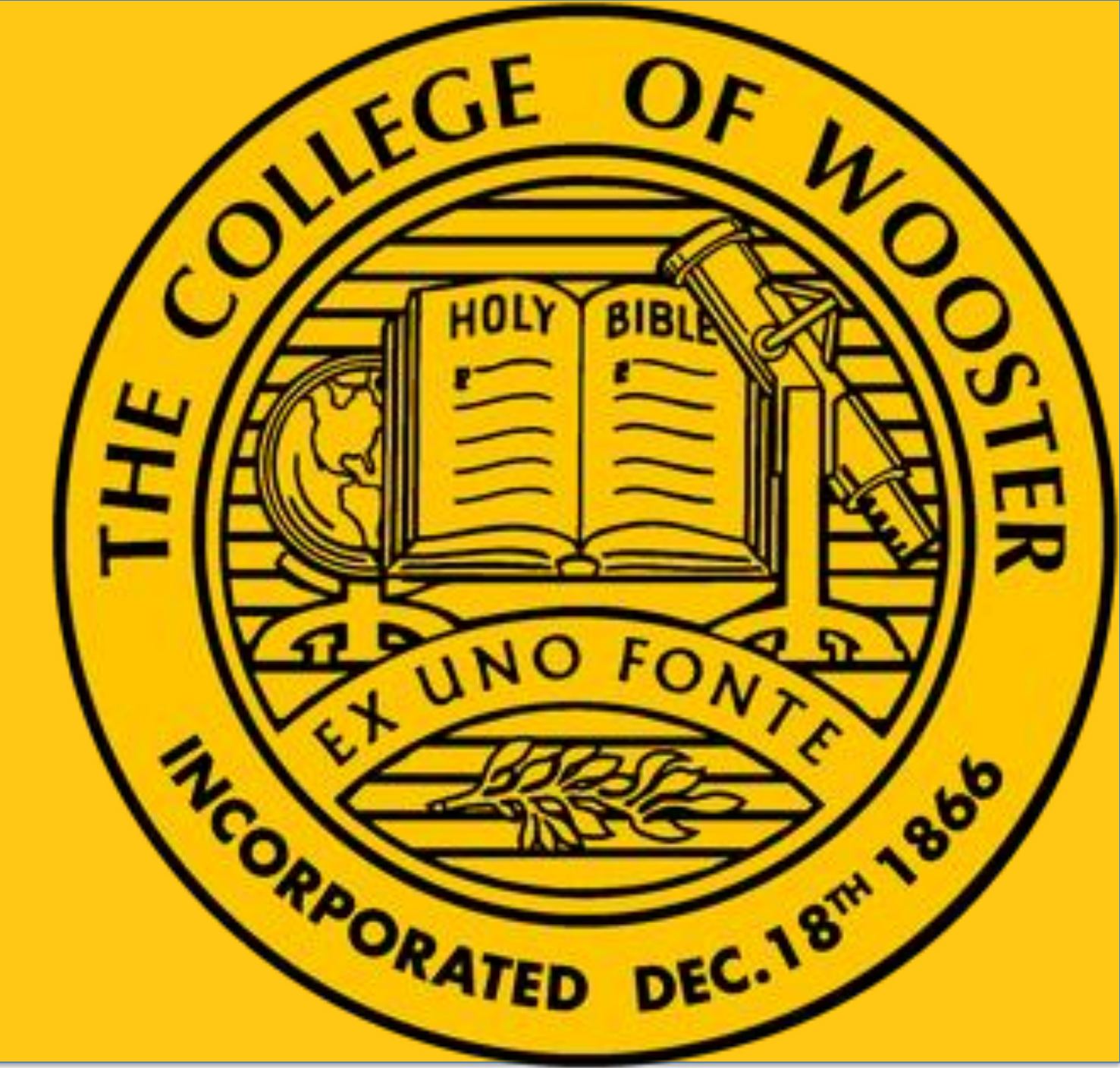


# The United States Information Agency and Domestic Support for Public Diplomacy During the Cold War

Emma McKone

ADVISED BY DR. MADONNA HETTINGER, HISTORY DEPARTMENT; AND DR. JEFFREY LANTIS, POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT



## Research Question

How did American perception of foreign threats during the Cold War – measured through ideological congruency with USIA program content, urgency of foreign relations with the target country, and the USIA’s ability to mobilize American minds – help shape domestic support for the USIA’s public diplomacy programs from 1959-1999?

## Literature

### Public Diplomacy Theory:

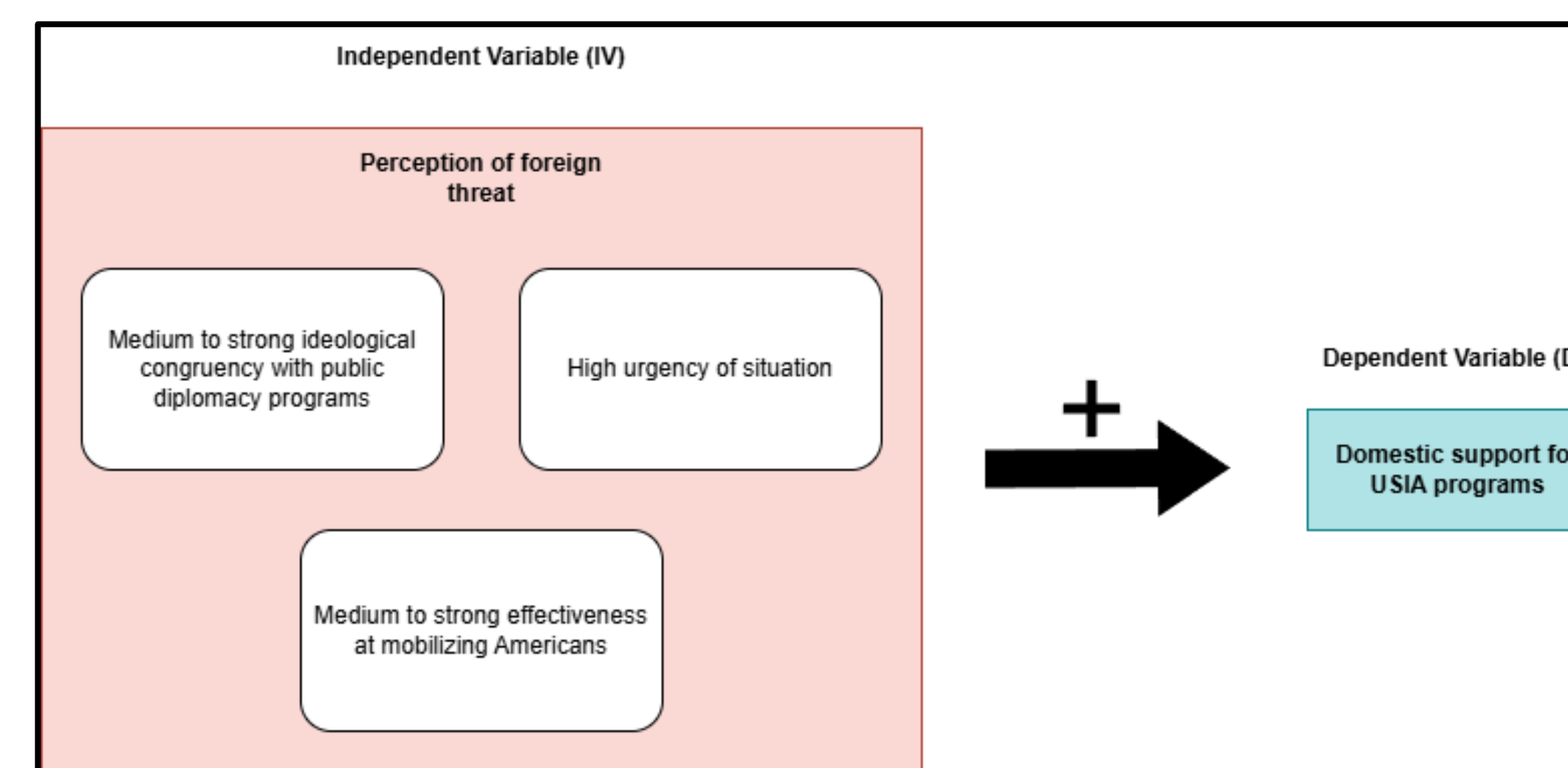
- Structural-centered theories (Nye 2008, Gilboa 2008, Merickova 2014)
- Actor-centered theories (Entman 2008, Frederick 1986, Yun and Toth 2009)

### Histories of the USIA:

- Structural-centered histories (Palmer and Carter 2006)
- Actor-centered histories (Arndt 2005, Dizard 2004, Sablosky 1999)

## Hypothesis

Ideological congruency of the USIA’s public diplomacy programs with “American” values, a high sense of urgency to combat perceived foreign threats, and moderate levels of mobilization will cause the programs to become more important to Americans than other foreign policy options and thus receive support.



### Key terms:

- **Cold War:** A period from 1945-1989 characterized by strong international tension between the United States and the Soviet Union. The enormously destructive power of the nuclear weapons both countries possessed made military confrontation risky enough where they engaged heavily in information and persuasion campaigns.
- **Public diplomacy:** A government directly communicating to foreign peoples in order to affect their thinking in some way that will influence their government.
- **United States Information Agency (USIA):** A federal agency of the United States operating from 1953-1999 that was responsible for conducting public diplomacy through international information, broadcasting, culture, and exchange programs.

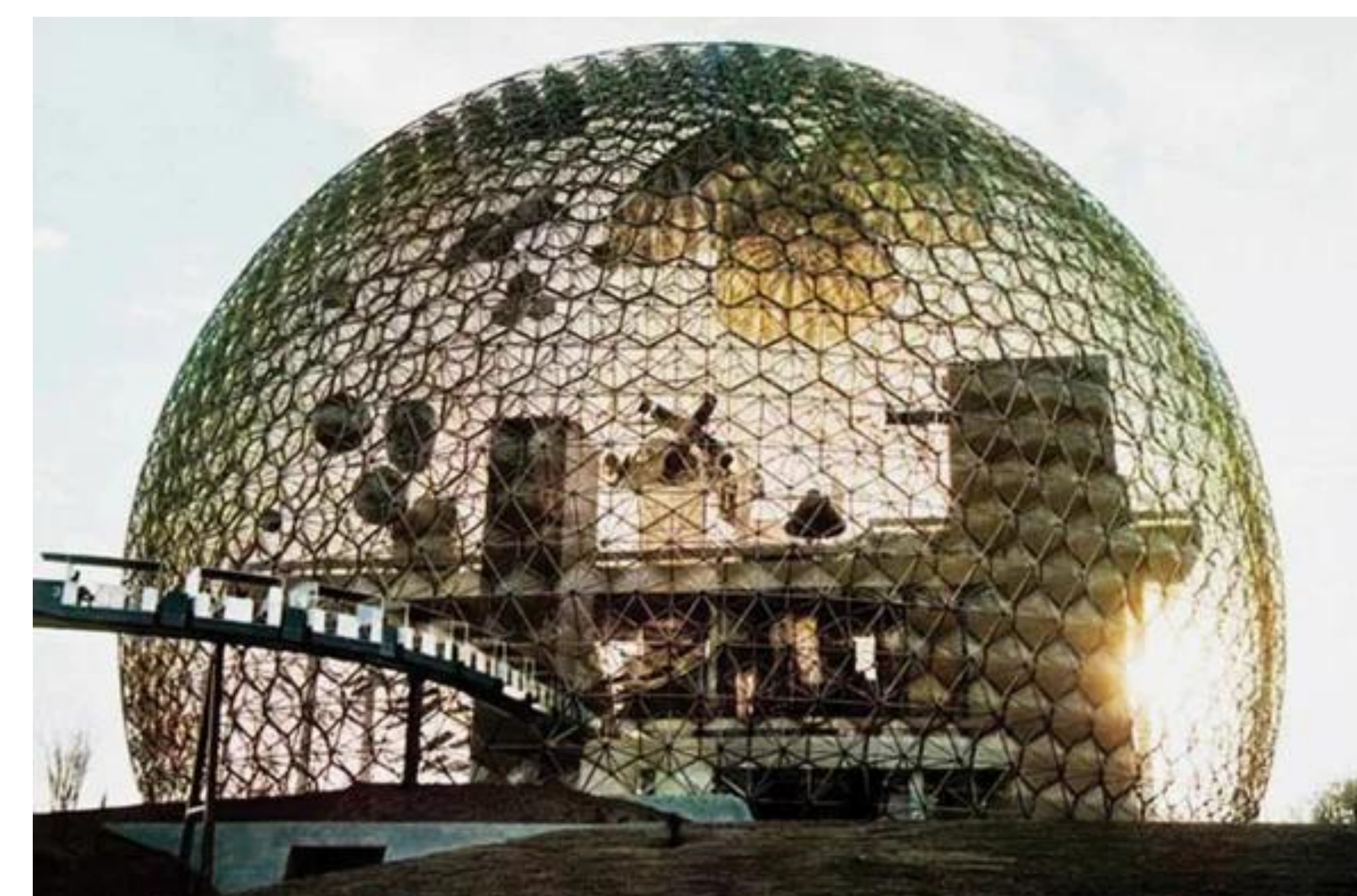
## Methodology

- Language analysis based on Paige (1968) as well as visual analysis for images/videos
- Language coding to match source content with factors of the IV
- DV measured based on positive/negative responses and historical outcomes of programs

## Case Studies

### U.S. Pavilion for World’s Fair in Montreal 1967 “Expo 67”

	Government Decision Makers	Press Sources	Other Americans	Threat Perceived?
Ideological Congruency	59.3% (medium)	64.3% (medium)	56.0% (medium)	No
Urgency	30.0%(low)	25.0%(low)	31.1%(low)	No
Mobilization	61.8%(medium)	27.9%(low)	43.9%(medium)	Yes



### Radio Martí (radio station directed toward Cuba in 1980s)

	Government Decision Makers	Press Sources	Other Americans	Threat Perceived?
Ideological Congruency	57.9% (medium)	52.9% (medium)	61.5% (medium)	Yes
Urgency	53.6%(medium)	69.0%(high)	79.2%(high)	Yes
Mobilization	70.0%(high)	55.5%(medium)	60.1%(medium)	Yes



## Conclusions

- The hypothesis matches with the outcomes of the two case studies. U.S. participation in world’s fairs dwindled in the years after 1967, but Radio Martí continued to operate for decades.
- Both programs were controversial among Americans, but Radio Martí had strong interest group support while the U.S. pavilion did not. This may have contributed to the program’s longevity.
- Further research might include more case studies from the present day and/or more research on the role of interest groups in affecting domestic support for public diplomacy.