

CONFLUENCE

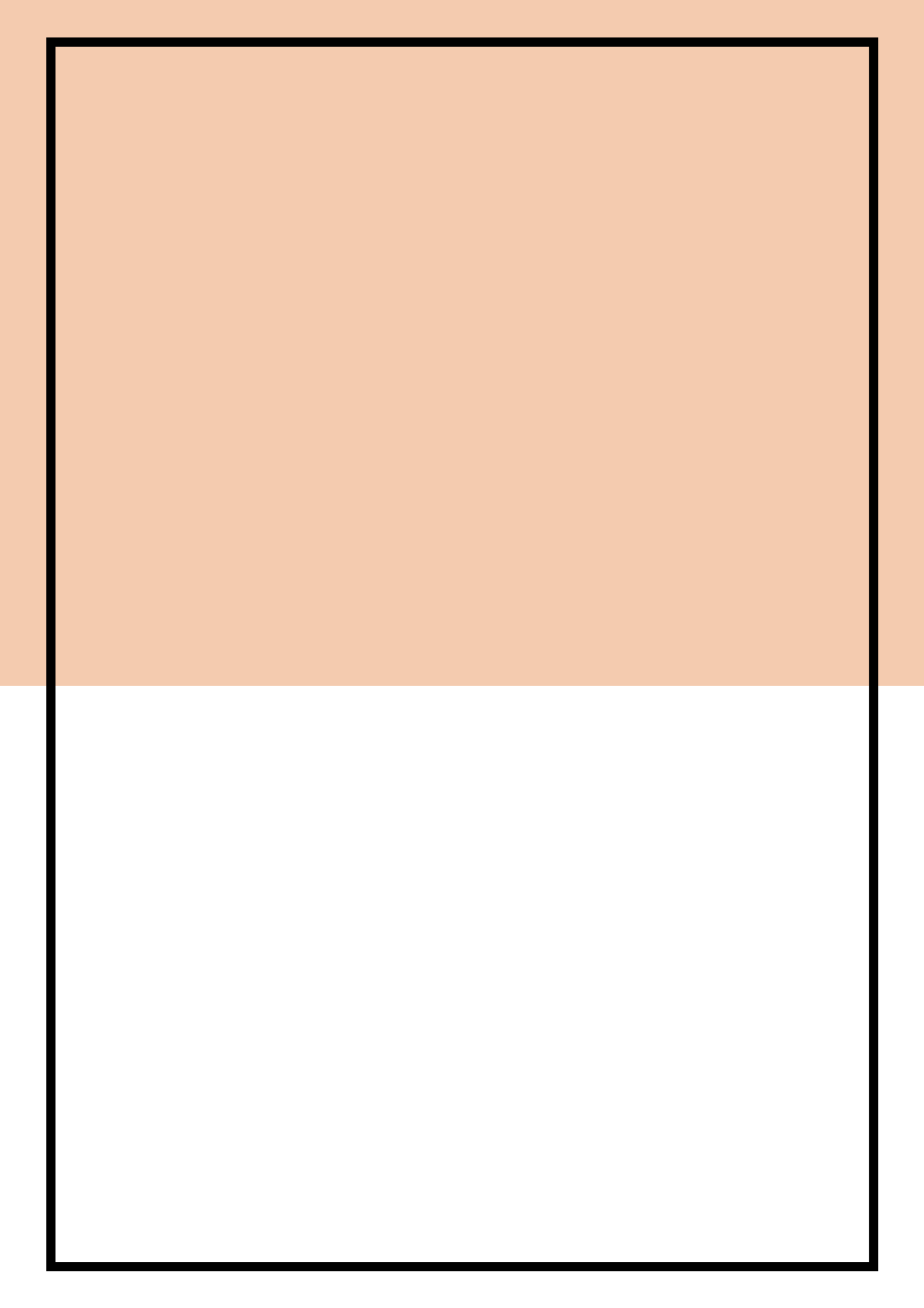
THE DEATH OF DEMOCRACY



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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS



HA LONG BAY, VIETNAM (2017)

BEATRIZ ALEGRIA FERNANDES

"In 2018, Freedom in the World recorded the 13th consecutive year of decline in global freedom. The reversal has spanned a variety of countries in every region, from long-standing democracies like the United States to consolidated authoritarian regimes like China and Russia...the pattern is consistent and ominous. Democracy is in retreat." - Freedom House, 2019

We chose the theme *The Death of Democracy* at the end of 2019, as we wrapped up our first issue of *Confluence*. There has been a steady decline in democratic governments around the globe for several years now, from the instability of newly established democracies in the Global South to the erosion of long-standing democratic systems in the West. We hoped that, with this issue, we could capture some of the thoughts, opinions, and concerns of Simon Fraser University's International Studies students regarding this trend. As we are nearing the end of 2020, having witnessed the rising influence of populism, authoritarianism, corruption, and civil unrest, it is obvious that we are living in a critical time. Although the submissions included in this issue were written before the COVID-19 crisis, they offer an interesting perspective into how politics looked last year and prove that many of the issues that people are experiencing in today's world have long been bubbling under the surface, only to be exaggerated and forced into the open by a global pandemic and subsequent recession.. COVID-19 has clearly exacerbated and highlighted inequalities around the globe, as it continues to weaken previously-unstable democratic regimes and put even the most stable ones to the test.

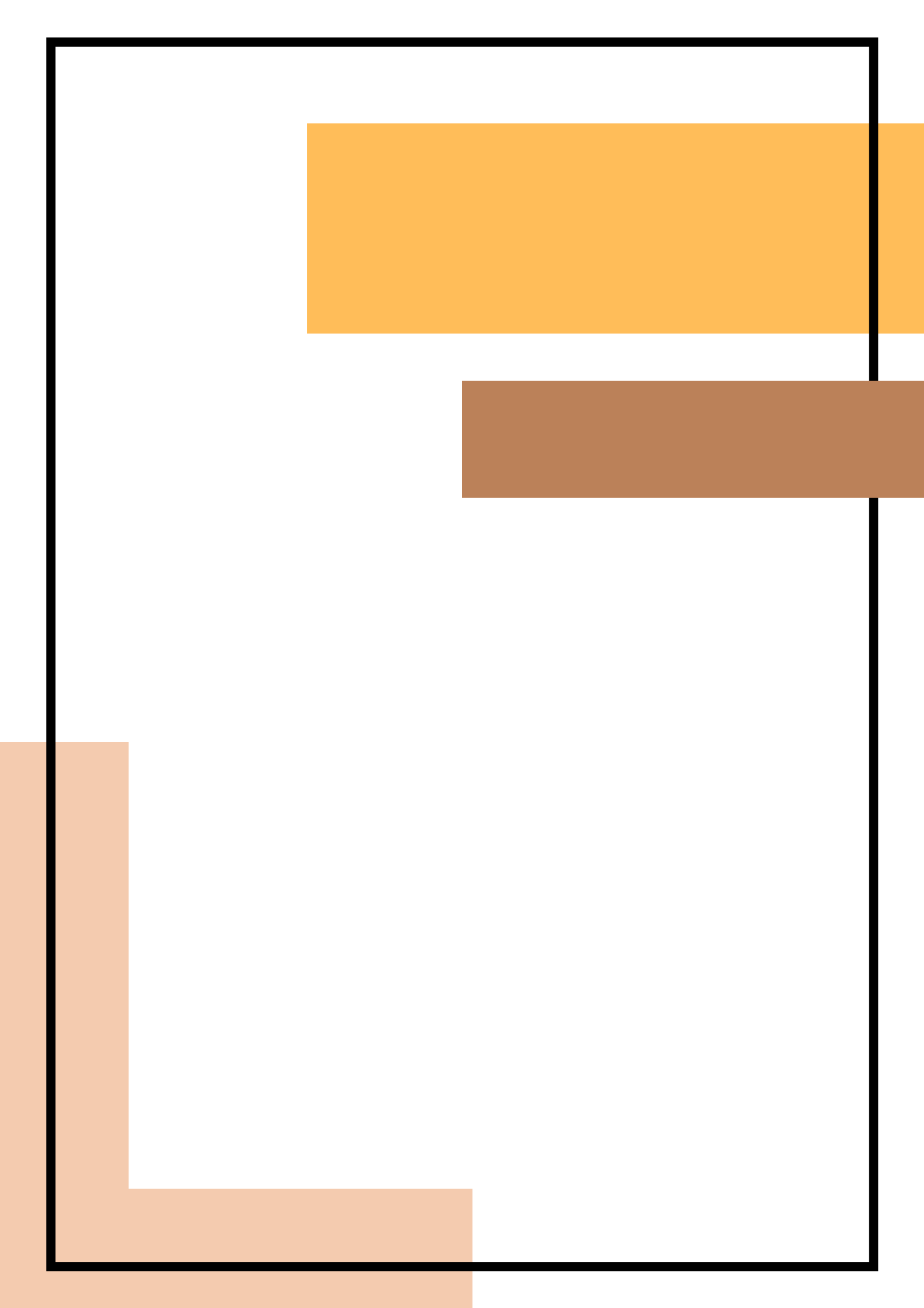
As the world adjusted to the 'new normal' of the global pandemic, our editorial process also faced challenges, working from home in quarantine. We would like to extend our gratitude to our editorial team for their resilience, adaptability, and commitment to our mission - giving SFU students a platform to share their ideas and opinions surrounding global issues that affect both our country and the international community. We would also like to thank Dr. Brenda Lyshaug and Dr. Tamir Moustafa of SFU's International Studies Department; Dr. Juan Pablo Alperin, of the Publishing Department at SFU, as well as the International Studies Student Association for their support and promotion of the journal. In the coming years, we hope to expand *Confluence*'s reach to include submissions from a variety of academic fields to reflect the interdisciplinary nature of International Studies. We hope that, in doing this, we are able to bring more perspectives, opinions, and experiences into these important conversations.

Finally, we would like to thank our readers. We hope that you will enjoy *Confluence*'s second issue and that you will take the time to share it with your friends and family.

Sincerely,
Landyn Imagawa & Katia Hammond
Journal Managers, *Confluence 2*

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The US-China Trade War

Beatriz Alegria Fernandes

Introduction:

The political relationship between the United States (US) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) can be characterized as unpredictable and volatile. Although the US has consistently maintained its status as a major global player over the past century, the rise of China as a dominant and influential nation, in an international context, has strengthened mainly in the last few decades. Nevertheless, the impact these events have had has greatly shifted global power dynamics. US-China relations became tense following the Cold War and with the dissolution of the USSR. Currently, the US and China are amidst a major trade war that greatly impacts not only the participating parties, but global economic and political fields as well. In this essay I will analyze the political and economic consequences of this trade war on both nations, as well as on a global scale. I will also explore particular case studies and recur to game theory in order to demonstrate the impact of the trade war on democratic affairs.

Historical scope of US-China relations:

In order to understand the current relationship between the US and China in both political and economic terms, it is crucial to analyze the history that shaped it. The PRC was established in 1949, and in 1950, the Korean War began. The US intervened in order to defend South Korea from communist North Korea, which was supported by China (Zhao et al, 2009). In 1971 China invited members of the US ping-pong team to the country, making the players some of the first Americans allowed in the country since 1949 (Andrews, 2018). In the same year, the United

Nations granted China a permanent seat in the Security Council. The first formal ties between the US and China formed in 1979 when American president Jimmy Carter gave China full diplomatic recognition, whilst agreeing to their One China principle, which dictates that the PRC is the only sovereign nation to hold the name “China” (Schmitz & Walker, 2004). During his administration, President Ronald Reagan demonstrated his clear support of Taiwan, once again causing the dissatisfaction of the PRC (Ching, 1980).

It is also around this time, in the midst of the Cold War, that an antagonistic relationship between the US and China truly intensifies due to their polarizing views of capitalism and communism respectively “with the passing of the global threats of Soviet national power and transnational communist ideology” (Ross, 2015, p.23). Around 2000, the two nations normalized trade relations through US president Bill Clinton’s signing of the U.S.-China Act of 2000, which consisted of a “bill extending permanent normal trade status to China” (Smith, 2000, para.1). Throughout the first decade of the 21st century, China boosted its military budget on defense, becoming a major player in the economic and political global arenas (Cusack & Ward, 1981, p.439). In 2011, US President Barack Obama pushed for China to join the Trans- Pacific Partnership (TPP), “a multilateral free trade agreement that seeks to reduce and eventually eliminate trade tariffs among member countries, and for which the bar for joining is set so high that China would not likely be able to qualify for many years” (Glaser, 2011, p.29). Shortly after, there was a rise in trade tensions between the two nations as the US held a trade deficit with China, but in 2013 “Xi Jinping takes office with a vision for a "new type of major-power relations" between China and the United States” (Byun, 2016, p.1). This made great way with President Obama in the Sunnylands US-China Summit held that year as the “two countries share

more common interest in this space than in any other, and that makes it possible to identify and quickly pursue joint actions that benefit both sides” (Hart, 2014, p.8). From 2012-2015, US-China relations remained fairly stable, but still unpredictable, however it is not until US President Donald Trump was elected in 2016 that this relationship became explicitly precarious, and the trade war established.

US-China Trade War:

War on Tariffs

Although Trump has stayed true to his vow to China’s President Xi Jinping that he would honour the One China policy (Chen, 2019, p.1), Trump announced the implementation of tariffs on Chinese imports to the US as early as 2018. With the economic effort, the US also claims that the Chinese government is spying on the US and engaging in theft of international property (Stuart, 2019). These accusations towards China were not only reciprocated with a similar increase in tariffs, but also infuriated China, creating political turmoil between the countries that would eventually lead to the initiation of a trade war. A trade war consists of the defense of a protectionist economic approach, that is enforced through the raise of tariffs on foreign goods. This battle is more so one of leverage and representation, rather than an economic one. This means that the goal is to maintain the appearance of dominance and stability, rather than raising tariffs in reality. The tariffs on trade are a method used to reach a particular goal, which in this case, is power and control.

There have been, thus far, several tariffs imposed on diverse goods by both countries, usually initiated by the US and then reciprocated by the PRC. According to author Edwin Lai (2019), there have been three waves of tariffs. The first wave was in July 2018 and consisted of a 25% American tariff on Chinese goods worth US\$34 billion. The second wave of “25% tariffs on an additional US\$16 billion of Chinese exports went into effect on 23 August 2018” (Lai, 2019, p.1). It is at this point that China began to retaliate and proceeded to impose “25% tariffs on US\$16 billion of US exports” (Lai, 2019, p.1). The last round of tariffs were imposed in September of 2018, as explained by Lai (2019):

“when President Donald Trump started levying 10% tariffs on another US\$200 billion in Chinese goods. In retaliation, China imposed tariffs, with rates ranging from 5% to 10%, on an additional US\$60 billion worth of American goods, effective on the same day” (p.1)

This war, however, goes beyond just trade, as it includes reducing Chinese direct investment in the US based on security reasons, and the belief that China is spying on the US.

The Huawei Case

In July 2018, Huawei, an electronics company from China, was accused of violating trade sanctions against Iran. Meng Wanzhou, Huawei’s chief financial officer was then arrested in Canada, which contributed to the escalation of the trade war (Stewart, 2019). In March 2019, Huawei sued the US with the aim of restricting U.S federal agencies from using its company’s products (CBC, 2019). President Trump then proceeded to make an assertive global statement, urging other countries to cease the use of Huawei electronics, and once again declared that the company is spying. Whilst Wanzhou remains in custody in Canada, the fragility of North

America's relationship with China is notable. The trade war continues to escalate, with both countries imposing higher tariffs on each other. The most relevant, recent event between these two nations occurred in August 2019, when the US claimed that China is manipulating its currency. The PRC's national currency, the Yuan, has decreased its value significantly, raising questions as to why (Swanson, Stevenson & Smialek, 2019).

US-China Trade War as a Game of Chicken:

Game Theory is an approach to politics and economics that simplifies an international conflict and dispute using deduction, assisting in the creation of a resolution. When applied to this case, the US and China are playing a game of Chicken. According to the scholar Humphreys, the Chicken game consists of two players driving towards each other at full speed, and each player hoping the other will swerve (Humphreys, 2016, p.4). If neither swerve, both parties die, but if one party swerves, they become the chicken. In this particular case, the two players (US and China) dispute contradictory positions to each other and expect the other side to surrender and decrease their imposition of tariffs. If neither country stops creating tariffs, the economic and political repercussions could be extremely negative. On the other hand, if one country defers, they will be seen as weaker politically. In the chicken game, players lack a dominant strategy; their only strategic option is to attempt to do the opposite of what they presume their opponent will do, meaning both the US and China do not see the end of the trade war with any particularly positive outcome, but rather simply hope that the other nation ceases

imposing tariffs first. Unsuccessfully, there is a potential conclusion in which both parties provoke the occurrence of a mutually negative outcome, which would be brought upon by a serious threat of joint miscalculation, and subsequent social, economic, and political harm.

Possible Outcomes of the Trade War:

On a global scale, China provides the global market with cheap labour and products. The nation is a leader in technology, and as a strong political, economic and military power, most nations regard China as a worthy adversary. In the words of author Jessica Weiss:

“the pendulum has swung from a consensus supporting engagement with China to one calling for competition or even containment in a new Cold War, driven in part by concerns that an emboldened China is seeking to spread its own model of domestic and international order” (2019, p.1).

Given the fact that this trade war is ongoing and with no visible end in sight, economists and political scientists have asserted that there are several possible outcomes (detailed below): both parties continue to increase tariffs and hinder international trade; China is forced to give in; or harmony.

Both parties continue to increase tariffs and hinder international trade

It is most likely that the US will continue to impose tariffs on Chinese goods, and that China will reciprocate the actions. This outcome relies on the conception that “economically,

China wants to use the retaliation to force the US to back down from or at least halt the escalation of its protectionist measures. Politically, the Chinese government cannot appear to be weak in the face of unreasonable unilateral provocation from the US". (Lai, 2019, p.178).

China is forced to give in

Economists believe that China is participating in this war as a matter of principle, with little to no economic benefit, as Laid (2019) states, "it is also clear that China would stop whenever the US stops, because the only reason China retaliates is to force the US to back down" (p.178). As such, it is crucial that we consider the possibility that China will eventually compromise if under too much financial constraint. This being said, given the political implications of the conflict and the ties to espionage claims, the Chinese government maintains a stronghold as a matter of dignity.

Harmony

There is also a possibility that both states reach a solution that is mutually beneficial. According to Kleinberg and Fordham, "liberal international relations theory suggests that mutual gains from trade prevent conflict between states" (2013, p.3). This would mean that both states could cease the implementation of tariffs due to its cost. In this case, the only way the trade war would negatively impact both Chinese and American economies, is if the conflict evolved towards a military arena, no longer making it feasible for either nation to participate.

Significance of the Trade War on Global Economic and Political Arenas:

Firstly, it must be noted that it is hard to predict what the next actions taken by either country will be, as China, especially, is traditionally a wildcard. As put by scholars Cusack and Ward, “because of the turbulent changes during the last 30 years in the People’s Republic of China, unraveling the history of Chinese economic development plans is, to say the least, a difficult task” (1981, p.438). While US conduct seems to be a consistent increase in tariffs fueled by a technological war, the PRC’s behaviour thus far has been reactionary, making it difficult to anticipate.

Impact on the United States

As a leader of the US, Trump’s platform is heavily based on maintaining a protectionist approach to the US economy, and restraining China’s influence on the US market. According to the article “*The China Syndrome: Local Labour Market Effects of Import Competition in the United States*” David Dorn and Gordon Hanson, “Rising imports cause higher unemployment, lower labour force participation, and reduced wages in local labour markets that house import competing manufacturing industries” (2013, p.1). Nevertheless, a poll taken on US citizens asserts that “Americans overwhelmingly think that trade is more of an opportunity to boost the economy than it is a threat to it, according to a WSJ/NBC News polling conducted on 10–14 March 2018 that showed support by a 66–20% margin. And that feeling transcends party lines” (Lai, 2019, para. 13). However, regardless of civil opinion, to continue to engage in the trade war will certainly put the US in an unfavorable economic position. According to statistical data collected by Pantheon Macroeconomics, factory activity in the US has dropped unexpectedly and

exports are rapidly falling, causing the nation's job growth rate to decrease, as "Employer surveys and other data suggest that job growth is on course to slow to just 50,000 or so by late fall" (Khan, 2019, para. 18). Additionally, due to the uncertainty of the economic situation, small businesses are no longer making investments for the future, leading to a decline in contribution to the financial market (Khan, 2019). As reported by the Tax Foundation, "tariffs imposed so far by the Trump administration are estimated to reduce long-run GDP by 0.23 percent, wages by 0.15 percent, and employment by 179,800 full-time equivalent jobs" (York, 2020, para. 3). Essentially, if the US is to maintain its current stance regarding the imposition of tariffs, it is expected that citizen's wages will decline, as well as a decrease in employment and production rates.

Impact on the People's Republic of China

It is important to note that in China's case, there is no bilateral agreement with the US, meaning that the PRC still possesses the ability to trade with numerous other nations without impacting the US (Chong & Li, 2019). However, according to various studies performed on possible outcomes of the trade war, China is always projected to be more negatively impacted than the US, as "analysis simulates that in the worst-case scenario, China will lose 1.1% of its job positions and 1% of GDP. While the findings confirm that the trade war will have some impact on China, it is far from catastrophic" (Chong & Li, 2019, p. 4)

Global Impact

The motivation for the trade war, although an economic issue, is political. If we pay attention to the leader initiating this conflict, Donald Trump, his platform relies on domestic

consumption and a rather unstable perception of foreign world powers. Politically, the willingness of US leaders, both president and vice-president, to comment and defame China, creates an unstable and susceptible bond between the two nations, which could potentially lead to an issue of global proportions.

Initially, we can assume that this conflict will lead to the political polarization of global alliances. This implies the idea that other countries, not involved in the conflict, will inevitably become affected when it comes to their economy. Most importantly, Reuters predicts that “the fallout will slow global growth in 2019 to 3.0%, the slowest pace in a decade, the IMF estimated this week” (Shalal & Timmons, 2019, para. 7). Nevertheless, according to the study ‘*The Varieties of Collective Financial Statecraft: The BRICS and China*’ the authors reach the conclusion that “BRICS governments have been impressively successful in hanging together despite having diverse political regimes, distinct interests, and even long-standing tensions among some members of this group” (Katada, Roberts & Armijo, 2017, p.107). This means that it is a possibility that if this conflict is ever to reach a global scale, there would be other institutions and measures to regulate it and prevent massive economic damage.

Undemocratic Uncertainty:

In the same way that certain systems could restrain the economic casualties of this trade war, it is also crucial to take into consideration the undemocratic leaders that could propel its political detriment. Both China and the US are currently under the leadership of debatably

precarious leaders. According to the Freedom House Report of 2019, “China’s authoritarian regime has become increasingly repressive in recent years” specifically regarding the lack of media and speech freedom, as well as the recurrent breach of human rights (Freedom House, China, 2019, para. 1). As stated in the report, Xi Jinping has also integrated an amount of personal, concentrated power that has created discontent from the masses, greater than any other leaders in recent decades (Freedom House, China, 2019). According to this report, China is not considered free. On the other hand, the Freedom House report considers the US not only to be free, but one of the world’s earliest democracies (Freedom House, United States, 2019). Albeit the fact that the definition of freedom in the US is heavily dependent on economic, social and racial conditions, it is still bewildering to learn that the democratic institutions and systems that allegedly once stood as exemplary, are currently falling short on reflecting the proper application of a representative and inclusive government. As disclosed by the Freedom House Report of 2019, the US has become progressively undemocratic “as reflected in partisan manipulation of the electoral process, bias and dysfunction in the criminal justice system, flawed new policies, etc...” (Freedom House, United States, 2019, para. 1). With Trump and Xi Jinping in power, the political implications of the economic turmoil go beyond what either nation has previously experienced. The US has always had a strong democracy, but it is now faltering, resulting in the political tensions that, combined with a volatile leader, are difficult to predict. One should think through the consequences of the US re-electing Trump, or a leader with similar political positions, in the following election, who will continue to withdraw from active participation and leadership of the international system. On the other hand, China has never been an established democracy, and given that trade is currently declining, there is a greater focus on economic activity, rather than on enforcing democratic values. Essentially, to be under the leadership of

stable democratic leaders would be beneficial when discussing the consequences of a trade war, as it is impossible to safely predict the political outcomes of decisions made by perilous heads of state.

Conclusion:

The relationship between the US and China has consistently been strained and ever-changing. It is important to reiterate that the economics and politics that govern these nations are extremely interconnected, and dependent on the current political leaders. The implications of a US-China trade war affects not only these two nations, by creating a fraught condition for their relationship, but could also have stark consequences on the global trade market. In the immediate future and given the historically tense relationship between these two countries, there is no visible solution to the volatile economic relationship between the US and PRC but given the status and importance of these two states, the results will deeply affect politics and trade globally. As put by the scholar Eswar Prasad: “the nature of their relationship has far-reaching implications for the smooth functioning of the global trade and financial systems” (2009, p.1). In the immediate future, the most mutually beneficial and realistic outcome for the trade war is the increasingly apparent idleness from both sides. Although it is far from ideal that the relationship between these two countries remains tense and constricted, there seems to be no progress on reaching a legitimate bilateral, favorable agreement. Thus, for the PRC and the US to remain dormant and inactive, and not impose further tariffs, is the more stable and durable outcome, regardless of the lack of positive impact in the nations’ relationship.

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**Creation and Dissolution of Indian Democratic Socialism: India's Constitution Under the
Leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi**

Kayla Mudaliar

Introduction:

With a population of over one billion citizens, India is the world's largest democratic state (World Bank, 2018). Since achieving independence on the 15th of August 1947, the Indian political sphere has experienced various reforms and mobilization movements promoted by leaders of the Indian National Congress (INC). Two critical Prime Ministers in Indian history are Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, and his daughter and successor, Indira Gandhi. Political power in India within the first thirty years of independence was consolidated predominantly by a single family and thus left a lasting legacy on the democratic secular state. While both had strong Hindu-Indian values and were highly accredited in politics, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi had surprisingly different visions of a 'successful India'. By examining the contrasting policies implemented into the constitution by Nehru and Gandhi, a greater understanding of democracy in relation to Indian society, economics and ethnicity can be gained. The first section of this essay intends to compare the political styles of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, focusing on the positive and negative impacts of their constitutional policies. The latter half will briefly discuss each Prime Ministers' legacy and why Nehru continues to receive more respect as a politician than his daughter in the democratic world.

1. Biography of India's Prime Ministers

To understand the differing effects of Nehru and Gandhi's politics, it is important to first understand the background, ideologies and motives that would later prompt the policies established during each of their time in office. A brief biography relating to their transition into politics must be discussed.

Born into the Brahmans, the leading Hindu caste, Jawaharlal Nehru received the highest level of education. His teachers and mentors consisted of affluent English- educated governesses and private tutors (Keshap, 1964). In his late teens, Nehru attended Trinity College, Cambridge where he received his Honors degree in Natural Sciences (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). He then furthered his education at Inner Temple in London where he passed his Legal Bar exam and became a barrister (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). After seven years in England, Nehru returned to India, joined the All Indian Congress in 1918 and was elected secretary and president (Keshap, 1964).

Nehru's motivations and interest in politics stem from two sources: Fabian Society and more importantly, Mahatma Gandhi (Masilamani, n.d.). While the latter was mostly a personal motivator to participating in the future of India's independence, the former (Fabianism) would be reflected in his policies after becoming Prime Minister. Nehru was an advocate for Gandhi's *Satyagraha*, the non-violence resistance movement, as a means to achieve an independent India (Masilamani, n.d.). Similarly, the concept of "peace movements" is mirrored in Fabian ideology. Founded by the Fabian Society in Britain in 1884, Fabianism reflects Marxism but differs in the belief that no revolution is needed to create change; rather greater emphasis on democratic socialism to achieve political goals (Masilamani, n.d.). When Partition occurred on the 15th of August 1947, India adopted a new domestic and international image of *Satyagraha*, with Nehru at its core.

After Nehru's death in 1964, the Indian electorate sought to find a new leader that understood India's diversity and complexity like Nehru. Born into the *Satyagraha* movement, Indira Gandhi "was a child of the Indian Revolution" (Parasher, 1984). Unlike her father, Gandhi

only received one year of public higher education in India and one year at the University of Oxford, England (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). In 1938, she joined the INC and once her father gained power, she carried heavy influence in all INC discussions; eventually being declared the honorary president of the party (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). India needed a dynamic leader who understood Indian diversity and complexity, and in the 1966 election, Gandhi secured her spot in office as head of the INC and Prime Minister of the country. Although Gandhi served as Prime Minister for four terms, my analysis will only focus on policies formulated in the first three consecutive terms. This is by choice, as Nehru only served consecutive terms and any policies or backlash implemented from either prime minister are in response to their own actions and not another leading party in power.

Gandhi, contrary to her father, had little regard for democratic institutions and Fabianism, and instead desired to obtain an egalitarian socio-political order with a nationalistic political economy (Parasher, 1984). Her time in office is seen as a radical approach to Indian politics by a majority of the population (Oberst, 2018). Through a comparative examination of Nehru's creation of the constitution and the later reforms implemented by Gandhi, it can be seen that their differing ideologies and political style will provide a basis to understand various policies and the effects on the lives of the Indian people.

2. Framework of the Indian Constitution

Prior to India's partition, Nehru summarized his constitutional vision before the INC during a speech in 1936 known as "the Socialist Creed" (Kinney, 2014). This declaration emphasized

Nehru's commitment to India's independence, and explained why he believed socialism was the appropriate future of India. A segment of the Creed is as follows:

“Socialism is something more than an economic doctrine; it is a philosophy of life... I see no way of ending poverty, the vast unemployment, the degradation and the subjection of the Indian people except through socialism... I work for Indian independence because the nationalist in me cannot tolerate alien domination... we are a nationalist organization and we think on a nationalist plane... I have no desire to force the issue on the Congress... I shall cooperate gladly” (as quoted in Kinney, 2014).

Through this excerpt, it is evident that Nehru understood the multidimensional crisis within India and turned to Fabian ideology as a driving force to reach a solution. Although Nehru may not have achieved his full democratic socialist state, remnants of the Socialist Creed can be identified within India's first constitution of 26th January 1950 (“Constitution of India”, 2015).

Nehru's political leadership and policies can be perceived as democratic liberalism. He valued individual freedoms and equality among all Indians, with a strong commitment to institution-building as a means to uphold rights outlined in the Indian Constitution. As stated in the ‘Socialist Creed,’ Nehru emphasized the economic struggles facing Indian society and thus promoted strong central economic planning to minimize poverty, unemployment and wealth divisions (Oberst, 2018).

Nehru faced two major political challenges in upholding democratic socialist values: power diffusion and Cold War tensions. While the latter accounts for external actors, the former includes deep rooted domestic actors. India was a feudal state, meaning power was divided not only among its' national, regional and local governments but also among the control of princely

states (Masilamani, n.d.). Before manifesting his homogenous, socialist India, Nehru had to push hierarchical rulers into retirement or dismissal in order to achieve a true democracy (Masilamani, n.d.). If he did not do this, central planning would fall prey to bargaining and negotiating as power would be diffused to various domestic actors; thus making policies and constitutional resolutions subject to interest groups pushing individual demands. Indeed, this became a destabilizing factor for Nehru's government as his desire for a socialist society ultimately faltered and the government became subjected to pushing personal groups' agenda as a means to maintain leadership (Oberst, 2018). The constitution was viewed as a mere framework used to order society, while Nehru and the Congress party allowed nationalist views to advance socialist policies.

The second obstacle Nehru faced was his idea of socialism in the Cold War era. Nehru wanted India to be recognized as a major international actor without surrendering his ideology. This led to his assistance in establishing the Non-Aligned Movement in 1956 (Keshap, 2019). The Non-Aligned Movement was a multilateral approach to deter involvement in the Cold War by refusing to align with a major superpower and therefore protecting state independence (Haque, 2017). Nehru also believed that in being one of the founding leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement, India would become more reputable on the international stage and rise as a key actor in the Global South.

Gandhi, on the other hand, was not as concerned with how Global South states viewed India, instead, she was motivated by holstering state power. One of the most controversial political motions in Indian history was spearheaded by Gandhi. Unlike her father, Gandhi did not value democratic institutions, but rather favored traditional, centralized authority and took steps

to undermine the liberal ideas of democracy within the Constitution itself. In 1975, India was experiencing rapid economic downturn, high public debt, increased poverty, strict labor laws and extremely high population rates (Das, 2006). All of these factors were a result of Gandhi's failing economic policies. Gandhi believed the primary socio-economic crisis facing India was mass population and thought that family planning programs could "cure" poverty (Connelly, 2006). Already confronted by state discontent and asked to resign as Prime Minister, Gandhi declared a state of emergency on 26 June 1975 (Johnson, 2016). Under the state of emergency, political opposition was arrested, new economic plans were established, statewide censorship was imposed, and forced family planning was implemented (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019).

The call for this declaration can be described as Gandhi herself, not the Indian state, facing an emergency. Weeks earlier, under claims of breaching electoral laws, Gandhi lost her seat in parliament, making her ineligible to hold office (Oberst, 2018). By announcing a state of emergency, India's political sphere froze, and Gandhi held onto her power. This was the first time India was subjected to authoritarianism since its independence. With help from her son, family planning measures were set forth, including mandatory sterilization, limiting the number of children per family and enforcing birth control (Ledbetter, 1984, p. 743). This strategic political movement allowed Gandhi to not only secure her role as Prime Minister for another 18 months, but also push her socio-economic agenda of population reduction to cure India of its poverty. Calling a state of emergency did not only undermine democracy and the institutions created by Nehru, but it also initiated what would be deemed the largest and most aggressive sterilization campaign in history (Ledbetter, 1984, p. 743).

From 1971 to 1976, Gandhi's government had made a record-breaking twenty constitutional amendments (India Today, 2015). Of the 20 revisions, the 42nd amendment is the most disputed, subversive, and undemocratic change India has seen. Enforced during the state of emergency, the 42nd amendment curtailed powers of the supreme court, granted parliament full authority over the judiciary, and shifted power back to Congress rather than state governments and parties (Granville, 2000, p. 371). Gandhi's authoritarianism and lack of respect for political participation proved true under article 368, granting her, "anything in this Constitution, Parliament may in exercise of its constituent power amend by way of addition, variation or repeal any provision of this Constitution in accordance with the procedure laid down in this article" (*Constitution of India*, 2015). This article solidified Gandhi's power so that she could amend the constitution without being questioned by the state or seeking judicial review because absolute power laid with Congress.

Moreover, a significant change occurred under the preamble of the 42nd Amendment. In the creation of the Constitution, Nehru was against including 'secularism' to define Indian society. Under his Constitution, the preamble stated India as a "sovereign democratic republic" (*Constitution of India*, 2015). Although he did not believe it was a way to define Indian life, Nehru understood the importance of religion alongside historical traditions and advocated for a secularized state. Gandhi, on the other hand, did not agree with her father's views and during the state of emergency, changed the preamble to declare that India was now a "sovereign, socialist, *secular* democratic republic" (*Constitution of India*, 2015). India's religion and politics were, legally, separate entities. This warrants multiple criticisms. Primarily, by deeming secularization a trait of being a 'true Indian,' it not only overlooks all religions of India as secondary to society,

but limits democracy as a whole, specifically social democratic equality and freedom of religion within the political sphere and parliament (Roychowdhury, 2018). The second issue with altering the preamble was that India's structure was not socialist in nature. Political and social aspects of life—open press, free speech, freedom of political parties, and individual rights—were all suspended under the state of emergency. The poor classes were targeted for family planning while elite officials were given 'bonuses' for minimizing family size (Connelly, 2006, p. 629). Under Gandhi, India's socio-economic ills were blamed on citizens as a means to justify her motives towards establishing an autocracy, which was anything but Nehru's idea of democratic socialism.

3. Economic Policies and Intervention

The differences between Nehru and Gandhi's visions of democratic socialism can be seen in major economic policies they implemented while in office. Nehru's five year plans reinforced central planning and the importance of working-class growth rather than elitism. His industrial policy of 1956 called for the acceleration of growth rates and industrialization to achieve a socialist society (Masilamani, n.d.). Three key objectives of his policy were improving the standards of living and working conditions for the masses, reducing income inequalities and preventing power from being regulated by elites (Masilamani, n.d.).

Power diffusion was central to Fabian ideology and Nehru believed that prevention of private monopolies would create a homogenous India, dissolving the polarization inherent with the urban labourers and rural agriculture. To achieve these three key objectives, Nehru applied unduly strict production and price regulations to an already strict labour regime, maximized

government control of private enterprise, and was openly against foreign investment (Gurcharan, 2006). As India was newly independent, Nehru did not want to rely on Western powers for market stabilization because it reflected a colonial dependency legacy and would decrease the chances of India becoming globally recognized. Instead, Nehru and the INC focused on capital flow and declared the state solely responsible for establishing new industrial undertakings that were “inward-looking and import-substituting,” not export promoting (Gurcharan, 2006).

However, this five-year plan did not reduce income inequalities between working and rural sectors as Nehru had hoped. Major issues arose between the landed vs landless citizens. Forming 80% of the population, the landless (the rural poor) were economically constrained by landowners and urban centres (Oberst, 2018 p. 130). Nehru’s second five-year plan in 1956 did not directly address this social inequality. Instead, he focused on increasing transportation facilities and technological diffusion from urban to rural areas in hopes of solving the issue (Masilamani, n.d.). Nehru did not adequately assess the industrial framework that existed at the time—for example, regions of India were still operating under feudalism. Urban India and rural India could not be regulated under one economic growth policy. Though lacking effectiveness and efficiency, the 1956 policy indicated pitfalls for future economic planning since price control, quality control, and geographical location would not be included to achieve capital growth. Most importantly, economies do not run on static, five-year cycles; they are dynamic (Masilamani, n.d.). Therefore, plans to restructure should not be time-dependent, but rather, based on quantity, or direct reformation of the source of instability.

Following in her father’s footsteps, Gandhi continued to promote the public sector but did so by advocating an economy shaped by radical egalitarianism. India, under Nehru’s first eight

years as Prime Minister, saw 361 banks claiming bankruptcy, averaging at 40 banks closing per year, all of which were privately owned (Khan and Karim Haider, 2018, p. 5). To combat this, in 1969, Gandhi nationalized fourteen banks, including the Bank of India (Khan and Karim Haider, 2018). The goal of nationalization was to shift capital from the private sector to the “priority sectors” of minor industry, entrepreneurs, traders, and agriculture (Shen, 2019). The idea was that by reducing private ownership, rapid capital growth would increase deposit rates for those who were restricted by corporate control while simultaneously pushing investment into priority sectors at a lower interest rates (Shen, 2019).

Gandhi’s pursuit for economic growth intensified in 1971 with the nationalization of the cotton, copper, coal and steel industries, and again in 1973 with the nationalization of oil companies (Khan and Haider, 2018, p. 5). Similar to Nehru, Gandhi’s perspective was inward looking, focusing on wealth for the people so that citizens would, in turn, fund the state and raise industrial growth internally. Gandhi’s economic policies were favoured by intellectuals and the elite, or those who supported Marxism, rather than the masses of the working class, as the working class were exploited by elitists, granting workers little economic power over their employers and corporate entities (Oberst, 2018, p.55). Reflecting on the outcomes of Nehru’s five-year plan, Gandhi’s nationalization program failed at fulfilling the original mandate. However, she took a radical, proactive approach to economics by addressing the source of instability—banks and the resource sector—while Nehru took a passive approach by focusing on secondary factors, such as price, quality and location, rather than the economic institutions themselves. Although rash, Gandhi’s policies had greater socio-economic impact since she learnt

from the shortfalls of Nehru's static plans. Under Gandhi's leadership, savings rates increased, and India experienced the lowest inequality rate in all of South-East Asia (Kundu, 2016).

4. Social and Religious Policy Obstacles

Apart from the social welfare sphere of politics, religion and ethnicity were—and continue to be—two major destabilizing factors of Indian politics. Both Prime Ministers recognized the complexities but each of their approaches to combat the tensions in these spheres differed. While Nehru focused on traditional ethnic and social divisions, Gandhi was challenged by a religiously motivated movement. Although neither policies Nehru and Gandhi adopted to alleviate rising social tensions were added to the Constitution, they cast a heavy shadow over Indian democracy.

Enshrined into society, India functions on a caste-based system. Unlike class systems, individuals are inscribed into their castes and cannot move up within this framework. Caste systems organize employment, social interaction, and the moral conduct of some sects of Hinduism under the idea that God formed society to reflect order (Masilimani, n.d.) Nehru was born into the highest caste, the Brahmans, meaning he experienced economic stability, high social status and education, thus directing him into his career path. Following his socialist roots, Nehru tried to dismantle the integral framework India was based on.

In September of 1955, Nehru spoke at a seminar for “Casteism and its removal of Untouchability.” The following is an excerpt of Nehru's perspective on social structure:

“... untouchability is only an extreme form of casteism. From removal of untouchability, it naturally follows that we should put an end to various aspects of casteism, which have weakened and divided our society... from a democratic or socialist point of view, it is

anachronism. From a human point of view, it also wholly undesirable” (Nehru, 2002, p. 228).

Dalits or ‘untouchables’ are the lowest caste within India; they are often employed to do unsanitary work, subject to human rights violations, and face extensive isolation and oppression from higher ranking classes. Nehru realized India could not succeed if a vast population was at the mercy of an ethno-religious social order. Because Dalits had no political voice, meaning the likelihood of a caste uprising was marginal, Nehru understood that change must be sought institutionally. This notion aligns with Fabian ideology that revolutions are not needed to bring about change, but central planning can instead be the core activator of social change. Nehru attempted to criminalize caste inequalities—specifically for the Dalits—on multiple occasions. Unfortunately, no constitutional changes developed as the caste system not only provided religious and social order but also dictated how daily Indian life functioned. However, resolutions within government and educational sectors were implemented to minimize oppression based on their caste (New World Encyclopedia, 2019). Simply, Dalits were granted better access to education and received higher representation in political spheres.

During her first year in office, Gandhi’s core focus was not on the caste system or granting Dalits better access to state resources. Gandhi’s party faced the peak of the 1966 anti-cow slaughter campaign. The cow campaign was a historic movement led by multiple Hindu organizations to ban the killing of cows as they are a sacred, holy figure within Hinduism. When the campaign leaders demanded legislature to make slaughter illegal, Gandhi denied the motion; just like her Father did (Copland, 2014, p. 422). This denial resulted in the peaceful protests quickly turning violent. Curfews were broken, public property destroyed, tear-gas deployed, and

the President of the Congress Party's house was set on fire (Copland, 2014, p. 425). Rioting ceased, resulting in eight deaths, forty-seven wounded, along with two hundred and fifty cars, and ten buses destroyed (Copland, 2014, p. 425).

The primary reason for Gandhi refusing the anti-slaughter campaign was her political ideology. A Hindu herself, Gandhi valued cows, but saw no merit in politicizing Hinduism. Gandhi's India was secular in nature and if she had criminalized killing cattle, she would have risked maintaining the control and status of the Congress party in the 1967 election (Copland, 2014, p. 426). Moreover, socialist secularization was pivotal to her party's platform. Trying to gain favour of the masses, Gandhi, in all her terms in office, would not constitutionalize the anti-cow slaughter campaign.

Neither criminalization of the caste system, nor the cattle campaign under Gandhi's term sought constitutional implementation, however both provide a brief insight to the socio-political sphere of India and the challenges that each leader faced. Although both campaigns were deeply rooted in Hinduism, Nehru's caste dissolution gained more political traction than the religious-based campaign Gandhi faced. While Nehru was granted reservations in the system for Dalits, the cattle campaign only received negative political backlash and riots. Again, Nehru profoundly represented democratic institutions by fighting for equality and growth, while Gandhi resumed a self-interested religious stance to protect her future political career.

5. A Prime Minister's Legacy

Nehru and Gandhi governed India on different sets of principles and goals. The divisiveness of democratic socialism left a lasting legacy on Indian politics. Overall, Nehru's impact on India is

perceived as more positive and beneficial in comparison to his daughters'. Nehru was committed to modernizing Indian nationhood via the four pillars of 'Nehruvian thought:' secularism, socialism, democracy and unity (INC, 2019). Nehru is often considered the father of Indian politics—not only in creating the constitution but in granting minorities equal rights. His charisma attracted the support of the masses that aided individual, communal and state social growth. Seen as courageous and innovative by scholar Zoe Keshap (1964), who claimed that Nehru was “a prince among men and champion of India’s freedom” (p. 35), Keshap, though not incorrect, does not take into account the flaws of his visionary personality. Nehru undeniably struggled with creating a stable economic sector. His five-year plans were too idealistic for Indian society as industry needed to be established before policies *shaping* industry could. However, Nehru remains India’s longest Prime Minister; diligently serving India for 17 years. His death on the 27th May 1964 left India mourning a hero, a legacy asking themselves, “after Nehru, who?” (Copland, 2014, p. 412).

Indians received their answer of ‘who’ when Gandhi took office in 1966. Predominately known for her boldness and radicalism, Gandhi transformed the idea of Indian democratic socialism. Gandhi’s legacy is deemed authoritative in many respects, but mainly because she undermined the very institutions her father established. Her socio-economic policies targeted the poor and won her the support of leftist elites. In comparison to Nehru, her nationalization program was erratic and impetuous yet progressive. She tackled the state’s growing economic discontent by granting all power to the state, only to later abuse this power. The state of emergency declared in 1975 is regarded as the most undemocratic event in Indian history (Masilamani, n.d.). Gandhi’s hegemonic attitude and self-interested motives made her highly

unfavourable among the masses. Under Gandhi, one can argue that Nehru's India, from a constitutional basis, had dissolved and 'Indira's India' was "...not the name of a mere woman but a philosophy which is wedded to the service of [India]" (Parasher, 1984, p. 258). Ultimately, Gandhi's policies and state-wide discontent led to her assassination—which was said to be committed by her own Sikh bodyguards, under Operation Blue Star on the 31st October 1984 (*Indira Gandhi*, 2019).

Conclusion:

Within the first thirty years of independence, the INC, under the authority of Nehru and later Gandhi, shaped India's populist, highly complex political sphere and perception on a global stage. However, differing visions of democratic socialism caused polarization within society, ethics and politics. Nehru, who built all of India's liberal institutions and created the Constitution, believed a stable administration was the key to India's growth. His daughter opposed these established institutions and exercised central authority in hopes to achieve a prosperous India. Nehru established democracy while Gandhi deprived India from experiencing a democratic society. Democracy in India did not die, rather, it went through tribulations, alterations and marginalization before the resurrection of democratic socialism. Nevertheless, the constitutional policies Nehru and Gandhi implemented during their years as Prime Minister aided India to become the world's largest sitting democracy.

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KURDISH INDEPENDENCE RALLY, VANCOUVER (2019)

JASJIT MANKOO

"A rally organized by Kurdish people in downtown Vancouver in support of Kurdish independence following aggression from Turkey in mid-October. Turkey began assaults on Kurdish populated areas within Iraq following US abandonment of their former allies."

Clash of Civilizations

Usama Naeem Toor

Abstract:

This essay analyzes Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis and argues that the theory did not sustain itself in the post-Cold War period. In this theory, Huntington argues that all post-Cold War conflicts will be between civilizations, declaring Islam as the primary challenger to the West. While his theory has sustained itself on some occasions, on most it has failed to live up to its expectations. Contrary to Huntington's predictions, the post-Cold War world has witnessed more intra-civilizational conflicts compared to inter-civilizational, with Islam fighting within itself. On the other hand, Islam's hostility towards the West has not been significant. In fact, many Muslim countries have begun to adopt Western values, even in the face of various Islamist Organizations. The essay concludes with the assertion that while Huntington's theory had components which warranted attention, the argument had significant flaws and deficiencies.

Introduction:

With the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1991, the United States became the dominant power in the world—militarily, politically and economically. The collapse of the Soviet Union meant that the United States was left with no competitor. Renowned political scientist Francis Fukuyama claimed “The End of History”, indicating the clear domination of a Western liberal democratic system with no other alternatives left to challenge it. At the same time, however, another political scientist, Samuel Huntington, offered a different hypothesis of what he believed would dominate the post-Cold War period (Bonney, 2008).

In 1993, Samuel Huntington developed the notion of a “Clash of Civilizations,” claiming that with the demise of the Soviet Union, the ideological conflict between Capitalism and Communism had come to a conclusion. According to him, the new conflict would be between civilizations. Amongst these civilizations, Huntington primarily singled out Islam, and to some extent Confucianism, as the main adversary to the West (Huntington, 1993). Huntington claims that it is not Fundamental Islam that poses a challenge to the West, but Islam itself, as it is incapable of integrating with the Western Liberal system (Huntington, 1996). While Huntington substantiates his theory regarding Islam's hostility towards the West with the various conflicts the Islamic World has appeared to be involved in, his hypothesis, however, seems to contradict what has actually been witnessed in the post-Cold War years. Firstly, since the creation of the theory, Islam has mostly conflicted not with Western powers, but rather with itself, indicating an increase in intra- civilizational conflicts, rather than inter-civilizational. Secondly, by claiming “Islam” to be the inherent enemy of the Western system, Huntington carelessly holds a large, diverse Muslim

population as being anti-Western, even those allied with and welcoming of Western norms and values.

Clash of Civilizations:

Before commencing with the critique, it is essential to understand the theory itself. Huntington first introduced the theory in his 1993 journal article, the “Clash of Civilizations”, which was transformed into a book in 1996 and renamed *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Bottici & Challand, 2010). The central component of the theory was that conflicts in the modern era were no longer to be based on ideological grounds, but rather on cultural grounds, between civilizations (Huntington, 1993).

Any next world war, Huntington claimed, if it were ever to transpire, would be between civilizations. Declaring that Islam has “bloody borders,” Huntington's suspicion of Islam as an adversary to Western dominance appears to be clear (Huntington, 1993). However, what generated more provocation appeared in his 1996 book, where Huntington argues that “the underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power” (Huntington, 1996). With such an argument, Huntington claims that the Islamic system is inherently against Western values and systems. As long as Islam exists, he asserts, conflict with the West will prevail (Chiozza, 2002).

Increase in Inter-Civilizational Conflict:

Huntington's core argument in the *Clash of Civilizations* is that conflicts in the post-Cold War world would be inter-civilizational and not intra-civilizational. Coupled with his wariness around Islam, the conflict between the West and Islam is propagated in his hypothesis (Chiozza, 2002). Huntington supports his claims using the examples of Former Yugoslavia and the Gulf War, citing how Bosnian Muslims were supported by the Muslim World and how Muslims applauded Saddam Hussain as the champion of the Arab World when confronting America (Huntington, 1993). However, Huntington's arguments have been critiqued by many scholars. Vjekoslav Perica, an authority on the breakup of Yugoslavia, claims that it was not religion in Yugoslavia that led to its breakup, but rather religious institutions that failed to give allegiance to Post-Tito regimes (Bonney, 2008). For the Gulf War, a majority of scholars argue that the conflict originated as an intra-civilizational conflict between the Muslim-majority countries of Iraq and Kuwait, and remained as one even after the support of non-Muslim countries like Israel and the United States, due to the support of other Muslim countries, such as Saudi Arabia with Kuwait. Some scholars argue that in claiming the Gulf War as evidence of a "Clash of Civilizations", one agrees with Fundamental Islamists such as Osama Bin Laden (Bonney, 2008).

Contrary to Huntington's prediction of an increase in inter-civilizational conflict between the West and Islam in the post-Cold War period, many studies indicate that the number and depth of such conflicts have actually decreased since the Cold War. Investigating militarized interstate disputes between 1950 to 1992, Russett et al. (2000) claimed that inter-civilizational conflicts declined as a result of the end of the Cold War. Another study on violent domestic conflict by Professor Jonathan Fox

(2003), observed that from 1985 to 1998 intra-civilizational conflicts were more likely than inter-civilizational conflicts. Fox further claimed that violent engagement of Muslims is more likely to be with their fellow Muslims than members of other religions or civilizations, thus providing evidence that inter-civilizational conflicts are less likely to occur (Hansen, Mesøy & Kardas, 2009). This trajectory has proven correct in the case of various Fundamentalist Islamist Organizations such as the Al-Qaeda during the first decade of the 21st century and ISIS in the second.

With the events of 9/11 and subsequent American invasion of the Middle East, Al-Qaeda seemed to progress much closer to its task of reigniting the flames of conflict between Islam and the West (Heck, 2007). While observers may claim that Al-Qaeda and 9/11 are symbols of a civilizational clash, one must remember that the majority of Al-Qaeda's terrorist, and in some cases insurgent, activities were actually conducted in Muslim countries. Fox (2005) claims that in the post-9/11 world, Al-Qaeda has overwhelmingly engaged with Muslims and Muslim states, with plans to replace the current regimes in Muslim countries. After Saddam Hussain's fall, the Iraqi insurgency involved various Islamist groups, such as the Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), engaged against the American-backed government (Tosini, 2010). Interestingly, more Muslims were targeted by these Islamist organizations than occupying forces were targeted. From 2003 to 2008, attacks mounted by insurgent groups resulted in 12,447 to 13,403 casualties, involving mostly Iraqis (Tosini, 2010). Another important aspect to note is that most of the civilians killed as a result of AQI's bombing were from the Shi'ite community (Tosini, 2010). This calls into question the concept of civilization itself and how Huntington views the Islamic world as a singular civilization, when in reality, it is divided into groups such as Shi'ites and Sunnis.

In contemporary times, Iraq and Syria face the dilemma of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Though ISIS has claimed responsibilities for various attacks in the Western world, such as Paris in 2015 and Brussels in 2016 (Cruickshank, 2017), its activities, just like Al-Qaeda, are mostly concentrated in Muslim-majority states. In Iraq, between 2014 and 2015, about 18,802 civilians were killed by ISIS according to the United Nations ("Staggering civilian death toll in Iraq – UN report", 2016).

With various conflicts continuing in the Middle East, it is doubtful that Huntington's forecast of Islam uniting against the West will be realized in the near future. Even with the conclusion of the Syrian Civil War and the Iraqi insurgency, it would still not be enough to unify the Muslim-majority states in the Middle East. Rivalry between the Sunni-majority Saudi Arabia and the Shia-majority Iran is likely to continue into the coming decades.

Islam towards the West:

While one could agree that contemporary attacks involving Fundamental Islamist Organizations such as ISIS and Boko Haram on the West and Christians, respectively, provide support to Huntington's theory, the magnitude at which he places the incompatibility of Islam with the West is too broad. Huntington claims that the "underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam." (Huntington, 1996). By claiming Islam to be the root problem, Huntington renders more than a billion people to be an enemy of Western values and systems; a rather broad generalization. By framing it as such, he places Islam as being at odds with

the West, and in support of militant organizations like Al-Qaeda who reject Western ideas and thoughts.

Since the events of 9/11, various terrorist organizations, such as Al-Qaeda, have worked as aggressors against the West. In 1998, Bin Laden claimed that the West, a threat to Islam that must be eliminated, had become vulnerable, and that it was the perfect moment to attack its dominance (Heck, 2007). For such a huge endeavour, Bin Laden expected support from Muslims around the world. However, support for such organizations has not been strong (Heck, 2007). Contrary to Bin Laden's hopes, the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) was at the forefront in denouncing the barbarities committed by the Islamist organization. Moreover, after 9/11, the OIC made various efforts to mediate between Islamist Organizations and the United States, going as far as to request the handover of Osama Bin Laden (Rehman, 2005). This support indicates that Muslim attitudes towards Islamic terrorism was hostile and on the issue of Islamic aggression against the West, it supported the West.

Huntington had claimed that Islam was "a religion of the sword" and Islamist Organizations like Bin Laden's Al-Qaeda effectively confirmed his narrative (Huntington, 1996). However, the OIC, which represents various Muslim countries, overwhelmingly condemned the atrocities committed by the Al-Qaeda and even offered help in return. Another indicator of Islam's rejection of Islamic extremism can be seen by the fact that Pakistan was able to run its anti-militant campaign very effectively, in a country where Islam is one of its core values (Novak, 2004).

Islamist Organizations, like Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, present no desire for reformation or accommodation for new ideas, which displays a grim future to Muslims under Islamist rule (Adib-

Moghaddam, 2011). Because of their resistance to reform, these organizations have drawn criticism from Muslim-majority states, and Muslims in general, for the adverse conditions of people, just as the Taliban received for Afghanistan (Novak, 2004). Similarly, in Iran, where a fully-fledged Islamist government operates, the diminishing standard of living for people is moving people away from the concept of religion in politics and towards the notion of Secularism; a Western ideal (Hunter, 1998).

Other aspects of what are considered Western values have gained prominence in the Muslim World. A poll conducted by YouGov in April 2003 suggested that only around 40% of Iraqis believed that there were chances for American or British-style democracy succeeding in Iraq (Basham, 2003). On this point, Michael Noval, in his book *The Universal Hunger for Liberty*, argued that experience with elections would soon surely increase support for democracy in Iraq (Novak, 2004). And, indeed, his prediction has proven quite right. In 2018, Iraq held elections with 6,990 candidates from 87 parties, of which 25% per cent of seats were reserved for 2,011 women, showcasing not only democracy in the country but also an increase in civil liberties (Ibrahim, 2018).

Huntington had claimed that Islamic values were incompatible with the West, even to the extent that its adherents strove to protect themselves from its temptations and allures (Huntington, 1996). However, contrary to his belief, Islam saw its resurgence by adopting various Western ideas. Governments led by Islamists such as Iran and the Taliban saw its people adhere and ask for Western ideals and values. Even in Iraq, where people had their opposition and hatred towards Western democracies for overthrowing their leaders, Western values gained prominence with time. In 2011, various Muslim-majority countries would struggle to overthrow dictators

and call for democracy and other democratic values; events which came to be known as the Arab Spring (Whitaker, 2011).

Counter-Argument:

In his 1993 journal article, Huntington claimed that Islam has “bloody borders,” a statement which he supported by the fact that in the West, Islam is engaged in the Balkans with the Serbians; while in the East, it is engaged in the Philippines with the Catholics (Huntington, 1993). Though his statement received much criticism, he pointed towards various trends in the Muslim World that appeared as a result of the demise of the Cold War. The most prominent of these is what Huntington describes as the “Islamic Resurgence” (Huntington, 1996).

Since the end of the Cold War, the West has had to deal with the phenomena of International Islamic Terrorism, perpetrated by organizations such as the Al-Qaeda, and in recent times, ISIS. While it is correct to claim that the Al-Qaeda did not receive as much support from Muslim countries as they had hoped for, the organization still exercised much influence. According to a poll conducted by the Pew Research Centre in 2003, in the aftermath of the 9/11, people in the Muslim countries of Morocco, Indonesia, Pakistan, Palestinian Authority and Jordan considered Bin Laden as one of the top leaders understood to make correct judgments. Similarly, another poll conducted in the same year showed that only 1% of Jordanians and Palestinians had a pro-American view (Cox, Falconer & Stackhouse, 2009). One of the main reasons for such massive support for Al-Qaeda and Bin Laden was due to their significant and alluring

ambitions. Bin Laden's Pan-Islamist ideology attracted people because he wanted to revive the glory of the once-powerful Ottoman Empire (Burnell, Rakner & Randall, 2017). Support for such an endeavour was readily granted by the Muslims who felt as if the West dominated them. This domination was apparent as Western countries exercised great influence and strength in inter-governmental organizations such as the United Nations, the IMF, and the World Bank. Moreover, with the illegal invasion of Iraq, which was condemned by even the United Nations Secretary- General (Straus & Driscoll, 2018), insecurity and grievances were established. In such a scenario, a prevailing Muslim opinion became one that claimed that the West saw its domination and development through the submission of Muslim governments to Western powers (Hunter, 1998). Such narratives supported Al-Qaeda's ambitions of removing non-Islamic Leaders (Burnell, Rakner & Randall, 2017).

In recent times, however, the fear and intimidation of Al-Qaeda has been replaced by another organization— ISIS. ISIS came into prominence in 2014 when its leader, Abu-Baker Al Baghdadi announced his Caliphate in Iraq (Karam, 2019). Since then, ISIS has been able to gain a credible amount of recruitment amongst Muslims, a substantial number of which has come from foreign lands. In 2014, an assessment by the CIA claimed that around 15,000 people have joined ISIS, with 2,000 of them being from the West (Sciutto, 2014). By another measure, as of December 2015, around 30,000 people, both Muslim and Non- Muslims, have travelled to enlist for ISIS, from 85 countries. Amongst the prominent Western countries are France with 1700, U.K with 760 and Belgium with 470 recruits (Benmelech & Klor, 2016).

To understand the reasons for such persuasions, we must acknowledge what ISIS has to offer. Against the Western model of democracy presented by Americans to Iraqis, and to an

extent the secular dictatorship in Syria, ISIS offers an Islamic version of a utopian state where people are governed under strict Shariah Law and where universal rights and regulations (deemed as Western) are not heeded (Stern, 2016). As an offshoot of Al-Qaeda, this motivation more or less comes in line to what Bin Laden intended to achieve. The main agenda of ISIS remains to lift Muslims from the humiliation that they face at the hands of the West, which explains the roots of ISIS found in the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The imposition of democracy, or Western values, and its subsequent failure, gives weight to the argument made by ISIS of the West's control and domination over Muslims (Stern, 2016). Similar to Al-Qaeda, while ISIS maintains its conflict in Iraq and Syria, it has also conducted various terrorist acts in the West, the most prominent being the 2016 Brussels and 2015 Paris attacks (Cruickshank, 2017).

Conclusion:

Just like all theories and predictions, Huntington's Clash of Civilizations was bound to have its strengths and weaknesses. Amongst the various civilizations prophesied as coming into clash with the West, his attention towards Islam might have its credibility. Considering the contemporary world, it is not hard to observe that Islam seems the most conflicting of all the "civilizations," as prophesized by Huntington (1996). Islamic resurgence has allowed for various Islamic fundamentalist organizations to counter Western values and system.

However, as is being seen in the Middle East, the greatest threat that Muslims face is not the assumed Western imperialism but rather fundamentalist organizations in their own society, such as

ISIS in the Middle East and the Taliban in Afghanistan. Adding more, the rejection of Western ideals by Islam, as Huntington puts it, is not due to incompatibility, but rather due to the way these Western elements are implemented. It must be noted that the broad generalizations made by Huntington make the subject of analysis too large. Nevertheless, Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* makes a remarkable counter-argument to the euphoria of the Western political scientists, in which they argued that the end of the Cold War meant Western domination. What has occurred instead is that the world has simply moved from one phase of struggle to another; there is no "End of History."

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Partner or Predator?
An Analysis of Burgeoning Sino-African Relations

Hannah Christensen

Introduction:

Traditional, asymmetric, neo-colonialist relationships between African nations and their former colonizers have remained largely undisturbed since their establishment in the decolonization period of the 1960s. With the exponentially increasing activity of China in Africa since the 1990s, this long-standing status quo has finally been challenged. Since the beginning of China's return to Africa, the academic debate has circled around the controversies of China's actions on the continent, with many scholars and political figures decrying the trend as neo-colonialist. Others, however, have countered this argument, stating that it is hypocritical, or lacking in substance. To this end, this paper aims to crystallize the definition of neo-colonialism in this controversial academic debate by returning to the term's original popularization by Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah in 1965. This paper will create a new conceptual framework to apply this re-centered definition to the modern trend in Sino-African relations. Using this framework, this paper shows that China's latest foray into Africa is in line with Nkrumah's original description of neo-colonialism, though it argues that in some cases this may still be an improvement from the status quo. Following in the footsteps of the Beijing Model of development, I argue that this new evolution in Sino-African relations will result in a stronger prioritization of economic rights over political rights, and while it might result in economic benefits in some cases, it will also likely result in a move away from democracy globally.

This paper is organised as follows. First, I review the current literature in academic debates over the nature of Sino-African relations, analysing debates based on the three schools of thought first outlined by Simplice A. Asongu (2016, p. 354): optimistic; pessimistic; and

accommodative. I then develop a conceptual framework for the operationalised definition neo-colonialism, based heavily on Kwame Nkrumah's 1965 work, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, and broken into three facets: economic neo-colonialism; political neo-colonialism; and cultural neo-colonialism. This conceptual framework will then be applied to modern Sino-African relations to better understand the nature and complexities of recent trends in China's increased involvement on the African continent.

Literature Review:

Existing literature on the nature of Sino-African relations is very divided. This paper splits arguments over modern Sino-African relations into two distinct questions: to what extent is the current Sino-African relationship neo-colonialist? Secondly, is the recent trend in increased Sino-African relations beneficial to Africa as a whole? As it stands, existing debates can be split into three dominant schools of thought which scholar Simplice Asongu terms 'pessimistic', 'optimistic', and 'accommodative' (2016, p. 354).

The pessimistic school of thought presents a view that China's engagement in Africa is a threat to Africa (Naím, 2007, p.95) and to the longstanding Western hegemony on the continent (Campbell, 2008, p.89). Pessimistic arguments include criticisms of the economic, cultural, and political elements of China's involvement in Africa. Giovannetti and Sanfilippo (2009) present their argument from an economic standpoint, stating that China's exports are flooding Africa's markets and crowding out local goods, leaving African industries even more vulnerable (p. 506),

while Breslin and Taylor (2008) argue that increased Sino-African economic relations export human rights violations as well (p. 59). The pessimistic school of thought labels China's increased trend in providing aid as 'rogue aid', coined and defined by Moisés Naím as "development assistance that is nondemocratic in origin and nontransparent in practice" (p. 95), implemented with the goal of undermining the attempts of Western conditional aid to foster political reform (Campbell, 2008, p. 92-93). Scholars of the pessimistic school believe that China is not acting as an alternative for African development, but rather as another self-interested global power whose priorities are its own advancement, and if needed, would place its economic needs above the humanitarian needs of African peoples to do so (Campbell, 2008, p. 99; Mason, 2017, p. 84).

On the other hand, the optimistic school of thought believes that the modern Sino-African relationship is a mutually beneficial partnership, providing African nations with an attractive alternative to Western hegemony (Power & Mohan, 2010, p. 462). These scholars cite evidence such as China's non-conditional 'no-strings-attached' aid, debt cancellations, infrastructure projects, and historical lack of participation in the Transatlantic Slave Trade or colonialism to present it in a positive light (Tull, 2006, p. 459; Zhao, 2014, p. 1034). The optimistic school accuses the pessimistic school of having a "one-sided interpretation of global order, in that Western dominance is seen as progressive and thus the only form of hegemony that matters historically and normatively" (Hirono & Suzuki, 2014, p. 451). Dean Coslovi even notes that it is "precisely because China's cultural and political values differ from those of the West that it is has been so readily received by nations of the developing world" (2018, p. 201). A large focus of the optimistic school is the hypocrisy of Western authors and politicians decrying China's

involvement in Africa, given the negative track record of the United States and European countries in Africa.

Finally, the accommodative school of thought exists somewhere in between the two schools of thought above. It argues that this new nexus of Sino-African relations is a historical evolution (Alden & Alves, 2008, p. 43), and since African nations have no alternatives besides following the West or China, they must accommodate this new realm of globalization (Asongu & Aminkeng, 2013, p. 261). The accommodative school does not necessarily believe that China's involvement in Africa is of equal mutual benefit to both parties, but rather that it is a blend of imperialism and a new model of development from which African nations may truly benefit (Ovadia, 2013, p. 233). Even though China may be engaging in neo-colonialist practices, the accommodative school believes a developing nation may still find ways to benefit from an exploitative relationship, even if the situation is not ideal (Rich & Recker, 2013, p. 66).

Neo-Colonialism Conceptual Framework:

Since the beginning of the post-colonial period, descriptions of the way former colonial powers have maintained control over newly independent states through 'neo-colonialism' have circulated without much consensus on a concise, operationalized definition. Given that Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah's 1965 work, *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism*, originally popularized the term, this paper will operationalize a definition of neo-colonialism

covering the descriptions and caveats given by Nkrumah of the new phenomenon he observed overtaking the developing world in the 1960s.

Neo-colonialism is a method of achieving the same benefits from the exploitation of developing countries that were previously achieved through colonialism (Nkrumah, 1965, para. 19). Neo-colonialism occurs through the use of economic, political, and cultural means to influence or control a dependent, although outwardly independent, country (Nkrumah, 1965, para. 2). While neo-colonialism may have the same goal as colonialism did before it, securing benefits for the colonial power at the expense of the colony, the difference is in the mechanism. Whereas colonial powers previously used their military as a means to conquer territories, neo-colonial powers must respect the nominal independence of the territories over which it intends to exercise control. Whereas colonialism was able to be overt in its intentions, neo-colonialism must be subtle and covert. As a result, economic, political, and cultural neo-colonialism are deployed against developing nations, however economic neo-colonialism is most frequently the weapon of choice. Therefore, we must differentiate the kinds of neo-colonialism not in terms of their content, but rather in terms of their purpose, whether they hope to influence the economic, political, or cultural structure of the targeted country.

Concept: Economic neo-colonialism:

A neo-colonialist power aims to maximize their economic benefits in their relationship with a neo-colonized nation. This can be accomplished through high levels of trade of cheaper

natural resources and primary products from the neo-colonized nation and expensive, manufactured products from the neo-colonialist nation (Nkrumah, 1965, para. 3). Tied aid is frequently used to exercise economic neo-colonialism, where developed nations, historically Western states, offer aid programmes in exchange for that aid being used to purchase products from the donor country (Nkrumah, 1965, para. 24).

Aid is often used as a method to ensure the continued dependency of a neo-colonized nation on the donor. Rather than fulfilling the stated purpose of assisting in development until the neo-colonized country becomes more self-sustaining, aid programmes have acted largely to keep neo-colonized countries dependent and stagnant. Nkrumah details this paradox in his book. Neo-colonialism is the victim of its own contradictions. In order to make it attractive to those upon whom it is practiced it must be shown as capable of raising their living standards, but the economic objective of neo-colonialism is to keep those standards depressed in the interest of the developed countries. It is only when this contradiction is understood that the failure of innumerable 'aid' programmes, many of them well intentioned, can be explained. (Nkrumah, 1965, para. 24).

Capital from developed countries enter Africa's markets and countries in different forms, from foreign direct investment (FDI), to Official Development Assistance (ODA). In this complex environment, it is necessary to determine the motivation of the aid in order to determine its purpose. For example, tied aid, mentioned above, acts as a "revolving credit, paid by the

colonial master, passing through the neo-colonial State and returning to the neo-colonial masters in the form of increased profits” (Nkrumah, 1965, para. 25). This kind of aid serves not only to gain profits from the neo-colonized country, but also to develop a trade monopoly in that country, and by extension, a sphere of influence.

Concept: Political neo-colonialism:

By political means, a neo-colonialist power aims to gain political benefits or further control over a neo-colonized country’s political structure. This can involve the placement of advisors in strategic positions in a neo-colonized country’s government, interference in a country’s political system to the benefit of a chosen political leader, or more military means, such as agreements for military bases or troops stationed in a neo-colonized country (Nkrumah, 1965, para. 84). To obtain these political benefits a neo-colonialist power may intervene directly in a neo-colonized country’s political system or use economic incentives to gain political benefits. The use of an economic incentive does not necessarily mean that this should be termed economic neo-colonialism, as there are cases where economic incentives may be used to achieve political gains. Conditional aid is a prime example of this, as while the neo-colonized nation may be offered economic aid as part of the exchange, the conditions attached to this kind of aid are generally political in nature. The most common example of this kind of conditional aid is the International Monetary Fund’s Structural Adjustment Program, which provided aid in exchange for democratic reforms and the liberalization of a country’s market.

Another goal of political neo-colonialism may be the creation of a bloc on the international stage. Nkrumah uses the example of the spread and containment of opposing camps in the Cold War. In his book, he states that neo-colonialism allows great powers to “export the social conflicts” of their countries (Nkrumah, 1965, para. 13). In the 1960s, huge swaths of previously colonized territories suddenly opened up as new ideological battlegrounds between external powers. As a result, these great powers used economic and military aid in an attempt to gain control over these territories, partly out of fear of the threat that their rival would do so first. A more modern example can be observed in the structure of the United Nations General Assembly, where each country has a vote and the support of a large bloc of countries such as the African Regional Group, which includes over 50 UN member states, can be crucial in ensuring support for measures to a given great power’s benefit. In conclusion, political neo-colonialism is the use of political or economic incentives to bolster a neo-colonialist state’s political interests abroad, generally against a rival state, or sometimes a more generalized ideological adversary.

Concept: Cultural neo-colonialism:

By cultural means, a neo-colonialist power aims to create a one-way cultural exchange and therefore sphere of influence over the neo-colonized nation in order to create a like-minded bloc to promote the neo-colonialist nation’s goals on the global stage. Cultural neo-colonialism can be seen as a subsidiary to political neo-colonialism as the two are closely tied. In macroscopic terms, the goals of cultural neo-colonialism are largely to reinforce the success of

political neo-colonialism. If the general public of a neo-colonized country tends to agree with the values of a great power, then it is more likely that their political goals will align. The key difference between political and cultural neo-colonialism is the target audience, as political neo-colonialism aims to directly influence the state's government, while cultural neo-colonialism is aimed at the public of the neo-colonized state.

The key component of cultural neo-colonialism is that the exchange of values is strictly one way. Elements of cultural neo-colonialism could include cinema, media, news publications, ideologies, values, religions, ideas, and notably, propaganda. Kwame Nkrumah cites the United States Information Agency (USIA) as a clear example of cultural neo-colonialism, which he terms "psychological warfare". In the 1960s, the USIA could be found in around 120 branches in 100 countries, half of which were housed in Africa. It developed cinemas, libraries, radio programmes, newspapers, and magazines (Nkrumah, 1965, para. 89-104). As Nkrumah describes, their content "glorifies the U.S. while attempting to discredit countries with an independent foreign policy...in developing countries, the USIA actively tries to prevent expansion of national media of information so as itself to capture the market-place of ideas" (Nkrumah, 1965, para. 98). However, in this example, American values and culture could make their way into the everyday life of a given African country, the inverse is not the case.

The next section will analyze whether China is currently practicing any or all of the three branches of neo-colonialism: economic; political; or cultural.

Analysis: Economic neo-colonialism:

While aid originating from OECD member states has been stagnant or declining recently, China has been essential in enabling African countries to close gaps in funding (Zhao, 2014, p. 1037-1038). In terms of trade, raw materials are undeniably high on China's priority list in Africa, as exemplified by their most important trading partners being resource-rich countries, mainly oil producers (Tull, 2006, p. 465). Many of these countries enjoy trade surpluses with China, such as Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of Congo, and Angola, while countries with trade deficits with China are generally lacking in natural resources, such as Benin, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, and Morocco (Chen, 2016, p. 103).

Although it is evident that Sino-African trade depends greatly on raw materials, is not apparent whether Chinese engagement on the continent is substantially different from Western involvement, or whether it will lead to development (Tull, 2006, p. 471; Chen, 2016, p. 103). Chinese involvement in Africa has heavily featured concessionary loans, which are often used to finance large Chinese-owned infrastructure projects, and frequently paid back with raw materials (Zhao, 2014, p. 1038). Chinese trade with Africa has not reduced Africa's dependence on primary goods, such as oil, copper, ore, timber, and minerals, and China is often accused by Western scholars and politicians of dumping manufactured goods, such as textiles, into Africa in its place. There is a large discrepancy between Chinese imports from Africa and Chinese exports to Africa, especially in recent years, with the largest disparity being in 2015, when Chinese exports to Africa totaled 150.4 billion USD, over 388% higher than the value of its imports from Africa (CARI, 2019). This trend is causing fear that China will simply procure the resources it

needs to develop while African economies will dry up without the natural resources to fuel their own development (Tull, 2006, p. 471; Zhao, 2014, p. 1042-1043). Dumping manufactured goods into the neo-colonized nation while extracting its primary goods is at the heart of a core-periphery style relationship, which is exactly how Nkrumah describes a neo-colonialist dynamic (1965, para. 21).

China's involvement in Africa also takes advantage of Western policies towards Africa in order to maximize its own economic benefits. Moisés Naím coined the term 'rogue aid' to describe China's non-conditional aid to authoritarian regimes, namely Sudan and Zimbabwe (2007, p. 95). China is not only the biggest importer of Sudanese oil but a major weapons supplier to the Sudanese government and militias fighting against rebels in the Darfur region (Zhao, 2014, p. 1039). In 2008, China vetoed sanctions against the Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe's reign, aiding Chinese companies to secure deals in mining, defense, aviation, and agriculture (Zhao, 2014, p. 1040). Rogue aid allows China to circumvent competition over resources in a sanctioned area. To Beijing, this is a "highly advantageous status quo" (Tull, 2006, p. 470). From a Western perspective, however, this development is extremely concerning as it undercuts the threat of Western sanctions. China's investment without an added policy changes clause, makes the offer of Western investment a less enticing 'carrot' to effect positive change surrounding human rights violations under this regime (Hirono & Suzuki, 2014, p. 447)

China's indifference towards civil wars and human rights violations in the name of non-interference allows it to access territories that the West has closed off. Additionally, this indifference could also be seen as an indicator of China's short-term strategy on the continent. If China intended to secure long-term trading partners, then concern over what effects a civil war

could have on its access to natural resources would be higher. However, if China is focusing on short-term rewards, then “investment in Africa should be directed more at resource extraction and quick profits than sustainability” (Rich & Recker, 2013, p. 62).

Another area in which Chinese companies appear to be taking advantage of African economies for short-term gain is in their exploitation of Western strategies for African development, such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The purpose of the AGOA is to give some African states preferential access to American markets, while the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing was created to protect European and American markets from cheap imports from Asia (Tull, 2006, p. 471; Campbell, 2008, p. 91). The combined effect of the AGOA and the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing saw the rise of Chinese textile companies in many southern and eastern African countries such as South Africa, Kenya, and Lesotho, as manufacturers hoped to lower labor costs and find easier export routes to American markets (Zhao, 2014, p. 1046; Tull, 2006, p. 471-472). However, when the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing expired in 2005 and restrictions on Asian textiles were removed, the African textile boom quickly crashed as Chinese companies immediately began moving back to China (Tull, 2006, p. 472). Once these companies were no longer able to exploit the benefits of American and European development programs, they became uninterested in continuing to invest in their respective communities.

The most recent trend in the Sino-African economic relationship has been the inclusion of several African countries in the ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and the concerns over the possibility that China is setting so-called ‘debt traps’ across the developing world

(Chellaney, 2017). It is too soon to say what the future of these large infrastructure projects will be – debt trap or not – especially with the added stress and uncertainty of economic crises caused by ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Regardless, the mounting debt owed by African nations to China is reaching mountainous levels, making it concerning no matter the creditor in question (Moore, 2018, para. 6).

China's economic relationship with Africa has not changed the reliance of most countries on export raw materials, suggesting a lack of development towards manufacturing or service industries. On the other hand, China has managed to use Africa to its own advantage, particularly by working around Western policies designed to develop the continent, such as the AGOA or sanctions against regimes such as those in Sudan and Zimbabwe. The status quo in Africa has been extremely beneficial to China, and less so to African countries themselves.

Analysis: Political neo-colonialism:

China's ventures into Africa have always been fueled not only by economic interests, but political ones. When the People's Republic of China (PRC) first engaged with African states, it was with the goal of undoing the spell of isolation placed on it by the West, and advancing the One China Policy's competition for diplomatic recognition with Taiwan (Hirono & Suzuki, 2014, p. 443; Rich & Recker, 2013, p. 63). This policy succeeded in bringing the PRC to the world stage, as African countries were instrumental in making the PRC a member state of the UN and the UN Security Council (Coslovi, 2018, p. 196). Similarly, when China returned to

Africa in the 1990s, it was a result of being cut off from the rest of the developed world after the Tiananmen Square Massacre (Taylor, 1998, p. 447). In these ways, China established a tradition of using economic incentives to gain political benefits on the African continent.

While military involvement is usually associated with colonialism rather than neo-colonialism, military benefits allow a neo-colonialist country to extend its influence in an area and they therefore, as Nkrumah sees it, fall under the umbrella of political benefits (Nkrumah, 1965). To that end, China has slowly begun to include military involvement in its Africa Policy. China has been militarily involved in Africa with a strong peacekeeping presence and a naval force off the coast of the Horn of Africa to fight Somali pirates (Chen, 2016, p. 106-107; Tull, 2006, p. 475). In 2017, China opened its first overseas military base in Djibouti to support this effort, even though opening an overseas base was something they had repeatedly claimed they would never do (Brautigam, 2020, p. 4). If rumors of future bases in the Seychelles, Kenya, Tanzania, Namibia, Angola, and Nigeria come to fruition, this should be seen as an extremely important trend, and an attempt by China to extend control over Africa as a sphere of influence (Chen, 2016, p. 106-107).

In the past, China has used economic and military aid to secure the leaders it preferred in newly independent African countries by tying their independence struggles with larger, socialist, anti-imperialist struggles. It also used non-conditional aid to secure its sphere of influence and advance the One China Policy, culminating in the 1971 UN General Assembly vote which admitted China into the United Nations (Coslovi, 2018, p. 196). Today, China continues its use of non-conditional aid to present itself as an attractive alternative to Western development and

inspire popularity of its Beijing Model. 2017 marked a large step forward in terms of expanding their sphere of influence as China opened its first overseas military base in Djibouti.

Analysis: Cultural neo-colonialism:

In cultural terms, Beijing is rapidly expanding its outreach to African peoples. This includes a network of Chinese media outlets, training programs, language classes, and cultural centers (Zhao, 2014, p. 1037). The success of these policies is clear as across the continent public opinion has shifted away from the West and towards the Chinese alternative (Moyo, 2010, para. 28-29). Surveys such as the Afrobarometer consistently find that critical opinions of China are outnumbered in almost every African country by two to one, and that China is “almost universally viewed as having a more beneficial impact on African countries than does the United States” (Moyo, 2010, para. 28-29). Rhetoric of South-South cooperation has reinforced the idea that China and Africa share similar values such as non-interference and mutual benefit, allowing China to spin Western criticism of Chinese behavior as trying to intervene in and impede Chinese and African development (Alden & Alves, 2008, p. 47-52).

There is clear evidence that the Sino-African cultural exchange is very one-sided. While African students take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the cheaper alternative to American or British schools that China offers, even Chinese workers and officials in Africa do not seem to take initiative in a two-way cultural exchange (Zhao, 2014, p. 1037). Chinese workers in Africa tend to isolate themselves from the local populations, and therefore have no

“incentives or opportunities to learn about local languages and cultures” (Zhao, 2014, p. 1044). As for Chinese officials, even those espousing the benefits of cultural exchanges have trouble following through. For example, when President Hu paid a visit to Mauritius in 2009, his rhetorical focus was on cultural exchange (Zhao, 2014, p. 1044). However, instead of engaging in or attempting to learn about Mauritian culture, Hu visited a Chinese cultural center and spoke of the benefits of “what Africans can learn from China and Chinese culture” (Zhao, 2014, p.1044). This shows that China is clearly only interested in injecting its culture and values into African countries, and not learning about diverse African cultures and values. While espousing a South-South relationship, China clearly has a very specific view of who should be leading this dynamic.

Conclusion:

While the Sino-African relationship may not represent cooperation with Africa, in the context of a competition between Western powers and China over influence on the continent, it presents an alternative development model for Africa. China’s involvement has not greatly changed Africa’s dependence on the export of primary goods, however the optics of a cooperative South-South relationship, non-conditional aid, and infrastructure projects allow China to present itself as an attractive alternative to Western conditional aid. As a result, China’s involvement in Africa may not be seen as wholly positive, but simply better than the alternative. By providing a marginal improvement in the standard of living, or at least having the optics of

doing so, China is able to present its Beijing Model as the correct path forward for African development, and it seems this is taking hold. This paper argues that there is clear evidence China is practicing economic, political, and cultural neo-colonialism in its modern relationship with Africa, based on Kwame Nkrumah's 1965 definition. With the added uncertainties of the future of the Belt and Road Initiative in Africa, the possibility of debt traps, as well as the far-reaching consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, what remains to be seen is whether China's neo-colonialism will be better or worse for Africa than Western neo-colonialism.

What can be said with some degree of certainty is that if African political leaders move towards a Beijing Model of development, it will result in important consequences for the strength of Western notions of democracy that have been promoted in Africa since the decolonization period. If the correct way forward for development follows the footsteps of the Beijing Model, rather than the Washington Consensus, democratic ideals and political rights will undeniably take a backseat across the developing world.

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The Secular Republic of Pakistan

Harry Deng

Prior to British colonial rule, there was a general trend by the (Muslim) Mughal Empire to integrate Hindus into civil and military administrations in India. They also actively sought to bridge any religious divide and to create a more coherent society through matrimony. However, with the onset of the British Raj, this generally harmonious existence started to fade away. The British believed Muslims and Hindus were naturally separate nations and thus proceeded to create separate electorates based on sectarian lines. Due to this Two-Nation theory, along with the fear of Hindu domination, Muslims began to champion the idea of a separate Muslim majority nation state in northwest and northeast India. With the partition of British India in 1947, this became a reality. Pakistan came into existence based on the notion of being the Muslim homeland in South Asia.

However, in this paper I argue that even though the Islamic Republic of Pakistan was created as a nation for Muslims, and for a moment in their history reached Islamism, it was never an Islamic state. Instead, Pakistan has always been secular. The word, ‘secular,’ is often simplified to mean the separation of religion and state, however, while this definition is not incorrect, it lacks the necessary nuance – which I discuss in this paper. Thus, this essay explores several ideas: one, what secularism actually implies; two, the concepts of Islamism and post-Islamism; and finally, the development of Pakistan’s political institutions in relation to Islam– therefore providing evidence of the secular nature of the Pakistani state.

Demystifying Secularism and Laying the Groundwork:

Whether secularism is a jealous ideology – a systemic black hole that sucks everything coming close to it – or a benign political concept that contends itself with the separation between religion and state is a proposition contingent on the viewers’ conditioning. Like the proverbial three blind men and the elephant, it carries different shades of meaning to its “believers (Jan, 2003, p. 3).

For most western nations, the term, ‘secularism,’ is often simplified to the notion of a separation of church and state. France, on the other hand, has a much more concrete definition of secularism vis-à-vis the doctrine of *Laïcité*, which literally translates to ‘secularity.’ The *Laïcité* version of secularism is the closest version of secularism we get to anti-theism. According to this doctrine, French politicians and state institutions are highly discouraged from making religious remarks and are prohibited from officially recognizing any forms of religion.

So, what exactly is secularism? Is it the passive version of secularism we have here in North America in which religious identities are an integral part of the political sphere and where American presidents finish important speeches off with the phrase, “may God bless the United States of America”? Or is it the hard-line *Laïcité* version where religion is explicitly rejected from the public sphere? Or is it somewhere in between these two notions? The best answer to this question is that they are both correct. The best way to understand this notion is to view it as a spectrum of the role religion

should play in the public sphere. In Western liberal democracies, passive secularism and *Laïcité* secularism are on the opposite ends of this spectrum. Any further than the passive version of secularism and you start to enter the territory of where Islamism, or political Islam, would be represented and any further than *Laïcité* is where you start to enter anti-theism where the state can no longer be considered a democracy, such as Turkey under Mustapha Kemal or Iran under the Pahlavi regime. Thus, at its most basic level, secularism can be described as the removal of religion from a sacred space and appropriating it into the political sphere. This means that any political action or participation occurs within profane time and space. It is not the rejection or removal of religion from the political domain, but rather connecting religion to things like policy making, law, and the consolidation of power instead of attaching it to God and the divine.

Problematic Rhetoric Surrounding Secularism and the Alternative:

As mentioned above, one of the most prevalent interpretations of secularism in the western hemisphere is the concept of the separation of religion and state. This interpretation is a lazy attempt to explain the phenomenon, as it is simply a misguided attempt to capture some essential quality that secularism is supposed to embody, or in other words, typecast secularism.

The problem with this definition and using it as the basis of discourse surrounding secularism is that it “slights secularism as an ideology on the one hand, and misreads the

nature of religious response to life on the other” (Jan, 2003, p. 9). In other words, a discourse in which there exists a divide between religion and states decomposes religion by: one, rejecting religion as a legitimate public institution by denying the existence of God; and two, if given legitimacy, relegating God and God’s message as an antiquity of the past that has not kept up with modernity, and thus has no place in society.

It is important to note that because secularism is a product of the Enlightenment, its claim to territory is universal. It sees no bounds. Therefore, under this fundamental condition, by following the path of the hard-line secularism espoused by the *Laïcité*, where it sees a natural divide between religion and rationality, the secularist then believes that it is only a process of nature and the natural evolution of human civilization to unconditionally move past any sort of religiosity.

This is why instead of conceptualizing secularism as a homogenizing force, I suggest we look at the concept of multiple secularisms. This is the notion in which secularism is understood not as an explicit form of distinction between religious and non-religious spheres and practices in society and analyzed in quantitative terms, but instead understood in terms of its cultural underpinnings (Burchardt and Wolhrab-Sahr, 2013, p. 607). In the case of Pakistan, this means that secularism will need to navigate the social and political tensions that came with Partition, which I discuss further in the paper .

What is Islamism? Post-Islamism?:

Much like the concept of secularism, the discourses of both Islamism and post-Islamism are often overly simplified or misconstrued. Even though Pakistan claims to be the first Islamist society in the modern era, many scholars would argue that the most influential Islamist polity in modern history began in Iran immediately following the 1979 Islamic Revolution (Bayat, 1996). In this paper, I use the definitions of Islamism and post-Islamism posited by Asef Bayat in which he uses Iran as the quintessential model for these notions; thus I use the Iranian polity as the basis of my definition of Islamism and post-Islamism.

The Iranian Islamist polity could be summarized by the establishment of the office of the *velayat-I faqih*. The *faqih*, in this case Ayatollah Khomeini, would become not just the primary interpreter, but also the vehicle of Islamic law itself and “who is to rule the community of believers in the absence of the Twelfth Imam” (Bayat, 1996, p. 44). Islamism is thus the top-down process of a systematic Islamization of society and economy through mechanisms such as a forced dress code and institutionalization of state-sponsored religiously oriented education and extra-curricular activities (Bayat, 1996, p. 44). However, this does not preclude it from secularism as the state is still subject to the conditions of modernity – meaning the interest of the state will always take precedence over the interest of divinity.

Post-Islamism, on the other hand, is the condition where the “appeal, symbols, energy, and sources of legitimacy of Islamism get exhausted” (Bayat, 1996, p. 45).

However, post-Islamism is not anti-religious, but rather it is the point in history in which religion is no longer the source of political legitimacy, yet still holds influence.

Moreover, this phase is characterized by things such as the recognition of pluralism, religious and political choice, constitutional human rights, and an active civil society.

Development of the Pakistani Political Sphere in Light of Islam:

After seven years of struggle by the All-India Muslim League under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the state of Pakistan came into existence vis-à-vis the partition of British India in 1947 under the conviction that it was going to become the Muslim homeland in South Asia. From the very beginning, the Muslim League lacked a mass support base outside the province of Bengal, even during times of heightened freedom struggle (Long, Singh, Samad, et al. 2005, p. 22). Many of the Muslim Leagues' branches only existed on paper and were further hampered by factional schisms. Without mass support from the Muslim majority provinces, the Muslim League's ambitions of Pakistan would lack the slightest credibility. Thus, they had to accommodate themselves with local mediators of power that ranged from landlords to local religious leaders Long, Singh, Samad, et al. 2005, p. 22). This process of clientalism would be a trend throughout Pakistan's history.

To say Islam was the primary vehicle of mobilization would not be an accurate account of the reality of partition or state building in Pakistan. As a matter of fact, in

addition to the institutionalization of clientalism, the Muslim League's ambivalent attitude towards Islam has also been seen as a factor in weakening its state building ability (Long, Singh, Samad, et al. 2005, p. 22). The Muslim League mobilized their supporters either through the narrative of Islam and Muslims being in danger or through local sources of power.

Furthermore, Jinnah and most of the Muslim League's leaders were secular in outlook and merely used religious slogans to further their nationalist agenda. In fact, the *ulama*, which literally translate to "the learned ones" and is the religious institution that has historically functioned as the guardians and interpreters of Islamic law, had rejected the Muslim League's Pakistan movement for two main reasons: one, they disliked the secular outlook of the leadership; and two, they opposed what they believed to be a secular nationalist movement that placed national identity over the *ummah* (the collective community of Islamic peoples) (Long, Singh, Samad, et al. 2005, p. 23). It was only later that the Muslim League was able to overcome this deficiency when the influential Deobandi cleric, Shabir Ahmad Usmani, broke rank with the *ulama* and launched a separate political platform in support of the Muslim League's Pakistan movement (Oasmi, 2010, p. 1198).

However, it is important to emphasize the word, "political." The political sphere is by nature a non-sacred space because a debate surrounding the interpretation of the *sharia* is no longer a theological one, but rather a debate with the hopes of reaching a political objective. As such, if Usmani supported the Pakistan movement on theological grounds, he could not have supported the Muslim League, whose leaders were non-

observant Muslims and had barely any knowledge of Islam. This argument in which the political sphere and the religious sphere are comprised of two mutually exclusive dichotomies is neither new nor provocative. As a matter of fact, this notion was stretched even further vis-à-vis the prophetic model. In essence, the prophetic model created the same dichotomy where the Prophet Muhammad's role as a religious leader was separate from his role as a statesman. Moreover, the prophetic model counters the idea of a pristine Islamic state, which is to say the creation of a perfect and just state much like that of Medina in the 7th century led by the Prophet Muhammad, by pointing to the fact that there exists no theory or general outline in the Quran of how the state or government should function. There only exists a specific guideline that refers to the Prophet Muhammad being the sole source of authority.

Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to examine the *ulama* in post-independence Pakistan, as they have continuously demanded the Islamization of the state. Mualana Abulala Maududi was the most prominent among the traditional class of *ulama* for his sustained discussion of the subject (Syed, 1982, p. 63). In 1948, he called on Pakistani Muslims to oppose the non-religious nationalist democracy functioning in Pakistan stating that it was their duty. He warned that their continued maintenance of Pakistan is traitorous to their prophet and his God and maintained that it was “un-Islamic to fight in Kashmir, serve in the Pakistan army, or bear allegiance to the state, until it had become fully Islamic” (Syed, 1982, p. 64).

For Maududi, sovereignty in an Islamic state belonged solely to God in which Islamic law found in the *sharia* and *sunnah* would be the basis of all laws of the land.

Therefore, the legislature would act only as an interpretative body rather than a law-making entity, whose job is to discover, codify, and make Islamic laws tangible and relevant. However, he was ambiguous about democratic process and political participation. On the one hand, he asserted that God had delegated the authority to rule to the entire community and anyone who has an understanding of Islamic law is entitled to interpret the law. A statesman is not only responsible to God, but also to his community of followers (Syed, 1982, p. 65). Therefore, according to this logic, the *ummah* held the right to depose of any statesman they deemed unfit to rule. However, on the other hand, Maududi, insisted that the great mass of people were “incapable of conceiving their true interest” (Syed, 1982, p. 65). Furthermore, he believed they were unable to separate emotion from rationality, thus, cannot consider matters impartially and should not be admitted into the ranks of the rulers. Instead, he proposed that Pakistan’s ruling elite should be occupied with pious Muslims well versed in Islamic knowledge.

The contradictions found in Maududi’s narrative are indicative of the tensions that Islamism must navigate in a modern nation state built on secular notions of development. Because Pakistan is a constitutional democracy, political participation from the general, non-political populace is an inevitable occurrence and this poses a significant obstacle to the development of an Islamic state. For instance, the notion that the statesman is also responsible to their populace in addition to God and may be deposed if deemed unfit to rule raises the question of what the definition of “unfit” is. If the statesman can be deposed on non-religious grounds, such as poor management of economic funds, then the definition of “unfit” would be secular. This then leads to a second complication: if the

qualification of a statesman is based on religious knowledge instead of administrative competency, the likelihood of poor bureaucratic proficiency increases and, as a consequence, so too would the number of disgruntled citizens. Yet if the citizenry is incapable of perceiving their true interests, do they have legitimate grounds to depose the statesman?

The modernist class of *ulama* has a different approach to making sense of modernity while retaining their religiosity. The narrative of modernists is much more explicit of their secular nature than that of traditionalists. For instance, in his 1952 book, *Problem with Ijtihad*, Hanif Nadwi posits that “Islamic prescriptions were not merely a matter of mindlessly obeying God but were based on human pursuit of humans interests” (Zaman, 2018, p. 101). Moreover, he states that laws governing human interactions are subject to modification depending on the social and political context in which the laws are applied (Nadwi, 1952).

The 1956 Constitution:

It took nine years after partition before Pakistan adopted its first Constitution. One of the major reasons for the delay was the contention of prospective Islamic provisions that would be included in the Constitution. In the Objectives Resolution of 1949, the Constituent Assembly defined the basic directive of the new state as the following:

The Government of Pakistan will be a state... Wherein the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance, and social justice, as enunciated by Islam, shall be fully observed; wherein the Muslims of Pakistan shall be enabled individually and collectively to order their lives in accordance with the teachings and requirements of Islam, as set out in the Holy Quran and Sunnah; wherein adequate provisions shall be made for the minorities freely to profess and practice their religion and develop their culture (Art. 2 and Sch. item 53).

These provisions have remained essentially unchanged throughout Pakistan's statehood and fluidity of constitutional law (Oberst, Malik, Kennedy et al. 2014, p. 156).

Nonetheless, these provisions explicitly advocate for religious pluralism, which when included into the constitution of a supposedly Islamic state, produces a fundamental dilemma. By advocating for religious pluralism, these provisions have inherently moved to subvert one of the five pillars of Islam: *Shahadah* (profession of faith). This is the practice of repeating the phrase "there is no God but Allah (the God) and Mohammad is his messenger." The principle idea behind *shahadah* is the declaration of belief in the oneness of God, otherwise known as *Tawhid*. Monotheism is one of the foundations of Islam and when other Gods are accepted, this foundation is shattered.

Zia ul-Haq's Islamization:

After toppling the Bhutto regime and receiving a mandate provided by the Pakistani National Alliance (PNA) calling for the imposition of the *Nizam-I Mustafa* (rule of the prophet Muhammad), General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq announced that Pakistan would return to its original Islamic mission, or in other words, establish an Islamic state and enforce *sharia* law. Under Ayub Khan, who led Pakistan from 1958 until 1969, the Pakistani state was able to co-opt religious forces who were unable to reach the top echelons of the ruling elite (Akhtar, 2017, p. 98). Bhutto's regime, on the other hand, drastically conceded more ground to religious forces than the Ayubian regime; declaring Ahmadis non-Muslims, banning alcohol and nightclubs, and officially announcing Friday as the official day to prayer. Though there had been a significant transformation in the dynamics between the religious forces and the state, especially under the Bhutto regime, none were as substantive as Zia's regime where a new alternative state building project was proposed.

Accordingly, Zia re-structured both state institutions as well as government demographics by introducing more conservative Islamists into the government. For instance, he created new state institutions such as the Federal Shariat Court and the Council of Islamic Ideology, which further provided opportunities for religious forces to penetrate the top echelons of the ruling elite. Moreover, the Zia government was able to co-opt over 126,000 mosques into the state structure in addition to hiring over 3,000 village *ulamas* as schoolteachers (Akhtar, 2017, p. 99).

One of the most controversial pieces of legislation enacted by the Zia government was the *Hudood Ordinance*. Even the commencement date of ordinance was announced within the framework of the Islamic calendar as it states the following: it shall come into force on the twelfth day of *Rabi-ul-Awwal*, 1399 *Hijri* (*Constitution of Pakistan, 1979*), which translate to the tenth day of February of 1979. Within this ordinance, individuals found guilty of *zina* would be subject to death by stoning (*Constitution of Pakistan, 1979*). *Zina* is the Islamic legal term referring to unlawful sexual intercourse, such as adultery or bestiality. It belongs under the *Hudud* class of crimes, which is class of crimes that is subject to punishment as specified by the *sharia*, but the punishment itself is determined on the basis of the *hadith*, which the consensus among most schools of jurisprudence is stoning.

While the Zia government did pass legislation based on their interpretation of Islamic law and his rule did transform Pakistan into a global centre for political Islam, Zia's Islamization efforts should still be taken with a grain of salt. The normalization of clientelism in Pakistani politics continued to affect the Zia government where it had become the relevant vehicle of change and activity for certain political actors. For instance, we see that clientelist relations with the state military apparatus have allowed multiple militant and sectarian groups to alter domestic and foreign policies and norms (Akhtar, 2017, p. 99). In addition, the fragmentation within the state has allowed operatives to favour different religious organizations, which has fomented an increasingly violent atmosphere. Dissatisfaction with the Zia regime resulted in the *ulama* distancing themselves from Zia along with other religiously oriented political parties. Not even the

ultra-conservatives of Pakistan could circumvent the conditions of modernity, which does not allow state actors to act within a vacuum free of secular influences, nor could they escape from the secular institutions achieved by Jinnah that had made the partition of British India possible in 1947.

Conclusion:

Secularism is almost unavoidable in the modern age where global integration and modern inclinations have pushed for, and won, which makes a 'pure' Islamic state virtually impossible. Even if a state's legitimacy rests on its religiosity, competent governance is still required to keep the citizenry content. Consequently, what we see throughout history is an interpretation of religious law to justify the actions of the state. This is not exclusive to Pakistan; in fact, it is far from it. For instance, the Ottoman sultan Suleiman the Magnificent had to receive a *fatwa* from the Grand Mufti of Istanbul before he could even give the order to murder Ibrahim Pasha. Thus, religion is actively taken from a sacred space and placed into the public domain where it is subject to different social, cultural, and political forces and the connection is no longer with God, but instead with the conditions of modernity and governance.

Moreover, states in the global south must also respond to the legacies and on-going processes of a colonial past that make state building more difficult - forcing leaders into relationships and dynamics that are undesirable. In the case of Pakistan, the founding

of the state was heavily reliant on clientelist relationships. These relationships take the religious nature of the state further into question.

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Rise of Populism: Promoting Awareness Towards Populist Ideologies

Neelia Radin Mohd Fuad

What is Populism:

Populism is defined as the separation of society into two opposing groups – ‘ordinary’ people and the elite. Populism has no exclusive set of characteristics. However, they enjoy **family resemblances** - they place priority on the nation state (Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, 2017). In general, populist leaders are:

1. **Anti-Elitists** – Target different elite groups based on class, race or religion.
2. **Against checks and balances** – They attack systemic limits (Legislative, Judicial and Media Freedom)
3. **Reductive** – Offer reductive answers to complicated solutions

Populism cannot be defined by its content but instead through its execution: through **political greening** which focuses on social justice; and **direct democracy** which focuses on the direct establishment of policies.

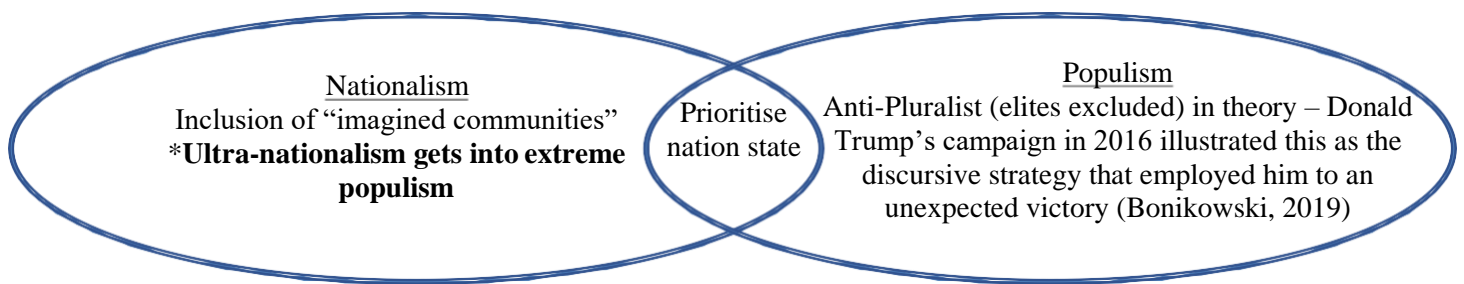
Left Wing vs. Right Wing Populist

Left-wing populism: Unites the middle and bottom classes against the top.

Right-wing populism: Focuses on conflict between the ‘ordinary’ people and the elite. This includes the elite groups that are coddling a third group. Both can be misleading since the groups take different forms depending on the issues that surface

Populism vs Nationalism:

Commonly misidentified as similar, populism and nationalism need to be set apart for the two to focus on different factors; populism denies coexistence in the nation whilst nationalism focuses on collective identity. Despite these differences, they also coalesce in some ways as shown below:



- Nationalism: Everyone is bound through citizenship, patriotism and belonging. The “**imagined community**” overlaps with the **social imaginary** as it serves a public purpose.
- Populism: **Fractures the “imagined community”** which identifies the community as a social construct (Anderson, 1991); **and social imaginary** which observes how people share a common understanding of their social surroundings (Taylor, 2004), excluding specific groups from their in-crowd like the elites and populist leaders. As such, populists have **tight national values** and they choose their ingroup based on ethnicity, culture and religion. They view themselves as nationalists because it creates political branding; it is **respectable**, it **bonds people** and it **justifies citizenship**.

Populist nationalism is not:

An ideology, but it appeals to people’s emotions inclusive of the “nation”

Populist nationalism is unwelcoming because it divides the nation by excluding certain societal groups. President Trump declares himself a nationalist because he sees himself as caring primarily about America and what is good for them (Cilizza, 2018)

“A globalist is a person that wants the globe to do well, frankly, not caring about our country so much. And you know what? We can’t have that.” - Donald Trump (Blake, 2018)

Populist Global Trends:

Western and non-Western examples have been analyzed in this paper to identify the rise of populism globally. By analyzing evidence, readers would gain an understanding on how populism emerges universally. Non-Western states will be able to use the findings and mistakes of Western populist states to guide and prevent them from making the same errors. However, some states in Southeast Asia are promoting a different kind of populism due to weak, deeply solidified and long-established party politics (Kurlantzick, 2018). This can be illustrated with case studies of countries like Italy, the Philippines and India.

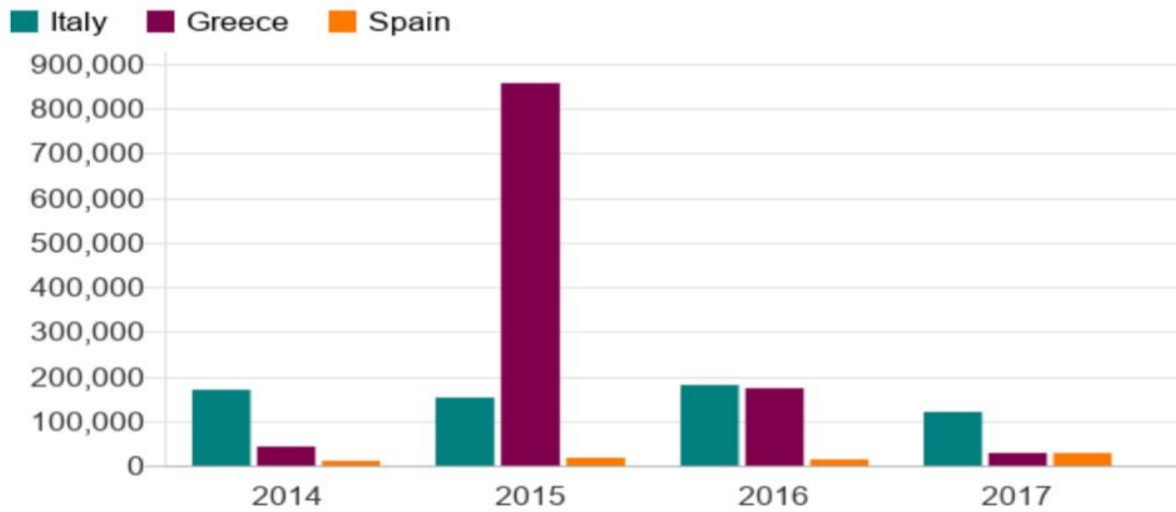
Italy:

Italy embraced populism due to the alarming **rates of inequality** present. Inequality began emerging during the 2008 financial crisis and recession in Europe. The economic crisis reduced standards of living in Italy and caused unemployment rates to increase (7.8% as per 2009) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to fall (Coletto, 2018). Italy was also facing corruption, mismanagement of the national economy and the refugee crisis which persuaded its people to lean towards populism (Henley, 2019). Right-wing populism was thus adopted by the Italian state due to the economic issues that they faced.

The graph below (Figure 1) shows that there was a fall in the number of migrants and refugee arrivals in Italy. 20120 migrants and refugees arrived in 2018, which was a lower number compared to 2016 and 2017 (UNHCR, 2018). This illustrates the idea that **numbers and rankings** have been used by the Five Star Movement to manipulate and intimidate Italians. The Five Star Movement is a populist movement that aims to replace the Italian parliament (Loucaides, 2019). The party uses **exaggerated statistics to argue that migrants and refugees posed a threat to Italians**. A joint policy document was released by the Five Star Movement showing plans to build more detention centers to accelerate deportation of an estimated 500,000 illegal immigrants (Giuffrida, 2018). The Five Star Movement is being **selective to prevent the rise of mass migration** within Italy. Overall, populism rose in Italy because of the **free market and mass migration**.

Migrants and refugees

Total arrivals 2014-17



Source: UNHCR

BBC

Figure 1: Total arrivals of migrants and refugees in Italy, Greece, and Spain between 2014-2017 (UNHCR, 2018)

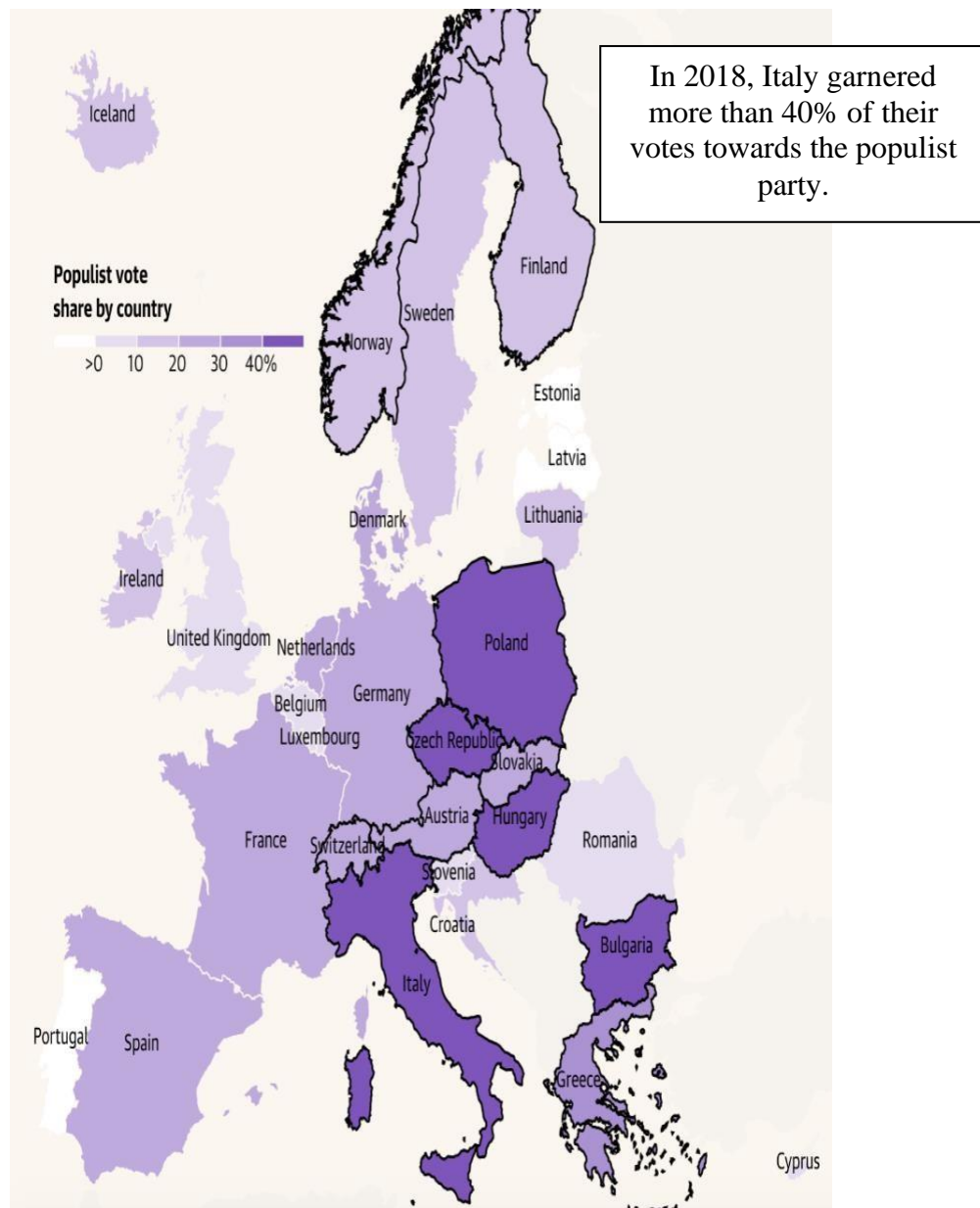


Figure 2: Map of the populist vote share by country in Europe (*The Rise*, n.d.)

Philippines:

A mix of factors influenced the rise of populism in the Philippines (Mendoza, n.d.).

Corruption and mismanagement are the main factors which enabled populism to flourish in the Philippines. However, other factors like **inequality of lifestyle** and **rapid urbanization** have also boosted populism. These have led to an increase in poverty within the nation.

Under President Rodrigo Duterte, widespread incidences of poverty decreased significantly. The percentages on Figure 3 illustrate how both these incidences were lower in 2018. This shows how effective Duterte was



Image 2: *President Rodrigo Duterte* (n.d.)

in reducing the rates of impoverishment within the Philippines. **Numbers have been emphasized to show the positive effects** Duterte had on state poverty. By quantifying this factor, the Filipino government has been able to classify poverty as **an object of political intervention** (Mau & Howe, 2019). Therefore, the quantification of poverty provided a visual representation that Filipinos could examine on their own.



FIRST SEMESTER 2018 POVERTY STATISTICS



Republic Act 8425 of 1997 (Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act)

defines "Poor as individuals and families whose income fall below the poverty threshold as defined by the NEDA and/or cannot afford in a sustained manner to provide their minimum basic needs of food, health, education, housing and other essential amenities of life." (Section 3 of the RA 8425)



POVERTY THRESHOLD

is the minimum income required for a family or individual to meet the basic food and non-food requirements, also known as the **POVERTY LINE**.

POVERTY THRESHOLD

In the first semester of 2018, a Filipino family with five members needed around **Php 10,481** on average monthly to meet their basic food and non-food needs.



16 out of 100

Filipino families did not have sufficient income to meet their **basic food and non-food needs** in the first half of 2018.

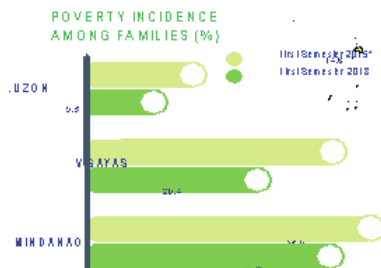


POVERTY INCIDENCE

The proportion of families or individuals with per capita income less than the per capita **Poverty Threshold** to the total number of families or individuals.

1 out of 5

Filipinos belonged to a poor family in the first half of 2018.



FOOD THRESHOLD

is the minimum income required for a family or individual to meet the basic food needs, which satisfies the nutritional requirements for economically necessary and socially desirable physical activities.

FOOD THRESHOLD

A Filipino family with five members needed around **Php 7,337** on average monthly to meet their basic food needs during the first semester of 2018.



6 in 100

Filipino families did not have sufficient income to meet their **basic food needs** in the first half of 2018.



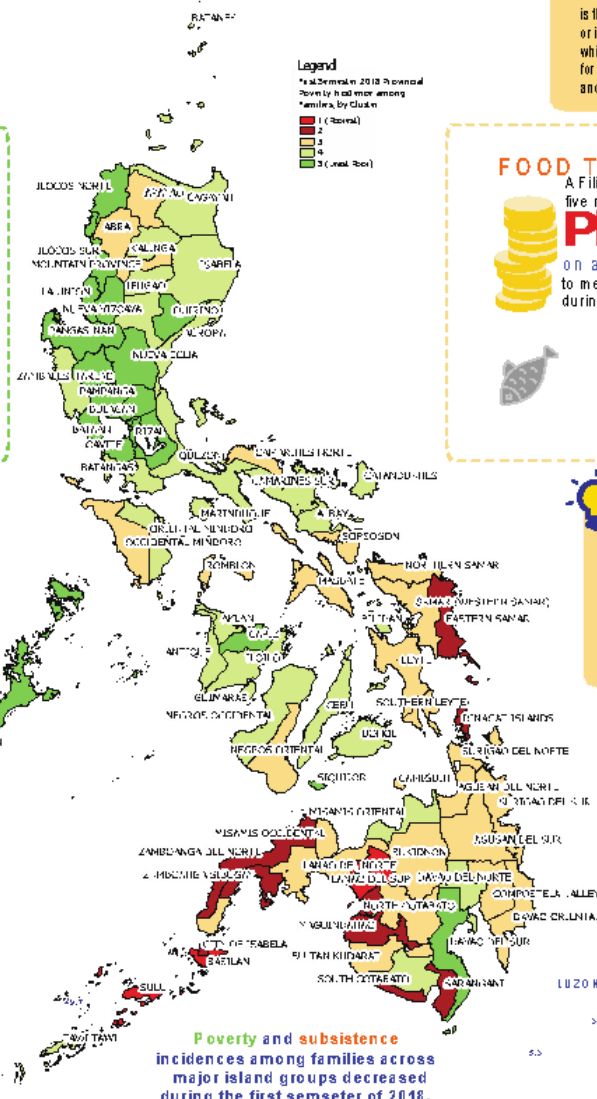
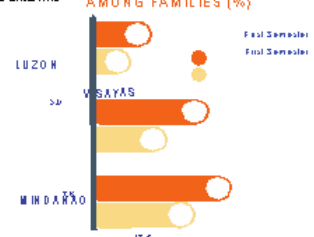
SUBSISTENCE INCIDENCE

The proportion of families or individuals with per capita income less than the per capita **Food Threshold** to the total number of families or individuals.

9 out of 100

Filipinos did not have enough income needed to meet their **basic food needs** during the first half of 2018.

SUBSISTENCE INCIDENCE AMONG FAMILIES (%)



*Food Thresholds are estimated using actual prices collected by PSA for the estimation of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). In consonance with the updating of the market basket for the collection of prices for CPI, the 1st Series for 2018 Poverty Statistics were revalued accordingly.

Philippine Statistics Authority

Social Sector Statistics Service (SSSS)
Poverty and Human Development Statistics Division (PHDSD)



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Figure 3: Philippines poverty statistics (Philippines Statistics Authority, n.d.)

War on Drugs:

Duterte's governing method qualifies him as a populist leader. In 2016, Duterte won the presidency because **of his promise to reduce crime and drug rates** in the Philippines (Mogato et al., 2016). For some, Duterte's rule is viewed positively as he was able to

eradicate social and economic problems that the country faced. On the other hand, some citizens view his rule negatively as he goes against international human rights law. Duterte **has killed more than 5000 people** (France-Presse, 2019) **without giving them a fair trial**. His drug war has raised the attention of Human Rights Watch since the killing of drug lords and dealers is a form of arbitrary and extrajudicial execution.

Despite this, Duterte has received a **79% approval rating** showing the huge support he receives from the general Filipino population (*Philippines Elections*, 2017). Duterte's high approval ratings are due to manipulating Filipinos by arguing that **killing criminals would reduce crime rates in the Philippines**, a rhetoric which proved to be appealing to his crowd. Therefore Duterte: 1) sees **checks and balances as inconvenient**; and 2) uses his **authoritative power to attack these limits**.

“Hitler massacred 3 million Jews... there's 3 million drug addicts. There are, I'd be happy to slaughter them.”
(President Duterte, 2016)

India:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi employs a **nationalist approach** to gain support from his people. He appeals to the Hindu majority with his **charisma** which has led to the fall of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) rivals. The relentless ubiquity of his face, in print, on screens and in the streets may be something that money and power can buy—and the BJP has plenty of both (*Narendra Modi*, 2019). BJP wealth and power have been used to **control the Indian media**. Media control has enabled Modi to **create religious branding** which is respected by his Hindu followers, leading to increased altercations based on Hindutva, an identity that revolves around India as a nation, the Indian culture and the Hindu religion. In India, Modi has become a vessel for dreams, but he is also a vessel for anger against the elites (*Narendra Modi*, 2019). Hence, the Indian social imaginary is fractured by prioritizing and appealing to Hindus whilst employing an anti-elitist stance.

In 2019, Modi attempted to implement the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) which grants non-Muslim migrants fast-track residency from three majority-Muslim countries—Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan — which could lead to increased Islamophobia (Kuchay, 2020). Whilst people have been protesting against the CAA, Modi defended the law as he believes that the CAA is beneficial for the state. Prime Minister Modi said the government has established the CAA to correct “historical injustices” and to fulfil BJP’s “old promise” to religious minorities living in neighbouring countries (*CAA to Fulfill*, 2020).

How do they relate?:

Populism is universal because of the foundational similarities that different countries share. Through global trends, we can see how populism is dangerous because leaders are:

- **Selective** – They appeal to an in-crowd by selling and providing people with “extra-factual information”. This term that encompasses not only misleading and unverified statements, but also other sources of non-factual claims (Greenhill, 2018)
- **Against the Constitution** – They would do anything to enact laws that promote exclusion by providing “real” solutions for their followers. An example of this is the immigration policies that Trump has established whereby certain countries are banned from entering the state (Strauss, 2020). Therefore, populists are against the elitism of constitutionalists and those tasked with safeguarding the constitution. This erodes trust in the political system which leads to democratic backsliding.
- **Against Checks and Balances** – They instill fear in people by rupturing and fragmenting system limits and legislations within the constitution that populist officials find inconvenient.

Strategies to combat populism:

Populism fractures the social imaginary and creates vulnerability within the masses, therefore effective strategies are required to reduce its spread, such as:

1. Civil Society – Valuable groups that protect threatened civic spaces from populism:

- Defend **liberal democracy**
- Establishment of different group **memberships** which civilians could anchor towards based on the issues they face. **The more memberships the individual has, the more protection they have against populism because they can use their support systems to actively participate in political conversations.**



Image 3: *We are the 99%* (2011)

- Creates **networks** through civil society groups which can **act as support** against those who feel threatened
- **Uncertainty** behind civil society groups because it can **provide systemic resistance** to populist ideology
- **Good civil society guards bad civil society**; empower people to filter populist truth

*Example: The **Occupy Wall Street Movement** (2011) where groups with diverse backgrounds protested against financial greed and corruption*

2. Role of Media:

Traditional Media (Radio, Television, Billboards)

- **Passive reports** about populism are made by media outlets. **The more outrageous the statement, the more media time is granted, which exacerbates and fuels populism**
- It is important for media outlets to **tell the truth** but it is **risky**. Populists would find these media companies and shut them down. An example of this would be Duterte's shut down of ABS-CBN, the country's leading broadcast network because the outlet was being critical of his leadership (Gutierrez, 2020).
- **Justice commercials and documentaries** can be displayed to block out populist "truth".

New Media (Social Media, Blogs, YouTube)

- Media platforms **belong to everybody**
- **Can spread awareness** of populism through posts and blogs
- **An educational tool** for civil society activists to educate themselves and those around them but this can be **risky since extreme populist groups can also create content to support populism**



Image 4: Neo-Nazi groups network online, rather than real life (n.d.)

- **Globalized networking:** Social groups can be made to provide support

*Example: YouTube plans to remove video contents and channels that support neo-Nazism, white supremacy and other bigoted ideologies to try and **remove extremist thoughts and hate speech** from its platform (Roose & Conger, 2019).*

3. Civic Education:

- Implementation of civic education in pre-school to university curriculums **which will emphasize the need for checks and balances**
- **It is a long-term goal** but can be used as a starting point to **empower generations** towards liberal democracy
- Allows youth to **understand differences between democratic and populist approaches**

Example: The Malaysian government is reintroducing civic education into national school syllabi to educate citizens on their rights and duties (Tan, 2016)

Conclusion:

As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1963) once said, *“injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny”*. One would unknowingly support populism due to the misinformation that they receive from their populist governments. By supporting populism, individuals risk losing the lives of everyone including their own towards injustices. Populism may be enchanting, but it is



Image 5: *Teaching Civics Anew* (2019)

indeed dangerous because it divides people, and is akin to a wolf in sheep's clothing. Today, globalization has allowed for our society to be intertwined which means that our rights as citizens should be preserved allowing us to fight against the rise of populism. This is a task we should not take lightly, especially now as the pillars of democracies crumble before our very eyes.

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Angered and empowered: Youth as agents of change across Africa

Michelle Gomez

Introduction:

In a continent where youth represent the largest demographic yet experience unprecedented levels of unemployment, youth will be the driving force of change across Africa and the key to upholding democratic standards. In fact, youth have already been a driving force of change across the continent and will continue to drive change until they are satisfied with their available economic opportunities. In this paper, I explain that the main motivation for youth to demand change in Africa is a lack of professional opportunities. I argue that African youth will be able to create change due to their demographic dominance, as well as their ability to utilize new technologies to their advantage, specifically social media.

In order to do this, I first examine how youth have experienced significant economic hardship as a result of inadequate employment opportunities, despite recent economic growth in many African countries. I then present two case studies of youth mobilization in Africa that were a result of economic frustrations: The Occupy Nigeria movement, in which youth mobilized against the government's removal of fuel subsidies; and the #FeesMustFall student movement that swept across university campuses in South Africa. Finally, I demonstrate how youth strategically used social media in both of these cases, and how social media will continue to be a powerful tool for Africa's change-hungry and resourceful youth population.

Unemployment and youth in Africa:

Sub-Saharan Africa has seen tremendous economic growth over the past few decades, with gross domestic product (GDP) growing approximately 4.5% on average per year between 2000 and 2012 (Filmer & Fox, 2014). Additionally, several African countries are among the fastest growing economies in the world (Filmer & Fox, 2014). Fox et al. (2016) note that this economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa has led to an improved standard of living in many aspects, including improved health care, better education, better access to clean water, and declining infant mortality rates.

The declining infant mortality rates have in part contributed to rapid population growth in Africa, which has created a large youth demographic. In 2005, 62% of Africa's population was below the age of 25 (World Bank, 2009). With an estimated 296.9 million people aged 10-25 in sub-Saharan Africa, it is the youngest region in the world (Hilson & Osei, 2014). Partially due to improved infant survival rates, the region's youth population is only growing; it is estimated that sub-Saharan Africa will contain one quarter of the world's young people by 2025 (Hilson & Osei).

However, of youth aged 10-24 in sub-Saharan Africa, less than 50% are employed in the formal economy (Hilson & Osei, 2014). Some countries have youth unemployment rates as high as 80%, such as Mozambique and Ghana (Hilson & Osei, 2014). In Uganda, youth make up 83% of the total unemployed population (World Bank, 2009). The rapid economic growth that many African countries have seen over the past decade has clearly not translated into job opportunities for youth (Fox et al., 2016). A constantly growing youth population without the substantial

creation of formal jobs means increasing unemployment and economic frustrations among young people.

Furthermore, there are a variety of types of unemployment that statistics do not usually take into account, such as the underemployed, those who are engaged in informal work, and the vulnerably employed (Ranis & Hino, 2013). Due to a lack of formal economic opportunities, many youth in Africa are forced to make ends meet by working in the informal sector, or through self-employment (Fox et al., 2016). Fox et al. (2016) note that while high youth unemployment is often associated with urban areas, underemployment is particularly common in the rural economy. Due to the weather dependent nature of agriculture, many farmers do not work for the full year. They must fill the gaps by engaging in informal employment or self-employment (Fox et al., 2016). In addition to offering poor prospects for professional growth, working informally usually results in unpredictable and precarious income.

In 1999, only 4.5% of young, unemployed men and 2.3% of young unemployed women had higher education. By 2011, these numbers grew to 28.5% and 18.8% respectively (Ranis & Hino, 2013). Furthermore, despite the fact that youth currently entering the employment sector are more educated than previous generations, they are finding that their opportunities and potential earnings are similar or worse to those of their parents (Filmer & Fox, 2014). Even youth that work in the formal sector often work long hours under poor conditions to earn very little (Ranis & Hino, 2013).

Additionally, African youth appear to “play only a marginal role in the political, economic, social and cultural processes of their societies” (Akor, 2017, p. 110). Akor (2017) notes that in comparison to Africans who grew up in the 60’s and 70’s right after independence and an

economic boom, those growing up after the 80's have been described as part of a "lost generation." Indeed, the lack of professional opportunities coupled with increased living costs have caused many young Africans to experience economic hardship. However, a multitude of youth protests and movements have emerged over the past decade as a result of these grievances, many of which have led to concrete change. I will now look at two movements that demonstrate how African youth, angered by their economic situation but hopeful and ambitious in spirit, have stepped up to demand change and hold their democratically elected governments accountable.

Occupy Nigeria:

Youth were the driving force that sparked the January 2012 resistance against the abolition of fuel subsidies in Nigeria. This movement was the result of existing frustrations with the grim economic situation in the country coupled with the government's sudden announcement of increased fuel prices (Akor, 2017). In response, "a large section of youth felt the government was just trying to transfer to the people the cost of its inefficiencies and corruption-ravaged system" (Akor, 2017, p. 113).

The Nigerian government initially announced that it would remove its subsidy on petrol, which would raise the price from N65 to N141 per litre, in late 2011 (Akor, 2017). After the initial protests in November 2011 were met with tough resistance by the police, future protests were planned for April 2012, when the subsidy was to take effect (Akor, 2017). However, when the government surprised citizens on January 1 by announcing that the subsidies would take

effect immediately, youth were shocked and angered (Akor, 2017). With Facebook and Twitter monitored closely by the government, youth groups used BlackBerry Messenger (BBM) to communicate, and decided to start protesting the next day (Akor, 2017). Despite it being yuletide holidays in Nigeria at the time, the protests started on January 2 in Abuja, on January 3 in Lagos, and on January 4 in Kano (Akor, 2017). They blocked off major streets and occupied the space by singing chants and displaying posters—all with a clear demand for the return of the subsidy (Akor, 2017). Civil society organizations (CSOs) joined the youth groups to create the Occupy Nigeria movement, under which they consolidated their demands (Akor, 2017). A week after the initial protests, the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) received approval to strike in protest of the removal of the subsidy, essentially shutting down the economy across the country (Akor, 2017).

Once the labour strike began, youth took control of the movement in major cities with support from CSOs and labour unions (Akor, 2017). In Lagos, for example, the crowd of mostly youth protesters were estimated to be about three million (Akor, 2017). Akor (2017) notes that the protests were so sophisticated, that the Nigerian government made accusations that they were sponsored by opposition politicians. The movement was able to attract popular Nigerian musicians, actors, and entertainers to perform at rallies and express their support. Humour was often used to make a point, both in online discussions and in public demonstrations by popular comedians. Akor (2017) asserts that “there is no doubt that the protest discourse was driven by popular youth culture” (p. 118).

The movement eventually became divided when CSOs and youth groups started calling for President Goodluck Jonathan’s resignation, while labour unions expressed that they simply

wanted to restore the petrol subsidy. The labour unions eventually met with the President on January 15 and agreed to stop striking in exchange for a partial reduction of the price of petrol (to N97 per litre). The subsequent withdrawal of labor unions caused the protests to fall. Akor (2017) notes that the way in which the protests ended demonstrates the power of the Nigerian government, or the “neo-patrimonial networks in Nigerian politics” (p. 122). It shows how the government is able to use its power to stifle the voices of other sectors of Nigerian society (Akor, 2017). Akor (2017) concludes that the fact that Nigerian youth were easily immobilized shows that they still have a lot of work to do in order to break down power structures and establish a system of equal say.

Although this movement did not result in full restoration of the fuel subsidy, the partial reduction of the price of fuel was still a tangible result. Furthermore, what distinguishes the January 2012 resistance from previous protests in Nigeria relating to fuel prices is that it was commenced by youth, who were able to organize and take to the streets before the labour unions declared a strike and civil society joined in (Akor, 2017). Youth were able to effectively organize, articulate their demands to the government, gather support from CSOs and labour unions, and attract Nigerian celebrities to support their movement; this ultimately led to the partial reduction of the petrol prices. This nonviolent youth-driven movement resulted in concrete change and displayed the intelligent and creative ways in which youth in Africa are able to organize under pressure. The ability of youth to initiate and sustain such a successful movement demonstrates the power and resourcefulness of African youth, as well as their ability to act as agents of change.

#FeesMustFall in South Africa:

The #FeesMustFall movement is another case of youth mobilizing to demand better economic conditions for themselves. The movement spread rapidly across South African universities in the fall of 2015, after an announcement by the University of the Witwatersrand on October 4 that it would be raising student fees by 10.5 percent for the 2016 academic year (Booyesen, 2016). Anger spread among university campuses as other schools announced tuition raises. Students began to demand a halt in the increase of tuition, through both public demonstration and on social media with the hashtag #FeesMustFall (Booyesen, 2016).

Booyesen (2016) explains that the students who started this revolution were mainly first-generation students—those who are the first generation in their family to attend university. Many of them experienced poverty and socioeconomic exclusion; they not only struggled to pay fees, but they felt alienated on campus due to their economic standing (Booyesen, 2016). Although #FeesMustFall began primarily as a movement against the increase of tuition fees, students came to incorporate other demands, including the demand to decolonize the university system, ensure equality of staff composition with regard to race and gender, and insource general workers (Langa et al., 2017). They partnered with university workers who were displeased with the outsourcing of staff (Booyesen, 2016). They also were able to garner the support of academic staff, which provided the movement with credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of university administration (Langa et al., 2017).

The movement resulted in concrete policy change. The South African government announced in late October that there would be no tuition increases for the following academic year

(Booyesen, 2016). The national budget reallocated funds to education and committed to working toward free higher education for the poor (Booyesen, 2016). The movement also caused university administration to prioritize the hiring of black-African faculty, make changes in their curriculums, alter their language policies, insource workers (Booyesen, 2016), and rename university buildings (Langa et al., 2017). Furthermore, it raised public awareness about issues that were important to youth in universities, such as racial and gender equality, cultural decolonization, and workers rights. In this case, a movement that began primarily out of economic frustrations created change in many other ways aside from just economic policy.

However, it is important to note that the #FeesMustFall movement was imperfect. Some downfalls that Langa et al. (2017) point out include gender imbalance in the movement, internal disagreement on certain demands, and conflict over leadership positions. In many aspects, the movement was not consolidated and consisted of internal battles and contradictions. However, Booyesen (2016) states that although student solidarity eventually weakened and the movement splintered, students' unified insistence on full implementation of a 0% tuition increase remained strong. Despite internal conflict, students were united in the desire for free and decolonised education (Langa et al., 2017).

In conclusion, #FeesMustFall in South Africa resulted in a 0% tuition increase for the 2016 academic year. This was not a compromise by the youth; it was a complete victory in the sense that it achieved the movement's initially stated purpose. The movement was also impactful in transforming university systems and challenging dominant ways of thinking. Not only did it force university administration to question their values, but it resulted in both the university and the national government changing policies in radical ways (Booyesen, 2016). Overall, students

were able to demonstrate their frustrations in an organized and clear way, and this allowed them to enact change. In doing so, “the revolt demonstrated how students, united through mass action and facilitated by social media, could, within a week, escalate issues of free higher education and insourcing of workers from university management level to national presidential level—and get the results” (Booyesen, 2016, p. 45).

Social Media as a tool for change:

In a continent where “youth play only a marginal role in the political, economic, social, and cultural processes of their societies” (Akor, 2017, p. 110), social media is an extremely useful tool for young people. It has played a crucial role in many youth-driven social movements in Africa over the past decade and will likely continue to propel the voices of youth forward in the future. The use of social media was integral to both the Occupy Nigeria and the #FeesMustFall movements.

Akor (2017) notes that the leaders of Occupy Nigeria were inspired by both the Occupy Wall Street and Arab Spring movements, not only in ideology but also by their use of social media to initiate and organize. These movements alerted Nigerian youth of their ability to use social media to challenge existing power structures and mobilize against them (Akor, 2017). When the Nigerian government initially announced the removal of the subsidy, youth across the country took to social media channels to express their anger (Akor, 2017). After the leader of the Nigerian Youth Council who declared a hunger strike in protest was arrested as a warning to halt

any planned protests, youth were forced to “go underground” and use unmonitored platforms such as BBM as a tool to discuss and organize (Akor, 2017, p. 113). Following the government’s surprise announcement on January 1, these channels that young people had already begun using allowed them to mobilize quickly and take to the streets the following day. Arguably, protests could not have been organized for the next day without the use of social media platforms. With regard to logistics and planning, social media was integral to the Occupy Nigeria movement. Iwilade (2013) notes that Occupy Nigeria shows how social media can be used by youth to “challenge dominant discourses of state power and to protest perceived injustice in Africa” (p. 1062).

#FeesMustFall can be seen as a Twitter movement. Bosch (2016) notes that the hashtag played an integral role to the protest; it was emblematic of the movement and was widely referenced in national political discussion by both the media and general public. Bosch (2016) attributes much of the success of #FeesMustFall to social media, specifically to the fact that it was a viral campaign with a catchy slogan, quick growth, real-time participation, and celebrity endorsement. She notes that Twitter provided a platform for youth who were normally detached from traditional political discourse and encouraged them to participate in the movement. Students used Twitter to share their experiences of exclusion from post-secondary studies, discuss their grievances of economic hardship, and express their solidarity with their peers (Bosch, 2016). In addition to using social media as a forum for discussion and promotion, the #FeesMustFall movement also utilized social media as an organizing tool. Students used Twitter to coordinate meetings, plan public demonstrations, attract media attention, disperse information on police activity, and ask and answer questions about activities taking place on specific days

(Bosch, 2016). Twitter allowed for rapid dissemination of information, which made quick organization of protest activity possible.

Overall, social media was utilized by both the Occupy Nigeria and the #FeesMustFall movements to discuss important issues, gather support and attention, and organize protest activities. Social media is important tool for youth in Africa because it provides a way to efficiently mobilize. It also upholds democratic principles by giving young people on the margins of society a platform to elevate their voices, which is a power that they would otherwise not have.

Conclusion:

In this paper, I have shown that despite the ample economic growth that many African countries have experienced over the past two decades, youth in Africa are growing up with minimal employment opportunities, which has led to economic hardship in this demographic. However, the social movements that I have examined in my paper show that youth are able to effectively channel these frustrations in productive ways. Akor (2017) notes that contrary to the “lost generation” stigma that is often associated with African youth, research shows that most African youth actually have a positive and hopeful attitude to life and their future. Unemployed African youth are not powerless, reckless, and mindlessly violent ticking time bombs as many narratives suggest, but rather intelligent, resourceful, and active agents of change in their country. This is evident in the examples of Occupy Nigeria and #FeesMustFall. Both movements

demonstrate that youth in Africa are resourceful, clever, and more than capable of effectively organizing to enact the change they want to see.

African youth have already been a driving force of change and will continue to be as long as they experience economic hardships and high levels of unemployment. Equipped with demographic dominance and social media, youth are in a better position than any other group to create change in Africa. Economic hardship is the motive, and demographic dominance and social media are the means through which youth will be the driving force of change and democracy in Africa.

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" These photos were shot in Cartagena, Colombia in 2013. They represent the paradox of opportunity presented by global democratic capitalism--its ideological promises juxtaposed with its inherent failures. The words 'joven libre' or 'free youth' graffitied on the centuries-old fortress wall built to protect the old city take on multiple meanings as a background to the scenes of daily life. There is artistic expression, a young girl on a leisurely stroll, colonial degradation, trash piled out in the open heat, a middle-aged man peddling drinks from a cart. Together, these images can be taken as a microcosm of the city itself: cultural revival, booming development, legacies of colonialism and its violences, environmental waste, and a precarious informal economy of limited possibilities and poverty. "

JADE CAMERON

JOVEN LIBRE 1 & 2 (2013)

The Paradox of (Neo)liberal Society: Collective Consent for an Anti-Democratic Project

William Duppel

Introduction:

In describing the Athenian project of democracy, the 4th Century-statesman Pericles (d. 429 BC) proclaimed: “We do not say that a man who takes no interest in politics minds his own business; we say he has no business here at all” (Schubert, 2008, p.164). This exclusive basis for citizenship has not survived modernity. Under the liberal conception of democracy, the state awards equal citizenship to all of its subjects, based on what Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor termed “a politics of universalism, emphasizing equal dignity of all citizens, [...] the content of this politics has been the equalization of rights and entitlements” (Taylor, 1994, p.38). Yet this was accompanied by a second development: the recognition of each citizen’s unique identity (Taylor, 1994, p.38).

The tension between the two conceptions of the individual (as both equal part of a larger citizen group yet protected in his solitary identity) is mirrored in modern institutions. Taylor identifies three institutions which frame our shared conceptions - or ‘social imaginaries’ - of modernity: the free market (enabling and exclusively supporting individual agency); the public sphere; and the popular sovereignty which has become the basis for modern democratic states (both exclusive vehicles of collective agency) (Taylor, 2004). The emergence of the neoliberal paradigm has seemingly facilitated the expansion of the former by weakening the latter two. Yet, paradoxically, it has had to do so *through* collective consent - achieved only by atomizing the individual, stressing their uniqueness over their role within wider society, and replacing citizen identity with that of the consumer. This paper will trace this development.

However, neoliberalism alone cannot account for the modern crisis of liberalism - a crisis expressed through the rise of populist governments, fundamentalist outfits, and worldwide popular

protests. This paper posits, in line with Karl Polanyi's opus, *The Great Transformation* (1944), that neoliberalism has distilled, rather than produced, the aforementioned tensions, which are inherent in the liberal social imaginary. The paper will close with projections of an alternative modernity.

A Brief History of Neoliberalism:

Neoliberalism, in its most basic form, advances the position that human well-being can be served best by individual entrepreneurship and the subjection of nearly every facet of society to market forces (Harvey, 2005, p.3). However, economic geographer David Harvey argues that its actual goal - at least in the hands of elites - was always the "restoration of class power" (Harvey, 2005, p.18). The extreme social inequalities that are often deemed to be the negative side-effects of this paradigm were in fact its *raison d'être*. Neoliberalism was thus born as a "system of justification and legitimization for whatever needed to be done to achieve that goal" (Harvey, 2005, p.19). This interpretation of neoliberalism, in the hands of power, was internally inconsistent: the government vilified in neoliberalist orthodoxy as an obstacle on the way towards freedom and efficiency - was necessary for the continued survival of this system (Monbiot, 2016). The state needed to protect private property, to ensure that vital national services continued to function, as well as to impose (through military means if necessary) its will on weaker nations. Peter Evans (2008), a political sociologist at the University of California, Berkeley, writes that,

“From a ‘Westphalian/realist’ perspective, we do not live in a neo-liberal world at all. We live in a pseudo-liberal world where powerful nation states in general, and the United States in particular, pursue mercantilist and imperialist policies at the expense of both economic rationality and an equitable world order. This mercantile/imperialist regime uses global governance institutions to subjugate weaker nation states in the global South, preventing these states from pursuing developmental strategies that could foster the well-being of their citizens.” (p. 282)

Yet the inconsistent jumble one recognizes as ‘neoliberalism’ today began as a “distinctive, innovative philosophy promoted by a coherent network of thinkers and activists with a clear plan of action” (Monbiot, 2016). What changed?

The history of neoliberalism did not begin in the White House or at Downing Street. Instead, it began in the public sphere, among the writings of intellectuals - most notable among which were Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman (of the so-called ‘Chicago School’). They influenced other economists and think-tanks; their ideas were lent credence by the bestowment of the Nobel prize in economics (an award, Harvey (2005) says, controlled by the Swedish banking class) to the duo in 1974 and 1976, respectively (p. 22). Converts soon found themselves within the ranks of power (for example, Keith Joseph, in the United Kingdom and Paul Volcker in the United States). Harvey (2005) writes, however, that the election of Reagan in 1980 was “crucial” (p. 24) for the diffusion of neoliberalism: under his so-called ‘Reaganomics’, the prevalent ‘Keynesianism’ (that is, a hands-on approach to the free market) was purged from international

economic institutions and neoliberal ‘structural adjustments’ began to be imposed on weaker nations, from Mexico to Egypt to Indonesia (Harvey, 2005, p.167). The paradigm was cemented in the modern social imaginary during the 1990s-2000s, when the competing model of the Soviet Union collapsed, China found its own flavor of neoliberalism, and European labour parties and US Democrats adopted neoliberal policies in their respective markets (Harvey, 2005). Crucially, neoliberalism was not simply a top-down enforcement of the ‘new normal’; it came coated in the attractive mantle of personal liberties, which developed in the popular imagination in parallel to neoliberalism (further outlined below).

The neoliberalist creep has been devastating: wealth inequality, both domestic and international, has risen almost everywhere (Sachs, 2019); the maxims of deregulation and privatization have had disastrous effects, from Bolivian Water Wars (Webber, 2011) to security outsourcing during the Iraq War (Stober, 2007). A ‘second enclosure movement’ - this time, a race to gain monopoly rights to intangible assets for rent extraction - furthers global inequality (Evans, 2008, p.278). Crucially, Paul Dauvergne (2016) argues that the influence of ‘environmentalism of the rich’ - whereby the increasingly-catastrophic climate change the planet is experiencing can be reverted by more conscious consumer choices - has stifled productive action to halt the destruction of the environment. Conservation organizations have focused their efforts on lending legitimacy to the worst polluters - those most responsible for the current situation - in order to obtain from them marginally more sustainable production practices (Dauvergne, 2016). Yet, in doing so, mainstream environmentalism has “increasingly come to reflect the interests and comforts of those with the

most money and most power” (Dauvergne, 2016, p.114), while leaving precisely those who cannot ‘vote with their wallets’ to endure the brunt of the deteriorating climate conditions.

The mercantile/imperialist version of neoliberalism, as described by Evans (2008), closely mirrors what Polanyi (2001) termed the ‘double movement’ - the emergence of liberal *laissez-faire* utopianism in the 17th Century, its implementation through illiberal means, and, finally, the reactionary countermovement of state protectionism (eventually birthing fascism) (p. xxii). The double paradox of liberalism - “*laissez-faire* was planned; planning was not” (Polanyi, 2001, p.147) - rings true today. As will be elucidated in the following section, the modern ‘double movement’ has weakened social protections, all the while shielding powerful institutions from democratic accountability, thus weakening the ‘social contract’ between the state and its citizens.

The Neoliberal Erosion of Democracy:

As described above, neoliberalism (in the West) was mostly voted into office. Attaining the consent of the ruled was necessary due to the stark influence of Taylor’s two collective imaginaries, but also, writes Evans (2008), because “democratic procedures, even if they complicate denying non-elites’ claims (whether from poor nations or social movements) and increase ideological vulnerability, are less costly than Hobbesian anarchy” (p. 245).¹

¹ Further: “global neo-liberalism does not have the option of abandoning the pretense of democracy completely. Elites need to protect themselves from each other, especially at the global level. Enforcing rule bound governance is the least costly and most dependable way to do it [...] Overtly

Yet neoliberalism was also deeply suspicious of democracy. This manifests in a number of ways, including the transfer of power from governments to international institutions, the capturing of the media, and the atomization of society. Neoliberal theory fetishizes technology and consumption as the most efficient solution to society's ills. Ultimately, so the thinking goes, citizens make the most important choices with their wallets, not at the ballot box. (Monboit, 2016)

The stripping away of most roles of the state, as well as the communal links that bind people within a society, means that "the state has been reduced to nothing but authority and obedience, the only remaining force that binds us is state power" (DemocracyNow!, 2016). And as highlighted above, the neoliberal project can only be sustained through a strong state, if not an authoritarian state. Neoliberalism nominally supports free choice, yet individuals are not meant to choose strong collective institutions, but rather further atomization (Harvey, p. 69). 'Freedom' in the neoliberal paradigm, then, is highly selective. According to the Guardian columnist George Monbiot, "freedom from regulation means the freedom to poison rivers, endanger workers," (Monbiot, 2016) etc., but not for the poorest to restructure their own lives, collectivize, or be lifted out of poverty. Instead, Harvey writes, "neoliberalism [only] confers rights and freedoms on those whose income, leisure and security need no enhancing" (Harvey, p. 38).

The global economic institutions of the liberal Washington Consensus (International Monetary Fund, World Bank) and later additions (for example, the World Trade Organization) have grown in importance in the past half century, often at the expense of national governments

abandoning democracy would open a Pandora's Box filled with the potential for elite conflict." [Evans, "Is An Alternative Globalization Possible?," 245.]

(Evans, p. 274). Additionally, these institutions have, as historian Niklas Olsen argues, been “immunized against the pressure of mass democracy to protect the market order” (Zamora, 2019). Author Naomi Klein (2008) has thoroughly investigated how deregulation and privatization policies have been thrust on countries in the wake of manufactured crises. Nevertheless, even when these steps are taken willingly, they are often inevitable: governments seeking loans or investment often face a forced choice between economic stimulus and protecting their citizens. Leading presidential candidates across the planet are similarly loath to go against the neoliberal consensus and thus risk a withdrawal of Wall Street money and economic crises. Even in rich nations, standing in the way of neoliberal expansion is equated with a ‘loss of competitiveness’ in the global financial market. However, as Evans (2008) points out, ‘there is no alternative’ (TINA) is also a convenient narrative for political elites to resort to when confronted by an irate constituency (p. 274-5).

Privatization and deregulation have had a particularly pernicious effect on news media. Together with the advent of 24-hour news television channels, neoliberal policies have eroded journalistic integrity in favour of for-profit ‘stories’ and ‘spectacles’. Truth is less important than ratings - a fact even President Trump was not too self-absorbed to fathom (Temelkuran, 2019, p. 111).² Thus, news media - particularly, though not exclusively, in the United States - have aided the rise of illiberal or anti-democratic forces, solely in the pursuit of profit. Or, as the CEO of the

² “Even the media, the media will absolutely support me, sometimes prior to the election. All those horrible people back there, they’re going to support me. You know why? Because if somebody else won, their ratings would go down, they all would be out of business. Nobody would watch. They all would be out of business.” [Donald Trump as quoted in Ece Temelkuran, *How to Lose a Country*, (4th Estate, 2019): 111.]

CBS broadcasting company so succinctly put it (commenting on Donald Trump's run for the Oval Office): "it might not be good for America, but it's good for us." Privatization has not so much defanged news media, as it has intoxicated them. When, as DemocracyNow! (2016) reports, during the 2016 presidential primaries, more collective screen time by the major American news channels was devoted to showing Donald Trump's empty podium in anticipation of his buffoonery than was spent covering the leading left-wing contender, Bernie Sanders (whose poll numbers were on par with Trump's), it is no wonder that the American electorate chose the man more inclined to disregard democratic checks and balances and less willing to empower working- and middle-class Americans (Ibid). The slow death of the fourth estate - at least in the mainstream - has weakened politicians' democratic accountability to their electorate. All the consequences laid out here have occurred without the aid of authoritarian intervention or ideological influence. Though, as Harvey points out, the manufacturing of consent for the neoliberal project has also relied heavily on "captur[ing] certain segments of the media" (Harvey, p. 40).

However, this paper argues that the most important development in eliciting consent for anti-democratic neoliberal practices has been the appeal to individuality and personal freedom. The neoliberalization of the market came paired with a neoliberalization of culture: elites supported "all manner of diverse cosmopolitan currents" in order to support a culture of "narcissistic exploration of the self" (Harvey, p. 47). As per Charles Taylor (2004), individual rights and freedoms are the bedrock of the shared conception of liberal modernity. The Canadian philosopher finds their source in the establishment of a market economy during the 19th Century, which, for the first time, was driven by individual wants and needs and, conversely, necessitated

that individuals conduct business on an even playing field, each bestowed with the same rights. Neoliberalism did not invent this. Instead, it found an already-fertile ground among the general (Western) public, in which elitist economic paradigms would be welcomed, so long as they were “disguised as cultural ones,” (Harvey, p. 39) stressing the uniqueness of individuals over their role within the collective (as stated in this paper’s introduction). However, this atomization came intimately coupled with a second development: the citizen’s metamorphosis into a consumer.

Neoliberalism, political theorist and author Wendy Brown argues, has ‘undone the demos’ (Brown, 2017). Democracy has ‘turned into a marketplace’ (literally, in the case of American campaign donation practices) in which the basis of democracy - citizen equality, a balanced share of power, people’s collective choice of which values to uphold and societal goals to pursue - has been replaced with market forces and the insular ‘sovereign consumer’(Olsen, 2018).³ Brown argues that there has always been an inherent tension between capitalism and democracy, but that traditional liberalism upheld democratic aspirations, while markets were employed only as tools to enhance citizen’s prosperity (Brown, 2017). Capitalism derived its legitimacy from democracy. Yet readers of Polanyi (2001) will know that liberal economics were also violently rejected in the 19th and early 20th Centuries (p. xxii). The free market failed, according to the Austro-Hungarian economic historian, because it did not serve social ends; it did not reflect society (Polanyi, 2001, p.257). Consequently, the following section will position neoliberalism in the larger liberal social imaginary, arguing that - far from opposing ideologies - liberalism and neoliberalism are based on

³ A term first used by historian Niklas Olsen in his eponymous history of neoliberalism [Niklas Olsen, *The Sovereign Consumer: A New Intellectual History of Neoliberalism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).].

the same fallacy - namely, that individuals can be divorced from society. It will first outline the liberal source of atomization and its effect on the modern individual, then briefly highlight how a rejection of the *status quo* has further eroded democratic institutions across the globe.

Modern Social Imaginaries:

Neoliberal ‘privatization’ refers not only to models of ownership; individual lives, too, have been ‘privatized’. Taylor (1992) writes that they have been “flattened and narrowed” in modernity (p. 4). This has had damaging consequences: a 2018 Economist study showed that more than two in ten people in the US and the United Kingdom (UK) suffer from acute loneliness - the magazine termed it an “epidemic” (the UK even appointed a Minister for Loneliness that year) (The Economist, 2018). There have been many contributing factors: the rise of social technology in the past century is one. As historian Chris Wright (2018) writes in a *CounterPunch* article:

“It seems to me that electronic mediation of human relationships, and of life itself, is inherently alienating and destructive, insofar as it atomizes or isolates. There’s something anti-humanistic about having one’s life be determined by algorithms (algorithms invented and deployed, in many cases, by private corporations).”

As if to underline this argument, Facebook only recently (2017) thought to change its mission statement from the quite uninspired “making the world more open and connected” to a warmer

“give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together” (The Economist, 2018).

The perennial ‘alienation of labour,’ too, has been a factor. The commodification of labour (alongside nature and money) is one of the defining characteristics of the liberal paradigm, as per Polanyi: “to separate labour from other activities of life and subject it to the laws of the market was to annihilate all organic forms of existence and replace them by a different type of organization, an atomistic and individualistic one” (Polanyi, p. 171).⁴ This process was completed under the banner of freedom of choice; non-contractual and land-based ties had to be liquidated so as to enable the mobility of labour, an imperative under the free market (Polanyi, 2001). A similar development can be observed today: free trade and globalization⁵ has brought people across the globe closer together, yet in doing so, it has also undone many a social fabric. “Don’t ask me where I’m from, ask me where I’m local,” urges novelist Taiye Selasi (2014), representing a new breed of mixed-heritage, cosmopolitan individuals. However, by demanding to be seen as unique, separate from a larger national collective, she is also contributing to her own insulation. While this post-national sentiment will continue to spread, society’s social contract remains tied to national governments under the Westphalian order. As has been demonstrated in the Fall of 2019 in the streets of Santiago, Beirut and Hong Kong, social change - even in opposition to neoliberal policies - remains anchored to collective national unity.

⁴ Polanyi compares this development to that of colonialism. (Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 171.)

⁵ Not to speak of the increasing patterns of south-to-north migration, which are quite often catalyzed by north-to-south neoliberal imposition and resource extraction.

Finally, authors across the board have noted a loss of meaning in modernity. Taylor (1994) writes that, “anthropocentrism, by abolishing all horizons of significance, threatens us with a loss of meaning and hence a trivialization of our predicament” (p. 68). He attributes this development to runaway individualism, the primacy of instrumental reason, and institutions that force reason over morality (his “three malaises of modernity”) (Taylor, 1994). The loss of meaning can be traced back to the Enlightenment’s “‘disestablishment’ of religion” (Schubert, p. 168) and the construction of an Apollonian, secular (and allegedly freer) society (Weber, 1905).⁶ Yet irreligion alone cannot account for the loss of meaning. Ece Temelkuran (2019), a Turkish journalist, in describing neoliberalism’s advance in her country, says that “[...] morality was corralled into the holding pen of religion, religion itself was crippled and cropped into marked-friendly ‘spiritualities’” (p. 119). Self-sacrifice and solidarity - even morality itself - were confined to the nuclear family and “exiled” from the public sphere under neoliberalism (Temelkuran, 2019, p.120). An “acceptable amount of apathy was crucial” to endure the stark inequalities of the neoliberal system, and thus purposely cultivated by elites (Temelkuran, 2019, p.184).

The loss of meaning can be attributed to the general atomization of society in the name of personal freedoms. This is not only, as Polanyi illustrated it in the 20th Century, due to a failure of the economic system in reflecting society, but also because the neoliberal economic paradigm has succeeded in reshaping social and political relationships in its image. Yet, as German philosopher Jürgen Habermas (1994) writes: “the identity of the individual is interwoven with

⁶ Though it could also be argued that individualism had its inception in early Protestant ethics, which stressed individual responsibility, as Max Weber famously argued in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905).

collective identities and can be stabilized only in a cultural network that cannot be appropriated as private property any more than the mother tongue itself can be” (p. 129). John Donne’s (1595) pronouncement that “*no man is an Iland, intire of it selfe*” (p. 109) never rang truer, nor more false. As has been shown in this section, the tensions between interconnectivity and loneliness, between individualist cosmopolitanism and the Westphalian order with its national social contract, between the loss of morality and the demand for meaning, and between personal freedoms and the individual’s social inclination have been exacerbated by the infusion of neoliberalism, though not caused by it.

Increasingly, people are acknowledging not only the detrimental effects of neoliberalism, but the inherent inconsistencies in the liberal social imaginary. A particularly ugly reaction - anti-democratic populism - has been investigated by Temelkuran (2019),⁷ mirroring Polanyi’s (2001) thesis, which holds that fascism was a reaction to liberal economic policies (p. 245).⁸ Anti-democratic populism, in a perverse reversal of neoliberalism’s promises, justifies the loss of personal freedoms with a supposed return to community ties (be they national, ethnic, or ideological) (Harvey, p. 79). Yet its erosion of the collective agency bestowed by popular sovereignty and the public sphere (similar to neoliberalism) reveals populism’s limited potential. Habermas (1994) writes that - much like Islamic fundamentalism - populism and nationalism simply “apes a substance that has already disintegrated” (p. 132).

⁷ She argues that atomization, the loss of meaning and the cultivation of apathy are some of its main drivers. (Temelkuran, *How to Lose a Country*, 187)

⁸ He called it a “reform of market economy achieved at the price of the extirpation of all democratic institutions.” (Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 245.)

Alternatives & Conclusions:

This paper has outlined the modern crisis of liberalism, distilled by neoliberalism: its threat to democracy (both inherent in neoliberalism, and as a result of populist reactions) as well as its detrimental effect on the individual and their social ties. It is not enough to condemn neoliberalism: its liberal foundation, too, faces insurmountable challenges. The modern social imaginary of democracy - where it exists - has thinned: for most, it is confined to voting in national or local elections. Even where collective organization occurs, such as in Hong Kong, for example, it is mostly framed negatively, as a rejection of authoritarian impositions, rather than as a collective vision of the 'good life'. Harvey (2005) criticizes neoliberals for preferring to rule by "executive order and by judicial decision making" (p. 66), yet, as contemporary American philosopher Cornel West counters in *What is Democracy?* (2018) with a reference to Plato's challenge, it is precisely through these institutions, rather than through the popular vote, that racist segregation policies ended in the US. The issue, it seems, goes deeper than neoliberalism; democracy needs to be rethought, too.

It is tempting to call for a return to the *agora* and Periclesian exclusivity in citizenship. Political identity *should* be localized and extend beyond simply voting whom to be governed by. The social contract - if the market-inspired language did not already make it apparent - is a concept which not only seems outdated, but is also, according to Polanyi (2001), based on societal constructions that are entirely "unnatural" to humans.(p. 257). Part of the solution will certainly entail rebuilding social "bonds of solidarity," (Temelkuran, 2019, p. 201) and an "effective common purpose through democratic action," (Taylor, 1994, p. 117) as have advised

Temelkuran and Taylor - 'democracy with a human face', if you will. Yet much has changed since the era of the homogenous Athenian *polis*. No model of alternative modernity can be justified that does not account for globalization and multiculturalism. In this vein, Evans (2008) calls for 'counter- hegemonic globalization.' He writes:

If we compare the extent to which communities' lives were shaped by rules formulated by national governments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the extent to which the lives of contemporary communities are shaped by rules generated at the global level, the institutions of twenty-first-century global governance look like a target at least as alluring as their nineteenth-century national counterparts (p. 288).

Already, national pro-democracy and anti-neoliberal protests are inspiring one another - for example, during 2011's Arab Spring, or during the protests which have rocked Hong Kong, the South American continent, and parts of the Middle East in 2019.⁹ The Westphalian order is unlikely to be completely overthrown. Instead, democratic movements ought to outgrow the national stage like a rhizome (to borrow Evans' metaphor), both into the local and into the global. Increasingly, the most important cartographic revisions the coming generations will experience will not be shifting national borders, but receding coastlines. This apocalyptic challenge

⁹ It would not be unthinkable to see, for instance, labourers of multinational companies, such as Amazon, striking against working conditions on a global scale in the near future.

necessitates a fully inspired local electorate, a functioning national democracy, as well as effective collective action which transcends borders. An alternative to liberal modernity is needed.

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Fundamental Rights and Indefinite Rule:

The Case of Electoral Rights in Bolivia and Nicaragua

Alexandro Aparicio

The current human rights system owes a debt to Latin America. The region was one of the first to address the lack of protections for human rights, and in doing so, set the agenda both regionally and internationally for human rights norms we take for granted today. Sadly, the continent that has championed human rights has also had to endure leaders that have sought to undo these advances. In this paper, I will counter the arguments posed by Nicaraguan and Bolivian governments stating that the limitation of presidential terms disregards their fundamental human rights as outlined in the American Convention on Human Rights, the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights, and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and instead argue that this is a misuse of the fundamental principles of human rights to undermine democratic restraints on political power.

Collective human rights agreements in Latin America date back as far as the early twentieth century; however, the most significant discussion on human rights in the Americas took place in Chapultepec, Mexico, in 1945 to formulate a regional consensus on human rights in the post war inter-American system. These talks led to the formation of an Inter-American judicial committee that would draft the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man. This declaration was one of the first human rights instruments in the international system, outlining that human rights “are not derived from the fact that he is a national of a certain state but are based upon attributes of his human personality” (Goldman, 2009, p. 859) even before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. It is this history that demands special attention be given to the application of human rights codes in Latin America. Furthermore, the Organization of American States, the region’s primary multilateral organization, - contained sections dedicated to human rights in its very charter.

These examples illustrate the extensive work done to advance human rights in the region, and as a result of its early adoption of human rights norms, a figurehead for the international fight for human rights.

In a twisted interpretation of this history, the Bolivian government under Evo Morales and Nicaraguan government under Daniel Ortega have claimed that the political rights of themselves and their electorate are threatened by the term limits enshrined under their own constitutions. Daniel Ortega has lead Nicaragua since 2007, however, his current presidency according to the country's own electoral system should have ended in 2011. After the conclusion of his second mandate as Nicaragua's leader, Ortega petitioned the Supreme Electoral Council to review its laws to allow him to run in the following election. The following day the court refused this request. After receiving this news, Ortega proclaimed that this resolution harmed his fundamental rights and returned to the Council to demand a second review. That same day, after a record breaking 90-minute hearing, the court ruled that the articles that limited election terms were unconstitutional (Barahona, 2012).

A similar set of events occurred in Bolivia in 2016, when after having served his second term as president, Evo Morales rejected the notion that he was no longer legally able to run for another term in office. Instead, he attempted to amend the constitution created under his own administration through a referendum. After this failed by a slim margin, and with a lack of further recourse, he convened the Plurinational Constitutional Tribunal using the same arguments as Ortega. This court, with a membership of judges loyal to his political party, deemed that the political right to stand for elections should be considered a fundamental human right which

supersedes the constitution. These arguments are based primarily around three articles of international law, as follows:

Article 23 of the American Convention on Human Rights

1. Every citizen shall enjoy the following rights and opportunities:
 - a. to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;
 - b. to vote and to be elected in genuine periodic elections, which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and by secret ballot that guarantees the free expression of the will of the voters; and
 - c. to have access, under general conditions of equality, to the public service of his country.
2. The law may regulate the exercise of the rights and opportunities referred to in the preceding paragraph only on the basis of age, nationality, residence, language, education, civil and mental capacity, or sentencing by a competent court in criminal proceedings.

Article 25 of the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights

Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions:

- (a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;
- (b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors;
- (c) To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country.

Article 21 of the UN's Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

- (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country (Venice Commission, 2018, p. 15)

In reviewing the report completed by the European Commission of Democracy through Law, otherwise known as the Venice Commission, one can clearly see that the argument which links the constraint on presidential terms to a breach of human rights is one that not only escapes reason but also lacks legal ground. According to this body, removing limitations on election terms from the constitution can undermine the confidence necessary for the political system to function well” (Venice Commission, 2018, p 22). Existing agreements and rulings in the international human rights system further exemplify the problematic nature of these claims. For example, the African Charter of Human Rights and Peoples demonstrates that the need for free access to elections should be bound by the provisions of local law or “Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa” (Venice Commission, 2018, p 15). Similarly, as found by the European Tribunal, the right to free election cannot be considered an absolute one and thus, should be subjugated by one’s constitution. Thus, the cases brought forward by both Morales and Ortega would be subject to their local constitutions, both of which have clearly stated limits on presidential terms.

Whilst the articles presented above specify that individuals have the right to stand for elections, they do not specify that this principle is then applicable to re-election. However, the restrictions outlined in agreements such as Article 1 of the American Convention of Rights are limited only to social reasons for which one may not be discriminated against (reasons of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic status, birth, or any other social condition) (Venice Commission, 2018, p. 13). As there is no social form of discrimination present by barring an individual from re-election, this article similarly demonstrates that the right to re-election is unsubstantiated by international law.

Finally, the argument claiming that the political rights of the people are violated by eliminating a candidate is invalidated as society collectively agrees to abide by its constitution and the laws that govern it. However, if the rights of individuals were believed to be infringed upon by the constitution then an amendment would be initiated. In the case of Bolivia, a referendum was put into place to modify the constitution and extend term limits. However, as this referendum failed to gain support from the majority of the country, it was clear that Bolivians did not feel that their rights had been infringed upon. Secondly, the government regularly exercises its power to implement the criteria for which candidates are able to run for office through conditions such as mandating that candidates be citizens or of a certain age, among other qualifications. These conditions are up to the discretion of one's government, and while they cannot be discriminatory, the right to re-election should be subject to these same parameters.

The Venice Commission has cited numerous agreements on human rights in their report and their conclusion is clear: it is evident that the cases of Nicaragua and Bolivia have formed arguments that do not accord with any major international decisions on human rights. These arguments have attempted to utilize human rights to reaffirm their illegitimate presidencies and weaken the strength of their own democratic institutions. Failing to acknowledge these farcical trials can have deleterious effects on a country, as is already acutely visible in the current state of Nicaragua which has recently been responsible for a government crackdown that left 300 dead in 2018, and in the fraudulent elections of October 20, 2019 in Bolivia which led to widespread chaos in the country. In this article, I have sought to illustrate that human rights are enshrined both in the constitutions of states, and in numerous conventions and charters internationally, to

protect the most essential and irrevocable civil liberties. However, if leaders continue manipulate these rights to best suit their political endeavours, a precedent will be set that will weaken its moral and normative legitimacy both locally and internationally.

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