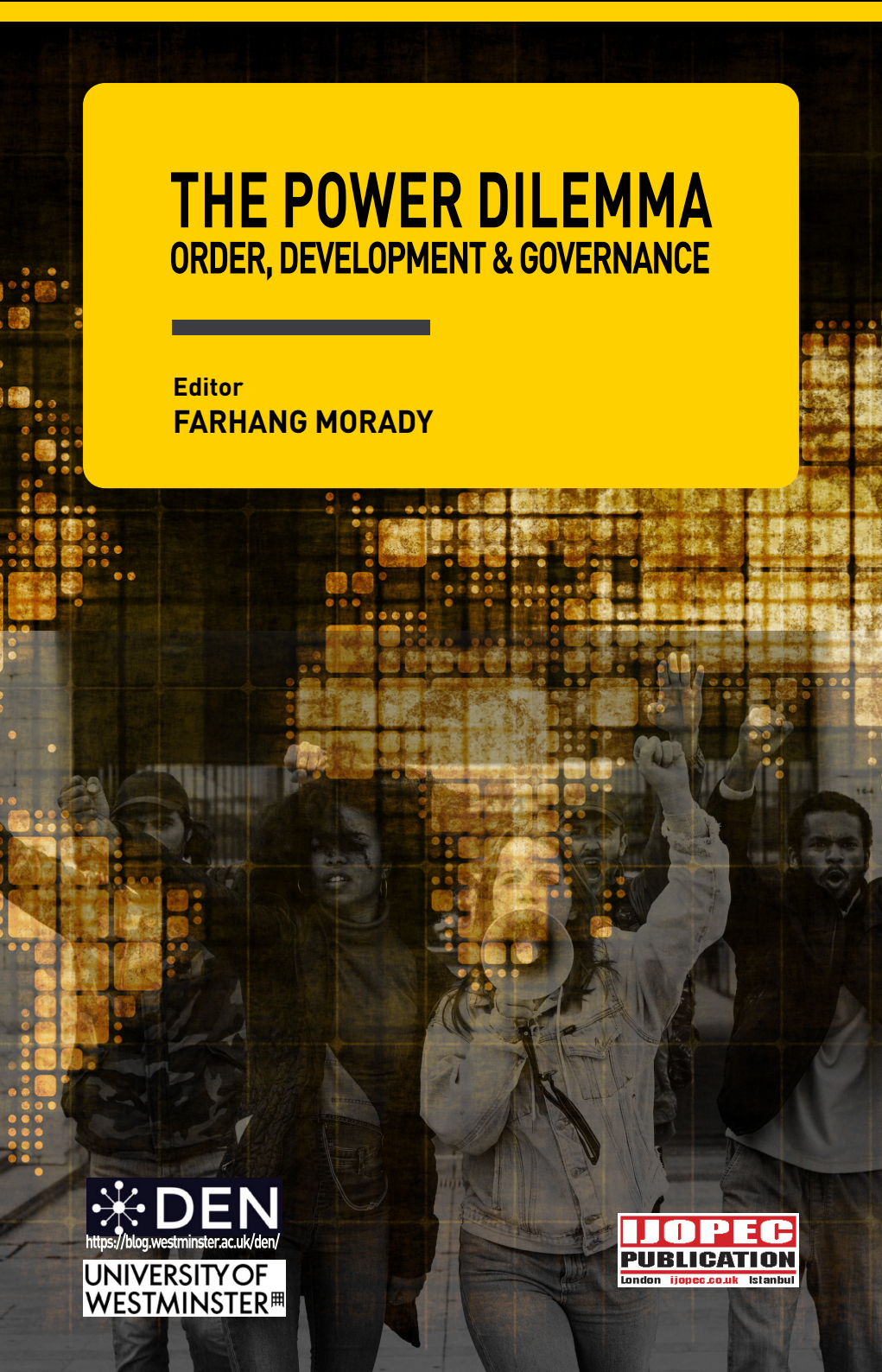
THE POWER DILEMMA
ORDER, DEVELOPMENT & GOVERNANCE

Editor
FARHANG MORADY



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Farhang Morady

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The Democratic Education Network (DEN) is a University of Westminster based collaboration of students with academics as well as with local and global communities. Several universities from around the world have also been instrumental in encouraging their students to join DEN's international projects including this book. We are especially grateful to Dr. Ismail Siriner from Batman University in Turkey, Tien Thi Minh Nguyen and Dr. Thi Nguyen Do from Hanoi University in Vietnam, Dr. Nadhawee Bunnag from Kasetsart University in Thailand and Horacio Gago from the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú).

At the University of Westminster, we owe an enormous debt to Dr. Peter Bonfield, Vice-Chancellor of the University, Dr. Sal Jarvis, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education); Professor Dibyesh Anand, Head of the School of Social Sciences, Dr. Andrew Pitchford, Head of the Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation, and Dr. Thomas Moore, Associate Head of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. All have constantly been a source of support for various DEN projects. If we had to pick one person who has been integral to DEN, that is no doubt Dr Farhang Morady, the Academic Director of DEN. We are deeply grateful for the constant guidance provided to us by Dr. Morady, who has become a mentor for all individual members of the team. And, last but not least, a hearty thanks to all the student contributors for their true dedication to the project.

FOREWORD

We are often reminded that "power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." This volume of work, fashioned out of the energies and passions of students from the University of Westminster's Democratic Education Network, explores the dimensions of power in contemporary global politics today and some of the dilemmas associated with the exercise and practice of power in public policy, democratic activism, political economy, and geopolitics. We know that power is a corrupting influence for those who are subject to its allure, but this volume seeks to unpick some of the dilemmas of power in global politics today. This volume seeks to articulate some of the dilemmas of power and governance from a range of theoretical, cultural, and political perspectives. Read between the lines closely, as you will have the pleasure of seeing creative and critical thinkers present their visions for global order, responsible governance, and democratic politics in profound and paradigm-shifting ways.

Domestic order shapes international order and the first set of essays explore the influence of domestic politics on the formation of global order. It is three years now since the United Kingdom left the European Union and allegedly 'took back control' of its sovereignty. The first section of this volume explores the domestic forces at work in shaping political culture in a comparative context. But what is the source of national sovereignty, and should we act only according to the dictates of sovereignty whilst overlooking fundamental questions about human rights and our responsibility to support the rights of distant strangers? George Perfect examines the rise of the far right in the United Kingdom and asks us to move beyond the more recent past of Brexit politics and to explore the bubbling away of populism as a response to the centrism of Blairism. Likewise, Arturs Danga and Ose Anthony Aiyakhaire examine the rise of religious right alongside the exclusionary politics of the Global War on Terrorism. Jamie Greenfield also exposes the rise of authoritarianism in Thai politics, exploring how hybrid democracy entrenches authoritarianism as a result of the uneasy relationship between the public and elites.

Melissa Huaman Carrion and Lorena Renteria Paredes bring the discussion to consider Peru's rich political culture arguing that 'the Peruvian state is the result of an extremely long process of change in the public sphere brought about by the struggles for independence, different political ideas and projects, elections, the role of the media as well as significant social, economic, and political change'.

The next section examines the emergence of geopolitics and bordered logics in global politics today. Victoria Ramírez presents a powerful testimony of her experience of being trapped between Venezuela and Colombia during the pandemic. This is an honest reflection on everyday bordering and how the logic of borders impact on lived experience of individual political subjects. She asks the question 'where do you go when you can't go home?' and this prompts us to think

about the political function of homes and homelands in global politics. Are all afforded the same mobility rights? How is travel across borders regulated and codified within the landscape of different political spaces? This is a must read for anybody wanting to understand the diversity of lived experience during the pandemic and to also capture the international student experience from a very real perspective.

Karlis Starks asks us to return to thinking about geopolitics and the legacies of the Cold War which inscribed global politics within a complex political and ideological space. The war against Ukraine, described by Russia as a special military option and understood by the West as a violation of the territorial integrity and political sovereignty of Ukraine, has returned us to thinking about the differences between the West and the non-West. Strange bedfellows are being made because of the war against Ukraine by Russia, with Russia seeking affirmation of their stance by reaching out to the West's estranged friends (who are not technically enemies). This is not friend-enemy thinking demonstrated by the Cold War, but a battle for economic supremacy and energy politics as the currency of global order.

We must not forget how this global order has been shaped by Empire, as Alexandra Bukhareva explores in her essay on British strategy towards the Persian Gulf in the post-colonial context. She argues that 'despite the formal end of its empire, the imperial strategy can still be seen in the British post-colonial approach to the region of the Persian Gulf'. This provides scholars of International Relations with a reminder to acknowledge the historical legacies (and continuities) between Empire and the colonised world. At Westminster we are committed to ensuring that post-colonial knowledge is situated within the narratives and ontologies of a shared yet ultimately contested history. This reflection of British Empire in the Persian Gulf reflects our mission to decolonise the curriculum, in both word and deed.

Equally as persuasive, Anushka Parakova navigates the journey of foreign aid and economic development since the end of the Cold War, suggesting that the new world order imagined at the beginning of the 1990s has done little to shift the selective political mobilisation of aid to serve the interests of Western liberal states in the post-Cold War context. Drawing attention to the misery of underdevelopment she details how aid is always conditional on dominant states fulfilling their national interest.

Likewise, Arvin Khosroshahi explores the significance of US-Iranian relations in global politics arising from the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Looking at continuities in the relationship, he argues that 'the current conflict between the US and Iran, including the sanctions that have been in force since the Revolution, have exposed this vulnerability' of the relationship between the US and Iran.

We are particularly pleased to see a contribution from Hoàng Anh Quang Nguyễn, Toàn Thế Nguyễn, and Ngọc Châm Thị Nguyễn in this volume. As students at Hanoi University this international partnership is at the heart of our commitment to thinking through, in practical ways, the Sustainable Development Goals. Deploying a critical geopolitics framework to understand the belt and road initiative in mainland Southeast Asia the authors examine how 'Beijing's

infrastructure diplomacy is gaining traction around the world' and what this means for Vietnam as it negotiates a sustainable future.

Lucas Iacuzzi brings moral questions about the use of political violence in global politics to the table. In asking, 'can one man's freedom fighter be another's man's terrorist' the intention is to underscore the problematic profile of morality in thinking about violence in global politics today. Through a careful engagement with Walzer's theory of just war, the author concludes that contested nature of political violence (and intentions) means that we are still living with the reality that one man's freedom fighter is another man's terrorist.

Rayan Haji masterfully explores the impact of colonialism and ethnic conflict in Rwanda, suggesting that a post-colonial framing is needed to understand the future political trajectory of Rwanda. He examines 'whether historic colonialism and ethnic conflict has taken a persistent toll on the development of the country' and the answer is a resounding yes.

Camille Mathy also discusses the differential impact of feminism and gender norms in contemporary political life, suggesting that an intersectional approach (taking into account racialised and ableist assumptions) are necessary for feminism to realise its mission to liberate all women. 'Women's emancipation is an ongoing struggle that should not be reduced to the acquirement of new rights', she argues 'but as a quest for autonomy and the abolishment of a whole system based on the subordination of minorities'. This powerful and honest discussion of intersectionality needs to be taken forward in all cultural, institutional, and economic contexts. Camille's reflections are profoundly important for rethinking the 'woman question' in global politics.

Cassidy Mattingly also explores the minoritizing politics of language in Colombia, encouraging indigenous language preservation as key to valuing the lived experience of Colombians against the dominance of the English language. English is a neo-liberal language, and its promotion has served to grow the economy rather than to enrich the cultural landscape of Colombia. In arguing that 'indigenous language speakers are pushed to the margins' she argues for governments and businesses to support indigenous language communities given the dominance of English and Spanish in the public education system.

Eleonora Venturini directs us to think about the post-covid recovery plan not just in terms of economic livelihood but on developing sustainable solutions to the climate emergency and pollution in urban areas. Sebastian Crisp also explores climate policy formation in the United Kingdom, United States, and China. He considers why and how the US 'Green New Deal' policy is 'best placed for cutting carbon emissions to a level able to avoid significant risk to humanity'.

Taken together, these contributions embody a remarkable engagement with the world in which we live and the desire of the authors to lead active change in thinking about the impacts of war, climate change, geopolitics, sustainability, and human rights. I'm especially proud of all these student contributions and their candid engagement with thinking about the possibility of a better world. The voices

which emerge in this volume are rightly critical of the crises and various emergencies we face, but they are optimistic in driving forward change for good. Another world is possible and these contributions make this present.

I would like to thank all the students who contributed to this volume and also thank Dr Farhang Morady for his stewardship of the Democratic Education Network. The Democratic Education Network is always evolving and the student voices in this volume reflect this dynamic approach to political and social change. Go Westminster! Go Democratic Education Network!

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INTRODUCTION

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Alexandra Bukhareva

Karlis Starks

Lucas Iacuzzi

Momina Nehmat

Valters Ostrovskis

Democratic Education Network (DEN) was launched in 2016 at the University of Westminster, as an initiative to address diverse students' engagement and development of their democratic skills, especially in problem-solving and decision-making. In addition, DEN supports collaboration between staff and students in designing, developing and delivering projects.

DEN has placed students at the heart of learning by enabling them to have agency – to devise solutions, interventions or products and apply them or see them employed. Some of DEN's projects include DEN's online magazine and book, encouraging students to write short and long blogs and articles on issues they believe in. We have always emphasised engagement in what is one of the most diverse universities in the world. We have focused on students' capabilities by developing their skills in research, scholarship, imagination, digital abilities, event management, communication and teaching.

DEN champions student engagement at the heart of its philosophy, believing engaged students make a firm commitment to learning. We take pride in making the effort to understand students' needs and incorporating them into their lives.

At DEN, we explored different ways to manage and sustain our activities. We experimented with various methods to maximise students' potential, encouraging them to work collaboratively to create a new environment. As a result, students expressed their passion and desire in learning and working together. Hence, they developed new democratic skills by performing in a friendly environment, encouraging each other, and ensuring respect and

equality. DEN's unique way of engaging students has facilitated knowledge exchange with local communities and international partners. One of DEN's objectives is to encourage the development of educational strategies and practices. We have done this with care, mutual understanding, and respect for academics, students, and support staff. The collaboration between academic staff and students with common aims and goals has become a fundamental principle in DEN's objectives. Through this collaborative work on different projects, DEN has looked for the best practices to engage students and develop learning materials in the classroom. The academic program has prepared students for professional life, but DEN also ensures they are equipped with a good understanding of their society, locally and globally. The academics' willingness to go beyond their subject expertise in teaching has been a crucial part of DEN. In addition, through practices with some years of experience, DEN has become a platform for interning and mentoring students. Thus, in working as a community, we have involved our alumni and post-graduate students in supporting the process of mentoring our undergraduate students within DEN's projects. Hence, DEN has shown awareness and taken on board responsibility for improving Westminster students' future employment prospects and post-graduate studies.

This book is a co-creation between the students and the academic staff who have worked collaboratively to design, develop and publish it. A group of students, from undergraduate to postgraduate students, were involved in writing and reviewing articles constructively and democratically. Students with academic support have learnt from each other and have developed their skills via knowledge exchange.

Through co-creation, students have engaged in higher-order thinking skills. This has also engaged them more deeply in the subject content and its meaning and application; the book has brought fresh perspectives and insights by involving them in every step, from design to production. In addition, we have particularly empowered under-represented groups to have a say in what is involved in their learning, providing an inclusive and democratic place to examine multiple perspectives and experiences rather than privileging certain viewpoints and forms of knowledge. Hence, the university has always explored new ways of engaging our students, with particular attention paid to the experiences of underrepresented and disadvantaged students at all levels. The internationalisation of higher education has added to the diversity of the student population, placing additional attention by the university's management and academics on how to culturally and socially integrate students.

DEN has undertaken various extra-curricular projects to develop and support students' learning:

- The online magazine
- The virtual field trips
- The international students' conference
- The annual book

DEN's annual edited volume includes articles on local, global, social, political and economic issues. We hope this will help students to feel better prepared to engage in a global world by examining topics through a variety of lenses and perspectives.

The modern world combines itself in diverse political, economic, and social systems that give ground for an infinite list of challenges, which extend way beyond the local level. Part 1 of the book focuses on 'Governing Domestic Order in the 21st Century' and consists of articles focused on exploring the ways governments are facing challenges and maintaining order in the modern world. This chapter will include an analysis of US counter-terrorism public policy issues and counter-terrorism strategies, the practice of secularism in the US and Latvia, the rise of populist politics in the UK, the inevitability of authoritarian regimes in Thailand, and the changing nature of political and economic spheres in Peru. Using differing perspectives and case studies from across the world, these chapters provide insights and conclusions about the features of local governments, the challenges they face, and the means they use to overcome such challenges.

Current global events tend to the heighten the tensions between the great powers, demonstrating the sophistication of the global balance of power, whilst also illuminating its fragility, absurdity, and ever-shifting nature. Part Two concentrates on 'Geopolitics and Global Power' and delves into a selection of global processes taking place at this very time, whilst also putting forward novel concepts and viewpoints for comprehensive analysis. It does so by exploring the path from an initial friendship to a major collision of values and military might between the U.S. and Iran; the intertwining of foreign investments, strategic infrastructure, and diplomacy in Southeast Asia; the intricate relationship between an unlikely bunch – the Eagle, the Bear and the Dragon – possibly taking place in a "Fourth World" of its own creation; and revisiting of infamous, yet familiar patterns in Britain's foreign policy in the Persian Gulf.

Part Three, 'Social Dilemmas in a Contemporary World' aims to focus on contemporary social dilemmas facing global realities. Referring to the case studies on the Rwandan genocide of 1994, US policies of the War on

Terror, and the crisis for women's rights, this section expands on how modern governments use the tools of neoliberalism to solve certain problems, but instead create new ones. The following articles explore the issues of women's emancipation, consequences of 19th century colonialism, marginalization of indigenous languages and cultures, and self-liberation movements to make conclusions on: 1) whether there is a future for the fair global social system; 2) can developing countries overcome the post-colonial struggle and successfully implement developmental policies; and 3) can the concept of "freedom" be universally set and "just" acts of terror be justified?

Part Four, 'The Politics of Aid and Climate Change' gives an important insight into the growing relevance of development and environmental degradation dilemmas. The first part focuses on the politics of aid, tracing it back to the post-Second World War period to assess the impact and implication of support on development. It will argue that aid is a new form of imperialism with no or little good intention to support development. The second section focuses on the environmental consequences of COVID-19. It opens a dilemma around the fact that when the solution for environmental recovery seems to be found, there is another side of the coin, as initial relief for the environment appears to be an illusion since much more is at stake in reality. The second part of the section seeks to answer the following question: As the climate crisis grips the world and calls for action to reach new heights, several questions are raised to solve this existential threat. By developing the arguments around aid, climate change, pollution, and global warming, this section explores the dilemmas behind aid policies and poverty and climate change impacts, as they remain critical global issues whose relevance constantly increases.

PART I

GOVERNING DOMESTIC ORDER IN 21ST CENTURY

1

WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER, LET NO ONE SEPARATE? A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SECULARISM IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA.

Arturs Danga

Abstract

It was all the way back in 1324, when Marsilius of Padua came up with an outrageous idea, claiming that the cornerstone of effective rule is the right of citizens to choose their own rulers. This quite literally unorthodox approach indicated indisputably that neither the Pope nor the Church may claim political power as such. Little did Marsilius know that this same idea would be incorporated in the 1st Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America many centuries later in 1791. Since then, the much applauded saying of Thomas Jefferson advocating – 'a wall of separation between the church and state' has set a standard for democracies worldwide, with most constitutions featuring a reference to this significant notion of secularism. This article will compare the practice of secularism in a well-established democracy with overwhelming Christian influence, the US and contrast this with Latvia, a much newer democracy that has a predominantly atheist recent past and an even older pagan identity. Is there really a contrast of biblical proportions between the two?

Genesis

In today's world, the main manifestation of secularism – the partition of secular and spiritual power – is a seemingly self-evident feature of any contemporary democracy, that is, a form of government in which the sovereign power is held by the people and the rights of freedom of speech and religion are respected unequivocally (Blaug & Schwarzmantel, 2016). It is no secret that the Establishment Clause of the 1st Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America incontestably reaffirms this – 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion [..]' – complemented by the Free Exercise Clause – '[..] or prohibiting the free exercise thereof' (Senate.gov, 2021). While quite general, these ideas not only guarantee that the State does not get involved in Church affairs

but also that the Church stays out of State authority. At least, in theory. Numerous US Supreme Court cases over recent decades have arisen from attempts to either cement or undermine the specific application of said Clauses for various instances; nonetheless, the principle of Church and State separation has prevailed over time and is currently incorporated in the overwhelming majority of democratic constitutions across the globe.

Meanwhile, across the vast blue Atlantic, on the coast of the Baltic Sea lies a much newer and less experienced democracy than the US, with a predominantly atheist recent past and an even older pagan identity, the Republic of Latvia. While Latvia may be both culturally and historically vastly different from the US, and relatively new to being a democracy, it aims to offer no exception to those same democratic ideals exhibited by America. Thus, the second sentence of the 99th article of the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia (known in Latvian as *Satversme*) staunchly declares the following, 'The Church is separated from the State' (Likumi.lv, 2018). Resembling the vague, yet universally applicable nature of the Establishment Clause in the US, the 99th article of Satversme expresses the same overall idea with the same implication of regulation of the Church and State dynamic, by prevention of State action towards the Church and vice versa.

If merely the constitutions were part of this analysis, at this point there would be nothing to analyze further and a definite conclusion could be drawn already, preaching the secular nature of both the US and Latvia. For better or worse, that is not the case. In spite of there being no doubt whether the constitutions of these two countries indeed contain secularism, a countless number of precedents in those same countries suggest the "flexibility" of this principle. Examples range from presidential oaths and state symbols incorporating strong religious references and national holidays corresponding to religious events, to church officials being involved in parliament debates and having a say in local municipality matters. During the global pandemic, alleged selectivity of Covid-19 restriction applications in regard to religious activities have led to debates of state secularism yet again.

This article will focus mainly on the Christian church, paying little regard to other religions as Christian beliefs have been the predominant influence of government policy towards societal, cultural and religious issues in both countries. For the most part, the Church's influence on the State will be explored, not vice versa, for the purpose of illustrating possible religious influence on decision-making. The contribution of this paper in an academic sense opens up further debates about what constitutes democratic governance and how far secularism extends, as well as reveals the overall

ambiguous realities of religion in the modern democratic state. It must be emphasised that this article is written from a political, rather than a theological or legal perspective.

The cases of the US and Latvia are indeed quite different on many levels: the former is a well-established major democracy with an overwhelming Christian influence, a significant partisan divide and a vast composition of religious organizations of all denominations; while the latter has somewhat recently undergone some 50 years of Soviet occupation, during which practice of religion was largely restricted, and has only re-established religious freedom for the last 30 years. This raises the question is there really a contrast of biblical proportions between the two?

Let there be light. Theoretical justifications of secularism

The general argument of this article is that spiritual and secular powers are indeed incompatible. By its very nature, spiritual power refers to those who pursue religion – the belief and worship of some supernatural controlling power or deity – and respect the teachings of religious authorities at the international level (such as the Pope) or of national importance (such as cardinals or archbishops). In other words, this power, unlike the secular power of the state, is not binding and does not apply to everyone, thus it can be argued that the Church is not entitled to decide on the lives of all citizens.

Examining the ideas of American philosopher John Rawls (1921-2002) it can be concluded that a fair public contract is the cornerstone of a fair society. Fairness, according to Rawls, is a manifestation of the needs of individuals of all parties to be ensured equally, therefore only fair institutions could lead to a more just society (Rawls, 1971). Given that the principle of secularism requires decision-making to take place regardless of religious concerns, abiding by secularism would increase fairness in society since it would essentially guarantee that institutions treat religious and non-religious persons equally. Another American author Ronald Dworkin (1931-2013), one of the most-cited scholars of jurisprudence in the 20th century, has thoroughly addressed the concept of egalitarianism, which is based on equal treatment of all people, extending to equal care for them, regardless of their particular life choices. Dworkin points out that the establishment of an egalitarian community inevitably constitutes a representative election rather than, say, the selection of representatives from a small social elite group (which in this case could be attributed to priests). Since religion is a freedom of choice for every member of society, it should not, in accordance with the concept of egalitarianism, affect the decision-making, care and treatment of members of society (Dworkin,

2000). Thus, according to the ideas of Dworkin, secularism is a vital part of ensuring an egalitarian society.

In Britain, the thinker John Locke (1632-1704), who among other things, is regarded as one of the founding fathers of liberalism, raised a thesis on the role of power and freedom in ensuring the good of society. He argued that the government should deal with laws that defend the rights of all people and that such laws ought to be introduced in a way to ensure maximum public benefit (Locke, 2003). Based on the fact that the clergymen do not defend the rights of all citizens a priori, even insisting on restricting certain freedoms of the population (e.g., euthanasia, same-sex marriage, etc.), the exercise of the power of the Church constitutes a threat to maximizing the benefit of society. In turn, strict limitations of Church power and religion-based State policies would promote legislation as a source of freedom.

Finally, one of the most prominent radical ideologues of the 19th century, Russian revolutionary Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876) defied both the State and the Church, declaring that humans may only be truly free and access all the vast knowledge of the world when they are able to think for themselves and rebel against any controlling power, be it secular or spiritual. In his unfinished manuscript *Dieu et l'état* (God and the State, 1970, p. 25) he famously proclaims:

> *The idea of God implies the abdication of human reason and justice, [..] of human liberty, and necessarily ends in the enslavement of mankind, both in theory and practice.*

Being one of the major contributors to the movement of anarchism, Bakunin directs a similar critique towards the State as well. He considered that being free demands living by the so-called "natural laws" – the inevitable uniform constructs of nature and science – and disrespecting authority because power and privilege as such ineluctably lead to corruption. (Bakunin, 1970).

Acts of the Apostles. A brief evolution of state secularism

In 1324 Italian scholar Marsilius of Padua (1275-1343) in his treatise *Defensor pacis* (The Defender of Peace) came up with an outrageous idea, claiming that the cornerstone of effective rule is the right of citizens to choose their own rulers, and citizens should have the right to participate in the process of law-making. This quite literally unorthodox approach indicated incontrovertibly that neither the Pope nor the Church may claim political power as such. Perhaps he dared go as far as to state that Christ himself had stood for the idea that priests ought not to have any power

over fellow humans, that their chief purpose was to preach about God and teach the learnings of the Bible (Emerton, 1920). Of course, such revelations were deemed heretical by Pope John XXII in Marsilius' time.

Centuries later, the authority of the Church declined as a result of the scientific discoveries of the Enlightenment era and the accompanying overall change in public sentiment. A prominent French writer of the time, Voltaire (1694-1778) spoke even more harshly about theological religion, in his *Dictionnaire philosophique* (Philosophical Dictionary) in which he equated religion with 'the enemy of mankind' and strongly defended the idea of secularism. He believed that the complete separation of Religion and State would, in fact, contribute to the development of human rights worldwide, as human progress and advancement would prevail. It is crucial to clairfy that Voltaire did not have a problem with God as such; after all, he did believe in the existence of a higher power or deity, perhaps God, which had created the universe but had since abdicated responsibility The issue with religion, however, was based on his conviction that it acted as the opposite of logical reason (Voltaire, 2006). Having been imprisoned on multiple occasions for expressing such views, his certitude only increased, and his critique and satire towards the Church did not subside as he acknowledged the inherent corruption, forestallment of progress, and absurdity that stemmed from the fusion of State and Church power.

Little did Marsilius or Voltaire know at the time, but that same idea they defended would be incorporated into the Establishment Clause of the 1st Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America in 1791. Since then, the much applauded saying of one of the Founding Fathers of the US, Thomas Jefferson – 'a wall of separation between the Church and State' (Meacham, 2012) – has set a standard for democracies worldwide, with most constitutions featuring a reference to this significant secular notion.

Led Astray to the Mute Idols of Law. Case study: the Republic of Latvia

The case of Latvia in the context of secularism is strange from the point of view that although the Christian Church in the 13th century was responsible for the oppression and murders of native Latvian during the Crusades, at the end of the 20th century several members of the Church became the moral leaders of the people in the fight for the restoration of the independent Republic of Latvia, amid the dissolution of the Soviet Union (Balode, 2021). The ambiguous role of the Christian Church in Latvian history enables discussion of Latvian identity, more specifically to what extent that identity is religious and Christian in particular.

To understand this apparent contradiction, there is the obvious question of culture. In this sense, Latvia has a very particular culture whereby both the traditional Christian events (Christmas and Easter) and the Pagan midsummer celebrations (*Līgo* and *Jāņi*) are widely celebrated national holidays, regardless of one's religious affiliation. No other religious holidays are observed, at least not as state holidays. Ever since the solidification of Christianity in Latvia, Jāņi is celebrated on a date correspondent with the Christian Saint John's Day (June 24th), however, initially Jāņi used to be celebrated on the 21st of June - the longest day/shortest night of the year or summer solstice. It is fair to say that Saint John's Day has very little to do with the traditional celebrations and mythological rituals that take place during the two consecutive days of Līgo and Jāņi. People escape major towns and cities for the countryside, jump over bonfires, sing and dance till sunrise, assemble bouquets and wreaths out of wild herbs, garden flowers and leaves to wear on top of their heads, drink beer, eat homemade cheese and couples set out to find the "flower of the fern" (usually understood as sex). Most of these traditions include themes of ancient Pagan deities and folk beliefs and have preserved their uniqueness for centuries. In everyday life, however, Pagan traditions and beliefs are rarely observed, unlike Christian habits which prevail such as visiting the church. For most Latvians, Pagan and Christian customs are not seen as contradicting each other at all – Christians participate in Līgo and Jāņi celebrations and then have no problem attending Sunday mass the next weekend.

Under the Soviet years, nearly all expressions of religious affiliation or nationalism (including celebrations of Jāņi) were prohibited as was anything that did not praise the achievements of communism or the USSR. Some of the restrictions loosened only during the final years of the Union itself, yet despite the official ban a sizeable portion of the population celebrated national holidays in secret for roughly 50 years. In Soviet Latvia secularism was practised in an extreme "one-way" manner – the Church did indeed not affect the affairs of the State, whereas the State had exclusive authority over the Church. Ironically perhaps, the USSR policy of state-enforced atheism only aided in strengthening the role of the Church and Christian values in the founding of the newly independent Republic of Latvia.

There has been relatively little debate on official state symbolism emerging from time to time in Latvian society. For example, the national anthem, adopted in 1920, is undeniably religious in character – "*Dievs, Svētī Latviju*" translates literally as "God, Bless Latvia." According to author Ieva Skrebele, the lyrics of the anthem potentially introduce an obstacle for non-religious citizens to associate themselves with it, as it implies that God

assumes a significant role in Latvian statehood. It is generally assumed that the lyrics for the anthem were inspired by the anthems of several other European countries, copying their appeal to the Christian God who protects the land and its ruler. While in this case, the religious references in the anthem can be defended by the historical conditions under which it was composed, it is much more difficult to find a solid excuse for the Latvian €2 coin introduced in 2014, with an analogous "*Dievs, Svētī Latviju*" inscription (Skrebele, 2018).

Another aspect to be explored in regard to secularism is the political landscape. The representation of predominantly conservative Christian values in the Latvian parliament (*Saeima*), the European Parliament and even at the local municipality level has been an essential element of a considerable number of political platforms. Most left-wing or liberal parties are often mockingly labelled as "communist" since the socially progressive or liberal ideals they represent mostly contradict traditional Christian values or draw on parallels with the ideas of atheism, which is still sometimes associated with the Soviet regime. In this way religion has become somewhat cultural for conservative parties, as it may be used to separate themselves from the Soviet identity. Every ruling coalition of Saeima and the government since the restoration of independence in 1991 has featured at least one party that, among other things, has strived to strengthen Christian values in the country. Of course, this does not constitute a violation of the principle of secularism per se, but some political decisions taken causes concern.

An illustrative example is the redrafting initiative of the Preamble of the Satversme in 2014, which was supported by the centre-right coalition of the 11th Saeima. The preamble of the Satversme, drafted by the prominent Latvian lawyer Egīls Levits (currently the President of Latvia), defines the modern country as composed of 'universal human and Christian values.' This statement, among others in the Preamble, has since caused occasional bursts of disapproval mostly within the liberal part of society. Social anthropologist, Klāvs Sedlenieks has critiqued the redrafting initiative, highlighting the blatantly unequal treatment of members of other religions and non-religious people in this document; he suggests that the authors of the Preamble could have done without including this notion (Sedlenieks, 2014).

The Covid-19 pandemic has also highlighted the ambiguous relationship between secular and spiritual power and the potential role of religious concerns in government decision-making. In early November 2021, the Minister of Justice, Jānis Bordāns of The New Conservative Party declared that religious activities (such as church services) are intended to take place

only in the so-called "green zone" – meaning that only people with Covid-19 vaccination or recovery certificates would be able to attend in-person. On the eve of the upcoming election year and an anticipated increase in morbidity caused by the Omicron variant in December, the Cabinet of Ministers decided in favour of allowing Christmas services to take place in the "red zone" (enabling anyone to attend with or without a Covid-19 certificate). It seemed Bordāns had had a change of heart over applying the vaccination requirement to pastors despite this appling to nearly all professions. The exemption of religious officials and religious events from the same kind of epidemiological requirements that apply to the rest of the country suggests an infringement of the secularism principle.

Moreover, not only religious considerations but also the presence of religious authorities in political decision-making is occasionally observed in Latvian politics. In Saeima, the Mandate, Ethics and Submissions Committee (chaired by MP Janīna Kursīte-Pakule (of *National Alliance* – a right-wing nationalist party) invited four representatives of major Christian denominations and only two health experts to review an initiative to legalise medical euthanasia. During the heated Saeima debates afterwards, MP Marija Golubeva (of *Development/For!* – a social liberal party) stressed, '[..] In Latvia, the State is separate from the Church and religious dogmas ought not to be binding to the society as a whole [..] In a secular society, ethics is a field of science and judgments are better adopted by experts,' (Saeima, 2021). Unsurprisingly, the initiative was shut down by the Committee.

Next, at the municipality level, the strange practices on religious matters of the Liepāja City Council, representing the third-largest city in Latvia, are worth mentioning. Following the 2021 municipal elections, representatives of 8 Christian congregations were invited to attend the first session of the newly elected Council. Not only did they call on councillors to follow Christian values and defend those values, but the speeches were concluded with a shared prayer by all those present, including the councillors. A month later, Liepāja City Council decided to set up a Committee on Religious Affairs, the composition of which would be determined by the pastors themselves. One of its tasks is to represent the interests of the congregations in the City Council, a never-before-seen practice in Latvia. Opposition councillor Dace Bluķe (of *For!/New Unity/The Progressives*) sharply criticised the decision as unnecessary and even labelled it "undemocratic," while questioning the compliance of the work of the Council with Article 99 of Satversme.

The legal implications of certain religious ceremonies open up a wider debate on the blurry lines between State and Church jurisdiction. Recently,

some controversy was sparked by a Lutheran pastor in Liepāja who announced that in order to marry in St. Anne's Church, couples must present proof of signing the initiative to modify the Satversme to include a reference to the so-called "natural family". This is controversial as this initiative prevents Latvia from recognizing same-sex families. Currently, a civil union bill is under review in the Saeima, aiming at allowing the legal registration of same-sex couples, following a ruling by the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Latvia in 2021. In 2005, the Satversme had been amended to include a sentence that the state only recognizes a marriage between a man and a woman. Back then, religious rhetoric had been applied to justify these additions. Since the institution of marriage is not exclusively religious one but also acts as a legally binding union, the involvement of the Church in dictating policy for the legal basis of such unions is yet another breach of the secular principle of the State.

One Nation Under No Good. Case study: the United States of America

Situated conveniently at the upper part of the emblem, the Eye of Providence gazes down upon America, the self-proclaimed land of liberty and justice for all. The Eye representing the all-seeing eye of God is within a triangular summit, surrounded by rays of light, cut off from and levitating above a 13-layer pyramid, intended to symbolise the initial 13 states which made up the United States of America in 1776. This thorough description refers to the Reverse of the Great Seal of the United States – one of the manifold examples of religious symbolism incorporated in the US official state insignia. References to religion in state symbols should not come as a surprise, owing to the fact the US has the largest Christian population in the world. Some mention of God is found in federal symbols such as the National Anthem, the Oath of Allegiance, the Great Seal, and the National motto; however, there are countless more examples to be found in other polities across the nation, be it in State flags, coats of arms, nicknames or mottos.

The case of the United States of America in the context of secularism is quite compelling, as there is a notable jurisdictional background in this field, oftentimes invoking the power of the Supreme Court, which has allowed for a deeper examination of this topic not just from a theoretical but also a legal standpoint.

Without a doubt, Christianity has always been deeply embedded in the American identity. Prior to 1962, most public schools in the US observed Christian prayers at the beginning of class each day. Routine Bible reading was a common formality in public schools in more than half of US states,

often a mandatory procedure. Steven I. Engel, a Jewish founding member of the New York Civil Liberties Union, and Madalyn Murray O'Hair, the founder of the non-profit American Atheists, made headlines by successfully challenging mandatory school prayer in the Supreme Court. These rulings, of course, initially resulted in a very divided reaction from the general public, with news outlets such as *Life* going as far as to label O'Hair "the most hated woman in America". Nonetheless, their wins have acted as a basis for further Supreme Court decisions prohibiting not just the mandatory but the voluntary school prayers as well.

To understand why there was outrage over decisions limiting state-endorsed religious practices, we will examine the key role of God in the American identity: the US dollar bills subserviently boast the country's official motto – "In God We Trust," established by law in 1956. Next, is the case of the National Anthem *The Star-Spangled Banner,* which is interesting in particular as it mentions both God and Heaven, marking an obvious reference to the Christian God specifically, since no other major monotheistic belief describes Heaven as such. Certainly, atheists and citizens practicing other religions may find it uncomfortable to identify with these lyrics. In a way, America can be said to veritably rely on God as affirmed by an even more demonstrative tradition – the giving of the oath of office of the president of the United States. During the swearing-in procedure, it is a customary practice that the president-elect swears on the Bible (although it is not required to swear on a Bible specifically), whilst the oath itself is concluded with the phrase "So help me God," obviously implying a connection of the spiritual and secular powers. Moreover, as if the previously mentioned customs did not seem excessively religious enough, schoolchildren in the US are still subject to mandatory Pledge of Allegiance recitals in many public schools (although prayers as such are banned). The pledge involves the phrase "One Nation under God", directly implying the omnipresence of a religious deity over the people.

These examples ought to make for a compelling case in favour of arguing that the principles of secularism are heavily breached in the US, for better or worse, but this is not entirely the case. In US jurisdiction, there exists something commonly referred to by jurors as "ceremonial deism", a term coined by Eugene Rostow, former dean of Yale Law School. In short, the implication here is that religious references and practices on a federal or state level are to be considered "purely ritual" and, therefore non-religious due to their long-term customary adoption, which supposedly has more to do with tradition than spiritualism. The Supreme Court has generally employed a similar argument to the principle of ceremonial deism in several of its decisions. For example, concerning the words "One Nation under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance, former justice Sandra Day

O'Connor outlined her belief that the government may reference divine concepts in its symbols accordingly with ceremonial deism due to the historical context under which they were created, as well as their overall character. In this way, such acknowledgements seem to be made without breaching the Establishment Clause (Merriam, J. et al., 2008).

In some quarters the practice of ceremonial deism has been subject to criticism. Attorney and former president of the Secular Coalition for America, David Niose has challenged the stance taken by the Supreme Court. He argues that ceremonial deism is ill-judgedly considered to be harmless, since it is more than merely ceremonial (nor actually a form of deism). He labels the term itself inaccurate and even dangerous, referring to the controversial case of *Ahlquist v. Cranston* in 2012, in which youth activist Jessica Ahlquist sued and won a case against Cranston High School West to remove a banner containing a Christian prayer from the school premises. During the trial, Ahlquist found herself in the firing line from Christian activists, as she became a target for hate mail, bullying and even death threats, specifically, using the exact words from the Pledge of Allegiance – "under God". According to Niose (2012) this case illustrates the stark reality of routine religiosity becoming associated or, perhaps, even equated with patriotism – the affection and respect for one's country – due to the enabling of ceremonial deism in law. He suggests that such ceremonies in some part teach citizens the tenets of patriotism, and if patriotism becomes associated with certain religious dogma, the two become inseparable.

Indeed, an understanding of American patriotism often entails a mention of religion, this trend being especially visible in recent years among the politicians and voters of the Republican Party (GOP). GOP political candidates and elected officials alike seldom miss the chance to refer to themselves as Christians and patriots whether on social media, the campaign trail or in their political campaign ads. To some degree, GOP has attempted to monopolize patriotism, with some of their more radical members labelling the Democrats "unpatriotic." Of course, this is logically explained by the GOP's appeal to predominantly conservative Christian voters and its application of Christian rhetoric in policy-making decisions (bans on abortion rights, opposition to LGBT rights, opposition to vaccination, amongst others).

Revelation

Comparing the cases of the US and the Republic of Latvia in the context of secularism is indeed an arduous task, not only because the two are quite dissimilar in terms of population size, governmental system, economic and

geopolitical context, but also because of the historical and cultural considerations that have shaped each nation in adopting the laws and practices that make up their societies today. On top of that, even the religious composition of these societies does not match, as the US is predominantly Christian, although virtually every religion of the world can be found being practiced by someone who lives there, whereas in Latvia most citizens consider themselves non-religious. One may naturally ask – how are the two even comparable and what conclusions can be drawn from this analysis?

To answer simply – both are officially recognized as democratic secular states, in which the letter of the law is respected. While they are indeed poles apart in many regards, it is the content of their constitutions that makes this comparison possible, as it appeals to the uniform idea of the separation of the Church and the State. This case study examined exactly how the unique conditions in which each of these countries is situated in has shaped their individual approaches toward upholding the principles of secularism.

An obvious conclusion from this survey is the fact that the US has had significantly more legal debate concerning this issue than Latvia. There are several reasons, some of them are of practical nature: the country is much larger in size and its judicial institutions have operated for much longer. More theoretical reasons could include the argument that the US has a substantially stronger attitude toward values like freedom of speech, freedom of religion and other civil liberties rooted in the First Amendment. Consequently, Americans are more inclined to challenge potential breaches of these rights in legal battles. In contrast, only 15% of Latvian respondents indicated freedom of speech as a value of priority in the World Values Survey in 2008 (Atlas of European Values, 2008). There have only been three rulings of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Latvia in regard to the 99th article of Satversme since the restoration of independence, which clearly indicates that the Latvian society does not have the resources or simply does not care enough to demand changes in this aspect.

Secondly, while it is impossible to measure exactly to what extent both states can to be considered secular since there are no universal criteria for such measurement, conclusions can be drawn in specific fields. The situation mainly varies in aspects such as state symbolism, where the US seems to be considerably less secular than Latvia and has established in its jurisdiction so-called ceremonial deism – a legal concept of ambiguous nature, seen by some as a critical violation of the Constitution. On the other hand, the Latvian political landscape seems to entail considerable

religious influence on certain governmental decisions in areas of social policy, such as the legal status of euthanasia, recognition of same-sex families, and others (this is also the case of several US states, but not at the federal level). The majority of political parties in the ruling coalition of the Latvian government have employed Christian rhetoric to justify their decisions, but in a few cases actual Church representatives have been directly involved in policy-making both at the national and municipal level. Unlike the US, Latvia is yet to have its first liberal government, since so far there have only been centre or centre-right coalitions. Looked at in a global context, both countries may still be regarded as very secular and stable democracies.

Thirdly, an interesting prospect to explore is the correlation between a country's religious identity and its attitude towards secularism. This case study finds that there is, perhaps, no ultimate correlation to be found in this regard. In Latvia, common Christian and Pagan traditions seem to go hand-in-hand for both theists and atheists, while in the US Catholics and Protestants embrace solely the Christian God. Yet both nations seem to exhibit quite similar perceptions of state secularism overall, with relatively few attempts to challenge the *status quo*.

To conclude, this study inarguably indicates that there is still much progress to be made in order for the United States of America and the Republic of Latvia to more closely resemble the fair, egalitarian societies envisioned by Rawls and Dworkin. Whilst the current legislation has far exceeded the expectations of Voltaire or Marsilius of Padua, it is not necessarily a straightforward path of evolution of state secularism. Will the future bring about an effective control mechanism to uphold the principle of secularism? The findings of this paper can serve as a framework for further research into the unique conditions which alter the State and Church dynamic in the modern democratic societies of today, as well as look for possible solutions to the problems they currently face.

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2

COUNTERTERRORISM IN THE US SINCE 9/11

Ose Anthony Aiyakhaire

Abstract

Terrorism and counter-terrorism presents a public policy issue central to the study of politics, international relations, and public policies. Different states have dealt with it using various public strategies. The September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001 was one of the most horrendous events that shook not just the US but the world. The US response has been robust including arresting and imprisoning scores of people both at home and around the world. This paper examines US counter-terrorism public policy issue and counter-terrorism strategies since that attack.

Introduction

The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on US soil caused the US government to start thinking about how to fight terrorism (Lankford, 2010). This was not the first violent act of extremism involving the terrorist group Al Qaeda; others include the bombing of the US embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi in 1998, the attack on the US military housing complex in Saudi Arabia in 1996 and the 1993 bombing of the US World Trade Centre in New York. However, it was the September 11 attack that caused the US Federal Government to start rationalising its counter-terrorism strategy both domestically and globally (Brooks, 2010). This article will look at the root cause of terrorism and the state's strategy to use policies to counter it, emphasizing US counter-terrorism measures as a policy issue.

The Policy Issue: Counter-terrorism in the US since 9/11

In October 2001, US President George W. Bush utilised his powers as Commander-in-Chief of the US Forces to attack Afghanistan and the Taliban militia that was thought to harbour Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaida terrorist group.[1] The US Congress reaffirmed the President's powers of using force in fighting terrorist groups that were a threat to the peace

[1] Al-Qaida is a Sunni Islamic extremist terrorist organization that is believed to have executed the 9/11 terrorist attacks (McCants, 2015).

and security of the US (Emerson, 2014). That same month, Congress enacted the Patriot Act to expand the powers of the Justice Department in the surveillance against terrorists. The president then used an executive order to create an Office for Homeland Security to oversee programs regarding terrorism surveillance. Congress then proceeded to create a Department of Homeland Security at cabinet level in line with the President's aim of protecting the nation against further terrorist threats.

The Al-Qaida attacks were meant to decapitate the nation's leadership and economy by killing leaders and destroying the nation's key buildings such as the World Trade Centre. The attacks were well-coordinated from abroad and were aimed at communicating an ideological and political objective. It has been established that the terrorists wanted to change US foreign policy in the Middle East (Emerson, 2014) President Bush found these acts to constitute an act of armed conflict requiring military intervention. Congress thus also ratified the President's decision to use force against Al-Qaida as a self-defence mechanism (Lankford, 2010). Notwithstanding the magnitude of damage caused by terrorist groups on US citizens and property, is it fair to conclude that these attacks constitute an armed conflict with the US, so that they warrant the use of force in self-defence? Some scholars argue that the war against Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups cannot constitute an armed conflict with the US as Al-Qaida is not a *state* that is waging war with the US. Further, the laws of war under the Geneva Conventions do not apply in this kind of war (Birkland, 2016). Others contend that in a case where a state wages war against a non-state actor then the laws of war cannot apply. According to Rothe and Muzzatti (2004), terrorist groups like Al-Qaida are belligerents, and, although their attack on states does not constitute a state-state war, a war waged against them can constitute an armed conflict.

The USA-PATRIOT Act of 2001

This act is an acronym for *Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism* and was passed by both Congress and the Senate in 2001 as a response to the September 11 terrorist attacks on US soil (Heller et al., 2012). The Act expanded the mandate of law enforcement officers regarding investigation and surveillance of terrorist acts as well as other forms of crime, including computer hacking and money laundering—crimes that are often associated with terrorism. In particular, law enforcement officers are allowed to use wiretapping and surveillance when investigating terror-related crimes. This mandate has ensured that law enforcement officers in the US have more power to investigate and survey crime (Flint, 2003). The Act also requires agents of the federal government to seek leave of the court when they want

to use roving wiretaps to track a suspected terrorist. This was not the case before the enactment of the law. This measure aims to ensure a coordinated effort between government agencies in the fight against terrorism.

In addition, the Act allows law enforcement officers to delay notification of search warrants when investigating a suspected terrorist so that the suspect does not know that they are being investigated, since if they knew they were being investigated, it would interfere with the investigation. Law enforcement officers can also seek leave of the court to obtain bank and business records of suspected terrorists in cases of money laundering. It has been established that money laundering is one of the many ways that terrorists obtain finances to sustain their terrorist acts globally. Thus, law enforcement officers in the US have powers to seek permission of the court when they want to investigate such suspects.

The USA-PATRIOT Act further requires government agencies to cooperate in information-sharing regarding security matters. Sharing information about security between government agencies promotes surveillance and investigation of suspects (Kaiser & Hagan, 2018). Warrants of arrest can also be obtained from any district in the US regardless of where it will be executed. This is meant to fast-track the process of obtaining search warrants so that suspected terrorists do not vanish as law enforcement officers are looking for search warrants. Most importantly, the Act ended the legal doctrine of statute of limitations for terror-related crimes. This means that terror suspects can still be investigated and prosecuted a long time after the commission of the crime. This is meant to ensure that no terror suspect escapes the wrath of the law regardless of the time they committed the crime (Chenoweth, 2012). The Act further restricts entry of terror suspects into the US, specifically persons who have been suspected of terror-related offences are not allowed to enter the country. Finally, the Act provides aid to public safety officers involved in the investigation and prosecution of terror suspects. The Act also provides aid to terror victims.

US Counter-terrorism Policy

The US has several strategies in fighting terrorism. These strategies are usually promulgated by presidents based on their approach to fighting terrorism. This part will analyse four US Counterterrorism policies: The US counter-terrorism policies of 2003, 2006, 2011, and 2018.

The US National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, 2003

The strategy recognizes that the availability of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and the sophistication of modern technology have provided fodder for the growth of terrorism across the globe generally and in the US specifically (Brooks, 2010). The US therefore seeks to act to ensure that terrorist groups do not win the "war on terror." This is the term used by the Bush administration in the wake of 9/11. But it is problematic. First of all, it is not clear that the notion is coherent. Wars have points at which they begin and end. The struggle against terrorism will likely continue indefinitely. Moreover, terrorism is not a univocal concept. There are many types of terrorism in many parts of the world. The US does not operate against all of these groups. And second, it blurs the lines between counter-terrorism and outright war, potentially giving more expansive power to the executive office that it should have, under the Constitution. The aim of the 2003 strategy was to stop terrorist attacks against the citizens, friends, interests, and allies of the US and therefore to create an environment free from terrorist attacks. It proposed that the US military could attack terrorist leaders, communications, control, command, facilitators, and financiers (Kfir, 2018). The military would thereby force the terrorists to surrender, retreat, and regroup along regional lines and the US would then work with its regional partners to isolate the terrorists in their hideouts and ultimately force them out and suppress them. The strategy also aimed at denying the terrorists any further sponsorship by ensuring that states and non-state actors play their role in severing any terrorist links and support (Muzzatti, 2017).

The US National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, 2006

The 2006 strategy for combating terrorism was promulgated as a follow-up to the 2003 strategy. This strategy had six key pillars (Heller et al., 2012). First, the US government committed itself to advancing democratic governance as the long-term antidote to countering terrorist ideology. This would ensure respect for the rule of law, fundamental freedoms, and human dignity. The pillar is based on the reasoning that democratic governments take control of leadership because they are sanctioned by the people. They ensure that territorial borders are not porous, and that society is free from indoctrination (Brooks, 2010). Democratic governance would further avoid political alienation, grievances that can be blamed on others, subcultures of conspiracy and misinformation and an ideology that justifies murder.

Secondly, the 2006 strategy sought to prevent attacks by terrorist networks. This would be done by tracking down the enemy, capturing them, or even killing them. The idea is to cut the links between the terrorists and their

financiers, facilitators, and support of any other form. The terrorist will be denied resources they use when carrying out terrorist attacks (Kfir, 2018). The US recognizes the importance of working with its overseas partners in effecting this strategy. To ensure that this pillar succeeds, the US military would attack the enemy and their capacity to operate. Thus incapacitated the enemy could not regroup and carry out more attacks in the future. The government will also deny such terrorists entry into the US and incapacitate their ability to travel internationally.

This Act has other pillars, including denying "rogue states" and terrorist allies' access to Weapons of Mass Destruction.[2] Towards this end, the US with Russia in 2006 commissioned the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism which sought to cut any links between terrorists and nuclear weapons which might be used to carry out massive attacks on the globe (McCants, 2015). Connected to this pillar is the need to ensure that rogue states do not provide support to terrorists in any manner. The US government believes that any state that chooses to support terrorists has chosen to be an enemy of freedom, justice, and peace The government will therefore cut the links between the states and terrorists and also hold those states to account for this link. It appears that the US is prepared to interfere with state sovereignty in pursuit of international peace and security (Heller, et al., 2012). We noted earlier that the US counter-terrorism strategy is anchored on the need for self-defence against terrorist attacks. It understands terrorism as an armed attack against US citizens, their friends, and allies across the globe and therefore deserves the use of force in response. The idea is to end state sponsorship of terrorism and to disrupt the flow of resources from the state to terrorists preventing them carrying out attacks (Rothe & Muzzatti, 2004).

The final pillar of the strategy touched on here is to deny terrorists control of any nation they might use as a base and launching pad for terror. At the time of attacking Afghanistan, the US felt that the Taliban government was sponsoring Al-Qaida terrorists and therefore wanted to cut those links and force the Taliban government to surrender the terrorists from their hideouts. The government has committed to ensuring that terrorists do not take refuge in such states and use it as a safe haven from which to carry out attacks (Graff, 2013).

[2] The term "rogue states" is ideologically loaded. It was coined at the end of the Cold War to refer to states that are believed to practice state-sanctioned terrorism—the classic examples being North Korea and Iran. However, in these cases, it is not clear that what is called "state-sanctioned terrorism" differs from self-defense against more powerful aggressors such as Israel and the US. It would not be inaccurate to say that the US deems "rogue states" to be any nations that interfere in substantial ways with American global interests.

Therefore, the US government seeks to eliminate physical safe havens that are used by terrorists to carry out attacks. In a nutshell, the 2006 counterterrorism strategy seeks to strengthen the 2003 strategy while recognizing the gains that have been made by the 2003 strategy (Chenoweth, 2012). Some of the gains include dismantling the Taliban regime in Afghanistan which supported Al-Qaida and establishing a democratic governance which supported the war on terror. Another was cooperating with Iraq in the war against terror; Iraq was once thought to support and finance terrorists. The US military has also dismantled the Al-Qaida network by capturing or killing its leaders. The US has also made it hard for terrorist financing to be carried out across the globe (Kaiser & Hagan, 2018). Finally, the US boasts of an overwhelming cooperation globally in the fight against terror.

The National Strategy for Counter-terrorism, 2011

The 2011 strategy was promulgated by President Barack Obama in 2011. It uses four core principles that inform the administration's approach to the fight against terror (Heller et al., 2012). These core principles are adhering to US core values, building security partnerships, applying Counter-terrorism (CT) tools and capabilities appropriately, and building a culture of resilience. The US core values that the strategy seeks to adhere to are respect for human rights, encouraging responsive governance, respect for privacy rights, civil liberties and civil rights, balancing security and transparency, and upholding the rule of law. Upholding the rule of law involves Maintaining an effective, durable legal framework for CT Operations and bringing terrorists to justice (Muzzatti, 2017). Building security partnerships involves accepting varying degrees of partnership and leveraging multilateral institutions. Applying CT tools and capabilities appropriately involves pursuing a whole-of-government effort and balancing near and long-term CT considerations (Wynter, 2017). The US government also seeks in this strategy to build a culture of resilience among its citizens by encouraging its citizens to develop the "individual, community, and economic strength to absorb, rebuild, and recover from any catastrophic event, whether manmade or naturally occurring" (USATH, 2018, p. 76).

The 2011 strategy appears to be a radical departure from the 2003 strategy in fighting terrorism as far as respect for fundamental freedoms and the rule of law is concerned (Chenoweth, 2012). The 2003 strategy was categorical in that it intended to defeat the enemy by attacking them in effective ways. It also stated that the government would 'deny further sponsorship, support, and sanctuary to terrorists by ensuring other states accept their responsibilities' in facilitating terrorism. There was no mention

of the need to have respect for the rule of law and fundamental freedoms as enshrined in the US Constitution (Sandler, 2015). This illustrates that the US counter-terrorism policy, although anchored in the USA-PATRIOT Act, is ambulatory and depends on the philosophy of the government in power.

The National Strategy for Counter-terrorism of the United States of America, 2018

The 2018 counter-terrorism strategy was promulgated by the Donald Trump administration and succeeded the Obama counter-terrorism strategy. It starts by acknowledging that the US continues to be a nation at war with terrorists because the terrorist landscape continues to be fluid and complex (Whitehouse.gov, 2018). The strategy also recognises that the main enemies in the war against terror are radical Islamist terrorist groups that continue to recruit members both within and outside the US with the aim of conducting attacks both at home and abroad. The strategy further recognises that Iran is the most prominent sponsor of terrorism because the country hosts a global network of terrorist groups, threatening the US and US interests across the globe (Whitehouse.gov, 2018). Other terrorist groups seeking to achieve other aims through violent means are also a threat to the peace of the citizens of the US and her interests across the globe. The strategy is therefore meant to recommend ways of fighting terrorism defined as a domestic and global threat to peace and wellbeing. The strategy further recognises that the US cannot win the war against terror by merely arresting or killing terrorists and that more needs to be done (Kaiser & Hagan, 2018). To this end, the government of the US committed itself to a strategy intended to deprive terrorists of all types of support that sustains them. It also commits to dismantling all terrorist networks across the globe because they threaten the peace of the citizens of the US anywhere in the world. Once dismantled, the strategy states that the government of the US would maintain the pressure so that these groups could do not reconfigure themselves and re-emerge (Kfir, 2018).

The strategy confirms that it is a policy enacted by the government to address a public problem namely that terrorists seek to undermine the ideals of the citizens of the US by using propaganda and violence to advance their goals. The strategy recognises that, whereas the government of the US has covered a lot of ground in thwarting terrorist attacks and dismantling terrorist groups to date, there is still a lot of work to be done because not all threats have been thwarted and not all terrorist groups have been dismantled (Whitehouse.gov, 2018). The strategy adopts an "America First" approach to the fight against terror in which the interests of the US are taken care of, whilst a balance between the US challenges and

capabilities is struck. It also proposed that the roles of the allies and partners of the US are taken care of. The strategy seeks to utilise a combination of tools to fight terror both within and outside the US. These tools include financial investment, diplomatic engagement, law enforcement actions within and outside the US, and military and intelligence operations overseas. The government will also make use of non-military capabilities such as building societal resilience to terrorism, minimising the appeal of terrorism propaganda online, and the ability to prevent and intervene in terrorism recruitment. The government also seeks to fight and eradicate radical Islamist terrorism such as the one that is being propagated by ISIS and Al-Qaida.[3]

The policy has six strategic objectives. The first is to diminish the capacity of terrorists to conduct their attacks in the US and in other countries where the US has vital interests. The second objective is to sever all the sources of support and strength for terrorism. The third objective is to diminish the ability of terrorists to mobilise, recruit, and radicalise with an aim of carrying out terrorist activities within the US and across the globe. The fourth objective is to prepare and protect Americans from terrorist attacks in the homeland. The fifth objective is to ensure that terrorists are not able to acquire Weapons of Mass Destruction like nuclear, radiological, biological and chemical weapons. The sixth objective is to ensure that all stakeholders and partners in the public, private and foreign spheres collaborate in the fight against terror. The policy identifies ISIS and Al-Qaida as the most prominent radical Islamist terrorist groups that the government seeks to fight (Whitehouse.gov, 2018).

In particular, the policy recognises ISIS as a superior terrorist group with financial and material resources to carry out terrorist attacks both against the US and US partners across the globe. Despite the concerted efforts of the US and partners, ISIS has continued to carry out terrorist attacks across the globe, as a result killing many people and maiming others (Kaiser & Hagan, 2018). It has branches and networks in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. The group continuously recruits new members and mobilises them through online media platforms to carry attacks on US and partners. It utilises the porosity of the European border and the migration crisis to the West to gain access to the US. It has been established that two of the perpetrators of the 2015 ISIS attacks in Paris, France entered France while posing as migrants and succeeded in their entry. The group's members and leaders are highly innovative and continue to innovate on new ways of accessing their target country to carry out attacks if one route is closed. Unlike ISIS, al-Qaida's global network has been significantly

[3] "ISIS" stands for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. It is a Sunni terrorist organization that seeks to establish an Islamic state in the Middle East (McCants, 2015).

thwarted across the globe by killing their key leaders and arresting others (Whitehouse.gov, 2018). However, the network continues to recruit new members and to raise funds through the international financial system. Other terrorist groups that pose a threat to the US and its allies include Boko Haram, Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, and Lashkar-e Tayyiba. These are feeder groups for the two main terrorist groups and work closely with ISIS and al- Qaida to carry out terrorist attacks across the globe. The 2018 policy seeks to also find and diminish these feeder terrorist groups to prevent them from carrying any further attacks.

The 2018 strategy recognises Iran as the main sponsor of terrorism across the globe because it accommodates groups like Lebanese Hizballah. This group boasts a high-level intelligence, weapons, and well-trained fighters and carries out attacks on countries such as Iraq, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, Syria, and Yemen. The policy recognises that Iran supports this group and other terrorist groups like HAMAS through its main terrorist support arm, Islamic Revolutionary Guard CorpsQods Force (IRGC-QF). The policy recognises that the arm has the capacity to train, finance, offer other forms of support to terrorists, so that they can carry out attacks in several parts of the globe, including the US.

One key objective of the strategy is that the government of the US will pursue terrorists to their source (Whitehouse.gov, 2018). A set of priority actions include targeting key terrorists (group leaders and their members) and terrorist actions using both military and non-military capabilities. The aim is to disrupt, degrade, and prevent the reconstitution of terrorist networks. The second priority action is an enhanced reach into denied areas overseas using all possible means. The third action is to effectively use the law of armed conflict detention as a counter-terrorism tool. Suspected terrorists will therefore be detained at the US Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba—which was set up in 2002 to detain and interrogate people believed to have been involved in the 9/11 terrorist attacks—pending their transfer to the US for trial (Whitehouse.gov, 2018).

One other objective is to isolate terrorists from financial, material, and logistical sources of support through such priority actions as enhancing the detection and disruption of terrorist travel, countering existing and emerging terrorist funding methods, exposing and countering state support to terrorism, and preventing the development and acquisition of attack capabilities (Kfir, 2018). Countering terrorist radicalisation and recruitment will involve such priority actions as institutionalising prevention architecture to thwart terrorism, combating violent extremist ideologies, increasing civil society's role in terrorism prevention,

countering terrorists' online influence, and countering radicalisation through strategic communications (Whitehouse.gov, 2018).

A Critical Analysis of the US Counter-terrorism Strategy of 2018

The strategy satisfies the definition of public policy, i.e. that it is a government statement on how the government seeks to address a specific public problem; public policy is all about solving public problems (Birkland, 2016). However, the strategy has been criticised as being a "carbon copy" of previous strategies by the Bush and Obama administrations. The strategy however emphasises a continued partnership with foreign actors on the fight against terror. Although the strategy stresses "America First," it further states that "America First" does not mean "America Alone" and therefore America needs foreign partners to win the war against terror. This notable inclusion has been heralded as a continuation of the provisions of the Bush (2006) and Obama (2011) counterterrorism strategies that reiterated the US government's commitment to foreign partnerships in the war against terror. For this reason, although public policy is aimed at addressing a public problem, such a public problem need not be a *national* problem. It can be a problem cutting across international borders and regions. The 2018 counterterrorism strategy therefore meets this criterion of a public policy (Cairney, 2012).

A public policy must clearly state the public policy issue that it seeks to address (Dunn, 2014). The US Counter-terrorism strategy clearly states in the abstract that the US remains a nation at war. It then proceeds to describe the war by stating that the key adversaries that the US is at war with are ISIS and Al-Qaida, in addition to other smaller feeder terrorist groups that are scattered in several parts of the globe. This is a public policy problem that has troubled the US government since September 11, 2001, when Al-Qaida first struck the US territory, killing thousands of people and injuring many others. The policy therefore clearly describes the policy problem that it seeks to address and proceeds to state the guideline for the solution to the problem (Dye, 2008).

After describing the problem, a public policy should proceed to state the manner in which the government will solve the problem (Birkland, 2016). The US Counter-terrorism Strategy of 2018 provides a list of six objectives. These objectives are accompanied by priority actions that the government will take to meet the objectives of the policy. The priority actions, though repetitive of policies by previous administrations, are specific and outline what the government will do to implement the objectives of the policy. For instance, one of the key objectives of the strategy is that the government of

the US will pursue terrorists to their source. This objective is accompanied by priority actions like targeting key terrorists and terrorist actions using both military and non-military capabilities, enhancing reach into denied areas overseas using innovative means, and effectively using law of armed conflict detention as a counter-terrorism tool (Dunn, 2014).

The strategy also emphatically acknowledges that the US border is porous and therefore vulnerable to infiltration by terrorists (Whitehouse.gov, 2018). For this reason, the government commits to make sure that all borders and ports of entry are secure from terrorist threats. Two of the most important priority actions in this objective are to secure the US borders from terrorist threats and to enhance detection and disruption of terrorist travel. For this reason, the US counterterrorism strategy adheres to the definition, nature, and contents of a public policy document.

Conclusion

This paper examined the US counterterrorism public policy issue and counterterrorism strategies since the September 11, 2001, attack on US soil by Al-Qaida terrorists. It is the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on US soil that caused the US government to start thinking about how to fight terrorism. The US counter-terrorism policy since 2001 has been based on the government in power because each new president of the United States has promulgated a new counterterrorism strategy. This paper concludes that the US Counterterrorism of 2018 adheres to the definition, nature, and components of a public policy document, although it has been criticised as a replica of the preceding strategies of 2003, 2006, and 2011.

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3

THE RISE OF POPULIST POLITICS IN THE UK

George Perfect

Abstract

This paper will discuss the rise of populist politics in the UK. In doing so, it will examine the failure of centrist politics to respond to changing economic, political and social conditions. Hence, this has opened the opportunity for populist politics from both right and left to occupy centre stage in the UK.

Introduction

The rise in populist movements across the Western world has been well-documented in recent years. The pro-Brexit movement saw the United Kingdom (UK) Independence Party win the 2014 European Parliament election and culminated in the UK's vote to Leave the EU in 2016. The failures of Gordon Brown and Ed Miliband to beat the Conservatives following the financial crash also saw the rise of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party in the UK. Both events demonstrate how UK politics has been captivated by opposing political ideas and has led to the increasing polarisation seen in the last decade. However, this rise can be traced back to the beginnings of Tony Blair's premiership in 1997 and the start of the New Labour project; followed on by One-Nation Conservatism in the wake of the 2010 election of the coalition government. This paper will explore the rise of two contrasting political movements, and how the failures of centrists in the period 2010 to 2016 to fully grasp the challenges presented led to the exponential rise of hard-right and hard-left politics.

This is a relatively untapped area within the literature, specifically around the nature in which the extremes responded to the challenges faced, as well as a lack of consideration of the impact of hard-left factions in the Labour Party during this period, with a large amount of the literary and media focus placed on Brexit. There is also a large amount of misinformation in relation to the emergence of right- and left- wing politics, including the myths surrounding Brexit, with many claiming the right is fuelled by white working-class men and the left is fuelled by students (Eatwell & Goodwin,

2018, p.11). This paper will break down these myths and explore how the broad appeal of these groups can be traced to the failures of centrism.

Centrists Politics: New Labour from Blair to Brown

The New Labour movement of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, as well as the One-Nation Conservative movement of David Cameron and George Osborne, defined the first decade and a half of the twenty first century. Under their respective terms of office, they undertook the further integration of the UK within the EU, large increases in immigration (and the subsequent hostile environment policy), the emergence of the war on terror, the subsequent rise of terrorism across the West and the Global Financial Crisis of 2008. These events have come to define British politics in recent years and the response from these leaders in addressing these challenges was not only suboptimal but led to the mass disillusionment among many British voters.

The election of Tony Blair in May 1997 saw a new look Labour Party, following eighteen years of Conservative Government. The question of Europe, and specifically immigration, was a defining part of the early years of Blair's premiership. Blair introduced the 'Managed Migration Policy', which transformed the UK's immigration landscape, and from 1997 to 2010, saw net immigration to the UK quadruple, with a rise in UK population of 2.2 M (Consterdine, 2017, p.v). The impact of immigration is well understood by scholars to be one of the most important considerations when looking at a society. Consterdine argues that to understand any country and its politics, you must first look at its immigration system. This dramatic change to immigration should not be underestimated and is one of the greatest failures of the New Labour project. Immigration to the UK is a positive thing, enriches the cultural landscape, brings new skills and talents, and develops the workforce; however, if not managed carefully (and matched with positive messaging, as opposed to a communications vacuum), can cause resentment from those in deprived communities. Within the UK, immigration primarily increased following the accession of eight countries to the EU in 2004, when immigration spiked, particularly in lower skilled workers (Consterdine, 2017, p.vii). Judis, (2016, p.136) argues the impact of lower skilled immigration is to drive down earnings for those in the lowest paid jobs, whereas for those in medium and higher paid jobs have benefitted from higher respective income.

Critics suggest there was no strategy from Blair at the time, and without properly managing this immigration equally across the UK it led to deprived areas, particularly in the North, facing the brunt of this new

income challenge (Consterdine, 2017, p.6). There was also far too much focus on the benefits that this immigration brought to London and the Southeast, which saw high skilled immigration benefitting the financial centre of London and the strong economic growth of the surrounding counties, so continuing the North-South divide (Mattinson, 2020).

Immigration also exacerbated a cultural divide within the UK. Goodwin and Eatwell (2018, pp. 133-137) explore the way in which the changes sparked by immigration led to massive integration problems within communities. They argue that during this period there were growing concerns around the size of immigration, which was not formed from racism but came from the anxiety around the future and a feeling of a change of values and culture. This required management and leadership from the government, however, Blair continued embracing globalism and refused to acknowledge the challenges in deprived towns and cities (Watt & Wintour, 2015). There is strong evidence that this lack of understanding in government drove a wedge between politicians and the people (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018, p.124).

The second key failing of the Blair and Brown years was the ever-increasing income inequality seen within the UK, particularly around high earnings at the top end of the income scale. Research carried out by the Resolution Foundation demonstrates that even though income rose from 1997 until 2002, it levelled off and real incomes have never recovered since (Brewer, et al., 2020, 19). This is attributed to rising housing costs, high inflation, and mounting wealth held by the middle classes. Menon and Evans (2017, p.37) particularly explore the way in which the Blair and Brown years led to those in the working-class having a general pessimism about the future and concern that they will never be able to move up the class ladder.

Those at the top meanwhile were continuing to see their wealth balloon (which can be argued to have started under Thatcher) and, without safeguards in place, this led to a breakdown of trust between people and government. Working-class Britons had no increase in wages during the New Labour period which served to lay the foundations for the extreme anger and dissatisfaction that was to come (Judis, 2016, p.136). These challenges around earnings became a major problem for centrists, as this is the main way through which living standards are affected. 22% of workers faced a reduction in wages, hitting hardest families in deprived communities, and the government failed to grasp this and did not stand up to the test (NatCen Social Research, 2012, p.ix).

These two problems were then compounded by the financial crash in 2008, which suddenly saw these issues catapulted into the spotlight, under

Gordon Brown's Premiership. September 2008 brought turbulence with the government having to take some of the most challenging decisions in history, from bailing out national banks, increasing unemployment and large-scale credit issues, responded to by VAT cuts and further spending increases (Ashbee, 2011, pp.79-82). These economic challenges saw a further disconnect between politicians and the public, with widespread concern and conspiracy against the media and political institutions (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018, pp.200-201). The global system was extremely susceptible to collapse and there was extraordinarily little that the UK Government could do about it. This storm caused strong sentiments opposed to globalisation, driving up anger and dissatisfaction with the EU (Davies, 2020).

One Nation Conservatism - Cameron and Osborne

Following the 2010 election, David Cameron's Conservatives were the party with the largest share of the vote, so were able to form a coalition government with Nick Clegg's Liberal Democrats. Cameron had run the campaign based on 'one nation conservatism', focusing on recovery from the financial crash and a centrist agenda for the country (Kavanagh & Cowley, 2010). The manifesto proposed by Cameron during the 2010 election was remarkably similar in outlook to Blair's initial charge, focusing on 'progressive-ends, conservative-means', and referencing language around the 'politics of support', but this changed remarkably when it came to the reality of the financial challenges faced (Seawright, 2010, p.167). Culturally, Cameron's manifesto also took a similar outlook to that of Blair, strengthening the individual and the family; indeed, Cameron is famous for declaring himself the 'natural successor' to Blair (Mason, 2012). However, on the financial side, his party pushed towards reducing spending and a much smaller government (Seawright, 2010, p.169). The government's initial challenge was to spearhead the response to the financial crisis, and work out a way of moving forward, with sky-high debt and a mounting unemployment problem.

George Osborne, as the all-powerful Chancellor of the Exchequer, first addressed The House of Commons in the June budget of 2010 and referenced how he would eliminate the budget deficit and get public spending back down by 2016. However, what came next was set to change Britain forever (Wren-Lewis, 2018, p.1). The austerity programmes introduced reduced spending by over £30 billion in real terms from 2010 to 2019 and sparked a dramatic shift in the makeup of the UK (O'Hara, 2014, p.4). Deprived working-class areas suddenly faced service cutbacks, poor investment in infrastructure, a reduction in living standards and families without even the essentials, raising big questions about the centrist

project (O'Hara, 2014, p.5). The vital work of youth services, library facilities, and community projects was also lost as part of local government cuts, which harmed the whole centrist idea of the 'politics of support' (Gardner, 2020, p.301).

These austerity programmes not only damaged local services and changed the role of government, but also pushed once again a message of individualism. The policies of austerity were compounded by a period of even greater emphasis on standing up for yourself and not being reliant on others. These policies detached many people from their local communities. Hertz (2020, pp.33-35) makes the point that those who have a weaker relationship with their government, have a weaker relationship with their community and therefore, tend to feel lonelier and more isolated.

The austerity programme also caused further problems in relation to immigration and the impact of income inequality, challenges that had been created under the New Labour government. This period saw NHS waiting times increase, as did crime rates, school exclusions and other key metrics (O'Hara, 2014). The existing worries that the public had around immigration were suddenly fuelled by worsening services, however, this arose from a lack of investment in support services and other community programmes that previously reduced the burden, as opposed to the issues of immigration itself. There is now an increasing conversation around the way in which public services should be valued, and how cohesion within communities is only possible with support from strong public services that deliver for all (Latham & Prowle, 2011, p.43).

The problems of austerity were further compounded by challenges caused by the issue of quantitative easing and lack of housing. Currently experts believe that the UK should be building approximately 250,000 houses a year to meet demand, however, house building in the UK is at a record low whilst house prices continue to increase year on year (Halligan, 2019, p.2). A chronic housing shortage and ever-increasing number of renters creates a massive age divide between older votes and younger votes, whilst the rises in the cost of renting and the cost of living have also caused substantial difficulties for many working-class families. The Conservative Manifesto of 2010 made a commitment to 'create a property-owning democracy where everyone has the chance to own their own home', reinforcing Cameron's one nation vision (The Conservative and Unionist Party, 2010, pp.74-75). Yet the policies enacted including introducing the Help to Buy scheme increased the powers of large housing developers, pushed up house prices further and caused a continuation of the rent divide, with the number of renters doubling to nine million working-aged adults in most recent data (Halligan, 2019, pp.2-3). The fact that rents across the UK

continue to rise, alongside house prices, means that younger generations are locked out of owning their own homes, driven by the fact that their income is earmarked for rent (Halligan, 2019, p.5). This issue continues to worsen, has caused a marked change in the UK landscape, and raises several problems for the future including the increasing polarisation of younger people driven to the politics of the extreme left.

The way in which centrists failed to grasp the challenges of the day and the realities of these decisions, pursuing policies that did not resonate with ordinary people, was to cause major problems for the centrist cause. Blair and Brown did not fully grasp the challenges caused by immigration and a change in the cultural makeup of the UK. In a similar way Cameron and Osborne did not carefully consider the impact of their austerity policies on the country at large. Both the right and left made this a key critique of their respective campaigns in the years ahead.

Farage and Corbyn

The failings of Centrists came just at the point when extremes were beginning to grow in popularity within society. The UK Independence Party was a little-known political movement, established in 1993 as the Anti-Federalist League, with Nigel Farage at the head. For over twenty-five years, Farage was seen an irrelevant and little-known politician, however, by 2014 he was leading a party that would win a national election, the first time a party other than the Conservatives or Labour had won an election since 1906 (Goodwin & Milazzo, 2016, p.3). Farage successfully tapped into the feelings of the British public, attacking their anxieties around immigration and a loss of common culture, as well as addressing traditional Labour voters that felt left behind and ignored by 'elites'.

This period also saw a major shift in the Labour Party. Following two election defeats, Labour decided that time was up for Ed Miliband. Corbyn shifted the Labour Party to its most hard-left position in history, pitching a radical agenda that would have seen a total shakeup of the UK (Pogrund & Maguire, 2020). Both movements were based on a radical foundation, attacking the centrist politicians of the years prior, and captivating public opinion at the time.

Brexit

The Brexit movement was a relatively small faction in the early part of the 21st century. The public were still jubilant at the election of Blair and the global project was beginning to settle in. However, the years following the 2010 election saw Farage building a movement, primarily of disillusioned

and unhappy Conservatives, but also tapping into those in the Labour Party that had been failed by Blair and the New Labour project.

Nigel Farage and UKIP are one of the most interesting political movements in history. The movement was able to galvanise enough support to not only build a party that could win an election but create a machine that would hold thousands of public events and reach out to new voters that had not been addressed previously (Goodwin & Milazzo, 2016, p.6). Farage focused the efforts from 2010 onwards on attacking the grassroots, fighting against what he called the 'liberal elites', and getting into the heart of communities. Farage deliberately ensured that his party held events in local pubs, working-men's clubs, town centres and other areas that many mainstream politicians did not want to visit (Winlow & Hall, 2016, p.109). Goodwin & Milazzo, (2016, p.7) describe how his visits would often play new political attack lines, enabling him to get a strong sense of what people were thinking.

Farage realised that the EU project was on the minds of many working-class voters who had felt significant loss and were not enthused by the centrist project (Evans, 2014, pp.24-28). This led him to campaign in the 2014 EU election against immigration, strengthening the NHS, reducing taxes, and building homes (The UK Independence Party, 2014). The particular focus on immigration and its impacts really resonated with working-class towns, and the party performed very strongly in working-class Labour areas in the North and Wales, as well as traditional Conservative towns in Kent and Essex (Clarkson, 2014, p.13).

The party also took a populist tone and focused on public services and housing, which were both concerns that had continued to grow under the Blair and Brown Governments (Judis, 2016, pp.138-139). The success at the 2014 EU election and their subsequent wins in Parliamentary by-elections in Clacton and Rochester bolstered UKIP's position and caused major anxiety for Cameron. Many scholars have likened the success of UKIP in 2014 to the rise of Donald Trump's movement in the Republican Party, in addressing the challenges and engaging with issues that had been ignored (Goodhart, 2017, pp.1-2).

Following these successes UKIP moved onto the 2015 General Election, with the same momentum and main line of argument. The Party continued to attack the 'liberal-elite' and pushed the anti-immigration message. The result from the election saw their vote share increase to 12.4% and the first MP elected at an election was Douglas Carswell (Hawkins, et al., 2015, pp.36-37). The pressure this placed on Cameron

was immense, forcing him to renegotiate the UK membership of the EU and declare a referendum under the Referendum Act (Cameron, 2016).

The referendum campaign then began, with Vote Leave and Leave.EU the main campaign groups. The campaign was now backed by then Mayor of London Boris Johnson, and Cabinet Minister Michael Gove who backed Vote Leave, with Farage focusing on Leave.EU. The two campaigns struck messages which were remarkably similar, however Vote Leave focused its arguments on the economic benefits of bringing more money to the NHS, and ending the powers of Brussels, whilst Leave.EU focused heavily on immigration and was a more UKIP-focused campaign (Goodhart, 2017, pp.42). The success of the campaign is broadly attributed to the fact that the Leave side was able to tackle the main issues and understood them much more clearly than those on the left. The arguments around the NHS and moving funding earmarked to the EU towards healthcare was exceptionally popular amongst the population, principally addressing the public's dissatisfaction with poor public services, in itself a reaction to the austerity policies of the Conservative's one-nation movement. Clarke et al (2017, p.2) also make the point that in the days before the referendum, 87% of 600 leading academics stated that they had certainty Remain would win. This failure to understand the frustration of the electorate demonstrates the gulf in understanding of the Remain campaign and the centrist project.

Whilst the Leave campaign were hitting home to voters with arguments against immigration, income inequality and poor public services, the Remain campaign ran arguments that were not answering the public's concerns, concentrating on dangers of ending peace in Northern Ireland, immediate recessions, and how the UK would become irrelevant (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018, p.11). These arguments were characterised by the Leave side as 'project-fear' and did not properly address the needs of those who had faced years of hardship and been adversely impacted by centrist policies. The campaigning from Blair and Brown was extremely poor and did not speak of the opportunities of remaining within the EU or addressing any of the claims that the Leave camp were making. The Brexit campaign utilised the failures of centrists and an anti-establishment message to build support, attacking the very foundations that were built by Blair, and leading to Brexit.

The Hard-Left – the rise of Corbynism

Many argue that Corbynism and the rise of the hard-left faction within the Labour Party equally demonstrated rejection of Centrism. Following the failures at the 2010 and 2015 General Elections, the Labour Party majorly

shifted position and looked to Jeremy Corbyn as their new leader. The leadership election was a failure for the centrist Labour movement with the Blair-backed candidate only gaining 5% of the vote (Wainwright, 2018, p.34). The establishment of this hard-left faction dominated the Labour Party and much of the national debate.

It was clear that Labour was struggling to compete with the Conservatives, with their vote share going down and the Conservatives increasing in popularity after five years in coalition (Hawkins, et al., 2015). Wainwright (2018, p.35), a socialist journalist, states that factions within the Labour Party were exceptionally angry at the New Labour project, that they believed had endorsed a continuation of Thatcherism and embraced neoliberal policies that were very distant from the Labour Party's traditional beliefs. The Corbyn project managed to build momentum during the leadership election, tapping into ideas such as the renationalisation of industry and spoke of embracing far-left policies, and challenging the 'billionaire culture' (Seymour, 2017, p.10). This message proved to be extremely popular amongst the Labour union base, young members and members that were dissatisfied with the New Labour project (Wainwright, 2018, p.34). These were groups that did not back the Brexit movement but had similarly been ostracised from mainstream centrists. In a similar way to UKIP and Farage, Corbyn travelled around the UK meeting with activists and members and utilised a strong social media presence to build a following and attack his opponents. The use of social media allowed Corbyn to strongly engage with a younger audience in a much more unconventional way (Seymour, 2017, p.15). The catchphrase 'For the many, not the few' became the Corbyn phrase from the leadership election and stuck with him throughout his entire time leading the Labour Party. Following his election, he immediately began to make changes to Labour policy, and changed the rank and file of the party to be much more closely aligned with his aims and objectives (Pogrund & Maguire, 2020).

With Theresa May serving as Prime Minister following the referendum in 2016, Corbyn felt he had a unique opportunity to attack another centrist within UK politics (Pogrund & Maguire, 2020). Ahead of the 2017 General Election, the Labour Party really changed direction from the 2015 Manifesto, and embraced scrapping tuition fees, nationalising industry, introducing higher taxes, increasing welfare entitlements amongst other radical policies (The Labour Party, 2017). The particular emphasis from Corbyn at this point was to move away from the policies of Blair, with him speaking as if the Labour Party had been out of office for a substantial period. The particular focus on income inequality was a real rejection of the centrist project. Blair, as a Labour Prime Minister, had continued to embrace elements of private sector involvement, including through private

NHS partnerships and PFI schemes (Shaw, 2003, p.277). These schemes were seen to have reduced the strength of public services and the quality of delivery, something that ideologically Corbyn stood against. This appealed to Trade Union members, who consistently stood against the privatisation of industry and were opposed to involvement of the private sector in government contracts (Faucher-King & Galés, 2010, pp.51-52).

Corbyn pledged to implement a new taxation system, transforming the taxation policy of centrists. This would have seen a 45% increase for higher rate taxpayers, an increase in capital gains tax of over 28%, and corporation tax going up to 26% (Todd, 2019). These measures attempted to tackle the New Labour view, championed by Brown whilst serving as Chancellor, of keeping the tax burden low and ensuring the competitiveness of the UK in the wider world (Faucher-King & Galés, 2010, p.19). The fact that the power of the unions continued to decline during the years in which New Labour held power, irreparably damaged the feeling amongst trade union members, which led to the surge in popularity for more socialist policies (Faucher-King & Galés, 2010, p.89) and caused major divisions within some factions of the Labour Party.

There was also a move by Corbyn to trash the austerity policies of Cameron and Osborne, the other centrist movement. Labour's 2017 manifesto specifically addressed what it called 'underlying-pressures' across the whole of the UK due to austerity and made it clear that the Party blamed austerity as opposed to believing deprived areas were struggling due to immigration (The Labour Party, 2017, p.29). The use of austerity as a message strongly resonated with millennials and Generation Z voters emphasising the hard challenges that these groups had faced (Seymour, 2017, p.257). By 2018 only one fifth of the UK electorate backed austerity, amidst overwhelming concern about the future of public services (Deloitte, 2018, p.16). This concern was successful in galvanising support for the far-left extreme within UK politics and is demonstrative of the rejection of centrism from those to the left of the political aisle. Whilst the far-left did not achieve its goals of leading the country, it successfully transformed the UK's official opposition party and its place within UK politics.

The Brexit process is now completed, Jeremy Corbyn no longer holds a position of leadership, and the future is looking increasingly more united, with a return to politics as usual and a move away from divisive extreme candidates and messages.

The Future

The 2019 General Election saw a continuation from previous elections. Boris Johnson and the Conservatives used the catchphrase 'Get Brexit Done', whilst Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party stood on 'It's time for Real Change'. The election was fought mainly on issues relating to the Brexit vote and ended with the Conservatives taking a majority of eighty seats and being the main political force (Elliott, 2020, pp.8-9). The fact that Labour and the Corbyn movement had been damaged so significantly demonstrated a rejection of the hard-left politics of Corbynism, and Nigel Farage's Brexit Party's failure to contest many seats saw them looking weak (House of Commons, 2019). The main outcome from this election was that the Brexit debate could finally end, with the UK leaving the European Union and returning to status quo politics. However, as quickly as Brexit came, very quickly the Coronavirus pandemic took a hold on the political landscape, and the country at large. This has dramatically shifted the political debate and will now come to dominate the UK conversation over the coming years. There has also been a key change at the heart of the Labour Party, with Sir Kier Starmer, moving it back towards the centre.

The main challenges that were faced by centrists in the years following the financial crash of 2008 were centred around a ballooning debt situation, unemployment, and an income inequality crisis (Ashbee, 2011). These same problems are now set to be a fixture of UK politics once again, due to the 9.9% fall in UK GDP at the end of 2020 (Office for National Statistics, 2021). Whilst the Government's coronavirus job retention scheme (furlough), initially has masked the pain to be felt in unemployment, there is bound to be widespread problems moving forward. The problem of the rising UK's national debt, largely from the coronavirus response, has frightening parallels to 2008. This challenge cannot be responded to in the same way as in 2008, as the response will not have the political space to be tolerated (Ipsos MORI, 2020, p.1).

The other major problem that the government now faces is the similar situation of isolationism and individualism. There is a particular problem in how to ensure that left-behind communities do not continue to feel left out of decision-making. The catchphrase of 'Build Back Better' seems to refer to this, however, the UK government must invest to ensure that all areas are included as part of the response and not again leave behind deprived areas. Without this, there is a risk that the same problems will come to a head once again, with a further breakdown in trust between politicians and their electorates.

Within the current context, there are several methods through which centrists can avoid the mistakes made by their predecessors and attempt to

build sustainable political movements for the future. One way in which centrists can avoid repeating their failures, is to ensure that they listen much more widely to the key issues that face their electorates. Eatwell and Goodwin (2018, p.280), make the point that politicians must ensure they are reflecting the populations they serve, and that the London-centric view does not remain. The government clearly need to embrace some of the tactics employed by both Brexiteers and Corbynites, getting out and engaging with people on the ground and ensuring that they are addressing people in a relatable and direct manner.

Centrists need to properly utilise social media to connect with their electorate and interact much more closely with the public. Hart (2020, p.198) makes the point that populists boost their message through social media during election campaigns, but also utilise this whilst in office. Writing in in a US context, Hart shows that Donald Trump utilised this medium to connect with voters, with 75% of US citizens saying they had picked up his Tweets or heard his social media messages. The ability to connect through social media is immensely powerful, and a method that populists use around the world. This is not just a method utilised by the right, with left-wing politicians also applying social media-based campaigns to drive support. The Labour movement under Jeremy Corbyn was able to reach out and engage with a broad array of millennials and specifically Generation Z voters. This was evident in both the Referendum and the 2017 General Election, with Corbyn utilising the platform to get impressions on messages running into the millions (Sloam & Henn, 2018, p.27). By utilising social media more effectively, centrists can re-engage with voters and use this to form a key foundation of the national debate.

Secondly, centrists must ensure that they guarantee diversity of opinion within their political parties. Many have made the point that the rise of the harder-right faction within British politics, and the Brexit vote, was the result of 'poor internal party management' by David Cameron. This problem was a major issue for not only the Conservative Party, but also the Labour Party with the rise of the hard-left faction. Both parties did not allow sufficient diversity of opinion and the result led to a rebellion amongst both the senior officials within the party and within the membership. Centrists should embrace the opinions of those within their parties and allow a broad range of opinions at the table. By enabling this they would ensure that these opinions were properly debated and aired, avoiding breakaway factions and offshoots from the party to take form. Webb, Bale, and Poletti (2017, p.439) have suggested that UKIP is strong evidence of this, with 5% of Tory members voting for the Party at some point during their peak period. By allowing political parties to properly debate and share ideas, the leadership will likely have a greater grasp of the

issues of the day and seek to tackle them. This is a criticism that is seen frequently of centrists and this disconnect must be addressed if they are to avoid the emergence of extremes.

Finally, centrists must put more power in the hands of local people, to better address the challenges that they face. Wills (2016, p.197) makes the case for moving even more power from Whitehall outwards, claiming that people on the ground are best placed to make the right decisions when it comes to the future. The current devolution settlement favours the smaller nations of the United Kingdom; Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, whilst ignoring England (Wills, 2016, p.200). Problems such as growing income inequality and the direct implications of austerity drove people to revolt against the traditions of the democratic system. The Commission for the Future of Localism in 2018 explored the feelings of communities in recent years (Locality, 2018, pp.5-10) and found that 80% of people feel they have little or no control over the decisions that impact their lives, and that a lack of control of funding and resources was one of the biggest issues facing deprived communities since the financial crash in 2008. A recent report from the Institute for Government made a similar finding when reviewing the last ten years and the devolution settlement, finding that one of the greatest problems of the devolution process has been that England has been ignored throughout (Cheung, et al., 2019, p.8). The devolution settlement currently means that devolved nations have great power over their relatively small populations. By contrast, local authorities in most of England do not have any authority to make large changes and are mainly limited to council tax, driving up English nationalism. By allowing decisions to be much more localised and fairer across the board, centrists will ensure that the decisions are taken closer to those with whom they have the biggest impact.

Conclusion

Throughout this essay has been the central question as to how centrist politics failed to address the challenges of the early 21st century and how the populist revolution witnessed in the years that follow was a manifestation of this. The evidence demonstrates this shift, whether it be through the fact that populists had the greatest appeal to the public, or through the fact that they managed to tackle the challenges that were on the minds of the average voter.

The research has covered a large amount of work that has been undertaken, however, there are still a lot of unanswered questions in this area. Further research should be conducted into the specific public attitudes over the past twenty years, and there are much broader questions still to be answered

about the future in years to come, following the pandemic. There will be a variety of opportunities to understand public attitudes better once the pandemic is over, now that the Brexit debate is complete, informing both scholars and politicians further on the views of the public moving forward.

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4

THE GENERAL'S KINGDOM – HYBRID-DEMOCRACY AND THE INEVITABILITY OF AUTHORITARIANISM IN THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND SINCE 2014

Jamie Greenfield

Abstract

The Kingdom of Thailand as one of the most developed nations in South-East Asia lacks prosperity within political life. Ninety years have passed since the abolition of absolute monarchy in a push towards democracy. However, authoritarian regimes have dominated this space with military juntas ousting governments. This paper will analyse the inevitability of authoritarian regimes in Thailand, focusing on the 2014 coup d'état and the NCPO dictatorship, how their influence has been embedded in Thai politics and used authoritarianism to enact hybrid-democracy. Analysis of NCPO statements and policy will be used to show the measures taken in order to maintain power, restricting, and limiting any progress towards liberal democracy. I will also be arguing that hybrid-democracy and authoritarianism are causes for the rise in anti-royalism in the country, a discussion which is culturally unacceptable, with the anti-royal attitudes stemming from 2006 and the ousting of Thaksin Shinawatra.

Introduction

Thailand's social and economic development has made them a pioneer for countries within developing South-East Asian and African nations. However, with this success, there is a major flaw: political stability. The number of coup d'états and constitutional changes makes the kingdom prone to military regimes and forms of authoritarianism. Since the 1932 abolition of absolute monarchy, there have been twelve successful coup d'états and twenty constitutions, with 2014 as the last coup and 2017 as the most recent constitution. The National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) took power promising to restore democracy and make the country more peaceful but neither of those objectives were achieved, causing more harm than good. Three concepts of authoritarianism - *constitutional*, *junta*, and *liberal* (with *hybrid-democracy*

using all means to make any institutional change impossible) have allowed Thailand to remain authoritarian and for years to come. This article will analyse the rise and grip on power by the NCPO, the forming of the 2017 constitution, and the obsession of restoring morale to make the junta seem palatable and socially acceptable. Finally, it will explore the depth of hybrid-democracy in the country, how it has been used in recent electoral processes and how this concept has led to a spike in anti-royalism due to the frustrations of living in an authoritarian regime with daily lies pumped out by the government.

Kingdom Fit for a Junta – NCPO Rise and Grip on Power

Protests between Red and Yellow[1] shirts reached violent levels in 2014, as the use military grade weapons and assassinations of key political figures occurred across the Kingdom. The final birthday speech by HM Bhumibol Adulyadej urged the Thai people to remember the importance of solidarity, acting in the interest of the nation and not just oneself. This message had been used before, during Black May 1992 telling protest leaders they do not own the country and stating that victory on a pile of rubble leaves no winners. Speaking in the way the King has done shows the volatile state the country had fallen back into, urging unity during a period his health declined to a point where he was not seen in public after his birthday event. Less than a year after the speech, in May 2014, military personnel took control on the streets of Bangkok, ousting the elected Prime Minister, Yingluck Shinawatra on corruption allegations.[2] They drafted a bill to bring back her brother, Thaksin Shinawatra and any charges he was facing in Thailand were cleared. Thailand's twelfth coup d'état was led by retired General, Prayut Chan-o-Cha spearheading a military coalition named the National Council for Peace and Order, (NCPO), enabling martial law and scrapping the 2007 constitution. This section will analyse the six years of NCPO rule and how their alterations to Thai political structures have allowed them to remain in power.

The NCPO's authority over Thailand came through martial law and was cemented by a crackdown on two articles of the Penal Code. Article 112 which refers to lèse-majesté, prohibited defamation towards any member/institutions of the Bureau of the Royal Household. Article 116,

[1] Red Shirts were loyal supporters of Thaksin Shinawatra and his subsequent political parties. While Yellow shirts comprised of royalists from the middle classes and Southern Thailand. Conflict between the two sides had begun following the 2006 coup d'état and the exile of Thaksin.

[2] PM Yingluck Shinawatra was responsible for a rice subsidy scheme whereby millions of farmers were unpaid, and she was indicted by the National Anti-Corruption Commission in 2014. Despite being the chairperson, Yingluck had never attended a meeting of the National Rice Policy Committee.

known as the sedition law, aimed to protect the interests of national security; however, the ambiguity of the law made it easier for authoritarian leaders to abuse the Penal Code. The letter of the law has always been open to interpretation, but this is especially true when it comes to Thailand. Within Article 116, raising civil unrest and disaffection amongst people is considered as sedition and given the dissatisfaction following the re-emergence of dictatorships, Article 116 cases rapidly increased. During the first four years of NCPO rule over 600 people were arrested for violations of laws concerning national security (Haberkorn, 2018, p.936), a sharp rise from less than ten cases between 2007 and 2014. This rise in cases highlights the authoritarian grip which the NCPO are looking to maintain over the population, turning any criticism of government into a crime. Individuals who hold online influence will be constantly watched with every social media post used against the uploader, targeting selected people in order to '[kill] the chicken to scare the monkey' (Haberkorn, 2018, p.936). Academics, journalists, politicians, and others who were critical of the junta have been sent to 'attitude adjustment' sessions aimed at silencing opposition through criminal charges, censorship of online content and constant harassment from the military. Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-Cha was determined that nobody could challenge his leadership: if those who try do not learn, 'they will be detained again and again…. I might tape their mouths shut, too' (Human Rights Watch, 2019, p.1). The NCPO justify this rise in Article 116 cases as a means to protect national security. However, it has always been in the name of protecting the junta, fuelling an iron grip on society through coercion and intimidation of opposition voices. They shame those who attempt to speak out and bully them into self-exile. To maintain legitimacy, it must appear that the nation wants dictatorship and a totalitarian regime.

Restoring Morale and Happiness

One of the aims of the junta was to boost morale in the kingdom, creating a narrative that living under the military is better than previous elected governments. The Royal Thai Army promoted *happiness* events, with music, food, and even a petting zoo (Hodal, 2014), to encourage Thai people to forget about the junta and the 300 people that had been detained less than one month since the coup. The junta already controlled all terrestrial TV channels and radio and continued to broadcast pro-royalist messages and air military-funded shows. Two shows produced by the government were *Thailand Moves Forward*[3] and *Returning Happiness to the Thai People* hosted by PM Prayut Chan-o-Cha. The junta used

[3]A show hosted by cabinet members to update the progress and work of the NCPO Government.

indoctrinating ideology to shape public opinion and the four categories analysed by Sumintra Maklai (2021, p.417) shows how Thailand was presented as a country at war, needing strong noble soldiers to calm the situation and restore peace and joy to the kingdom. Eight songs were released over the span of the NCPO regime with seven written by Prayut Chan-o-Cha. Maklai's four main sections are:

- War & Difficulty
- Supporting the Government
- Those opposing the Government
- References to democracy

Maklai argues that in these state propaganda messages, the 'war' is a reference to the divide the Red and Yellow shirts were creating. Blame was predominantly placed on Red shirt supporters due to their alleged reluctance of allegiance to the King (Anonymous, 2018) and their left-leaning politics. During this time, the junta claimed Thailand was unsafe, needing people to support and uphold the values of the NCPO. Therefore, Thai people must rely on their government, *holding their hands* and *cooperating* through these tough times. The third category, opposing the government, was most prominent in the track *Fight for the Country* released in April 2018, which is important given political parties were readying for a general election in 2019. People who did not support the government are described as 'lost' and 'villains', putting pressure on political parties to avoid running an anti-junta agenda and coercing voters to stick with the military to avoid the country falling back into war and difficulty. This creates a narrative that living under a junta is peaceful and while authoritarianism may be inevitable, peace and stability is maintained. Finally, looking towards democracy within the NCPO ideology, *A New Day* was released just twenty days before the election, using state media to continue propaganda to persuade voters to re-elect the military leadership. This article highlights the level of influence and power the regime holds in Thailand, controlling all terrestrial television, especially given Channel 5 and 7 are owned by the Royal Thai Army. They use this to create a perspective that the Kingdom is under attack while the junta are considered the 'good people'. Using the term 'good people' is highly controversial in Thailand and will be discussed when looking at the 2019's hybrid-democracy.

Re-emerging Constitutional Authoritarianism

General Chan-o-Cha's coup was to rectify the failings of the 2007 constitution and ultimately to prevent anybody associated with Thaksin

Shinawatra ever coming close to the office of Prime Minster. In order to limit Thaksin's party reaching government, constitutional authoritarianism had to be instated in the kingdom. Publicly, the junta had taken over the government to restore social order within the nation. There had been public anger towards Yingluck over an amnesty law which would pardon Thaksin Shinawatra as well as the decision made by the National Counter-Corruption Committee which ruled a government rice subsidy scheme had become susceptible to corruption (Hodal, 2014). With the Yingluck administration dissolved, the NCPO began working on drafting a new constitution to cement their influence. Initially failing to pass their first draft, the military-backed National Reform Council voted 135 to 105 with seven abstentions (BBC, 2015). The military-appointed council found the draft to be too progressive: simply eroding political party influence and integrating military loyalists within independent institutions was not enough. Further changes would lead to greater constitutional authoritarianism, with the political rules changed to favour certain parties over an equal democratic system. Frankenberg (2020) analyses various types of authoritarianism and draws on how constitutional authoritarianism becomes a government tool to hold onto power.

The importance of restricted freedoms has become a major factor within Thailand's constitution, acting as tool to refrain 'from making any concessions towards democracy … designed as a purely organisational statue of absolutist rule' (Frankenberg, 2020, p.257). The 2016 draft presented by the NCPO ensured suppression of political and social freedoms, including a military-appointed Senate and the Prime Minister not having to be an elected MP amongst other clauses which benefit the military over opposition political parties. What proved to be a major shock in the new constitution was a direct clause change by the newly coronated King Maha Vajiralongkorn, who ascended to the throne in 2016. This constitution was presented in 2016 and had been put to the Thai people in a referendum, which began the process and political structures of a hybrid-democracy in the Kingdom.

"I am not a dictator"[4] Prayut's Broken Promise

Changes to the constitution also brought forward a new electoral system, initially promising to restore Thailand back 'to democracy by the end of 2015' (Prasirtsuk, 2015, p.203) in order to provide justification for the coup d'état. As previously mentioned, this promise was broken numerous times given the failings to impose constitutional authoritarian upon the nation. The Mission Statement published by the Ministry of Foreign

[4] Quote by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-Cha in 2014 (The Nation, 2014)

Affairs, provides a vague description of how elections ought to run under the NCPO. Under article 2.14, 'laws regulating political parties, the candidate selection process, the electoral monitoring process' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014) were of priority to the junta. Given the proposed constitutional changes, military loyalists started to fill independent political bodies with political parties but were finding it increasingly difficult to recruit members to their parties. Independent institutions such as the Election Commission of Thailand, Constitutional Court, and National Anti-Corruption Commission became filled by junta loyalists (Pongsudhirak, 2018). Gaining influence within these institutions bought the NCPO time to host an election with victory assured for the military. The announcement by the Bureau of the Royal Household in October 2016 of HM Bhumibol Adulyadej's death brought the kingdom into a year of national mourning, essentially buying more time for the junta to delay elections as their leadership was responsible for the cremation and coronation ceremonies. Elections were planned for November 2017, with government officials sticking to their initial election roadmap; a government spokesperson pointed out, "This is not the time to discuss politics" (Reuters, 2016) dismissing any interest for elections given the state of the Royal Household. The junta continued to dismiss and disregard transparency, as elections were pushed back from 2017 to 2019 citing national security issues and arguing "returning to democracy would stir up polarised conflicts and street violence" (Kanchoochat and Kongkirati, 2018, p.292). This delay further exposes NCPO disapproval for open democratic structures, blaming citizens for resorting to violence and potentially reversing the progress which the military has made since the coup.

The Ministry of Interior in 2017 released provocative questions aimed to test attitudes towards hybrid-democracy, asking how citizens felt about NCPO interfering in elections. By asking the following questions, it legitimises the political grip Gen. Prayut Chan-o-Cha is looking for, asking whether 'we need new political parties or new politicians for the people to consider in the next election?' and 'Does the NCPO have the right to support a political party' (Prachatai, 2017). The purpose of these questions is to test how far the military can actively get involved within the political process, implying that if the NCPO were to dissolve, a political party backed by them would hold the most weight in making up a government. Questioning the need for new politicians and parties implies that the Thai people are happy to remain under military rule with a political party banner. Ensuring the happiness of the Thai people has been central to the NCPO, making sure that government can remain authoritarian if Prayut Chan-o-Cha remains in charge. Embedding the military throughout political structures of Thailand has become a major issue, especially after

the constitution and electoral system was overhauled to create a pro-Prayut government.

Resorting to the complicated *mixed-member apportionment* for future elections would involve 500 MPs, 350 constituency MPs and 150 party-list MPs. The military-loyalist filled party Palang Pracharath had aimed to take many constituency MP slots while working with other centre-right parties to vote for Prayut Chan-o-Cha to continue as Prime Minister, given that the leader of the party does not need to stand as an elected MP. Elections are an integral part of any democracy; however, the junta was imposing authoritarian means to delay and corrupt independent institutions with the sole purpose of keeping the military in political power. Claims of violence if democracy is restored too early or asking the question of a post-NCPO system shows the grip Gen. Prayut intended to maintain going forwards into the general. With elections being hosted after the constitution was signed by the King, hybrid-democracy and liberal authoritarianism go hand-in-hand. The intimidation of political leaders continues, but as elections take place, ballot box irregularities taint the future of Thai politics being a true democracy; rather it is just the façade of liberal authoritarianism.

Hybrid-Democracy – NCPO Control in a Post-Junta Environment

Military generals broadcast their message on the Television Pool of Thailand, but their promise of swift elections after the process of a rewritten constitution was broken within months. An initial failed attempt at a constitution in 2015 led to suggestions for an appointed senate and an electoral system which would guarantee a military victory. The referendum which was put to the Thai people aimed to show the junta were rewarding patience with democracy, a hybrid-democracy. The concept of hybrid-democracy is one where the rules and structures are based on free and fair elections - one person gets one vote. However, the rules opposition parties had to play by were wholly unfair, with the junta campaigning before it was legal, and confusion by the Election Commission in which results were published months after the ballot had been held. The rules were clearly going to be broken by the junta. After the referendum victory, a date for the general election was announced, with similar restrictions against the opposition introduced and major institutional incompetence from the commissions set up precisely to avoid foul play in the elections. The end of this chapter will focus on the current issues in the Kingdom, and how the introduction of hybrid-democracy has led to spikes in anti-royalism, a stark difference from anti-royalism during the Thaksin regime.

'Harmonious Referendum for Meaningful Democracy'[5] Thailand's Twentieth Constitution

Establishing a new constitution for Thailand was one of the main priorities of the NCPO, creating a *Thaksin-proof* electoral system and filling institutions with military loyalists to maintain its grip on power. The National Reform Council had voted against the first constitutional draft, leading to a possible political crisis, however, the junta quickly restructured the council forming the Constitution Drafting Committee. By 2016, the NCPO had approved the draft constitution and decided to put it to a referendum to avoid accusations of being dictatorial and thus holding true to their promise of electoral freedoms. With a date of 7th of August 2016 set for a constitutional referendum, this provided the junta with a chance to trial hybrid-democracy features. Measures such as a ban on opposition campaigning, deliberate lack of information, and a low turnout all played into the success of the junta, establishing a constitution in which the Thai people were simply unaware of the changes.

The Constitutional Drafting Committee was led by a conservative jurist, a shift from the former National Reform Council which was too progressive for the NCPO. During the drafting of the constitution, Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwan had *suggested* a number of clauses to be added. Political influence and a conflict of interest were at the heart of these changes, with an independent institution influenced by the military to create an electoral system which would keep the junta in office. Suggestions by Prawit included removing an elected Senate, opting instead for 'two hundred members installed from a selection by [the NCPO]' (Office of the Council of State, 2017, p.36). Also, under Section 158 the 'Prime Minister must be appointed' (Office of the Council of the State, 2017, p.55) through a vote in the lower and upper houses of parliament and is not required to be an elected MP. The leader of the NCPO Gen. Prayut Chan-o-Cha was looking to continue as Prime Minister and as a result would not stand as an MP. He expected to be appointed by pro-junta parties in the House of Representatives with backing from the military-appointed Senate. Thailand's twentieth constitution was set to put the kingdom back to the 1990s, removing checks and balances to power and enforcing an electoral system manufactured to continue a junta government under the guise of a democracy. Testing hybrid-democracy was used during the 2016 referendum, allowing eligible Thais to vote, while the opposition self-censored and supressed their opinion.

As mentioned above the junta aimed to boost happiness and morale in the kingdom to show the Thai people that life under the military is for the best

[5] Title of the "Act on Referendum" published by the Election Commission of Thailand.

in terms of security, growth, and royal protection. Through the control over state broadcasting, pro-constitution propaganda was being broadcast across TV and Radio. Continuing from the *Thailand Moves Forward* TV show, the NCPO had produced *Know About the Referendum* which contained information about the benefits of the constitution. Debates about the constitution was prohibited, with those campaigning ahead of the referendum or *confusing* the messaging of the constitution liable for 10 years imprisonment (Lefevre and Thepgumpanat, 2016). The neutrality of the Election Commission of Thailand came into question during the campaign when the commission published a music video titled *7th August Referendum, Unite to Secure Democracy* which portrayed 'northeastern voters as naïve and easily manipulated', forcing the EC to rewrite lyrics but also illustrating that the 'election agency … was actively promoting a yes vote by patronizing and misrepresenting those who disagreed with the draft constitution' (McCargo, 2017, p.153). Those from the North-east/Isan tend to support Thaksin and his subsequent parties, holding anti-junta views and in some extreme cases are a reason for the rise in anti-royalism post 2006 (Anonymous, 2018).

Leaflets delivered to every home in Thailand contained distorted information regarding what the proposed constitution would do to the electoral system or how the senate would be selected. All while any leaflet or campaigning for *no* would lead to harassment by the police or prosecutions under the Organic Act on Referendum for the Draft Constitution 2016. This special set of laws for the referendum aimed to test hybrid-democracy, with Section 61 outlining that any person who aims to 'induce eligible voters to refrain from voting or vote in a certain way' (Royal Thai Government, 2016, p.25) is liable for up to ten years imprisonment voting rights revoked for ten years. Any information which would persuade the electorate to vote *no* is in breach of the law and throughout the campaign, the junta made full use of this law including arresting 'two eight-year-old girls … [who] had torn down voter lists to repurpose the pretty pink paper' (McCargo, 2017, p.152).

Once polling concluded, the Election Commission announced the resounding result for *yes* with the draft constitution to be signed as the Kingdom's twentieth constitution. However, despite 62% approving the changes, there was a total turnout of 60% (Election Commission of Thailand, 2016), much lower than the government expectation of an 80% turnout. On the ballot was a supplementary question, asking if voters agree that the 'next prime minister might be a non-elected figure' (McCargo, 2017, p.153); 59% of voters agreed with this statement (Election Commission of Thailand, 2016). This clause was already written in the constitution, added to back up the junta and Prayut Chan-o-Cha that his

premiership can continue without the need to be an elected official. These changes were creating a political structure ready for the election in which the pro-junta parties could build a coalition government with Prayut continuing as Prime Minister. The government were ready to pass this on for royal assent, up until the death of HM Bhumibol Adulyadej on 16th October 2016. The kingdom went into one year of mourning with civil servants instructed to wear black and white for the year.

Initially after the death of King Bhumibol, Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn appointed former Prime Minister and Privy Council President Prem Tinsulonda as acting regent of the Kingdom. By the 1st of December 2016, Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn was proclaimed King Rama X of the Chakri Dynasty. One month after becoming King, Vajiralongkorn had personally amended the constitution, taking full control of the controversial Crown Property Bureau assets and thus able to rule from abroad, given HM Vajiralongkorn's preference to living in Bavaria, Germany. These changes were not allowed to be put forward to the Thai people who had to accept the royal institutional changes without any chance to vote on them. Any criticism towards the constitution amendments made by HM Vajiralongkorn is protected under lèse-majesté.

This survey shows Thailand's new constitution was mired with controversy from the offset, with campaigning illegal, low turnout, and personal intervention by a newly coronated king all part of the workings of hybrid-democracy, with similar methods used in the general election in order to cement military power in government and supress opposition opinions.

2019 General Election – honesty, integrity, independence… or lack of

After almost six years of junta rule, Thailand was heading to the polls under the 2017 constitution, with a newly formed Mixed-Member Apportionment electoral system. 500 MPs would be represented in the House of Representatives, with 350 directly elected constituency MPs, and 150 party-list MPs through proportionate representation. The election date was set for the 24th of March 2019, with participations from the NCPO junta group rebranded as the Palang Pracharath Party (*PPP*), Thaksin's party, Thai Raksa Chart/Pheu Thai[6], and the youth driven party, Future Forward Party (*FFP*). These three parties were the main actors throughout the campaign, with FFP working towards gaining party-list MPs while PPP and Pheu Thai worked towards constituency MPs in order

[6] Thai Raksa Chart was disbanded by Constitutional Court and rebranded as Pheu Thai during the election.

to build a coalition government. The election much like the constitutional referendum was filled with scandal and inappropriate interventions. This section will look primarily at the junta's crafting of liberal authoritarianism, that is using the concept of hybrid-democracy as a means to hold onto power despite the overwhelming majority of Thai people looking to reject junta politicians.

Thailand as a constitutional monarchy requires the separation between monarchy and politics. This has not been the case with the Royal Household's influence over Thai politics increasing since 1932. The upcoming election was no different, with HM Vajiralongkorn seemingly getting involved in the electoral process twice through royal broadcasts. The first issue came as Thai Raksa Chart announced former Princess Ubolratana would run as candidate for Prime Minister. Princess Ubolratana gave up her royal title in the 1970s in order to marry an American citizen. Despite now living in Thailand as a common citizen, registration papers list her legal residence as 'Boromphiman Throne Hall and the Grand Palace' (Kijewski and Graham-Harrison, 2019). Hours after the announcement of the Princess' bid, the King published a statement on the *News in the Royal Court*[7] on Television Pool of Thailand, calling the actions 'an act that conflicts with the country's traditions, customs, and culture, and therefore considered highly inappropriate' (Graham-Harrison, 2019). Shortly after this statement, Thai Raksa Chart confirmed the Princess' short lived political career was over. Despite the Princess no longer being a serving member of the Royal Family, her candidacy could have jeopardised an easy victory for the military, as parties would be uneasy running against the daughter of the late King Bhumibol who would be able to bridge the domestic issues between the Yellow and Red shirts. Thai Raksa Chart was also disbanded by the Constitutional Court for this act by Princess Ubolratana.

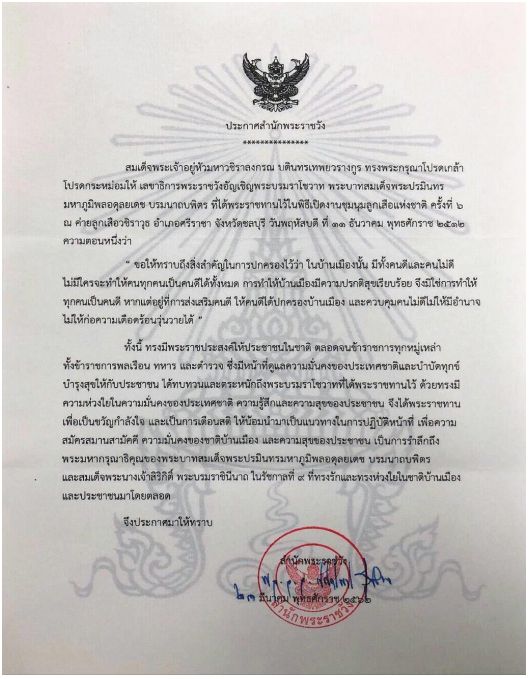
King Vajiralongkorn's words had once again appeared on the Royal Court Circular, this time urging the Thai electorate to think who to vote for, using a politically charged term in order to maintain '*normality*' in government. On the night before the election, HM Vajiralongkorn issued a statement referencing a speech from his father. The king had stressed the importance of having "good people" govern the nation, as doing so will prevent the "bad people" from taking power and causing harm. Vajiralongkorn wanted people to be aware of the words of HM Bhumibol and the actions of HM Queen Mother Sirikit to consider 'national security and the feelings and happiness of the people' (Bureau of the Royal Household, 2019). *Good People* has been used by conservatives well before

[7] ข่าวในพระราชสำนัก – Daily royal show promoting the works and duties of Their Majesties and other royal family members.

the 2014 coup d'état, to differentiate the actions of the military being for the people, in comparison to Thaksin's regime, bringing unprecedented levels of bad decisions and putting bad people within civil service and government. General Prayut had also said similar words in 2011, urging voters to 'think who would be the good people to govern the country' (BBC, 2011) in the runup to the 2012 election. The words of the King had been carefully used to influence the Thai people to choose the military government, consider happiness and national security in the ballot booth, two areas in which the junta NCPO had worked tirelessly to improve since coming into power:

> *Please let it be known about an important thing in governing, that in the country, there are both good and bad people. No one will make all people become good people. So to give the country normality and order is not about making everyone become good people, but it lies in supporting goodness, so that good people govern the country, and restraining bad people from having power, in order not to create confusion. Unofficial translation – HM Maha Vajiralongkorn (Bureau of the Royal Household, 2019).*

Figure 1 Statement by HM Maha Vajiralongkorn the day before the General Election urging Thais to vote for "Good People". (Bureau of the Royal Household, 2019)



ประกาศสำนักพระราชวัง

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สมเด็จพระเจ้าอยู่หัวมหาวชิราลงกรณ บดินทรเทพยวรางกูร ทรงพระกรุณาโปรดเกล้าโปรดกระหม่อมให้ เสชาธิการพระราชวังอัญเชิญพระบรมราโชวาท พระบาทสมเด็จพระปรมินทรมหาภูมิพลอดุลยเดช บรมนาถบพิตร ที่ได้พระราชทานไว้ในพิธีเปิดงานชุมนุมลูกเสือแห่งชาติ ครั้งที่ ๖ ณ ค่ายลูกเสือวชิราวุธ อำเภอศรีราชา จังหวัดชลบุรี วันพฤหัสบดี ที่ ๓๑ ธันวาคม พุทธศักราช ๒๕๓๒ ความตอนหนึ่งว่า

" ขอให้ทราบถึงสิ่งสำคัญในการปกครองไว้ว่า ในบ้านเมืองนั้น มีทั้งคนดีและคนไม่ดี ไม่มีใครจะทำให้คนทุกคนเป็นคนดีได้ทั้งหมด การทำให้บ้านเมืองมีความปรกติสุขเรียบร้อย จึงมิใช่การทำให้ทุกคนเป็นคนดี หากแต่อยู่ที่การส่งเสริมคนดี ให้คนดีได้ปกครองบ้านเมือง และควบคุมคนไม่ดีไม่ให้มีอำนาจไม่ให้ก่อความเดือดร้อนรุ่นวายได้ "

ทั้งนี้ ทรงมีพระราชประสงค์ให้ประชาชนในชาติ ตลอดจนข้าราชการทุกหมู่เหล่า ทั้งข้าราชการพลเรือน ทหาร และตำรวจ ซึ่งมีหน้าที่ดูแลความมั่นคงของประเทศชาติและบำบัดทุกข์บำรุงสุขให้กับประชาชน ได้ทบทวนและตระหนักถึงพระบรมราโชวาทที่ได้พระราชทานไว้ ด้วยทรงมีความห่วงใยในความมั่นคงของประเทศชาติ ความรู้สึกและความสุขของประชาชน จึงได้พระราชทานเพื่อเป็นขวัญกำลังใจ และเป็นการเตือนสติ ให้ข้อบ้านเป็นแนวทางในการปฏิบัติหน้าที่ เพื่อความสมัครสมานสามัคคี ความมั่นคงของชาติบ้านเมือง และความสุขของประชาชน เป็นการรำลึกถึงพระมหากรุณาธิคุณของพระบาทสมเด็จพระปรมินทรมหาภูมิพลอดุลยเดช บรมนาถบพิตร และสมเด็จพระนางเจ้าสิริกิติ์ พระบรมราชินีนาถ ในรัชกาลที่ ๙ ที่ทรงรักและทรงห่วงใยในชาติบ้านเมืองและประชาชนมาโดยตลอด

จึงประกาศมาให้ทราบ

สำนักพระราชวัง

๓๑ ธันวาคม พุทธศักราช ๒๕๓๒

สำนักพระราชวัง

The independent integrity of institutions such as the Constitutional Court or Election Commission of Thailand (EC) had been lost throughout the junta regime. As seen during the constitutional referendum, the EC acted in favour of the military, with the same attitude throughout the General Election. Members appointed to the Election Commission sat there for seven years, and by selection of the junta in 2018 (Ricks, 2019, p.451). Before, during, and after the election, the commission was called out for political bias as well as incompetence and inconsistencies. The government were accused of campaigning months before the election cycle, which is illegal; however, no action was taken as the EC ruled the cabinet was meeting in various parts of the country for administrative duties as Prime Minister. This set opposition parties back, as any attempt by them to bend the rules would see the parties immediately disbanded and threats of imprisonment.

Figure 2, 2019 General Election results, political parties' share of seats and share of votes. (Sawasdee, 2019, 58)

	Constituency	Popular	Party list		TOTAL	
Political parties	Seats	votes	%	Seats	Seats	%
Pheu Thai	136	7,881,006	22.2	0	136	27.2
Palang Pracharat	97	8,441,274	23.7	19	116	23.2
Future Forward	31	6,330,617	17.8	50	81	16.2
Democrat	33	3,959,358	11.1	20	53	10.6
Bhumjaithai	39	3,734,459	10.5	12	51	10.2
Chartthaipattana	6	783,689	2.2	4	10	2.0
Seri Ruamthai	0	824,284	2.3	10	10	2.0
Prachachat	6	481,490	1.4	1	7	1.4
New Economics	0	486,273	1.4	6	6	1.2
Pheu Chart	0	421,412	1.2	5	5	1.0
Action Coalition for Thailand	1	415,585	1.2	4	5	1.0
Chartpattana	1	244,770	0.7	2	3	0.6
Thai Local Power	0	214,189	0.6	3	3	0.6
Thai Forest Conservation	0	134,816	0.4	2	2	0.4
Other parties	0	1,208,334	3.4	12	12	2.4
Valid Votes	350	35,561,556	100	150	500	100.0
Spoiled Ballots		2,130,327	5.5			
None of the above		605,392	1.5			
Voter turnout		38,268,366	74.69			
Eligible voters		51,239,638				

Once the election was over, the junta's creation of hybrid-democracy had looked close to failure, with anti-military parties set to hold over 250 seats in the legislature, making it harder for Prayut to be selected as Prime Minister, even with the whole support of the Senate. Over a month after the ballots closed, the EC finally released the results, after confusion over

which party receives the party-list seats[8]. Delays to the results of the election can be seen as electioneering by the junta-appointed members in the EC. As mentioned, Palang Pracharath came close to leaving government, but as the final results were published, it is clear to see the power of the military and how hybrid-democracy has suppressed opposition.

The figure above provides the results published by the Election Commission, showing anti-junta parties gained almost half the vote, in stark comparison to a quarter of total votes going to pro-junta parties. The general population's rejection of a continuation of militarised politics can be clearly seen but suppressing opposition since the constitutional referendum has allowed the junta to remain in power, no matter the cost. The shock highlight in the election was the Future Forward Party, which came about before the election, campaigning for the youth vote on social media; knowing they would not break through constituency seats they worked towards gaining party list seats, overtaking the Democrat party - Thailand's oldest political party. Once the election was over, the junta worked to continue suppressing opposition parties, using the Constitutional Court to dissolve the Future Forward Party, which posed the greatest risk to the power of Prayut Chan-o-Cha's premiership. The Court had announced the party had accepted illegal loans from founder, Thanathorn Juangroongurankit who had already been stripped of his MP status in 2019; the party were unable to defend themselves and were forced into a rebrand, a system which is common for disbanded parties.

Anti-Royalism as a Result of Hybrid-Democracy

Thai domestic politics has not quietened down since the general election in the way the Generals were hoping. Throughout the NCPO regime, the economy was showing signs of becoming sluggish and morale had remained stagnant. Disbanding political parties and continuously harassing members, all while the government are reassuring people they are living in a democracy. Unless it is relation to the Royal Family. However, since the dissolvement of Future Forward, along with other political frustrations, some of the largest demonstrations have taken place in Thailand, with protestors holding a three-finger salute[9] (an illegal act) and demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-Cha and all those in government. As the protests continued over the current state of Thai democracy imposed by the former NCPO through the anti-

[8] Party List MPs are electeds through a distribution of total votes within a consitutency and is calculated by the Electoral Commission of Thailand. Candidate is chosen from a list presented by a political party rather than from a constituency election.
[9] Adapted from The Hunger Games and used as a pro-democracy symbol in Thailand, used since the NCPO took over in 2014.

democratic constitution and liberal authoritarianism present in the 2019 General Election, the focus started to embrace anti-royalism arising from hybrid-democratic rule. This section will analyse how the problematic constitution and election have caused a re-emergence of anti-royalism, ironically the fault of the Royal Family's number one supporter, Prayut Chan-o-Cha.

As the Coronavirus pandemic swept the world, protests ended, but the attitude had not. There was anger towards the King for staying in Germany while the country experienced significant hardship and sacrifice during strict lockdowns. To combat the pandemic, the government had introduced draconian laws which were much harsher than the martial law introduced during the NCPO regime. The 2005 Emergency Decree provides greater powers to the Prime Minister, including the prohibition of sharing 'false' or 'misleading' information and banning gatherings (Royal Thai Government, 2005). Extensions to the decree brought more people onto the streets, with thousands arrested for breach of the decree, but also anti-government critics started to be detained on allegations of lèse-majesté.

Since the coronation of King Vajiralongkorn, lèse-majesté cases were non-existent, due to a personal plea from 'His Majesty [providing] mercy and asked that [lèse-majesté] not be used.' (Bangkok Post, 2020). But while lèse-majesté cases were falling, computer crime laws were increasing to encompass similar offences. The authoritarian nature of Prayut's government was becoming clear, reintroducing lèse-majesté against the wishes of the King and abusing the law in order to protect the government. This allowed anti-royalism to run strife in the country, with portraits of Their Majesties vandalised across the Kingdom as evident in Figure 5.

Anti-royalism on this scale is highly controversial and signals a shift in attitude towards the authoritarian regime backed by the monarchy and the Royal Household as an institution. Private discussion on the monarchy is still widely muted within Thailand given the status of the previous King Bhumibol Adulyadej. Those who were anti-royalist post 2006 were simply disillusioned by the lack of support by HM Bhumibol after Red Shirt crackdowns show by graffiti: 'Dad, where are you?' and 'A Person Who Used to Love' (Anonymous, 2018, pp.375-379). These were implications rather than outright protest which has occurred in modern Thai politics.

Figure 3 HM Maha Vajiralongkorn portrait vandalised during the height of anti-government and anti-royalist protests in late 2020. (Twitter, 2020)



The tightening of political discourse and discussion has reached levels never seen before the 1997 *People's Constitution*. Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-Cha's government were fighting a court case on whether he is able to run in the next election as the constitution his junta approved states the PM 'shall not hold office for more than eight years in total, whether or not consecutively' (Office of the Council of State, 2017, p.55). Opposition leaders argue Prayut's regime began in 2014, making Prayut unable to run in the next general election. Since this has come up, the Royal Thai Government website has erased the PM's starting date, believing the

General can continue for another four years, making his potential total time in office fourteen years if his party were to win the next election. This is further evidence of the government pursuing authoritarianism, with the possibility of disregarding their own constitution in favour of maintaining their grip on power and exploiting the hybrid-democracy they have created.

Conclusion

Authoritarianism has more than ever become embedded within Thai politics. Explaining and analysing the three concepts of authoritarianism allows us to understand how the NCPO used the constitution to craft a political system which would ensure a military victory. Breaking promises time and time again, the 2019 general election was not the free and fair system the NCPO had pledged in their Mission Statement. By increasing the charges within Articles 112 and 116, fears of accidental criticism or being able to challenge political matters has grown. Failure to publicly voice opposition got worse with laws brought in before the constitution essentially banning *no* campaigning; the election taking months for the results to be published; and the dissolvement of political parties who had dented the possibility for a large junta majority in the Parliament.

Pouring money towards a public relations campaign to make the people happy had not worked, despite releasing propaganda songs and using public spaces to promote government policy. Under the concepts of authoritarianism outlined at the beginning of the article, the shift towards a hybrid-democracy has made Thailand institutionally and inevitably authoritarian in the present and for the foreseeable future. Independent institutions and justice systems are filled with military loyalists as well as living in a state of fear over free speech. Thailand may profess to act with democracy at heart, but the current offering is a hybrid of liberal democracy with fundamental flaws which allows a junta in government with a constitution set to cement their victory before the electorate can even cast their ballot.

With this in mind, the anti-royalist movement has only become prevalent because in my opinion, the effects of hybrid-democracy had fuelled this frustration. Over eight years of NCPO/Prayut Chan-o-Cha rule and the country seems to be in a worse position. There is no longer peace in the streets as protests continue for the resignation of the Prime Minister and order has evaporated with demands to reform the Bureau of the Royal Household. A reality for Thailand is that authoritarianism is inevitable with no scope for change in the future for as long as hybrid-democracy is in full force.

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5

POLITICS, DEVELOPMENT - FROM THE 20TH CENTURY ONWARD – AND CURRENT ECONOMY IN PERU

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Abstract

This essay focuses on sharing part of Peru's rich history in the political and economic sphere, from 1920 to the present. It is clear that as a country Peru has lived through several hard times, in which political parties have not faithfully represented the population. However, a constant variable throughout the years, even until today (2022 is the Year of the Bicentennial of the Congress of the Republic of Peru) is the achievement of political leaders who are icons of daring and intelligence, with the ability to project changes and to provide the security needed in order to lead the development for which Peru has fought. For this, it is important to emphasise that being a leader requires accepting the responsibility of carrying out governmental actions and to guide a whole nation. In its decision-making, it must always prioritise what is best for the country and the human rights' protection, instead of safeguarding its own interests. Peru is a country with biodiversity and a long history. It possesses wealth in flora, fauna and mining thanks to its geographical location as well as many traditions with diverse meanings. Above all, there exists in the country today a desire to move forward despite past adversities and to achieve a future both more developed and safer for the coming generations.

Introduction

Historically, the Peruvian state is the result of an extremely long process of change in the public sphere brought about by the struggles for independence, different political ideas and projects, elections, the role of the media as well as significant social, economic, and political change. In the light of the abundance of studies on the political world of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is evident that political history in Peru (and not just in Peru) is a subject worthy of analysis.

Writing the history of Peru presents numerous obstacles and problems. Westerners basically viewed the ancient land of the Incas from the vantage

point of distance and profound cultural differences that Edward Said famously termed 'Orientalism[1]' That is, they perceived Peru not only as a mysterious and exotic country, a mirror of their own dreams and desires, but also as a land of extremes. Thus, for Western observers - travellers, journalists, businessmen and others - Peru over the years was a country of legendary and fabulous wealth (El Dorado), of bloody conquest (Pizarro against Atahualpa), of lost cities of the Incas (Machu Picchu), of a stately Hispanic and Catholic nobility (colonial Lima), of fanatical violent revolutionaries (the Shining Path guerrillas), and of drug traffickers in search of the 'white gold' of international cocaine trafficking. The most recent manifestation of this orientalism was perhaps the perceived impermeability of Alberto Fujimori, the neo-populist Peruvian president of Japanese descent who proclaimed democracy but closed Congress in the so-called self-coup of 1992.

Today, history focuses more on how a fractious and ethnically heterogeneous Peruvian population managed to tenaciously survive conquest and rule by a small Europeanised creole elite, amidst the periodic and often dire natural disasters or social crises that have plagued the country over centuries. At every opportunity Peruvians rose from the economic and social ruins of such debacles and managed to survive in a way that can only arouse the admiration of readers of this country's long and troubled history.

Another problem for the historian is how to deal with a distant territory the size of England, France and Spain combined, characterized by vast geographical, climatic and ethnic diversity. In reality, Peruvian history has developed, as a series of 'vertical archipelagos' in which each community cooperated at different altitudes and climatic niches to cultivate a wide variety of products, in a mosaic of micro-regions in which human life has developed in many forms. This plural history was generally ignored by historians, especially those of the country's ruling elite, who for a long time imposed an artificial unity on the past. This emanated from Lima and portrayed a narrative from the centre, from the capital, where it was assumed that the history of the Nation-State had been given in European terms. This produced a double problem or distortion: history written from the perspective of the elite, who rarely ventured into the indigenous world and therefore did not know the *real* Peru; and the past seen from the commanding heights of the viceroyalty state, and later of his republican successor, both looking decisively towards Europe.

[1]Said, E., (2007). *Orientalism*, De Bolsillo, Barcelona. Available online: https://digitum.um.es/digitum/bitstream/10201/37101/1/91321-370671-2-PB.pdf

To challenge this, a historiographical revolution, was initiated in the 1970s with its new methodologies of economic and social history. A new generation of historians trained in ethnohistory and in what has been called 'history from below' emerged. This is the story about and from the perspective of those who do not have power: workers, peasants, slaves, women, the so-called sub-alternate classes that increasingly populate the Latin American post-colonial history that is being written in the United States. The result of these historiographical trends was the beginning of the displacement of the predominant approach to Peruvian history. The focus turned on one side, from the perspective of the dominant elite to the subordinate classes, and on the other, from Lima to the various regions and subregions that make up the heart of the Andean space.

In short, the history of Peru went from being the projection of the 'history of Lima' to the history of the entire country, a greater approximation to what the historian Jorge Basadre called 'the deep Peru.'[2]

This essay exposes in a didactic manner Peru's political history since the 1920s, examining development in order to encourage readers to study it for themselves and to analyse the country's projected future as an emerging power. The topics chosen are therefore the most important things that happened during the time period in question up to the present day. In this sense, the overview provided of past and current conditions and events in Peruvian politics can serve as a mirror of other Latin American and global realities, which can be useful in replicating positive aspects while avoiding negative ones.[3]

Economic growth policies after the First World War

In the 1920s, during the administration of President Augusto Leguía[44] economic growth resumed after the devastation of World War I. Foreign investments and loans, particularly from the US, were sought to build new railroads, irrigation, sanitation, and construction projects, among other things, to achieve this goal. During this decade, the government's policies accelerated and deepened the development of work in mines, capitalist haciendas, and increased financial and commercial activity. The construction of a massive new smelter and refinery at La Oroya resulted in an increase in oil exports and an increase in copper production.

[2] Jorge Alfredo Basadre Grohmann (1903-1980) was a Peruvian historian and historiographer of the republican and contemporary stage of the country.
[3] For more on this, see Gómez Híjar, 2008.
[4] Augusto Bernardino Leguía y Salcedo (1863-1932) was a Peruvian politician who was President of the Peruvian Republic twice: from 1908 to 1912; and from 1919 to 1930.

The domestic industrial sector was paralyzed because, post-World War I, the import of basic products was encouraged, and wool exports decreased, which among other factors, caused dissatisfaction among the indigenous peoples of the Southern Andes. This resulted in the rebirth of the indigenous rights movement and its transformation into a powerful urban force in defense of the indigenous cause. This movement arose from the recognition and revaluation of indigenous peoples as national patrimony. The Great Depression of 1929-1930 had an immediate impact on the country's economy, which was heavily reliant on international capitalism, particularly that of the United States. Similarly, President Leguía's heavy foreign indebtedness exacerbated the situation, resulting in a deep economic crisis that severely affected all sectors.

The economy experienced a dynamic recovery led by exports in the early 1930s. Peru was one of the countries in South America that was least affected by the Great Depression. It got back on its feet faster than other South American countries. The government just waited for the prices of its most important exports to rise again on the international market. When they did, first for silver, gold, and copper in 1932 and then for cotton and sugar in 1933, Peru went back to its traditional model of growth based on exports

New paternalistic social welfare policies were implemented as the improvement in the economy enabled President Oscar Benavides[5] to adopt measures to increase taxation and government spending. Laws establishing a minimum wage, workers' compensation and pensions, and social welfare benefits were enacted. However, the Second World War's outbreak heavily influenced the presidency of incoming Manuel Prado. At first, he didn't give much thought to the economic future of a country whose economy was based on exports and foreign markets (Klaren, 2004, pp.312-325).

Rapid population growth was a significant social event of the period. In 1940, cities accounted for 35% of the population, while the countryside accounted for 65%. By 1961, the population had grown to 9 million, and 47 percent of the people lived in the city, while 53 percent stayed in the countryside. The majority of these residents came from the departments of Ancash, Ayacucho, and Junin and settled in the slums that increasingly surrounded the capital city. These settlements were an entirely novel occurrence in Lima.

[5] Óscar Raimundo Benavides Larrea (1876 - 1945) was a Peruvian military officer and politician who served as the Provisional President of Peru twice, from 1914 to 1915 and 1933 to 1939.

Emigrants came from all kinds of social classes, including the middle class and the lower class, and their transition and adaptation were often helped by family and relatives who were already living in Lima. In this way, the government enacted policies to provide access to land and various basic services, charitable activities, and the promotion of public works designed to employ newcomers (Gago, 2012).

Post-World War Two

The fishing industry began to thrive in the 1950s. The fishmeal boom generated a large and well-compensated labour force, composed primarily of Andean people from Peru's highlands. It grew rapidly taking advantage of market opportunities and technological advancements. In addition, a significant increase in copper and sugar exports provided stability to the government at the time. However, from an economic and social point of view, the growing social differences and inequality set the stage for the sudden rise of rural discontent and peasant mobilization in the late 1950s. The peasants of the highlands felt aggrieved as wealth and power moved to the modern sector on the coast and this movement which reached its peak in the mid-1960s. People started joining left-wing parties because of this, which was especially clear in college politics.

In this context, a new generation of artists, writers, and scholars emerged, influenced by the Cuban Revolution and the Cold War. Known as the Generation of the 1950s, it rose to prominence in the 1960s and 1970s, resulting in a remarkable cultural flowering by an extraordinary generation of poets, unparalleled in Latin America, according to Higgins (Higgins, 1987). Social scientists came to the fore in various disciplines such as archaeology (Luis Lumbreras), anthropology and sociology (Julio Cotler and Anbal Quijano), history (Pablo Macera, later Manuel Burga and Alberto Flores-Galindo), and ethnohistory (Luis Millones). Also, musicians, playwrights and artists (Fernando de Szyszlo and Armando Villegas), and most notably, writers (Mario Vargas Llosa, Alfredo Bryce Echenique, Manuel Scorza and Julio Ramón Ribeyro) whose works of fiction reached a large international audience (Klaren, 2004, pp.346-350).

The "military" revolution of 1968

When the military took over in the late 1960s, President Alvarado[6] had a strong belief in military virtues like authority and respect for law and order. He thought that without such virtues, no society could hope to move

[6] Juan Francisco Velasco Alvarado (1910-1977) was a Peruvian military officer and politician, who served as President of Peru from 1968 to 1975.

forward. The government implemented two major reforms. Firstly, a comprehensive agrarian reform that eliminated the old farms and the landowning elite, including foreign corporations, from the agrarian system of the country. The second major transformation was the rapid expansion of the state, which for the first time assumed a central role in the economy and the development process. New state-owned companies emerged in mining (Mineroperú), fishing (Pescaperú), steel (Siderperú), oil (Petroperú) and industry (Moraveco).

The main goals of President Velasco's plan for development were to switch from a laissez-faire economy to a mixed economy and from an industrialization strategy based on exports to one based on replacing imports. The agrarian reform had a greater redistributive impact, but it had an unequal outcome, particularly for the majority of peasants in the highlands (Klaren, 2004, pp.410-420).

Populism and the division of society

In 1975, the new government of general Morales-Bermúdez[7] asked workers and the general public to make sacrifices, such as reducing state subsidies and social spending. It was stated that this was required because a global recession was commencing. As social objectives and programs were abandoned, the new left and popular sector organizations began to proliferate and mobilize against the government at the end of the 1970s.

In the 1980s, things changed when Fernando Belaunde was elected president of Peru for the second time, to govern a country that had changed significantly since he was first elected in 1963. Migration from the provinces to the capital continued on its inexorable path, stimulated by the agrarian reform's upheavals and the pursuit of economic opportunities. The urban population increased dramatically, rising from 47 percent of the national population in 1961 to 65 percent in 1981 (Gago, 2012).

During this time, a series of natural disasters struck Peru in early 1983, just as public spending was being slashed and credit was becoming more difficult; consequently, social unrest grew and several national strikes broke out in the cities and the countryside. This environment resulted in the emergence of terrorist acts by extreme leftist groups led by urban middle-class leaders, particularly among university students.

[7] Francisco Remigio Morales Bermúdez Cerrutti (b. 1921) is a Peruvian politician and military officer. He was de facto president of Peru from August 29, 1975 to July 28, 1980.

President Garcia's administration: from orthodoxy to heterodoxy

In 1985, a young man, Alan García[8] assumed the presidency and moved swiftly to implement what would become known as a 'heterodox' economic program. Based on a policy of selective government involvement in the economy, this gave state subsidies to both businesses and workers to help the slowing economy and get growth back on track. It also included anti-inflation measures such as wage and price controls. Fiscal policy emphasised employment, and the government established programs to hire workers for state projects, among other measures, aimed at improving living conditions in both the new towns and old impoverished rural areas.

However, these measures proved insufficient to address the country's severe crisis and in 1990, a new president was elected, Alberto Fujimori. Known for his campaign slogan 'honesty, technology, and work' Fujimori stood out for being different from traditional politicians and evoked positive images of probity and technocratic efficiency (Klaren, 2004, pp.475-480).

Neo-Liberalism and Peruvian progress

Fujimori inherited a society in shambles because of a protracted economic crisis. Backed by the military and a momentarily docile Congress, Fujimori was able to enact a series of decree laws that liberalised the economy, encouraged foreign investment, cut state spending and reduced tariffs. On the revenue side, the President pursued tax evaders, and eliminated subsidies and tax exemptions for large companies that had obtained them through legal sleight of hand. To fight terrorism, he gave permission to proceed for civil defence patrols (also known as peasant patrols) to be set up in both cities and rural areas.

As Fujimori took steps to address issues such as the economy, subversion, and drug trafficking, he demonstrated signs of becoming more authoritarian, which irritated the opposition and the media. During his first term, Fujimori was able to stabilize an out-of-control economy, open Peru's closed, protected, and highly regulated economy to free markets, international trade, and investment, and successfully combat terrorism. On the other hand, several policies were implemented during his second administration that have been the subject of debate to this day, including the public health plan that promoted sterilization of poor women in order to reduce poverty in the country.

[8] Alan Gabriel Ludwig García Pérez (1949 - 2019) was a Peruvian lawyer and politician. He served as president of the Republic of Peru for two non-consecutive terms from 1985 to 1990 and from 2006 to 2011.

A new beginning, the 21st Century

The Peruvian economy was recovering from the international financial crisis at the start of 2000, but it experienced a slowdown in productive activity due to domestic political instability.[9] From 2001 to 2006, the government was led by Alejandro Toledo. The administration was distinguished by the country's development process, the beginning of the macroeconomic upturn with the promotion of foreign investment and the signing of free trade agreements; it also resulted in the implementation of several infrastructure and human development investment projects.[10] Despite internal political instability, the economy improved, and there was no sense among the population that Peruvian democracy would fail.

The second administration of Alán Garcia promoted the continuation of neoliberalism, including the ratification of a free trade agreement with the US in 2007, resulting in sustained economic growth in Peru from 2006 to 2011. Unquestionably, international metal prices were primarily responsible for this growth, and Peru successfully overcame the global recession as a result of prudent economic management. However, national economic growth was not as robust as anticipated, particularly in the highland's region of Peru's periphery.

Therefore, in 2011, the incoming government intended to pay attention to the entire country, which was reflected in the economy's continued expansion under Ollanta Humala. However, society remained estranged from its president. Pedro Pablo Kuczynski served as president of Peru from 2016 to 2018. His tenure, however, was brief due to his resignation. From 2018 to 2020, Martin Vizcarra took over as president. During his administration, he dissolved the Congress in 2019, due to the Congress's refusal to address the question of trust raised to amend the Constitutional Court's Organic Law. Finally, his government ended after a second debate, and his position as President of the Republic was vacated due to incapacity. This occurred amidst the political crisis and uncertainty that the nation was experiencing. As a result, Manuel Merino succeeded Vizcarra as president, but he too resigned in the face of opposition.

The Peruvian Congress elected a new president to face the political-social crisis that the country went through. On November 16, 2020, legislators voted overwhelmingly for Sagasti to be the new transitional president to replace Martín Vizcarra and Manuel Merino, with the task of redirecting the country until Peruvians could elect a new leader at the polls on April 21, 2021. Francisco Sagasti became the third president of Peru to rule in

[9] BCRP, 2000, 11.
[10] Fondo Editorial Cultura Peruana E.I.R.L, First edition, January 2018, 37.

the same week! The deputies dismissed on November 9th the former president Martín Vizcarra and his replacement, Manuel Merino, then resigned on the 15th under the pressures of massive marches against everything that surrounded his appointment. The protests, the largest in the country for 20 years, mainly opposed Congress sharpening the political crisis with Vizcarra's ouster just as Peru went through the biggest drop in its economy in a century because of the pandemic. For the protesters, the decisions of the Congress only brought more instability, and the ideal was to keep Vizcarra in place until a new elected president could arrive, in mid-2021.

It was precisely because of these pressures that many believed Sagasti could calm the protests: his collectivity Purple Party, was one of the few that voted against the dismissal of Vizcarra. The party even proposed that the congressmen retract the vacancy so that Vizcarra can return to his position. However, this was not possible. Analysts agree in describing Sagasti as a sensible person who managed to convince the majority and who, since he arrived in Congress, stood out for his conciliatory character. In his campaign for the seat for Lima on the list of the Purple Party, his slogan was 'Make a decent policy, fight against corruption and political reform'.

In February, after winning his seat in the extraordinary legislative elections, he said: 'The important thing about this Congress is to break that idea that we have to fight among the congressmen, between the groups, and look for what the citizens have asked of us' He was president of the Committee on Science, Innovation and Technology of the Congress and, in addition, main spokesman of the purple caucus. The authors agree that he had a good government, because, after overcoming some difficulties, he managed to steer the country towards the final goal of reaching elections that were turbulent, not because of his management, but because of the great polarization that occurred between two irreconcilable currents in the context of a divided country.

Undoubtedly, due to his management and his ministerial team, the administration of Francisco Sagasti kept millions of Peruvians alive thanks to a massive, transparent, and efficient vaccination plan. Many Peruvians will remember him for this. Many feel we owe him our lives and support him because, in a few months, he showed that in Peru it is possible to govern for the common good. Definitely, the year of the Bicentennial demands a historic response, *A New Beginning* for the country, the third century of independent life. The government must show itself capable of responding creatively to the challenges of an accelerated changing world, and to the long-delayed legitimate demands of the vast majority of Peruvians. Therefore, it will be important that our country promotes

conscious, ethical, and supportive behavior, and recover the values that inspired many of the precursors of our independence so that they guide our behavior at all times.

Subsequently, Mr. Pedro Castillo is the current President of Peru, and he faces a big challenge in gaining the acceptance of the entire Peruvian population. It is worth noting that newspaper La Republica Data[11] published a survey which asked a random cross-section of the population for their views on the government. The sample consisted of 1201 individuals from 24 departments, 153 provinces, and 413 districts, making it large and dispersed. The trend showed that 49 percent of the people asked believed that the political situation in Peru was not good in October 2021. In April 2022, six months later, a second survey was done. The trend showed that 73 percent of the people think the political situation is not getting better.

In this way, these polls show that 68 percent of Peruvians, think that speeding up the presidential and congressional elections is the best way to avoid a possible political crisis. Regardless of the results of the polls, future differences of opinion and decisions cannot be a return to the previous circumstances. Instead, the next Peruvian decisions should be geared toward a progressive government that proposes solutions to protect the public interest.

Finally, in this year of the bicentenary, we have the inescapable task of promoting dialogue and generating a consensus on what we need to change. The first duty is to look at the reality and face it with courage. Identifying and recognising mistakes will be a part of this solution because addressing them helps to avoid future mistakes. This brings to mind the well-known phrase: 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it' and its meaning is profound, wise, and never-changing. Human beings make mistakes and are fallible by nature; however, if they re-affirm the goal they are working toward on a daily basis, along with a commitment to improve, they will be able to achieve it for the benefit of society. So, reflecting on the last 100 years of violence and inequality described above could certainly lead us toward the change desired by Peruvians. The proposal is clear: to work together so that, with determination and courage, we fight for a better Peru and look forwards towards a modern world, to look clearly at our reality that cries out for a change to leave our children, a more fraternal and reconciled Peru. Hence, the populace must not lose faith that a representative leader in whom they

[11] LR Data, 2022 a survey conducted by the Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP) on random cell phone numbers on April 25, 2022. The target population was people aged 18 holding a National Identity Card.

can place its trust will emerge. As a result, she or he must be someone who maintains order without resorting to arbitrary imposition and, indeed, assumes his or her position with dedication and honesty.

Development and emerging powers in Peru

Peru will register an expansion greater than the average for Latin America in the next five years according to the FocusEconomics Consensus Forecast LatinFocus, in its last report of June 2022 (Agencia Andina, June 19, 2022)[12]. In addition, Peru will have a higher growth than the Euro Zone (2.6%) and Japan (2%) in 2022, and the same as the United States (2.8%), although below the world average (3.3%). Besides, Moody's Investors Service downgraded the country's rating from A3 to Baa1, sending a warning signal to investors about the situation in the country governed by President Pedro Castillo. "In a continually polarized and fractured political environment, political risk has increased and policymaking capacity has been considerably weakened," Moody's argued. However, it remains one of the countries with the least risk in the region, only behind Chile and tied with Mexico (BBC, September 2, 2021)[13].

Regarding the national territory, National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI) reported, "In January 2022, the Peruvian economy increased 2.86% when compared to January 2021 due to the favorable performance of most economic sectors, except for fishing, manufacturing, construction, and financial and insurance." In terms of mining and hydrocarbons, increased by 4.53 percent due to a 3.61 percent increase in mining-metallic activity thanks to increase volumes produced of tin (14.7 %), copper (11.4%), gold (4.5%), and molybdenum (0.2%) (The Lima Chamber of Commerce, March 15, 2022). Moreover, the Peruvian GDP will grow 3.2% in 2022, 3% in 2023, 3.1% in 2024, 3.2% in 2025 and 3.3% in 2026, while the average for Latin America will advance 2.3% in 2022, 2.3% in 2023, 2.4% in 2024, 2.4% in 2025 and 2.4% in 2026, analysts predicted (El Peruano Newspaper, January 30, 2022)[14]. Thus, it is expected that Peru will experience a steady increase in the next four years, simultaneously with the growth of its population, which is expected to rise by 37% by 2050.

> *"Many countries in the world will offer very high growth rates. These places are not in the developed world, which faces cyclical and structural*

[12] https://andina.pe/agencia/noticia-peru-se-expandira-mas-promedio-latinoamerica-del-2022-al-2026-897950.aspx.
[13] https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-internacional-58428983.
[14] https://elperuano.pe/noticia/138368-el-peru-se-expandira-32-este-ano-mas-que-promedio-de-latinoamerica.

headwinds. These places are in the emerging world," (Gestión Newspaper, January 11, 2012). Similarly, "According to HSBC, Peru's economy will grow at a 5.5 percent annual rate over the next 40 years. HSBC's forecasts were based on indicators such as per capita income, the rule of law, democratic respect, educational levels, and demographic changes" (Reuters Staff, January 11, 2012).

Finally, it is important to note that Peru's economic performance has the potential to improve. It is essential to implement state investment policies, promote technology education, increase human capital, advance business development, and advance the service and banking sectors. It is estimated that in this manner, we could transform our economy into a modern, up-to-date, industrialized, manufacturing one. Long-term planning should be done in conjunction with the restructuring of our economic model, which may lead to more opportunities for people, higher income for businesses, and more investors in the future. Because, in a rapidly evolving emerging economy, it is possible that it will become a desirable place to live, study, invest, and so on. With proper planning, strategy, work, and discipline, Peru could achieve this in the future.

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6

TRAPPED BETWEEN BORDERS

Victoria Ramírez

Abstract

This article is based on a true and personal experience of trying to go home when the pandemic first struck. During the start of the pandemic, people were returning to their homes whilst lockdowns were being put into place. I wanted to go home to Venezuela as the UK was nearing a lockdown and I was far away from my family. On my way, I encountered multiple hurdles such as being stranded in Colombia and then having to cross the physical border between Colombia and Venezuela which is known to be dangerous and in conflict. In the article I also present the political aspects from my experience and how both things were interlinked.

Introduction

As a student living in London, I decided to go back to my country, Venezuela, when the COVID-19 pandemic first hit. Whilst I was aware of the cumbersome journey that was ahead, I could not imagine undergoing the pandemic abroad and alone. Having been through the journey during this difficult period I decided to write about my experience. This paper is centred around my journey. Moreover, this article also serves as a reflection of the impacts of the pandemic that I experienced whilst making this trip. It is worth mentioning that Venezuela, although beautiful and diverse, is a country which has endured significant economic, political, and social struggles over the past decades, as 64% of Venezuela's population lived in extreme poverty in 2020 and 97% lived on the poverty line (Romero, 2021). Furthermore, "Venezuela scored 14 points out of 100 on the 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index reported by Transparency International" (Venezuela Corruption Index - 2021 Data - 2022 forecast - 1995-2020 Historical - Chart, 2021). This has led to Venezuela being labelled as a "mafia state" as described by Moises Rendon: "Both corruption and organised crime are widespread throughout the government and have a major impact on internal political dynamics" (Rendon, 2020). Corruption has been institutionalized, as evidenced by the case of Alex Saab, an accomplice of the Maduro regime who was detained in South Africa and extradited to the US in October of 2021. Another example where this can be seen is through the "Cartel de Los Soles", which started out as a term to describe members of the Venezuelan

government's special forces who participated in drug trafficking (La organización terrorista que Nicolás Maduro es acusado de liderar, 2020). The cartel "is the only known drug organization in the region completely comprising military and government officials" (Fiegel, 2015). There are multiple high-ranking members of the cartel within the government and the military, and they command all control points in the country.

Context of Venezuela

Venezuela is a Spanish-speaking country in the northern part of South America, known mainly for its oil and mineral exports. Furthermore, the region has been hit with violence in recent decades: "El Caracazo" in 1989, two military coups in 1992 led by Hugo Chávez and another military coup in 2002 in an attempt to oust Chávez. Since then, the country has faced constant political turmoil causing protests such as in 2014 where 43 people died, then again in 2017, where there were 6,729 protests in which 163 people died (Garcia Marco, 2017). The most recent protests were in 2019 due to the presidential crisis where 55 people died (BBC News Mundo, 2019). These last protests were triggered by the swearing-in of interim president Juan Guaidó according to the constitution. However, Nicolás Maduro claims to be the rightful president and holds military power in the country. Across the world, there are debates regarding the legitimate president of Venezuela as different countries recognize different leaders. The country's economy has been suffering for years, from hyperinflation, power-outs, and the overall collapse of the health system (Valderrama and Sequera, 2019). This is manifested in the major societal gap in the country as 94.5% of the population lives in poverty and 76.6% live in extreme poverty as of 2021 (Kinosian, 2021). However, Venezuela is also the 7th country in the world with the most private jet ownership per capita (Ellis, 2017). This clearly demonstrates the massive societal gap in the country. Moreover, these issues were further exacerbated by the arrival of the pandemic.

Furthermore, the economic crisis had worsened before the pandemic, as Venezuela's hyperinflation rate hit ten million per cent in 2019, up 9.02% from 2018 (Sanchez, 2019). This is due to political corruption and the authoritarian government whose economic policies drove the country into an unforeseen era of hyperinflation through accelerated money printing (Yapur, 2022). Venezuela's inflation went on to hit 686.4% in 2021 (Armas, 2022). More than six million Venezuelans have left the country since 2014 and the number keeps rising due to continued crisis and the lack of any change in government.

The Venezuelan-Colombian border and the relationship between them

We currently live in a globalised world that when it shut down during the pandemic, we noticed how dependent countries and people are upon each other. Specifically in this case we depend on transport, such as flights to get home. Travelling back home has always been complicated as flights are scarce, but it became harder as everything was shutting down. I was left with no choice but to cross the physical border between Colombia and Venezuela. This border has been the focus of multiple human rights violations as well as the centre of political turmoil through the presence of guerillas and paramilitaries on both sides of the border. "Guerrilla fighters from both sides, which had previously operated as allies, have committed a range of abuses including killings, forced recruitment, including of children, and forced displacement" (Colombia/Venezuela: Border Area Abuses by Armed Groups, 2022). Guerillas and paramilitaries at the border come from both countries. Guerilla groups usually form to tear down public authority and are economic predators whereas paramilitaries were born from armed forces and drug traffickers as a solution to fight the guerrillas. Yet they, in turn, have also been to blame for various heinous crimes (Spencer, 2001).

The border has been closed a few times in the past. In 2016 Nicolas Maduro suddenly closed the border with Colombia, without warning, allegedly to "destroy the mafia." This proved a completely failed attempt at a real and horrible issue (Venezuela closes border with Colombia 'to destroy mafia', 2016). The first time the border was closed was in 2014 showing how shocking this closure was as it came with no warning, and how it continues to impact since then (Venezuela 'anti-smuggling' troops deployed near Colombia, 2014). The closure was very impactful as people in border towns tend to work and live on both sides.

Venezuela and Colombia have always had a relationship of camaraderie due to shared history, proximity and shared borders. Nonetheless, there is still a sense of kinship despite recent disputes, as we have always welcomed each other in times of crisis. Colombia hosts the highest number of Venezuelan refugees reaching more than a million. According to the World Bank "approximately 25 municipalities in Colombia (out of a total of 1,122) host 70 % of all Venezuelan migrants" (Supporting Colombian Host Communities and Venezuelan Migrants During the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2021). Disputes between these two states, specifically on the border, occur as there is a lot of drug crime and corruption occurring from both sides.



Map of Venezuela showing the border with Colombia



(I crossed through the Colombian city of Maicao, which is labelled in the northern part of the map near the gulf of Venezuela)

At the beginning of the pandemic

I was in the middle of my first spring term at university when the pandemic began. As borders were closing people were growing desperate to get to their homes before being effectively locked in a foreign country, as it was my case. This process highlighted the fact that globalisation, which has reimagined global communications, has shaped our everyday interactions. It is because of these new ways that the pandemic was able to spread as massively as it did, and then there was the unprecedented impact that the shutting down of borders had on countries, especially on their economies. Furthermore, globalization allows for international market relations that result in an interconnectedness that we have relied on for decades: all this was suddenly threatened by COVID-19. The pandemic evidenced the multiple faces of globalization which had not been seen before. In my case, flights to Venezuela, which are normally scarce became even harder to obtain due to COVID-19.

At the end of February, I was visiting family in Italy right before the country went into lockdown. For those two weeks my university at the time, Goldsmiths University of London, was on strike. I hadn't heard anything regarding how the Coronavirus was going to affect my classes. I didn't know whether to stay with my family in Italy or go back to London as I was supposed to attend lectures upon my return. I chose to return thinking classes were going to resume, whilst also leaving behind the rapidly escalating situation in Italy.

Upon my return to London, the university still hadn't communicated anything regarding the pandemic. However, the situation became dire very quickly and within a week I started arranging plans to immediately return to Venezuela. There are only a limited number of flights entering and leaving the country due to multiple reasons such as unrest in the country, cut-off diplomatic relations and the government not paying airlines. As of 2014, international airlines were owed approximately $3 billion in ticket sales by the government, hence airlines have parted ways making my return to Venezuela harder (Nagel, 2014). Nevertheless, I found a connecting flight through Bogotá, which I decided to take as I had limited options and the alternative was to remain alone in my university accommodation.

I left London on a Saturday evening, and my trip to the airport was eerily quiet and empty: you could clearly sense the panic of the pandemic starting to settle in. A lot of the transport that weekend suffered delays due to maintenance. Luckily, I had decided to go to the airport six hours early, as I didn't know what to expect. The airport was packed, especially the queue for the flight to Bogotá, as it was the last flight leaving Europe from the

UK. After I finished the line for the bag drop-off, I was told I couldn't use my Italian passport to travel due to the situation in the country at the time. They asked me if I had any other nationalities and I handed them my Venezuelan passport to which they responded with what I already knew: I couldn't enter Colombia with a Venezuelan passport, as the Colombian president, Iván Duque, had already announced the closing of the border with Venezuela before the flight (Colombia closes the border with Venezuela over coronavirus, 2020). In the end, they accepted my Italian passport. However, I was then told I couldn't check my bag as I had no outbound flight *out* of Colombia, which is mandatory when entering the country without a residence permit. That's when I noticed my flight from Bogotá to Caracas was cancelled as the airspace had been closed between both countries.

Flights between Colombia and Venezuela were resumed nearly three years later in late 2022, however during the pandemic there were no humanitarian flights to repatriate Venezuelans. I called my parents to figure out what the next course of action should be. We ended up deciding that the situation was worsening with a lot of uncertainty and thus I should still attempt to return home. I was redirected to the airline's counter, which had a long queue of people in similar situations who also didn't know what to do. After waiting for about an hour, I finally got to speak to one of the airline representatives who, in a very exasperated tone, advised me to purchase an outbound bus ticket from Bogotá to any city outside Colombia. That way I would have some time to figure out how to get home once I got to the same continent. I ended up purchasing a random bus ticket to Perú and was allowed to check-in.

At this point many of the passengers that shared my predicament were in tears, myself included, due to the frustration of not knowing what was going to happen or if we would even be able to go home. There were families with sick relatives that they had to return to, parents wanting to reunite with their children and many other similar situations. We were all panicking as we all yearned to be home and feel safe instead of being locked in a foreign country. After finally being able to drop off my bags, I went through the security check and saw that my flight was boarding. So, I now had to run to the gate and was able to make it just in time to join the last bit of the queue. The staff were rechecking everyone's documents and the forms to enter Colombia, on which we had to state where we were going to stay in case the authorities needed to check up on people who would have to go into isolation.

Lockdown in Colombia

I was very fortunate as one of my best friends and her family live in Bogotá, and I was able to stay with them during my time in Colombia. I was welcomed with open arms and treated like family whilst I tried to sort out my way home. When I finally got to Colombia after a twelve-hour flight, we went through customs where we were divided into groups depending on our destinations to prevent further infections. After being asked about my whereabouts and my business in their country, I was finally led through. I had no phone service, and the airport Wi-Fi wasn't working, so I had no way of getting in touch with my friend and letting her know I had arrived. An older woman was kind enough to lend me her phone and I was finally able to let them know where I was and that I had arrived. I must mention that my friend's family, to who I am eternally grateful and indebted to them, were being extra cautious as my friend's mom was an at-risk person for COVID-19 having a compromised immune system, which made the whole situation more delicate. I had taken every precaution, sitting by myself on the plane and I had only interacted with family members who were being cautious for the same reasons as my friend's family. Regardless of this, my friend's mom received me with a big hug and from then onwards my friend's family took me in and treated me like one of their own.

That was the start of what I didn't know would be nearly three months in Bogotá. Not knowing if I would get home or where I would end up going. During my first week there, we had a few days before lockdown started, so we made the best of it by going out to eat, as I had not visited them for some time. A couple of days later, the city finally went into lockdown, and the imposed rules were incredibly harsh. Such as, no two members of the same household could be outside at the same time or else you would be fined. Men were only allowed to go outside on even-numbered days and women were only allowed on odd-numbered days. This first rule changed a couple of months into the lockdown, as the mayor of the city, who imposed these rules, was seen alongside her girlfriend in the supermarket!

During the beginning of the lockdown, I still had to attend online classes with a time difference of six hours which was very tough to go through when taking political philosophy lectures at four in the morning. Besides the online classes, I was able to spend a lot of quality time with my best friend and we ended up watching multiple TV shows and movies, doing puzzles alongside her family and ended up almost having a routine, which helped me forget a little bit about the uncertainty and the frustration of the impotence I felt, as I couldn't get home to my family regardless of how geographically close I was. It was ironic that I was so close to my country and yet so far as it was becoming harder and harder to get back home.

Thousands of Venezuelans were deserted around the world. I had friends who were in similar positions to me and were stranded in random countries and had to be put up in hotels for weeks in foreign countries completely alone as there were no humanitarian flights back to our country.

I was able to pass the time with my friend and her family in a very fun and wholesome way, which I'm very thankful for. I did get homesick at times as every option we thought of for me to go home would be scrapped due to the everchanging COVID-19 situation as well as the political situation in Venezuela. My family and I came up with other alternatives, once returning seemed highly improbable. I had already been staying, at that point, longer than a month at my friend's house so we looked at a variety of options such as going back to London, as there was a brief moment where it seemed possible and a good idea, but the situation became very dire very quickly in the UK. We also toyed with the idea of going to the US, as it was closer, had looser COVID-19 restrictions and I have a lot of family and friends I could stay with. We had also thought of the idea to return to Italy on a humanitarian flight, as I could board one of the two-weekly flights as I have Italian citizenship, but Italy's situation worsened.

Despite all these alternatives, which we ended up discarding for one reason or another, I was still set on going home. We came up with three possible scenarios for my return home by land, which had a lot of variables. We had to take into consideration multiple factors such as the conflict at the border, the fuel crisis in Venezuela, and COVID-19 restrictions on both countries, amongst others. My family and I, considering the advice of close friends and family, had considered three possible border crossing points that we could use. However, the most commonly used border crossing is in Cúcuta, on the Colombian side. This crossing is one of the most conflict-ridden ones along the border, so we rejected it as the security issues were too high. Then we entertained the idea of using the Guasdualito border crossing in the southern part of the country. This was the ideal option as it is regarded as a calmer border crossing and it was a shorter drive from the capital, where we also had family friends who knew the area and were willing to help us. However, in the weeks leading to the date of my departure, we had to change the plan as the area of Guasdualito had gone into lockdown due to rising cases of COVID, and the military was not letting anyone enter or leave the area. Hence, we had to move to our third and last option, which was through the Maicao-Paraguachón border crossing, located in the north-western part of the country.

This border crossing encompasses "La Guajira" which is a native area that involves both Colombia and Venezuela; native Guajiros cross the border without getting checked as they identify as Guajiros rather than the

nationality of either country. This plan was formed with the help of my uncle, who is a retired army lieutenant colonel, who knew the area and how complicated and perilous the border can be. We also had family friends whose families lived in regions neighbouring the border and thus had up-to-date information regarding the border situation. We had different possible plans, which I discussed constantly with my parents and my uncle. We would analyse the day-to-day changes occurring in Venezuela as well as at the border to make sure my dad and uncle could reach the border as well as finding the safest possible passage back to Venezuela. The plan involved the help of a friend of my uncles' as well as my dad and uncle coming to get me from Caracas to the border. In my country, retired military men are highly regarded and respected for their service, whereas the current military tends to be more feared as they have become incredibly corrupt, thus my uncle's status as retired military was highly respected.

In spite of all the obstacles, I set out on my trip, which I undertook alongside a friend of my friend's family. There were two parts to the trip, the first was the drive my dad and uncle were making from Caracas to Maracaibo, the latter which is the capital of the state I was going to enter. This part of the plan was also very complicated, as in order to cross the country during COVID-19 you required special passes given by the military to cross state lines. It took time to acquire the dates we needed. We also struggled with fuel for the trip as even though Venezuela is known for having the largest oil reserves in the world, the country still suffers from fuel scarcity, the direst region being the east part of the country which has been suffering from this for over a decade now. This situation was exacerbated during the pandemic and impacted heavily on the country's capital. The fuel crisis happened due to "Seven years of mismanagement and political purges, the dismantling of Petróleos de Venezuela S.A.'s (PDVSA) managerial structures and deviations in longstanding company policy implemented by the government of Nicolás Maduro since 2014 have undermined the sector and destabilised the national economy" (Ramírez, 2021). It could also be argued that it was worsened by US sanctions, however, this crisis had been critical even before the sanctions were put into place. The crisis is unprecedented, as though the oil sector suffered from falling oil prices, its decline was further accelerated by Maduro's policies. This made the plan to drive to and from the border especially hard; my family had to borrow fuel from friends and even had the fuel engine of the car adjusted to sustain a larger capacity of fuel to fulfil the trip.

Part I of the journey home: Crossing the Colombian-Venezuelan border

The trip started with a seventeen-hour drive, leaving Bogotá at dawn for Maicao. We undertook this part of the trip with some drivers who offered to drive people to the Venezuelan border. After a gruesome drive, we arrived at the border late in the evening and stayed in a local motel for the night, before attempting to cross the border the next morning. When we woke up the next day, the initial plan consisted of my uncle's friend helping us cross the border as well as stamping our passports with the exit stamp. However, we were told that same day that the whole plan had changed and that we now had to pay an absurd amount of money to pass, our passports would not get stamped and that we would have to cross the border all the way to Maracaibo through the "trochas". Trochas are deemed incredibly dangerous as they are the untrodden paths through the wilderness, which are usually controlled by either guerillas or paramilitaries. After a lot of back and forth, we came up with an arrangement. We crossed the border from a different part, where we encountered some guerilla members and had to pay to be allowed safe passage as there was no other way.

Once we crossed, we approached the Venezuelan border control where we encountered a colonel, Salazar, who was in charge of the area. He had spoken to my uncle and was aware that my father and my uncle were driving to the border to come to get me. My uncle asked him to keep me safe and comfortable until they were able to get to me. I was then told that I would have to undergo a rapid COVID-19 test, disinfection, and have my ID checked. At that point in the day, we had walked for various kilometres in forty-degree Celsius weather, and we hadn't had anything to eat or drink. Whilst we were taking the COVID-19 rapid tests I fell to the ground as I was very dehydrated and there was no water at the border as it was deserted. After doing the test and having our IDs checked, we were told to sit at the side of the road while we waited for our results. After some time, we were told to head over to a bus that was going to take us directly to Maracaibo. When we were getting to the bus, we were told to turn around as I had to retake the test as my result was unclear. I found this odd as I hadn't left my friend's apartment for three months, and a positive test was highly improbable. Nevertheless, I retook the test, and on both occasions when I was tested, I was not allowed to see the results of my tests.

After the second test, I was separated from the family friend I was travelling with and was put into a group of people I had never met before. The soldiers wouldn't answer any questions, and no one would tell me what was going on. After a while I was told I had tested positive and that the group I had been put in was with the other people who had tested positive. We were told that we could take our masks off around each other,

something I protested about as we were yet to get a PCR test to confirm whether we were infected or not. We were all sitting on the ground by the road occasionally turning around when someone needed to use the trash-filled corner as a bathroom, as there were no bathrooms, and we were not allowed to leave because we were going to be taken away at dawn. However, no one would tell us where we were going to be taken to. The people who had been there from the previous day said that the people who tested positive would get picked up by an ambulance in the middle of the night and be driven away, and no one knew where they were being taken to.

After much insistence, we were told that we might be taken to an abandoned warehouse in the middle of nowhere to quarantine until we tested negative. The soldiers later told us we were being taken to the university hospital in Maracaibo, (which is in a collapsed state) to get tested again. We were also told we were to be taken to the countryside to receive an experimental COVID-19 treatment by Cuban doctors. We didn't know who or what to believe. I was in constant contact with my family, as my mom was in Caracas with my sister and my dad was in Maracaibo with my uncle. We were trying to understand what was going on and no one would tell us anything. At that point, my dad and my uncle were refused the permit to drive to the border, as the only way to have a safe drive to the border would be if they were escorted by soldiers, as guerillas were shooting at any non-military vehicles that drove by. We later learned that Colonel Salazar had told my parents I was staying in a very comfortable and safe environment and given water and food. This wasn't the case as I was in the infected group seated under a tree by the main road, and I was eating the food I had packed for the trip three days prior.

The people in my group varied in age, some were young, and some were older or had pre-existing conditions which made them vulnerable to being exposed to COVID-19. One particular young guy started making conversation asking if I was from the US and what I was doing at the border. During that same time my dad was trying to figure out what was going on, and even threatened to drive to the border without the permit. The General in charge of the state we were in, whose name was Gonzalez, showed my dad a picture of my three, allegedly, positive tests. When my dad called me to inform me that I was a registered and confirmed positive case in the country. However, no one else in the group I was in had been a confirmed or registered case yet. The General argued that I had been tested three times and they all came back positive. We knew something was wrong, as I had only been tested twice at that point, with one allegedly inconclusive result. My dad informed General Gonzalez of this misinformation, as the whole situation wasn't adding up. The General

offered to approach the border to have me tested again under his supervision.

As time passed, I waited hopefully for the General to appear, it became darker, and we were told that no one was crossing the border anymore for the day and thus we had to be disinfected. Two men with hazard suits started disinfecting everyone with a spray mainly consisting of diluted chlorine. People were drenched in this solution, and it was getting chilly at night as the temperature dropped. People were starting to cough, my skin was getting itchy, children were crying, and elderly people were barely able to sit up straight. After some time, I made peace with the fact that the General wasn't coming as it was getting too late.

At some point past midnight, around seven cars arrived from the DGCIM (*Dirección General de Contrainteligencia Militar*) which is the military counterintelligence agency of Venezuela. Their job is to prevent internal and external enemy espionage and there is a lot of power abuse within these agencies, hence they are feared. Around fifteen or more men came out of those cars dressed in all black with their faces covered by balaclavas; they were fully armed and started patrolling both sides of the border, even though they hold no jurisdiction in Colombia. Everyone at the border became tense and scared as we didn't know what was happening or was about to happen. They met with the military men that oversaw the border and talked for an hour and then left. We never found out what they were there for.

Part II of the journey home: Leaving the Colombian-Venezuelan border

Right before dusk, an ambulance appeared, and we were told to get into hazard suits. Seven of us got into the ambulance and thus we were set to embark on a six-hour drive to the university hospital in Maracaibo. The ambulance had no air conditioning, and we were not allowed to roll down the windows. It was incredibly hot, and we wanted to keep the ambulance ventilated to reduce the risk of infection as we were crammed together. Regardless of this, our protests were ignored. After an hour or so into the drive, the ambulance suddenly stopped and pulled into a dirt road where we couldn't see where we were. We asked why we were stopping and what was going on but were ignored. We then asked if we could open the door to get some air in and we were told, in a very threatening tone, that no one was allowed to get off the ambulance or open the door. The soldiers ended up getting off the ambulance, leaving us alone.

After some time, they returned with other soldiers and a doctor, who told me I had to take another COVID-19 test, which made me nervous. I took the test and was left in the ambulance again. After some time they all came back and told me I had to do yet another test. This was the fourth test I had taken in the day. I was nervous as I didn't know what the test was for, where I was or what was going to happen. After a couple more minutes, they returned one last time. They told me to get out of the ambulance and to take my stuff with me, as well as the woman I was travelling with. After we got out of the ambulance, I kept asking where we were, but I was ignored. I couldn't recognize my surroundings as it was very dark, and I had never been in that state before. We entered this massive place and were received by the Colonel who had lied to my parents about my situation and had faked my allegedly positive results. He told us to take off the hazard suits and that we were going to spend the night in the military base called Fuerte Mara which is in Paraguaipoa.

Once we got to the waiting room (where we ended up sleeping in) we met the General who explained the whole situation. He had asked for my tests to be retaken and that both of my tests had been negative. Finally, he told me that I would be able to reunite with my dad and uncle the next day. We spent the night at that military base and a very kind Sergeant gave us dinner and stayed with us until we felt safer and more comfortable as it was filled with troops, tanks, and helicopters, which intimidated us. The next morning there was a power out in the region, all phone lines were down, and I couldn't communicate with my dad to let him know we were delayed as we had to fill the tank of the car we were taking. This was an important detour because time was of the essence as the permits to leave the state that my dad and uncle had filed for had an expiration time. Hence, we had to leave Zulia (the state we were in) before five in the afternoon. After filling the tank, we went on our way. Halfway to Palia Negra, which was the meeting point, we were stopped by a soldier in Río Limon and were told we could not pass, even though we had the right permits. The soldier kept asking if I had been in Colombia and if so that I should give them some café Valdez (very popular Colombian coffee) if I had any on me. I only had my backpack which was filled with basic essential things such as my personal documents. After a while they reluctantly let us go.

We finally made it to Palia Negra, where I was able to reunite, teary-eyed, with my dad and uncle. We made it out of the state in time and spent the night in Sanare, a city in another state, on our way back to Caracas. We had an amazing meal and I slept soundly for the first time in nearly three days. The next day we were able to finish the drive to Caracas safely. Later on, I had to resolve some issues regarding my passport as I hadn't been able to get it stamped on leaving Colombia and entering Venezuela; thus, I had

to open a file with the Colombian government to inform them of my departure from the country, as it wasn't registered in the system. At that point, I was just relieved and happy to be home, as none of us thought this trip would have been as complicated as it turned out to be. I'm eternally grateful for my family, my friend's family who treated me as one of their own and General Gonzalez, who has since sadly passed away from COVID-19, for having some fatherly empathy and helping us in what seemed like an impossible situation. Finally, these experiences and stories are unique to each person and completely different. Nevertheless, my story is one of the millions of stories regarding the border and I know I was one of the lucky ones.

Conclusion

During my time at the border, I was able to listen to various perspectives from people who were crossing the border, including both young and elderly people who were either fleeing or trying to go back home. I also interacted with soldiers on both sides of the border who hold very different views regardless of their proximity. One of the people I met was a young Venezuelan man who had originally left the country to look for a better future; he lived and worked in Colombia but was returning to help his family cope with the struggles of the pandemic. I also met a Venezuelan soldier with whom I had multiple conversations throughout my stay at the border. He held firm to his pride in how they were handling the situation better than their neighbours. When asked how he knew this to be true, he had no actual answer. There were lots of other people including grandmothers and little children. All of those who leave and enter the country for various reasons have had different experiences and motives. One example is the humanitarian crisis as there is chronic poverty with "severe food and medical shortages alongside inadequate and repressive government response" (Venezuela's Humanitarian Crisis, 2016).

I believe this experience has made me stronger. It has helped me explore new perspectives and forced me to grow as a person. Nonetheless, I do not wish for anyone to go through this, as it was a distressing and scarring experience. I have also learned many things, such as that the complexities of the political world, which are sometimes overlooked from day-to-day routines, have a harsher impact than previously thought. Even though globalisation has enabled multiple pursuits and connections between countries. The impact of states can be seen by how globalised the pandemic was and thus affected all corners of the world. This also brings up the debate of states and their roles in preventing individuals to cross and move freely within their borders, which limits freedom, as is the case of any refugee fleeing their countries. However, in this scenario, millions of

people didn't have the freedom to return to their own countries. Which raises the question, where do you go when you can't go home?

A lot of these issues are the reason I decided to study Politics and International Relations. I wish to help not only my country, but others so that they may not go through the same turmoil. Through my own experience, I wish to bring awareness to many issues, especially the ones faced on the border, which has become an everyday issue in the last years. Nonetheless, it has worsened throughout the pandemic but was cast aside as there were bigger issues at hand. There are accusations of human rights violations and coercion on behalf of the military on the border who are profiting and taking advantage of people in desperate situations. I believe this experience translates to bigger issues shared around the world.

The pandemic has changed and reshaped the world in many ways but particularly historically and politically. This can be seen especially with the outpouring of people fleeing Venezuela in search of a better future due to the ongoing economic and humanitarian crisis which is due to the political turmoil and the current authoritarian regime. I wish to shine a light on these stories of border crossings and the impact they hold, as well as bring awareness to some of the issues faced in my home country.

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PART II

GEOPOLITICS AND GLOBAL POWERS

7

THE EAGLE, THE BEAR AND THE DRAGON: A NEW MULTIPOLAR COLD WAR

Karlis Starks

Abstract

The world is at the precipice of a new international order split between the increasingly rival global superpowers, but how did we get here? For many, these changes might echo the beginning of the Cold War, which encompassed a large part of the history of international relations. The decline in US soft power emboldens the actions of other states and their own pursuit of an international sphere of influence. These massive changes in global politics, combined with the rapid advancement of military technology and tactics create a situation, where the possibility of a new type of multipolar world order is increasingly plausible. This article analyses both the history and political shifts of our multipolar world to conclude with the idea of an emerging second Cold War and possible perceptions around it.

Introduction

The war in Ukraine took many people by surprise: a conflict of such scale has been unprecedented in Europe since the end of the Cold War; but with the increasing tensions between Western states and the Russian Federation (Russia), a new iron curtain is falling over Europe, not this time constructed from concrete walls and barriers, but with separated digital spaces and information bubbles. Some analysts such as Serhii Plokhy (2022) and Jonathan Masters (2022) have even argued that this is the most intense time since the Cold War. With the power of the People's Republic of China and Russia's resurgence in the global theatre, a new "Fourth World" is emerging, one with its own allegiances and conflicts, whilst at the same time un-aligned to the main global powers and unhindered by the underdevelopment that plagued the Third World during the 20th century. In this article, I will examine how the world is rapidly changing into a new multipolar world order, by analysing the changes in both warfare and foreign relations between states. Will the world become a battleground between the Russia, China and the United States, or is nothing going to change, and our lives will continue as before?

Theory and Concepts

The first question to ask when dealing with the topic of the possibility of a future cold war is to determine whether or not war has become obsolete. Since the beginning of security studies in the field of international relations, theorists such as Mary Kaldor (1999) and Tarak Barakawi (2004) have analysed the ever-changing characteristics of war. Until the end of the Cold War, the field was dominated by realist thinkers who focused on the actions of states and their inherent preparation for war through the security dilemma. After the Cold War - the military standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union, involving indirect military action between the states – ended, liberal thinkers such as John Mueller became increasingly prominent with his proposal that, because of international institutions, global trade and democratisation, war has become more or less obsolete (Mueller, 2021). After the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on 9/11, realist theories of war being part of human nature and geopolitics rose to prominence again, creating a new clash with liberal thinkers over the future of geopolitics.

When analysing war and conflict, it is necessary first to define what "war" and "conflict" are, because these seemingly obvious terms are actually quite contested not only between realist and liberal theorists but also between Marxists and constructivists, who look at the inevitability of conflict and focus on the relationship between warfare and different social factors and viewpoints. The more realist authors hold the position already made by classical theorists around war such as Carl von Clausewitz, who defines warfare as 'an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will' (Clausewitz and Graham, 2000, p.90). This type of thinking around war compels authors to think of conflict first and foremost as a political action, carried out between states, and which usually entails the total submission of the defeated side. Thinkers such as Siniša Malešević, on the other hand, consider the liberal view on warfare in politics with the main emphasis on many new ways to consider war. Such new perspectives have led to the idea of "new war": conflicts which tend to be smaller in scale and more regional. This approach allows for detailed ways of violence to be considered as conflict; for example, the conflicts in the Congo and Angola are prime examples of wars with both state and non-state networks (Malešević, 2008). Many scholars who debate this topic have their own definition of what conflict is, so for the sake of this article, I have combined the ideas of what "war" is to acknowledge that the main goal of a conflict is to force the will on one side by the other whilst at the same time utilising the idea that warfare occurs in smaller, regional contexts as well. By basing our definition of the war on this combination of ideas, we can agree on what war is and that it clearly has not disappeared from the world, using the wars in Ukraine and Yemen as an example.

Secondly, I wanted to bring attention to what this paper describes as the Third World and what are its implications. During the Cold War, the world was theoretically split into three "worlds": The First World, involving mostly western states politically and strategically aligned with the United States, The Second World, which was the counterpart of the First World and consisted of Warsaw pact countries and states loyal to the Soviet Union. The Third World, however, has always been a bit vaguer in its classification, but usually was described as all the states which were not allied with either of the global superpowers. Nowadays the term has shifted to a description of states (mainly in the global south) which also usually have a presumption of being a developing country. Now, with the possibility of a Cold War between three superpowers and the development of many Third World states, the "trio of worlds" seems to have become archaic and disregards factors of economy and security. It is still possible to use the terms, First and Second World to the West and Russia's sphere of influence respectively while stating that China does not have a "world" of its own as it does not yet have a real sphere of influence of its own. What this paper proposes is a new term called "The Fourth World" which would refer to states that have a development level similar to that of the First and Second World and which maintain a position of constant neutrality with either of the powers. This could encompass countries such as Singapore or Vietnam. These Fourth World countries differ from many states of the Third World by being stable countries which do not have the risk of conflict. Using precisely defined terms should provide a more precise understanding of the subject.

Foreign Policy and Conflict, "The Clash of Titans"

The Cold War ended in 1991 not with nuclear war, as many theorists had expected, but with a metaphorical explosion of democratic and ethnocentric movements. For the next two decades, the world experienced an era of unprecedented peace, where the amount of casualties and conflicts drastically dropped. The beginning of the end of this era could be considered as the speech given by Vladimir Putin at the Munich Security Conference in 2007, which set out the foreign policy of the Russian Federation in the years to come. Here, Putin criticised what he called the United States' monopolistic dominance in global relations and its 'almost uncontained hyper use of force in international relations' (Shanker and Landler, 2007). Afterwards, he alluded to a promise made by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) to never expand its influence eastward. Even though such an agreement never really took place, implicating such a treaty gives Russia the ability to justify any hostile international action as a defensive measure against so-called Western aggression, a tool Putin has used constantly in recent years. Putin also

publicly opposed plans for the US missile shield in Europe and allegedly presented President George W. Bush with a counterproposal on 7 June 2007 which was declined.[1] Russia suspended its participation in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe on 11 December 2007 arguing 'The treaty, signed at the time of the Cold War, has ceased to respond to modern European realities and to meet our security interests."[2]

Soon after this conference the Georgian War began, a costly, but short war which was the first tell-tale sign of Russia's new strategy against the West, a war that not only the Georgians but also the Western world was not prepared for. This war showed the world how unready for a conflict the West really is, with EU states and NATO members unable to form a coherent and meaningful response in time to have any impact. This conflict ended with a decisive Russian victory and was a symbol of what would happen to a state that decided to leave the Russian sphere of influence in favour of the West (Emerson, 2008). The West was outraged by the attack on its potential future ally and loudly condemned Russia for its actions, but there were no real consequences: trade and fuel exports continued to flow between both sides and NATO still even included Russia as a potential future ally. This lack of response emboldened the Kremlin to take even more brazen actions such as assassinations of Russian nationals in foreign countries (like the assassination of Alexander Litvinenko, a British-naturalised Russian defector and former officer of the Russian Federal Security Service) or large military exercises on the borders of NATO countries. This culminated in the second large-scale action which was the annexation of Crimea, as well as the creation of the Peoples Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk in Ukraine.

The Russian actions in Ukraine began after 'The Revolution of Dignity', also known as the *Maidan* Revolution, which took place in Ukraine in February 2014. This followed the Euromaidan protests, when deadly clashes between protesters and the security forces in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv culminated in the ousting of elected pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovych and the overthrow of the Ukrainian government (Marples, 2020). Not wanting to lose another ex-Warsaw pact country and its naval bases to the West, Russia decided to swiftly annex the territories it deemed necessary, and in doing so also send a clear threat to the Ukrainian people that any further move towards the West will end in further bloodshed. This is the moment where the West lost hope in Russia as a future ally, a notion that had begun during Yeltsin's presidency and showed a lot of promise at that time. Relations between the "Eagle" and the "Bear" had now reached a point which a lot of people never expected to see again: north-eastern

[1] Press Conference following the end of the G8 Summit, 2007.
[2] "Russia Suspends Participation in CFE Treaty" Radio Free Europe 2007.

European countries such as Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia rapidly increased their defence spending and other large western countries created new battlegroups to guard the alliance's eastern flank.

At this moment Russia pulled back a bit and switched its concentration away from Europe and toward potential allies in the global sphere. The first and most easy one to partner with was Bashar al-Assad, the dictator of Syria. At this time Bashar was somewhat losing the Syrian civil war, as large expanses of territory were in the hands of either anti-government rebels or the Islamic State. Since the West condemned Bashar and helped the rebel movements, the Syrian government needed to get foreign support from somewhere which is where Russia comes in. With its superior air force and artillery, Russia engaged in a brutal air campaign targeting any meaningful sites in rebel-held territories. This air campaign destroyed many of the largest cities of Syria and killed hundreds of civilians, but it ensured Assad a victory in the civil war and made a new ally for Russia. At the same time Russia engaged in supporting movements or countries in Africa, for instance, by sending Russian forces to train and support the government in the Central African Republic, orchestrating a coup in Burkina Faso, and installing a pro-Russian government. By these means, Russia was expanding its sphere of influence, similarly to during the Cold war. The last and most cumulative action was the current invasion of Ukraine, the end result of years of preparation from the Kremlin's side and finally showing the West that Russia is regaining its sphere of influence. Even though it appears that Russia underestimated the resistance of the Ukrainian people as well as the unity in the response from the West, the dice has been cast and now there is no way to turn back. The ongoing plethora of devastating packages of sanctions damages the Russian economy and its digital space, but also creates a situation, where Russia, just like China, can grow its own internal economic and digital sphere, thus creating a new digital iron curtain. Whether or not the current economic sanctions will destroy Russia as we know it is unclear, but what is clear is that relations between Russia and the West will never be the same.

Whilst most of the attention spearheaded by the West is going towards Russia and its history of rivalry with the US and its Western allies, there is another power that has gained traction in the past decades. China has had a cosy place in geopolitical history since the mid-20th century, with states constantly importing goods manufactured in China, thus creating a very powerful deterrent against any action opposing Chinese geopolitical plans. Even if relations with Russia had been tense in the history between these two powers, they have increasingly become more and more supportive of each other. One of the possibilities for this is that both states are authoritarian in how they conduct themselves domestically and

internationally, so it is speculated that both need each other to justify their actions on the international stage to ensure no large-scale backlash from the rest of the world. But where did China's power come from?

The region which encompasses the modern-day state of China has had a rocky history. During the Qing Dynasty, China experienced the rapid collapse of its role as the dominant power in Asia; replaced by the Japanese Empire, it began to fall back in technological advancements with the rest of the world and when Western empires came to colonise, the middle kingdom could do little about it (Cheek, 2004). What followed in the years afterwards was effectively the disintegration of a Chinese state. The Qing Empire disintegrated into fragmented factions, each with their own agenda and loyalties. This period only realistically came to an end during the Second World War, when the Communist and Nationalist movements fought together against the Japanese invasion. The end of the war saw civil war between the two Chinese powers, culminating in the creation of what we now know as the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan.[33] After this period of turmoil, China went into a period of rapid industrialisation which, combined with its exploding population, allowed it to become the major manufacturing power in the world.

China's history of rivalry with Western states grew during the Cold War with the PRC staunchly allied to the Soviet Union which helped it fight not only the Korean war, but also funded socialist movements all over Asia to combat Western efforts to influence these states. For instance, China was one of the largest suppliers of weapons to Vietnam during the war, before attempting to invade Vietnam themselves. Soon after, Sino-Soviet relations soured and the states were no longer effectively close allies, but with the collapse of the Soviet Union, China was still effectively considered an unfriendly state to western or democratic interests. For the next two decades, besides a few altercations about the status of Hong Kong and Tibet, China has taken a relatively neutral position: it does not interfere in US interests and the US does not interfere with Chinese interests.

This position, both politically and socially, started to shift in the years 2014-17 when not only was the existence of Uyghur concentration camps discovered by the international community, but also China began a campaign of island-building in the South China sea to establish dominance in southeast Asia. China also engaged in various cyber-attacks against Western countries, mainly the United States, which was initially considered an unprecedented move in state history. When the Taliban

[3] Also known as the Republic of China due to the fact that Taiwan was the place to where most of the Nationalist movement emigrated to after being pushed out of the mainland by the PRC.

took over Afghanistan after the US military pull-out in 2021, they declared China as one of its closest allies, which does implicate how China is using covert tactics to undermine Western efforts across the world. There have also been cases where China has begun a version of "modern colonisation" in Africa by investing in east-African countries in a way that they become reliant on Chinese money and security, thus falling under their sphere of influence. All this shows that China is increasingly coming onto the world stage and establishing a sphere of control of its own, possibly even surpassing the United States and Russia in the future. With the invasion of Ukraine, it is speculated that China is maintaining neutrality in the matter knowing that an invasion like this in a way justifies a possible Chinese invasion of Taiwan, a move that they have alluded to for the past few years. Seeing how events between the Eagle and the Dragon are unfolding, it is quite easy to speculate that they are headed on a collision course in the near future, but currently China has a long way to go to militarily catch up to the United States and its allies (Robinson and Shambaugh, 2006).

Whilst it is always quite simple to see the relations and actions between the US and its potential rivals, it is also apparent that the relations between Russia and China are of utmost importance if the chance of a new world order is to be realised. The Bear and The Dragon have always had a rocky relationship throughout history. During most of medieval history, Russia and China did not ever really interact with each other, the only cases being with distant traders venturing along the silk road. Even though interactions were scarce, they were constantly eying each other for any sort of transgression coming from the opposite side. The first real interactions came during the reign of the Qing Dynasty in the 17th century, during which the relatively new Russian Empire was advancing eastwards; when they reached Manchuria, the Chinese tried to push any settlers out. These small conflicts culminated in the Treaty of Nerchinsk, which solidified the borders between the two empires and created a period of uneasy peace. The relations were cold until the emergence of communism in China, which the Soviet Union heavily supported, creating a strong bond of partnership between these two powers. All this came to an end during the Sino-Soviet split in 1961, where the Soviet Union and PRC had different views on ideological teaching and foreign policy. This split worsened with the Soviet support of Vietnam during the Chinese invasion, only further antagonising relations between the two states. With this tension, the centuries-old border disputes returned to this region, with both sides even engaging in a border war in 1969. From that point onward the relations between the two states had completely soured and there was speculation of an all-out war between the two. After the Cold war, the relations between the two states settled down a bit and communication returned. Even if relations were nominal during the rule of Russian President Yeltsin, new cooperative deals

were formalised which would create the beginning of a longstanding partnership between the two powers.

The relationship between the two states achieved a new high during the rule of the current Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has increasingly promoted cooperation. In 2001, close relations between the two countries were formalised with the *Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation*, a twenty-year strategic, economic, and controversially implicit military treaty (Peace Agreements Database, 2022). For modern relations between China and Russia, it is important to realise how much they matter to each other on the geopolitical stage. Since both are powerful and authoritarian states, they can use the actions of each other for their own gain as justifications for their foreign policy. As mentioned, China may use Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a justification to invade Taiwan. Although China and Russia currently enjoy the best relations they have had since the late 1950s, they have no formal alliance, and since both powers seem to show an indication of wanting to expand their spheres of influence they might become potential rivals once again. Russia does not have any more realistic options to expand west which means they have to confront China in an effort to gain some manner of control in Asia, thus possibly pushing both powers at odds once again.

War never changes or ever-changing war?

As the famous Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu once said: 'The nature of war is constant change'; such words ring true when looking at how far military advancement has gone in the past decade. Suicide drones, robotic combat vehicles, tools and laser-guided missiles are only a small part of the military advancements of recent years, changing the ways wars are fought. One of the most prevalent and noteworthy advancements, which has been in constant use in the war in Ukraine is cyber warfare. Although not entirely new, the magnitude of employing hackers to combat each other's influence in Ukraine has kept a lot of military analysts profoundly interested. With the hacking of radio stations, news agencies and even government websites, cyberattacks are a powerful new way to cripple a state's digital infrastructure from a relatively safe position. Whilst the cyberattacks carried out on Russia by Ukrainian hackers are quite overt and very direct, larger state-sponsored cyber warfare is a lot different. The US and China have been locked in a constant digital confrontation between each other for the past few decades with both states constantly having to defend themselves from each other's attacks. The main difference in the case of these attacks is that they are covert enough for them to be plausibly deniable from the state's standpoint, which allows them to evade prosecution for such action.

Another covert strategy utilised by states waging war against each other is the use of private military companies/contractors (PMC), which are notoriously hard to pin down or investigate. Known for being unaccountable for the war crimes they commit, PMCs are the perfect tool for doing a powerful state's "dirty work": efficiency has become a ubiquitous phenomenon in today's world (de Groot and Regilme, 2021). Individuals, states, international organisations as well as privately-owned companies are attempting to achieve the best outcomes possible without mis-spending their time or money, and this is where PMCs come in. From the war in Iraq, where the US utilised a PMC organisation then known as a Blackwater, to the current war in Ukraine and the Russian use of the Wagner group, mercenary contractors are used by states to guard officials and military installations, train the local army and police forces, as well as carry out assassinations, kidnappings, and other legally dubious military actions. The Warsaw Institute wrote about PMCs:

> *With the use of private military companies come strained ties within state actors, while those being politically and economically weak are closely tied to players outside. There is also much room left for illegal missions as well as those lacking a democratic mandate. In the future, the use of private military force will expose deeper rifts in society and between states, between the rich and the poor. So could it serve as a catalyst for military involvement while perhaps leading to conflict escalation and impairing any controlling mechanisms of the executive power… The privatised military industry boasts a huge potential for information warfare campaign — and it could be used by state coalitions to solve their transnational problems comprehensively, whether they touch upon issues like migration, demography, or climate change (Pałka, 2020).*

These types of organisations have grown in popularity in recent years and present many new questions as to how modern conflicts are being fought and the responsibilities state government hold over such organisations; at the same time, because of the lack of accountability and their ability to switch uniforms to not seem affiliated with a state, they pose new and grave concerns over the laws of war and how they apply in modern times. Due to the dubious nature of PMC operations, many of these companies can be registered or based in Fourth World countries, which only benefit from the economic boost these companies bring. This also creates somewhat of a tension between Fourth World and Third World states since many of these developing countries view their neighbours as collaborators for the same colonial actions that decimated their countries years before. Another strategy, which has returned from the Cold War is the use of organising coups and creating hybrid threats such as Russia has done in eastern Europe, by covertly sponsoring dissent in Western-aligned nations with the use of corruptible politicians and separatist movements.

These developments have changed the way wars can be fought, creating a system where states are less and less inclined to officially combat their opponents, preferring more covert tactics, which receive less political pushback and thus encourage states to continue to use them more often. Tactics like these allow states to be a lot more aggressive in their foreign policy and can already be seen across the world from the Central African Republic, where Russia is utilising covert tactics to ensure an allegiance in the generally Western-oriented continent to countries like Iraq, where US PMCs are being used to ensure maintenance of the order established by them in the past decade. The increasing use unt of PMCs indicates the growing levels of tensions between the great powers and edges us ever so closer to an all-out war. If a new Cold War really is emerging, it can almost certainly be said that military contractors are going to be involved in conflicts worldwide, a process which has begun already in the Ukraine where Russia is already utilising the Wagner group to commit potential war crimes with plausible deniability.

The precipice of the point of no return

The other large-scale change in the world, which draws us ever nearer to a new Cold War, comes from the new way dominant world powers utilise their soft power and foreign policy to ensure their political will. With the slow decline in US soft power in the global sphere (increasing criticism of US politics and the polarisation of society in many Western powers) and the hindrance of its military size by its own domestic policies, states such as Russia and China have increasingly geared their actions in foreign affairs toward the extension of their power in the international sphere. The first example of this can be seen in the states surrounding the Russian Federation. Even ten years ago, actions such as the war in Ukraine would be unthinkable, but now, with the US getting increasingly bogged down in internal issues for a vast array of reasons from digitalisation to faults in democracy, the Kremlin, Russia's main governing body, senses an opportunity to expand their influence and once again return to major power status.

Based on analysis by the Institute for the Study of War and the Financial Times, Russia is very intent on restoring the bloc of power it held during the years of the Soviet Union aiming to maintain its strategic position and control over its existing sphere of influence, which is why it is so intent on invading Ukraine, no matter the cost of resources or manpower as well as the risks of antagonising the West (Serhii Plokhy, 2022). In modern times it is no longer possible to absorb states such as Poland and the Baltic States without the risk of nuclear war, but that means that states such as Ukraine and Kazakhstan cannot fall into the Western or Chinese sphere of influence

in the eyes of the Russian government. China, on the other hand, is very intent on observing how Western states deal with Russian expansion. The US and China are very interdependent to further their economy so the actions between these two states need to be as covert as possible to mitigate any real risk. At the same time it is in China's interest to see another "Trump" get into office in order to have the legitimacy of the US diminished even more, since a polarised and indecisive US works in the favour of Chinese expansion; whilst Russia is busy with its rivalry with the West, China is slowly expanding its influence over the Third World whilst at the same time attempting to collapse the neutral stances of the Fourth World in order to garner some potential allies.

As of writing this paper, Ukraine is still holding its ground and the support of the West is only increasing. These are tense times, but the uncertainty of the future should not discourage us from analysing state actions and predicting whether a new Cold War is coming. An analysis such as this paves way for further analysis on the topic, an in-depth look at the purpose and future of the "Fourth World", what this new world order could look like and what are the security concerns of a potential three-sided world. George H.W. Bush (2009) said "The Cold War began with the Division of Europe. It can only end with Europe as whole". The Cold War ended with changes across the world that previously seemed unfathomable. With the threat of new, even more global confrontation happening in the future, the Cold War can begin with the division of the world, but it can only end when the World is whole, or there is no world left at all.

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8

BRITISH STRATEGY TOWARDS THE PERSIAN GULF IN THE POSTCOLONIAL ERA A CONTINUATION OF ITS IMPERIAL STRATEGY?

Alexandra Bukhareva

Abstract

British imperialism plays a huge role in British history and its global hegemonic position. The era of British colonialism may be officially over by the end of 20th century, but the consequences of its colonial power can still be seen in the modern world order. The Gulf was one of the key colonial possessions of the British Empire, providing Britain with strategic resources for its development. When the colonial control in this region ended, it did not mean the independence of the Gulf. Britain still possesses permanent military presence, controls political opposition, and supports the oppression of human rights in the Gulf States. Analysing these, it is fair to claim that such post-colonial British behaviour in the Gulf displays its striving for an expansion of regional hegemony and imperial power. The aim of this paper is to show how British strategy towards the Persian Gulf in the postcolonial era is simply a continuation of its imperial strategy.

Introduction

The period of British imperialism played a huge role in the formation of Britain as a hegemon in the global arena. From 1820 to 1971, Britain was a dominant power in the Gulf region, taking responsibility for the allocation of resources and economic development. Although in 1971 Britain withdrew from the Gulf, significant British interest remained in this area and despite the period of British imperialism formally ending this does not mean its imperial strategy has come to an end. According to Crowhurst 'British Imperialism was not just about establishing formal control' (2015, p.1), Britain was also a centre of the world's banking system and the world's largest investor, so territorial annexation was not a vital part establishing their power in the region. This paper claims that British strategy towards the Persian Gulf in the postcolonial era is simply a continuation of its imperial strategy. The arguments come from analysis of British post-colonial behavior in the Gulf and the specific features of British imperialism. It will argue that Britain's

imperial character can be seen in its post-colonial strategy in the Gulf in a number of ways, including its permanent military presence; control of political opposition; oppression of human rights, caused by the use of violence; and importance and security of elites. These, therefore, are the main features of post-colonial British behaviour in the Gulf, that displays its striving for an expansion of regional hegemony and imperial power.

Context

To understand the aims behind the British strategy, it is important to look at the imperial history of British influence in the region and provide a theoretical framework for British imperialism in the Persian Gulf. The initial interests of Britain to expand its influence and gain imperial power began in the 17th century when British focus was mostly directed toward trade and commerce. Nettels (1952) describes this phenomenon as 'British mercantilism', which assumed Britain acting in its own interest by putting control and restrictions on the infrastructure and economies of its colonies. One of the first British colonies were the territories of America, where the reason for the expansion was that 'Small holdings inspired the colonists to work; their labor expanded production; and increased production enlarged English commerce' (Nettels, 1952, p.107). The reason this is considered as mercantilism is because the resulting trade was easier to control by the state than trade with foreign countries. From the late 17th century into the 18th century, British expansion to the New World caused British settlers to migrate to the islands of the West Indies (Barbados and Jamaica), where sugar production was eventually monopolized by the British elites. There, the majority of population were African slaves, where 'extractive institutions were constructed to exploit their labour', so the working class was politically and economically marginalised (Lange, Mahoney & Vom Hau, 2006, p.1428). The construction of colonial administrations took place in these colonies over the 18th century, which was parallel to the expansion of British Empire.

In the 19th century, 'Britain actively laboured to cement a foothold in the Gulf by interjecting herself in the rival politics of the Arab sheikhdoms' (Farah, 1996, p.176). Through this time, the Gulf region was important for Britain for the strategic defense of India, as the protection of its established trade-routes to the East was significant. British imperialism in the Persian Gulf throughout the 19th century could also be justified by a fear of enemies, that could 'destabilize British power in India' which was the greatest imperial possession of Britain at that time (Crouzet, 2015). In fact, British intentions in the Persian Gulf were a subject of a constant change because, as Onley claims, before WW1, the Persian Gulf's importance to Britain was all about 'maintaining peace and

stability, protecting British ships and subjects, securing the route to India, and excluding rival imperial powers from establishing a presence in the region' (Onley, 2009, p.13). Then, in the inter-war period, British officials saw their power as an opportunity to establish new facilities (airfields, RAF stations, a Royal Navy base) and expand businesses, while the discovery of oil after the WW2 promoted further dependency on Arabian oil and investment.

Nevertheless, it wouldn't be fair to claim that British power didn't face any act of rebellion against its influence, as in the period between 1950s-1960s, Arab nationalists and communists pressured the British control to end, by domestically and internationally challenging British hegemony in the Gulf. Arab nationalists, who supported anti-imperial and pro-communistic movements, were distancing from Britain to counter Soviet influence, because Britain and the US were implementing policies to prevent the spread of communism in this area. There were many reasons for Britain to cease its control and withdraw from the region, which scholars argue over, including economic reasons, for example fiscal crises and the devaluation of sterling, caused by the 'denial of oil from the Middle East helped finish off sterling as a prominent trading and reserve currency' (Smith, 2016, p.329); political reasons, as the Labour Party won the election in 1964 and returned to power, which facilitated the withdrawal process; and increase of orders of arms in this area. After British imperial influence in the Gulf ceased to exist, it did not necessarily mean a disappearance of the dependency. As Owen concluded (1972), arguing on the case of Bahrain, British withdrawal didn't necessarily mean that the independence was gained. Initially, it was more of a neo-colonial influence, rather than colonial, as, Go (2015, p.1) puts it, the concept of "colonialism" refers to 'the direct political control of a society and its people by a foreign ruling state, while "neo-colonialism" is the continued exercise of political or economic influence over a society in the absence of formal political control'. Britain acted like a "protector", with the Gulf like a protégé. In this case, the protector (Britain) considered such land (Gulf territory), to be a "dependency" rather than a part of a sheikhdom, and the protector usually left the governing of the dependency to the local ruler or tribal leader who had submitted to their authority, meaning that a part of independent self-regulation remained. According to Onley (2009), there is still a strong continuity from the British era to the present. This is because the relations established under British imperial rule imposed many interconnections between Britain and the Gulf region. Despite differences in the contemporary imperial strategy, it is still present in British policy towards the Persian Gulf.

Military Presence

Analysing the current British presence in the Gulf, there are clear signs of a permanent military presence that was established to secure the flow of resources and to possess an assertive position in the region. These resources are a major source of a country's development and a source of power, wealth, and energy, which emphasises its strategic importance. The military presence was one of the key features of British imperialism. From the middle of the 19th century, 'the dominant British position over the region was enforced by a naval military presence commanded by the Senior Naval Officer in the Gulf' (Allday, 2014, p.1). A permanent military presence was key to holding power, protecting resources, and ensuing that no other global power could claim hegemony in the region. Similarly, nowadays there are new and enlarged bases in countries such as Dubai, Oman, and Bahrain that 'will enable the UK to present a more assertive position in the region, and to safeguard the all-important outward flow of gas and oil' (Raphael & St. John, 2016, p.6). One of these bases is a new British naval base in Bahrain that was built in 2018. The first UK permanent military base in the Middle East was placed in the port of Mina Salman and, officially, 'the UK Naval Support Facility was being established to ensure maritime security and to combat piracy and terrorism' (The Middle East Journal, 2018, p.479). Nevertheless, it was concluded by the UK Defence Secretary Williamson, that this naval base will help Britain tackle the growing threats to British nation wherever they are across the globe (Stubley, 2018). Moreover, General Chris Deverell described this naval base in Bahrain as much more permanent, emphasising the permanent state of the British military control (Harb, 2018).

Another example is the military presence in Oman, where in September 2020, Ben Wallace, the current Defence Secretary, announced a plan to invest £23.8m to expand Britain's army and navy bases (Miller, 2020). This base will be sited in the Omani desert as a location for the training of arms and military machinery. In addition to that was the new 'training area' used for tank firing practice. This strong British military presence is conditioned by close military ties between Britain and Oman, as Oman's Sultan has 91 UK troops on loan, that are stationed at 16 sites, which are directly run by the British military or intelligence agencies. Any disagreement or insult towards the Sultan is prohibited by law in Oman, and while the Sultan continues to support the construction of such bases, a permanent British military power can freely grow there. Britain considered nationalism and democracy as a threat to the expansion of its power and in a similar way, these military bases in the Gulf would protect the free flow of commerce and resources, safeguarding the economy, and at the same time projecting British power over the region. It also increases British private wealth, as it used to do during the imperial times.

Military training

British military presence in the Gulf grows every day and as well as military bases, there are huge arms exports and military training conducted in the territory, which helps to stem any opposition to British growth of power by minimising political resistance. The export of arms from the UK to the Persian Gulf was vital for maintaining the military-industrial capacity needed for projection of the global power, however, they were also used to fight any kind of opposition (Wearing, 2017, p.178). During imperial times, nationalist movements in the colonies were not a rarity, but they were usually suppressed by the coloniser, which was the reason why Imperial Britain existed for so long, as all the rebellions were easily suppressed and didn't threaten the spread of imperial power.

One of the post-colonial cases that need to be considered is the revolution in Iran (1978-1979) and the following Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988). For Britain, there was a 'threat to neighbouring states offered by the nature of the revolution in Iran, which was totally against the British political interests in the region' (Çavusoglu, 2018, p.53). Iran is rich in natural resources, which is why Britain strategically needed to maintain good relationship with this country, as these natural resources could be used as a fuel for development. Being the fourth producer of oil in the world, Iran was strategically important for Britain, as one third of its annual output of 10 million tons was used for the Royal Navy (M.B., 1994, p.1197). The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, together with the pipe-lines, trans-Iranian railway and access to ports of Khorramshahr bring a crucial part of the crude oil from the oilfields. At the same time, behaving in its own interest, Britain knew it needed to isolate Iran from the Gulf states to prevent potential political influence; Britain couldn't lose good relationships with either side of the conflict. The influence of the Iranian revolution (which, in its nature, was directed towards anti-western influence) in the Gulf states meant the goal of the British state was to act to isolate Iran from them. This isolation was done by 'manipulating the Gulf States against Iran', warning the Gulf States against the potential Iranian threat to their regime security and 'keeping insecurity of the Gulf States under the presumed Iran threat (by sectarianization) for maintaining their security dependencies to the West' (Çavusoglu, 2018, p.60).

The duplicity of British strategy can be clearly seen in the fact that during the Iran-Iraq war, Britain armed both sides, and 'sent millions of pounds-worth of tank barrels and tank engines to Iran' (Curtis, 2019). Millions of pounds were also spent on arms exports and military training to control the riots in other Gulf countries, including Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain. 'Hundreds of licenses for assault rifles, sniper rifles and other guns some of which have been used to suppress protests and assassinate

government critics' (Raphael & St. John, 2016, p.15). Military training was also conducted in Bahrain in the use of such arms, even though they were being used to suppress the democratic protests. That is how the military control and limitation of opposition movements proved the British were acting as an imperial power even after the end of the formal empire: only controlling opposition and fighting every barrier will allow the expansion of British power, especially increasing its political influence.

Violation of human rights

The military control and Britain's actions towards the maintenance of its power in the Gulf region showed that Britain prioritised the protection of resources over human rights, which resulted in severe acts of violence and human rights oppression. Wagner (2018, p.231) concludes 'to say that violence played a central part in Britain's imperial history is not to add much to the sum of knowledge.' Violent means and physical coercion have always been a feature of maintaining imperial control, even though Britain itself may claim otherwise, 'Our [British] security and justice work reflect our commitments to strengthen and uphold the record of the United Kingdom as a defender and promoter of human rights and democracy' (Raphael & St. John, 2016, p.7). The opposite is true as there are still direct actions of violence from Britain, which abandons any pretence of support for human rights. In fact, Britain supplied arms, tear gas, and irritant ammunition to suppress the protests, and at the same time justifies the usage of such arms in the Gulf territories because these protests are giving 'extraordinary provocation' to the authorities (Raphael & St. John, 2016, p.10). These protests, which were supported by Britain (directly or by the provision of financial means) are the evidence of severe cruelty and violation of human rights that it supported. The use of extra ammunition is aimed against the civilians, who decided to oppose the government, but which was not profitable for Britain.

In addition, there is also considerable proof that ammunition provided by UK companies was used against the protesters in Bahrain (Raphael & St. John, 2016, p.12), which undermine the idea of human rights protection claimed by Britain. This includes the birdshot and cartridges found at protest sites. In addition, the UK has sent around 100 officers and 43 cadets to Sandhurst since the uprisings in 2011 (Raphael & St. John, 2016, p.8). Other proof includes the record of deaths and injuries in Manama, which exceeds 100, traceable back to an official export of an arsenal of deadly crowd control weapons (Beaumont & Booth, 2011). Adi sees these actions as a 'continuation of the unequal relationship between Britain and many countries in Africa, Asia and elsewhere' and as a 'resurrection of the values of the empire-builders of the nineteenth century who justified their

colonial conquests, massacres and plunder with the talk about their 'civilizing mission'' (Adi, 2012, p.2). That is why for modern Britain, the security over the resources of the Gulf, that maintains British economic stability and power, is more important than the wellbeing of people in the Gulf.

Role of elites

Despite the permanent military presence, fight with opposition, and violation of human rights, there was another feature of post-colonial Britain in the Gulf, that displays the continuation of the imperial strategy – its relations with elites. While people in the Gulf territory might be suffering from discrimination, low living standards and human rights violations, there is always someone living in this area who benefits from it. This was common to the colonial period, where the existence of such elites contributed to a freer flow of resources from the periphery and, at the same time, resulted in corruption (Angeles & Neanidis, 2010). These elites helped to increase their private wealth and control the colonies due to the material gains and protection they personally receive. A similar system of elites still exists in today's relations between Britain and the Gulf. The control of opposition is primarily necessary for Britain as it might be a threat to British relationships with the elites in the Gulf. The domination of the British Empire over this region 'have endured and continues to be available for Anglo-Arabian elites to take advantage of' (Blakeley & Raphael, 2017, p.261). Considering the economic side, Britain has a 'leading role in providing financial services to Gulf elites that have often run their nation's finances in a way that resembles a family business.' (Blakeley & Raphael, 2017, p.181). That is why British foreign policy is mostly focused to serve the interests of the elites, rather than the national interest. According to Curtis (2016, p.254), 'British policy in the Middle East is based on propping up repressive elites that support the West's business and military interests.' The support for these elites is also conditioned by the fact that Britain does not need other democratic governments to become popular, because that would decrease its power in the region.

Conclusion

To sum up, it has been argued in this paper that Britain has built its relations with the Gulf states by the means of imperial dominance that started in 17th century. Nevertheless, despite the formal end of its empire, the imperial strategy can still be seen in the British post-colonial approach to the region of the Persian Gulf. Analysis of British modern presence in the Gulf shows that there are some features that are parallel to the

behaviour of an active empire. Firstly, there is a permanent military presence that Britain is establishing in the territory of the Gulf, which is a clear sign of the British desire for regional hegemony and geopolitical protection. These military bases do not just safeguard the natural resources that contribute to the development of British commerce but also project British power in the global arena. Secondly, through the means of arms export and military training, Britain continues to increase its political control in the Gulf. Suppression of protests and opposition was one of the features of its imperial past that clearly projects British imperial strategy and shows the duality of its behavior, as Britain claims to be a big upholder of democracy on the global stage, and at the same time suppresses the opinions that goes against its personal interests. It is rather a result of a disrespect to the freedom of speech, than a democratic feature. Thirdly, the military power that Britain possesses results in the direct violation of human rights. This shows that economic and political power is prioritised over the basic rights of people in the region. Fourthly, the existence of close relations with the elites of the Gulf is similarly reminiscent of past British imperial behavior, as its post-colonial policies are continually focused to serve its own interests. Even though the formal empire has come to an end, and there are no official colonies and colonisers, still, the imperial past that connected Britain and the Gulf continues to impact their contemporary relations. It is this which allows us to support the claim that British strategy toward the Persian Gulf in the postcolonial era is simply a continuation of its imperial strategy.

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9

COOPERATION AND CONFLICT IN US-IRAN RELATIONS

Arvin Khosroshahi

Abstract

The turbulent relationship between Iran and the US has been at the heart of the crisis in the Middle East since 1979. With the revolution in Iran, the US lost one of its most important and reliable allies in the region. The Middle East since then has gone through political calamities involving invasions, the civil wars in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, and the rise and fall of ISIS. This article argues that the oil industry has been fundamental to the development and integration of Iran into global capitalism and continues to support its standing as a regional power. It has also been the Achilles' heel of the country, making the economy dependent on energy and subject to transformations in the global order, not least that of the US. The current conflict between the US and Iran, including the sanctions that have been in force since the Revolution, has exposed this vulnerability.

Introduction

Iran's relations with the US have ebbed and flowed since 1945, and with the Revolution it went from being a friend and ally to an enemy. Indeed, it was not just the 1979 Revolution that reshaped the geopolitics of the region; the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which took place the same year, also radically altered the strategic equation.

In 1980, the 1969 'Nixon Doctrine', under which the US had provided ultimate security guarantees to its allies, calling upon them to 'assume the primary responsibility' for their own defense, was replaced by the 'Carter Doctrine', which emphasised the use of 'any means necessary, including military force' to protect US interests in the Persian Gulf Region (PGR).[11] This required expanding the US's regional alliances, and the other Gulf countries, in part threatened by the Iranian Revolution, allowed the US to establish some forty military bases on their soil.

The US occupation of Iraq in 2003 and the recent civil wars in Syria and Yemen put the entire PGR in a state of continuing crisis, with Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Israel, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Qatar involved

[1] See Brzezinski, 1983 and Litwak, 1986.

in the ongoing conflict. Competition between different super- and regional powers in the PGR has gone to a different scale.

The economic transition of Iran since the 1970s has been remarkable, as it has moved from being on the margins of the global political economy to being an influential state in the world system.[2] A key to this transition has been the role of energy, involving both local and global actors, states and international companies.

Since the discovery of oil in Iran in 1908, countries in the region have become producers in the international division of labour and importers of a range of commodities, including military equipment. While in the early part of the 20th century Britain and France dominated the Middle East, later, and especially since the end of the Cold War, the US has been the undisputed superpower. In this role, it has relied on allies in the region, such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and, until 1979, Iran.

The growing importance of energy, and especially income from it, has encouraged some of the states in the region to seek to extend their influence beyond their borders (Hannieh, 2011). This has effectively made them sub-imperialist powers collaborating closely with imperialist ones.[3] Their regional power depended on their collaboration with the US in particular. This has not meant complete subservience to imperialist forces as Iran played one superpower against another since 1979; mostly unsuccessfully Iran has tried to use its relationships with China and Russia to fend off the US threat.

Until 1979, the balance of power and relative stability favoured the US, but this changed with the Iranian revolution. The Iranian state, for all its particularity as rule under the control of clerics, has had to operate within the modern global system (Morady, 1994). Whilst the economic structure remains capitalist, mainly oil-based, the political superstructure has changed under theocracy: *The Valayat Faqigh* (the guardianship of the jurisconsult) is the supreme leader, the highest religious and political authority. The Assembly of Experts (*Majles-e Khobregan* or *Majles-e Khebregan-e Rahbari)*[4] formed in 1979 and in theory, had the power to elect and remove the Supreme Leader; in practice the matter is far more complex (Ansari, 2005). Other institutions, the Guardian Council, *Shora-*

[2] See Halliday, 1979, Katouzian, 1981 and Maloney, 2015.
[3] Sub-imperialism emerges out of capitalist development in the centres and peripheries. With the transformation of capitalism over time, new centres of accumulation emerge, with different states aspiring to have political and military influence in vital geopolitical location in the world (Rowthorn, 1971; Callinicos, 2009).
[4] Made up of 68 Islamic scholars, in charge of choosing and supervising the activities of the Supreme Leader. See http://www.khobregan.ir/FA/Default.html

ye Negahban, approves or rejects candidates for the parliament and presidency, also monitoring legislation. In 1988, the Expediency Council, or *Majma Tashkise Maslahate Nezam*, was established to mediate disputes between the Guardian Council and the parliament.[5]

These institutions, especially, the Office of the Supreme Leader have their own advisers and own budget to use to influence domestic, regional, and foreign policy. The Islamist leaders, under considerable pressure from popular movements, portrayed themselves as anti-imperialist, especially with regard to the US and its previous role in Iran. They claimed that Iran was allied to neither the East nor the West, and that its representation of Islam made it fundamentally different from either (Khomeini, 1981; 1985).

In the early years after the Revolution, Iran appeared as a challenger to the role in the region of both the Soviet Union and the US, as well as other Muslim countries. The Islamists in power supported Hamas in Palestine, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and later Syria and the Houthi in Yemen, as well as developing close relations with Cuba and Venezuela.

Caught between resentment of the West and the need for oil income, the regime was unable to find an economic solution to Iran's dependency on exporting energy and importing raw materials including food. Providentially, the seizure of the US embassy in 1979[6] provided an opportunity for the regime to divert attention from its failings, using this to rally people against the 'Great Satan'. The US responded by stopping the shipment of $300 million worth of spare parts that Iran had purchased and, within weeks, froze $10 billion in Iranian assets (Mostyn, 2001, p.62).

This article provides a framework for understanding the current conflict between Iran and the US, by contextualising it historically, in terms of the transition to capitalism and Iran's subsequent rise as a regional power, which were made possible in part by the oil industry. As such it covers Iran's growing integration into global capitalism before the Revolution; its ambitions and role as a regional power; and the conflicts and cooperation with the US.

[5] See http://www.maslehat.ir

[6] A group of Iranian students who were followers of Khomeini occupied the US embassy in Tehran in November 1979, taking hostage about 62 US citizens and 36 citizens of other nationalities. They were not released until January 1981.

Energy and Imperialism

The history of Western intervention in Iran during the 20th century does much to explain the political behaviour of post-revolutionary Iran. The country's history has been marked by repeated interventions - by the UK, the Soviet Union, and the US, including the coup organized by the US and the UK against the elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh (1882-1967) in 1953 (Abrahamian, 2013). The US backed the Shah until he was overthrown in 1979 and with the growing international importance of oil, Iran accrued windfall income and embarked on a course of capitalist development in the 1960s and 1970s, based on near-total dependence on a single resource. In a short time, income from energy transformed the economy and society, integrating it into global capitalism (Hanieh, 2011). This, however, has taken an uneven form, as there are persistent differences in both the degree and rate of economic development between different sectors and geographical regions, with some parts becoming much more advanced and others advancing much more slowly.

The economic effects of oil in Iran at the beginning of the 20th century were negligible but the royalties paid to Iran by Britain rose steadily in subsequent decades. A total of £335,000 in royalties were received from 1911-1919; this figure rose to £10.5m during the 1920s and continued rising reaching £26.9m p/ in the 1930s. Crucially, between 1911 and 1951, only 10 per cent of the value of oil exports stayed in Iran: the rest was repatriated to international oil companies (Statistical Centre of Iran, 1974, p.163).

Oil was thus one of the key factors behind the Allied occupation of Iran that began in 1941 and lasted for sixteen years. Iran's location and its huge oil reserves made it highly important to the great powers (Abrahamian, 1982). Iran was occupied by British, American, and Soviet forces, and during the war the country became an important conduit for the supply of food and ammunition to Soviet troops. The US was to emerge from the war as the world's strongest military force, and as its interests in the area grew, it exerted greater influence on Iran. This was clearly expressed by the words of then-US Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who in 1943 told President Franklin D. Roosevelt:

> *… from a more directly selfish point of view it is to our interest that no great power be established on the Persian Gulf opposite the important American petroleum development in Saudi Arabia (Bill, 1988, p.19).*

The growing power of the Soviet Union and anti-imperialist struggles in the region drove the US government to ensure that its oil companies played a big role in Iran. This led to the rapid penetration of Iranian oil into the

world's energy markets, particularly in Europe, where the international oil companies were aided by US loans.

The growing anti-colonisation movements around the world were an encouragement to nationalist groups and organisations in Iran; they emerged as a force as they became aware that the nation's possession of such a vital resource could enable a measure of national economic independence. The move to nationalise oil led by Prime Minister Mosadegh was met with the UK-led boycott of Iranian oil (Odell, 1986). The British government even considered military intervention against Iran but was dissuaded by the need to give priority to the serious political crisis then in Egypt, where British interests were also severely threatened.

The UK's boycott of Iranian oil was effective because oil-consuming countries were able to obtain oil from other Gulf countries. The shortfall in Iran's oil production was offset by increased production by Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. The resultant severe economic pressure on Iran led to a virtual standstill in its oil operations and exports. Britain also refused to pay any royalties owed to Iran prior to nationalization, also freezing its sterling assets. This loss of oil revenue meant a drop in foreign exchange and growing economic hardship, which posed a threat to Mosaddegh's government. Aiming to balance the budget, it increased taxation, which had a direct effect on the large section of population already experiencing financial difficulties. The government tried to postpone salary payments to state employees, borrow from the private sector, and print money to better manage the economy.

Mosaddegh tried every political avenue to overcome these pressures, including attempting to gain US support in order to balance the power of the British and Soviets. The US at first played a mediating role between Iran and Britain in an effort to bolster its own influence, but this did not last. President Truman never actively supported Mosaddegh, and President Eisenhower subsequently began covert activities against Iran. Under the influence of Britain, the US administration came to believe that Mosaddegh's persistence in pursuing nationalization would adversely affect Western interests in the oil-rich PGR and beyond. The result of these political concerns was that the US joined in the British boycott of Iranian oil (Bill, 1988), and in early 1953, both powers seized the opportunity presented by the increasing domestic economic turmoil in Iran, and with help from a splinter group moved to oust Mosaddegh.[7]

[7] Mosaddegh, like Gandhi and Nasser, became a great national hero in Iran and remains so today.

Integration to Capitalism

Considering Iran's geopolitical importance, the US ensured the Shah had the necessary support to re-establish his regime following Mossaddegh's fall. His first priority was to rebuild Iran's state and institutions, especially the army. US support was vital to the Shah for both economic and political reasons: it assisted him in reorganising the national economy and challenging the Soviet threat.

Oil exports resumed in the early 1950s and the oil revenues enabled the Iranian state to finance a planned development programme. A rapid increase in oil revenues after 1954, along with military and economic aid from the US, enabled the state to promote capitalist development. The influence of oil to the economy became more noticeable from the early 1960s. Production increased to over 1.2 million barrels per day in 1961 (twice as much as in pre-nationalisation days) and, by 1974, oil production had reached 6 million barrels per day. Oil income rose from 77 per cent in 1964 to 90 per cent of Iran's total exports by 1973. This facilitated significant land reform and industrialisation as government total expenditure increased by 260 per cent in the period 1967-1973, then by a further 200 per cent between 1973 and 1979 (Morady, 1994). As in other newly industrializing countries, such as South Korea, Mexico, and Brazil, the state was the key actor in directing the course of development, while the new wealth meant little pressure for political change (Harris, 1986).

Within a short period, the new industries began to utilise state-of-the-art technology. Aside from the petrochemical industry, which was the most developed sector in Iran, there was development of steel mills, a car and truck industry, and electronics assembly plants. Sustained growth in the economy is evidenced by the increasing share of manufacturing in GNP from 57.8 billion rials in 1963 to 684.3 billion in 1978, an almost 12-fold increase (Statistical Centre of Iran, 1979). The state was a powerful player in the process of industrial development, both through direct intervention in the economy and the provision of funding. Oil income was a double-edged sword, promoting both cooperation and conflict between the state and the private sector.

By 1979, Iran's economic development was totally dependent on the global economy. The windfall oil revenue accrued largely to the state, in the form of 'unearned' income (Mahdavi, 1970). It provided the state with expanded economic and political power and meant, in turn, that the ruling elite functioned as 'guardians of the status quo'. The spectacular oil revenues after the 1973-74 OPEC price increase not only helped the Shah consolidate his regime, but also created more instability, with an overheating economy and high inflation (Cottam, 1979, p.12). In fact,

Iran became the world's most important producer of oil, with its average oil production reaching nearly 6 million barrels a day. However, during the Revolution oil workers were among those taking strike action, bringing the industry to a halt. It was this that helped bring down the Shah's regime.

The political role of energy was visible during the Revolution, when the 30,000 workers in the industry brought the country to a standstill. This proved extremely important for both economic and political reasons, as workers in other sectors struck in support of the revolutionaries. Without that, the outcome could have been different. What followed were more strikes. Including takeovers in factories, offices, hospitals, and universities. This became a common pattern as the Revolution unfolded (Bayat, 1987).

Continuity and Change: Defiance and Compliance

The Islamic state was at first staunchly anti-imperialist, influenced by the revolutionary zeal that had brought it so spectacularly to power. Given the history of British and American economic imperialism, it was often said by participants in the Revolution that its aims included being 'against Westernisation', something viewed as the main enemy of the Iranian people; in economic terms, though this made very little sense given that Iran's economy was so dependent on the West.

With the economy integrated into global capitalism, Iran's theocratic leaders were faced with the legacy of the old regime's socio-economic and political programmes. Politically, the Revolution was the outcome of the anti-Shah protests, involving a broad-based social movement that had united a wide range of classes and groups including merchants, the religious establishment, and the working and middle classes. This alliance comprised a diversity of social interests that were temporarily unified by opposition to the Shah and his economic and political programme.

With new state institutions emerging after 1979, and with the Islamists adopting various approaches and styles, the impasse with the US was complicated. The new constitution provided for an elected president, but the Supreme Leader was assigned the power to make the final decisions on the direction of Iran's foreign policy. In practice, decisions about such vital issues as relations with the US turned into a political saga, partly because of the role of competing forces and ideological factors. The Supreme Leader had the complex and difficult task of keeping a balance between these various factions.

The theocracy was itself caught up in, and divided by, multiple power struggles involving various economic and political interests. At stake were

not only foreign policy questions but also policy changes that could have a profound impact on domestic politics and the future character of the Islamic Republic as a whole. Some powerful institutions, such as the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Office of the Supreme Leader, tended to see any changes in US policy on Iran as having a direct impact on their own economic and political interests. Thus, Iran's relationship with the US was shaky due to the political costs to different political interests. The ferocity of the factional disputes that often took place was a product of the diversity of opinion amongst the Islamists, who also occupied various social and political positions within the Iranian state.

Despite wide variations in rhetoric and tactics, since the 1979 Revolution, both Iran and the US have consistently pursued diplomatic engagement of various kinds, regardless of the political situation at the time in the respective countries. The US administrations have had to face the complicated conundrum of how to deal with Iran, and have done so in terms ranging from isolation, to threats, to conciliation (Ramazni, 2013).

In the early years, the Islamist leaders, under pressure from the revolutionary movement, broke off relations with Israel, left the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO), which included Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, and the UK, and recognized the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). The Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) then came as a welcome opportunity for the US and its allies to weaken both of these regional powers, especially the threat presented by a revolutionary Iran to conservative Gulf states like Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. Iraq's invasion of Iran in September 1980 was seen as ending the perceived threat of the spread of revolution. Iraq had the support of Arab states in the region, the US, and some Iranian ex-generals in exile. Zbigniew Brzezinski, the US National Security Adviser, declared in April 1980, 'We see no fundamental incompatibility of interests between the United States and Iraq' (Gordon, 1981, p.154).

US support for Saddam Hussein in the Iran-Iraq War pushed Iran close to Syria and the Shi'a party Hezbollah in Lebanon. Damascus is only an hour's drive from the Lebanese border and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. Militarily weak, Syria valued having Iran as an ally, though this alliance was not based on any historical or cultural affinities, but purely on pragmatic political considerations.

During the eight years of its war with Iraq, Iran was able to regain its initial losses of land and even to annex part of Iraqi territory. This was not acceptable to the US. The *Los Angeles Times* summed up the common American reaction to the possibility of an Iranian victory, saying that 'the global equilibrium would be fundamentally tilted against Western

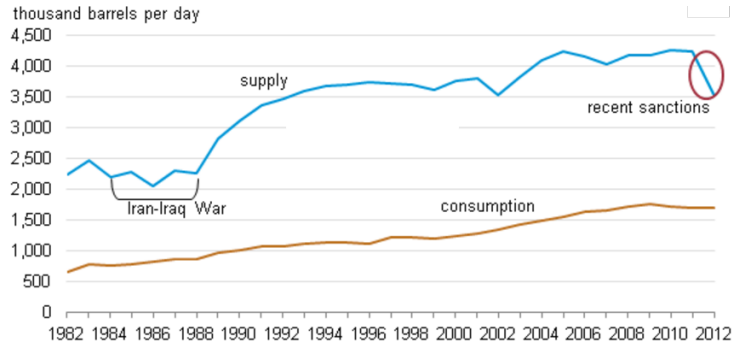
interests' (27 July 1988). This prospect much alarmed both the West and Iran's neighbours, and the situation worsened along with the conflict in Lebanon and the ensuing hostage crisis after Hezbollah kidnapped several Western workers. In late 1986, Ronald Reagan, tried to appease Iran by offering it much-needed arms in exchange for the release of the hostages in Lebanon, an effort later dubbed 'Irangate.' The US attempted to bring a section of Iran's ruling elite closer to the West; Rafsanjani and others had willingly met with US representatives in Tehran, including the leading figure in 'Irangate,' Colonel Oliver North.

A radical Iranian Islamist group led by the cleric Mehdi Hashemi revealed the 'Irangate' affair in a Lebanese magazine in 1986. For this, Hashemi and several associates were arrested, later executed. The 'Irangate' scenario showed the Islamic Republic's leaders' willingness to be pragmatic. As a result of the affair, members of the government came under heavy attack and Khomeini himself had to intervene to silence them. According to Rafsanjani, Khomeini knew about the deal and could have decided to arrest Robert McFarlane, Reagan's National Security Adviser, 'but such action did not fit the Imam's mind, so we decided to let the gentlemen leave in good health' (*Kayhan-e Havaie*, 24 December 1986).

The price of oil fell dramatically from the height of $30 per barrel to just $10 in 1986 before settling at around $18 in 1987. In 1979, Iran was exporting 3 million barrels per day, which declined to an average 1.2 million in 1988 (Statistical Centre of Iran, 1991). Saudi Arabia, an important ally of both the West and Iraq, was less reliant on its own huge revenues from oil and therefore able to use oil as a political weapon, flooding the market to keep prices at a low level.[8] Lower oil prices impacted Iran with a sharp drop in its oil revenues, by 59 per cent in the first half of 1986 as compared to the first six months of 1985. In comparison, over the same period Iraq's revenues fell by 30 per cent, Saudi Arabia's by 24 per cent, and Kuwait's by only 8 per cent (Renner, 1988, 194). This external pressure on Iran was compounded by a combination of Washington's continued support for Iraq and an increased number of US fleets in the PGR (Sick, 1988, 22).

[8] Saudi Arabia was producing around 5 million barrels per day in 1986, an increase from 3.5 million in1985. See Central Bank of Iran, 1987.

Iran's Total Supply and Consumption of Oil (1982-2012)



Source: Energy Information Administration

The fall in oil prices was the result of deliberate political manoeuvering by countries in region led by Saudi Arabia, and it was supported by the US. The impact on Iran was severe and led many within the ruling elites to reconsider continuing the war.

While the call to war was made in the name of Islam so too was the call to end the war and pursue various economic and political reforms. In fact, rather than being merely based on religious principles these changes arose from a set of material conditions including Iran's regional and global circumstances. Although radical forces within the Islamic Republic advocated the continuation of the war, the dominant faction, led by Rafsanjani and supported by Khomeini, eventually called for its end. This was the beginning of a major shift in both domestic and foreign policy as the Islamic Republic established formal diplomatic ties with France and later the UK and a host of other countries. Economically, Iran opened formal talks with bankers, industrialists, and officials from various Eastern and Western countries to help in its post-war reconstruction efforts. In addition, financial and economic advisors from many countries as well as from the IMF and the World Bank were invited into the country.[9]

The ceasefire boosted the confidence of Saddam Hussein to the extent that he believed that Iraq could become a regional power. Indeed, he did not wait long before invading Kuwait, a Western ally, in 1990. This led other US allies in the region, including Saudi Arabia, to express concern about Iraq's ambitions. The US-led coalition forces, supported by Saudi

[9] Iran was in debt by around $12 billion, which constituted 8 per cent of GDP. See Central Bank of Iran (2005).

financing,[10] undertook the first 'Gulf War',[11] which resulted in massive destruction to Iraq. This was a blessing for the Islamic Republic, as it removed not only one of its biggest challengers in the PGR, but also installed as the new Iraqi government the Shi'a opposition influenced by Iran.

The Islamic Republic's approach has changed since the war, as a more moderate line has emerged towards regional neighbours, primarily in response to unavoidable local and global economic and political conditions. The then Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, (currently an advisor to Ayatollah Khamenei), pointed out that:

> *[the] objective of the slogan ['Neither East nor West'] is the negation of alien domination and not a snapping of communication … Nowadays, negating political relations with other countries means negating the identity of the countries (cited in Ramazani, 1990, p.61).*

In order to counterbalance the US threat, Tehran sought to make use of regional and international organisations that were not entirely subject to Western domination, including the Non-aligned Movement, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC)[12], the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC),[13] the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO),[14] the D-8 organisation for Economic Cooperation, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO),[15] and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA).[16]

The US policy of containing Iran by presenting it as a 'rogue state,' or part of the supposed 'axis of evil' proclaimed by Bush in 2002, continued sanctions, which pushed Iran towards alliances with China, India, and Russia. At the same time, the rise in global demand for energy in the first decade or so of the twenty-first century, particularly among emerging powers, (especially China and India), benefited oil-producing countries:

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[10] It is believed that Saudi Arabia provided $36 billion towards the cost of the war.
[11] The war was waged by US-led coalition forces against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.
[12] An international Islamic organization, this is an intergovernmental organization founded in 1969, which now has 57 nations as members (see http://www.oic-oci.org/)
[13] An inter-governmental organisation founded in 1965 (see http://www.opec.org /opec_web/en/)
[1414] Formed in 1985 by Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey to promote economic, technical, and cultural cooperation among member states.
[15] An inter-governmental mutual security organisation founded in Shanghai in 1996. Members include China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Uzbekistan (joined in 2001). Iran, India, Pakistan, and Mongolia are observers with the intention to join at some point in the future.
[16] An inter-governmental forum proposed by Kazakhstan's president in 1992 to promote peace, security, and stability in Asia. The organisation's members include India, Iran, China, and many Asian countries.

Iran's GDP rose from $414.06 billion in 2009 to $583.5 billion in 2011. However, with the sanctions it dropped to $385.87 in 2015 (World Bank).

Tehran's relationship with the emerging powers must be seen as the product of two important factors: first, Iran's hope that the interstate rivalries between the US, China, and Russia would pit one against the other; and second, the desire for alliance-building with countries driven by opposition to the major powers. This approach was not always fruitful.

China, Russia, and India have also used Iran as a bargaining chip to get concessions from the West, especially the US, over Taiwan, Pakistan, and now Syria. For the time being, Russia needs Iran's presence in Syria to maintain the balance of power regionally in relation to Saudi Arabia and Turkey. In fact, Iran has played a vital role on the ground in pushing ISIS from Syria. Iran is for the time being content to work with Moscow in order to achieve its regional goals. Russia is not keen to see Iranian domination in the Middle East; Putin has given repeated assurance to Israel that Russia intends to be the main actor in Syria, and not Iran.

Iran's Nuclear Program, Sanctions, and their Consequences

The Islamic Republic's need to assert its own power domestically, regionally, and globally, was a factor in the Islamic Republic's decision in the 1980s to re-start its country's nuclear development program. The development of nuclear power in Iran dates back to the 1950s, when the US provided highly-enriched uranium fuel for the country's reactors (Linzer, 2005). Twenty-five years later, Henry Kissinger, who had been Secretary of State in the Nixon and Ford administrations, publicly endorsed Iran's nuclear program, having concluded that it was for peaceful, commercial purposes.[17]

The Iran-Iraq War and continuing gestures of aggression from the US convinced the Islamic Republic's leaders that the nuclear program should be recommenced to serve as a deterrent. In the 1990s, Iran and China signed a nuclear cooperation agreement that allowed Iran to import the necessary raw materials. In 1995, Russia began to reconstruct one of the reactors at the Bushehr plant, and after years of delay, it was finally completed in 2010. Under Khatami's presidency, in a bid to gain Western trust, Iran temporarily halted uranium enrichment, asking in return for an end to the US-imposed economic sanctions. Iran was prepared to meet

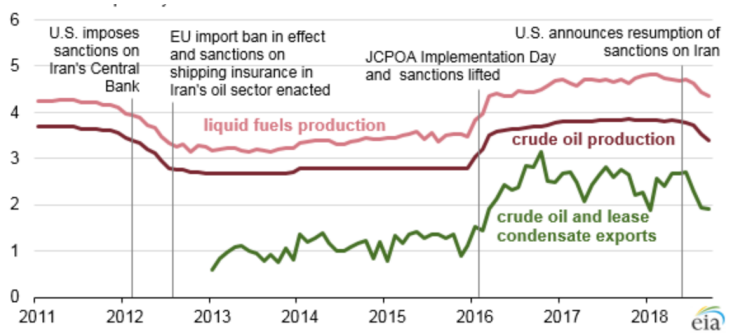
[17] See Linzer, 'Past Arguments Don't Square with Current Iran Policy,' *Washington Post*, March 27, 2005, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A3983-2005Mar26.html

with Zalmay Khalilzad, the US Ambassador to Afghanistan to negotiate on these issues, but the US refused to allow any discussion (Porter, 2006).

The failure of Iran's moderate faction to win concessions from the US strengthened the power of the regime's conservative hard-liners. In 2005 President Ahmadinejad took a hardline approach to the West, the US in particular, which responded by imposing further economic sanctions and threatened military intervention. This led Ahmadinejad like his predecessor to move Iran closer to India, Russia, China, North Korea, and radical left regimes in the Third World such as Venezuela and Cuba.

The restrictive sanctions imposed by Western governments, which targeted both Iran's energy sector and its access to the international financial system thus caused enormous problems for the nation's economy, to the point where the regime was forced to re-examine its foreign policy. In fact, the sanctions imposed by the US during Ahmadinejad's administration did not at first dramatically affect Iran's economy. The game-changer occurred when the sanctions were no longer imposed unilaterally by Western countries but were legislated for by a United Nations resolution. Consequently, Iran faced huge difficulties as its oil exports fell from over 2 million barrels a day to less than 1.5 million (Morady, 2017). Decreasing oil production and Iran's inability to earn foreign capital after 2012 were reminiscent of both the crisis following the nationalisation of the oil industry in 1950 and the situation during the 1980s Iran-Iraq war. These problems created a split within the ruling establishment.

Iran's Production and Export of Crude Oil (2011-2016)



Source: Energy Information Administration, 2018

By 2012, the Islamic Republic's oil export revenue had declined to $69 billion from $95 billion just a year previously. At this time, oil exports accounted for 80 percent of Iran's total export revenue and 50-60 percent

of government income. Sanctions also curtailed much-needed investment in the oil industry, as foreign companies cancelled many projects. Iran is a relatively inefficient user of energy and had relied on subsidies to reduce the cost of power to consumers. The doubling of Iran's population since 1979 coupled with inefficient usage caused the demand for energy to surge well beyond expectations.

According to an IMF report published in April 2014, the economic sanctions constricted Iran's economy, with real GDP declining by nearly 6 percent a year in 2012-13. Between June 2012 and February 2014, Iran experienced negative GDP growth for seven consecutive quarters.[18]

When Hassan Rouhani became President in 2013, his first priority was to stabilise Iran's economy. The energy sector was in his sights when he appointed Bijan Namdar Zangeneh (who had been Oil Minister under Khatami) to his cabinet. His plan was to bring back experienced technocrats to support and manage the ailing economy. At the same time, Rouhani urgently needed to find a way to bring an end to economic sanctions and encourage investment. Immediately after the election, he persuaded the Western powers to sit around the table and engage directly in negotiations over Iran's nuclear program.

Reconciliation

Western pronouncements on Iran's nuclear ambitions and growing economic difficulties meant Iran had to accept the US terms or face more pressure, including the threat of military intervention. The US was also concerned about influence in the region, from Turkey to Central Asia, and the oil reserves in the Caspian Sea Basin. The resistance of Iran, Russia, and China to US and Western intervention in Syria must be viewed in this context, as they all fear any further increase in US influence in the region. The US did, however, reduce its forces in the Middle East around this time as a side effect of increasing them in the Pacific (in what was known as the 'Obama pivot'). What remained in Syria and the region around Iran was a balance of power that kept the conflicting interests in check. In this respect Obama proved more cautious militarily than his predecessor Bush. As Obama put it in a speech at the West Point Military Academy, "US military action cannot be the only or even primary component of our leadership in every instance. Just because we have the best hammer does not mean that every problem is a nail" (Reuters, 19/June/2014).

[18] IMF Country Report, No. 14/93, https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2014/cr1493.pdf

In fact, Obama's government was largely concerned about the rise of China, the second biggest economy in the world and now the US's main competitor. China certainly has the potential to challenge US geopolitical and military dominance in the Asia-Pacific region, although other nations such as Japan and India have a stake in this too.

In Iran, Khamenei as Supreme Leader navigated every step of the nuclear deal. Irrespective of rhetoric, all factions were united in the belief that this would support Iran's economic integration within the global order. Finally, on 14 July 2015 Iran and the world powers in the so-called 5 + 1 (China, France, the UK, Russia, the US and Germany) reached the agreement that would be known as The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The contents of the agreement were not very clear, but it was certain that Iran's nuclear programme would be delayed for at least the next ten years. This, however, proved short-lived when President Trump announced the US withdrawal from the nuclear deal, demanding Iran's withdrawal from Syria, and the end of its support for Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. Khamenei instead accused Washington of only tolerating those who are obedient to the US power.

Trump warned of blocking access to the US market to companies that do business with Iran. Reactions in Europe included France's Finance Minister Bruno le Maire saying that the US is not 'the economic policeman of the planet' (*Financial Times*, 9 May 2018). However, in fact all the European countries have toed the US line so far, with no sign that this will change. Given the monetary value to Iran of its alliances with European countries, it is unlikely that it would be able to benefit from any rift between the US and European Union. Although the European Union itself is not one of Iran's major trading partners, it provides fuel to individual countries such as Italy, and imports, manufacturing, and transport equipment to others. A withdrawal by European companies such as Renault, Airbus, Siemens, and Total would have consequences for Iran. The US willingness to find a way to work with Iran will likely depend on the relation of global power balances including the ever-present threat of a China.

Conclusion

The still turbulent US-Iran relationship, forty years on from the revolution, shows the world system continues to be dominated by handful of advanced capitalist countries, headed by the US. The US has shown its capacity to intervene when necessary to protect its interests, to determine the outcome of a regional conflict such as the Iran/Iraq war, to invade militarily as in Afghanistan and Iraq, or by the imposition of sanctions.

The Islamic Republic has had few real choices, with its economy locked firmly within the global system and energy as its lifeline. Unable to break from this dependency, it has had to negotiate its position within the global order. Hence, the theocratic regime since the revolution has consistently adjusted to the requirements of the international system. The end of the war with Iraq, agreeing with the 5 + 1 deal and the latest embargo reflect this. Although the Islamic Republic has drawn some security from the rivalries between different powers, this has been largely unsuccessful, as current economic conditions in Iran demonstrate. Despite China's emergence as a major power, the US continues to be the undisputed power able to have its own way in the conflict with Iran at the present time.

The move towards building alliance with Iraq, Syria and Yemen, although mainly through misjudgement of the US and its ally Saudi Arabia's intervention in Iraq and Yemen has, though, provided Iran with an opportunity. For the US to change its approach to Iran, it would have to consider the renewed challenges, especially the rise of China as a great economic power. Iran took risks in negotiating the 5 + 1 deal. Rouhani's government made concerted efforts to negotiate in order to reach a deal with the US, and also in the hope of developing a better relationship with the West generally. However, Trump promoted isolation of Iran, along with closer cooperation with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Israel. It may take further efforts or more time for Iran and the US to resolve all their differences and resume proper diplomatic relations. This seems the only way forward for Iran today, given its growing economic difficulties.

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10

THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE IN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA: A GEO-ECONOMIC AND CRITICAL GEOPOLITICAL ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR VIETNAM'S REGIONAL FOREIGN POLICY

Hoàng Anh Quang Nguyễn

Toàn Thế Nguyễn

Ngọc Châm Thị Nguyễn

Abstract

Access to infrastructure funding has traditionally been a bottleneck for many developing nations around the world, especially in Mainland Southeast Asia. In the void left behind by Western powers, China has been using the art of infrastructure diplomacy to fill in that gap. This research will attempt to give a brief historical overview and analysis of China's Belt and Road Initiative and timeline in Mainland Southeast Asia. A critical geopolitical and geo-economic analysis has been conducted to understand China's objectives in the region. On the basis of Laos' geostrategic importance to Vietnamese regional security, the article will provide a re-examination of Vietnam-Laos relations.

Introduction

China has always tried to compete for influence and international status with other powers, especially with the United States, as Chinese leaders perceive that the United States is not only an ideological-political rival but also a target that needs to be overcome in terms of science, technology, and economics (Cleveland et al., 2020, p.44). Since President Xi Jinping became the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China and proposed the "Chinese Dream" in 2012, the country has aimed to become the world's leading power and achieve the "Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation" in 2049. Since then, the country has strived to promote development in all aspects, especially in economic, military, and international influence. According to the idea of power transition, it is improbable that a rising power and a dominating nation will resolve their issues amicably.

Concurrent with the development of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which was announced in 2013, China has been aggressively engaging in infrastructure diplomacy because the Chinese government considers infrastructure ties to be a priority for the BRI. In this context, Beijing's infrastructure diplomacy is gaining traction around the world, with China investing in and constructing seaports, railways, airports, bridges, electrical grids, and other critical facilities in foreign areas such as Southeast Asia, a strategic hub and a crossroads for the Maritime Silk Road. 'The use of political means for economic ends' best described China's economic diplomacy from the late 1970s, when Beijing began to implement reforms and opening-up policies under Deng Xiaoping's leadership, through the eras of Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao (Sun & Zoubir, 2015, p.907). However, since Xi Jinping's inauguration, China's foreign policy has shifted considerably. Xi's foreign policy, on the other hand, clearly differs from Deng's, as indicated by the new ideas of 'Great Power Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics' and 'New Type of Great Power Relations', as Xi is determined to infuse traditional Chinese values and morals into China's diplomacy (Wang, 2019), in addition to expanding "(the) potent nationalist vein through foreign policy" (Blackwill & Campbell, 2016, p.24).

Theoretical Framework

Critical Geopolitics

The concept of "geopolitics" was first proposed by Ó Tuathail in his 1996 publication. Critical geopolitics argues that 'geopolitics' is a much broader and more complex problem than acknowledged in orthodox geopolitics (Ó Tuathail, 1996). According to Ó Tuathail (1996), geography is not a fixed substratum, as some claim, but a historical and social form of knowledge of the earth. To consult 'geography' historically was not to view raw physical landscapes or 'nature', but to read a book. From the critical geopolitical standpoint, geography is a socially constructed concept. Intellectuals of statecraft construct ideas about places, and these ideas influence and reinforce their political behaviours and policy choices, and these ideas affect how people process their own notions of places and politics.

Ó Tuathail (1996) argued that political space and geography do not simply reveal themselves to us, or that there are no such things as "this is how the world is" and then "this is what we must do" (as orthodox geopolitics usually describes political space and geography). The dominant geopolitical knowledge actually emerged from multiple competing ideas and discourses about political space and geography and is a particular

geographically bounded cultural/political version of the truth of that political space and geography. Critical geopolitics critiques the superficial and self-interested ways in which orthodox geopolitics 'reads the world political map' by projecting its own cultural and political assumptions upon it while concealing these very assumptions

Figure 1. Types of Geopolitics

THE TYPES OF GEOPOLITICS STUDIED BY CRITICAL GEOPOLITICS

Type of Geopolitics	Object of Investigation	Problematic	Research Example
Formal Geopolitics	Geopolitical thought and the geopolitical tradition	Intellectuals, institutions and their political and cultural context	Halford Mackinder, his geopolitical theories and imperialist context
Practical Geopolitics	The everyday practice of statecraft	Practical geopolitical reasoning in foreign policy conceptualiz-ation	'Balkanism' and its influence over US foreign policy towards Bosnia
Popular Geopolitics	Popular culture, mass media, and geographical understandings	National identity and the construction of images of other peoples and places.	The role of mass media in projecting images of Bosnia into Western livingrooms
Structural Geopolitics	The contemporary geopolitical condition	Global processes, tendencies and contradictions	How globalization, informationalization and risk society condition/transform geopolitical practices

Source: Ó Tuathail (1996)

In very broad terms, critical geopolitics seeks to contextualise geopolitical figures and unravel the textual strategies they use in their writings. It argues that orthodox geopolitical utilizations of classic geopolitical figures often neglect the context within which they lived, ignore the inconsistencies in their works, and ironically utilize their arguments to close off any openness to geographical difference. Critical geopolitics, in other words, seeks to recover the geography and geopolitics of 'geopolitical thought' while opposing any glib celebration of the so-called 'timeless insights' of certain geopolitical masters (Ó Tuathail, 1996).

Geo-economics

In Blackwill & Harris' 'War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft', geo-economics is defined as:

> *The use of economic instruments to promote and defend national interests, and to produce beneficial geopolitical results; and the effects of*

> *other nations' economic actions on a country's geopolitical goals. (2016, p.20).*

It is necessary to define what is not geo-economics: (i) geo-economics is not about states pursuing economic rather than geopolitical goals; (ii) geo-economics is not about economic concerns driving foreign policy; and (iii) geo-economics is not about governments leveraging their economy to fuel a military-industrial complex.

In short, geo-economics focuses on the economic meta-dimensions of geopolitics. States that gain economic supremacy are in a better position to fulfil geopolitical aims since rivals either compromise or are compromised due to their economic dependence. Controlling geopolitical areas and chokepoints is no longer enough; major industrial sectors, markets, and supply networks must also be held. The goal of geo-economics is, ultimately, to master this new domain.

According to Blackwill & Harris (2016, pp. 33–34), the rise of geo-economics is due to three main factors: (i) the enormous expenses of contemporary warfare have reduced the effectiveness of diplomatic and military threats; (ii) while nations continue to prioritize their own security, citizens also want them to protect their economic well-being and will change governments based on the health of the economy; (iii) the globalized economy has introduced a new dimension of strategic rivalry.

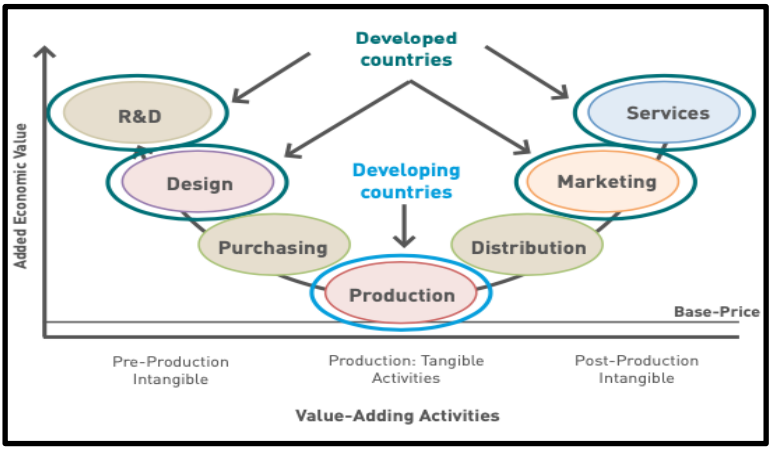
Geo-economics exists to serve larger geopolitical strategies. This assistance takes the shape of 'hard' or 'soft' economic power. 'Hard' economic power coerces and deters by threatening economic damage through embargoes, investment withdrawal, currency and stock manipulation, and other means. 'Soft power' refers to the ability to influence adversaries' actions and behaviour through enticements, structures, and linkages.

'Hard' and 'soft' economic power are not mutually incompatible; they are frequently two sides of the same coin. Both strategies necessitate a powerful and influential economy. Enticement and embargoes are ineffective if the economy is too small or unimportant to have a major impact on a competitor (Luttwak, 2000, p. 135). In general, geo-economic strategy strives for two objectives (Blackwill & Harris, 2016, pp. 28–27, 87–92): (i) the construction of a sizable economy; and (ii) the creation of a relevant economy (either by controlling vital industrial connections or by being present in significant markets).

Capital is at the core of the geo-economic strategy. Everything in geo-economic strategy revolves around building, deploying, and sustaining enterprises so that the correct arrangement of capital is in place to achieve

the strategic aim (Luttwak, 2000, pp. 128–134; Blackwill & Harris, 2016, pp. 53–58). Capital is required to invest in production and build the economy, and capital is required by enterprises to expand and preserve their market positions. Businesses in industrial sectors generate capital, but not all industrial sectors are created equal, with firms in capital-rich industries, largely services, generating far more profit and capital than others. These wealthy economic domains are required to support geo-economic strategy, but geo-economics is primarily interested in industries that have geopolitical impacts. These strategic industries include (Luttwak, 2000, p. 134): (i) scarce yet critical industrial resources such as oil, machine tools, or microchips; (ii) services that underpin the modern economy, such as communications and finance; and (iii) high-tech, high-innovation industries that generate and dominate completely new markets.

Figure 2. Smile Curve of High-Value Activities in Global Value Chains



Source: Gereffi & Fernandez-Stark, 2016, p. 14

Aside from industrial sectors, nations must also examine the value chain component of geo-economics. Looking at the value chain 'smile curve' (Figure 2), it is clear that the bottom of the 'smile,' which consists of basic, labour-intensive tasks such as production, is capital-poor (Gereffi & Fernandez-Stark, 2016, p. 13; Baldwin & Ito, 2022). In contrast, capital or knowledge-heavy 'tips' like R&D, design, marketing, and services are not only capital-rich but also possess naturally strong positions in the economy. The goal of the geo-economic strategy is to occupy these positions.

Finally, there is the concept of markets, which still largely corresponds to political borders. There are capital-rich markets, but in general, strategic

targets are chosen on strictly geopolitical grounds, either because they deliver significant political benefits or because they can neutralise the resistance of a broader political bloc.

The Rise of China and the Chinese Dream

The Hundred Years of Humiliation

The "Century of Humiliation," also known as the "Hundred Years of National Humiliation," is a term used by Chinese scholars to describe the period of intervention and subjugation of the Qing dynasty—the last Chinese feudal regime—and the Republic of China by imperial Western powers and Japan from 1839 to 1949. Many Chinese believe that their country has been coerced into the current world order, a world order that has been constituted by the European empires (Zhao, 2015, pp. 979–981). China under the Qing Dynasty was defeated, putting an end to its regional hegemonic system known as the Tributary system and forcing China to join the Western system of international order through "unequal" treaties that it had no other way but to sign in order to survive. All the defeats, unequal treaties, territorial disputes, and offences against the national pride of the Chinese people have reinforced China's conception of an unjust world order created and dominated by Western powers. At the same time, China is a victim of imperialism (Jain, 2019, pp. 157–179).

The Rise of China

Since the open-door reformation of its economy in 1979, China has profoundly transformed and achieved many great successes. The purchasing power parity (PPP) of China's economy has overtaken the United States since 2013, becoming the world's largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) (Purdie, 2019). Furthermore, it is predicted that China will achieve a GDP per capita level on par with the leading developed countries by 2030 (Baláž et al., 2019, p. 52). In 2020, when the global economy faced many difficulties due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, China's economy still maintained its growth and reached a GDP of more than approximately $14.72 trillion, equivalent to more than approximately 70.3% of the size of the United States' economy (approximately $20.99 trillion) (World Bank, 2020). And more surprisingly, in 2021, the Chinese GDP reached approximately $17.45 trillion while the equivalent figure for the United States was approximately $22,99 trillion, meaning that the Chinese economy in 2021 was equivalent to approximately 75.9% of the size of the United States' economy (International Monetary Fund, 2022). The above figures are the basis for

positive predictions that China's economy might overtake the United States' position by 2050.

China's competition with the United States is not only in terms of the economy but also militarily (Bartholomew et al., 2019). Its tremendous and continuous economic development has allowed China to rapidly modernise its armed forces. At the Chinese Communist Party Congress in 2017, President Xi Jinping stated that the goal of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) is to basically complete its modernization by 2035 and become a world-leading armed force by 2049, with the ability to approach or even surpass that of the United States to create a favourable international environment for China's rejuvenation (The National Institute for Defense Studies, 2021, p. 2). It should be noted that, in the early 2000s, in general, China had a military force of enormous size but was still perceived to be incompetent, lacking organisation, and not quite ready for modern warfare (Office of The Secretary of Defense, 2020, pp. i–ii). However, after 20 years, according to the Office of The Secretary of Defense (2020, pp. i–ii), the Chinese military has made remarkable progress in all aspects and has surpassed the United States in some specific aspects. China's defence spending in 2020 will be more than $197 billion (Funaiole et al., 2020). In addition to military upgrades and modernization, more notably, there are restructuring efforts to improve the overall capabilities and combat readiness of the PLA, as tensions with the United States continue to build up.

One crucial factor that could affect the outcome of the hypothetical confrontation between the United States and China is the technology race. China has recently been focusing on developing new revolutionary technology clusters that combine high-speed internet and 5G telecommunications networks, artificial intelligence (AI), and robotics, which all have high economic and military applicability. China's research and development investment has been speculated to soon surpass the United States in 2025 (Chik, 2021). The country's next-generation artificial intelligence development plan asserts that China will become a major power in artificial intelligence (AI) by 2030 (Hass, 2021, pp. 24–25). It can be seen that Beijing is trying to become a "cyber superpower," enabling China to change the power correlation with the leading countries of the current international order, typically the United States (Cleveland et al., 2020, pp. 48–52).

The Chinese Dream

China's belief in its own continuous and rapid development in all aspects while "Western democracies" are "constantly facing socio-political crises"

has boosted confidence and optimism among many Chinese leaders about the transfer of power from the West to the East and the beginning of the projected Asian Century (Studwell, 2013). According to Westad et al. (2012, p. 52), for three decades, China's foreign policy has been determined by a single overarching imperative: the pursuit of fast domestic economic growth and development. This has put a priority on maintaining stable external ties, particularly with the United States, while avoiding international entanglements and letting others "shoulder the burdens of global leadership." However, this approach has shifted considerably under the Presidency of Xi Jinping. Under President Xi Jinping, has replaced Deng Xiaoping's strategy of "hide your strength, bide your time" with the strategy of 'Major Country Diplomacy'. (Ding & Panda, 2021, p. 216).

China's dramatic rise has drawn concern from the United States and Japan. In the 2020–2021 national security and defence reports, both the United States and Japan acknowledge China as the top challenge to their national interests and position (Haines, 2021, pp. 6–9; The National Institute for Defense Studies, 2021), as well as China's ambition to become the world's leading power (Cleveland et al., 2020, p. 31). The Chinese Dream was first mentioned by President Xi Jinping as: "National rejuvenation is the dream of all Chinese people" at the exhibition "The Road to Rejuvenation" in November 2012 (Xi, 2014/2022, pp. 58–60). The above goal can be understood as a declaration of a nationalistic aspiration to restore China's past strength, prosperity, and hegemonic position in the region. This is a concept or political tactic that has been used by previous Chinese leaders such as Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, or even Hu Jintao to recall the Hundred Years of Humiliation under the Qing Dynasty (Wang, 2014, pp. 1–2). Chinese foreign policy under President Xi, focuses on igniting Chinese national pride based on an uncompromising stance on territorial disputes and building a military power to enable China's claims (Hass, 2021, p. 20).

In order to accomplish the Chinese Dream, China has implemented a series of new plans and policies toward comprehensive development, such as the plan Made in China 2025 to upgrade the manufacturing base of China and allow it to be autonomous in the supply chain of high-tech manufacturing; the plan to complete the modernization of the PLA by 2035 and make the PLA the world's leading military force; or the establishment of new international institutions led by China, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to counter the similar international institutions of the West. The most notable at present is the "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) launched in 2013 to connect China with global markets and resources to ensure its stable development. When completed in 2049, the BRI will connect China with more than 100

countries, thereby establishing a China-led economic region as well as marking the beginning of the projected Asian Century (Caron, 2021, p. 43).

President Xi Jinping's goal of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has created different opinions on how the Chinese Dream should be interpreted. While there are voices concerning this might be an attempt by China to regain its position as a regional hegemon in the past or as an incitement to Chinese nationalism in order to consolidate the CCP's power and leadership, many mainland Chinese scholars seem to be more supportive and optimistic towards the Chinese dream (Zhao, 2013, pp. 1–14). Some define President Xi's Chinese Dream as a reminder of the pride in Confucian culture as well as representing a new Chinese foreign philosophy, characterised by two elements: (i) condemnation of the use of force to resolve conflicts and (ii) promotion of harmony in resolving differences (Chai & Chai, 2013, pp. 95–96). Other scholars consider the Chinese dream to be a new featured ideology of the Chinese Communist Party aimed at strengthening its political legitimacy and even encouraging national pride, thus mobilising support from the masses (Wang, 2014, p. 11).

The Belt and Road Initiative

Infrastructure is a broad-reaching, transdisciplinary word. As Larkin (2013, p. 329) defines it as 'matter that enables the movement of other matter', it refers to both tangible public capital, such as roads, trains, and airports, and non-material power, which may be utilised to exercise geographical, temporal, social, ideational, and circulatory force (Star, 1999, pp. 379–382; Nijkamp, 2000, p. 88; Larkin, 2013, pp. 329–336). Infrastructure is essentially the blood vessel of a country that help maintain a country's economy and ensure the efficient flow of goods and people.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a transcontinental development project launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013 and has since become his signature foreign policy initiative. President Xi called the BRI "the project of the century," which could help China extend its economic, political, and strategic influence across Asia and beyond. According to the Foreign Language Press (2019, pp. 4–34), the BRI is aimed at six main goals: (i) Policy coordination, (ii) Infrastructure connectivity, (iii) Unimpeded trade, (iv) Financial integration, (v) Closer people-to-people ties, (vi) Industrial cooperation. The initiative comprises two segments: the Silk Road Economic Belt, which refers to various land corridors connecting China with Southeast Asia, South Asia, West Asia, the Middle East, and

Europe; and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, which is a sea route linking Asia, Africa, and Europe.

China portrays the BRI as a project of connectivity driven by benign economic intentions that would lead to win-win outcomes for both China and partner countries. However, the perception of the BRI in foreign countries has been largely negative, with suspicions abounding that it is ultimately a tool for China to expand its economic and strategic interests at the expense of others. Such interests include: (i) exporting Chinese capital and generating higher returns on China's vast foreign exchange reserves; (ii) creating business opportunities for China's state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in overseas markets, especially in the construction and engineering sectors; (iii) exporting China's excess industrial capacity to regional markets; expanding China's export markets; and (iv) boosting the internationalisation of the renminbi (Le Corre, 2018).

The initiative, which is estimated to provide funds of up to $900 billion, would become a source of hope for countries seeking to upgrade their infrastructure systems. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), 45 Asian countries would need a total investment of $26 trillion between 2016 and 2030 to fix their infrastructure shortfall, of which two-thirds is for transport and power. However, several concerns have been raised regarding the initiative. Inside China, critics are worried about the excessive debts generated by the big-ticket BRI projects and the widespread corruption in many recipient countries. Early scholars of the BRI questioned its viability and if it would secure China's position at the centre of a regional network of manufacturing processes that would inevitably increase China's overall economic and geopolitical significance (Beeson, 2018, pp. 240–256). The sustainability of such projects will become even more questionable if China considers the projects mainly from a geopolitical perspective and neglects their commercial viability. In January 2017, rating agency Fitch observed that (as cited in Hancook, 2017): "The lack of commercial imperatives behind [BRI] projects means that it is highly uncertain whether future project returns will be sufficient to fully cover repayments to Chinese creditors."

There have also been backlashes against the BRI in different parts of the world. A major source of concern for recipient countries is the risk of falling into a "debt trap," in which their inability to repay debts will expose recipient countries to political and strategic manipulations by China, through which their political autonomy and sovereignty may be undermined. An often-cited example is the case of the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka, where the Sri Lankan government had to lease the strategic port to China for 99 years after it failed to pay back the debt to Beijing. As

Abi-Habib (2018) puts it, "The case is one of the most vivid examples of China's ambitious use of loans and aid to gain influence around the world—and of its willingness to play hardball to collect." The deal also contributed to the mounting accusations about the BRI that it "amounts to a debt trap for vulnerable countries around the world, fuelling corruption and autocratic behaviour in struggling democracies."

In sum, the Belt and Road Initiative is the key to the success of the Chinese Dream and China's rejuvenation. Despite its challenges at home and abroad, the current international situation is creating conducive conditions to accelerate the actualization of the BRI project more than ever, when too many economies are now heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the BRI is often compared to a "Marshall Plan 2.0," allowing China to tighten trade ties with other countries and strengthen its international position (Caron, 2021, p. 53). China's rise is requiring a rethinking of the nature of power and influence in the modern international order. Not only is the nature of economic organization currently raising important theoretical and practical questions about the foundation of international competition, but it is also becoming increasingly clear that national governments' power and influence are largely determined by relative shifts in the balance of economic power, as much as by more traditional strategic factors (Beeson, 2018, pp. 240–256).

A Case Study of Laos

While the BRI is crucial to China's rise, it is also a representation of a mix of challenges and opportunities for China's neighbouring countries. For different neighbouring countries of China, a variety of responses to the BRI have also been witnessed: there are nations who have been (enthusiastically) embracing economic interdependence with China through the Initiative (notably Laos and Cambodia), and vice versa, countries who are cautious towards their very large next-door neighbour's economic expansion (namely Japan). According to Pham & Ba (2021), Vietnam's attitude to the BRI has been a delicate balancing act between embracing. Vietnam is one of the earliest supporters of the BRI and a founding member of the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and remains highly cautious as many BRI projects in Vietnam pre-existed the BRI's launch and were simply rebranded or have been slow to implement.

One of the feasible explanations for Vietnam's cautious responses to China's "project of the Century," despite the geographic proximity and similarity in regime ideology - both being the last remaining communist states - is critical geopolitics. Centuries of struggle to protect national independence from the imperialist expansionism of China have had a

strong influence on shaping Vietnam's national identity, which has transformed into anti-Chinese sentiment. Using the approach of critical geopolitics, this distinguishing characteristic of Vietnam's national identity can be seen in popular geopolitics, especially the way anti-Chinese sentiment is constructed in the Vietnamese mass media and popular culture and formal geopolitics—nominally, the development and cooperation of the Vietnam-China comprehensive strategic partnership has always been depicted as Vietnam's top priority, but in practise, there are still many disputes between the two nations.

In this section, we will analyse the case of Laos as a country that has been enthusiastically embracing China's Belt and Road Initiative and the impact of such a response on Vietnam-Laos relations for two main reasons: (i) the two countries have traditionally been close allies in the modern age; and (ii) Laos has crucial importance to Vietnam's strategic and geopolitical security.

Vietnam-Laos Bilateral Relations

Throughout each historical period, Vietnam has embraced "inner peace and outer peace" (Vietnamese: *nội yên ngoại tĩnh*) as its foreign policy (Trần, 2017; Trần, 2021). Up to now, Vietnam's foreign policy has three main pillars: (i) party diplomacy, (ii) state diplomacy, and people-to-people diplomacy; (iii) creating a favourable environment for economic development; ensuring people's living standards; and enhancing the national position (Bùi, 2021; Nguyễn, 2021). With Laos, Vietnam reached a new milestone in this potential relationship by establishing bilateral diplomatic relations in 1962 (Vu Anh & Phan Anh, 2018). In more than 23 years since the Laotian government adopted the policy to encourage foreign investment (1989–2012), Vietnam has become the largest foreign investor in the country. Vietnam has invested in 429 projects in Laos with a total value of about $4.9 billion (TTXVN, 2013). By establishing bilateral relations with Laos, one of the closest neighbours not only geographically but also politically (being the only other communist state that Vietnam borders), Vietnam has partly ensured national security, sovereignty, and territorial integrity as well as national independence, specifically through events such as the Vietnam War (1964–1975), the Hồ Chí Minh Trail during the Laotian Civil War, etc. (Porter & Burton, 1990; Llewellyn et al., 2019).

From history, the economy, and politics, the relationship between Vietnam and Laos has traditionally been close (Ban Tuyên giáo Trung ương, 2017). Investment between the two countries in the region, especially Laos, is mostly focused on: (i) Economically, according to the World Integrated

Trade Solution (2019), Vietnam was the second largest trade partner with Laos, with an increase during the last 20 years, and the exports of Vietnam to Laos have increased at an annual rate of 11.4%, from $65.6 million in 2000 to $566 million in 2020 (OEC, 2020). In return, Laos exports to Vietnam were valued at $440 million. The main products that Laos exported to Vietnam were rubber (valued at $97.7 million), electricity (valued at $65.3 million), and coffee (valued at $55.6 million). The two countries are currently focusing on economic and transport connectivity projects, and cooperation in education and training remains a priority field. What can be seen as recently, Laos has been the largest recipient of Vietnam's overseas investment so far, with 209 projects totalling $5.1 billion in registered capital, and Vietnam currently ranks third among Laos' foreign investors (VNA, 2022). (ii) In politics, Vietnam and Laos signed 14 agreements spanning a wide range of cooperation during the two-day visit to the neighbouring country paid by Vietnamese President Nguyễn Xuân Phúc on August 9th, 2021 (Minh Vu, 2021; Diệp Châu, 2021), and in 2022, the two sides also agreed to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the diplomatic ties (September 5th, 1962–September 5th, 2022) and the 45th anniversary of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (July 18th, 1977–July 18th, 2022), which aims to further develop the faithful and transparent bilateral relations and promote the great friendship, special solidarity, and comprehensive cooperation between the two countries (Nhan Dan, 2022).

Laos' Geostrategic Implications

Being located in the middle of China, Thailand, and Vietnam makes it necessary for Laos to use strengthening strategies simultaneously in bilateral, regional, and multilateral relations to build a true strategic model and maintain sovereignty; and on the other hand, to play a role in coordinating and mediating regional integration (Ho, 2016; Chuyên trang Việt Lào, 2018). As the only country in Mainland Southeast Asia without access to the sea, Laos holds a special geographical position, lying in the middle and at the geostrategic crossroads of the region. Laos is also the only country that has borders with all countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS).

Not only with countries in the GMS, but Laos' relationship with other countries in the ASEAN region is also important. According to VNA (2016), although the growth rate is not outstanding compared to the member countries, the trade cooperation between Laos and China is constantly increasing every year (from about $1.3 billion in 2011 to $1.7 billion in 2012, $2.7 billion in 2013, $3.6 billion in 2014, but slipped to $2.78 billion in 2015). China is the largest trading partner of ASEAN and

the largest foreign investor in Laos. The $6.28 billion railway line between Boten and Vientiane (which connects to the Kunming–Yuxi–Hekou railway via the Yuxi–Mohan railway and will connect to the Thai Northeastern Line through Nong Khai, a city across the Mekong River from Vientiane) is part of the Belt and Road Initiative, which is expected to help Laos transform from a landlocked country to an integrated land state, thereby promoting external cooperation with other ASEAN countries and China (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Laos-China Railway



Source: Martin & Sangwongwanich (2021)

However, this often makes it difficult for Laos to try to stay out of regional disputes such as those over territorial claims in the South China Sea (in Vietnam the South China Sea is commonly referred to as "Biển Đông" which means "East Sea" in Vietnamese). In 2016, Laos took over the chair of ASEAN, in the same year, the South China Sea became an area of fierce sovereignty disputes between a number of countries in Asia: China deployed a missile rig to Woody Island (Vietnamese: Đảo Phú Lâm; Chinese: Yǒngxīng Dǎo), in the Paracel Islands (Vietnamese: Quần đảo Hoàng Sa; Chinese: Xīshā Qúndǎo) in dispute with Vietnam (Việt Hà, 2016). And according to Nikkei & Thanh Nien (2016), "Laos leans towards China in the South China Sea dispute." Due to the disproportionate development of the Mekong Sub-region, promoted by China with the help of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the area along the border with China has turned into a separate region—a trend that could permanently rift ASEAN (Trọng Nghĩa, 2011). Because it is necessary to be more rigid in actions with sovereignty over territorial waters and islands, the ASEAN Code of Conduct (CoC) has clearly expressed the desire that the CoC will be a more effective tool for contributing to peace, security, and stability in the South China Sea (Cổng thông tin điện tử tỉnh Cà Mau, 2014).

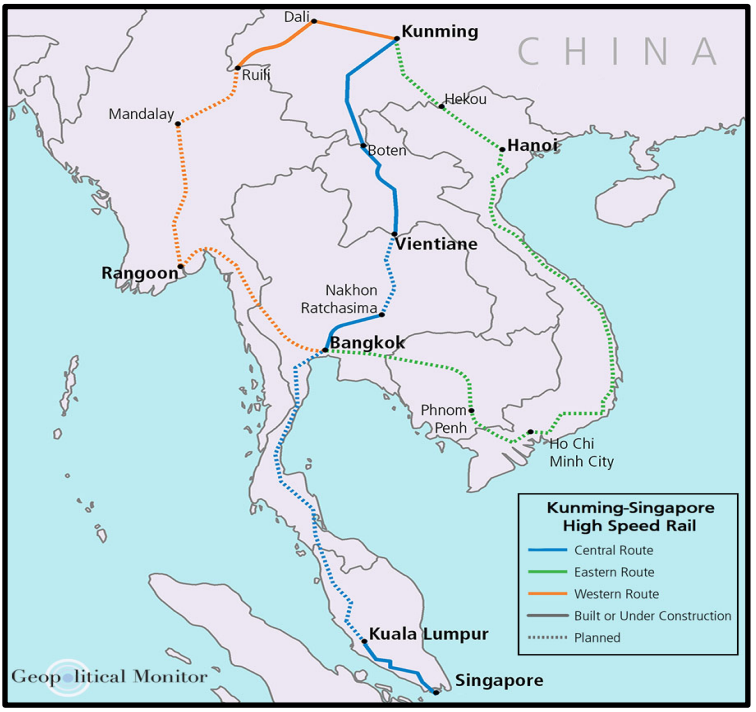
Laos' Importance to Vietnam's Strategic Security

Given the geographical relationship between Vietnam and its two mainland Southeast Asian neighbours, Laos and Cambodia were part of a 'single strategies unit' during Vietnam's two wars against outside powers. Vietnam's geography has consciously or unconsciously shaped the concept of security. Located at the edge of the Asian landmass, Vietnam's two river deltas—home to most of the Vietnamese population—are linked by a thin strip of coastal land in central Vietnam, which can be cut with relative ease. Consequently, the Vietnamese people considered the mountainous areas shared with both Cambodia and Laos as safe havens in case of outside attack, which has been a common strategy used during wars against foreign invaders (Turley, 1986/2021, p.180).

Because Vietnam is strongly linked politically with Laos and Cambodia, if these two countries fall completely within China's sphere of influence, Vietnam would be threatened politically and geographically. With China in the north, Laos in the west, and Cambodia in the southwest, all under Beijing's influence, and many parts of the South China Sea under de facto Chinese control, Vietnam's national security will be significantly compromised.

Economically, like a trade crossroads between neighbouring countries, Laos holds a potentially important trading position. The development of Laos depends on Laos' diplomacy with surrounding countries and vice versa. However, the biggest hindrance to Laos' development is a lack of infrastructure. In recent years, competition has been shown between Vietnam and China, the two countries are respectively the third and second top trading partners of Laos. The 414-kilometer railway from Vientiane (Laos' capital) to Boten (a small Laos town on the Laos-China border) - one of the Chinese-funded BRI projects in Laos - will link Laos to China's and other ASEAN member states' larger, more established markets (ASEAN), and this railway will continue to run to Singapore via Thailand and Malaysia from Kunming (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Kunming-Singapore High-Speed Rail Network



Source: Geopolitical Monitor (2017)

The Mekong River, which flows through six countries including Laos and Vietnam, with a length of about 4,800 km, plays a special role in both Laos (providing necessities of life for people such as food, drinking water, and income) and Vietnam (nourishing two key economic regions, the Mekong

Delta, the southernmost region, and the Central Highlands in the central region). Extensive hydropower construction has also happened in the Upper Mekong River Basin as part of China's development agenda. Along the mainstream of the Upper Mekong Basin, China has built 11 hydroelectric dams, two of which are huge storage dams. Another 11 dams, each having a capacity of more than 100 MW, are being planned or built. The overall capacity is anticipated to be 31,605 MW, up from 21,310 MW. The annual economic value of hydropower in China's Upper Mekong River Basin is estimated to be $4 billion (Mekong River Commission, 2019). Experts believe that due to climate change, along with the many dams that China and Laos have built upstream that draw water for agriculture, have been the causes of the occurrence of periodic droughts (Mekong River Commission, 2019; Avary & Gerin, 2022). Water levels in the Mekong now depend on the amount of water released by China (Ngoc Tai, 2022). And as a downstream country, Vietnam is affected by the cumulative effects of the hydropower project chain (Figure 5) on the mainstream, especially the harmful effects on alluvial and aquatic resources in the Mekong Delta (Phương Nhung, 2018).

Figure 5. Dams along the Mekong River



Source: Johnson & Wongcha-um (2020)

BRI Projects in Laos

Since the 2010s, China has pushed investment in Laos through projects such as the construction of the Lao National Cultural Hall and the reconstruction of Avenue Lane Xang in Vientiane, which has "transformed the socio-economic landscape of northern Laos" (Shambaugh, 2020). In 2013, China became the largest FDI investor in Laos (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2013). In 2017, China emerged as the top donor to Laos, the top investor, and the second-largest trading partner after Thailand (Xinhua, 2017). Just like Cambodia, Laos has "always looked to China more as a protector against powerful neighbours (Thailand and Vietnam) than as a threatening great power" (Stuart-Fox, 2004). Unlike the United States' Marshall Plan—the United States' financial stimulus to Western European countries after WWII in Europe—which provided constraint-free grants (Office of the Historian, 2017; Kenton, 2021), the BRI's financial terms are loan-dependent with higher interest rates than loans from Western lenders, and render the debtors vulnerable to security risks when handing over critical strategic infrastructures (seaports, railways, communication networks, etc.) as collateral for defaulting. Chinese investment loans often come with little or no conditions, which makes least developed countries (LDCs) and developing countries more vulnerable to easy, unregulated loans that "require borrowers to create escrow accounts or special accounts separate from requirements for cash balances that China can seize in the event of default, and essentially require countries to waive the Chinese lending from restructuring efforts with other lenders" (Saldinger, 2021).

In early September 2020, Laos transferred a controlling stake in the state-owned national electricity company to the South China Power Grid Company, raising concerns that Laos had fallen into a debt trap by China (Sims, 2020). Given that China is already a creditor of a massive amount (45% of Laos' GDP), according to a study by the Lowy Institute, the contract's default term "to take over the operation of the Laos national electricity network for 24 years" will only deepen China's involvement to turn Laos into "the battery of Southeast Asia" (Rajah et al., 2019). If Laos defaults, its economic and political autonomy will be threatened. This is another example of debt-trap diplomacy that might erode China's credibility and the BRI (Rajah et al., 2019).

Conclusion

An analysis of Chinese news headlines reveals that the Chinese official media uses the number of physical infrastructure projects China has built in other countries, as well as their contract values, to demonstrate China's diplomatic accomplishments ("Belt and Road" Forum for International

Cooperation, 2017; Xinhuanet, 2019; Zhōngguó Xīnwén Wǎng, 2015). This has been especially true in recent decades, notably since the late 1970s, when China began to execute the pragmatic diplomatic method, which largely focused on direct economic connections.

In this sense, China's economic diplomacy is currently defined by a mix of using economic leverage to acquire political advantages and using political leverage to get economic benefits. China's infrastructure diplomacy is the international development of Chinese state-owned firms that invest in and build railways, seaports, highways, power production facilities, and other infrastructure projects. Throughout this process, many government departments collaborate to serve national commercial and political objectives. Because China's worldwide infrastructure cooperation is akin to a foreign commercial activity encompassing foreign assistance, foreign commerce, and foreign investment, infrastructure diplomacy may be viewed as a sort of economic diplomacy.

Long before the launch of BRI in 2013, Laos was one of the earliest Southeast Asian countries to participate in infrastructure cooperation with China. The Chinese-funded Boten-Vientiane Railway, which is the most notable sign of the BRI investment in Laos, is currently also the most expensive and controversial project (Kuik, 2021, pp. 735–759). Beijing's backed-projects seemed beneficial to Laos as they sought to transform this landlocked country into a "land-linked" one, thus promising to facilitate connectivity and commercial trade and attract foreign investment to this developing nation, despite the discontent and concerns about Laos's long-term risk of debt and economic-political dependence on China. Furthermore, it can be observed that Vietnam's long-dominating economic and political influence on Laos has been gradually offset and substituted by China, thus threatening Vietnam's geostrategic interests in Laos in particular and on the Indochina Peninsula in general. This certainly will push Hanoi to consider changes to its approach towards a potentially pro-Beijing Laos in the broader context of a united ASEAN and major powers rivalry in the Southeast Asia region.

For Vietnam, the BRI is an important source of funding that Vietnam may want to tap to finance its infrastructure projects. Vietnam's demand for infrastructure investments will keep increasing in the coming years. Vietnam also pays attention to the quality of projects sponsored by China. The use of Chinese capital to invest in projects in Vietnam poses challenges in managing quality, cost, environmental and social issues, such as the Quang Trach 2 Thermal Power Project in Quảng Bình Province, the Ninh Thuận electrical grid, the Hanoi Metro Line 2A (Cát Linh–Hà Đông elevated railway), etc.

The South China Sea dispute is the most significant issue in the Vietnam-China relationship, and it risks escalating into an armed conflict if occurrences at sea are not properly controlled (Nguyễn, 2021). The 2014 oil rig disaster is a good illustration. In early May 2014, China installed the Haiyang Shiyou 981 deep-water oil rig (HYSY981) in an offshore area, along with roughly 80 ships. The central coast of Vietnam is within a 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) measured from the Vietnam Baseline. To prevent the rig from being stationed, Vietnam dispatched navy ships to the area. The standoff lasted until July 2014, when hostile Chinese ships assaulted the Vietnamese ship and used water cannons. The problem also sparked two anti-China protests in Vietnam, causing tension in the country for weeks. The incident confirmed Vietnam's assessment of China's South China Sea threat. As a result, Vietnam is more cautious in dealing with China's actions, notably in the economic arena, particularly if such actions are perceived as having significant strategic implications that could limit Vietnam's mobility in the South China Sea (Le, 2019). Therefore, even if the BRI is an opportunity to develop infrastructure and economic development in Vietnam, Vietnam's reactions to the BRI or its foreign policy towards China seem to always be cautious, careful, and flexible.

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PART III

SOCIAL DILEMMAS IN A CONTEMPORARY WORLD

11

CAN ONE MAN'S FREEDOM FIGHTER BE ANOTHER MAN'S TERRORIST?

Lucas Iacuzzi

Abstract

Can one man's freedom fighter really be another man's terrorist? What can be considered an act of terrorism? How are so-called freedom fighters different? And are there meaningful definitions to distinguish the two? In a world faced with both a steady increase in terrorist activities and global tensions how do nations and in particular the US define, categorise, and identify terrorist activity from guerrilla fighters and self-liberation movements, or so-called freedom fighters. This article seeks to discuss and analyse this claim, with a specific focus on the American understanding of terrorism both before and after the 9/11 attacks and applied theory from Bellamy and Walzer questioning the possiblity of 'just' acts of terror.

Introduction

The phrase 'one man's freedom fighter is another man's terrorist' is one that many academics and politicians are likely to encounter when dealing with global security. Seen as a fundamental truth of international relations it is often unchallenged. Yet despite this there is little to no consensus on what makes a freedom fighter different from a terrorist. This article will critically discuss this claim, by first looking why the terms are so heavily contested, in the context both the pre 9/11 US understanding of terrorism and the post 9/11 war on terror. And then by looking at academic theory from Bellamy and Walzer in trying to define and understand these terms and their potential implications. Before concluding that the idea that a single group can be interpreted by security actors as both terrorist and non-terrorist in nature remains academically sound, despite a lack of true consensus as to if terrorism can be justified and where the line between the terrorists and freedom fighters can be drawn.

Understanding terms: What makes a terrorist?

The first obstacle we face in trying to tackle this question, surrounds our understanding of what it means to be a terrorist. While this may initially

seem simple, this is a complex issue due to how highly contested much of the language linked to global security is. There is currently no unanimously accepted definition of terrorism, and most nations maintain their own definitions that are at times prone to chance. Arguably, the closest that there is to an internationally recognised definition is the United Nations classification of terrorism. As set out in a 1999 resolution stating that terrorism consists of "Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons, or particular persons for political reasons are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious, or other nature that may be used to invoke them" (Halibozek, Jones, et al., 2008).

While by no means universal, this definition does share three main features with many other definitions set out by international organisations and nations including the US and UK. These are the deliberate efforts to establish fear and intimidation in a population, the use of force to do so, and underlying political motivations or targets (Halibozek, Jones, et al., 2008). Despite efforts at reaching a mutually understood definition, multiple actors in the international security space still dispute this definition, and in doing so, make it difficult at best to unanimously apply the labels of terrorist or freedom fighter to any individual groups.

Most notably in American politics, especially among right wing groups this definition and understanding of terrorism has faced ever growing criticism from the political right as it has been found to often cover domestic issues such as mass shootings. That is not to say that domestic terrorism is impossible, but instead this is a political attempt to draw focus away from the ever-increasing risk of ideologically (primarily right wing), racially motivated shootings as has been highlighted by the Department of Homeland Security (Taylor, 2019). It is common consensus among academics that many of the mass shooting incidents in America, especially those in recent history can be categorically defined as terrorism once they are analysed against four key criteria "a political, religious, ideological, or social motivation; intent to reach a larger audience; the motivation not involving personal monetary gain; and the manifestation of an 'enemy/other'" (Hunter, Martha, Scott, et al., 2021) as these mostly white supremacist actions meet the criteria.

Strategic ambiguity: A US policy of Convenience?

It is in fact possible to argue that these definitions deliberately contain nuanced differences, that are at times prone to vague interpretation in order to allow actors to apply the term when it best serves individual

interests, completely undermining any sort of effective differentiation between terrorists and freedom fighters.

The US government took full advantage of this ambiguity when formulating its response to 9/11. This can clearly be seen when focusing on the Bush administration use of the term's "terrorist" and "combatant". Initially Bush proclaimed that the US would bring the plotters behind the attacks to justice (not how combatants are conventionally dealt with), before then quickly transitioning to identifying the terrorists as combatants. This seemingly granted the terrorists an unusual sense of legitimacy and recognition that they seek to gain, however this was a calculated move which would under international law allow US forces to attack the 'enemy combatants' without limits on when and where. However, this was a double-edged sword identifying terrorists as combatants would also force the US to grant them prisoner of war status when captured (protecting them from punitive efforts and torture/interrogation) and would legally allow for attacks on US forces. The solution was to then grant the terrorists the unconventional title "unlawful combatants" (McMahan, n.d.). This unique move highlights the way the dominant narrative surrounding the use of the term "terrorists" at the time, functioned not only to garner moral and public support, as the narrative was used to legalise and justify the war effort domestically, as well as on the international stage.

It is also important to acknowledge that the term "terrorist" was only one component in the elaborate publicity efforts of the US administration at that time. The term War on Terror itself was elaborately crafted by the administration of the time as part of this dominant narrative and was based upon four key concepts. According to the work of Richard Jackson these are ensuring that the understanding of the 9/11 attacks would be derived from the official government discourse. Establishing roles that position the American citizens as heroic and innocent victims and the terrorist operatives as an inhuman barbaric force that is void of any morals. Placing an emphasis upon the extreme threat that the mere existence of terrorists poses to not only American, but all western liberal society, a threat comparable only to previous 'public enemies' such as communism and fascism. And lastly the justification and normalising of the war efforts and government activities, placing America on the side of all the civilised world protecting mankind in the eyes of its citizens and allies (Jackson, 2005 p.149).

Looking back there is one seriously startling effect of this narrative, how it influenced the actions and opinions of institutions that rely on public approval. While it is now possible and in fact easy to readily find criticism

of the government's post 9/11 response, at the time there was a serious absence of any opposing views. Unsurprisingly this can be best visualised in the actions of politicians who hold a unique position with regards to public opinion, especially in the weeks after the 9/11 attacks while patriotism was running high. On the 18th of September congress approved the Authorization for Use of Military Force bill (GovTrack.us, 2004), with only one single congresswoman, Democrat member of the house Barbara Lee voting against the bill's passage. Lee was justifiably critical of the Bill, specifically due to its likely deliberate and ambiguous wording that effectively made the bill a carte blanche, similarly to the Gulf of Tonkin resolution of the 1960s (Walsh, and Herb, 2017). Presidents since, notably Obama and Trump have used the bill to justify actions that cannot conceivably be within the scope of the bill passed over 10 years prior, most recently the US military presence in Syrian oil fields that was justified under the act.

Mujahideen in the eyes of the Americans: Terrorists or Freedom fighters?

While the US post 9/11 response is perhaps both the most significant, and recent major example of the strategic ambivalence surrounding the concept of terrorists and freedom fighters it is far from the most blatant example, which many consider to be the US relationship with the Afghan mujahideen.

In 1979 the Soviet Union commenced what would then become the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, alarming the US, and forcing it into action in line with its policy of containment. Due to the near unanimous desire within the US government to avoid direct confrontation with the Soviets, this invasion would see the US covertly assist the emergent Afghan mujahideen, a collective grouping of armed pro Islamist insurgent groups that were fighting the Afghan republican and Soviet forces in the region. The CIA alone undertook the largest scale operation in its history, Operation Cyclone with the objective of both funding and training these rebel groups to use American provided military hardware to combat what was perceived to be the expansion of soviet influence in the region (Galster, 2001). While media coverage at the time of the war was limited, primarily due to the difficulty in gaining reliable information. The western media very quickly found itself romanticising the struggle of the mujahadeen, happily using terms such as Jihad freely despite their more negative connotations in other contexts. There was a clear consensus that the struggle of the mujahadeen was a righteous fight for freedom and rights, and they quickly found themselves being referred to as guerrillas, Freedom Fighters and Mountain Men (Sheikh, 1990).

It is not a significant stretch to say that within the little western media coverage the mujahadeen had, they were pictured as heroic warriors, yet little over 25 years later this image would come crashing down. After the end of the Soviet occupation, and the ensuing Afghan civil war, it was the Taliban who emerged as the dominant power in Afghanistan, once a core part of the mujahadeen (Nojumi, 2002). While relations between the US and the Taliban had soured since the end of the invasion, primarily over human rights concerns it was in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks that the public and media perception of the group soured. (Nojumi, 2002). Overnight the Taliban had become public enemies in the west, The US government quickly prepared for a full-scale invasion of Afghanistan, with bombing commencing just a month after the initial attack.

The US government and media had in effect transformed the former mujahadeen or "Freedom Fighters and Mountain Men" into enemies of the nation, condemning them as terrorists up until the current day. Many Taliban combatants that fought the US during its invasion had, just a few years before, been financed, armed, and trained by the US as "freedom fighters". This only serves to further undermine the concepts of terrorist and freedom fighters, suggesting that the two terms are fully interchangeable depending on circumstance and self-interests. It would be naïve to assume the US did not fully realise what the mujahadeen would later become, or what they stood for. They never hid their position as militant Islamists, and even went so far as to publicly invite President Reagan to convert to Islam. From the beginning the two sides had different fundamental views and only came to support each other out of necessity. This ability to switch labels applied to any single group, highlights the effect a lack of true definitions has on the issue. As long as this is the case the idea that one man's terrorist can be another's freedom fighter will continue to garner widespread support as a result of the many differing interpretations.

It was in large part the War on Terror, and more specifically 9/11 that has contributed the most to the new media interpretation of terrorists. Much of this shift can be attributed to the US government, and its attempts to influence both legal and social views on terrorism. Then president Bush, for example, in an unconventional move identified the terrorists behind the 9/11 attack as combatants, at first glance granting them much of the recognition and legitimacy that they sought to gain. This was done in order to allow US forces to take more extreme actions against terrorists in combat and set a new legal precedent (McMahan, n.d.). These government efforts when combined with the media, have served as a sort of echo chamber for government rhetoric. Have successfully established new simplified roles in society such as the innocent American civilians as heroes and the 'barbaric'

terrorists as the villains who oppose all liberal democracy (Jackson, 2005). It is this new simplified understanding of terrorism that has established it more of a blanket term. It is now possible for a group to be both terrorists and freedom fighters simultaneously as the concepts have lost any significant meaning. The idea that one man's terrorist can be another man's freedom fighter, while correct, becomes increasingly meaningless when the terms become increasingly similar. Without clear cut internationally recognised definitions, it becomes increasingly difficult to identify and combat terrorism, and by extension freedom fighters.

Terrorism and liberation in the Arabic world

So far, this article has established that, primarily due to a lack of agreement or rigid definition of terrorism, the idea that one man's terrorist can be another man's freedom fighter continues to hold credibility. In order to maintain a balanced argument is important to challenge this view, and some attempts to define and understand terrorism have resulted in debates over if it is possible to justify, a belief that supports the claim in question.

One notable example comes from the politics of the Arab world in the mid to late 1980s. Initially in a speech given in 1986, president of Syria, Hafez al-Assad made an initial attempt to isolate the ideas of terrorism, and national liberation movements by distinguishing the two and suggesting that the latter holds legitimacy that states must support. Ministers of the Arab league further built upon this concept in a 1987 resolution stating that "The conference reiterates its absolute faith in the need to distinguish the brutal and unlawful terrorist activities perpetrated by individuals, by groups, or by states, from the legitimate struggle of oppressed and subjugated nations against foreign occupation of any kind. This struggle is sanctioned by heavenly law, by human values, and by international conventions "(Al-Anba'a. 1987 cited in Boaz, 2002). Further conferences, notably including the 1998 meeting of the Arab league in Cairo reiterate this distinguishment, and in doing so attempt to sanction the means (terrorism) to the goal/end (freedom from oppression) (Boaz, 2002).

While at first glance these definitions appear to clarify what actions can be considered just and unjust, they fail at making any clear distinctions and leave much up for interpretation. The idea that the ends can at times justify the means, in fact supports the idea that a terrorist group can be seen as freedom fighters and vice versa, and it highlights that the key factor is position and perspective of the observer. Many academics have since attempted to draw a conclusive line at what constitutes just and unjust actions, perhaps most notably the efforts of political theorist Michael Walzer.

Walzer's theory

Walzer argued that there are multiple critical differences between the terrorism and war, and that with the exception of extreme circumstances it is exclusively war and not terrorism that can be justified. These critical differences are that terrorism seeks to avoid confronting the enemy force head on (relying instead on an indirect approach) and that unlike war, is primarily used as a means of communication with a wider civil population (primarily by seeking to terrorise and instil fear in specific groups). Warfare on the other hand, places an emphasis on the destruction of enemy combat capabilities through direct engagement, therefore the threat or use of violence is a tool to subjugate or dominate an enemy directly. It is important to note that Walzer does not at any point require terrorist attacks to be against civilians, as this could be interpreted as a justification of strikes against targets such as government facilities or military units outside of a combat zone, Instead Walzer argues (2015) terrorist attacks can be defined as against non-combatant targets.

The significance of Walzer's understanding, is that he presents the two activities as occurring on different scales. The very idea that terrorism is a tool for communication that avoids confrontation by definition requires that it is employed on a localised scale to threaten a limited number of individuals, at that it is the possible threat of further violence that is used to send a message. In contrast the definition presented for war means that such actions are only viable on a large scale, after all, the objective is to subjugate and control, not completely annihilate and it is therefore necessary to prove that resistance on any scale is impossible. The two approaches therefore rely on what can only be considered as fundamentally different approaches in which terrorism can be considered to be bottom up and war top down as they operate on opposing principles, both in terms of scale and effect.

In partial response to criticism of his work, Walzer acknowledged in his book 'Arguing about war 'that the implications of his understanding of terrorism and war would suggest that terrorism can be excused due to its lesser casualty rates stating "Today that knowledge is insufficient unless it is supplemented and reinforced by a systematic critique of excuses. That is my purpose here. I take the principle for granted: that every act of terrorism is a wrongful act (Walzer, 2006, p.52). While this statement would suggest Walzer's ideas are in line with Just War theories emphasis on avoiding civilian casualties at all reasonable costs. it is undermined later in the book when Walzer voices support for the allied bombings of Germany during WWII. In this case Walzer specifies that this targeting was a necessary action to best avoid what he described as a disaster to the international political community.

While critics such as Bellamy, are quick to highlight these inconsistencies in Walzer's theory, they have all consistently agreed that there is a threshold in which terrorism can be justified under exceptional circumstances only (Bellamy, 2004). In a similar light to Walzer. This therefore indicates that in many cases the debate may not be surrounding if terrorism can be considered just, but where the threshold between 'normal' and 'exceptional circumstances' lies, further supporting the initial claim that legitimate conflict (or in this case freedom fighting) and terrorism overlap.

Conclusion

This article initially set out to critically discuss the claim that 'one man's freedom fighter is another man's terrorist'. In doing this this article first addressed the inherent and widespread politicisation of both the term 'terrorist' and 'freedom fighter', acknowledging it as an inevitable outcome of the highly contested security space and its many actors differing interests both domestically within the US, and in terms of foreign policy. In doing this the article focused upon the US governmental and media response to 9/11, and the treatment of the mujahideen and the Taliban formed at least in part, from its members. In studying this case study, a conclusion was drawn implying that the widespread manipulation of the terms freedom fighter and terrorist had resulted in them losing any significant meaning, and as a result supporting the idea that freedom fighters can be seen as terrorists and vice versa, in some cases by the same party. Then, by focusing strictly on academic discourse, focusing on the work of theorists in both identifying and explaining attempts to better define terrorism, in order to allow for a better understanding of what makes terrorists different, and if a group can be considered both terrorists and freedom fighters under academic and political definitions. The resulting analysis found that it is primarily an actor's self-interests and viewpoint that influences their interpretation of a group's activities, and that despite the prominence of theories such as Just war theory, many academics still believe there is a threshold at which terrorism becomes acceptable as a means to a justified end. Ultimately these findings support the continued relevance of the initial claim and maintain that as long as actors continue to hold conflicting interests and views, it will be possible for one man's freedom fighter to be another man's terrorist.

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12

POLITICAL INDIGENEITY, DEVELOPMENT AND POSTCOLONIAL THOUGHT

Rayan Haji

Abstract

Although arguably dated, the Rwandan genocide of 1994 portrays a relevant example of the impacts of ethnic conflict towards development in post-colonial countries that aim to break off from vestiges of colonialism. The tragic event has long posed harm to aspirations for political and socio-economic development in the country. Nonetheless, following the start of the 21st century under President Paul Kagame's administration, Rwanda – most often referred to as 'an agrarian state' – had received high plaudits from scholars and international donors for its ongoing achievement in areas of economic development. This article will assess the contemporary successes and shortcomings of the country to evaluate whether historic colonialism and ethnic conflict has taken a persistent toll on the development of the country.

Introduction

This article aims to situate itself in a theoretical space between the field of postcolonial studies and African prospects for development. The myriad intersections between race, violence and power are at the very heart of both postcolonial literature and political thought. To comprehend the conditions which motivate current political and economic development, we must go back to the purposes of colonialism in the early twentieth century. By considering the curtailment of colonial operations in Africa as a whole, it becomes evident how it has hindered the economic potential of African societies and brought forth the fallacious discourse of their very identities.

Using postcolonial scholarship, this research underpins the theoretical conception of the politics of identity and its extensive relevance to this case study: Rwanda demonstrates a great example underlining the impacts of race and ethnicity in the region and how this can, more broadly, relate to the wider continent of Africa.

From a postcolonial outlook, this research will argue that the history of ethnic conflict embedded in Rwanda since pre-colonial history and further emphasised by European colonists has spurred economic and social inequalities throughout the country. To substantiate this argument, this article will begin by identifying the relationship between colonial legacies in Rwanda witnessed through the 1994 genocide and current prospects for development. By doing so, it aims to illustrate how negated prospects for socioeconomic development leave political administrations with the complex dilemma of moving away from economic reconstruction to a sustainable economic transformation.

Overview of Africa under Colonial Presence

The history of early nineteenth century Africa draws one to enslavement, environmental exploration, space for European mercantile trade, and resource extraction. During this epoch, the continent became exposed to the European scramble for resources, imperialist ventures, political subordination, and the regulation of economic markets. Along with almost every corner of the globe, European (i.e., Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal, Germany, and Italy) colonial influence blanketed nearly every African country (with the arguable exception of Liberia) (Olaniyan and Ifidan, 2017). This shift in the mode of production – widely known as the industrial revolution – contributed to the pursuit for investment and raw materials overseas. The under-utilisation of wealth in Europe instigated requirements for capital to be transported and invested (Ocheni and Nwankwo, 2012). The need to expand led to the colonisation of the African continent. This transition of power into Africa's interior meant the direct control of not solely production, but of Africa's political and economic administrations.

The seminal work of Walter Rodney 'How Europe Underdeveloped Africa' illustrates the economic dimensions of the colonial era. It conveys the economic elements of capitalism i.e., money relations, private property, and private land, imposed by European settlers on African societies that previously thrived on communalism (Rodney, 1972, 259; see also, Amin 2014). For instance, African markets – prior to the rule of the Europeans – functioned under a barter system (Ocheni and Nwankwo, 2012), conveying the lack of requirements for monetary means. Following the colonial occupation, this soon changed. It is safe to say that this mode of occupation served the greater profit of Europe in both areas of capital and economic development. As we shall see, colonialism was not only inherent to capitalism but coexistent with racism, cultural domination, the distortion of identity and European self-aggrandisement (Bulhan, 2015). Finally, African nations at that time, and at present, are situated at the

periphery of our global political economy and are commonly perceived to be economically 'underdeveloped'.

Postcolonial Theory

Before drawing an understanding of the roots of African contemporary global representations and economic developments, we must comprehend what we mean by postcolonial theory. Despite its numerous controversies, postcolonialism has been largely defined as a notion directly involved with the ontologies and epistemologies of non-Western societies.[1] Postcolonial theory brings us to question our very methods and sources of Western dominant knowledge production of the non-Western world in our current era.

The origins of postcolonial theory can be traced back to Edward Said's eminent work, 'Orientalism' (1978). Our contemporary epoch has witnessed an increase in postcolonial and post-structuralist literature due to the space it allows for insight and analysis which can be relative to the marginal representation of the continent of Africa. Accordingly, Said's work extensively grounds itself in Foucault's (1982) notion of power and knowledge relations by identifying the links between dominant Western narratives with the power to justify imperial ventures. Concisely, the illustration of racialised knowledge production and global power relations in our international system remains relevant to African literature and understanding. For example, hegemonic narratives – in most cases deriving from the West (i.e., Europe and the US) – draw on images of an uncivilised, isolated, and primitive Africa: an ideology born out of colonial racism (Amin, 1972).

Conversely, according to Horowitz, Western narratives on African societies either 'condemn their societies and cultures' or 'chronicle their westernisation or modernisation' (Horowitz, 2005, p.369). Nevertheless, to condemn a very being, society or community is to hegemonize one's own through a process of *othering* (Doty, 1996). Postcolonialism, whilst born out of the study of Third World literature and social theory, posits notions of difference and resistance to relations between the First and Third World. In *'Navigating Modernity: Postcolonialism, Identity and International Relations'* Albert Paolini provides a multifaceted comprehension of postcolonialism. He suggests that the postcolonial acts as 'the meeting ground of the modern and traditional' (Paolini, 1999, p.7). The salience of postcolonial theory in this context derives from its ability

[1] See, for example, Olaniyan (1993), Childs and Williams (1996), Young (2001), Geeta and Nair (2002).

to contest new and old forms of imperialism and current Westernisation, thereby underpinning the subject for cultural resistance and granting space to the marginal and dispossessed. Similarly, the postcolonial is situated at the formal end of the historical experience of colonialism in certain parts of the world – in this case, the independence of Congo and Rwanda from Belgium, or Eritrea and Somalia from Italy (Olaniyan, 1993). This framework maintains that such historical proceedings, however recent, have left their marks on African societies and as we shall see, have consolidated themselves to-date.

Postcolonial theory has gained criticism in recent decades arising from its political agency. Ella Shohat notes that Third World struggles take place within nations that possess constantly changing relations between dominant and subaltern groups whereby 'the notion of the three worlds, in short, flattens heterogeneities, marks contradictions, and elides differences' (Shohat, 1998, p.101). Therefore, it is easy to oversimplify countries or regions by using notions of 'First' or 'Third' worlds. It is important to distinguish the differences *between* regions, countries, and communities to avoid subjecting them to mere generalisations. Power relations in the 'Third World' are dispersed and ever-changing, thus the importance of distinguishing the varying natures of regions and countries. For example, given the common norms of global hegemony the post-Cold War era (a period of economic struggle for many countries in Africa and a stepping-stone for the Bretton Woods institutions) signified an era of unipolarity between the dominating Soviet Union and the US. Given current circumstances, with the fall of the global hegemony of Western countries, a current era of multipolarity is now increasingly evident (Murray and Hehir, 2013). The narrowing of the income gap between the global North and the leading economies of the developing South has become a central feature of our time (Güven, 2017). Thus, one can argue that the site for knowledge production is progressively shifting. This article considers both the differences between African countries and their differences compared to other regions of the globe. Such disparities are what this article goes on to highlight through a contemporary case study of Rwanda.

Lastly here, a common critique worth considering is that postcolonial theory identifies itself as the epochal 'end' of colonialism and is thus fallaciously utopian and prematurely celebratory. According to Gandhi (2019, p.174), the 'post' in 'postcolonialism' expresses the meaning of mere chronological succession with the utopian interpretation of progressivism. Hence, postcolonialism can arguably be illusionary by supposing that the continuities of colonialism have ended. In contrast, Lyotard (1992, p.90) considers that the 'post' in 'postcolonialism' does not

necessarily signify actions of amnesia or recurrence; rather, the notion serves as a procedure of 'analysis' which elaborates an 'initial forgetting'. Therefore, the theory itself encourages thinking out of the historical disparities and social inequalities produced by colonists. Postcolonial discourse instead reflects the diversity of colonial histories by addressing the potential for colonial continuities and vestiges (Purdeková and Mwambari, 2021). It signifies the importance of noting fundamental questions of identities, subjectivities, notions of modernity, and how these have themselves been constructed by colonial history. Furthermore, it allows us to move beyond privileged concepts such as sovereignty and order which lay at the forefront of dominant political discourse and shift towards conceptual understandings of contemporary African identity as well as the factors that obscure it.

The Politics of Identity

Despite its scholarly contention, the concept of identity in political discourse has been best defined as 'the symbolic-expressive aspect of human behaviour' (Paolini, 1999, p.19). Alongside the notion of culture, the idea of identity itself remains subjugated to imperatives of power, subjectivity, citizenship, and dominant modes of representation.[2] By re-positing matters of identity amongst contemporary African states, we can articulate how trajectories of the discourse of politics remain narrow in determining the issues circulating not only around identity, but the representation of groups left marginalised and exiled to a peripheral landscape. It is important to first attempt to understand how dominant forms of identity can be produced through the inextricable link of power and knowledge as articulated by Foucault (1982), and how certain courses of action that stems from colonial history take place.

Amongst postcolonial scholarship, as mentioned, Said (1978) draws on Western epistemology and cultural expressions which remain useful when distinguishing the links between contemporary formulations of identity and colonial racism. The notion of Western racial and cultural superiority over 'oriental backwardness' promoted through Western philosophy and cultural expression, is seen as 'central to the promotion and protection of European imperial ventures' (Geeta and Nair, 2002,12). By moving the focus to the political production of knowledge and its dialectical relationship with the non-Western world and Western colonial ventures, Said rightfully illustrates the centrality of racialised knowledge in the spread and maintenance of imperialism. Accordingly, such distinctions remain salient when articulating the dominant orientations (in this case, Western)

[2] See, for instance, Hall, 1997, Paolini, 1999, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012.

that seek to define areas of universal representations. Identity can then be understood as a process whereby knowledge is articulated through the exercise of hegemonic power and can be utilised to disadvantage already marginalised groups (Geeta and Nair, 2002). This demonstrates the importance of revealing ontological, epistemological, and political negations of identity within political discourse.

For example, African identity is subjected to numerous conventions that stem from Western social constructions. The complex African identity is distinguished largely concerning broader national, global, and continental histories that include the slave trade, mercantilism, colonialism, and migration. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012, 73), there is indeed a history and complexity of social and political processes behind the construction of Africa: 'What is beyond doubt is that individuals make their identity, but not under conditions of their choosing and making'. Thus, this supposes the social constructive nature concerning the formation of identities and how historical epochs are a determining factor in naturalised constructions to date.

The ideological prejudices against Africa are extensively connected to colonial racism, in which matters of racism, stereotyping and essentialist tendencies dominate identity politics (Amin, 1972). Accordingly, for black people, 'primitivism' and 'blackness' became interchangeable as culture and nature thus have become exponentially relative (Hall, 1997). This reduction highlights the connection between the visual discourse and the production of racialised knowledge. This link between authority and knowledge poses larger questions as to the consequences of matters of universal representation. The power attained by the relatively small portion of the world referred to as the West gives identity to marginalised *others* (Doty, 1996).

Nonetheless, it is important to note that given the perplexity of notions of identity, its social influence in political discourse possesses further factors that contribute to its interwoven nature. The shared African identity is just one example of the multiplicity of its conceptions, including the existence of nativism and xenophobia concerning certain identities. There are challenges in explaining the failures of nationalism to create a shared sense of identity in areas of the continent that have witnessed a myriad of tragic events i.e., the 1994 genocide of Rwanda, xenophobia in South Africa, and the attempt of ethnic cleansing in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan. A failure that thus creates 'strangers' out of people belonging to one country (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012, p.78). In relation to the West, it raises the intricate question of how the people and places that are inherently different from universalised and dominant identities are represented.

The Discursive Power of Development

The post-World War II era changed the core meaning of 'development' (Escobar, 2011). Since then, the definition of development remains multifaceted and largely contested. Its interconnectedness to political ideologies, social, cultural, and economic changes as well as its subjectivity to time are just a few factors that contribute to its contestations and kaleidoscopic nature (Kothari, 2019). The pursuit of development has been one of the defining features of our modern era. It has been largely defined as 'a process of change'[3] which can be concerned with historic or socioeconomic dimensions of global inequities and exclusionary processes.

Conjointly, the achievement of facets of development is closely linked to the state of political society (Rodney, 1972, p.18). Development can also be exclusively understood from an economic sense given that the type of economy can be reflective of other social features i.e., human rights, individual freedom, and income (in)equality. This can be measured quantitatively - Gross Domestic Products (GDP), Gross National Product (GNP), Gross National Income (GNI), Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and Human Development Index (HDI) are a myriad of ways in which the socio-economic development of a state is measured (Potter et al., 2018). On the other hand, qualitative measurements are observed through the presence of 'freedom', human rights, and liberal democracy. It is important to note, however, that while general indicators of development, such as those mentioned above, show that the 'developing world' has witnessed substantial socioeconomic improvements, simultaneously, inequality remains ubiquitous (Potter et al., 2018, p.3).

Against this background, development studies are further concerned with the spatial expression of development: the Global North and South, the First and Third World and the concept of 'developing' nations.[4] For example, one can argue with Escobar (2011) that constructions of the Third World by Western discourse are essential to development studies. This brings us to the example of contemporary media images that portray perceptions of Third World countries stereotyped from Western perspectives as traditional and/or backward. The notion of the Third World at the frontier of the discourse of development, conveys the ever-present dominating Western understandings and measurements of 'development'. Thus, it brings us to question our normative perceptions and experiences of knowing and economising within the development sphere. Most importantly, it forces us to question the processes and

[3] See, for instance, Rodney, 1972, Potter et al., 2018, Kothari, 2019.
[4] See, for example, Rodney, 1972, Kapoor, 2008, Escobar, 2011, Potter et al., 2018, Kothari, 2019.

measurements of 'development' that have been generated by the West and applied to the Global South.

Moreover, Rodney's seminal framework posits that the foundations of development should not solely be perceived as a mere economic phenomenon but rather, an overall social process shaping and being shaped by how society came to be ideologically formulated. 'Underdevelopment is not the absence of development', rather it is underscored consequently, and to a large degree, a by-product of it (Rodney, 1972, pp.15-16). The relation between development and underdevelopment is arguably tied to exploitation, as the relationship between Europe and Africa shows. Positioning the economic exploitation of regions at the centre of our analysis, allows the causes of the continent's 'economic backwardness' to be understood. The scale of Africa's assets makes it at present, the region with the greatest economic potential (Sylla, 2014). Nonetheless, despite this economic potential, it has experienced, and still experiences, a history of violent appropriations of its wealth and labour by Western capitalist institutions. So, having discussed the myriad theoretical intersections among postcolonial scholarship, identity politics and the discursive power of development, the following section will introduce an empirical account of this using the case study of the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

The 1994 Rwandan Genocide as a Case Study: The Colonial History and Ethnic Polarisation of Rwanda

Before and throughout the colonial period, Rwanda was politically governed by Tutsi – a social group comprising roughly less than a quarter of the Rwandan population – while the rest of the population were Hutu or less than 1 percent aboriginal Twa (Kuperman, 2004). The colonial rulers (first Germany and, after the first World War, Belgium) had both sharpened ethnic distinctions to implement a system of indirect rule. The Belgian colonists introduced 'ossified' and tribalist versions of rural authority through chieftaincy that was relative to the social identity of Tutsi (Harrison, 2020, p.220). Considering the perplexity of Rwanda's colonial and historical heritage, while this article considers the numerous factors that could have led to the genocide, it will begin to address the colonial underpinnings that have proliferated the political, socio-economic, and ethnic divide among the two larger social groups – Hutu and Tutsi. Likewise, it will seek to demonstrate how such colonial rhetoric has been further intensified under the Habyarimana regime.

The colonial rule of Belgium in Rwanda following 1919 had intensified pre-existing socio-economic and ethnic divisions among the population. European colonists largely preserved what they saw as 'traditional'

structures of power whereby the Tutsi aristocrats ruled over Hutu peasants, who were treated as second class citizens (Newbury, 1998, p.11). For instance, European rulers upheld what was termed the *Hamitic Hypothesis* in literature.[5] Tutsi were presented as *Hamites* – a superior race descended from peoples of old Palestine. Such myths underpinned the pivotal racial distribution of power and privilege: 'The Hamitic hypothesis was used to elevate the traditionally ruling group to a quasi-European status' (Balorda, 2021, p.6). Accordingly, it signified that the Tutsi were superior given their alleged descendants from Europeans. The mythical link between the Tutsi and the Europeans indicated that the Tutsi had the right to territory and rule over the 'inferior' Hutu, as indigenous Africa became reduced to barbarity.

The significance of the Hamitic myth lies in the fact that had it not been institutionalized, it would have likely been less relevant. The colonial interpretation of monarchical structures was based on racial distinction and, more broadly, class differences. Notions of inequality in Rwanda were not new in the colonial period but, these distinctions between the two larger social groups are argued to have been rationalised under racial/biologic divisions that were introduced by European colonists.[6] As a result of decades of suppression and ethnic discrimination, one can argue that Hutu's effort for independence was based even more on the liberation from internal Tutsi domination than from external colonial authority.

The 1994 Genocide and Matters of Identity

Despite the role of German and Belgian colonists in Rwanda in contributing to ethnic divisions in the region, the rule of the former Hutu army officer, President Juvenal Habyarimana from July 1973 undoubtedly played a factor in contributing to the 1994 genocide (Forges 1999; Kuperman 2004). Following Habyarimana's rule, there was an attempt to shift the political identity of the Tutsis. The reconstruction of Tutsis as an ethnicity engendered the notion of the ethnic group being considered indigenous to Rwanda, in contrast to colonial conceptions of a non-indigenous 'race'. Habyarimana's notion of 'ethnic reconciliation' between Hutu and Tutsi was opposed by largely Hutu extremists reluctant to share political and social power. This merely affirmed ideas of Tutsi as a *race* distinct from Hutu instead of an ethnic group and fostered the hostile attitude towards a possible Tutsi power by reaffirming the colonial vestiges.

[5] See, for example, Mamdani 2001, Purdeková & Mwambari 2021.
[6] See, for example, Newbury 1998, Mamdani 2001, Purdeková & Mwambari 2021.

Tutsi were interpreting themselves in a similar way that Belgium colonists had before independence.

In the 1990s, despite promises to end ethnic violence in Rwanda, social disparities that contributed to the eventual genocide persisted on a regional scale (Kuperman, 2004). Habyarimana had favoured Hutu as his home region in North-western Rwanda consisted largely of Hutu communities. From 1992, 'Habyarimana had begun providing military training to the youth of his party' (known as the *Interahamwe* (Those Who Stand Together or Those Who Attack Together) (Forges, 1999). Subsequent attacks on Tutsi's and other crimes instigated by Interahamwe went unpunished; thus, violence for political ends became normalised. By the end of that year given the attacks on opposing parties, the prominent racist propagandas and political strategies, the political and ethnic divisions between Hutu and Tutsi were widespread (Forges, 1999; see also, Mamdani, 2001, pp.189-191).

On April 6th, 1994, the plane carrying President Habyarimana was shot down, leading to his assassination, which was quickly blamed on Tutsi rebels by Hutu extremists, and this directly led to the commencement of the genocide the next day (Kuperman, 2004). The wide-scale genocide took place across all regions of Rwanda, including its capital, Kigali; however, the scale of violence across areas varied and largely consisted of mainly Hutu perpetrators against the smaller Tutsi population. The definite number of Tutsi deaths is difficult to determine. Kuperman (2004, p.21) compares the population figures of Rwanda before and after the genocide suggesting that from April 1994, '1.1. million Rwandans appear to have died or gone missing'. The number of Hutu killed is less certain, but it is estimated from 10,000 to over 100,000 Hutu deaths and Kuperman notes (ibid.) that '600,000 of those victims could have been Tutsi'. The brutal genocide took more than half a million lives, killing roughly three-quarters of Rwanda's Tutsi population within the span of just three months (Kuperman, 2004; Human Rights Watch, 2014). Nearly all large massacres were finished by the end of April.

Development Against All Odds

It is important to note that the discourse of development, widely influenced by neoclassical economics, has long been dominated by notions of 'poverty', thus categorising what it means to be 'poor' or 'wealthy', 'developed' or 'underdeveloped', industrialised, or rural (Kapoor, 2008, p.25). As mentioned, the Euro-North American capitalist growth method is theorised as a universal process for economic growth, transposable to Uganda as much as say Indonesia. Nonetheless, the political independence

of numerous African countries from European colonists became a marker of optimism, with potential for economic development, and ambition for political freedom. For example, when Ghana became independent in 1957, followed by other African countries during the 1960s progress was indeed recorded since independence; but by the 1980s, numerous African countries, including Rwanda, saw their economy begin to stagnate, if not plummet (Bulhan, 2015).

The postcolonial economic system of Rwanda has witnessed a colonial-style economy based on the export of coffee, whereby exports had contributed to over 80% of its foreign exchange earnings (Chossudovsky 1996, p.939; see also, Uvin 2011, p.54). The agricultural sector has remained the backbone of the Rwandan economy due to its landlocked area and largely rural society with more than half of the population working in the agricultural sector (Ansoms et al., 2017). The country has been dependent upon the agricultural export of crop production, i.e., coffee and tea, for the foreign currency earnings of the economy (Uvin, 2011). Under the Habyarimana regime, the salience of agricultural and manual labour was emphasised, and peasantry was encouraged and extended beyond Hutus through political elites hence, Rwanda has been widely reflected as a rentier state (Chossudovsky 1996; Uvin 2011). In addition, if peasantry were to be extended beyond Hutus, there would be an arguable decrease in class distinctions, hierarchy, and inequality between the social groups.

Despite contestations, however, the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s had witnessed high economic and social progress in which the 'GDP growth was of the order of 4.9% per annum (1965-1989)', and inflation was one of the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa with less than 4% annually (Chussodovsky, 1996, p.939). Yet, the mid-1980s signified the beginning of the economic crisis in Rwanda. For example, the decrease in coffee prices internationally significantly impacted the Rwandan economy as 'coffee export receipts fell from $144 million in 1985 to $30 million in 1993 (Uvin, 2011, p.54). These factors affected Rwandan prospects for development as the reduced national revenue led to increased borrowing to keep up its expenditure pattern. As a result of the crisis, foreign debt in Rwanda began to increase over time.

During the late 1980s, economic slowdown and a deleterious structural adjustment programme were accompanied by President Habyarimana's authoritarian rule (Harrison, 2020, p.221). International development organisations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank had come in to implement structural adjustment policies, Inspired by neoclassical economics these centres mainly on a critique of Keynesian state welfarism (Kapoor, 2008). In the context of Rwanda, an

IMF Extended Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) of approximately $11.91 million was approved in April 1991 (Storey, 1999; Uvin, 2011). The World Bank approved a Structural Adjustment Credit (SAC) of $90 million in June 1991(Storey, 1999).

As with many other programs in Africa, conditions were attached to this funding: the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) sought to promote fiscal and monetary regulation, prescribe government cutbacks, 'liberalise domestic and international trade' (Uvin, 2011, p.58). and remove the government from all economic sectors, apart from the environment, justice, and human resources. The government became progressively authoritarian and explicit in distributing a discourse of ethnicity (Harrison, 2020, p.221). As a result, Rwanda had come under profound international pressure from the US, France, and Belgium to democratise the country which aimed to engender ethnic pluralism and maintain political representation. The Arusha Accord of 1993 signified an agreed power share between the Rwandan government under President Habyarimana and the Tutsi minority and Hutu opposition parties (Wheeler, 2002). Thus, one can argue that the implementation of SAPs while the country was exposed to an economic crisis, a civil war, and a democratic transition meant that the interwoven variables undermined their potential impact, or even its likely implementation.

Moreover, Uvin notes that the case of Rwanda is extreme both because of the unfortunate nature of the violence, but also, nearly up to the last day, Rwanda was measured by many development communities 'to be a model developing country' (Uvin, 1999, p.49). Rwanda's approach to economic and social management and development in the 1980s had been considered successful by organisations including the World Bank, the Belgian NGO community, and the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency (World Bank, 1989). Despite ethnic hostility being a significant factor under the Habyarimana regime, numerous policy analysis reports failed to cover the socioeconomic circumstance of the region, or the regime's inability to address the political and social factors affecting the economy for decades. The World Bank preferred to promote 'the image of a country of subsistence farmers' who 'followed the right policies, the fruits of which the hardworking population enjoyed' (Uvin, 2001, p.42).

More profoundly, the widespread apolitical image of the developing country was shared by international organisations. At least until the genocide. The issue of ethnic and social inequality, institutionalised racism, regional politics, the absence of justice, human rights violations and the oppressive nature of the state are numerous factors that have been continually ignored by international institutions, further constituting the

image of an apolitical development (see also, Nelson, 1995, p.9). In sum, the World Bank, along with international development aid agencies, failed to consider the political crisis facing Rwanda and behaved, in traditional fashion, as though the political factors hindering Rwanda did not exist.

During the genocide, Rwanda witnessed widescale agrarian destructivism (Harrison, 2020, p.221), consisting of the destruction of infrastructure and rural property; what 'agribusiness' remained halted production or was eradicated as the consistent labour required became almost non-existent. The scale of the genocide meant that there was a larger import of machetes rather than tools for agricultural productivity! Nonetheless, one can argue that the post-genocide administration was confronted with the historical legacy of a massively disrupted and traumatised agrarian society. Despite the role of German and Belgian colonists in Rwanda in contributing to ethnic divisions in the region, the rule of the former Hutu army officer and President Habyarimana played a factor in contributing to the 1994 genocide (Forges 1999; Kuperman 2004).

Post-Genocide Development under Paul Kagame; Rwanda as a Developmental Patrimonial State

Following the aftermath of the genocide of 1994, the Rwandan government has been led by the authoritarian rule of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which as Tutsi rebels had won the civil war (Takeuchi, 2019). The RPF was formally organised in Uganda in the 1980s by Rwandan Tutsi refugees; however, having successfully invaded the Rwandan capital of Kigali, 'the RPF unilaterally imposed its constitutional order' - an imposition without the consent of the Rwandan people (Reyntjens, 2013, p.3). The government of Rwanda to date - the RPF party-state - explicitly declares the aspiration to transform the agricultural sector of the country to attain high economic growth and essentially attain capitalist transformation (Harrison, 2020, p.223). After taking over as the official Vice President of the region, General Paul Kagame formally succeeded President Augustin Bizimungu after his resignation in 2000.

Having addressed the background of the political governance of Rwanda, notions of 'developmentalism' and 'developmental state' have gained wide recognition post-genocide. Rwanda, as well as other countries of the Global South such as Botswana have experienced recent economic growth (Mkandawire, 2001; Takeuchi, 2019). Such phenomena are used mainly in the context of states that promote their political 'mission' to ensure economic development both domestically and through their relationship with the international economy (Mkandawire, 2001, p.290). In the

context of Rwanda, these notions can be used when considering the widespread political emphasis on developmental ideologies, the social engineering of the state, and the high economic performance of the country (Takeuchi, 2019). As previously mentioned, it is essential to note that the rapid economic growth throughout this epoch has been achieved under the presence of strict authoritarian rule. The RPF's authoritarian political system is seen best through its weak civil society, limited existence of 'free and fair' elections, and lack of political transparency (Reyntjens, 2013).

The strength and ambition of the Rwandan state are widely reflected through several policies launched by the Government of Rwanda (GoR). Namely, the GoR has published both its Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy of 2008-2012 (EDPRS) and 'Vision 2050' (Ansoms and Rostagno 2012; Mann and Berry 2016). As embodied in the previous 'Vision 2020' report, the EDPRS provides a framework for achieving long-term development aspirations - with priority given to economic growth, human capital development, and poverty alleviation. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) of 2002-2005 was emphasised in a post-conflict environment where the primary emphasis was on managing 'a transitional period of reconstruction and rehabilitation' (Republic of Rwanda, 2007, p.1). Since then, the priority of the EDRPS has been to expand on this by utilising the critical role of the private sector to accelerate growth and reduce poverty. By heightening economic growth, the Rwandan government aimed to increase the opportunities for employment and the generation of exports.

Secondly, similar to the EDPRS blueprint, the Rwandan government under President Kagame has sought to launch what is referred to as the 'Vision 2050' report as a national strategy for transformation. This approach goes beyond mere economic development and offers a critical plan and policy blueprint to guide the efforts of all development factors in Rwanda. Earlier aspirations for development focused heavily on economic recovery since the genocide, i.e., through human capital investments, development of basic infrastructure, and the expansion of access to various services. The Vision 2050 report firmly states that 'Vision 2020 was about what we had to do to survive and regain our dignity. But Vision 2050 must be about the future we choose, because we can, and because we deserve it' (Republic of Rwanda, 2020, p.4). Accordingly, the post-2010 epoch, alongside the EDPRS, had laid the foundations for sustainable economic growth and diversification, Vision 2050 seeks to prioritise economic growth and the quality of life for Rwandans by emphasising human development and 'agriculture for wealth creation', to name but a few (ibid., 10).

Despite the novel policies introduced, such projects fail to measure by a performance indicator or even identify a logical framework that should be addressed. For example, the modernisation of the agricultural sector is widely problematic. With the use of interventionist policy measures, peasants are restructured through new technologies, and their livelihoods are reorganised both socially and spatially (Harrison, 2017). The arguable purpose of this interventionism has been for the rational use of land due to current land scarcity and degradation of soil; thus, a top-down attempt for effective and reasonable land use (Ansoms et al., 2017; Takeuchi, 2019). Subsequently, the evident economic transformation of Rwanda that centres on capital accumulation involves numerous complexities. At the core of this development is the profound and pervasive shift of not only production and spatial identity but the social identity of peasants, who make up a large majority of the population (Cioffo et al., 2016; Takeuchi 2019). According to Harrison apart from the basic foundations of liberal historiography, accounts of capitalist development are heavily dominated by processes that 'dispossess, alienate and disempower' (2017, p.10). It involves the utilisation of Western intellectual constructed frameworks that are *declassé* and ground themselves on the process of social shifting that embeds in Rwanda's agrarian transformation strategy.

This brings forth post-genocide development through the social transformation of the Rwandan population. The reliance on developmental legitimacy is thoroughly linked with the government's nationalist discourse, which remains a critical component underpinning the political incentives behind developmental governance in Rwanda. The post-genocide government has been argued to uphold decolonial agendas and produce radical solutions that explicitly set out to reject colonial legacies that were further exacerbated by previous regimes, i.e., the Habyarimana administration. For instance, the RPF has proposed a 'de-ethnicisation' policy that calls for 'the rejection of ethnicity as a way of defining identity' (Purdeková and Mwambari, 2021, p.2). The rejection of ethnic or racial signifiers of identities has become a foundation of the post-genocide peace-keeping strategy. This initiative is not only another instance of the postcolonial phenomenon of national development as a method to maintain unity under state sovereignty but remains another way the government can address the legacy of the genocide (Harrison, 2020). Moreover, Rwandan development remains a political project that aims to reconstruct social identities that are less liable to generate political violence in the future. One can therefore argue that these policies as such aim to openly deconstruct colonial heritage and create space for transformation and radical change.

Although international observers and academics have praised Rwanda for its economic achievements, technocratic government, and societal reforms following the genocide, a further criticism worth considering is the ubiquity of human rights abuses under the RPF regime. These violations have been seen in the information management scheme, victimisation of the Hutu majority and the retributive justice system.[7] Moreover, practices of authoritarian rule in Rwanda have included the oppression of dissidents, the monopoly of power by the government and the technology of disinformation (Reyntjens, 2013; 2019). Non-RPF parties in the parliament have supported President Kagame in presidential elections which has illustrated the political spread of fear towards the population as a tactic to prevent political space for substantial opposition parties. The space for freedom of expression is reduced to a minimum to prevent an environment for contestation and, in contrast, has expanded the space for victimisation of Hutus for their past (Takeuchi, 2019). Such political actions have directly impacted the existence of human rights defenders, civil society, political and social representation, and domestic and international nongovernmental organisations (NGOs).

Economic Development

There is a broad consensus within academe and aid consultancy reports that the government of Rwanda has achieved outstanding post-conflict development, given the austere starting point of the country (see, for example, Ansoms 2011; Takeuchi, 2019). However, it is important to note that there remains considerable controversy on the reliability of national development statistics considering that data on African countries are regarded as partial and unreliable (Ansoms et al., 2017). Nevertheless, it is beyond doubt that agriculture remains to be of great significance for Rwanda. As of 2016, all productive sectors had grown consistently, with agricultural and industrial sectors included Considering the findings of McKay and Verpoorten (2016), since the end of the genocide, there has been strong evidence that living conditions have improved alongside economic growth. Overall, it is clear that Rwanda has seen continuous economic development since 1995, in stark contrast to the 1980s and early 1990s, when GDP was largely stagnant.

Subsequently, as of 2020, 72% of Rwandans possess an agricultural foundation for their livelihood (Harrison, 2020). The real GDP growth of Rwanda increased by over 10% per year (1996-2000) (Republic of Rwanda, 2007). According to the World Development Indicators (WDI), Rwanda's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) more than doubled from

[7] See, for example, Ansoms, 2009, Reyntjens 2013, Harrison, 2017.

$333M to $690M from 2000 to 2015, averaging growth of approximately 8% per year (Harrison 2017). The country has improved social provision alongside a slight decrease in poverty. Simultaneously, the economy experienced a structural shift as, for example, the Service Sector replaced agriculture as the primary contributor to the increases in output (Republic of Rwanda, 2007). The agricultural share of GDP steadily decreased from 39 to 29%, whereas the service share increased from 51 to 57% (Takeuchi, 2019). Considering these figures, Rwanda has not only undergone a social transformation but an economic one in recent years.

Despite the standard neoclassical growth models predicting the relatively vast hike that would follow in the years after the genocide, poverty in Rwanda remains omnipresent. Although it is argued that the rural society remains the heart of 'traditional' social identity, likewise, it is the location of most of Rwanda's extreme poverty (Harrison, 2020, p.222). As of 2020, poverty rates in Rwanda were roughly twice as high as in urban provinces (ibid.). According to the World Bank (2022) report, by 2021, the economy of Rwanda grew by around 11% as targeted measures aided economic activities to effectively navigate through the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Conjointly, alongside the emergence of Covid-19, Rwanda has relatively higher poverty rates than African peers with similar income per capita, whereby poverty reduction has been less responsive to the growth over the years (World Bank, 2022). Contemporarily, the country faces challenges in fully translating its strong economic growth into commensurate gains in poverty reduction and shared prosperity to alleviate poverty by 2050. Considering that capital accumulation has been the main growth driver, the Rwandan government has done little to address persistent regional poverty.

In addition, inequality remains a vast issue. In 2016, political, social, and economic disparities exceeded compared to most countries in Eastern Africa which have been a concern for sustainability and cohesion. Concerns have been raised about the 'voice and accountability' of governments that fail to address the persistence of the socio-economic inequalities (McKay and Verpoorten, 2016, p.132). Despite improvements in the Gini coefficient – the measurement of income distribution across the population – inequality has not improved at a rate that reflects the wide-scale economic growth (Harrison, 2020). Finally, the significant gap between Kigali and other areas of the region remains imperative to this; however, there are still significant levels of inequality within provinces (McKay and Verpoorten, 2016).

Conclusion

This article has argued that the history of ethnic conflict embedded in Rwanda since pre-colonial history has been greatly accentuated by European colonists (namely, Germany and Belgium), which has, to a large degree, spurred economic and social inequalities throughout the country. This has made evident the negated prospects for socio-economic development and the myriad colonial vestiges engraved in both Rwandan political rhetoric and identity. As mentioned, the present is not solely defined by the past, which is an idea we must reiterate when it comes to the case of Rwanda. Therefore, this article has acknowledged the role of former President Juvenal Habyarimana and his administration in failing to address the responsibility of Hutu extremists in alienating the Tutsi ethnic identity.

Extensive economic data illustrates the extent to which colonialism has played a factor in the economy of Rwanda. The state of Rwanda has been characterised as a developing economy and, like others, faces political, social, and economic challenges detrimental to its stability. Critically comprehending the multifaceted nature of Rwanda's political and socioeconomic demands breadth alongside a postcolonial analysis. The sustainability of this development is widely debated by numerous scholars as mentioned, whilst the persistence of political and social inequalities accentuated by colonial influence has long posed harm to the stability of the multidimensional state of Rwanda. This chapter has recognised both the successes and shortcomings of the developmental goals of Rwanda. Despite having achieved vast economic growth, the government continually fail to address the ongoing challenges brought by poverty and inequality. So long as the ruling administrations fail to acknowledge the political and social shortcomings addressed, the threat to Rwanda's stability will persevere.

This article concludes by returning to my findings and overall argument. Whilst ethnic conflict has been present in the precolonial era of Rwanda, it has been further accentuated by European colonists, namely, Germany and Belgium, spurring economic and social inequalities throughout the country. Furthermore, the recent political administrations of Rwanda have failed to recognise the threat posed by the prolonged social inequalities that have embedded the country.

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13

CAPITALISM SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION OF WOMEN AND EMPOWERMENT

Camille Mathy

Abstract

'Never forget that it only takes a political, economic or religious crisis for women's rights to be called into question. These rights can never be taken for granted. You must remain vigilant throughout your life.' Simone de Beauvoir (Monteil, 2011, p.41). In an era where women's rights are more than ever contested, it seems essential to understand how they have been acquired. Is capitalism willing to grant rights to oppressed groups, or have they ceased under pressure? Once achieved, the manipulation and reappropriation of these rights also need to be underlined since they are essential tools for neoliberal governments to portray themselves as the first actors for women's emancipation. This discourse legitimises white middle-class men to make decisions over women's lives and bodies. Yet, women's emancipation is also braked by 'inners': women who only suffer from gender oppression but are not in solidarity with precarious, women of colour, disabled and trans women. Thus, women's emancipation is an ongoing struggle that should not be reduced to the acquirement of new rights but as a quest for autonomy and the abolishment of a whole system based on the subordination of minorities.

Introduction

Modern feminist movements of the post-World War II era emerged as an insurrectionary force which challenged male domination in state-organised capitalist societies. The particularity of such an economic ideology is that private property controls the means of production. These post-war feminist movements frame their emancipation around the claim that the 'the personal is political', whereby oppressions experienced by women within the private sphere do not have private solutions. Forms of submission must henceforth be identified within the institutional structure of society. That is, private problems in general must be addressed by the political public. Another characteristic of advanced capitalism in the postwar era is globalisation and the interconnection of social dynamics. Consequently, macro-region (the EU and the US most notably, but also international organisations such as the UN, the IMF and the World Bank) reconstituted inner inequalities. This political process emerged in opposition to the notion of a social contract of

the political sphere. As such, analysis of historical feminist movements must also be viewed between the social struggles for emancipation within global dominant economic structures.

Emancipation, defined as the struggle to free minorities from forms of domination must be understood as a process, since social claims evolve in response to changing societal circumstances. Women's emancipation thus draws upon historical movements of the 19th century, which broke

stereotypes of the Victorian image of women's 'proper' role and their 'sphere' within society and made significant advances in terms of education policies. Nonetheless, the focus of this study centralises around post-war feminist movements precisely because the form of emancipation reacted against the novel form of economic capitalism. Capital within this system is mobile, meaning communities are commodified in order to be integrated within the global profit accumulation process.

The changing social context of global capitalism thus leads to different forms of emancipatory movements, but also and more importantly different ways in which these movements penetrate the political public. In this context, positive movements, those perceived as an advancement in women's emancipation process, are only presented as such because of 'selective enforcement' (Fraser, 2009). Capitalism is inherently a malleable political structure able to identify and include emancipatory movements (under a liberal agenda) only as long as these movements do not fundamentally challenge its profit accumulating structure. Indeed, these 'positive movements' are only positive for a fraction of women within different axes of power.

Based on these premises, this paper seeks to contribute to existing feminist literature by answering the following research question: *How can the capitalist paradigm of woman's empowerment beget their submission?* It will be shown that the notion of women's empowerment as understood in the West is limited by the tools that capitalism is willing to provide. Such movements that do not conform to the capitalist paradigm, on the other hand, are faced with repressive backlash. According to Faludi (1991), backlash can be defined as the concerted efforts to contain, undermine, and reverse the gains made by women under feminism. Due to the nature of the research question, it is appropriate to use a critical theory and materialist feminism as an analytical methodology. Critical theory formulates a normative reflection of struggles of oppressed groups, whereas materialist feminism analyses the material conditions in which social arrangements are formed. To further focus the scope of this paper, the emancipatory movements analysed will focus on Western Europe and the

US, which seems appropriate considering the geographical reach of feminist 'waves' and their reappropriation by the capitalist paradigm. This theoretical methodology is nonetheless coupled with empirical data highlighting arguments relevant to understanding the role of women in the labour force, within the nuclear family, or the socio-economic backgrounds in surrogacy.

In part 1, emancipatory movements will be contextualised within the societal structures in which they took place and the backlash they faced. Indeed, one of the difficulties in answering the research question is to not portray the post-war feminist movement as a single entity. In part 2, the backlash effect will be presented as splitting feminist emancipation between those who have the tools to emancipate themselves and those who don't. The main argument being made is that the emancipation of some groups of women is conditioned by gender and social injustices for other groups, limiting a full positive gender revolution.

Part 1. The reappropriation of women's emancipation by the capitalist paradigm

In Western literature, the history of modern feminist movements is often characterised through waves, from suffrage movements beginning in the 19th century, to second-wave feminism emanating from the US in the 60s (women's liberation movement), to more recent movements such as *Me Too* which publicised allegations of sex crimes (Harnois, 2008). This section will focus on the forms of feminist emancipatory movements that have been first constrained and later reappropriated by an oppressive societal structure, whether in the form of patriarchy or capitalism. As such, these feminist movements will be analysed through the lens of a structural materialist point of view, focusing on the emancipatory movements within Western Europe and the US. This is to highlight the ability of capitalism to create a backlash effect of blaming women for their so-called emancipation. It will be shown that these movements within capitalism, often categorised by white Western historians as the most emancipatory, have certainly gained in empowerment, but only because of the rights and tools that capital was willing to give up.

The so-called women's emancipation

Capital cedes to these movements through a rights-based approach. Different tools of emancipation have been granted by capital to women, starting with the right to vote during the first half of the twentieth century, marking an unprecedented advance in women's rights according to the Western discourse. Following numerous struggles, often long and intense,

Western states ceded to women the right to vote. Despite the pacifist narrative that frames the suffrage movement, other forms of action have been undertaken and often hidden by history. In the UK, in reaction to the suffragists that adopted moderated means of actions, the suffragettes emerged who through the slogan "deeds, not words" fought for their emancipation by breaking windows, beating up police officers, setting fires and even planting bombs. (Dubois, 1975).

Other tools have been ceded to women by the capitalists, such as the right to work, but without simultaneously changing some structures that it has created, rendering women unable to fully emancipate. Indeed, the growth of female employment in the post-war era only occurred with the establishment of global capitalism as a new economic system, which became hegemonic with the fall of the Eastern Bloc. In order for profit to accumulate in a transnational economy, areas of social life that were excluded from market relations become commodified. This is what William Robinson called the 'intensive enlargement of capitalism' (Robinson, 2004).

This phenomenon is exemplified by World War II (WWII), where many feminists thought the period of 'stay at home women' was over (Faludi, 1991) since women replaced men in political activities during WWII and were thus emancipated from the family home. This phenomenon took place in both France and the US, where massive war campaigns were undertaken. The most illustrative one is the campaign of Rosie the Riveter that inspired many women to take their work into the public arena (Santana, 2016). In 1942, following the attack on Pearl Harbor the previous year, the US entered the war, and to alleviate the lack of manpower in industry, a major propaganda campaign was launched by the government. It encouraged women to adopt 'men's jobs'. More generally, women workers who would gradually make up a larger and larger share of the American workforce - up to 20 million women by 1944 - were known as "Rosies" (Anderson, 1988). Women thus played a major role in the war economy, but once peace was restored, they had to return home. Indeed, the post-war was to get the women to give up those jobs and drop out the workforce so there would be more jobs for the men returning from the front. This return to the household was influenced by a new wave of propaganda arrived at this period, spreading the message of the necessity for women to be at home carrying their children and husband. According to the discourse, women had been missing for a long time creating unstable households, and it was their duty now to make it great again (Anderson, 1944).

Despite some rights and form of "emancipation" that women have achieved, there was an area where the capital had a whole 'main prise'[1] over women: their bodies. The 1960s was a time of profound change in morals and representations: the main objectives were now individual freedom, equality in marriage, voluntary motherhood, sexual pleasure, and personal fulfilment (Klatch, 2001). The prosperity of the 'Trente Glorieuses[2] (1945-1975) attracted women to professional activities in the service sector. Their income improved household living conditions and gave them a resemblance of financial independence.

This illusion of autonomy influenced women's willingness to limit the number of children they had (Gordon, 2002). Women's desire to reclaim control over reproduction emerged as a reaction to the control that capital exercises over women's bodies. Indeed, this form of control is as old as male domination itself, which is entirely focused on one central objective: the control of motherhood. This control is exercised in different ways, but its aim is always to control female sexuality in order to ensure the reproductive function for the benefit of the male group (Gilbert, 2010). Thus, many feminist movements emerged to obtain the right to birth control, but above all, to conquer their freedom and fight for their emancipation. Avant-garde figures such as Margaret Sanger made the free disposal of women's bodies their propaganda theme (Katzive, 2015).

In France The Movement for the Freedom of Abortion and Contraception (MLAC), created in 1973, fought for the need to dissociate sexuality and procreation, for freedom of contraception and abortion, and for the dissemination of sexual information. This movement practiced a mass illegal behaviour that contributed decisively to the adoption of the Veil law in 1975, which partially decriminalised abortion in France (De La Hougue, 2018). The movement's forms of struggle were diverse, such as a tour of France in 1974 to propagandise for abortion liberation, or the organisation of trips to England and Holland to help women who wanted abortions (Zancarini-Fournel, 2003).

By waging these struggles, women have understood the nature of their oppression. It is not their fault; it is not because one is born of a certain gender that one is destined to be dominated. These are systemic oppressions, which have been socially constructed to justify power relations against certain minorities. By getting rid of essentialist arguments aimed at justifying biological oppression - women have found their enemy: the state and capitalism (Delphy, 2010). Their condition is not due to any biological or metaphysical nature that would deny the existence of history and

[1] Ownership
[2] The Thirty-year boom

therefore of male domination. On the contrary, it is imposed by dominants who need to divide the population into two binary identities: 'men' and 'women' that serves to maintain the nuclear family and the role of motherhood, thus leading to man's hegemony (Scott, 2012). Yet, women have a target, a tangible enemy.

This theorisation of women's condition can be portrayed as a huge achievement since by recognising one's enemy, it is possible to fight it and emancipate oneself from it. This era is therefore often illustrated as one of women's empowerment, given the number of rights that governments have ceded to them. Thus, during the 1980s, the neoliberal narrative about women's emancipation was clear: governments had heard and considered their demands leading to profound change on women's lives, so they were granted unprecedented autonomy and had full control over their lives (Cornwall, 2018). This discourse, supported by politicians and the media but also by certain feminists, portrayed a total emancipation of women. They talk about these struggles to show that they have brought progress to the economic, social, and political condition of women, but the era that follows will call into question the achievements and hinder the fight. To such an extent that this era was referred as 'post-feminism' or 'the failure of feminism'. Thus, the notion of backlash took on a dazzling importance in feminist discourse: this is what Silvia Federici called 'the undeclared war against women' (Faludi, 1991).

Backlash

"They've done it, women's fight for equality is largely won". This is how advertisers or magazines illustrated the condition of women in 1980 (North, 2009). This discourse is still prominent today. Men have agreed that the fight for equal opportunities is no longer a priority. They already have 'so much', 'there has been such an advance', that they no longer need to be appointed to positions of responsibility. On the other hand, they have become so 'equal' that the equal rights amendment [3] has become unnecessary (Delphy, 2010). This discourse, predominant in newspapers but also in academic studies, is referred to by feminist theories as backlash. Women have gained freedom and equality, but to their despair. This idea was therefore shared en masse in the 1990s by the media: 'Working women are likely to be exhausted and not have children' (as if not having children was a failure of femininity), women 'without husbands' are 'hysterical' and have 'a serious crisis of confidence' (Haraldsson and Wängnerud, 2018). Thus, the message to women is that their unhappiness comes from their

[3] Amendment seeking to provide for the legal equality of the sexes and prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex.

liberation; they are slaves of their own emancipation. It is necessary to underline that while these rights have been acquired through many intense struggles, often carried out illegally and with great risks for women, the capitalist paradigm willingly allows itself not to mention them in its discourse, in order to make room for its own.

The discourse given to new generations is that women's political rights are an inevitable evolution of neoliberal society. That gender equality is paramount, that all this would have happened anyway (Delphy, 2010). Thus, capital renders invisible the forms of struggle that have been going on for decades. Women are still tied to the female role that capital invented for them. The sexual division of labour persists and thus giving up a job is a matter that mainly concerns women. According to a study conducted by the Center for American Progress, between 1974 and 2015, the percentage of families with children headed by a single mother doubled from 14.6% to 25.2% (Glynn, 2019). In addition, another US study conducted by the Institute on Aging shows that more than 75% of caregivers[4] are women who may spend 50% more time caring for their loved ones than men (FCA, 2013). In 2011, of the 15 million women aged 20-59 in France who were not students, 2.1 million (14%) were 'housewives': they were living with a man and were economically inactive (Djider, 2013).

Contrary to what the capitalist paradigm claims, women do not have the most basic means to achieve equality in the labour market. This can be explained by the persisting sexual division of labour that impedes women to emancipate themselves through work. When they enter the world of work, they are subject to guilt-tripping discourses blaming them for their 'inability' to fulfil their role as good wives and mothers (Lamb, 2011). If a woman works full-time and is less present for her children, she will easily be perceived by society either as a selfish person who only thinks about her own personal development - which most men do, but which does not bother anyone - or as a workaholic - because a woman is always too extreme. In a patriarchal society, women are meant to be fulfilled and accomplish themselves through motherhood and their husband. Most women are under the pressure of a system that wants them at home. Thus, capital succeeds in its mission: the woman is a woman until she becomes a mother.

Another backlash effect women experience is that even when they have the determination to try to enter the labour market there are many barriers. Firstly, they have significantly less opportunity than a man to do the job they 'want', once hired they are more likely to be paid significantly less

[4] Carers are defined as people who provide unpaid help to others.

than a man, and their workplace is often a place of sexual assault which they must endure (Rudman and Phelan, 2008). Finally, when women struggle to get paid for their housework, society ridicules this struggle, neutralising these protagonists: by fighting for a right that is not considered essential to capital, their struggle is made invisible. Thus, women are seen as hysterical housewives and grumbling snipes and not as workers in struggle (Faludi, 1991).

So, if women are so equal, as the men of power say, why are so many struggles still going on? For example, the struggle for remuneration for housework has persisted since the emergence of capitalism. Capitalism does not only exploit labour power when it is in the factory or in any other place of "work", but also a whole part of unpaid, unrecognised work, mainly done by women in household tasks and reproduction (Wharton, 2000). By fighting for the recognition of this work, women want to get away from the image of the alienated housewife whose horizon is “barefoot and pregnant” (a figure of speech introduced in the early 20th century justifying the idea that when the wife is kept barefoot and pregnant there are less divorces). Women have realised that it is through their work that the world depends, that they do not have to become aware of their *oppression* but rather of their *power*, and finally that it is necessary to dare to use such power to attack capital. By demanding payment, these women are not seeking to institutionalise this role - that is, not to change the gendered roles assigned to domestic tasks but they want their work to be valued by society (Delphy, 2010). Indeed, the reason that housework had to be transformed into a natural attribute, rather than being recognised as a social contract, is that from the beginning of capitalism, this work was unpaid. In order to make women accept their unpaid work, capital had to convince them that it was a natural, inevitable and even rewarding activity. Moreover, the material condition of unpaid housework has been the most powerful weapon in reinforcing the generally held view that housework is not work (Pupo and Duffy, 2012).

Another form of backlash against women was the return to domestic work after the so- called emancipation of Rosies during WWII. If women were returned to domestic work at the end of the war it was because capitalism tends to subordinate women's needs to those of the nation. Indeed, the post-war period in both France and the US created a need to increase the birth rate to preserve the future of the race, rather than focusing on the needs of individual mothers. Thus, in a context marked by international concerns about the declining birth rate, the discourse of the traditional family having to respond to its procreative function was extremely widespread, inciting women to give up their freedom to comply with their gender assigned task (Lewis and Heinen, 2016). Moreover, their war work

was not the fruit of capital giving them the possibility of emancipation, but just a use of women's bodies to be able to carry on with the war by replacing the absent men. Slogans such as "we can do it" for internal company communication were not intended to integrate women into the labour market on an equal footing with men, but rather an incentive to prevent them from going on strike and fighting absenteeism. Thus, at the end of the war, although women had the right to work, they were forced to follow Parson's theory of 'specialisation' of roles between spouses: men were to guarantee the income and women were to do the domestic and care work.

The sexual division of labour persists. Capital has managed to manipulate the discourses directed to women according to where the workforce was necessary. Despite the rights that women may achieve, they will remain in the place where capital wants them to. Hence even though rights are ceded, capital maintains control over the tools it gives to women.

The process of backlash is further explained by the fact that a capitalist society does not seek to empower minorities. Promoting the idea that women were happier before, when they may have had fewer rights but also fewer responsibilities, or that they were better wives/mothers before the so-called emancipation, governments tend to demotivate women to gain their freedom. The emancipation of women is contradictory to the survival of capitalism (Despentes, 2015). Society does not want women's independence because it is necessary to preserve the nuclear family where women are alienated and provide unpaid housework. Without this work, the state would have to organise assistance to families with domestic tasks, as all household workers would be at work (there is no intention to remove men from the labour market to fulfill this role). These tasks are essential for capitalism to survive since it is the place where future workers are being raised, and where actual ones need to rest. Hence, women need to remain private, a men's shadow and property.

Backlash has long-term effects, and still impacts women's lives today. Indeed, as a study commissioned by the European Parliament states, the backlash ‘has decreased the level of protection for women and girls and reduced access to their rights’ (Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs policy department, 2018, p.106). Thus, backlash has ongoing impacts on women’s conditions but is used as a tool for governments to justify and legitimise their non-action: the work for equality has already been done, so if women are not satisfied it is their responsibility. Thus, by discrediting women and trying to take away their power to act, capital ensures the persistence of women's submission, and de facto, ensures the survival of the status quo.

One of the key objectives of capital is to be in exponential progress, from the development of technologies to the process of globalization. Since the industrial era capitalism has spread at the worldwide scale in so-called "development". To achieve such expansion, a capitalist society needs to exploit: from women to ethnic minorities or even the planet. However, when progress - an improvement of a condition – is achieved in spite of itself – for example through struggles – neoliberal governments will reappropriate for themselves these victories by claiming that it is the result of the progress of capitalism. This phenomenon can be seen with past feminist struggles. While there have been decades of struggles for improvement of women's condition, the capitalist paradigm portrays the liberation of abortion as 'the inevitable evolution of society' or women's liberation as an 'unavoidable consequence of our democracies' (Delphy, 2010, p. 87). Hence, this clash between the reality of history and the one that capitalism wants to provide reinforces the vision of women as a dominated being whose destiny is already set and may be accomplished by fulfilling her gendered assigned role.

Part 2: Emancipation for whom?

During their struggles, women have been impacted by a backlash effect resulting in a new form of control from the capital over their bodies and their condition. By ceding certain tools supposedly destined to free women from oppressions, neoliberal governments create forms of subtle domination. However, even if it is only a partial one, these struggles have led to a form of empowerment, but mainly for certain women. It is essential to make these struggles visible, because if women do not acknowledge the battles undertaken to achieve the world they have created for themselves, what can those who have never experienced those movements do? How will they defend themselves against the capitalist paradigm which through various means presents women's advances as 'progress that works itself out' or as an almost natural process? (Delphy, 2010). If the capitalist ideological vision wins, then feminist gains will be lost as soon as they are gained.

Nevertheless, as many de-colonial feminists point out, women's 'emancipation' over time has suffered from various forms of backlash. Indeed, the majority of rights gained among Western countries were struggles led *by* white women, and *for* white women. Indeed, the forms of struggles analysed above were mostly carried out by white and privileged women: suffragette and suffragist activists were overwhelmingly white *bourgeois* women, as were those fighting for reproductive control, whilst the labour propaganda messages during the Second World War were aimed to convince white women (Velez, 2019). While other struggles have been waged in non-Western countries, such as revolutionary feminist

movements in Latin America, or the thousands of feminists marching at the head of demonstrations during the Arab Spring, they tend to be less visible in Western narratives (Sjoberg and Whooley, 2015). Although it is necessary to learn from these struggles in order to build intersectional[55] feminist movements, it is also important to render visible the many women forgotten within Western feminist history itself. In such cases, these women have not only been absent from history, but also from the struggles. The 'mainstream' struggles for equality – or in any cases the most famous among the Western narrative - have generally not represented the conditions of racialised, working class and precarious women (Breines, 2002).

Inter-division of feminist movements: history & privileges

The marginalisation of certain women within the feminist struggle can be explained through various ways. According to their colonial past, Western countries have created a common narrative of 'the others'. Individuals from the so-called 'developing countries', or 'undeveloped' ones, are portrayed by the capitalist paradigm as reluctant to progress. Ways invented by capital to sustain this argument are various: their religion, their way of life, their culture… all are barriers for their integration within *modern* Western societies (Passada, 2019). Colonial history is still anchored in Western society to a point that, through different levels of consciousness, systematic racism is part of every white individual. Indeed, women experiencing intersecting oppressions created by the capital - such as racialised and precarious - are often represented by some Western feminists as 'third world women' that are 'passive, ignorant, dependent, and victimised' (Mohanty, 2000, p.63). In contrast, the image spread at the worldwide scale of the white women is the one of the 'educated, liberal and empowered'. This discourse is therefore representative of Western imperialism and how the non-recognition of the history of domination reinforces systematic oppressions. This division among women has a direct impact on the effectiveness of the feminist movement. Capital has managed to divide women between the 'developed' and the 'underdeveloped' reinforcing Western ethnocentrism (Christensen, 1997).

By acquiring new rights, white middle-class women achieve more equity than precarious and/or racialised women. In addition to having new rights won through feminist struggles, some women have rights automatically guaranteed by their social class. On the other hand, other women often experience an accumulation of oppressions: their religion, their skin colour, their level of education, their social class, the place they live. Struggles for

[5] Struggles that takes into account all forms of oppressions.

emancipation led by white middle class women are therefore susceptible to reinforce the inequality gap between women by representing only a fraction of the oppressions that capitalism can exercise. Indeed, not all women start from the same level of equality. At the time of slavery, white women had the right to own a slave, while black women had no rights or control over their lives. Although white women had no legal *rights* at the time, they had privileges due to their social class and skin colour, which they used to exploit non-white women (Bohrer, 2020). The same pattern of oppression can be found centuries later. At the time where the suffragette movement was gaining importance, the British Empire was at its peak. This phenomenon had a great correlation towards the organised suffragette movement: only few non-white women assisted the meetings and the figures that represented the movement were (and still are) white women. At a time where imperialism had an overwhelming presence among British society, racialised women were suffering from hard poverty. Thus, while *bourgeois* women – such as Pankhurst - had the privilege to spend their time campaigning and parading, others were serving them, doing their household duties in order to free their time (Ware, 2019). This notion is therefore essential in thinking about female emancipation: as not all women are equal at the starting point, they will not emancipate simultaneously and will experience very different backlashes depending on their race and class.

Reluctance of women to fight together against a common enemy

The roots of oppression for women in the 20th and 21st centuries, although building upon previous colonial domination, emanate from capitalism. Until individuals renounce their privileges, they are reinforcing the domination of minorities. Hence, feminists that dissociate themselves from others because they do not want to struggle for an intersectional feminism are *de facto* oppressors. In the 1960s in the US the most representative form of the women's movement was liberal egalitarian feminism. This feminist movement had individual freedom and equality as its main axes of struggle. For them, full equality would allow women to participate fully in society on an equal footing with men. This discourse was the most heard and legitimised by the media when talking about the feminist movement (Delphy, 2010). By representing only these women, the media made invisible all feminist struggles against capitalism and its exploitation, nor women whose objectives are not to be equal to men. Defining feminism as a struggle that seeks to be equal to men results in framing the movement as one whose objective is that women resemble men. Many feminist struggles fight against this notion, and therefore does not seek to give power to women but rather destroy the power (Marsh, 1978).

Hence, radical feminist theories are portrayed as not legitimate and marginalised from the political discourse. For instance, anarchist theories such as the one of Emma Goldman were portrayed as irrational by both politicians and institutional feminists. Goldman's theory was that struggles for the acquirement of new rights are an illusion created by a system in which a corrupt political elite made laws that others were forced to obey, thus creating a dependence towards an entity that does not have the willingness to provide real tools of emancipation (Shpolberg, 2020). These rights are given by an elite that seeks long-term prosperity and thus would not grant rights that can put their hegemony at stake. By marginalising and discrediting radical views, the status quo suggests that there is no real feminist willingness to abolish a whole system, but rather to work with it and to reform it according to its rules. This phenomenon also took place in France in the 1990s. It was not feminist activists or intellectuals who were interviewed, but stars manufactured by the media. Accordingly, Elisabeth Badinter, a so-called 'universalist' but actually a supporter of national republicanism was portrayed as the representative of the Women's Liberation Movement, while providing arguments to the media that had never been shared among the movement (Delphy, 2010).

By giving so much voice to these women, the message conveyed by the media is that a form of equality already exists, thanks to the status quo, rendering invisible the injustice and inequality that other women face. Therefore, the media are perpetrators of backlash by excluding from the movement's discourse women that are not willing to cooperate with capital. On the other hand, feminists that cooperate are serving the interests of capital since it is then possible to divide the 'good' feminists from the 'bad' ones. The alliance between institutional feminists and capital is only feasible since the rights that are reclaimed by these women are not seeking to abolish inequalities between gender, race, and social classes, but only the one that affects them (being their gender exploitation). Hence, rights granted by capital, which may only partially improve their condition while still providing a form of emancipation, shows that capital can be reformed to their demands, creating a relation of trust between the 'requestor' towards the 'giver' (Kenny, 2007). By cooperating with governments, institutional feminists are serving the interests of capital since it can be perceived as respectful of the social contract without having to cede tools of emancipation to minorities.

Thus, feminists that accept this paradigm and continue their struggles without considering minorities are not allies to the movement. By protesting for rights that will only benefit themselves these women are appropriating the feminist movement. Then, the 'others' are invisible or worse, portrayed as enemies of feminism.The case of the veil in France -

surely one of the greatest controversies of the French system - illustrates this argument. Some white non-Muslim 'feminists' describe Muslim women as victims, submissive to their husbands and unable to make 'free choices'. For example, in a 2003 campaign to ban the Islamic headscarf, Ségolène Royale - a candidate in the 2007 French presidential elections announced her desire for a framework law against domestic violence, mentioning raped women and veiled women as equal victims (Delphy, 2010). The systematic victimisation of Muslim women within Western culture has been criticised by decolonial feminist in several ways. Aren't these women, who criticise the submission of Muslim women to their husbands, the same ones who are fighting for more freedom, especially from the men around them? They have not emancipated themselves from patriarchal oppressions but think they have the solution for the 'others'.

In addition to a violent *whitesplaining* argumentation, these women show the anchored racism among so-called feminists' discourses that illustrates the predominating neo-colonial narrative among Western societies (Lamrabet, 2019). Moreover, can they, as women, but also as citizens of this capitalist world, declare themselves 'free' from any pressure when they make a choice? As has been shown, women under the constraints of social pressures often refuse to choose the path of emancipation in order to fulfil their role as women created by the capital. Thus, a Muslim woman may not wear the veil fully by choice, she may be subject to certain constraints/pressures, but does this make her an enemy of feminism? Is she not just a woman suffering more from patriarchal oppressions? Is she more submissive than a white woman staying at home out of compulsion?

Thus, women of immigrant background in France are almost never represented and their problems remain neglected in political discourse. However, when it comes to the domestic violence they may suffer at the hands of their husbands, there is some interest. The French government under Sarkozy (2007 - 2012) has tended to use this violence to create an illusion of 'good French men' versus 'immigrant rapists' (Delphy, 2010). Thus, the violence suffered by racialised women is useful only to blacken the image of the 'uncivilised'. Delocalisation is another strategy used to conceal male violence. While it took feminists thirty years to get their societies to recognise that the most dangerous place for women is at home, politicians instrumentalise this message to pursue two equally reprehensible goals: to minimise the damage caused by the entrenched tradition of male violence in our patriarchal societies, and to boost racism).

Capitalism has thus, for the moment, succeeded in its work. Bourgeois women and precarious women, white women and racialised women, almost does not share common goals or struggles. It has conceded tools

that benefit only a part of the female population, creating a reinforced marginalisation of precarious women, and above all dividing the feminist struggle. As women no longer fight together, they become more controllable and manipulable. This is why the feminist struggle must be intersectional, otherwise it will not be successful.

Conclusion

Legislation plays a crucial role in defending neoliberal reforms. Granting a sacred status to laws undermines both the conditions under which they are transcribed and the severe impact they can have on people's day-to-day lives. Indeed, they are often used as tools of neoliberal governments to crystallise social relationships while maintaining forms of subtle domination. Capital is not in an approach of ceding rights that could put its interests at stake, but a tool to sustain power. Hence, only individuals that are willing to cooperate and who respond to standards set by the capitalist paradigm can be granted a form of 'emancipation'. The ones that do not correspond to this capitalist framework are suffering from ongoing backlashes leading to an important division within the feminist movement. However, independently of the tools unevenly ceded to women, capital needs women's submission for its survival. If capitalism has successfully expanded at an international level by commodifying the social sphere and differentiating productive and unproductive work (and thus between *the skilled* and *the unskilled*), then intersectional global solidarity between class struggles must become the driving force for women empowerment.

Under this system, the notion of empowerment is only an illusion that has as consequence at best a small improvement of women's condition, and at worst the division of the feminist movement and women's dispossession from their body and power to act. Supposedly, the feminist movement's objective is to provide emancipation to all women. In that case, there is the need for the privileged ones to put themselves at risk for struggles that do not confront their reality. Since capital still has colossal control over women's condition, it is necessary to recognise it as an enemy to create autonomous ways of life that do not depend on its approval

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14

BILINGUAL EDUCATION POLICY IN COLOMBIA: GLOBALISATION AT THE EXPENSE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Cassidy Mattingly

Abstract

Since the 1980s, neoliberalism has been a cornerstone of policies implemented worldwide. For example, in Colombia the government has implemented a neoliberal policy on bilingual education. This paper will raise awareness surrounding the continued marginalization of indigenous languages and cultures, present in Colombia's bilingual education program since 2004.

Introduction

English has been coined the 'language of modernity', seen to facilitate participation in the global economy (Guerrero, 2008). For the past 40 years, Colombia has continued to negotiate its education policy around the idea of a bilingual nation, with English as *the* second language to be taught in schools (Guerrero, 2008; Mora, Chiquito, and Zapata, 2019). The Bilingual Colombia Program is the current language education policy that governs language learning in Colombian public schools (Cifuentes, Mejia, and Nates 2017). It has been criticized for its inconsistency, limited success, and continued devaluation of indigenous languages spoken throughout the country. This essay will seek to explore and analyse issues surrounding the implementation of bilingual education policies in Colombia through the lens of neoliberalism. It will then present an alternative solution to the current policy through the lens of the capabilities approach.

Language Diversity

Spanish is spoken by approximately 99% of the Colombian population, and 65 of these are Amerindian. Despite Spanish being the third most spoken language globally (behind English and Arabic), it is deemed 'not enough' to give Colombians access to the 'modern world' (Guerrero,

2008). The indigenous minorities of Colombia have been disregarded since Spanish colonization, and their marginalization persists through the current bilingual education policy. Those who successfully learn and speak English will be prioritized, while monolingual speakers are thus disadvantaged and seen as less competitive in the job market.

Current Language Policy

The Bilingual Colombia Program is the current language policy implemented in Colombia and seeks to ensure the equivalent of a B1 proficiency in the Common European Framework amongst students (Miranda, 2016). The emphasis on English proficiency reveals the aims of the state: to produce workers who can further its economic gains and its participation in the global market (Mejia, 2002; Motta, 2014; Miranda, 2016). As indicated in the National Program for Bilingualism (2004), the main goal was and continues to be to "achieve citizens capable of communicating in English, in such a way that they can insert the country in the processes of universal communication, in the global economy and in cultural openness, with internationally comparable standards" (Miranda, 2016).

Context of Colombia's Bilingual Policy Agenda

In line with these 21st century language trends, minority language communities are choosing to adopt majority languages to express themselves as these majority languages hold significant power, prestige, influence, and communicative reach. Although the indigenous population in Colombia is approximately 1,378,884 people, making up 3.3% of the national population, they remain the most marginalized 'people group' in the country due to a narrative which posits English as the most valuable resource for the country's economic development, ignoring the other 66 languages prevalent within the country (Guerrero, 2009).

History of language policy in Colombia

The pressure for second-language acquisition and the abandonment of indigenous languages can be traced back to Spanish colonization. Upon their arrival, the Spanish conquistadors were repulsed by the multilingualism present throughout the land, referring to the number of indigenous languages spoken as an "illness" that had been spread to the aborigines of the new world. The first encounter between colonizers and colonized represents the initial devaluation of indigenous languages, knowledge, and culture, which persists throughout Colombia in the present-day.

Colombia's independence from Spain was declared in 1886 and the first constitution was written, which dictated Spanish as the country's official language. It was assumed that indigenous peoples would stop speaking their native languages and adopt Spanish instead (Guerrero, 2009). In 1991, a new constitution declared indigenous people as Colombian citizens (de Mejia, 2006). Spanish was still the official language, but indigenous languages were recognized in the territories in which they were spoken (Miranda, 2016). In 1994, The General Act of Education was passed, introducing foreign language teaching and learning at the primary level, although it did not specify which languages were acceptable to be included. 2004 marked a period where the Colombian government more visibly sought to embed their human capital into the global market through developing English speakers in the classroom. Between the years 2004-2016, four different bilingualism plans were implemented (Gómez Sará, 2016).

The National Bilingual Program (2004-2010) was established to address the 'bilingualism necessities' of Colombia while preparing to form citizens able to communicate in English who can immerse the country in processes of universal communication, global economy, and cultural openness through internationally comparable standards (Gómez Sará, 2016; de Mejia, 2006). To achieve its aims, the Ministry of Education adopted the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as the national standard, defining the levels of language proficiency from A1 (breakthrough) to C2 (mastery) (Gómez Sará, 2016). The expectation was that by the third grade, students would attain A1 level, and at the end of the eleventh grade, they would be at B1 level. The country's national exams (Saber 11 and Saber Pro) were aligned to the CEFR to track student progress through assessment.

The Program for Strengthening the Development of Competencies in Foreign Languages (2010-2014) was aimed at continuing helping Colombians develop communicative competencies in a foreign language (with a heavy emphasis on English) in the hope of further inserting the country's population into the global knowledge economy. The Law of Bilingualism (otherwise known as Law 1651) was enacted in 2013 to redefine foreign language acquisition in Colombia, "prioritizing the teaching of English in the public educational institutions of the country without disregarding the wide variety of indigenous languages spoken in the national territory" (Congreso de la República de Colombia, 2013; Gómez Sará, 2016).

The National Plan of English: Colombia Very Well! (2015-2025) was launched to address the previous bilingual programs, which although

identified as positive had achieved unsatisfactory results (Gómez Sará, 2016). Only 5 months after this plan was implemented, it went through a restructuring and was re-implemented with the title "Bilingual Colombia". Information on the current program is sparse, but it was reportedly anticipated that by 2018, 35% of Colombian eighth-graders would have achieved a B2 level of English acquisition, with 8% at an A1 level. The Bilingual Colombia Program was not implemented nationwide but was launched in 120 schools spanning 36 cities. It continues to privilege the 'highly-visible', socially accepted Spanish-English bilingualism which is assumed to provide employment in the global economy (de Mejia, 2006). The 'invisible' bilingualism associated with speaking multiple minority languages is continuously linked to underdevelopment (de Mejia, 2006). The restructuring of Colombia's education sector in the last two decades has made evident the emphasis placed on globalization and the role of education being solely to prepare learners to enter a global world (Verger, Fontdevila, and Zancajo, 2017; Motta, 2014; Miranda, 2016; de Mejia, 2006).

What is the importance of language policy in the wider society, and the education sector in particular?

The move towards a bilingual Colombia, or an English-Spanish bilingual nation, is a small part of a much more complex pattern in language policymaking whereby the elite are favoured and hold power, making decisions which mainly benefit their small circle of privileged (Guerrero, 2009). Across the policy documents lies a common theme: the preparation of Colombian learners to meet "the demands of the globalized world" (Miranda, 2016). An education directed towards global needs rather than prioritizing the local is uncritically accepted, and English is asserted as the modern world language. The assumption is that an education not directed towards the needs of the globalized world would be unsatisfactory. This leaves no room for local knowledge to make meaning and derive what is important to local communities themselves.

Issues Raised

The bilingual language policy has been critiqued immensely within the education sector and accused of imposing exploitation and cultural imperialism (Mackenzie, 2020). The idea of bilingualism equating to Spanish-English speaking reflects a lesser desire for any other combination of languages and may be interpreted as a form of cultural imperialism. Through the promotion of English language learning in schools, students who possess inadequate resources to learn English are being marginalized

and closed out of participation in further schooling and, eventually, the job market.

Concerns regarding the implementation of bilingual education in Colombia reflect a lack of preparedness to implement this large-scale policy, an insufficient number of qualified teachers, inappropriate class time devoted to foreign languages, and poorly resourced, overcrowded classes. Critics suggest that epistemic violence has taken place by the West against Colombia through the commissioning of international organizations rather than local sources to implement these policies. The bilingual language policy in Colombia represents the power, prejudice, unequal competition, discrimination, and subordination of anyone who does not speak Spanish and English. Indigenous peoples are being forced to replace their mother tongue with the country's official language, thereby furthering the extinction of indigenous languages.

Two key questions are central in exploring further the implications of Colombia's bilingual education policies. First, what rationales are used to defend and promote the current policy? Second, what are the implications of the current language policy? Before those can be answered, an understanding of the neoliberal theory is necessary.

Analysis of the issue using Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism cannot be reduced to a theory or ideology but can be understood as a particular stage within the development of capitalism, founded on the idea of financialization (Fine and Saad-Filho, 2016). The neoliberal school of thought suggests that human flourishing is best supported by the liberation of individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within a framework which promotes private property rights, free markets and trade, deregulation, privatization, and the resignation of the state from social provisioning (Harvey, 2005). Neoliberalism suggests that in every area lacking a market (i.e., healthcare, the environment, social security), one must be created, with state support if required. Beyond the creation of markets, state intervention must be kept to a minimum. Since the 1970s, neoliberalism has remained the hegemonic mode of discourse, seen as the 'common sense' mode of political and economic practice.

A key feature of neoliberalism is its emphasis on globalization. Believing that social well-being will be maximized through the market, neoliberalism values both the reach and frequency of market transactions at the heart of all human action and interaction. It is assumed that the market's freedoms back individual freedoms: self-responsibility is a critical component of this line of thinking (Harvey, 2005; Fine and Saad-Filho, 2016). As explained

by Fine and Saad-Filho (2016), "The ideology of self-responsibility has been especially significant since it deprives the citizens of their collective capacities, agency and culture, appears to value consumption above all else, places the merit of success and the burden of failure on isolated individuals, and suggests that the resolution of every social problem requires the further individualization and financialization of social provision and intercourse."

Neoliberalism and development

When it comes to development, it is assumed that "the rising tide lifts all boats", and that the trickle-down nature of neoliberal theory is enough to eliminate poverty domestically and globally through free markets and free trade. Wealth creation is tied to private enterprise and entrepreneurial initiatives, so it is assumed that steady boosts in productivity can create higher living standards for everyone.

Since the early 1990s, the ideological shift which provided space for neoliberalism to gain its hegemonic position suggested that the ideal development model included liberal democracy and capitalist economics and should strictly follow the development model of the United States and Europe. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO), the three largest and arguably most influential financial institutions globally, have aided in constructing this new, neoliberal world order and serve as 'stabilization' mechanisms in the uneven path of global development (Heron, 2008; Harvey, 2005).

Neoliberalism and Education in Colombia

In the early 1980s, the first wave of neo-liberalization hit Latin America and resulted in a "lost decade of economic stagnation and political turmoil" (Harvey, 2005). Trans-nationalization has resulted in the profits of Colombia's export-producing economy landing in the hands of national and transnational political and economic elites. During the 1990s, the developmentalism of the country was exacerbated by neoliberal restructuring in the form of policies of austerity, deregulation, and privatization. According to Motta (2014), "Within this context of the passive revolutionary transformation of developmentalism into neoliberalism, the role of educators and education is pivotal as a place in which repression and coercion is enacted, and practices of hegemonic construction are created."

In the past decade, education privatization has become a global trend, resulting in higher enrolment of students in private schools worldwide (Verger, Fontdevila, and Zancajo, 2017). The private sector's role in

education reform has resulted in the widespread adoption of pro-privatization policies such as charter schools, per capita financing options, and the contracting out of the private sector. Commonplace within neoliberal reform, the privatization of the education sector has drastically altered the state's role in education. The state is no longer responsible for direct service delivery and instead took a backseat, maintaining a new role of regulating the distribution of incentives among education stakeholders. Supporters of this privatization of the education sector argue that these policies and other market-oriented reforms will result in improved public services.

In Colombia, a different form of privatization, known as 'scaling up', has taken place over time - in line with the passive forms of neoliberalism that did not turn into a more visible hegemonic discourse until the regimes of Uribe and Santos (Motta, 2014). Privatization was not advanced within the country through major structural reform; rather, it was a series of piecemeal adjustments which have significantly altered the public education system in a non-linear way (Verger, Fontdevila, and Zancajo, 2017). Over time, as pro-market discourse further developed, some market-driven educational solutions have become synonymous to matters of equity or equal opportunity (such as school choice policies) and have become widely accepted and mainstreamed in the public eye. Other privatization efforts have been advanced through Public-Private Partnership programs (such as the *Voucher Scheme Program for the Expansion of Secondary School Coverage*), and the charter school program *Colegios en Concession*. Some have compared the case of Colombia's education system to that of the US in the sense that privatization efforts have advanced unevenly and non-linearly through several low-scale reforms over time, typically conducted at the subnational level (Motta, 2014).

Bilingual Education Program Results

The results of the various bilingual education programs pushed from 2004 up until now have been contested. The policies and subsequent curriculums have been identified as product-oriented and instrumentalist, as learning English is promoted as increasing Colombians' employment opportunities, even though this is not always the case (Motta, 2014). In fact, it was reported by a hiring agent for multinational Colombian companies that only 5% of the job listings she interacts with require bilingual employees, proving that English acquisition is not necessary or beneficial for all Colombians (de Mejia, 2006).

The National Bilingual Program (2004-2010) emphasized the necessity of assessment, adopting a European framework (the CEFR) to adjust national examinations to keep track of student progress (Gómez Sará, 2016). The Saber 11 is the school exit exam which also serves as an admission requirement for higher education opportunities (Miranda, 2016). Students are tested to see if they have met the desired B1 level of competence at the end of grade 11). Between 2007 and 2011, it was found that over 90% of students tested did not reach the anticipated level of English acquisition relevant to their grades. In 2005-2006, teachers were administered diagnostic tests to assess whether their language acquisition levels matched what was expected of students. It was found that approximately 65% of English teachers from the public sector had an A2 level or below, and only 33% of teachers had a B2 level or above (Gómez Sará, 2016). Repeatedly unsatisfactory assessment results have not incentivized policy change, however. The Bilingual Colombia programs have been designed around a linear curriculum focusing on objectives and results, with the Saber 11 and other relevant exams serving as the final link in the top-down chain which goes from objectives to strategies to results (Miranda, 2016).

Other negative effects have been reported following the implementation of bilingual education policies in Colombia in the last two decades: a lack of teaching resources and infrastructure and a lack of proper school management practices to support learners and teachers. There is also little evidence of changes made since the most recent Bilingual Colombia Program was launched regarding the extra time allotted to English learning or better allocation of English teachers with the proper qualifications and language acquisition skills needed to teach. The education revolution in Colombia, marked by privatization and decentralization, was founded in an understanding that Colombians are uneducated and underdeveloped, and thus in dire need of obtaining global North elites' universal, 'neutral' knowledge (Motta, 2014). The rigid focus on Spanish-English bilingualism, evidenced in the programs from 2004-present day, represents a circumstance where symbolic and ontological violence is being committed against indigenous pedagogies and ways of being.

The programs have been inconsistent in their aims and results, and the obsessive focus on employability through Spanish-English bilingualism rather than social development has resulted in an uneven path of education for the country and lackadaisical inclusion of the diverse concerns of learners (Gómez Sará, 2016). The government and Ministry of Education's misconception of bilingualism has resulted in the privileging of English and its speakers over speakers of aboriginal languages, even when accompanied by proficiency in Spanish. The adoption of foreign models for evaluation and curriculum development represents a contemporary

form of coloniality still very much present throughout the country, whereby capitalism has penetrated the academy, and economic profits remain the core focus of learning.

Analysis of the issue using Capabilities

The capabilities approach, introduced by Amartya Sen in 1979, is "an intellectual discipline that gives a central role to the evaluation of a person's achievements and freedoms in terms of his or her actual ability to do the different things a person has reason to value doing or being" (Robeyns, 2017; Sen, 1999). It is concerned with people's capabilities, or what they can do and be, as well as their functioning, understood to be what they are genuinely achieving in respect of their beings and doings (Robeyns, 2017). Functionings are seen as fundamental to understanding people as human beings.

Sen introduces the concept of unfreedoms and their effect on one's ability to achieve optimal well-being. Examples of famine, undernutrition, and a lack of access to clean water and sanitation deny humans the basic freedoms to survive (Sen, 1999). More complex forms of unfreedom concern systemic denials of political liberties and basic civil rights. Although these liberties' restrictions are often labelled as stimulatory for economic growth, they prevent people from achieving their full freedoms.

Nussbaum contributes to the overarching capabilities framework, suggesting that all humans deserve to be treated with dignity and respect by social institutions and the laws which govern them. She states, "This idea of equal worth is connected to ideas of freedom and opportunity: to respect the equal worth of persons is, among other things, to promote their ability to fashion a life in accordance with their own view of what is deepest and most important" (Nussbaum, 1999).

Capabilities and development

Sen identifies the problematic gap in the development field between an absolute focus on wealth and a refocus on the lives that people can lead. He does not negate the necessity of wealth to achieve a certain degree of well-being; rather, he believes that "the basic objective of development is not just the maximization of income or wealth, which Aristotle said is 'merely useful and for the sake of something else' … for the same reason, economic growth cannot be treated as an end in itself" (Sen, 1999). The capabilities approach values humans as the *ends* rather than the *means* of development and suggest that a sufficient development paradigm is one in which the focus shifts beyond wealth accumulation to consider a more

satisfactory way to enhance the lives that people live and the freedoms that they can enjoy (Sen, 1999). With more freedom comes the further ability for humans to meet their needs and help the world more broadly – two aspects that Sen proposes as key to development. Nussbaum (1999) highlights that if we wish to provide all citizens of a nation with equitable levels of educational and economic attainment, it is necessary that resources are directed towards those most affected by traditional hierarchies and prejudice.

Application of capability approach to Colombia

In relation to the bilingual education situation in Colombia, the capabilities approach highlights the idea that humans are the means rather than the ends. This means that unless all Colombian learners are provided with the freedom to fashion a life in accordance with their own view of what is deepest and most important, injustice is occurring. Evidenced in the discussion above, it is understood that indigenous language speakers and all other minorities are being continuously marginalized in the public education system as Spanish-English bilingualism is prioritized as the preferred, privileged linguistic repertoire to be learned and spoken. Indigenous language speakers are being denied the right to speak and learn in their mother tongue, and the insufficient prioritization of 'minority' languages within schools represents the manifestations of unfreedom that Sen refers to through the inadequate processes and opportunities provided within schools to minority language speakers (Sen, 1999). An equitable solution which brings all Colombian learners to the same level of educational language attainment is needed; this will require an increased devotion of resources to indigenous language speakers within public schools whose obstacles encountered learning in a Spanish-English preferred system stem from traditional hierarchies and colonial prejudice (Nussbaum, 1999).

Translanguaging for Decolonial Language Education

Translanguaging is a relatively recent phenomenon and provides a decolonial perspective on foreign language learning and bilingualism (Wei, 2022; Wei and Garcia, 2022). Translanguaging practitioners advocate for the dynamic usage of multiple languages and resources in the teaching and learning process more generally and in foreign language learning more specifically. Rather than viewing each 'named' language as a separate entity and not mixing languages spoken during lessons in the classroom, translanguaging involves meaning-making out of students' already-known languages, advocating that "the languages learners already have should and can play a very positive role in learning additional languages" (Wei, 2022).

Rather than focusing solely on English as the most 'ideal' foreign language to adopt, and restricting the classroom repertoire to Spanish/English, translanguaging advocates for integrating the multiple languages that multilingual learners already know and speak (Wei, 2022; Wei and Garcia, 2022).

Translanguaging advocates highlight how language policies and curriculums are not politically neutral, as nationalistic and sociolinguistic monolinguist ideologies have reflected the dominance of English and postulated it as synonymous with internationalization and globalization (Wei, 2022). The broader processes of colonization, nation-state building, and geopolitical dominance have resulted in English being understood as the global language of opportunity. Wei (2022) highlights that the categorization of languages as 'native', 'foreign', 'immigrant', or 'heritage' is also a political act which results in the marginalization, racialization, and social stigmatization of languages (Wei, 2022). These minority languages are usually never included as a language of instruction in schools either, which means that minority language speakers are at a constant disadvantage. Wei states that "if it is accepted that languages are political constructs, then the choice of the medium cannot be value-neutral. In fact, the institutions that promote English medium education do not claim that their choice of language of instruction is value neutral because they typically promote the benefits of English medium education in terms of better employment prospects, financial gains, and social and global mobility. In this context, the translanguaging stance urges all of us to resist neocolonialism through the soft power of English" (Wei, 2022).

It would benefit Colombia if the government and Ministry of Education were to consider implementing a translingual education model across the country. This does not mean that English should not be taught in schools. Rather, it challenges the absolutism attached to the bilingual Spanish-English speaker who is assumed to being prepared to participate in the global market. A translingual Colombian classroom would first be highly aware of the multiculturalism present within the learning environment, honouring the diversity in languages spoken in the classroom and beyond. If teachers could take steps towards acknowledging the multiplicity of dialects which may be spoken, and their relationships to English, it would serve as a step forward in resisting the monolingual ethos commonly associated with the global North. As long as bilingual students who don't fit the desired mould of Spanish-English bilingualism are forced to abandon their mother tongues in pursuit of a more 'global' dialogue, they will continue to be excluded, with their identities and cultures devalued (Wei and Garcia, 2022). Translanguaging proves a viable alternative to the current neoliberal Bilingual Education Policy in Colombia, as the

capabilities and desires of learners, are prioritized over the potential economic gains that their human capital can provide to the country (Wei, 2022; Wei and Garcia, 2022).

Conclusion

This essay has sought to argue the necessity of a new paradigm for bilingual education in Colombia. Although there are approximately 70 languages spoken throughout the country, only two have been prioritized in education policy since 2004: Spanish and English. When discussed in education policy, bilingualism is automatically associated with these two languages, and indigenous language speakers are pushed to the margins.

The current education policy situation was thoroughly assessed through the lens of neoliberalism, and it was found that English proficiency is associated with economic competitiveness and globalization, revealing the aim of the state, which is to create workers who can increase its financial gains through increased participation in the global marketplace. The capabilities approach revealed an alternative perspective which advocates the capability and freedom of learners to excel in a way that incorporates the knowledge they already attain through speaking other languages. The translanguaging approach developed through Wei and Garcia offers an integrative curriculum design which values the multiplicity of languages spoken in addition to Spanish and English, encouraging the inclusion of those 'other' languages in a classroom. The aim of this essay was to raise awareness surrounding the continued marginalization of indigenous languages and cultures, ever so present in Colombia's bilingual education program since 2004. Further research on the potential for translanguaging in Colombian classrooms and its implementation thereafter could provide solutions to the exclusion of minority and indigenous languages from the classroom.

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PART IV

THE POLITICS OF AID AND CLIMATE CHANGE

15

FOREIGN AID AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SINCE THE COLD WAR

Anushka Parakova

Abstract

The twentieth century set the course of current affairs. Aid has become the most insidious and destructive weapon for battling the 'new silent wars.' The Marshall Plan, also considered a progenitor of today's aid, initially meant financially subsidising broken countries to return to the development ladder. Nonetheless, this economic boost did not utterly appear only as a genuine gesture of goodwill. Contracting the recipient countries to adopt democratic values also guaranteed capitalist domination and Western hegemony. Moreover, market liberalisation and free trade incentives had been, rather brilliantly, paraphrased as the aim to create the idea of one fully interconnected, globalised world. In other words, a capitalist paradise. This global interconnectedness soon converted to unequal interdependence, and the world witnessed rising inequalities. Possessing the 'recipient status' means initially the same as signing a pact with the devil. Recipients get trapped in a vicious cycle of underdevelopment and endless debts, utterly dependent on their donors. This phenomenon is also called 'rent-seeking behaviour,' when the primitive accumulation has either never been achieved or has gone wrong. It will be argued that aid has become no more than a political tool to maintain Western hegemony, backed up with empirical evidence that the mighty West has never truly accepted the loss of its colonial domination. Moreover, recipient countries' deepening misery and underdevelopment confirm that aid has been overtly political and never unconditional.

Introduction

There has been an ongoing discourse on the credibility and intentions of foreign aid (Duffield 2014: 80, 149; Elliot 1994: 74; Engel 2014: 1375, 1376, 1384; Hayter 1971: 7 – 9, 15, 143 – 148, 184; Stiglitz 2002: 195). The events of the late twentieth century have remained significant.

The end of the Cold War, globalisation and the spread of capitalism set the new world order (Peet 2009: 36, 37). The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the US Agency for International Development (AID) had been massively subsidising broken economies of countries in the global South (Elliot 1994: 74, 75). The general knowledge of foreign aid was founded on the assumption that the wealthy countries of the global North aim to help poorer countries to develop and reach economic and political stability. This development was based on 'good performance' and 'good policies,' such as market liberalisation, development project or tariff regulations. On the contrary, the 'subsidised' countries are sinking into endless debts and underdevelopment.

According to the severity of the arguments, this paper has been divided and structured into three main parts. The first section provides introductory insights on foreign aid, its origins, and history because only with a real understanding of the past may we fully understand the present. It explains the founding of the Bretton Woods institutions – the IMF, the WB, and the AID later called the 'international agencies.' Thus, it will argue that changes in global macroeconomics and the shift to neoliberalism and finance capitalism from 1981 onwards caused increases in inequality, particularly 'absolute inequality,' and recipient-donor dependencies (Hayter 1971: 21; Peet 2009: 173).

This research has collected enough evidence to show that aid is nothing but a new form of imperialism[1] and are overtly sceptical about possible good intentions behind it, if any (Peet 2009: 82; Duffield 2014: 80, 97; Elliot 1994: 74). The second part engages with the practical evidence about unsuccessful implementations and their ineffectiveness. The case studies from Russia, Cameroon and Nepal reveal correlations between the emergence of capitalism and the increase of corruption and poverty, resulting in rent-seeking behaviour and dependencies (Peet 2009: 68, 69). Lastly, the main argument is not against aid per se but rather against its overtly political motives within, involving various governmental and non-governmental actors.

Conceptualising Aid

What is today referred to as 'aid' was initially known as the 'Marshall Plan.' After the Second World War (WWII), the world faced catastrophic aftermaths, breaking the world into pieces. Previously mighty Europe had new enemies to fight - despair, hunger, and poverty. Contrary, the US emerged mighty and powerful, confident to spread its democratic principles worldwide (Fitzpatrick 2021: 113, 114; Hayter 1971: 46, 47; Peet 2009: 36, 37). Through the Marshall Plan, the US aided devastated

Europe with massive financial subsidies for the post-war recovery. The post-war reconstruction plan was tailored inclusively for Europe. Other poor countries were mentioned very rarely and without discussing any poverty issues. No wonder such countries technically did not exist because all countries outside Europe or North America were known as 'the colonies' (Peet 2009: 127). What first seemed like a genuine help to suffering people in Europe later appeared to be the plan for the further spread of democracy and capitalism (Chang 2002: 15; Chomsky 2021: 26, 27; Duffield 2014: 102; Fitzpatrick 2021: 113, 114; Peet 2009: 37). The IMF, the World Bank WB and the AID had been massively subsidising broken economies of countries in the global South (Elliot 1994: 74, 75; Hayter 1971: 21 - 23). Their primary interests were a 'good performance' measurement and market liberalisation. This can be achieved through various forms of aid. "Aid has never been an unconditional transfer of financial resources" (Hayter 1971: 15), and it usually comes as a package of set conditions.

Regardless of its type, aid should take off the burden and help underdeveloped countries make the first step on the never-ending ladder towards a glorious capitalist paradise.

Why have barely any improvements been seen over the three decades (Duffield 2014: 80, 97, 257)? Some of the right's aid radicals ascribe this phenomenon to the traditional Hobbesian' state of nature theory (Engel 2014: 1377, 1378). For Hobbes, the 'state of nature' means a brutish state of war without any rules. It is a state of anarchy and distrust. Similarly, for right's aid radicals, man is naturally self-interested and selfish (Engel 2014: 1377, 1378, 1384). Thus, he must stay vigilant of his neighbour because he can never be entirely sure about the neighbour's next moves (Tuck 2002: 67, 69). Hobbes lived his life through the civil war in the seventeenth century.

Nevertheless, such times Hobbes describes no longer exist. Considering the unstable era offers an understanding of the pessimistic view of the world. The world aims to maintain liberal peace. Thus, blaming nature for the 'embedded' self-interest and greed should not be any justification.

As in Russia in the 1990s. New Russia's justice system eventually meant no system where licit and illicit had become one. The IMF subsidised Russia with billions towards stabilisation of the economy and rouble (Glenny 2009: 72, 73; Stiglitz 2002: 188, 189). Nevertheless, the oligarchs sent even more significant sums to the banks worldwide. The speedy enrichment process and complex money laundering started Russia's years of 'wild capitalism.' Ruthless and unlawful. Everyone grabbed whatever,

however, as much as they could (ibid: 72, 73; Fitzpatrick 2021: 214; Stiglitz 2002: 217, 189). Glenny argues, "The whole process was dramatic testimony to how venality and myopic stupidity are always likely to triumph in the absence of regulatory institutions" (Glenny 2009: 73).

The indicators are that things are political strikes from everywhere. Political instability in developing countries often leads to the poor redistribution of capital and the emergence of new middle classes of bureaucrats. This poor performance can negatively impact efficiency and growth (Khan, Jomo 2000: 4, 39; King 2018: 135). Politically organised transfers have deepened existing inequalities where the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer (Khan, Jomo 2000: 4, 39; King 2018: 32). Such processes can be traced back to the sixteenth century. Coincidentally, long since the emergence of the first capitalism. European enlightenment, the separation of the state from the church, dominance of science or the creation of property rights led to the demand for more complex markets and capitalism (King 2018: 28, 32; Stiglitz 2002: 217, 189). What Marx once identified and described as 'primitive accumulation,' economists call today 'rent transfers' or 'rent-seeking behaviour.' In developed countries, these transfers serve as a redistribution of income from production through taxes and subsidies. In development, they operate through soft loans from state-owned banks and are necessary pre-stages for capitalist development and property creation (Duffield 2014: 102; Khan, Jomo 2000: 4, 39). Successful scenarios lead to progressive capitalist development. However, often, primitive accumulation goes wrong and creates an 'unproductive' capitalist class, escalating into theft and plundering. In other cases, a 'productive' capitalist class successfully emerges, but "…the theft and corruption associated with primitive accumulation get embedded in the social system and are difficult to stop, well after their social 'usefulness' has become history" (Duffield 2014: 113; Khan, Jomo 2000: 14, 15). Instead of inducing growth in developing countries, they find their way to foreign banks, inducing growth of private accounts (Hayter 1971: 17).

Global interconnectedness soon converted to unequal interdependence and catalysed rising inequalities. Possessing the 'recipient status' unconsciously adopts 'rent-seeking behaviour' when the primitive accumulation has either never been achieved or has gone wrong. Recipients get trapped in a vicious cycle of underdevelopment and endless debts, utterly dependent on their donors. Aid has become no more than a political tool to maintain Western hegemony. Recipient countries' deepening misery and underdevelopment confirm that aid has been overtly political and never unconditional. The next part will introduce empirical evidence about unsuccessful implementations and their ineffectiveness but will also bring the example of those who recognised the devil and rejected it. The

case studies from Cameroon and Nepal reveal correlations between the emergence of capitalism and the increase in corruption and poverty (Peet 2009: 68, 69).

From Theory to Practice

One of the places where things have gone wrong is Cameroon, also known to be one of the most corrupt countries in the world. 1999 held the title of the most corrupt country surveyed. In 2010 it was 146th-153rd out of 178 (Transparency International, Harford 2010: 206). At the time of Harford's visit, Douala, the second largest city home to two million people, had no real roads. Those significantly fewer 'roads' it had, had not been fixed for nineteen years. It used to have buses. However, there are no longer in order due to disastrous road conditions (ibid: 207, 211). Like many other developing countries, Cameroon, like many other Third World [2]countries, has also been heavily subsidised by international donor agencies since the end of WWII (Chang 2012: 112 – 114; Harford 2010: 207; Fitzpatrick 2021: 113, 114).

Doing the maths right, Cameroon should have been flourishing by now with higher living standards, good educational levels, or government transparency.

On the contrary, the lack of basic infrastructure and increasing underdevelopment are eye-striking. Does Cameroon enjoy its stage, or does the corrupt dictator enjoy his pay? We could argue for the latter.

In 2010, Cameroon had a prototype of a majoritarian dictatorship. The publicly unpopular President Biya had been elected nineteen times with ninety per cent of the votes. The length since the last road refurbishments (Harford 2010: 211).

'White elephant' projects are also attractions in countries like Cameroon (Chang 2012: 123). For instance, the library in Cameroon's most 'prestigious' boarding schools. The construction, like the Sydney Opera House and the roof, is like a massive open book that, during rainy seasons, is utterly useless and serves no protection. There are no books as the librarian had refused to move them from the old library with a good roof (Harford 2010: 219-223). This place is certainly worth visiting! However bizarre it may seem, the sad reality is that the school principal built the library to become a university. The wasted money could have been used to buy more books or allow more children to gain education (ibid: 219-223). 'White elephant' or 'castle in the dessert' projects emerged in the 1960s when many developing countries had built motorways that had never been

used or unprofitable steel mills heavily financed by the government and tariff protection (Chang 2012: 126). From safety issues to countries' early stages, the long list of reasons behind their ineffectiveness varied.

Nepal is another exemplary model of a 'when it has gone wrong…' scenario – the famous Nepalese 'dam development.' To attain the most effective irrigation, farmers in Nepal built their irrigation systems consisting of canals and dams. These traditional systems are older but have proven their benefits and effectiveness (Harford 2010: 223). However, donors of some big international organisations had decided to fund the Nepalese government in building a big development project of professionally engineered modern systems of canals and dams. Made of concrete and designed by some of the most prominent specialists in the world, these new-generation projects are meant to improve irrigation and make it even more effective.

The older versions were no longer compelling (Harford 2010: 223). So far, there is nothing unusual about this story. Presumably, the newly built dams should have improved irrigation systems, leading to better farming and boosting Nepal's economy. Is that how it usually works…or not? Paradoxically, modern dams have shown their ineffectiveness.

On the contrary, they caused a reduction, delivering less water to fewer people. Conversely, modern canals have strengthened irrigation systems (ibid: 224, 225). One may ask if Nepal needed the new dams in the first place. This is when things start being fishy. At the bottom line are engineers to whom civil servants commission. Engineers do their job and get paid for it; nothing wrong with it.

Nonetheless, the plot thickens when it gets to civil servants. Instead of diligence and loyalty, a promotion for Nepalese civil servants depends on seniority levels and association with large construction projects (ibid: 224, 225). Large, prestige construction projects are a lucrative source of income that offers living comfort and pays for their children's private education. Who would then care about 'simple' farmers and the effectiveness of irrigation? Not to put the blame entirely on the self-interests of civil servants, donor agencies play an equally important part. The donor agency officials are evaluated according to procedures, not results. Hence also favour big construction projects and even more extensive paychecks. As Harford explains, "…all donor agencies need expensive projects because if they fail to spend cash, they are unlikely to raise more" (ibid: 225).

The enrichment of a few individuals has had detrimental consequences on Nepalese farmers. The old traditional irrigation systems are essential for

retaining cooperation among farming communities. Because the old dams demand regular maintenance, the upstream farmers help to clear the canals and the downstream help with the dam. This symbiosis and cooperation break with the new, less maintenance-demanding concrete dams. The upstream farmers no longer depend on help from the downstream farmers, and the downstream farmers have nothing to offer for the deal to continue (ibid:226).

Clearly, development projects often become a tool for enrichment for wicked, self-interested officials. Donor countries may tick another box, and donor agencies can raise more cash. The practical effect is less significant, and so are the consequences on human properties. Moreover, there has always been a trap attached to aid. From Hayter's research, Latin Americans always say to be vigilant and 'look for the trap' in AID offers of aid (Hayter 1971: 96). For instance, the US aid must always be transported in US ships. In Nepal, the bilateral aid from the US donor agencies initially meant all the equipment for building dams had to be purchased from US companies (Harford 2010: 225; Hayter 1971: 15, 96).

In 1967, Peru rejected the offer of a programme loan from AID. The 'usual trap' consisted of conditions based purely on US imperialism and superiority. For example, the US demanded that Peru buy US planes only instead of the French that Peru originally planned to purchase. The US asked permission to fish off-season within a 200-mile radius of Peru's lands, utterly ignoring Peru's initiatives to preserve stocks (Hayter 1971: 148).

Ecuador managed early loan repayment and stated it does not want to have anything to do with the IMF ever again. Nicaragua's President, Daniel Ortega, described the involvement with the international donor agencies as a rather unpleasant experience and called it a 'blessing' to be free of funds (Peet 2009: 124).

Conclusion

There are various types of aid and various camps to join. The word 'aid' carries a lot of negative connotations (Duffield 2014: 80, 149; Elliot 1994: 74; Engel 2014: 1375, 1376, 1384; Hayter 1971: 7 – 9, 15, 143 – 148, 184; Stiglitz 2002: 195). The general knowledge of foreign aid was based on the idea that the wealthy Western countries aim to help the Third World countries to develop and reach economic and political stability (Hayter 1971: 7 – 9). The twentieth century and the new North-South division had set up the new world order in which capitalism and democracy became the main ideologies (Elliot 1994: 74, 75). The polarisation was no more a phenomenon merely geographical but entirely political. Political

instability in developing countries often leads to the poor redistribution of capital and the emergence of new middle classes of bureaucrats. This poor performance can negatively impact efficiency and growth (Khan, Jomo 2000: 4, 39; King 2018: 135). Politically organised transfers have deepened existing inequalities where the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer (Khan, Jomo 2000: 4, 39; King 2018: 32). The international donor agencies have been offering funds and loans which supposed to reduce poverty. Aid, however, has never been without any attachments to it. On the contrary, it always comes with a set of conditions favouring the interests of a donor country. Possessing the 'recipient status' means initially the same as signing a pact with the devil. Recipients get trapped in a vicious cycle of underdevelopment and endless debts, utterly dependent on their donors.

This paper has shown an interrelated plot between capitalism and corruption through case studies from Russia, Cameroon and Nepal (Peet 2009: 68, 69). It has argued not against aid per se but rather against its overtly political motives within, involving various governmental and non-governmental actors. This research has collected enough evidence to show that aid is nothing but a new form of imperialism and are overtly sceptical about possible good intentions behind it if any (Peet 2009: 82; Duffield 2014: 80, 97; Elliot 1994: 74).

Aid and its misconceptions have been far too deeply embedded in the world system. For anything to change, it would first have to begin from the rotten principles that dwell within because it is not about institutions but about those who govern them.

References

[1] I broadly use the term imperialism to explain the system of domination by one state over another. However, the dependency theories defined imperialism as exploiting the core or relatively wealthy power west of the developing countries: see Frank, 1974.

[2] I use the Third World term to refer to relatively poor countries. The term initially emerged after World War II to define non-aligned with nether Western or Eastern European countries under the sphere of the Soviet Union.

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16

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE AFTER COVID-19 – WHY UNDERSTANDING POLLUTION IS CRUCIAL IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Eleonora Venturini

Abstract

The effect of COVID-19 on the global population was devastating but had positive changes. For example, wildlife returned to places with no sightings in years; we could breathe cleaner air with no black stains around the nostrils due to smog from cars or buses and less traffic in the street or the sky. This paper will analyse the positive contribution of COVID-19 on the UK environment. We also assess the country's impact of a green and sustainable economy. Finally, we suggest how different approaches would help a sustainable future after COVID-19.

Introduction

Pollution has been a topic of concern for centuries, and so have campaigns to improve its effects. Sometimes the judgements and the powerless feeling of not doing enough are overwhelming, especially when we walk on a beach that once was immaculate but now is full of waste. What is pollution and global warming, and why is everyone talking about them? Pollution is about the unwanted waste that every minute of every day gets released into the environment, (water, land, and everywhere that human beings are nearby). Nowadays, pollution is one of the major causes of death: the World Health Organisation (WHO), (September 2021, News release), states that 7 million people die prematurely every year due to pollution.

This research will evaluate and compare previous reports with those published now and analyse the changes from the evidence gathered to look at how pollution affects humans' everyday lives. It will start by analysing the different categories of pollution and the factors with the most significant impact on wildlife. Consequently, there will be a focus on how the pollutant agents affect the spread of viruses, looking at a report by the

European Respiratory Society to examine how they promote the increase of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. We will use journals, articles from environmental researchers like the 'European Environmental Agency', and reports from institutions like the 'Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (Defra) to explore how COVID-19 has positively and negatively impacted the environment. Looking at how the recycling process works and how plastic is disposed of helps us understand that the industry is more connected to money rather than environmental preservation. The impact of COVID-19 will also be evaluated regarding the wastage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) dispersed, reflecting how this could have been avoided and whether the consequent environmental damage can or cannot be repaired. The use of PPE was vital during the pandemic to save lives and reduce the spread of COVID-19, but the plastic produced for human protection will last for centuries before disintegrating into smaller pieces. My focus is on how plastic produced to protect us from a virus affects our planet, human health and the environment.

This paper has been written to inform and set a tone for the change that we will inevitably have to face and should therefore not shy away from. The focal point will be England's intervention and goals towards a sustainable future, as portrayed in Downing Street press releases concerning the implementation of the NET ZERO project.[1] We will also focus on the specific sectors that will need to increase their use of green technology to sustain the change, speeding up a process that must be moved forward at speed. The analysis will cover how the plan has been handled so far, and the prospects going forward, considering the actual costs that the country has to absorb and its impact. The effects of a green and sustainable economy will only deliver the necessary results if the right approach is used.

The World Health Organisation, the UK Government's own reports and experts on climate change articles like Chris D. Thomas, will be used to establish how human health is intimately connected with the environment, so much so that future risks are difficult to anticipate. However, there will be a reflection on how to be a step ahead of this crisis to summarise where we are now, accepting that the planet's very survival is entangled with human actions now. To conclude, the study will cover how every contribution matters to leave a legacy that will allow future generations to continue to live on this planet.

[1] Press Release, Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street and The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, published 18th of November 2020.

Pollution, definition and typologies

"Pollution, also called environmental pollution, the addition of any substance (solid, liquid or gas) or any form of energy (such as heat, sound, or radioactivity) to the environment at a rate faster than it can be dispersed, diluted, decomposed, recycled, or stored in some harmless form." (Britannica, May 2022)

This definition helps understand pollution, but it does not say much about how it is formed in our environment and how humans contribute to its formation. These substances released to the environment are called pollutants: they can be natural (like volcanic ash) or produced by industrial machinery. These pollutants damage the environment by contaminating air, water and land.

Even if not always visible, ***air pollution*** can be hazardous to human health, leading to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases and death. For example, in 1986 a poisonous cloud expanded on Lake Nyos, Cameroon. The gases dispersed in the landscape killed organisms, animals and 1,700 people (British Medical Journal, 1989). Like carbon dioxide and methane, greenhouse gases naturally keep Earth warm, allowing life on the planet. Unfortunately, the quantity of these gases causes global warming as burning fossil fuels, and deforestation increases the formation of greenhouse gases. IQAir is an air quality company from Switzerland that classifies the most polluted cities in the world by measuring their 'particulate matter' (PM) or particle pollution (the term used for solid particles and liquid droplets present in the air). Some PMs are visible, like dirt or dust, while others can only be detected with an electron microscope (EPA, 2021). Based on the IQAir scale, the WHO created a guideline to determine the pollutants present in all the cities in the World's air.

Researchers found that 99% of the World's population live in cities where the quality of the air they breathe does not meet the World Health Organisation limits (WHO Report 2022). During COVID-19 in 2020, a sudden halt in transportation visibly affected air pollution, especially in big cities, confirming that COVID-19 helped reduce global air pollution. From the satellite data collected by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in the US, the lockdown effects from March 2020 to May 2020 are incredible. The limited transportation has reduced the concentration of Nitrogen Dioxide and the number of particulate matter by 60% and 31% respectively (PNAS, 2020).

Water pollution can be physical (you can see the rubbish floating and the corrupted waters) or chemical contamination (you may not see the hazardous chemicals in it as the water looks clean). Sadly, contaminated

water is unsafe to drink or swim in, as it can make you sick either straight away or years later. These waters are also dangerous for the ecosystem of the Earth, as fish and wildlife survive by drinking it and humans, when they eat fish, involuntarily contaminate themselves. Another primary source of water pollution are the nitrogen and phosphorus-rich fertilisers, washed away into the rivers by rain waters.

Human industries and oil extractions have heavily impacted water pollution and the consequent marine destruction. For example, on 20/4/2010, Deepwater Horizon, an oil rig situated in the Gulf of Mexico, exploded, releasing an atrocity of 60,000 barrels of oil per day (1 barrel = 158,98 litres) that over 89 days of spillage totalled 5,34 million barrels circa. In 2020, National Geographic stated that over ten years later, the waters in the Gulf of Mexico still harm the wildlife, interfering in the migration of birds and the reproduction of mammals. The results of water pollution can be considered permanent, mainly because the destruction covers extensive areas where the damage is irreversible (Mainers, 2020).

Since COVID-19 impacted air pollution, the hope of positively affecting the waters was high. When in March 2020, countries around the world decided to close their borders, we saw an improvement in clean rivers due to the closed factories that stopped releasing chemicals and hazardous materials. However, the impact of in-house tourism was undermined since disposable face masks and PPE used during the pandemic were often not disposed of properly and many were discarded in the landfills and waters. Research showed that '1.6 billion masks entered our oceans (Pacific Ocean) in 2020'. This equates to 5.5 tons of plastic that will take 500 years to decompose. In April 2020, China reported their production of 450 million face masks per day (Marcus Lu, July 2021).

Land Pollution is often related to pollutants in water that contaminate the landfill with hazardous chemicals. Pesticides in fertilisers have a significant role to play as they are generally used to grow plants and fruits that inevitably absorb them. Rubbish that does not get collected or disposed of following correct recycling procedures gets discarded or buried in landfills. These landfills are often not secured and so pollutants and hazardous substances get released onto the land, contaminating the plants eaten by the herbivores, which get eaten by predators and by us. Some rubbish gets incinerated, which inevitably increases the problem of air pollutants. Once plastic gets burnt, besides the foul smell, it releases toxins and gases (dioxins, furans, mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls) that are dangerous to the environment (UN Environmental Program, 2022).

Similarly, the incineration of poly vinyl chloride (PVC) present in packaging, footwear, cable insulation and many other products releases halogens and pollutants responsible for climate change into the atmosphere. In England, as of December 2020, there are currently 90 facilities and in development are 50 more, each with 20.20 tons capacity (Inori Roy, 2020). According to data UK Government website, in 2000/2001, the total waste managed was 28.1 million tonnes, of which 9% was sent to incineration. In 2020/2021, the total waste managed was 25.9 million tonnes, and a whopping 48.2% was sent to incineration. Even if the amount of wastage over the years has decreased, this increase of 435% of wastage sent to incineration is limiting England from meeting its recycling targets of 50%, leaving it at only 41% (Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs, January 2022). Looking at this data, we can see that the number of incinerators will increase regardless of the danger of exposure to toxins harmful to human life, creating significant damage to the environment, contributing to global warming. The Department for Environmental data shows the total waste fell by 2.2 tons from 2000 to 2021, which is positive, especially considering that the year of COVID-19 lockdown, was one in which the increase of wastage is supposed to have increased. However, looking at the breakdown of waste, the increase in incineration of wastage undermines this with a 435% increase. Fumes from medical waste and harmful substances have been released into the air, leading to harm to air quality that, especially during a pandemic, may not have helped with the spread of viruses.

How pollution impacts the spread of viruses

Time has passed since COVID-19 started to wipe out the population, beginning in China. The terrible consequences of the pandemic can still be seen across the world. Face masks may have reduced infections during Covid-19, but extended lockdowns, with no regard for other infections, made us more vulnerable to other diseases once the restrictions were lifted.

The increase of pollution in cities, accompanied by long-term exposure, has significantly amplified the cases of influenza mortality, respiratory disease and respiratory viral infections. Studies conducted by the European Respiratory Society (ERS) have investigated the possibility that the spread of COVID-19 is related to pollution levels in the environment, concluding, 'Air pollution may be linked to increased COVID-19 severity and lethality through its impact on chronic diseases, such as cardiopulmonary diseases and diabetes. Experimental studies have shown that exposure to air pollution leads to a decreased immune response, thus facilitating viral penetration and replication' (ERS 2021).

These studies also showed a direct connection between climate change and vulnerability to COVID-19; for example, the health consequences of pollution can lead to asthma and increase the contamination of infectious diseases. The WHO and the International Agency for Research on Cancer confirm that extensive exposure to air toxins will affect the health of all the organs in the body, likely leading to cancer. The European Environment Agency (EEA) estimated that 370,000 early deaths in the 27 EU States were attributed to chronic exposure to delicate particulate matter in 2019 (EEA web report, 2021). The dangerous effects pollution has on human health include breaching the organism's defences by exposing the body to viruses and diseases. Intensive farming with toxic substances, deforestation in favour of plantation with pesticides, and increased human presence in wild habitats has created the perfect environment for the creation and spread of many pathogens.

The emergency began more than ten years ago when the risks of zoonotic diseases or zoonoses started. Zoonotic diseases are viruses, germs, fungi, and bacteria in animals that can cause multiple types of illnesses in people. Infected animals can appear healthy even if they carry the virus that can then spread in a number of ways: by direct contact; foodborne (by eating the animal); waterborne (drinking water contaminated by infected faeces), or vector-borne (by being bitten by an insect that carries the disease). A study investigating COVID-19 cases in Italy has shown that from February to April 2020, there was a connection between a rise in Covid infection and the levels of PM. Particulate Matter 2.5 are tiny particles in the air that reduce visibility whilst PM10 are bigger particles that can irritate your throat, eyes and nose. Research by the European Commission reported that the number of established particles showed a connection with the number of COVID-19 cases in different regions. Compared to less urbanized cities, Lombardy and Piemonte were most affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Other studies have reported a direct connection between a virus's contagion capacity and the mobility of air pollutants. For example, in 2003, the spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Asia, North America, Australia and Europe showed how an influenza outbreak could spread across the world. Influenza was hard to detect and control due to the case-defining symptoms on people occurring after the patients were already contagious (Koh et al. 2008). We could also compare it with avian influenza in the years before, highlighting the difference in spread and control between the two viruses. A factor to consider is the presence of desert dust in the atmosphere associated with the increased concentrations of cultivable bacteria, fungi, and fungal spores that affect the air quality in downwind areas. Schlesinger et al. (2006) suggest that long-range transport

of pollutants favoured the local bioaerosol levels (a collection of airborne biological components).

The spread of avian influenza (H5N1) that affected the poultry industry and threatened human health was a hint of what we have experienced since 2020. Viruses like COVID-19 can be spread through dust, fibres, and microscopic particles in the air, 'It is shocking to most virologists and epidemiologists that airborne dust, rather than expiratory droplets, can carry influenza virus capable of infecting animals' (Professor William Ristenpart of the Department of Chemical Engineering at the University of California Davis) (Health News, August 2020). People are more exposed to respiratory viruses as these studies confirmed that influenza viruses would remain viable on materials for long enough to be spread on dust particles. At the time of writing, the last virus that afflicted the planet is COVID-19, which worldwide as of March 2022, left a reported 437 million cases with 5.96 million deaths (WHO Dashboard, March 2022).

You can never get rid of plastic

In the UK, concerns about waste are becoming more pressing every day, but what do we consider to be waste? The notion of throwing away what we do not use when it is broken or old, is constantly being forged in Western societies. Researching where the objects surrounding us are coming from has never been a priority, neither is where those objects go when they are no longer in our possession.

The question facing today's culture is how plastic or other materials end up in the sea and landfill when a recycling process is in place. Plastic was created in 1907 by the Belgian chemist Leo Baekeland. With plastic being around for little over a century, it is estimated that in the 21st century, we produced 3.3 billion metric tons of plastic, of which 6.3 billion metric tons were wasted. Just 9% of this waste gets recycled. (RTS, October 2020). All the plastic ever created remains with us physically or ends up becoming the damaging nano-plastic nowadays found in water, glaciers, animals, and even in human bodies. The commodities that plastic offers us are infinite, but we rely on it so much that now we are surrounded by waste, as there is not a single place on Earth not touched by it.

The recycling of plastic is therefore vital to reduce waste, landfill contamination, risk to wildlife, and increase sustainability. Unfortunately, plastic is not indefinitely recycled, as every time, it loses quality and degrades. Therefore, it will eventually be sent to incinerators or landfills. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a surge in production of surgical face masks with non-woven fabric, which has a better bacteria filtration capacity

and is less slippery than woven cloths. The most commonly used materials for this is polystyrene, polycarbonate, polyethene, and polyester, all materials that are rarely recycled. The COVID-19 response has resulted in massive production of PPE masks, gloves and certain types of packages made of long-lasting single-use plastic that cause greenhouse gases and other emissions. Masks and gloves litter our streets, rivers, beaches, coasts, and the sea (Adyel, 2020; Canning-Clode et al., 2020). Experts warn that fish and birds can ingest soft and flexible plastics whilst animals can also become physically entangled (Hirsh, 2020). Face masks and gloves are now included as items to report in marine litter monitoring (OSPAR, 2020).

England Net Zero strategy and impact

In June 2019, England was the first major economic country to pass legislation committing the country to net zero emissions by 2050. The term net-zero means the achievement of balance between the carbon emitted into the atmosphere and the carbon removed from it. The primary target is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 100% compared to the relative 1990 levels. In order to reach this goal, the emissions from homes, transport, industries and agriculture will have to be greatly reduced. The UK Government decided to set the target of Net-Zero by 2050, however, what is wise to bear in mind is that considerable changes have to be reached before that year, optimistically before 2030. If other countries were to follow the UK's lead, there would be a 50% chance of avoiding a 1.5°C temperature rise by 2100, the level which will have catastrophic consequences on our planet (Committee on Climate Change 2019).

Every part of the UK has different carbon targets to achieve, considering the impact on the economy and the urgent need to take action. Scotland has committed to reaching zero emissions by 2045, while Wales has aligned with the UK target of 2050. Northern Ireland will cut carbon emissions by at least 82% by 2050. Time is ticking, and these targets will require massive changes in the next ten years if the goal is to be achieved. A report released by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy stated that in 2020, our emissions were reduced by 48.8% from 1990 levels (National Statistics, March 2021). This massive reduction in carbon emissions was helped by the COVID-19 pandemic, which positively impacted greenhouse gas emissions with the sudden reduction in transport use. This reduction showed the effects of the change in generating energy connected to how we use energy in our lives. It is paramount for governments to consistently hold to clear policies to reduce emissions and mandate changes in everyday life.

Another factor that also needs consideration is the economic impact in the UK of reducing emissions by 2050. The Committee on Climate Change estimated an annual cost of 0.6% gross domestic product (GDP) by the early 2030 and 0.5% by 2050, which means an increase in investment in low carbon technologies from around £10 billion in 2020 to £50 billion by 2050 (Energy Saving Trust, 2021). Nevertheless, as already mentioned, not aiming for net zero is not an option. The cost of not reaching it will be incredibly high: the planet will deteriorate, with devastation impacts on both wildlife and human health, and costing many trillions of pounds.

The benefits of achieving net zero is priceless: the goal is not just cutting emissions but also achieving a better way of life for us and a legacy of cleaner air and water, healthier homes, cleaner transport, better habitats and greener spaces. We are at the point where we cannot indulge in slow action as we have lost this luxury over the years. The government is working on trying to absorb these costs with more energy-efficient buildings and vehicles, expecting the price of gas to rise in the foreseeable future as use of the last fossil fuels falls. The net-zero project is enmeshed with the green economy and will lead to exponential growth in associated industries, increasing their need for employees and creating new opportunities. The cost of doing nothing is dangerously higher as global warming will affect human health, agricultural productivity and food supply. More specifically, in the UK, it will include the frequency of flooding in non-residential areas to increase exponentially, affecting lives and livelihoods.

What's the Net Zero Plan?

In a press release on the 18/11/ 2020, Prime Minister Boris Johnson set out a ten-point plan for a Green Industrial Revolution. The plan is to mobilise £12 billion of government investment to create and support 250,000 green jobs in the UK, building future industries. The ten points are built around UK strengths:

OFFSHORE WIND: Producing enough offshore wind to power every home, quadrupling how much we produce to 40GW by 2030, supporting up to 60,000 jobs.

HYDROGEN: Working with industry to generate 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030 for industry, transport, power and homes, and aiming to develop the first town heated entirely by hydrogen by the end of the decade.

NUCLEAR: Developing small and advanced reactors that could generate 10,000 jobs while advancing nuclear as a clean energy source

ELECTRIC VEHICLES: Backing our world-leading car manufacturing bases, including in the West Midlands, North East and North Wales, to accelerate the transition to electric vehicles, and transform our national infrastructure to better support electric vehicles.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT: Making cycling and walking more attractive ways to travel and investing in zero-emission public transport of the future.

JET ZERO AND GREENER MARITIME: Supporting difficult-to-decarbonise industries to become greener through research projects for zero-emission aircraft and ships.

HOMES AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS: Making our homes, schools and hospitals greener, warmer and more energy-efficient whilst creating 50,000 jobs by 2030, with a target to install 600,000 heat pumps every year by 2028.

CARBON CAPTURE: Becoming a world-leader in technology to capture and store harmful emissions away from the atmosphere, with a target to remove 10MT of carbon dioxide by 2030, equivalent to all emissions of the industrial Humber today.

NATURE: Protecting and restoring our natural environment, planting 30,000 hectares of trees every year whilst creating and retaining thousands of jobs.

INNOVATION AND FINANCE: Developing the cutting-edge technologies needed to reach these new energy ambitions and making the City of London the global centre of green finance.

How can we contribute?

The plans to go fully sustainable look excellent on paper, and it is a relief that lots of worldwide countries came together to take action and responsibility for climate change. Governments have been shaken in the past two decades, and people have been persuaded that a green plan is necessary.

However, what can we do as individuals to contribute and help this revolution? It is overwhelming when you look around, and you find waste and rubbish in rivers and in parks; and even if you clean it today, tomorrow

someone will no doubt throw it again. How can we help the planet and not be crushed under the reality of human behaviour? We can begin with our homes, recycling with care, limiting our day-to-day wastage and reusing the items that can be reused like glass containers, clothes, and packages, and avoid using plastic. The wastage we create by ordering at home or buying things that we do not need is astonishing.

Reducing carbon emission in our houses will also help the household's economy. In the UK, 22% of the carbon emission comes from our homes, which highlights the importance of being more energy-efficient, generating more renewable energy, moving to a green energy company, and insulating your home to keep the heat inside.

Eating less meat will also help reduce the pollution impact on the landscape, as meat production is the most significant contributor to climate change. Meat consumption releases greenhouse gases like methane, CO2 and nitrous oxide. Also, when land is used to raise animals, precious water and soil are lost. Trees are cut down to create new factory-farm sheds, and untreated animal waste pollutes rivers and streams. By reducing meat consumption, you can help reduce the meat industry's impact on the planet.

Growing your products or shopping from local shops is the best way to reduce your footprint on the planet. Trying to buy products that do not come from abroad is the best way to reduce transportation pollution. Also, the wastage of food can be limited by saving the leftovers for another meal or if they go off, use them to create compost for your garden.

The fashion industry is one of the primary polluting industries globally, and especially during COVID-19 lockdown waste from unnecessary clothes purchases was massive. The fast-fashion industries that sell cheaper clothes in enormous quantities are responsible for 10% of the annual global emissions and 20% of global wastewater. They are the second-largest consumers of the world's water supply (after agriculture), with polluting chemicals and dyes used in their production. Also, the materials used to produce clothes is for the 60% plastic, which contributes to ocean pollution. The durability and resistance that plastic gives to textile products have the after-effects of releasing plastic micro particles (called micro plastic) into the water every time we wash them. Every year we release half a million tonnes of micro plastic in the oceans caused just by laundry (UN Environment Program, 2019). Textile production has increased substantially over the years, with an estimation on consumption rise by 63% by 2030. An excruciating 85% of textiles go to waste every year, and, in the UK alone, an estimated £140 million worth of clothes are burned or

thrown into landfills (WRAP, July 2017). Buying clothes from charity shops or sustainable clothing outlets is a great way to reduce the impact on the planet.

Chemicals and cleaning products can harm the environment. Therefore, many green companies have committed to producing green/eco-friendly products with containers that can be refilled in-store or recycled. During Lockdown, many suppliers to big chains decided to swap the majority of their products for a more sustainable option, which is not yet 100% green, but we do have to start from somewhere.

The Centre for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES) states, 'Communities with strong public transportation can reduce carbon emission by 37 million metric tons yearly.'[2] Another massive factor to help reduce carbon emissions is therefore walking, riding a bike or using public transport, instead of driving. This is also beneficial for your health as well as the environment.

These are just a few practices that we can implement in our everyday routine to help get to the Net- Zero target together and strive toward a greener future. Together we can do it!

Conclusion

We saw few of the many contributions to Climate Change that we normally experience in our everyday lives during the pandemic. The loss and damage caused to nature and people are already apparent with natural disasters becoming more common and will have heavier consequences in future. Air pollution significantly influences our health, as does land and water pollution. We have created an ecosystem surrounded by waste which damages wildlife and impacts their and our chance to live in a healthy environment. The data from the Environmental Agency and the UK Government speak for themselves when we consider the increase of 435% in incinerated wastage in 2020/2021, whilst the recycling is decreasing. The decrease of waste produced from 2000/2001, to 2020/2021 by 2.2 tons, is not enough if we do not dispose of the waste we continue to produce. Significantly COVID-19 massively increased the production of medical equipment and the spread of single-use plastic. EEA and WHO studies connecting climate change with the spread of new viruses are alarming, mainly because if we compare now to previous years, we are already experiencing an increase in these diseases. This emergency began

[2] The Centre for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES), *'Reducing your transportation footprint'*, https://www.c2es.org

more than ten years ago when the risk of viruses transmitted from animals to humans started to be a reality. These viruses connected with influenza viruses are viable on materials long enough to spread on dust particles and do not leave any second guesses about the alarming situation we find ourselves in.

The plan to achieve Net-Zero has arisen because the effects of pollution have reached such high numbers, and predictions from scientific experts confirm that if we do not do something now to reduce our emissions drastically, we will experience disastrous consequences. COVID-19 helped reduce emissions during the pandemic as all the transport stopped, but as systems return to normal levels, the plan is to reduce them to zero by 2050. This effort will be costly, but we simply have no choice but to undergo it: the consequences of doing nothing will result in destruction of the ecosystem and the drastic increase in the temperature will cost many trillions of pounds.

Our personal contribution is vital in this battle against time; therefore, adjustments to everyday life can be made to help the Net-Zero plan speed forward with no setbacks. Recycling with more attention ensures that the waste goes where it can be disposed of in the right way, but ultimately reducing the amount of plastic used is better if we are to reach as close to Net-Zero as possible. We understand now that plastic can only be reused until a certain point, and when disposed of, it inevitably reaches landfills and us. Plastic never leaves the planet; it transforms into microplastic that ends up in water, fish, animals and humans. Reducing carbon emissions by improving the energy efficiency of our houses, generating more renewable energy. Reducing meat consumption can help reduce greenhouse gases like methane, CO2 and nitrous oxide. Also, growing your products or shopping from locals is the best way to reduce your footprint on the planet. One industry that contributes to pollution is the fashion industry, responsible for 10% of annual emissions; being considerate of where we shop and how we dispose of our clothes is a great place to start.

While we are trying to adapt to the worsening effects of climate change, the hazard is widespread and will be felt with such force and rapidity that we are not ready for it. Especially in more vulnerable countries, the population resent the projected higher mortality rate and loss of their future. We are in a critical era, where the next ten years will determine our fate. We need to move faster, hastening the steps taken to include everyone and removing unsustainable and destructive development hazards. Even if this battle appears overwhelming sometimes as challenges seem to increase, we should remember that we are not alone on this planet. There is a community fighting with and for us. The battle against climate change has

never been more vital for our future than now; do not wait to join the cause. The time is now!

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17

HOW EFFECTIVE IS US, UK AND CHINESE CLIMATE POLICY AT COMBATTING THE CLIMATE CRISIS?

Sebastian Crisp

Abstract

As the climate crisis grips the world and calls for action reach new heights, what really can be done to solve this existential threat? This essay considers how different governments have chosen to tackle what they perceive as climate change's biggest issues. Is it best to do the bare minimum and spare a social revolution, or use the biggest crisis known to man to enact wider economic and social change? If a single plan can be heralded as the solution to the world's problems, then what are the domestic challenges of such policies? Ultimately, all governments are currently dealing with climate-related changes, and this is only going to increase. With the US, UK, and China being some of the most influential powers on the planet, what they choose to do will set a bar for whether the worse effects of this building storm can be avoided.

Introduction

Accredited scientists have been warning for years that the climate crisis offers a challenge to humanity the like of which it has never been faced before. These challenges will require policy change across the globe and affect all elements of society, from economics to daily habits. Climate change has the potential to severely alter weather patterns and will not discriminate. Experts argue it will cause extreme droughts, increased flooding, regularly high temperatures, loss of habitats and the mass extinction of vulnerable animal species. There is a large amount of evidence to suggest that the effects will not just be felt on physical environmental landscapes, but also cause much damage to society and human livelihoods, 'Climate change will cause more than $500 billion in economic loss in the United States alone each year by 2090' (D'Souza, 2021).

It has been argued jobs which have been relied upon for decades will soon become obsolete or impossible due to changing weather patterns. As well as this, scientist have warned certain foods will become harder and harder

to obtain with increasing production difficulties. Governments have stated that the challenges caused will lead to a drain on resources once reserved for other sectors including healthcare, education, or poverty reduction. Money could be used to mitigate the most devasting impacts of the climate crisis instead, 'Rising heat due to climate change could lead to the loss of 80 million jobs by 2030' (Taylor, 2019).

US 'Green New Deal'

The impact of the climate crisis upon the US is already beginning to show its potential transformation of people's lives, the economic sector, and the environmental landscape. This article will describe the situation which faces the country itself, analyse the US policy towards climate change, and in conclusion compare it to the policies of the UK and China.

Between 1901 and 2016, temperature increases across the US averaged 1.0 °C, but in the next 30 years that temperature increase is predicted to rise to 2.5°C (Wuebbles et al, 2017). As a result, the sea level rises which have already begun to affect the US, will increase. Daily tidal flooding will accelerate and 'Flood events [are] estimated to significantly decrease employment in communities by an average of 3.4 percent' (Miller and Sarmiento, 2006, p.xi). More rain in areas like the Northeast and Midwest has the potential to cause flash flooding and loss of life. Extreme weather events, like flooding, are caused by high temperatures which arise from changing weather patterns and reduced protection from the sun's ozone radiation layer. This layer of protection from the sun protects the earth and is weakened by corrosive pollutants in carbon dioxide. Heat waves are caused, crops are destroyed, or people are forced to move away from areas in which they have spent their whole lives.

Dahl in *Environmental research communications* notes, 'the number of high temperature records has outpaced the number of low temperature records, particularly since the mid-1980s' (2019, p.1). Droughts, forest fires, heat related illnesses, and energy consumption will all dramatically increase as high heatwave like levels of exposure become the norm. Trees will be lost in the Great Forests of California, the already hot desert city of Las Vegas will face unprecedented challenges, and critical infrastructure will fail under the strain.

Climate change could cause dramatic change to physical American landscapes, but also bring huge human costs. With increased heat and parts of the natural food chain disrupted by massive global heating over time, wildlife which would usually feed upon insects which carry diseases will die out and 'vector-borne diseases, such as those carried by ticks, fleas, and

mosquitoes, could increase in certain regions' (Smith and Tirpak, 1988, p.219).

Life-shortening impacts of humidity growth will be felt as farmland is abandoned and weeds spread; hay fever and asthma rates will increase as will skin infections such as ringworm and candidiasis. This is on top of the already apparent effects of air pollution on American lungs in large metropolis, especially on those who are youngest and most disadvantaged.

The 'Green New Deal' (GND) proposal put forward by left-wing members of the ruling Democratic Party in the US Congress sets out radical alternatives to the current path to net-zero proposed by previous American administrations. Popularised by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC)[11] the plan is aimed at bringing an end to climate change escalation in the US. AOC and her supporters follow the guiding principle of seeing disaster as an opportunity. The plan also addresses some of the wider and more long-standing problems in American society. Hence its name 'Green New Deal', a modern version of Franklin D. Roosevelt's 'New Deal' which used the 1930s Great Depression as a catalyst for the biggest federal program of investment to create jobs, improve the economy, and set the nation on a course to become a superpower.

The GND's main aim is to combat and eliminate the US contribution to climate change and set the country on a steadfast track to profit from the new and improved infrastructure required to achieve this. The aim is net-zero by 2030 and will be accomplished mostly through the role of the federal government. This target is a much more ambitious 20 years earlier than the current US administration aim for net zero (Milman, 2021). Each element of the plan comes with guarantees to the US population, including, but not limited to, access to nature, clean water, and healthy food.

The GND legislative proposal recognises the effects climate change is already having on the community. D'Souza (2021) details these plans ranging from investments, and leverage funding whereby money is borrowed for projects which will pay themselves back with interest over time, along with financial assistance provided for repairing and upgrading existing infrastructure. Climate policy for years has been seen as a preventative measure, but this is the first large-scale legislative proposal to acknowledge that we have already entered the critical period of climate

[1] AOC is a radical congressperson who shot to fame after winning a surprise election; often outspoken on topics related to the climate and poverty.

change altering the world. It recognises that extreme weather from climate change is not reversable due to decades of inaction.

The environmental policy contained within this framework is argued to be the most radical policy ever introduced to the US Congress, 'because it has a single radical ask: an ecological and economic transformation of the current system to end our addiction to fossil fuels and endless consumption of the earth's finite assets' (Pettifor, 2019). It offers solutions to problems which, if left unanswered, will cause catastrophic damage to the US. As well as offering resources to deal with climate challenges already faced by much of the American public, 100 % renewable power sources will be instated for the US power grid. These grids will be upgraded to smart power grids to enhance energy efficiency and decrease the cost to consumers for this clean energy. All buildings currently connected to this grid (along with those planned) will be required to achieve maximum efficiency ratings in all utilities from water to safety and durability (Ocasio-Cortez, 2019). This will address a flaw which already exists in many dilapidated energy systems, meaning energy produced from fossil fuel plants is lost through the process of transportation to usage. According to Wirfs-Brock (2015), this ranges from 2% to 13% of energy lost in transmission and distribution from 1990 to 2013. If this is dramatically scaled down and similar achievements are made in building efficiency, then not only will the fuel which has provided this energy be clean, but less of it will be needed for production as wastage is reduced.

The focus in the GND on public transportation aims at reversing a trend in American life which, beginning with the Highways and Public Works acts of the 1950s, has prioritised the individual car as the principal mode of transportation. Reversing this will mean a reduction in consumption of fuel, but also remove existing traffic congestion. Investment targeted at public transportation systems creates better forms of movements of people around their neighbourhoods. Those who must use a variety of modes of transport will use green forms like electric cars and public electric transit. One of the biggest polluters in the US is domestic air travel, to which high-speed rail is proposed. Rob Jackson, chair of the Global Carbon Project at Stanford, has stated these measures would at the very least 'eliminate 62,000 air pollution deaths per year in the U.S, saving taxpayers $600 billion a year' (Jordan, 2019).

US citizens who stand on the side of the debate sympathetic to stronger environmental regulation see the GND as the best chance to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. Conversely those who are more sceptical of an enlarged government, normally those on the right of American politics, challenge its practicality. There have been discussions that this plan could

cost in the region of $100 trillion and there are those who see this as too hard to deliver as well as financially irresponsible. Those in favour stand on the left with AOC arguing that unless this action is taken the world will fall further and further into climate catastrophe: surely no price can be put on the survival of the planet as they see it. Loris has further reservations about such a large introduction of funds to initiate this GND, even at a very basic level, arguing that the new restrictions and moving from old to new forms of energy consumption could cause 'a peak reduction of more than 1.4 million jobs, more than $40,000 in lost income for a typical family of four, and an average of 12-14% increase in household electricity costs by 2040' (Loris, 2019).

This plan does not set about to change the system which makes up the American economy but rejects neoliberal arguments over private involvement, believing it would be too slow to act compared to massive state involvement. Measuring the social impact that the GND could bring to the US is perhaps what makes this plan the most comprehensive piece of legislation ever proposed. The bill aims to create new material needs for an energy revolution locally, in turn bringing manufacturing back to areas which have suffered greater levels of unemployment alongside new opportunities for those just starting out. Abandoned sites and those containing hazardous waste would be cleaned and processed for reuse under the scheme creating safer, more pleasant environments to live in. Similarly, new brownfield sites for cheaper housing or social centres like schools/hospitals would be built for the local community (Ocasio-Cortez, 2019). With climate change at the forefront of this plan, the new schemes can also tackle wider social justice problems: it makes sense to use a large federal program to pull as many people as possible out of poverty and address a problem which will affect the poorest the most. Growth in jobs, investment in new areas of the community, new transport links with a growing public transit program, and more land made available for housing, will no doubt be of benefit to those who have the least disposable income.

The main source of contention with this plan, and one which could cause its downfall, is the current domestic political scene which faces most major pieces of legislation in the US. The polarised nature of the legislature enables a filibuster whereby 60 votes are needed, rather than 50% of the senate, to pass bills. This makes it especially hard for any legislation to pass without substantial support from the opposition. With this unlikely for even the simplest of bills, one which is as comprehensive, complex and large as this one is almost doomed to fail. There is also the very real question of how this policy will be achieved and kept on track for success in the short span of 8 years.

UK 'Build Back Greener' Strategy

The UK today does not sit that high on the list of polluting nations, but it still has had a major impact on historic total global emissions, being responsible for the first industrial revolution which made these emissions boom. According to Carrington (2021), the UK currently sits 8th in the world when it comes to total emissions from fossil fuels since 1850. In comparison to the other nations which make up the top 10, the UK population is also comparatively smaller. As a developed nation, the UK has contributed significantly to global warming but will be disproportionately better off in terms of its impacts. Having said this, no state will go untouched in this encroaching crisis and the UK is already seeing the effects of climate change and the demands this will bring. As in the US, the dramatic climb in temperatures will have devastating effects as heat-related deaths rise sharply, 'by around 257% by the 2050s from a current annual baseline of around 2000 deaths' (Hajat et al, 2014, p.641).

As stated, extreme weather events will grow with the disturbance that emissions cause to weather patterns. Coastal areas will be subject to battering from storms disrupting, risking the lives of many inhabitants. But water and its damaging affects by mother nature are not just reserved for the coast. Low-lying areas and those in the vicinity of rivers will also have to deal with increasing tides of water, 'sea-level predicted for the end of the twenty-first century will lead to changes in the height of water levels measured relative to the present-day tide' (Gregory and Lowe, 2005).

Winters will also suffer from extreme events. The Met Office predicts winters to be 'between 1 and 4.5 degrees warmer' by 2070 and this could have catastrophic consequences for organisms within the UK ecosystem (Met Office, 2022). Blue tits, for example, are a popular garden bird which feed on caterpillars and have evolved to breed when their stock is at the highest. However, when the tree leaves come into leaf earlier due to warmer springs, it means that caterpillars are also hatching earlier too. This in turn means that the whole cycle becomes distorted and by the time blue tits are ready for breeding there are not enough caterpillars to feed upon so fewer chicks survive (RSPB, 2022).

Climate change across the UK is already beginning to have a damaging effect, with rising temperatures, more extreme weather events, and wildlife routines being disturbed. UK policy at home must be coupled with an international strategy to make up for the historic nature of the effect it has had on emissions. 'Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener' (HM Government, 2021), is the UK's principle governmental document when it comes to acting on climate change. It sets out necessary changes in UK infrastructure and habits in order to decarbonise:

1. The types of energy which supply power to the country should be greatly expanded from a number of sources including nuclear power. This is intended to make up for the shortfall in energy provision that would result from shutting down fossil fuel plants. The document includes proposals for more established clean power like wind power to "deliver 40GW of offshore wind, including 1GW of innovative floating offshore wind by 2030" (HM Government, 2021, 94).

2. End the sale of all new polluting vehicles by 2035.

3. Invest £12 billion into local transport in the next 3 years.

4. Create up to 54,000 new jobs through investment in key new energy sectors, like nuclear.

5. Consult local actors and stakeholders on new projects in their area as a means to involve local people in decision-making for government policy

The criteria of environmental, economic, social, and political viability will be used to measure the effectiveness of these policies in relation to these areas.

Environmentally, the inclusion of these policies is welcome when it comes to addressing two fundamental issues with infrastructure in the UK: the *type* of energy and its *supply*. However, this will not be enough to replace dirty fuels. The UK government has made it clear that as well as wind and solar, nuclear energy will play an important role in achieving net zero. An announcement was recently made which hoped that the UK nuclear capacity would reach 25% of energy demand and see the construction of up to eight more nuclear reactors approved (BBC News, 2022). While it is a cleaner fuel than coal or oil, the clean-up process with nuclear waste and potentially devastating effects if it goes wrong, mean that it should not be a long-term solution to fulfilling the UK's power demand. Factoring in the costs of both start-up and decommissioning, this solution seems to prevent the growth of longer-term greener solutions like hydro, solar, wave, and wind power.

The physical, and often most publicised, part of climate change and the way it affects our lives is the way we produce and use energy. This is of course an important part of decarbonising, but critical parts of climate change like agriculture and wildlife are relatively absent from this plan. This has already been noted by the CCC (Climate Change Committee),

stating 'no specific decarbonisation plan has yet been set out for this sector to match those in others' (Climate Change Committee, 2021, p.6).

The transport sector makes up around a quarter of UK total emissions (Cran-McGreehin, 2016). The document proposes that no new polluting vehicles should be sold after 2035. While a step in the right direction for the environment the infrastructure for all these new vehicles is only briefly discussed with no concrete plan for how to deal with the surge in electricity required.

The economic detail in some areas of this plan merits credit. This is one of the first of its kind when it comes to a government taking action on climate change in one statement. From transport to the energy sector, mentions are made of policies to introduce and tackle an economic polluter, but often without implementation proposals or any sort of wider financial considerations. Existing in isolation these measures cannot be successful. For example, if you have new power sources, but no commitment on how funding, or transportation to people's homes, then there are credibility issues for practical implementation.

Just banning pollutant vehicles does not necessarily solve the issue so the plan aims to encourage people to buy a new car and give up on diesel or petrol. However, it lacks funds for a scrappage scheme or to subsidise the buying of these new electric cars. This economic short-sightedness hinders the effectiveness of people to be able to afford these new measures. Despite the £12 billion allocated for transport no direct costings are given as to where this money will be spent. The money used should be interconnected with other priorities, like electric buses bought for the busiest routes in the most polluted parts of an area enabling a double benefit, of new transport being greener while an area's pollution levels reduce.

For social improvements, creating all these new manufactured cars, and people needed to build and run nuclear facilities will create up to 54,000 jobs (HM Government, 2021, p.21). New projects to tackle climate change could stimulate social mobility through cleaning up contaminated industrial sites for new housing, as well as providing more homes for people. The government hopes to bring the industries needed to achieve net zero to places with high levels of unemployment or former industrial towns. Re-industrialisation could produce new levels of social cohesion which many felt was lost with deindustrialisation in the 1980s. For example, the UK government has committed to investing heavily in 'hydrogen hubs' to be used across the future energy sector. Fife in Scotland, once famous for textile production, will be the centre for a demonstration

in how hydrogen can provide power for 300 homes over a 4-year period. (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2020).

The government also hopes to build new relationships with local residents and businesses to harness the innovation that these local meetings can bring. Policy devised in rooms hundreds of miles away from where it will impact can sometimes make those actors feel powerless in decision-making. If people can have a say and debate the effectiveness of these schemes in the long term, it will ensure that these policies become embedded in the local fabric of the community (HM Government, 2021, p.260).

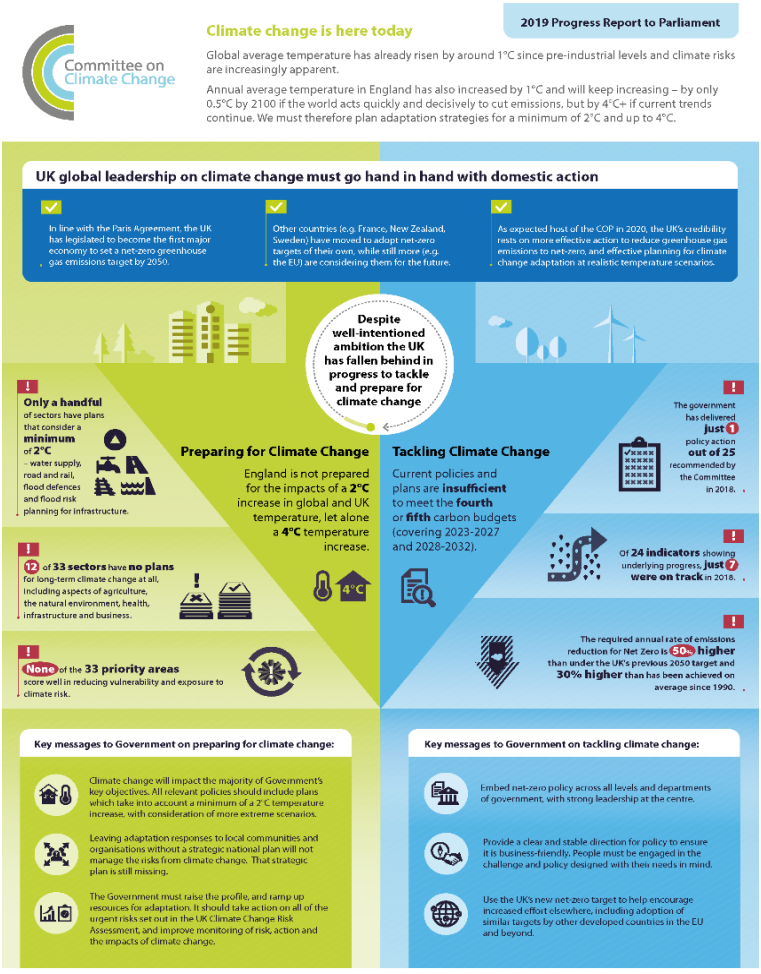


Figure 1: UK Climate Policy Success. Source: Committee on Climate Change (2019)

For this legislation to be politically viable, the gap between the policy proposal and actual implementation on the ground must be overcome. Actors and agencies which are formally answerable to a government minister, but in practice are not, can quite often fail to achieve what they are instructed to do. For example, if local councils are told they must create more green spaces, but lack the resources to do so, then the policy will fail.

The nature of the report means it is not legally binding as it was not a bill put through parliament. The current government's rhetoric suggests they are in favour of its proposals, but as with other policies previously announced, it could be dropped at will with few consequences. Simon Hughes, former Cabinet Minister and MP for 32 years, has suggested that the system which elects MPs to parliament has seen the current government (2019-2024 parliament) handed a majority of 80, with less than half total number of votes cast. A level of scrutiny is possible as parties can read the report and debate in the House of Commons, but the size of the government's majority makes them toothless to act in altering its proposals significantly (Hughes, 2021).

There is the additional problem that it is very hard for smaller parties to gain representation in the UK Parliament. For example, parties which hold strong green credentials, like the Green Party, are unable to win a significant number of MPs in the House of Commons even if their share of the vote increases, due to the first-past-the-post system. The spread of these votes across the country rather than concentrated in a few seats makes it much harder for them to elect MPs than bigger parties. Countries like Germany which have proportional systems tend to have Greens in government. This ensures climate policy is always at the forefront of policymaking (Hughes, 2021).

The UK's publishing of a report to reach net zero by 2050 is very encouraging; the commitments and long-term strategies in terms of transport and power supplies are welcome. What holds this report back, however, is the credibility of its actual delivery. The nature of the UK political system makes it incredibly hard to ensure that this policy will be binding for successive governments or even carried through without backsliding by the current administration. The exciting prospect of the social benefits that such a policy could bring to disenfranchised communities is the epitome of the opportunity that awaits governments who dare to take radical action to solve the climate crisis. Involving actors from across a spectrum of society, the economy, and the environmental industry, can ensure the legacy of many of the projects set out in this report. The problem as with most policy which is made in a winner takes all system, is relying on those in charge to take responsibility in making

tangible progress on a problem which puts the Earth's health at terminal risk.

China's 'Climate Policies'

The People's Republic of China holds an important historic and contemporary position when it comes to reducing emissions. Like the studies of the US and UK, the reality of climate change will be no mystery to its inhabitants, and a developing crisis will increase this visibility. The choice of China as a country to study is deliberate: with the other two case studies focusing on western states, I am focusing on a country in the east in order to cover as diverse a range as possible of expertise and sources. This was to investigate the different structures and societal traditions which have affected, and continue to affect, a country's action towards climate change.

China's influence on the current crisis is the biggest out of the three states studied so far. Its contemporary position makes it the most polluting country on the entire planet but the trajectory of the global economic superpower with its existence as a large agricultural and relatively poor nation up until its massive development from the 1990s onwards, means that its contribution to emissions has been a recent phenomenon. Nonetheless its contribution is very important and so China has one of, if not the biggest part to play in combatting climate change. China has much to gain from reducing the negative impact of changing atmospheric conditions.

Climate change in China is visible and has begun to affect parts of Chinese life which it relies upon for many of its exports. Over the past 100 years, 'average temperatures [have] increased by about 0.5-0.8°C' which has seriously impacted the agricultural sector, which supports over "20% of the world's population with only 8% of global sown area" (Chen, Chen, and Xu, 2016, p.105). So, while it is true that the effects of climate change will be felt within the country itself, the importance of China's farming for the world means that climate change will have a profound impact on global food markets.

These fluctuations in temperature have been increasingly volatile, with unusual weather patterns affecting the very wet south while the north stays dry. As in the UK and US, more frequent floods and droughts have been felt, severely disrupting the harvesting and growth of one of the world's biggest suppliers of grain, meat and vegetables. This rapidly developing/developed country is a failure of its own success: the 'significant decline of sunshine duration and solar radiation in eastern China has attributed to the increased emission of pollutants' (Yihui et al, 2007, p.3).

The large number of factories that the country which has made it an economic superpower power, has had terrible implications for both the environmental degradation of the habitats and weather patterns of the country. The wellbeing of, mostly poorer, people who work in these areas surrounded by dirty polluting factories, is reduced as they have no choice but to live and work amongst, and breath in, these toxic pollutants. This will gradually take a toll on their lives with less sunlight and more contamination inching itself into every aspect of their existence.

The rapid growth of China's population has vastly expanded its urbanisation. Air quality has fallen dramatically especially around massive new cities created to deal with the increased demand for housing. Three out of the top 10 biggest cities in the world are in China (Worldometer, 2015), with 65% of China's population now living in urban areas. (Statista, 2022). Why this is significant for the country is the importance cities hold to its population, and the effect they can have overall on climate change emissions. The UN estimates that cities make up 70% of global carbon dioxide emissions and consume two thirds of energy produced (UN News, 2019).

China has both high areas of urban concentration and pollution but when it comes to Chinese political policy, there is no definite framework setting out proposals to achieve carbon neutrality. Instead, there are general announcements from the Chinese authorities and subsequent action announced sporadically which will be analysed here.

China has a poor global reputation for environmental protection. Having said this, the country has put some effort into support for renewable energy since the 1990s, 'The renewable energy law, established in 2005 and revised in 2009, set a national renewable energy target, required grid companies to connect renewable energies, established feed-in tariffs and provided for government financial support' (Williams, 2014). On the back on this, China has led the way in manufacturing and producing solar panels and power, with "one third of global solar capacity… roughly 175GW of solar power" (Columbia University, 2022). The country is dominant in the solar panel market, yet the issue of air pollution once again affects the current and future health prospects of Chinese citizens. Dirty air restricting the sun's rays from being detected by solar panels means the resulting loss of energy consumption of between 17-35% in parts of eastern China (Columbia University, 2022).

The use of fossil fuels in creating environmental issues is also carried through Chinese foreign policy. International strategy put forward by the Chinese state has enabled a situation whereby it prioritises influence over

other states' affairs through its 'belt and road initiatives', rather than climate change. This initiative is when China pays for the building of new infrastructure abroad e.g. a new power station, which is paid back through loans over time from the receiving country. In return China charges interest on these loans and gets to play a part in that state's affairs as they are 'owed' something. The Chinese built the M4 Motorway in Pakistan and will receive payment for this back overtime.

China is the biggest deployer of coal in the whole world and since 2001, domestic coal production has nearly tripled 'despite the country's plans to become carbon neutral by 2060' (Schiermeier, 2021, p.20). China's decision to reach carbon neutrality by 2060 is a good step but its continued actions abroad, and slow decision-making over the eventual winding down of building new coal power plants abroad, suggest that it may be mere lip service.

China's way of formulating its economic policy is to develop 5-year plans as it has done this since the days of chairman Mao. In its 11th plan of 2006-2010, it stated economic growth 'could not continue to come at the expense of environmental degradation.' Plans were also put in place which would see energy consumption of renewable sources increased by over 10%, and emissions reduced by over 10%. (Williams, 2014). While conditions were met over pollution, the energy consumption plans over non-fossil fuels fell short.

The current and most up to date five-year plan sparks a similar but different tone in relation to the environment and economics. Normally with these blueprints for economic regulation, China tends to under-promise and over-deliver. But the Chinese leader, President Xi Jinping has already announced his country would reach peak carbon use by 2030, as well as net zero by 2060. The usual policy, however, of over delivering may still be relevant in this case, with green expert Lauri Myllyvirta explaining that with the planned development of the Chinese economy, peak emissions could be hit much earlier in the mid-2020s (McGrath, 2021). China is in a race with its economic rivals, like the US, and recognises the opportunity of a faster-evolved green economy to give it an advantage over its competitors. Therefore, its plan of net zero by 2060 could be greatly overstated and may be achieved a lot sooner. With its recent experience in industrialisation, the state could commit to this inevitable transition and get a head start on its economic rivals. What is often omitted from Chinese climate policy is a specific focus on social policy: whilst there are obvious benefits of a cleaner lifestyle with less health risks associated with pollution, these are benefits of climate policy undertaken, rather than specifically targeted at improving people's lives.

One of the ways of cleaning up Chinese air, especially in cities, is through electric cars. China has the largest number of electric cars on the road of any country, and by 2030, 40% of vehicles sold in China will be electrified (Stauffer, 2021). Whilst this growing trend might spell good news for the quality of air, there are in fact social risks to consumers. Measures once in place to encourage the take up of electric cars have been removed. These included subsidies to buy the cars, a policy scrapped after it became too expensive. A new policy has been introduced whereby manufacturers are given a mandate to only sell electric cars by 2035, resulting in people now having to pay the full cost of these electric cars, with little help given in return.

The authoritarian nature of the Chinese state means that the government is probably not willing to change society that much. Chinese leaders do not want a repeat of the Tiananmen square incident in 1989 and risk disruption of the relative stability of today. There is always the risk that any reform allows a society to seek to overthrow its leaders in search of wider freedoms or economic uplift. Despite this, the authoritarian Chinese government is still able, at least in the short-term, to push through unpopular policies which Liberal Democratic governments are not. This power has enabled an environmental policy which has often left society to deal with rapidly changing conditions on their own. Little thought has been given to the benefits that new large-scale environmental policies could have in benefitting wider society. Citizens are silenced by being told 'Stay out of politics. Don't ask questions'. There is collective agreement that any hardships, 'frustrations and fears have been overshadowed by the surge in pride - and the sense of opportunity - that has come from seeing the motherland's rise' - not having the right to speak out is considered a sacrifice worth making (Qin and Hernández, 2018).

China is a one-party state. The CCP (Chinese Communist Party) rules over China by decree and has done so for decades. As mentioned previously, it exercises its control over society by supressing any challenge to its established authority and actively avoids reform or uplift. Opportunities for this then from climate policy are ignored. While many moral questions exist over this method of governance, it does allow for an effective method of policy implementation whereby there is little to no opposition given and policy can be passed relatively quickly. This was evident with restrictions over Covid-19 in China which saw it able to lockdown almost instantly, while legal restrictions in other western countries had to be passed through the legislature first before they could be implemented. Full economic control is given to the state and a few close private Chinese business. With this centralised method of governance and the implementation of a policy's economic costs and impact, the measure

can be closely monitored with delays improbable due to full centralised control.

The Chinese angle when considering climate change is perhaps less clear than some other nations. The lack of a single coherent plan, and single policy announcements, mean that the ability to measure the ambitions of Chinese climate policy can be difficult. Added to this the closed nature of its society and very different tactics in social intervention, we can only take a brief look at some of the proposals released by the Chinese state. It does, however, provide an interesting difference between a non-western country and the UK and US when it comes to approaching a developing crisis through political means.

Conclusion

There is a clear winner in attempting to answer what is the most effective climate policy at combatting the climate crisis. No one policy is perfect and all plans contain flaws which would require significant overcoming of hurdles to be a success. However, the US 'Green New Deal' policy is best placed for cutting carbon emissions to a level able to avoid significant risk to humanity. China and its rollout of electric cars is to be admired though there is a general lack of concern for active reductions in pollution rather than just a focus on economic drivers crafting climate policy. While the UK plan is well-researched and affordable in both time and resources it does lack ambition and feels like a half-hearted appeal to a 'Green New Deal' style policy completed out of necessity.

The US plan may struggle in actual implementation due to the fractious nature of the US political system but this should not detract from its dedication to putting environmental protection and promotion at the heart of every policy proposal. From the social fabric of society to the fuel we use to power homes and business it uses it framework as a means to better life across all sectors. It aims to make the US a more ecological place with positive consequences for the environment ingrained into our everyday lives. Placing environmental protection as a spur for deeper thought around long-standing economic and societal problems becomes a legacy that future generations must continue across all kinds of society.

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THE POWER DILEMMA

ORDER, DEVELOPMENT & GOVERNANCE

The Democratic Education Network (DEN) is a collaborative initiative involving academic colleagues and students that aims to organise and support students' educational experiences at the University of Westminster. DEN has inspired students to engage locally and globally. This book is a co-creation between the students and the academic colleagues who have worked collaboratively to design, develop and publish it. DEN represents a radical departure from some of the 'chalk and talk' as well as PPT culture that continues to dominate much of the learning experience in our higher education institutions.

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Co-Chair of University
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