The US Founding Documents Through the Lenses of Bourdieu, Foucault, and Marx: A Power Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Few scholars have explored the founding documents to identify the deliberate social change strategy that led to America's independence and a new form of government that was of, by, and for the people. This study aimed to apply a post-hoc polytheoretical framework of power to the findings of a democratic social change study to understand the dynamics of power between Great Britain and the American colonists. The original study employed the constructivist grounded theory tradition to explore democracy in the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, The Federalist Papers, and the United States Constitution. This produced two frameworks of power strategies, one empowering and the other demoralizing: principles of democracy and anti-democratic tenets. To gain a holistic perspective of the interplay of power, a polytheoretical framework of power consisting of theories of power proposed by Marx and Engels, Bourdieu, and Foucault was employed to discuss the findings. The findings suggested that democratic social change interacts with structural forces, culture, and power strategy selection. This could provide an alternative lens through which to explore whether people of color in America were used instrumentally to sustain democracy.

Keywords: Anti-democratic strategy; Democracy; Polytheoretical framework; Principles of democracy; Strategies of power; Strategies of resistance.

1. Introduction

This article discusses the interplay of power between American colonists and Great Britain's monarchy based on America's founding documents, specifically the Declaration of Independence, where the Founders recorded the anti-democratic tenets leveraged by Great Britain against colonists and the colonists' counterstrategy to gain independence. Great Britain's anti-democratic strategy included species of dehumanization, subjugation, nativism, social distinctions, fear, and misinformation. The Founders leveraged a counterstrategy of knowledge, human dignity, fairness, hope, unity, and security, or their species. Their goal was to establish a new form of government that fostered trust, nurtured hope, and enlarged the concept of self-determination beyond the government to include individuals. Understanding the interplay of power between these two parties requires a review of the type of government the American Founders wished to abolish and the species of democratic government they sought to establish. The Declaration of Independence emphasized a government empowered by the people and foreshadowed the principles of empowerment embedded in the Constitution that uphold respect for human dignity, leading to security. Knowing the power of words, the Founders empowered American colonists to pursue independence through sentiments promoted by Jefferson and the leaders of the Continental Congress through the idea that:

Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness. It is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security.

—Declaration of Independence (1776).

It is pertinent to note that an analysis of the founding documents revealed that while the Federalist Papers (1787/1998) differ from the Declaration of Independence (1776), the essays also refer to a republic that employed government representation to resolve the mischief caused by factions within pure democracies. Therefore, the Founders fused species of democracy and instituted safeguards in the United States Constitution. This fusion resulted in a republican form of government in which the nation replaced the monarchy and became the focal point of power. American democracy "varies from pure democracy" on "two great points,"—a "small number of citizens [are] elected by the rest," and it offers coverage of a "greater number of citizens" and "sphere of [the] country" (The Federalist No. 10, p. 38). It was argued that this structure would make the public voice "more consonant [with] the public good than if pronounced by the people themselves" (No. 10, p. 38).

The Founders assumed a republic would differ from a direct democracy, where "men of factious tempers, of local prejudices, or of sinister designs, may, by intrigue, by corruption, or by other means, first obtain the suffrages, and then betray the interests, of the people" (The Federalist No. 10, 1787/1998, p. 38). The Founders preferred the wisdom of the chosen body versus the collective wisdom of the people—the greatest difference between a republic and a pure democracy. The wisdom of the elected body is demonstrated by Madison's (1787) approval of representatives "whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice [the nation] to temporary or partial consideration," discerning the "true interests of their country (p. 38)." To further support the wisdom of the elected body, the Electoral College was incorporated into the United States Constitution to secure the nation's interests rather than relying on collective wisdom. This interpretation of a republic as a democracy is consistent with Amar's (2023) and the Founders' formulation of a republican form of government as a type of democracy (The Federalist No. 10, 1787/1998). The nation's founding documents evidenced the power dynamics between Great Britain and the colonists and between the colonists and the new government. The lack of hope in a fair king contributed to feelings of subjugation and the Founders' pursuit of independence.

A government for the people gains and maintains legitimacy by empowering its people with hope. This was exemplified by Lincoln, who infused hope by reinforcing the Founders' idea of democracy with the *Emancipation Proclamation* (1862), the passing of the 13th Amendment, and the *Gettysburg Address* (1863) in which he promised that a "government of the people, by the people, for the people" would not perish from the earth. Lincoln's promise of democracy celebrates America's independence from "a long train of abuses and usurpations" (Declaration of Independence, 1776) leveraged by a king who was not of, by, or for the people. American people of color may not have activated democracy in post-independent America. However, recognizing the human dignity of people of color became the medium for mass political and social change.

The dynamic of power in the new nation's founding documents starts in the Declaration of Independence, where the empowered Founders shared their empowerment with colonists to fight against Great Britain's "long list of abuses of usurpations." In the Articles of Confederation, the dynamic of power switches from power held by the monarchy to a perpetual union to consolidate state power against the monarchy and certain classes of people (i.e., "paupers, vagabonds, and fugitives from justice;" art. IV, p. 1). Power dynamics in The Federalist Papers take the form of state power against factions, captive people of color, and threats from "FOREIGN ARMS AND INFLUENCES" (The Federalist No. 3, 1787/1998, p. 12). In the United States Constitution, there appears to be a balance of power in

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the Bill of Rights but a usurpation of the people's power elsewhere (i.e., the Electoral College, entrusting Congress with the selection of U.S. Supreme Court Justices, Dahl, 2001).

2. Theories of Power and Transformation

The critical inquiry of the founding documents led to the findings of the democratic social change theory study (Forde, 2023). While the three theorists proposed vehicles of social transformation—Marx and Engels (1848/2001), revolution, Bourdieu (2000), resistance, and Foucault (1977), discourse—this article focuses on their theories of power. Forde's (2023) democratic social change findings were explored to present a holistic understanding of power dynamics in the founding documents. The power dynamics that emerged from analyzing Forde's (2023) democratic social change theories will be presented through various perspectives: structural, hierarchical, relational, cultural, and symbolic. The following is a summary of the power theories that framed the findings.

2.1. Marx and Engels: Social Change and Class Struggle

As a critical theory that seeks to transform whole systems of power, Marx and Engels's theory of revolutionary change continues to be used as a framework for theories of social movements resulting from conflict (Della Porta & Diani, 2006), relative poverty (Flynn, 2011), and by advocates of social change who seek structural changes to create a more compassionate society. Politicians historically associated Marxism with socialism to distract and deter the proletariat from voting for their interests. A parallel can be drawn between Marx's description of the character of socialists and the character of modern neoliberals who put profit and capital ahead of education, equity, and human security (Giridharadas, 2018). Marx and Engels's (1848/2001) thesis is that class conflict catalyzes revolutionary social change. Their study examined revolutions in several countries, including the United States. Their theory was useful for understanding the power relations between colonists and kings from the perspective of the oppressed class, who, because they were denied social justice, revolted against the government. The "ruling and oppressed classes" progress through a "series of evolutions" (p. 6) from which the ruling class cannot free the proletariat. Marx and Engels saw the traditional avenue for change as unsuccessful because of socialists' lack of commitment to the proletariat's struggles. This led Marx and Engels away from the socialist party toward drafting *The Communist Manifesto*, which called for a more radical and "total social change" (e.g., the creation of a new form of government; p. 5) where the proletariat's struggle is "at first a national struggle" (p. 20) in the interest of minorities like all "historical movements [that] were movements of minorities or in the interest of minorities" (p. 20) because the "bottom stratum cannot raise itself up without the whole superincumbent strata" (p. 20).

As such, Marx and Engels' (1848/2001) theory of power can explain the colonists' class struggle between Great Britain's king, who owned the means of production and ruled society. The struggle can be summarized as "contests between the exploiting and the exploited, the ruling and the oppressed classes" that undergo a series of evolutions (p. 6), during which the proletariat cannot rely upon the ruling class for emancipation so long as they are enslaved by "capital and profit" (p. 5). As a result of Marx and Engels's predicted reaction to the proletariat's claim to emancipation through revolutions, some scholars and politicians have restricted Marx and Engels's theory of transformation to revolutionary social change (Christiansen, 2009). However, Marx and Engels (1848/2001) found that "all past society has consisted of class antagonisms" that "assumed different forms at different epochs" (p. 29),

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concluding that antagonists like religion, law, philosophy, political science, and morality survive all social change efforts to serve the ruling class. Moreover, the ruling class uses myriad layers of power, epochal evolution of social hierarchies, and power strategies (Marx & Engels, 1848/2001). These power strata can be found among the ruling elite, the educated class, the clergy, and politicians (Marx & Engels, 1848/2001). Subordinate gradations in the Roman class hierarchy included "patricians, knights, plebeians, and slaves" (p. 9). In the Middle Ages, social rank consisted of "feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, and serfs" (p. 9). While Marx and Engels explain structural forces and revolutionary social change, Bourdieu sections and expands Marx and Engels's theory of structural power with a more thorough explication of the effect social class has on culture, power, behavior, and worldview.

2.2. Bourdieu's Field of Power

Bourdieu's field theory describes a hierarchically organized sphere of action in which agents occupy positions determined primarily by habitus, an organizing structure that manages practices and perceptions generalizable within specific fields. Habitus is a structuring entity that renders a schema of practices, beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, categorizations, and prejudices formed by socialization and field experiences (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984). Individuals' positions in the field are affected by their capital. In contrast, nomos, which regulate field practices, and doxa establish the power structure within a field (Bourdieu, 1984). Considering these options, agents enter fields to maintain or transform power relations. Bourdieu (1991) viewed his work as distinct from Foucault and Marx and Engels and distinguished his work from Marx and Engels by emphasizing multidimensionality instead of a singular focus on class. In addition, Bourdieu considered his works superior to those of Foucault because Foucault utilized qualitative rather than quantitative analysis. However, like Foucault, Bourdieu (1991) acknowledged that power is usually manifested overtly by human behavior, resulting from socialization, displaced dichotomous either-or thinking, and relational thinking. In 1994, Bourdieu (as cited in Grenfell, 2008) asked, "How can behavior be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules?" (p. 50). Bourdieu's field theory discusses the legitimization of power as nomos, doxa, and illusio.

According to Bourdieu (1991), power is derived from cultural beliefs, dispositions, and behaviors that make it culturally and symbolically constructed. Agency and socioeconomic status determine behavior within specialized fields—social arenas in which norms, unquestioned assumptions about social order, and values are shared. As a result of shared commonalities, power can be explored through specialized fields from the perspective of an agent's worldview or habitus, a system of dispositions individuals employ to "act and react in certain ways" (p. 2). An individual's habitus is the schema that allows them to intuitively play their role in various fields based on the dispositions acquired through socialization. Throughout life, dispositions mold the body, become second nature, and reveal the individual's cultural origins (p. 12). Dispositions can be embodied in a "durable way of standing, speaking, walking . . . feeling and thinking" (p. 13). Bourdieu (1984) shows the "interrelationship of constructs to practice" with the equation [(habitus)(capital)] + field = practice (p. 101). An individual's disposition is often determined by two of the three species of capital.

Bourdieu (1984) conceptualized economic, social, and cultural capital as assets that can be exchanged within networks and across fields. Certain types of capital are valued more highly in one or more fields than in others.

Social capital differs from the traditional conception of assets. It is a network of personal, familial, and professional connections that may allow one access to another's social connections for support. Economic and cultural capital are the two dominant species of capital. Bourdieu (1991) defines economic capital as goods, property, wealth, money, and other measures of monetary assets. Educational qualifications, knowledge, skills, technical qualifications, and "other cultural acquisitions," such as the fine arts, are examples of cultural capital (p. 14). Symbolic capital, like symbolic violence, is not a species of capital; still, it is relevant to understanding Bourdieu's field theory. Symbolic capital refers to accumulated prestige or glory. By contrast, symbolic violence refers to "softened and disguised strategies that conceal relations of dominance beneath the veil of an enchanted relation" (p. 24). The adage "gifts corrupt" exemplifies symbolic violence.

Nomos, unspoken field-specific norms, and doxa, the unexamined assumptions, beliefs, and opinions in a given field (Bourdieu, 1991), have the same effect as Foucault's (1977) normalizing power: obedience to rules through non-repressive power. Doxa, closely related to nomos, is an unquestioned social construction of reality regarded as the natural order of things (Bourdieu, 1991). Illusio is the belief held by agents in a particular field that rewards have value (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu (1991) suggests that strategies of distinctions, nomos, and doxa legitimize the dominance of the upper classes over the lower classes by reinforcing illusions of worth based on social distinctions. Through these distinctions, one class can dominate all other classes with the consent of the dominated, who perceive the illusion as incontrovertible. Social class and institutional hierarchy systems are illustrative of this phenomenon.

Hierarchical relationships in specialized fields, e.g., politics, law, and education, reveal the presence of the illusion that the pursued reward has value. Attainment of the valued reward helps maintain the perception of the value of social hierarchy. The king's social status will be held against the Founders' to explore culture as a construct of power and the reward both parties pursued using Bourdieu's field theory. Despite Bourdieu's field theory being an excellent framework for studying the interaction between culture and power, Foucault's (1980, 2019) theory of power complements Bourdieu's theory of power as it explicates the ubiquity of power resulting from strategies of power—or applied resistance to power, used in power relations.

2.3. Foucault's Theory of Power

Foucault's (1980) theory of power is the last of three frameworks used to interpret the founding documents. In contrast to Marx and Engels' (1848/2001) macro-level theory of social change and Bourdieu's cultural perspective of power, Foucault proposed micro-level social change by educating individuals on how power is leveraged. Foucault's theory of power can be used to understand power strategies used in interpersonal relationships. Foucault (1980) discussed disciplinary power, normalizing power, sovereign power, and power/knowledge. He rejected the idea of a "permanent repository of power" (p. 4). As a result of the ubiquity of power, power does not disappear but reconstitutes itself in various ways. Moreover, power strategies depend on the societies from which they emerge. The interplay of power during socialization is responsible for the pervasiveness of relational power in institutions. The result of socialization is a normalization of power in which adherence to rules resulting from non-repressive power pervades institutions and is invisible to most of the population (Foucault, 1977).

According to Foucault (1977), power strategies can be used in any situation. Counterstrategies of power, such as that employed by the Founders, constitute resistance. Where there is resistance to power, power reconstructs itself as the "role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations" (Foucault, 1977, p. 95). This contrasts with the traditional idea of repressive power that takes on the form of aggressive resistance and coercion. Normalizing power on the subject contributes to the adjustment to the dominant culture's norms, values, beliefs, attitudes, and law-abiding behaviors. Normalizing power is the most subtle and used form of power because subjects are socialized to it through rewards and punishments (Foucault, 1977). Individuals who have accepted normalized power accept, believe, and adhere to the rules of authority and social hierarchy. Through normalizing power, the sovereign maintains an ever-watchful gaze over their subjects and renders repressive power useless against subjects bound by normalizing power.

Foucault's (1980) power/knowledge is an in-depth look at the evolution and means by which individuals are socialized to normalize power. Power/knowledge refers to the collection, creation, and dissemination of knowledge by individuals with power. Scientific knowledge is inextricably linked to power because power determines what is regarded as knowledge, what can be known and considered scientific knowledge, and how people can acquire knowledge. Higher education institutions contribute to normalizing power as institutional power shapes the thinking and behavior of subjects. Power/knowledge is critical in governance and security, where the sovereign must have access to quantitative and qualitative knowledge at an ever-increasing pace (Foucault, 1980). Power/knowledge provides the sovereign with strategies to leverage power/knowledge for managing subjects, promoting innovation, and maintaining social control. The Founders' power/knowledge was evident throughout the nation's founding documents and in the Founders' strategy to become independent from Great Britain by exploiting Great Britain's vulnerabilities by allying with France.

3. Background of the Original Research

The study that included the analysis of power answered the research question: How do the first principles of democracy in the American founding documents provide an understanding of the process of American democratic social change (Forde, 2023)? The theoretical sample comprised the American founding documents: the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, The Federalist Papers, and the United States Constitution. Charmaz's (2016) grounded theory tradition was selected to construct a democratic social change theory that could be applied at various levels of analysis: micro, meso, and macro (see Forde, 2023). Data was analyzed using grounded theory's process of theoretical sampling (see Forde (2023) Appendices), a species of purposive sampling used for constructing grounded theory, and grounded theory's systematic constant comparison method until theoretical saturation was achieved, the point at which novel theoretical codes stopped emerging (see Charmaz, 2006). Various data analysis strategies were integrated into the constant comparison method: systems and holistic thinking, situational and dramaturgical analysis, deconstruction, and perspective-taking (Forde, 2023). A total of 18 founding documents were systemically compared and contrasted, including the Articles of Confederation, the United States Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and 14 essays (Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 14, 22, 38, 42, 43, 51, 54, and 83) from The Federalist Papers (Forde, 2023; see Figure 1).
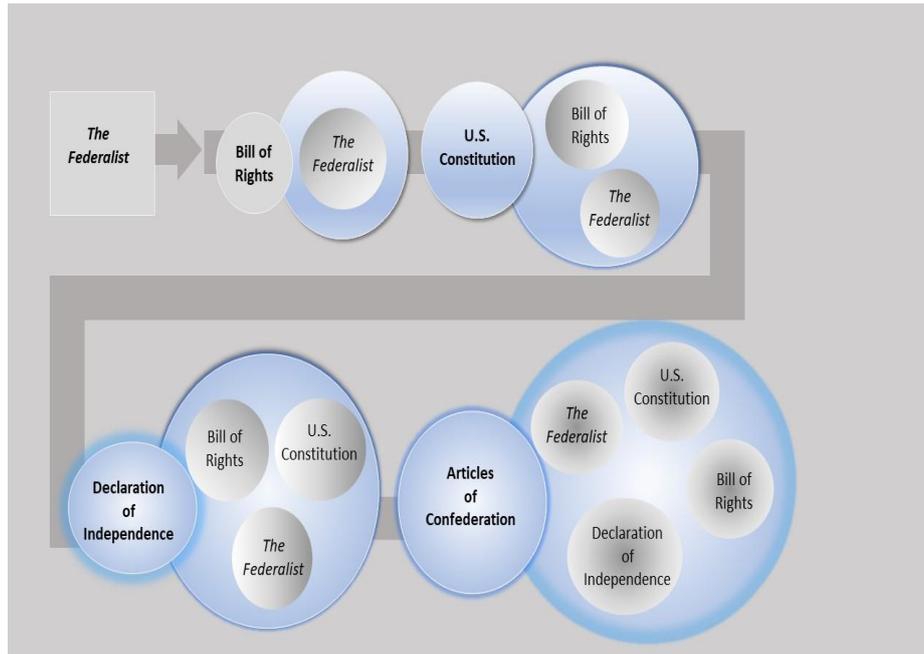
Figure 1. Theoretical Sampling Process

Memoing and methodological self-consciousness (Charmaz, 2016) were incorporated into the data analysis (see Forde (2023) Appendices). This resulted in the emergence of two frameworks of power strategies that the colonists and Great Britain used: the principles of democracy and the anti-democratic tenets (Forde, 2023; see Figure 2 and Figure 3).

Figure 2. Empowering Power Strategies

Figure 3. Demoralizing Power Strategies

Internal and theory triangulation were employed to establish trustworthiness. The theoretical framework was selected after theory construction, commensurate with grounded theory tradition (Bryant & Charmaz, comprised).

4. Power Analysis of the Founding Documents

In order to explain the findings related to power in the founding documents from the perspective of Great Britain and the colonists, Marx and Engels's, Bourdieu's, and Foucault's theories of power were employed. The repressive power used by Great Britain differed from the more subtle and strategic use of power by the Founders. The king held the central repository of power throughout Great Britain and many colonies. However, Foucault (1990) attributes power to a "complex strategical situation in a particular society" (p. 93), implying that the species of power employed is determined by society. Examples that support Foucault's theory of power were based on

patterns of behaviors that were promoted by the Continental Congress but interpreted as person-specific, specific to a particular society, or a combination of these. This holistic perspective of power illustrates the interrelationship of structural, cultural, and relational power (see Figure 4).
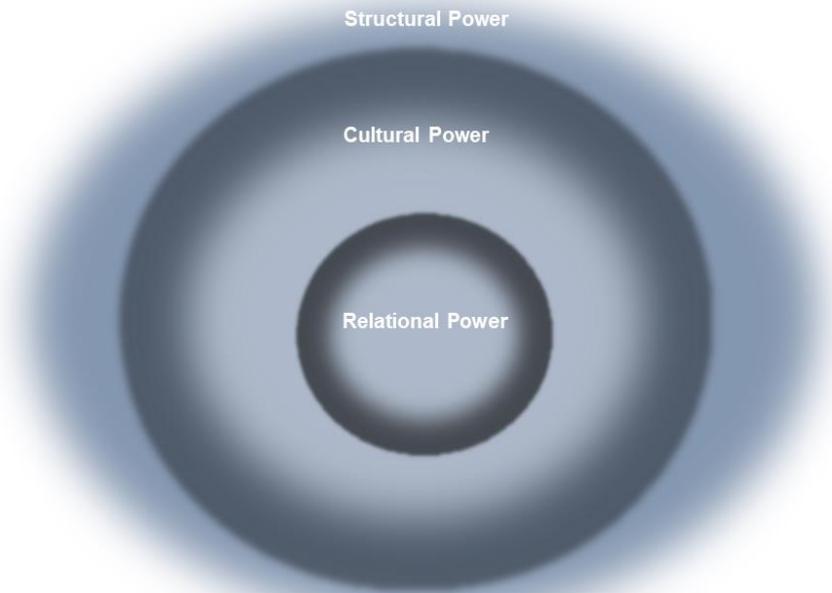

Figure 4. Holistic Perspective of Power

Bourdieu's (1991) field theory provided a suitable framework for examining power dynamics within the political arena and the role of symbolic capital on the Founders. Marx and Engels's theoretical framework provided the foundation for explaining revolutionary social change and understanding the power shifting from Great Britain to the colonists in their class struggle for equality and an alternative form of government. Moreover, The Federalist Papers support Marx and Engels's thesis of the beneficial effect of class (factions) on state power, and their detrimental effect on enslaved people and on "paupers, vagabonds, and fugitives from justice" in the Articles of Confederation (1781, art. IV, p. 1). Foucault's (1977, 1980) power relations characterize a system of strategies for gaining and maintaining power. By exploring power through relationships between individuals, where power is constructed and reconstructed, it became evident that the strategy of disempowerment leveraged by Great Britain and the counterstrategy of empowerment leveraged by the Founders can be best understood using Foucault's analysis of power (see Figure 4). The two categories of power strategies illustrate some of the many strategies of power. In contrast, Bourdieu's power theory can be understood in the context of culture and fields of power.

4.1. Pierre Bourdieu

Bourdieu's (1984) exchange system includes economic, social, and cultural capital. Exchange value is field-specific, with certain species of capital being more valuable in specific fields versus others. Because the founding documents bind this study, only two were available for assessing Bourdieu's theory of power as explored by the exchange between Great Britain and the colonists: the Articles of Confederation and the Declaration of Independence. The Articles of Confederation criminalized accepting "any present, emolument, office, or title of any

kind, whatever from any king, Prince, or foreign state … without the consent of the United States in Congress" (art. IV). Cultural differences such as social class, political influence, and exercise of power were manifested in the Articles of Confederation (1787, art. I; e.g., "paupers, vagabonds, and fugitives from justice" art. IV, p. 1) and the Declaration of Independence, where the king represented various species of capital and the colonists were the subjects. Bourdieu's theory of capital is supported throughout the founding documents, as is Foucault's theory of power in relations of power where resistance is leveraged through power strategies and their species. Symbolic capital was alluded to in numerous examples: "Judges [depended] on his will alone for the tenure of their offices and the amount and payment of their salaries," and "he financed transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries" and imposed taxes (Declaration of Independence, 1776). Moreover, the Founders suggest that the king had a despotic disposition based on his tyrannic reactions:

> He has swarms of officers to harass our people … eat out their sustenance, [and] called together legislative bodies at places unusual [and] uncomfortable … for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures. He has given his assent to their acts of pretended legislation [and introduced] the same absolute rule into these colonies.
>
> —*Declaration of Independence (1776).*

Other examples of real and symbolic power include the exclusion of the poor, the unemployed, and fugitive criminals, and the banning of specific interactions between government representatives and foreign state representatives (Articles of Confederation, 1787), the protected minority, congressional members, and represented colonists in The Federalist Papers (1787, 1998), and the Electoral College, and the US President and Vice President requirements (United States Constitution).

The Founders' disposition vacillated in the Declaration of Independence. This phenomenon could be explained by the field of power and the various contributors to the document's creation. The Founders' disposition showed due deference when they "petitioned for redress" through appeals "to [Great Britain's] native justice and magnanimity [and in] conjur[ing] them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence" (Declaration of Independence, 1776). At other times, the Founders made themselves equal with the king by holding "these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal" (Declaration of Independence, 1776) and are therefore no less worthy of respect and freedom. As equals, the colonists "warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislatures to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us" and saw themselves as having the right and duty "to throw off such [a] government, and to provide new guards for their future security" (Declaration of Independence, 1776). With a disposition that overshadowed the king's, they declared: "These colonies are, and of right … free and independent states," and thus "absolved [themselves] from all allegiance to the British Crown" (Declaration of Independence, 1776). They held the king as they held "the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace, friends" (Declaration of Independence, 1776).

The shifting of power between the king and colonists took the form of doxa: colonists acting as subjects legitimized the king's authority "In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms" (Declaration of Independence, 1776), and resistance (the violation of nomos). The colonists rebelled against the

king for "imposing taxes on us without our consent" (Declaration of Independence, 1776). The Founders attempted to regain power but shifted to being complicit in their oppression when they reminded the king of the circumstances "of our emigration and settlement here." The king responded with reminders of his authority "with repeated injury" or deafness to "the voice of justice and of consanguinity" (Declaration of Independence, 1776). In the same manner that it was doxa that colonists were to be subjected to "A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant" (Declaration of Independence, 1776), it was doxa that African Americans were to be "subject at all times to be restrained in his liberty and chastised in his body, by the capricious will of another, and compelled to labor, not for himself, but for a master … vendible by one master to another master" (The Federalist No. 54, 1787/1998, p. 354). Native Americans challenged the doxa of European superiority. They were condemned as "merciless Indian savages" (Declaration of Independence, 1776). Illusio was the power dynamic that legitimized the king's social hierarchy and sovereignty over Great Britain's territories. Great Britain sought to maintain its sovereignty through acts and legislation, while colonists valued independence and national sovereignty.

4.2. Marx and Engels

The cause of America is, in a great measure, the cause of all mankind.

—Thomas Paine, Common Sense, 1774–1779.

There was support in the founding documents for the Marxist theory of class struggle: The colonists were the working class that labored on behalf of the bourgeoisie, Great Britain, and social change resulted from the conflict between two opposing groups, the thesis (the king) and the antithesis (the Founders). The events that led to revolutionary social change support multiple claims made by Marx and Engels (1848/2001) and parallel Bourdieu's thesis on legitimization power relying on three phenomena: nomos, doxa, and illusio. As proletariats, they prolonged their oppression by conceding that "governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes" and through their many pleas of "common kindred to disavow these usurpations" (Declaration of Independence, 1776). As the proletariat, the Founders brought to the forefront "the common interests of the entire proletariat" and "independently of all nationality" (Marx & Engels, 1848/2001, p. 22) by asserting "that all men are created equal and are endowed with certain unalienable rights" (Declaration of Independence, 1776). Moreover, the Second Continental Congress rose to the occasion. It became "the leading class of the nation" (Marx & Engels, 1848/2001, p. 28), challenged the natural order of things, subordinated to the king, and established a sovereign nation. Colonists' social existence under British rule raised their consciousness (Marx, 1859/1970, p. 220), and their exhortations sealed the bond between them and subjects worldwide when they proclaimed:

The right of the people to alter or to abolish (destructive government), and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness.

—Declaration of Independence (1776).

They understood that the goal of self-governance could only be achieved through a "united action … one of the first conditions for the emancipation" (Marx & Engels, 1848/2001, p. 28). A united front is gleaned in the language of

the Declaration of Independence when the Founders appeal to various factions described in The Federalist No. 10 (1787/1998): "the landed interest, mercantile interest, moneyed interest, and lesser interests" (p. 34). Although the Continental Congress rose to the occasion, the Revolutionary War was fought "under the banner of the proletariat," who fought and did "the work of the bourgeoisie" (Marx & Engels, 1848/2001, p. 24).

The objectification of the working class by the bourgeoisie in their pursuit of property ownership (Marx & Engels, 1848/2001) nurtures a false consciousness and doxa that:

From the protection of different and unequal faculties of acquiring property, the possession of different degrees and kinds of property immediately results; and from the influence of these on the sentiments and views of the respective proprietors ensues a division of society into different interests and parties. (The Federalist No. 10, 1787/1998, p. 34)

Therefore, it is accepted as the order of things that different "interests exist in different classes of citizens, [that] in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, rendering them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to co-operate for their common good" (Federalist No. 10, 1787/1998, p. 35). Few realize that "if a majority is united by a common interest [i.e., respect for human dignity, fairness, security, and independence], "the rights of the [oppressive] minority will be insecure" (The Federalist, No. 51, 1787/1998, p. 335). Factions not only limit the effect of pure democracy: Class divisions (a species of faction) exist to protect bourgeois interests (Marx, 1848/2001) since:

The most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society. Those who are creditors, and those who are debtors, fall under like discrimination.

—The Federalist No. 10, 1787/1998. P. 34.

The Founders recognized the effect of factions from "the possession of different degrees and kinds of property" and "from the influence of these on the sentiments and views of the respective proprietors [that] ensues a division of the society into different interests and parties" (p. 34). Although Marx and Engels (1848/2001) and the Founders agreed on "the most common and durable source of factions" being "the possession of different degrees and kinds of property" (The Federalist No. 10, 1787/1998, p. 55), they differed on how to remedy this.

Marx and Engels interpret class differences as the unfairness of property ownership and the value of labor determined by the bourgeois class. In the Articles of Confederation, structural forces were evident in excluding "paupers, vagabonds, and fugitives from justice" (art. IV, p. 1). In the United States Constitution, age and native nationality are lines of division regarding presidential and vice-presidential office (Articles II and XIV).

Marx and Engels's remedy is for the people, through government, to own the means of production. This is an apparent attempt to protect workers' human dignity and condemn capitalism instead of greed and global competition that could take place under any economic system. In The Federalist (1787/1998), political injustice is interpreted as the effects of the injustice of a majority against a minority, with the remedy being the separation of power.

4.3. Michel Foucault

Power is tolerable only on condition that it masks a substantial part of itself.

Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanism.

—Foucault, The History of Sexuality, 1978, p. 86.

Foucault's power lens was employed to explore the empowerment and disempowerment categories as "views of power relations" (Foucault, 2019, p. 17) used in "strategic games between liberties" (p. 300). American colonists contributed to their oppression in the master-subject relationship with Great Britain (Adams, 1776/2022; Henry, 1775). It prompted Adams (1776) to ask: "Who among you, my countrymen, that is a father, would claim authority to make your child a slave because you had nourished him in infancy?" This relationship can be described as repressive and coercive power. However, colonists resisted power through boycotts and riots.

Great Britain intensified its oppressive strategies and leveraged tyrannic strategies of power over colonists at the realization that the king's sovereign power over the colonists had diminished: He "has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people," and transported "large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny" (Declaration of Independence, 1776). However, as agentic actors, the colonists freed themselves when it became "necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands [and establish a] separate and equal station" (Declaration of Independence, 1776).

The negative and positive force of power (Foucault, 1980) can be demonstrated by the Founders' resistance when they leveraged empowerment and disempowering strategies against the king (e.g., dehumanizing the king by proclaiming that he is "marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, [and] is unfit to be the ruler of a free people"; Declaration of Independence, 1776). The interplay of power between the king and the Founders supports Foucault's idea that the "liberty of men is never assured by institutions and laws that are intended to guarantee them" because "the guarantee of freedom is freedom" (Foucault, 1991, p. 47). The colonists' fight for liberty constitutes "the very matter of ethics" (Foucault, 2019, p. 300). Where there is no resistance to power, there is no interplay of power but obedience to power: Resistance is the only guarantee of freedom (Foucault, 2019) because the ability to resist implies self-determination, a type of freedom.

The founding documents are the repository of political and social knowledge/power. The Founders' understanding of human behavior and their power of discourse, as evidenced by the Declaration of Independence, played a role in the colonists' emancipation (Foucault, 1980). The Declaration became a destabilizing strategy that changed the power relations between the colonists and Great Britain. It empowered and united colonists, made France an ally, and led to conscientization.

Hence, this made Foucault's (1980) knowledge/power an appropriate lens to explore the findings. The Founders' knowledge/power was evident not only in the Declaration of Independence but also in The Federalist Papers (i.e., deliberative democracy, the construction of a new government, and the foundation of American political culture) and the United States Constitution (i.e., separation of power, the Electoral College as a barrier to pure democracy and voter ignorance, and the Bill of Rights).

The Federalist Papers were published in the newspaper for the educated minority to deliberate the design of a form of government that had not previously existed. The complexity of the topic excluded a large population of colonists. The Anti-Federalists Papers were written in opposition to The Federalist Papers. The Anti-Federalist Papers were written by a group that lacked the organizational strength of the Federalists (Staff, 1976). The lack of organization impeded the anti-federalists' efforts to rally in support of the people, despite advocating on the people's behalf (Staff, 1976), thus supporting the relationship between knowledge and power (Foucault, 1980).

The construction and reconstruction of knowledge/power is most evident in the United States Constitution, where laws change, but the power structure remains the same. Aware of the corrosive effect of power (The Federalist, 1787/1998), the Founders included the Bill of Rights in the United States Constitution. However, at one time, the rights of most of the population were nullified. The Founders advised colonists to "not be apprehensive that there will be too much stability" in the United States Constitution (The Federalist No. 72, 1787/1998, p. 482) because it led "to greater stability in the system of legislation" (The Federalist No. 73, 1787/1998, p. 487). In the Articles of Confederation (1781), knowledge/power took the form of perpetual union, law against treason, full faith and credit, and national security, among others. Knowledge/power is responsible for creating structural forces and social hierarchies as a state strategy to maintain the status quo (see Marx & Engels, 1848/2001). Power/knowledge led the Founders to a response to pure democracy. However, this solution led to the creation of national and social divisions:

> *Society itself will be broken into so many parts, interests, and classes of citizens, that the rights of individuals, or of the minority, will be in little danger from interested combinations of the majority. In a free government the security for civil rights must be the same as that for religious rights. It consists in the one case in the multiplicity of interests, and in the other in the multiplicity of sects.*
>
> *—The Federalist No. 51, 1787/1998, p. 192.*

Looking at power from the polytheoretical lens in terms of the founding documents suggests that institutionalized power, culture, and species of resistance are interrelated; however, more research is needed to support this observation.

5. Discussion

The polytheoretical framework of power was used as the interpretive lens to discuss the findings in Forde's (2023) constructivist democratic social change grounded theory. The dual negative and positive force of power (Foucault, 1980) became evident in the interaction between Great Britain and the Founders reconsolidating power in the founding documents. Employing a polytheoretical framework of power was useful in presenting the findings and led to rigor. However, applying the framework to this grounded theory has limitations. The most critical limitation in applying Foucault's lens was the assumption that the institutional voice represents the voice of one individual. Another limitation in applying the power lens to interpret the findings was relying on memos detailing symbolic capital in the founding documents. Another limitation was restricting the theoretical framework to the sample, particularly the selected Federalist essays. However, applying this polytheoretical framework of power to a

historical or case study design, for example, permits an in-depth analysis of power. Even so, power theories support the findings despite the theoretical framework being applied post-hoc.

The founding documents document the emergence, institutionalization, and strategies of democracy of a newly formed republic. The demoralization process devised by Great Britain to disempower colonists led to the emergence of democracy in colonial America, while The Federalist Papers institutionalized a species of democracy. As strategists, the Founders breached the demoralization process—nativism, social distinction, misinformation, fear, dehumanization, and subjugation—and countered it with a strategy of resistance that empowered them with knowledge, fairness, human dignity, hope, unity, and security.

The two categories of power suggest a state-sponsored empowerment and anti-democratic process at work by Great Britain against colonists and the newly formed government against its people. In the Articles of Confederation, the anti-democratic strategy was leveraged against the "paupers, vagabonds, and fugitives from justice" (art. IV, p. 1). In this study, this became the genesis of government-sanctioned structural inequality based on economic class in America. In the United States Constitution, the anti-democratic strategy is evident in suffrage laws, the Electoral College, and the selection of US Supreme Court Justices. In the Federalist Papers, the anti-democratic process takes the form of social and political divisions and the use of laws to determine humanity. In politics, the process was supported by the creation of factions, a subspecies of "divide and rule" (see The Federalist No. 51, 1787/1998, p. 192). The anti-democratic strategy was supported, and the status quo was maintained through the politics of law:

> *The true state of the case is, that [captives] partake of both these qualities ... by the laws under which they live ... because it is only under the pretext that the laws have transformed the negroes into subjects of property ... and it is admitted, that if the laws were to restore the [human] rights which have been taken away, the negroes could no longer be refused an equal share of representation with the other inhabitants. [emphasis added].*
>
> *—The Federalist No. 54, 1787/1998, pp. 354, 355.*

Although laws determined humanity, at least two founders rejected the notion that people of color lacked human qualities: Madison and Jefferson. Despite their personal and political reasons for divesting African Americans of their social and political status, Madison recognized that "the slave *may appear* to be degraded from the human rank" [emphasis added] (p. 354), not that the enslaved had lost their humanity. Moreover, Madison (1787) "thought it wrong to admit in the Constitution the idea that there could be property in men" (p. 1). Likewise, Jefferson acknowledged the humanity of enslaved people in the original Declaration of Independence. As a result, further research beyond the analysis of this polytheoretical framework and Forde's (2023) either/or approach to democracy is needed to determine whether African Americans were consigned to the margins of society to promote democracy as an alternative explanation for why people of color are an oppressed group.

6. Conclusion

In the original study, the following question was asked: How do the first principles of democracy in the American founding documents provide an understanding of the process of American democratic social change? (Forde,

2023). To interpret the findings holistically, Marx and Engels, Foucault, and Bourdieu were used. As the Founders consolidated the power of the 13 colonies, two power strategies, one democratic and one anti-democratic, emerged and were documented in the nation's founding documents: the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, The Federalist Papers, and the US Constitution. A power strategy based on ethical principles contributes to security, whereas a power strategy based on oppression will lead to subjugation and a divided society. Great Britain's anti-democratic strategies are evident in the Declaration of Independence (1776).

The ethical and demoralizing power strategies enshrined in the American founding documents remain occult despite being deeply embedded in the American social structure (see Forde's (2023) application of power relations to domestic violence, school bullying, and workplace hostility; Triangulation; National Security Report of the United States of America; Business Strategy section). Due to the institutionalization of anti-democratic strategies, there has been a delay in the development of a stronger and better democracy. Power strategies play an important role in the promotion and development of democracy. In contrast to ethical power strategies, the anti-democratic power strategies detract from democratic social change in America when they act as barriers to democracy instead of the lever that triggers democracy. However, understanding these power strategies, their species, and how politicians, the media, and other institutions use them could lead to empowerment and encourage political participation.

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