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**GOVERNANCE, PROTEST, AND PRESIDENTIAL
TERMS IN THE GAMBIA**

by

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December 2021

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GOVERNANCE, PROTEST, AND PRESIDENTIAL TERMS IN THE GAMBIA

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ABSTRACT

In December 2016, The Gambia democratically removed its 22-year dictator and elected Adama Barrow as president. Barrow campaigned on a promise to be a transitional president who would restore democracy to The Gambia. He agreed to a limited term of three years and not run for re-election. However, once in office, Barrow, who no longer considered himself a transitional president, claimed that the constitution gave him a five-year term. Barrow's refusal to abide by the agreement created a movement calling for his resignation. This thesis examined protest and governance through the lens of presidential terms using the structural-cognitive model (SCM) to synthesize protest theory and governance. By dissecting the elements into macro and micro variables, this answered the question, "Why have political protests over efforts to extend a presidential term occurred in The Gambia despite the election of a new president?" The rule of law was violated by the two presidents and is shown to be the governance variable responsible for many protests in Gambia. Citizens continued their protest—they feared a return of dictatorship—as Barrow's government remained flawed on critical rule of law. The policy recommendations centered on creating adequate checks and balances to correct the rule of law issues.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
ECOMIG	ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GDP	gross domestic product
GERMP	Gambia's Electricity Restoration and Modernization Project
Hib3	<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type B, third dose
LGBTQ+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, plus pansexual, agender, gender queer, bigender, gender variant, pangender
MOU	memorandum of understanding
NDP	National Development Plan
NEA	National Environment Agency
NGO	nongovernmental organization
PCV3	pneumococcal conjugate
PIU	Police Intervention Unit
POA	Public Order Act
RotaC	rotavirus
SCM	structural cognitive model
SSA	sub-Saharan Africa
TRRC	Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
TYJ	Three Years Jotna
UDP	United Democratic Party

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gambia is a relatively young country and, like the rest of the states in Africa, is still in the process of establishing the best governing model for its people. As of 2020, The Gambia has elected three presidents since becoming a nation-state in 1965, all chosen through elections. Two of the presidents ruled for nearly 20 years each and an incumbent attempted to extend his presidency beyond his term limit. In 2016, Gambians successfully protested President Yahya Jammeh's 22-year rule and chose Adama Barrow as the interim president for three years as the country moved toward democracy. However, once in office, Barrow considered himself more than a transitional president, discovered that the three-year term agreement was unconstitutional, and decided he would not follow it. Protests erupted when Barrow refused to resign, insisted on serving out his full five-year term, and then chose to run for re-election in 2021.

This thesis focuses on a single case study of The Gambia. It poses and answers the question "Why have political protests over efforts to extend a presidential term occurred in The Gambia despite the election of a new president?" This research tests its hypotheses using Karl-Dieter Opp's structural cognitive model (SCM), a synthesis approach to protest theories offered in his book *Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements*. The SCM is used to test the hypotheses on governance, grievance, resources, political opportunity, framing, and identity all operating in concert to generate protests in The Gambia. The hypotheses are as follows:

1. If governance is more effective, if grievances are fewer, and if citizens are happier with the regime, protest is less likely to occur in response to a bid to extend presidential terms of office.
2. Under Jammeh, citizens in The Gambia were less happy with their government, had many grievances, and received poor governance, so they protested.

3. Under Barrow, citizens in The Gambia obtained more public services and experienced better governance but were unhappy with the president's move to extend his term, so they protested.

Although data on protest and governance exist, no scholarship currently exists on the relationship between governance and protest in The Gambia. This thesis begins to close that gap. The case study employs a presidential term comparison of the second president, Jammeh, and third president, Barrow, due to the available information following the election that turned the country back toward democracy. The research focuses on the years between 2010 and 2020, as they covered one election cycle for each president and provided a fair comparison of one term for each. This research analyzes the elements of governance and protests through a presidential term lens in The Gambia. The method helps determine why political protests recurred in The Gambia during the presidencies of Yayha Jammeh and Adama Barrow.

A. GOVERNANCE IN THE GAMBIA, 2010–2020

Between 2010 and 2020, governance in The Gambia improved slightly, going from extremely poor to moderately poor. Governance dynamics played a major role in all protests during the 2010–2020 timeframe. In the first six years of the period, the economy, the rule of law, human rights, and delivery of public goods, with few exceptions, deteriorated under President Jammeh's policies. Jammeh abused his power for personal and political gain and refused to step down as president when he lost re-election, causing the Economic Community of West African States to intervene and threaten to remove him from office forcibly.

Democracy won in December 2016, when the Gambian people elected a new president whom they hoped would bring about much-needed change. President Barrow inherited a dysfunctional government, a deteriorating economy and institutions, and citizens who were emotionally scarred by the atrocities of Jammeh. Barrow tackled the many areas he had inherited in disarray, starting with the economy.

Barrow made remarkable economic improvements before the global COVID-19 pandemic reversed the economic gains. At one point, The Gambia had a 6 percent growth

in gross domestic product, the public debt was below 80 percent, and the unemployment and poverty rate had declined. During his first three years, the economy bustled and caught the eye of the international community, and then 2020 brought COVID.

During the first three years of Barrow's presidency, his governance in every area, while not perfect, was a vast improvement over Jammeh's. From 2017 to 2019, Barrow fulfilled some campaign promises, such as improving human rights, filling the judiciary branch with Gambian judges, and not interfering in the judicial and legislative systems as Jammeh had done. His government made policy changes to attract investments and improve infrastructure, ranging from education to energy, to health, to water, to sanitation. Had Barrow stepped down from his presidency at the end of 2019 as agreed, the Gambian people would have considered him "the" president who single-handedly turned The Gambia around economically and restored democracy. However, Barrow decided to take what was legally allowed and serve a full five-year presidential term (of which the last year is excluded from this research).

In 2020, President Barrow's fourth year in office, his governance went from progressing to regressing. Barrow began to suppress political opposition and commit human rights violations against those who opposed his tenure in office. This year was a controversial one for the president; if he had fulfilled the promise of the 2016 memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the country's political parties, a new president would have risen to office. Even though some aspects of the MOU were unconstitutional—serving only a three-year term and calling for a new election—other parts of the agreement could have been retained, such as Barrow's not running for re-election. Barrow was legally entitled to serve a full presidential term and run for re-election. However, what were considered by protesters to be morality issues, combined with the suppression of opposition, media, and human rights, were indicators of the country's backsliding in its newfound democracy.

B. PROTESTS IN THE GAMBIA, 2010–2020

Protests in The Gambia were prevalent throughout the 10 years covered in this research. More protests occurred under President Barrow than under Jammeh. However, the increase in protests were due to improved governance, democracy, and the return of

rights guaranteed by the constitution. This thesis analyzed the protests in chronological order to contrast the two presidents' administrations, show how protests and governance were interconnected, and demonstrate how they were, in some cases, chain reactions. The research presented the general facts of each protest and emphasized some dynamics that aided in the synthesis.

All protests fed off a previous protest but not necessarily the one directly preceding it. Protests under Jammeh all moved toward his removal as president, mostly via election. Protests under Barrow were mostly related to change in government and, toward his fourth year, his removal as president. Each protest produced more confidence in protesters, and the demand for change began to grow, especially following the protests that culminated in the voting out of Jammeh. This point in time was a tremendous milestone for Gambians and empowered them with confidence that their collective action made a difference. In subsequent protests, this confidence strengthened their identity and gave hope for positive outcomes in favor of protesters if they made their voices heard.

C. KEY FINDINGS

The Gambia's governance, protest, and presidential terms provided a unique glimpse at a small country with big potential. The research isolated the area of governance that sparked many of the protests: the rule of law. This thesis used the SCM to explore theories about why political protests occurred in The Gambia despite the democratic election of a new president. The first hypothesis—that better governance leads to more protests—was partially accurate because increased liberties under the Barrow administration led to more protests. However, the second hypothesis proved false because Jammeh's weak governance generated an environment of fear that created fewer protests than Barrow's administration over a longer period. The final hypothesis—that citizens protested because Barrow wanted to extend his term—was partially true. Compared to Jammeh, Barrow provided better governance for Gambians. Citizens protested because Barrow's governance still had deficiencies in the fundamental rule-of-law issues, and citizens feared a return of dictatorship. Some, not all, protests were caused by Barrow's political ambition to fulfill a full five-year term.

Governance is essential to supporting peaceful protests and preventing violent ones. Gambians chose Barrow as interim president because he had no political aspirations, an ideal trait for a transition president, who should be concerned with using power for the country's benefit. Barrow was supposed to be altruistic and give The Gambia an opportunity to improve all parts of governance for the people. When Barrow decided he was more than a transitory president, he dethroned himself in the eyes of some of his initial supporters. He became another man intoxicated with power and unable to provide the next president with a competent administration to improve The Gambia. Barrow's desire to stay in office for another three years and run for re-election angered citizens who felt robbed of the possibility of a new start toward democracy. In the end, during the period covered in this research, Barrow did not live up to the people's or the international community's expectations.

D. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Protests show that democracy is working, especially in Africa. The problem in protests arises from the government's response to protesters. Protests may be minimized by adequately addressing the issues that cause many grievances. Therefore, the goal should not be to eliminate protests using violence. It is recommended that leaders focus on improving governance by delivering political and social goods to citizens and the rule of law.

On the African continent, the rule of law is critical to good governance. Corruption and human rights abuses result from manipulating the rule of law. Therefore, democracies must prioritize constitutional or security reforms that prevent this manipulation. Some democracies may challenge the reforms, yet if appropriately implemented, they will ultimately benefit the country and improve all aspects of governance. A country must have adequate checks and balances on all branches of government to protect the country and ensure its prosperity. Any manipulation or elimination of those checks could prove disastrous in already weak institutions. This research strongly recommends the concept of a transitional president, prime minister, or head of state for any state transitioning to democracy. A transitional representative will remove or diminish the authority of the

branches of government that enable corruption or other ineffective behaviors such as the repression of human rights.

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I. INTRODUCTION

From 2010 to 2020, political protests occurred across sub-Saharan Africa. One case of significant interest is The Gambia. During this period, the country transitioned from a 22-year dictator, President Yahya Jammeh, to a new president, Adama Barrow, in the 2016 presidential election. Leading up to the election, Gambians protested the authoritarian incumbent, but after the election, they protested the democratically elected president as well. Barrow had promised to serve as interim president for three years, yet after the election, he decided to extend his term to five years as established in the country's constitution—a decision The Gambia's citizens rejected as part of the Three Years Jotna movement.¹ The Gambia is intriguing because its citizens have protested both a dictator who limited their rights and a democratically elected president who wanted to extend his term as allowed by the constitution.

Given the dichotomy in political developments of the two presidents, this research examines the question “Why have political protests over efforts to extend a presidential term occurred in The Gambia despite the election of a new president?” The research explores possible factors that have shaped the emergence of citizen protests in The Gambia. Asante and Helbrecht observe that protests are a long-lived experience in Africa, with their root causes emanating from public dissatisfaction with incumbents' bad governance.² This research intends to test this theory by using Karl-Dieter Opp's structural cognitive model (SCM). This synthesis approach to protest theories, as offered in Opp's book *Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements*, can help determine why political protests have recurred in The Gambia during the presidencies of Jammeh and Barrow.

¹ Nicolas Haque, “The Gambia Clamps down on Protests against President Barrow,” Al Jazeera, January 27, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/videos/2020/1/27/the-gambia-clamps-down-on-protests-against-president-barrow>.

² Lewis Abedi Asante and Ilse Helbrecht, “Seeing through African Protest Logics: A Longitudinal Review of Continuity and Change in Protests in Ghana,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 52, no. 2 (2018): 173, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00083968.2018.1477607>.

A. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

This research highlights a critical political reality confronting African nations in the post-independence and democratizing era: governance vis-à-vis protests. Said Djinnit, United Nations representative on West Africa, says that it is stability, not democracy, that a country requires to put institutions in place for economic governance.³ However, he further states democracy and stability are linked and that democracy is the foundation of long-term stability.⁴ A country's stability requires good governance, which involves both political and economic governance. Even though not all African countries are democratic, stability is essential for a country that wishes to develop and thrive.

Meanwhile, protests are a crucial tenet of governance. Citizens' ability to protest is an integral part of responses to governance. When all other avenues fail, a government must be willing to listen to its citizens' voices. A government's reaction to and its effects on citizen protest will either strengthen or weaken its democratic status. The government's decision to ignore its citizens or use force to silence them could lead to destabilization, which can be detrimental to that country and the region.

A delicate balance between protest, governance, and stability is crucial to mastering a country's continued development. In Africa, countries have yet to achieve this balance; thus, by exploring the case of The Gambia, it is possible to find the elements that trigger protests and evaluate those with governance to see what factors, if any, are related. Where cooperation between the government and the polity is emphasized, citizens are less likely to resort to protests to express their grievances.⁵ By examining how governance influences the outbreak of protests, it may be possible to determine what aspect of governance is causing the issue; resolving this issue could strengthen the state. Furthermore, examining The Gambia's successes and failures of governance in dealing with efforts to extend

³ "'Stability Is Based on Democracy': Interview with Said Djinnit, UN Representative on West Africa," *Africa Renewal*, April 15, 2010, <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/april-2010/%E2%80%98stability-based-democracy%E2%80%99>.

⁴ *Africa Renewal*.

⁵ Sabine C. Carey, "The Dynamic Relationship between Protest and Repression," *Political Research Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (2006): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1177/106591290605900101>.

presidential term limits contributes to the scholarly debate on governance and protest. The findings may suggest future policies aimed at minimizing protest, improving governance, and increasing country stability.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ascertaining the relationship between governance and protests is critical to understanding how states can minimize protests and improve governance. This literature review analyzes governance, protests, and their connection to modifying presidential term limits and extending presidents' terms in office. It explores the definition and characteristics of good and bad governance, followed by the definition and protest theories pertinent to efforts to extend presidential terms, and concludes with the connection between protest and governance.

1. Governance Issues

The authority of a government to direct actions, implement policies, and control the state is *governance*. While government refers to the machinery and institutional arrangements for the exercise of sovereign power in the service of the political community's internal and external interests, governance encompasses both the process and outcome of making authoritative decisions for society's greater good.⁶ More simply, governance is the ability to provide public goods to the masses, including political, social, and economic goods and services.⁷ However, scholars have different definitions and explanations of the concept of governance. Francis Fukuyama emphasizes that the critical aspects of governance are bureaucratic capabilities and autonomy.⁸ Robert Rotberg disagrees with Fukuyama and others on bureaucratic autonomy and believes that

⁶ Abdullah Senghore, *Democracy, Human Rights and Governance in The Gambia: Essays on Social Adjustment* (Centre for Media and Development Research in Africa, 2018), 70, <http://muse.jhu.edu/book/58081>.

⁷ "Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG)," Mo Ibrahim Foundation, accessed February 11, 2021, <http://mo.ibrahim.foundation/iiag>.

⁸ Francis Fukuyama, "What Is Governance?," *Governance* 26, no. 3 (July 2013): 347, <https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12035>.

governance is a measure of performance and the results of service delivery.⁹ Rotberg equates governance with government performance.¹⁰ The capacity for a government to deliver goods and services is predicated on its economic performance. The government's economic performance is a subset of the government's overall performance, as measured by how it controls the economy and business climate. A country's president is the citizens' perceived representation of the government. Therefore, understanding the characteristics of good and bad governance is necessary to evaluate the president's performance as the representative of the citizens' government.

Good governance requires provisions of basic goods and services including security. According to Marie Besançon, a well-governed nation ensures its citizens' security, which is the most critical political good a government can provide its polity.¹¹ Human security implies that a government ensures its citizens access to the following: clean food, a clean and sustainable environment, guaranteed civil liberties, good healthcare, and other related social amenities and infrastructure such as schools, accessible transportation systems, and other social services.¹² Moreover, a nation that ensures its citizens benefits from well-structured institutional and fiscal policies, wise environmental management, and an enabling business environment that attracts investors is one that practices good governance.¹³ Good governance architecture embodies adherence to accountable leadership principles, transparency, inclusivity, and civil liberties. As a result, governance entails a government's providing various political goods, most notably security, to its citizens. Hence, good governance occurs when a government achieves its

⁹ Robert I. Rotberg, "Good Governance Means Performance and Results," *Governance* 27, no. 3 (2014): 511, <https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12084>.

¹⁰ Rotberg, 511.

¹¹ Marie Besançon, *Good Governance Rankings: The Art of Measurement*, WPF Reports (Cambridge, MA: World Peace Foundation, 2003), 1.

¹² Besançon, 1.

¹³ Kempe Ronald Hope Sr., "Toward Good Governance and Sustainable Development: The African Peer Review Mechanism," *Governance* 18, no. 2 (2005): 294, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0491.2005.00276.x>.

mandate given by its citizenry to effectively deliver access to various political goods, beginning with security.¹⁴

African countries have increasingly experienced political upheaval, unrest, and an environment that tolerates violations of their own citizens' fundamental human rights, all of which underscore bad governance. Many of these protests revolve around an incumbent regime's refusal to allow for a peaceful transition of power following an electoral defeat.¹⁵ Besançon believes that if these nations revered good governance principles—such as respect for institutions, promotion of civil liberties, and the rule of law—incumbents would willingly hand over power upon defeat and thus prevent protests in the first place.¹⁶ The logic is that governments that adhere to good governance practices do not silence dissent through extrajudicial arrests, detentions, and killings but rather respect the rule of law by providing citizens with essential services, food, and national security. Presidential incumbents refusing to transfer power peacefully have sparked frequent protests and dissent across the continent. Over the last decade (2010–2020), protests occurred not only in West and East Africa, where The Gambia is located, but also in Central Africa, particularly in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Equatorial Guinea.¹⁷

2. Protest Theory

Protest usually occurs due to some form of grievance. Sabine Carey defines *protest* as collective action by actors within a state that takes the disruptive form typically directed at government institutions and their representative authorities.¹⁸ Similarly, Karl-Dieter Opp defines *protest* as collective action to achieve common goals by influencing a target's

¹⁴ Besançon, *Good Governance Rankings: The Art of Measurement*, 1.

¹⁵ Brett L. Carter, "The Struggle over Term Limits in Africa: How International Pressure Can Help," *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 3 (2016): 48, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2016.0038>.

¹⁶ Besançon, *Good Governance Rankings: The Art of Measurement*.

¹⁷ Filip Reyntjens, "Respecting and Circumventing Presidential Term Limits in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Comparative Survey," *African Affairs* 119, no. 475 (2020): 289, <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adz029>.

¹⁸ Carey, "The Dynamic Relationship between Protest and Repression," 2.

decisions.¹⁹ A *protest group* describes a collection of actors who want to influence a target's decisions to achieve common goals.²⁰ A *social movement* is a protest group that can be distinguished from other protest groups.²¹ In essence, a social movement is a specific protest group. This research uses the term social movement rather than protest group for consistent terminology in the social movement research field. A social movement addresses protest groups and explains the characteristics (variables) frequently used to distinguish them from other groups.²² The study of political protests and social movements has developed multiple ways to understand individuals' participation in collective action.²³

One school of thought, *resource mobilization* theory, emphasizes economic motives for the rise of protest and social movements. Other perspectives focus on the opportunity for mobilization and collective action as necessary for understanding the protests that arise, rather than the issues that motivate the protest. These perspectives are often labeled the political opportunity model. In combining these two insights, for social mobilization and protest to arise, there must be both a reason and motivation that sparks the desire to mobilize. Groups must have the resources and capability to mobilize for protest and movements to arise. The final school of thought focuses on the synthesis of these theories.

¹⁹ Karl-Dieter Opp, *Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements: A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Critique, and Synthesis* (London: Routledge, 2009), 44, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203883846>.

²⁰ Opp, 44.

²¹ Opp, 44.

²² Opp, 44.

²³ Giovanni A. Travaglino, "Social Sciences and Social Movements: The Theoretical Context," *Contemporary Social Science* 9, no. 1 (2014): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21582041.2013.851406>; Conny Roggeband and Bert Klandermans, eds., *Handbook of Social Movements across Disciplines*, Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57648-0>; and Doug McAdam, "Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Direction," in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, ed. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 23–40, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803987.003>.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, resource mobilization theory emerged out of research on collective behavior. It argued that protest is an acceptable practice for ordinary, rational individuals.²⁴ According to resource mobilization theory, social movements and protests occur due to changes in the structure, resources, and potential for collective action of an organization.²⁵ Resource mobilization theory approaches collective action from an economic perspective, emphasizing the role of resource flows in the formation and advancement of movements.²⁶ Mancur Olson has suggested that humans are rational decision-makers who engage in collective action because it is “either more rewarding or less costly than inaction.”²⁷ Olson’s argument is important because “protesters do not provide the public good themselves.”²⁸ Instead, as Opp has pointed out, “only third parties like governments are capable of providing the public good.”²⁹ If individuals cannot provide resources for themselves, they have no choice but to go without or demand public goods. Nevertheless, scholars saw resource mobilization theory’s overemphasis of economic and entrepreneurial approaches as inadequate in explaining social movement development.³⁰ As a result, resource mobilization expanded to introduce *contentious politics*, including protest as a relational action between the state and society.

²⁴ Paris Aslanidis, “Occupy Populism: Social Movements of the Great Precession in Comparative Perspective” (PhD diss., University of Macedonia, 2015), 59, <http://dspace.lib.uom.gr/handle/2159/18750>.

²⁵ Deana A. Rohlinger and Haley Gentile, “Sociological Understandings of Social Movements: A North American Perspective,” in *Handbook of Social Movements across Disciplines*, ed. Conny Roggeband and Bert Klandermans, Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 11, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57648-0>.

²⁶ John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory,” *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 6 (1977): 1212–41.

²⁷ Rohlinger and Gentile, “Sociological Understandings of Social Movements,” 11, quoted in Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, Harvard Economic Studies, vol. 124 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965).

²⁸ Opp, *Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements*, 92.

²⁹ Opp, 92.

³⁰ Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 2nd ed., Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Sydney Tarrow, a notable scholar of contentious politics, argues that contention is linked more with collective action opportunities and limited by constraints rather than persistent social or economic factors.³¹ As a form of resource mobilization, contentious politics occur when institutional access opens for new actors, relationships are formed and tested with elites and exacerbated by challengers, the state's ability to repress dissent decreases, and the cost of inaction is high.³² If a state is firmly authoritarian or a democracy with poor governance, it possesses a strong willingness and capacity to suppress dissent to maintain its status quo. Threats to challengers can bring either resentment or collective action, but states carry out these threats when not doing so might cause irreversible opportunities for action to succeed.³³ In essence, politicians or political entrepreneurs may use contentious politics to cause protests to make a political point. Therefore, contentious politics necessitates an internal and external examination of all actors, protesters, and the state alike, as well as their motivations. A presidential bid to remain in office could lead to contention and the increasing necessity for the regime to suppress dissent, thus leading to protest. Contention and other elements of resource mobilization, however, do not necessarily speak to the political opportunity that may arise and cause protest.

The political opportunity model emerged as a response to the limitations of the resource mobilization theory. The resource mobilization model exaggerated the role of resources, placed too much emphasis on elite power in shaping mobilization, and most importantly, did not assign a central role to the political factors that influence grievances, resources, and opportunities in the larger context. Political opportunity debates emerged among scholars who contend the underlying premise of protest is “simply politics by other

³¹ Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, “Comparative Perspectives on Contentious Politics,” in *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, ed. Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 260–90, ProQuest; Tarrow, *Power in Movement*; and Marco Giugni, “Political Opportunity: Still a Useful Concept?,” in *Contention and Trust in Cities and States*, ed. Michael Hanagan and Chris Tilly (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2011), 271–83, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0756-6_19.

³² Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 71.

³³ Tarrow, 72.

means.”³⁴ Other scholars have argued that new prospects of opportunity increase the perceived possibility of success for politically marginalized communities, promoting mobilization and collective action.³⁵ Political opportunity is a possible tool for political opponents to use a government’s deficiency toward its citizens as a way to rise to power.

Another prominent school of thought involves *framing*. According to Snow et al. in their article “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation,” the most glaring deficiency in social movement theory is the propensity to gloss over the interpretation of events and experiences pertinent to participation in social movement activities and campaigns.³⁶ This tendency is most pronounced in the handling of grievances.³⁷ Too much attention is given to grievances and “their social psychological manifestations (e.g., relative deprivation, alienation),” thereby ignoring that grievances or discontents might be interpreted differently across individuals, social movement organizations, and time.³⁸ Frames are “schemata of interpretation” that help individuals to “locate, perceive, identify, and label” occurrences within their personal space and the larger world, according to Erving Goffman in his book *Frame Analysis*, published in 1974.³⁹ According to Goffman, frames organize experience and direct behavior, whether individual or collective, by giving events or occurrences meaning.⁴⁰ According to McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, “At a minimum people need to feel both aggrieved about some aspect

³⁴ William A. Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1990).

³⁵ J. Craig Jenkins, David Jacobs, and Jon Agnone, “Political Opportunities and African-Americans,” in *Readings on Social Movements: Origins, Dynamics and Outcomes*, ed. Doug McAdam and David Snow, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 57.

³⁶ David A. Snow et al., “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation,” *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 4 (1986): 465, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2095581>.

³⁷ Snow et al., 465.

³⁸ Snow et al., 465.

³⁹ Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 464.

⁴⁰ Goffman, 464.

of their lives and optimistic that, acting collectively, they can redress the problem.”⁴¹ Framing allows for narratives and a shared purpose of forming social movements. This thesis explores framing processes in developing the anti-Jammeh and Three Years Jotna (TYJ) movements around the respective president.

Another psychological school of thought encompasses collective identity. Alberto Melucci defines collective identity as the process through which actors build shared cognitive frames that enable them to analyze their surroundings and weigh the costs and benefits of action.⁴² Collective identity is an interactive, collaborative concept that comprises action orientations and the space between possibilities and constraints in which action occurs; “interactive and shared” refer to a process that is built and negotiated by repeatedly activating the bonds that tie people together.⁴³ According to Melucci, “Collective identity as a process involves at least three fundamental dimensions . . . : (1) formulating cognitive frameworks concerning the ends, means, and field of action, (2) activating relationships between the actors, who interact, communicate, influence each other, negotiate, and make decisions, (3) making emotional investments, which enable individuals to recognize themselves.”⁴⁴

According to William Gamson, collective identity is part of a participant’s definition of self.⁴⁵ He further states that individuals may participate not because they believe their contribution will aid the movement in accomplishing its goal but because of the immense pleasure derived from being and feeling a part of this collective membership, which provides “self fulfillment and realization.”⁴⁶ Chris Barker states that identity is

⁴¹ Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5.

⁴² Alberto Melucci, “Getting Involved: Identity and Mobilization in Social Movements,” *International Social Movement Research* 1 (1988): 343.

⁴³ Melucci, 342.

⁴⁴ Melucci, 343.

⁴⁵ William A. Gamson, *Talking Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 60.

⁴⁶ Gamson, 56.

better understood as an emotionally charged description of oneself rather than a fixed entity: “Identities are discursive-performative, that is, identity is understood to be the ‘effect’ of discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names.”⁴⁷ Identity, as defined by Opp, is the sense of identification with a group.⁴⁸ It is a sense of belonging, so the group’s welfare is in one’s interest. Identity is a selective incentive in the theory of collective action.⁴⁹ This research acknowledges the role of identity in the formation of protests or movements under Jammeh and Barrow.

The final school of thought in this review integrates social movements into a single model. Opp argues that although most social movement scholars consider psychological approaches opposites of other collective action approaches, synthesis is possible.⁵⁰ Opp’s SCM synthesizes macro-models, such as resource mobilization and political opportunity, with micro-level social psychological theories, such as framing and identity (see Figure 1).⁵¹

⁴⁷ Chris Barker, *Making Sense of Cultural Studies: Central Problems and Critical Debates* (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), 106, ProQuest.

⁴⁸ Opp, *Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements*, 232.

⁴⁹ Opp, 232.

⁵⁰ Opp, 350.

⁵¹ Opp, 327–34.

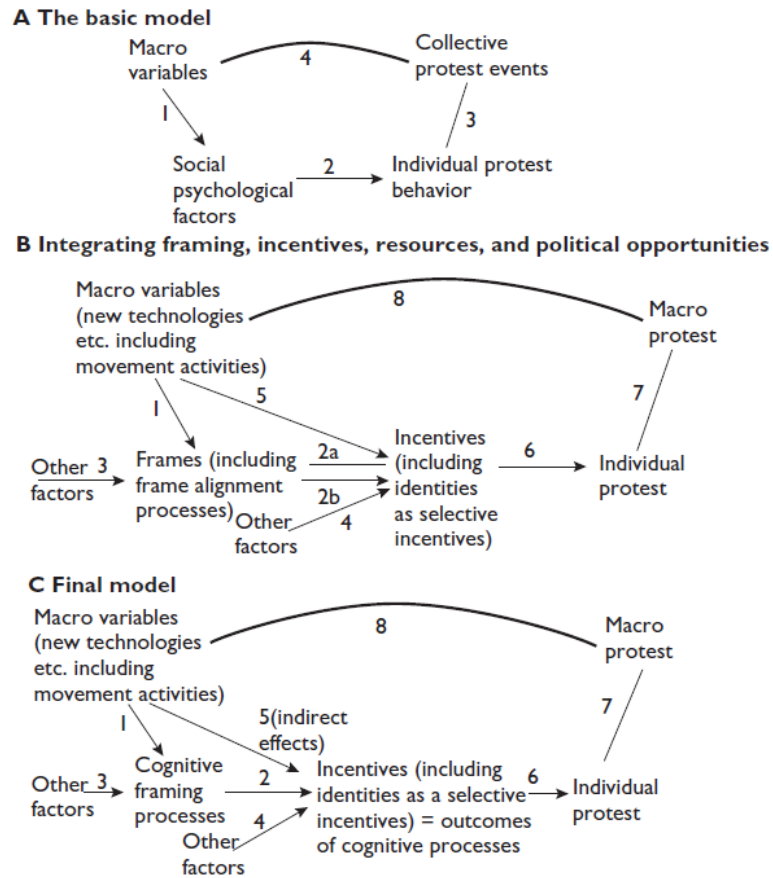


Figure 1. The Structural Cognitive Model: A Synthesis of the Major Theoretical Perspectives on Social Movements and Political Protest.⁵²

The limits of these macro-level theories are the psychological or cognitive micro-level theories, and vice versa. Thus, the SCM is useful in evaluating protests as it theoretically explains social movements better than other existing theories do.⁵³ As shown in Figure 1, the model expands the current protest theory explanations by evaluating how other factors ultimately affect the outcome in the final model, C. This model achieves a more in-depth evaluation of protests by using a bridge assumption to connect macro- and micro-theories to explain their occurrence.⁵⁴ Protest emergence in response to efforts to

⁵² Source: Opp, 328.

⁵³ Opp, 335.

⁵⁴ Opp, 349.

extend presidential tenure in office fits into the previous schools of thought, but the SCM provides a method to discover whether any theories overlap. As the SCM suggests, many factors bridge protest theory, including outside factors like governance; therefore, the following subsection explores the bridge between political protest and governance.

3. Protest for Better Governance

When a government fails to provide its citizens with political goods, such as security, good healthcare, and appropriate development in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) growth, fissures of dissent open. If a government fails to provide the goods its citizens expect to receive, the latter are likely to resort to protests and demonstrations.⁵⁵ According to Carey, protests occur as expressways for individuals to exercise democratic rights against a sitting government by voicing discontent with government practices deemed a deliberate disregard of good governance by sections of the polity.⁵⁶

Protests are framed as a manifestation of domestic conflict. Asante and Helbrecht argue that protests are ever-present in Africa, with most of them stemming from reactions to African regimes' bad governance practices.⁵⁷ One school of thought argues that Africa's protests occur as reactions against regime activity that seek to ensure a regime's continuity by curtailing civil rights.⁵⁸ Protests, in this context, are public responses to government attempts to coerce and repress the citizenry. From Côte d'Ivoire to Uganda, incumbent governments tend not to tolerate public protests and usually respond with harsh and forceful government action.⁵⁹ Police brutality is associated with protests in many African nations, as regimes across the continent increasingly regard protests as an attempt to

⁵⁵ Caesar Kayizari, "Good Governance as a Pillar of Sustainable Development in Africa" (presentation, Istanbul Aydın University, 2015), https://www.aydin.edu.tr/tr-tr/arastirma/arastirmamerkezleri/afrikam/Documents/Oturum%203%20-%20Good-Governance-as-a-pillar-for-sustainable-Development-in-Africa_CaesarKayizari.pdf.

⁵⁶ Carey, "The Dynamic Relationship between Protest and Repression," 1.

⁵⁷ Asante and Helbrecht, "Seeing through African Protest Logics," 159.

⁵⁸ Carey, "The Dynamic Relationship between Protest and Repression," 3.

⁵⁹ Adam Branch and Zachariah Mampilly, *Africa Uprising: Popular Protest and Political Change*, African Arguments (London: Zed Books, 2015).

delegitimize the current government.⁶⁰ For example, deaths and injuries among protesters in The Gambia are common because of clashes with government enforcers such as the police.⁶¹

This literature review concludes current protest theory provides the insight that protests are rational movements with varying sociological (micro-level) and external (macro-level) factors. These factors motivate political movements to include grievances, resource mobilization, and political opportunity. This thesis tests the SCM's effectiveness in determining the macro–micro relationship between protests, governance, and requests for presidential tenure extensions in The Gambia. The aim is to fill an academic gap concerning the correlation between governance and protest efforts to extend presidential terms in The Gambia.

C. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The six schools of thought presented in the literature expose several potential reasons Gambians protested President Yahya Jammeh's and President Adama Barrow's efforts to extend their presidential terms in office by re-election—and beyond the promised limit in Barrow's case. One thought is that grievance leads to protest. This grievance responds to a lack of governance, lack of economic opportunity, or restrictions of freedoms. The second school of thought, resource mobilization, contends that although grievance is present, protest requires resources like money or organization capacity. Political opportunity, the third school of thought, argues that a grievance and resources are essential but that protests occur due to the availability of political opportunity. The fourth school of thought, framing, argues that the psychological element of meaning or purpose is a

⁶⁰ Jacob S Lewis, "Corruption Perceptions and Contentious Politics in Africa: How Different Types of Corruption Have Shaped Africa's Third Wave of Protest," *Political Studies Review* 19, no. 2 (2021): 5, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929920903657>; and Jack R. Mangala, "Constitutionalism and the Future of Presidential Term Limits in Africa," in *The Politics of Challenging Presidential Term Limits in Africa*, ed. Jack R. Mangala (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), 14, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-40810-7_8.

⁶¹ Maggie Dwyer and Ismaila Ceesay, "The Gambia's President Said He'd Step Down after Three Years. Will He?," *African Arguments*, December 12, 2019, <https://africanarguments.org/2019/12/the-gambia-president-barrow-three-years-jotna/>.

necessary incentive for mobilization. The other psychological element and fifth school of thought, identity, is that connection with a group prompts mobilization linked to the identified group's welfare. The final school is the SCM, which requires a synthesis of all the models to dissect the macro–micro levels of a protest to determine its cause.

Democracies have more political space than other forms of government and should have more political opportunities to allow for protest. Looking at The Gambia, the question arises whether the quality of governance is related to protest. Is the quality of decision-making relevant? What about the existence or degree of corruption? Does the degree of citizen security provision matter to protesters?

The literature review deduces the following hypotheses:

1. If governance is more effective, if grievances are fewer, and if citizens are happier with the regime, protest is less likely to occur in response to a bid to extend presidential terms of office.
2. Under Jammeh, citizens in The Gambia were less happy with their government, had many grievances, and received poor governance, so they protested.
3. Under Barrow, citizens in The Gambia obtained more public services and experienced better governance but were unhappy with the president's move to extend his term, so they protested.

This thesis tests these hypotheses using the SCM to determine how governance, grievance, resources, political opportunity, framing, and identity work together to trigger protests in The Gambia.

D. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis employs a single case study using the SCM to examine the various governance modes in The Gambia under President Jammeh and President Barrow and their effect on protests concerning incumbent efforts to extend presidential terms in office. Framed by the literature related to governance, this research analyzes both good and bad governance aspects—ranging from democratic presidential transitions to institutional

respect, to infrastructure, to GDP growth, to the rule of law—to evaluate whether their scarcity explains the lack of citizen protests over presidential term extensions. The process includes an examination of past events focusing on two presidential terms encompassing 2010–2020. It looks at grievances, governance dynamics, resource mobilization, political opportunities, framing, and identity in The Gambia.

E. CASE SELECTION: THE GAMBIA

Although there are data on protest and governance, no scholarship currently combines the two in The Gambia. The Gambia has a semi-democratic system in that citizens vote for the president. Gambians have selected two long-term presidents who reigned for over 20 years, an incumbent who attempted to extend presidential tenure beyond what was promised, and presidential candidates who influenced legal changes to remain in office. Gambians successfully protested and subsequently ousted 22-year president Yahya Jammeh in 2016. They elected Adama Barrow as a three-year interim president while the government transitioned to a more democratic state. However, subsequent protests followed when Barrow refused to step down, insisted on completing a full five-year term, and then decided to run for a second term in the 2021 election.⁶²

Press restrictions in The Gambia have prevented the analysis of political protests from 2010 to 2020. During President Jammeh’s reign in The Gambia, the private press was highly vocal about human rights violations and misrule.⁶³ This media attention came at a high cost in terms of human and material losses; sometimes, media houses, publishing machinery, and printing presses were burned down.⁶⁴ Under Jammeh’s reign, private radio stations were closed down, and in some cases, journalists were physically assaulted and killed.⁶⁵ This behavior continued until what many Gambians believed to be “the new

⁶² Ruth Maclean and Saikou Jammeh, “Gambia’s Joy Gives Way to Sinking Distrust as Barrow Clings to Power,” *Guardian*, September 23, 2019, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/sep/23/gambia-joy-gives-way-to-sinking-distrust-adama-barrow-clings-to-power>.

⁶³ Senghore, *Democracy, Human Rights and Governance in The Gambia*, 101.

⁶⁴ Senghore, 101.

⁶⁵ Senghore, 101.

Gambia” began under President Barrow. Since the transition, there has been a great deal of public information through newspaper articles and journals.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

The thesis, using a single case-study approach, analyzes the phenomenon of political protest and governance to explore why Gambians under different presidents have protested presidential term limits. If the people successfully changed rulers, why are they still protesting the current president’s attempt to remain in office? The thesis examines the various governance modes in The Gambia and their effect on protests concerning efforts to extend presidential tenure in office. Under each president, the case analyzes the following:

1. What are the governance deficits or positive dynamics? What grievances do citizens have (e.g., economic, service delivery, or governance)? How were these grievances triggered by the efforts to extend tenure in office by the country’s president?
2. If there was a grievance, what was the political opportunity for mobilization and protest? Did citizens try to mobilize?
3. Once groups tried to mobilize, was framing or identity part of the reason?
4. What resources were citizens able to gather for their efforts?
5. How did the government respond? How did the response affect the current protest? Did the response appear to have any impact on future mobilization efforts? If so, how?
6. If any one of the above—grievance, governance deficiencies, political opportunity, framing, identity, or resource mobilization—is not present, does its absence prevent protests? Are any of the above dependent on any of the others to create protests? Did any factors outside of these have a role in the outcome?

1. Background

This thesis focuses on The Gambia and uses the same structure for each president's chapter. An exploration of the protests in The Gambia over 10 years, from 2010 to 2020, looks for explanations why they occurred and whether they had to do with the incumbent president's desire to remain in office. This research explores protests in the last six years of Jammeh's presidency and those of Barrow's presidency, as well as classifies any coup attempts during this time as protests for presidential removal. Chapter III, which covers President Barrow, contains shorter sections for things inherited from President Jammeh, as they are discussed in Chapter II. The following paragraphs lay out the terms, definitions, structure, and country background used for this research.

In The Gambia, presidential terms are for five years. Over the 10 years reviewed, there were two presidential elections, one in 2011 and one in 2016. Under a democratic system, protests are expected and often encouraged to demand change. The bedrock of democracy is the will of the people, for the literal meaning translates to *rule by the people*. In The Gambia, elections are held for the country's president and its 53-seat legislature, the National Assembly of The Gambia. All offices hold a five-year term. The election of these public servants is meant to do just that: serve the people. Due to the country's high illiteracy rate, citizens cast votes by placing round marbles in drums with the candidates' pictures on them. As of 2020, The Gambia has had only three elected presidents. The first president, Dawda Jawara, ruled from 1972 to 1994 before being overthrown in a coup by Yahya Jammeh. Jammeh ruled from 1994 to 2016 before being defeated in a presidential election by Adama Barrow, the incumbent. In The Gambia, no article in the constitution addresses the issue of presidential term limits.⁶⁶ Therefore, an incumbent can theoretically be reelected until one's death or loss in an election.

The lack of term limits has resulted in two long-term presidents, with a promise to change the constitution from Barrow. Barrow's promise to change the system for The

⁶⁶ Urbain Thierry Yogo and Joseph Keneck Massil, "Presidential Term Limits and Fiscal Policy in African Countries," *Journal of African Economies* 28, no. 2 (2019): 208, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jae/ejy021>.

Gambia and end Jammeh's 22-year reign of terror on the Gambian people was a major unifying factor for the country. Due to the length of presidential reigns in the country, this thesis limits its focus to the 10 years covering two presidential terms to see how effectively the presidents served the people by evaluating governance and protests during that time. The first term is President Jammeh's last five years in office, and the other is President Barrow's current term.

a. Governance

The Gambia's governance is explored through the lens of three factors: the economy, security institutions, and the provision of public goods. These factors create the subsections under governance. Some scholars disagree that the economy is a governance factor; however, this research argues that it is. The economy is a crucial factor in governance as the delivery of public goods depends on the economy's strength. If the economy is weak and the state does not have funds, it cannot provide public goods. If the economy is strong and being mismanaged, it can also affect the delivery of public goods. As Rotberg suggests, governance is best measured through proxies of tangible service deliveries.⁶⁷ Therefore, this research uses the Gambian economy as a governance variable. The economy section explores the country's GDP and debt, citizen unemployment rate, and poverty rate. The security institution section explores the rule of law and any deviations among the military, police, citizens, and president. Security institutions are created for the public's wellbeing and intended to protect and assist the country in maintaining order. The elected government of a nation must ensure that the security sector is managed democratically and that security is provided as a public good.⁶⁸ Governments are also politically responsible for security-sector actions.⁶⁹ This responsibility necessitates comprehensive security measures and management systems to assure accountability.⁷⁰ As

⁶⁷ Rotberg, "Good Governance Means Performance and Results," 511.

⁶⁸ "The Role of Government," Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, accessed October 5, 2021, <https://securitysectorintegrity.com/institutions-and-organisations/the-role-of-government/>.

⁶⁹ Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance.

⁷⁰ Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance.

defined by the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, the rule of law is a set of formal and procedural rules that regulate how a community is governed. The formal principles involve generality, clarity, transparency, stability, and prospectivity of social norms.⁷¹ These procedural principles involve the mechanisms and organizations required to administer these norms, such as courts and an independent judiciary.⁷²

The public goods section explores The Gambia's provision of infrastructure, health care, education, and job training. This thesis uses the term *infrastructure* to mean public infrastructure, which is defined as government-developed, owned, and operated infrastructure facilities, systems, and structures. Infrastructure can be subdivided into three types: soft, hard, and critical. *Soft infrastructure* refers to all institutions that contribute to an economy's health. These typically demand significant human capital and are geared toward providing services to the populace. All educational, health, financial, law and order, and other institutions deemed critical to an economy's wellbeing are termed soft infrastructure. *Hard infrastructure* refers to all physical systems required to run a trade-based economy, which encompasses roads, highways, and telecommunications services, such as telephone lines and broadband networks. *Critical infrastructure* refers to all assets the government considers critical to an economy's operation. It covers such assets as those utilized for housing and heating, telecommunications, public health, and agriculture, including natural gas, safe drinking water, and medicine. Infrastructure is, therefore, all the necessary systems and facilities to ensure smooth daily operations of an economy and improve citizens' standard of living.

The constitution establishes the government's ownership of infrastructure, its responsibility to the population, and the guidelines for the office of president. The 1997 Gambian constitution has provisions for infrastructure, health, education, and job training, as mentioned previously. The following are constitutional mandates:

⁷¹ Jeremy Waldron, "The Rule of Law," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2020/entries/rule-of-law/>.

⁷² Waldron.

- Infrastructure (Social objectives 216): The state shall provide clean and safe water, health and medical services and facilities, shelter, food, and security for all Gambians.⁷³
- Education (Educational objectives 217): The state shall provide all residents access to free basic education and quality education at all levels, skills training, adult literacy programs, and rehabilitative vocational training for the disabled through policies and government resources.⁷⁴
- The Executive Branch (Chapter VI): The president shall uphold and defend the constitution; may at any time declare and revoke a state of public emergency in whole or part of The Gambia; shall appoint and may remove move members of the electoral commission with certain caveats; may not serve as president if found liable for misconduct, corruption, negligence, or improper behavior by the commission or committee of inquiry.⁷⁵
- Presidential Term (63): The elected president shall have a five-year term in office, shall assume office 60 days following the election, and may be removed from office at any time with two-thirds no-confidence vote of the National Assembly.⁷⁶
- Vacancy (65): Office of the president shall become vacant upon death, resignation, or removal due to health or misconduct. Upon vacancy, the

⁷³ Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia, 1997, January 16, 1997, 121, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4811c33f2.html>.

⁷⁴ Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia, 1997, 122.

⁷⁵ Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia, 1997, 42–44.

⁷⁶ Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia, 1997, 42.

vice president shall assume office; if there is no vice president, then the speaker shall assume office.⁷⁷

- Salary and Allowances (68): The president may not hold any other profit or emolument office, whether public or private; occupy any other position entitling him to remuneration for services rendered; or directly or indirectly engage in any trade, business, or other undertakings—provided, however, that the president may engage in any agricultural business, including farming, horticulture, livestock rearing, and artisanal fishing, but may not utilize their official position or information gained to profit themselves or others.⁷⁸

The constitution promises that these are provided to citizens and that the president will abide by the constitution. Therefore, looking at the constitution is important in fairly evaluating governance to refrain from assessing public goods that are not included. The constitution is an important part of this research due to its manipulation by the incumbent president in efforts to extend his presidential term. An analysis follows this section to determine the effectiveness of governance, which is one part of the equation in this research. The other part involves protest.

b. Protests

Protests that occurred over the 10 years studied are explored in chronological order, then analyzed through four protest theories—resource mobilization, political opportunity, identity, and framing—and synthesized with the SCM to evaluate the causes of the protest. The SCM is not a new protest theory; it is a way to dismantle protests at the macro- and micro-levels and determine each level's significance before, during, and following protests (see Figure 1). Exhibit C of Figure 1 is used in the SCM analysis portions. To summarize, the SCM synthesizes the macro-level theories of resource mobilization and political opportunity and micro-level theories of identity and framing to develop and test macro–

⁷⁷ Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia, 1997, 43.

⁷⁸ Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia, 1997, 46–47.

micro relationships to determine what triggered a protest.⁷⁹ In bringing together each protest, the applicable theories, outside factors, and governance, the SCM frames the macro-to-micro relationships to determine whether the presidents' attempts to remain in office were triggering factors in the protests.

2. Outline

This thesis contains four chapters, including this introduction. Chapter II tests the hypotheses by taking an in-depth look at The Gambia's governance and protests under Jammeh in his last term in office. The chapter concludes by discovering the relationship between governance and protest and determining whether the hypotheses are valid. Chapter III tests the hypotheses by examining governance under Barrow for most of his term in office, from 2017 to 2020, using the same factors as those in Chapter II. The chapter concludes with an overview of the results of the hypotheses. Chapter IV analyzes the two presidents' SCM analysis results and presents which factors contributed to the protest outcomes over efforts to extend presidential tenure in office. Last, the thesis concludes with recommendations for future policies and strategies that governments can employ to address protests and improve governance.

⁷⁹ Opp, *Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements*, 330.

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II. PRESIDENT YAHYA JAMMEH

Yahya Jammeh's 22-year reign as president started with hope and evolved into a ruthless dictatorship. On July 22, 1994, Jammeh took power of The Gambia in a bloodless coup from the country's first president, Dawda Jawara, who had ruled for almost 30 years. The young army officer went on to win the presidential election on September 26, 1996, with transparency of votes in question.⁸⁰ After ruling for two and a half years with a military government, Jammeh's party won legislative elections four months later, completing the transition to civilian authority.⁸¹ Jammeh was then reelected in 2001, 2006, and 2011. Over the years of his presidency, The Gambia's economy, security institutions, and delivery of public goods declined. This chapter covers Jammeh's final six years in office, from 2010 to 2016, including his last five-year presidential term, which covers the two election cycles leading up to his election loss to Adama Barrow. The coverage of two cycles allows for a comparative analysis of each president during an election and one term in office. It first investigates governance and assesses its effectiveness, after which it analyzes governance and synthesizes protests using the SCM. This chapter concludes with a synopsis and evaluations of the proposed hypotheses.

Before the 2011 election, President Jammeh had completed three terms in office after a 2002 constitutional amendment removed presidential term limits. According to Freedom House rankings, in 2011, The Gambia saw the most significant drop in rank compared to any other country in Africa. The country's status shifted from partly free to not free due to Jammeh's repression of civil society, political opposition, and the media in the run-up to the election.⁸² Leading up to the 2016 presidential election, he warned that

⁸⁰ "The Gambia: Jammeh's Rule in Six Dates," *Vanguard*, January 18, 2017, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/01/gambia-jammehs-rule-six-dates/>.

⁸¹ "Jammeh's Rule in Six Dates."

⁸² Arch Puddington, "The Year of the Arab Uprisings," *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 2 (2012): 85, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2012.0032>.

any election protests, peaceful or otherwise, would not be permitted after the election.⁸³ President Jammeh had been in office for more than two decades, and he had reason to believe that protests would break out because they had occurred after nearly all his election victories. The Gambia under President Jammeh earned the name “North Korea of Africa” due to his increasingly brutal and repressive rule.⁸⁴ Under Jammeh’s reign, protests were few but consistent during elections.

The analysis of governance and protest through the macro–micro lens provides a more in-depth analysis of what caused protests under President Jammeh. Although some look at protests only through the macro-lens, exploring the bridge between macro and micro explains why micro-factors were dominate in The Gambia during President Jammeh’s last six years in office.

A. GOVERNANCE UNDER JAMMEH

Jammeh’s governance is evaluated by the state of the economy, security institutions, and the delivery of public goods. Many of these things are not usually the sole responsibility of the president, but because Jammeh was a dictator, this research assumes that he controlled all aspects of the government. Only policies that started or were in place for the 2010–2016 period are used to evaluate Jammeh’s governance to compare the two presidents fairly in Chapter IV. This section concludes with an assessment of the effectiveness of governance under President Jammeh.

1. Economy

By the end of President Jammeh’s last term in office, the Gambian economy had seen better days. When Jammeh took control in 1994, the country’s economy was among the fastest growing in the subregion; it was third among the 16-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in terms of GDP per capita, after Ivory

⁸³ Al Jazeera, “The Gambia President Warns against Election Protest,” All Africa, November 30, 2016, ProQuest.

⁸⁴ Jeffrey Smith, “Gambia’s Longtime Dictator Isn’t Going Anywhere Any Time Soon,” *Africa at LSE* (blog), May 5, 2017, <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2015/02/12/gambiaslongtimedictatorisntgoinganywhereanytimesoon/>.

Coast and Cape Verde.⁸⁵ During Jammeh’s final year in office, The Gambia was ranked last, 16 of 16.⁸⁶ This section discusses the economy’s regression by looking at the GDP and debt ratio, citizen unemployment rate, and poverty.

a. GDP

In the last five years of Jammeh’s reign, the GDP was relatively stable and improved only slightly, from \$1.41 billion to \$1.48 billion in U.S. currency. The income per capita decreased overall, from \$767.20 to \$747.00; there was an increase from 2011 to 2013, then a decrease from 2014 to 2016.⁸⁷ The annual per capita growth was 2.78 percent in 2010, dropped to –10.86 percent in 2011, and ended at –1.06 percent in 2016, the growth rate being positive for only three of the six years.⁸⁸ By comparison, sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)’s annual per capita growth was 3.03 percent in 2010 and –1.39 percent in 2016.⁸⁹ The Gambia’s economy was recovering from the decline in 2011, but the slight recovery was partly due to an increase in debt. In addition, Jammeh’s economy performed below average among SSA countries.⁹⁰ The government’s debt-to-GDP ratio increased in 2010 from 42.3 percent to 60.3 percent in 2016.⁹¹ Thus, GDP growth did not keep up with the state’s growing debt, and GDP per capita decreased.

⁸⁵ Edrissa Sanyang and Sanna Camara, *The Gambia after Elections: Implications for Governance and Security in West Africa* (Dakar-Fann, Senegal: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Peace and Security Centre of Competence Sub-Saharan Africa, 2017), 6, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/senegal/13225-20170310.pdf>.

⁸⁶ Sanyang and Camara, 6.

⁸⁷ “Gambia GDP per Capita,” Trading Economics, accessed September 27, 2021, <https://tradingeconomics.com/gambia/gdp-per-capita>.

⁸⁸ “GDP per Capita Growth (Annual %)—Gambia, The,” World Bank, accessed October 3, 2021, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD.ZG?end=2020&locations=GM&start=2009>.

⁸⁹ “GDP per Capita Growth (Annual %)—Sub-Saharan Africa,” World Bank, accessed October 3, 2021, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD.ZG?end=2020&locations=ZG&start=2009>.

⁹⁰ “GDP Growth (Annual %)—Sub-Saharan Africa, Gambia, The,” World Bank, accessed October 3, 2021, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2020&locations=ZG-GM&start=2010>.

⁹¹ “Gambia Government Debt to GDP,” Trading Economics, accessed October 4, 2021, <https://tradingeconomics.com/gambia/government-debt-to-gdp>.

b. Citizen Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate in The Gambia averaged 9.35 percent during the last five years of President Jammeh’s reign. SSA’s unemployment average over the same five years was 5.88 percent.⁹² The unemployment rate reduced toward the end of Jammeh’s reign.

c. Poverty

Poverty was a main concern in The Gambia during Jammeh’s regime. While the unemployment rate decreased, the poverty rate increased slightly—by 0.5 percent—from 2010 to 2016, equating to 150,000 citizens entering poverty.⁹³ The number of persons living in poverty increased in urban and rural areas, albeit at various rates. While poverty increased by 8.3 percent for the rural population, it decreased by 1.8 percent for the urban population from 2010 to 2016.⁹⁴ The rural poor made up approximately 64 percent of the total poor in The Gambia. Poverty in the country was disproportional and extremely high. In 2010, roughly 43 percent of the population lived in poverty, but by 2016, that figure had increased to 44 percent. President Jammeh did not prioritize improving the economic health of the average citizen.

2. Security and the Rule of Law

Security institutions and the rule of law under Jammeh functioned not for the benefit of the public but for the benefit of his regime. Jammeh manipulated the rule of law, the constitution, and the judicial system. He also lessened restrictions on security institutions by decriminalizing and removing liability for their use of threats, violence, torture, and murder against dissenting citizens. This section details how Jammeh manipulated the rule of law through the proper channels. When the judicial branch checked

⁹² “GDP Growth (Annual %)—Sub-Saharan Africa,” World Bank, accessed October 3, 2021, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2020&locations=ZG&start=2010>.

⁹³ Sanna Manjang, “Poverty in The Gambia,” Gambia Bureau of Statistics, November 16, 2017, <https://www.gbosdata.org/data-stories/population-and-demography/poverty-in-the-gambia>.

⁹⁴ Manjang.

his power, he removed the judges responsible from office and replaced them with loyalists to his regime. As a result, security institutions failed to do their job—to protect citizens.

The foundation for the rule of law is that everyone must follow the same rules. The test for these rules is usually evident in how the justice system responds to violations. The Gambia's judicial authority is vested in the courts of the land, according to Section 120(2)(a) of the constitution, and the courts exercise it within the authority granted them by the law.⁹⁵ Section 120(3) of the 1997 constitution states that the judiciary “shall not be subject to the control or direction of any person or authority outside the judiciary.”⁹⁶ The Supreme Court is The Gambia's highest judicial agency, followed by the Court of Appeals. The Supreme Court is responsible for administering a decision on the validation of elections, particularly whether the office of president should be vacated or not under Section 127(1)(c).⁹⁷ Even though the 1997 constitution guarantees an autonomous judiciary, the courts' day-to-day operations in The Gambia have been marked by two significant divergences.⁹⁸ On the one hand, the courts struggle to claim their autonomy, and on the other hand, executive power exudes pressure or intervenes politically in the affairs of the judiciary.⁹⁹

President Jammeh used the police and military to protect the regime, not the people; promoted allegiance by adding or changing laws; and interfered with the judicial process to ensure that the security institutions protected his regime. Needless to say, by Jammeh's last term as president, he controlled the judicial branch, and the rule of law had become non-existent in its intended form—to create an orderly and just society.

Jammeh started to manipulate the rule of law in his early years as president, a pattern that expanded in 2010–2016. In April 2000, an investigation identified the officers

⁹⁵ Senghore, *Democracy, Human Rights and Governance in The Gambia*, 136.

⁹⁶ Senghore, 136.

⁹⁷ Senghore, 138.

⁹⁸ Senghore, 143.

⁹⁹ Senghore, 143.

responsible for the massacre of 16 students, a baby, and a Red Cross volunteer and the injury of many more who were protesting the rape of a school girl by paramilitary personnel and the killing of a school boy by fire service officers. However, in 2001, the state passed the Indemnity Act, which protected public officers and state agents from liability for conduct performed during times of public emergency, public disturbance, or riotous situations.¹⁰⁰ However, the Supreme Court invalidated the act but not before it was amended to start January 1, 2000, retroactively, and denied citizens access to an impartial court to seek justice. Justice Hassan B. Jallow's judgment upheld the invalidation on December 5, 2001.¹⁰¹ The court determined the right to access an independent, objective court as fundamental to enforcing other rights. As is discussed in the following section, due to Justice Jallow's multiple rulings against the president's backed laws, Jammeh had him removed as Supreme Court judge, and loyalists reversed Jallow's decisions.

Similarly, in November 2001, The Gambia's Supreme Court invalidated a significant portion of another act of parliament that modified many parts of the 1997 constitution.¹⁰² In *Kemesseng Jammeh v. Attorney General*, the Supreme Court partially voided Act No. 6 of 2001—the Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia (Amendment) Act 2001—which parliament enacted on May 15, 2001, and the president signed into law on May 25, 2001.¹⁰³ This partial overturn of the act was because the procedure for altering the constitution was not properly followed.¹⁰⁴ However, the Supreme Court struck down these laws to the disappointment of the president. Nevertheless, Jammeh continued his trend of interfering in judicial matters, as seen in the following section.

The Gambian judiciary was also subjected to political interference, ranging from the removal of superior court judges, to the termination of senior judges' appointments, to

¹⁰⁰ A. A. Senghore, "The Judiciary in Governance in The Gambia: The Quest for Autonomy under the Second Republic," *Journal of Third World Studies* 27, no. 2 (2010): 226.

¹⁰¹ Senghore, 242.

¹⁰² Senghore, 230.

¹⁰³ Senghore, 230.

¹⁰⁴ Senghore, 230.

aggressive attacks and harassment of leading practitioners.¹⁰⁵ In one category of actions, Jammeh's regime targeted and removed justices who ruled against the government and its affiliates. As previously mentioned, Justice Jallow was dismissed under mysterious circumstances in 2001 after presiding over the court on three major cases that resulted in rulings against Jammeh's government in favor of his political opponents.¹⁰⁶ Justice Jallow's dismissal was a significant setback for the Gambian judiciary for many reasons, the most salient of which involved preserving the independence, dignity, and reputation of the country's judiciary and upholding the supremacy and authority of the 1997 constitution, the country's fundamental law.¹⁰⁷ In addition, at the time of his dismissal, Justice Jallow was the only Gambian to join the Supreme Court, as Jammeh had contracted many non-Gambians to preside as judges in the country's highest court.¹⁰⁸ With the loss of a major check on executive power, Jammeh did as he pleased until the end of his presidency.

The removal of the check on Jammeh's power thus emboldened him to skirt the rule of law to further his political ambitions by curtailing the free flow of ideas through restricting public protest and the media. The Public Order Act (POA), passed in 2009, provided the inspector general of police with the discretionary powers to grant or deny protest licenses, effectively overriding the constitutional constraints on police power that safeguarded the right to peaceful protest, assembly, and demonstration.¹⁰⁹ The media was also often targeted by Jammeh's regime. The state criminalized many press activities, labeling them sedition, false news, and criminal defamation, and imposed stringent conditions for newspaper registration.¹¹⁰ Many journalists were abducted or murdered under Jammeh's reign.

¹⁰⁵ Senghore, *Democracy, Human Rights and Governance in The Gambia*, 143.

¹⁰⁶ Senghore, 151.

¹⁰⁷ Senghore, 151–52.

¹⁰⁸ Senghore, 152.

¹⁰⁹ Public Order Act, (Act No. 5/2009) (Gam.), https://www.icnl.org/research/library/gambia_puborder/.

¹¹⁰ "ECOWAS Court Rules Media Laws in Gambia Violate Human Rights," All Africa, February 15, 2018, ProQuest.

Jammeh was later able to champion an amendment to increase the penalty for homosexuality. President Jammeh signed the Criminal Code (Amendment) Act into law on October 9, 2014, including a section that imposed a heavy penalty for specific homosexual conduct previously criminalized under the country's Criminal Code.¹¹¹ This legislation created the crime of "aggravated homosexuality," punishable with up to life in prison.¹¹² This law was met with strong international opposition, which contributed to the country's human rights violations. The European Union requested that The Gambia revoke the controversial law or risk losing its \$186 million development aid packet, but The Gambia opposed the hold and refused to comply, resulting in aid suspension.¹¹³ Although the international community was unhappy with the law, Jammeh and his cabinet did not back down from the country's stance on homosexuality, no matter the price. Under Jammeh, civil liberties were virtually non-existent in The Gambia.

3. Public Goods

Governance is evaluated in part by how well public goods are provided. The provisions that citizens receive can be the difference between life and death. These provisions can also provide a livelihood or, in its absence, affect one's quality of life. This section looks at health, infrastructure, education, and job training under Jammeh's final five years in office.

Infrastructure of a state is a public good. Soft infrastructure provides education, laws, and health care, among others; hard infrastructure provides things like roads and the internet; and critical infrastructure includes the availability of safe drinking water, natural gas, and medicine. Infrastructure development in The Gambia under Jammeh saw an overall upward trend in most areas. Nonetheless, soft infrastructure remained poor due to

¹¹¹ "Gambia: Law Enacted Making Aggravated Homosexuality a Crime," Library of Congress, November 26, 2014, <https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2014-11-26/gambia-law-enacted-making-aggravated-homosexuality-a-crime/>.

¹¹² Daniel Flynn, "Gambia Condemns EU Pressure on Anti-Gay Law, Says to Break Ties," Reuters, November 30, 2014, <https://web.archive.org/web/20141201205849/http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/11/30/us-gambia-eu-idUSKCN0JE0SE20141130>.

¹¹³ Flynn.

political aspects, including Jammeh’s manipulation of courts of law and police over the years.

a. Education Infrastructure

The improvement of education is necessary for any government that desires a strong economy. Education distribution improved under Jammeh. From 2010 to 2016, the expected years of schooling increased from 8.7 to 9.2 years, indicating that citizens no longer pursued education beyond government-funded schooling. During Jammeh’s presidency, the Gambian government financed the first nine years of schooling while the private sector supplied the remaining three years of secondary school with the assistance of school grants from the government.

In 2014, the Ministry of Higher Education created the 2014–2023 Tertiary and Higher Education Policy, a plan of action to increase education and focus on science, technology, innovation, and research and development.¹¹⁴ Its goal was “to provide equitable access to high-quality and relevant tertiary and higher education . . . sustainable and responsive to national and global needs.”¹¹⁵ There were short-, medium-, and long-term priorities created to implement this plan. Only the short-term aspects are evaluated as President Jammeh’s administration was short lived. The short-term priorities included the following:

1. Linking effectively with the basic and secondary education sector and other sectors to provide a continuum of high-quality lifelong learning opportunities, and providing students with a stimulating and rewarding tertiary and higher education experience;
2. Initiating a sector-wide reform which entails the restructuring of the existing structures, where necessary, establishing relevant structures and systems and instituting essential legislative and regulatory frameworks;
3. Upgrading the existing infrastructure and facilities, while creating new ones to enhance more conducive teaching and learning environments;

¹¹⁴ Gambia Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, *National Tertiary and Higher Education Policy, 2014–2023* (Banjul: Gambia Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, 2014), https://moherst.gov.gm/sites/default/files/2020-09/The%20Gambia%20Tertiary%20and%20Higher%20Education%20Policy_0.pdf.

¹¹⁵ Gambia Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, 3.

4. Promoting and participating in in-country and global partnerships, networks and exchange programmes;
5. Facilitating student and staff mobility, in addition to supporting the sharing of knowledge, ideas and best practices.¹¹⁶

Improving the educational infrastructure was a must for The Gambia. According to the World Bank, The Gambia's literacy rate increased from 41.95 percent in 2013 to 50.78 percent in 2015.¹¹⁷ The primary completion rate increased from 67 percent in 2010 to 69 percent in 2016.¹¹⁸ These trends show that the country was making some progress with its education policy implementation. Jammeh understood that an educated population was necessary to contribute to the economy and country with skills, inventions, and a competent workforce to entice investors.

Critical infrastructure in The Gambia was a major public good that Jammeh failed to drastically improve. The provision of basic things like clean water, energy sources like gas or electricity, and medicine are essential to keeping the population healthy and productive. While intertwined, clean water and medical provisions are discussed separately from health infrastructure, and energy sources are addressed under energy infrastructure.

b. Energy Infrastructure

Energy infrastructure in The Gambia is essential. Not only is it a critical public good that connects Gambians with electricity and natural gas for their economy, but it also determines the health of citizens. The Gambia has a dual energy system—based partially on biomass, such as wood and charcoal, and partially on modern energy supply technologies, such as electricity. Electricity is available to 45 percent of households in The Gambia. Only 13 percent of the rural population has access to electricity while 71 percent

¹¹⁶ Gambia Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, 3–4.

¹¹⁷ “Literacy Rate, Adult Total (% of People Ages 15 and Above),” World Bank, accessed August 23, 2020, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS>.

¹¹⁸ “Primary Completion Rate, Total (% of Relevant Age Group)—Gambia, The,” World Bank, accessed December 4, 2021, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.CMPT.ZS?end=2020&locations=GM&start=2010&view=chart>.

of the urban population does.¹¹⁹ Biomass generates 60 percent of The Gambia’s total energy supply.¹²⁰ Over 90 percent of Gambian families rely on traditional biomass to cook.¹²¹ The use of wood or other materials indoors has caused many health issues, especially for women in The Gambia.

c. Health Infrastructure

Under Jammeh, The Gambia was working to improve health care, especially for women and children. From 2010 to 2016, per 1,000 live births, the infant mortality rate decreased by 14.7 percent to 38.8 percent in 2016, the neonatal mortality rate by 10.9 percent to 29.2 percent, and the under-five mortality rate by 20.7 percent to 57.8 percent.¹²² Although the maternal mortality rate in The Gambia was lower than in other parts of Africa, it was still relatively high, with approximately four deaths per 1,000 live births, according to the 2013 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS).¹²³ Maternal mortality accounted for 36 percent of all deaths among women ages 15–49.¹²⁴ The maternal and infant mortality rates significantly decreased when policy was implemented.

The Gambia’s health administration rallied around “health is wealth” in the 2012–2020 National Health Policy under Jammeh. The policy accelerated the quality of health services and provided universal coverage for Gambians, with goals to 2020. This initiative

¹¹⁹ “The Gambia—Energy,” U.S. International Trade Administration, accessed September 27, 2021, <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/gambia-energy>.

¹²⁰ T. Litchfield, “Use of Biomass Briquettes: Its Effect on Household Air Pollution and on Pneumococcal Nasopharyngeal Carriage in Gambian Women and Young Children. A Randomized Controlled Trial” (PhD diss., London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 2018), <https://researchonline.lshtm.ac.uk/id/eprint/4647890/>.

¹²¹ Musa Manneh, “Challenges and Possible Solutions to Electricity Generation, Transmission and Distribution in The Gambia,” *American International Journal of Business Management* 3, no. 10 (October 2020): 88.

¹²² “The Global Health Observatory, Gambia,” World Health Organization, accessed October 19, 2021, <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/countries/country-details/GHO/gambia?countryProfileId=79ffc757-a3a8-4853-a041-77a8fa1fc3e7>.

¹²³ Gambia Bureau of Statistics and ICF International, *The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey, 2013* (Banjul: Gambia Bureau of Statistics and ICF International, 2014), 246 <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR289/FR289.pdf>.

¹²⁴ Gambia Bureau of Statistics and ICF International, 263.

and the 2014–2020 National Health Strategic Plan started a downward trend in mortality rates of children. HIV antiretroviral therapy coverage increased by 150 percent, from 10 percent of the population in 2010 to 25 percent in 2016.¹²⁵ Immunizations given to children were consistently over the 90th percentile for neonatal tetanus, rotavirus (RotaC), pneumococcal conjugate (PCV3), and the third dose of *Haemophilus influenzae* type B (Hib3) in one-year-olds.¹²⁶ Access to health care is an essential public good to provide for a population and a healthy economy.

President Jammeh put forth effort to heal his country’s many health issues, however questionable at times. Health infrastructure under his presidency did improve, but Jammeh often got in his own way. The former president once claimed to have discovered the cure for HIV/AIDS and subsequently forced approximately 9,000 HIV-positive Gambians to abandon conventional medicine and use his treatment.¹²⁷ Although HIV is prevalent in The Gambia, the high death rate is mostly attributed to infant and maternal mortality rates, as previously discussed. Getting the health of a population under control is an essential public provision and measure of good governance. Despite his—often questionable—improvements to health policy, Jammeh could not significantly progress the health of Gambians given persisting problems with water and sanitation.

d. Water and Sanitation

Inadequate safe water and sanitation strained The Gambia’s health care system. Under Jammeh, The Gambia faced many of the same issues as other African countries—including a lack of safe drinking water and proper sanitation, widespread infectious diseases, malaria, other “tropical” diseases, and high infant and maternal mortality rates.¹²⁸ According to the 2013 DHS, 91 percent of households received their drinking water from

¹²⁵ World Health Organization, “The Global Health Observatory, Gambia.”

¹²⁶ World Health Organization.

¹²⁷ Philip Róin and Mikkel Danielsen, “How to Topple a Dictator: The Rebel Plot That Freed The Gambia,” *Guardian*, May 23, 2018, ProQuest.

¹²⁸ Rachael Dixey and Modou Njai, “The Call to Action: Health Promotion in The Gambia—Closing the Implementation Gap?,” *Global Health Promotion* 20, no. 2 (June 2013): 6.

an improved source, and 37 percent of homes had improved toilet facilities not shared with other families.¹²⁹ However, a lack of adequate safe water and sanitation was the cause of many health concerns in Gambians, especially children.

While the provision of water sources improved drastically during Jammeh's reign, he did not improve sanitation facilities with the same rigor, putting pressure on an already strained health system. A mere 46 percent of Gambians had access to water on their premises, with 70 percent in urban areas and 12 percent in rural.¹³⁰ Another 42 percent of the population had to walk 30 minutes round-trip to access water and 11 percent more than 30 minutes.¹³¹ Access to sanitation facilities was subject to the area and household. Two percent of the population did not have a toilet, 39 percent used non-improved toilet facilities (a pit), 23 percent shared an improved facility with other households (a collection system or flushing capability), and 37 percent had a single-household improved toilet facility.¹³² Unsafe water and poor sanitation conditions were the primary cause of diarrhea in children, and diarrheal dehydration was a leading cause of death in infancy and childhood.¹³³ Poor sanitation significantly contributed to overall health concerns but affected children more than adults. Jammeh improved access to safe drinking water as promised by the constitution. Sanitation also improved under Jammeh, albeit at a slower pace.

4. Governance Analysis

Governance in The Gambia under Jammeh had a mixed record. Although Jammeh made strides in improving some public goods, such as access to clean water and health care that addressed maternal and infant mortality rates, deplorable violations of the rule of law, human rights violations, and a declining economy overshadowed them.

¹²⁹ Gambia Bureau of Statistics and ICF International, *Demographic and Health Survey, 2013*, 11.

¹³⁰ Gambia Bureau of Statistics and ICF International, 12.

¹³¹ Gambia Bureau of Statistics and ICF International, 12.

¹³² Gambia Bureau of Statistics and ICF International, 13.

¹³³ Gambia Bureau of Statistics and ICF International, 120.

Delivery of public goods is the first element to scrutinize when citizens or the world evaluate a government, and Jammeh earned The Gambia a failing grade. Jammeh's last term as president was no different from his other three. During his last five years in office, Freedom House downgraded The Gambia from a partly free status in 2011 to not free in 2012 until Jammeh's forced departure in 2017.¹³⁴ This status represented an evaluation of The Gambia's political rights and civil liberties.

The rule of law evaluated under Jammeh violated both categories egregiously and possessed all the criteria for bad governance. Under Jammeh, unless individuals supported his party and regime, they had no political rights, and in many cases, he stripped away their civil liberties. From 2010 to 2016, The Gambia's Freedom House score for civil liberties increased from a 5 to a 6 on a seven-point scale, with 7 being the worst.¹³⁵ Jammeh abused and manipulated the courts, police, and military. He was responsible for getting laws passed that restricted or threatened civil liberties: the Criminal Code (Amendment) Act, which made homosexuality punishable with life imprisonment; the Indemnity Act, which gave public officials a "get out of jail free" card for any crime, primarily murder, committed in keeping citizen "rebellions" or protests to nil; and the 2009 Information and Communications Act, article 138, which granted national security agencies and investigators broad rights to monitor, intercept, and keep personal communications without judicial oversight.¹³⁶ In 2016, Freedom House's Freedom on the Net evaluation gave The Gambia a score of 33 out of 100 for internet restrictions, government hacking of citizen accounts, and media prosecution.¹³⁷ Citizens were denied the right to peacefully protest, the right not to be tortured, and the right to bring a case before an impartial judiciary, and they were denied freedom of the press and expression. Jammeh manipulated the rule of law

¹³⁴ "The Gambia: Freedom on the Net 2016," Freedom House, accessed October 27, 2021, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/gambia/freedom-net/2016>.

¹³⁵ Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2016—The Gambia," Refworld, July 14, 2016, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/57985a316.html>.

¹³⁶ Information and Communication Act, 2009, (Act No. 2/2009) (Gam.), 136–37, <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/gm/gm006en.pdf>.

¹³⁷ "Jammeh's Rule in Six Dates."

to serve his own purposes and, in doing so, stripped Gambians of their civil liberties and neglected his oath to preserve, protect, and defend the constitution.

Jammeh's governance was ineffective because he used the presidential office for his political gains. Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranked The Gambia 91st out of 178 nations surveyed.¹³⁸ The Gambia decreased to 77th out of 183 in 2011, but starting the following year, it increased significantly, ranking 145th out of 176 by 2016.¹³⁹ Corruption was a significant concern and part of the reason for the economic woes in The Gambia. Over Jammeh's two-decade rule, he stole approximately one billion dollars; accumulated over 130 properties under his companies, foundations, or personal name; and possessed almost 90 bank accounts associated with his foundations and companies.¹⁴⁰ While the president became wealthy, the country's public debt grew to 100.2 percent of GDP, unemployment was at 7.0 percent, and GDP growth was on the decline.¹⁴¹ The poverty rate declined under Jammeh, yet over 70 percent of the population still lived in poverty in 2016. Governance is about providing for the people, not for those in office.

Good governance also requires the peaceful transition of power. The presidential election of 2016 dealt a shocking blow to Jammeh's regime. President Jammeh lost the December election and initially conceded to the winner, opposition leader Adama Barrow; however, he later reneged and did everything he could to remain in office.¹⁴² He refused to vacate the office of president, calling the election invalid, and attempted to force a

¹³⁸ "Freedom in the World 2010—The Gambia," Freedom House, May 24, 2010, <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/coir/legacy/2013/11/07/Gambia%2C%20The.pdf>.

¹³⁹ "Corruption Perceptions Index 2016," Transparency International, accessed October 29, 2021, <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2016>.

¹⁴⁰ Abdoulie John, "Gambia Minister to Recommend Charges Filed against Ex-Leader," ABC News, September 13, 2019, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/gambia-minister-recommend-charges-filed-leader-65602678>.

¹⁴¹ "The Gambia 2016 Index of Economic Freedom," Heritage Foundation, 2016, <https://www.heritage.org/index/pdf/2016/countries/gambia.pdf>.

¹⁴² Róin and Danielsen, "How to Topple a Dictator."

re-election.¹⁴³ The fear of civil war caused tens of thousands of Gambians to flee to Senegal. The reports of imported mercenaries hired by Jammeh caused the newly elected president to flee to Senegal for protection as well.¹⁴⁴ On January 15, 2017, Jammeh attempted to get the backing of ECOWAS and block the inauguration of Barrow on live television, but the coalition brushed off his request, and he was embarrassed.¹⁴⁵ On January 19, ECOWAS troops entered The Gambia to force Jammeh to leave office, compelling him to flee the country.¹⁴⁶ Jammeh tried to cling to power for as long as possible. He might have started a war had his military been capable of combating the ECOWAS troops.

President Jammeh did not provide good governance to the Gambian people. He controlled all aspects of the government, and instead of using his influence to make The Gambia thrive, he terrorized, abused, and siphoned its resources. Under Jammeh's rule, the populace did not have security. Jammeh manipulated the rule of law for his good and not for the people's, denied their civil liberties, and ignored their rights. Public goods were the bare minimum and often inadequate. The only public good that Jammeh provided and improved consistently was access to safe drinking water. Unfortunately for The Gambia under Jammeh, all levels of government exhibited his abusive, corruptive, and manipulative ways, leading to a poor economy, human rights abuses, and the ignoring or manipulation of the constitution, resulting in ineffective governance.

B. PROTESTS, 2010–2016

This section explores protests that occurred from 2010 to 2016. The protests are presented in chronological order for easy reference in the subsequent analysis section. The protest timeline provides most of the details required for identifying macro–micro elements to be synthesized using the SCM.

¹⁴³ Róin and Danielsen.

¹⁴⁴ Róin and Danielsen.

¹⁴⁵ Róin and Danielsen.

¹⁴⁶ Róin and Danielsen.

During Jammeh's last five years in office, four instrumental protests and a coup attempt combined to create a remarkable effect, resulting in his loss of the 2016 presidential election. The first election in this timeframe occurred in 2011. However, very few protests were documented that year. It is worth noting that ECOWAS, citing intimidation of the opposition and the electorate, declined to send observers to the 2011 presidential election, indicating the lack of free and fair elections.¹⁴⁷ The first protest occurred outside the country in September 2013. Gambian protesters in the United States gathered outside New York City's Ritz Carlton hotel, where President Jammeh stayed for the 68th United Nations General Assembly meeting.¹⁴⁸ Reportedly, the president's stay at the \$1,000–\$14,000 per night hotel provided an opportunity to point out that many Gambians made less than \$700 per year.¹⁴⁹ Hundreds of Gambians from Atlanta, Georgia, and Washington, DC, joined their New York counterparts in protesting the Jammeh government's disregard for the rule of law and democratic norms.¹⁵⁰ Several carried banners proclaiming "Jammeh must go" and "Down with dictatorship."¹⁵¹ Ignoring the protests, Jammeh used the occasion to continue his campaign denouncing same-sex relationships, which he described as the "biggest threat to humanity."¹⁵²

Despite Jammeh's human rights violations, the United States provided information to help the leader thwart a coup attempt later that year. On December 30, 2014, the U.S. government tipped off Jammeh to a possible coup attempt involving two U.S.-Gambian citizens. The tip allowed Jammeh to leave the country at the time and successfully avoid the coup. The result, however, was a harsher lockdown of citizen freedoms by the dictator.

¹⁴⁷ "Gambia: Investigate Death in Custody, Free Protesters," Amnesty International, April 18, 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/04/gambia-investigate-death-in-custody-free-protesters/>.

¹⁴⁸ "Protests against President Jammeh in New York," All Africa, October 1, 2013, ProQuest.

¹⁴⁹ Colin Freeman, "Gambia May Have Quit Commonwealth after Presidential Fit of Pique," *Daily Telegraph*, October 4, 2013, ProQuest.

¹⁵⁰ "Gambians in USA Protest at President Jammeh's Hotel," All Africa, September 27, 2013, ProQuest.

¹⁵¹ All Africa, "Protests against President Jammeh in New York."

¹⁵² All Africa.

President Jammeh's response to the failed coup attempt was to label it a terrorist activity. He claimed that the military was "very loyal. . . . No force can take this place and nobody can destabilize this country."¹⁵³ He also said that "anybody who plans to attack this country, be ready, because you are going to die."¹⁵⁴ He later used the arrest of the U.S. citizens involved in the attack as propaganda that the United States backed his regime. Gilles Yabi, a Dakar-based researcher, warned on December 31, 2014, of a "major risk of repression" beyond the coup plotters and that many feared the regime would exploit the situation by blaming innocent people.¹⁵⁵

No free elections or civil liberties existed under Jammeh, and the following rights were non-existent: freedom of assembly, freedom to protest peacefully, freedom of expression, and free speech.¹⁵⁶ Local journalists informed the Committee to Protect Journalists that local media did not report on the armed attack on the presidential palace, and for fear of being jailed or shut down by the government, state-owned and privately operated radio stations broadcast music exclusively.¹⁵⁷ This fear proved valid. On January 1, 2015, police detained Taranga FM's managing director, Alagie Abdoulie Ceesay, and held him overnight at the Yundum police station before freeing him on bail the next day.¹⁵⁸ Following Ceesay's release, Jammeh's regime forced Taranga FM to shut down for four days. It allowed the station to play only music, and all the other regular programming,

¹⁵³ Agence France-Presse, "'Dozens Arrested and Weapons Cache Found' after Failed Gambia Coup," *Guardian*, January 2, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/02/dozens-arrested-and-weapons-cache-found-after-failed-gambia-coup>.

¹⁵⁴ Agence France-Presse.

¹⁵⁵ Agence France-Presse.

¹⁵⁶ Nina Porzucki, "The Gambia Is the Worst Dictatorship You've Probably Never Heard Of," *The World from PRX*, January 6, 2015, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2015-01-06/gambia-worst-dictatorship-youve-probably-never-heard>.

¹⁵⁷ "Gambia Radio Station Censored, Director Harassed after Foiled Coup," Committee to Protect Journalists, January 8, 2015, <https://cpj.org/2015/01/gambia-radio-station-censored-director-harassed-af/>.

¹⁵⁸ Committee to Protect Journalists.

including current events, had to be halted.¹⁵⁹ The people had limited access to information and no freedom of expression or assembly. Thus, the coup did not receive international attention due to Jammeh's media suppression.¹⁶⁰

Although the 2014 coup attempt was not during an election year, what prompted these U.S.-Gambian citizens and the U.S. citizen to organize with other diaspora and Gambian military members to overthrow President Jammeh? Maggie Dwyer suggested that existing tensions and internal divisions at the highest levels of the Gambian military contributed to the 2014 coup attempt.¹⁶¹ Gambian Americans who fled repression under Jammeh praised the coup organizers for putting their lives on the line to bring freedom and democracy to The Gambia while sharply criticizing U.S. officials for siding with a tyrant.¹⁶²

In 2016, several protests over electoral reform occurred before the upcoming presidential election. Solo Sandeng, a prominent leader of the primary opposition, the United Democratic Party (UDP), was arrested with UDP youth leader Fatoumata Jawara and others on April 14, 2016, during a peaceful protest supporting electoral reform ahead of the presidential elections in December.¹⁶³ The protesters were charged by Jammeh's regime with protesting without a permit.¹⁶⁴ Two days later, the UDP marched through the streets of Serekunda, demanding the release of Sandeng and others. Jammeh responded by

¹⁵⁹ According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, security personnel abruptly took the station off the air in August 2012, revoked its license, and seized contact information for its board members, alleging "directions from above," but eventually reinstated the restrictions as a goodwill gesture in January 2014.

¹⁶⁰ Porzucki, "The Worst Dictatorship You've Probably Never Heard Of."

¹⁶¹ Maggie Dwyer, "A Failed Coup Attempt (and Forecast) in The Gambia," *Dart-Throwing Chimp* (blog), January 2, 2015, <https://dartthrowingchimp.wordpress.com/2015/01/02/a-failed-coup-attempt-and-forecast-in-the-gambia/>.

¹⁶² Craig Whitlock and Adam Goldman, "Did U.S. Help Thwart a Coup Bid in Gambia?," *Washington Post*, June 1, 2015, ProQuest.

¹⁶³ "Jammeh's Rule in Six Dates."

¹⁶⁴ Kebba Jeffang, "Sexual Violence: Fatoumata Jawara Still Fears Her Torturer," *Chronicle* (Gambia), October 23, 2019, <https://www.chronicle.gm/amp/sexual-violence-fatoumatta-jawara-still-fears-her-torturer/>.

arresting party leader Ousainou Darboe and 18 executive UDP members.¹⁶⁵ The string of arrests ended in the suspicious death of Sandeng and a three-year prison sentence for others after they were allegedly tortured.¹⁶⁶

On Saturday, August 13, 2016, six presidential bodyguards began a chain reaction that helped bring down President Jammeh. The guards stopped Jammeh from rigging the election. After overhearing the location of the fake voter registration cards that would be used in the upcoming election, the guards put a plan in place to destroy them.¹⁶⁷ For years, the opposition had claimed and international election observers had suspected Jammeh and his party of bringing in voters from the neighboring countries of Senegal and Guinea-Bissau and providing them with fake identification to vote.¹⁶⁸ The six men broke into the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction's headquarters in Serekunda, where they discovered and destroyed three cardboard boxes containing identification cards for citizens registered to vote.¹⁶⁹ The destruction of the cards prevented Jammeh from producing more before the election and added to the civil momentum to bring him down.

President Jammeh, who had ruled the country for over two decades, had warned that even peaceful protests would be prohibited following the impending election. On November 29, 2016, he stated that his election victory was almost certainly due to divine intervention and urged the opposition not to protest.¹⁷⁰ Jammeh proclaimed that because the electoral system was impenetrable to fraud and rigging, no one should demonstrate.¹⁷¹ However, the European Union and ECOWAS did not send observers to the election, but

¹⁶⁵ Róin and Danielsen, "How to Topple a Dictator."

¹⁶⁶ "Jammeh's Rule in Six Dates."

¹⁶⁷ Róin and Danielsen, "How to Topple a Dictator."

¹⁶⁸ Róin and Danielsen.

¹⁶⁹ Róin and Danielsen.

¹⁷⁰ Al Jazeera, "The Gambia President Warns against Election Protest."

¹⁷¹ Al Jazeera.

the African Union did send a small contingent.¹⁷² To the excitement and shock of many, the election culminated with the defeat of Jammeh by Adama Barrow.

On election day, December 1, 2016, 60 percent or over 500,000 registered voters cast their marbles to elect the next Gambian president. As the votes were counted, one man, Alieu Njai, the 82-year-old commissioner of the Independent Electoral Commission, recorded and counted the district votes as they came in. Upon realization from Jammeh and others that he might lose, Jammeh asked Njai to stop counting through journalists working for the state-owned television station.¹⁷³ As Njai continued counting, Jammeh shut down all media to prevent the results from being known. He also shut down the internet and international phone network.¹⁷⁴ However, the shutdowns were unsuccessful as the results spread like wildfire by word of mouth, and soon people were celebrating in the streets.¹⁷⁵ The people spoke with their votes, and with the courageous acts of six bodyguards, they toppled a dictator. Jammeh's reign was over.

C. SYNTHESIS OF GOVERNANCE AND PROTESTS

Jammeh's governance of The Gambia threatened the economic prosperity of the country and the lives of its citizens. The poor governance and manipulation of the rule of law under President Jammeh produced Gambian grievances that morphed into the protest and subsequent anti-Jammeh movement that ended his presidency. The final section brings these elements of governance and protests together to illustrate how he lost. The five protests identified here are not individual protests as they feed into one another. The eight components and bridges of the SCM, Exhibit C of Figure 1, are evaluated to synthesize each protest with governance. They together show that people through a strong sense of identify and framing took back their country.

¹⁷² Al Jazeera.

¹⁷³ Róin and Danielsen, "How to Topple a Dictator."

¹⁷⁴ Róin and Danielsen.

¹⁷⁵ Róin and Danielsen.

The first protest in September 2013 initiated the identity dynamics that would become a critical factor in framing subsequent protests. The macro-variables were instrumental in making this protest possible in the United States. These macro-variables can be classified as resources, the internet, cell phones, airplanes, cars, and signs, among others. Due to the location of this protest, the internet contributed significantly to mobilizing the Gambian diaspora and provided an opportunity to protest without fear of death. This opportunity provided the diaspora with a strong sense of unity and framing to create a strong sense of identity. Identity was an incentive that, when combined with framing, influenced many to make a difference by doing what they knew many could not do in their home country—protest. This major incentive, combined with the other factors, provided an opportunity to bring attention to the Gambian dictator for spending 1–20 times the average Gambian’s annual salary per night on a room and highlight his extravagance while most of his citizens lived in poverty. It is possible to classify the resulting protest as strictly a resource mobilization macro-protest. However, as discussed, there were more elements than just resource mobilization at play. Jammeh’s response to the U.S. protest highlighted his regime’s oppression against homosexuals in The Gambia. His response had indirect effects on other protests.

Following the September 2013 protest and Jammeh’s blatant disregard for human rights, no major power intervened to assist Gambians. The news and observation of the September events led to the media framing that only Gambians could fix their country. This framing initiated the planning process for the December 2014 coup attempt against Jammeh. The framing, along with the sense of national identity, helped to mobilize the plotters. They then used money, intelligence, and other resources to plan and execute the plot. However, gathering some of those resources—firearms—had an unknown indirect effect that contributed to later protests. The incentive for most coup plotters was saving their country as well as the political opportunity to take Jammeh’s place. These incentives led to individual protests against the president for different reasons. Still, they ultimately resulted in a macro-protest in the form of a coup attempt born of political opportunity.

The coup attempt ultimately failed due to a U.S. intervention that tipped off the Gambian government to the plot and gave Jammeh an opportunity to escape. The United

States subsequently arrested the dual U.S.-Gambian citizens involved. This response by the United States was another outside factor that strengthened the Gambians' framing that they alone were responsible for solving their leadership problem and fixing their country. Some Gambians cheered on those who tried to save freedom and democracy. Jammeh's response was what others had feared—an excuse to oppress the media and citizens openly and to deny the coup attempt and any story of division between the military and the president. While the repression was nothing new, it strengthened the framing and increased the incentives that Gambians had to help themselves. The deaths and arrests of those involved in the plot were accumulating factors in later protests.

Following the 2014 coup attempt, the next significant protest did not occur until April 2016. In December, UDP leader Solo Sandeng attempted to frame the protest around electoral reform ahead of the 2016 presidential election. The other factors—the consequences of the coup attempt—changed the framing process somewhat to refocus on fixing the laws to remove Jammeh legally and restoring the country. Due to the heavy oppression, another incentivizing factor—identity—grew within political parties. The parties also had political incentives and opportunities to rally people around the idea of fighting for electoral reform. The police interrupted the protest, and Solo and others were arrested and tortured. This information fed immediately into the next protest two days later.

UDP leader Ousainou Darboe capitalized on the opportunity to frame others around the release of Solo and others. This protest would typically be categorized under political opportunity but might have only been the incentive of Ousainou. At this point in the timeline, history was introduced to the framing process to strengthen the incentive to get Solo released. However, the protest led to the arrest and three-year prison sentence of Ousainou and many others. The outcome of the protest, which led to numerous arrests, was a new opportunity for the opposition parties to grow. Solo's murder became the catalyst for the anti-Jammeh movement.

The movement went underground due to fear of repression of anyone who seemed to oppose Jammeh. The anti-Jammeh movement grew through framing that Gambians had to stop Jammeh. The framing of Jammeh as a repressor who had to be removed spread with social media, eventually succeeding in producing enough civil society pressure. As more

people joined and supported the movement online via messaging apps and radio broadcasts, the in-person protests picked up steam and individuals overcame their fear of physical harm. Though the movement to make their voices heard had been growing before this presidential election, a few presidential bodyguards took the opportunity to give Gambians a real shot at voting Jammeh out of office.

D. CONCLUSION

President Jammeh had promise when he first took office through a bloodless coup in 1994; however, in his last term as president, there was no hope in his ability to rule the Gambian people. Although Gambians vote for the executive and legislative branches, voting was a farce due to rigging and the oppression of political opponents. Jammeh turned the Gambian government into his own tool for control. He was more a dictator than a president. The task of this thesis is to ascertain whether the president's seeking another term was the cause of protests, and in the case of Jammeh, the answer is partially.

Elections provide an opportunity for mobilization and the hope that protests will result in change. The Gambian people had to time protests around elections because that was the greatest political opportunity to remove Jammeh from office legally and have the international community's backing. Many of the grievances explored were due to Jammeh's poor governance, from abuses of the rule of law to the inability or unwillingness to improve the economy for the good of average citizens. The grievances provided the opportunity for the framing of Gambians for Gambians, meaning that no one could change The Gambia for the better but Gambians together. That framing added to the strong sense of identity and incentive for a better Gambia without Jammeh.

The dynamics described in macro-level protest theories—resource mobilization and political opportunity—did exist, but they were not the drivers behind the mobilization of Gambians. Mobilization happened primarily because of micro-dynamics, mainly framing and identity. The micro does not depend on the macro's existence; instead, the two exist symbiotically. The anti-Jammeh movement is an example of this reciprocal relationship. The movement was reignited and cultivated strong framing and identity that

allowed mobilization around a political opportunity for a candidate, Adama Barrow, that would liberate and improve the economic state of The Gambia.

Jammeh's response to protests with oppression and murder was his downfall. The catalyst that reignited the movement was the murder of UDP leader Solo Sandeng. Without his murder, it is unclear whether the momentum needed to coordinate, unify, and motivate Gambians to act would have occurred with enough perseverance to stop Jammeh. Without the catalyst, it is unknown whether the anti-Jammeh movement would have been rekindled in time to motivate and lead the bodyguards to take such a life-threatening risk, destroy the fake identification cards, and give Gambians a fair chance at removing Jammeh. Jammeh would almost certainly still be president if he had governed The Gambia effectively, but he did not. The micro-level factors played a significant role in protests in The Gambia. Due to grievances, especially the blatant disregard for human life, protests erupted, gained momentum, and led to the election of a new president. In the next chapter, the new president's governance is evaluated to examine why Gambians started protesting his administration after two years in office.

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III. PRESIDENT ADAMA BARROW

In December 2016, citizens in The Gambia shocked the world and democratically voted out their 22-year dictator, Yahya Jammeh, replacing him with a person who had no prior political experience, Adama Barrow. A one-time security guard in the United Kingdom who later became a successful businessman, Barrow had become the presidential candidate for a coalition of opposition parties that had allied before the election. Barrow signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) stating that if he won, he would serve as a transitional president for only three years before calling new elections in which he would not run.¹⁷⁶ Barrow accepted the opposition coalition's nomination and made many promises. He vowed to create jobs, reduce corruption, repeal Jammeh-era laws, and improve the economy. After 22 years of dictatorship, corruption, and systemic pilfering of government revenue by Jammeh's regime, the new regime of Barrow promised hope and economic, political, and social change.¹⁷⁷

Three years later, Barrow had failed to achieve his campaign promises. He failed to improve the state of the country's security and the rule of law, and he failed to tackle corruption. However, Gambians' biggest disappointment in Barrow was that he refused to step down after three years. Barrow continues to cling to power, using the police force and other institutions to control protesters and the pro-state media to downplay the calls for him to exit office.¹⁷⁸ The macro-micro variables—an extensive systemic network of governance grievances ranging from economic and political to social and human rights-related factors that drove widespread protests in The Gambia under Jammeh—continue to drive protests under Barrow. The most considerable driving force was the new dictator himself.

¹⁷⁶ Dwyer and Ceesay, "The Gambia's President Said He'd Step down after Three Years."

¹⁷⁷ Sabine Donner et al., *BTI 2020 Country Report: Gambia* (Gütersloh, Germany: Bertelsmann Foundation, 2021), https://www.bti-project.org/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2020_GMB.pdf.

¹⁷⁸ Rebecca Brubaker and Dirk Druet, *Back from the Brink: A Comparative Study of UN Preventive Diplomacy in West and Central Africa, The Gambia and Gabon* (New York: United Nations University, 2020), <https://i.unu.edu/media/cpr.unu.edu/post/3968/BackfromtheBrink.pdf>.

This chapter aims to answer why political protests in The Gambia occurred over Barrow's efforts to extend his presidential term and run for re-election even though Gambians democratically elected him and his requests are constitutionally allowed. The period covered includes the first four years, 2017–2020, of Barrow's full five-year presidential term. During this period, Barrow experienced more protests than his predecessor due to an increase in democratic freedoms and the people's strong desire for positive governmental change in The Gambia, which led to protests calling for him to fulfill his promise, step down as president, and not run for re-election. This chapter's question is answered using the SCM synthesis of governance and protests to determine the macro–micro relationship of all factors. This chapter explores governance and protests in the same manner as Chapter II to answer the research question.

A. GOVERNANCE UNDER BARROW

As shown in Chapter II, The Gambia's governance before Barrow was in disarray. President Barrow came in with promises to fix several issues, including the economy. In December 2017, Barrow launched the National Development Plan (NDP) with the goal of “deliver [ing] good governance and accountability, social cohesion, and national reconciliation and a revitalized and transformed economy for the wellbeing of all Gambians.”¹⁷⁹ The NDP consisted of eight strategic priorities and enablers that aimed to build a modern democratic state while addressing Gambian society's most severe economic and social issues.¹⁸⁰ Barrow was confident that the plan had a strong accountability framework for the government to better engage with Gambians in the country and abroad. The plan achieved some milestones before being hampered in 2020 by the global COVID pandemic.

¹⁷⁹ Gambia Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, *The Gambia National Development Plan (2018–2021)* (Banjul: Gambia Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, 2017), 1, <https://mofea.gm/downloads-file/national-development-plan>.

¹⁸⁰ Gambia Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, 3.

The NDP's vision was to restore good governance by respecting "human rights, the rule of law, and empowering citizens through decentralization and local governance."¹⁸¹ By strengthening and reshaping the economy, the NDP sought to reduce poverty; improve education and health services; build and restore energy infrastructure and services; empower the youth; develop the private sector as a catalyst for growth, transformation, and job creation; and most importantly, sustain growth.¹⁸² Barrow and the people needed to discover what truly happened under the Jammeh regime in all aspects of government to address the human rights violations and improve the economy successfully.

Barrow established the Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission (TRRC) in 2017 as a result of former President Jammeh's 22-year reign of terror. The TRRC investigated the Jammeh regime's abuses, awarded reparations, and recommended amnesty or prosecution for perpetrators in late 2018.¹⁸³ The TRRC served as Barrow's foundation for accountable and democratic governance by promoting national healing and reconciliation. During the public TRRC hearings, more than a hundred witnesses testified concerning the Jammeh government's breaches of human rights, "including killings, torture, arbitrary detention, sexual violence, and forced disappearances."¹⁸⁴ Barrow's agenda focused on enhancing governance and human rights conditions and repairing international relationships. He commuted the sentences of dozens of political prisoners and established a committee to amend the constitution to limit presidents to no more than two terms in office.¹⁸⁵ He tasked his government with identifying and repatriating wealth that Jammeh had allegedly hid abroad.¹⁸⁶ In early 2019, the nonpartisan Organized Crime and

¹⁸¹ Gambia Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, 9.

¹⁸² Gambia Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, 9.

¹⁸³ Tomás F. Husted and Alexis Arieff, *The Gambia*, CRS Report No. IF11046, version 2 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2018), 1, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/details?prodcode=IF11046>.

¹⁸⁴ U.S. Department of State, *The Gambia 2019 Human Rights Report* (Washington, DC: Department of States, 2020), 9, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/reports/2019-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/gambia/>.

¹⁸⁵ Husted and Arieff, *The Gambia*.

¹⁸⁶ Husted and Arieff.

Corruption Reporting Project claimed that Jammeh had “orchestrated the embezzlement” of approximately one billion dollars in public funds and criminal earnings, although official Gambian figures have been significantly lower.¹⁸⁷ Many economic, legal, and security reforms were needed to move The Gambia forward after the previous regime.

Although Barrow made many promises to the people, he failed in one of the most crucial areas of governance. Barrow was supposed to end human rights violations, including police brutality. Instead, nothing changed, and the same practices under Jammeh continued under Barrow’s presidency. The economy and the distribution of public goods improved; however, Barrow manipulated security and the rule of law as his predecessor had. The following subsections evaluate four years, 2017–2020, of Barrow’s governance of The Gambia’s economy, security and the rule of law, and delivery of public goods.

1. Economy

President Barrow inherited an economic situation exacerbated by corruption, resulting in The Gambia being one of the world’s poorest countries. The state was in extreme debt that exceeded GDP, poverty was on the rise, and unemployment was on the decline but still relatively high. Over the first four years of Barrow’s presidency, The Gambia’s economy improved in all areas—apart from 2020, when COVID affected the world’s including The Gambia’s economy. Under Barrow, The Gambia’s ECOWAS ranking improved from 15 to 11 in 2020.¹⁸⁸ The economy’s progression is analyzed via the GDP and debt ratio, citizen unemployment rate, and poverty.

a. GDP

President Barrow re-instilled citizen and international hope in The Gambia’s future, resulting in the international community’s resuming economic aid and providing availability for the country to grow. Barrow presided over the rise in the country’s GDP

¹⁸⁷ Husted and Arieff.

¹⁸⁸ “ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States,” Africa Regional Integration Index, accessed December 2, 2021, <https://www.integrate-africa.org/rankings/regional-economic-communities/ecowas/>.

from \$1.5 billion in 2017 to \$1.9 billion in 2020.¹⁸⁹ The per capita GDP increased from \$665.21 in 2017 to \$713.43 in 2019 but decreased to \$693.07 in 2020 during COVID.¹⁹⁰ The annual GDP per capita growth rate increased from 1.76 percent in 2017 to 3 percent in 2019 and dropped to –2.85 percent in 2020.¹⁹¹ By comparison, SSA’s annual per capita growth rate was 0.03 percent in 2017, –0.08 percent in 2019, and –4.52 percent in 2020.¹⁹² The economy under Barrow performed considerably better than the SSA average. The government’s debt-to-GDP ratio increased in 2017 from 65.6 percent to 83.1 percent in 2020.¹⁹³ Between 2018 and 2020, government spending accounted for 23 percent of total output GDP, and budget deficits averaged 4.6 percent of GDP; the public debt decreased to 76.6 percent of GDP in 2020.¹⁹⁴ In part, the debt ratio climbed due to the status of the country’s finances resulting from Jammeh-era policies. Despite the challenges and a global pandemic, President Barrow’s policies gradually improved the state of the economy overall.

b. Citizen Unemployment

The economic growth was not solely in capital-intensive industries—it also drove down unemployment. Under Barrow, the unemployment rate in The Gambia steadily declined until 2020. The rate decreased slightly from 9.12 percent in 2017 to 8.94 percent in 2019 and increased to 9.64 percent in 2020.¹⁹⁵ SSA’s unemployment rate was relatively stable over the same four years. The rate decreased from 6.31 percent in 2017 to 6.28

¹⁸⁹ “Gambia GDP,” Trading Economics, accessed December 21, 2021, <https://tradingeconomics.com/gambia/gdp>.

¹⁹⁰ Trading Economics.

¹⁹¹ World Bank, “GDP per Capita Growth (Annual %)—Gambia.”

¹⁹² World Bank, “GDP per Capita Growth (Annual %)—Sub-Saharan Africa.”

¹⁹³ Trading Economics, “Gambia Government Debt to GDP.”

¹⁹⁴ Heritage Foundation, “The Gambia 2016 Index of Economic Freedom.”

¹⁹⁵ “Unemployment, Total (% of Total Labor Force) (Modeled ILO Estimate)—Gambia, The,” World Bank, accessed October 3, 2021, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?end=2020&locations=GM&start=2010&view=chart>.

percent in 2019 and increased to 6.63 percent in 2020.¹⁹⁶ The Gambia's unemployment rate was still higher than the SSA average but steadily declined before 2020.

c. Poverty

Poverty in The Gambia under Barrow decreased slightly, but the 2020 COVID pandemic reversed all gains. As of 2020, the Human Development Index ranked The Gambia 172 of 187 countries worldwide in poverty, an increase from 169 in 2012.¹⁹⁷ The country's poverty rate averaged 34.7 percent for the lower middle class and 70.2 percent for the upper middle class—much higher than the international poverty rate average of 8.9 percent from 2018 to 2020.¹⁹⁸ Before the pandemic, President Barrow had been on track to improve the country's economic health and that of its citizens.

2. Security and the Rule of Law

Barrow promised many improvements to security and the rule of law during his campaign and presidency. However, he has yet to fulfill many of them. Barrow has presided over a significant expansion of political and social space. He pledged to reform the constitution and to restore judicial independence, human rights, media independence, and true democracy.¹⁹⁹ Under Barrow, simple rights like free speech and free press have been restored to some extent and have made journalists feel safe. They have returned from exile, and the private media sector has grown.²⁰⁰ The newfound media freedom has revealed some aspects of Barrow's presidency that may have raised concern among those who elected him.

¹⁹⁶ "Unemployment, Total (% of Total Labor Force) (Modeled ILO Estimate)—Sub-Saharan Africa," World Bank, accessed October 3, 2021, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?end=2020&locations=ZG&start=2010>.

¹⁹⁷ "Human Development Data Center," United Nations Development Programme, accessed December 21, 2021, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data>.

¹⁹⁸ "Macro Poverty Outlook for The Gambia," World Bank, October 6, 2021, <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/b3502c65235d8c72aef5f34d87ed6298-0500062021/related/data-gmb.pdf>.

¹⁹⁹ David Perfect, "The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and Its Aftermath," *Round Table* 106, no. 3 (2017): 330–31, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2017.1326627>.

²⁰⁰ Husted and Arieff, *The Gambia*, 2.

President Barrow emphasized respect of the rule of law for his administration. In 2018 he emphasized that no one was above the law and that his government would run on the country's values.²⁰¹ Barrow urged the public to fully support the police in their efforts to keep the country safe and stable, rather than taking the law into their own hands. The police were there to enforce the law and maintain peace and security, but constraints such as personnel and mobility hampered their effectiveness in many cases.²⁰² In 2020, the National Human Rights Commission held a two-day retreat that centered on two documents—The Gambia's *Code of Conduct for Police Officers* and *Guidelines for Policing Assemblies*—which was a first, according to Ebrima Bah, deputy for the inspector general of the police.²⁰³ In the 50-plus-year history of the Gambian police force, it never had a specific code of conduct to follow.²⁰⁴ With the international community's help, Barrow's administration took strides to improve security in the country and reinstall faith in those public services.

Despite Barrow's many promises, however, human rights violations persisted. Abuses by security personnel continued, although they became more sporadic. More importantly, repressive Jammeh-era laws, especially the anti-LGBTQ+ law, remained in effect.²⁰⁵ From 2017 to 2020, arbitrary arrests were minimal. However, the following atrocities remained unabated for the entire four years: inhumane prison conditions; human trafficking; the criminalization of consenting homosexual encounters between adults; no accountability in cases of violence against girls and women, such as rape and female genital

²⁰¹ "Gambia President Calls for Respect of Rule of Law," BBC, July 20, 2018, ProQuest.

²⁰² BBC.

²⁰³ Arfang M. S. Camara, "NHRC Chairperson Highlights Role of Police in Upholding Rule of Law," *The Point*, July 3, 2020, <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/headlines/nhrc-chairperson-highlights-role-of-police-in-upholding-rule-of-law>.

²⁰⁴ Camara.

²⁰⁵ Husted and Arieff, *The Gambia*, 2.

mutilation/cutting; and child labor abuses.²⁰⁶ During that time, only one incident was reported in response to a protest on July 18, 2018, in Faraba Banta Village, Kombo East District. Police officers shot and killed four protesters who had attacked them; as a result, an investigation was conducted in September, and the officers were detained and eventually charged with murder.²⁰⁷ Although some individuals who committed abuses were prosecuted or punished by the government, impunity and inconsistency in enforcement remained an issue from 2017 to 2020.²⁰⁸ Barrow did not address many of the human rights issues, and although not as repressive as his predecessor, he ultimately followed suit in suppressing protests and media, as detailed in the following paragraph.

Barrow also maintained restrictions on freedom of expression and the investigation into human rights abuses conducted by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The POA that Jammeh had used to restrict protests was upheld by the Supreme Court in late 2017.²⁰⁹ The act mandates that organizers of public gatherings must obtain permission from the inspector general of police by obtaining a permit. The lawsuit filed by the Gambia Press Union against Jammeh’s internet and sedition laws in 2015 was finally ruled on in May 2018. The court upheld the sedition law, which prohibited “exciting disaffection against the person of the President for the government,” and the defamation law was ruled unconstitutional.²¹⁰ In 2017, Barrow’s administration promised to improve the climate for NGOs. Still, by the end of 2020, the 1996 regulation requiring NGOs to register with the

²⁰⁶ U.S. Department of State, *The Gambia 2017 Human Rights Report* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 2018), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2017-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/the-gambia/>; U.S. Department of State, *The Gambia 2018 Human Rights Report* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 2019), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/the-gambia/>; U.S. Department of State, *The Gambia 2019 Human Rights Report*; and U.S. Department of State, *The Gambia 2020 Human Rights Report* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 2021), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/gambia/>.

²⁰⁷ U.S. Department of State, *The Gambia 2018 Human Rights Report*, 2.

²⁰⁸ U.S. Department of State, *The Gambia 2017 Human Rights Report*; U.S. Department of State, *The Gambia 2018 Human Rights Report*; U.S. Department of State, *The Gambia 2019 Human Rights Report*; and U.S. Department of State, *The Gambia 2020 Human Rights Report*.

²⁰⁹ “The Gambia: Freedom in the World 2019,” Freedom House, 11, accessed July 23, 2021, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/gambia/freedom-world/2019>.

²¹⁰ U.S. Department of State, *The Gambia 2018 Human Rights Report*, 6.

National Assembly, which had the authority to amend, revoke, or deny NGO operations at any time, remained in place.²¹¹ Barrow's administration officially ignored the controversial act that criminalized "aggravated homosexuality," citing more pressing public concerns; nevertheless, in 2018, the administration publicly refused to reverse or change the law.²¹² Many of the systematic policies that produced human rights violations under Jammeh stayed in place under President Barrow.

Historically, the judiciary had been subject to executive interference, and the Barrow government continued the trend. However, it did take some measures to reestablish judicial independence. Barrow fulfilled his campaign pledge to fix the judicial system, which was predominantly staffed with foreign judges under Jammeh, by Gambianizing the judiciary. In 2017, he appointed a new chief justice and 14 Superior Court judges who were all Gambian nationals to restore credibility and reform the judicial system.²¹³ His administration promised to amend the constitution to include term limits. However, the administration voted against the proposed Constitution Promulgation Bill in September 2020 because its retroactive term limit clause would have prevented Barrow from serving two additional presidential terms.²¹⁴ Barrow promised the opposition coalition and the people that he would serve only three years as president, but he later discovered this promise was unenforceable, as he had been elected to a five-year term. According to the 1997 constitution, if the president stepped down, the vice president or the speaker would ascend to the office of president until the next presidential election in 2021.²¹⁵ Thus, the agreement to step down and have a new election was unconstitutional. Although Barrow's desire to fulfill his full five-year term received much opposition, it was legal. However, his

²¹¹ U.S. Department of State, *The Gambia 2020 Human Rights Report*, 10.

²¹² U.S. Department of State, 15.

²¹³ U.S. Department of State, *The Gambia 2017 Human Rights Report*, 5.

²¹⁴ Satang Nabaneh, "Attempts at Constitutional Reform in The Gambia: Whither the Draft Constitution?," *AfricLaw* (blog), October 26, 2020, <https://africlaw.com/2020/10/26/attempts-at-constitutional-reform-in-the-gambia-whither-the-draft-constitution/>.

²¹⁵ Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia, 1997, 43.

subsequent desire to manipulate the new constitution to remain in office for an extra term added fuel to the opposition fire and suggested executive interference.

3. Public Goods

The delivery of public goods under President Barrow continued to improve during the 2017–2020 period. The overall infrastructure, soft and hard, improved—from the continued emphases on education and health policies that started under Jammeh to the 2019 parliament-launched Gambia Infrastructure Fund. Barrow’s NDP succeeded in improving education, energy, health, water, and sanitation infrastructure.

a. Education Infrastructure

As discussed in Chapter II, the education infrastructure in The Gambia needed significant improvement. Under Barrow’s NDP, the government aimed to prioritize expanding access to early childhood education, enhancing the quality of learning with an emphasis on “Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), health, agriculture, and special needs at the basic, post-secondary/tertiary, and higher education levels.”²¹⁶ The NDP also focused on promoting technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and other skill-building initiatives that aligned with the labor market, as well as measures to expand access to higher education.²¹⁷ According to the World Bank, the primary education completion rate in The Gambia rose from 72 percent in 2017 to around 82 percent in 2020.²¹⁸ The NDP made significant progress in reaching some of its education goals, which was the first step to attaining many of its other goals.

b. Energy Infrastructure

Barrow inherited a flawed energy infrastructure but put a policy in place to improve it as much as possible during his presidential term. The Gambia was in an electricity crisis, with demand exceeding capacity due to aging equipment, a debilitating policy

²¹⁶ Gambia Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, *National Development Plan*, 13.

²¹⁷ Gambia Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, 13.

²¹⁸ World Bank, “Primary Completion Rate.”

environment, and a heavily indebted power corporation.²¹⁹ In 2020, 66 percent of Gambian households had electricity.²²⁰ The NDP aimed to improve policy and regulations to attract energy sector investments, thus allowing for the improvement of energy generation capacity, including renewables, access to power, and household energy security.²²¹ The World Bank authorized a \$43 million grant from the International Development Association for Gambia’s Electricity Restoration and Modernization Project (GERMP) in June 2020.²²² The goal of the project was to increase the availability and dependability of solar energy-generated electricity and strengthen the National Water and Electricity Corporation’s capacity to dispatch variable renewable energy.²²³ GERMP will also develop 20 megawatt on-grid solar photovoltaic plants in The Gambia, providing more energy, enabling the rehabilitation of 18 km of transmission lines, and improving water access across the country.²²⁴ The Gambia’s energy infrastructure is on the verge of receiving much-needed repairs and becoming more appealing to investors to realize Barrow’s aims of meeting citizen and business needs.

²¹⁹ Gambia Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, *National Development Plan*, 13–14.

²²⁰ Gambia Bureau of Statistics and ICF International, *The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey, 2019–20* (Banjul: Gambia Bureau of Statistics and ICF International, 2021), 9, <https://www.dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-FR369-DHS-Final-Reports.cfm>.

²²¹ Gambia Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, *National Development Plan*, 14.

²²² Haddija Jawara, “The Gambia: World Bank to Strengthen Access to Energy and Water,” World Bank, June 29, 2020, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/06/29/the-gambia-world-bank-to-strengthen-access-to-energy-and-water>.

²²³ National Water and Electricity Company and Government of The Gambia, *The Gambia Electricity Restoration and Modernization Project (GERMP): Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for the On-Grid Solar Plant at Jambur, West Coast Region* (Banjul: National Water and Electricity Company and Government of The Gambia, 2019), 7, <http://nawec.gm/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/GERMP-solar-ESIA-vFinal.pdf>.

²²⁴ “Gambia Electricity Restoration and Modernization Project (GERMP) Terms of Reference for Developing a Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) Implementation in The Gambia Transmission and Distribution Electricity Network Modernization Greater Banjul Area,” National Water and Electricity Corporation, January 4, 2021, <http://nawec.gm/gambia-electricity-restoration-and-modernization-project-germp-terms-of-reference-for-developing-a-resettlement-action-plan-rap-implementation-in-the-gambia-transmission-and-distribution-electric/>.

c. *Health Infrastructure*

President Barrow’s government implemented an effective plan to continue improving the health infrastructure. The NDP emphasized the importance of decreasing maternity and infant mortality, reducing communicable and non-communicable diseases, and ensuring the country’s health workforce was appropriately skilled.²²⁵ According to the World Health Organization, from 2017 to 2018, the infant mortality rate decreased by 2.6 percent to 36.8 percent, the neonatal mortality rate by 2.4 percent to 27.8 percent, and the under-five mortality rate by 3.6 percent to 53.7 percent.²²⁶ Extrapolating over four years, The Gambia would have a 10.4 percent, 9.6 percent, and 14.4 percent decrease in the respective mortality rates. This decreased rate per year was more significant than decreases under Jammeh, indicating that under Barrow, The Gambia had further improved the health infrastructure in some areas. However, childhood immunization rates had declined overall by 2019. The neonatal tetanus vaccine was the only one to increase, resulting in a vaccination rate of more the 95 percent in 2020.²²⁷ In 2019, RotaC, PCV3, and Hib3 all decreased compared to Jammeh’s final year in office.²²⁸ In 2019 the HIV antiretroviral therapy coverage increased from 27 percent in 2017 to 31 percent in 2019, up from 25 percent in 2016.²²⁹ The Gambia’s 2019–2020 DHS indicated a decrease in the maternal mortality rate, covering a seven-year period before the survey, to 17 percent, a significant decline from the 36 percent in the 2013 DHS. Barrow-era policies have been making noticeable positive changes in many areas of health infrastructure.

d. *Water and Sanitation*

Barrow’s NDP concurrently improved health and water and sanitation reform. The plan addressed fair access to clean and cheap water and sanitation, appropriate hygiene

²²⁵ Gambia Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, *National Development Plan*, 13.

²²⁶ World Health Organization, “The Global Health Observatory, Gambia.”

²²⁷ World Health Organization.

²²⁸ World Health Organization.

²²⁹ World Health Organization.

practices, and environmental protection.²³⁰ According to the 2019–2020 DHS, 95 percent of Gambian households had access to safe drinking water, and 72 percent had an improved toilet facility for the household.²³¹ The NDP added hygiene as a focus area, highlighting the role handwashing with a cleansing agent such as soap plays in sanitation. This element of sanitation lags others, as only 19 percent of households had a fixed place for handwashing, and only 13 percent of households had a cleansing agent available.²³² Despite the low handwashing numbers, Barrow’s government is aggressively trying to increase access to safe drinking water to 100 percent, improve sanitation to 75 percent, and double the handwashing percentage by 2021.²³³ These figures suggest that President Barrow has created effective policies to improve water and sanitation infrastructure in his goal to improve good governance in The Gambia.

4. Governance Analysis

Under President Barrow, governance of The Gambia improved in all areas except for the rule of law. Governance under Barrow was divided into three sections for analysis in this thesis: economy, security and rule of law, and public goods. This research argues that the most important aspect—security and the rule of law—did not improve as significantly as promised by Barrow and negated all his governance progress in the eyes of some. The grading of Barrow’s governance is heavily weighted on the rule of law as it covers many categories.

Under Barrow, The Gambia gained more freedom but still had issues. According to Freedom House, The Gambia graduated from a freedom status of not free to partly free

²³⁰ Gambia Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, *National Development Plan*, 13.

²³¹ Gambia Bureau of Statistics and ICF International, *Demographic and Health Survey, 2019–20*, 9.

²³² Gambia Bureau of Statistics and ICF International, 12.

²³³ Gambia Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, *National Development Plan*, 31.

and maintained the latter from 2018 to 2020.²³⁴ The country's Freedom on the Net status followed suit, with scores rising from 45 to 53 in the 2018 to 2021 reports.²³⁵ The reports indicate that the rule of law discriminates against people with disabilities and the LGBTQ+ population, and although Barrow states The Gambia is secular, the draft of the constitution does not indicate the same. During this time, corruption was still heavily prevalent in Gambian institutions. The Gambia's CPI ranking was the highest in 2018, when it ranked 93 out of 180 countries.²³⁶ The rank decreased to 102 in 2020, and the score remained consistent at 37 from 2018 to 2020.²³⁷

The Gambia's thriving economy and effective policies under Barrow drastically improved the delivery of public goods. The economy soared: GDP increased by an astonishing 8.2 percent average from 2017 to 2020, despite the downward economic decline in dealing with the COVID-19 global pandemic. The country saw improvements in education statistics, energy, health, water, and sanitation. Education infrastructure improved primary education completion by 10 percent in four years, and policies for higher education and TVET continued. Energy infrastructure received a major investment for the restoration and modernization of the energy grid. Investments also contributed to the

²³⁴ Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2018—The Gambia," European Country of Origin Information Network, January 2018, <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/1428746.html>; "Jammeh's Rule in Six Dates"; "The Gambia: Freedom in the World 2020," Freedom House, accessed March 8, 2021, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/gambia/freedom-world/2020>; and "The Gambia: Freedom in the World 2021," Freedom House, accessed December 4, 2021, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/gambia/freedom-world/2021>.

²³⁵ "The Gambia: Freedom on the Net 2018," Freedom House, accessed December 4, 2021, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/gambia/freedom-net/2018>; "The Gambia: Freedom on the Net 2019," Freedom House, accessed December 4, 2021, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/gambia/freedom-net/2019>; "The Gambia: Freedom on the Net 2020," Freedom House, accessed July 25, 2021, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/gambia/freedom-net/2020>; and "The Gambia: Freedom on the Net 2021," Freedom House, accessed December 4, 2021, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/gambia/freedom-net/2021>.

²³⁶ Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2018* (Berlin: Transparency International, 2019), 3, https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/CPI_2018_Executive_Summary_EN.pdf.

²³⁷ Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2018*, 3; Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2019* (Berlin: Transparency International, 2020), 3, https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/2019_CPI_Report_EN_200331_141425.pdf; and Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2020* (Berlin: Transparency International, 2021), 3, https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/CPI2020_Report_EN_0802-WEB-1_2021-02-08-103053.pdf.

improvement of access to safe water, which improved the water and sanitation infrastructure. The water and sanitation infrastructure has allowed over 95 percent of the population to access safe drinking water. Toilet access has improved to 72 percent, but access to handwashing with a cleansing agent has remained at less than 15 percent. The health infrastructure has improved as well: mortality rates are decreasing across the board while access to HIV antiretroviral therapy coverage is increasing. Although children's immunizations have decreased slightly, all these improvements are a win for President Barrow. However, the most important aspect of governance—security—has not improved in line with his promises.

President Barrow followed his predecessor's steps in security and the rule of law. Barrow began interfering in judicial matters and using security institutions for his political needs. Although he filled the judicial branch with Gambian judges as promised, his regime interfered in the amendment of the constitution. Barrow promised that his government would draft a constitution to include presidential term limits. He delivered on that promise, but he wanted his current presidential term not to count against any future presidential terms should he win re-election. His party blocked the Constitutional Promulgation Bill, which would have essentially delivered on his initial promise.²³⁸ The MOU that Barrow signed with the opposition coalition party was unconstitutional; however, he did not keep the one promise allowed within the agreement that prohibited him from running for re-election.

As is discussed in the following section, some Gambians did not approve of Barrow's serving a full five years despite it being the length of his elected presidential term. They became furious at Barrow's decision to run in the 2021 presidential election. These citizen grievances with the president culminated in protests wherein security forces began oppressing and arresting peaceful protesters. Barrow's security institution's reactions to the protests were like Jammeh-era actions. Because of some rule-of-law improvements like freedom of the press, the media publicized these repressive acts. President Barrow did improve the overall governance of The Gambia considerably.

²³⁸ Nabaneh, "Attempts at Constitutional Reform in The Gambia."

However, his Jammeh-era tactics in the most critical area of governance overshadowed many of his successes.

B. PROTESTS, 2017–2020

This section explores protests under President Barrow from 2017 to 2020. The format for this section is identical to Chapter II. The protests are presented in chronological order for simple reference in the subsequent analysis section. The protest timeline provides most of the details required for identifying macro–micro elements to be synthesized using the SCM.

During the first four years of Barrow’s presidency, 10 protests and a coup attempt occurred. Many of the protests were due to policies and culture left from the last administration, but two were in response to the incumbent’s policies. The first protest occurred in Kanilai, the birth village of the former president. On June 2, 2017, a violent protest occurred in Kanilai. Dozens of youth in the village’s vicinity took to the streets near the military camps demanding the withdrawal of ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG) soldiers from the area.²³⁹ Some protesters were armed with traditional weapons, provoking a disproportional response from soldiers and resulting in the arrests of 22, a few injuries, and one death.²⁴⁰ Barrow’s government acknowledged that peaceful protest was a protected right but denounced the Kanilai armed protest and stated armed protest of any kind would not be tolerated in The Gambia.²⁴¹

Later that year, Jammeh’s lingering influence was felt in a failed coup attempt. Captain Yahya Jammeh, a relative and longtime assistant to former President Yahya Jammeh, led 12 soldiers in a coup attempt against Barrow.²⁴² The 12 Gambian soldiers

²³⁹ Sanna Camara, “Kanilai Protest ‘Will Not Be Accepted’: Prexy Barrow,” *The Point*, June 5, 2017, <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/kanilai-protest-will-not-be-accepted-prexy-barrow>.

²⁴⁰ “Kanilai Protest: No Time for Blame Game,” *The Point*, June 6, 2017, <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/kanilai-protest-no-time-for-blame-game>; and Camara, “Kanilai Protest ‘Will Not Be Accepted.’”

²⁴¹ Camara, “Kanilai Protest ‘Will Not Be Accepted.’”

²⁴² “Gambia: 12 Soldiers Charged over Attempted Coup,” *Peninsula* (Qatar), November 18, 2017, <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/18/11/2017/Gambia-12-soldiers-charged-over-attempted-coup>.

were charged with treason and other offenses in November 2017 at the country's largest military base in Yundum, near Banjul.²⁴³

Following Barrow's full first year in office, policies and deals that had been enacted under Jammeh caused the administration some problems. On January 31, 2018, over 50 University of The Gambia students gathered outside the Banjul police headquarters to demand the release of political scientist Ismaila Ceesay, who had been detained over a newspaper interview in which he stated the government needed to do more to gain the army's trust.²⁴⁴ The crowd pressured the police to release the university instructor. The police charged him with "incitement to violence" but dropped the charges and released him a few hours later.²⁴⁵

Environmental protests erupted a few months later over business practices that disrupted life in the surrounding area. On March 22, 2018, approximately 150 Gunjurians mobilized to remove a Chinese company's waste pipe following its failure to comply with the Gambian National Environment Agency (NEA)'s order to treat its wastewater and remove the pipe.²⁴⁶ The pipe was causing environmental issues and the death of fish and birds in the area. The activists were met by police and arrested; however, charges were eventually dropped and the activists released.²⁴⁷ The government intervened and reversed the NEA's ruling to avoid discouraging possible investors, allowing the pipe to be restored.²⁴⁸ The Chinese company reinstalled the pipe and celebrated its victory by staking a Chinese flag near it. This was seen as disrespectful by one local: "When they planted a

²⁴³ "12 Soldiers Charged over Attempted Coup."

²⁴⁴ Ruth Maclean and Saikou Jammeh, "'It's Scary'—Gambian Lecturer's Arrest Sparks Repression Fears," *Guardian*, February 2, 2018, LexisNexis; and "Gambian University Instructor Detained for Newspaper Interview, Then Released," *Global Voices*, February 2, 2018, <https://globalvoices.org/2018/02/02/gambian-university-instructor-detained-for-newspaper-interview-then-released/>.

²⁴⁵ Maclean and Jammeh, "Gambian Lecturer's Arrest Sparks Repression Fears."

²⁴⁶ Holly Eva Ryan, "Protests in the Gambia Highlight Tensions over Chinese Investment in Africa," *Conversation*, June 27, 2019, <http://theconversation.com/protests-in-the-gambia-highlight-tensions-over-chinese-investment-in-africa-119221>.

²⁴⁷ Ryan.

²⁴⁸ Ryan.

flag on our beach like that, we really saw this as an insult. While we are not against investment in the area, we do ask that these things are undertaken responsibly and that they do not cause harm to our people and environment.”²⁴⁹

While the first environmental protest was peaceful, the second protest ended in violence. A series of protests on the same issue culminated on June 18, 2018, when three civilians were killed in Faraba Banta when police opened fire on an environmental protest against a sand-mining company.²⁵⁰ At the end of June, five police officers were charged with murder related to the fatalities.²⁵¹ Following the event, the Barrow administration immediately started an investigation. In November, the resultant report recommended that the five police officers be prosecuted, demonstrating Barrow’s commitment to hold police responsible for violence against demonstrators.²⁵²

In July 2019, large protests occurred in the major cities of Brikama and Serrekunda. The first of these protests was against sexual violence. The coalition of Gambian Civil Society activists organized a women’s march on July 4, 2019, in support of Fatou Toufah Jallow, a young woman who publicly accused former Gambian President Jammeh of sexual assault and rape in the October 2019 TRRC to educate the public on the prevalence of and call for an end to sexual violence in Gambian society.²⁵³ The march offered assistance to victims and promoted public awareness about sexual violence in Gambian society, which was widespread and growing.²⁵⁴ The protest’s tagline was “Stand up against sexual violence today to protect your daughter tomorrow.”²⁵⁵

²⁴⁹ Ryan.

²⁵⁰ “Jammeh’s Rule in Six Dates.”

²⁵¹ “Jammeh’s Rule in Six Dates.”

²⁵² “Jammeh’s Rule in Six Dates.”

²⁵³ U.S. Department of State, *The Gambia 2019 Human Rights Report*, 10.

²⁵⁴ Kaddy Jawo, “Sexual Violence Survivors, Activists to Protest against Sexual Violence,” *Gambia Times*, July 3, 2019, <https://www.thegambiatimes.com/sexual-survivors-activists-to-protest-against-sexual-violence/>.

²⁵⁵ Jawo.

On July 24, 2019, two protests occurred, one planned and one spontaneous. Residents of Brikama assembled on July 24, 2019, despite being denied a legally required permit by the police, to protest the Brikama Area Council's poor delivery of community services.²⁵⁶ Meanwhile, in Serrekunda, a spontaneous protest of youths demanding justice erupted in response to the death of a Sierra Leonean national, Ousman Darboe, who was allegedly tortured by police from the anti-crime unit.²⁵⁷ The government issued a statement asking the youth and the public to remain calm, resist violence, and refrain from provoking the police, and promising an independent investigation into the incident.²⁵⁸

The final protest of 2019 began the series of protests against President Barrow. On December 16, 2019, the TYJ movement organized a protest to deliver a letter formally to the Barrow administration, demanding that he honor the 2016 MOU with the coalition opposition and step down in January 2020. Thousands arrived in Banjul for the five-hour protest with signs demanding the president do what he promised during his presidential campaign.²⁵⁹ Some of the banners read: "An Agreement is an Agreement, Respect the 2016 Coalition Agreement; Barrow Put Gambia First and Barrow Last; Don't Steal Our New Found Democracy Mr. Adama Barrow; ECOWAS Come and Get Your Adama Barrow 3 Years Jotna."²⁶⁰

The year 2019 marked what some believed should have been Barrow's last year as president, so the beginning of 2020 was a continuation of the December 2019 protest. However, due to gathering restrictions following the start of the global COVID-19

²⁵⁶ U.S. Department of State, *The Gambia 2019 Human Rights Report*, 6.

²⁵⁷ Fatou Touray, "Government Calls for Calm following Death of Shopkeeper Ousman Darboe," Kerr Fatou Online Media House, October 4, 2021, <https://www.kerrfatou.com/government-calls-for-calm-following-death-of-shopkeeper-ousman-darboe/>; and Fatou Touray, "Arrest of 37 Youths a Typical Malpractice We Saw under Jammeh," Kerr Fatou Online Media House, October 4, 2021, <https://www.kerrfatou.com/arrest-of-37-youths-a-typical-malpractice-we-saw-under-jammeh/>.

²⁵⁸ Touray, "Government Calls for Calm following Death of Shopkeeper."

²⁵⁹ Momodou Jawo and Arfang M. S. Camara, "Thousands Protest, Demand Barrow's Resignation," *The Point*, December 17, 2019, <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/thousands-protest-demand-barrows-resignation>.

²⁶⁰ Jawo and Camara.

pandemic, protests occurred only in January 2020. The year started with a protest for the return of Jammeh from exile.

On January 16, 2020, thousands of supporters of former exiled President Yahya Jammeh endorsed him by protesting for his right to return from exile.²⁶¹ Protesters urged that regional and international authorities adhere to an agreement that would allow Jammeh to return from exile in Equatorial Guinea.²⁶² Barrow's government responded by stating that should Jammeh return, he would be arrested, and his security and safety could not be guaranteed.²⁶³

For the final protest of 2020, the TYJ organization and source of Operation Three Years Jotna planned a permitted peaceful protest on January 26, 2020.²⁶⁴ After protesters deviated from the approved route, authorities forcibly dispersed a Banjul protest over President Barrow's desire to extend his term beyond the promised three years.²⁶⁵ Authorities detained 137 people, including senior TYJ members; the TYJ was later banned, and eight members were charged with rioting.²⁶⁶ In response to their coverage of the January protest, private radio stations Home Digital FM and King FM and their associated online services were shut down by the Barrow administration but were allowed to reopen the next month following mediation.²⁶⁷ At the end of 2020, President Barrow was still in office, COVID remained a global concern, and large gatherings were discouraged globally.

²⁶¹ "Gambia—Thousands March for Ex-Ruler Yahya Jammeh's Return," All Africa, January 16, 2020, ProQuest.

²⁶² All Africa.

²⁶³ All Africa.

²⁶⁴ Momodou Jawo, "3 Years Jotna to Protest on Jan. 26," *The Point*, January 20, 2020, <https://the.point.gm/africa/gambia/article/3-years-jotna-to-protest-on-jan-26>.

²⁶⁵ "Jammeh's Rule in Six Dates."

²⁶⁶ "Jammeh's Rule in Six Dates."

²⁶⁷ "Jammeh's Rule in Six Dates."

C. SYNTHESIS OF GOVERNANCE AND PROTESTS

President Barrow's governance was a drastic improvement for The Gambia, but his refusal to change fundamental laws and conduct police reform resulted in the strengthening of identity and the framing for progressive change. Although the economy thrived and delivery of public goods improved, the lack of change in security and critical areas of the rule of law negated Barrow's governance progress. The micro-variables—governance elements, identity, framing, and emotions—allowed for the macro-variable—resource mobilization and political opportunity—to establish a movement that called for Barrow's removal as president. This final section, as in Chapter II, synthesizes governance and protests and analyzes them together. The 11 protests that took place under Barrow appeared to be independent, but they contributed to different macro-micro variables and fed into subsequent protests. The eight components and bridges of the SCM (as represented in Exhibit C of Figure 1, Chapter I) were evaluated to synthesize each protest with governance. This research determined what bridged the protests to each other and governance, resulting in the findings that it was the people's strong sense of national identity, an increase in democracy, the framing for change, and the refusal to experience another dictator that allowed simultaneously resource mobilization and political opportunity to produce the protests against Barrow's re-election bid.

The first protest on June 2, 2017, started because of identity and economic loss. The inhabitants of Kanilai were extremely proud of their village and former President Jammeh. As the birthplace of Jammeh, Kanilai benefited considerably in his tenure as president. The village had been a small quiet farming town before Jammeh helped it flourish into a major socioeconomic center with the addition of a presidential palace, a wrestling arena, a luxury hotel, a game park, a zoo, and more.²⁶⁸ After Jammeh fled into exile in January 2017, the village full of Jammeh loyalists remained under guard by the Gambian army and ECOWAS troops. The benefits the villagers had received under Jammeh's presidency included free electricity, free water, and a thriving local economy. One villager indicated that it felt as if

²⁶⁸ "In Kanilai, Nostalgia for Jammeh Continues to Kick In," *Chronicle* (Gambia), June 21, 2019, <https://www.chronicle.gm/amp/in-kanilai-nostalgia-for-jammeh-continues-to-kick/>.

the new regime had made the village an enemy, treating residents like aliens in their own country.²⁶⁹ He claimed that they were being “tormented and isolated by the very government that [was] supposed to be there” for them.²⁷⁰ The villagers celebrated their identity as Jammeh supporters, and that identity combined with the copious time they possessed when their local economy came to a standstill to foster the ideal conditions for resource mobilization against the troops in the area. The troops’ presence in the village eliminated the need for finances to mobilize—the protesters simply had to go outside. Thus, while resource mobilization was at play in this protest, the grievance was not just about the economic loss of the villagers but how Barrow turned the government against them and reversed any gains they had had under Jammeh.

On the surface, the July 2017 protest was about removing the ECOMIG and Gambian troops from the village to regain freedom. The villagers lost many resources when Jammeh left office, and they felt they were now being targeted and attacked because the former president had taken care of the village. Barrow’s targeted restrictive governance of the village had indirect effects. The sheer presence of ECOWAS created an indirect effect of loss, which helped frame the need for the villagers to regain their freedom. The framing combined with the villagers’ collective identity, and the micro-level incentives they had had under the former president motivated them to macro-level resource mobilization. Since the village’s local economy came to a halt with the removal of Jammeh, villagers and other Jammeh supporters had the weapons, time, and energy to dedicate to this protest. They, too, were citizens of The Gambia, and now the government was treating them as less-than. The major incentive of freedom and identity, combined with the other factors, provided a desire to remove the troops from the village. This desire to remove the troops possibly justifies classifying this protest as resource mobilization. However, as discussed, more factors went into this protest. The response of the Barrow administration to the arming of protesters signaled that the country had changed and that protesting was a right if it was conducted peacefully.

²⁶⁹ “Nostalgia for Jammeh.”

²⁷⁰ “Nostalgia for Jammeh.”

The 2017 attempted coup at first glance could be classified as stemming from political opportunity. The coup did not take place so that the military could take over but intended to reinstall Yahya Jammeh into office. The coup attempt had framing, identity, resource mobilization, and political opportunity aspects. Being a part of the military was an identity; therefore, the other incentives that framed the coup attempt were the rewards that the former president would have given to the military had the coup been successful and the reduction of incentives if Barrow remained president. During this time, the Barrow administration did not prioritize reforming the military. Military personnel had the resources, time, and energy to mobilize as they waited to see what would change with the new administration. The use of technological resources, specifically the WhatsApp messaging app, helped to harness those resources and frame the desire to restore Jammeh to office, but it also had the indirect effect of spreading word of the coup attempt and thwarting it. Loyalty, identity, political opportunity, and resources allowed the military personnel to organize and plan the coup. In November 2017, the soldiers involved in the coup were charged with treason, among other offenses. The news of these charges reminded everyone of the need for the new administration to reform the military, which would feed into the next protest.

The January 31, 2018, protest resulted from identity but was framed by another factor: outrage over an unjustified arrest. Technology allowed for this protest to mobilize quickly and present as a resource mobilization protest. Although resource mobilization was the macro-variable in this protest, there were more micro-factors at play, one of which was emotion. Emotions jumpstarted the framing process, but other factors led to the arrest. Governance played a big part in this protest. Barrow's administration still had Jammeh-era laws in place that allowed for the arbitrary arrest of individuals under the guise of national security. The police used this technique when they arrested Ceesay for his comment that the administration should do more to gain the military's trust. The fact that Gambians elected Barrow to change police practices such as this provided incentives to let the police know these actions were no longer tolerated. From the raw emotion of outrage came the framing to urge the police to release Ceesay.

Regarding identity dynamics, the protesters were all University of The Gambia students uniting around one of their own, Ceesay. All the incentives, combined with resources and technology, allowed a crowd of students to mobilize and pressure the police to release the professor. Following the arrest of Ceesay, two Twitter posts summed up many Gambians' feelings concerning President Barrow's first two years in office. The first Twitter post was by freelance Gambian journalist Saikou Jammeh—no relation to the former president—on January 31, 2018:

#Gambia. We must all stand up & speak up for Dr. Ceesay. His arrest & detention indicates a backstepping on our democratic gains. This is a threat to the rights & freedoms we have come to know, to cherish & appreciate after been suppressed & oppressed for 22 plus yrs #FreeDrCeesay.²⁷¹

The second Twitter post was posted a few hours later by Gambian Aisha Dabo, @mashanubian:

I thought using hashtags to demand release of citizens whose basic rights were being violated in #Gambia was over from 20Jan2017. Until 31Jan2018 Ceesay detained for his opinion & here we are #FreeDrCeesay. We voted for a change of SYSTEM[,] NOT JUST a President.²⁷²

Gambians were tired of oppression, demanded change, and were fighting to keep their newfound democracy. The successful outcome was that the students' protests were heard throughout the country. This outcome, combined with the protest results to remove Jammeh and the newfound freedom, played a role in the environmental protests that followed.

Both environmental protests were motivated primarily by a lack of good governance. However, they both presented as resource mobilization protests due to the planning, energy, and resources that occurred to mobilize both groups. Therefore, the macro-variable in both environmental protests was resource mobilization, and the micro-

²⁷¹ Saikou Jammeh @saiks2, "We must all stand up & speak up for Dr Ceesay," Twitter, January 31, 2018, 1:18 p.m., <https://twitter.com/saiks2/status/958781572580347905>.

²⁷² Aisha Dabo @mashanubian, "I thought using hashtags to demand release of citizens whose basic rights were being violated in #Gambia was over from 20Jan2017," Twitter, January 31, 2018, 3:07 p.m., <https://twitter.com/mashanubian/status/958809089357828103>.

variables were various governance elements, identity, and framing. The first environmental protest lacked adequate reform and accountability in the business environment. The March 2018 protest occurred due to micro-factors, a lack of enforcement by the NEA on the Chinese company, and identity. When the Chinese company essentially ignored the NEA and did not remove the waste pipe, its removal became the framing that, when combined with the identity of the Gambians who were being affected by the waste, produced the incentive for them to mobilize and personally remove the pipe. The Barrow administration's response was made in part for a specific portion of governance that contributed to the economy, outside investments, due to the poor financial state of the country. However, the response implied that investment was more important than the Gambian people. When combined with the corruption of the previous regime, this statement cast Barrow in a bad light. The comments of disappointment by the public showed that Gambians wanted their country to do well and have investments, but they no longer wanted investing to be done at their expense. This sentiment fed into the following protest.

The second environmental protest, like the first, was due to a governance issue. This issue was the lack of police reform combined with business reform. A series of protests led to the May 2018 protest in question due to sand-mining company Julakay Limited's never gaining consent from Faraba Banta villagers to start mining on their rice fields, which threatened their food supply.²⁷³ The micro-factor that led to protests was the government's unwillingness to step in for the betterment of the villagers. Upon investigation, it was found that the mining company's license was authorized and that there was nothing that could be done. This decision had an indirect effect in allowing identities, youth, and villagers to make their voices heard. The youth mobilized on May 26, 2018, to protest the mining activities in their village, citing they had never been notified about the

²⁷³ "Julakay Ltd. Sand Mining in Faraba Banta, the Gambia," Environmental Justice Atlas, August 18, 2019, <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/julakay-mining-site-the-gambia>.

company's mining license.²⁷⁴ Due to the clashes, the Gambian Police Intervention Unit (PIU), a paramilitary force, intervened and stayed to protect the mining site.²⁷⁵

The decision for the PIU to stay, combined with the lack of police reform, contributed to the poor outcome of the following protest. The villagers denied the claims of the Gambian inspector general of police that they had received quarterly compensation by Julakay. On June 18, 2018, the PIU used lethal repression to kill three people during a new protest.²⁷⁶ The Barrow administration could no longer ignore the lack of police reform, and in the interim, the five police officers responsible were charged with murder. Governance in the business climate failed by letting a company destroy a village's food supply without concern. Although almost two years into his presidency, Barrow's administration held police accountable, signaling the change that Gambians had been waiting to see.

Change and reform became the key pillars of protests in 2019. On July 4, 2019, the protest against sexual violence was framed around change and could be classified as resource mobilization, as the organization of the march required many resources. However, this protest was influenced by outside factors and contributed to the Me Too movement. The Me Too movement was a macro-factor that helped feed into the framing that was already taking place in the country. Women identified with this change and were incentivized to promote it. Gambian women were emboldened, which contributed to these incentives by another outside factor, the testimony of Fatou Jallow. Timing and technology became huge factors in the mobilization of women for this march. The establishment of the TRRC and the internet's role in helping women identify and demand change and freedom to protest—not to mention capture the world's attention—contributed greatly to the incentives that led to the march and the Me Too movement. In this protest, the improvements to governance were working.

²⁷⁴ Environmental Justice Atlas.

²⁷⁵ Environmental Justice Atlas.

²⁷⁶ Environmental Justice Atlas.

On July 24, 2019, the two protests showed that governance needed additional improvement. They both could be classified as resource mobilization protests, but more micro-variables were at play. The protest in Brikama was not just about resources and poor delivery of public goods but about governance. This protest was framed around changing the community for the better, and the incentives were tied to the identity of the community that wanted access to better services. The denial of the protest permit had the indirect effect of shedding light on the POA's still being in place—even though the Barrow administration said that peaceful protests were a right guaranteed by the constitution, it allowed a law to stay in place that easily denied that fundamental right. The POA was a governance issue that would reappear in subsequent protests.

On July 24, 2019, the second protest, in Serrekunda, was mobilized from outrage. Again, emotion was the other factor that immediately framed youths around justice. The same governance issue of police reform was the cause of the outcry. It was alleged that Ousainou Darboe had died due to the unconstitutional practice of torture by the police. The constant factor of police reform and the indirect effects of the inaction of the Barrow administration incentivized this collective identity—the youth—to take matters into their own hands, which created another indirect effect, more chaos in the rule of law. The statement by the government was one that many had heard before—“We will look into it.” However, this did not ease the minds of the youth that things would change soon. At this point, President Barrow was nearing the end of three years in office, but police reform had yet to be addressed. The speed of Barrow's reform of Jammeh's laws and policies would be used in the following protest.

The December 2019 protest is a glaring example of a political opportunity protest. However, like all other protests evaluated thus far, there was no singular reason for the protest. The organizers of the TYJ movement were politically motivated to create a new presidential election and use the movement under the framing of making Barrow stick to his three-year agreement and step down. Even though the 2016 coalition MOU was not legal, the framing was combined with other factors—such as Barrow's slow pace in replacing Jammeh-era laws like the POA, enacting police reform, and being a man of his word—to mobilize thousands. Abdou Njie, chairman of the TYJ, stated that the protest was

primarily carried out to show Barrow and the international community that people opposed the president's desire to remain in office beyond the three years detailed in the 2016 coalition agreement.²⁷⁷ While organizers knew that the protest would not produce Barrow's resignation, they were cultivating incentives for future political opportunities.

Gambians have been divided on Barrow over many issues. Some want Barrow out of office, some want him to stay, and some want Jammeh back. The pro-Jammeh group has been biding its time and planning in the background, awaiting an opportunity for the return of their ex-ruler.²⁷⁸ The first protest of 2020 was for the return of Jammeh from exile. The possibility of Jammeh's comeback emerged as many Gambians grew disillusioned with the incumbent. Furthermore, according to Gambian human rights campaigner Madi Jobarteh, not only has Barrow been unable to combat corruption, but he has also been accused of cozying up to old Jammeh party members.²⁷⁹ Political opportunity was a major part of this protest. Political opportunity mobilized pro-Jammeh supporters through identity and framed it around the notion that the country was better with Jammeh. Although many did not want Jammeh to return, the ability for this type of protest to occur spoke to Barrow's commitment to allow peaceful protesting. His response to this protest was that Jammeh would be held accountable for the atrocities committed during his presidency if he returned. However, Barrow promoted freedoms in this protest and denied them in the next.

The final protest to be discussed was one of Jammeh-era oppression by the Barrow administration. The January 2020 TYJ protest took more than a year of planning and mobilizing.²⁸⁰ The planning process was purportedly initiated for the movement when Barrow stated he would remain in office for a full five-year term, and as January 2020 marked the conclusion of the three years Barrow agreed to serving, the opposition planned

²⁷⁷ Jawo and Camara, "Thousands Protest, Demand Barrow's Resignation."

²⁷⁸ All Africa, "Thousands March for Ex-Ruler Yahya Jammeh's Return."

²⁷⁹ All Africa.

²⁸⁰ Sally Hayden, "Gambia Protesters Charged with Treason," *Irish Times*, January 30, 2020, ProQuest.

the December protest to give Barrow a chance to step down on time in January. The peaceful protest in January was a continuation of the December 2019 protest with all the same variables in place. However, the outcomes of the protest raised concern among some Gambians and the international community. The protest ended in violence, arrests, and a barring of the movement that vehemently opposed Barrow's remaining in office.²⁸¹ Police forcibly dispersed the protest and arrested members of the TYJ organization and opposition. Human rights organizations criticized The Gambia's authorities for arresting 137 people, injuring dozens, and detaining notable journalists during the TYJ protest.²⁸² The government justified the movement's ban by describing it as "subversive, violent and illegal."²⁸³ Two radio stations, Home Digital FM and King FM, were later suspended by the government "for peddling incendiary messages" and "urging Gambians to join Jotna."²⁸⁴ Amnesty International warned that the attack on protesters bore frightening similarities to The Gambia's violent past and exacerbated tensions.²⁸⁵ It stated that while human rights have improved under Barrow, "the use of excessive force by security forces to disperse protesters risks fueling tensions and steering The Gambia back to dark days of repression."²⁸⁶ Ismaila Ceesay echoed these sentiments through a Twitter post, stating the "disproportionate use of force by police against protesters, the shutting down of media houses & the arrest of journalists marks the dawn of a retreat from our democratic progress. We strongly condemn these acts & urge the GoG [government of the Gambia] to ensure

²⁸¹ "Gambia: Government Bans Group Opposed to President," *Vanguard*, January 27, 2020, ProQuest.

²⁸² Jason Burke, "Outcry over Crackdown in The Gambia as President Refuses to Quit," *Guardian*, January 28, 2020, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/28/outcry-over-crackdown-in-the-gambia-as-president-adama-barrow-refuses-to-quit>.

²⁸³ Burke, "Outcry over Crackdown."

²⁸⁴ "Jammeh's Rule in Six Dates."

²⁸⁵ Burke, "Outcry over Crackdown."

²⁸⁶ Burke.

the rule of law always prevails.”²⁸⁷ President Barrow has begun to turn back the progress on his governance with his regime’s response to the TYJ movement.

D. CONCLUSION

President Barrow gained his presidency through democratic means. Gambian votes were truly counted for the first time in years, and with those votes, the people wanted to change representation and ensure a better life in the country they love. Barrow made many campaign promises and worked hard to fulfill some at the beginning of his presidency. However, this became difficult due to the dire state of the economy and institutions that he inherited. The economy was overspent, human rights were being violated, and freedoms were being trampled. During his first four years as president, Barrow improved the economy, reestablished some freedoms, and began to address human rights violations. However, Barrow soon walked the same path as his predecessor, with a hunger for power, executive interference, the denial of civil rights, and continued human rights abuses, although sporadic. The task of this thesis is to see whether the president’s seeking another term caused the protests, and the answer is, yes, it caused protests toward the end of 2019 and in 2020.

More protests occurred under Barrow due to a strengthening of democracy. Citizens were now free to express grievances to the government via protest without fear. Protests, therefore, happened when the opportunity presented itself or there was a need. Barrow’s slow response to change and his final actions reminded Gambians of who they voted out—Jammeh—and they refused to let the same atrocities happen again. They were empowered by their recent victory in removing the former dictator with democratic means and appeared to like their newfound freedom.

Gambians appear to have a long memory, and every action or inaction on the part of Barrow has been compared with Jammeh. Therefore, the micro-variables were dominant

²⁸⁷ Ismaila Ceesay @ismailaceesay, “The disproportionate use of force by police against protesters, the shutting down of media houses & the arrest of journalists marks the dawn of a retreat from our democratic progress,” Twitter, January 27, 2020, 2:34 p.m., <https://twitter.com/ismailaceesay/status/1221894339389001728>.

in all the protests under Barrow. The macro-variables of resource mobilization and political opportunity did exist, but the biggest micro-variable was governance, particularly the rule of law. This factor, combined with identity, gave Gambians the incentives they needed to protest for change in the respective areas of government.

Although the economy did extremely well under Barrow, and the delivery of public goods over several infrastructure areas improved, security and the rule of law caused most protests. Barrow's response to the TYJ movement was handled poorly. Although the 2016 coalition MOU was not legal, he promised not to run for re-election. He could have appealed to Gambians by doing a great job with his other promises and proving to them that he deserved to be more than a transitional president. Instead, he instilled the fear that he was becoming another Jammeh, and the people did not want that. If Barrow continues down this path of repression, it is unlikely he will be reelected in a free and fair election against a strong candidate in 2021. Gambians voted for the removal of repressive laws and the elimination of abuse by security personnel. Instead, they received a new president who did everything but.

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IV. A COMPILATION ANALYSIS OF JAMMEH AND BARROW

The Gambia is an interesting and remarkable country that has proven extremely resilient. The young country is on its third president since gaining independence in 1965. In this research, the final term of the second president, Yahya Jammeh, and the first four years of the incumbent, Adama Barrow, were examined through two lenses: governance and protest. Using Opp's SCM, macro-micro variables of protest and governance were synthesized to answer why protests occurred in The Gambia over Barrow's efforts to extend his presidential terms. Protest and governance were synthesized in each president's chapter, and this final chapter compares the results to answer the thesis question. The hypotheses ascertained that more effective governance would have produced fewer protests; Jammeh's poor governance was the cause of protests during his term; and despite good governance, Barrow's desire to extend his presidential term was the cause of protests during his term. Unfortunately, none of the answers are simple. The SCM analyses showed that many more variables were at play in the protests; however, governance did play a critical role.

Political protests occurred after Barrow's attempt to extend his presidential term as his governance patterns began to mirror those of dictator Jammeh, and the citizens did not want another dictator. The macro-variables of resource mobilization and political opportunity were present, but the micro-variables of democracy, confidence, and fear were the ultimate reasons for protests in The Gambia from 2010 to 2020. While this research covered only the last five years of Jammeh's tenure, Barrow had to reconcile Jammeh's two decades of injustice by focusing on what the people truly wanted, justice and reform. Admittedly, he was unable to satisfy everyone regarding major cases of human rights violations such as the April 2000 massacre, the killings of journalists, and Jammeh-era laws like POA and the Indemnity Act. Still, he did begin to address these issues with the creation of the TRRC. The people hoped that faith could be reestablished in the system and government under Barrow's leadership. However, hope started to fade with his refusal to reform security and the rule of law for the betterment of Gambians.

President Barrow's governance of The Gambia improved over Jammeh's governance in all areas. However, the lack of change or unwillingness to change some of the Jammeh-era laws has hindered considerable improvements to The Gambia's rule of law and a positive evaluation of his governance. In pursuit of power, President Barrow used his predecessor's tactics of controlling protesters with the police force and other institutions, including the use of pro-state media, to downplay the calls for him to honor his promise to resign after three years.²⁸⁸ Over the 10 years covered in this thesis, widespread protests in The Gambia were driven by macro–micro variables that include an extensive systemic network of governance grievances, ranging from economic and political to social and human rights–related factors, that fed off each other. Protests increased under Barrow with the restoration of freedoms and the promotion of democracy in The Gambia.

A. SCM ANALYSIS OF THE GAMBIA

The SCM analysis of The Gambia revealed the cyclical nature of protests and the interconnection of protests through cognitive dynamics. The SCM was used in this research because it provided an avenue to factor the governance dynamic into the protest cycle using micro- and macro-variables. The breakdown of governance and protest into variables helped to examine each variable and determine to what extent it contributed to protest and why a protest occurred. The SCM allows for the possibility of a multi-part reasoning for protests instead of the singular rationale of current protest theories. Rarely does a grievance, conflict, or period of chaos result from one factor.

Governance played a key role in causing protests as certain elements of poor governance created different grievances. Governance deficits, citizen grievances, and repression within the Jammeh regime created opportunities during presidential election cycles to mobilize and gain international attention and support for a new president. Jammeh suppressed the airing of these grievances and forced citizens to disguise them as other issues to avoid being retaliated against or murdered. Many citizens fled the country or were

²⁸⁸ Brubaker and Druet, *Back from the Brink*.

exiled due to many of his practices, opening the door for the first protest discussed in this research. From there, the framing that Gambians had to fix The Gambia became a national identity that was prevalent in subsequent protests, reigniting the anti-Jammeh movement and the successful voting out of Jammeh as president.

After the grand victory of Gambians in electing a new president, Adama Barrow, protests did not cease but increased, eventually turning into protests against the new incumbent. The hypotheses—that protests occurred under Jammeh due to poor governance and many grievances and under Barrow due to his unpopular desire to extend his term in office—are partially true. Jammeh’s poor governance led to many grievances, which fueled Gambians’ desire for a new president. However, his governance style also restricted rights, including the right to protest, resulting in fewer protests. Some protests occurred due to Barrow’s desire to remain president for a full five-year term and run for re-election. However, the third hypothesis—that protests against presidential term extensions are less likely to occur if governance is good, grievances are reduced, and citizens are satisfied with the regime—proved false. Barrow’s policies did produce fewer grievances, and governance was more effective than his predecessor. Improved governance also allowed for more freedoms like the right to protest, so protests increased. Protests against Barrow’s desire to extend his term were not based on governance issues but on morality. He made a few promises to become the eventual incumbent, but he did not follow through on the legal one allowed—not running for re-election. Barrow’s attempt to cling to power, his hindrance to change, and his outright refusal to amend some laws appear to have created fear of The Gambia’s return to a Jammeh-style dictatorship, where the people were not represented or cared for due to poor governance.

B. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Protests are a good indication of a working democracy, especially in Africa. It is the governmental response to protests that needs to be addressed. The focus of leaders and governments should be good governance, defined as the delivery of political and social goods to citizens.

The rule of law is a key aspect of good governance on the continent. Manipulation of the rule of law causes many issues, e.g., corruption and human rights violations. Priority should be given to reforming any constitution or security policy that allows for manipulating the rule of law. This reform may prove difficult in democracies; however, it will be for the betterment of the country overall if appropriately enforced. Checks and balances on all branches of government must be present and working in the spirit of the law. Any manipulation can prove disastrous in already weak institutions.

The Gambia's 2016 coalition of opposition parties had the right idea in selecting a transitional president to ensure that the laws that needed to be changed would, without regard for the incumbent's bothering with re-election or being corrupted by power. The concept of a transitional president, prime minister, or head of state is one that this research highly recommends for any state that is transitioning or will transition into a democracy. A transitional representative ought to be selfless, change the governance issues that are fundamental for the success of the state, and remove or reduce the powers of the branches of government that enable corruption or other ineffective behaviors, such as the suppression of human rights.

The government's response to protest should be nonviolent and meant to deescalate, not oppress. Protests are the citizens' way of voicing their concerns when all other avenues fail. Therefore, if protests occur, a process should be put in place to see what system failed that resulted in a demonstration that citizens felt was worth their time and energy to voice, and then address the system's failings. Violent government reactions to protests lead to instability, which can keep a country from developing.

Governance is about fulfilling promises to citizens, and gains in the economy should enable the country to flourish by pouring the money back into the people via services. Good governance produces good economies. Good economies grow funds for developing countries. Developed countries are more secure, and more secure countries provide the landscape for economic growth, investment, and innovation. Innovation contributions can come from anywhere, but their benefits are felt worldwide, so focus on the rule of law and, naturally, governance will improve.

C. CONCLUSION

The examination of governance, protest, and presidential terms in The Gambia offers a unique look at a small country with significant potential for positive change. The analysis of governance effectiveness under the presidents allowed this research to parse out the area of governance that brought about the grievances that led to protests: the rule of law. The purpose of this thesis was to determine why political protests over efforts to extend a presidential term have occurred in The Gambia despite the democratic election of a new president, using the SCM to test hypotheses. The first hypothesis—that effective governance leads to more protests—proved partially true, as more effective governance led to more protests due to greater freedoms in the Barrow administration. The second hypothesis—Jammeh’s poor governance led to protest—was partially true but proved mainly false: Jammeh’s poor governance created an environment of fear and thus resulted in fewer protests over a longer period than Barrow. The final hypothesis—Barrow provided better governance than Jammeh, so protests occurred because of citizen dissatisfaction with Barrow’s wish to extend his term—was partially true. Gambians did receive better governance under Barrow compared to that of Jammeh. However, Barrow’s governance still had flaws in key rule-of-law issues, so the citizens protested. Barrow’s desire to extend his presidency and serve a full five-year term was a factor in a few protests, but it was not the only cause.

Governance is key to promoting peaceful protests and preventing violent ones by removing the issues that create them. Gambians elected Barrow as a transitional president for a reason. They chose him for his lack of political ambition, a positive trait for a transitional president. He was supposed to be selfless and allow The Gambia a chance to turn all aspects of governance around for the good of the people. A transitional president is not concerned about keeping power but about using that power for the country’s good. When Barrow decided he was more than a transitional president, he essentially dethroned himself in the people’s eyes. He became an ordinary person consumed with power and was, thus, unable to reach necessary milestones or give the next president a functional government to enhance The Gambia. Therefore, the citizens’ protests against Barrow were

not only about his breaking promises to serve for three years or not run for re-election but about his stripping the country of its chance for a fresh start toward democracy.

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