



*Op-Eds
and
Commentary*

The time is right. Your public is calling. Now how will you turn mountains of data and research into a short op-ed?

Today you learn ...

**Guidelines for Op-Ed,
Commentary, and Opinion Writing**
featuring Thomas K. Lew, MD, PhD
in conversation with Luciana Herman, PhD (SLS
Lecturer & Program Director, Law & Policy Lab)

GLOBAL CAUSES





OP-ED RULES

THOUGHT



MESSAGE

Whoever tells the story

WRITES HISTORY

The OpEd Project's mission is to change who writes history.

We are a community of thought leaders, journalists, commentary writers and activists who proactively share our skills, knowledge and connections across color, creed, class, age, ability, gender, orientation, and beyond. Through our programs we elevate the ideas and knowledge of underrepresented expert voices, including women, and to accelerate solutions to the world's biggest problems--problems that cannot be solved justly or sustainably without a diversity of voices, expertise, experience and identity. We have stunning results. We believe the best ideas, regardless of where they come from, should have a chance to be heard and to change the world.

The OpEd Project is an [Echoing Green](#) Project.

OP-ED ACCELERATOR

Op-eds are a promising tool to promote conversations about why science and technology topics are important to all members of society.

We are excited to be collaborating with [Science Rising](#) to help individuals compose, target, and submit compositions to their state and local and newspapers. Our goal is to support writers who can help spread evidence-informed ideas and concise calls-to-action to people and communities who may not consume mainstream scientific news. We believe that hearing a community member's voice (yours!) is a more powerful way to create change.

Read more below for our expected timeline & guidelines and please feel free to reach out to oped@scipolnetwork.org with any questions!

OP-ED ACCELERATOR TIMELINE & GUIDELINES

<https://scipolnetwork.org/page/op-ed-accelerator>

Commentary

- Frame your research
- Plant your flag
- Impact & influence
- Raise your profile
- Receive invitations to write more
- Leads to collaboration
- Raises CI GH and Stanford profiles

*By Sindhu Nathan, et al.
Stanford Grad Student &
SSPN Member*



Demonstrators take part in the March for Science in Washington, DC on April 14, 2018. Credit: Andrew Caballero-Reynolds *Getty Images*

As early-career scientists and engineers working at the intersection of science and society, we represent the next generation of leaders in science policy. Over the past four years, we have helped reshape how the scientific

Science Policy Can't Be Simply about Science

As early-career researchers, we argue that it also has to prioritize justice and social equity

By

Kavitha Chintam, Jennifer L. Brown, Brian S. Canter, Ryan B. Dudek, Marie Fiori, Sarah Hall, Christopher Jackson, Sindhu Nathan, Bernat Navarro-Serer, Meredith Schmehl, Melody Tan, Meredith Ward, Caitlin Warlick-Short, Isabel Warner
on April 22, 2021

community engages in the political process: we marched for science and the National Science Policy Network. As presidency nears, we recognize that our administrations with greater and evidence-based policymaking, the we working to ensure that our evolving

Spreading Your Message

- Target your publication
- Think about social media
- Tweet & post to your accounts first & tag others
- Kickstart the issue



Sindhu Nathan Retweeted

Stanford Science Policy Group @SpgStanford · Apr 22
A powerful op-ed about justice and social equity in science policy, co-authored by our VP @_sindhu42! 🌟

Sindhu Nathan @_sindhu42 · Apr 22
"...the scientific community must continue working to ensure that our evolving scientific enterprise is committed to racial, economic and social equity."

Excited to share my first op-ed out today in @sciam co-authored with some of greatest #SciPolPals! scientificamerican.com/article/scienc...
[Show this thread](#)

Sindhu Nathan Retweeted

Bent Group @BentGroup · Apr 22
An op-ed in Scientific America about the (hopeful) future of Scientific Policy, co-authored by current group grad student Sindhu Nathan!

Sindhu Nathan @_sindhu42 · Apr 22
"...the scientific community must continue working to ensure that our

Sindhu Nathan
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Sindhu Nathan @_sindhu42 · Apr 22
"...the scientific community must continue working to ensure that our evolving scientific enterprise is committed to racial, economic and social equity."

Excited to share my first op-ed out today in @sciam co-authored with some of greatest #SciPolPals!



Science Policy Can't Be Simply about Science
As early-career researchers, we argue that it also has to prioritize justice and social equity
scientificamerican.com

1 11 31

Sindhu Nathan @_sindhu42 · Apr 22
S/O to our amazing @scipolnetwork author team! @thakavic Jennifer Brown @CrianBanter @RB_Dudek @marie_fiori @bmesarah @Chwistofu @bnserer @MeredithSchmehl @melodytantx @merelairward @CaitlinAShort @izzypie101

10

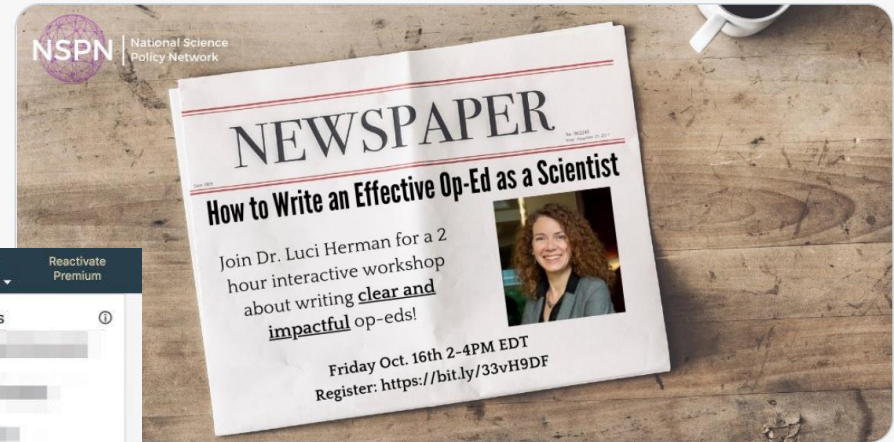
Spreading Your Message

- Reframe the debate
- Deepen discussion
- Heighten your credibility

National Science Policy Network (NSPN) @scipolnetwork · Oct 9

Are you interested in learning how to craft an impactful op-ed for your local community? Join @lucianaherman on Oct. 16 from 2-4 PM EDT for an interactive workshop to prepare you to publish a #scipol op-ed of your choice!

Register at bit.ly/33vH9DF by TOMORROW, 10/10!



#SciPol #SciWriting #SciEngage #STEM
@scipolnetwork

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← "Thomas Ken Lew" ...

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Stanford Health Care Tri-Valley @SHC_TriValley · May 9, 2020 ...

"Preventive care in the best of times can reduce health risks in the worst of times." **Thomas Ken Lew**, an attending physician at Stanford Health Care-ValleyCare, writes about the health issues that can make people more likely to get very sick from COVID-19.

usatoday.com

Severe coronavirus is more likely if you neglect yo...
Many of our sickest coronavirus patients have undiagnosed chronic conditions. Don't neglect ...

🗨️ ↻️ ❤️ 1 📊 📤

Stanford Health Care Tri-Valley @SHC_TriValley · Jun 11, 2020 ...

"Fear of contracting COVID-19 should not stop you from seeking medical care when you need it. It is easier than ever to make an appointment with your doctor through telephone visits and video chats," writes Stanford Health Care-ValleyCare's **Thomas Ken Lew**.

mercurynews.com

Opinion: Don't let COVID-19 fears stop you from ...
A doctor's advice: Delaying needed care can be more dangerous than the virus itself.

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Messages



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4,288 Tweets

📍 Stanford, CA  globalhealth.stanford.edu  Joined July 2011

1,108 Following **6,789** Followers



Followed by Environmental Justice Working Group at Stanford, Stanford HAI, and 27 others you follow

4,292 Tweets
Others you follow

Tweets **Replies** Media Likes



Stanford Center for Innovation in Global H... @StanfordCI... · 28m ...

Happening tomorrow! #Stanford students, post-docs, residents, and affiliates: Join us for an expert panel and skill-building session on global health communications and advocacy on May 10!

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[@StanfordDeptMed](#)
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globalhealth.stanford.edu/event/communic...

COMMUNICATING FOR IMPACT:
An expert panel on global health storytelling and advocacy

May 10, 2023 | Munzer Auditorium, Beckman Center

4:00 - 5:15 PM | Expert Panel
5:30 - 6:30 PM | Skillbuilding session, op-ed writing

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GLOBAL HEALTH

FEATURED PANELISTS

- Janine Zacharia**
Carla Kelly McClatchy Lecturer and Journalist, Stanford
- Britt Wray, PhD**
Stanford Pioneer Health Postdoctoral Fellow
- Alok Patel, MD**
Pediatric Hospitalist, Stanford Journalist
- Kristina Krohn, MD**
Assistant Professor of Medicine, UMN Global Health Media Fellowship Alum
- Cecilia Arradaza**
Chief Communications Officer, Stanford Medicine

PANEL MODERATOR

- Paul Costello**
Global Health Faculty Fellow Adjunct Lecturer, School of Medicine

SKILLS SESSION MODERATORS

- Thomas Lew, MD**
Clinical Assistant Professor, Stanford School of Medicine USA Today Opinion Columnist
- Luciana Herman, PhD**
Program Director, Law and Policy Lab, Stanford Law School

🗨️ 1 ❤️ 📊 43 ↗️



Stanford Center for Innovation in Global He... @StanfordCI... · 1h ...

New Anderson Collection art exhibit shines a light on the human-planet relationship, with a focus on plastics. It includes the work of Jean Shin, Denning Visiting Artist & artist-in-residence in the lab of Global Health Faculty Fellow Dr. Desiree LaBeaud.

WHY
THEY
WANT
\$HAR\$
STHEY NEED TO
FOOD FOR
TO TAKE
VIEW

Guidelines

When opportunity strikes and
you have a hook

And the forum is right

And your research illuminates
something new

Then take a stand!

Structure &

Style

1. The lede or news hook
2. Motive or Theme
3. Evidence, Arguments, Research
4. Turning point, Ask, or Aha!
5. Open or Closed Ending
6. Cogent Argument



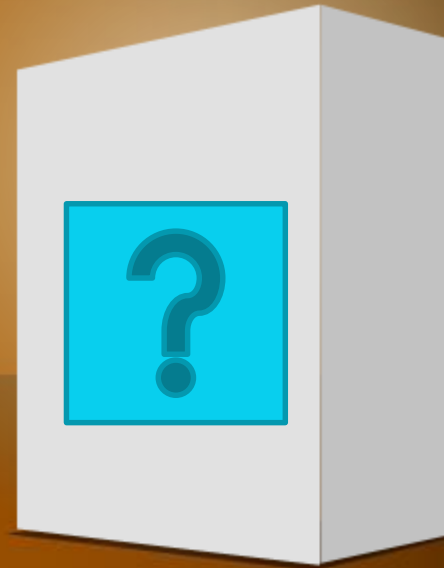
REFLECTION

How do you


compress


all that


research



Frame issue for an audience

- 
- *Who is your target audience? Where will you publish?*
 - *What example explains or resonates best with that audience?*

- 
- *What are your values? What are their values?*
 - *What are the phrases, images, or concepts that express your values in common terms?*

- 
- *Does your message leave anything important out? If it does, is that a strategic choice? Have you anticipated counterargument?*

- 
- *Create your central frame through key words that resonate.*

1

The News Hook



Hook the reader with a compelling lede

- A good lede has an opening hook that seizes on the urgency and critical nature of the issue.
- The lede has a motive that frames the problems and may point toward the solution.
- It should be direct and to the point.
- It should underscore why your issue matters.
- Ask yourself: **Why today?**

Strong lede tackles the issue head on

**As a doctor, I've seen what an AR-15 does to the body.
Unless we act, so will many Americans.**

I'd like to be able to tell my patients who've suffered gunshot wounds that no one else will suffer the way they have. I can't.

Dr. Thomas K. Lew
Opinion contributor
USA Today
04/23/23

2

Hook

Motive

Theme



Hook / Motive / Theme

Hook

When I was in the operating room observing as surgeons repaired the bleeding organs and frayed muscles of a gunshot victim, one horrifying image came to mind: shredded meat.

Motive

This was during my trauma rotation years ago in my medical training, and by then, I had seen a few patients with gunshot wounds. But this particular young man lying on the operating table in front of me was shot with a semi-automatic rifle. The damage from any bullet to the human body is astounding, but this was particularly terrifying.

These images have come to mind in recent days as we yet again have a slew of gun violence across our great nation.

Theme

Something needs to be done; legislation finally needs to be passed to address gun violence. And as a culture, we need to acknowledge that this is a problem that needs to be fixed.



Hook / Lede

Motive / Theme

BREAKOUT

SESSION



3

EVIDENCE:

Help them

UNDERSTAND

the issue and

your motive



WHO

WHEN

WHERE
HOW

WHAT

WHICH

WHOSE

Core Characteristics of Op-Ed

WHO and WHAT / Where

1. Describes the problem in terms of **WHO** the major player/s are, sometimes framed as a representative example.
2. Concisely **states the problem or issue** often in term of current policy or as a situation.

WHY

1. Explains why the issue is troubling. May offers **reasons** for changes to that policy or situation.
2. May signpost **key options** or approaches; sometimes this is simply stated as the status quo, sometimes it includes alternatives that seek to remedy or address the problem.
3. May signpost the **pros and cons** of key options or may highlight the **general trends** in addressing the issue.
4. References key data, examples, statistics, or scholarly analysis as evidence of **WHY**.

HOW / When

1. **Recommends** course/s of action or **states findings** that may lead to recommendations in future policy work.
2. Offers **supporting reasons** for selecting or highlighting that course of action or findings.
3. May offer a **timeline** to carry out the recommendations.

SO WHAT or THE ASK

1. Returns to the motive or central objective to underscore the **urgency** of the issue and/or importance of acting on the recommendations.

WHO?

I'm a gun owner: I'm a sitting duck until commonsense gun laws are on the books

WHAT?

We seem to be in a cycle where mass shootings happen, we are upset, but then nothing is done. Arguments are made that it is too soon after shooting, or that politicians are politicizing a tragedy, or that any gun legislation tramples Second Amendment rights. Time goes on, and the issue fades to the background.

Why?

Guns are public health crisis: I survived a mass shooting – and found Americans aren't all that divided on gun safety

How?

Want fewer shootings?: Pass tougher gun laws. Our research shows lax laws fuel violence.

Return
to motive

What can we do?



We aren't helpless as a nation

But we as a nation are not helpless and can make a change. We need to put pressure on our elected leaders for more comprehensive gun control. We need to expand background checks and reinstate the federal assault rifle ban, which was shown effective in reducing mass shootings. We also need to be open to more studies on gun violence, research the government has traditionally been resistant toward putting money into.

Conclusion -
Solution

I'd like to be able to tell them that no one else will suffer the way they have, and that the mass shootings shown so frequently on the news these days will slow down and stop. I continue to hope this will be true, but we need our elected officials to act, and to act now before more lives are lost.

EVIDENCE: 3 is a magic number

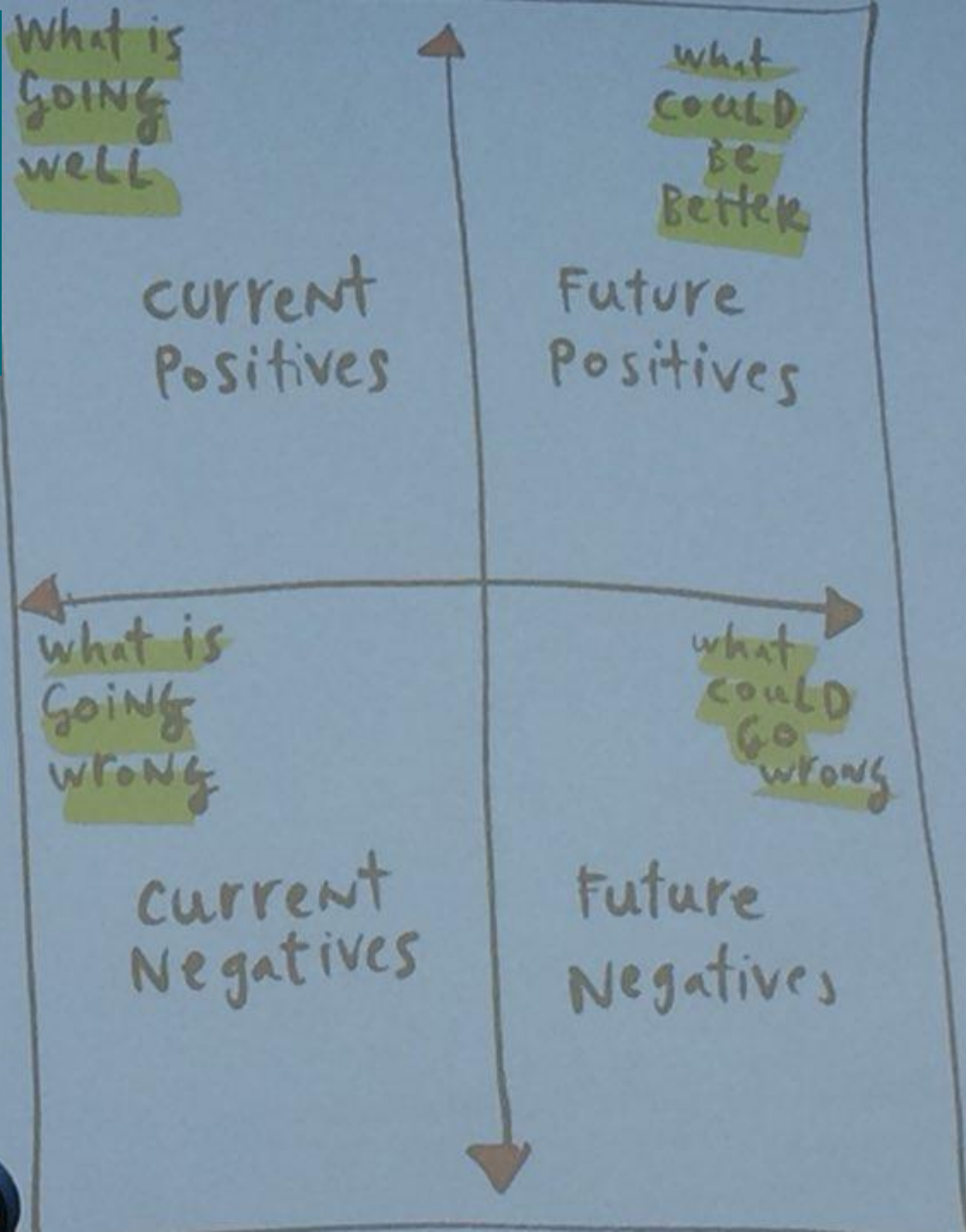
1 Personal experience: Staying in Las Vegas hotel when a shooter fired an AR-15 into a music festival, killing 58 people.

2 **Research:** We also need to be open to more **studies** on gun violence, research the government has traditionally been resistant toward putting money into.

Professional experience (returns to and resonates w/ personal experience): Today, while I no longer am in the operating room, I still see the effects of gun violence on my patients as a hospital medicine doctor.

3 **Case study or examples:** Many of those I have treated in the hospital have become paralyzed from a bullet to the spine. They come in repeatedly for infections or blood clots from immobility. Others have mental health difficulties or post-traumatic stress disorder from their experience with gun violence.

SWOT is a tool to quickly outline strengths – weaknesses / opportunities – threats of status quo and alternative approaches

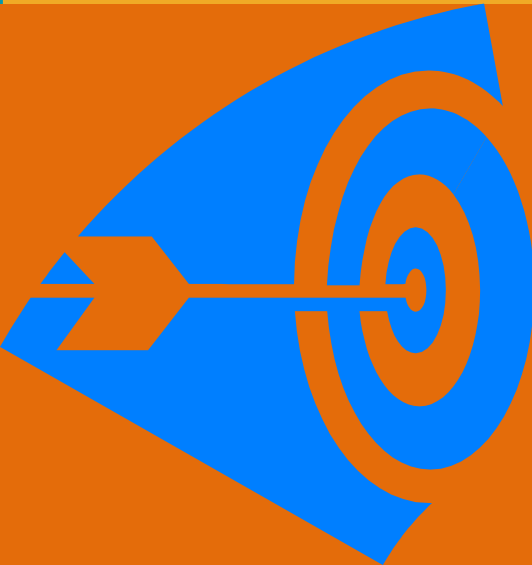




Evidence

and Data

Breakout



4

the
ASK

End with an ASK or a solution

Return to Motive

Op-ed by
Sindhu Nathan
(Stanford Ph.D. '21)
"Science Cannot
Simply Be About
Science,"
Published in
Scientific American
April 22, 2021

We can make science policy more equitable by holding our institutions, including professional societies and universities, accountable. We **demand** our organizations **adopt** clear, public values that **advocate** for evidence-based policy as well as social justice.

We **call on** our organizations to incorporate justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI) considerations in all aspects of their work, including event planning.

Finally, we **advocate** for "Hill Day" agendas that go beyond research funding and toward urgent issues including application of research for societal benefit and equity, sexual harassment and immigration policy

In addition to **pushing for** structural changes, scientists and engineers can **take action** as individuals to **increase and expand their political engagement.**

Return
to motive

What can we do?



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Memorable Close

What happens if we **do not** take action? What is the status quo? Where will that take us in the future?

What would happen if we **do** take action?
What is the better path for future?

Why is this **urgent**? Remind reader of why this matters.

Do ...

I'd like to be able to tell them that no one else will suffer the way they have, and that the mass shootings shown so frequently on the news these days will slow down and stop. I continue to hope this will be true, but we need our elected officials to act, and to act now before more lives are lost.

Don't ...

Urgency

The Ask

And a Memorable Closing

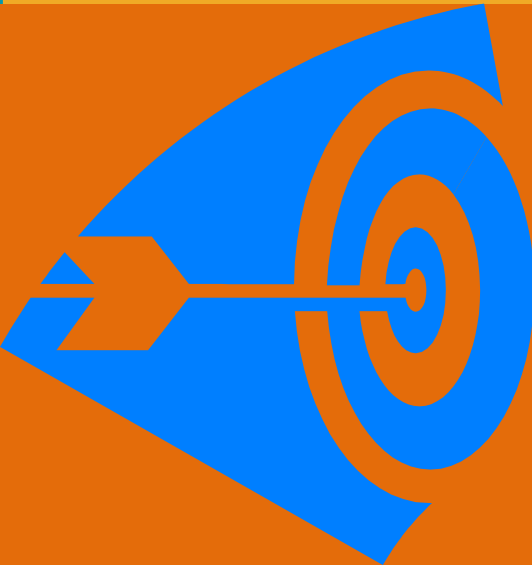
Breakout



5

VISUALIZE

DATA



Monkey Cage

Why the NYPD's decision to drop a unit that spies on Muslims may help counterterrorism



A



5

By Rachel Gillum April 16, 2014



Muslim community and supporters protest the NYPD surveillance operations of Muslim communities during a rally in Foley Square on Friday, Nov. 18, 2011, in New York. (AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews)

The New York Police Department [announced Tuesday](#) that it would disband a special unit charged with detecting terrorist threats by secretly conducting surveillance on Muslims in New York. Applauded by Muslim and civil rights organizations, such a move could actually boost U.S. counterterrorism efforts, according to data from the [Muslim American National Opinion Survey](#) (MANOS) of which I am the principal investigator.

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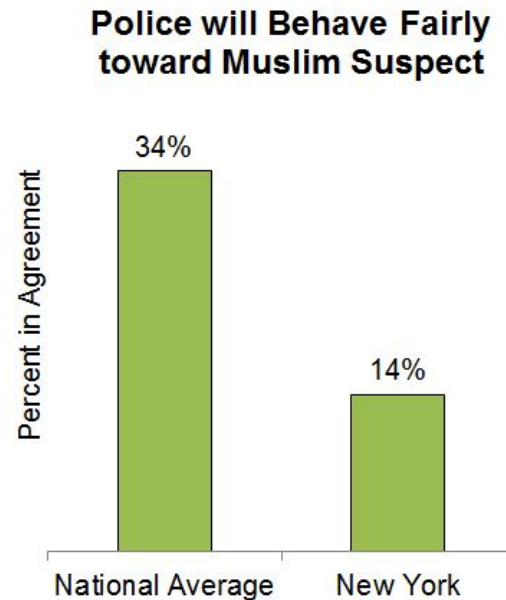
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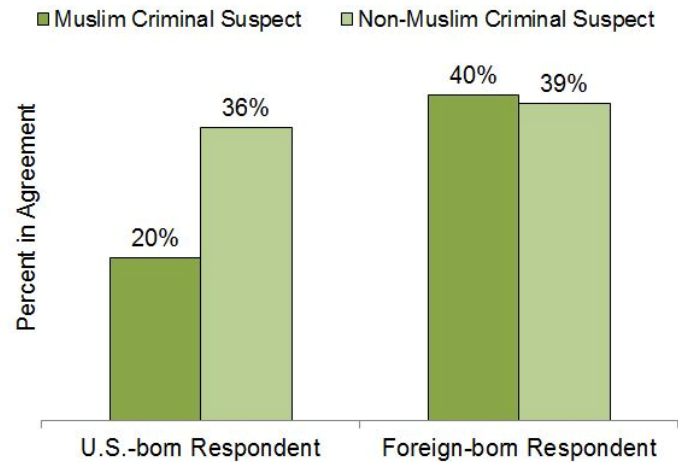
The MANOS data reveal that even after accounting for a variety of background features and baseline attitudes about police, the 13 percent of Muslim respondents living in New York are significantly more cynical about how police will likely treat a Muslim criminal suspect, compared to other Muslims across the country.



Source: Muslim American National Opinion Survey 2013

In a [paper](#) assessing how Muslim-Americans develop opinions about U.S. law enforcement, I find that those who are most familiar with the American system and its laws are best able to identify when law enforcement is violating its principles of equality and fairness. Using a randomized experiment, I find that U.S.-born Muslims are 17 percent less likely to say that police will behave fairly when dealing with a Muslim suspect, compared to a non-Muslim suspect. This is a striking difference relative to the beliefs of foreign-born Muslims, who [like other U.S. immigrants](#) are significantly more trusting of police

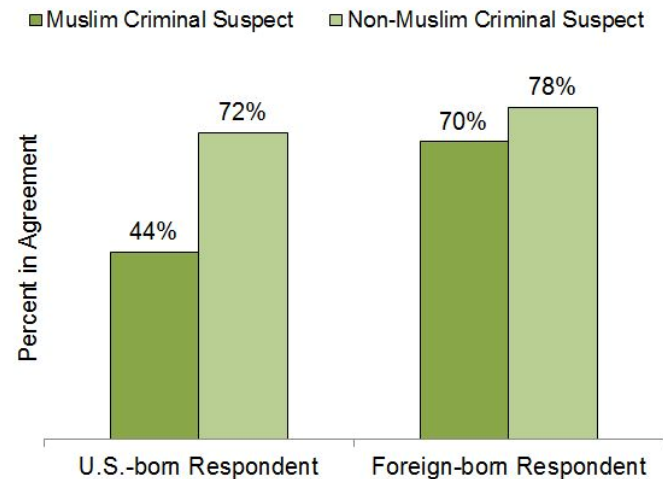
Believe Police will Behave Fairly toward Suspect



Source: Muslim American National Opinion Survey 2013

In a related [paper](#), I show using regression analysis that these expectations of fairness are directly related to willingness to help law enforcement. Figure 3 shows that U.S.-born Muslims are significantly less willing to provide police information on a criminal case involving a Muslim suspect.

Willing to Assist Police in Investigation



Source: Muslim American National Opinion Survey 2013

GLOBAL

There Is No Global Jihadist 'Movement'

The world of Islamist fighters is deeply fragmented and constantly shifting.



Wikimedia Commons/The Atlantic



MARTHA CRENSHAW | MAR 11, 2015

Reports last week [indicated](#) that the Nusra Front, a major anti-Assad jihadist

There Is No Global Jihadi 'Movement'

The world of Islamist fighters is deeply fragmented and constantly shifting.



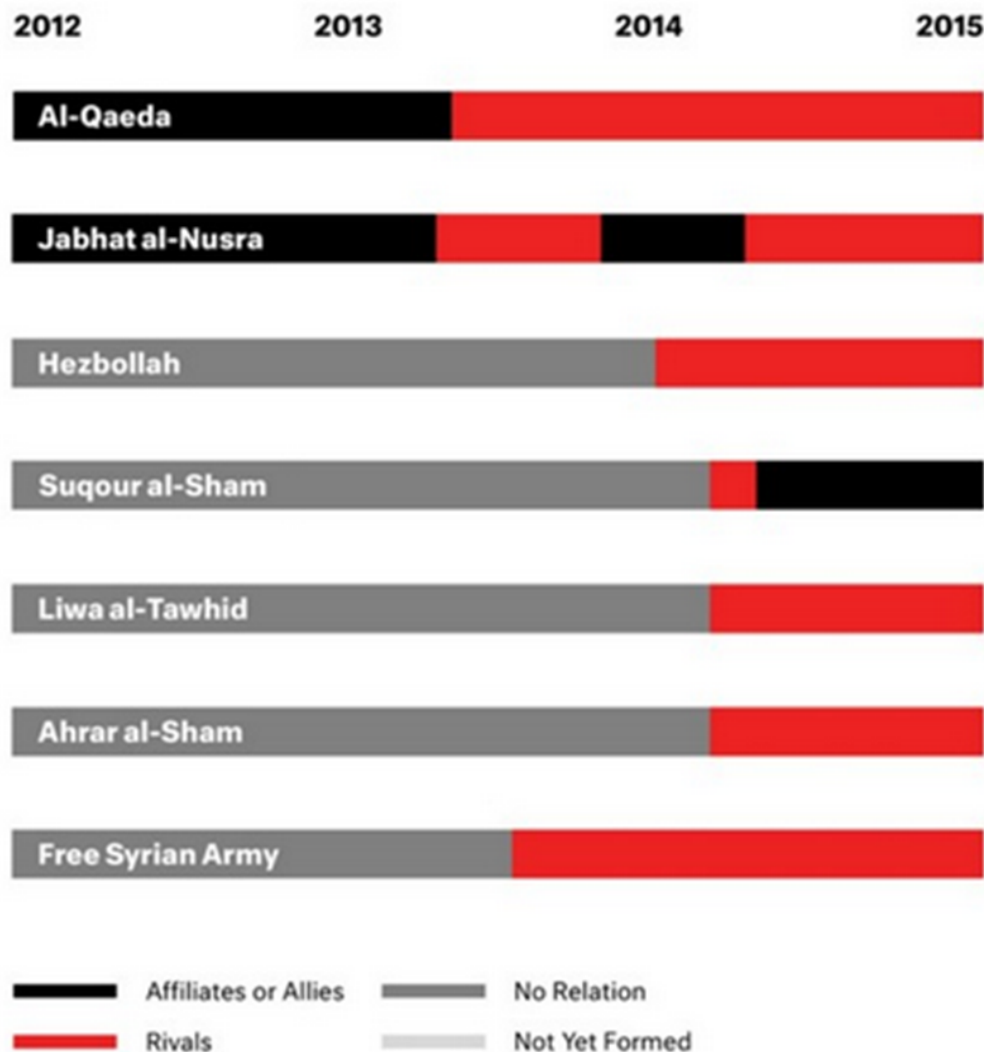
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MARTHA CRENSHAW | MAR 11, 2015

Reports last week [indicated](#) that the Nusra Front, a major anti-Assad

The Islamic State's Relationships in Syria



Strength

Showing some initiative, ISI set up the Nusra Front as its Syrian affiliate in 2011, attempting to absorb the group fully after renaming itself the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria in 2013. But the leaders of the Nusra Front rejected that merger. By 2014 Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's successor as the leader of al-Qaeda, had had enough of al-Baghdadi's disobedience, including its attempt to take over the Nusra Front without consulting al-Qaeda central, and at that point the split between ISIS and al-Qaeda was final. Asked to choose between ISIS and al-Qaeda, Nusra essentially chose the latter.

Weakness

Threats

The new ISIS was now pitted against the governments of both Iraq and Syria, an array of local groups in both countries, including elements of the Free Syrian Army—the loose coalition of secular, “moderate” rebel groups backed by the West—and the Kurdish pesh merga, as well as the Nusra Front and other al-Qaeda affiliates. Some important Syrian groups that had joined in the Islamic Front, a coalition of seven major Islamist groups whose ideology fell somewhere between that of the moderates and the jihadists, initially pledged allegiance to ISIS but later recanted. (To add to the confusion, rival groups occasionally cooperate on the battlefield, forming the kinds of tactical alliances that are not uncommon in such tangled conflicts.) Despite what seemed to be an unfavorable starting position, ISIS made impressive territorial gains in Syria and Iraq. By the spring of 2014 ISIS astonished the West by sweeping almost unopposed into Mosul, and in June the offensive culminated with the declaration of the caliphate under the aegis of the Islamic State, now no longer limited to Iraq and Syria.

Opportunity

- 1 A Cent Figure
- 2 What It NSA S
- 3 Gays, F Feeling
- 4 What IS
- 5 The Go (and Ar
- 6 What's
- 7 Rolling
- 8 The Fo
- 9 The Irra
- 10 Why Ca



PRACTICE

Cogent

Argument

Not Comprehensive Superfluity

Basic Structure

- Lede or Hook
- The Problem or Issue
 - Your Motive
 - Your Credibility
- Evidence 1, 2, 3 (SWOT)
- Brief Counterargument and Rebuttal (SWOT)
 - (Return to) Motive and Theme
 - Options for Change
 - Recommendations
 - The Ask
- Memorable Closing Line

Keep your writing simple and direct

- Imagine the reader as having a basic level of interest in current events and public policy, but no real expertise. You are the expert.
- Keep your sentences short, direct, informal, and dramatic.
- Write in a natural voice, as if speaking to a colleague.
- Avoid jargon or academic language.
- Be precise and concise.
- A good style book is Joseph Williams, *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*.

7



Where

will you publish?



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ANALYSIS

04/02/2015 - 21:29

The experts on the Iranian framework agreement

Bulletin Staff

Six world powers—the United States, Russia, China, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany, or the P5+1—and Iran announced a framework agreement Thursday on limitations to the Iranian nuclear program. Very generally, the framework agreement sets out a series of actions that would limit the scope of the Iranian nuclear program and restrain Iran from producing nuclear weapons; in exchange, international sanctions instituted because of the Iranian nuclear program would be eased. In the wake of the announcement, the *Bulletin* asked numerous experts on the situation to offer their assessments of the framework agreement. We set out parameters on these expert comments, which are offered here in hopes they will inspire discussion on the prospects for a final agreement by a June

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- 2 The experts on the Iranian agreement

American Economic Review: Vol. 104 No. 6 (June 2014)

AER Volume. 104, Issue 6 ◀ Previous Article Next Article ▶

Aid under Fire: Development Projects and Civil Conflict

Article Citation

Crost, Benjamin, Joseph Felter, and Patrick Johnston. 2014. "Aid under Fire: Development Projects and Civil Conflict." *American Economic Review*, 104(6): 1833-56.

DOI: 10.1257/aer.104.6.1833

Abstract

We estimate the causal effect of a large development program on conflict in the Philippines through a regression discontinuity design that exploits an arbitrary poverty threshold used to assign eligibility for the program. We find that barely eligible municipalities experienced a large increase in conflict casualties compared to barely ineligible ones. This increase is mostly due to insurgent-initiated incidents in the early

News & Comment >



NASA mission will 'fist bump' an asteroid to reveal the Solar System's secrets

OSIRIS-REx spacecraft is about to execute a nail-biting manoeuvre to scoop up rock samples from the asteroid Benu and send them back to Earth.

Alexandra Witze
NEWS | 16 Oct 2020



COVID research updates: Are rapid coronavirus tests effective? It depends

NEWS | 16 Oct 2020



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Chris Funk
WORLD VIEW | 15 Oct 2020



What it's really like to do science amid COVID-19

Quirin Schiermeier, Holly Else ... Nisha Gaid
NEWS | 15 Oct 2020



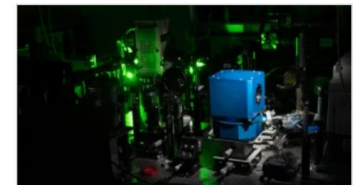
How anti-ageing drugs could boost COVID vaccines in older people

Cassandra Willyard
NEWS FEATURE | 14 Oct 2020



Why *Nature* supports Joe Biden for US president

EDITORIAL | 14 Oct 2020



First room-temperature superconductor excites – and baffles – scientists

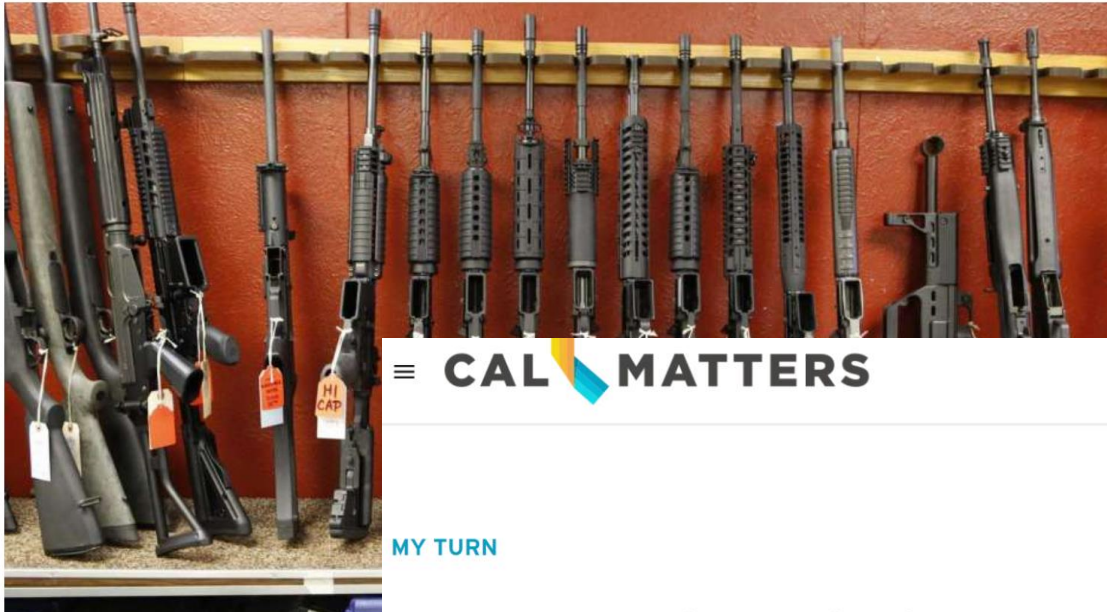
Davide Castelvecchi
NEWS | 14 Oct 2020



OPINION // OUTLOOK

Let's study gun violence in the Texas Medical Center [Opinion]

By Michael B. Bagg | Aug. 16, 2019



A gun violence prevention research center located in the Texas Medical Center is studying existing centers and analyzing the impact of potential interventions. Photo: Ed Andrieski, STF / Associated Press

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Monkey Cage

What's the Monkey Cage?

Many dictators have sought nuclear weapons; some succeeded, some came close, others failed spectacularly. A careful examination of two such regimes illuminates why. Today, many dictatorships are becoming personalist, in which leaders dominate decision-making at the expense of formal state institutions. According to recent research, personalist dictators are more likely to pursue nuclear weapons and are less likely to get them, but they can become increasingly dangerous and unrestrained if they succeed. In my recent book, "Unclear Physics: Why Iraq and Libya failed to build nuclear weapons," I revisit the unsuccessful attempts in those two countries. Libya failed badly at its nuclear-weapons program, whereas Iraq came dangerously close to a major breakthrough when its program was interrupted by the 1991 Gulf War cease-fire.



SciPolBites: Voting by Mail

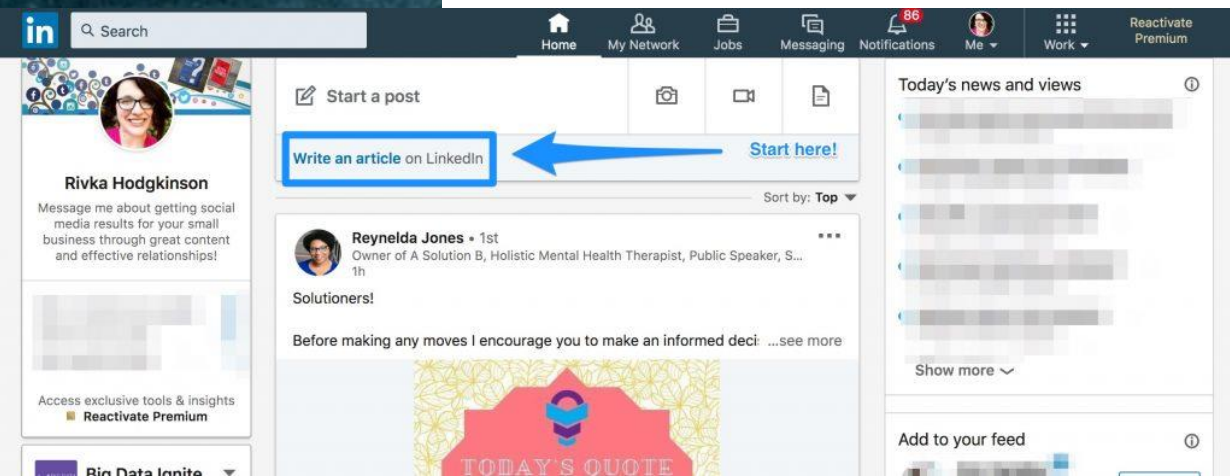
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SciPolBites is a series of reflections from NSPN members about current issues in science and policy. In this SciPolBite, three members share their perspectives on the health consequences, accessibility concerns, and security risks associated with voting by mail.

Kat Cruz (@katherranne)


Vote-by-Mail: A Public Health Issue



...field warned that this will be "the worst fall, ...tion Day will be right in the middle of it. All of ...sed areas, and touch screens or shared pens

For more background on writing op-eds, use these resources:

- NSPN Op-Ed Accelerator
- Op-Ed Project: theopedproject.org/
- Harvard Kennedy School Communications Program:
How to Write an Op-Ed – Classic Structure



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