perhaps a bit less noticeable at the time. In the course of reflecting on either time though, the resistance has become more pronounced for both. In short, the benefit of hindsight is such that the climate is easier to identify, though in some epochs it was identifiable at the time. It goes without saying, though, that the climate stream plays a role in the creation of musico-political

opportunities for resistance; however, the breadth of this role is less than that of the events or politics stream. Metaphorically speaking, it seems as though the climate stream is akin to a river that generally runs peacefully but contains latent undercurrents (an atmosphere of dissent). From time to time, when the undercurrents swell and overtake the dominant current (the dominant atmosphere), an environment ripe for the discontented to lash out musically is created.

CHAPTER VI

MUSICO-POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESISTANCE

Following from a confluence of the streams discussed in the previous chapters, there emerges what I have termed *musico-political opportunities for resistance*. As was mentioned in Chapter 2, these musico-political opportunities are periods of time in which there is an increased likelihood that there will emerge a musical genre that is either more politically or socially resistant. In the cases of the more socially resistant genres, I have drawn a distinction by labeling them *musico-social opportunities for resistance*. The terms are nearly interchangeable as they are created in the similar fashion; the distinction is in the manner in which the actual resistant genres resist. More specifically, the resistances differ in their inputs and outputs. For the musico-political opportunity, the inputs are political in nature (i.e.-the incidents causing swells in the streams, as well as the nature of the resistant musics). By contrast, the musico-social opportunity is created out of more socially oriented inputs. Both are followed ultimately by their respective resistances. This might be a bit confusing; as a result, a short discussion is fitting.

This theory includes three independent streams: the events, politics, and social/climate streams. These three streams normally flow separately; however, at times, certain influences on each respective stream can trigger an expansion of that stream. If two of the streams expand such that they run together, the result is a musico-political or musico-social opportunity for resistance. In some cases, all three streams join, creating a resistant genre that is often particularly powerful. At a minimum, though, two streams

are necessary to spark a musico-political opportunity for resistance. Furthermore, for this theory, the streams that converge are not as important as the fact that there is indeed a convergence. For example, the events and climate streams *can* adjoin and create just as potent a genre as if the politics stream had adjoined the events stream instead. It should be noted, though, that the politics stream seems to be the most essential to inspiring the creation of a politically resistant musical genre. As a result, most often, if only two streams join, one is very likely to be the politics stream. This musico-political opportunity framework is analogous to Kingdon's policy windows; however, here, the musico-political opportunity is a result of the confluence, and hence has less of a feeling of a chance happening as in Kingdon's theory. More specifically, in Kingdon's theory (as discussed in chapter two), the policy window is, at most, an *opportunity* for legislation to be made. Whereas in my theory, with the confluences of the streams, the genres created out of the musico-political opportunities are more than chance occurrences; they are more than mere windows when things *could* be done. They are actually *likely* to occur.

It is at this point that the convergence of multiple streams and the subsequent creation of a musico-political opportunity yield specific results. The results here are specific musical genres that have a decidedly resistant nature. Resistant music in the terms of this theory is a musical genre that vocally protests a political or social status quo (as in the protest music of the 1960s) or is not as politically resistant, but is still socially resistant (as in disco during the 1970).

In essence, the former seems to vocally protest the actual political status quo while the latter seems to be a less vocal, but no less potent protest of the social status quo. This is important because it helps predict what sort of resistant music will arise out of

given circumstances. In short, it appears that when the streams are influenced by more political factors, the end result is often politically resistant, whereas when the streams are influenced by factors more akin to social change, the end result is more socially resistant. More concisely, the nature of the inputs into the streams affects the nature of the outputs in the event of a musico-political opportunity for resistance. The resistant musical types that have occurred as a result of a musico-political opportunity that I have included as case studies below include genres like rock 'n' roll that emerged in the 1950s, the protest music of the 1960s, disco of the 1970s, rap and punk rock of the 1980s, and, to a certain extent, grunge rock of the 1990s. However, I have divided these into social resistance and political resistance. First, the socially resistant musics of 1950s rock 'n' roll and 1970s disco will be discussed. Following that, the divergence will be made much clearer by the contrast in the factors affecting the streams in the cases of 1960s-era protest music, 1980s rap and punk rock, and 1990s grunge. It should be noted that all of these genres typify the resistant music that has a tendency to materialize out of the chaos that is a musico-political or musico-social opportunity. The differences fall mainly in the influences and the outcomes; the process of the musico-political opportunity is unchanged. As the lines that separate political from social rebellion may be hazy, clarity requires further investigation. Below I have included case studies of the aforementioned genres that should help to show the differences between the socially resistant musics and the politically resistant musics.

Social Resistances

1950s Emerging Rock 'n' Roll

The 1950s saw the rise to prominence of a genre of music unlike much of what had come before. The new music was termed rock 'n' roll, and borrowed elements of the blues while adding a more electric sound and faster tempos (among the other differences between rock and other music of the time). This new sound was a resistant one, as well. It should be noted that resistant music has been no stranger to Americans over the course of the history of the U.S. For example, jazz music and the blues both existed as resistant musics. However, despite these prior resistant musical genres, we will focus specifically on the post-WWII period as technology reached a level significant enough that it allowed these musics to reach a majority of the population. As a result, rebel music before 1950, including genres like jazz, blues, bebop, scat and several others, would not pass muster for this theory as they came before mass distribution. Rock 'n' roll, however, reached widespread prominence, despite its humble beginnings. As such, rock 'n' roll is the starting point of a series of resistant genres that have come together as a result of the influences of the various streams.

The reason that this particular genre is included is because rock 'n' roll came about as a result of the confluence of the several streams. Furthermore, the rock 'n' roll that originated in the 1950s was resistant, though because it was not explicitly so, it falls into a similar category as disco. Rock 'n' roll's resistance manifests itself in the challenging of more traditional rhythm and tempo frameworks. The fact that a wide variety of people from different races, ethnicities and socio-economic statuses jumped into the movement helped to lend it legitimacy and spread the seed of rock music as well

as helping to further develop it as a rebellious music. Once it had begun to gain prominence, it quickly became a socially resistant movement.

The musico-social opportunity that allowed the rock movement to come forth in the 1950s resulted from a convergence of streams; specifically, the politics, events and social climate streams. In terms of politics, the preponderance of laws that were known as Jim Crow was heavily responsible for affecting the politics stream in this case. Note that the politics of the time were less involved than other, more socially oriented factors. It is in precisely this way that musico-social opportunities function instead of musico-political opportunities.

The events stream also experienced a few events that caused a swell which ultimately joined with the politics and climate streams to allow an opportunity for rock 'n' roll to come about. The events stream, which contains major events that affect the populace, saw a major influence. The temptation here would be to attribute the swell to the Korean War. This is not the case though. The war in Korea was an event that occurred in the proper time period; however, because the U.S. had previously been mobilized, and the country was in a 'war mood,' the Korean War had a very small effect here in affecting the events stream. By contrast, the boom of the economy in response to winning World War II and rebuilding much of Europe (as well as the positive economic effects caused by Korea, however negligible it may have been) caused the stream to swell. As previously mentioned in talking about the events stream, both booming and crashing economies can cause changes. In this case, the boom caused a swell in the events stream because more people were employed that previously might not have been (namely African-Americans and women, though white men also saw increased employment compared to the pre-war Depression years). And despite time spent at work,

many more began to enjoy leisure time, as the basics of survival were more likely to be met.

Also affecting the events stream was the return of black soldiers from Europe. This event was also essential in expanding the events stream enough to cause a convergence. At the time, African-Americans returning from war in Europe in the late 1940s had experienced a life without much of the repression felt stateside. As quoted by the Army Historical Foundation, Gladys O. Thomas-Anderson (a participant in the war effort in Europe) stated, “We were treated better in Europe than in the States... You could go anywhere you wanted; there was nothing you couldn’t do. We never saw signs that said ‘Colored Only.’”²⁴ This type of juxtaposition of repression compared with a relative increase in freedom generated discontent that would result in social resistance. As a result, economic influences as well as the return of black troops caused increases in the events stream which, when coupled with the other streams, caused a musico-social opportunity for resistance.

Finally, the climate stream was affected in this instance with the social climate of the time being that of a global challenge to authoritarianism. With the collapse of the fascist regimes at the hands of mostly democratic nations, and a communist/free-market standoff (essentially the Cold War) just beginning, a climate of challenge existed. As a result of this appropriate climate, rock ‘n’ roll had a suitable atmosphere in which to arise.

Examples of rock’s social rebellion abound. First and foremost, Elvis Presley was a major leader of this social musical rebellion. Presley was controversial for his

²⁴ Quoted from the Army Historical Foundation website. The article from which this quote comes is on the topic of black veterans of the various wars.

provocative method of dancing on stage; however, his lyrics also pushed the standards of the time. For example, his lyrics to the 1956 song “I want you, I need you, I love you” include just those words in the lyrics.²⁵ At the time, the words “I want you,” might have been considered risqué. Further proof includes Presley’s 1957 song “Jailhouse Rock.” In it, while referring to inmates the lyrics state, “Number forty-seven said to number three:/ ‘You’re the cutest jailbird I ever did see./ I sure would be delighted with your company,/ come on and do the Jailhouse Rock with me.’”²⁶ This song, while most likely not actually advocating prison homosexuality, did however push boundaries. Even his 1957 song “Teddy Bear” was not overtly sexual, but Presley’s performance and the lyrics, “Baby let me be, around you every night/ Run your fingers through my hair,/ And cuddle me real tight”²⁷ could be considered inappropriate for the time.

Still other examples of social resistance exist. Ritchie Valens’ 1959 song “La Bamba” took a Hispanic folk song and created an American rock ‘n’ roll song, essentially rebelling against the tradition that surrounded the song. Or the Big Bopper’s 1958 song “Chantilly Lace” that contained the lyrics, “That wiggle in the walk and giggle in the talk/ Makes the world go round,”²⁸ could be considered risqué for the time. Among other examples, it seems that the trend at the time was to challenge social or cultural norms and push boundaries through rock ‘n’ roll.

In short, the friction caused by the disjointed feelings felt by black Americans who had been exposed to freer European culture only to experience increased restrictions upon their return from overseas theaters (politics stream) coupled with newfound

²⁵ Lyrics to the song can be found at letssingit.com

²⁶ Lyrics also found at letssingit.com

²⁷ Found from letssingit.com

²⁸ Lyrics here found at stlyrics.com

financial security found by both blacks and whites after WWII and free time (events stream) and an apt climate for a challenging or rebellious musical genre to grow (social/climate stream) created the musico-social opportunity that spawned rock 'n' roll. This resistant genre originated within the black community as a result of the musico-social opportunity, and with the arrival of Elvis Presley to the scene, the white community was eventually involved as well. As a result, the resistant sounds that originated within this genre and time period ultimately caused rock music to grow into a genre developed by and distributed to multiple groups through which social rebellion could be expressed. It is important to note here the distinction; that is, why rock music constitutes a socially resistant genre and not a politically resistant one. It can be seen by the lyrics mentioned above, and in other songs, that resistance of the political status quo was pretty much nonexistent. However, social standards at the time were often pushed by Elvis' hips or the Big Bopper's song lyrics. From similar (albeit distinct) influences, the addition of a political spark helped to create the protest music of the 1960s.

Disco from the 1970s

Disco, on its face, may not seem a good candidate for a resistant music. But with very different methodology in its production, and different reasons for its production in general, disco is a great example of a less vocal, but no less potent protest movement. Disco was similar to rock 'n' roll in the method of resistance as neither were vocally politically resistant. However, the challenges they presented to established mores and the overall status quo were more than enough to be considered socially or culturally resistant. Consider provocative styles of dance like 'the hustle' and 'the bump' or songs such as the Bee Gees' "Stayin' Alive" that make explicit drug use references as examples of status

quo resistance. This resistant music called disco was created out of the musico-political opportunity caused by the convergence of a heavily swollen politics stream with the climate stream that was appropriate for the creation of a highly sexual and resistant genre.

The politics stream here was affected in several ways, much like the protest music found in the previous decade. More than likely some political discontent carried over from Johnson and the Vietnam War. However, the majority of the effect on the politics stream by the executive dealt with an increase in political distrust with Richard Nixon and his Watergate scandal. As a result of the scandal, the public's trust in its government fell further, inciting both changes in the politics stream in the form of a turning away from government as well as resistance to the status quo, yielding a social, not political impact. Governmental distrust aside, the heaviest effect on the politics stream occurred as a result of the Supreme Court. Decisions such as *Griswold* (though decided in 1965, this case had a delayed effect), *Eisenstadt*, and *Roe v. Wade* made huge ripples in the politics stream, though it should be noted that the effect was largely social, as these cases were about sexual freedom and not something more political in nature such as voting rights, etc. As a result of these three cases, reproductive rights were largely defended and established by the Court. Specifically, married and unmarried couples had the legal right to obtain both birth control and abortions (though some restrictions applied). As a result, one large barrier to sexual action (procreation) was removed, and casual sex became more commonplace. In short, governmental action at the time increased the politics stream by creating further political distrust, while enabling the people to more easily experiment in certain aspects of their lives.

The climate of the decade that gave rise to disco music was perfectly suited to the creation of this resistant genre. The climate stream was affected during this time by

several factors. The air of the 1970s was very experimental; as was previously mentioned this could have been due to government distrust or the growing societal acceptance of social drug use or could have been an adaptation of the mood hanging over from the previous decade. The important thing to note is that an experimental social climate inclined towards drugs and sex did exist and is evident in the existence of music like the 5th Dimension's "Stoned Soul Picnic," or Barry White's "It's Ecstasy When You Lay Down Next To Me."²⁹; most specifically when White sings, "livin' in ecstasy, yeah, when you lay down next to me."

Consider also as an example of sexual socially resistant music K.C. and the Sunshine Band's "Give it up." In the song, the lyrics state, "Everybody wants you/ Everybody wants your love/ I'd just like to make you mine all night."³⁰ Or also from K.C. and the Sunshine Band, the song, "Party with your body" exemplifies the type of sexuality that existed during the 1970s disco culture. Lyrics from the song include, "Can you find your see-through gown/ So we can lay your body down/ Won't you put on your negligee/ So we can play tonight/ I want you tonight."³¹ In addition to sexuality, drugs were prevalent during this time. In the music, Curtis Mayfield's "Superfly" made overt reference to cocaine; "The aim of his role/ Was to move a lot of blow."³² The drug culture, though, was not represented as heavily in the music of the time, but rather existed at social gathering places such as clubs and discotheques. Instances of either gender retreating to the restroom of a disco club and snorting cocaine became common. In fact, the prevalence of overall drug use during the 1970s grew. According to Gallup's

²⁹ It should be noted that Barry White is arguably considered disco music. According to AllMusic, or AMG, Barry White belongs at times to the genre. This info can be found at allmusic.com. Lyrics to this song can be found at letssingit.com.

³⁰ Lyrics can be found at letssingit.com

³¹ Lyrics can be found at letssingit.com

³² Lyrics found at letssingit.com

website, “The ranks of those who had tried illegal drugs grew -- in 1973, 12% of respondents to a Gallup poll said they had tried marijuana. That number had doubled by 1977.”³³ In short, the disco era was a highly sexualized culture that felt that experimenting with drugs was not a problem. As a result, the rebellion felt via the music was more social than political, but no less potent than eras such as the 1960s or 1980s.

As has been mentioned, disco is not readily known for its resistance. However, in the light of this theory, not only is the type of resistance illuminated, but the causes for originating such a sexual and resistant genre are much clearer. In short, with an air of political distrust due to scandal, and the sanctity of personal choices upheld by the Supreme Court, the politics stream swelled. These political events, coupled with an atmosphere of experimentation with both sex and drugs, caused the streams to converge and create a musico-social opportunity for resistance; and from this opportunity sprung forth socially resistant music: disco.

Grunge Rock of the early- to mid-1990s

Finally, the musical movement that was termed ‘grunge rock’ that originated in the 1990s is one of some controversy. The controversy does not exist so much in the actual music or the performers that were a part of the movement; the controversy exists more in whether or not this movement counts as a resistant genre within the confines of this theory. In reality, despite coming out of the potent musical protest decade of the ‘80s, grunge was still a movement; albeit a smaller one. And this movement was created out of a musico-social opportunity that was generated from a convergence of the politics and events streams.

³³ The data presented here was based on Gallup polls during the time periods noted. These figures were part of a series of reports on drug use during various decades.

The politics stream in the 1990s was affected by several specific political events that could spark increases in it. The political strife and bickering that characterized Newt Gingrich's tenure as Speaker of the House of Representatives proved to be a large influence on the politics stream of the time. This infighting eventually got so bad that it led to a government shutdown. The quarrelling was such that some believed that Newt Gingrich had made it his personal mission to remove then-President Bill Clinton. This sort of squabbling affected the politics stream by decreasing confidence that the federal government could accomplish necessary goals such as agreeing to a budget. As a result, the politics stream in the 1990s grew enough to converge with the events stream.

As for the events stream in the 1990s, the major issue was the increase in opulence. The U.S., at the time, was experiencing economic prosperity as a result of events like the rise of the dot-coms. Furthermore, beginning in 1991, the U.S. experienced the longest period of economic expansion in its history.³⁴ This economic expansion and the opulence for some that followed were large enough to elicit criticism. Though opposite from that of rap in the 1980s, this prosperity was also large enough to elicit a significant growth in the events stream; enough so to cause a convergence of the politics stream with the events stream.

In short, governmental infighting and economic boom created a convergence of the politics and events stream. As a result, the convergence created a musico-political opportunity for resistance that resulted in grunge music. At times grunge was a movement against politics; at others, grunge was simply an apathetic response to the whole world. This can be seen by in lyrics such as Nirvana's "Smells like Teen Spirit" in which Kurt Cobain states, "Oh yeah, I guess, it makes me smile/I found it hard, it's hard

³⁴ According to the National Bureau of Economic Research. The website can be found at www.nber.org

to find/ oh well, whatever, nevermind.”³⁵ However, grunge music, mainly because of the economic aspect of the events stream, was often a criticism of the prosperity that the country was experiencing. This criticism can be seen both in the lyrics of the time and the dress of those associated. For example, the criticism of opulence is exemplified by the song “Tomorrow,” by Silverchair. In the song, the band sings the lyrics, “You say that money isn't everything/ Well I'd like to see you live without it/ You think you can keep on going living like a king/ Oooh babe, but I strongly doubt it.”³⁶ Going further into disparagement of the affluence of the time, the Pearl Jam song “Garden” states, “The direction of the eye, so misleading/ The defection of the soul, nauseously quick/ I don't question, our existence/ I just question, our modern needs.”³⁷ As far as dress is concerned, look no further the wardrobe choices made; often grunge rockers could be seen in ripped jeans and cheap flannel shirts as opposed to the leather and studs found in previous decades and genres. As a result, grunge was a movement caused by the confluence of the streams that spoke out against the increasing opulence of the time.

Political Resistances

Protest Music Characterizing the 1960s

Possibly one of the most widely cited resistant genres in the U.S. is the music that emerged out of the chaotic decade that was the 1960s. Most Americans nowadays are likely to cite musicians during this time period as the most resistant; musicians like Jimi Hendrix, Bob Dylan, and several others. However, as with the other genres here, there is more to the story than simply the random existence of a resistant genre. The protest

³⁵ From Nirvana's 1991 album "Whatever." Lyrics quoted from Letssingit.com

³⁶ Lyrics can be found at letssingit.com

³⁷ Lyrics to this 1991 Pearl Jam song can be found on letssingit.com

music that was heard widely in the 1960s is also a result of a musico-political opportunity, due to the convergence of the several streams. In the case of the politically resistant music of the '60s, all three streams are involved.

The politics stream was affected in this case by several instances. Most notably, the unpopularity of the war in Vietnam and the corollary political events (a forced military draft, etc.) made the largest impact. Lyndon Johnson's decision to continue and even increase the military effort in Vietnam specifically had a large impact on the politics stream. Furthermore, in terms of government action, the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act of 1964 and 1965, respectively, were passed. These caused a swell in the politics stream due to the controversy surrounding them. African-Americans hailed these pieces of legislation (although many criticized them for not going far enough) as a good starting point. However, some members of the white majority criticized it, as it would come to interfere with segregation and the way of life that much of the south had become accustomed to. Further affecting the politics stream was Eisenhower's forced desegregation of Central High. Despite occurring in 1957, the effect was large enough to help begin the swell of the politics stream. In short, the politics stream during this time period experienced a number of events that caused swells, and eventually caused confluence with the other streams.

The events stream, too, was affected by more than a few incidents. More specifically, the events stream was affected by the assassinations of prominent people, as well as those that were not as prominent. Most notably, the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963 had the most prominent effect on the events stream. As a very popular president with hard-earned international clout (as a result of the Cuban Missile Crisis), the assassination was a major event both in U.S. history and in terms of the politics

stream. In terms of the music, the assassination of Kennedy paved the way for the accession of Johnson, who many disliked³⁸ and as a result spurred resistance. Furthermore, the deaths of the three civil rights workers in Mississippi in 1964 helped the events stream grow larger. These types of brutal attacks shook many Americans; this effect on a wide number of people inspired an increase in the events stream.

The climate stream in the case of protest music from the 1960s was wide-open as a result of the air of direct opposition to government. Possibly as a result of the beginnings of resistance begun by rock 'n' roll in the previous decade, the climate during the 1960s was ripe for potent protest music. The causality is not so important here, though. What is important, and can be proven by the potency of the protest music created during this time period, is that the proper climate existed for forceful protest music to be developed. Furthermore, with the strides that had been made towards equality of both gender and race, an atmosphere of change existed. As a result of this atmosphere, a convergence with the other streams was possible, if not likely.

The resistance can be seen overtly in many of the lyrics of the time. For example, Buffalo Springfield's 1967 song "For What It's Worth" states "There's battle lines being drawn,/ nobody's right if everybody's wrong/ Young people speaking their minds/ Getting so much resistance from behind." The lyrics go on, "I think it's time we stop, hey, what's that sound?/ Everybody look what's going down/ What a field-day for the heat,/ a thousand people in the street/ Singing songs and carrying signs, mostly say, hooray for our side/ ...Paranoia strikes deep, into your life it will creep/ It starts when you're always

³⁸ It could be argued that Johnson was well-liked (and proven by his success in getting the Civil Rights Act passed. However, according to Altschuler (1986) some of Johnson's initial popularity was merely a honeymoon phase. Further, "As his poll ratings declined, Johnson used a number of methods to convince those with influence that he was more popular than the polls indicate." (285) This could have skewed actual measured popularity and made him seem more popular than he actually was with the public.

afraid/ You step out of line, the man come and take you away.”³⁹ The heavy anti-government sentiments in the song speak volumes to the types of political resistance that occurred through music at the time.

Arlo Guthrie’s eighteen minute long song, “Alice’s Restaurant,” exemplifies protest music. The commentary on the Vietnam War draft that included lyrics like, “Came to talk about the draft./ They got a building down New York City, it's called Whitehall Street,/ where you walk in, you get injected, inspected, detected, infected, neglected and selected.” Later in the song (several minutes later), Guthrie eventually arrives at his purpose, “If you want to end war and stuff you got to sing loud./ I've been singing this song now for twenty five minutes [erroneously noted at twenty five minutes]. I could sing it for another twenty five minutes. I'm not proud... or tired.”⁴⁰ Jefferson Airplane’s song “Volunteers” protested government as well by lyrically stating, “Hey now it's time for you and me/ Got a revolution, got to revolution/ Come on now we're marching to the sea/ Got a revolution, got to revolution.”⁴¹ Overall, the era and genre were both rife with examples of potent protest music, and further evidence can be noted on a number of other songs and lyrics.

In short, the political happenings coupled with shocking events and the proper climate created a very powerful musico-political opportunity for resistance. It is not coincidental that songs such as Dylan’s “The times they are a-changin’” often furnished the musical fuel for the political protest movements of the time. As a result, rebellions like protests, draft card burnings, etc. that exemplified the political resistance of the time were not without a resistant musical soundtrack.

³⁹ Lyrics found at letssingit.com

⁴⁰ Lyrics also found at letssingit.com

⁴¹ Lyrics to this song can be found at letssingit.com

Rap Music created in the 1980s

One of the most overt and politically charged musical genres is the rap music that was newly developed in the 1980s. Rap music that began to emerge at the onset of the new decade was different from the genres from which it derived much of its influence. Though borrowing from rhythm and blues, jazz, and several other genres, rap (particularly in the 1980s) had a distinct feeling to it. The political messages that pervaded much of the newly emerging rap music were very explicit in some cases, as proven by the lyrics to the song “Fight the Power.”⁴² The lyrics to this resistant song include lines like, “Gotta give us what we need/ our freedom of speech is freedom or death/ We got to fight the powers that be.” However, in some cases, the music simply mentioned problems that African-Americans faced, as in the case of Kurtis Blow’s song “The Breaks.”⁴³ The musico-political opportunity that fostered the creation of this politically charged music was a direct result of a convergence of the politics and events streams.

The political stream here had a few causes for its swell. First, the politics stream was most likely swollen by Reagan-era economic policies. Reagan’s ‘voodoo’ economic policies that focused on reigning in increases in government spending while lowering taxes and reducing inflation and regulation seemed, in retrospect, to aim at helping the impoverished, struggling, average taxpayer. History has been, depending on the source, either quite fond or quite critical of Reagan’s economic policies. For instance, it would seem according to Niskanen (a Reagan trooper inside the Council of Economic Advisors) that Reaganomics was a success because “most of the poor were exempted from the

⁴² “Fight the Power” was performed most notably by Public Enemy. Lyrics can be found at letssingit.com

⁴³ This song mentions instances of infidelity and poverty (borrowing money from the mob). Cases of both, among other issues, were a part of the black, inner-city experience for many.

individual income tax... [and] The unemployment rate declined from 7.0 percent in 1980 to 5.4 percent in 1988.” (Niskanen, 1)⁴⁴ However, other academic sources (such as the journal *Challenge*) show a wholly different picture. Specifically, one article states, “[During the Reagan years, there existed] ...a distribution of income that is now more unequal than at any time in the Postwar period.”(Sawhill, 57)⁴⁵ An earlier article completes the other side of the story by saying, “[A]s a consequence of the Administration’s budget cuts and the recession induced by deflationary monetary policies, the official poverty rate rose from 11.7 percent in 1979 to 15.0 percent in 1982, a 28 percent increase.” (Buchele, 26)⁴⁶ The article states further that, “The Administration’s cuts in social spending have been aimed directly at the poor. The most heavily cut social programs have been those for which only low income and/or unemployed people qualify: employment and training, unemployment insurance, AFDC and Medicaid benefits for the working poor and food stamps.” (Buchele, 26) According to the same article, the difference in the pictures is due in part to the Administration’s factoring into the poverty equation the non-cash benefits of those receiving some sort of social help, including school lunches and Medicaid benefits. (Buchele, 26-27) As a result, it appears that where you stand on your opinion of Reagan’s economic policies depends largely on where you sit. What can be said here, though, is that there must have been some negative effect on the urban poor (which according to the U.S. census included many African-Americans⁴⁷) otherwise, such potent cries from the ghettos

⁴⁴ From the *Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*. It should be noted that Niskanen, the author of this selection was a Reagan employee. As a result, his impartiality may be questionable.

⁴⁵ From the 1989 issue of *Challenge*.

⁴⁶ From the 1984 issue of *Challenge*.

⁴⁷ Retrieved from the U.S. Census website. According to the data, approximately 22 million of the roughly 27 million African Americans in 1980 were urban dwellers. In addition, 29.9% were considered below the poverty rate in 1980.

would probably not have arisen. There would not be the same political outrage that called people to “fight the power.” In short, the answer to the question of the existence of negative economic policies during the 1980s is answered by the effects; namely, the presence of a swell in the politics stream leading to political protest in the form of newly created rap music.

In addition to economic woes, things like the failure of some schools to comply with desegregation by the 1980s (for example, Boston Public Schools) helped to further fuel the discontent with the white establishment. By 1971, integration was noted as not fully achieved as suit was brought to the Supreme Court in the case *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg*⁴⁸. The Court noted that because segregation in many northern cities was de facto by housing patterns, busing was a viable option to attempt to reach full integration. However, the fact remains that until the 1980s, schools in certain areas like Boston were not totally integrated.⁴⁹ In the context here, full integration is one step toward upward mobility as it entails a chance at similar educational opportunities between the two races. This sort of failure is just the type to inspire swells in the politics stream as well as swells in political resistance. The swells in political resistance cause confluences with the other streams and ultimately led to resistant music. In this case, the failure to fully integrate, coupled with discontent at the establishment’s treatment of the impoverished (a group to which many African-Americans belonged in the 1980s) via the supply-side economics of the time, caused the politics stream to swell. It should be noted, though, that the effects of federal supply-side economic policies were not intentional. Keeping African-Americans in urban areas and out of ‘white’ neighborhoods was intentional, but was not

⁴⁸ 402 U.S. 1 (1971)

⁴⁹ From a 2005 special edition of *The Journal of African American History* that dealt specifically with the *Brown* decision and the progress over the past 50 years.

directly a result of wide-reaching federal action. Overall, the economic policy choices of the time paired with other failures in areas such as segregation in the schools created the rise in the politics streams that eventually caused confluence.

The events stream also played a role in the musico-political opportunity leading to rap. For example, the issue of poverty affecting the black community in most urban areas was of considerable magnitude. The issue of poverty in the inner-cities was big enough to create a large swell in the events stream. The issue was so large, in fact, that it is easy to see how rap music screams in the face of the harsh economic conditions faced on a daily basis, especially when considering Grand Master Flash's song "The Message."⁵⁰ In the case of rap, all that was needed for the events stream to swell and ultimately cause a convergence was the issue of poverty. Despite higher instances of poverty in other time periods, the 1980s contained high enough poverty levels in both the area of relative deprivation and the area of absolute poverty; enough so to inspire people to resist.

More lyrical proof of rap's political overtones can be found in the 1988 N.W.A. song "F**k the Police."⁵¹ The reason for the creation of this song is directly related to a vicious cycle; specifically, harsh economic conditions created the need for innovation (in this case, negative, unlawful innovation), as a result, the drug trade developed as a way for some young African-Americans to help make ends meet. From this, police often profiled many young black males (and other minorities) and automatically assumed they would be carrying narcotics. Subsequently, there was no real solution to this cycle, and

⁵⁰ This song begins with the lyrics, "Broken glass everywhere/ People pissing on the stairs, you know they just don't care/ I can't take the smell, I can't take the noise/ Got no money to move out, I guess I got no choice." Lyrics reported by letssingit.com

⁵¹ This song, among all the resistant music I've found, was the only one to really require censorship. Despite requiring a bit of censorship, these patently offensive lyrics are just the types that fit into the framework of highly resistant music. The censored words include offensive terms for African-Americans, as well as other expletives that should be quite apparent to anyone familiar with rap music.

the belief that urbanites were second-class citizens was solidified. As a result, inner city dwellers resorted to resistant music, as opposed to more conventional political methods (which would likely have been ineffective). Specific to this situation were lyrics like those found in “F**k the Police”. The heavily charged lyrics to this song include “F**k the police/ comin' straight from the underground/ A young ni**a got it bad 'cause I'm brown/ And not the other color/ Some police think/ They have the authority to kill a minority...”⁵² The song goes further by saying, “F**kin' with me 'cause I'm a teenager/ With a little bit of gold and a pager/ Searchin' my car, lookin' for the product/ Thinkin' every ni**a is sellin' narcotics...” As is readily visible by the lyrics to the song, N.W.A. made a political statement against the white establishment, and, judging by the popularity of the song, N.W.A. clearly touched a very tender nerve with it.

Other examples exist in numerous other songs from the time including KRS-One's 1989 song, “Who protects us from you?” In it, KRS-One raps, “You were put here to protect us/ But who protects us from you?/ Every time you say "That's illegal"/ Doesn't mean that that's true/ Your authority's never questioned/ No-one questions you/ If I hit you I'll be killed/ But you hit me? I can sue.”⁵³ Clearly, by just the few instances of lyrics presented here, members of the African-American community were up in arms at the state of their plight and dissatisfied with the hypocrisies and mistreatments that they received from the white establishment.

In short, the politics of the time played a role in causing the convergence, but the swell in the events stream caused by the social unrest of tremendous poverty in urban areas was so large that a musico-political opportunity for resistance was not only

⁵² Lyrics can be found at letssingit.com

⁵³ Lyrics to this song can be found at elyricsworld.com

possible, but likely. The incredible destitution and the conditions faced by many on a daily basis were the root causes of this explicitly resistant genre; and though the politics and government establishment at the time (sometimes known as the ‘powers that be’⁵⁴) were partially responsible here and subsequently bore much of the brunt of the resistance, they were not the only cause of the musico-political opportunity that spawned rap.

1980s U.S.⁵⁵ punk rock

The 1980s proved to be a booming decade for musical resistance. As one of the only decades that can lay claim to having more than one rebel music originate within its time period, the 1980s produced rap (as discussed above) and punk rock. What is especially noteworthy here is that punk rock’s roots of creation differ from that of rap. That is, punk rock, while sharing a similar theoretical foundation as rap, and similar aims (political resistance), the issues affecting the streams that created the musico-political opportunity are very different. Punk rock’s musico-political opportunity arose out of the politics and events streams of the 1980s.

The politics stream in the 1980s was expanded largely by a large swing to the right of the political spectrum. As a result of the distaste with Democratic rule in the late 1970s, namely because of Jimmy Carter and the events surrounding his presidency (the Iran hostage crisis, the oil shortage, high stagflation, etc.), the American people seemed to create a mandate for a swing toward conservative presidential leadership; the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 being the herald of this ‘mandate.’ Punk rock was largely seen as an anti-conservative movement as the dress and the lyrics of the time often advocated

⁵⁴ From Public Enemy’s, “Fight the Power”

⁵⁵ U.S. is a required qualifier, as the punk rock movement in general began in the U.K. However, the American version still fits into the theoretical framework set forth here.

against the political norm. Specific examples of this status quo resistance include Mohawk haircuts, and tattoos as well as lyrics like those from Bad Religion's 1981 song "Politics," that include lines like, "what is right and what is wrong?/ the government decides./ you don't have no rights at all,/ as long as you don't fight"⁵⁶

The events stream here, like in rap, contained a large enough impetus to create a swell in the events stream. However, the source of this impetus is vastly different from that of rap. For punk rock, the cause of the swell was created from what might be considered the exact opposite of rap. The success and 'sell-out' mentality that was found by popular rock artists is what spurred the events stream in the case of punk rock. Thus the event that catalyzed an increase in the events stream is the resistance to the changes that usually accompany large contracts (and the associated wealth). Instead of following the trend of overproduced, somewhat boring pop rock music, punk sought to focus on loud, straightforward music. As a result, punk rock's main issue that affected the events stream was not much more than an open and direct resistance to the traditional goal of popular musicians: to sign with a big label and produce music that would sell to the masses. This difference in perspective on success may help to explain rap's reach and longevity. Rappers hoped as a result of their music to rise and escape the ghettos they originally belonged to, while punk spurned success. Punk largely went underground, as a result, while rap flourished and changed away from its roots (perhaps leading to the almost totally politically void lyrics heard today).

The political resistance in punk rock's lyrics is not hard to find. One might even argue that the anti-authority sentiment in most punk rock songs can be applied to the

⁵⁶ Full lyrics can be found at letssingit.com

political sphere. Consider as proof the Dead Kennedy's song from 1981 called "Nazi punks f**k off." Specific resistance against economic success and the politics of the time are exemplified by the lyrics, "Punk ain't no religious cult/ Punk means thinking for yourself/ You ain't hardcore 'coz you spike your hair/ When a jock still lives inside your head.../...You still think swastikas look cool/ The real nazis run your schools/ They're coaches, businessmen and cops/ In a real fourth reich you'll be the first to go."⁵⁷ Or the 1980 Dead Kennedys song called "Holiday in Cambodia." The most pertinent lyrics come when the band sings, "You're a star-belly sneech you suck like a leech/ You want everyone to act like you/ Kiss ass while you bitch so you can get rich/ But your boss gets richer off you/ Well you'll work harder with a gun in your back/For a bowl of rice a day."⁵⁸ Clearly presented within Dead Kennedys' lyrics is criticism of greed and following the crowd (though the song is primarily concerned with western imperialism).

The always prolifically resistant Bad Religion criticized government with their lyrics from the 1981 song "World War III."⁵⁹ The political lyrics state, "Nancy Reagan's a f**kin' mess/... it doesn't matter what the people think./ these days our president drinks." And the Ramones (who many consider the beginners of the American punk movement) contributed to the political discourse with songs like, "Commando."⁶⁰ Resistant lyrics for this song include, "They do their best/ they do what they can/ They get them ready for Viet Nam/ From old Hanoi to East Berlin/ Commando---Involved again." Though too late to protest the Vietnam War, the song protests American involvement in conflicts such as the Cold War and is critical of how government trained

⁵⁷ Lyrics can be found at letssingit.com

⁵⁸ Lyrics can be found at letssingit.com

⁵⁹ This song is a case example of punk rock in the 1980s. It is 53 seconds long, and is hard, fast and simple. Lyrics can be found at letssingit.com

⁶⁰ The lyrics can be found at letssingit.com

and sent troops overseas, in essence criticizing military and military spending.

Furthermore, the Ramones song “Bonzo goes to Bitburg” was a song that emerged as a direct result of a political event (then-President Reagan’s visit to a Nazi SS cemetery in 1985) and was made possible only by the already converged streams. In short, punk rock (as can be seen lyrically) was heavily anti-government.

In the case of punk rock, a reaction to a conservative backlash in America caused a swell in the politics stream. This swell in politics coupled with the swell in the events stream which was caused by an open rebellion to the seemingly normal course of action in the music industry: to sell out. The coupling of these two streams created the musico-political opportunity for resistance that resulted in punk rock.

As seen by the case studies above, a combination of factors that affect the individual streams can create convergences that allow for musico-political opportunities for resistance. In fact, it appears that normally the politics stream is involved, and another stream’s convergence with the politics stream does not solely provide the opportunity for resistance, but it makes resistant musics likely to emerge from these opportunities. In all the cases above, the politics stream contributed directly to the creation of a musico-political opportunity. Though, as noted previously, the inputs into the streams help determine the outputs of the musico-political opportunities in the context of this theory. More specifically, more politically heavy influences create more politically resistant music, while more socially heavy influences create genres more inclined to challenge social mores.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This thesis has considered the issue of the creation of either socially or politically resistant musics. No paradigm in the political science field, to my knowledge, has tackled the question of resistant music. And very few have even considered or discussed music in general. One of the basic theoretical questions I began with was: what is the effect of music on politics? The literature in several points discussed the relationship between music and politics in different contexts, but never developed any sort of causal linkages, and as a result, I found them lacking. Consequently, I attempted to fit music and causality into some sort of theoretical framework to investigate whether there is, in fact, any causal links between music and politics. From there it became evident that music has an effect on politics. More importantly, however, it became apparent that politics affects music in a much more profound way.

In the beginning of this project, a few plausible frameworks existed to explain causality in the context of music and politics. However, upon viewing the situation through the lens of Kingdon's Streams theory, the links became much clearer. In fact, it appeared that the relationship between politics and resistant music was similar in process to Kingdon's theory, though several key differences existed. Specifically, the streams had a similar feel, but were actually different in several aspects. Secondly, the way that the policy window in each theory functions is different; so much so that it required the coining of wholly different terminology: musico-political and musico-social

opportunities for resistance. Thirdly, the recognition of the different natures of some of the inputs into the equations of each theory leads to different results; Kingdon's theory does not recognize that different inputs can cause different outcomes. To be fair, though, Kingdon's theory does not require such a differentiation to preserve the robustness of his theory. Nor is it really material to his theory due to the fact that he makes clear that his theory does not explain how decisions are ultimately made. At any rate, my theory takes into consideration that if the influences on the streams are more social in nature, the outcome generally tends to be more musico-socially resistant. By the same token, if the influences on the streams are more politically oriented, the outcomes are more musico-politically resistant. To summarize, my theory postulates that there exists three independent streams: the politics, events and social/climate streams. These streams ebb and flow with occurrences that affect large numbers of the population. In the event that the streams expand enough to cause a confluence of two or more streams, a musico-political or musico-social opportunity for resistance is created, depending on the types of influences on the streams. For example, if the influences are more political in nature, the resistance is often more politically charged whereas if the influences are more social, the resulting resistance is often more socially rebellious.

Future Research

A few issues remain to be developed in terms of this theory. First, further investigation is needed into the possible existence of an amplifying effect caused by multiple large influences on the streams. For example, further analysis might conclude that 1960s protest music was much more politically resistant than 1990s grunge because there were more events influencing the streams during the 1960s than were affecting the

1990s. Or, it may be revealed that the intensity of the resistance depends more on another factor such as political apathy (i.e. that the 1990s were considerably more apathetic politically than the 1960s). It seems that there is indeed an amplifying effect in terms of the intensity of the resistance that is seen in genres that are influenced by all three streams, or ones that see several major events influence the streams that do join. Meanwhile, political apathy does play a role. In this question of intensity, more research is necessary to develop the exact interaction. From this point the issue of lag time becomes a concern. Specifically, while a resistant movement can lay claim to an event from the past, how long ago may the event be to still be legitimately associated as an influence on one of the streams? For example, did some events in the 1960s create a type of thinking that affected 1980s punk rock? Or did more current events account totally for the creation of punk? It appears to me that the more recent events are most influential in creating the swells that create the musico-political or musico-social opportunities that allow the creation of resistant genres. However, the continuity found in patterns of thinking cannot be denied, and as a result, the questions of lag time and the hangover effect of some events are valid ones. Last and chief among them is that there is an obvious lack of new resistant genres since the comparatively smaller movement in the 1990s that was identified by grunge music. One suggestion is that political participation seemed to reach its peak in the 1960s, and each successive decade since then has been more and more apathetic. Support for this assertion can be seen in studies done on political participation and attachment. More specifically,

“Some of the basic facts are well known. In the early 1970s, about one half of 18-29 year olds voted in presidential elections. By 2000, only one third did. The same pattern holds for congressional elections—a bit more than one quarter in the mid-1970s, compared to less than

one fifth in 2002. Less well known are the trends charted by the remarkable UCLA study involving a quarter million matriculating college freshmen each year, conducted since the mid-1960s. Over this period, every significant indicator of political engagement has fallen by about half. Only 34% of freshmen think that keeping up with politics is important, down from 60% in 1966...” (Galston, 2004)

In short, I believe that the absence of new resistant genres is related to the trend of decreased political participation. It seems as though the lack of new resistant music is so because the apathy felt by Americans (namely the young voter) requires either more events, or more serious events to be overcome. For example, the issue of possibly electing an African-American president (an arguably large event) in the 2008 election drew roughly 62% of voters to the polls⁶¹, despite average turnouts that were significantly lower in the elections both before and after. However, the years since the 1990s has seen collapses of whole financial sectors, recession, depression, two wars, Congressional scandals, the rise of a new, super-conservative political party (the Tea Party), and the historic election of Barack Obama to the presidency. If ever there was a tumultuous time, now is it. And the glaring absence of a musico-political or musico-social opportunity is puzzling. It appears that the threshold of political activity of the populace during the time has a decided impact on all the streams; that is, that the more apathetic to social or political situations the populace becomes, the less likely the streams are to link up creating opportunities for resistance (whether social or political). In the end, though, more research is ultimately necessary to determine the actual effects of apathy.

⁶¹ According to the analysis done by Dr. Michael McDonald of George Mason University. Data accessed for this paper was retrieved from his website.

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