

# GLOBAL CROSSROADS: RETHINKING DOMINANT ORDERS IN OUR CONTESTED WORLD

**Edited by**  
Sahar Taghdisi Rad

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# **GLOBAL CROSSROADS: RETHINKING DOMINANT ORDERS IN OUR CONTESTED WORLD**

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**Sahar Taghdisi Rad**

## **Global Crossroads:**

## **Rethinking Dominant Orders in Our Contested World**

*Edited by: Sahar Taghdisi Rad*

*(Deputy Editors: Steve F.R. Fröhlich and Kate Vasiljeva)*

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## FOREWORD

*Dr Sal Jarvis, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Education*

I am delighted to write the foreword to this third book of the Democratic Education Network (DEN). The work is the product of the dedication, enthusiasm and hard work of the University of Westminster students in DEN, who have tackled some of the most critical topics in contemporary international politics; the rise of China; environmentalism, gender and identities; and terrorism and security. This book makes a valuable contribution to some important debates.

Student-led, and supported by dedicated staff members from the Politics and International Relations team at Westminster, DEN embodies the University's commitment to staff-student partnership. Through DEN, students have been empowered to develop their academic expertise, developing research and producing scholarly outputs. I am looking forward to engaging with the work of DEN in the coming year as it continues to contribute to political research and debate.



# INTRODUCTION

*Dr Sahar Taghdisi Rad*

The University of Westminster is globally known for its diversity. Of its 22,000 students, 8,400 are international students, many as second-generation immigrants, representing 169 nationalities. Building on this incredibly diverse and global student body, the Democratic Education Network (DEN) continues to strive as a platform for stimulating students' creativity and engagement with issues that not only relate to their studies and interests, but which also matter to their immediate and broader communities.

Since 2015, DEN's projects have continued to expand in various directions, including initiatives such as Student Action for Refugees (STAR), OutReach, Local Community Projects, International Organisation Engagement, the Inside Westminster online magazine, and the organisation of the annual DEN Conference and the publication of its proceedings in an edited volume (<https://www.denwestminster.net/>).

DEN International Student Conferences benefit from the unique feature of being organised by students for students – focusing on themes that matter to their realities and the global contexts that they live in. They are also a great opportunity for both undergraduate and postgraduate students, from home and abroad, to present their research and analysis. The 2019 conference, held on 10–11 May, focused on the pressing theme of 'Global Crossroads: Rethinking Dominant Orders in Our Contested World'. Emanating from the challenges to the established global order from the left to the right of the political spectrum, and the consequent questioning of the dominant narratives of sovereignty and democracy, the conference focused on some of the pressing questions and implications arising from these changes. Following the conference, a dedicated team mostly comprised of DEN students focused on collating and carefully editing the conference papers for the publication of the current edited volume on this very timely theme.

The global order today has become an arena for contestations of dominant orders and structures. From protests and demonstrations in Hong Kong and Chile, to Algeria and Ecuador, dominant political, economic and social orders, hierarchies and norms are being questioned more intensely by the masses worldwide. These trends reflect the growing discontentment with inequalities and inequities

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within and between nations. At the national level, impediments to citizens' democratic, economic, social, and human rights have triggered movements against the regimes and structures that deny their citizens such rights. At the international level, growing economic disparities between nations – together with the rise of new and emerging powers – are destabilising the pre-existing dominant global order. This has resulted in new forms of economic, political and security alliances as well as conflicts. As such, the dominant economic and political frameworks and policies that have resulted in widening inequalities nationally and internationally over decades are being questioned at an increasingly rapid pace, with calls for alternative socio-economic and political frameworks and radical changes to the policies and structures of governance.

Although the growing and intensifying forms of national and international contestations in recent years have been aided by the increasing global access to various forms of social media and access to readily available information that enhance the opportunities for global solidarity, major challenges remain in transforming these forms of discontentment and contestation into new viable forms of politics and livelihoods. Despite the challenge of defining the new structures, institutions and systems that could generate more equitable, fair, and inclusive outcomes, the very existence and intensification of various forms of contestation worldwide demonstrate, at the very least, that the existing economic, social and political orders are no longer viable or acceptable. It is in this context that this book aims to contribute to the discussions on the sources of the growing global economic, political, social and ecological crises, and the ways we can move forward from there. The chapters of the book fall into a number of inter-related themes.

The chapters in **Part I – The Decline of Dominant Orders** highlight some of the fault lines in the dominant ideological and institutional structures of the global political economy, including international law, multilateralism and new institutionalism, the institutions of a state, and the continued legacy of colonialism. The chapter on 'The Paradoxical Narrative of Capitalism', for example, highlights the contradictions within the liberal narrative that emerged and has dominated since the Second World War, practiced through international institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. It questions the stability and viability of the capitalist system of production, while recognising the enormous task of deconstructing the social norms and values that have been created by the liberal narrative.

The chapters in **Part II – Regional Dynamics in a Changing World** explore the rise of new poles of global power, as well as their implications for global economic and political relations. Two papers focus particularly on the rise of China and its implications, on the one hand, for challenging the Western hegemony, and on the other hand, for generating another *de facto* powerful benefactor for the less developed economies. Other important regional issues – such as the Eurozone Crisis, the rise of Central Asian economies, as well as the contentious relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia – are also explored in this section.

Closely related to the previous theme, the two chapters of **Part III** focus on the rapidly growing and contentious issue of **Global Security**. The latter has come to symbolise an inevitable and vital component of international relations, attracting growing economic and political resources. While one chapter addresses the impact of counterterror methods in the UK on British Muslim communities, another focuses on the ways in which the privatisation and commercialisation of the security sector has given rise to an exponential expansion of private security companies (PSCs) – which have, in turn, ensured that the privatisation of security remains a solid reality topping the global security agenda.

To address a vital issue with pressing implications for international relations and global politics, **Part IV – The Rise of the Green** offers analyses of some aspects of the global ecological crisis that has engulfed most regions of the world. As is widely understood by now, today's environmental crisis is largely borne out of an economic model that, for decades, has focused relentlessly on expanding economic growth numbers and consumption levels, with little regard for the environmental sustainability of such policies. Furthermore, the ecological crisis today demonstrates the severity of the global disparities in access to resources and opportunities, with developed economies being the main perpetrators of this crisis and the developing economies being those most vulnerable to its effects. The chapters in this section address some of these issues, including the links between the rise of anti-environmentalist movements and the new forms of governance and political structures which they seem to reinforce, and the nature of civil movements and popular actions that have emerged in response to this crisis. While perusing the ability of the various forms of movements to alter governmental and corporate policies in this regard, the chapters conclude that a 'business as usual' attitude is no longer viable, as it only increases the pace of this ecological meltdown.



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Another significant cross-cutting issue, which is addressed by the chapters in **Part V**, is that of **Gender Representation and Identity**. These chapters focus on several fascinating topics ranging from gender politics in North Africa, to human trafficking in Japan, the politics of masculinity and the sexual history of London. For example, by focusing on world cultural history and gender-based violence as a post-colonial exercise, one of the chapters in this section explores the impact of art and its various forms of historical representations on women's rights, arguing that addressing issues such as gender-based violence is possible when lessons from the past are carefully considered and learnt from. The chapter's conclusion that only by looking back can we move forward, comprehend the present, and work towards a better future is perhaps one of the key conclusions emerging from this book: today's contestations of the dominant global order are a reflection of historical processes and trajectories that need to be understood carefully in order to enable the formulation of policies and actions that make a break from the past and create viable alternatives for the future. The latter ideas form the basis for the 2020 DEN International Student Conference.

PART I

THE DECLINE OF DOMINANT ORDERS



# 1

## THE PARADOXICAL NARRATIVE OF CAPITALISM

*Camille Mathy*

The roots of globalisation can be traced back to the 15th century with the ‘encounter’ of the Americas, creating the first biggest interconnected market ever seen before (Triangular trade). It was from this period that colonisation began and from which it began to dominate the world for the next five centuries. This phenomenon imposed a global system of industrialisation, massive production, and extraction of resources. Colonisation ended after the Second World War, coupled with the later defeat of the Communist blockade (1991). Both factors allowed the victory and the international imposition of a global liberal system (the United States as a hyper-power). Thus, it directly influenced the intensification of globalisation hand-in-hand with neoliberal doctrines inducing a worldwide capitalist order. This phenomenon forged a more radical international system and reinforced a unidimensional way of developing the countries of the so-called ‘third world’. This globalised world was supposed to provide development for a common international good. However, it ended in satisfying the needs of the richest minority population of the world by exploiting the resources of non-Western countries. One primordial effect of globalization is that even today, top-down approaches such as the modernisation theory (boosting urbanisation and industrialisation) are still being imposed, influencing the permanent situation of dependency of the Global South. To do so, the key feature for a successful globalisation was to impose a liberal and capitalist system by creating a massive increase of technology and science, opening the market to the international economy and a global consumer culture (GCC) (Sheth & Maholtra, 2009). Moreover, another primordial effect of globalisation is its impact on the functioning of the planet and its increasing of inequalities due to the meritocratic ideology established through capitalism. This world order has, as its main aim, the goal of persisting; of surviving – even if it easy to demonstrate that it is not a sustainable system and that it

is full of unfair/illogical processes and that (to some extent) it may be one of the biggest threats to the future of humanity.

This paper will seek to show that the liberal narrative that emerged during the aftermath of World War II through international institutions such as the World Bank or the IMF is, in fact, a discourse that is in contradiction with its application. Furthermore, it will try to explain that the world is suffering from an unprecedented crisis and that the capitalist system is unstable and is benefiting (and that, only in the short term) the richest minority of the population. Another topic that will be approached is the topic of socially constructed values that are predominant among most of the population due to the liberal narrative. Lastly, it will be argued that even if governments are trying to offer solutions to those issues, they keep putting their own interests in first place. Therefore, such alternatives/solutions proposed are nothing but discourses to reassure the population and maintain the status quo. In any case, this research represents a real effort to change/improve a toxic system. To illustrate the illogical nature of the response from governments, social movements and activism will explain the discontentment felt by socially conscious and aware citizens.

### **A World in Crisis; and Capitalism as an Unstable System**

It is essential to underline the importance of globalisation and its historical background, as it is a process that is affecting every part of the world (from single individuals to companies or governments). This phenomenon is directly correlated with capitalism, as both of them share the ideology of an interconnected world by establishing a free market economy based not only on privatisation but also on a worldwide culture of consumerism. Therefore, globalisation is strongly attached to the roots of today's system, and this is a reason why it is almost unimaginable to break with this process.

Globalisation increased after the post-Cold-War period as a political project. As Fukuyama argues in his book *The End of History*, the expansion of liberal democracies will (theoretically) create a prosperous, interconnected world where all countries will share common goods and values, achieving the Kantian idea of democratic peace theory (Placek, 2012). To simplify, the idea was to expand a universal economy that could benefit all and secure political stability around the world. During the 1980s, the neoliberal era began with Thatcher and Reagan – the main

leaders of the Western world – boosting radical free-market policies, which would spread neoliberal economic doctrines across the world (Gittins, 2017). The idea is that the state has to be rolled back and that the market alone will provide development for the country and for society itself. Another key idea of globalisation was to decrease inequality and to eradicate poverty as far as possible in developing countries. To do so, international organisations following this neoliberal ideology – institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank – were created after the Second World War in order to provide economic support and political stability (Michaelowa & Hännny, 2010). With the development of the international division of labour, the production of the world was being exchanged for a promise – leading to an opportunity for developing countries to integrate into the international market and to attempt to industrialise rather than keep their resources – without achieving any benefit as they used to. Globalisation is therefore considered by many as being a phenomenon which has simplified their life by always providing them with multiple choices for everything: food, hobbies, clothes, travels, jobs, and so on; and also by increasing health-related or even communication-related benefits.

However, in our present world, the majority of the countries which are producing those possibilities are being exploited by the very people who are enjoying it. Those international powers are relocating their factories in developing countries to benefit cheap labour. This phenomenon is creating a situation of dependency from the poorest countries to the richest ones due to the fact that their only solution to the problem of how to keep going in the international arena is to borrow money from Western countries, mainly through the Official Development Assistance (ODA) programme, in order to improve their own technology and industries to an internationally competitive level. The fact is that even if they have made an important improvement, they do not earn enough benefits; so they cannot clear their debts. This situation of dependence is quite favourable for Western countries, as their investments earn them a great deal of interest from debt or from high penalties for late payments, which creates its own debt trap (Carbonnier, 2010). This trap creates a continual dependence without a viable solution for enabling developing countries to become independent and to emerge from poverty. This pattern can also be found at a smaller scale. Student debt in the United States can exemplify this idea. One year of study at university can cost an average of \$34 000, making it almost impossible for most students to afford and therefore inducing them to apply for a student loan. One estimate claims that 45

million Americans ask for a loan each year (Bryant, 2019). This is another type of trap, where citizens – even before starting their labour life – have the obligation to work hard for many years to repay their debt. This is a tool for capitalism to control society; as when people are forced to work, they do not have the time/choice to think either about the world in which they are living, or about their own personal interests. They become just another sheep among the societal herd; one which is going to follow the system without any chance of being independent from it. As has been explained, globalisation is a system based on the mechanics of interdependence; and with its exponential growth and development over the years, it is seen as being the only system possible in our present world.

The consequences of this globalised system can be found not only through inequalities between the Global South and the Global North, but also through the environmental problem. The 21st century is characterised as an era where the elite of the population are having unlimited access to resources such as oil, water and electricity. The profligate use of those resources is portrayed as being something natural; but in fact, the daily global levels of usage is having a monumental repercussion on the functioning of the planet in ways that have never been seen before (Suzuki, McConnell, & DeCambra, 2002). It is important to note that many countries of the Third World are being exploited and that their environments are being destroyed in consequence of relocating manufacturing facilities to those nations in order to gain access to those countries' goods. Those countries are suffering the huge impact of climate change – while, in most cases, they are the ones with the lowest carbon footprint. Environmental catastrophes are directly affecting the development of those countries because of the destruction of buildings; the decrease of soil fertility; the lack of tourism (as many of the countries border, or are near, the sea); and potential migrations (in extreme cases). In sum, natural disasters engender an important economic loss (they are estimated to cost one-third of a trillion dollars a year) (Giugale, 2017). Due to the important control over energy that many scientists have, the production of goods is being increased exponentially at an unstoppable rate; and natural resources are being exploited until the last drop of water and oil has been extracted; and the repercussions are beginning to be universal rather than affecting only the poorest part of the population. Agriculture, energy production, industry, and transportation (in brief: human activity) is polluting the air, which is contaminating the atmosphere, ending by creating global warming. As has been said before, this relatively new phenomenon is already having repercussions in some developing countries

but also in developed ones, as the United Nations' Department of Climate Change argues: 'From Miami and Puerto Rico to Barbuda and Havana, the devastation of this year's hurricane season across Latin America and the Caribbean serves as a reminder that the impacts of climate change know no borders' (Steiner, Espinosa, & Glasser, 2017). Those disasters have made headlines over the last few years; and as a result, many activists and NGOs are (and have been) pressuring the government to take into consideration human's abuse of the environment.

Demographic growth also illustrates the problem of managing resources. Many countries around the world are already suffering from a lack of freshwater: '1.1 billion people lack access to water and 2.7 billion experience water scarcity at least one month a year' (WWF, n.d.). Additionally, the WWF report argues that more than half of the world's wetlands have disappeared (*ibid.*). Plus, population growth is not going to decrease across the following decades. By the end of the century, the UN predicts that the world population could grow to 11 billion (Roser, Ritchie, & Ortiz-Ospina, 2019). Therefore, in a world where resources are being limited, and with there being a high possibility of 'wearing them off', it is hard to imagine a prosperous future with a growing population of people unwilling to think about anyone but themselves.

However, politicians' discourses are not often mentioning or underlining these issues. It seems that they do not want to talk about the fact that, in the decades to come, we will have to find other ways to satisfy our needs and that we will no longer be able to live with the global consumerism culture. However, many argue that politicians, scientists and mainly the elite of the population are aware of the coming consequences of human activity. In fact, the 'elite' may already be planning a way out of catastrophes to come. Silicon Valley billionaires are already building bunkers in New Zealand in case they will need refuge from 'climate catastrophe, [a] decline of transatlantic political orders, [or] resurgent nuclear terror' (O'Connell, 2018). Therefore, how it is possible that none drastic measures have been undertaken to stop this toxic process? How is it possible that the richest minority of the population is preparing to flee when the crisis will be uncontrollable, and that passive citizens – who, in any case, have been participating in the problem – will be the one suffering from the situation? The answer reflects on the individualism and inequality of our societies: the constant phenomenon of benefiting the richest minority of the population only for short-term profit. Answers from the government regarding that unfairness will be explained more



deeply later on. Being focused on the actual deficit of our system is indispensable to understanding that urgent changes need to be undertaken. Hence, since overproduction is a key element for a sustainable liberal economy, and since it has been shown that overproduction cannot be possible on a long-term scale, it can be argued that a long-term liberal economy is unstable and weak. The consequences of human activity on the planet can only affirm this argument.

Most Western citizens are aware about climate change, about the rise of the level of oceans, about the acidity of water, and so on. But the data are not, or are rarely, making us feel the duty to react. People need to see the problem through their own eyes in order to understand that it is a reality rather than being only a set of numbers, or a series of pictures about a polar bear isolated on a piece of iceberg. The Paris Accord was seeking to maintain a global warming level of under 2 degrees from now to 2100. By contrast, multinational companies predict a 5-degree augmentation of temperature – by 2050 (Dion, 2018). It is hard to know the truth, but what should be clear to all of us is that real catastrophes are coming – and urgent changes are needed.

Enormous technological progress has been undertaken during the last few decades; and that increase in improvements is not ready to stop. Transhumanism and digital progress are shaping a world where we will be able to advance our length of life, create powerful robots, eradicate illnesses, double our cognitive capacity, and achieve even more advancements (Dion, 2018). In sum, the idea is that (some) people will be able to improve and polish all the defects that have surrounded us. Yet for many, this may be nothing more than a dream. The improvement of these technologies is only possible due to the existence of a vertical system. Technology needs a hierarchical structure of those who are dominant and those who are dominated – thereby increasing inequalities between those people who have access to all types of technologies versus those people who are lacking access to even the most basic necessities. However, the fact is that as the default outcome of these improvements, the earth and a huge majority of the world population will suffer from irremediable consequences linked to this so-called progress. Scientists of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other intergovernmental experts are claiming that global warming is happening at a rate two times faster than what had been predicted in 1998 (Dion, 2018). Global warming will not only affect the rise of ocean level but directly human beings. Human beings are not used to temperatures exceeding 37 degrees. As organisms,

we need to be in an environment where temperatures are not higher than our constant temperature, which is 37 degrees. When this temperature is exceeded, we use mechanisms such as sweat to maintain our body at the relatively colder temperature to which it is accustomed. However, at some point, our body will not be able to acclimate anymore, and our health – and the biodiversity of the planet, too – will be in danger (National Aeronautics and Space Administration, 2019). In sum, each rising degree is representing an enormous threat for human beings, but also for all other living beings. It is important to underline that all the other species have nothing to do with what is happening in the world – and yet they are the ones suffering the greatest consequences. ‘The world’s 7.6 billion people represent just 0.01% of all living things, according to the study. Yet since the dawn of civilisation, humanity has caused the loss of 83% of all wild mammals and half of plants’ (Carrington, 2018). The pattern of inequality dominators/dominates, oppressor/oppressed is still present in democratic societies, in an indirect way but is affecting all living species now more than ever.

### **The Story They Are Telling Us – How Do We Believe It, and How Do We React to It?**

The importance of the economy among the international system can also be illustrated through the lens of indicators of development. Analysis of statistics is used to study the country’s development, but most of those statistics seek to show the level of economic development instead of the quality of life. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was one of the first methods to measure the development of a country, in a Beyond DGP conference organised by the European Commission (European Commission, the European Parliament, the Club of Rome, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the World Wildlife Fund, 2007), President Barroso argued that GDP is an indicator of economic market activity and was not intended to be an accurate measure of well-being. Issues such as climate change, competition for resources, social inclusion, and security are not being taking into account by the GDP measure (ibid.). Some countries like Qatar have an incredibly high income due to their natural resources but still have development problems such as a lack of freedom and there being immense gaps between the rich and the poor. With the creation of the Human Development Index (HDI), important advances have been made, as it is based on 3 new dimensions: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable, and having a decent standard of living (UN Development Programme). This new method of analysing

development is, then, not just seeking to grow the economy. Nonetheless, some academics such as Murray, have argued that it is an overly simplistic approach that only takes a restricted set of indicators into consideration (Kovacevic, 2010).

On the other hand, independently of how much any given democratic leader wants to solve the issues mentioned above, there is not an easy solution. Firstly, this is because most of the presidential mandate is short – during only a few years – so they do not have the possibility to think on a long-term scale and even less to adequately address nonlinear issues such as climate change (Friedrich et al., 2016). Secondly, this is because even if they try to make a radical change, they will be blocked by special-interest lobby groups and all sorts of people who are actually benefiting from the problem. The capitalist system has economic growth as its DNA. Therefore, when talking about tackling issues, we are talking about breaking off with economic development – and, therefore, from capitalism. According to this, it is evident that facing reality and acting to change it means confronting the system. However, scientists are alarming the population of the damage that is coming. Citizens are getting scared. They need to be reassured by their ‘trustful’ leaders that the situation is under control – because if they are not, fear is going to emerge among the organised state. And fear has no other way out than creating chaos. Chaos is the biggest fear of politicians. A revolted population could lead to a weak control, and the possibility of losing power. This is why green capitalism emerged alongside the ideology of blaming the consumer for having overconsumed. Instead of talking about supraduction, politicians are talking about ‘overconsumption’. And from one day to another, all the publicities are talking about buying locally, recycling, using public transport, or engaging in bicycling instead of cars, etc. The only solutions that our politicians are giving us – while facing the worse crisis we have ever faced – are individual actions. Some policies may have changed about an ecological transition, but it still in the frame of consumption within exponential growth. Blaming the consumer by saying that he is not consuming in a good way, or that he should reduce its consumption, is saying that the economy is working through the mechanism of demand-offers. But this is not the case. No citizen has decided the products that they are buying. No citizen knows the exact process of the production of the products they are buying. The 21st century is an era where fake needs are in the centre of consumption. The consumer is at the end of the chain once everything has been decided for him. Capitalism is a system that is obligating citizens to follow the pattern of consumption. It is almost impossible to be detached from the ‘fake needs’

without being isolated from society. Not having a phone means being isolated from communication. Not having a car means struggling to go to work when not living in the city centre. Capitalism is transforming 'fake needs' into essential needs. Therefore, citizens need to be able to afford these products. To do so, education has almost inevitably become a way to integrate the system. The elite of the population have been educated to think in an individual way, and the system/social pressure has been imposed on a majority of the people, with the goal being to have as much money and 'means' as possible – even if it means sacrificing one's entire life to do so. This is what it can mean to integrate into the system. The present world portrays how much globalisation has influenced its own development of the population – up to the point that even if the world people are living in is suffering the biggest environmental crisis ever known, they will follow the way of life that the system has induced them into blindly following. Therefore, it can be argued that no citizens are guilty of having perpetrated the ecological crisis, but rather that they grew up in a system that indirectly forces them to be part of the problem rather than the solution. Even if individual actions are not the solution, it is important to not support this aggressive control that the capitalist system is establishing. Social movements are emerging around the world, with their main aim being social justice. Insurrection moments are happening presently, from Lebanon to Chile, through Ecuador. This proves that, in general, the population is fed up with the status quo. Similar causes (ultra-liberal reforms) provoke similar consequences (popular uprising). These reforms include an increase in tax on fuel in France and in Ecuador; and an increase in metro ticket prices in Chile. These are only catalysts. They quickly give way to social and democratic claims. The people want to take back control of their own existence and write their own history. In fact, neoliberalism has progressively deprived individuals of their autonomy. Those revolts are, therefore, reflecting a desire for freedom; for the freedom to be free (Hannah Arendt). We are assisting in a deep-level crisis of representation. Political parties are progressively losing their legitimacy. '*¡Que se vayan todos!* [May they all go!]' is chanted in urban riots. Individuals no longer believe in this capitalistic-democratic illusion. Consumption that has been presented to us as the carrot, thanks to the soft power, is not baiting anyone anymore. Masks have fallen. The state's true face has been revealed. The carrot has been replaced with the stick. Authoritarianism and democracy are becoming one. Through their mediatory and political power, elites denigrate and repress those movements of protest. Facing such threats, they gather together.

It is now on us to meet and reorganise.

To conclude, it seems that three potential ‘walls’ or barriers are being built to stop our exponential growth. Resources are the first barrier to face. However, the melting ice and our technology enable us to find new oil reserves (even if those ones are dirty and less worthwhile). Resources are not a direct constraint anymore. Hence, this first barrier risks being overtaken by the second one: the climatic and ecological barrier. Indeed, the environmental impact of our politico-economic system has become so obvious by now that it no longer needs to be demonstrated anymore. Ultimately, the last barrier is the social one. It is, by far, the most promising because it is not endured but chosen. As a matter of fact, the people want a change of paradigm. They desire to be part of political decisions. The Kurds’ experience in Rojava testifies of the willingness to build a more horizontal, less complex, and less authoritative world.

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## 2

### HOW DOES DEVELOPMENT AND CAPITALISM CREATE INEQUALITY?

*Harkiran Bharij*

Poverty is something which is faced all over the world, whether it be in rich and developed countries or poor and developing countries. In most, if not all nations, there are huge disparities and inequalities with the way that wealth is shared and distributed, with many people living below the poverty line. In October 2015, the World Bank updated the international poverty line to \$1.90 a day (World Bank, 2015). One in ten people live below this line, in what is known as the 'threshold'; in Sub-Saharan Africa; over 42% of the population live within it (United Nations, 2018).

However, poverty is more than a lack of income and productive resources which ensure sustainable livelihoods. The UN has defined poverty as taking 'many different forms' (United Nations, 1995, cited in Gordon et al., 2006, p. 57) including hunger and malnutrition; limited access to education and other basic service; and social exclusion and discrimination; as well as a lack of decision making. This is a very broad description of what poverty entails, as seen through its focus on economic-, social-, and health-related issues.

Furthermore, the impact that one's social background has on the extent to which one will end up in poverty is important in relation to the definition stated above. As seen through this statistic, it is apparent that the issues mentioned do not discriminate against gender and age – there are 122 women aged between 25 and 34 who live in extreme poverty; while for men, it is 100 in the same age group (United Nations, 2018). Other figures have illustrated how there are 160 million children worldwide who are at risk of continuing to live in extreme poverty by 2030 (United Nations, 2018). These numbers are rather startling and have influenced several organisations to take measures to combat it. For example, the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 'promises to leave



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no one behind and to reach those furthest behind first' (United Nations, 2018). They aim to do this through developing a plan which ties to and is supported by 'full employment and decent work for all, social integration, declining inequality, rising productivity and a favourable environment' (United Nations, 2018).

This paper on universal poverty will be split into four main areas, each of which will focus on different issues. Primarily, in Section One, the formation of development and the binary between the developing and developed world will be discussed. Section Two will attempt to understand capitalism on a global scale. Section Three will follow on from the previous section where it will detail the inequality and oppression which capitalism causes the poorest countries to suffer. Lastly, in the fourth section, the impact of capitalism and inequality on women will be analysed and discussed, prior to the whole paper's being concluded in the fifth and final section.

### **Development: A Binary between the Developed and Developing World**

The overall theme of this paper is to understand how poverty is universal and is affected by everyone, whether they reside in developed or developing countries. This involves being knowledgeable on how it differs and/or is similar in different parts of the world. One important theme which is used to understand this is how the 'improvement in [the] country's economic and social conditions' (Shah, 2018) has contributed to development. Near the end of World War 2, scholars and policy makers became interested in answering the questions surrounding development, such as why some countries were poorer than others and what could be done to raise living standards (Viterna & Robertson, 2015, p. 244). Providing answers for these complex questions has profound effects on three main areas of society – economic, social and political areas. As a result, this questioning led to the birth of the 'development', an entity that involves political, social, and economic growth or the lack thereof for some nations.

Many scholars and academics have defined the term 'development'. Modernisation theorists have characterised modern and capitalist societies as being at the forefront of development. This is because these societies have been effective in utilising their social, political, cultural, and economic features to create and maintain 'highly specialised, differentiated' and 'technologically sophisticated institutions'

such as schools, the media, and parliament (Viterna & Robertson, 2015, p. 244). This description of development shows it as something which is perpetuated by the social institutions that operate in society. Other definitions have looked at the economic principles of development, attributing such growth to finance. In 1985, Amartya Sen (cited in Viterna & Robertson, 2015, p. 245) introduced a new way to perceive development. Rather than adopting a view which focused on income and wealth (economics), he instead concentrated on what is known as 'capabilities' (Viterna & Robertson, 2015, p. 244). The idea of freedom is important in this definition, with it being constitutive of development – if countries and nations are to develop, they need to involve and integrate human independence and autonomy in order to do so successfully. Sen argues for a broad view of freedom with themes such as 'political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities[,] and security' (Yee, 2003) all being interrelated concepts which advocate hope for greater development. He uses many examples as evidence for this point, an important one being between income per head (economic facilities) and the freedom for individuals to live long and well (security). For instance, the citizens of some places in Africa and South America may be richer in per-capita Gross National Product (GNP); however, those living in Asia have higher life expectancies than those living in the former (Sen, 2001, p. 6). This example illustrates how being able to access both – or more than one – of the freedoms mentioned above is a large contributor towards greater development, although it has also been demonstrated that not all are needed for this to happen positively.

The contemporary global map of development is based on the binary between First and Third worlds, the developed and developing world respectively. There is a 'new polarisation' that is growing 'in the developing world' (Surbhi, 2019) – referring to the world. This is amongst 'moving' and 'stuck' (Surbhi, 2019) countries, which are differentiated due to their economic growth or lack thereof, creating a dualism between the two. This idea sees most people in the developing world as living in 'moving countries' where they are 'constantly bombarded by positive developmental changes such as consumption lines, increasing economic growth and the dominance of the global economy' (Surbhi, 2019). These changes are brought on by globalisation, better communication, capitalism, and the rise of technology and media. The distinction between the developing and developed worlds is one which is big, and one which needs to be understood so that it can be managed in an appropriate manner. Giovanni Arrighi, in his 1992 article states, 'the increasing inequality of the global distribution of incomes' (cited in Viterna and

Robertson, 2015, p. 246) argues how the nations of the world 'are differentially situated in a rigid hierarchy of wealth in which the occasional ascent of a nation (mainly in the West) or two leaves all the others more firmly entrenched than ever they were before' (Berger, 2009). This refers to global capitalism, an entity which only the richest nations in the world have the power and resources to use. The rest of the world is further plagued by inequalities as they are often left to fend for themselves. This often slows down the development of these poorer and less well-off countries in the 'developing world' as it causes the 'polarisation' (Surbhi, 2019) to grow even more wider, making it harder to catch up.

### **Global Capitalism**

Capitalism and its global dominance are very important to consider when understanding inequality and poverty worldwide. It is the 'system of economic and social relations marked by private property, the exchange of goods and services by free individuals, and the use of market mechanisms to control the production and distribution of those goods and services' (Muller, 2013, p. 31). Prior to capitalism coming into force, life was governed by the traditional social institutions such as education and religion which controlled individual futures and destinies, often constraining them to 'communal, political and religious structures' (Muller, 2013, p. 31). These institutions restricted any sort of change, or kept it to a minimum, something which blocked the ability for individuals to make progress; they were unable to do things for themselves and everything they did do was tied down to the state and these institutions. The elements mentioned above have existed in human societies for decades, but it was only in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries that it came together in full force in the Western world (Muller, 2013, p. 32). Fundamentally, this kept on growing as more and more populations – especially in the West – began to sell their goods and commodities, something which allowed them to make a living and earn a wage. As capitalism became increasingly pronounced in societies, individuals were given more control and responsibility over their own lives than ever before – this proved to be rather liberating and freeing (Muller, 2013, p. 32). Nowadays, these societies have been characterised as orienting towards 'innovation and dynamism, to the creation of new knowledge, new products, and new modes of production and distribution' (Muller, 2013, p. 35).

Many events in the past have allowed for a rise and domination of capitalism – including the end of the Cold War, the reunification of Germany and the collapse of the Soviet Union, all of which influences the economy today. For instance, when the Cold War ended in 1989, there was much international speculation on what would happen in the United States. When the communist threat left the United States, the traditional (and stereotypical) liberal values of democracy, individualism, and free markets was very popular; the one thing in common with these values was their capitalist ethos (Muller, 2013, p. 37). Similarly, in the 1990s, the priorities of Western Europe also started changing as it became less willing to follow American leadership, instead emphasising their own national interests. For example, under Margaret Thatcher and her neo-liberal policies, competition, state market liberalisation and privatisation were all the frontrunners for capitalism in the UK (Hjemgaard, 2013). Following this, economic liberalisation in countries such as China, Brazil, Indonesia and other countries in the developing world allowed (some) people to escape ‘grinding poverty and move into the middle class’ (Muller, 2013, p. 37). The most advanced capitalist societies, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, suffered somewhat of a revolution as the prices of commodities and the influx of goods have become more available (Muller, 2013, p. 36).

The growth of capitalism in the West was accelerated by the help of globalisation. William Robinson sees globalisation as representing a ‘new epoch in the ongoing evolution of world capitalism distinguished by the rise of a globally integrated production and financial system, an emergent transnational capitalist class, and incipient transnational state apparatus’ (2012, p. 54); in this case, globalisation is a vital tool in enabling what is known as the ‘golden age’ of capitalism (Robinson, 2012, p. 54). After the Second World War, global capitalism was seen in the development between nation states that were connected by the international division of labour and the financial exchanges by the Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund), which aimed to help rebuild the shattered post-war economy and promote international economic cooperation (Bretton Woods Project). One way this was done was by providing loans to countries facing financial difficulties (IMF). All of this was good for the ‘developed’ countries – the West – but was negative for those which were ‘developing’ – the East.

### **Failures of Capitalism and the Consequent Inequality**

Fundamentally, capitalism is a system which is based on inequality – a small number of capitalists own a major share in the means of production, while the rest of the population own little else but their ‘own labour power’ (Moghadam, 1999, p. 371). This is made even worse globally where capitalists can enhance their financial, social, and physical influences worldwide, which is often at the expense of the poorest people in the world. In his 2017 article ‘Is Global Inequality Getting Better or Worse? A Critique of the World Bank’s Convergence Narrative’, Hickel viewed inequality as a ‘major political issue since the [G]lobal [F]inancial [C]risis of 2008’ (2017, p. 2208). It has been found that the financial crisis of ‘October 2008 erased around US\$25 trillion from the value of stock markets’ (World Institute for Development Economics Research, 2009, p. 1). As a result, there were many implications on the rest of the world especially, developing countries (World Institute for Development Economics Research, 2009, p. 4). These include the following:

1. **Banking Failures and Reductions in Domestic Lending:** Following the financial crisis, a major fear was ‘financial contagion’ (World Institute for Development Economics Research, 2009, p. 4) – that is, financial institutions in other countries catching and being negatively affected by what was happening in the US. Many banks in developing countries had limited relationships with international banks, as the latter – places such as Latin America and Africa – are not major players (World Institute for Development Economics Research, 2009, p. 4). Furthermore, in China, exposure to American banks is minimal due to their banks being controlled directly by the government (World Institute for Development Economics Research, 2009, p. 4).
2. **Reduction in Export Earnings:** Given that most developing countries such as China, India, Japan, Korea, and Malaysia base their economic growth on exports, the crisis could lead to a substantial decline in their earnings (World Institute for Development Economics Research, 2009, p. 5). The International Monetary Bank reported that ‘growth in world trade would decline from 9.4% in 2006 to 2.1% in 2009’ (World Institute for Development Economics Research, 2009, p. 5). This large decrease in numbers is due to the decline in commodity prices, the decline in demand from advanced economies and the decline in tourism (*ibid.*).

3. Reduction in Financial Flows in Developing Countries: As a group, developing countries require financial inflows from the rest of the world to help generate economic growth, trade, and development, all of which were on the decline because of the financial crisis (*ibid.*, p. 6). Cali, Massa and Te Velde (2008) estimated that this decline in resources was around US\$300 billion (*ibid.*).

Therefore, these reasons show how the financial and economic development of developing countries were halted and restricted by the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. Since capitalism was a major contributor to this event, the influence that is had is seen.

Furthermore, in 2014, Oxfam published a report detailing how the richest 85 people in the world had more wealth than the poorest half of the planet's population combined (Hickel, 2017, p. 2208). However, in 2016, they published a follow-up report which showed how these statistics had become worse – the richest 62 people owned more than the poorest half of the world (*ibid.*). They also noted how the wealth of the richest 1% had been increasing since 2008, along with their share of total wealth; this was to the point that the 1% was richer than the rest of the world combined, for the first time (*ibid.*). This demonstrated how unequal wealth distribution was – feeding into the narrative that global inequality was rising. These trends have been met with discontent, with theorists providing their own explanations and analyses. One such theorist is Charles Lane, who argued that the trend towards greater global inequality justified a US-led extension of free-market capitalism around the world since the 1980s (*ibid.*, p. 2209). According to this, global inequality had to do with 'the collapse of communism and the spread of market institutions, freer flows of international trade and private capital' (*ibid.*), all of which restricted positive financial influxes in developing countries; this is seen as something which led to wealth contrasts.

Following on from this, a counter-narrative emerged when the World Bank published a report titled 'Taking on Inequality: Poverty and Shared Prosperity' (*ibid.*). Although this report was critical towards inequality, it made the dramatic claim that 'poverty is not as bad as people assume' (*ibid.*). It argued that global inequality trends are inaccurate – they are a myth, rather than a fact. The report suggested that 'global interpersonal inequality has been increasing steadily since 1820' but in the 1990s, the 'Global Gini Index' – a measure of statistical dispersion which represents the income of wealth and distribution of the nation's residents

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– has ‘began to fall’ (ibid.). Contrastingly, looking at the gap between the richest and poorest countries, and between the developed and developing ones, there is a different story which is present. This gap between the countries has not diminished. Rather, it has grown rapidly over the past half-century. The per-capita income between the richest and poorest countries have been compared, with the richest countries being 31.8 times higher than the poorest in 1960; however, in 2010, this changed to being 118 times higher (ibid., p. 2212). Furthermore, the gap between the US and the Middle East and North Africa has grown by 155%, while the gap between the US and South Asia has grown by 196% (ibid.). All of this demonstrates how global inequality is a very important issue worldwide, with these statistics showing how it has roughly tripled from the time period mentioned above. It also illustrates how research and studies on global inequality and poverty is a divided area, with some researchers arguing that it does not exist and others being adamant about its substantial influence.

The argument above is effective, as it exemplifies the way that developing countries are unable to take part in global capitalism; they are often excluded against their will for reasons such as a lack of organised labour in their countries (International Monetary Fund, n.d.). However, it ignores how some countries may actively choose not to be a part of it – not because of poverty and inequality, but because they have their own policies and politics in place. Fundamentally, outside the US and a small set of rich countries, public opinion tends to be rather negative when speaking about capitalism. Resistance to free markets is observed in former communist and underdeveloped countries such as those in Africa, and even in some European democracies (MacCulloch & Tella, 2003, p. 285). It is most shockingly evident in Latin America, where after a decade of economic reform, there was a backlash against the free market (ibid.). Primarily, people may reject capitalism because of ‘unpleasant capitalists’ (ibid., p. 294) – the system favours a set of individuals who they do not like. Most of the time, these people agree and understand the benefits of capitalism, but they would like for the ‘capitalists’, who rely on maximising their own profits at the expense of others, to be punished (ibid.). This explanation is closely related to another which illustrates the unattractiveness of capitalism in poor countries – corruption; it is easy to dislike the rich and elite of a poor country if they are profiting from government contracts through corruption and favouritism. Hence, they are perceived as being ‘undeserving’ (ibid.); and those who are not characterised as being rich and ‘well off’ hope to stay away from, and disconnected from, them. After cross-checking

left-wing governments in a small selection of countries, Beck et al. (2001) (cited in MacCulloch & Tella, 2003, p. 295) found that there was a positive correlation between government intervention and corruption. This is corroborated in another research by Faccio who 'examined political connections in 20,202 publicly funded firms in 47 developing countries' (Faccio, 2006, p. 375). She found that in each firm where a politician was a board member or a shareholder, there was an increase of 2.29% in the company's share value (ibid.). This sample was split into countries with below and above average corruption levels, finding that this result is found entirely in high corruption countries (ibid.). In above-median corruption countries, the stock value increased by 4.32%; while in below-median countries, having a politician had no impact on stock value (ibid.). All of this shows the profound impact and positive correlation between capitalism and the government and the way that the latter influenced the former in a negative way. It also explains why developing countries – those that are already struggling with inequality and poverty – hope to not remain a part of it.

### **The Impact on Women**

A major consequence of capitalism is that it increases inequality, especially for disadvantaged groups such as women. Bahramitash (2005) (cited in Hutchens, 2010, p. 449) describes that out of the 1.3 billion people that live below the poverty line, roughly 70% are women. Women living in rural areas are affected the most by poverty, with it rising by 17% in 21 years in 41 developing countries (Bahramitash, 2005, cited in Hutchens, 2010, p. 449). Feminists argue that capitalism inevitably leads to inequality, something which women suffer more than men (Cudd, 2015, p. 761). Fundamentally, it increases and reinforces economic inequality for women – which, in turn, tends to create social and political disparities (Cudd, 2015, p. 761). Along with this, research has shown that women face disadvantage on a global scale. Functionalists such as Goode and Parsons argued that the oppression of women is necessary for the operation of capitalism (cited in Thomas, 1988, p. 536). They identified three grounds on which this works:

1. Women's cheap labour at home provides capital with greater profit, as their husbands' wages may be reduced as they pay for their 'wives' services' such as cooking, cleaning, and laundry.
2. Women provide a cheap and flexible army of labour.



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3. Women are the primary targets for advertising campaigns and provide the demand which capitalism needs (Goode & Parsons, cited in Thomas, 1988, p. 536).

Out of these reasons, cheap and unpaid labour is seen as being the most important. For a long time, economists did not recognise unpaid and domestic work as being work. This ignorant attitude towards women's work increased when they entered the formal workforce, during which time they were undertaking both paid work and, when they were at home, domestic work – looking after the family; cooking; and cleaning. Unpaid work in this form went unnoticed by economists and others in the academic world. In response to this large unsettlement, female economist Marilyn Waring travelled around the world studying unpaid work before calculating that if other workers were hired to do the same amount of unpaid work that women do, unpaid work would be the 'biggest sector of the global economy' (Gates, 2019). She uncovered the exploitation that women went through with unpaid work and how this aided the capitalist system. Often, the bulk of female employment in developing countries is poorly paid, often informal labour-intensive production that is unstable in terms of employment (Hutchens, 2010, p. 450). They are also assigned to traditional, low-status, and unskilled jobs which result in a lower return, while they lack proper wages and training (*ibid.*). All of this is so that the male dominated capitalist system can benefit and accumulate wealth (*ibid.*).

Women tend to lack access to modern technologies, capital, land, and other productive resources that enable them to benefit from economic development. However, the plight of women is different based on the state that they live in and the strength of the economy. For example, workers in the welfare states of Northern Europe have it best, followed by other strong democracies (Moghadam, 1999, p. 371). However, in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the economic status of working women has dramatically changed for the worse since the collapse of communism (*ibid.*).

Overall, as a system, capitalism has been argued as promoting envy and frustration, which in turn leads to social unrest, violence and the 'erosion of wealth' – it encourages the worldview of engaging in desperate ways to increase wealth, no matter how immoral this may be (Cudd, 2015, p. 764). This is made especially worse for women in developing countries, who tend to be poorer and more

vulnerable while raising children. They may be forced to do things which lead to self- degradation such as 'surrogacy contracts or solicitations for prostitution, or to be sold by relatives' (ibid.).

Capitalism 'upholds the ideology of individual rights and the idea of mutual advantage' (ibid., p. 767); it promotes the idea that individuals are to sacrifice their own interests 'with no expectation of benefit' (ibid.). This is something which opposes the traditional culture – a culture which most women, mainly those who are poor, follow and are a part of. In this sense, tradition is defined as 'the set of beliefs and values, rituals, and practices, formal and informal, explicit and implicit, which are held by and constitute a culture' (ibid.). Due to the largely individualistic culture and beliefs which surround capitalism, this is often disruptive for women who uphold traditions which have been passed down generations. As these traditions are hereditary and have been inherited in the past, they have a lot of social meaning. As a result, the beliefs which are associated with it are often valued very highly. The most important one which concerns women is that they are of 'low status' a lot of the time – they are 'less likely to be politically powerful' and their lives in traditional societies are 'nasty, brutish and short' (ibid., p. 766). Cudd argues that all of this makes women worse off materially in traditional cultures as compared to non- traditional, capitalist cultures (ibid.). Most countries where traditional societies and cultures are the norm are also places where women are poor (such as in India) and have higher fertility rates and lower life expectancies. They also have much lower incomes than in capitalist, non- traditional ones; and they have lower incomes as compared to men (United Nations Development Program 2007/2008, cited in Cudd, 2015, p. 766).

Even though the aforementioned arguments presented capitalism in a negative light in relation to women, there are also several advantages to it. Firstly, capitalism is a promoter of innovation and freedom, things which have helped women drastically (Cudd, 2015, p. 766). It has allowed for things which have helped improve the quality and length of women's lives, especially in poor and underdeveloped countries – things such as maternal and infant health care; birth control; and technology which reduces the intensity of their domestic labour (ibid., p. 764). It is also effective in offering women the option to become entrepreneurs and thus, become their own bosses. For example, Bisrat Debebe Negese started her own construction firm in Ethiopia where she provides short-term work for 'numerous labourers and subcontractors, 30 percent of whom are women' (United Nations

Conference on Trade and Development, 2012). Additionally, as mentioned above, capitalism is the prime example of individual liberty, something which has helped to break down patriarchal and sexist norms of traditional cultures such as FGM (female genital mutilation); such as in the case of survivor Jaha Dukureh, who won the ban of FGM in Gambia (Davis, 2018). They have also helped encourage the use of contraception, which is mostly forbidden in traditional societies. Furthermore, in the developing world, there is a class of women professionals and workers who have been employed in the public and private sectors; this has been due to rising educational attainment, changing aspirations, economic need, and the demand for relatively cheap labour (Cudd, 2015, p. 769).

### **Conclusion**

Overall, as has been stated above, inequality and poverty are worldwide phenomena faced by individuals in both developed and developing countries. This paper has been written to provide an insightful and informative understanding on the issues related to inequality – issues such as development, capitalism, and gender disparities. Government action proposals are crucial to combating such concerns. These practitioners, who are found in government and in development organisations, are united in their goals of providing help for those who need it (Viterna & Robertson, 2015). Primarily, scholars have hoped to understand social change and development on a national scale and have sought to understand how these are integral to the formation of a successful foreign policy – the principles on which laws are based (ibid.). In addition, politicians hope to begin and establish initiatives which would promote social change through action such as those involving the rebuilding of war-torn Europe and those involving the reduction of levels of misery in developing nations (ibid.). This has led to the operation of large inter-governmental organisations (IGOs) such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund – all of which have the common goals of ‘fostering cooperation between nations in order to solve economic, social, cultural[,] and humanitarian international problems’ (United Nations, 2018). These actions are promising, and those taking such actions are hopeful that the actions can help in the reduction of inequality and the positive improvement in related conditions faced by everyone around the world.

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# 3

## ARE EMERGING ECONOMIES COLLABORATING OR CHALLENGING WESTERN HEGEMONY? A CASE STUDY OF CHINA

*Marina Alexandra Gulie*

The current world dynamics are in a continuous movement. Spheres of influence are being reshaped due to the loss of dominance by the Western hegemony and the old empires, while less developed countries are starting to gain power and emerge in the global scene. As a result of the globalisation process, many countries tend to set both their internal and external affairs on a certain direction towards economic progress and increased trading.

This article will attempt to analyse and present the meaning of what constitutes 'emerging' powers and how these countries are reshaping international relations. Furthermore, it will present a case study based on China's development over the past few decades and its economic growth, as well as its geopolitics. It will show the challenges that China brought to the First World countries and how such countries are collaborating together and are maintaining the global order. In addition to this, the paper will seek to illustrate China's progress regarding the climate change crisis and its latest substantial economic investment through the Belt and Road initiative – which aims at enormous infrastructural connections across the continent.

The notion of being an 'emerging power' is known to be recent, vague, and controversial, due to the fact that from a global perspective, the countries that are recognized as having already emerged have engaged in the economic and political process faster than the others, especially as compared with the Western hegemony. In addition to this, the emerging countries are known to have large populations and vast territories (Stuenkel, 2018).



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A bloc that unites the most important emerging powers of the world is the BRICS bloc comprised of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. In contemporary history, all these countries started to become more active in the world's economic framework, changing the dynamics as well as achieving a rapid growth in their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Stuenkel, 2018).

### **China: From an Emerging Market to a Global Power**

To better understand China's current state of affairs, we first need to understand its history and geographical position. China's main ethnic group is known as the Han population, which covers 90% of the Chinese people, dating back to more than 3,000 years. The Hans were located in the North China Plain, between the two great rivers, the Yellow River and the Yangtze, which allowed them to develop by being able to farm and cultivate soybeans and rice (Marshall, 2016).

Throughout history, China has expanded its territory, becoming as great as it is now, but with considerable effort. Mongols were attacking them from the North; and it was only after the 13th century that the Han people had re-established their own dynasty and maintained peace. Centuries later, in 1951, China annexed Tibet, which could be considered as having been a great geostrategic move, considering that the high Himalayan mountains were protecting China in the South-West from another numerous and large emerging country, India. Tibet is still a controversial disputed territory between the two countries. China is still facing territorial disputes with Japan, India, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, and many other countries, over territorial claims (Marshall, 2016). In addition to China's military expansion, Japan – a strong ally of the US – had to invest millions of dollars in increasing its security, as well as its Self-Defense Forces, in order to protect itself. The outcome of World War II with regard to Japan made it more cautious in regard to its national security (Kelly, 2019).

Looking at China from a political perspective, it has been a communist regime since 1949. Related to this fact, China has relied on its population to help advance the industrialisation process. Being the most populated country in the world, the Government has faced crucial obstacles; and many policies were not adopted because they might have created a high rate of unemployment, which the state could not afford (Little John, 1951). We could take, as an example, the fact that when the communist regime took root, 82% of the country's population

was situated in the rural areas and was engaging in agricultural activities. Ever since the 1970s, when de-collectivisation reform began, there have been massive movements from rural areas towards the urban areas as a result of the industrialisation. In the 1980s, a TVE (township-village enterprises) policy has been implemented, which ensured the smooth transition towards the urban areas as well as keeping the rate of unemployment at a low level (Shi, 2008).

According to many scholars, the communist government is strict and oppressive – abusing human rights, imposing censures, and giving life imprisonment sentences for those who do not respect their communist ideology. A recent violation of human rights in China is the abuse of the Uighur ethnic people, due to their religious beliefs. The Uighur population is a Muslim minority which has been severely oppressed by the Chinese government. The following facts need to be taken into account: The Uighurs have been forced to accept applications on their phones so that they could be spied on by the government (*The Economist*, 2019). Face recognition cameras have been installed in the Xinjiang region (ibid.). Many Uighurs have been detained in re-education camps in response to their having revealed their religion (ibid.). In addition, after the 9/11 attacks, the Chinese government took action against the Islamic population, using that incident as a tool for making the minority obey strict measures imposed in order to ‘reduce’ the rise of extremist movements in the Xinjiang region (ibid.). Hence, we can understand how the communist regime of China has survived over the past 7 decades.

China is considered a socialist state, with only one major political party, called The Communist Party of China. However, capitalism has made influential inroads into its system since 1989, when Jiang Zemin took over the leadership of the Communist Party. China has changed its foreign policies, which include China’s integration in the international economic system. Therefore, China has become more open to the world by engaging in the globalization process, increasing its trade and influence all around the world and gaining a seat within the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 (Hook, 2002). As a result of the tariff reduction, since becoming a member of WTO, China expanded its trade in response to the lowering of tariffs around the world. However, the membership to WTO also involved China in various conflicts with other members, such as the US, for ‘illegally applying higher value-added taxes to foreign integrated circuits than to domestic ones’ (ChinaPower Project, 2019). Therefore, China was forced to change its trade policy in order to comply with WTO rules.

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Although most businesses are monopolised by the state, some companies have obtained the right to privatise their shares. Fortunately, China's geographical position was its main asset in conquering the world market, considering the fact that it has access to the Pacific Ocean and by this, to the world at large. In fact, China started being one of the biggest threats to Europe and especially to the United States. A threat the US hegemonic power could be China's Belt and Road Initiative, which could expand China's trading around the world (Marshall, 2016).

The Cold War period tended to focus on America's economic and political power. Thus, due to the decolonization process, regional powers emerged, shifting nations' spheres of influence in the world. Therefore, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is argued to be known as the 'Asian Century' as a result of China's openness to a free market and increased trade. Another argument that would support this statement is the 2007–2009 Global Financial Crisis, caused by an American bank. The resulting crisis led to contesting the enterprise capitalistic model by the US, whilst China's fast recovery showed its separation from American economic dependency. An example of its rapid recovery is the post-crisis GDP growth of 2010 and 2011, where China's economy grew more than 9%, which proved that by 2020, China could overtake the US and become the world's biggest economy (Heywood, 2014).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, China has become more and more involved in the so called 'Third World' countries, resource-rich but with a weak and corrupt governmental system, from where it can impose its idea of imperialism or neo-colonization. For example, China has impacted the African continent, offering some countries an alternative to Europe or America, by investing billions in foreign aid, which can be considered as being helpful to the countries' development. Therefore, China invests in ports, roads, and railways and develops businesses in countries such as Zimbabwe, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Nigeria and many others. In addition, it does not impose a democratic system or human rights ideologies. However, China has a permanent seat at the UN; so that in return, it receives raw materials that are used for its large-scale industry in China (Campbell, 2008).

The case of China–Angola–DRC relations is an example that would explain the Chinese domination in Africa. The Chinese have invested more than \$8 billion in renewing Angola's 800-mile railway, which unites the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the Angolan port of Lobito, further facilitating resources

being transferred to China. In this way, China benefits from one of the most resource-rich countries in the world, DRC, by gaining access to its copper, manganese, and cobalt resources. Besides, Angola is one of the wealthiest countries in Africa when it comes to its oil resources. Therefore, the Chinese are aware of the fact that 'black gold' is the most valuable present and future resource; consequently, they are trying to exploit it as much as they can (Marshall, 2016).

As a result, the US position in the South African region is threatened by the Chinese, because, since the region's independence war, America has been trying to protect the area in order for it not to fall under the sway of the communist regime during the Cold War. Therefore, the imposed democratic ideology was strongly supported by Western world leaders who were following the US' global orders. American domination is being challenged, to the extent that the US no longer has the kind of access to raw materials that it used to have; this is affecting their economic stability and global market share (French, 2002). Moreover, Chinese competitiveness has started affecting the US' hegemonic relationships. Thus, the US does not have the same influence within these states' governments, which leads to a great financial loss when it comes to the state's contracts.

In addition to this, the Americans are not the only ones who have begun feeling the growing presence of the Chinese in that area. The European Union is another example of Western power which has started to feel the growing power of the Chinese. The EU was and remains an active actor in the DRC, with a strong determination to maintain the country's peace. Therefore, the EU is organising short-term stabilization solutions, bridging and organising civilian protection operations, which could be considered as being a pretext in order to exploit the country's cheap labour and resources. As a result, European control is weakened, while China expands its zone of interest (Vines, 2010).

Nowadays, China is a global power. Hence, at a regional level, it has increased its influence in the South-East Asian countries. This has happened due to massive exports having flooded their markets; together with aid and investment programs (Tammen, 2006). These countries hope to obtain regional safety and protection under China's military, which has been growing continuously (ibid.).

Since 2002, China became a member of several regional associations, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) being one of the most influential alliances within the area. Its influential status is related to the fact that it gathers together

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a great majority of South-East Asian countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and others, as well as congregating almost 25% of the world's population into a single free-trade zone. Ever since, China has started to negotiate bilateral trading agreements, thus achieving new economic goals. Owing to the fact that the US is not part of this agreement, the US endangers its sphere of influence in the region by diminishing its authority towards those countries which do not have such a strong military as China; therefore, China's power rises within the region (Bader, 2005).

Additional evidence that exhibits the declining involvement of the US in the South-East Asian region is provided by the new foreign policy adopted by the Philippines, a former strong military ally of the US in the area. The year 2016 was the year that marked changes in the Philippine government's approach regarding military cooperation with the US. As a result, the Philippine president, President Rodrigo Duterte, suggested that he might end the partnership with Washington and establish a new collaboration with Beijing. Consequently, President Obama began reducing its commitments regarding the country's military defence, while China gave Mr. Duterte favourable conditions related to maritime debates and financial contribution towards the country's economy (Fisher & Carlsen, 2018).

As part of the BRICS alliance, China has been seen as being an important player on the world stage, due to the integration of the 21<sup>st</sup> century's most flourishing and fastest growing economies, which gives China the backing it needs to continue its growth. The outcomes of the association between them have been challenging Western hegemonic plans of subjugating small, economically and military dependent, countries (Steinbock, 2018). After the 2009 World Economic Crisis, the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) decided to collaborate and help each other in order to avoid a massive economic crash, by paying to the New Development Bank USD10 billion each so that they could develop their trade and economic cooperation. They have also decided to a contingency fund consisting of USD100 billion, so as to assist the members facing burdensome payments (Zhao, 2015).

Lately, China has shaken the world's Western hegemony by strengthening regional and international alliances and thus forcing global players to take its foreign policy more seriously. Fortunately, due to the collaboration between them, escalation of conflict was avoided. As a result, China had to begin cooperating

with the United States of America regarding the Environmental Protection Policy, which could be considered a step forward towards their cooperation (EDF Talks Global Climate, 2018). As a proof of engagement on this policy, China enforced their first Environmental Protection Tax Law in 2018 following environmental regulations, which targets those industries that pollute the air and water and which create noise pollution as well as solid waste (Khan & Chang, 2018).

Moreover, the two great powers – the US and China – have recognised the imminent danger that might take place if they do not begin to take action to tackle climate change. China and the US are the countries which are the highest consumers of oil (USA) and coal (China) in the world, which means that they have the highest rate of carbon emissions. Beginning in 2013, in Sunnylands, California, the United States of America and the People's Republic of China initiated a collaboration and reached agreements in order to reduce hydrofluorocarbons, the substance that is the most corrosive form of carbon emissions. The deal involved a higher use of renewable energy and a reduction of light transportation pollution (Jones & Steven, 2015).

The Belt and Road Initiative is the latest cooperation with the European Union that China began promoting. This project has its roots in 2013, since China intended to rebuild the Silk Road in a modern form, which aims to link 68 states around the globe and cover more than half of the world's population. The New Silk Road is considered the greatest plan of the 21st century and facilitates an easier economic development and commercial trade across the world. This impressive plan marks a new era for China, which continues to progress and work closely with the Western hegemony. The Chinese have already commenced investments in over 20 countries concentrating on infrastructure development in railways and ports (Hu, Liu, & Yan, 2017).

Furthermore, the Belt and Road Initiative could be considered as being a win-win situation, due to the fact that China is taking the gamble of placing a large amount of money into developing countries' economies as well as investing in their infrastructure, while these countries are given the opportunity to pay their debt over a long period of time for a small amount of interest. In addition, the companies that are used to build the infrastructure are also Chinese companies; this denotes that China is able to recoup some of the tax revenues it is investing in the Initiative – doing so by taxing Chinese construction companies involved

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in the Initiative and placing that tax money back into its state budget (Hillman, 2018). As a result, the states involved in the Belt and Road Initiative are getting their economies boosted, while China continues its growth as the world's fastest growing superpower.

In 2018, Beijing hosted a summit where the presidents of both the European Council and the European Commission attended in order to agree on a EUR €500 million fund concerning the Belt and Road Initiative. The China-EU Co-Investment Fund plans to attract new investments and technical proficiency from both the European Investment Fund and the Silk Road Fund. The partnership expects to reinforce investments in the private sector, which will support developing organizations all over Europe in the years ahead (European Investment Fund, 2018).

To conclude, today's global dynamics have shifted significantly as compared to the last century; and new actors are emerging which are both collaborating and challenging the traditional Western hegemony. China could be considered as being the best example when it comes to emerging countries. It is a dormant giant which has made innovative economic changes such as the Belt and Road Initiative. Additionally, it has made huge investments in resource-rich countries in Africa. Moreover, it has been highly involved in implementing climate change policies. Such changes have led China, over the last decades, to become the most powerful growing economy in the world. Thus, China has sent an important signal across the world, telegraphing that the fundamental powers are no longer the only ones who matter anymore. This current situation adds a new dimension of unpredictability to the global markets.

On the one hand, in order to maintain its constantly surging economy, China relies heavily on Western purchasing power. Therefore, all sorts of collaborations are essential in order to assure the continuing development of the economy. On the other hand, China now disposes of extensive capital funding, which is used wisely in order to spread its political influence. This has unleashed underdeveloped regions and other dominant global markets from the grip of Western hegemonies.

It is hard to say whether China is more collaborating with or challenging the Western hegemonies. It is, however, certain that China is now chained to the global economy. Its lack of concern for human rights (as illustrated by its oppression of the Uighur minority population) has given China an upper hand in competing with more sophisticated economies. However, it is also creating a fragile

economy which, from a trade point of view, is highly interdependent with the traditional global powers.

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## ARE EMERGING ECONOMIES COLLABORATING OR CHALLENGING WESTERN HEGEMONY? A CASE STUDY OF CHINA

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# 4

## CAN UNRECOGNISED STATES STILL THRIVE?

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During the second half of the last century, the world started to decolonise, meaning that countries that once were empires and kingdoms were granting independence to some of their former colonies. As some nations started getting their independence, others also started seceding from their parent state – in most cases, without governmental consent to do so. Hence, legal issues arose. This was especially true in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union. There are several such nations that have done this exact thing. These include Somaliland, the Republic of Abkhazia, Kosovo, and Transnistria.

### **What is a State?**

First of all, what is a state? The words ‘state’, ‘nation’, and ‘country’ are often used interchangeably but can mean quite different things. There are varied and different definitions for what constitutes a state or country. There are also varied and different definitions and categories, as well as exceptions to these rules. But to put it simply, one might define a state in terms of its having a seat at the United Nations General Assembly, with its seat being recognized by the other members. Therefore, by this definition, the ones which do not are not considered as being formal states. However, even this isn’t necessarily a complete definition. For instance, although Israel formally entered the United Nations in 1949 (Caspersen, 2011), it is nevertheless not recognised as a state by over thirty members of the United Nations – members such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Bangladesh. One can complicate this further, as not all states recognised by the UN have full membership. For instance, Palestine has observer status but is not recognised by several members of the General Assembly. Interestingly, another nation that also has observer status is the Holy See, which is not actually a country, but is rather, in effect, the Pope and his office, the papacy, rather than being representative of the Vatican, which is the small country from which he is based (Broers, 2013).

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One can also look at the sovereign state of the Order of the Knights of St. John, which is recognised as a sovereign state but does not actually hold any physical land. Even full membership does not necessarily guarantee statehood. This is the case with Taiwan, officially the Republic of China, which was a founding member of the United Nations and which sat in the Council; however, its membership status was revoked in 1971 and it is no longer recognised as a state, its seat was replaced by that of the People's Republic of China (Cooley & Lincoln, 2010). Then, there are countries that only hold membership as a group. The United Kingdom, or the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (to give its full title), is the collective name of four nations – Scotland, Wales, England, and Northern Ireland – which are collectively represented by the UK Government. Oddly enough, however, this is not the case in many sporting events, where all four nations have their own teams (Meydan, 2018). Still more confusingly is, as previously stated, the interchangeable use of country and state. The United Nations uses neither, but rather uses the term 'Nation' – which, again, is also used to mean the same thing as the others. The term 'Nations, however, is usually reserved for a social, cultural, or ethnic group that has its own country, usually referred to as a 'nation state'. This is why Israel is sometimes referred to as the 'Jewish State' even though many non-Jewish people live there as well (ibid.).

A more widely accepted legal definition of a state, which was accepted at the 1930s meeting in Uruguay, states under Article 1 of the Montevideo Convention that there are four essential criteria for statehood: (1.) a permanent population; (2.) a defined territory; (3.) a government; and (4.) the capacity to enter into relations with other states. This sounds good; but as one can see in this paper, this does not always apply (ibid.). Many would also define statehood through power. The German political scientist Max Weber defined the state as a monopoly of the legitimate use of violence over a given territory. When talking about unrecognised states, one's mind usually goes to micronations such as Christiania or Sealand. These, however, are different than the unrecognised states that will be covered in this paper. Micronations usually exist purely from either a political reason, a social experiment, or for touristic reasons; these micronations would rarely ever try to declare their statehood on legal grounds or try to formally establish an independent sovereign nation. Rather, they enjoy a pseudo-statehood and still rely on their parent state. The unrecognised states that will be covered have a legal and ethical basis for their independence and are actively seeking recognition from the standard international institutions.

Due to the legal issues of their existence, these nations do not usually receive international assistance, which other transition states usually receive, such as for holding parliamentary elections, through financial support or advice. One of the hardships that unrecognised states face in their quest for recognition, would be the eternal debate between 'Demos' and 'Ethos', with the latter usually being preferred in most cases of these states. Therefore, the democratisation that happens in these unrecognised states has mainly been ethnically exclusive, which naturally creates criticism (Caspersen, 2011).

This very thing has been especially problematic in the case of the republic of Abkhazia. Prior to the declaration of independence from Georgia, in 1990, the estimated Abkhazian population of the region that is now the Republic consisted of only around 17.8 per cent. Even after the expulsions of the majority of Georgians from the region, native Abkhazians still only made up around just over one third of the population. However, the crucial elements of democracy in the Republic of Abkhazia have mainly been reserved for ethnic Abkhazians only. While Armenians and Russians not only sided with and supported the fight for self-determination of Abkhazia, they are barely recognised in the Abkhazian parliament: They each hold only three seats in a thirty-five-seat parliament. Moreover, the main problem is the Georgian returnees. Georgians have accused Abkhazians of disenfranchising them (Pugh, 2005). These allegations would mean that their whole claim to democracy would be undermined (ibid.). Hence, this represents a dilemma for the Abkhaz leadership (ibid.).

Comparatively, Somaliland broke away from Somalia in 1991 and has since formed its own democratic countries that hold annual elections. It has its own security force, as well as its own currency and a stable yet weak economy and government, as compared to Somalia which still suffers from widespread corruption and poverty. Similarly, one can also look at Transnistria and the Republic of Abkhazia, both of which are unrecognised by the international community and yet seem to function as autonomous states. Therefore, this paper tries to look into the issues that these unrecognised nations encounter when dealing with international relations, as well as the economic impacts of their being unrecognised, and whether they still have a hope of becoming successful.

### Somaliland

During the colonial period, there were two Somalias – Somaliland, which was a British protectorate, and Somalia which was an Italian colony. However, after the Second World War, when the African colonies were being decolonised, it was decided that those two colonies would also be independent. Somaliland gained independent statehood for five days before being fused into one state with Somalia (Zierau, 2003). However, the now former Somaliland in the north objected to its being under the control of a government in the south. Hence, from the start, there were issues.

This finally led to the Somali Civil War in 1995, which ended with the North's secession from the South to create its own nation (ibid.). To this day, one can still see the effects of the war and a corrupt government in the South, with its regularly making the news due to Somali piracy. The conflict and struggles were made famous by three Hollywood movies in the West: *Black Hawk Down*, *Captain Phillips*, and *The Pirates of Somalia*.

On the 31st of May, 2001, the government of Somaliland conducted a national referendum where the public was asked their opinion regarding the future of the nation (ibid.). This referendum has generally been regarded as being an accurate reflection of the opinion of the nation. The referendum revealed that the majority of the people in Somaliland are heavily in favour of remaining independent of Somalia proper (Initiative and Referendum Institute, 2001).

Somaliland previously tried to introduce a national currency as well as a national bank. This, however, was not a successful enterprise, as the main actors in Somaliland economy did not trust their nation's financial policies and preferred to change their money on the parallel market (Ahmed, 2000). Somaliland government has made several attempts to support their financial market. For example, in 1995, they tried to sanction foreign exchange operations and to fix the exchange rates in order to support Somaliland shilling. These particular attempts were met with public protests, as well as causing many traders and businesses to move to Puntland in East Somaliland where there were no restrictions on export trade; and therefore, this defeated all the efforts which the government attempted (ibid.). 'Trutz von Trotha once said that in Africa, places of power are always places of petitioners' (Zierau, 2003), meaning that high government offices and positions as well as titles usually go to the highest bidder or a relative,

allowing them to be as corrupt as possible and to take in high government salaries without doing much. Yet in Somaliland, one can notice the opposite: 'High government officials only draw symbolic salaries' (ibid.). Their real income is donations from members of their own clan (ibid.). The recipients of donations are obligated to speak on behalf of the donors or to give them tax exempt or 'turn a blind eye' to some of their misconduct (ibid.).

Since the 1970s, a major part of Somaliland's economy has been remittances. However, the remittance flow has only significantly increased since the outbreak of the war in 1988. This forced the majority of the nation to flee and seek refuge in foreign nations. At some point in the 1990s, remittances replaced livestock exports as being the main source of foreign exchange earnings for Somaliland's economy. Currently, it has been estimated that remittances constitute four times the value of livestock exports (Ahmed, 2000). Due to this reliance on remittances, an economic disaster was successfully averted in 1998 when Saudi Arabia banned the import of livestock from the Horn of Africa. The majority of these remittances originated from the Gulf States, representing almost 60 per cent of total transfers in the late 1980s (ibid.).

### **Abkhazia**

Abkhazia is a nation that seceded from Georgia on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 1990, when the Abkhaz Supreme Soviet declared independence, after the collapse of the Soviet Union; prior to that, it had formerly been one of the most prosperous regions in the USSR (Broers, 2013). Historically, the Abkhaz were a minority ethnic group in Georgia that had their own distinct language. In 1990, Georgia gained its independence from the Soviet Union, and the Georgian government decided that it shall declare Georgian as its official language. This offended many Abkhaz, which they then used as an excuse to declare their independence (Cooley & Lincoln, 2010).

Georgia had three breakaway regions within its territory: South Ossetia, Ajaria, and Abkhazia. The latter two have historical and cultural ties with Turkey; both breakaway regions are partly Muslim and were part of the Ottoman Empire between 1578 and 1804.

Turkey's demographics have played an important role in these relations, as there are many ethnic Abkhaz (approximately 500,000) living within Turkey's borders.



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These Abkhaz fled Abkhazia to Turkey (then the Ottoman Empire) during the Russian Empire's annexation of the Caucasus in the 19th century. As a result, most of the Abkhaz who live in Turkey are not first-generation immigrants; but second- or third-generation Abkhaz have been progressively Turkified (Cooley & Lincoln, 2010).

The remaining Abkhazians in Abkhazia thus became a minority, even in the Abkhazia region. Abkhazia's population in 1989 was approximately 525,061, of which 93,267 were ethnic Abkhaz. However, due to demographic change following the collapse of the Soviet Union and a civil war that displaced many Georgians, Abkhaz are now the majority in Abkhazia. The region's population in 2011 was 190,000 of which approximately 122,200 were ethnic Abkhaz (*ibid.*). Abkhazia formally declared independence in October 1999. Russia opted to support the Abkhaz independence movement, aiding it militarily and financially (Caspersen, 2011).

### **Transnistria**

Transnistria (henceforth referred to as TMR) seceded from Moldova 1990, similar to the Republic of Abkhazia. Officially, no other nation has recognised TMR as an independent country from Moldova. However, in practice, it is treated as a separate entity by several nations, Russia is one of them, and Russia assists TMR mainly through their natural gas supply. The Transnistria government likes to promote itself as being self-sufficient. However, this may be more out of necessity than choice.

The main supplier of natural gas in Moldova (including the TMR region) is Moldova Gaz SA (Crowther, 2007). When Transnistria split from Moldova, they received a separate share in said gas company. They were also able to receive annual negotiations for gas supply contracts with the Russian company Gazprom, separately from the one Gazprom hold with Moldova. Interestingly, TMR is paying lower prices than Moldova is. Despite this, TMR managed to acquire a debt of approximately \$US 1.3billion to Gazprom (*ibid.*). This is TMR's only external debt. However, this exceeds its annual GDP (Gross Domestic Income) by a factor of three; and it is almost 10 times greater than its annual budget. In addition to subsidised gas, Russia has provided aid in the form of direct financial aid on a few occasions. This was at least the case back in 2006 where there were customs tensions between Moldova and TMR, at which point Russia provided

Transnistria with USD \$50 million of direct aid and a further \$150 million in the form of credit, supposedly with the prospect of Russia acquiring shares in local Transnistrian enterprises (*ibid.*).

The democratisation of Transnistria has been linked with the Ukrainian president, Viktor Yushchenko, who has, in recent years, advanced a plan for TMR's transformation into a democratic state by starting with fair and transparent competitive elections. Most of the West (as well as Moldova) has declared these elections to be undemocratic and illegitimate (Protosyk, 2006). However numerous other observers have pointed out that they were, in fact, free and fair, contrary to previous remarks by other nations.

Contrary to what election law stated, there were two main rival party movements – two rival political parties, or public movements – which took part: the *Obnovlenie*, which represented the interests of the new business elite; and the *Respublika*, who represented the interests of the ruling 'old guard' (*ibid.*).

Therefore, it became evident why the creators of the Yushchenko plan were adamant about starting the transformation of TMR with democratic competitive elections to the Supreme Soviet, as they were aware and well informed of the intentions of the new business elite. The new business elite cannot but be oriented towards the West, as the region's economy is export–import oriented (the share of the EU in its exports is more than 33 per cent) (Broers, 2013).

Furthermore, the change in public opinion has also become more favourable for better political conditions, as the armed conflict of 1992 has become a thing of the past and is not as active in the minds of the new generation, which have grown up educated not through Soviet ideals such as collectivism and the struggle for the motherland, but rather on more Western capitalist ideas of personal enrichment and individualism.

All in all, one can see the potential for the Transnistrian people (especially the new, more Western, generation) gaining international recognition for their small nation in future. The economy has potential; although small, it nevertheless collaborates with Russia (Crowther, 2007). Also, their parliament has a functioning government. So, it is not necessarily the most transparent or the most respectably influential government out there. However, it has enough backing from outside and Western powers for this to take a turn for the better. Their collaboration

with both Russia and the Ukraine has showed that they are on their way to gaining more international acceptance and greater economic ties.

### **Kosovo**

The Republic of Kosovo formally declared its independence from Serbia on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February of 2008. Kosovo has since been recognised by 114 out of 193 United Nations member states, as well as 23 nations out of the 28 members of the European Union. Kosovo has since become a potential European Union candidate. Its membership process has been accelerated with the signing of the Stabilization Association Agreement in October of 2015 and has been put into force since April of 2016 (MacShane, 2011).

Kosovo has recently been outperforming its neighbours with regard to economic growth (*ibid.*). The economy has also been largely inclusive. However, this has not been sufficient enough to significantly reduce the high unemployment rates that Kosovo has been facing. It has not been able to provide formal jobs, especially for women and the youth. It has not been able to reverse the trend of large-scale emigration. The growth model of Kosovo has been highly reliant on remittances to fuel domestic consumption; however, this has recently shifted towards a greater investment and export-driven growth model (Pugh, 2005).

Kosovo is experiencing an infrastructure bottleneck, particularly in the energy sector (Korovilas, 2002). Their growth and poverty reduction strategy needs to address this concern and create an environment that would be more conducive to private sector development. If the government would provide their population of youth with the skills required by employers, as well as provide financial protection to their citizens, as well as build up governance and the rule of law, they would be much better able to reap the benefits of full EU integration.

Similarly, to Abkhazia in Georgia, Kosovo is creating several difficulties for Serbia in terms of economic development, as Kosovo is preventing it from joining the European Union (*ibid.*). Kosovo remains a low-middle income country eligible for support from the International Development Association (IDA). Prior to the war, Kosovo was the poorest region in Yugoslavia, whose economy mainly relied on agriculture. Unfortunately, however, the majority of the country's agriculture was destroyed during the war. The agricultural sector has mostly been

reconstructed since, though. Its current economy is heavily reliant on imports, with imports constituting almost thirty times that of exports (see Table 1).

*Table 1*

**Table 5.** Imports and exports by trading partner, 2003

Trading partner	Imports		Exports	
	1.000 Euro	Per cent	1.000 Euro	Per cent
Albania	7.600	1%	1.900	5%
Bulgaria	41.300	4%	200	0%
Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia	54.400	6%	2.700	8%
EU and Switzerland	250.700	26%	13.900	38%
FYROM	141.800	15%	6.900	16%
Montenegro	11.100	1%	1.000	3%
Serbia	142.100	15%	6.000	16%
Turkey	92.300	10%	1.700	5%
Other Partners	227.200	23%	1.900	5%
Total	968.500	100%	36.200	100%

*Source:* United Nations Interim Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) Customs Service / Monthly Macroeconomic Monitor, January 2004

At first, well before the disintegration of Yugoslavia, this region had been resistant towards modern forms of economic organization, such as centralized and audited economic exchange (*ibid.*). The conflicts of the 1990s, however, had sources both economic and political in nature, which allowed for new and lucrative opportunities and incentives for trafficking and black marketeering to be opened up in the region (*ibid.*).

It remains to be seen whether Kosovo's post-crisis economic forecast will also prove another important prediction of dependency theory wrong, which is that satellite states are bound to experience development, rather than just show resilience, when their ties of dependency are weakened as a result of depression.

Currently, however, the biggest problem for Kosovo's economy is the high rate of unemployment amongst the youth (see Table 2) (*ibid.*).

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Table 2

Table 7. Labour force of the population (15-64 years) and employment 2002

Subject	Sex		Kosovo
	Male	Female	
Labour force of which:	64%	33%	48%
-Employed	35%	8%	22%
-Unemployed	29%	24%	27%
Not belonging to the labour force	36%	67%	52%
Unemployment rate	45%	74%	55%

Source: Labour Force Survey 2002 (Sok)

## Conclusion

To conclude, this paper has presented only a few of the numerous unrecognised nations that exist throughout the world; however, the nations that have been presented here are not only some of the most famous ones but rather also some of the ones with a better chance of being recognised. Somaliland, for example, has one of the strongest cases for being recognised, as it meets all the criteria to be classified as a sovereign state. However the international community's refusal to do so has mainly been rooted in the belief that if they would recognise the said state, it would cause other regions in Africa to try and secede from their parent nation. If it weren't for this belief, Somaliland would have already been recognised. The second nation that has been presented was Kosovo. This nation has the strongest chance of being recognised within our lifetime, given that it is already being overseen by the European Union, which already has plans for eventually incorporating the area into the European Union. The main issues that Kosovo is facing are their economy and the high unemployment rate amongst their youth. If (and once) Kosovo and Serbia reach an agreement, Kosovo could be one of the most flourishing nations in the region. Kosovo has the fortune that its lack of recognition is slowly fading away as a large number of nations not just recognise it but also actively trade with it. (As such, its case is in contrast to that of Abkhazia or Transnistria.) Kosovo also has the fortune of being not just within Europe (where democratic institutions are stronger and make more expansive attempts at establishing peace), but also within the sphere of influence of the European Union (as opposed to the other unrecognised nations, which are usually neither). This leads on to the next point: Abkhazia. Abkhazia was once a popular tourist destination

in the Soviet Union. However, since its conflict with Georgia, this no longer is the case. If Abkhazia wants to achieve recognition as a sovereign state, it has yet a long way to go. The issue with Abkhazia is that the argument for independence based on ethnicity is weak, as the Abkhaz people are still a minority in Abkhazia. However, it is in a position that if it is able to reach an agreement with Georgia, Abkhazia would also be able to use its position in the Black Sea to improve its economy through trading. Lastly, the final nation addressed was Transnistria. Transnistria is a peculiar nation, as it is not a very large nation. However, the nation does receive backing from Russia, as well as assistance from the Ukraine. However, it is not on the international radar as much as other nations are. Thus, it does not receive much attention, especially from the West, which could make a difference. Transnistria has been able to have a stable economy as well as some business success and may be even more stable in the future with the newer generations who are less driven by ideology toward the old causes of conflict.

### **What Will the Future Hold?**

One can speculate that Somaliland and Kosovo have the greatest chance of becoming a sovereign recognised nation, as they have the most international recognition, in part because the international community has the most to gain from these two nations becoming recognised, as doing so would not just create stability in their respective regions but would also create business opportunities for Western nations. This is contrary to Abkhazia and Transnistria, which the international community feels it can afford to ignore.

Unrecognised states have also been fighting for international recognition. For instance, they have done so by establishing and participating in organizations such as the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization as well as the Commonwealth of Unrecognised States. These organizations have been aiming for a greater awareness and representation for their people. They have been able to achieve some minor successes. Such successes are partially due to some of their constituent members being well-reported and well-known cases of unrecognised states, such as East Turkestan (Uyghur) and Tibet.

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# 5

## THE NEW INSTITUTIONALISM: AN ENQUIRY TOWARD ISSUES OF WAR, MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS, AND THE CONCEPTIONAL PROGRESS OF SOVEREIGNTY

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The study of world politics begins with the study of war. Political realism has set its scholarship on the goal of trying to understanding why war is a 'perennial institution of international society and what variable factors affect its incidence' (Keohane, 2011). Identifying power and interest as the central forces in the behaviour of states, a realist's analysis of warfare relates directly to broader contemporary issues on discord, conflict, and cooperation. However, the concept of the present 'long peace' has been attributed to by scholars and commentators over the past 70 years. The absence of interstate war advances the strong thesis in international relations that 'war' is already becoming obsolete. Yet, with the advances of technology and the development of international society, the question of how to think of the changing nature of war and the role of the sovereign in the 21st century is puzzling. Scholars seek to establish static and conational generalisations of war instead of trying to bridge the gap between foreign policies and academic theory. This creates a very inferior understanding of change that does not lead to realizing effective long-term regularities to tackle conflicts. In the first part of the essay, war will be discussed, trying to provide some meaningful insights into how we should understand its phenomenon. Second, at realism's core is the belief that struggle for power among sovereign states is best illustrated by the warfare which occurred after the establishment of the Westphalian world order. However, with the development of international society in the 20th century, the internationalists' theory has significantly challenged this order – or, more correctly, has developed



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it in regard to the global economy. In the latter part of the essay, the post-war consensus and the possible challenge of the new millennium will be discussed.

Considering what would be involved in the task of providing a formal and universal definition of war, such a task appears rather difficult. Paring down the essential traits of war would inevitably highlight the inherent limitations of any attempt of conceptualising the term. The burden of war underpins the political and historical development of states; but in order to understand war today, the development of war theory should be traced. It would not be wrong to say that the contemporary international order is a product of war. Armed conflicts have had superiority over the modern territorial polity, and not vice versa. Thus, it is quite necessary to look into a particular time period in order to fully understand war within an historical framework. Generalisations of the nature of war – generalizations that have made significant contributions to the study of war – have been made by Christian philosophers like Thomas Aquinas. This religious doctrine has later developed into the Just War Theory (Walzer, 1977), the purpose of which is to ensure that war is morally justified. Regardless of the importance of military ethics, the Just War Theory does not provide a sufficient definition of the concept of war. The theory was also significantly undermined by the Westphalian order, as the divine sanction which determines the justness of a cause which is worth fighting a war for has become irrelevant. Opponents of the Just War Theory are inclining towards a more realist-type viewpoint with regard to world order in their pursuit of more permissive nationalist standards or a constructivist's viewpoint with stricter pacifist standards. Bringing the thought of the morality of war further, Clausewitz (1989) provided something more relevant to the Westphalian-order reading of war. He made a distinction between the more abstract and logical clash of wills, calling these 'absolute war' and 'real war' from which unfolds the political instrumentality of war. Two important conclusions can be drawn from the Clausewitz's definition of real war: (i) governmental bodies shape war and its forms of application to the historical and social needs of the sovereign; and (ii) a universal definition of war cannot be provided. Thus, important questions arise: How we can define whether something is present or absent when we cannot fully acquire knowledge of its character? Again, the social and historical dependency of war is enough and will be used to understand war in the context of today's world. Second, how we can talk of obsolescence of war when war is constantly reforming and developing? This essay will argue that war cannot be completely obsolete despite the success the success of institutionalist

theory and the significant decrease in major conflicts. However, this shift in the status of war is challenging but has been challenged at the same time. Those challenges will be used to explain the whys and hows regarding the absolutism of war by looking at economic globalisation and the nation-state.

The contemporary world order is a product of war; and engaging in armed force is still viewed today as being a privilege of every state (Bousquet, 2016). It can be argued that the Westphalian order framed war as being the final instance of a state's defence of its interests. From history, it is evident that wars (on poverty; disease; etc.) are fought on the basis of different forms of social unrest that require domestic or even international mobilisation (ibid.). The natural development of international relations scholarship alongside the Westphalian world order is evident for contributing significantly to the shift in the current status of war. War is perpetually associated with the presence of separate sovereign states existing in an anarchic international order as the sovereign holds executive power over matters of war and peace (ibid.). Thus, in the absence of a consistent and reliable process of reconciling conflicts, war is just an instrumental action for attaining political goals in the modern world (Waltz, 2001). The Westphalian framing of international society has also made the concept of war institutional for defining today's world order (Bull, 2002). War has simply possessed the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force on a domestic and international level. It can be argued that there has been a codification of violence on a domestic level (Bousquet, 2016) and the sovereign has developed legal patterns over the status of violence, deciding between legitimate and illegitimate forms of violence. This has put the Westphalian institutionalisation of war to a severe test ever since. Halfway through the last century, dramatic inter-state war has shown the ugly and collectively devastating side of war and realism. Industrialism and the advancement of modern technology alongside extreme levels of social dominance over nations' citizenry would go on to grant nation-states global superiority. This was mainly driven by a desire for maximising utility that went beyond ethical theory. However, the boundaries of war within the Westphalian order have been tested first by the revolutionary wars (such as The Russian Revolution) and by inter-state wars prior to the beginning of the 20th Century (ibid.). Robert A. Pape concluded that terrorism is a new form of revolutionary war that is even more relevant to current affairs and that has an impact on the global economy. Therefore, he is putting the Westphalian conceptualisation of war in a new historical and social context – that of today. He believes that suicidal acts of terrorism can be a rational, realistic strategy

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for the leadership of national liberation movements which seek to ban democratic powers from occupying their territory (Snyder, 1998).

Another contemporary argument regarding the Westphalian institutionalisation of war can be developed on the bureaucratic centralisation of political power and in the absence of higher sovereign power that has led to the emergence of multilateral and supranational institutions such as the EU. This, on the other hand, has given privilege to the economic power instead of the military capabilities of states and a new theoretical approach to international politics. This social and historical development of international society and its collective imagination towards violence has suggested that cooperation based on economic interest is perhaps a more significant social expression than violent settling of disputes by those groups. This fully illustrates a contrasting to realism theory, which takes the stance that progress in the relations between nation-states can be made. '[Undertaking a] slow but inexorable journey away from the anarchic world through free trade and the establishment of international institutions that can forge ties between nations' (ibid.).

Law, politics, and economics – despite their distinctness – share notoriously complex relations that address the behaviours of individual actors and how such behaviours shape decision making and conflict resolution. However, decisions and wars are typically determined only by the state; and individual actors cannot usually possess enough political or economic power to act independently. Globalisation is sure to stir up discontent regarding the effectiveness of the state on regulating economic flow and exercising power in current times. Resting on the theoretical common ground between international law, the nation-state, and international economic relations, it is not hard to recognise the fundamental role of the nation-state, despite its limits, in regard to the 21st-century contemporary society and its changing nature.

Looking deeper into the historical development of states, globalisation has generally been a longer and slower phenomenon than many would admit. In contrast, the nation-state is considered by the political and historical sciences as being a rather new and recent occurrence. However, the culmination of the relationship between the two occurred in the first half of the last century, where the global market requirements clashed with the individual requirements of nations. It is arguable that the biggest achievement of the international economic order in the latter part of the 20th century reached the level of globalisation which had already been

achieved back in 1913 (Cable, 1995). Today's global markets are merely a recreation of past political and economic structures. The globalized structural nature of transnational companies is not much different from the trading companies of centuries back. Thus, globalisation has been historically (and not only) engaged with the oldest debate in economics – the debate over the advantages and disadvantages of free trade. Thus, globalisation can be said to be concerned with (i) economic integration and the efficiency of many traditional, national economic policy instruments, on the one hand and (ii) domestic political reactions, which have fluctuated between adaptation and rejection, depending on the time period. Vincent Cable (1995) traces the erosion of economic sovereignty and has followed the debates of national politics, populist movements, and the rejection of closer international integration, only to conclude that these debates have resulted in different theoretical perspectives on nationalism, cultural identity, and mercantilism.

Globalisation appears to be a recent dominant paradigm of international politics. But in order to appropriately understand what the concept means, some further reflections on the concepts of the state, international law, and international economics and their interaction with one another should be made. On the surface, globalisation suggests two things: (1) universality, which leads to (2) interdependence, as the economic exchange and intercourse between nation-states is ever-increasing. This interdependence can also explain the exploitation of human labour and social injustice. In fact, international trade has always had a tendency to go beyond states' boundaries. Another inherent characteristic of globalisation as a universal phenomenon is the political influence exercised by 'global companies' in the decision-making process. Third, the international financial flow or transfer of funds is another sector in which globalisation is highly advanced and is able to exceed the limitations of the state as a main building block of governance. Lastly, the diverse scope of the universal phenomenon of globalisation goes outside of economics and reaches the cultural and linguistic identity of the individual. An example has already been given, with print capitalism.

However, it can be argued that globalisation originated in the scientific field of economics and that thus, a privileged (economic) approach can be applied to any contemporary phenomenon. This being based on the economic costs and economic benefits approach is a result of merchandising most of the aspects of social life. This leads us to the next conclusion about globalisation: Again, this phenomenon is mostly representing the world economy or the economy on different

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supra-national levels, and it is usually a self-regulatory body. Both collective and individual economic relations are regulated by 'liberalisation'; and the free market is determining its own norms. This also supports the recent tendency in social sciences which only analyses human behaviour with regard to their economic capability. When contemplating, throughout this essay, on the complexities surrounding the concepts of nation-states and globalisation, it has become apparent that such a straight-forward and deterministic approach can neither fully nor appropriately explain the changing nature of the terms; nor can it provide us with adequate conclusions concerning how human behaviour is regulated. Nevertheless, the mechanism of the free market implies that 'liberalisation' is regulating the global exchange of goods; financial flows; and the strategies of multinational corporations. This assumption is that globalisation is limiting for the nation-state, as it 'gets the better of' borders (e.g. in there being no state barriers for free trade). Thus, nation-states are bound to consider their production efficiency and concentrate more on what other countries sees as their endowments. This is highly dependable on different factors of production such as labour and natural resources.

Brigitte Stern (2001) recognises this as the principle of comparative advantage, but this rather utilitarian understanding of state economics creates a generally positive perception of the 'global' aspects of liberalisation with regard to the economic relations between states. Shaped by national law and power (or force, though only rarely), international economic relations are analysed through their economic efficiency. On the one hand, the absolute reign of the deregulated and liberalised market is accepted as the overall aspect of human behaviour because of its high economic efficiency. On the other hand, this deregulation leads to uneven distribution of goods, further deepening the gap between states. According to the World Social Forum, 80 percent of global financial flow is concentrated among 20 countries or 20 percent of the world's populations (Fisher & Ponniah, 2003). Therefore, the international financial institution which does not have legislation that is similar to national law is incapable of regulating financial crises or to overcome existing inequalities.

Further to this, the political reaction on the domestic level to economic globalisation speaks greatly as to the reduced functions of the nation-state. One of the most obvious consequences of globalisation is that of the forces of international competition and the mixture of opportunities. Wages and job prospects for the more unskilled workers in developed countries are squeezed –and at the same

time, the more educated and rich part of the population is enjoying a great deal of travel and promotion experiences. The subsequent debates on national politics, the rise of populism, and the rejection of international cooperation (Cable, 1995) have resulted in the state's limiting its own efficiency but not dismissing its purpose for going to war.

After such theoretical engagement with this topic, it can be concluded that the nation-states remain the major actors in the international arena. Despite the limits set by globalisation in the 21st century, by this time, the nation-state is the only political structure that can deal efficiently with the (re-)distribution of social and economic benefits (Mooney & Evans, 2017) while providing a stable social environment at the same time. Neither law nor economics can possess the function of guardian of non-mercantile values (such as cultural and democratic values). The state, more importantly, is the only structure that can correct the consequences of globalisation on individuals. In terms of its interaction with international law, the law does imply the end of states – but on the contrary, the only legitimate framework of international law corresponds to that of national law.

For the purposes of this essay and to stress the crucial role of tracing the development of international society and the scholarly work on war, the internationalist institutionalisation of war will be explained through a legal frame of war that is the main reason of its own obsolescence (Hathaway & Shapiro, 2017). Drawing on recent global events, the internationalists are attempting to illustrate that realist theory is unable to adequately react to the changed legal status of war – formally accepted under the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 – and its consequences. It has been argued that war is not an instrument taken by states in the pursuit of their own interests; and that neither it is a breakdown of the rule of law. War has simply become an instrument of the rule of law, which is now in favour of positive-sum cooperation rather than an anarchic zero-sum competition (*ibid.*). However, stripping away the legal protection of war is not a revolutionary occurrence developed by legal and political scholars. It rather is just a less abstract conceptualisation of the term in a new historical and social framework that places war beyond recourse (Harper, 1928). More importantly, it has been a part of the overall occurrence of major confrontations between sovereign states and has proven its efficiency. However, the reduced probability of conflict and of the future occurrence of conflict is not satisfactory for the goal of the internationalists' belief. Their more modest and prudent approach in the international codification of

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violence is again based on the historical and social dependency of war and conflict. Both Hathaway and Shapiro (2017) raised the question of whether the international system is simply too far gone to be reshaped. This undermines their own argument, while attempting to provide a clearer analysis of recent events in the context of their theory.

This essay has already tackled the challenges faced by the Westphalian anarchic order before and after the ratification of the pact; and it has become evident that the current order has little to do with legal norms. Realism is central in the argument of internationalists; however, realism is completely insensitive to international legislation. This theoretical clash has led Shapiro and Hathaway to conclude that realism is unable to react to the decrease in conflicts.

But this does not mean that realists' theory is outdated or irrelevant. In light of the rise of anti-internationalists and anti-EU sentiments, internationalists identify a struggle to today's order. Appealing that 'the US and their allies should maintain their commitment to the rules and institutions that underlie it' (ibid., p. 419) creates contradicting and conflicting opposition between 'us and them' in international politics, which is nothing more than an opportunity for a war in the future. Meanwhile, realism does simply continue to exist unbothered by proving that the application of military power in the post-9/11 world order to persistent conflicts is central for preserving states and maintaining the Westphalian order (Snyder, 1998).

Addressing issues of war, cooperation, the role of multilateral institutions and the conceptual progress on issues of sovereignty, this essay argues that war is still not obsolete, despite the desire of internationalists for it to be otherwise. However, significant progress has been made in the spread of global peace. Despite war not being a contested term, it is evident that it follows a pattern of historical and social development. It has also attempted to illustrate those interconnections and theoretical gaps with coherent and relevant examples. The flaws of the Westphalian and internationalist institutionalisation of war has been discussed in the context of the historical development of both the concept of war and international society, in order to evaluate the relevance of each. This has also resulted in references to 'zero-sum' and 'positive-sum' games. This has provided more in-depth analysis. It can be concluded that war and conflict have always been an indefinite process, with a changing attitude. Realists' core perception of the anarchical world

and struggle for power will remain most relevant to how we understand war in today's world. However, the flexibility of the phenomenon of war has left space for the development of not-fully-successful and efficient internationalists to put together a legal framework on war. Relevant suggestions for improvement have not been made for two reasons: such suggestions lack relevance to the question of this essay (and, more significantly, for the field of study); and the current challenges to the theory failed to be defined.

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# 6

## WHERE HAVE ALL THE HUMANS GONE? RETHINKING RESERVATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW TREATIES

*Julian A. Hettibewa*

It is well-established that treaties are based on the consent of the participating States. An important component in this logical system is the right to enter reservations and to make objections to such reservations. This rule is understandable, since States are those benefiting from treaties and those who restrict themselves. However, this changes in view of human rights treaties (HRTs). Individuals have taken the place of the State as sole beneficiaries. Yet, humans do not have the right to enter reservations or to object to reservations. This essay centres around one question: Can the current system of reservations still be in place – and if not, what are the possible alternatives? To answer the first half of the question, this essay will canvass the law on reservations in order to understand how it operates and why. Then this law will be applied to HRTs in order to uncover differences. To answer the second half of the question, the essay will examine how to accommodate the differences: Is an alternative to the law of HRTs needed? Do alternatives exist at all, or must one re-imagine the law? In the end, a conclusion will sum up the findings and, hopefully, deliver a satisfying answer to the posed questions.

### **The Law on Reservations and Objections**

A reservation is a ‘unilateral statement, however phrased or named, made by a State, when signing, ratifying, accepting, approving or acceding to a treaty’ (Art. 2 (1) (d) Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT)). Its legal effect is the exclusion or the modification of a legal effect of a provision of a treaty in the application of this treaty to the reserving State and in relation to the party

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accepting the reservation (Art. 2 (1) (d), 20 (4) (a), 21 VCLT). Generally, reservations are always lawful unless a respective reservation is prohibited by the treaty or incompatible with the object and purpose of the treaty (Art. 19 (a), (c) VCLT).

The question, then, is what legal effect an invalid reservation has. The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT) offers no insights. Hence, two opinions deriving from jurisprudence will be presented. First, an invalid reservation should lead to the total invalidity of the treaty (International Court of Justice, 1951). This means that the State entering into an invalid reservation is no longer a party to the treaty. Second, an invalid reservation should be severed from the treaty (United Nations Human Rights Committee, 1999). This means that a State entering an invalid reservation is party to the treaty while the reservation is disregarded. This essay will return to this issue in regard to HRTs at a later stage.

Generally, reservations do not need approval by the other contracting States (Art. 20 (1) VCLT). However, this changes if the treaty so provides or if the number of the contracting States is limited and if the object and purpose of the treaty implies that acceptance by all parties is needed (Art. 20 (1), (2) VCLT). Furthermore, any other contracting State has the right to object to a reservation, which leads to – if so intended and expressed – precluding the entry into force of the treaty between the reserving and objecting States (Art. 20 (4) (b) VCLT). If an objecting State does not oppose the entry into force of the treaty between itself and the reserving State, the provisions to which a State entered a reservation does not apply between both States (Art. 21 (3) VCLT). To conclude, the current system of international law in general, and the law on reservations and objections in particular, are State-centric and are based on the consent of States.

### **Application to Human Rights Law**

This essay will now turn to HRTs and the law of reservations and objections in this regard. HRTs are ‘those binding instruments adopted by States which enshrine the fundamental rights and freedoms to which the State ascribes’ and to which individuals in their jurisdiction are entitled (Smith, 2013). Notably, HRTs are established under international law, which leads to an important implication: The VCLT and the law on reservations and objections apply (Higgins, 1989). Practically, taking the example of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) being one of the core pillars of international human rights law

(HRL), dozens of reservations have been entered (United Nations Treaty Collection, 1966). The United States of America (USA), for example, entered the following reservation regarding Article 6 of the ICCPR:

‘That the United States reserves the right, subject to its Constitutional constraints, to impose capital punishment on any person (other than a pregnant woman) duly convicted under existing or future laws permitting the imposition of capital punishment, including such punishment for crimes committed by persons below eighteen years of age’ (United Nations Treaty Collection, 1966).

This reservation has been regarded as excluding the USA from ‘virtually all international norms respecting the death penalty’ (Schabas, 1995). Several States objected to this reservation (United Nations Treaty Collection, 1966). Issues have been raised concerning the legality of such reservations. However, it must be noted that the reservations are still in place – regardless of their being regarded by scholars as legal or illegal. Reservations to HRTs have been criticized further: The increasing number of reservations are a risk to the integrity and credibility of HRTs (Cook, 1990); individuals can no longer ascertain the scope of their rights (Megret, 2015); reservations conflict with the effective implementation of human rights (Pauw, 2013); and States can easily undermine ‘foundations of (...) international life’ (Alvarez, 1951). Moreover, reservations to HRTs contradict the very nature of human rights (Megret, 2015): these rights might be understood as being ‘the rights one has simply because one is a human being’ (Donnelly, 1985); as being universal rights, meaning that ‘they apply to or may be claimed by everyone’ (Beitz, 2001); as being inalienable rights and a protection for individuals and groups against any acts by states (OHCHR, 2019); and as being rights independent from Positivism, meaning that they existed ‘long before lawmakers drafted their first proclamation’ (Robinson quoted in Harees, 2012). Furthermore, objections to reservations are of no use here. The effect of objections in Human Rights Law (HRL) is the same as in international law. However, precluding the entry into force of the treaty between the reserving and objecting States or precluding a provision between both States is pointless, since the treaty or a provision never had any legal effect: HRTs are vertical, applying only between States and the persons within their jurisdiction (Schuter, 2014; Kaczorowska-Ireland, 2015).

We can conclude that reservations to HRTs create several obstacles. This essay turns now to different approaches to accommodate these obstacles.

### **Accommodating the Differences**

One approach consists of the perception of the named issue not as problem, but as chance. According to Alain Pellet and Daniel Müller (2011), reservations “‘bilateralize’ the relations between the parties’ and achieve a wider consensus. Needless to say, the argument that reservations achieve a broader acceptance is most prominently one made by reserving States. The International Law Commission (ILC), with Pellet as its Special Rapporteur, makes clear that HRTs should only be based on the consent of States (International Law Commission, 2011). For example, in its view ‘[t]he nullity of an invalid reservation does not depend on the objection or the acceptance by a contracting State’ (ibid.). Finally, Madeline Morris adds that with regard to the named US reservation, HRTs are too ambitious to create broad adherence (Morris, 2000).

To comment on the named arguments, relations between contracting States and HRTs can never ‘bilateralize’, since the provisions never had any legal effect between them. Moreover, Judge Alvarez noted correctly that the Charter of the United Nations (1951) was adopted without any reservation, which is evident that consensus without reserving is possible. To use further judges to counter the arguments:

‘It is therefore not universality at any price that forms the first consideration. [...] In the interests of the international community, it would be better to lose as a party to the Convention a State which insists in face of objections on a modification of the terms of the Convention, than to permit it to become a party against the wish of a State or States which have irrevocably and unconditionally accepted all the obligations of the Convention’ (Guerro, McNair, Read, & Mo, 1951).

Without further confrontation of the above opinions, this approach does not attempt to find a solution to the problem, as from their perspective, a problem does not exist. By doing that, this approach offers no new insights but gives reservations to HRTs a more appealing mask.

Another approach, named after the locality of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), proposes that States making invalid reservations ‘should be bound by the obligations of the agreement beyond the limits foreseen in those reservations’ (Baratta, 2000). In the *Belilos* and the *Weber* case, the ECtHR ruled that a State cannot rely on a reservation if this reservation conflicts with certain requirements of the respective HRT – which was the first time an international

court found a reservation invalid (1988, 1990). Thus, the reservation becomes invalid, yet the State remains 'bound by the Convention irrespective of the validity' (European Court of Human Rights, 1988). To clarify further, this means that a State is also bound by the full provision it desired to enter a reservation on, and hence the reservation gets severed, as if it never existed (Marks, 1990; Edwards, 2000). Notably, an objection to the reservation was not needed.

It is questionable, whether this finding is of any significance for international law, since the ECtHR is only a European court. Moreover, with a similar decision of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) (1983) (severing invalid reservations to a HRT), we may discover a universal character of the opinion. Even further, already in 1957 Judge Lauterpacht urged that when it comes to a provision being the 'minimum of compromise', this provision should be determined by the ICJ – excluding any reservations (Lauterpacht, 1957).

However, before going into details, the problem remains within the ECtHR as such. The court is based on a treaty concluded by States. The creation of the treaty was governed by laws established by States. Individuals were not included in the creation process of the treaty or in the creation process establishing the laws governing the conclusion of treaties. Since individuals had no part in the creation of the law, or in the creation of the court, a general flaw is recognizable. We see a system based on the consent of States. Although the ECtHR attempts to enhance the protection of human rights, it is by virtue of its nature State-centric (the same applies to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the ICJ).

The United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC), which is the monitoring body of the ICCPR, raised in its General Comment No. 24 (GC) concerns regarding reservations to the ICCPR (1994). In its opinion, ideally reservations to a HRT should not exist (United Nations Human Rights Committee, 1994). Further, the VCLT should not govern reservations in HRT alone, since:

'treaties that are mere exchanges of obligations between States allow them to reserve inter se application of rules of general international law, it is otherwise in human rights treaties, which are for the benefit of persons within their jurisdiction' (ibid.)

That is why States may not enter reservations on provisions which represent customary international law (ibid.). In addition, the UNHRC finds that objections are 'inappropriate to address the problem of reservations' to a HRT (ibid.).

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Furthermore, because the law of objections is 'so inadequate', meaning that the right to object is of no use for States, the absence of objections by States does not indicate whether a reservation is (in)compatible with the object and purpose of HRTs (*ibid.*). To solve this problem, the UNHRC regards itself as a competent body to decide whether a reservation is compatible (*ibid.*). If it is decided that a reservation is void, this reservation will be severable, thus the reserving State is bound by the ICCPR as if the reservation never existed – which equals the Strasbourg approach (*ibid.*; Baratta, 2000).

This approach was described as 'revolutionary' and historically significant (Baylis, 1999; Rasulov, 2000). Even though the analysis of the problem is accurate and though the UNHRC tries to limit reservations, the approach must be criticized. Firstly, The GC is non-binding and thus the GC remains a suggestion, an invitation. Moreover, the UNHRC consists of persons elected by States and not by individuals (Art. 29 (1) ICCPR). Hence, again, individuals are left out and without a voice in the debate over reservations to HRTs. Finally, the UNHRC does not challenge the use of the laws governing reservations *per se*. Revolution looks somewhat different.

### **Democratizing Human Rights Law**

Hazel Smith seeks to challenge State-centrism in international law by replacing it with democracy based on individuals (Smith, 2000). She argues that other theories such as Realism (explaining the behaviour of States), Liberalism (the ethical behaviour of States as a foundation of international relations), social constructivism (States as social actors), and Cosmopolitanism (global democracy consisting of States) are united in their State-centric approach (*ibid.*). Smith criticises taking sovereignty of States for granted as a 'basic error of Realist thinking' (*ibid.*).

Although Smith forms her argument only in regard to international law, an analogy could be drawn to HRL. More precisely, we could take her idea of international democracy based on individuals and use it as a tool for resolving the aforementioned issues regarding reservation with HRT legislation. In such a case, individuals would not only benefit from a HRT but would also have a voice in the process of establishing a HRT – and ultimately, individuals would be held accountable. In this sense, the laws of reservations would be logical again. If an individual makes a reservation concerning a provision, he or she must fear an

objection by another individual. Now, the provision, which had legal and factual effect between those two individuals, would be of no benefit to them – not only unilaterally for the potential beneficiary but also for the duty-bearer who, in this case, colludes with the same individual.

Yet, Smith's approach (or our analogy) must be criticized on three points. First, the notion of democracy has no clear definition. Not only would certain scholars regard democracy as a Western concept, but there is also no universal agreement on how democracy should be understood and executed. Second, democracy alone does not guarantee human rights. It is possible that the individuals would act towards the abolishment of human rights and of democracy itself. Even though the idea that a 'man gives himself gratuitously' is considered to be 'absurd and inconceivable' – and, as an act, is considered to be 'null and illegitimate, from the mere fact that he who does it is out of his mind' – it must be recognized that this has happened in the history of mankind (Rousseau, 1762). Thirdly, giving every individual the right to enter their reservations and to object to reservations seems to be an impractical way to guarantee the full scope of human rights.

### **Localizing Human Rights – A Story of Two Dilemmas**

A new approach could be found in local authorities. It will be assessed whether these authorities can serve as guardians of the full scope of human rights. First of all, a local authority – or local government – is 'the lowest tier of public administration within a given State' (Human Rights Council, 2015).

The first question in this regard could be: why local authorities? To begin with, the field of human rights at the local level is quite under-researched. Hence, there are hopes that an answer to the presented problem can be found here. Moreover, local authorities are the ones closest to individuals. In contrast to central or federal governments, they are less concerned with law-making than with taking local action. Furthermore, local authorities are in the position to decide how a 'right' should be implemented in a concrete case. So, are local authorities implementing 'more' than the State signed up for? To answer the posed question, two dilemmas will be presented in connection with practical examples.

Local authorities are often not considered as being concerned with human rights. This applies from an external perspective (e.g., from the perspective of the inhabitant of a city) and from an internal perspective (e.g., from the perspective of a



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civil servant). There is little awareness that human rights – which are understood as being something global – have local implications. However, ‘it is difficult to imagine a situation of human rights being realized where there are no local authorities to provide the necessary services’ (United Nations Human Rights Committee, 2015). This is the reason why local authorities have not been considered as guarantors of human rights for a long time. Likewise, citizens and persons working for local authorities neglected this observation. This forms our first dilemma.

After acknowledging that local authorities are fulfilling human rights, the question remains whether they are doing that inside or outside the scope of the human rights obligations conferred upon the respective State. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), for example, was adopted by San Francisco in 1998. Thereupon, the city passed several legislative acts and launched various programmes. The Commission on the Status of Women in San Francisco, for instance, is now required to conduct a gender analysis of its own commission. The San Francisco Gender Equality Principles Initiative supports companies to reach equality between the genders (San Francisco Department on the Status of Women, 2019). Besides that, the city engaged in programs to prevent domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Notably, even until now, the USA has still not ratified CEDAW (United Nations Treaty Collection, 1979).

To name a less prominent municipality, Zwolle (the capital of the Dutch province Overijssel) symbolically ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2013 (Oomen, 2015). Moreover, Zwolle hosted an event to discuss the implementation of the convention (Oomen, 2015). In contrast, the Netherlands ratified the convention only in 2016 (United Nations Treaty Collection, 2007).

Graz (the capital of the Austrian federal state Steiermark) took several measures to support migrants and refugees in the city – this time regardless of a (symbolic) ratification of a relevant document (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2016). For example, Graz undertook steps to assist refugees in administrative challenges and to ensure that refugees can access basic services (*ibid.*). Moreover, the city provided German language courses and organized events to break barriers between communities (*ibid.*). Without going into legal details, Graz provided more than it was obliged to under respective treaties.

Naming only three examples, it becomes apparent that certain local authorities are ensuring a wider scope of human rights than the State signed up for. This proves a second dilemma: Although local authorities might be sometimes perceived as guarantor of human rights, they are not at all regarded as a tool against the system of reservations to HRTs.

Again, persons working for local authorities are probably neither aware of the problem of reservations to HRTs, nor of their capability of serving as a solution. This may be understandable, as reservations form a special and difficult matter of international law. Perhaps the sole factor motivating local authorities to apply human rights on a local level might be because it is understood as being something morally 'good'. Yet, a coherent and systematic approach is missing.

This gives room for taking a more efficient stand on the implementation of human rights, meaning that local authorities could assess to which provisions of a HRT their respective State has entered reservations. From then on, local authorities could decide – whether alone or in union with other local authorities – how to implement the provisions on the local level. They can orientate themselves through general commentaries and recommendations of monitoring bodies – independent from the central or federal government. Moreover, citizens would have the possibility to contacting their local authority and to state their specific concern regarding a provision of a HRT. Hence, they would be acting independently of the decision of the respective State; in order to offer the possibility of individual requests under a HRT.

## **Criticisms**

The aim of this section is to address possible critiques of the thesis.

Arguably, only such cities were presented which have a positive human rights record. However, guaranteeing human rights should not depend on the political will of the local authority. The whole concept fails if local authorities act in line with the reservations entered by the respective State.

Moreover, the concept was set out to allow not only for the full scope of human rights to be achieved but also to ensure participation of the individual. That local inhabitants in a local authority which is democratically elected have the possibility

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of participating was set out as a basic assumption. However, the same cannot be presumed in an undemocratic system.

To counter these two points, the most effective existing alternative still regards the engagement of local authorities as being a tool against HRT reservations. Here, it is understood to be a capable and effective means of solving the outlined problem. There is no possibility that the State-centrism in international law can be challenged. Thus, there is no reason to believe that States should give up their practice of entering reservations to HRTs. However, these reservations create only a bottom-line minimum standard. Local authorities are free to ensure a wider scope of human rights. Saying this, any action by a local authority that ensures a wider scope of human rights would be beneficial to the current system in a sense that it adds on to the State commitment. Of course, to also ensure the participation of individuals, these authorities need to be democratically elected; as otherwise, they could be criticized on the same points as the ECtHR and the UNHRC. To name one more argument in favour, local authorities are usually embedded within a system of checks and balances. Individuals acting through local authorities could only pass measures in line with the existing laws and could not abolish human rights per se. This is a profound advantage to the idea of democratizing human rights. Furthermore, to consider local action as a tool against reservations to HRTs would not involve great financial costs. This makes it a more realistic approach.

### **Conclusion**

The laws governing reservations in international law cannot be transferred to HRL without creating certain problems. This is due to the fact that individuals are in the position of standing to gain as beneficiaries; it is also due to the quality of human rights itself. We can discover a fragmentation of international law leading to specialized fields of law, such as HRL, which co-exists with a 'relative ignorance of legislative and institutional activities (...) and general principles and practices of international law' (United Nations International Law Commission, 2006). There are different approaches to solving this issue. Although the ECtHR recognised the problem, the court is, by virtue of its nature, State-centric. Although the UNHRC acknowledges that individuals should be considered, it still is an institution governed by States, in a system governed by States. Although democratizing HRL is a promising approach which seeks to include

individuals in the cost of State-sovereignty, it does not guarantee a change in the laws of reservations in HRL. Nevertheless, the latter at least attempts to include individuals at the international level. Still, localizing human rights seems to be a tool against the system of reservations which is already working now. Although this approach can be criticized, it enables the widest scope of human rights and ensures the highest possible participation of individuals. However, this approach is not used systematically yet, as it is entangled in a dilemma: It is not yet recognized as being an answer to the question, 'Where have all the humans gone?'

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PART II

**REGIONAL DYNAMICS IN  
A CHANGING WORLD**





# 7

## THE EUROZONE CRISIS – ORIGINS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EUROPEAN REGIONAL INTEGRATION

*Dmitrijs Zuyev*

In this paper, I will talk about the Eurozone Crisis, the causes for it, and the main actors, including of whom may be seen as the most responsible throughout the crisis and the effects it had on the Euro politics. The Eurozone is one of the largest economic regions in the world. It is comprised of, and consists of, all the European Union countries that have adopted the Euro currency: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain.

The Euro currency is considered as one of the world's main currencies, along with the dollar and the British pound. The Euro currency, which had been adopted in 1999, allows more economically deprived countries of the European Union (EU) to borrow money for the same amount of interest as the richer countries of the EU had done before. Even though the inflation rates were much higher in less economically developed countries such as Italy, Ireland, Greece, Spain and Portugal that have tended to rely on either tourism or on foreign investors, the same currency has allowed them to have similar conditions and incentives to borrow money for their own needs. Also, as previously mentioned, having the same currency across almost the whole geographical area of Europe allows the world to have an extra-stable and very liquid currency besides US dollars and British pounds. However, the interconnection of every European country only exposes its weaknesses, as they are dependent on each other – 'European banks hold on average 70 percent of their equity in European government securities and approximately 30 percent in the form of loans. This makes them extremely vulnerable to sovereign debt crises, as we have seen since 2009' (Ugeux, 2014, p. 29).

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One of the main causes of the European Crisis is the fact that European money with its loans and equity are held inside Europe itself, along with the Euro currency amongst most of the EU countries. This makes all of the participating countries vulnerable due to the fact that money is still kept within Europe. Even though it may seem very paradoxical, this also allows it to have a centralised bank and regulations for all of the Eurozone countries. '[T]he Eurozone Crisis is just one in a long series of debt and balance-of-payments problems that the world has experienced in the past 200 years. As has been true of all of these crises, the [E]urozone crisis has led to stark political conflicts about its resolution, both between and within states (e.g., Dyson 2014, Frieden 1991, Pepinsky 2009, Walter 2013)' (Frieden & Walter, 2017, pp. 3–4). As it is viewed as the series of debts, it is not a short-term event but rather a series of actions throughout time within its context, causes, and the ways in which the EU has tried to solve these issues.

The main problem for the Eurozone Crisis began in the late 1990s, when the Southern European countries had a faster pace of development than did the countries to the north of them. However, the inflation rates of Southern countries (3.1% compared to 1.5%) (Frieden & Walter, 2017, p. 375) were still higher than those of the Northern countries, so the banks were content to lend money to these countries, and the investors were investing money knowing doing so would be profitable. However, at some point, it reached its peak when the fast-economic growth became a simple bubble that had to pop at a certain point. Nonetheless, the investors and the banks were hoping that other European countries, with a slower developing rate, would be 'happy' to bail out other countries in case the South would fail to pay off those debts. Yet in fact, they (the banks and the investors) did not consider the 'other' countries' financial situation in depth. In particular, the money of the North, such as debts and assets, were included in the loans that were given to Southern countries. As a result of this, Southern countries such as Spain, Greece, Portugal and Italy were left with no financial support, yet still had a massive GDP deficit and even higher inflation rates, so all they had left was to maintain a balance between GDP and inflation rate by continuing to borrow money.

The lack of any financial support varied in each of the different states mentioned before. However, the case of Italy clearly implies the political instability within a country. Roberto Di Quirico from the University of Cagliari states: 'In fact, an Italian peculiarity since the 1990s [has been] that the Left has supported financial

stability and reductions in public debt and the budget deficit, while the Right has not hesitated to increase public debt and the budget deficit in order to support spending or to mask the problem of tax evasion. In other words, Left and Right in Italy have adopted economic policies that are the opposite of those of traditional European parties of the Left and Right' (Quirico, 2010). Thus, the Italian economic crisis has its roots within the Italian political rather than economic system, which leads back to the fact that the 'South' was accused of falsifying its actual ability to pay back the debts given by the IMF and the EU. As a result of such manipulations, while Italy and other Southern countries were borrowing money to maintain the rates within a country, their loans were only growing and in certain occasions had reached a point when their loan was bigger than their actual GDP rate. In addition to this issue, also the housing crisis arose, and the US financial crisis of 2008 occurred. This unfortunate series of events led to a massive crisis across the whole Eurozone when countries had to simply 'buy out' their own money in order to free themselves out from under the burden of debt that they, as socially progressive countries, had accumulated. Meanwhile, at the same time, the United States could not help the EU, as the US faced its own issues with housing and banks. The housing issue of the US arose directly from the financial crisis, and mortgages, that were mentioned already. When people were obtaining mortgages through the government, their credit history and/or ability to actually pay it back was not thoroughly checked. This resulted in many people going bankrupt, causing the whole system of mortgages to go into default even when the problem had already been dealt with. The percentage for flexible mortgages was raised and resulted in people not being able to afford it – and not being able to afford to pay back their loans (Duca, 2013).

As in every other crisis, the Eurozone Crisis is more likely to have main actors that were responsible for it. However, in the Eurozone Crisis, there were a number of such actors. One of the causes was the Eurozone itself, with countries sharing a common currency and yet keeping their assets in trust as surety for sovereign debts that they sold for other countries to hold. With this came a very high probability that such a country would need to buy back their own assets from the lender if they, as the debtor, did not meet the expectations of the lenders or investors. However, if the country-lender would have been ready to rescue the debtor country by bailing it out of its debt (or at least cut out some parts of the debt), this could have eased the burden. However, this simply didn't happen in the case of the EU. '[T]he result was that the 'no-bailout' commitment was not

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credible. Bailout expectations meant that even the least creditworthy member states were able to borrow at rates roughly equivalent to those charged to Germany' (Chang & Leblond, 2015). Here, Chang and Leblond are implying that the South's finance was not as liquid, which means that they had a lower ability of paying back the debts in comparison to more economically developed countries such as Germany. Even though the 'bail-out commitment' was not credible at all, countries still had to decide what to do with the bail-out.

At this point, there were banks who also took a role in lending out money and their own assets to the 'developing and prospective' countries; they also fell into the crisis and suffered. However, some of the banks that were involved in this financial disaster were as big as some of the countries' GDPs. Therefore, it was not possible to bail such countries out. As a result, panic over the crisis had reached the private sector – people who had their money held in these banks. Also, as mentioned already, a housing issue also affected the Eurozone, simply because a lot of money that banks loaned had been allocated to private sector investors for housing. So, when the housing prices dropped, people started panicking and began to withdraw money, which affected banks even more – as now, they had less 'money turnover' to operate with. Yet, the governments found a way to solve this issue; as, 'to prevent a financial meltdown, governments ended up assuming many of the bad debts of their banks—converting private [debts] into sovereign debts. But this led to growing public debt, which increased the country's sovereign credit risk, which further weakened the financial system, and thus created a negative bank–sovereign loop' (Acharya et al., 2014). As the sovereign debt grew, every state that was involved should have come out with a type of policy that could have been used to boost their economy and slowly take them out of deficit spending. Nonetheless it was discovered that Greece had been falsifying and covering up its real deficit rates since joining the Eurozone in 2001. So, the issue became more complicated because countries that were in the most debt and which had the largest deficit were mostly relying on the tourism industry rather than on manufacturing. The industry of tourism is very much dependent on the amount of money that tourists have; and if there aren't any tourists at all, this would be a problem. The housing crisis hit middle-class people who would have been more likely to travel. So, this meant a rapid decline in tourism.

To solve an issue of a deficit in Southern countries, the countries of the 'Southern Bloc' should have come out with a collective number of fiscally sensible

policies that would have affected every citizen yet would have helped the Eurozone to escape the crisis. But, because the politics in every country is more focused on domestic policy and on keeping one's own seat within a parliament or a government and on getting re-elected, politicians were either too scared or selfish to risk losing their seats.

Therefore, no fiscal policies were adopted.

(This argument can be supported by the writings of Hobbes, who makes a clear point about people being naturally selfish. A quite similar argument can be found throughout his writings.)

The degree to which countries were willing to stop the cycle can be summed up as follows: Putting on the brakes would have been appropriate. 'However, there was little or no national interest in adopting the appropriate counter-cyclical fiscal policies—in fact, fiscal policies became more procyclical after the [E]uro was introduced' (Benetrix & Lane, 2013).

After the Eurozone Crisis, a number of fiscal policies within each European country were finally applied. Then, however, with regard to loans being given to countries, lenders were thoroughly 'choosy' as to whom to give loans to. Yet such 'pickiness' affected the growth ratio of other countries. Also, a number of nationalist movements have arisen across Europe – including in Hungary, Poland, Austria, the UK, and France – arose from this. Such movements believe that their economy would have been much stronger without Europe, in contrast to its having been dependent on the European Central Bank and its Commission. The latest example of rising nationalism can be seen via the case of Brexit in Britain, when one of the unofficial slogans was to 'take back control of our laws and borders.' This slogan spread around various right-minded political groups. A prime example of such a slogan is the 'Leave'-campaign-created website available at: <http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org> (Vote Leave, 2016) – even though it may seem very pluralistic in the sense of its gaining support, the 'Leave' campaign still proved to be more successful than the 'Stay' campaign. Another case study that can be considered is the case of Austria – a country that is still a part of the Eurozone. It has experienced a political crisis with the rise of the far-right movement, specifically – Austria's Freedom party (FPÖ). The FPÖ was seen in a highly favourable light by many sceptics and analysts as being the major, if not the main, force on the Austrian political arena (Olterman, 2019). However, recent elections in September

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have proven that many analytics were wrong in their predictions; and the FPÖ has only gained 17.3% (Oltermann, 2019). Therefore, another collapse of the right-wing party in Europe may have shifted forces in the EU, if not economically, then politically. In fact, certain assumptions regarding the economic crisis are still relevant to the political crisis within certain states – for example, within Austria, as was mentioned above – the economic struggle being seen as having stemmed from a conflict of interest that preceded the economic crisis. Also, as has been mentioned already, Brexit (which, as of the writing of this article, is currently happening) remains another major aftermath of the Eurozone Crisis. Another debate that has arisen regards the single currency within Europe – should the European Union continue sticking to a single currency or not? ‘The EU finds itself on the horns of a dilemma. Influential figures are arguing that the single currency will survive only if the Eurozone has an economic government of its own. But, since there seems no way of making such government truly democratic, moves in this direction threaten to replace embryonic democratic institutions with a new technocracy. Caught between Scylla and Charybdis, the member states are currently temporising. With a fiscal compact committing the member states to budgetary balance and new regulations for the supervision of national budgets, the European authorities have acquired unprecedented powers of purview over national budgets, but it remains unclear whether those powers will ever really be exercised’ (Hall, 2016, p. 27). As the author states, the local governments have almost lost their power over the national budget; and this is one of the reasons of why the nationalists’ movements are rising across Europe.

In addition to this, the European Union has yet to accept the Ukraine and Balkan states, which have their own issues, including the war in Ukraine and very strained relations between other Balkan countries themselves. The importance of Ukraine and the Balkans is often underestimated, even if it causes a number of issues, the pros/benefits of such union may outweigh the cons/costs. Ivan Dikov, from European Views, argues that the importance of Ukraine is majorly related to its geographic size. Even though Russia and Turkey have been considered by the EU members for some time, and although Turkey is still in negotiations to join the EU, there are a number of reasons why Russia and Turkey have not yet been granted EU membership. Perhaps this hesitancy is related to their large size; and possibly it is partly in response to their post-imperial political and geopolitical ambitions. Meanwhile, the recent case of Ukraine shows (according to Dikov) that the country is striving towards democracy and that therefore it

would be an excellent candidate for the EU. The author uses the example of Poland, which was very similar to Ukraine almost 15 years ago when it joined the EU and which now is a member of the Big Six of Europe, and is a very important manufacturer in the EU. In the case of Balkan countries, they are strategically important in terms of adopting EU values, ways, and means, and opening the way for the market of the workforce, as the potential of this market keeps rising. Even though economic crises may arise in these countries, the migration opportunities will clearly benefit certain Western European countries. However, it is very likely that these countries will adopt the Euro as their currency and therefore strengthen its value. And finally, while the Brexit issue was still ongoing, the UK was given a chance to revoke Article 50 and stay in the EU, so it is still unclear as to what is going to happen with it (BBC News, 2018).

In conclusion, the Eurozone Crisis, which followed after the Global Financial Crisis, became a very serious issue for a few years. The Eurozone Crisis pointed out almost every problem that the EU had before but which it had preferred not to notice (or, at least, not to mention). The Eurozone Crisis had very close ties with a number of different institutions, such as banks and the government. It also had issues with the US that had a lot of their assets in European banks. But even though the Crisis has formally ended, we can still hear its echoes with the rise of nationalist movements and the slow development of those countries that have adopted the Euro just a few years ago, for example – Baltic States that were on the edge of becoming a ‘Greece’ and which now are slowly falling into the recession themselves. And lastly, the EU is often viewed as a union of countries rather than as a unique ‘supranational institution’ that can be viewed as a whole. This was proven by the example of the EU’s legislation regarding the consumption fossil fuels. This legislation was simply spread around a number of states, rather than being targeted at the main CO<sub>2</sub> producers such as Germany.

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# 8

## EXAMINING SINO-AFRICAN RELATIONS – IMPERIAL UNDERTONE OR DEVELOPMENT?

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China has undoubtedly become an economic powerhouse within the international circle. Its relations with the African continent have indeed further bolstered its position, given the unprecedented growth it has accumulated with the former. However, over the years, the socio-economic affiliations between the two have sparked polarising debates as to whether or not China is a colonising power or merely a capitalist benefactor.

Western scholars and political commentators, such as the former British foreign secretary (Jack Straw) have long ‘insinuated’ that China’s investments in Africa is somewhat reminiscent of the imperial infiltration into Africa that had existed during the colonial period. Western conspiracies conclude that China, a neo-colonial power, has been ‘exploiting Africa’s natural resources and harming its quest for democracy and human rights’ (Junbo, 2007). Albeit, it is quite interesting to see the disparities in opinion between these Western political commentators and the alternative narrative depicted by many African officials who regard Sino-African relations as being a positive. Jonathan Coker, Nigeria’s former ambassador to Beijing, has contested that ‘warnings about Chinese investments are hypocritical’ (Feng & Pilling, 2019). The primary objective of this paper is to examine whether this relationship can be conceptualised as being progressive and grounded on reciprocal benefits, or whether the balance of power is skewed to favour China’s booming economy and displays nuances of neo-imperialism. I will be using an imperialist theory as an analytical model to appraise China’s policies towards the African continent. For the sake of this paper, I will be using the terms ‘colonialism’ and ‘imperialism’ interchangeably.

In order to provide a comprehensive analysis of Sino-African relations, it would be plausible to firstly evaluate the numerical data in order to gauge whether the

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economic affiliations with African-states proves to be mutually beneficial or not. From this, it is certainly true that Sino-African relations should be regarded as being interdependent on each other's respective assets and liabilities. However, we should be cautious on implementing an aspirational discourse that reinforces the simplistic view of development-as-economic-growth (Mawdsley, 2012, pp. 158–159). It is often the case that economic growth supersedes socio-political dynamics as the primary indicator for development.

Conversely, there needs to be an emphasis on social and political mobility, as these factors should constitute within the framework of developmental discourse too. In the case of Sino-African relations, I will be highlighting the limitations of Chinese investments with regard to the exploitation of local labourers; the import of counterfeit medicine; and environmental degradation. Furthermore, case study examples of life within the sphere of Sino-Angolan interaction shall be explored. These examples reveal the imperialistic undertones of their imbalanced relationship, as is the case of Djibouti and Angola. In considering the former, China's first military base in Djibouti has become synonymous with the global shift of power. It is through this military trajectory that we witness their neo-imperialistic and geostrategic efforts' further projecting China into the international arena. With the case of Angola, I aim to highlight China's inherent imperialistic tendencies; and illustrate the economic exploitation at the hands of the Chinese government.

The first section will give prominence to the economic interaction between Sino-African relations, centralising the debate around whether the investments into Africa favour a zero-sum game theory. In the second section, I will critically analyse the ideological and political underpinnings of China's foreign policy and their 'Going Global Strategy' to examine whether their policies are conducive to a mutual partnership. The case-study of Sudan shall be explored in order to assess the implications of China's blatant disregard for human rights and the role they played in assisting with the Darfur genocide. Lastly, the final section will compare the resemblances and divergences of U.S hegemonic influence in Africa, and to determine whether China poses a threat to Africa or whether they present an opportunity for the development of the continent.

### Methodology

I decided to utilise secondary research as my primary methodological approach for this paper. This method was time efficient, as I had access to a mammoth pool of

information, which, after pursuing this research, further heightened my holistic understanding on the matter. Collecting primary research data would have been time consuming and economically exhausting. Additionally, secondary research provides a basis for comparison with the data collected by various researchers, enabling me to draw patterns and trends from the empirical data they provided. However, a limitation of using the method is that the accuracy of the data is unknown and it is something that seldom fits the agenda of the researcher. Hence, statistical or qualitative secondary research may be slightly skewed or inflated to fit with the narrative of the proposed ideology. This was an issue I encountered with online journals derived from state-owned outlets, which depicted either side as the transgressor. Hence, I was cautious to include an array of articles, journals, and books; in order to gain a more impartial outlook on the issues at hand. Lastly, the final obstacle encountered was in relation to the data being outdated. It was a challenge to find relevant data pertaining to contemporary issues regarding China's political and economic status.

It's important to note the academic literature pertaining to Chinese investments in Africa is limited, especially in terms of rigorous empirical studies. The Chinese are very critical of external onlookers; hence, we see that there is a lack of official data provided; this has been attributed towards their policy of preserving 'state secrets' (Brautigam, 2009, p. 2). Barney Glaser explains that secondary analysis provided by an independent researcher could, amongst other things, 'lend new strength to the body of fundamental social change' research (Glaser, 1963, p. 11). One strength of making primary data-sets available for secondary analysis is that it can facilitate training for novice researchers. Furthermore, secondary analysis may be of benefit in situations where the topic being discussed is sensitive and in which participants may be what Fielding entitled an 'elusive population' that has thus been difficult to access (Fielding, 2004).

## **Theoretical Framework**

Applying an imperialist framework is a salient component of understanding the theoretical, material, and geostrategic underpinnings of imperialism. David Harvey reviews this theory through the scope of historical-geographical materialism; in order to gauge the deeper transformations occurring beneath the turbulence and volatility of a state, and to assess the historical context. The definition of this contested concept is 'often explained primarily as an outcome of economic

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expansionism’ (Bello, 1998, p. 367). We can see this materialise through China’s Belt and Road Initiative, which ‘expands the super-powers['] economic and social influence to countries across the globe’ (Marvin, 2019). Similarly, Vladimir Lenin’s quasi-eschatological definition of imperialism is synonymous with the highest stage of capitalism. He argues that imperialism is a teleological process within a capitalist discourse, to which there is an inextricable link between the two dogmas. The ‘surplus extraction approach’ is a neo-imperial practice that subjugates the developing countries’ ability to expand their economy. This framework of imperial theory is a key component of this paper; in an attempt to understand the question of whether Chinese investments provide mutual reciprocity or perpetuates the exploitation subjected on former/ex-colonies.

### **Economic Imperialism or Economic Development?**

Between the 10th and 12th of October 2000, an official framework emerged between China and Africa to promote and strengthen economic trade relations. This first Ministerial Conference held in Beijing, entitled ‘The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation’ (FOCAC), provided a consultative platform to promote diplomatic, trade, security, and investments between China and their African counterpart. This initiative had been hailed as a model for multilateral engagements and allowed for a discussion regarding a plethora of ways to foster socio-economic partnerships, including smaller states which have usually been overlooked by Western institutions. The proposals put forward by the Chinese government in their first African Policy paper is founded upon an assortment of historical narratives, win-win principles, and South-South Solidarity discourse. Both China and the countries within Africa have been victims of imperialist subjugation, to which this historical trajectory has become the basis for their common understanding and approach towards development.

During the 2015 FOCAC conference, the Chinese government committed themselves to an aggregate sum of USD \$60 billion in funds to cover the next three years of economic enterprise. I believe it is of high importance in order to deconstruct the budget and see where the money had hitherto been allocated; in order to truly gauge whether this level of expenditure is based on ‘win-win’ principles or not. My research, founded on an individual’s internal audit, reveals the following figures:

1. USD \$5 billion of free aid and interest-free loans
2. USD \$35 billion of preferential loans and export credit on more favourable terms
3. USD \$5 billion of additional capital for the China-Africa Development Fund
4. USD \$5 billion split between each Special Loan for the Development of African SMEs
5. USD \$10 billion as the initial capital for China-Africa production capacity cooperation

From this, it is clear to see the disparity between the ‘free aid’ provided and loans that were contingent upon China obtaining preferential access to Africa’s growing market – especially for its manufactured goods. A report conducted by the Research Lab at William & Mary reveals that the PRC had offered minimal aid in the strictest sense of the term, with regard to the development projects. As reflected in the figures above, the grant element constituted a mere twenty-five per cent. An abundance of the financial support that China provides ‘comes [in] the form of export credits and market[-rate] or close-to-market[-]rate loans’ (Dreher et al., 2017, p. 2); albeit China’s export credits and concessional loans to Africa play a strategic role in strengthening their economic relations and influence away from traditional Western donors.

They have achieved this by offering favourable loans such as longer grace and repayment terms as well as lower interest rates (Robertson & Corkin, 2011). In many ways, China and Africa are well-suited together. Much of Africa required monetary investments for their infrastructural development sector and are in possession of a large quantity of the world’s natural resources; whereas China is in their pursuit of greater opportunities overseas, by satisfying their burgeoning private sector with their requisition of Africa’s resource-rich materials to cater to its prospering economy. David Haroz rightly argues that ‘this combination of respective assets and liabilities has fostered a strong Sino-Africa interdependency, as each party uses the other to reconcile its own balance sheet’ (Haroz, 2011, p. 65). On purely economic grounds, China’s engagement with the African continent is generally viewed in a positive light and conceptualised as such – notwithstanding, of course, that there are few exceptions which one must keep in mind, as I shall further explore with the case study of Angola.

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We have discussed the economic strengths that Sino-Africans relations have fostered. However, the socio-political implications of Chinese foreign investments into Africa have had dire ramifications on the welfare of local communities. International spectators have noted that ‘Chinese businesses routinely abuse local labour laws and push indigenous entrepreneurs out of business by selling inexpensive manufactured goods’ (Hanauer & Morris, 2013). As a result, there has been an influx of an estimated one million Chinese migrant workers operating in private multinational corporations such as Huawei and ZTE within Africa (King, 2013, p. 105).

Moreover, this steep rise in competition may lead to domestic products becoming less desirable in foreign markets; as well as reducing incentives for African-owned businesses to counteract this growing issue by building and sustaining their own productive enterprises. A similar rhetoric has been set forth by Nee and Oppen, who highlight the growing conflicts of interests between the competing markets. In their contention, they state that the burgeoning Chinese presence in African markets has arguably ‘left only a narrow scope for domestic private start-ups’ (Nee & Oppen, 2012, 50). The growing social and economic inequality has become a deeply embedded phenomenon and is reminiscent of prior exploitation conducted by their imperial predecessors.

Furthermore, it is true to say that Sino-African economic relations have become ever more tainted due to the lack of accountability on behalf of China’s transactions of goods and services. For instance, China is not a member of an inter-governmental development organisation such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Therefore, they are not constrained by the principles and stipulations that all member states need to adhere to. As a result, China can effectively circumvent transparency since they are not obliged to partake in the OECD’s Creditor Reporting System – a system whereby data can be obtained to regulate where aid is to be provided.

Moreover, as there is a conspicuous lapse in external regulatory frameworks, any international standards that are violated will be kept unperceived due to the degree of secrecy exercised by the Chinese government and private contractors. What is even more alarming is that China’s ‘Eximbank usually does not report the terms of its own export finance activities which thus often constitute unfair trade practices’ (Massa, 2011, p. 11). Consequently, one can understand why the Chinese

are able to so easily and successfully dump low-quality, cheap products into the growing markets of Africa, as they do not need to report back to the aforementioned financial, global governance institution which would monitor and assess the level of quality of products.

Ultimately, Sino-African relations, particularly within the economic field, it becomes less simple and not wholly positive as one might assume. The intricacies of such relations manifest itself under the wider scope of China's accountability and lack of transparency for development. As one can see, this presents an enduring and growing issue for such relations.

Additionally, there have been cases of health deterioration due to the counterfeit of medicine imported by Chinese pharmaceutical industries. The consequences of this has resulted in as many as '100,000 deaths a year in Africa, according to the World Health Organisation' – so much so that 'Ivorian authorities in March burned 50 tonnes of fake paracetamol, antibiotics, vitamins, and other drugs' (Kuo, 2017). This shocking figure reveals the extent to which the role of capitalism, and the desire to accumulate maximum profits, has superseded the safeguarding of human life. Lastly, the environmental degradation brought forth by the manufacturing practices of various industries adds to the rise of global warming. As a consequence of international scrutiny, China's Ministry of Commerce and Environmental Protection (MCEP) has issued voluntary guidelines for the first time that 'encourage companies investing overseas to follow local environmental laws, minimise the impact on local heritage, manage waste, comply with international standards, and draft plans for handling emergencies' (Shinn, 2015).

Notably, however, these guidelines are voluntary, in this case; so companies can choose to dismiss this, since there are no penalties which follow acts of environmental transgression. These policies require revision; and the MCEP (or the African Union) ought to implement non-voluntary guidelines as a further precaution. China's environmental concerns have materialised into concrete legislation. Yet its implementation tends to be weak. Climate change is a global issue that transcends all geographic borders. Therefore, China's sovereignty needs to be put aside in order to share the collective responsibility of such activities – in order to generate further sustainable and greener forms of energy.

A post-colonial critique formulated by Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels comprehends globalisation of capitalism as the urge to seek expanding markets for its



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manufactured goods. For them, it ‘chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, and establish connections everywhere’ (Marx & Engels, 1848). This analogy is an accurate depiction of China’s quest for regional as well as global influence. Critics suggests, Chinese investments into Africa creates an aid-to-dependency pipeline; providing debt relief to several African nations, and creating a sense of entitlement and ownership by the donor state. Aid has long been used as a ‘concession by the imperialist powers to enable them to continue their exploitation of the semi-colonial countries’ (Hayter, 1972). Hence, this is rhetoric similar to that encapsulated in China’s foreign policy endeavours regarding the African continent. In applying a Marxist-Leninist critique of imperialism, economic ‘aid’ is set to serve the dominant country (China, in this case) at the expense of Africa and its development.

### Case Study of Angola

One of the most highly disclosed examples of a Chinese *natural-resource-backed loan* is the one arranged by China Eximbank in Angola. According to Broadman, the desired end-result of these investments is to propel African trade into cutting-edge multinational corporate networks – ones which are increasingly altering the concept of international division of labour (Tsikata, Fenny, & Aryeetey, 2008, p. 4). The international division of labour is synonymous with the global industrial shift of production from a heavily advanced industrialised country into developing countries. Although this is typically used to explain the North-South divide, we can see this take form in South-South relations with the case of Angola. Sino-Angolan relations is one of the most intriguing case studies to explore, simply because China’s financial investment in this particular region supersedes all the others.

This begs into question: What sets Angola apart from the rest of the continent? The prominent and presiding explanation for this lies in Angola’s natural resources – mainly, their oil reserves –which, unsurprisingly, have been used to repay their loans to China. Angola has accepted billions of dollars from Chinese state companies and investors, on the basis of their economic diversification strategy. China has loaned Angola a sum total of USD \$60 billion over the course of four decades (as their diplomatic relations predates the 1990s); and this will continue to increase, as Luanda insists on negotiating a further \$4.4 billion in funds (Alaco, 2018).

Under normal circumstances, Angola should be well positioned to manage its finances: the money accumulated from their oil reserves should clear their debts and foster their economic development. However, the issue therein lies in Angola's inability to generate cash flow from its natural reserves, since 'much of its oil is never sold on the open market and is instead used to pay off all the Chinese debt, prompting a severe liquidity crisis' (Olander, van Staden, & Dias Alves, 2018, p. 1). Angola has reached an impasse; and their dependence on Beijing for economic diversification has had serious implications for their long-term development plans. A post-colonial critique would imply that China's investments in Angola reflect the imperial undertones adopted by their former ex-colony. To conclude, the combination of financial investment, trade, and aid to facilitate the export of natural resources into China is reminiscent of the extractive and exploitative colonial systems of the Old Powers (Balasubramanyam, 2015, p. 21).

In the case of Angola, Sino-African relations fail to include the 'mutually beneficial' parts of their claimed agenda; rather, the reality signifies a zero-sum game. Conversely, if China does not take precautionary heed, they may find themselves in a 'lose-lose' predicament whereby the recipient states' economic infrastructure collapses under the weight of colossal debt driven by Western and Chinese investments. Some commentators have already foreshadowed a decline in China's foreign economic affairs, since 'unsustainable debt levels can lead to expectations of inflation and exchange rate depreciation (Fischer, 1993). The offering of these loans to Angola is contingent upon the Chinese government's ability to obtain preferential access to natural resources. But what happens when those natural resources start to deplete? The future of Sino-African relations becomes relatively unclear. However, one thing is for sure: If Angola does not leverage its oil for better deals with China, then it is placing itself at risk of compromising its future sustainability endeavours.

### **Case Study of Djibouti**

China's military in the mid-1990s was vast but antiquated in both operational practice and equipment. Since then, there has been a steady increase in the defence budget and this is reflected in their 'abilities to deliver advanced weaponry and equipment' (Chase, 2015, p. 5). Over the past few decades, the People's Liberation Army have utilised the method of protecting China's geostrategic pursuits by shifting their attention overseas. In 2017, the PLA officially deployed ships to

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construct its very first naval base in Djibouti; this newly built facility has thereafter become a symbol of China's hegemonic influence and power in the Horn of Africa.

Many US officials – including senators such as Chris Coons, a senior member on the Subcommittee for African Affairs – have displayed concerns with regard to China's overseas military base. The base will 'provide China a foothold at the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a strategic chokepoint in international maritime trade. About 4 percent of the global oil supply passes through this waterway connecting the Gulf of Aden with the Red Sea each year' (Cheng, 2018, p. 1). The landmark agreement to establish a base in Djibouti marked a critical step in securing a navy with sufficient equipment to access energy resources for its growing economy, thus creating an incentive for permanent Chinese military presence in Africa (Wiley, 2016). Even the most minimal disruption along the chokepoint of Bab el-Mandeb Strait impedes upon the flow of maritime traffic, and as a result causes a spike in energy costs which has reverberated across the global economy. Consequently, the competition amongst a conglomerate of states – ones such as Turkey, the US, and other Arab Gulf states in the region – may 'increase the potential for diplomatic discord and strategic instability' (Francis, 2018).

Thus, the PLA feel compelled to protect their strategic planning and operations overseas, seeing as the oil tankers are 'susceptible to pirates, terrorist attacks, and political unrest' (Gresh, 2017, p. 38). It is apparent that China views itself as the economic vanguard in that region, so their presence in Djibouti will continue to cause apprehension with their US adversaries. However, experts warn that by heavily relying on Chinese investments, Djibouti may fall into a state of quasi-dependence on the former. If Beijing is adamant on sustaining a long-term relationship with Djibouti based on the premise of mutual reciprocity, then China 'must give precedence to local interests and make sure to positively engage [with] and share profits with local communities' (Dube, 2016). One of the key tenets of imperialism is foreign military expansion. At this stage, however, some may argue that it's too early to indefinitely express a neo-imperialist rhetoric derived from the presence of China; as their primary concern in Djibouti is to safeguard their operations. As Mary Chan puts it: 'the labelling of China as a neo-colonialist or an imperialist power is symptomatic of a shift in [the] global balance of power, and hence [of] the growing uncertainty [as to] how to engage [with] or contain China' (Chan, 2018).

## **China's Foreign Policy and the Securing of Political Affiliations**

This section seeks to elucidate Sino-African diplomatic relations and the increased interdependency exhibited within global governance forums, such as the United Nations. Leni Wild claimed that the principal aim of China's diplomatic associations with African states is twofold: Firstly, it provides a buffer from international criticism following its human rights violations in Tiananmen Square. Secondly, it bolsters its global position amongst others emerging, as well as established, great powers. By economically investing in states such as Sudan which likewise have committed crimes against humanity, this culminates in the formation of a quid-pro quo relationship. In the political realm, such a relationship refers to the exchange of support (whether financial or otherwise), with the expectation of receiving political backing in the face of adversity.

A partnership has been formed between China and Sudan in their plight to deflect issues pertaining to human-rights infringements. Sino-Sudanese relations have proven to be mutually beneficial within such settings, given the nature of interdependence. Within the UN National Security Council, Sudan has become ever more important in its bid alongside other African allies in 'blocking resolutions at the UNHCR condemning China's human-rights record' just as China has been 'key in abstaining in votes in the UN Security Council on Darfur' (Wild, 2006). Ultimately, as one can see, Sino-African relations can simply be put as a relationship that exercises interdependence; with both parties being able to secure a balance of power on issues such as human rights and the maintenance of international law.

Chinese foreign policy places sovereignty above all else and has routinely condoned some of the most corrupt regimes in Africa. Sudan is a prime example of this, in that China has been an active agent of violence, in addition to having facilitated the Darfur genocide of 2003. China sold arms directly to President Bashir. This resulted in a death toll of 300, 000 lives – 'the military machine that has laid waste to vast tracts of land, forcing hundreds of thousands to flee their homes, was, in effect, bankrolled by Beijing' (Blair, 2007). China's complicity in the Darfur genocide sheds light on their negligence when it comes to human rights.

This is a disturbing characteristic embedded within their governance of domestic and international affairs. Thus, critics have a right to be concerned about the morality of China's foreign policy and the future hegemonic role that it wishes

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to play in the international arena. Their foreign policy of non-intervention and sovereignty is arguably fostering and harbouring dictatorship in Africa. The aforementioned genocide demonstrates this, to which their lack of democratic values and their disregard for human rights could potentially constrain the development of liberalism and the emancipation of African states.

China's African discourse is undergirded by the foreign policy priorities of comparative eras. The pattern of African policies has followed a trajectory from ideological (Mao) to pragmatic (Deng) to business (current) interests, mirroring China's ever-evolving perception of foreign affairs and domestic imperatives (Chan, 2013, p. 62). This is underpinned by the Chinese Communist Party's assertive adherence to the progression of its core national interests, under the domestic rhetoric of the 'Great Rejuvenation' (Langan, 2017, p. 90; Reeves, 2018, p. 978). It is instructive to see that national security and self-determination (rather than human rights) are at the forefront of their diplomatic affairs (Weatherley, 2014, p. 142); whereas Chinese discourse on human rights and democracy in the post-Mao era has long been compromised.

### US Hegemonic Competition

China's exponential economic growth poses a threat to US hegemony. The establishment of the Bretton Woods institution in 1944 gave birth to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank; which, for the longest time, have provided adjustment loans to many poverty-stricken nations, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, at the turn of the twenty-first century, there has been a distinct shift of investments into Africa by the emerging Chinese market and a decline in foreign direct investments by the US. Consequently, the steep rise in Chinese fiscal investments directly challenges the stringent demands imposed by Western global governance institutions such as the aforementioned firms. A key example is how, for 'every 1% increase in Chinese aid, Hernandez found that the World Bank lessened its typical demands for things like market liberalisation or economic transparency by 15%' (Hernandez, 2016, p. 21).

Using the database provided by AidData, Diego Hernandez, an economist, concludes that China's active involvement with lending aid has increased the competition between traditional donors from Western institutions. Moreover, Joseph Stiglitz also argued that the agenda of Capital market liberalisation has been pushed,

despite the fact there is no evidence that can correlate with economic growth. The economic policies imposed by the Washington Consensus have been inappropriate for countries in the early stages of transition. Pressurising an economically developed country to expand their markets onto the global stage has resulted in precarious implications for the socio-economic status of countries. With the state having been left open and highly susceptible to competition from stronger counterpart industries, poor farmers in developing countries simply couldn't compete with the highly subsidised goods from industrialised-developed countries.

So evidently, the iron-clad hold that the World Bank has had within regions of Africa is slowly but surely being loosened, with the lucrative economic efforts being displayed by the Chinese. China's offering of aid without preconditions and providing debt relief in return ensures valuable diplomatic support towards its national and global interests. However, as Tull has argued, the 'asymmetrical relationship differs little from previous African-Western patterns' (Tull, 2006); as the support for authoritarian regimes at the expense of human rights is still being sustained; although the economic contribution from China has been proven to facilitate an increase in trade between the state elites. Yet, one cannot simply ignore the political implications which are bound to prove deleterious for the wider society. The West does not see Africa as its equal. The narrative of Africa requiring the aid of the West has been deeply ingrained, reproducing the rhetoric of the white-saviour complex.

This year alone (2019), trade tensions have escalated between Washington and Beijing, causing a ripple effect, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. As we move into a more globalised economy, it has become increasingly difficult to disassociate from the inconvenience of trade wars amongst the superpowers. China has leveraged this opportunity to sow anti-American sentiments and to further deepen its long-term investments in Africa. On the topic of investments, the loans have (almost) no political conditions attached, and this is one of the many reasons why African officials have welcomed Chinese investment with open arms.

In conclusion, China's economic investments have enhanced the physical landscape of specific African countries, with over three thousand strategic infrastructure projects having been financed by Chinese corporations (Moore, 2018). However, this has come at a stealthily steep price for those African nations that are willing to compromise their natural resources in return for developmental projects.

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Irrespective of this, their natural reserves have always been a target and prey for Western powers and will continue to become a core strategic pursuit of their foreign policy agenda. At least with Chinese investments, Africa sees a return on their reserves, unlike in the historical colonial trajectory – i.e. the ‘Scramble for Africa’ – whereby exploitation of human capital and natural reserves was the norm.

This mentality of the ‘white-saviour complex’ has transcended its former iteration and has now insinuated itself into financial Western institutions in the form of structural adjustment programs which inevitably perpetuate the North-South dichotomy; whereas, with China’s economic agenda, their main objective is to foster South-South solidarity and mutual reciprocity. However, there have been a few exceptions, as illustrated by the case study of Angola, revealing the debt trap and imperialistic undertones of Chinese–Angolan relations. The inability of Angola to sell their oil on the open market and generate cash flow as a result of marketing all their natural reserves to China is highly problematic. However, whether or not this arrangement is fair, the impetus is on autonomous African governments to negotiate better trade deals; although the concessional terms of the low-interest loans prove to be favourable as is. An in-depth evaluation of Africa’s economic partnerships states: ‘[Analysis of] the trade, investment stock, investment growth, infrastructure financing, and aid concluded that no other country matches the depth and breadth of Chinese engagement’ (Moore, 2018). Thus, the economic dynamics between the two has proven to be mutually beneficial. However, the social-political implications concerning future developmental discourse are extremely notable.

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# 9

## THE ORIGINS OF TENSIONS BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN

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Since the events of the Arab Spring, a number of countries have been experiencing significant domestic instabilities that have been quite chaotic. However, two regional powers seem to be dominant over their neighbouring states, and have used these instabilities in order to achieve a characteristic hegemony within the Middle East. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia and Iran, despite their differences, have shared an ancient tension between each other which has impacted several regions around the world. As the two nations contain a significant percentage of the world's oil resources, the behaviour of the USA would tend towards being crucial to the enhancement of this tension. This paper will examine the reasoning behind the rivalry between these two nations – a rivalry which is political, economic, and theological in nature. The allies of both nations as well as their influences on the Iranian and Saudi Arabian systems – specifically, during the Trump era – will be illustrated. Additionally, two case studies will be presented in order to analyse the consequences on regional stability.

To understand the history of the modern state of Iran, we need to look back to the initial arrival of democracy in Iran, which has been labelled as having been the 'Constitutional Revolution', and which occurred in the beginning of the 20th century. The movement eventually failed, due to the foreign interference of the Russian government which strengthened the power of the then monarch. By the end of the First World War and the collapse of the Qajar dynasty, Reza Pahlavi, the military commander of the state, founded the Pahlavi dynasty and named himself as the new 'Shah' (Persian title for king) of Iran (Ghani, 2000). Additionally, it resulted in the Iranian parliament's playing an influential role within the state. After a few decades, the Iranian parliament successfully took control of the state – a takeover caused by the immaturity of the crown prince of Iran.

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Mohammad Reza Mossadegh, the democratically elected Prime Minister of Iran, halted the British's holding shares in Iranian resources, nationalising the profit from the Anglo-Persian oil industry, which made him a hero among the Iranian people (Marsh, 2003). The rise of Mossadegh resulted in the weakening of the role of the monarch, as the prime minister was supported by the majority of the population. However, since the American government was afraid of the rise of Marxist ideology in Iran, they overthrew him through a pre-organised coup, known as 'Operation Ajax' (ibid.). By the start of the 1960s, the Shah started a series of social reforms, also known as the 'White Revolution'. In the meantime, religious clerics, who were always considered as being supporters of low-class society, started to increase their exercise of political influence over them (Wagner, 2010). The Shah's reforms during the White Revolution were highly unpopular among Iranian society, because such reforms were seen as being measures motivated by a Westernised ideology and taken in order to put a halt to the flourishing of Iranian culture. Meanwhile, several opposition groups were actively trying to bring power back to Iranian society. Groups such as the Mujahideen-e Khalgh (MEK) and the Tudeh represented a combination of a Marxist Islamic ideology, liberal democrats, and Islamists who were all led by Ruhollah Khomeini (Wagner, 2010). Since Khomeini was the most widely known anti-monarch rebel leader – someone who had been jailed and exiled by the Iranian monarchy – he was chosen as the leader of the opposition party to overthrow the Shah. However, by the time that Khomeini got power and the Islamic Republic was established through a referendum, the other major opposition parties such as MEK and Tudeh were eliminated (ibid.).

Saudi Arabia could be considered as being a fairly new state in comparison to Iran. For centuries, the Arabian Peninsula had belonged to the Ottoman Empire. By the collapse of Ottoman Empire, though, Saudi Arabia had become a free state. Consequently, groups from different tribes had fought each other in order to conquer the peninsula. Eventually, by the late 1920s, Abdul Aziz al Saud conquered the majority of the land, officially declaring it as the independent state of Saudi Arabia in 1932 (Wynbrandt, 2019). Within a few years, a chain of oil reserves was discovered. This highly strengthened the economy and ascribed to Saudi Arabia the status of being a valuable ally of Western nations, despite its undemocratic political structure and conservative opposition to Western values such as human rights (ibid.). What needs to be taken into consideration within the history of Saudi Arabia is the holy city of Mecca, which has shaped the political power of

Saudi Arabia. Hence, the Kaaba is considered as being the very house of Allah – and it is part of the religious duty of every Muslim, regardless of their sect, to visit this mosque and complete a series of practices. Therefore, according to the essentiality of the Kaaba, it could be understood that Saudi Arabia has a significant advantage which allows them to have a sort of leadership over Muslim states by using this phenomenon as a religious tool. Additionally, this religious cite has been a remarkable economical factor for the state of Saudi Arabia as well, by attracting religious tourists each year (Business Today, 2018).

A key influential factor for the tension between Iran and Saudi Arabia is the sectarian divide of Shia and Sunni, which has been an ongoing point of difference for almost 1,400 years. Even though there are certain differences within these two branches of Islam, both sects share the core beliefs of Islamic ideology. The contradictions of Sunni and Shia ideology arose after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. Additionally, the Sunni Muslims' faith claims that the successor of the Prophet should have been selected based on experience and popular acclaim; which suggests the mantle of responsibility should have fallen on Abubaker. On the other hand, Shia clerics claim that the next Khalif of the Islamic Empire should have remained in the family of the Prophet, which suggests that Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, should have been chosen to be the next leader. Despite there being no official war between these sects, the division is used as a political tool for states to gain influence over people. The most prominent example of this notion would be the very reason that explains why Iran is a Shia majority state. With the rise of the Safavid dynasty and the Ottoman Empire, Shah Ismael, the leader of Safavids, in an obligatory gesture, changed the national religion of Persia to Shia Islam. According to Quinn (2010), they did so for two main reasons. Firstly, a goal in doing so was to declare their opposition to the Turkic state. Secondly, they did so in order to bring solidarity within the state because of the variety of ethnicities among peoples living in Iran (ibid.).

The ongoing conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia roots back centuries ago. During the spread of Islam, Persia was the first empire to be conquered by the Arab world. Furthermore, during the reign of the Arabs over Persia, the Arabs tried to Islamise the culture and traditions of Iran by extinguishing the identity of the Persian people, including their language. What they did could be considered as being a form of cultural genocide. However, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, during the reign of the Pahlavi dynasty, Iran and Saudi Arabia were on good terms,

since the 'Saudi Iranian' treaty was signed by both countries, as both states were backed by Western superpowers and were against the Marxist influence of the Soviet Union. Moreover, both nations' economies were heavily based on oil. This led to the foundation of OPEC in order to benefit the economies of both states. However, the 1979 Revolution and the selection of Khomeini as the supreme leader of Iran changed the Iranian attitude towards Saudi Arabia. Moreover, Khomeini highly opposed the idea of a monarch, which he called 'un-Islamic'; and he certainly demonised those political figures who were backed by Western powers. Therefore, he drew similarities and parallels between the Shah of Iran and the Saudi Royal family, which made the royals concerned about the spread of 'Khomeinism'. Additionally, according to CIA documents, the Islamic Republic of Iran is ideologically committed to the spreading of the values and principles of the Iranian revolution to other states, which could be considered as being a dangerous threat to Saudi Arabia, another regional power (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010). Consequently, this ancient conflict – along with fear over the spread of Iranian revolutionary ideas – led to a series of events. In the early 1980s, the Shia minority group in Saudi went to the streets and protested against the Saudi regime and declared reforms in favour of the Shia population, while holding Khomeini's pictures and quotes; this led to violent reactions from the Saudi forces, causing 20 people to die (France 24, 2018). During the Iran–Iraq War, Saudi Arabia decided to give financial support to Iraq, which rose to the anger of Tehran towards the Saudi royal family. The main indicating factor for conflict between these two nations would be the death of 400 pilgrims in Mecca (Times, 1987), which caused a cutting off of ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Afterwards, the two states transformed the shape and method of their conflict into an indirect form. The most prominent example would be the creation of Hezbollah, Iran's first proxy force.

By the start of the 21st century, the two nations had transformed their conflicts into indirect proxy wars. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia started funding the movements of Iranian ethnicities. Groups such as PJAK fought for the independence of a Kurdish state and for the Arab separatist movement that is located in the southern province of Iran. In fact, the last terrorist attack took place in Ahwaz, a city located in the southern region of Iran, with a population of 1 million Arabs. The attack, which caused the deaths of 24 people, was allegedly funded by the Saudi government. On the other hand, Iran has strongly supported the Shia movements within the southern region of Saudi Arabia, led by Sheikh Nimr al

Nimr (Mamadkul, 2017). The execution of this Shia cleric increased the tension between these two states and led to a wave of protests and demonstrations in front of the Saudi embassy in Tehran and Mashhad, causing diplomatic tensions between Iran and the majority of Gulf States, including Bahrain and Kuwait (ibid.). However, the proxy war between Iran and Saudi did not only take place within the borders of these nations. The start of the Arab Spring was the starting point in the international proxy battles between Iran and Saudi Arabia, drastically changing the dynamics of the Middle East region (McGinn, 2018). Both nations used the ancient tool of sectarian division in order to gain power within the region. Consequently, the Iranian government supported the Shia populations of Bahrain and Yemen who were oppressed by pro-Saudi governments. Conversely, Saudi Arabia supported the Sunni populations within Syria and Iraq which were ruled by pro-Iranian Shia leaders (McGinn, 2018).

It could be argued that the Syrian Civil War is a product of the tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Syria is a Sunni majority state which has been ruled by a Shia president. This alone could have attracted the attention of both Tehran and Riyadh. Additionally, Bashar al-Assad, who has always been on good terms with the Iranian government and Hezbollah, experienced a series of anti-government protests and riots which were highly supported by the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council), particularly Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, by the start of the Arab Spring in 2010, Saudi Arabia seemed to sense an opportunity to weaken the Iranian influence within the Levant by overthrowing Iran's ally, al-Assad, because of the growing Iranian involvement in Lebanon and Iraq in the post-2003 order in the Middle East (ibid.). The main goal of the Saudi's involvement was to spur on American intervention within the state of Syria. This goal was achieved. Consequently, Iran saw the uprisings as a threat to its regional hegemony, mainly due to the involvement of the US and Israel, both of whom were (according to the Iranian perspective) using the Saudi platform as a tool. Additionally, the Iranian clerics believed that the overthrow of al-Assad's regime could potentially be a danger to their own regime. The clerics eventually awakened the Iranian population against the population, as the chaos was occurring only a few years after the Green Movement. Therefore, Iran, with the air support of Russia (another ally of both the Syrian government and of Hezbollah), sent in their troops – led by Qassem Soleimani (the commander of Quds force) – in order to keep Assad in power at any cost (ibid.).



Yemen is another battleground for the Saudi-Iranian proxy war (Salisbury, 2015). Furthermore, since Yemen is the neighbouring country of the Saudi government, the royal family has been trying to maintain the behaviour of the state. On the other hand, Tehran is aware of the oppressed Shia minorities of Yemen which could be impactful to the Shia population in Saudi as well. During the Arab spring, the Yemeni population fought against the totalitarian regime of Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had been in power for almost 20 years. Eventually, President Ali Abdullah Saleh had to give up his power, which he turned over to his deputy manager Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi in 2012 (Salisbury, 2015). This overthrow resulted in governmental failure due to significant unemployment rates and food insecurity. The failure of Hadi's government was the main cause for the re-birth of the separatist group 'the Houthis' founded by 'Hussein Badr al-Deen al-Houthi', the ex-Zaidi member of the Yemeni parliament who fled to Iran and who was eventually killed by the Yemeni army in his hometown in 2004 (ibid.). Additionally, the tension increased after the conquest of Sana'a and extended the territory to Al Hudaydah and Aden in the Western and southern regions of Yemen, which forced Hadi to flee to Saudi Arabia. As a response, Saudi created a coalition among several Arabic countries such as Egypt and the UAE in addition to regaining the Western region of Yemen because of the Arab League being aware of the essentiality of this region. Firstly, the port city of Al Hudaydah holds a crucial position because it borders the Red Sea and lies along the only route for ships delivering crude oil from Persian Gulf (ibid.). Secondly, the closeness of Sana'a to the southern region of Saudi Arabia would be highly influential on the Shia clerics in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the Saudis would have no desire for Iranian influence in this region because such influence would directly affect the Saudi economy and society.

The existence of half of the oil resources within the Middle East attracts the attention of powerful states – namely, the USA, Russia, and China – to the region. As a matter of fact, the regional dominance of both Iran and Saudi Arabia would not have been possible without international support. Since the Iranian revolution, Western powers – including (more precisely) the USA – shifted their alliance from Iran to Saudi Arabia. This has had a positive impact on the power involvement of Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the US has usually acted as a solid supporter of the royal family by offering financial and military support in return for barrels of Saudi oil. On the other hand, as a result of the Iranian revolution, the clerics openly declared their opposition against the American-led world order.

As a consequence, states with a similar desire – states such as China and Russia – have been mostly acting in favour of the Islamic Republic, in order to weaken the American influence within the Middle East. However, the election of Donald Trump as president of the USA has complicated the international relations of both Saudi Arabia and Iran. Since the withdrawal of the USA from JCPOA, the remaining members of the treaty – including China, Russia, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom – have opposed the ‘maximum pressure campaign’ against the Islamic Republic, due to their economic interests. Therefore, the Iranian regime has, to some extent, changed its attitude towards several Western nations such as France and Germany. On the other hand, from the start of his presidency, President Trump has been strengthening economic ties with the Saudi government, including the increase of arms sales such as missiles, which has had devastating effects on the war against Yemen. Hence, similar to the case of JCPOA, the European Union has a different approach towards Saudi Arabia, precisely regarding the arms trade, caused by the dishonesty of the royal family in the case of Jamal Khashoggi and the brutal conflict in Yemen.

One of the main similarities between the two states is that both countries have a vital dependency on oil exports, which introduces another reason for tensions between the two states. Since Saudi Arabia is the largest oil exporter of the Middle East, with 11.5 million barrels a day (Consumer News and Business Channel (CNBC), 2018), the price of oil significantly dropped to almost half with the return of Iran to the global oil market in 2015. Furthermore, by the end of 2015, Iran and the P5+1 came to a so-called ‘Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action’ (JCPOA) agreement, by which Iran would assure the International Atomic Energy Agency that it would not produce any sort of nuclear-warfare-capable material; and by which, in return, the economic sanctions would be lifted from the Iranian state (McDonald, 2016). As a consequence, the oil production of Iran almost doubled from 1.8 million barrel to 3 million barrels (McDonald, 2016). As a result of this increase in oil production, the value of oil decreased to \$30 per barrel, pushing the oil-based financial market of Saudi Arabia to the verge of collapse (CNBC, 2018). According to a series of political/economical events in 2015, it could be understood that the improvement of Iranian-Western relations would not be in favour of the Saudi government. On the other hand, in May 2018, Donald Trump announced the American withdrawal from the Iranian nuclear deal and a re-imposing of sanctions on elements of the Iranian economy, which has resulted in the reduction of Iranian national oil production to just under 1

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million barrels, causing high inflation within the Iran market. In the meanwhile, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who planned to privatise Aramco, was on the edge of bankruptcy due to the Iranian nuclear deal (Algethami, 2019). However, since the price of oil has increased and financial embargoes have been placed on Iran, Aramco's shares have experienced a significant increase within the market – an outcome which has been promising for the Saudi economy (*ibid.*).

As has been mentioned, the American foreign policy during the Trump era has been a turning point in the antagonism between the two nations. Furthermore, since the start of the financial embargoes on the Iranian market, the regional stability of the Middle East has been heavily jeopardised. Hence, President Trump's campaign of exerting maximum pressure has shown that the US is willing to push the Iranian economy to the verge of collapse (in response to concerns over the revelation of Iranian concealment of its nuclear program). The Iranian revolutionary guard and the connected proxy militias have illustrated a response towards the sanctions which endangered both the safety of neighbouring states and their billion barrels of oil that have impacted the global market. The most prominent example of this issue would be the attack on the KSA's biggest oil manufacturing company 'Aramco'. Houthis in Yemen took credit for this attack, yet Saudi Arabia believes that the Islamic Republic played the main role in this attack. Moreover, on the 14th of September, Aramco experienced a series of missile attacks that eventually resulted in the destruction of half of Saudi oil resources. The consequences of this occurrence were highly impactful on global oil prices, resulting in a price increase of USD \$10 per barrel (BBC News, 2019). Therefore, it could be understood that withdrawal of the USA from JCPOA, rather than stabilizing the region, has had quite the opposite effect. The result could have been expected, because the Iranian regime – being under significant economic pressure – is willing to destabilize the region in order to force the Americans to revoke the embargoes.

Overall, it could be perceived that both nations 'need' to demonise one another in order to achieve regional hegemony. From their perspective, maintaining this power is critical to both states in relation to securing economic and political dominance. However, it could be perceived that both nations have grown quite tired of this never-ending conflict. This fatigue explains the recent efforts of the Iranian regime to start direct negotiations with the royal family. However, an agreement between the nations would be highly unlikely, because of Trump's influence over

Saudi politics. From a broader perspective, the influence of Russia and China in Iran, and of the US in the Arabian Peninsula, further enhances the tensions between these two powerful states. Therefore, in order to achieve peace in the region, the two states must weaken their influence over their neighbouring states.

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# 10

## DIGITAL GOVERNANCE AND DIGITAL ECONOMY IN UZBEKISTAN

*Sasha Alexandra Sternick*

The world we are living in is highly digitalised, and most of us can barely imagine what life would be like without having our smart devices and on-demand access to the Internet. However, this is not the reality for most Uzbek citizens: According to a 2018 estimate, only 48% had access to the Internet (from any device), while 70% had access to a mobile connection (We Are Social, 2018). These numbers tend to grow over time, and there is a substantial possibility that soon, all of Uzbekistan would be covered in a fast and accessible broadband network. Keeping this in mind, it is essential to act proactively and deliver the best services when possible.

Despite many problems that could be seen inside Uzbekistan as being much more urgent priorities than the creation of e-economy and e-government, it is important to recognise their necessity for a prosperous and sustainable development. Digitalisation can ease access to crucial resources and provide a generally streamlined platform for a dialogue between the government and its citizens.

Uzbekistan is a developing country with its own set of (sometimes unique) problems. While the annual GDP growth is 5.3% (World Bank, 2019a), its economy has yet to become prosperous. Governance is inefficient on many levels. The prevalence of young people in the population is accompanied by a lack of jobs and a lack of social mobility. The agriculture sector is still the biggest employer; and with the fast-approaching environmental crisis, this is yet another urgent concern. Simultaneously, there is not enough export to boost economic prosperity. However, digitalisation can address these concerns.

There are barriers hindering the development of digitalisation: poor infrastructure, a lack of qualified personnel, and a lack of female empowerment. This report will

aim to address such barriers, while highlighting the aspects that should be given special attention in the near future. Case studies of two countries – Belarus and Estonia – will be used to justify these recommendations.

### **Methodology**

Considering the substantial lack of information on Uzbekistan in English, the author conducted a fieldtrip to the country in January 2019. Various governmental officials, UNDP representatives and NGO specialists were interviewed. The report is based on a synergetic synthesis of primary data (in the form of interviews) and secondary data (reports, articles, and legislative sources). The paper consists of three main parts: country profile, foreign case studies, and the review of issues with recommendations regarding each. While each part of the paper can be read individually, together they provide a coherent picture and the justification for the recommendations proposed at the end.

### **Overview of the Current Situation**

The Republic of Uzbekistan is an ex-USSR Central Asian developing country which is going through a number of rapid changes. Since 2016, there were particular developments towards liberalisation. This will be described in more detail later in the report. Uzbekistan shares borders with other post-Soviet countries: Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, as well as Afghanistan. The latter deserves special attention, as its proximity is the main reason for unrest in the region, as well as the general justification for the increased level of security in Uzbekistan: The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan remains active in Afghanistan (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2019).



*Uzbekistan (Google Maps, 2019)*

Geographically, Uzbekistan is located in a very disadvantaged position: It is a double-land-locked country, deprived from the most efficient way of transporting goods – open water. The country has an area of 447,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and a very diverse geography. While most of the territory is deserted, the highest mountain in the eastern part of the country reaches 4,299 m (14,000 ft.) (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). Uzbekistan is rich in natural resources: oil and gas (81.4 million tonnes and 977 Mtoe of recoverable resources, respectively) (World Energy Council, 2019). However, two main sources of income are exports of gold (\$3.67B) and cotton (\$594M). The latter is also responsible for the poor environmental situation in the country: Most of the soil is very saline as the result of barbarous irrigation methods. This, combined with the very arid climate, puts extra pressure on irrigation systems. In order to facilitate this, the Soviet Union was using the Aral Sea, which led to an environmental catastrophe: The sea is now only 1/5 of what it used to be (Naturvernforbundet, 2019) (see Figure 1).



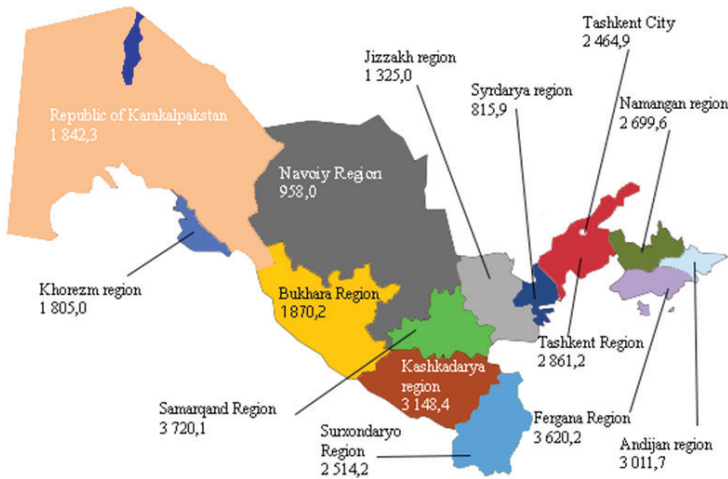
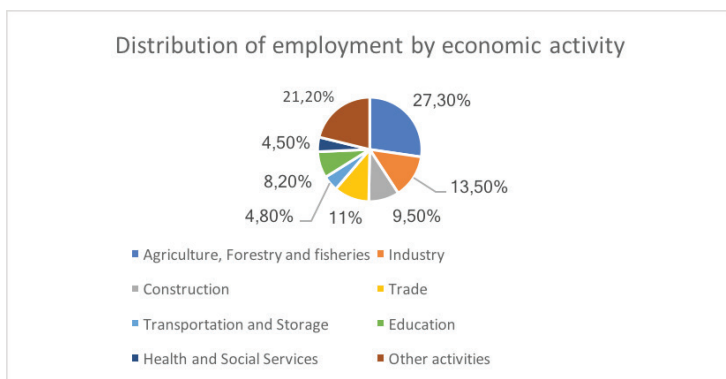


Figure 1. The number of people by region (at the beginning of 2018), per thousand people

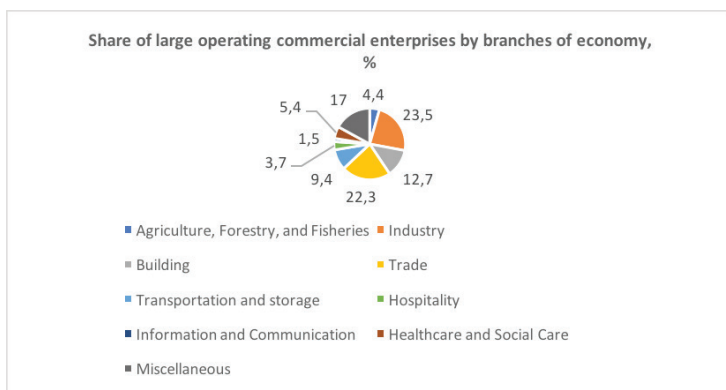
Uzbekistan has the largest population in the region, with more than 32 million people (State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, 2019). The population is distributed somewhat equally between cities and rural areas. The urban population is 50%. The annual natural increase in population is 554,000 people (State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, 2017). The median age is 26.7 years, and the main age group is 25–29. Literacy is 100% for both sexes, and school life expectancy is 12 years. Retirement age is 55 for women and 60 for men, and life expectancy stands at 74.3 years (Trading Economics, 2019b).

In terms of the economy, the GDP stands at around \$48.7 billion, with a per-capita GDP of \$1,504. The exchange rate to USD (as of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May, 2019) is 8445.49 UZ. The country's size of labour market stands at around 18.6 million people, with an unemployment rate of 5.8% and an underemployment rate of 20%. The latter is a source of major concern: while the unemployment is fairly standard, the underemployment rate is particularly distressing. It is especially concerning, considering the natural growth of the population of 543,000 per year. Moreover, per the current employment structure, the biggest employer is the agricultural sector – despite that sector's being responsible for no more than 4.4% of the GDP (see Figure 2).



*Figure 2. Employment chart*

This is both extremely inefficient and alarming, considering the already lamentable situation with Aral Sea and the coming consequences of global warming in future. The situation is further worsened by the poor export profile of the country. At the moment, the country's predominant source of income is the export of non-renewable resources (i.e., gold). Additionally, there is an uneven gender distribution of the employed workforce: 61.5% are men and 38.5% are women. The same goes for education: Only 36% of students entering universities are female (see Figure 3).



*Figure 3. Industry chart*

At the same time, since 2016, the country has been going through a massive amount of economic reforms aimed at the liberalisation of the economy. For instance, in 2017 the Central Bank stopped artificially supporting the monetary exchange rate and allowed a free currency market to emerge. The rate immediately dropped about 50%, and the black market dissolved. The creation of new businesses and licensing has been hugely simplified. Taxes have been simplified and reduced. Export and import operations have been liberalised; and restraints for travelling and working abroad have been eliminated.

### **Overview of Uzbekistan's IT Policy**

'Attempts to move to the digital world began in [the year] 2000. There were two main problems: [N]either did the government understand the full picture of what [was] happening[,] nor did they understand what ... e-government is'.

*– Diyora Kabulova, UNDP Uzbekistan*

By the end of 2003, electronic signatures were granted the same status as physical ones (National Database of Legal Documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2003). Legal electronic document management first appeared in 2004 (National Database of Legal Documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2004). However, this first attempt to implement e-governance failed and was frozen for almost a decade, due to several reasons. As several author's respondents pointed out, there were no effective connection between separate state departments and agencies, and no conception of data transparency and data integration between them; most of them had not maintained electronic databases and information systems at that time.

A second attempt, taking a more comprehensive approach, was made in 2013. In June, a Presidential Decree approved the 'Comprehensive Program for the Development of the National Information and Communication System of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2013–2020' (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). The document determined infrastructure-related tasks for national telecom development; and on top of that, 28 projects and activities were named, aimed at the development of e-government for the period 2013–2020. The document was also known as the 'e-Government Master Plan'.

On the basis of this document, the e-Government Centre (EGC) and the Centre for Information Security (InfoSec) were created. They were subordinate to the

State Committee for Communications, Information and Telecommunications. The EGC and InfoSec were not seen by other government agencies as having enough political weight. This lengthened the transitional period required for creating the Republican Commission under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. Ultimately, however, much progress was made.

As a result:

- The State Personalization Center (SPC), established under the Cabinet of Ministers, now holds an entire database of biometric passports (National Database of Legal Documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2013).
- Database integration between state agencies was achieved. There are unified databases of legal entities; of transport vehicles; and of a cadastral database of real estate.
- A NGIS (National Geographic Information System) is being developed – one which is designed to hold several map layers with information on each property, with objects being assigned a cadastral number.
- A Single Portal for Interactive Public Services (SPIPS) was created, integrating all projects into one system – and opening that system to public use.

In theory, providing the public with state services through the online portal is a good idea. In practice, though, there are some problems with its implementation. The most important problem is that online access is not yet available for everyone:

- The Internet infrastructure leaves much to be desired. Internet users now number just over 20 million.
- Most Internet users are mobile users; whereas many services – such as a digital signature – require access to a computer.

‘In 2011[,] UNDP helped [with] launching a pilot project of the first ‘Single Window Center’ (a one-stop shop). The full transition to the online mode [of governance] is still far away, and having one-stop shops is a necessary intermediate solution. The load on [such shops] will decrease when it will become possible to conveniently receive public services via mobile phones. All [of] this needs to be developed in parallel’.

*– Anonymous respondent, member of staff of an NGO based in Tashkent*

The attempt to launch e-government under the 2013 master plan was partially successful. However, not everything in the plan has been implemented so far. This is due to several factors, according to the author's respondents:

- Some governmental agencies are difficult to work with: There is a dominant mind-set of 'belonging' to a ministry and seeing everyone else as 'competitors' instead of working together.
- Whether consciously or not, some of their staff might actively resist the process, for reasons ranging from sheer rigidity and fear of changing accustomed habits, to protecting the opportunities for corruption to blossom on the soil of non-transparent processes and non-change-proof data.
- Non-digitized paper archives. While this is a problem which the government strongly intends to solve, it will take several more years to scan all the existing paper documentation (including, remarkably, the national birth certificate archives).
- General stagnation of the state (1991–2016).

The new stage of the transition began in 2017; and since then, many processes have sped up. The National Agency for Project Management (NAPU) was created. The NAPU is directly subordinate to the president. Then, by several consecutive executive legislature acts, including the July 3, 2018 Presidential Decree on Promoting the Development of the Digital Economy, many mandate duties and executive powers were transferred to NAPU from various state agencies, including passing the burden of governance on to the state's mobile operator. EGC and InfoSec have been closed. By 2019, NAPU concentrated enough power to control all the steps related to digitalization.

One more approach to digital opening of the government to citizens was tried by creating the Virtual Office of the President. According to Bobir Akilkhonov, at the time of the interview, the CFO of the Digital Trust Foundation (which is subordinate to NAPU), two million complaints (regarding the work of state officials) had been registered by it since its launch in 2017. However, the same respondent mentioned the issue of this tool not being corruption-proof: Officials with a high degree of influence are known to interfere in its work, pushing the administrators to delete complaints concerning their departments.

NAPU is currently developing a national strategy entitled 'Digital Uzbekistan 2030'. Rapid changes are observed relating data openness: Many state departments, including the Central Bank, which had previously fully closed their data, now open their data to public scrutiny. While this process is already seen as positively influencing direct foreign investments and the transition to good governance, the accumulation and the analysis of data, reliable statistics, and data-driven decision making are at a very early stage. At the end of 2018, in his annual address to the Parliament, the president listed digitalization among the main priorities of development; new projects are being prepared with the help of global NGOs – in particular, the World Bank is working with the Government on the preparation of the proposed 'Digital CASA – Uzbekistan' project.

### **Successful Examples of Other Post-Soviet Countries**

In order to justify the recommendations proposed below, various success stories were studied. For the purposes of this report, two case studies are particularly relevant: Belarus and Estonia. These countries cannot be considered as being exact mirrors of Uzbekistan. They could, however, represent two stages of its development. Considering the size limitations of this report, the case of Belarus will be used for exploring the topic of digital economy. Likewise, the case of Estonia will be used for exploring digital governance.

### **The IT Sector and the Digital Economy in Belarus**

(This section will be mostly based on the Ernst & Young Report from 2017.)

Belarus is a dynamically developing country from the post-Soviet bloc. While it has a dynamic economy, there are problems that have to be solved:

- The country's productivity index is around 4 times lower than productivity within the EU;
- Most of the production is material insufficient and energy inefficient.

As a result, President Lukashenko, in 2007, called for the rapid development of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector (President of the Republic of Belarus, 2016).

The ICT sector in Belarus is now accountable for 5.1% of the overall GDP and 2.2% of total employment. It means, however, that it reached circa USD \$4 billion in revenue in 2016; that is 7 times more than in 2009. The ICT share in total export grew by sixfold – in contrast with the drop in total exports in 2012–2016 (Ernst & Young Global, 2017).

This massive change started to happen when Hi-Tech Park (HTP) was established. HTP is both a hub physically hosting its residents, and a special tax zone. Residents are entitled special preferences, including exemption from income and value-added taxes, as well as a reduction in taxes on employees' salaries. 'Thanks to the HTP, Belarus managed to build a mature export-oriented software development industry and became a significant player [in] the IT services market in Europe over just 10 years. Today, Belarus[] Hi-Tech Park is one of the largest IT clusters in Eastern Europe, with over 30,000 software engineers employed there. This favourable environment, as well as the availability of qualified IT specialists, fosters the development of IT business in Belarus' (Ernst & Young Global, 2017). For example, Masquerade Technologies, Inc., the company behind MSQRD masks (a popular app enabling users to overlay animated masks over their face in selfie videos) were residents of HTP prior to being acquired by Facebook (D'Onfro, 2016). Overall, '[e]mployees of HTP residents make up 28% of the total ICT workforce and 70% of those employed in the IT products and services segment' (Wade, 2015). 'HTP residents contributed 28.9% to [the] total ICT sector revenue in 2015 and 85.7% to total exports of computer services. Therefore, the bulk of computer services that Belarus exports is generated by HTP [Hi-Tech Park] companies' (Ernst & Young Global, 2017, p. 22).

This data should highlight the necessity of investment in developing an ICT hub in Uzbekistan. While this is already happening in the form of an IT park which had been due to be launched in September 2019, it is necessary (as primary data from Uzbekistan shows) to further emphasise the need for developing the educational sector. According the E&Y report, 24% of Belarusian students are specialising in STEM, while private companies from the industry are working with local universities to ensure that the quality of education is sufficient for their needs. In order to achieve this, they are offering courses taught by professionals from the industry; are setting up labs; and are opening their own training centres.

This approach works: ‘Belarusian students have taken part in competitions such as ACM ICPC, Google Code Jam, Google Hash Code, TopCoder Open[,] and IEEEExtreme. In 2004, the Belarusian State University team took third place and won a gold medal in the International Collegiate Programming Contest (ACM ICPC). From 2004 through 2016, a total of over 40 students achieved strong results, 29 of them taking prizes in individual or team competitions’.

Belarus’ IT industry has managed to achieve an incredible level of development over the last 20 years, predominantly due to public-private partnerships and the creation of the High-Tech Park. This model is something that seems very feasible for Uzbekistan to follow.

### **E-Governance in Estonia**

This part of the report will be based on materials provided by the e-Estonia website. Estonia is a brilliant example of the triumph of e-governance. 99% of the governmental services in the country are available 24/7; and 44% of citizens vote online. As a result, ‘1407 years of working time [have been] saved’ (E-Estonia, 2019), and ‘the use of IT tools in the security services (e-Police, rescue board, [and] emergency centre) has halved the number of deaths by accident in Estonia over the last 20 years’ (E-Estonia, 2019).

The most important aspect to be learned from e-Estonia is that ‘it lacks a centralised or master database – all information is held in a distributed data system and can be exchanged instantly upon request, providing access 24/7’ (E-Estonia, 2019). A consecutive timeline of how and when various features of e-governance were introduced is a useful orienteering tool with which to follow the chronology. The steps after the first introduction of e-governance in 1997 included the following milestones, among other accomplishments:

- 2000 – Online tax filing and payment;
- 2001 – X-Road (the environment integrating together various databases);
- 2002 – Digital ID;
- 2007 – Digitalisation of public services related to security and safety; and
- 2008 – Implementation of the Blockchain.



The key approach is the usage of open-source technologies, and decentralisation. Despite not operating within the framework of one single database, Estonia managed to ensure a perfect connectedness throughout the system. This was crucial to building a properly functioning structure and allowed the private sector to develop – which, in turn, contributed further to the development of the system (Kalvet, 2012). As a result, Estonia is the only example, among other post-Soviet countries, where the corruption level fell after 1991. This happened mostly thanks to e-government, as various studies suggest (Andersen, 2009). This model could be replicated in Uzbekistan.

## **Challenges and Recommendations**

This section is dedicated to solving two different categories of challenges: ones slowing down the country's development in general, and ones hindering digitalisation in particular. Recommendations begin by offering a solution to the main problem and proceeding on to addressing consecutive obstacles that could be found along the way to achieving that goal. While the most obvious proposal to encourage the development of the IT industry would be introducing tax benefits and preferential treatment to IT companies, including creating IT parks, this particular recommendation is not being elaborated here, since the government is already doing this. There is a special tax regime for ICT companies: 7.5% of income tax instead of 12% and 0% for unified social payments instead of 25% (Norma.Uz Информационно-Правовой Портал, 2018). Uzbekistan's IT Park, similar to Belarus' HTP, is due to be opened later this year (Interview data).

## **Challenges**

Every state has a number of issues. Some are common to the region (or in general), while others are fairly unique. Uzbekistan is a post-Soviet country with a predominant Muslim population, located in Central Asia. Therefore, the problems it is experiencing could be divided into a few main categories: historical [H], regional [Reg], common [C], and unique [U]. Some problems could fit into more than one category, but the most prominent one is chosen. This division is essential, as it allows for making recommendations using a factual base and a comparison to countries with similar profiles. Issues include the following ten:

1. It has a regionally low GDP; Uzbekistan's per-capita GDP is amongst the lowest in the region [Reg].
2. It is a double landlocked country (with poor transportation links); this is a very unique issue, as there are only two such countries in the world, Uzbekistan and Liechtenstein. Unfortunately, Liechtenstein's experience is not exactly applicable, considering the difference in size and socio-economic position [U].
3. It lacks female empowerment (although it is important to highlight that this is true mostly for the rural regions and small villages, rather than for the big cities like Tashkent) [C].
4. It has poor infrastructure (electricity, network, water, etc.), especially in its remote regions; [H].
5. It lacks qualified personnel [C].
6. It has a deficit of universities/colleges; the nation lacks adequate space to accommodate potential students [H].
7. It has a poorly managed government (ineffective services, a high level of corruption, a lack of transparency, and bad communication between various agencies) [C].
8. It has an unstructured banking industry; there is public distrust of banks in the country, as Uzbekistan lacks a modern financial system [H].
9. It has a very centralised and unevenly distributed economy; there is a steady stream of resources (including human resources) from the 'outskirts' of the country to Tashkent [Reg].
10. It lacks computer literacy (although general literacy levels are nearly 100%) [H].

Some of these problems are tied together and should be addressed as such; for example, a lack of qualified personnel is implied by the deficit of universities.

## **Recommendations**

While digitalisation (as such) cannot be the universal answer to all the problems, it could serve to help in solving some of them. Thus, the recommendations below would address the issues highlighted above.

## **The Unique Geographical Problem**

As the map shows, Uzbekistan is a double landlocked country, which hugely hinders the export and import of goods (World Shipping Council, 2019). Concentrating on exporting products exclusively to neighbouring countries could help avoiding high transportation expenses but would require producing something very unique to the region, which does not seem feasible (but which could become relevant later). One possible solution is exporting not physical products, but on-line services; to become a large source of remote workers (coding; copywriting; call centres; etc.). Such workers could act either as freelance contractors or as remote full-time employees. They might be marketed and job-placed through companies specialising in outsourcing services. Additionally, considering that electricity in Uzbekistan is quite cheap in comparison with developed countries (Global Petrol Prices, 2019), the country could become a massive host for various on-line services – for example, server hosting and online accounting. Of course, that should not become the main specialisation of the country, but it could provide a relatively stable source of income for the time being.

There are few massive country-level players in the outsourcing markets; but the largest one is, of course, India. Granted, its population (of 1,3 billion) is far bigger than Uzbekistan's (32,67 million people) (World Bank, 2019c). Also, India has the 'added benefit' of having the English language as one of the official languages due to its colonial past. However, these factors should not discourage the Uzbek government from following the Indian example. While being able to make English a widely spoken language within a country in the next 10–15 years, Uzbekistan already has Russian as the second working language, which gives access to roughly 260 million people worldwide (Ethnologue, 2019). This would allow the country to focus on the Russian-speaking market, while increasing the number of English speakers.

As mentioned above, the government is already following this course of action in its aim to resolve the current problems of unemployment and dependency on labour export. Furthermore, the current government's strategy for solving this problem dovetails with solving the next problem.

## **The Low Capacity of Universities/Colleges and Under-Qualified Personnel**

While around half a million people graduate from secondary schools annually (the number of applicants to universities in 2018 was 675 049) (*Mg.uz*, 2018), only slightly more than 10% of them have a chance to enter university (81 331 admissions listed). A huge number of young people are left behind. To solve this problem, the government is currently reaching out to various educational institutes abroad. For example, Inha University in Tashkent, a branch of the Korean university, was opened in 2014; and the University of Westminster in Tashkent was opened in 2002. Besides that, of course, local universities have been opened recently; for instance, Tashkent State Institute of Law was opened in 2013.

However, with the development of modern educational technologies, there is a potential to accommodate even more students. Online education is on the rise right now in the form of online courses like Coursera or Udemy, but also in the form of online lectures provided by the leading universities in the world. For example, 'edX is a joint partnership between MIT, Harvard, and many other top universities to offer online learning to individuals around the world' (MIT Admissions, 2019). While education is, in fact, not technically a part of e-governance, changing the approach throughout the system is a strong necessity.

The state could adopt policies simplifying and facilitating access to these educational platforms. This may include subsidising Internet-accessible fares and fees of individuals or learning centres offering computer classes; private-public partnerships; or state-financed procurement of translations of courses. Also, providing legislative support could make this process very efficient. Also, while these degrees/educations may not be equal to 'actual' 'offline' degrees, they should nonetheless be recognised.

Besides that, there is a range of fairly low-level IT professions (e.g. testers; data assessors) which can be taught via short-term professional courses. While these courses would not provide a full degree, they could ensure rather rapid employment in IT companies. Organising such online courses by both domestic and foreign IT and e-education companies should be encouraged by the state, again, through the granting of preferences and the establishment of public-private partnerships. Some of the interviews conducted in Tashkent mention that policy is already recognised by the government, and the first business arrangements to

that end are on the way. However, that would not be possible without solving the next problem.

### **The Lack of Computer Literacy**

The need for greater computer literacy could be solved by first addressing not the end users, but someone higher in the hierarchy: ‘hokims’ (heads of the local administration); chiefs of schools or of local societies; etc. There is no way around this at the current stage of computer literacy in Uzbekistan; there being no other viable means except the top-down approach. Unfortunately, there is no data available on the level of knowledge at the ‘top’. If the information becomes available later and shows that the level is not satisfactory, educational courses should be set up across the country. This could be done with the help of the youngest generation – as, in most cases, they are the first to adopt new technologies. Building a wide network of such an educational effort could become a project involving local communities. Culturally, Uzbek society is characterised by the high level of neighbourhood collaboration and a high involvement of local communities in all aspects of individual and family life. Such an intergenerational project is not only well suited to these habits, but could also provide additional workplaces for young public servants in the community.

### **The Very Poor Gender Balance**

Gender inequality still exists in Uzbekistan. While this is not the case for Tashkent, the capital, it is prevalent in the regions. As studies show (Klasen, 2010), gender imbalance prevents development and prosperity. This issue, surprisingly, can be addressed under the scope of this report: One of the very fundamental principles of the Internet, which is the platform for both digital economy and governance, is its accessibility to everyone. This could be utilised to dramatically improve the situation while preserving cultural norms and traditions.

Considering that in some traditional families, women are not allowed to work or socialise outside of the home, there is a logical solution: to bring work inside the home. Essentially, that brings another angle to the concept of developing the country’s potential as a massive hub for outsourcing: Women could be given relatively low-level online work on a part-time basis. While not exposing them to the

opposition of their families, this might raise their self-esteem and empower them more by providing them with some income and virtual socialization.

This would require them having necessary skills, which they might lack in very rural communities. These skills could be provided via online courses, and therefore would not oblige them to leave their families.

### **Poor Infrastructure**

The above solutions are possible only after the most fundamental problem is solved: poor infrastructure. In fact, there are three sub-problems which to be addressed.

'[There is] a massive problem with the electrification of the country. The government subsidises prices too heavily, so energy is exported, and [is] not [retained] for the domestic population [to the extent that it should be] — as a result, [there is only] weak penetration of the Internet [into] the [nation's remote] regions ... Also, the Uzbek-Telecom market is monopolised, and public-private partnerships have not been developed until recently.'

— *Diyora Kabulova, UNDP Uzbekistan*

### **Electricity**

Considering the climatic features of the country, the most obvious solution would be the installation of solar panels. There are major financial investments required, though; recently, SkyPower, a solar energy developer, announced that it will invest \$1.3 billion to build 1 gigawatt (GW) of solar capacity throughout the country (Hill, 2018). The 'throughout the country' part is particularly important here: While the situation is better in big cities, it is rural regions that suffer the most. In some cases, they have electricity only for a few hours a day. However, considering that on average there are no less than 100 sunny hours monthly (Uzbekistan, 2019), solar panels dispersed within the country might provide electricity 24/7 even for the most distant regions.

At the same time Uzbekistan is currently exporting energy abroad (International Trade Administration, 2019). While this is an important source of income, this is neither stable nor beneficial for most of the population. Thus, if the country reorients to the third sector of the economy (i.e., the service industry), there

would be enough power to kick-start the installation of solar panels. Hopefully, that should solve the current energy crisis.

## Network

Solving the electricity problem will not solve the problem with the network. There are two separate sub-problems: (1) the price of broadband access and of network availability, and (2) the price of the devices themselves (see Tables 1 and 2). Broadband connection is unavailable in rural regions and is high priced where present. The main reasons for that are geographical (laying seabed cables to access foreign traffic is impossible, and bringing cables to mountain regions is too expensive). The country is working on launching own satellites and partnering with neighbours; but the temporary intermediate solution possibly lays in bringing cheap mobile connections to rural villages. There is a case study of San Juan Yae, Oaxaca, Mexico, where the state created its own cellular network. This happened because the state had been ignored by larger players, as it had been deemed as being too small of a market for such companies to make a profit.

While this report is not aiming to access the potential profitability of remote regions of Uzbekistan, the strategy of creating small-scale cellular services providing Internet traffic could solve some of the country's network problems. Most importantly, it is affordable for poor citizens: In the San Juan Yae case, subscribers of the local network are paying \$2 per month (Wade, 2015).

*Table 1*

Percentage of Internet Users (in relation to the total population)	Percentage of Mobile Internet Users (in relation to the total population)	Percentage of 3G & 4G Mobile Connections	Affordability of Devices & Services (out of a scale of 1–100)	Mobile Ownership
48%	30%	51%	55.96	70%

*Table 2*

Internet (60 Mbps or More, Unlimited Data, Cable/ADSL a month)	1 min. of Prepaid Mobile Tariff Local (No Discounts or Plans)
£ 37.11	£ 0.023

## **Device Prices**

Affordable devices in the country, where the average monthly salary is circa \$170 (State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, 2017b), is an important factor. Part of the price for the end user lays in retailers' commission. There is an elegant solution for this that could also address another problem. As one of the GSMA's reports suggests, women are the most disadvantaged groups in terms of smartphone ownership.

The situation could be mitigated by granting special preferences for women who are opening and maintaining small-business smartphone distribution businesses. That would both improve gender balance and reduce the smartphone prices, thereby reducing the commission. The expectation is that this will lead to a rise in mobile ownership, among the poorest strata, in 5 years – enabling a rise in their connection to, and usage of, the digital economy and e-government services.

## **Poorly Managed Government**

*'There is a fundamental problem in the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent Countries) – corruption.'*

*– Bobir Akilkhonov, former CFO of Digital Trust, Uzbekistan*

Good governance is a system run transparently and smoothly, where citizens' requests are fulfilled quickly and efficiently.

Corruption, which is one of the main problems faced by Uzbekistan right now (and by most of the other developing countries), is based, among other factors, on the opportunity to manipulate data and documents. The results of such manipulation pose a threat to public safety; spoil the statistics (obstructing decision making); and inhibit the reliability of ownership (decreasing investment appeal of a country): In such a system, any document or record could be changed in return for a bribe or pandering to the will of an 'influential person'. The author's respondents mentioned examples of corruption in admission to universities; deletions of complaints regarding civil servants; and the faking of university diplomas (together with the faking of admission and graduation records).

One-stop shops closed the doors on corruption (doing so by circumventing the system of extorting bribes in return for performing various services). However,



the opportunity for data manipulation is still open to unscrupulous officials. This problem can be addressed by introducing blockchain, a technology that ‘authenticates the ownership of assets, makes them traceable, and facilitates their digital transfer’ (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019). A data entry cannot be modified separately in an isolated place controlled by a sole administrator – any invalidated data chain would be ruled out by the decentralised network and replaced with a valid chain from other nodes.

The country’s government has already recognised the prospect of this. The Presidential Decree of July 2018 declared the importance of blockchain, together with the cryptocurrency market and crypto-exchanges. To explore the field, the state-owned Digital Trust Foundation was created under NAPU. One of its tasks is establishing private-state partnerships to implement the technology into the practice of documentation exchange between the various public and state bodies. However, the process is at an early stage now, and requires a strong political will to make all the organisations incorporate these changes.

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PART **III**

**GLOBAL SECURITY**





# 11

## TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE PRIVATISATION OF GLOBAL SECURITY BECOME INCREASINGLY MORE SIGNIFICANT?

*Kate Vasiljeva*

Ever since the Cold War, due to the rise of private security companies (PSCs) as well as private military firms (PMFs), security has been increasingly viewed as being a private-entity concern and as part of the market. Discussions on the privatisation of security within the field of International Relations have grown exponentially in the twenty-first century, but the question still stands as to whether such discussions, and the privatisation of security as a whole, have gained significance over time and become more prevalent in the present day as compared to conventional state security apparatuses.

In order to fully grasp and understand the rise of the privatisation and commercialisation of security, it is first empirical to outline what is meant by security. In the 1980s, when the study of security started to gain major significance again, it was most often defined in military terms, which often only focused on military threats and omitted discussion about any other kinds of threats that existed (Krahmann, 2008, p. 381). This, therefore, allowed scholars to elaborate on the definition of security and our understanding of it. Over time, it has come to be defined as 'the absence of threat' (ibid.). This broadened the definition to more than just including understandings of military threats; and began to involve 'state and non-state actors and entities' (ibid.). It also touches on a broader spectrum of threats including 'environmental degradation and infectious diseases' (ibid.) as well as other threats. In addition to Krahmann's definition, it is also helpful to view security in terms of the following questions: Who is the security for? What does it provide protection from? Which values is it based on? What means can it use? What is the cost? What is the time frame? How much security is needed?

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(Baldwin, 1997, pp. 13–17). These questions help identify security beyond the existence of threats, and question the motives of those who are in charge of providing security narratives and protection.

To pinpoint how the privatisation of security can be understood, it is first empirical to highlight the fact that traditionally, states hold the monopoly on legitimate violence. Privatisation of security is, therefore, the monopoly over violence being distributed to private security companies who operate on a transnational or a global level (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2009, p. 2). The privatisation of security has been argued to be a ‘quiet revolution that coincides with the expansion and spread of mass private property’ (Kitchen & Rygiel, 2014, p. 204) which needs protection. It can be seen as being a move to commercialisation, where security can be put up as a product on a global market.

This paper will, therefore, argue that privatisation of security has gained large significance in the global market as well as in the field of International Relations in the twenty-first century, and especially in the present day. It will mainly address the privatisation of security through the notion of private security companies (PSCs) but will also touch on the general commercialisation of security (as both are closely interlinked and have been used together or interchangeably in the literature that addresses the topic of global security). This will be done through an initial discussion of the rise of private security companies in recent years and their relevance to the privatisation of security. The paper will then go on to argue how the success of private security companies in the global market has made the privatisation of security more significant in current discussions about global security. It will then touch on the consequences that privatisation has brought about and what those consequences mean for global security. The paper will finally also argue that the literature around the subject of privatisation of security lacks breadth due to the majority of texts only discussing physical threats regarding security and omitting the rest.

Since the 20th century, the world has seen a drastic increase in the number of private security companies emerging in various states. This has been largely due to the ‘neoliberal reconstruction of the global economy’ (ibid., p. 203) in which the focus has been shifted from state provision of security to private entities providing the security instead. This has also meant that some have claimed that the privatisation of security has contributed to the ‘erosion of state power and authority’

(Abrahamsen & Williams, 2009, p. 1) and that it thus has been deemed as being something negative and dangerous.

Since the Cold War, the increase in private security companies has been rapid. In Japan, the private security sector has also grown ten times larger between 1972 and 2003, from 41,000 personnel to 460,000 (*ibid.*, p. 2). Similarly, the Russian private security sector grew significantly after it became legal with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1992. In its first year, 4,000 private security companies emerged, which increased to 6,775 in 1999, with firms employing over 850,000 personnel in contrast to the 28,000 police officers in the country at the time (*ibid.*). Furthermore, the United States has employed from 1.5 to 2 million people in the private security sector, outnumbering their police force by two to one (*ibid.*). When taking the figures from around the world into consideration, it is obvious that in most cases, private military and security personnel outnumber state security personnel. This is one of the key factors in arguing for the idea of the erosion of state power, especially the power over security.

In addition to private security company personnel growing exponentially, private security firms have also brought in a lot of revenue for themselves through the provision of their services. In the aforementioned case of Japan, the private security sector brought in revenue of \$30.6 billion for the state in 2003 (*ibid.*). Similarly, in the U.S., between 1990 and 1999, private military sector revenues doubled in size from \$55 billion to \$100 billion (Leander, 2010, p. 209). This is also closely linked to the United States government's spending an estimated '\$3 to \$4 billion for private security services between 2003 and 2007' (Congressional Budget Office, 2008; cited in Cotton, 2010, p. 12). The revenue figures for private security companies, as well as the extensive spending of some states to employ these private companies in order to help alongside state-employed security personnel, both demonstrate that the private security sector has grown significantly – not only independently of the states, but also due to state demand for their services. This is seen in the case of the U.S. and their spending on the private security sector in addition to on the pre-existing U.S. Army. The extra spending has opened 200,000 positions that can be subject to being outsourced to private security companies (*ibid.*, p. 11). In looking at these statistics, it can be argued that the privatisation of security has gained significance, as private companies have been employed by governments to work alongside officials. This also

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suggests that both the public and the private spheres can work in harmony with each other and not impose on each other's power and rights.

Over the years, it has also been evident that the ratio of soldiers and state security personnel to private security personnel has drastically changed. Such was the case in the U.S. in 1991, where the ratio of private contractors to soldiers was 1 to 60 but which then jumped to 1.3 to 1 in 2007 during interventions in Iraq in the aforementioned years (Leander, 2010, p. 208). However, even this figure might be underestimated due to a lack of published information on these private security contractors. To understand the scope of just how large the sector is, it is helpful to look at the currently largest private security company in the world, G4S, also formerly known as Group4Securicor, which employs over 570,000 people and which operates in 44 different countries (G4S, 2019). G4S, like many other private security companies, now works regularly with state security personnel as well as regularly working independently of the state, thus demonstrating their scope as a separate sector but also as a partner which can be helpful to the state that they operate in. The fact that PSCs are private entities also means that they can act in their interests and not represent those of the state, as they have no obligation to do so.

The way that the private security sector has been able to generate such income (including investment from the state) and number of personnel is by 'identifying new threats and increasing risk perception, but also by individualising threat perception and security provision in order to expand the number of potential customers' (Krahmann, 2008, p. 390). The sole reason for the existence of private security companies is to provide security to the people that require it. In order to provide this security, a potential or existing threat needs to be identified as well as the risk that it poses to the people who need protection. Therefore, private security companies can be understood as being companies that are pitching a business idea to further push their agenda on 'selling their own message about insecurity' (Leander, 2010, p. 6).

Furthermore, this newly emerged private security sector has been influencing the outcomes of wars in recent years, in addition to them selling their own messages about insecurity (Singer, 2002, p. 188). This is especially evident through the conflict in Kosovo in 1999, where private security firms (PMFs) supplied logistics and information on aspects of warfare against the Serbs, as well as operating the

refugee camps just outside the borders of Kosovo (ibid.). The conflict illustrates the extent to which private military firms were integrated into helping stop the conflict; and demonstrates the fact that they worked alongside conventional forces and personnel to solve it. This also demonstrated the reach that the privatisation of security has had over time and how they have grown to become more significant as international security players, as seen in the case with Kosovo in 1999.

However, this is not the only time when private security companies were able to influence the outcome of international conflicts, humanitarian crises, or wars. Apart from Kosovo, private security companies have also been prevalent in 'wars in Angola, Croatia, Ethiopia-Eritrea, and Sierra Leone' (ibid.). Their involvement in the outcomes of the wars and conflicts illustrates the increase in their power regarding national and global security, especially in regard to the fact that these private security companies are protecting the interests of the general international community.

The success of the private security companies in various conflicts has allowed for the further marketization of security, which is affecting 'the supply and demand of security' (Krahmann, 2008, p. 390). Private security companies have had vested interest not only in shaping public opinion but also in increasing individual risk perception and therefore, in creating a demand for greater use of private security services. Although crime rates had fallen, '[the perception of threats and] the demand for private security in the US and Europe have increased' (ibid., p. 391), meaning that the profits of private security companies have increased as well. PSCs have used the most prominent threats in the twenty-first century to their own advantage, this largely including the War on Terror that had emerged after 9/11. The demand for the provision of private security has meant that PSCs are in a position where they hold the power to manipulate the public and to create demand from said public for more of their services (Leander, 2005, p. 814). In turn, this is also a key step in increasing the presence of private security companies on an international level as part of a global market.

Similarly, Europe and North America have been outsourcing many of their military sources to private companies, thereby demonstrating the idea that states and organisations have become dependent on these companies to meet the demand for security provision. The case of this can be seen in terms of the US military, which has employed private security companies in a range of fields and programs.

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An example of this is private military firms being employed for the delivery of military instruction as well as for the 'operation of the computers and communications systems at NORAD's Cheyenne Mountain base, where the U.S. nuclear response is coordinated' (Singer, 2002, p. 189). This demonstrates the multifaceted abilities of private security companies, something that is not always available when it comes to state security personnel. Additionally, this also generates greater demand for the provision of security by private companies, as they can provide a wider variety of services than just physical security protection.

Private security companies' ability to provide a wide variety of services also cements their status as reliable businesses, thus not only generating demand on a personal level and a national level, but also on an international scale as well. How this has been most evident is when taking into account terrorism and how the privatisation of security has contributed to solving the risk and threats of said atrocities. Terrorism has gained greater prevalence – since the atrocities of September 11, 2001 – in discussions regarding global security – and, more than ever, has become a perceived-as-growing global threat in all parts of the world. To solidify these threats as imminent and real, private security firms have used events such as the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center to push for further demand for the provision of their services (Krahmann, 2008, p. 392). This is typically the provision of information on known figures as well as of physical protection from any dangers.

However, if the focus is given to the year of the 9/11 attacks, then it can be seen that 4,548 people had died in terrorist attacks worldwide in comparison to over 42,000 people in the U.S. alone who had died in traffic-related incidents (*ibid.*), thus suggesting that the use of events like 9/11 serve the purpose of instilling fear in people, so that they can then turn to private security services to protect themselves from said terrorism. A similar case was present in the UK after the 2005 terrorist attacks in London, where businesses were advised by the national police 'to upgrade their protection in order to safeguard themselves' (*ibid.*, p. 393). Such dependence on private security, as well as a demand for private security services, demonstrated the growth of the privatisation of security as a whole regarding smaller concerns and threats as well as large-scale global threats such as war and terrorism.

Despite the vast analysis of the privatisation of security and global security in general, there has been a significant gap in analysing privatisation of security in terms of threats that are not physical, such as cyber-attacks. Most of the literature on the topic focused solely on the military aspect of security and the aforementioned physical threats like terrorism. Smaller physical threats or things such as environmental threats and epidemics were widely accepted as being part of the general definition of security but were not analysed by most of the literature as part of privatisation of security. The lack of analysis on a wider variety of security threats makes analysing the privatisation of security and its relevance to today's society and global security extremely problematic, as (too often) the focus tends to be exclusively directed only on the large-scale physical threats.

In concluding this essay, it has been evident that the privatisation of security has had a large impact on global security over time and has continued to remain relevant as a key player in the provision of security. Despite the lack of breadth of analysis on different security issues, it is still evident that private security companies have had a big impact on many international conflicts and wars such as Kosovo. Additionally, the vast numbers of employees around the world who are employed in the private military sector have demonstrated the reach that PSCs have had globally and continue to have today. Furthermore, the changing nature of individual perceptions of threats and risk due to various events and conflicts taking place around the world have increased the demand for private provision of security, where state security has not been able to cope with the task. The demands for private security provision have not just come from individuals. They have also come from companies, too, where things such as employing private security personnel or buying items from private security companies like fences, barriers, CCTV, and more have become the new norm in today's society in order to protect companies and individuals in those companies from security threats. All this has led to a dependency on private security and has transformed the notion of security into a consumer market. This idea of dependency and demand was pushed further by the private security sector through the exploitation of events such as terror attacks to present the public with the perception of there being an increased threat. The need for private security has also extended to a state-wide level, as seen in the case of the United States which outsourced several of their security operations to private security companies. It has, therefore, increasingly been evident that the privatisation of security has gained significant attention on the individual, corporate, national and even international levels – thus penetrating



## TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE PRIVATISATION OF GLOBAL SECURITY BECOME INCREASINGLY MORE SIGNIFICANT?

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all layers of the global society. Private security companies have become normalised in today's world and now play a big role in providing security for people.

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# 12

## COUNTER-TERROR METHODS IN THE UK AND THEIR IMPACT ON BRITISH MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

*Zara Patel*

This paper attempts to understand whether the counterterror policies in the United Kingdom (UK) post-9/11 have been a success and whether or not they have led to an increase in Islamophobia. The paper will start by analysing current counterterror policies enacted post-9/11 and will attempt to ascertain whether or not they have been a success. The next section will examine my attempts to organise a focus group at the University of Westminster and the methodology used to collect this primary research. Finally, the paper will analyse why the focus group did not work and why I was left to gather primary research in a very different way than what I had initially intended, despite having the relevant ethics approval.

### **The ‘Nitty Gritty’ of the UK’s Counterterror Legislation The Perceived Threat**

The September 11, 2001 attacks against three major structures in the United States of America (USA) caused the world to wake up to a new ‘threat’ that, up until that point, virtually no one had seen as being imminent. This threat came at the hands of one group and one man: Al Qaeda and its leader Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden was fixated on destroying the economic and military capabilities of the USA by successfully destroying New York’s Twin Towers (a symbol of financial excellence) and a wing of the Pentagon (the USA’s military core). The group killed 2,997 individuals (CNN, 2018) and left many more injured. These attacks came with little warning to the world’s most powerful country and left it and its allies reeling. The aggressors had managed to do what was deemed impossible – they put fear into millions of citizens, who were left with little faith in their governments. Whilst Western countries took new measures to defend against

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terrorism, the UK and USA implemented the most changes, with little regard for their citizens' human and civil rights.

Bin Laden claimed that the attacks were payback for the USA's deployment of troops to Saudi Arabia and, back in 1987, had called for 'a boycott of American products' (Byman, 2015) to protest the treatment of Palestinians by Israel. Bin Laden blamed the US for their support of Israel and claimed they were equally responsible for the deaths of Palestinian civilians. In 1992, Al Qaeda issued a fatwa 'urging jihad to fight the US occupation of Saudi Arabia and other Muslim lands' (ibid.). He also celebrated numerous attacks committed against US bases or civilians around the world as being part of Al Qaeda's 'jihad'. This obsession with the USA was new, and was not a country bin Laden and his organisation had originally intended on fighting. The group was formed after successfully defeating the Soviets in the 1979 war with Afghanistan. They had started out as the 'Mujahideen' and had operated with support from the USA. However, when the Soviet occupation ended, US support ended, and they went from friendly allies to vicious enemies.

Despite many warnings before September 11, the USA, along with many Western countries, continued to underestimate the strength of Al Qaeda and were shocked when the attacks took place. This threat has been in the forefront of counterterrorism policy in the UK since 2001 and has led to some questionable policies being enacted by the government of the time. It is important to ask ourselves whether the UK needed such policy after 9/11, as we were not the country that had been attacked. Whilst 9/11 shook the world, the perpetrators were aiming for American targets, not British civilians, and had very little problem with the policy of the UK. This, however, all changed after the Blair government decided to join the USA in the invasion of Afghanistan. Had such choices not been made, the threat that we face today might not have been as prevalent.

### **The UK's Reaction**

Although the perpetrators of 9/11 had not invaded UK airspace, 67 Britons lost their lives – the second highest total after American lives (Hewitt, 2008). Many scholars have attempted to understand why the UK took measures similar to those taken after a mass assault on its own soil after the 9/11 attacks. The answer may lie in Blair's speech to the nation that evening. Prime Minister Blair stated that

the UK would 'stand shoulder to shoulder with our American friends' as 'this was not a battle between the United States and terrorism, but between the free and democratic world and terrorism' (Associated Press, 2015; Sky News, 2001). Blair's speech infers that British efforts to back the USA in the 'War on Terror' were predicated not on fear, but on the need to back an ally to the bitter end. On the night of 9/11, UK-time, Blair ordered a no-fly zone over central London and made immediate plans to visit President Bush in Washington, being the second leader after the attacks to do so (Hewitt, 2008). In his October 2001 Labour Convention speech, Blair declared that the UK had joined the USA in the 'War on Terror', focusing his speech on UK foreign policy in response to the attacks. However, he neglected to disclose steps that were being taken behind-the-scenes to enact domestic policy as a result of the attacks. The speed with which the legislation was enacted is indicative of the realist approach of the Blair government. 'Strategic choice theory' proposes that actors will survey their environment and will then attempt to produce a strategy that best works to defend them (Foley, 2013). This theory was clearly used by the UK to defend its borders, as well as to attempt to stay within the boundaries of UN and EU Human Rights requirements and the basic tenets of UK rights laws.

### **The First Response**

The UK's first attempt to enact counterterror policy came shortly after 9/11, when a central Sub-Committee on International Terrorism was formed under the Defence and Overseas Policy (DOP) Committee of the Cabinet Office. The aim was 'to review government policy on international terrorism, with particular focus on the UK's ability to locate, capture[,] and convict suspected terrorists' (ibid.). The UK government took exception to following laws set out in the EU human rights legislation that it had signed. For example, according to such legislation, they would be unable to arrest an Egyptian terrorist in London and deport him home, because Egypt uses torture as a form of interrogation. Sending him to what certainly would be unfair questioning would violate his human rights. A 2005 review of the work conducted by the DOP sub-committee found that the current laws in place to prevent terrorism in the UK were inadequate; more had to be done.

## CONTESTing the Status Quo

After the review into the UK's counterterror policy deemed the existing policy to be inadequate, the government took new measures to protect its citizens. Possibly the most significant of these measures was the creation of a new senior-level government position known as the 'Security and Intelligence Co-ordinator'. The first person to be given this post was former GCHQ Director Sir David Omand. Whilst well versed in Cold War politics, there is no evidence to suggest that Omand had any experience in terrorism or the impact that Al Qaeda could have around the world. The main part of this role was to create a new counterterror policy for the UK; this new policy became known as CONTEST. The CONTEST policy was fourfold: PURSUE, PREVENT, PROTECT, and PREPARE.

- The PURSUE strand referred to intelligence and methods to better facilitate the flow of information between governmental organisations and allied countries. This included making organisational reforms and mapping out actions that could be taken against potential or confirmed terrorists within UK borders. This strand also covered the research of new anti-terror legislation and operations against terror networks.
- The PREVENT strand, possibly the most contentious of the CONTEST policy, concerns the radicalisation of individuals into terrorist organisations.
- The PROTECT strand referred to increases in surveillance technology for the protection of public property which could be targeted by terrorists.
- The PREPARE strand was a plan to manage the effects of terrorism and the immediate aftermath of an attack (Hewitt, 2008; Foley, 2013).

The CONTEST policy was endorsed by the DOP Ministerial Committee on Terrorism in 2003, and came into effect shortly thereafter – in 2004, it was approved by the UK cabinet. Whilst Sir Omand laid out the basic tenets of the policy in press conferences, it was not published until 2006; one year after the 7/7 bombings. Foley suggests that the main motive behind publishing CONTEST was to provide the public with the confidence that their government had a full-proof plan to defeat terrorism after the fear that had stemmed from the 7/7 attacks (Foley, 2013). Providing the public with such a detailed plan could also be seen as being an attempt to legitimise the unethical or otherwise illegal practices woven within the policy – in particular, the practices under the PREVENT strand of CONTEST.

## **PREVENTing Terrorism ... But Does It Work?**

According to the 2006 CONTEST policy, published by the UK government, the sole purpose of the PREVENT strand is to 'tackle the radicalisation of individuals' (2006 CONTEST Strategy, UK Government). They intended to do this by 'tackling disadvantage and discrimination'; in other words, by attempting to break down the structure of disadvantaged communities and remove the stigma placed on British Muslims by the media. However, the problem is that the stigma that the policy is trying to remove arises from the implementation of the policy itself. The British government admitted that 'some of our counter-terrorist policies will be disproportionately experienced by people in the Muslim community' (Bonino, 2012). If the policy is implemented solely in areas with a high Muslim population, the public infers that they are the problem. This leads to British Muslims suffering 'day-to-day harassment' (ibid.) at the hands of the police and the public, and leads to them retreating into their communities, looking for alternative outlets for their frustration. In many cases, these alternative outlets are terrorists behind a keyboard seeking vulnerable Muslims to join their cause, promising a true sense of community and belonging (Sky News, 2014). This hypocrisy, whilst being pointed out by several leading academics like Abbas and Bonino, has yet to be recognised by the government, which still employs the above-mentioned method to counter terror.

Another tenet of the PREVENT strand is 'detering those who facilitate terrorism and those who encourage others to become terrorists – changing the environment in which the extremists and those radicalising can operate' (2006 CONTEST Strategy, UK Government). This 'bullet' is twofold. The first seeks to stop those who are radicalising individuals, and the second attempts to shut down their forms of radicalisation. This is a very brief and broad policy. The word 'deter' does not explain how the government intends to stop individuals radicalising young Muslims to join their cause. Much of what they say is covered under freedom of speech or freedom of expression laws. Therefore, they could not necessarily be prosecuted for their words without them claiming that they were being persecuted for expressing an opinion. Furthermore, the 'environment' that the government hoped to change with this policy is nearly impossible without monitoring Internet or mobile phone usage, which is considered illegal in the UK, but which is allowed in the USA under NSA wiretapping laws. This leads Hewitt to believe that the UK's main flaw in its PREVENT programme is an

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attempt to be too much like the USA in its fight against terror (Hewitt, 2008). Both parts of this point rely on first-hand intelligence or the illegal monitoring of citizens in order to prove radicalisation; and the methods behind their intent are not mentioned in the 2006 policy brief, making the policy itself worthless.

The final tenet of the PREVENT section of the 2006 CONTEST policy is 'engaging in the battle of ideas' (2006 CONTEST Strategy, UK Government). The government claims that 'challenging the ideologies of extremists ... primarily by helping Muslims who wish to dispute these ideas to do so' can avert British Muslims' radicalisation (ibid.). However, this can easily backfire. Government attempts to help young Muslims better understand their religion can be seen as an imperialist government telling their citizens that their beliefs are not valid; that they are wrong. This is a dangerous needle for a democratic government to thread. On the one hand, many terrorist organisations use excerpts from the Quran to justify their claims; while on the other hand, attacking these 'ideologies' could be perceived as attacking the fundamental beliefs of Islam. Doing this would not encourage British Muslims to turn to their government for guidance, as the policy suggests; rather, it would turn them away from their government and into the hands of those who can better justify their position: the terrorists.

Under the guise of the CONTEST legislation (particularly the PREVENT section), the government has been able to target Muslim communities and has used forms of policing that would not otherwise be allowed (Heath-Kelly, 2012). The consensus amongst the Blair government was that CONTEST was 'largely about discussion and symbolism and not concrete action' (Hewitt, 2008). The lack of faith in the policy from the very government that published it is worrying and gave the policy very little chance to succeed. Although the policy has progressed over time, with a new counter-terror report being released by the Home Office every year, the bias towards British Muslims was clear from the start. The first CONTEST policy, published in 2006, was available in only three languages: English, Urdu, and Arabic. The latter two languages prove that the document was written with citizens from Urdu and Arabic-speaking countries, also known as MENA countries, in mind, and from which many Islamic terrorists originate. Furthermore, the bias is seen in the 'The Threat' section of the 2006 CONTEST Strategy. The document recognises that the UK has faced terrorism pre-9/11 and that 'terrorism is not a new phenomenon' (2006 CONTEST Strategy, UK Government). Nonetheless, the only threat the document claims the policy

has been designed for is the threat of Islamic terrorism – a threat that the document acknowledges does not come from an accurate representation of Islam, but rather from ‘a distorted and unrepresentative version of the Islamic faith’ (ibid.).

### **‘Londonistan’**

For years prior to 9/11, London has been home to people from around the world, and has been seen as being a smaller version of the USA’s ‘melting pot’. After the attacks in the USA and the 7/7 attacks, the UK government was put under pressure by the media to root out extremist Muslim preachers such as Sheik Omar Bakri Mohammed, otherwise known as the ‘Tottenham Ayatollah’, and deport them to their home countries in order to stop them influencing young Muslims in the UK. The term ‘Londonistan’ was reportedly coined by ‘French officials outraged at the British government’s inability ... to extradite the Algerian Rachid Ramda, who had been charged in France with financing a series of attacks on public transport in Paris in 1995’ (Caldwell, 2006). The term was later adopted by the media and commonly referred to areas that had a strong Muslim presence. The ‘-stan’ is in reference to the Persian word meaning ‘land’, but also refers to countries, like Pakistan or Afghanistan, that have a majority-Muslim population. Few can define the term specifically; however, the author believes it can be defined as a community whose identity has morphed into something perceived as being more culturally Muslim or ‘Arab’ than ‘British’.

In the years preceding 9/11, very little action had been taken to prevent the radicalisation of young Muslims or to stunt the growth of so-called ‘terror organisations’ in the UK. The power given to Sheik Omar Bakri Mohammed – and his quick rise through the ranks of suspected terrorist organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir – is an example of this neglect. Founded in 1953 by Taqiuddin al-Nabhani (*New Statesman*, 2008), Hizb ut-Tahrir is a Sunni-Muslim based organisation now commonly associated with the Islamic State in Syria (ISIS). However, the organisation’s roots are in Jerusalem, with a scholar whose ideas are not dissimilar to those of the Salafi founder, and author of *Milestones*, Sayyid Qutb (Manne, 2016). The organisation had a base in the UK for years and took an active role in the lives of young British Muslims, attempting to convert them to their cause. Umm Mustafa was persuaded to join Hizb after meeting them at a 1998 ‘Freshers Fair’ at the University of Brunel. Their main attraction to Mustafa? The question of why religion should be confined to the Mosque, and not forced into the realm



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of politics – to use the words of Mohammed Shamsuddin, a notorious Islamic preacher from North London currently unable to leave the UK and ‘moulded by Omar Bakri’ (Roberts, 2016), the belief that one day, ‘the black flag of Islam will fly over Downing Street’ (ibid.). Mustafa became a fully-fledged member of the organisation, after months of gaining trust, at age 20; one year before 9/11. She joined their ‘halaqa’ – a small group of Muslims who come together to discuss the Quran – and spent hours listening to recordings of sermons by their founder Al-Nabhani; all of this was quietly radicalising her to the wider cause. Given that these circles were seen by security services as being a symbol of free speech, no one ever thought to gather intelligence on the subject of these meetings. Mustafa chose to leave the group in 2006, after Hizb leaders were unable to answer her pressing questions; and their explanations of scripture started to make less and less sense (*New Statesman*, 2008). She is still a practicing Muslim, but no longer identifies with the ideas behind Hizb; nor does she have any contact with its members. The ease with which Hizb ut-Tahrir was able to recruit such young Muslims, at university fairs designed for recruitment to Student Union societies, rather than religious organisations, would not be possible today.

The PREVENT programme, as it is today, would have been aimed at hindering groups like Hizb from carrying out their agenda. Had the government enforced policy like this pre-9/11, they would not have seen such a strong network of Islamic fundamentalists operating in the ‘safe haven’ of the UK (Caldwell, 2006). 9/11 lifted the veil covering such groups, and the government was harshly condemned in the media for having allowed these organisations and preachers to flourish.

### **‘All Muslims are Terrorists’**

The concept of the ‘enemy within’, a so-called ‘fifth column’, is not an academic term. Rather, it is a term used by the media to draw attention to British Muslims – many of whom are innocent, law-abiding citizens – to instil fear into the British public. The ‘us versus them’ attitude is prevalent here. We see a group of individuals put into a category of ‘them’, whilst we the ‘victims’ of terrorists using Islam as a cover for their hatred, have to live next door to them, unaware of the secrets they may be harbouring or the allegiances they may hold. This branding has led to an increase in Islamophobic attacks and has given rise to far-right groups who use the media to push their agendas and use British Muslims as an example of an imminent threat. ‘Tell MAMA’ is an independent organisation

that works to catalogue incidents of hate or bigotry against British Muslims. Their findings in 2017 noted that there were 1,330 reports of abuse, of which 1,201 were Islamophobic or anti-Muslim in nature (Tell MAMA, 2018), 26% higher than the year before, and the 'highest number since the organisation was founded' in 2012 (Marsh, 2018). Interestingly, the 'enemy within' is seen as being more dangerous after a terrorist attack; even if the attack does not take place in the UK. There was a reported '600% rise' in Islamophobic attacks following the New Zealand attacks in March 2019 (*The Independent*, 2019). This includes breaking windows at a mosque in Birmingham, leading to the Metropolitan Police providing protection for mosques across the country (ibid.). This continued discourse is unlikely to decrease in the near future. The hatred and fear of the so-called 'enemy within' has emboldened bigots to declare a 'War on Muslims' to root out 'the new evil other' (Pantazis & Pemberton, 2009) and to assume that, because of a small minority's having committed atrocities in the name of Islam, all Muslims must be terrorists.

### **'You Have the Right to Remain Silent'**

The rise in the fear of 'the enemy within' and the increase in police powers against majority-Muslim communities has turned them into 'suspect communities' – 'a sub-group of the population who are targeted because of their presumed membership [in] that sub-group' (Pantazis & Pemberton, 2009; Patel, 2018). The principle of 'suspect communities' has led many academics, such as Lambert, to compare the current treatment of British Muslims to the treatment of Irish Catholics at the height of The Troubles. Lambert argues that 'while all Northern Irish communities might have suffered...Irish Catholics bore the brunt of stereotyping, profiling and stigmatization' (Lambert, 2008). This is not only reminiscent of the treatment of British Muslims recorded by Tell MAMA but was also witnessed by individuals who were questioned during primary research for this paper. One student noted feeling like she was being profiled for wearing a hijab and felt like she was 'more likely to be attacked by a member of the public, than sought after by the police', despite having no relation to Islamic terrorism. 'Suspect communities' are often flagged precisely because they receive more negative attention from the police rather than because of a comparative difference in crime. This Panopticon-like surveillance, similar to that of the Latin model employed by the French (Bonino, 2012), makes surveilled communities more suspicious in the eyes of the law. A new phenomenon that many in UK security

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services fear is 'Sudden Jihad Syndrome' (Steuter & Wills, 2010). This is the idea that Muslims may seem to integrate well into their communities and follow the values and ideals of the West, but 'abruptly become violent' and resort to acts of terror without any apparent cause (ibid.).

The mantra behind new terrorist legislation is to 'win hearts and minds' (2006 CONTEST Strategy, UK Government). However, the policies have had a largely negative effect, forcing British Muslims to retreat into their own communities to find understanding and acceptance of their heritage and culture. Government efforts to stunt the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in the UK has often come with the side effect of alienation. The rise in Islamophobic attacks has been steady since 9/11, and police response is slow to catch up with the hate currently running rampant in British society.

### **The Failures of My Primary Research**

#### **The Intention**

In order to gain a better idea of the impact of the policies I decided to analyse in this paper, I chose to create a focus group, speaking to Muslim students around London and asking them questions about being a British Muslim post-9/11. My decision to use a focus group, rather than interviews or a survey, was to stimulate free, open and honest discussion on the topics I wanted to explore and allow myself to be guided through my secondary research by my primary research. A focus group is described as 'a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research' (Gibbs, 1997) and relies on 'interaction within the group based on topics that are supplied by the researcher' (Gibbs, 1997). The groups can be useful in exploring a large topic between a group of individuals from different backgrounds and allows them to work together to find a common goal or angle. They can be more beneficial than interviews, as they can be more 'naturalistic' and place individuals in a place of comfort where they feel free to share their views, away from critique or argument (Wilkinson, 2004). My idea was to place a group of British Muslim students in a room and ask their opinion on a variety of issues pertaining to my secondary research for Section One. Many choose to 'sample' their participants; however, I chose to advertise the group by word of mouth and keep all opinions anonymous.

## **The Paperwork**

In order to complete an exercise like this, I had to apply for approval from the University of Westminster's ethics board. I was required to fill out a remedial ethics form (Appendix 1) that consisted of basic 'yes' or 'no' questions regarding my research, followed by more detailed questions. Due to the nature of my research, I was also required to create a 'participation information sheet' (Appendix 2) which covered what my research was for and how the findings would be handled, and which would be handed to every student upon arrival. Furthermore, I had to create a consent form (Appendix 3) that each participant would be required to sign before participating; even though I had guaranteed them anonymity. In total, this was eight pages of approval I needed ... before I had even thought about my questions. After approval was granted by my paper supervisor, who had been guaranteed that his approval was sufficient if certain criteria on the ethics form had been met, I believed I was free to start crafting my questions and 'spreading the word' to students. The questions I eventually submitted for approval by my supervisor were:

1. Do you feel being a British Muslim in today's political climate makes you a target for the police?
2. Do you feel being a British Muslim in today's political climate makes you a target for the public?
3. Do you believe Islamophobic attacks in the UK have increased post-9/11?
4. To what extent do you see the PREVENT programme as inefficient or racist?
5. Do you agree with post-9/11 terrorist laws that allow the police to 'stop-and-search' anyone they believe may have links to a terrorist organisation?
6. Do you believe having Asians/Muslims in [government and in] high-ranking police positions makes a difference?
7. Do you think the British public should be educated on the difference between Islam and Islamic radicalisation?

The questions had come from weeks of tedious research into the CONTEST policy and the structure behind counterterror laws and policy in the UK. My supervisor approved formally of the questions and I set out to find students willing to participate. My supervisor even offered to book a room on university premises for me to conduct the group.

## **Oh, the Misplaced Confidence**

When my supervisor attempted to book a room (an action that usually takes place with little interference), I was sent a series of emails from individuals in the university whom I never even knew existed. I found myself so swamped in rules and regulations – even though I had ethics approval – that I felt giving up the group would be the easiest fix. I could not understand why this was so difficult to achieve. It was later pointed out to me that my last name ‘Patel’, alongside the topic, made this task ‘a recipe for disaster’. I later chose to ask students the questions by message and asked them to voice-note me replies that I then transcribed and which I have embedded in Section One. However, I feel like part of my paper is missing; I missed out on the key aspects of a focus group. The synergistic discussion and emotion that undoubtedly would have arisen if it were not for the hurdles is missing in the results; and the data has not given me the full access into the life of a British Muslim that I had hoped for. I do keep wondering whether the treatment I received – the suspicion and questions that were not required of other students doing primary research into far-right extremism or child trafficking – was typical of the experience of being a British Muslim today. The PREVENT programme has obliged universities to shut down events they believe could lead to the radicalisation of students, and to place so many restrictions on research that it does not seem worth the hassle. I wonder if this restriction of free speech is exactly what Tony Blair and New Labour had in mind when they created the CONTEST policy.

## **Institutions and Society**

As long as topics that could violate the PREVENT programme are discussed beneath the radar, universities tend to allow such discussions to move forward; they are institutions of higher learning, after all. However, there are times when an institution feels that it has to step in; my focus group is an example of one of these times. Whilst I was technically not excluded from doing the research, the time delays that came with dealing with the bureaucracy left me with little choice but to change my game plan. There are many reasons for this. However, I intend to highlight only three.

## **The Outside vs. the Inside**

The media has played a part in business for many years. How an institution is portrayed in the media has a large impact on its funding and, in the case of a university, how many students it can attract. Media attention on the University of Westminster was constant after a former student was revealed to be a notorious ISIS fighter. Mohammed Emwazi became part of the Islamic State and, even though his radicalisation took place after he graduated, the university was represented as having been a safe haven for young British Muslims who sought a more fundamentalist way of life. This attention got worse when, in 2018, a report by *The Daily Mail* quoted a former student as saying, 'the university has a dark side to its campus culture ... the ideological climate feels conducive for radicalisation' (*The Daily Mail*, 2018). The article was written to highlight a protest organised by students to boycott the PREVENT programme's being enforced on campus. The protest made little impact on university policy; however, the negative media attention surely led to concern over the image of the institution.

The attempts to brush off 'Jihadi John's' alumnae status as a one-off were misguided when, in 2019, a BBC report identified seven former Westminster students who had been radicalised to join ISIS, by students they met at university (BBC, 2019). The university has been labelled a 'breeding ground' (*The Telegraph*, 2019) for Islamic fundamentalism, which explains why it reacted so strongly to my request to conduct a harmless focus group. The negative press has not done much to stop the flow of new students and has not had much impact on funding. Nonetheless, it is clear the university feels it is walking a thin line when it comes to academic research. I can understand why the university took the steps it did to dissuade me from carrying out my primary research. I do not place the blame exclusively on them; the PREVENT programme must take some responsibility. The policy has allowed the UK government to pressure universities into censoring its students. History has proven that small, unregulated groups within the university have managed to radicalise vulnerable students to a radical cause. Universities are not solely responsible for the actions taken by their students. However, the PREVENT programme dictates that universities curb any form of possible 'radicalism' and ensure students do not feel pressured to substitute their innocent beliefs with those of a hateful ideology. This dictate leaves academic institutions with little choice but to stringently monitor and control the behaviour of their students. This side effect of PREVENT – this fear to do the right or

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necessary research – is dangerous and tramples on the principles of free speech and freedom of expression. If universities are censored, then ground-breaking research will inevitably be put on the backburner to allow room for ‘safer’ research that guarantees a non-controversial outcome.

### **What Did I Do Wrong?**

When attempting to ascertain why my focus group had caused so much consternation, I reflected on the ethics forms and consent sheets, trying to find a way to compromise on my primary research. Research looking into the emotions behind PREVENT or the negative effects of government policy is rare and often receives little-to-no media support. However, I had not set out to do research for widespread publication in a range of popular media outlets. My goal had been to embed a report on counterterror policies and their impact on Muslims in British society. My confusion was seen as naïveté by teachers who have been here for years. Bureaucracy is a complicated web, and the nature of institutions meant that my research was not top priority for anyone at the top.

### **Like Jumping Hurdles**

The obstacles behind a focus group designed to investigate the reaction of British Muslims to society and government policy today are indicative of a fear within institutions of what could be. My research was guaranteed to have little impact; despite this, however, it was seen as being a threat to the status quo. One must ask whether or not this is a problem with the University of Westminster, or with society itself. I see it as a problem with society. We are aware of the racism that runs rampant within the UK but are unwilling to act to challenge what is now the ‘norm’. In recent memory, citizens seem to stand up against racism after the fact; after the killings; after the unlawful arrests; and after the unlawful searches. If society had condoned and requested this research, there would not be a stigma surrounding its production. Even though I was unable to conduct my focus group in the way I had intended, I did gain something else: I was unwittingly placed in the shoes of a British Muslim and was forced to endure the suspicions and fears that can bring. I am unsure what all of this fear means and where it will lead. However, I am sure that if allowed to continue, it will lead to a world unable to discern the difference between a peaceful religion and a hateful ideology.

## Where Do We Go from Here?

This paper has attempted to investigate counterterror policies enacted post-9/11 and to what extent they have been successful. It is true that the UK has seen little of terrorism since 9/11, and that many attempts have been foiled by security services – but at what cost? The side effects of these policies almost outweigh the extent to which they are a success. The CONTEST programme was initiated to avert a UK equivalent of 9/11; and for that, it has been a true success. Nonetheless, the impact on freedom of speech and expression and on the civil liberties of citizens is frightening and has led us to live in a Panopticon-like state, where we are always being watched by our government, and where people are suspicious of one another. The impact these policies have had on British Muslims is comparatively more worrying. We have witnessed an increase in Islamophobic attacks and have seen a rise of the far right. The fear of ‘the enemy within’ – and the constant, day-to-day suspicion of Muslims – is indicative of a society divided by religion and culture. Institutions are no better, with the fear rising through the ranks and students being divided between faith and respecting the so-called ‘norms’. As a society, we must do something to change this ‘norm’, or else we will end up with a country plagued with fear and division – to the devastating extent that no value or expression will be held sacred.

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PART **IV**

**RISE OF THE GREEN**



# 13

## IS RIGHT-WING POPULISM COMPATIBLE WITH GREEN OBJECTIVES?

*Kajsa Hallberg*

The contemporary situation of global politics is evidence that many countries have recently experienced a rise of the phenomenon of right-wing populism (RWP), which has grown strong and has gained wide reception around the world. With the rise of RWP, a trend of climate change scepticism has also emerged, contradicting the broad scientific consensus that anthropogenic climate change is a critical threat which importantly requires immediate action. Public discourse tends to argue that there exists a convergence between the two, taking the form of hostility of RWP towards climate and environmental policy and regulations. This, in turn, has led to the frequent perspective of RWP as being directly anti-environmentalist. Though there exists a vast amount of research on RWP and environmentalism respectively, much less is to be found about the relationship between them. Although their incompatibility may be considered obvious to political scholarship, a negative relationship should not be assumed without proper investigation. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the connection between RWP and environmentalism and whether it is necessarily the case that they are incompatible.

The first section aims to set the scene by defining the key concepts of populism, RWP, environmentalism, and ecologism. Then, the second section will examine the environmental record of RWP using three populist governments as case studies: the US, Brazil, and Italy. This will be done by analysing their respective political decisions, as well as documented attitudes and approaches towards the implementation of climate and environmental policy, nationally and internationally. Lastly, the third section will discuss the links between RWP and environmental ideas, based on the empirical evidence found in Section Two. This includes an in-depth look at whether there is evidence for populism's being inherently anti-environmental, and a discussion of whether this is necessarily the case.

The research methodology used is that of a conceptual analysis of populism and environmentalism, respectively, and a comparative analysis of three case studies, chosen because they exemplify different contexts of RWP in government. Significantly, the United States is the largest economic power today, and is governed by Donald Trump; and Brazil, led by President Jair Bolsonaro, serves as a representation of a country from the Global South. Moreover, Italy stands as an example of how the relationship plays out in the context of a coalition government as the one between the populist Five Star Movement (M5S) party (Movimento 5 Stelle) and the right-wing League (Lega) party (Lega Nord per l'Indipendenza della Padania). The sources used primarily comprise secondary data in the form of reports from academic journals and news articles.

Based on this evidence, it will be held that although there is a link between RWP and climate scepticism arguably exists, it does not necessarily originate in anti-environmentalism. Rather, it stems primarily from notions of anti-elite and anti-establishment sentiments, which may also be found in the political ideology of ecologism. Therefore, if RWP and ecologism would hypothetically release their partiality of capitalism and social justice, respectively, some potential for a possible common ground, however small and unlikely, could exist. However, the tendency of RWP to prioritise economic growth and capitalist incentives above the environment is a significant and problematic reason for it to be considered incompatible with ecologism and a dark green approach. It will therefore be concluded that though RWP and ecologism share some features they are also very different, which is the reason why RWP constitutes more of a threat to the global climate response strategy than a possible solution.

### **Conceptual Framework**

In order to evaluate the environmental characteristics of RWP, it is necessary to first try to define some key concepts, starting with populism and specifically RWP, followed by environmentalism and ecologism.

### **Populism and Right-Wing Populism**

Populism is, like most concepts in social sciences, greatly contested (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012, p. 7), and therefore difficult to define, resulting in many different interpretations within the discourse. Seemingly, the one statement that

scholars have reached a consensus about is the fact that populism is both ‘elusive and recurrent’ (Laclau, 1977). Though it may be argued that its contestation is neither surprising nor problematic due to its many uses (Hallin, 2019, p. 15), conceptual disagreements have led to confusion and struggle when attempting to define populism, resulting in it being applied to governments, policies, parties and leaders alike (Weyland, 2001).

Yet, some characteristics are more broadly agreed upon as defining the concept, as almost all definitions share the notion that populism always include ‘a confrontation between “the people” and “the establishment”’ (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012, pp. 8–9). This may take the form of social movements having the key feature of strong distrust towards ‘the elite’ seeking to reshape the status quo that is seen as ‘the establishment’ (Dzur & Hendriks, 2018, p. 336). Importantly, Cas Mudde defines populism as ‘an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, “the pure people” versus “the corrupt elite”, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people’ (Mudde, 2004, p. 562). However, the claim of legitimacy on the grounds of representing ‘the people’ is ambiguous and is often exploited for rhetorical purposes (Canovan, 1999, p. 4). This is clear as it tends to be used to describe both the ‘united people’ of the nation against dividing parties, ‘our people’ (generally on the grounds of ethnicity), as well as the ‘ordinary people’ against the privileged, cosmopolitan elite (*ibid.*, p. 5). This understanding is essential, as populism generally seems to emphasise an anti-elite and anti-establishment agenda by declaring to be representing the ‘real democratic’ alternative that is favoured by the majority of ‘the people’ (Mudde, 2015b).

Moreover, populism can be divided into two different versions; the thin and the thick account categorised according to distinctions between ‘democracy-disrupting “thin” populist efforts’ and ‘democracy-enhancing “thick” populism’ (Dzur & Hendriks, 2018, p. 339). Focusing on the thin version, it can be found on either side of the political spectrum as it ‘rarely exists in a pure form’ but rather is generally combined with another ideology (Mudde, 2015b). Which ideology it tends to be combined with largely depends on perspectives on issues of distribution and opinions on nationalism and cosmopolitanism (Lockwood, 2018, p. 714). Consequently, whereas left-wing populism is normally advocating for social liberalism and universalism, RWP tends to emphasise nativism, social authoritarianism and economic intervention (*ibid.*). Mudde (2015b) defines RWP as



‘pro-democracy, but anti-liberal democracy’, fundamentally supporting ‘popular sovereignty and majority rule’ but rejecting the values of pluralism and minority rights. The notion of ‘the people’ as a united body may be considered inclusive at first glance, but is divisive in this case due to how it may be used to distinguish people based on ethnicity (Canovan, 1999, p. 5). Because RWP directly disregards minorities and alternative opinions in this way, populism has gained a reputation as discriminatory and exclusivist, commonly perceived as a negative force in current debates. Discussing RWP specifically, Mudde (2015b) therefore agrees that the frequent tendency of directly equating populism with democratic rule in public debate is inaccurate.

Today, the term populism is often used when referring specifically to right-wing parties, politicians and political initiatives that stress economic nationalism, different versions of anti-immigration sentiment, and so-called ‘traditional values’ (Dzur & Hendriks, 2018, p. 336). This leads to populist values being generally understood as being contrary to those of Cosmopolitan Liberalism (Inglehart & Norris, 2016), which – despite having suffered some bruising with the 2008 Global Financial Crisis – still forms the unipolarity of contemporary world politics. Assuming that this is the condition under which contemporary populist movements are emerging (Hallin, 2019, p. 17; Panno, Carrus, & Leone, 2019, p. 154), cosmopolitan neoliberalism constitutes the status quo that has led to the recent rise of RWP. Hence, although RWP is not characteristically anti-neoliberalism (Hallin, 2019, p. 17), this context has facilitated the incorporation of anti-cosmopolitan tendencies into RWP anti-establishment sentiment.

### **Environmentalism and Ecologism**

Environmentalism and ecologism are the two concepts that will be referred to as describing green ideology. The approach that will be used is primarily that of Andrew Dobson (Dobson, 2007, pp. 26–27) who distinguishes these concepts based on their different levels of radicalism in remedying the concerned environmental degradation. However, beyond and crucially more important than radicalism, is the fact that like all political ideologies, environmentalism and ecologism ‘differ in degree as well as in kind’, which demands separation (*ibid.*, p. 3). In fact, Dobson simply does not consider environmentalism to be an ideology at all (Dobson, 2007, p. 3), but a ‘thin’ account that applies to many other political ideologies, such as liberalism, socialism and conservatism (Carter, 2007, p. 12).

Dobson therefore defines environmentalism as 'a managerial approach to environmental problems, secure in the belief that they can be solved without fundamental changes in present values of patterns of production and consumption' (Dobson, 2007, p. 2). This indicates that it is not necessarily concerned about the dismantling of the industrialism and capitalism in which the current system and institutions are built upon. On the contrary, environmentalists do not tend to want to limit growth or production at all, but 'believe that technology can solve the problems it creates' (*ibid.*, pp. 26–27). The reliance on future solutions fits into a larger scope as they serve the idea of the 'ecological modernisation' where a booming economy goes hand in hand with ecological objectives (Machin, 2013, p. 16), perpetuating the existence of the industrialised capitalist society as the status quo. An extended approach may be found in John S. Dryzek's evaluation of environmental discourses, which originate in the industrial society and must therefore be placed in the context of industrialist discourse (Dryzek, 2013, p. 14). From this context he draws four different 'departures' based on their respective tendency to assume a more or less radical or imaginative approach: problem solving, sustainability, limits and survival and green radicalism (Dryzek, 2013, p. 14–16). Similar to Dobson's environmentalism, the first three operate within the current system by assuming it as a given to taking environmental action in different ways.

However, Dobson claims that it is not environmentalism but ecologism, which should count as the real ideology of political ecology (Dobson, 2007, pp. 2–3). In contrast to environmentalism, it 'holds that a sustainable and fulfilling existence presupposes radical changes in our relationship with the non-human natural world, and [radical changes] in our mode of social and political life' (Dobson, 2007, p. 3). This is similar to Dryzek's 'green radicalism', which is both radical and imaginative as it rejects the industrial society and reconceptualises the environment and humanity's place in the world (Dryzek, 2013, p. 16). Likewise, Neil Carter establishes ecologism as an ideology with its most distinctive and radical features being its conceptualisation of the human-nature relationship and conviction of there being ecological limits to growth (Carter, 2007, p. 353). The former feature is primarily concerned with replacing anthropocentricity with ecocentricity in terms of ethical hierarchy and drawing attention to the interdependence of ecosystems and moral duties of human beings to the natural world (*ibid.*, p. 35). The latter importantly 'suggests that ecological destruction is inextricably linked to prevailing economic, social and political systems' leading to the conclusion that

only radical transformation can prevent an environmental apocalypse (*ibid.*, pp. 44–45). From this perspective, environmental behaviour cannot exist within the current world order but demands its radical alteration.

These core features, the ecocentricity of moral concerns and ecological limits to growth, are then complemented by the principles of social justice, participatory democracy, and decentralisation (*ibid.*, p. 353). Though modified to fit the green agenda, these principles are considered vital components in building a sustainable society and informing the ‘green theories of agency’ that can create a sustainable world (*ibid.*, p. 353). The argument of a deliberate or radical democratic option as a strategy is frequently made in scholarship of environmental politics (see for example: Machin, 2013; Dryzek, 2013; Brulle, 2006). This is due to the legally institutionalised processes of democratic deliberation and decision-making which would create ‘an arena in which ecological politics would take place and meaningful disagreements and debates about our society and the actions necessary to foster ecological sustainability would be carried out’ (Brulle, 2006, p. 65). This indicates that a restructured society according to the core values of ecologism can only be fully realised in a context of a decentralised democracy where power of action lies with the community and where ethical considerations are ecocentric, based on the social justice framework. These core characteristics, combined with the identification of various strategies of change, importantly shows that ecologism constitutes an ideology, whereas environmentalism does not (Carter, 2007, pp. 11–12).

### **The Environmental Record of Right-Wing Populism**

In order to assess the practical aspects of the relationship between RWP and environmentalism, this section will evaluate the environmental record of three different populist governments: the Trump administration in the United States (US), the Bolsonaro government in Brazil, and the Italian coalition government between The Five Star Movement (M5S) and the League (Lega).

#### **The United States**

Despite being a billionaire, Donald Trump has laid claim to being ‘a “man of the people”’ (Cox, 2017, p. 10), which, in combination with his resistance against a powerful and globalised elite, embodies direct populist tendencies. It is widely recognised that with the Trump administration, the US commitment to climate

and environmental action has transformed and has resulted in several significant policy changes. Even before the new administration officially took office, radical changes to the US environmental agenda were indicated, with climate change deniers and individuals who were outspokenly expressing environmental hostility being nominated to influential governmental positions (Sedlak, 2016). Therefore, the administration does not have a reputation for being particularly compassionate about the environment. Rather, it has presented an agenda that is generally considered explicitly climate sceptic and anti-environmental. This is unsurprising as Trump frequently voices climate scepticism through social media such as Twitter by posting statements such as: ‘What the [h-ll] is going on with Global Warming? Please come back fast, we need you!’ —in this case specifically referring to the record-breaking cold that hit the American Midwest in January 2019 (Natter, 2019).

This highlights a remarkable shift from the policies of the earlier Obama administration, something that Lynn L. Bergeson (2017, p. 101) describes as ‘most unwelcome and, frankly, disturbing’. Trump has presented inconsistent views on climate change throughout the years. In 2009, he joined a coalition urging swift response to tackle the threat; but since then, he has turned completely (Friends of the Earth, 2018). By the time of the 2016 election, he explicitly stated on a number of occasions that he does not believe in the existence of climate change; and he has threatened to pull the US out of climate treaties, commitments, and negotiations (Friends of the Earth, 2018). Several decisions have been made since that directly cut back on climate and environmental policy, evidently realising his explicit climate scepticism through his presidency. The administration is not only ‘reversing carbon-related Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations and support for Obama’s clean energy programme, and withdrawing the United States from the Paris Agreement’ (Lockwood, 2018, pp. 712–713) but is also presenting alternative policies of questionable environmental implications.

Importantly, whereas the Obama administration aimed to reduce carbon emissions through renewable energy sources and introducing major pro-environment policies, Trump has a distinct approach to that of his predecessor regarding energy and fossil fuels. These Obama-era policies are now all being rescinded or rewritten by Trump (Holden, 2018) in favour of increased use of fossil fuels and the removal of environmental regulations. The new America First Energy Plan effectively repeals Obama’s policies and places a heavy focus on fossil fuels, coal

and fracking, and limits the missions of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (Friends of the Earth, 2018). This largely mirrors the Republican Party's energy policy in that it is based on the ideas of energy independence and security by the continued use of the country's vast fossil fuel resources (Friends of the Earth, 2018), which is scientifically proven to be linked to dangerous emission levels. In fact, 2018 saw a rise in US greenhouse gas (GHG) with emission levels of 3.4% – the largest increase since 2010 (Holden, 2019). This is unsurprising, at it has long been known that Trump is opposed to renewable energy sources, evident by the 72% cut in funding for the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, which was exposed in his 2018 budget (Friends of the Earth, 2018).

Perhaps the most critical decision made is the US withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, announced in June 2017. The agreement passed in 2015 and is considered extremely important as it essentially represents the willingness of the member countries of the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to cooperate and transform the global response to climate change (Zhang et al., 2017, p. 213). Though the agreement has not been unravelled yet (due to notice periods preventing a withdrawal until November 2020), this has definitely rocked the boat in terms of its international dynamics, as the absence of the second largest historical emitter has led to other countries trying to back out as well (Milman, 2018). Therefore, many argue that Trump and his environmental policy decisions present great implications to the global climate change response (Curtin, 2018), which consequently threatens worldwide public health (Panno, Carrus, & Leone, 2019, p. 154).

### **Brazil**

Over the last few years, Brazil has, by many, been considered as being a global role model for climate and forest protection (Hance, 2019). This stems from its having one of the cleanest electricity portfolios in the world and by its having implemented a recognised campaign for the reduction of deforestation by about 80% between 2005 and 2012 (Viscidi & Graham, 2019). Combined with policies endorsing clean transport, renewable power and conservation, it has been a long-time belief that Brazil is a front-runner in the climate response. For instance, they have been praised for the implementation of several sophisticated and innovative methods of monitoring deforestation through remote sensing and preservative initiatives such as the DETER program (Bizzo & Michener, 2017, p. 562).

However, the recent 2018 election of President Jair Bolsonaro, a famously controversial climate sceptic and right-wing populist, has seemingly cast doubt on Brazil's status as an environmental champion.

Critically, it 'represents a serious threat to [the progress that] could lead to the tragic loss of a major world economy from the coalition fighting climate change' (Viscidi and Graham, 2019). This is primarily due to Bolsonaro calling for economic investment and exploitation of the country's natural resources, including minerals and forests (Giacomo, 2019), and proposing to remove funding for scientific programs and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), for which he is likely to have significant support in Congress (Erickson-Davis, 2018). Additionally, Bolsonaro signed an executive order for the governmental supervision, co-ordination, and monitoring of environmental NGOs operating for Amazonian protection; and threatened them with expulsion (Hance, 2019). Moreover, he has continuously either defunded or weakened the power of the government agencies supervising the protection of the forest and indigenous people, transferring this responsibility to the agriculture ministry (Giacomo, 2019). This fits well with his promises to allow agricultural and industrial development of the Amazon (Hance, 2019).

Pursuing exploitation of the long-time endangered Amazon rainforest; the largest rainforest in the world, the 'lungs of the planet' and home to a vast diversity of animal and plant species as well as indigenous peoples (Giacomo, 2019) poses a great threat to the global climate response. Nevertheless, Bolsonaro has suggested an authorisation of the opening of large indigenous reserves for mining, something that will meet with extensive national and international resistance despite the pro-mining lobby in Congress (Branford & Torres, 2019). In March 2019, the Minister of Mines and Energy, Admiral Bento Albuquerque, announced his intention to permit mining on indigenous land and in the buffer zones around the Brazilian borders, as he claims that 'current mining restrictions are outdated' and that it would 'bring benefits to these communities and to the country' (ibid.). Moreover, he stated that 'Brazil's indigenous people would be given a voice but not a veto in the matter', mentioning a soon-to-be-held nationwide consultation regarding the plan (ibid.).

Because the government's policies will likely not only affect conservation areas, indigenous rights and reserves, but also heavily impact deforestation, they are

jeopardising Brazil's 2015 Paris Climate Agreement carbon reduction targets (Rocha, 2019). During his presidential campaign, Bolsonaro stated a desire to follow in the footsteps of the US and withdraw Brazil from the Paris Agreement, as they 'could not afford to meet some of the requirements' (Douglas, 2018). This was met with an extensive international outcry and was thus retracted (Viscidi & Graham, 2019). However, despite seemingly having reconsidered his position, Bolsonaro has since stated that his priorities lie with the sovereignty of the nation, highlighting that a withdrawal is still a possibility (Douglas, 2018). Similarly, the Bolsonaro administration was greatly provoked by the announcement of the synod focused on the Amazonian area to be held at the Vatican in Rome, Italy, this October (Rocha, 2019). This is primarily due to worrying that it will be used to criticise the government's policies regarding the rainforest, thus infringing on Brazilian sovereignty. Additionally, the 25<sup>th</sup> United Nations Conference of the Parties was scheduled to take place in Brazil in November 2019, welcoming representatives from almost all countries to discuss climate change (Viscidi & Graham, 2019). Though it seemed the logical choice of location at the time of planning, Brazil withdrew its offer to host the conference in November 2018, referring to 'the government transition process and budgetary constraints' (ibid.). In sum, this indicates that great uncertainty lingers over Brazil's environmental path and their future participation in efforts to tackle climate change.

### **Italy**

Since the general election in March 2018, Italy is currently ruled by a coalition government between the Five Star Movement (M5S) and the League (Lega). In 2009, M5S was co-founded by comedian Beppe Grillo and late web strategist Gianroberto Casaleggio as an activist platform against political corruption (Giffurda, 2018a). As Grillo is an outspoken environmentalist, M5S was essentially built on his railing against the idea of a corrupt Italian establishment disregarding the environment (Albanese, 2019), highlighting a strong anti-establishment approach. It was largely on its environmentalist credentials that M5S gained an unexpected number of votes in the general election, realising the unlikely alliance with Lega (Albanese, 2019). Lega was originally created by Umberto Bossi as separatist 'Lega Nord' (Northern League) in 1989, demanding autonomy for Northern Italy and gaining prominence in its frequent alliances with Silvio Berlusconi (Follain, 2018), and anti-elitist and anti-political discourse (Ruzza and Balbo, 2013, p. 168). In 2013, Matteo Salvini took on the leadership and rebranded

the party as Lega (the League), making it a 'national force' (Follain, 2018). Today, Salvini is the deputy prime minister of the coalition together with Luigi Di Maio (Coman, 2018), the now official leader of M5S (Giuffrida, 2018b). The Prime Minister is Giuseppe Conte, a novice in politics who though close to M5S is not considered affiliated with either party (Jones, 2018), and granted by President Sergio Mattarella (Kirchgaessner, 2018).\_

Notably, this government is indeed 'a strange hybrid' as M5S attracts support from both left and right, while Lega is explicitly right-wing (Coman, 2018). Many of the M5S voters state green policies as a key concern whereas Lega does not share the conviction of prioritising the environment, the unlikely coalition proposes many challenges (Albanese, 2019), effectively eroding the support of M5S (Tamma, 2019). The businesses and industries of the North tend to side with Salvini (Albanese, 2019), whereas M5S has gained most of their electorate from the young and unemployed in the South (Coman, 2018). These groups have starkly different interests, resulting in constant disagreements from which Lega tend to emerge victorious (especially in questions of environmental issues) (Albanese, 2019). In contrast to M5S, Lega has displayed a keen interest in oil, gas and rail projects, and combined with its tough stance on migration it has gained in the polls while their partner continues to give in to the pressure, backtracking on several green promises (Tamma, 2019).

Actually, M5S has surrendered on two core campaign issues already; stopping the approval of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) and closing the toxic ILVA steel plant (Albanese, 2019; Tamma, 2019). The former (a gas pipeline project completing the Southern Gas Corridor) has long been strongly opposed by the M5S and grassroots organisations due to environmental risks but was still approved by Prime Minister Conte in October 2018 (Jones, 2018). This decision was welcomed by Salvini, as he argues that the project will be economically beneficial for Italian businesses and citizens (Jones, 2018). The latter has also been a core issue of M5S, as the ILVA steel plant plays a significant role in the economy of the Puglia region in Southern Italy but has also been linked to massive pollution issues and to a local rise in cancer and deaths (Besser, McKenna, & Rothall, 2018). Nevertheless, Lega promised to keep ILVA open; and soon, Di Maio backed down, which resulted in its being sold to the Indian steel multinational ArcelorMittal as approved by the previous government (*ibid.*).



The current argument regards the Treno Alta Velocità (TAV), a controversial high-speed rail link to France that has been under construction since 2001 and which is another key issue dividing the parties (Tamma, 2019). While some studies declare the project financially doomed if it continues, others claim that abandoning the project is much more costly (Albanese, 2019). Currently awaiting the result of the latest cost-benefit analysis, the issue is at a stalemate that, due to the escalating quarrel, risks turning the project into a loss as the delays jeopardise funding from the European Union (EU) (Albanese, 2019). Seemingly, the future of the TAV rests on the decision of what is most economically beneficial rather than the environmental impact, which is what has been at the heart of M5S' politics since its creation.

In sum, the empirical evidence above makes a compelling case for RWP being anti-environmentalist. The respective statements, decisions and actions of the three administrations all give testament to either direct climate scepticism or to a general prioritisation of the economy above the environment. Both Trump and Bolsonaro have recognised track records as climate sceptics as a consequence of controversial statements, actions and policy decisions. Similarly, despite M5S' environmentalist profile, the Italian case shows that in the case of a coalition government, the substantive support of Lega's prioritisation of the economy effectively leads to the dismissal of environmental imperatives and campaign promises of M5S.

### **Populism and Environmental Ideas: The Relationship**

Though the evidence suggests that RWP is inherently hostile towards environmental objectives, the question is whether this must necessarily be the case. Looking at the conceptual components, it becomes clear that populism is incompatible with Dobson's definition of environmentalism. This is principally due to environmentalism believing that environmental progress can be reached without fundamental changes to the status quo (Dobson, 2007, p. 2). By assuming the industrialised, liberal and globalised society as a given, it clearly shares neither the populist wishes to transform established institutions, nor the perception of society being divided between 'the people' and 'the corrupt elite'. Environmentalism does not reject the status quo of global and reformist solutions; whereas populism emphasises radicalism and decentralised, localised approaches. RWP and environmentalism are therefore directly contradictory.

Notably, however, populism shares some features with the political ideology of ecologism, giving reason to believe that the possibility exists for the two to find common ground. This is essentially based on them sharing anti-establishment and anti-elitist traits, showing that populism does not necessarily have to be incompatible with green ideas. Fundamentally, populism embodies cynicism regarding existing institutions and elites, preferring to trust the 'ordinary people' instead (Dzur and Hendriks, 2018, p. 336). In RWP, this takes the form of a dislike of scientific and international institutions, for instance, as evidenced by Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and controversial statements displaying a skewed understanding of climate and environmental science. This effectively highlights the conflict between 'the people' and 'the elites'.

Ecologism commonly sees the restructuring of this elitist society taking the form of the substitution of liberal democratic status quo for different versions of deliberative or participatory democracy (Dryzek, 2007, pp. 233–239). Obviously, democratic procedures may not necessarily always generate decisions to protect the environment (Brulle, 2006, p. 65), but it is believed to deliver the most responsive government and best conditions for the development of greater individual autonomy and for the nurturing of ecological consciousness (Carter, 2007, pp. 55–56). By contrast, 'non-democratic methods often contain an implicit technocratic assumption that a governing elite of politicians, scientists and professionals knows best' (ibid., p. 54). The notion that certain decisions should be made by those with 'superior knowledge' rather than by democratic decision-making effectively 'privileges science over other forms of knowledge and understanding of ecological issues and gives power to an elite minority' (ibid., pp. 54–55). By stressing the importance of a decision-making process, which addresses a wider variety of considerations, the ability of democracy to guarantee 'a more informed decision that can attract widespread support' is highlighted (ibid., p. 55). Hence, like populism, ecologism is anti-elite at its core, stating a preference of 'the voice of the people'.

Moreover, the anti-establishment sentiment also exists within both political ecologism and populism. As opposed to environmentalism, ecologism requires a radical transformation of the establishment, meaning the contemporary society and institutions (Dobson, 2007, p. 189; Carter, 2007, p. 353). As such, ecologism shares the populist anti-establishment agenda, though fundamentally based on distrust in the ability of the status quo to deliver a green society. This is why the role played by economic and political institutional structures in either promoting

or hindering ethical considerations of nature is important (Brulle, 2006, p. 65). In comparison, populism shares the goal of reshaping 'the establishment' and its institutions (Dzur & Hendriks, 2018, p. 336), though not necessarily for explicitly green reasons, but to deliver the real 'democratic' alternative favoured by the majority of 'the people' rather than 'the establishment' (Mudde, 2015b). This is usually based on ideas of localisation and decentralisation.

Though decentralisation does not ensure a directly democratic society, ecologism consistently mentions it as a necessary condition for its function because 'only in small communities can individuals regain a sense of identity lost in the atomised, consumerist society' (Carter, 2007, p. 58). Neither would a decentralised deliberative democracy necessarily always lead to decisions to protect the environment, but 'it is a necessary prerequisite for us to even consider these questions in a meaningful way' (Brulle, 2006, p. 65). Thus, assuming it as a precondition for a thriving democracy, decentralisation enables meaningful participation, and prepares citizens to 'accept the material sacrifices required of a low-consumption sustainable society', leading to policy decisions being more understanding of environmental objectives (Carter, 2007, p. 58). Given the weight placed on democracy, decentralisation then becomes important as critical conditions for the creation of a green society. Because ecologism requires radical reconceptualization of the relationship between humans and non-humans as well as our social and political life (Dobson, 2007, p. 3), it is also central that it 'offers a persuasive critique of (capitalist) industrial society and the liberal democratic polity, holding them largely responsible for the current ecological crisis' (Carter, 2007, p. 353). This clearly indicates that ecologism views the anthropocentric and capitalist contemporary society as needing radical alteration. Likewise, populism demands radical societal transformation, though not based on environmental grounds. This shows that ecologism and populism shares the anti-establishment sentiment that favours decentralisation and the local community above national and international institutions.

However, the two view the notion of the community differently due to distinct ideas of the extension of ethical considerations. While ecologism demands a democracy that celebrates disagreement (Machin, 2013, p. 129), populism denies divisive interests and opinions within the group it considers 'the people' and deems anyone with an alternative perspective 'the elite' (Mudde, 2015a). It may then be assumed that RWP rejects the extension of ethical considerations outside

the community of 'the people', often based on criteria of ethnicity or nationality. Contrastingly, ecologism arguably recognises local action as being solutions to global ecological and social justice concerns. In terms of climate change and environmental concerns being of critical global importance, this highlights their respective anthropocentric and ecocentric perspectives. Also, this emphasises the notion of the globalised contemporary society as a structural condition for RWP being critical of ecologism and its ethical extension.

Furthermore, Greens tend to attribute environmental problems to market forces, privatisation and selfish exploitation of the commons (Eckersley, 2006, p. 147), displaying ecologism as anti-capitalist. Essentially, the concern therefore lies in finding an alternative economic framework that holds the market subservient to ecological and social justice considerations (Eckersley, 2006, p. 153), rather than trusting market mechanisms to solve the problems. As evidenced by the Italian case, the environmental agenda is generally lost when combined with interests centred on the capitalist economy and industrial development. Notably, approaching climate change as an 'existential threat to global industrial capitalism', it can be anticipated that the most significant and reliable indicators of climate change scepticism are closely affiliated with 'ideological or material positions of reform versus defense of the industrial capitalist system' (McCright et al., 2016, p. 187). The argument for RWP being unsympathetic to the climate change agenda then stems from the struggle against the established contemporary technologically developed and globalised society, that has left the 'ordinary people' behind by eroding their income and status (Lockwood, 2018, p. 726). In combination with its ideological elements based on the idea of nationalism and distrust of the corrupt and cosmopolitan elite establishments (ibid., p. 713), it shapes the RWP perspective on climate issues and thus capitalism. The indication is that RWP is anti-environment in the way it is anti-elite but pro-capitalism and pro-free market for the benefit of 'the people'. Perhaps the best example of this is Bolsonaro's exploitation of the Amazon for the benefit of Brazil's economic incentives, dismissing that its protection is of global environmental concern. Subsequently, despite the similarities, it is evident that critical differences exist between ecologism and RWP, which shows that the incompatibility of green objectives and RWP stems from different views of ecological and social justice and capitalism.

## Conclusion

Although it can be argued that a convergence between RWP and climate scepticism exists, this paper has aimed to investigate whether it necessarily stems from RWP being anti-environmentalist. It asserts that rather than being based on anti-environmentalism, RWP is in conflict with environmental values due to its anti-elite and anti-establishment traits; which may also be found in the political ideology of ecologism. Nevertheless, as shown by the empirical evidence of the environmental record of the US, Brazil, and Italy, the combination of RWP and green considerations has yet to prove viable in practice. Importantly, though RWP and ecologism share some core characteristics, there are also important differences limiting the possibility of these ideologies' finding common ground. These differences can be prescribed largely to their commitments to capitalism and social justice. Hypothetically, some room for a possibly positive relationship could exist, but only if these commitments were to be released. Yet, due to the tendency of RWP to prioritise questions of economic growth and capitalism in favour of ecological considerations, environmental commitments are generally neglected or completely dismissed on the grounds of climate scepticism. This indicates that RWP embodies values that generally lead to an inherently negative relationship. As argued in this paper, this does not necessarily have to be the case, but how this relationship plays out in practice shows that RWP seems to be hostile towards the climate change and environmental agenda and thus towards the global climate response strategy. Although little research exists on the relationship between RWP and ecologism, which is why the connection would benefit from further investigation, the endangering of the environment in this way clearly confirms that RWP is incompatible with green objectives.

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# 14

## CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE IN THE UK: RAISING AWARENESS OF THE GLOBAL CLIMATE CRISIS AND THE NEED FOR POLITICAL ACTION

*Marianne Tynan*

It is no surprise that our profit driven economic model is having drastic, soon to be irreversible effects on our planet. It is also no surprise that the leaders of the wealthiest economies have been prioritising growing their economies exponentially in order to have the highest GDPs as opposed to thinking of its unsustainable effects. Although climate change came onto policy agendas as early as 1990, little progress was made in policy debates in the 1990s and virtually none between 2001 and 2008, either in the United States or at the international level (Dessler & Parson, 2005). The current top-bottom system has failed to tackle this problem leading to bottom-up activist groups demanding action from political leaders. The public, for the most part, are no longer in denial. Yet even for those who are, as socialist Kari Norgaard (2011) puts it, ‘denial can – and[,] I believe[,] should [–] be understood as [being a] testament to our human capacity for empathy, compassion, and an underlying sense of moral imperative to respond, even as we fail to do so’.

As Klein (2015) relates, ‘we engage in this odd form of on-again-off-again ecological amnesia for perfectly rational reasons. We deny because we fear that letting in the full reality of the crisis will change everything. And we are right’. It is understandable how people believe that climate change will not affect us, due to it being a far and estranged concept that is not directly affecting the Global North in the same way it is affecting families in India and Fiji. It is easy to reject the thought that we may have to change our comfortable lifestyles which we have worked hard for. However, we are running out of time and need to face cruel facts in order to grasp the magnitude of this emergency. In the following essay

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I will be outlining the public and political actions and reactions towards the climate crisis. Specifically looking at the agreements politicians have made to ease the public's growing concern and the lack of action taken on those agreements resulting in the public orchestrating mass acts of civil disobedience.

### **Humanity's Current Efforts in Combating the Crisis**

For decades the climate and ecological crisis has been unprioritized among many world leaders but now humanity is standing at a crossroads where we can either take action or continue to be oblivious until our species is extinct. It has been confirmed that there is a more than 95 percent probability that human-produced greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide have caused much of the observed increase in Earth's temperatures over the past 50 years (Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet, 2019). Klein (2015) argues that climate change is the result of a war our economic model is waging against life on earth. Pievani (2014) agrees in saying our capitalist and consumer-driven society has led us to the brink of the sixth mass extinction.

Climate change is already affecting people across the world – specifically in the Global South, as nations experience extreme weather conditions and natural disasters leaving their villages uninhabitable and communities deprived of basic human needs. Many families whose ancestors have always inhabited the land they once called home have had to migrate due to the unpredictable change in climate. A global report by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2018) estimates that since 2009, one person every second has been displaced by a disaster, resulting in an average of 22.5 million people displaced by climate or weather-related events since 2008. The Environmental Justice Foundation (2009) published a report stating that global warming will force up to 150 million 'climate refugees' to move to other countries in the next 40 years. These reports emphasize how leaders from developed countries in the Global North need to help less developed countries in the Global South as the sooner we tackle this crisis, the more we can minimise the amount of lives it disrupts, in turn minimising the amount of people migrating to the Global North.

Scientists have been telling global leaders about the connection between man-made actions such as releasing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and climate change publicly since 1988 and privately since the 1970s (Boykoff & Boykoff,

2004). In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol prompted nations to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases (United Nations Climate Change, 2019a). Similarly, in 2009 the Copenhagen Accord was agreed upon, despite acceptance and participation not being mandatory (Centre for Climate and Energy Solutions, 2019). However, most politicians treated these warnings as mere suggestions from ecocentric individuals as opposed to actual demands. Meanwhile, leaders of countries in the Global South were already starting to see the effects of climate change destroying their nations' land, communities, and economy.

Politicians from low income, less developed countries urged wealthier countries to re-evaluate their emissions and suggested that we collectively take action on this global crisis and address global equity before their nations sink. As the wealthiest ten percent of our population are responsible for more than half of all greenhouse-gas emissions, the responsibility was placed on more developed countries (Extinction Rebellion, 2019). In 2015, a few tiny Pacific nations under threat of the rising sea levels joined together to shape the Paris Agreement (Worland, 2019). The Paris Agreement is dedicated to holding the average global temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius and set a more ambitious goal to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (United Nations Climate Change, 2019b).

Eight months later, US President Donald Trump withdrew from the agreement (The White House, 2017), leaving other major leaders unmotivated to fulfil their part of the agreement. Trump has denied climate change as a real concern on multiple occasions despite the U.S. being the biggest carbon polluter in history (Gillis and Popovich, 2017). Theresa May, the Prime Minister of Britain, has addressed and criticized Trump's withdrawal at the General Debate of the 72nd Session of the General Assembly saying, 'As the global system struggles to adapt, we are confronted by states deliberately flouting for their own gain the rules and standards that have secured our collective prosperity and security' (May, 2017). Hypocritically, May did not make amendments to ensure that the UK would meet the carbon reduction target.

Due to a lack of action following this agreement scientists have said there is a 5% chance we will meet the agreed-upon target (Rafferty et al., 2017). In October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a statement affirming that we have twelve years to act on this crisis before the effects become irreversible. This study prompted the public to demand more climate

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transparency within the media along with political action through acts of rebellion against the current, failing system.

### **Documenting the Rise in Climate Activism and its Effects**

Extinction Rebellion (XR) formed in the UK when a group of academics and activists started working together to figure out why our previous attempts failed to stop climate change and how we are going to stop it. Through studying governance systems, collaborative working styles, momentum-driven organizing, and direct-action campaigning, they figured out an effective strategy which would bring their vision for systemic change to fruition.

The group which is now internationally recognised with over 100,000 members in the UK has three demands. Firstly, they demand that the Government must tell the truth by declaring a climate and ecological emergency and listen to other institutions to communicate the urgency for change. Secondly, they demand the Government to act now to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025. And finally, going beyond politics, they believe the Government must create and be led by the decisions of a Citizens' Assembly on climate and ecological justice.

Their organised protests have three main aims and usually achieve all outcomes at any event. Firstly, they want to cause disruption through mass civil disobedience. Their second goal is outreach – to inform the public on the climate and ecological crisis. Thirdly, they manage to express their wish for a more competent governance system (Extinction Rebellion, 2019).

The group's most disruptive action made history when it shut down the city of London, the protest lasting two weeks, day and night from the 15th to the 29th of April 2019 (Extinction Rebellion, 2019). In London, five major locations were shut down – namely, Parliament Square, Marble Arch, Oxford Circus, Waterloo Bridge, and Piccadilly Circus. In addition to that, acts of mass civil disobedience took place across 80 cities in 33 countries within those weeks. Over 1,000 people were arrested in London mainly for minor public order offences (Dodd, 2019). XR supporters actually wanted to be arrested, showing how committed they are to saving the human race. It is understandable why people are taking these matters into their own hands, the scientific reports state that we are running out of time and that action must be taken immediately. As MIT economist John Reilly

said, 'the more we talk about the need to control emissions, the more they are growing' (Chomsky & Barsamian, 2013).

Last summer in Sweden, whilst most kids were going back to school, sixteen-year-old Greta Thunberg started the Youth Strike for Climate movement as she sat on her own outside the Swedish Parliament (Watts, 2019). Despite starting by herself, she quickly gained the attention of the media and fellow classmates, quickly becoming a global movement as more than 1.4 million children and teenagers across the world walked out of their schools on March 15th, 2019 (Carrington, 2019). Greta has been nominated for a Nobel peace prize and has spoken at various conferences with world leaders, notably of which included the European Economic and Social Committee where she bluntly told her elders they were acting like 'spoiled, irresponsible children who don't seem to understand hope is something you have to earn' (Thunberg, 2019).

There have also been many protests targeting British Petroleum (BP) for being the company with the third biggest contribution to climate change out of any company in history (Heede, 2013). Events sponsored by the company such as the BP Portrait Award at the National Portrait Gallery and the Royal Opera House's screening of *Romeo and Juliet* have been boycotted by various environmental groups to draw attention to the effects the sponsor is having on the planet. Greenpeace activists also shut down BP headquarters in London and an oil rig in the North Sea to draw attention to the fact that BP is expected to spend \$70bn on new oil and gas extraction in the next decade (Worthy, 2019).

Whilst many may agree with these activists, they have been criticised for causing disruptions as a way of conveying their message as the protests put a strain on a police force which is already stretched. However, as discussed further in part three public demonstrations have provided to be the most effective way of raising the awareness of social and political issues throughout history. By willingly getting arrested to support this cause, activists are drawing more attention to the crisis and showing the urgency individuals feel to act now. Those who broke the law during the aforementioned demonstrations have led the Metropolitan police to review laws concerning protests as they believe tougher penalties should be considered (Dodd, 2019).

These activists' actions put emphasis on the extent they must go to in order to make themselves heard. The risks taken are not excluded to tarnishing their police



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record or disrupting their education as no one else is doing anything and it is their future that is on the line. As Greta says, 'why should I be studying for a future that will soon be no more, when no is doing anything whatsoever to save that future? What is the point of learning facts within the school system when the most important facts given by the finest science of that same school system clearly mean nothing to our politicians and our society?' (Thunberg, 2019).

Overall, climate activists use disruption as a means to raise awareness (as opposed to the anarchy of causing disruption for the sake of disruption) and in doing so gaining as much attention from the media, public and government to show that they demand action. They believe short-term disruption is justifiable in order to advert the effects of climate change. They are fighting the climate crisis on behalf of those already affected in the Global South and ultimately feel the end justifies the means.

### **History of Civil Disobedience Leading to Political Action**

Throughout history we have seen scenarios where public acts of mass civil disobedience have been successful. The Suffragette's tactics were to cause disruption and civil disobedience, such as the 'rush' on Parliament in October 1908 when it encouraged the public (60,000 bystanders) to join them in an attempt to invade the House of Commons. According to Parliament, the lack of Government action led the Women's Social and Political Union to undertake more violent acts, including attacks on property and law-breaking, which resulted in imprisonment and a hunger strike (UK Parliament, 2019). XR is inspired by the Suffragette movement, saying that 'the feminist movement taught us that speaking with one another allows truth to enter in and be held together. In creating spaces to talk, we transformed our isolation and, although we have not focused our energy on issues of extinction, we need to do so now' (Extinction Rebellion, 2019).

Throughout 1989 and 1990, the public rebelled against Margret Thatcher and the Conservative Party after she introduced the poll tax. The tax aimed to make local council finance fairer and more accountable; however, it caused civil disobedience and riots (Higham, 2016). This movement brought together law-abiding citizens who collectively decided to refuse to pay the tax. It was their solidarity that ensured this movement was successful.

Looking at the actions of XR and Youth Strike for Climate it must be said that this is not the first time we have seen a generation of environmentally aware youth. In 1990, *Time* magazine featured an article about the 'ecokids, the new generation of conservation-conscious, environmentally active schoolchildren' (Elmer-DeWitt & Horowitz, 1990). The article discusses how this was only a matter of time given that their parents were raised during the activism of the 1960s. Coward (1990) said, 'environmentalism is youthful now in the way that feminism was in the late '60s'. Thirty years later the children from this article are raising their own children during the next major activist movement.

XR hopes to gain as many members as possible by being as inclusive as possible. Anyone can join as long as you agree with their three previously mentioned demands. When XR came into the public eye, people had a sense of purpose, a feeling that they could actually turn this dilemma around and build a better system wherein the human race and nature thrive together. It has motivated citizens to get involved out of fear for their future, their children's future and even their grandchildren's future. People have taken time off work and travelled across the country to join XR protests in London because they are frustrated that the government is not addressing the biggest threat humanity has ever had to face. This generation do not want to look back and think about what they could have done better, they want to know they did everything they could to prevent global warming. The public have seen the predictions and it is apocalyptic, this movement has provided hope for the hopeless.

When their actions cause disruption and in doing so invite media to the scene it is only an amount of time before a political statement must be made. Due to the predicted influx of climate refugees, it is known that it is extremely important for national governments to address this topic which is mutually of national interest. Despite the urgency of action highlighted by the public, Theresa May criticised children for missing school, saying, 'It is important to emphasise that disruption increases teachers' workloads and wastes lesson time that teachers have carefully prepared for. That time is crucial for young people precisely so that they can develop into the top scientists, engineers and advocates that we need to help tackle this problem' (McGuinness, 2019). This implies that we do not already have a solution; or that we plan to tackle this problem, and that we can afford to wait another ten years for the youth of today to find solutions. Greta Thunberg arranged to meet with Theresa May, Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the Labour Party

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and Caroline Lucas, co-leader of the Green Party in London. However, Theresa May failed to attend, which reflected her interest in the situation (Merrick, 2019).

May has not made any formal response to XR protests; however, Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has met with XR members and has promised to consider a citizens' assembly on the topic of climate change (Forrest, 2019). Despite not directly responding to XR two days after their two-week-long protest across London ended, the Parliament of the United Kingdom declared a climate emergency (BBC News, 2019), resulting in numerous other nations following suit just days after. Before stepping down as Prime Minister, Theresa May made her legacy by making Britain the first major economy committed to net zero emissions by 2050. However, groups such as Greenpeace are not pleased with her efforts, as the plan allows the UK to achieve net zero emissions in part through international carbon credits, which would 'shift the burden to developing nations' (Walker, Mason, & Carrington, 2019), ignoring the issue of climate equity which should be a major cause of concern when drawing up these plans.

In democratic fashion, the public are demanding those in power acknowledge and represent them. Following the Kyoto Protocol, the Copenhagen Accord, and the Paris Agreement, we have seen a top-down political party fail and understand that bottom-up, grassroots politics gives the majority a voice in decision making. XR would like to see the implementation of citizen assemblies to ensure everyone has an opportunity to voice their concerns and suggestions so everyone is heard. XR ultimately demands 'systemic change – not climate change'.

### Conclusion

Based off of effective civil disobedience movements from the past such as the suffragettes and the poll tax movements, I can estimate that with the encouraging drive and commitment that XR members have towards the prevention of the climate and ecological breakdown they will not surrender until they feel that the government is taking sufficient action. The survival of the entire human race (not just the wealthiest one percent) and climate equity must take precedence in any decision making from now on. A bottom-up political model would permit this. Without undermining other major human rights issues happening today, it is imperative to acknowledge and act on the fact that without a stable planet, humanity's greatest issues will no longer matter – as we will have scarce food resources

and mass climate refugees. The science makes it evident that if we continue our 'business-as-usual' attitude, it is only a matter of time before a catastrophic ecological and climate 'breakdown' ultimately occurs (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2019).

For now, we must ask our government, 'How many people need to act out in civil disobedience in order to get an adequate reaction?' 'How many children have to miss their education before the educated are heard?' 'How many people need to be panicking before the people with the power will panic?' 'How many economically poor nations will have to face the effects of climate change before economically wealthy nations take overdue drastic action?'

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PART **V**

**GENDER REPRESENTATION  
AND IDENTITY**





# 15

## GENDER POLITICS IN NORTH AFRICA

*Adam Khair*

The region of North Africa consists of predominantly Islamic nations, often recognised as overlooking the gender equality movement and gender rights of all. Does history support this idea? Or, is the truth concealed? What is the historical and current stance of Gender Politics in the region of North Africa?

North Africa consists of predominantly Islamic nations (often referred to as the Maghribs) and shares many similarities in culture with their Arab brethren. Nonetheless, there remains a fundamental difference in their approach towards gender politics. This is often recognised as overlooking the gender equality movement and gender rights of all, but this does beg the question of whether history supports this idea? Or, has the truth been concealed behind the decades of struggles and the abusive nature of the state? These questions lead us to explore the idea of what are the historical and current stances of gender politics in the region of North Africa?

Throughout this paper, I will be exploring this issue, first by examining the historical ambience behind this ever-growing movement whilst focusing my attention onto four separate case studies. As a by-product, I will reference the statistical data published by the UN and domestic governments which provides secure evidence to the arising question alongside documented experience by leading members from the movements in each individual case study. An analysis of the historical family codes and legislative proposals will also provide insight into the current status as well as the growth of gender politics in North Africa.

### **Historical Context**

The movements promoting gender equality, gender rights and gender identity in recent decades have been at the forefront of Western politics, as well as, the

largest growing civil rights movement since the racial equality movement from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Arguably, an even older movement stemming back to pre-biblical times – equality amongst genders – has been a cornerstone for public deliberation throughout human history.

Prior to diving deeply into the historical evolution of this issue within North Africa, I will begin with defining the perspective of gender politics I am attempting to analyse and present, in addition to providing a summarisation of the aspects I will be primarily focusing this paper on. ‘People all over the world find that the basic conditions of their lives—their safety, health, education, work, as well as access to markets, public space, and free expression—are fundamentally shaped by their identification as belonging to particular sex or gender groups. Individual bodies may be typed as male or female, masculine or feminine, heterosexual or homosexual, transgendered[,] or nongendered in a dizzying variety of ways across cultures and over time’ (Waylen et al., 2013). As aforementioned, my focus will stem from analysing the evolution of actions that impact gender politics and summarising the current results based upon the situations in North African nations.

An inherent truth of the world is that women fare much better in matrilineal societies than patrilineal ones; yet the introduction of Christianity, Islam, and modernity within these regions have promoted the shift to patrilineal societies. However, even in contemporary matrilineal societies, husbands still dominate in marriage, with males exercising far more authority than females. In multiple forms of Christianity and Islam, patriarchy has a powerful influence over women’s lives; even traditional forms of religion and belief continue to be practiced, although the effect on women varies in every situation. The reality of these societies places a high value on marriage and reproduction. The consequence slates women into ambivalent positions where focus is highly placed in reproductive potential combined with the target of male control.

The reformation of family codes dawned upon the region, with much of the reform being in these countries’ ‘family codes’, are a set of laws guiding the role and status of women in marriage, as well as their rights in divorce and custody matters. The family code has been an important focus for women’s rights activists because its laws are ‘absolutely critical and fundamental in Muslim society’ (Charrad, 2001) – the first being Tunisia, which reformed its family code in 1957. However, it was only in 1993 in Tunisia, and also a decade later in Algeria and

Egypt, that a woman who married a foreigner could pass on her citizenship and nationality to her children.

Prior to that, children born of this sort of relationship had to apply for residence permits in the same manner as any foreigner. At the time when the Tunisian government allowed a woman to pass on her citizenship to her children, this reverberated within society as a seismic cultural change. Inherently, traditional citizenship, as well as all other legal rights, was always passed on through the paternal side. However, by permitting citizenship to now pass through the maternal line, these new laws challenged the entire patrilineal concept of the family in Maghrib countries. The credit for the emergence of this progress lies solely with the dynamic and indigenous women's movements in North Africa during the 1980s and 1990s (Charrad, 2007).

Unfortunately, this progress has been halting and uneven. In 2005, The Egyptian government granted women an expansion of divorce rights. Although, the efforts to change the law that allowed for women to travel without the permission of a husband or father were dismissed by the government out of a fear that they were too radical to be passed. Consequently, the countries of North Africa are marked by archaic social practices that in this present day discriminate against women and ironically contradict international treaties, as well as contravene their own domestic laws. 'Egypt's constitution grants equality to all citizens', but that is then disputed in Egypt's family law 'by placing women under the guardianship', or legal control, of their fathers, husbands, or other family males (Talbayev, 2012).

Studies and data collection by Freedom House, a US-based group, based upon their research into the Islamic doctrine, have found many indications whereby women are able to counter the conservative social practices. For example, 'under Islamic law[,] a marriage contract may allow each spouse to state in writing his or her specific rights in the marriage' (ibid.). Thusly if used properly, the bride maintains this provision by which serves as a guarantee of rights for women in marriage. Therefore, with regard to marriage, issues surrounding gender inequality stems from social practices instead of religion, as was the case. Until 2004, an Algerian woman required a male guardian (e.g. father, brother or uncle) to formalise the arrangements of her marriage on her behalf. Cases in Egypt found, while educated girls have a substantial role in choosing their husbands, in rural areas it remains that marriages are contracted by the fathers (Tadros, 2010).

Freedom House also noted the issue of 'male guardianship', which also has implications for women's economic welfare. For example, the dowry, which is money paid by the groom, also conforming to Islamic stipulations that the groom must prove that he provides for the bride and is often the only income a woman can keep in case of divorce. However, this is not the case in Morocco and Egypt, where poor women often receive little or no dowry at all. Additionally a national survey discovered that 60.7 percent of rural women in Morocco reported that 'their husbands or guardians appropriated' such income (Kelly, 2010).

Moreover, resounding gender inequalities can result with women being divorced by their husbands immediately and without explanation, this practice is known as 'repudiation'. Only in 2004 was the practice of 'Talaq' a form of repudiation as a form of divorce abolished in Algeria. As for the case in Morocco, which previously made it easier for men to divorce their wives, granted men and women equal rights to file for divorce in 2004. In Egypt, a law was passed in 2005 that granted women the right to a no-contest divorce. However, a woman who exercises that right as a consequence could potentially lose her dowry, alimony and other gifts given by the groom's family, which became a serious deterrent for women with few economic options.

Lastly, I will be touching upon the issues of violence within this region; of course, the issue of violence against women occurs universally but I would like to touch upon the brief historical and contemporary view on violence. As aforementioned, violence against women is poorly legislated against and ever so rarely prosecuted the world over. North Africa is no exception to this problem. Through the 'African Renewal' department ran by the UN their investigation into domestic violence in North Africa discovered that 'although Tunisia provides for the death penalty in cases of rape of girls under 10 years old'. Furthermore, 'rape in Morocco is regarded as indecent assault or public indecency'. Unfortunately, Egypt considers 'domestic violence and marital rape not as criminal offences'. Therefore, victims have found themselves seeking other laws, such as battery or physical assault, in order to prosecute the perpetrators behind these assaults (United Nations, 2019, p. 1).

Religious interpretations of Shari'ah law have displayed a flexibility in siding with women and against them; firstly during Algeria's civil war, the country's Supreme Islamic Council deliberated cases in April 1998 resulting with a 'Fatwa' which is

a religious edict that permitted women who were victims of war rapes to have abortions, which even today abortion remains illegal in most Islamic countries. Nevertheless, at the other extreme, in 2001, 30 women had been displaced by the civil war and found themselves in searching for work in two oil towns (Moussa, 2016). These women were raped, killed, and mutilated, with the attackers never being successfully prosecuted by the law. In addition, the conservative clergy condoned these attacks. However, their reasoning stipulated that these women were attacked since the women were travelling without a male escort; therefore putting forward the assumption that they were prostitutes.

Finally, with regard to Egypt in 1999, Egyptian women's groups were successful in lobbying a change in law that forgave rapists if they married their victims. The Egyptian Ministry of Social Affairs subsequently put in place 150 family counselling centres to help these victims. Moreover, the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights conducted a survey in 2005 on the harassment of women walking in public. Rebecca Chiao, founder of HarrassMap and an advocate for the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights revealed in an interview with the 'Africa Renewal' department, said that '[a]t the time, it was impossible to talk about the issue' – 'Even the word "harassment" was not accepted. Nobody knew what it meant, and they were offended by it' (Chiao, 2005). The Centre then recruited volunteers to raise awareness on the issue. 'We tried to be creative and innovative. Teachers spoke to schools, journalists recorded advertisements for radio, and we had music bands and film. Since then, we have seen substantial change' (Chiao, 2005). Individuals such as her have been leading phenomenal improvements to social change regarding gender issues in all of North Africa, which has produced a vast improvement into the modern age and the world of today.

Concluding this historical analysis upon the evolution and reality of the history behind the issue of gender politics in the region of North Africa I will now be moving onto in-depth reviews of case studies for four different North African nations – Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia – touching upon a brief historical success into the immediate and present moment progress of Gender Politics.

### **Case Study – Algeria**

The focus of this case study will highlight the relationship between women, gender activism and the regime. Post-independence from France in 1962, gave birth

to a fully-fledged emergence of activists pushing forward a gender equilibria movement. During the socialist period, the regime had relented support to women's social and political activism through the Union Nationale des Femmes Algériennes (UNFA)—the Algerian National Women's Union. This remains to be a mass organisation which largely lost its direct links to the former ruling party in the 1990s and the early 2000s but continues to exist and remains close to the existing authoritarian regime up to the present day (Roca, 2012, p. 72).

As early as 1984, strides towards gender equality began with the appointment of the first female cabinet minister (Hamma, 2015). Additionally, in 2004, Louisa Hanoune – the head of the 'Parti des Travailleurs' (PT, Workers' Party) – emerged (for the first time) as a potential candidate for the presidency. In doing so, she became one of the first female candidates to ever have campaigned for such a position in the entire Arab world. Thusly, she has since campaigned in all presidential elections, whilst simultaneously maintaining close ties to long-standing authoritarian president Bouteflika (Wakli, 2015). In recent times, the regime attempted to increase political representation of women domestically, with the introduction of a 30% quota for female members of Parliament (Faath, 2012, p. 17).

Following the run-up to the 2014 elections, the UNFA supported authoritarian president Bouteflika's controversially unwanted bid for a fourth term in office, with a statement from the organisation's general secretary, Nuria Hafsia, 'we are convinced that Bouteflika will do everything to realise the rights of women, as he has always done' (Chalal, 2014). In 2014, an additional statement from the general secretary of the FLN, Amar Sadaani, also claimed publicly that the promotion of women had progressed to an unprecedented extent during the tenure of President Bouteflika and that this was nothing less than a 'lesson of democracy' (Sadaani, 2014). Many leading representatives of these organisations stated that President Bouteflika had given the issue of women's rights a '*new breath*' and that the introduction of the quota was only 'thanks to the president' (ibid.).

The regime's success through the partial realisation of women's rights as a legitimisation strategy resulted with a multitude direction that targeted not only Algeria's civil society but Algerian society as a whole. It also had an impact on the international community. This has been proven to be true by the fact that the regime's record of actively encouraging women's organisations to celebrate international holidays relating to women's rights, such as International Women's Day

in March, whilst simultaneously actively shaping and manipulating domestic media reports as well as public discourses about these events in contention with the issue of women's rights (Radio Algérie, 2015).

March 8th 2015, President Bouteflika declared in a public speech that 'it is necessary to get the Algerian woman out of her status as a minor' (Hamma, 2015). Furthermore, in March 2015, members of both the UNFA and women's organisations became very critical of the regime, notable examples are FARD and Tharwa Fatma n'Soumer (TFNS, Children of Fatma n'Soumer), were granted permission to attend the World Social Forum in Tunis. This was attended by a leading representative of Algeria's oldest human rights organisation, the Ligue Algérienne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (LADDH, Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights) brought forward claims that women's groups were sometimes granted the ability to manoeuvre without recourse due to the promotion of women's rights was ideal for the regime's political and international *image*.

Touching upon the regime itself, ever since the early post-independence period, the Algerian government has repeatedly used women's organisations as mechanisms of co-optation for support. Consequently, the authoritarian regime of Algeria has also instrumentalised gender politics for a deviant purpose for sustaining and reinforcing existing divisions between secularist sects and Islamist sects with the goal of maintaining a broader divide-and-rule strategy. Whilst many women's rights activists have been at the forefront of the popular movement that has been challenging the authoritarian rule in the late 1980s (Liverani, 2008), the stance and actions of many women's organisations towards the authoritarian regime was significantly transformed during the 'black decade' of civil war between the military and the Islamist insurrection of the FIS. Fearing repeatedly violent onslaughts by Islamist militias and the introduction of a political system based on Shari'ah law, many women's rights activists turned towards the military – the military having been perceived as a saving grace during this time (Lalmi, 2014, p. 38)

While the regime has used women's rights fundamentally, as a weapon against the Islamist opposition, it has also counteracted this by accommodating Islamist and socially conservative, as well as, to an extent, patriarchal forces in Algeria. This created an issue where secular women's rights activists maintain a fear of an Islamist seizure of power which has still persisted in the post-civil-war period, thus shaping their political attitudes and allegiances until today. When asking questions



regarding the major obstacles to the full realisation of women's rights in Algeria, most of the women's CSOs interviewed never mentioned the country's authoritarian political order but instead feared the influence of Islamist parties, the persistence of patriarchal stereotypes, and their violent displays in Algerian society as a whole. Even up to this day, these organisations issued a periodical entitled 'Femmes Contre l'Oubli' ('Women Against Forgetting'), which documents crimes committed by violent Islamists against women since the Civil War all the way until today.

Lastly regarding details surrounding the 'Family Code' legislative status in Algeria, the Code was first passed by the socialist one-party regime of the FLN in 1984 and therefore predates the Algerian civil war as well as the formation of the FIS (Hamma, 2015). The original version of this document imposed severe restrictions upon women's right to divorce, legalised polygamy, and openly endowed women with an inferior legal status within the family. As aforementioned, in order to marry, women must require the consent of a male 'tutor', which usually was their father. Since the introduction of the 'Family Code' many amendments have occurred at various times, with the most radical reform developing in 2005. Major changes were made to the 'Family Code' which included extensions such as women's right to divorce and an improvement to the legal situation of divorced women. Moreover, women were also granted the right to choose their male 'tutor' regarding cases of marriage, additionally a man's right to polygamy was also made conditional solely based upon the consent of his first wife (Cavatorta, 2011, pp. 50–52). One final notable improvement came with Algeria's claim to currently have numerous female judges, as well as many women members in the police force.

### Case Study – Egypt

The approach I will be taking towards this situation will primarily focus on the gender gap between men and women in Egypt. Briefly, in the Western world within the discussions of gender politics there is great dispute regarding the existence of gender gaps. With one side insinuating statistical data that proves men do end up in more successful roles, however the same data in the *Human Development Report* shows that women dominate in many fields that usually pertain to female-orientated roles.

Analysis of statistical data published by the UN in accordance with Egyptian officials indicates that in Egypt, 77 percent of men voted in the first 2011–2012 transitional parliamentary elections, while only 58 percent of women ended up voting (United Nations Development Programme, 2019). Furthermore, 55 percent of the male voters decided on their vote prior to this election deciding upon their votes during the campaigns or at the very least the beginning of the campaigns, compared to the much lower 45 percent of women (*ibid.*). This data further shows that Egyptian women tend to decide on election day the candidates they wish to vote for revealing to be a much greater extent than men; 24 percent of Egyptian women decided on election day, as compared to 13 percent of men (*ibid.*). In Egypt, political participation amongst parties is staggeringly lower with only 5 percent of men being involved in parties, as compared to a significantly lower 2 percent of women (*ibid.*). Moreover, 77 percent of women have described themselves as not interested in political parties whereas the data indicated it is just 66 percent of men who share this sentiment (*ibid.*).

Yet the gender gap appears to have narrowed and reduced somewhat in Egypt after the uprising, with 47 percent of men and 24 percent of women claimed to have participated in an election before the revolution (*ibid.*). Nonetheless, overall as a group, women have been proportionally underrepresented in the Egyptian parliament and other civic offices. During the final years of Hosni Mubarak's leadership, women only held 12 percent of parliamentary seats (*ibid.*). While such a figure may be considered to be proportionally low, this has been the highest level of female inclusion within parliament in modern Egyptian history. After the revolution that ousted Mubarak, the number of women in office continued to decrease significantly. Data recorded in 2013 by the Human Development Report stated that the overall percentage of parliamentary positions being held by women had dropped to 2.2 percent (*ibid.*).

With reference towards political participants, records from the Human Development Index indicate that women have been active in the revolutions during the Arab Spring, as well as all subsequent protests and debates regarding the future of their nations. Statistical data also unveiled a suggestion that as many as 55% of the protesters were female and that approximately 60% of people voting in the most recent Egyptian elections were also female (*ibid.*). Looking back towards early 2014, the view on equal rights and protections for women were inclusive rights that were added to the newest Egyptian constitution, which reversed

many of the restrictions imposed by the more conservative Mohamed Morsi regime. Although women were not guaranteed a minimum mandatory number of seats within parliament, new laws were included which forbade any discrimination based upon gender. Moreover, women were to be given access to all higher judiciary positions for the very first time. Thusly, the effectiveness of providing the legal framework for a greater approach to gender equality, though enforcement has yet to be determined. Finally, in February 2014, Egypt, for the first time, elected a female political party leader; Hala Shukrallah, a Coptic Christian, to represent the Constitution Party.

### **Case Study – Morocco**

With each of these case studies I will approach each nation of North Africa from a different aspect. In relation to Morocco, front exterior lenses have always been viewed as the most liberal North African nation I will be delving into political activism and its success from a feminist perspective as well as a national perspective.

Moroccan feminists, whether secular, reformist, and Islamic alike, have all endeavoured to promote women's empowerment through the support from education, knowledge, and legal rights whilst simultaneously raising all women's awareness about family law and labour code conduct rights, doing so through the introduction of NGOs and community-based groups.

The rise of women's activism has considerably contributed to democracy in this region, particularly in Morocco, due to its greater social involvement in social and political affairs, as well as, the proliferation of women's associations in contention with women's access to the media. Women's activism is essential to the modernisation and democratisation of the region, as it has significantly contributed to the advance of civil society and democratic culture. Therefore, it begins to be difficult to imagine the success of democracy in this region of the world without the full emancipation of women.

In order to appreciate the significance of women's activism in Morocco, the essentiality of comprehending the role of feminist NGOs such as AWID is clear. This is in addition to taking into account of women's own interpretations, needs, and views on gender equality and development in order to respond to the local realities, needs, and demands. These NGOs have played a major role in the struggle against gender inequalities whilst also highlighting their agency to consolidate

democracy and social justice as well as challenging the traditional thinking and oppressive, sexist practices of governance (Ennaji, 2016).

Some of these women's NGOs have attempted to solve the many perceived problems directly, such as establishing many income-generative activities, construction and care of orphanages, providing shelters for battered women, and the investment into schools. Other attempts have been made to pressurise through lobbying officials, public demonstrations, advocacy campaigns, and any other means to attract the attention of the government and the private sector into undertaking solutions and reforms. Women's NGOs are also active in politics, peace, and legal and human rights. Women's NGOs focus on promoting women's emancipation, participation, and social mobilisation, this encouragement on women's empowerment and participation in decision-making is to boost their input on public affairs. This has enabled women to critically assess their own current situations and the possibility to transform society.

Communication established across the many diverse channels and as a by-product formed multiple advocacy networks, which produced the option for women's NGOs to impose changes to criminal laws, specifically regarding Article 475 of the penal code that allowed 'rapists to escape punishment if he married his victim' (ibid.). This law was recently been reintroduced with the following amendment which stipulates that 'a rapist goes to jail and cannot marry his victim' (ibid.). However, despite the successive results of these organisations, women are still fundamentally disfavoured at the judiciary level regarding legal matters such as polygamy or inheritance. The conservative forces often regard the women's role to be limited to home, reproduction, and raising children (ibid.).

Unlike in many Arab countries, the Moroccan women's NGOs have been granted permission by the government to receive financial aid from foreign organisations as well as foreign investors who act as donors. This results in vast engagement in diverse activities. This, in turn, accumulates a large amount of experience in mobilising women towards local development. Yet there remains the challenge these NGOs are facing in regard to elaborate upon a multitude of self-driven strategies for the establishment as independent forces in partnership with the state as well as political parties. Many of these associations have managed this by retaining distance from political parties, those of which have little credibility with the public (ibid.).

Feminist activists have been responsible for many important accomplishments, most notably the elimination of the requirement that needed authorisation of the husband for traveling abroad which occurred 2004. Moreover, for practicing any type of trade activity in 1995, as well as the revision of the work code and of the penal code that also occurred in 2003, and finally the reform of the citizenship law which now allowed for a Moroccan woman to transmit over her citizenship to her children. Yet, the most remarkable achievement of all these reforms was the 2004 family law reform – a struggle that had taken the feminists more than 20 years to achieve (ibid.).

Secondly, another partial case I'd like to briefly mention is regarding women's lower engagement in elections which has had an impact on their access to parliamentary services. This is due, in part, to the fact that women are less politically engaged, and that their vote is perceived by candidates as being comparatively less important in the need for mobilisation of the vote. There is evidence from much of the original surveys of 200 Moroccan parliamentarians (Wikipedia, 2016) that indicates many female citizens have significantly reduced access to client-based services, with only a margin of 20–29 percent of requests for assistance in contention for personal and community-based problems (Ennaji, 2016). While electing women helps the possibility of reducing the gender gap in the services department, the majority of women elected are through quotas whose experienced mandates have had an effect and are more responsive to an extent with female citizens rather than deputies of either gender who have been elected without quotas.

This leads to a possible explanation for why female citizens in North Africa have had less access to service provision-based networks. These expressive resources are often considered to be purposed for mainly dispositional members of noteworthy networks. This is sometimes impacted by those of the same gender, which can provide an easier approach in relating to the creation of durable networks amongst individuals who can offer resources and support.

### **Case Study – Tunisia**

Amongst all the nations of North Africa, one country has significant and vastly progressive strides towards the ultimate goal desired by all those who have advocated the issues presented in the field of gender politics. Tunisia is a country with the state having passed legislation in favour of equality between genders, with

such progress beyond just the national level. Initiatives have been taken to improve the situation at the local level, this started with an amendment, which had applications to both the municipal and regional elections. The inclusion of this amendment provided a proposal suggesting *horizontal and vertical* gender parity in Article 49 of the electoral law.

My focus will pertain to 'Horizontal' parity, which stipulates that all municipal election lists across Tunisia must have an equal number of both men and women. This proposal is contrary to the design of 'Vertical' parity, which solely requires that men and women alternate within each list. Nevertheless, both policies were adopted by the Assembly of Representatives of the People (ARP), in the Tunisian parliament, on the 15th of June 2016. What was a fundamental success of this amendment was that out of 134 representatives, 127 agreed to pass this new measure (Babnet, 2012).

Whilst my interest greatly favours the approach of the 'Horizontal' parity, the adoption of this new electoral law regarding parity has supported the alignment of the democratic path that Tunisia has chosen to follow (Hamida, 2017). 'For the first time, 73 women parliamentarians, from different parties, backgrounds and political ideologies, voted unanimously and conducted their own lobbying in favour of the horizontal and vertical parity'. This quote is referenced to parliamentarian officer and member of the Commission of Women, Family, Children, Youth and Seniors, Bochra Belhaj Hamida, who made this statement after the law was passed.

The build up to the success of the electoral reform resulted with combined advocacy through the assistance of the UN department UN Women whose efforts led to a civil society for horizontal parity in local elections.

Prior to the plenary session held by Parliament for the draft law, a final partnered session with the International Development Centre for Local Innovative Governance was held regarding the remaining specifics that needed to be introduced. This session allowed for the final details that assisted Women parliamentarians to present the beneficial arguments as well as supporting evidence in favour of the adoption of horizontal and vertical parity.

In accordance with the preparatory work that UN Women involvement within Tunisia, several months earlier (March 2016) a project began that involved multiple

advocacy sessions surrounding the legislative agenda, capacity building, networking and support for the introduction as well as implementation for a women's caucus. The approach taken regarding this initiative, alongside the support from Members of Parliament, concludes with the aim to further improve the representation of women in both the local and national politics. 'Besides being a first in our region, the adoption of horizontal and vertical parity in electoral law is a timely achievement because it will guarantee effective participation of women in the upcoming decentralization process in Tunisia' (Rhiwi, 2016), a statement from representatives of UN Women Maghreb.

Although there has been reverberant success of the electoral reform to Article 49 of the Tunisian constitution, this hasn't always been the case. Subsequently, I would like to touch upon a brief evolution of the processes that brought about the reform I had previously mentioned. Prior to the re-drafted publication of the Tunisian constitution in 2014, the popularly elected NCA promoted its mandates to draft a new constitution, establishing the dawn of national struggle, mass public outcry, and a requisite dialogue that signified the urgency for restructuring Tunisian politics in addition to illustrating the significance for a prospering civil society. Thusly, breeding into the publication of Article 28 which entailed 'Women's Rights', released in August 2012, this proved to be one of the most debated and disputed articles in the first draft of the constitution due to the fact that the translation of the article stipulated that women's roles in the family were 'complementary' to those of men (Salem, 2010). Outcry from many women orientated organisations such as the Democratic Women's Association, La Ligue Tunisienne des Droits de l'Homme (LTDH), and L'Association des Femmes Tunisiennes pour la Recherche sur le Développement (AFTURD), expressed their grievances and outrage with the article, which resulted in multiple sympathetic, advocacy calls for alternatives (Karam, 2012). This led to mass demonstrations accompanied with dynamic slogans in order to funded support for the circulation of an online petition that acquired over 30,000 signatures, signalling the open critique from many women regarding the draft and the requisition for revisions to protect what many considered as rights enshrined in the CPS (family codes) becoming a symbol against the threat from the terminology of 'complementary' roles.

Intriguingly, the range of Tunisian women's activism was broadened in scope by the fact certain women indeed gave support towards Article 28. Specifically, this emerged by the Islamist women sect, in particular 'Ennahda' members of the

NCA, their voice openly supporting this article. Their argument stemmed from the fact that misunderstandings related to the article prevailed in the public forum due to a misrepresentation of the contents by opposition parties (Babnet, 2012).

Evidence indicating the effectiveness of women's organisations in Tunisia's emergent civil society during this period concluded with the 'complementary' clause of Article 28 being omitted from both the second and third drafts of the Tunisian constitution released in December 2012 and April 2013 (Cavaillès, 2012). Although the 'Ennahda' made multiple concessions in these later drafts, which excluded all specific references to Shari'ah law as the official and primary source of legislation in the country (Hamad, 2013).

## **Conclusion**

The finality of this paper doesn't stem from a summarisation of all the collective points but rather a response to the question at hand. The reality of the history behind the movement of gender politics in North Africa results with the irrefutable fact that women have had an impactful role in order to allow for the legislative bodies in each national body to pass progressive doctrines that have granted greater rights and freedoms to women in countries that are more known for their traditional and religious attitudes. History and evidence places the success of this movement on par with that of the Western world. The development of the family codes is key to this, promoting the role of women from a supportive and complementary position into that of fully fledged individuality.

Subsequently, the fact remains that the influence of women has been key to such progress, the true reason behind why it appears that such an important issue that has been overlooked is due to the fact that other political issues have risen above gender politics. Many of these countries are facing a multitude of serious issues, which garners far greater attention by Western media. Nonetheless, recognising the vast contributions that women have loquaciously applied to the region of North Africa is not only deserving but a step towards further improving the standards for women in this region.

Conclusively, not only is the issue of gender politics a key aspect to the political frame in North Africa, but this region's modern and post-colonial history has countless women to thank for the progressive strides taken. In order to improve the mistakenly assumed stereotypes of patriarchal dominance based upon shared



traditions and religious edicts with the Middle East, in a political sense gender activism in this region is much more similar to the West than it is to their Middle Eastern brethren.

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# 16

## A BRIEF JOURNAL ON THE HISTORY OF SEXUALITY

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The following chronological entries, using a multidisciplinary focus, scrutinise the discourse in the social framework regarding the discussion of sex. This journal displays the disparity between the institutional and personal representations of sex in aid to explore the dynamics between society and culture, whilst asking fundamental questions regarding social organisation. The ideas of sex and sexuality are crucial in the concept of the metropolis, thus is significant to the understanding of the distribution of power, national and metropolitan law and policing of society. In chronological order, this journal article includes a discussion of the queer 19<sup>th</sup> century of Oscar Wilde; the sexualisation of the Jewish East End; and women and fashion from post-World-War-I Britain. This is followed by a reflection on the films *Alfie* (1966) and *Pride* (2014), which represented sex in the 1960s and the attitudes of homosexuality in the 1980s. The article ends with a discussion of the modern moralities and sexual hypocrisy of a new phenomenon – Air BnB prostitution. By portraying a cultural perspective, the following entries will briefly demonstrate the gradual deterioration of the traditionally conventional Victorian perception of sex and the shift towards the relaxation of gender discipline.

### **Queer 19<sup>th</sup> Century London and Oscar Wilde**

The term *queer* was a derogatory label used against homosexuals in order to sexually displace people in society, thus conveying the annexation of sexual irregularity during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Queer fluidity, expressed in individuals such as Oscar Wilde, was found by others to be distressing. Consequently, the distinguishability of homosexuality ran parallel to an increasing in the visibility of government intervention. The desire to deter from conventional normalities defied the Victorian morality of traditional heteronormativity, as ‘sexuality was carefully confined’ during the period, the controlled containment defined homosexuality as a

'species' (Foucault, 1978, p. 3.) Oscar Wilde, along with other figures, contributed to the relaxed social framework of gender discipline in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1878, Wilde settled in London, during which he endured a life of decadence and social experimentation, complying with the Victorian perception of deviancy and 'peripheral sexualities' (Foucault, 1978, p. 43). The British Empire was the originator of some legal inventions governing social constructs and sexuality, which were particularly enforced in London due to its being the centre of the Empire. The Victorian purpose of sexual activity was that the supposedly non-pleasurable and 'serious function of reproduction' ought to serve the empire by providing offspring. However, being queer did not conform to these concepts. The formal discourse of having a sexuality that provided economic efficiency illustrates that 'the legitimate and procreative couple laid down the law' (Foucault, 1978, p. 3.). Consequently, those who were queer were segregated as a 'useless' breed of people who were seen as being unpatriotic to the empire. In 1895, the Marquis of Queensbury accused Wilde of being a homosexual due to Wilde's relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas. Condemned to prison in 1895 for acts of gross indecency with other men, Wilde refused to yield to the exigent pressures of reality. This led to his exile to Paris, with his reputation destroyed and his health irreversibly damaged. The regulation of sexuality was apparent in London due to the increasing visibility of homosexuality as being a lifestyle unbeneficial to the empire.

Wilde's play, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), entrenches the notion of sexual liberty as a symptom of the explicit cosmopolitanism visible in London. The sentimental comedy introduces the figure of the 'dandy', a man who pays excessive notice to his appearance, representing the stereotypical queer. The play is seen as a frivolous and superficial comedy, as it exposes the outlook of a period in which homosexuality remained a sensitive area. The language and the subtext of the play emphasise the hypocrisy and moralism of the social construct as it differs from the retained Victorian ideals of heteronormativity.

London's rejection of queerness conveys the retained idea of constituting a 'sexuality that is economically useful and politically conservative' (Foucault, 1978, p. 54). However, the notion of increasing cosmopolitanism in London entrenches the idea of a liberalising outbreak in the popularised discussion of sex – although the Victorian social construct prioritized the preservation of traditional heteronormativity and structure. Thus, the omnipresent confinement of sexuality

influenced public normalities. Consequently, there was some prior discussion regarding sex. However, the methods of such discussion were controlled. By emphasising strict gender disciplines, the Victorian construct unknowingly provided a platform for queer influence (as exerted by figures such as Oscar Wilde) to extend into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Sexualisation of the Jewish East End**

London was represented by many as being the migrant centre of the Empire as a result of the influx of immigrants, due to its inclusion of vast passenger ports in conjunction with its offering of cheap tickets and access to advanced transportation technology. The worldwide migration network epitomised a cosmopolitan population of mostly Irish, Huguenot, and Jewish immigrants, escaping persecution whilst searching for improved prospects. 'By 1888 the Jewish [p]opulation of Whitechapel had grown to between 45,000 and 50,000. At first[,] these Jewish immigrants had settled into the streets to the south of Spitalfields' (Jones, 2006). Although there were Jewish communities prior to the mass migration, sympathy towards them wore thin by the end of the decade, as the economic depression saw the sweeping emergence of mass unemployment, along with a housing shortage in the East End.

After escaping physical persecution in Eastern Europe, the Jews were forced to endure social currents of anti-Semitism. Although the constant movement of immigrants ingrained the idea of cosmopolitanism, it also heightened the host society's xenophobic fears regarding sexuality and crime. The sexualisation of migration portrayed male members of the Jewish community as possessing displaced masculinity whilst living on immoral earnings from sex trafficking and corruption. The illusion that all working women were infertile clouded the sexual reputation of Jewish men. The degree of such stigma of a so-called 'Jewish criminality' was proportional to the influx of Jewish people residing in the East End. The concept of anti-alienist forcing relation between racial communities and crime conveys a sense of xenophobia, due to proto-Fascism being used in response to Jewish migration in London. The hierarchy of race was a social construct, and the tarnished stereotype of Jewish men fuelled xenophobic sentiment. The Aliens Act legitimised the association of Jewish men with social evils, as it conveyed a governmental policy of urgent intervention with regard to immigration. The British Brothers League, a quasi-fascist organisation founded by William Evans-Gordon,



‘attracted the sympathies of some 45,000 [anti-Jewish men]’ (Knepper, 2007, p. 79), illustrating the extreme hostility against the migrant communities.

By 1888, the criminal sexualisation of migration was heightened by the serial killings of five prostitutes in the East End, a predominantly Jewish area.

‘Sir Robert Anderson, head of the Criminal Investigation Department, enflamed anti-Jewish furore by repeating his belief that ‘Jack’ was a Jew of Polish background’ (ibid., p. 77). The suspect Aaron Kosminski fitted the profile of being medically trained, capable of performing the psychotic murder spree and the mutilations. Spurred on by views tainted by a xenophobic press and the middle-classed distortion of migrant sexuality, due to their interpretation of poor foreigners, the identity of Jack the Ripper as being Jewish became ingrained. However, it is arguable how the Jewish identity was framed – and used – as a scapegoat for the ills of an artificial Victorian reality. The xenophobic sexual stereotype of Jewish ingrain the idea of how normality was based on the white heterosexual male, contradictory to the growing cosmopolitanism in London.

Racialisation categorised immigrants into tiers of sexual deviancy and encouraged stereotyping of certain communities. Currents of anti-Semitism tainted the view of Jewish sexuality, regarding the communities as being perverted and containing a distorted idea of masculinity whilst forcing women into prostitution. However, the clouded sexual reality of Jewish men contributed to the rise of xenophobic and fascist sentiment in London, paradoxical to growing cosmopolitanism.

### **Women and Fashion in the Queer 1920s and 1930s**

The interwar period was categorised as a sexual revolution. The shortage of men due to the violence in the First World War led to a gender ratio imbalance. As a result, women were singled out heterosexually. The new sense of ‘carpe diem’ (‘seize the day’) influenced sexual direction in London – as liberal circles promoted more relaxed and tolerant approaches towards gender, race, and sexuality, and such attitudes formed the basis of an emancipated cosmopolitanism. The new figure of the modern girl, the flapper, applied to the newfound formation of womanhood and femininity, being paradoxical to the image prior to the war – and, consequently, enhancing the notion of a liberal and sexual revolution.

The androgynous appearance of the post-war flapper embodied the new freedoms of London's cosmopolitanism, such as wearing makeup and going to restaurants without a chaperone, as the deliberate display of gender fluidity challenged social gender disciplines. However, the representation of 'immorality, generational challenge, and the erosion of stability, particularly in relation to gender relations and the family[,] ... blurred the boundaries between respectable women and women of a "certain class" (a coded phrase for prostitutes)' (Bland, 2013, p. 4). Consequently, women continued to be sexually confined, as flappers were referred to as being 'loose' – despite the supposedly revolutionary nature of the 'sexual revolution'. The sentiment was aided by the limited nature of the notion of what constituted sexual liberty, as such liberty was only financially feasible for the middle and upper classes; thus, it created less impact compared to a universal involvement. The new image of post-war womanhood was lost to those who 'grew up in [what] was a world that expected young women to marry... [T]o most observers[,] it was self-evident that "marriage is the normal mode of life"' (Nicholson, 2008). Consequently, the lost generation of men created a lost generation of lower-class women who were unable to abide with social convention. In addition to experiencing economic discontentment, the women were labelled as being outcasts. Overall, this combination of factors limited the sense of a sexual revolution in London.

However, the reflection of London's cosmopolitanism continued to be represented in the media, such as in the illustrated newspaper *Vogue*. Increasing awareness over different values of fashion became categorised as 'queer', as women had become used to wearing more practical masculine items of fashion, such as trousers, due to their performing male obligations as part of the work effort. The influence of pyjamas being worn as loungewear was seen as being a respectable way to wear trousers. In a *Vogue* cartoon titled 'Inappropriate Presents', an actress accidentally receives a present meant for a man; cigars and pyjamas. Her thank-you note reads: 'Good old Alcestes, [however do you] keep up with things[?] The pyjamas are quite [oh-so] lovely, and the smokes are the best I have ever hit. No one has ever given me a present I have been so delighted with' (Martin, 1925, p. 84). Consequently, the sexual revolution, in London, was also conveyed through the pervasive post-war penchant for male attire as androgynous dress gave women the opportunity to live life in a less conformist way. Women also appropriated tuxedos; theatre publications promoted these styles, which were then adopted by the rest of the population.

The roaring twenties was a response to the horrors of the First World War. The loss of a generation of men fuelled a sexual revolution that was limited by class and financial status. Although women had made advances, they continued to be sexually confined by social convention. However, the rapidly expanding, commercially generated, visual culture of the 1920s and 1930s had a profound impact that was ignited by the mass shortage of men due to their having been lost in the First World War. Consequently, traditional heteronormativity was not always achievable. This forced the denouement of a sexual revolution.

### **Women, Work, and Beauty during the Second World War**

The Second World War, also referred to as being a Total War, is seen as being a part of a transitional phase, conveying the sense of a gradual shift from femininity, in a traditional Victorian perspective, where 'sexuality was carefully confined' (Foucault, 1978, p. 3), towards a relaxed framework of gender disciplines. During the war, from 1941 on, conscription was compulsory for single women. This provided a platform for women to experiment with traditional masculine occupations and leisure activities without suffering the anxiety of being labelled as being a social outcast.

However, despite the euphoria over 'equality', true equality was not actually a reality. The war allowed women to confront the prejudices of femininity, but social heteronormativity reflected upon the public requirements of traditional womanhood through campaigns such as cosmetics advertisements to heighten male morale on the front lines. The importance of women's beauty in enhancing men's morale extends to one soldier even writing in a '1941 *Vogue* article, "To look unattractive these days is downright morale-breaking and should be considered treason"' (Komar, 2017). Consequently, the entrenchment of traditional values hindered full progression towards equality. Although morale was vital, the notion of enhancing beauty over skill undermined women's value in the wartime workplace. However, the constant challenge, during the wartime period, of the role of masculinity in the workplace ignited a gradual shift in gender disciplines as the labelling of any given profession as being 'male' or 'female' in nature became increasingly altered.

The image of what qualities constituted a 'perfect' woman can be reflected in advertisements as preserving the sense of a household woman, as only those women

who were single were conscripted and married women remained to uphold this notion. The Elizabeth Arden advert (1941) encapsulates the ideas of womanhood, conveying the expectations regarding the duty and patriotism of a woman.



*Figure 1. Elizabeth Arden advertisement*

Beauty products were withheld from rationing restrictions until 1941. Thus, the preservation of femininity was attempted during the early years of the war in order to enhance the morale of the male-dominated front lines; thus supporting the idea of having a patriarchal purpose for fighting. The promotion of a 'victory red' lipstick which relates red to patriotism and duty is particularly ironic, given that red – which had historically been seen as being a symbol of prostitution – was now being 'advertised' as what was now becoming the colour of the desired, modern, 'dutiful' woman. Consequently, the emphasis of 'victory' conveys how cosmetics 'were the product of a society in which the intertwining of ideas about women, class divisions, and the profit motive of business produced images purported to represent the real concerns of women and the life to which they should aspire' (Mawhood, 1991, p. 4). The general Victorian anxiety over impressionable young women's entry into the urban space was no longer prioritized in the wartime period.

The rebranding, for the wartime effort, was a common trend amongst other brands such as Tangee, as 'makeup was seen as [being] a necessity in order to help those [women who were] working [alongside] conveyor belts to feel more

feminine' (Komar, 2017) – as previously, women fulfilling male occupations had conventionally been seen as being unattractive.



Figure 2. Tangee advertisement

Adverts present an insight into public opinion. Thus the Tangee campaign reflects how beauty gave women the ability 'to maintain their individuality' (ibid.) whilst preserving a sense of normalcy prior to the war during a period of conforming to masculinities, and a period of feeling that they were encroaching on traditional male work. The advertisements portray parallel concepts and were issued in conjunction with the wartime propaganda campaigns directed towards women. Recruitment posters frequently illustrated the conventionally attractive woman who embodied femininity whilst effectively accomplishing the functions of traditional male occupations, such as serving in an agricultural capacity in the Women's Land Army.

The War unintentionally advanced the ideals of feminism whilst defying the previously repressive Victorian traditions of morality and heteronormativity. This notion reinforces the idea of a transitional period that shifts the view of femininity by the constant reformation of the social constructs. However, the advertisements portray how conventional femininity supported the upkeep of morale.

Thus, traditional values were just as important as occupying male jobs during the wartime effort.

### ***Alfie and the Swinging Sixties***

The 1960s represented the start of a gradual shift towards the relaxation of strict disciplines of masculinity and femininity. The new generation of young adults grew up in an era of post-war austerity, absent to the terrors during the war. Thus, those who wanted to avoid the constant physical and social hardships over the reconstruction of London used the pleasures of the nightlife as a distraction. Consequently, 'the means to control how you were seen were newly available to the young', which enabled 'the ability to distinguish yourself visually from your parents' (Diski, 2009, p. 15). This caused a change in the public discourse of sex, reflecting upon the breakdown of the Victorian structure and morality.

The film *Alfie* (1966) represents these 'radically new patterns of sexual behaviour' (August, 2009, p. 81) of sexual explorers, where the characters engage in vigorous heterosexual humour through a series of different ventures. The film was 'pretty revolutionary at the time', as the main character, Alfie, '[talked] to the camera' (Gilbert, 2001), entrenching the new idea of casual sex relationships through general engagement with the audience. The performance of multiple sexual relationships, all of which avoid commitment (thus defying the traditional stories of morality), implies the way society frames sex and the changing presentation of gender in the 1960s. This cultural artefact is significant, as it portrays female adulterers within the working class, while also including a working-class protagonist. This was an element in film which was previously absent in cinemas prior to the 1960s, as only upper-class people had been portrayed as the main protagonists. This change conveyed the concept of sexual liberty transcending class distinctions (rather than being restricted only to the upper class).

The notion of sexual liberty is a symptom of the explicit cosmopolitanism depicted throughout the film. However, the relations are paradoxical to the ideal of a traditionally moral companionate marriage. Statistical analysis demonstrates a gradual increase of births outside wedlock in during the 1960s, increasing from 5.8% of the total number of births in 1961 to 8.4% of births in 1971 (Office for National Statistics, 2015). This sizeable 2.6% difference quantifies the decline of people's compliance with the previous Victorian morality. The tone of *Alfie*

accentuates the altering attitudes towards marriage and abortion through his affair with Gilda, stressing the possible repercussions of his casual promiscuity as he strains to arrange an illegal abortion (Smith, 2001). Consequently, although the film promotes a cosmopolitan transformation of the social discourse on sex, it still retained ideas of traditional heteronormativity that continued to repress the empowerment of women in public spaces, as *Alfie* states: 'My understanding of women only goes as far as the pleasure' (*Alfie*, 1966). Thus, women continued to be depicted as objects of the male gaze – limiting the sexual transformation of the 1960s due to the obviously apparent sexism of that era.

The promiscuous cosmopolitanism of the 1960s, reflected in *Alfie*, defies the previous Victorian traditions of morality and heteronormativity. This concept reinforces the idea of a liberalising outbreak of a popularised discussion of sex – one resulting from a sexually transitional period of the 1960s – which contributed to the redefining of gender roles and disciplines. Yet, the decade was transitional, rather than being transformative; as the continuous relaxation of gender discipline, aided by the reduction of government controls regarding sexuality, represented a constant reformation of the social construct – a process which did not end in the 1960s. Thus, *Alfie* reflects upon the transitional phase, where sexism and class transgression are still apparent, but are not yet resolved.

### ***Pride, the Film***

The cultural media representation of the Welsh miner crisis in the (2014) film *Pride*, concerning events which occurred during the 1980s under the rule of Prime Minister Thatcher, portrays the outstretched union between unconventional homosexual Londoners and elderly reserved miners in Wales. The cinematic shift conveys the gradual relaxation of traditional gender discipline regarding homosexuality, represented by the Welsh miners' change in attitude, reflecting a sense of cosmopolitanism directed from London. Branded as 'sentimental fiction' (Kermode, 2014), the film translates the raw emotions experienced during the miners' strike, lasting from 1984 to 1985. The opening illustrates the NUM leader Arthur Scargill's declaration of a national miners' strike on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March, 1984. The explicit concept of sexual liberty is translated through the film, as its queer language emphasises the relaxation of traditional heteronormative moralities. However, the film welcomes the gay support group into a background of homophobic slur.

The common enemy of both homosexuals and miners is the set of political values driving social policy under the conservative party. The film demonises Prime Minister Thatcher and her government, due to both groups being portrayed as being oppressed both by the government and by the tabloid press. Thus, homophobic sentiment continued to linger from the traditional social construct of confined gender discipline. An unlikely union forms, due to a shared experience of oppressive realities. Thatcher's traditional outlook of heteronormativity clouds political judgment and tone throughout the film. However, even though the film takes a more leftist approach, there is no mention of leftist language such as 'socialism'. This would be due to a financial rationale, as the film tries 'not to alienate too many American viewers, who may be able to tolerate a few friendly queer folk – but might prefer [that] rampant Marxists stayed firmly in the closet' (von Tunzelmann, 2014). Consequently, this decision-making rationale, in the production of an historically based film, implies the inclusion of some historical inaccuracies in order to (ironically) make more profit.

The film involves a group of individual homosexuals forming a support group named 'Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners' (*Pride*, 2014). The students' flurries of political action reflect the realities and apparent factionalism within the group. There is an alliance between the students and the small Welsh community within which they reside. However, at the beginning of the film, there is hesitancy on the part of the Welsh community to reciprocate. This is symbolised by the fact that they view 'gays' and 'lesbians' with equal suspicion (Kermode, 2014), contrary to the notion of sexual liberty in London throughout the 1980s.

The tone of the film illustrates a strong bond of mutual acceptance – a positive sentiment depicted throughout, and one which is cinematically accommodated by uplifting music which portrays a sense of solidarity and of union between members of the group. However, despite their receipt of large donations from the group, many members of the Welsh mining community remain hostile towards the support group due to the growing presence and fear of AIDS; and distress over queer fluidity. Thus, entrenching the prejudices which gay men faced during the 1980s, fears such as the AIDS epidemic was significant at the time, when 'AIDS was labelled as being the "gay plague"' (Gander, 2017). The character of Joe represents there being, amongst the older generation, a continued denial of conformity to sexual identities.



The film depicts the influence of London cosmopolitanism, directed towards the rest of the country. The 1980s nostalgia displayed throughout the film portrays, to some extent, the unconventionality of the students' outlook on society. This cultural portrayal is significant, as it depicts a modern vision of events in the 1980s, whilst translating it into an emotionally raw piece of entertainment.

### **Sex Work and Modern Morality**

The foundation regarding the stereotyping of sex work is built upon the representation of exploiting the commodification of casual intimacy, which is paradoxical to the traditional values of morality and femininity. Consequently, the industry is morally tarnished, due to stereotyping, as the 'occupation is regarded as sinful or of dubious virtue' and '[employs] methods seen to be immoral' (Tyler, 2011, p. 1478). The morality regarding sex work defies the theme of traditional Victorian views of femininity, thus reinforcing the sense of taint. However, the increasing concept of sexual liberty throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, parallel to the change in sex work, is a symptom of the explicit cosmopolitanism and modernisation in London. Nevertheless, the socially conventional view of prostitution is commonly associated with a lack of self-respect along with amounting economic pressure, creating a negative stigma, which continues to linger from the Victorian era's conceptualization of certain practices as being 'social evils.'

Technology accommodates the progression of the sex work industry in London, giving such workers the ability to set up new branches of their industry in whatever public places may be available at the time. This progression is fuelled by activism regarding the safety of workers. One example of this is the modern 'establishment' of the temporary and informal 'pop-up' brothel. This kind of brothel was the creation of the sex workers themselves, 'where [they]... work out of short-term rental accommodation[s] or holiday lettings' (Sanghani, 2018). There is no management as would be found in a conventional brothel. Consequently, as reflected by this method, this portrays how the main priorities for the modern sex worker are safety, as they are constantly moving, and also fully maximizing earning potential (as there is no manager in such a setup). Economic distress has also forced workers towards taking measures to protect their own safety following the emergence of a heightened risk of violence in Westminster, due to a fall in demand; consequently, sex workers who accept more clients take on greater risks (BBC, 2013). The use of 'pop-up' brothels lowers the risk of violence, as 'colleagues

warn one another of dangerous clients and locations to avoid – or places they recommend’ (Sanghani, 2018). The constant movement expands their client base whilst working from safe premises. Nevertheless, the evolution of prostitution, due to the development in technology, widens the opportunity for work. However, they face increasing danger from more mediums. The reputation of sex work is tarnished, both socially and physically. Moreover, the reputation is challenged by the conventional definition of self-respect, as the commercialisation of sex is displayed as being repressive towards those involved.

‘Prostitution’ is a broad term. Thus, complex legal procedures are enforced to regulate it – although ‘pop-up’ brothels are illegal if more than ‘one woman uses [the] premises for the purposes of prostitution’ (Parliament, House of Commons, 2017). However, due to the phenomenon of this kind of brothel, the workers are less likely to get caught and are also safer. Conversely, though, this new type of brothel can also cater towards organised ‘sexploitation’ because of trafficking being consequently less easily detectable by the authorities. The criminalisation of sex work results in the entrenchment of a negative stigma, helping ‘to make [discussions of] prostitution about specific demons in society that could be managed by specific laws, rather than a sign of something very wrong in the fundamental structure of society or [of] the state itself’ (Laite, 2013, p. 216). The moral obligation of providing protection and a safe environment for the workers is a paradox against the national obligation of reducing the number of such workers. That this is an obligation illustrates and reflects how, under the current framework, the regulation of commercial intimacy has to be legally controlled, as it is perceived as being a social issue – one in which government intervention is thus needed. Such regulations, via government interference, are not only a good idea to preserve, but as a way of protecting the workers, are needed.

Thematically, in summary, conventional Victorian morality claims to protect the reservation of sex and the preservation of intimacy and traditional morality (to some extent) – thus being contradictory to the commodification of sex workers’ services (or even the commodification of the workers themselves). The use of ‘pop-up’ brothels heightens the view of sexual promiscuous cosmopolitanism in London, whilst prioritising safety fuelled by activism regarding the decriminalisation of sex work. The criminalisation of sex work entrenches a negative connotation upon the occupation, in relation to personal economic pressures, fitting with the stereotype.

## Conclusion

The discourse in the social framework, regarding the discussion of sex, thematically reflects the depicted challenge against conventional Victorian morality. The progression of individuality (as expressed through sexuality) over the persuasion of common thought is a progression which conveys the principal mechanism of power that is used to regulate and control populations. Consequently, the relationship between power and sexuality was exploited into a systematic form of social regulation, via institutional resources, thus moulding a public attitude towards sex in the metropolis. This brief social history uses a cultural perspective to emphasise the deterioration of the traditional social constructs, which prioritized the preservation of conventional heteronormativity, accommodating the liberalising development of cosmopolitanism. Accordingly, the Victorian construct unknowingly provided figures such as Oscar Wilde with a platform for queer influence. This was to extend into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by emphasising strict gender disciplines. The gradual shift in public attitude, resulting from 20<sup>th</sup> versus 19<sup>th</sup> century perspectives and from the gender imbalance remaining after the horrors of the First World War, proved that traditional heteronormativity was not always achievable. This forced a sexual revolution (during a period of post-war austerity) that only intensified in the 1960s. The discourse in the social framework led to a new perception of morality regarding the commodification of sex; as the increasingly adopted notion of sexual liberty was an outgrowth of the emergence of an explicit cosmopolitanism and liberated modernity of London.

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# 17

## THE POLITICS OF MASCULINITY: CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF MASCULINITY IN TODAY'S POLITICAL CLIMATE

*Bilyana Yankulova*

'I'm here to talk to you about the *Avengers* initiative'.

– Nick Fury

Marvel Studios has been central to the resurgence of the superhero genre within 21st-century popular cinema. They have been steadily shaping the contemporary Hollywood film industry for the past decade. However, one thing they cannot take credit for is bringing superheroes to life, be it on the silver or television screens. Adaptations from as early as the 1940s have been breathing life into superheroes such as Batman, Superman, and Captain America, to name a few of the most notable ones. At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox started a new era in superhero movies with the release of *X-Men* (Bryan Singer, 2000) and are continuing to expand on the team of mutants from Marvel Comics. Yet, when in 2008 Marvel Studios released their first solo production, *Iron Man*, directed by Jon Favreau, they started a franchise surpassing the scale of *X-Men*. In the post-credits scene of *Iron Man*, Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson) reflexively gestures to the emergence of the action-adventure genre of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which is increasingly being dominated by superhero films. Fury's words explain that 'Mr Stark, you've become part of a bigger universe. You just don't know it yet', which can be interpreted as hinting to the viewer that this is only a glimpse into a whole new world of superheroes, solidified by the release and immediate success of *The Avengers* (Joss Whedon, 2012). This paper responds to the critical and commercial popularity of Marvel films, and in particular, engages with the figure of Captain America as one of the characters central to the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Within several of the MCU films, Captain America is significant in discussing

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the search of identity and fighting the sense of displacement as a space where we see the transformation of masculinity through the decades. From the 1940s to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, American masculinity has taken on different appearances, all inspired by war, marking Captain America's character as a link between past and present male identity. This search for identity presents this super-soldier as both ordinary and superior, allowing us to identify with him, but preventing him from identifying with his own image. This struggle makes him an intriguing character through which to filter different aspects of identity.

Academic literature has been highly responsive to filmmaking trends in contemporary Hollywood and has begun placing increasing focus on superhero movies. Many scholars have given superhero cinema the credit for not only shaping the U.S. film industry but equally mirroring society's fears and presenting role models for the younger generation. Among the increase in scholarly literature on superheroes, there are several trends that support the ways in which superhero cinema has been critically discussed, which I will review in relation to the character of Captain America and his portrayal in the MCU. The first trend engages with questions of gender and masculinity, focusing on the representation of superheroes. Jeremiah Favara emphasises the importance of the superhero's physical body as a visualisation of his masculinity, citing directly the character of Captain America. He argues that 'Rogers' physical strength, as an embodiment of masculinity, and patriotic, team-playing ideals[,] are linked to the 1940s' (Favara, 2016). This is a common way of framing Captain America's masculinity through his temporal displacement. Another scholar's focus on masculinity which also falls on Captain America's character from the comic books is J. Richard Stevens. Stevens follows the character's transformation through the decades, noting that 'his actions, political stances, and speeches have frequently drawn attention and criticism from various sources' (2015). Another way to look at masculinity is from an internal, rather than external, perspective. Mark D. White's focus on comic-book Captain America falls in the direction of mind-set, rather than physicality, by looking at Captain America's ethics, honour, and judgment. He dates Captain America's moral values to a 'moral theory originating with ancient Greek philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, and the Stoics' (White, 2014). This old-fashioned outline of the character is a vital aspect of his appeal.

The second trend that can be traced through the academic literature on Marvel is the question of national identity of superhero films. This social aspect within the

writing allows us to think about Captain America as the embodiment of American values. Terence McSweeney argues that the MCU films are a reflection of society's perception of American and global political climate, touching on topics such as 9/11 and the resulting War on Terror, as well as the way they impact the narrative of *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* (Anthony & Joe Russo, 2014). He reads the prevailing post-9/11 topics in the film, such as 'pervasiveness of contemporary surveillance culture, data mining, governmental duplicity[,] and the need for more transparency from the intelligence community' as a critique of the American political climate (McSweeney, 2018). This aids in tracking the transformation of Captain America's character from a hero representing the black-and-white view of America's moral values during the Second World War, when there was a clear distinction between the good and bad sides of the war, to the contemporary fear of home-grown terrorism, blurring the lines between 'us' and 'them'. Consecutively, this fear opens the way for discussion of what Sasha-Mae Eccleston refers to as 'the various legal quagmires involved with domestic surveillance in response to terrorism', in relation to S.H.I.E.L.D. as a government organisation and Captain America as a soldier and an individual (2018).

The third point of focus I have identified engages with the importance of transmedia as a reflection of modern-day identity, both American and global, established through cultural and social anxieties. Liam Burke describes 'transmedia storytelling' as expanding on already existing themes and characters through different media platforms. A prime example Burke uses is the transition and evolution of characters between movies, TV shows, comics, and other media: 'scenes from the feature film [*Captain America: The First Avenger*] being used as flashbacks in the television series *Agent Carter*, the inclusion of Avengers action figures and other commercially available merchandise within the diegesis of *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.*' (2018). This not only connects Marvel across films and TV, but it also connects them to our world. Jennifer Beckett further solidifies the relationship between transmedia and social order in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: 'there is perhaps no better space in which to examine the underpinnings of today's war on terror than the pages and across the screens of a superhero dominated transmedia universe' (2018). The three trends represent a wide overview of the different aspects that make the Marvel Cinematic Universe so appealing, and provide a look into the role that the different characters occupy within separate films and across the franchise.



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My aim in this study is to apply the predominant themes of analysis – performances of gender and masculinity, the significance of national identity, and trans-media storytelling – and deploy them to construct a character study of Captain America within the Marvel Cinematic Universe. I narrow down my focus on the character of Captain America, reading him not purely as a cultural phenomenon in our society, but examining how the man behind the shield, Steve Rogers, interacts with his own status as a pop-culture icon within the diegetic world he occupies. The paper is divided into two sections, each of which focuses on a pair of films.

Section One engages with the representation of heroic masculinity and how it reflects on the films' distinction between protagonists and their opposing characters, as well as how Captain America's masculinity reflects his displacement in time, using as examples *Captain America: The First Avenger* (Joe Johnston, 2011) and *The Avengers*. When taken together, these two films construct Cap's introduction to the MCU, first through Rogers' physically becoming Captain America, and then, through displacing him in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to track the first transformations of his masculine identity. In Section Two, this paper will look at *Captain America: Civil War* (Anthony & Joe Russo, 2016) and *Avengers: Infinity War* (Anthony & Joe Russo, 2018) and the two films to expand on the political conflict between Steve Rogers and Tony Stark. The two films will also allow for discussion of the threat of external repression of masculinity as represented by the Sokovia Accords and the extent to which post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has influenced the characters' image. Each section focuses on one Captain America and one Avengers film, as to compare the representation of Steve Rogers' character both in terms of his own idea of self and the perception others have of him. I do this in an attempt to better present the differences between Captain America as a pop-culture icon and Steve Rogers' own struggle for identification.

### **Section One: Heroic Masculinity and Captain America's Displacement in Time: Search for Identity in *Captain America: The First Avenger* and *The Avengers***

'Everything that's happening? The things that are about to come to light? People might just need a little old-fashioned'.

– Agent Coulson

Perhaps one of the most appealing qualities of the superhero is the notion that before they became one, they were ordinary, perhaps even overlooked members of society, allowing the audience to identify with their pre-hero personas while looking up to their superhero qualities. Joel Deshayé discusses recognition and identification in regards to superheroes and their alter egos as public and private personas, saying that: '[t]he metaphor of celebrity is represented more visually and conventionally in recent blockbuster superhero movies when Spider-Man, Batman, and Iron Man – all represented as stars – begin to recognize and misrecognize themselves in their own masks (or personas)' (Deshayé, 2014). For Captain America, however, identity is not divided between private and public; the whole world knows that Captain America is Steve Rogers, a World War II hero, an all-American man, struggling to adapt to his new life decades after he sacrificed himself for his country. Mark White identifies that Rogers' 'sense of displacement ... came to define the character for years to come' (ibid.). White used the comic books as the base for this argument, however, displacement in time and Captain America's re-discovery of himself is also a common theme for his character in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

This section engages with the creation of the character of Captain America in *Captain America: The First Avenger*, on the one hand, by introducing him to audiences in movie theatres and, on the other, transforming Steve Rogers into Captain America, making him a symbol of masculinity and the face of World War II within the MCU. I will investigate the trajectory of Rogers' masculinity from a 'skinny kid from Brooklyn' to selfless soldier and a WWII veteran, in *The First Avenger* as the first film featuring Captain America, establishing him as a main character in the MCU. In the second part of the section the focus shifts to *The Avengers* and how Captain America's displacement in time from the 1940s to today's America allows for further investigation into his masculinity as he adjusts to the change – social, technological, and political. I wish to argue that Steve Rogers' gender identity, and consequently Captain America's masculinity, does not transition seamlessly between past and present. His character is hindered by his moral values, as well by his socially ascribed position as the face of American politics and the military, making him an anachronistic representation of masculinity.

*The First Avenger* both literally and figuratively builds Steve Rogers' masculinity and his heroism in stark opposition to his physicality. The first time the audience sees Rogers he is small and frail, hiding behind a newspaper. However, his

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dismissal of any doubts about enlisting, despite his physical size, attests to his heroic masculinity. This disparity between his physical and mental strength is shown often prior to his physical transformation into Captain America and the aim of this repetition is to establish Steve Rogers *as* Captain America morally, implying that heroism comes from within. Thus, the frail Rogers takes punch after punch, be it in Brooklyn or in the army and he always stands back up, ready for more. The setting of *The First Avenger*, both grounded in our reality through its locale of WWII frontlines, and in Marvel's fictional universe of monsters and magic, becomes a hybrid between a war film and a superhero narrative. Susanne Kord and Elisabeth Krimmer note that the war film addresses its spectators on both personal and national levels, providing an exemplary morality. 'If war is an ineluctable part of becoming a man, the willingness to engage in war is considerably higher' (Kord & Krimmer, 2011). Steve himself says that all he wants is to do his part in the war effort, not home but on the battlefield. 'There are men laying down their lives', he says; 'I've got no right to do any less than them'. The virtues Rogers represents, such as 'courage, a sense of civic responsibility, and loyalty' are what Kord and Krimmer define as the main points of focus of the war film notable in the context of all battlefields, regardless of time or location (2011). But just as heroism comes from within, Yvonne Tasker remarks that the action cinema hero 'depends on a complex articulation of both belonging and exclusion, an articulation which is bound up in the body of the hero and the masculine identity that it embodies' (1995) Rogers' body, however, is lacking what Tasker refers to as 'musculinity' – masculinity represented through the physical body of the hero (1995). As such, it is inherently feminised, made weak and vulnerable, and in need of masculinisation, a bodily transformation that is achieved through Dr. Erskine's (Stanley Tucci) super-soldier serum. This, as noted by Terence McSweeney, marks a return to 'more traditional forms of masculinity' that regain their importance in a post-9/11 world, where the idea of a national savour is becoming more prevalent again (2018).

The serum and the physical metamorphosis help Rogers transgress the 'binary opposition of active/passive', indicating active as a male and passive as a female role set out by Laura Mulvey in her 1989 piece *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Tasker, 1995). Before the serum, Steve has no active role in the army and is instead stagnant as he is unable to progress physically; after the serum, he becomes fit for duty and is finally able to actively partake on the frontline. The combination of the physical masculinity of the action hero and the moral qualities he carries makes

post-serum Steve Rogers the national saviour and the icon of his time, which he became when he sacrificed himself to prevent the deaths of many and the destruction of New York. Yet, even after his body's transformation, Rogers' Captain America is still contained in a passive role – as an entertainer and a movie star by his superiors. Tasker summarises Richard Dyer's analysis on masculinity whose investigation 'draws attention to the way in which any display of the male body needs to be compensated for by the suggestion of action' (Tasker, 1995). At first, Rogers is kept away from the action, as he is at once too valuable to be sent to the frontlines, and of no use as a civilian. His body becomes the spectacle, as Favara notes: '[t]he ability to use the body in the masculine way – in the case of superbodies, this refers to stunts and fighting – in an important characteristic of hegemonic masculinity' (Favara, 2016). Before becoming Captain America in battle, Rogers plays him on stage and on screen for a diegetic, as well as an extra-diegetic audience. Once he embraces the super-soldier persona of Captain America, he replaces the stage with the battlefield. The days of passive performance are echoed in Captain America's costume in *The Avengers*, bringing back anxieties of masculinity unbefitting the times from Rogers' days before the serum.

*The Avengers* is the first film to bring the characters that would become the superhero team together onscreen and Rogers' re-introduction to the audience partially repeats the end-credit scene from *The First Avenger* – Fury comes to Rogers to recruit him for the Avengers Initiative. When we first see him clearly, he is boxing, and his back is towards the camera. The audience is made privy to his inner thoughts, as he relives the horrors he experienced in WWII, simultaneously reminding the audience of *The First Avenger* and showing us that he is struggling to leave the past behind and move on. A soldier without a war, when Fury brings him to the project, Rogers tries to become Captain America again expecting that not only military culture would have remained unchanged for 70 years, but that his comrades would be as selfless and loyal as he is. One of the first signs of his status as a pop-culture icon is Agent Coulson's (Clark Gregg) open admiration towards Captain America, going as far as to imitate his posture. On a plane heading to Fury's helicarrier, Rogers stands behind the pilots and rests one arm on the panel in front of him, placing his other arm on his waist in a contemplative stance. As soon as he does this, Coulson moves to mirror his position showing not just his fascination with Captain America but also admiration for his masculinity and leadership skills.

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*The Avengers* provides comparison between Rogers and versions of modern masculinities more suitable to the new type of war. Kord and Krimmer, talking about *Iron Man*, note that the 'film seems tired of the moral superiority of the World War II generation and suggests that newer and better heroes have arrived' (Kord & Krimmer, 2011). Although they all look roughly the same age, Rogers finds himself working with people who have in one way or another fought wars, however, their wars did not have the benefit of a clear-cut villain. Tony Stark discovered his weapons were arming both the U.S. Army and the terrorist organisation that kidnapped him. Rogers prefers to believe his government and his country are inherently good, as part of his identity depends on America's image and position in global politics, that will become a bigger part of the following sections, as the films I will discuss focus more on international conflicts. This is reflexive of his displacement in time; his trust is based on American politics of the 1940s, but he must now learn that '[p]laying by the rules does not get you anywhere in a world without a moral compass. However, adjusting to the ways of the world also proves to be harmful' (ibid.). Thus, Rogers is in the position of attempting to re-discover who he is supposed to be and who to trust, once as a man, and then as a superhero. But before that, he must decide where his loyalty and duty, as internal factors of masculinity, lie. This can be mapped onto the American nation in a post-9/11 world, updating the context in which we view Captain America. He is still the righteous man, as he was in the stories of the comics from the past, but now the threat he faces is domestic.

Captain America's suit, as an extension of his bodily masculinity, plays a vital role in representing his state of disenfranchisement of his superiors, be it military, government, or single individuals. His costume in *The Avengers* resembles his stage costume from *The First Avenger* quite closely, reflecting his willingness to serve his government, albeit not as blindly as before. However, his first mission even in the 40s was against orders and yet it still represents the same morals. But another blow to his masculinity appears to be technology. While Howard Stark (Dominic Cooper) might not have possessed the super-soldier moral or physical masculinity, his son is a representative of the new masculinity that requires him to be more than a soldier. Tony Stark has become a man who has transcended the 'more general fears about the body and its relation to technology' by replacing his heart with a futuristic energy reactor (Tasker, 1995). Captain America, on the other hand, seems to be baffled by most types of technology. And his mistrust of technology extends to not trusting Stark enough to wait

for his computer to uncover S.H.I.E.L.D secrets. He instead uses force to break into the helicarrier's armoury.

During the final battle scene, what has become the iconic shot of the Avengers finally coming together as a team, is a compelling representation of different types of 'masculinities' within the team, all in opposition to each other from physicality to class, to gender. But the story has set out Captain America and Iron Man as the leaders of the team, as they each possess valuable skills that are important for the team and that put together can win any battle. Iron Man is insubordinate and rebellious, while Captain America is willing to take orders; and while Captain America has military expertise on the frontlines fighting alongside his fellow men, Iron Man's strength is designing tech, alone. Yet, when it matters most, they seem to be able to reconcile their differences and work together. As Kord and Krimmer argue: 'Superhero films not only show us how to respond in a situation of crisis and how to think about our enemies, but they also introduce and evaluate leadership styles. In particular, they are concerned with the relation between the leader and his people, and in this, they bear a direct relation to the politics of our time' (Kord & Krimmer, 2011). In that line of thought, *Captain America: The First Avenger* and *The Avengers* present a world that values multiple forms of masculinity for what they have to offer, and yet still at times rejects the people expressing them due to their differences with the rest of society.

## **Section Two: Politics, PTSD, and Masculine Identities in *Captain America: Civil War* and *Avengers: Infinity War***

'We try to save as many people as we can. Sometimes that doesn't mean everybody, but you don't give up'.

– Steve Rogers

This section will expand on themes of politics and representation of gender present in the films, both in terms of personal identification and as dictated by external forces. This transition of themes between movies is facilitated by MCU's incorporation of increasing levels of transmedia storytelling both as the growing number of TV series take on some of the story developments, and as the MCU gains traction and a dedicated audience. McSweeney has noted that the purpose of *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (Joss Whedon, 2015) was to unite 'the variegated narrative strains of the Phase Two films and establish a context for what would

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become Phase Three' which began with *Captain America: Civil War* and ended with *Avengers: Endgame* (Anthony and Joe Russo, 2019) (McSweeney, 2018). The importance of this type of unification of characters taking part in *Civil War* and then in *Avengers: Infinity War* is a direct result of both the steady stream of new characters being introduced and the desire to surpass the expectations set first by *The Avengers*.

This section will begin by looking at the political conflict between Steve Rogers and Tony Stark using Bucky as the direct catalyst presented in *Captain America: Civil War*. This will further develop the themes of political tension between Rogers and Stark following *Age of Ultron*, as well as introduce Bucky as a substitute for the collateral damage caused by the politically charged world of the Avengers. This will lead me to look at the additional repercussions of the external political pressure presented by the Sokovia Accords. The aim of the Accords, a set of legal documents established by the United Nations, is to serve as the mediator and to keep track of the involvement of the Avengers in an attempt to limit collateral damage and civil casualties. I will look at the rift the Accords create between the Avengers as a reflection of the current political climate. Progressing to *Infinity War*, I will compare Captain America's masculinity to that of Iron Man, differentiating between their masculinity traits reflected in the characters' willingness to compromise. I will look at this through the prism of the established mental state of the characters, as both Rogers and Stark suffer from PTSD. Stark's main symptoms appear to be anxiety attacks, as shown in *Iron Man 3* (Black, 2013), while Rogers' symptoms such as avoidance of the triggering topics are more internalised. As an inseparable part of their personalities, their disorder is important to establishing both their world views and their gender identity. To conclude, I will look at Captain America's costume and, in particular, his shield as a direct representation of his political alignment.

As noted in the previous section, Steve Rogers and Tony Stark have drastically opposing political views stemming from their different backgrounds and a certain level of antagonism towards one another has been part of their dynamics since their first meeting in *The Avengers*. Annika Hagley and Michael Harrison have also pointed out that one of the differences between them emerging from that first interaction, saying that Iron Man's narrative connection to the military industrial complex 'shows a newfound capacity to depersonalize war and is placed in counterpoint to Captain America, who represents traditional notions of patriotism

and acceptance of authority' (Hagley & Harrison, 2014). This comes to a critical turning point in *Civil War* when Roger's disenfranchisement with military policies and authority, following *Winter Soldier* reaches its peak. In fact, the reason for the rift between the Avengers is based on their freedom to choose their missions. Previously, the Avengers have been operating on a collective moral code, fighting for the greater good and without outside supervision, as at the beginning of the film and their involvement in preventing a potential terrorist attack in Lagos. While attacking without plan and supervision has been Iron Man's forte since his character was introduced in 2008, Cap's distrust in authority is jarring to his teammates and the viewer. Change, however, is a vital part of the reformation of his masculine identity, as well as the construction of identity as a national icon. J. Richard Stevens has stated the importance of renegotiating Captain America's character and by extension the characters around him, by saying that 'evolutionary changes document the necessity of reinventing American myths to avoid engaging derogatory elements of American history and yet to preserve a sense of narrative continuity' (Stevens, 2015). Following that renegotiation of character traits, Steve Rogers begins as a man desperate to join the army, only to become a man who trusts only his own rationale, while Tony Stark turns from a man disregarding any authoritative figure he encounters, to a man willing to give up control and follow orders. It is important to note that neither of those transformations take place without reason or foreshadowing, as Steve's first mission as Captain America is against orders, framed by Rodrigo Muñoz-González as 'moral naïveté' (Muñoz-González, 2017). Meanwhile, part of Tony's character arc has been figuring out when he needs to let others take the lead. Thus, it is not so much the characters themselves that have changed, but their views on how to continue preserving the greater good have.

Terence McSweeney has made the observation that the characters of Rogers and Stark offer 'insights into, among other things, changing circulations of what cultures define as masculine values' (McSweeney, 2018). His interpretation of the characters' masculine ideals is an attempt at 'reclaiming American national identity in the wake of 9/11' (ibid.). Bucky appears to be the opponent to that national identity, as he is perceived as a threat and is indeed framed, for acts of terrorism, a major plot point in *Civil War* as well as a secondary reason for the rift between Rogers and Stark. The character of Bucky, however, has a more complex role – he is the example of those casualties who find themselves in the centre of the clash by accident, much like the civilians in New York in *The Avengers*,



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Sokovia in *Age of Ultron*, or Lagos in the opening of *Civil War*. But while the responses the film's viewers are shown directly after the events in New York are positive, in *Civil War* the emphasis is on those who were hurt by the Avengers. Friedrich Weltzein has identified the costume as 'the exact opposite of camouflage; unlike all combat uniforms since World War I, these costumes want to attract attention' (Weltzein, 2005). In the case of Bucky the costume of his alter-ego, despite not being portrayed as a superhero, is his metal arm – an inseparable part of him and a sign of both his strength and weakness, much like the arc reactor in Stark's chest. Interestingly, both Bucky and Stark have been trying to leave behind their past mistakes and build a new life, however, Bucky's method is to blend in and lead a quiet unnoticeable life, separate from the world of superheroes, while Stark steps in to try and protect the world. *Civil War* escapes the notion of villainising either Bucky or one of the main characters, by interjecting a villain, who uses Bucky to further the rift between the Avengers.

Thus, Steve Rogers and Iron Man, while at odds with each other, are also crumbling under the external pressure of the Sokovia Accords, on the one hand, and of Zemo, the villain of *Civil War*, on the other. Kendall R. Phillips sees the Accords as an extension of 'the corrupt state mythology' and a reflection of the 2016 American presidential elections and the social and political repercussions of Donald Trump's election (Phillips, 2018). This, much like the representation of post-9/11 American mentality, is an inevitable point of identification for Americans. The Sokovia Accords, however, are an important involvement of international points of view, given the American involvement in conflicts around the world. This move away from strictly American perspective shifts the perception of the Avengers, the start of which is the assimilation of Wanda Maximoff into the, for the most part, all-American team of superheroes. Cynthia Weber, when tracking the representation of American foreign policy in contemporary Hollywood, has noted that 'the most moral of missions is not to fight for God and country; it is to fight for humanity, in whatever country, loyal to whichever God' (Weber, 2006). Thus, with the Avengers' missions moving away from American soil and starting to fight on a global scale, they could be perceived as morally righteous in their intent to stop the villains and save humanity. Mark White narrows down the ethical questions that affect the Avengers, just as much as they affect us in our daily lives, to 'when to offer help, how to do it when we decide to, and who to help if we have to make choices or set priorities' (White, 2014). However,

with the threat of the Accords being enforced, that decision will now be left in the hands of the United Nations.

This is where the conflict between Captain America and Iron Man lies – which organisation would be better at making the moral decisions – the Avengers or the UN. Nicole Maruo-Schröder points out that without supervision ‘the once[-]celebrated heroes turn into quasi-criminals who operate without mandate and on their own authority’, a view that is shared by Tony Stark, who points out that the Avengers ‘need to be put in check. Whatever form that takes, I’m game’ (Maruo-Schröder, 2018). Stark’s view on the Accords is that someone will have calculated the risks and help them limit the collateral damage. Steve’s view, however, is that by signing the document, all the Avengers do is clear their conscience, because now someone else can take the blame for their involvement. This sets the conflict between the two characters and facilitates the end of *Civil War* and the permanent rupture between the Avengers who at the beginning of *Infinity War* are not only separated into factions, but half of them are wanted as criminals or are under house arrest. Despite the bitter division of the Avengers, Steve has the courage to reach out to Tony with the promise that he is ready to help.

*Infinity War* heavily relies on that promise seen at the beginning of the film where Tony is being prompted to call Steve and ask him for help – as contrasted with Steve’s willingness to risk his freedom, and that of his friends, by stepping in. Interestingly, despite their growth and development throughout the films, both characters remain caught up in their respective past experiences: Tony has been betrayed by most people he trusted, starting with his father in his childhood and most recently by Steve himself at the end of *Civil War*. Steve, on the other hand, is too caught up in saving the little he has left of his past, in the face of the loss of his childhood friend. He becomes partially responsible for breaking up the Avengers. Sawn Gillen has pointed out that one of ‘the greatest hallmarks of PTSD is self-absorption with the past’, going on to note that the most evident case of this is World War II veterans struggling to adapt to a post-war society (Gillen, 2009). Perhaps more evident in Rogers’ need to keep people and mementoes from his old life close is Stark’s blatant refusal to give up his identity as Iron Man, even when his fiancé begs him to, which is a clear sign of his inability to move on. Gillen also gives a summary of some other PTSD symptoms that can be observed in Stark and Roger’s characters, such as ‘preoccupation with both the enemy and the veteran’s own military/governmental authorities’ and

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'persistent expectation of betrayal and exploitation; destruction of the capacity for social trust' (ibid.). *Infinity War* represents this best by eliminating any possible contact between Rogers and Stark, showcasing their leading styles as well as how they are hindered by their PTSD. Steve, while perhaps not in the traditional uniform, takes on the commanding position without turning to any governmental or military organisation for assistance. Instead, he chooses to trust individuals who have earned his trust personally, and charges into battle himself while refusing to sacrifice others. Stark, on the other hand, shows his fear of betrayal, directed towards Doctor Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch), despite their earlier encounter. In fact, Strange earns Stark's trust only after he says that he would let Stark and Spider-Man (Tom Holland) die before betraying his own cause. But even in their struggles with PTSD, Rogers' and Stark's different masculine identities are still prevalent, perhaps even being the explanation for the different ways the two men experience the disorder. James Rovira has observed that while the MCU does concern itself with the way hypermasculinity is used as an attempt to alleviate societal fears, Marvel idealises 'the union of opposites, not only in its presentation of gender and sex, but in its emphasis upon teams ... characterised by internal conflict' (Rovira, 2018). The point of the importance of a unified team is expressed in *Infinity War* better than in any other Marvel film – as the only time the team was truly divided, the villain won.

A unifying factor of Steve Rogers' political views and his representation of PTSD is his costume in both *Civil War* and *Infinity War*, more specifically the elements that identify him as Captain America. The most notable one is his shield, which previously he could be seen carrying with him, even when he was otherwise in civilian clothing. Even while fighting with Tony and being hunted by world governments, the shield still represents the WWII heroic values that made him Captain America, the cultural icon. But when at the end of *Civil War* Tony says 'That shield doesn't belong to you. You don't deserve it'. Steve drops it to the ground and leaves, symbolically leaving the identity of Captain America behind him. The first time we see him in *Infinity War*, he is without a shield; and his suit is visibly damaged, but not just from battle. The S.H.I.E.L.D. badge on his shoulder along with the star at the centre of his chest are torn off, much like rank marking on regular military uniforms are torn off in cases of demotion or desertion. Antony Mullen notes another use of Captain America's shield, that of a weapon, saying that its use 'is justified on the grounds of defending American life from [a] foreign enemy' (Mullen, 2018). Thus, it would only be logical that once Steve

Rogers loses his trust in America, he would attempt to leave the identifying markers of Captain America's identity behind.

'Everybody wants a happy ending, right?'

– Tony Stark

With the release of *Avengers: Endgame* and the conclusion of Phase Three, the story arc of Steve Rogers has ended; however, the character arc of Captain America is only just beginning. Through the passing of the shield so symbolic of the character, Steve exhibits personal growth and a detachment from previously seen attempts to burden the responsibility on his own. That serves both the purpose of clean ending for Steve Rogers' days as an Avenger and as a soldier, but also signals that he has come to terms with his identity. He is no longer torn between the responsibility of the proverbial mantle of 'superhero' and the weight of rediscovering his personal identity in a post-WWII world. In this thesis I have tried to differentiate between the identity of Steve Rogers and that of Captain America and in doing so, attempting to observe how much of that separation is present in his interaction with his fellow Avengers. Now, with the shield of Captain America being passed down from Steve to Sam Wilson, the MCU is entering a new phase. In today's racially charged political landscape, Marvel has taken a clear stand, by giving the image of USA's national hero to one of the first African American superheroes in their ranks.

In the first section of the paper, I followed the character of Steve Rogers as he became Captain America in the 1940s and deployed his heroic masculinity to fight for his country and for freedom and in the process giving life to a legend that is going to outlive him. I also examined how that World War II heroism translates in modern-day America and the changes in masculinity that separate him from the rest of the Avengers. The second section of the paper used Tony Stark as the opposition to Steve Rogers in their political convictions, as well as the extent to which they have been influenced by their PTSD. It also touched upon the implied importance of working as a team; but where *Infinity War* leaves the Avengers torn apart, *Endgame* brings them back together to save the day. Throughout his run in the MCU the character of Captain America has struggled adjusting to the political and social climate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a task made nearly impossible by the large part of time he has not witnessed. Events that have shaped generations – such as the terrorist attack on 9/11, the Vietnam War, and even unveiling

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the extent of the horrors conducted by Nazi Germany – have not left their mark on him, and possibly for the best. His decision at the end of *Endgame* to return to the past and fulfil the life he thinks he was supposed to lead is not necessarily a decision fuelled by his inability to reconcile his masculinity and views with those required of the 21<sup>st</sup> century men. It is evidence that he has learned to delegate responsibility and to trust his teammates and their abilities.

Dave Gonzalez gives an accurate summary of *Endgame* in his review for *Polygon*, saying: 'It's a comic book movie that made death feel permanent in a way that large scope superhero projects are usually incapable of!' (2019). And indeed, the deaths of Natasha Romanoff and Tony Stark make the consequences of death seem more significant than they did in *Age of Ultron* with the death of Pietro Maximoff. However, it can also open a world of possibilities for new and exciting Marvel characters that would diversify the MCU. Steve Rogers' decision to go back to the 1940s and start a new life is also another way in which the film solidifies the finality of the original characters' story arcs. Captain America's legacy will live on through Sam, and so will Steve Rogers' impact on the character. Rogers' heroic masculinity has transgressed the boundaries of war, liberating him from his identity as a soldier without a war. Meanwhile, Captain America's masculinity is on the verge of an historic rebranding, modernising the character's political and social impact.

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# 18

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The exploration of the Katabatic subject starts with *The Book of the Dead* (Figure 1), which reflects 'ancient Egyptians' obsession with the afterlife' (Rieber, 2011, p. 11).



*Figure 1. Anon. (50 BCE), The Book of the Dead, The British Museum, London*

In it, supernatural figures are personified concepts, such as legitimacy and justice (Rieber, 2011, p. 13). The representation of Nature, for example, which (interestingly) is gendered, is double-faced. Everything that is one presents itself as two. In the image, two gods are standing in front of each other, with the sacred representation of the Ibis in the centre. Under the image, writing emerges preceding Freud's thought remarkably (ibid., p. 20). 'I am Yesterday', it reads; 'I know today' (Budge, 1923). Only by looking back can we move forward and comprehend the present (Rieber, 2011, p. 20) – a *motif* later picked up by the Renaissance, partly pioneered by Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola, and a key *motif* of this piece of work. The masterpiece of the Florentine poet Dante (Figure 2) can be considered a Katabasis itself, and in turn, has strong elements of *Imitatio* of Homer's *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which all include the Katabatic thematic.



Figure 2. Di Michelino, D (1456) *La Commedia Illumina Firenze*,  
Santa Maria Del Fiore, Florence

### Dante and 'Figures of Female Desires' in the *Commedi*

Among the lustful crowd mentioned in the V Canto of the *Inferno* (Alighieri, 1320), the majority are women. This is to highlight how at the time – and, in general, in antiquity – lust was considered a typically feminine sin. Dante's hell includes Semiramis, identified as a libertine, lustful and incestuous woman. It includes Dido, Virgilian character of the *Aeneid* who killed herself for Aeneas. It includes Cleopatra, the Egyptian queen, sentimentally linked with the Roman leaders Caesar and Marc Anthony. It includes Helen of Troy, the protagonist of the love affairs leading to the war described by Homer in the *Iliad*. Finally, it includes the three male characters: Achilles, Paris, and Tristan (included before the mentioning of Paolo and Francesca as a couple). 'Women in the *Commedia* become a particular focus for transgressive desire, and focuses especially on the issue of Incest, the Freudian "Universal Taboo"' (Tambling, 1999). Semiramis, which, according to one version of the sources, would have established an incestuous relationship with her son, discusses the sin of Lust which is represented by the actions of Paolo and Francesca (Figure 3), perhaps the most influential characters in Dante's *Inferno*.



*Figure 3. Rossetti, D. M. (1855), Paolo and Francesca Da Rimini*

Francesca explains how she started the lustful affair with her brother-in-law, which can be considered a form of incest, while reading of the love story between Lancelot and Guinevere (Figure 4).



*Figure 4. Anon. (1400 CE) Manuscript illustration – Galehaut Arranged Lancelot and Guinevere*

A gendered analysis argues that infidelity is not perceived and experienced the same way for males and females, as the sexes hold different seats within the patriarchal society (Tambling, 1999). Women are inclined to be associated with insanity or even bestiality, as per the case of Pasiphae, represented in 26, 86, 87 Canto of *Purgatorio* (Alighieri, 1320). Pasiphae is an interesting character, similarly to her relatives Medea and Circe, being a woman with mystic powers – a witch in the ancient Greek imaginary, also thanks to Homer's representation. In Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, Pasiphaë is diminished to unflattering human expressions: 'Pasiphae fieri gaudebat adultera tauri' (Ovid, 2 CE): Pasiphaë took satisfaction in her adulterous encounters with a bull (Figures 5 & 6).



Figure 5. Anon. (1st century CE), *Daedalus presents the bull to Pasiphaë*: Roman fresco in the House of the Vettii, Pompeii





Figure 6. Masson, A. (1937) *Pasiphaë*, MoMA, New York

The iconic figures of female desire, Semiramis and Myrrha, are the framing females of Dante's *Inferno*. Dante's critical positioning of the two *Femme Fatales* as the initial and ultimate feminine characters, affiliated with distinct sins, implies their importance in the *Cantica*. Dante increases the noise of this fusion of political and sensual avidities by putting Semiramis, together with Dido and Cleopatra, are mythical oriental 'goddesses' whose narratives, especially in their Virgilian model, unveil the same pattern of political and sensual vulnerability (Tambling, 1999).

### **Rape: Metamorphoses as Punishment. What Has Changed Today?**

Dante inherits an immense wealth of knowledge from Ovid, whose narrative in the *Metamorphoses* is quite astonishing. The theme of rape by gods or men against women is prevalent in the Ovidian masterpiece. The poem begins with Apollo's attempted rape of Daphne and continues with an endless series of other stories;

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the fact that this theme is so recurrent within the work makes one understand how much the Ovidian public was entertained by it (Fantham, 2004). 'Rape is the little dirty secret of Ovidian Scholarship' (Curran, 1978). A part of society has always accepted the notion that unless a woman is hit or forced senseless, what she calls abuse requires minimum consent on her side (ibid.). In a notorious account from the early days of Rome, Lucretia is abused and raped by Sextus Tarquinius, the son of an illustrious king. She was granted the right to speak only to denounce the violence suffered and to officially declare her suicide (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Anon. (before 1561), *Lucretia's rape by Sextus Tarquinius, and her suicide*

Another episode in the *Metamorphoses* reports of the rape of the youthful Philomela (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Picasso (1931), *The Rape – Philomena and Tereus*

To avoid any Lucretia-style accusation, the violator cuts her tongue out. Shakespeare also uses this detail in his 'Titus Andronicus' (Beard, 2015). Ovid subjugates the corporal pains to the psychological affliction and the degeneration and degradation of the current condition (Curran, 1978). One example is the story of Medusa, originally a 'splendid' girl, and the only mortal of three sisters, the Gorgons. Her beauty attracted the attention of the god of the sea, Poseidon, who would have raped her in a sacred temple of Athena. Furious over the profaning of her temple, Athena turned Medusa into a monster with the terrible ability to petrify anyone who caught her eye (Figure 9).





Figure 9. Caravaggio, *Medusa*, 1595–1598, Uffizi, Florence

Again, in Roman times, there was also the case of Maesia, who famously defended herself during a trial; and the justification given by the contemporaries was that she certainly had a male's character and nature behind the appearance of a female. For this reason, she was named an 'androgyné' (Beard, 2015). 'A woman speaking in public was, in most circumstances, by definition not a woman' (Beard, 2017). Most females in power had to exercise significant effort to legalize their status. Consequently, they sought to declare their right to rule and mediate, highlighted once again by the hermaphroditic nature of their positions (Tomas, 2000). The penalty of the victims is not restricted to physical metamorphosis. Ovid subjugates corporal pains to the psychical affliction, and degeneration and degradation, of the current condition (Curran, 1978).

Besides societal criticism, the victim always pays the consequences; whereas the violator usually experiences nothing more than the rare shame (ibid.). Today, one finds a similar pattern, with enormous gender-based inequalities. By way of

illustration, the strict prohibition of extramarital sexual intercourse in predominantly Muslim countries, such as Mauritania, places rape victims in danger. The laws prevent them from denouncing their abuses because they themselves could face legal charges. For these reasons, social pressure and shame, at a familiar level and within the broader community, make it extremely difficult for victims to denounce their violators. In 2017, Mauritania enacted new legislation on reproductive health and a General Code on Children's Protection, however, the Mauritanian government still does not adequately restrict and criminalize sexual assaults against women (Human Rights Watch, 2019) (Figure 10).



*Figure 10. Ofme, C. (2018) Support Center for Women and Girl Survivors of Gender-Based Violence – a center run by the Association of Women Heads of Family, Mauritania*

In some other instances, communities of colour often push women to keep quiet about physical and domestic violence to support unification against segregation (Smith, 2001).

As the recent 'Me Too' movement testifies, the stigma around rape and sexual assault are very much alive in the Western world too. The vast majority of people who undergo abuse, physical attack, or sexual harassment don't report the case – even if, on paper, the victims are supported by the legislation in place against rape (Bloomberg.com, 2019) (Figure 11).



Figure 11. (Dovarganes, 2017)

### Woman as a Witch

Among Ovid's verses in the *Metamorphoses*, there are those dedicated to a beautiful girl, Scylla, and how this young woman – desired by many men and even by gods – becomes a horrible, bloodthirsty monster (Figure 12).

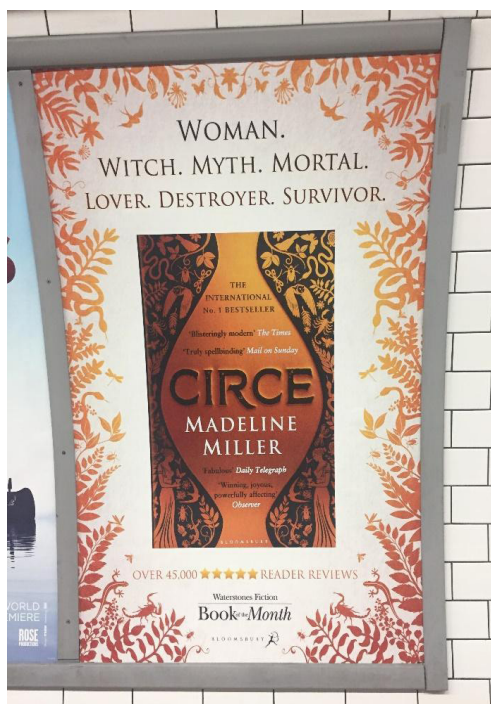


*Figure 12. Fussli, J. H. (1794), Odysseus in front of Scylla and Charybdis*

It was jealousy and hatred that moved the hand of the one who prepared the magic filter that transformed a splendid girl into a terrible monster, an enigmatic figure that ancient tradition portrays at the same time as a goddess and as a sorceress: Circe (Ovid, 8 CE). The Homeric character of Circe is converted from an ambiguous, but essentially emphatic, being, into an increasingly negative one – suddenly turning into a witch and *Femme Fatale*. Recently, academics have been pointing out this shift, revisiting the myth in a feminist key (Figure 13).

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*Figure 13. Circe. London: Bloomsbury*

Now, the representation of women as witches, especially beautiful and somewhat powerful, seems to be a recurring theme in history. There is no need to mention the horrid phenomenon known as a 'Witch-Hunt', often linked to superstition or mass hysteria (Figure 14).



*Figure 14. Rosa, S (1646) Witches at Their Incantations*

It has been brilliantly demonstrated that the killing of a myriad of ‘witches’ at the beginning of the modern era is intimately interconnected with the advancement of capitalism and a simultaneous rising hostility towards women (Federici, 2014). One theory maintains that the emergence of the Scientific Method can be linked to witch-hunt practices. Namely, the transformation deconstructed the traditional notion of the feminine ‘Mother Earth’ (Figure 15)





Figure 15. Botticelli, S (1482) *Primavera*, Uffizi Gallery, Florence

into one that was mechanical and non-controllable, portraying 'nature as a woman to be conquered, unveiled, and raped' (Merchant, 1980).

Once again, this is all about controlling women's bodies. Within the colonial narrative, accusations of witchcraft were used to suppress women and re-evaluate their position in society, determining a distinct, deeply patriarchal system that strengthened colonial rule and exploitation (Anievas & Nişancioğlu, 2015).

Not by chance, the related concept of unveiling, both physically and metaphorically, is to be found in the Colonisation context too, as in the case of Algeria. Frantz Fanon has argued that the wearing of the veil is a representative of colonial resistance, with Algerian women being at the core of the societal structure (Figure 16).



*Figure 16. Delacroix, E (1834) Women of Algiers in their Apartment*

He summarised the political attitude of Colonial rule, stating that if the Algerian community ought to be destructed, the first to be conquered must be the women (Fanon, 1965). As Colonization itself stands for the possession of the Body of Nature, it is literally a penetration and rape. ‘The rape of the Algerian woman in the dream of a European is always preceded by a rending of the veil’. The claim is that the French wanted to seize control of women’s thinking and perception of the veil, and therefore of their bodies (ibid.).

### **Contemporary and Classic Females in Power**

The previously mentioned case of Maesia – who was not considered a woman, but an androgyne because she stood for herself in public discourse – is not an isolated one. In the early fourth century BCE, Aristophanes dedicated a whole comedy to the foolish illusion that women might take over the public sphere. The parody was that females were not able to speak suitably in public, or they couldn’t adjust their communication and language appropriate to the occasion. ‘A woman speaking in public was, in most circumstances, by definition not a woman’ (Beard,



2015). Today, not much has changed (*The New York Times*, 2019). One woman who pioneered the modern trend of 'Female in power', Margaret Thatcher (Figure 17), is known to this day as 'The Iron Lady', as if to annihilate her womanhood.



Figure 17. Parkinson, N. (1981) *Margaret Thatcher*

Theresa May is mocked on the streets of Central London, embodied, not by chance, by Marilyn Monroe: an icon of femininity and sexuality in the modern era (Figure 18).



*Figure 18. Photo in Central London, satirically representing Theresa May in the form of Marilyn Monroe*

Women have been regarded as unelectable if seen as women (Ferree, 2006). The recently voted *Most Powerful Woman in the World* (Forbes, 2019).

Angela Merkel has always been associated with a man because of her haircut, makeup and outfits, as well as her family life (ibid.) (Figure 19).



*Figure 19. Lohness, T. (2015) Angela Merkel pictured at the annual CDU Federal Congress. Getty Images.*

Notorious is the fact that she never had children, going against the traditional parading of the pairing of 'woman and mother.'

### **Representation of Medea through History**

Medea, the daughter of the King of Colchis, is the infanticidal mother who gives the name in psychoanalysis to the supposed complex that causes a woman to kill her children out of hatred towards their father. Gifted with magical powers, the Medea of mythology helped Jason, who arrived in Colchis at the helm of the Argonauts, to conquer the Golden Fleece – having him in marriage in return. But the union broke when the couple settled in Corinth and Jason chose another woman over her. Medea retaliated by killing the children she had had from him. 'Medea responds to Jason's injustice with a typically heroic desire to see her enemies punished. Yet, women were not expected to show, or act upon, such a *male* desire' (Allan, 2002) (Figure 20).



Figure 20. Anon. (Unknown), *Medea and Jason*

Ovid mentions the myth of Medea in two distinct works: the *Heroides* (Ovid) and the *Metamorphoses*. In the first text, the story is interrupted before the tragedy is completed; its completion is possible to the reader only through literary memory. The Medea of the *Metamorphoses* is quite different: it oscillates between *ratio* and *furor*, *mens* and *cupido*. Ovid's Medea has been transformed into a true witch, and therefore does not suffer from the crime committed - nor could she suffer from a hypothetical punishment (Ovid, 8 CE).

In Aristophanes' play in ancient 5<sup>th</sup> century Athens, women were sometimes seen, but definitely not heard. However, we see so many strong women being portrayed on stage. Plays were written by men, performed by men, and seen by men. They were being performed in a society and in a social hierarchy that treated women as an underclass. And yet, the subject matter in these stories is that of women of incredible power: Antigone, Electra, and Medea are women with huge personalities,

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great strength, and emotional intelligence, fighting back against Patriarchy. In Greek Theatre, it is extraordinary how many powerful women are represented. Set in that kind of context it does seem very strange that we have all these wonderful female characters on stage. To do the Athenians some justice, they did recognize how important women were – and even though they wouldn't necessarily be allowed out of the house that much, they would have been identified as performing particularly vital roles for the *Polis*. Firstly, they created children. Secondly, women often were significant to the running of the city's religious festivals. In tragedy, we see the tension between recognizing women as important, and also needing to control and subdue women, worked out: Thus, we get a character like Medea. Everyone is fascinated by the 'other'; and if there is a symbol of the *other*, it is Medea. No one understands how someone can kill her own children, and Euripides is incredibly specific in showing this. Euripides' masterpiece, *Medea*, is one of the most prominent mythological personifications of the Modern Era, inspiring countless artistic versions of the Myth (Hall, 1999) (Figures 21 & 22).



Figure 21. Humm, P. R. (2017) *Medea and Jason*



Figure 22. Sandys, A. F. A. (1868), *Medea*

The fame of Medea's story in conservative Rome was undoubtedly linked to her displacement and immigrant status in Corinth. The Senecan Medea and Phaedra take inspiration from the customary feminine representation of the time, portraying the Roman conjugal practice of *repudium*, and exploring concerns about political control. Seneca, in his *fabula cothurnata*, places the matriarchal figure aside of her sexuality, destroying her womanhood and depicting her as a *quasi-man* (McAuley, 2015) (Figure 23).





*Figure 23. Columbia University in the City of New York (2019), Medea on Trial: A Conversation with Margaret Atwood and Lisa Dwan*

'Medea defines tragedy', by contrast to an epic, as a genre that is congenial to female voices but does not bring them *kleos* (Hopman, 2008). In a contemporary representation, Humm's 'Medea and Jason' alludes to the myth which has been represented before on numerous occasions, including by Delacroix (Figure 24)



*Figure 24. Delacroix, E. (1862), Medea, Louvre Museum, Paris*

and Feuerbach (Figure 25).





Figure 25. Feuerbach, A. (1870), *Medea*, Neue Pinakothek, München

Humm impersonates Medea as resembling Miss Goebbels – the companion of Hitler's right-hand man. She is remembered for her having killed her six children after Germany's defeat in the war. In another modern re-visitation of the myth, Kennelly links the figure of Medea to the colonial struggle of Ireland. Personifying Medea with Irish Republicans, Jason is the personification of England, abusing and profiting from Medea (McDonald, 2005).

### Mutilation of Women's Bodies as a Symbol of Control

Violence towards women is at present a global concern. Bioarcheology sheds further light on cultural and traditional customs of societies that physically deform the anatomy of an individual (Martin & Harrod, 2014). The Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children has outlined that many extremely harmful practices against women, which have unknown and enigmatic origins, are based upon absurd or non-existent purposes which have proven to be difficult to defeat (Kooyate, 2009). As these violent customs have an unknown genesis, going back in time to work out where these practices come from seems the only option.

Thinking about the removal or transformation of women's bodies, the legendary figures of the Amazons (Figure 26) comes to mind.



*Figure 26. Rizzuti, S. (2007) Amazzone*

One of the most recognised etymologies of their name refers to the traditional custom, attested to by mythographic sources, in which the Amazons mutilated the right breast in order to better perform in war. However, some associate the practice with a sort of fertility ritual, one 'especially preoccupied with nature, the sun and the moon' (Blok, 1995). In the *Amazonomachy*, the Amazons are described as bestial warrior-women as 'monstrous as the snake-limbed Giants or half-horse Centaurs and a race just as expressive of the forces which threaten to destroy civilized life'. Aeschylus depicts them as *flesh-devouring* and a threat to the nature and culture of the Greek Polis (Walcot, 1984). There is no scientific proof of this connection; but the fact that one of the interpretations of their actions concerns

fertility rituals could have influenced other similar rituals of removal through the centuries, culminating in barbaric practices such as FGM, which is believed to promote fertility, among other spurious benefits. There are many destructive beliefs and traditions which are deeply established in certain societies, intending to have submissive women whose role is to satisfy the impulses of men and their communities (Kooyate, 2009). These include Early/Forced Marriages (Figure 27),



*Figure 27. Steinert, U. (2017) Photo as part of the protest of 'Terres Des Femmes' against early marriage.*

Female Genital Mutilation (Figure 28),



*Figure 28. Okorodius, G. W. (1998) The Queue, Northern Nigeria*

Massage of the clitoris, Lip Plates (Figure 29),

## ARTISTIC REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AND VIOLATION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

*Georgiana Mariut*



*Figure 29. Dixon, G (1789) Young Haida woman with Lip Plate, portrayed in a voyage round the world, but more particularly to the North-West Coast of America.*

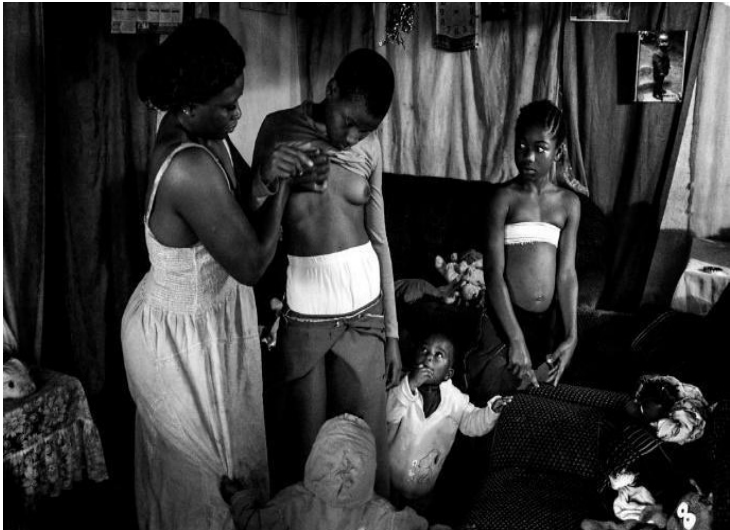
Food Taboos, Force-Feeding (Figure 30),





*Figure 30. Frenkiel, O. (2005), Forced to be Fat: The Real Danger to Women in Mauritania*

Breast ironing (Figure 31),



*Figure 31. Khamis, K. (2016), Banned Beauty*

Kidnapping/Abduction, Domestic violence against women, Sexual exclusion of wives, Sororate and Levirate marriages, and Trokosi sexual slavery have been listed, as well as other forms of harm, such as Foot Binding (Figure 32),



*Figure 32. Afong, L. (ca. 1870s) A Chinese Golden Lily Foot*

and Neck Elongation (Figure 33) (Kooyate, 2009).



*Figure 33. Azumendi, G., Long-necked Karen woman (Myanmar). Giraffe woman. North tribes. Tha Ton. Chiang Mai province. Thailand. Getty Images.*

'Most procedures control sexual access to females and ensure female chastity and fidelity' (Mackie, 1996); and their abusive nature is culturally and traditionally supported and imposed. It is believed to improve well-being and boost fertility, as is mentioned. The traditions are encouraged and practiced by women, from generation to generation, being perpetrated upon girls from as young as six to eight years old. They are said to expand the reciprocity of the sexes and to make copulation more enjoyable for the male (Mackie, 1996). A further example of the conscious or unconscious forced transmutation of the women's body, which was a common practice among one of the most developed countries in the world, England, is the use of corsets during the Victorian Period. The resultant skeletal damage this created highlighted the ways in which women were subordinated



and hurt based on the cultural ideology that promoted patriarchies. These forms of mutilation are a violation of Human Rights *in toto*. Such mutilations violate a range of rights, comprising first and foremost gender equality laws, 'the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and the fundamental right to Life when the practices result in death' (United Nations, 2019).

## Conclusion

The main aim of this piece of work is to demonstrate how gender-based violence is so deeply embedded in world cultural history. It is also, to some extent, a post-colonial exercise. There is a widespread assumption that certain behaviours towards women are traditionally only typical of Third-World 'backwards' societies, but it is not. Masterpieces of Western literature are preaching that; even if the curricula don't show it that much. We must not forget, however, that works of literature and art, in general, need to be placed in their historical context. In light of the research carried out, there seems to be a strong correlation between women's corporeal mutilation, as well as pure violence itself and the control of women's bodies. Proofs of this are testified to as early as the birth of Republican Rome and the story of Lucrezia's suicide (Rieber, 2011), as well as by the one of Philomena whose tongue had been cut to prevent her from denouncing her rapist (*ibid.*). Not only violence towards women, but 'our own traditions of debate and public speaking, their conventions and rules, still lie very much in the shadow of the classical world' (Beard, 2017). Beauty is always perceived as danger. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 'the victim's beauty is [seen as being] an invitation to and a justification for rape' (Curran, 1978). This concept is everywhere. One doesn't have to know Latin narrative to see it. One of the most popular tales for children in the world, *Snow White* (Grimm Brothers, 1812), is about a young girl whose trouble centre around her beauty; and children are unconsciously growing up with this idea. There is no surprise that atrocities such as 'breast ironing' are still widely practiced (see Figure 31 above). The tradition is handed down by their mothers or family members. It appositely aims to protect the young girl from rape or violence, making the girl less feminine and attractive. Similarly, to all the other harmful practices against young girls, the biggest paradox is that 'for mothers [... it] is a way to demonstrate their love by protecting their daughters. To hurt in order to protect is a way of showing love' (Khamis, 2019). Because beauty is menacing, fascinating figures such as Medea or Circe were considered

as being ‘Witches’, according to different interpretations. These assumptions, through the centuries, took the form of foolish religious, economic, and folkloristic interpretations, causing the deaths of thousands of innocent women who suffered cruel human rights abuses such as being burned alive in the infamous ‘Witch Hunt’, which still survives up to these days: ‘As soon as we strip the persecution of witches from its metaphysical trappings, we recognize in its phenomena that [we] are very close to home’ (Federici, 2014). Efforts to eradicate violence are made every day. However, it is essential to educate young and future generations about their past, because only by looking back can we move forward, comprehend the present, and try to make it better.

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# 19

## WHY IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING STILL SO PREVALENT IN JAPAN?

*Nizanka Yoganathan*

This paper argues that Japan is failing to combat female sex trafficking. Explaining the factors that hinder the country from ending sex trafficking and thereby providing solutions will raise awareness of the extent to which the crisis takes place in Japan. It is a problem that violates many human rights laws. Sex trafficking, in particular, perpetuates the power imbalance between males/females and the poor/rich in society. This is highlighted through societal and cultural factors demonstrating how inequality is entrenched within Japanese traditions such as the Geisha culture and how it contributes to sex trafficking and the abduction of young girls. Economic reasons also significantly contribute to sex trafficking through the exploitation of the poorer sectors in society. The effects of globalisation and neoliberal policies will demonstrate the negative impact this has had on women. The reasons one may unfortunately become victim to sex trafficking is often very complex. A socio-economic analysis provides partial explanation of how being victim to trafficking cannot be ascribed to just one reason but rather to a series of interconnected circumstances which victims do not have the immediate capability to change. To this end, the legal aspects of preventative trafficking measures will also be assessed to highlight weaknesses within Japanese law. Applicable to all states is the concept that merely having laws on the books is not enough; in order to have value, they have to be implemented. There is no single solution; rather, a set of improvements can be made to existing structures such as implementing rehabilitation schemes for the victims and perpetrators. Further, a stronger civil society and the encouragement of larger NPOs would contribute to tackling the problem.

### **Methodology**

In order to understand the intricacies of female sex trafficking, secondary discourse analysis was employed to enable a discussion on why human trafficking is



still prevalent in Japan. My research is mainly conducted of deeply analysed secondary data including theories from other academics and experts, data collected by government institutions, and other organisational data. The paper adopts a constructivist approach to analysing secondary sources that shows how we understand our world through ideas that are ever changing (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

Secondary data from the International Relations discipline is mainly used. HeinOnline was used as a main research tool; as were the books available on the discipline. The advantage of using secondary data bears many advantages. For example there was a lot of existing research on the problem of human trafficking and a relative amount specifically in relation to Japan, which allowed the research to encompass various issues and solutions. It proved more difficult to gather data from Japanese government websites (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2015). In particular, evidence of how much of Japan's Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) budget was given to NPOs proved difficult to find. Furthermore, the statistics were only up to the year 2013; however, in order to keep the argument as relevant as possible, statistics for 2015 and up would have been more desirable. Secondary data are comprised of other people's interpretations of information and therefore cannot always provide entirely accurate explanations; and as a result, primary data would have been beneficial, where one could conduct research to fill any gaps.

### **Research Background**

There is sufficient amount of work covering sex trafficking from the feminist / feminist legal perspective about the abuse and control of women and their bodies and also socioeconomic and cultural aspects as to why women end up as victims of sex trafficking (True, 2012; Olsen, 1995). This research focuses on how globalisation has exacerbated the problem of sex trafficking via the growth of Transnational Organised Crimes (TOC) and the failure of states to tackle this. In international relations, there is little work on the link between Japanese cultural practices and human trafficking. This is something I have heavily focused on in order to demonstrate how tackling culture is at the core of combating human trafficking in Japan. This research helps to understand trafficking in Japan through different perspectives in order to explain why it is still so prevalent. Trafficking is a widely acknowledged problem. However, many do not understand

the extent of it, specifically in Japan. Therefore, it is vital that it is addressed – in the hope for greater justice.

### **Female Sex Trafficking in Japan Today**

Trafficking is a highly complex problem; and it is a crime which takes place on the micro and macro scale (Lee, 2007). It includes transportation of humans from rural to urban areas as well as cross-border trafficking. Due to the nature of the problem consisting of 'black market trade', finding conclusive facts and statistics can be problematic. Without research and evidence, it is extremely difficult to combat, as the scale of the issue is still debated. Trafficking is often misconstrued as 'female sex trafficking.' However, there are numerous ways in which one can be trafficked including labour exploitation, forced marriage, and organ trading. Under international law, the UN Trafficking Protocol defines trafficking as the 'recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of threat or use force or other forms of coercion of abduction of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability // consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth shall be irrelevant' (United Nations, 2004).

Trafficking is a web of instruments used to manipulate people. Traffickers use laws currently in place to their advantage, such as avoiding certain countries which have stricter immigration and trafficking laws. Prostitution plays a central role in sex trafficking; many states have made prostitution illegal for various reasons, such as the belief that the activity degrades women. It has a negatively disproportionate impact on poorer women and that it contributes to the spread of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (Cole, 2006). Alison Cole argues that the aftermath of women emigrating for employment results in them being trafficked for sex, due to the large demand for sex (ibid.).

Women in rural areas are often highly involved in trafficking rings and are the main source of potential victims from their area. Victims are completely dehumanised, as they will be trafficked to brothels without knowledge, and auctioned to the brothel keepers. They face physical and psychological torture, including rape; and are forced to take drugs in order to maintain their dependence on the brothel keepers (ibid.). Victims of sex trafficking are tied to their trafficker and to prostitution with 'debt bondage', as the traffickers require the victims to repay

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them for their accommodations. The debt often increases at a greater rate than what the victim earns. Therefore, they are forever in debt to their traffickers. Studies show the debt bondage in Japan can reach up to \$50,000 (Academia, 2018). These women are therefore chained to a dangerous and degrading lifestyle that was forced upon them.

Japan is an incredibly influential state worldwide and particularly in the East Asian region, and was metaphorically referred to as the ‘rising sun’ during the late twentieth century (Hook et al., 2001). Rapid political and economic development meant they were the new threat to the US hegemony. In the Human Development Index (HDI), Japan sits in the category of ‘very high human development’, which indicates a very high standard of living, life expectancy, and level of education (United Nations Development Programme, 2019). According to Rostow’s 5 stages of development, Japan would be considered to be at the fourth stage of ‘The Age of High Mass Consumption’, meaning that consumption transcends basic needs such as shelter, food, and clothing; and the government has instead ‘chosen to allocate increased resources to social welfare and security’ (Rostow, 1960, p. 10). This is intended to reduce the gap between the rich and poor; and it reduces the opportunity to exploit people through trafficking. If this is the case, Japan cannot simultaneously be a state of welfare and the main host state of sex trafficking in East Asia. In a report conducted annually by the US Department of State (Trafficking in Persons Report) in 2017, Japan was the only highly developed state not to be included in Tier 1; although it moved up to the top tier in 2018, showing improvements in combating the issue. As Lee (2007), True (2012) and Shepherd (2015) have noted, in their research, that the increase in trafficking in Japan has challenged ideas about the country’s enhanced social welfare and security.

There is an undeniable correlation between poverty and violence towards women globally, with the leading cause of deaths for women aged 19–44 being gender-based violence (True, 2012). When assessing human trafficking, a measure many states take is the 3Ps approach: ‘preventing, protecting and prosecuting’ (ibid.). Many states approach human trafficking by dealing with the aftermath of it; there is still little emphasis on the prevention aspect. Preventative methods should address both the victim and the perpetrator; ensuring that women do not find themselves in vulnerable positions and that traffickers are prevented from entering the black-market trade.

Japan is considered a destination country for trafficked humans due to the scale of demand and the weak penalties during prosecutions (Ebbe & Das, 2008). An official Japanese Government annual report (in 2017) on combating human trafficking stated that 50 victims were taken into custody for the year 2016, 2 of whom were male and 48 of whom were female (Prime Minister's Office of Japan, 2019). This claimed figure, however, stands in marked contrast to The Global Slavery Index which suggests that in 2016, there were approximately 37,000 people living under modern slavery status in Japan (Global Slavery Index, 2019). An accurate figure of how many people are living under such conditions will always be subjective due to the nature of the problem as well as the disputed definition of modern slavery. The victims are predominantly Japanese, demonstrating that the pressing issue is within the country itself, which shows rural-to-urban migration rather than cross-border trafficking. Of the 25 non-Japanese victims, 18 victims had entered Japan on a temporary visitor visa, which does not permit them the right to work.

### **Societal Factors**

The way women are viewed in society is a leading factor as to why traffickers believe they have the right to control and manipulate someone. In Asia, the social order is one which perpetuates a patriarchal system in which women have the sole purpose of reproduction and domestic services (Lee, 2007). Dibyesh Anand describes this type of control over women as something nationalistic; with the idea being that women are seen as the child-bearers of the nation's identity – and that therefore, they need to be controlled in order to uphold the state's values (Shepherd, 2015). This can also be referred to as the feminisation of poverty – the notion that women are secondary citizens in many communities and are subjected to regimes that establish a power imbalance between men and women (Lee, 2007). As a result of that power imbalance, many Asian cultures cultivate an environment in which women are forced to take risks for economic stability. This is most often where they are caught in the web of trafficking. Kimberle Crenshaw's narrative on intersectional discrimination can be applied to how women become victims of trafficking 'Failure to embrace the complexities of compound[ed]ness is not simply a matter of political will but [...] is also due to the influence of a way of thinking about discrimination' (Phillips, 2009, p. 334).

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Women are seen merely as being bodies. Their value in society is seen as being dependent on the capacity of their body. Frances E. Olsen provides an explanation as to why women in society are deemed as objects and are submissive; explaining this through a feminist legal frame (Olsen, 1995). She analyses the dichotomy between the spheres of the home and the marketplace to describe women's position in society. The dichotomies of the state/civil, family/marketplace and male/female are all interconnected. The nineteenth century was a poignant period in suppressing gender roles in societies, in particular, in Europe. The industrial revolution placed more men in factories; the home was referred to as 'sacred', and it was seen as being a haven from the misery of modern life. The values of the workplace (such as its promulgation of the individualistic approach) contrasted with those of the home. What the marketplace values is for society to achieve common good through being individualistic. This can be juxtaposed with the values to the home, which placed emphasis on sharing and on having a common goal – although notably, Olsen argument bears mentioning that 'at one time[,] the social good was thought to require the husband to control his wife' (ibid., p. 115).

Olsen's arguments are coherent in providing one of many possibilities as to how and why women have resulted in having lower socio-economic and political power in comparison to men. However, this argument adopts a Western perspective, narrowing it to what is otherwise considered a problem encompassing most countries worldwide. Furthermore, in the quote provided above, the notion that the social norm was for the husband to control the wife is introduced with the preamble 'at one time', insinuating that this is no longer the case. This is not true especially in Japan due to the continuous objectification of women for the purpose of domestication, exploitation, and profit.

The prevalence of Japanese Geisha culture plays a prominent role in girls and women being trafficked. The majority of the 48 females trafficked in the year 2016, were from within Japan. This can partly be explained through the Geisha culture and the buying and selling of young girls for the purpose of forced labour. Tiefenbrun demonstrates that Geishas are seen as an iconic symbol of Japanese culture, and contrasts this with the finding that the veneer of elegance hides a dark underworld of slavery and abduction (Tiefenbrun, 2010). Tiefenbrun describes this process as girls from poor families often being conned by traffickers who tell the families they want to adopt the children (ibid.). Many families cannot afford

to take care of their own children; and under the belief that their child will have better lives, they give their children away to be adopted.

They are then sold from the traffickers to the Geisha houses in which the children become slaves. The Geisha house is an exclusively female workforce with a strict hierarchy within which the top Geisha controls all aspects. Girls are trafficked at young ages; and whilst living in the Geisha house, they are also enrolled in schools which teach skills that a Geisha would be expected to know, including performing classical music; singing; and playing games. Young girls over the course of their youth gradually advance through the hierarchy. Some will become Geishas themselves, while others will remain workers in the Geisha house. Many young girls are sold to traffickers under the pretence of adoption and are taken into the Geisha practise, thereby contributing to the prevalence of trafficking. In 1956, prostitution (which hitherto had been legal) was banned under the Anti-Prostitution Act and there was a slight decline of prostitution in Japan. However since Geishas did not fall under this act, they remained prominent. Geishas are not seen as being prostitutes under the law (*ibid.*). Therefore, justifications were given as to why the Geisha tradition did not need to be monitored. Girls trafficked into the Geisha houses have no choice but to reside there for many years and subsequently become accustomed to the traditions; even as the young girls mature, they stay there willingly as the house provides essentials such as food and shelter.

There remains a great disparity between the power of men and women in Japanese society; and despite being a progressive feminist nation, many women are heavily burdened by the patriarchal system. Many women especially from rural areas seek to escape this by migrating – yet in so doing, in many cases, they consequently become victims of trafficking. Furthermore, cultural practices such as the Geisha culture aids in human trafficking, as young girls are being sold to traffickers (whether the families are aware of this or not). There needs to be a drastic shift in how girls and women are perceived. Existing attitudes essentially push people into being trafficked for sex as a result of societal and cultural practices.

### **Economic Factors**

There are many economic factors, both national and international, that contribute to sex trafficking. Globalisation has intensified global trade and activity up to an unprecedented rate, bringing benefits but also exacerbation of social inequalities.

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The efficiency that globalisation provides, including rapid trade and transportation and the ability to instantly share information, has enabled human trafficking to take place at a larger scale, as there are more potential victims and more efficient means of finding them. Transnational organised crime (TOC), which is augmented by globalisation, has traditionally been handled through a legal lens, such as with the 'War on Terror/Drugs'. The potential threat that TOCs may introduce have provided states to use it as a precautionary measure, allowing them to heighten security. McCulloch and Pickering (2012) argue that this results in potential victims being neglected in the administration of humanitarian aid or protection (this will be discussed further in the legal section). This is not necessarily a pull factor; however, it abets trafficking rings, making trafficking a smoother process. There has been a rise in all types of violence around the world including violence against women (VAW) (Thiara & Gill, 2010). With women in many societies already being the 'outsider' in their community, globalisation is, in effect, speeding the process of women being the next disposable victims.

International neoliberal policies which underpin the world economic order focus on pursuing profits and place little importance on social welfare services such as health and education. David Harvey, cited in Gill and Scharff (2011), argues that neoliberalism is a class-based economic policy which ensures that wealth is concentrated amongst a few elites through dismantling welfare provisions. The Japanese government applies the economic concept of *Laissez Faire* economics onto social problems, suggesting that people are responsible for their own outcomes despite the inequality. The Post-Cold-War era saw global economic transformation as neoliberalism was fuelled by globalisation. One of the consequences of this was that the worldwide female labour force expanded rapidly. It is the low-skilled 'dirty jobs' that pose risks for workers. Domestic and entertainment workers have very little protection under labour laws, leaving them vulnerable to their employers (Marshall & Thatun, 2005). True (2012) argues that poorer women are at greater risk of facing greater power inequalities with their employers. Particularly in Asia, women have limited rights, and this is dependent how much money they can access. It could be argued that patriarchal structures are slowly being dismantled through global capitalism as this has allowed rural women to migrate into urban areas allowing them to own property and bank accounts in their own names (Santos & Harrell, 2016). It is also through migrating from rural to urban areas that women, predominantly, have been caught up in being trafficked.

Education is a structural method to reduce poverty. Ensuring that children attend elementary school is essential in reducing trafficking figures. Although Japan has made education compulsory for every child, they have simultaneously restricted access to education by shutting down rural schools. For example, in Hokkaido, due to the closure of schools, children are now forced to travel 50 km everyday by bus for an education (Fifield, 2019). This discourages families from sending their children to school and has a greater impact on the more underdeveloped areas of the country such as Hokkaido. In 2013, there were 21,131 elementary schools in Japan; this number has declined since 1990, when there were 24,827 elementary schools (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology—Japan, 2019). 100 schools were shut in 1995 which could be attributed to the emergence of a new coalition government between the Liberal Democracy Party, the Social Democratic Party, and Sakigake, under which social welfare was given a smaller priority (Shinoda, 1998). Migration for work opportunities is the primary way in which people are lured into being trafficked.

From a Marxist critique, economic relations directly allot your opportunity in society; this is determined by your place in the industrial process (worker/owner). This is something known as ‘class consciousness’; this is the notion that one’s socio-political stance in society will often shape their morality and ideologies (Bottomore, 2019). A common belief amongst poorer societies of Japan is the notion of selling daughters to traffickers for economic incentives (Joshi, 2002). The neoliberal world order, which dominates economic activity and is further spurred on by globalisation, negatively impacts women. Governments prioritise free trade and economic profit, and neglect human rights. This partly explains relaxed *laissez faire* attitudes towards human trafficking.

### **Socio-Economic Factors**

Human trafficking is augmented by a range of interlinked reasons and ultimately occurs as a result of demand. Many Japanese cultural beliefs and practices facilitate human trafficking, the ‘Lolita complex’ being one of them. This is the desire for younger pubescent girls and is woven into everyday activity. This is fuelled by the gender reinforcement of the ideal woman being ‘*kawaii*’, this literally translates as ‘cute’ but in Japanese can mean: ‘baby cuteness; very young cuteness; young cuteness; maternal cuteness; teen cuteness; adult cuteness; sexy cuteness;



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pornography cuteness; child pornography cuteness; authority cuteness; and corporate cuteness' (McVeigh, 2000, p. 135).

The obsession for all things 'kawaii' augments perverted sexual desires with younger girls and has created a society which has still yet to fully proscribe child pornography and paedophilia (Asano-Cavanagh, 2012; Smith, 2013). This incites sexual exploitation and violence against women, as the prescribed gender roles in society allow men to believe that women exist as disposable objects for male pleasure. To perpetrators, girls and women are investments and will ensure minimal risk of getting caught.

A common practice which contributes to human trafficking is the involvement of schoolgirls (usually, girls between the ages of 15 and 18) in the Joshi Kosei (JK) business. This involves being paid to entertain older men. Such 'entertainment' comes in many forms including 'JK O-Sanpo' (JK strolls) and 'JK Rifure' (JK relaxation). Many strolls are innocent; but Khrysten Acadimia (2018) states that for extra fees, girls may perform sexual activities. This is mostly arranged through entertainment cafes, where men pay between ¥5000 (£50) to ¥120,000 (£120) (Acadimia, 2018). Some girls choose to enter this sort of business for extra income, while others sign up to work in the cafes but end up being trafficked. According to Acadimia, girls take part in the JK business in order to pay for school services (*ibid.*). However, in 2010, Japan introduced the Act on Free Tuition Fee at Public High Schools and the High School Enrolment Support Fund, making state schools free (*ibid.*). It is therefore unlikely that state-educated girls are working in order to pay for school. Such services could instead mean paying for books or uniforms. It is the poorer members of society that are at greater risk of being trafficked or forced into work, they have less social mobility and education and therefore are easier victims for falling into the hands of traffickers (Shepherd, 2015). One way to encourage gender and income equality is to strengthen the notably fragile Japanese civil society which is the sphere intermediate between the family and the state (Hagemann et al., 2008).

This facilitates debates amongst citizens to discuss issues that may be commonly affecting them. A key factor shaping this relationship between civil society and the state has been the Internet and social media that have worked to limit discussion about eliminating trafficking in Japan (Schwartz & Pharr, 2003). Post-World-War-II, the idea of civil society was unfamiliar, to the extent where new vocabulary

had to be coined for 'society' and 'public' (ibid.). Noam Chomsky (2006) argues that language equals thought; and essentially, in the case of Japan, the vocabulary poignant to the concept of civil society was non-existent. This partially explains its weakness as there was previously no thought or discussion of 'civil society'.

A strong civil society is vital for tackling human trafficking. Japan has strong human trafficking laws. However, they are not implemented; which is a result of a weak civil society and Non-Political Organisations (NPOs) having little influence. Local governments and NPOs fail to coincide when addressing issues of similar concern. They see each other as being in competition, as the services NPOs provide could essentially mean fewer jobs for local government workers (Furukawa & Menju, 2003). Furukawa and Menju state that local governments should restrict their role as service providers and give NPOs more responsibility, although it could be argued that it is the state's duty to provide for the people (ibid.). The work NPOs do should be in collaboration with local government rather than being two separate bodies. Relying on NPOs to fix problems creates a dependency on them and the local government becomes an institution whereby they subcontract NPOs to be responsible for community development (ibid.). This removes the responsibility the state has towards its people.

The NPOs established are very small, as studies highlight that of the 275 leading Japanese overseas NPOs, only 61% exceed an annual budget of US \$200,000, in comparison to American NPOs such as World Vision that have an annual budget of \$330 million (Janic, 2010). The annual budget is composed of donor contributions and government funding. The assistance provided by Japanese governments for domestic NPOs is also very limited in comparison to their Western counterparts. The earliest ODA budget provided by the Japanese government website is from 2013, when US\$115 million was provided to NPOs (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2015). This is a highly minimal figure in comparison to the UK, where £1.4 billion was provided from the ODA budget for NPOs (National Audit Office, 2015). Although government funding alone does not solve deep rooted issues such as human trafficking, the work of NPOs is essential in combating the problem directly. It is vital that NPOs receive adequate assistance in order to function efficiently. The lack of funding indicates that NPOs are given low priority, which undermines their role in combating human trafficking.

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Socio-economic factors combined make human trafficking extremely difficult to combat. Years of sexist cultural attitudes and practices can only be filtered out through education. Alongside this, economic shortages mean many are forced to exploit the weaknesses in society in order to meet basic requirements. This includes both the traffickers as well as those girls who are willingly entering the JK business. Strengthening civil society and NPOs would encourage further gender equality through providing the medium in which problems can be commonly solved rather than waiting for the government to fix the problem. The Japanese government must acknowledge that social inequalities force many into potentially dangerous jobs as a source of income in order to pay for services that should already be provided equally to everyone. Creating a less egalitarian society contributes to the problem of human trafficking (Shirk, 1985).

### **Potential to Eliminate Human Trafficking Through Effective Implementation of Law**

According to the 2017 annual report of human trafficking, most of the known come from within Japan. Initially, when Japan ratified the 2003 Palermo Protocol in 2005, Article 226, The Crime of Kidnapping for Transportation out of a Country, it did not prohibit foreigners being trafficked into Japan. This was amended with the extension 226-2, 226-3, 227 and 228 to encompass all means of trafficking (Kamino, 2019). Under this law, anyone who buys a person can only be imprisoned for a maximum of 5 years; however, this is increased to a maximum of 7 years if a minor is involved. Ebbe & Das (2008) and the Palermo Protocol (2003) argue that increasing penalties will act as a deterrent to future traffickers, implying that Japan is a host state due to its weak penalties. Increasing penalties is an inappropriate use of power and ineffective in deterring people from committing crimes, doing so lacks any ethical considerations (Risse, 2012). This is evidently a weakness of international conventions, as institutions such as the UN rely on international cooperation of the states. Although states may become signatories of different resolutions, this does not legally bind them to ratify protocols as laws. As in the case with Japan, countries are not legally obliged to comply with all aspects of the protocols and can therefore choose whether to ratify them or not. Significantly, they can be selective about what becomes law. The large discretionary aspect in laws between states has resulted in dramatically different legal frameworks in response to trafficking. This creates legal systems which

international organised crimes can easily penetrate, reducing the efficiency of existing policies attempting to combat human trafficking (Cole, 2006).

Some theorists believe that looking at the solution to a problem through a legal lens is a way to divert the attention onto prosecution rather than onto prevention (Andreas & Nadelmann, 2008). By focusing on the traffickers and the illegal activity that takes place, it deflects from the importance of societal factors and the aspect of enormous consumer demand. This is seen all over the world such as the 'War on Terror / War on Drugs'. Often these projects are used as a reason to heighten security and close borders. Trafficking is constructed to be a problem that threatens a country's peace and security. The state therefore uses this to legitimise reasons for tighter immigration controls. This results in restrictive immigration policies, making it harder for migrants to cross borders. By framing trafficking as a security issue and therefore closing borders, migrants seek third-party assistance to cross borders and become vulnerable to traffickers (Shepherd, 2015). It could also be argued that restrictive policies are also the very thing resulting in people being trafficked. Governments' restriction of immigration in an effort to combat human trafficking is actually contributing to the problem (ibid.).

Laws regarding workers' rights also affect the number of people currently being trafficked. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) was established to ensure a set of universal labour rights. Japan is a founding member of the ILO and is the second-largest contributor by providing \$11.5 billion dollars in Official Development Aid in the year 2017 was made up of 0.2% of the national GDI (International Labour Organization, 2019). Despite the important role they play in the ILO, Japan has failed to ratify many of the conventions. Of the 189 labour standards conventions, Japan has only ratified 49. This stands in comparison to the record of other G7 countries such as the United Kingdom and France, which have ratified 87 and 127 treaties, respectively. In regard to human trafficking, a key treaty that Japan has failed to ratify is the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention 1957, which had, as its objective, the voiding of the Forced Labour Convention (No. 29), 1930, which Japan had ratified. Article 29 can be highly criticised in the way it appropriates certain types of forced labour. For instance, Article 11 states, 'Only adult able-bodied males who are of an apparent age of not less than 18 and not more than 45 years may be called upon for forced or compulsory labour' (ibid.).

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This contradicts Palermo Protocol 2000 as well as national Japanese laws which prohibits the trafficking of all genders and ages. The discrepancies between Japan's laws on forced labour provide loopholes for traffickers to work within. According to True (2012), there is a direct correlation between the violence of women workers and the states' failure to protect them (True, 2012). This is evident through the lack of ratification of the treaties: Only 10% have ratified the 1975 ILO Convention Concerning Migration in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equal Opportunity and the Treatment of Migrant Workers, and 17% have signed the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (*ibid.*, p. 58).

Japan has ratified neither of these treaties, highlighting how poorly they protect migrant workers, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation. By countries not ratifying conventions, it demonstrates low priorities being given to human rights in state policies. John Harley (1919) argues that there should be a moral obligation to ratify conventions, and believes international and multiparty conventions should be signed without any modifications. This would ensure a universal approach to applying human rights. Having solid universal laws amongst countries makes it easier to punish perpetrators and protect victims, as there are fewer discrepancies for traffickers to use at their advantage.

### **Recommendations**

Societies' attitudes towards women and children needs to change to treat women and children less like disposable objects. The Geisha tradition is one that perpetuates the buying and selling of children. Children are forced into labour and sometimes face sexual exploitation (sexploitatio) on their journeys. Culture and traditions are at the core of any society. However, children need to be protected. The recommendations therefore include prohibiting aspects of the Geisha tradition which include abduction, forced labour, fraud, and the buying and selling of persons.

Japan has weak penalties for traffickers. However, increasing the punishment will not solve any problems. It is therefore recommended that the rehabilitation schemes for the perpetrators are as vital as the rehabilitation schemes for the victims. The Japanese International Organisation for Migration (IOM), in its efforts to combat human trafficking, fails to recognise the perpetrators as being victims

of the state. By providing alternative work schemes and teaching former perpetrators core transferable skills, former perpetrators will have work options alternative to human trafficking. Preventing people from becoming victims is equally important, as is reducing the number of perpetrators in the black market. Removing perpetrators reduces the number of possible future victims.

This essay also suggests strengthening the existence of NPOs and providing more support for them by increasing the funding from the ODA from the current 0.9% to at least 2%. Societies play a vital role in combating human trafficking by providing support in areas that the government does not. Essentially, NPOs pick up the pieces left behind by government. It is crucial that the NPOs aimed at helping victims are able to provide the protection that the states fail to. This can be done by ensuring they have adequate resources and funding in order to operate efficiently as well as collaborating with local governments to combat human trafficking. Civil society and NPOs must have solid foundations in order for the movement against human trafficking to succeed.

## **Conclusion**

Human trafficking is a dehumanising practise, resulting in repeated torture and pain. Japan, as a 'highly developed state' and one holding immense power, has all the resources necessary to stop this. The Japanese economy would not be negatively affected by preventing women from becoming victims of trafficking. Increased education and social equalities would see women represented more equally across various sectors of society. Traditions and culture would not be eradicated but would become safer and more consensual. Japan would not lose its influence on global and regional arenas by ending modern-day slavery. This paper has demonstrated the various factors that have resulted in sex trafficking having become prevalent in Japan. The cultural and societal factors that result in women being trafficked are held in place – holding women down – by deeply rooted patriarchal systems restricting women's freedom. The neoliberal world order, which dominates economic activity and is further spurred on by globalisation, negatively impacts women. This paper has explained Japan's economic pursuit of profits and therefore its neglecting of human rights, thereby resulting in trafficking. Socio-economic factors have forced perpetrators into a world in which inflicting pain onto others is their way of making a living. Therefore, strengthening civil society plays a central role in revitalising voices that have otherwise been dismissed.

Conversations regarding women's rights and roles in society must be generated. The Japanese government, which is highly centralised, plays an important role in limiting this sort of conversation. Discussing such problems will raise awareness of the issue and will lead to greater action. Furthermore, the impact of NPOs has proven vital in combating human trafficking, as their existence provides a form of safety net that states do not provide. Restricted funding, combined with competition against local governments, prevents NPOs' growth and their ability to make a genuine societal change. As a nation, it is vital that human trafficking is tackled in Japan, as it acts as an obstacle to equality, development, and peace.

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## THE IMPACT OF DOI MOI ON GENDER EQUALITY IN VIETNAM

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As part of a Short-Burst Module entitled 'Learning in International Environment', in December 2019 I had the opportunity to spend some days at Hanoi University, Vietnam. During our stay in Vietnam, I had the chance to develop numerous observations about life beyond the UK. Most importantly, as one of our teachers put it, we felt and touched the politics of Vietnam. We were honoured and welcomed by the students of Hanoi University. Discussions with our fellow Vietnamese students allowed me to explore a culture and a way of Vietnamese life. The Vietnamese students, with whom we spent over a week at their campus, were curious and scrutinised about my questions and interests regarding gender inequality in Vietnam. This paper will reflect some of those discussions, which were focused on the impact of Doi Moi (economic rejuvenation) reforms on gender equality in Vietnam. It is also essential to indicate a high level of pollution in Hanoi where has been assessed as unhealthy for sensitive groups, with an approximate measurement of 148 (Hanoi, Vietnam Air Pollution: Real-time Air Quality Index, 2019) due to the development policies under the reforms of Doi Moi. The main reason for the pollution in the capital can be seen with there being an immense number of cars and motorcycles. Besides my astonishment to this rush of life, many of the young girls and women were riding motorcycles while wearing high-heels. It was sorrowful that street vendors and people carrying heavy loads on the streets were also mostly women and young girls. Perhaps, women in this business sector may serve as an indicator of the inequality of distribution in the business sectors of Vietnam, which has communist and egalitarian policies. For instance, according to 'The Law on Gender Equality' of Vietnam (2006),

*'Gender equality indicates that [men and women] have equal [positions and roles]; [that they] are given equal conditions and opportunities to develop their capacities for the development of the community[ and] family[.] and [that they] equally enjoy the achievement of that development'.*

However, in practice, the implementation of these laws was highly questionable, according to my observations of whether or not they were implemented in real life in

Vietnam. Finally, it raises the following question: Why were school-aged girls at work instead of attending school, even though there is a visible modernisation of society in Vietnam? Was this actually due to the fact that boys and girls do not have equal access to education? So, did Vietnam focus only on making economic progress in its policies known as Doi Moi and turn a blind eye to Vietnamese societal development? Thus, this paper attempts to look at the following question: ‘To what extent has gender inequality for women been shaped before and after the reforms of Doi Moi?’ Specifically, I aim to examine why street vendors and carriers of heavy burdens are mostly women and school-aged girls. In addition to this, I will explore how the division of labour and education have been affected by the concept of development in terms of gender perspective.

Vietnam is currently a developing country, currently making ongoing progress in the domains of economy, politics, and society. This has been preceded by economic renovation policies – also known as Doi Moi – since 1986. Prior to Doi Moi, the Vietnamese Communist Party was following the principle of central planning of socialism, which was based on overseeing a socialist market economy under state interference (Beresford, 2008, p. 221). Also, Beresford highlights Vietnam’s previous economic form of economics as having been an East Asian development model which with a combination of state enterprises (SEs) and an equitable, civilised society (ibid.). However, patriarchy and social hierarchy – which are values of Confucianism – have played a dominant role in the society of Vietnam (Chuyen & Scott, 2007, p. 244), even though the Vietnamese development model has sought societal equality. In relation to this, when I asked Vietnamese students what their thoughts were regarding gender inequality in Vietnam after Doi Moi, some argued that Confucianism’s influence was still ongoing in society. Likewise, the others stressed that there had been a considerable improvement in the community with regard to gender equality. My reflection, based on my conversation with students and researchers, was that Confucianism’s effect has still been inherited culturally in Vietnamese society. Likewise, Grosse (2015, p. 256) underlines how Confucianism is thought to pioneer gender-conservative relationships; whereas, development and modernisation with Doi Moi have led to positive changes in women’s employment and gender equality in society. Similarly, according to a Finance and Development (2008) report, female participation in the labour workforce has increased 6%, and women involvement in the labour force has reached 70%, since 1990.

Additionally, development is seen as being a progression from A to B and from B to C – and this it is a disputable concept, since development has variable branches such as politics, economics, and sociology, which should not be separated from one another. Nevertheless, there is a lack of gender equality development policies in Vietnam, since Doi Moi is more concentrated on economic reforms. For example,

when Doi Moi was first announced, Vietnam had promulgated 44 laws that concerned women out of 120 laws in terms of change (Duong, 2001, pp. 219–220). A notable example of the law in Vietnam is that maternity leave is currently being provided (ibid., p. 240). However, maternity leave shortened in 1994 – after Doi Moi – from six months to four months which clearly aimed to decline women labour because of paying less and secure employer (Goodkind, 1995, pp. 357–358). Likewise, as Duong highlights, the constitution of Vietnam restricts the right to paid maternity leave (Duong, 2001, p. 240). For this reason, there is an increasing gender inequality within the scope of the communist state. Thus, according to Marx and Engel's *Communist Manifesto* (1848), capitalism requires and underclass society; and in capitalism, the elites are served. At this point, it can be said that women are chosen victims who are negatively affected even under communism, which takes on the role of an egalitarian state.

On the other hand, nobody questions the fact that Vietnamese women have been hardworking from past to present. As Pham and Reilly emphasise, a majority of all females work in the agricultural and industrial production sectors (Pham & Reilly, 2007, p. 786). In Vietnam, some innovations have been constituted after Doi Moi in order to ensure development in the agricultural sector. First of all, peasants have been allowed to invest and produce directly on state-owned soils by the Agricultural Resolution in 1986 (Truong, 2002, p. 2). Secondly, in 1989, State-Owned Enterprises' (SOEs) development has been improved by reforms designed to alleviate adjustment burdens on businesses which formed a part of the private sector (ibid.). With the help of these regulations from after the launch of Doi Moi until today, it can be pointed out that these reforms have helped increase earnings and reduce poverty in Vietnam. Along the same lines, as Gallup mentions, wage levels enhanced by two-thirds in just five years (Gallup, 2002, p. 4). Therefore, women's progression can be seen as being inevitable in this sector because of the increased wages. Likewise, according to The Law on Gender Inequality, Article 13 (2006):

*'Man and woman are equal in terms of qualifications and age in recruitment, are treated equally in workplaces regarding work, wages, pay and bonus, social insurance, labour conditions[,] and other working conditions.'*

However, although development is visible in Vietnam in terms of economics and laws, there have still been inevitable problems because of the lack of regulations on actual gender wage equality in real life. To exemplify this, it can be noted that women's wages (especially in rural areas) are lower than those of men (Gallup, 2002, p. 8). Also, even in an urban area, Hanoi, women are earning 25% lower wages than their male counterparts (ibid.). Similarly, during our visit to the United Nations, we had discussed with Huong about the gender wage gap in the presentation. It was

emphasised that the United Nations is working to reduce gender wage inequality in Vietnam but unfortunately, this problem is continuing. Thus, the government must reaffirm the laws about the gender wage gap and ensure that these rules are implemented in real life.

Under Doi Moi, female participation in the People's Council has increased by 2% (National Strategy for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam, 2010). In addition to this, the number of female members of the National Assembly was 26.22% in 1999–2004 (National Strategy for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam, 2010). Furthermore, women have efficiently contributed to the achievements of poverty reduction, economic growth, and social stability, by means of their active participation (National Strategy, 2001). Thus, based on the progression of the active role of women, it can be highlighted that with Doi Moi, Vietnamese women are more liberated to be involved in the development process and the labour force. Moreover, the fact that the progress in Vietnam is still ongoing and is making step-by-step strides forward should not be denied. Besides all this, I had also noticed that at Hanoi University, the majority of students in politics and international relations were female. However, it was noticeable that the academics were mostly men. In this case, the fact that street vendors and carriers of heavy loads are mostly women is due to women's limited access to education.

Another significant point that needs to be stated is Doi Moi's effects on education. Before Doi Moi, girls were less likely than boys to go to secondary school (Bélanger & Liu, 2004, p. 23). 'In the school year [of] 2000–2001, the female enrolment rate [was 46.9% at the] lower secondary school [level], [...] 46.8% [at the] higher secondary school [level], 51.9% [at the] college [level], and 39.1% [at] the university level' (National Strategy for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam, 2010, p. 1). Likewise, according to data of UNESCO (2019) in Vietnam, the female rate of enrolment in education has increased from 20.31% in 2009 to 31.72 in 2016. Additionally, 'the literacy rate among women is 90.6% [as] compared with 95.3% among men' (National Strategy for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam, 2010). According to the statistics, it may be noticed that gender inequality in education decreases gradually. However, education fees for the secondary school level are almost expensive for the poorest socioeconomic quintiles of Vietnamese society (Bélanger & Liu, 2008, p. 51). The reason for this could be the costs of privatisation reforms in education under Doi Moi. Unfortunately, as Bélanger and Liu have highlighted, rising educational costs put girls at a significant risk as compared to boys – since if a family has two children, one boy and one girl, and there is no enough tuition fee for two children, families typically prefer for boys to be the ones to access education (ibid., p. 52). Because girls prefer to get married, the girls are being sacrificed.

I was having a discussion with one of the Vietnamese students, as I wondered how they were covering their expenses, since it was expensive for them. She told me that she was working in two different jobs. One of her jobs was teaching English to children, and the other one was working as a waitress in a cafe afterwards. She also said that she and her brother were the first two people in their family to go to university. Moreover, she expressed that if she did not earn the money, she would have to drop out of school because her family would not have enough money to cover her living and education expenses at Hanoi. Perhaps her family would have preferred to have paid for her brother. I understand that Vietnam is still facing a severe poverty problem. Reforms meant to improve have failed in terms of gender equality. I hope women's opportunities will be improved over time.

In conclusion, being in Vietnam allowed me to face up to realities. After seeing the difficulties of working conditions for women and girls, I started not complaining about my own country. In Vietnam, legislations are passing, laws are being regulated on gender inequality, and women pay attention to contribute to the development. However, it is heart-breaking that there is still a practical failure of this developing communist state. Girls' participation in education is still low, and despite regulations to the contrary, women's wages are lower than those of their male counterparts. In addition, culturally inherited patriarchal values still affect families. Privatisations in the sectors increase economic growth – but have a severely negative impact on gender inequality.

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