Confluence

Disruption

Confluence

Editors Team

Letter from the Editors

Almost every facet of life has experienced some sort of change entailed by the unprecedented disruption of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Our third edition of Confluence, written, edited, and produced, amidst that disruption, has been shaped as much by it, as the stories we have sought to capture. The articles of Confluence Disruption touch on how the world has changed, and ways in which it needs to change, moving forward.

The production of Confluence disruption has always been a collaborative effort among the students and faculty at SFU. It has been the dedication of our team of volunteers who choose to take up the challenge, burden and responsibility of contributing to Confluence in these difficult times which has made the publication of this edition possible. The tireless dedication and leadership of Katia Hammond, our Editor-in-chief during the production of this edition, has been integral in not only reviving Confluence, but building a foundation on which it can stand on in the times to come. It has been our privilege to be able to publish the work of SFU students, and we look forward to the stories to come.

Sincerely,

Arjun Shahi

Journal Manager *Confluence 3*

Table of Contents

Approaches to Denuclearization - Analysis on the Agreed Framework and the Six-Party Talks

Mio Senzaki

Introduction

As the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) continues to pursue a nuclear arsenal, a threat continues to remain among the international community. Averna calls DPRK's repeated coercive behaviours in meeting its desires a "Tantrum Diplomacy"[1]. The DPRK joined as a member state to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1985, which is often recognized as the one of the key treaties to confine the spread of nuclear weapons. The DPRK has violated several international regulations on disarmament including the United National Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1718 along with the withdrawal from the NPT in 2003. In response, multiple state actors have taken various diplomatic approaches both bilaterally and multilaterally in confronting the DPRK and working towards a mutually desired outcome in the past several decades. The engagement with the DPRK can be characterized through its domestic politics, bilateral relations with respective states, and multilateral efforts. This paper examines the Agreed Framework in 1994 and the Six-Party Talks in the 2000s where state parties met to combat denuclearization through different but similar approaches. Neither of these two schemes ultimately generated successful outcomes, suggesting that the international community needs approaches that involve more friendly negotiations moving forward.

---

[1] Averna, Richard B, "North Korea: Unstable, Intractable and under New Management-Options for the US Military on the Korean Peninsula," *Seton Hall Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* 15, no. 1 (September 1, 2014): 71. https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=64.6098&site=ehost-live

The Agreed Framework in 1994

Overview

  In 1994, the delegations from the US and the DPRK held discussions for a month in

Geneva to negotiate on resolving nuclear issues in the Korean Peninsula. Prior to the Agreed

Framework, the two parties were involved in little positive diplomatic relations.[2] Leading up to

the talks, the agreed statement and joint statement were generated prior to the formal

negotiations to ensure the objectives of the agreement.[3] The provisions under the agreement

addressed continuing the talks between high officials to ensure the process advanced onwards.

The leading motivation that resulted in such negotiations stemmed from the DPRK's intention to

withdraw from the NPT in 1993, which was followed by the discrepancies between the DPRK's

claims and the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) conclusions on the violations

under the safeguard, including higher levels of plutonium.[4] The United Nations Security Council

(UNSC) responded by issuing a non-binding appeal to the DPRK to accept continuing

inspections, however, the inspectors were asked to leave thereafter. The issues have been

apparent among the international community as there is concern about the continuous threat of

nuclear development and the possible outbreak of war from the disputes between the DPRK and

the state parties or international institutions such as the UN.[5] The US successfully managed to

---

[2] Newnham, Randall E, "'Nukes for Sale Cheap?'. Purchasing Peace with North Korea," *International Studies Perspectives* 5, no. 2 (May 1, 2004): 167. https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=54.7896&site=ehost-live.

[3] International Atomic Energy Agency, "AGREED FRAMEWORK OF 21 OCTOBER 1994 BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA," *Information Circular* (1994): 1. https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/infcircs/1994/infcirc457.pdf

[4] Oh Kongdan, and Hassaig, Ralph C., "The North Korean Bomb and Nuclear Proliferation in Northeast Asia," *Asian Perspective* 19, no. 2 (September 1, 1995): 163. https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=47.1045&site=ehost-live.

[5] Chittaranjan, Kalpana, "North Korea: Nuclear Issues," *Strategic Analysis* 23, no. 8 (November 1, 1999): 1306. https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=51.1077&site=ehost-live.

temporarily suspend its withdrawal as it promised to respect the sovereignty right, and not to interfere with internal affairs.

As part of the whole process, former President Jimmy Carter visited Pyongyang in June 1994 to promote both smoother negotiations on denuclearization and normalization of their political and economic relations.[6] Despite the complexity of this issue, he successfully advised Kim Ⅱ Sung, supreme leader of the DPRK, to negotiate with the US.[7] Under Bill Clinton's administration, this endeavour indicated a shift in their relationship as the DPRK showed a willingness to move forward with the US. Their relations were aimed to enhance communication through bilateral diplomatic dialogue involving "a series of expert-level talks and a round of high-level discussions to work out the modalities of an agreement."[8] Snyder analyzes this bilateral approach as "broad and thorough" since they "identify objectives that were sufficiently important to induce parallel concessions while avoiding setting preconditions that could become obstacles to forward progress."[9] Their agreement is often defined as a 'package deal' since both parties emphasized on proceeding through seeking reciprocal benefits by focusing on building a mutual trust.[10] In fact, the DPRK indicated that it would oblige rightfully as long as the US also does reciprocally.[11]

2000 was marked as an important year during this diplomatic process in which the US greatly relaxed its economic sanctions to promote trading, investment, and financial flow. The

---

[6] Newnham, "Nukes for Sale Cheap?" 168.

[7] Lee Jung-Hoon, and Chung-In, Moon, "The North Korean Nuclear Crisis Revisited: The Case for a Negotiated Settlement," *Security Dialogue* 34, no. 2 (June 1, 2003): 141. https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=54.1150&site=ehost-live.

[8] Chittaranjan, "North Korea: Nuclear Issues," 1309.

[9] Snyder, Scott, "A Framework for Achieving Reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula: Beyond the [1994] Geneva Agreement," *Asian Survey* 35, no. 8 (August 1, 1995): 704. https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=46.3657&site=ehost-live.

[10] Newnham, "Nukes for Sale Cheap?" 169.

[11] Snyder, "Beyond the [1994] Geneva Agreement," 705-706.

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright visited Pyongyang to express her goodwill, and to clarify the DPRK's position on the missile program, in which the report on its considerations in giving up the nuclear program, and continuing relations with the US could be obtained.[12]

Policy of Incentives/Compromises

A policy of incentives upon seeking reciprocal benefits was implemented to expand such diplomatic relations, through economic support and promise to improve their relations. It intended to discourage nuclear development through incentives, including financial support and working towards normalized relations.[13] The Clinton administration opted for the amiable negotiations and friendly approach rather than coercive sanctions. In fact, the United States Secretary of Defense William Perry suggested President Bill Clinton have friendly negotiations with the DPRK based on the policy review conducted.[14] Such a policy of incentives adopted could successfully pose less threat, easing of negative sanctions, and aid the DPRK which was deeply in need of economic payoffs.[15]

The policy of incentives often involved compromising. Leading up to reaching an agreement, the two parties had compromised on several proposals to make the procedures possible. The Clinton administration responded to the DPRK's proposal on creating a package deal to the issues, but insisted that the DPRK permit the IAEA's inspections and be open to

---

[12] Arms Control Association, "Facts Sheets & Briefs," The U.S.-North Korean Agreed Framework at a Glance. July, 2018. https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/agreedframework
[13] Lee and Chung-In, "The North Korean Nuclear Crisis Revisited," 142.
[14] Chittaranjan, "North Korea: Nuclear Issues," 1315.
[15] Newnham, "Nukes for Sale Cheap?" 171.

building relations with the South. Upon acceptance, the two parties conducted discussions step by step to enhance the effectiveness of the results and improvement of their relations.[16]

The DPRK agreed to freeze its nuclear program and graphite-moderated reactors immediately, as well as to comply with various safeguard terms under the IAEA. In exchange, the implementation of two light-water reactors (LWR) and an annual provision of 500,000 tonnes of heavy fuel oil (HFO) were promised by the US to compensate the lost energy[17]. In fact, the DPRK insisted that the US "lift the economic embargo as early as possible to compensate for the losses to be caused by discontinued missile export."[18]

Further, the US agreed to aid the DPRK in reforming and normalizing political/economic relations including the relaxation of trading barriers through the policy of engagement. In exchange, they both hoped for "full mutual diplomatic recognition."[19] The DPRK also actively participated in the enactment of a "Free Economic and Trade Zone in Rajin-Sonbong" to promote the free flow of economic exchange.[20]

The DPRK agreed to work towards the implementation of "the 1992 North-South Declaration on the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula,"[21] for a peaceful relationship with the Republic of Korea (ROK). The US encouraged the North-South dialogue since it recognized that such efforts were necessary to make progress on denuclearization more achievable. Through its peaceful stance, the US successfully managed to temporarily suspend the DPRK's withdrawal

---

[16] Aoki, Naoko, "KEDO: How multilateral cooperation helped an unprecedented North Korean project," *Center for International & Security Studies* (2017): 3. https://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/handle/1903/20647/AOKI%20Working%20Paper%20KEDO_multilateral_cooperation_101617.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[17] Chittaranjan, "North Korea: Nuclear Issues," 1309.

[18] Newnham, "Nukes for Sale Cheap?" 172.

[19] Cotton, James, "Mixed Signals on Korean Security," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 18, no. 4 (March 1, 1997): 402. https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=48.2343&site=ehost-live.

[20] Ibid., 404.

[21] Chittaranjan, "North Korea: Nuclear Issues," 1310.

from the NPT, as well as permitting several IAEA inspections.[22] This presents a successful compromise since "the United States won a freeze on the North Korean nuclear program, while the North achieved economic aid and a measure of diplomatic respect."[23]

Establishment of the KEDO

To further proceed with what was negotiated, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) was established as a multilateral organization to implement the Agreed Framework in practical and financial aspects. Its characteristics were unique in nature since the "founding members had historically hostile relations with North Korea."[24] It was established between the US, Japan and the ROK to overcome the financial concerns of the US over the implementation of the LWRs.[25] The representatives from the state parties were involved in a series of discussions to provide the DPRK with alternative energy methods.[26] This resulted in smoother financial and domestic support from state members, as well as a deterrence in erupting disputes, which allowed the organization to be more involved when the DPRK had unreasonable demands.[27]

Aside from the founding states, several other countries as well as the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) have joined since the KEDO was established.[28] Despite the growth in the number of member states, the DPRK's lack of technical skills and other necessities were burdensome to proceed with the implementation of the LWRs.[29] It further encountered an

---

[22] Cotton, "Mixed Signals on Korean Security," 403.

[23] Newnham, "Nukes for Sale Cheap?" 169.

[24] Aoki, "KEDO," 4.

[25] Ibid., 3.

[26] Chittaranjan, "North Korea: Nuclear Issues," 1310.

[27] Aoki, "KEDO," 7.

[28] Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Korean Peninsula Energy Development," (October, 2011). https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/korean-peninsula-energy-development-organization-kedo/

[29] Aoki, "KEDO," 9.

issue, when it rejected the ROK's contributions in providing the LWRs. As an immediate

remedy, the American design was chosen as a replacement, and required to consult with the

KEDO in the future.[30] The use of US technology strengthened the ties between the two, through

more reliance on American plans.

Implementation/Verification

The IAEA is an agency to monitor the freeze of nuclear programmes in the DPRK upon a

request from the UNSC.[31] If the DPRK's threatening activities are detected, it works to create

official reports. For example, its report in 2002 indicated the DPRK's unsafeguarded uranium

enrichment programme.

The Agreed Framework was not a legally binding treaty, but its compliances were rather

voluntary. It served as "a set of guidelines that helps to regulate and render more predictable the

behaviour of the two state parties toward each other."[32] Without a formal body that ensured

compliance, the US and the DPRK had constructed their own groundworks over a series of

negotiations. Using incentives, both parties had shown their willingness to commit to the

agreements upon trusting each other. Such reciprocal commitments meant that the achievement

of goals or attempts to violate could be apparently observed.[33] Continuous discussions facilitated

---

[30] Cotton, "Mixed Signals on Korean Security," 407.

[31] International Atomic Energy Agency BOARD OF GOVERNORS, "REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NPT SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE AGENCY AND THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA," November 29, 2002. https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/gov2002-60.pdf

[32] Hayes, Peter, Von Hippel, David, and Tean, "Modernizing the US-DPRK Agreed Framework: The Energy Imperative," *Asian Perspective* 26, no. 1 (January 1, 2002): 10. https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=52.7521&site=ehost-live

[33] Snyder, "Beyond the [1994] Geneva Agreement," 704.

several checkpoints on a timeline, which also allowed the parties to verify their level of commitment, and terminate the arrangements if a party breaches rules.

The Impact

As the bilateral negotiations under the Agreed Framework initially generated positive outcomes, there was hope for thorough denuclearization and peaceful relations upon the relaxation of sanctions. The DPRK successfully satisfied the terms under the supervision of the IAEA, including the freezing of plutonium-based nuclear programs from 1994 to 2002, and the removal of the 5-megawatt reactors' fuel rods from 1994 to 2002.[34] At first, many were optimistic about reaching a settlement under this framework.

Since the progress under the Agreed Framework and the KEDO were slow without an effective binding mechanism, what was expected to be achieved in the future was unclear as the established timeline was merely a target date. The DPRK felt that their built trust on commitment was weakened from the multiple delays of what was promised in exchange. Subsequently, the tensions had increased as the Bush administration terminated all the diplomatic exchanges, including the implementation of the LWRs and the HFO shipments, as well as did not fulfill the alternative measures.[35] As President Bush was skeptical in building positive relations with the DPRK, he had taken a more hostile attitude to what he called an "Axis of Evil."[36] He endorsed the "hard-line rejectionist approach that calls for North Korea to dismantle first, with negotiations coming later" through imposing negative sanctions.[37]

---

[34] Newnham, "Nukes for Sale Cheap?" 170.

[35] Aoki, "KEDO," 8.

[36] Hayes Hippel and Tean, "Modernizing the US-DPRK Agreed Framework," 13.

[37] Lee and Chung-In, "The North Korean Nuclear Crisis Revisited," 145.

Aside from the termination of projects under the Bush administration, their relations were further exacerbated as James Kelly, the US Assistant Secretary of State, accused the DPRK of starting its uranium-enrichment program in 2002, which resulted in the breakdown of the Agreed Framework in the following year.[38] Despite President Clinton's initiatives, "the abandonment of the 1994 pact by both sides was complete" by 2003 as both parties blamed each other on failures in commitment.[39] The impact of the breakdown was catastrophic as the DPRK had reinstated its coercive attitude towards the other states and international institutions, by indicating the use of military force in response to sanctions.[40] Not only did North Korea expel the IAEA inspectors but also withdrew from the NPT in a subsequent year.[41] In short, the Agreed Framework missed an opportunity to contain the DPRK's nuclear development.

Six-Party Talks

Overview

Following the establishment of the Agreed Framework, the DPRK's willingness to comply with the terms made the continuous positive relations possible. In addition, the DPRK's Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun attended the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum in 2000 to promote diplomatic relations with several other states. In 2000, the political leaders from the DPRK and the ROK undertook a historic three-day summit in Pyongyang for the first time since the Korean War to work towards reunification.

---

[38] Newnham, "Nukes for Sale Cheap?" 174.

[39] Ibid., 174.

[40] Ibid., 174.

[41] Lee and Chung-In, "The North Korean Nuclear Crisis Revisited," 137.

As the breakdown of the Agreed Framework had generated unintended consequences of continuing nuclear threat, a multilateral approach was arranged by several states to resume diplomatic processes on nuclear issues. To reaffirm the DPRK, that had feared the attack from the US, the officials under the Bush administration responded in a writing on the 2003 Joint Statement that it had no intentions in doing so.[42]

The Six-Party talks refer to a series of negotiations in the 2000s through cooperation between the US, the DPRK, the ROK, the People's Republic of China (PRC), Japan and Russia.[43] This involved six rounds of meetings for several years to negotiate with the DPRK starting in 2003 as the DPRK showed its willingness in proceeding with the Six-Party Talks to be held in Beijing. The leading motivation in arranging this meeting was the DPRK's withdrawal from the NPT following the failure of the Agreed Framework and the US's hostile policy. Not only did the DPRK undermine the potency of the international non-proliferation regime, but it also debilitated the ability of the IAEA.[44] The Six-Party Talks had intended to seek greater efficacy in persuading the DPRK through recognizing the importance of engagement and collaborative attempts. In a broader view, the parties gathered to consider goal-directed arrangements on regional security concerning nuclear development and made various efforts in mitigating the situations.[45]

The Six-Party Talks covered wider fields in diplomacy than those of the Agreed Framework, yet the negotiation processes are similar in nature, since the former also involved negotiation tactics that are step by step and "accompanied by specific conditions and

---

[42] The White House, "Joint Statement."

[43] Arms Control Association, "Facts Sheets & Briefs."

[44] Kim, Ji-Hyun, "Toward a Comprehensive Understanding of North Korea's Nuclear Conundrum: The Six Parties in Complex Interdependence from 2002 to 2008," *Asian Politics and Policy* 3, no. 2 (April 1, 2011): 258. https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=61.6876&site=ehost-live

[45] Ibid., 255.

corresponding incentives that may affect the target state's calculations about cost and benefits."[46] Kim indicates that "this logic drew the regional powers and the United States, though unwillingly, into a compromising position in their dealings with Pyongyang's brinkmanship."[47] However, the negotiations under the Six-Party Talks were far more complicated due to the intertwined linkages between state parties on various issues, which generated divergent objectives in this matter. To overcome difficulties in reaching a consensus beyond the core objective of denuclearization, the parties conducted several other bilateral negotiations in parallel to ensure their commitment and willingness to work towards regional peace.

The initial negotiations precluded friendly provisions or agreements as the US kept its coercive stance which was what the DPRK resented. Despite that, the PRC's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Wang Yi, kindly indicated a synopsis on consensus including further commitments and avoidance of any actions that could deteriorate the situation. After the initial session, the US, Japan and the ROK met to "discuss joint strategies for the next round and possibilities for a verifiable inspection system."[48] Despite the Bush administration's coercive stance on the issue, they showed a willingness to loosen up their strategies to work through a more peaceful path. Even though the official statements were not generated during the second and third round of talks in 2004, they showed some sort of progress where the DPRK offered to dismantle its nuclear program, but continue other peaceful nuclear activities such as for economic use.[49] The progress was slowed down as five parties had divergent views on its intention in continuing such "peaceful" nuclear activities. For example, the US, Japan and the

---

[46] Tan, Ming Hui, "Multilateral Engagement of North Korea: An Assessment of the Six-Party Talks and the ASE an Regional Forum," *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 5, no. 2 (November 1, 2017): 310. https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=68.4093&site=ehost-live

[47] Kim, "Toward a Comprehensive Understanding of North Korea's Nuclear Conundrum," 269.

[48] Arms Control Association, "Facts Sheets & Briefs."

[49] Ibid.

ROK insisted on the complete dismantling of all nuclear facilities, unlike the specified reactors under the Agreed Framework. The US proposed step by step programs that provided the DPRK a three-month period to gradually dismantle nuclear development during the third round of the negotiations and offered the DPRK compensation so that they would agree. Even though the DPRK was unwilling to join the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks, the US brought its interests back by clarifying its peaceful stance and efforts in bilateral negotiations.

The parties were able to generate a Joint Statement in 2005 to work towards a mutually desired outcome through numerous compromises.[50] The US, for example, ensured that it would respect the DPRK's sovereignty rights, not to invade, and to strengthen economic ties for the DPRK to rejoin the NPT in exchange. However, the terms under the Joint Statement still included broad terms that were merely stating their goals, but nothing further. Moreover, once the parties undertook establishing a verification body, the DPRK government officials showed less support.[51]

As the involved parties had divergent domestic interests, opinions, and priorities, they lacked a uniformity to manage the issue effectively. The intransigent US and Japan sought to adopt a more coercive approach since they "prefer to avoid rewarding the DPRK's bad behaviour with positive incentives."[52] In contrast, Russia, the PRC and the ROK valued the softer approach through engagement to avoid regional instability. Not only was there a misalignment among the five parties, but some of them also had competitive views on who should take a leadership role in the region. For example, the PRC regarded the efforts as an opportunity to assert its diplomatic

---

[50] Council on Foreign Relations, "North Korean Nuclear Negotiation". 2020. https://www.cfr.org/timeline/north-korean-nuclear-negotiations

[51] Cossa, Ralph A, "Six-Party Talks [with North Korea]: Will/Should They Resume?" *American Foreign Policy Interests* 34, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 30. https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=62.5290&site=ehost-live

[52] Tan, "Multilateral Engagement of North Korea," 317.

power as a new emerging state in the region. To better understand the diplomatic processes in the Six-Party Talks, differences in state parties' strategies are analyzed as each actor plays its role differently.

The US

After President Bush came into the office, he implemented a coercive strategy that included both offensive measures to pressure Kim Jong-il's authority, and defensive measures to mitigate nuclear threats domestically.[53] As the commitment problem between the US and the DPRK was evident under the 1994 Agreed Framework, a more coercive approach had become the US's viable blueprint. The US viewed the nuclear threat, the creation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and terrorism jointly, and had little hopes that the DPRK would comply with the agreement.[54] The US considered this multilateral approach to weaken the DPRK's regime and its bargaining power in negotiations.

The Bush administration's non-tolerant approach, so-called 'hawk engagement' was based on the conservative and pessimistic view that there is little feasibility in negotiations with the DPRK.[55] It is clearly shown during the first round of the discussions in 2003, when it called for "complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement (CVID) towards the DPRK."[56] After the Joint Statement, the more offensive measure was taken to weaken the DPRK's regime by creating "sufficient utility losses" through $25 million of financial sanctions targeted at businesses as well as political officials, pushing forward the punitive measures with the UNSC to

---

[53] Strohmaier, James, "Strategic Coercion and US-DPRK [North Korea] Stalemate: The End of the Six-Party Talks?" *Journal of East Asian Affairs* 20, no. 2 (September 1, 2006): 2. https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=57.5426&site=ehost-live

[54] Kim, "Toward a Comprehensive Understanding of North Korea's Nuclear Conundrum," 270.

[55] Strohmaier, "Strategic Coercion and US-DPRK [North Korea] Stalemate," 8.

[56] Ibid., 8.

compel its actions.[57] It resulted in provoking reciprocal threatening actions as the DPRK was responding by firing more missiles.

The US' defensive strategy was aimed to contain the DPRK's efforts in undermining the US's ability through refurbishing its defence mechanisms.[58] In 2003, the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) was established with other several member states aiming to prevent the trafficking of WMD.[59] Moreover, the US made efforts in strengthening bilateral security ties with Japan and the ROK to expand its defensive capability. Japan and the US collaborated to tighten their sanction measures and "develop a $3 billion missile interceptor to destroy incoming ballistic missiles."[60] The US increased its flexibility in the military at the United States Forces Korea (USFK) to combine its force with that of the ROK to reinforce its security measures.[61]

The ROK

The ROK's strategy under President Roh Moo-hyun was referred to as 'Peace and Prosperity Policy' or 'Sunshine Policy' as he believed that engagement and peaceful cooperation with the DPRK would be the most effective scheme.[62] In fact, the ROK greatly feared it would bear the burden of the collapse of the DPRK's regime as the US and other Western states intended to proceed.[63] The Roh administration highlighted that the Cold War mindset should be abandoned to be optimistic in approaching the DPRK peacefully. The ROK continued to provide financial and humanitarian aid, hoping that it would lead to rapprochement in the Korean

---

[57] Ibid., 9.

[58] Ibid., 6.

[59] Ibid., 22.

[60] Ibid., 21.

[61] Ibid., 20.

[62] Ibid., 10.

[63] Kim, "Toward a Comprehensive Understanding of North Korea's Nuclear Conundrum," 265.

Peninsula over time. Such a liberal approach also included assisting with several extensive economic projects such as the 'Kaesong Industrial Complex Project,' hoping to build mutual trust towards restoring relations.[64] Through the friendly compromising, the ROK "sought to raise its leverage in the North Korean nuclear bargaining within the six-party framework."[65]

The PRC

Likewise, the PRC had resisted the ideas of coercive strategies, and opted for neighbourly engagement and building stronger diplomatic, economic, and political ties under the Six-Party Talks.[66] As the PRC regarded its role as a player "mediating between the US and the DPRK," its objectives were to maintain regional stability, economic prosperity, and empowerment of its reign.[67] It had assisted greatly in the DPRK's economy through trading and financial aid to maintain friendly relations. In fact, the PRC as a member of the UNSC, who holds veto power, pressured the institution to avoid the use of armed sanctions even if the DPRK fails to comply.[68]

Japan and Russia

As Japan greatly fears the nuclear programs due to its geographical proximities to the DPRK, it wishes for denuclearization and regional security. Further, the ongoing issues of abducted Japanese citizens imply Japan's willingness to resolve the matter with the DPRK.

---

[64] Ibid., 264.

[65] Ibid., 265.

[66] Delury, John, "Triple-Pronged Engagement: China's Approach to North Korea," *American Foreign Policy Interests* 34, no. 2 (March 1, 2012): 72. https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=62.6570&site=ehost-live

[67] Ibid., 72.

[68] Kim, "Toward a Comprehensive Understanding of North Korea's Nuclear Conundrum," 267.

However, complicated political relations make Japan's diplomatic ability limited.[69] For example, Japan's political will is fairly influenced by that of the US.[70]

Russia's stance is that it opposes imposing sanctions, threats, as well as making efforts in bringing a regime change within the DPRK.[71] As Russia advocates for building mutual trust and security for all members, maintaining to aid the DPRK in developing peaceful nuclear activities, the DPRK generally approved Russia's propositions. Although the Bush administration disliked Russia's approach at first, officials from both the US and Russia believed at the time that cooperation would be important onwards.[72]

The Impact

Over the course of its negotiations, the initiatives under the Six-Party Talks were initially successful. The DPRK agreed to end its nuclear development, rejoin the NPT, and grant the IAEA's inspections in 2005[73]. The tensions were greatly relieved as sanctions were eased between the DPRK and other states, creating more hopes for a bigger step towards peaceful coexistence in the Northeast Asian region.

Despite the initial success following the negotiations, a lack of uniformity and diverse strategies among the five states limited their influence over the DPRK. Consequently, an increased hostility resulted in the termination of negotiations in 2008.[74] The negative consequences have impacted the five state members differently. There has been a great fear in

---

[69] Okano-Hejimans, Maaike, "Japan as Spoiler in the Six-Party Talks: Single-Issue Politics and Economic Diplomacy Towards North Korea." *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 6, no 10 (October, 2018): 2.

[70] Okano-Hejimans, "Japan as Spoiler in the Six-Party Talks," 8.

[71] Toloraya, Georgy, "THE SIX PARTY TALKS: A RUSSIAN PERSPECTIVE," *Asian Perspective* 32, no 4 (2018): 51. https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/article/784337/pdf

[72] Toloraya, "A RUSSIAN PERSPECTIVE," 53.

[73] Arms Control Association, "Facts Sheets & Briefs."

[74] Kim, "Toward a Comprehensive Understanding of North Korea's Nuclear Conundrum," 267.

Japan and the ROK that their national securities were still in danger from the historical and political frictions with the DPRK. The US further developed its apprehensions for global terrorism and negative effects on its global superpower, whereas China and Russia held much fewer concerns.[75] The UNSC showed its intentions in imposing punitive measures in response to the DPRK's two missile tests in violation of the UNSC Resolution in 2009. In this instance, it seemed that the more efforts in enacting sanctions, the more tensions there were. Several states, particularly the PRC, had stressed the importance of resuming the negotiations after the DPRK's position in halting involvement.[76]

In subsequent years, supplementary discussions both bilaterally and multilaterally were made in the meantime as the "two forums provide government officials with an opportunity to talk with one another in their private capacities, along with selected scholars who are well-versed in official positions."[77] The officials between the US and the DPRK continued discussions through the National Committee on American Foreign Policy (NCAFP), which endeavoured to keep the latter involved in this matter.[78] Further, the representatives met multilaterally to discuss security issues through the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NEACD) and the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific where "DPRK colleagues, other Six-Party Talks participants, and the broader East Asia security community" meet to discuss on the prevention of WMD.[79] Those efforts are significant in taking the next step forward.

---

[75] Ibid., 273.

[76] Arms Control Association, "Facts Sheets & Briefs."

[77] Cossa, "Six-Party Talks [with North Korea]," 33.

[78] Ibid., 33.

[79] Ibid., 33.

Conclusion

This paper analyzed the Agreed Framework as a bilateral approach, and Six-Party Talks as a multilateral approach in combating the issue of nuclear development and the increased tensions among the international community. Despite their series of careful negotiations, and the processes among the high government officials, they both ultimately faced difficulties in generating positive outcomes. To overcome this issue, it is necessary to cooperatively work and negotiate with the DPRK, which would require continuing efforts in step-by-step friendly talks both bilaterally and multilaterally. We need to avoid a disruption within the international community incurred by practices of nuclear weapons, before it becomes too late, and think of effective ways to move forward.

References

Aoki, Naoko. "KEDO: How multilateral cooperation helped an unprecedented North Korean project." *Center for International & Security Studies* (2017): 1-11. https://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/handle/1903/20647/AOKI%20Working%20Paper%20KEDO_multilateral_cooperation_101617.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Arms Control Association. "Facts Sheets & Briefs." Six-Party Talks at a Glance. June, 2018. https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/6partytalks

Arms Control Association. "Facts Sheets & Briefs." The U.S.-North Korean Agreed Framework at a Glance. July, 2018. https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/agreedframework

Averna, Richard B. "North Korea: Unstable, Intractable and under New Management-Options for the US Military on the Korean Peninsula." *Seton Hall Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* 15, no. 1 (September 1, 2014): 65–80. https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=64.6098&site=ehost-live

Chittaranjan, Kalpana. "North Korea: Nuclear Issues." *Strategic Analysis* 23, no. 8 (November 1, 1999): 1305–18. https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=51.1077&site=ehost-live.

Cossa, Ralph A. "Six-Party Talks [with North Korea]: Will/Should They Resume?" *American Foreign Policy Interests* 34, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 27–33. https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=62.5290&site=ehost-live.

Cotton, James. "Mixed Signals on Korean Security." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 18, no. 4

(March 1, 1997): 400–416. https://search-ebscohost-

com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=48.2343&site=ehost-live.

Council on Foreign Relations. "North Korean Nuclear Negotiation," 2020.

https://www.cfr.org/timeline/north-korean-nuclear-negotiations

Delury, John. "Triple-Pronged Engagement: China's Approach to North Korea." *American*

Foreign Policy Interests 34, no. 2 (March 1, 2012): 69–73. https://search-ebscohost-

com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=62.6570&site=ehost-live.

Hayes, Peter, Von Hippel, David, and Tean, Nautilus. "Modernizing the US-DPRK Agreed

Framework: The Energy Imperative." *Asian Perspective* 26, no. 1 (January 1, 2002): 9–

28. https://search-ebscohost-

com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=52.7521&site=ehost-live.

International Atomic Energy Agency. "AGREED FRAMEWORK OF 21 OCTOBER 1994

BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE DEMOCRATIC

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA." *Information Circular* (1994): 1-4.

https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/infcircs/1994/infcirc457

.pdf

International Atomic Energy Agency BOARD OF GOVERNORS. "REPORT BY THE

DIRECTOR GENERAL ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NPT

SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE AGENCY AND THE

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA." November 29,

2002. https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/gov2002-60.pdf

Kim, Ji-Hyun. "Toward a Comprehensive Understanding of North Korea's Nuclear Conundrum:

    The Six Parties in Complex Interdependence from 2002 to 2008." *Asian Politics and*

    Policy 3, no. 2 (April 1, 2011): 249–83. https://search-ebscohost-

    com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=61.6876&site=ehost-live.

Nuclear Threat Initiative. "KOREAN PENINSULA ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

    ORGANIZATION (KEDO)". (October, 2011). https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-

    regimes/korean-peninsula-energy-development-organization-kedo/

Newnham, Randall E. "'Nukes for Sale Cheap?'. Purchasing Peace with North Korea."

    International Studies Perspectives 5, no. 2 (May 1, 2004): 164–78. https://search-

    ebscohost-

    com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=54.7896&site=ehost-live.

Lee Jung-Hoon, and Chung-In, Moon. "The North Korean Nuclear Crisis Revisited: The Case

    for a Negotiated Settlement." *Security Dialogue* 34, no. 2 (June 1, 2003): 135–51.

    https://search-ebscohost-

    com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=54.1150&site=ehost-live.

Oh Kongdan, and Hassaig, Ralph C. "The North Korean Bomb and Nuclear Proliferation in

    Northeast Asia." *Asian Perspective* 19, no. 2 (September 1, 1995): 153–74.

    https://search-ebscohost-

    com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=47.1045&site=ehost-live.

Okano-Hejimans, Maaike. "Japan as Spoiler in the Six-Party Talks: Single-Issue Politics and

    Economic Diplomacy Towards North Korea." *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 6, no 10

    (October, 2018): 1-10. https://apjjf.org/-Maaike-Okano-Heijmans/2929/article.html

Snyder, Scott. "A Framework for Achieving Reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula: Beyond the

    [1994] Geneva Agreement." *Asian Survey* 35, no. 8 (August 1, 1995): 699–710.

    https://search-ebscohost-

    com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=46.3657&site=ehost-live.

Strohmaier, James. "Strategic Coercion and US-DPRK [North Korea] Stalemate: The End of the

    Six-Party Talks?" *Journal of East Asian Affairs* 20, no. 2 (September 1, 2006): 1–33.

    https://search-ebscohost-

    com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=57.5426&site=ehost-live.

Tan, Ming Hui. "Multilateral Engagement of North Korea: An Assessment of the Six-Party

    Talks and the ASE an Regional Forum." *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 5, no. 2

    (November 1, 2017): 307–24. https://search-ebscohost-

    com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ijh&AN=68.4093&site=ehost-live.

The White House. "Joint Statement Between the United States of America and the Republic of

    Korea". (2003). https://georgewbush-

    whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/05/20030514-17.html

Toloraya, Georgy. "THE SIX PARTY TALKS: A RUSSIAN PERSPECTIVE." Asian

    Perspective 32, no 4 (2018): 45–69. https://muse-jhu-

    edu.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/article/784337/pdf.

Book Review – *The Lies that Bind: Rethinking Identity* **(2018); Anthony K. Appiah**

Seif Kazamel

Identity as a social construct is one of the oldest and most important social artifacts in the history of human civilizations. According to scholar Kwame Anthony Appiah, identity paradigms constitute social constructions based on features such as gender, race, religion, or class, amongst other distinctive indicators.[80] In this sense, identities are organizational tools that humans may rely on to categorize themselves in alignment with or in contrast to one another. More importantly, identities provide humans with historical and socio-political anchors, which are crucial in the formulation and realization of a deep and necessary sense of belonging. Simultaneously, identities can also be destructive forces lest they become weaponized, a fact symbolized by a myriad of observable identity-related conflicts today such as the Rohingya and Nagorno-Karabakh crises, or Hindu-Muslim clashes accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, amongst others. In a world of many competing identities and claims, *how can humans manage such complex, at times ferocious, forces to avoid conflict yet achieve their personal and group objectives?*

Amidst a wave of global socio-political challenges such as the rapid proliferation of populism in America and Europe, consultation with the appropriate scholarship on identity and social ethics is crucial to answering this book review's question. As such, this book review will provide a synopsis and an evaluation of Appiah's latest addition to the field – *The Lies that Bind: Rethinking Identity* – an account of the author's most essential arguments over identity constructs, their inner workings, and his endorsements on how to manage them. Meant to serve as a relevant reference point to all humans as they tackle these social forces' internal and external

---

[80] Anthony Appiah, *The Lies that Bind: Rethinking Identity* (Newyork: Liveright Publishing Corp., 2018), Kindle.

challenges, this book's contribution to the broader ethics and identity scholarship will be evaluated.

Born and raised in an English-Ghanaian household,[81] Professor Appiah has enjoyed an intriguingly diverse upbringing. His personal experience best embodies a global citizen's, reflected by his diverse living experience in Africa, Europe, and now North America.[82] With a relatively well-rounded personal and academic understanding of the infinite diversities and inherent similarities amongst distinct communities worldwide, Appiah is arguably positioned as a very well-suited expert on identity questions. Appiah's expertise on identity topics was best illustrated in *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, a well-timed endeavour in the realms of ethics and national identities. Appiah's attempt at forming global principles of ethics for human relations in *Cosmopolitanism* revolves around the fact that, in a world occupied by billions of strangers, one ought to rethink identity markers – be they religious, racial, or cultural and so on – to avoid falling prey to the exclusionary consequences of heavily identifying with these socially-constructed boundaries.[83] In short, *Cosmopolitanism* promotes a world where distinct communities can find a shared space where fundamental human values or attributes – such as sharing ancestries or belonging to the same biological species – are understood, respected, and taken more seriously. At the same time, differences are tolerated rather than taken as grounds for conflict and indifference.[84]

The Lies that Bind, Appiah's latest attempt for a doctrine on the fundamentals of identity constructs, is divided into six chapters, of which the first half provides historical and

---

[81] Appiah, *Lies that Bind*.
[82] Appiah, *Lies that Bind*.
[83] Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (Newyork: W.W. Norton, 2006).
[84] Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*.

philosophical frameworks, while the second half engages with the concepts of race, class, and culture. The crux of the author's writing in this book reaffirms and further builds upon the fundamentals of its predecessor as it attempts to reiterate and recontextualize the significance of shared human values, irrespective of distinctions in people's beliefs or socio-political associations. In true cosmopolitan fashion, Appiah's new book promotes the promised value of developing an appreciation towards the elements of core mutuality and resemblance between diverse communities. At the same time – as per Appiah's long-held belief – avoiding a reliance on elements of dissimilarity or 'otherness' is a necessary resolution to divisive identity politics and bloody conflicts worldwide.

By drawing on other scientific fields, *The Lies that Bind* expands its predecessor's scope as it refers to a psychological-ontological dynamic he deems key to identity formation: 'essentialism.' Essentialism states that "certain categories have an underlying reality or true nature that one cannot observe directly," where the essentialized element, be it an ideology, tradition, or trait, "gives an object its identity, and is responsible for other similarities that category members share."[85] According to the text, essentialism incorporates itself in the identity formation process in children as young as four years of age, instilling a false sense of inherent value to the labels that children receive or pick up during the early stages of their development. Socio-politically, the problematic core of essentialism is reflected in the tendency of essentialist ideologies to define nationality according to ethnic or nationalist traits rather than according to citizenship, participation, or other democratic values.

---

[85] Appiah, *Lies that Bind*, 25.

Furthermore, Appiah implicates essentialist ideologies in the entrenchment of an inaccurate social assumption that women are fundamentally indifferent to economics, philosophy, and politics, perpetuating gender inequality due to widespread inaccurate designations of male and female attributes. In light of this, the author uses his book to direct special attention to feminist theory's contributions, often overlooked in the mainstream, to identity studies. Contrary to prevalent assumptions, Appiah's book demonstrates that feminist theory has been instrumental in highlighting the shortcomings of assuming a direct link between behaviour and physical features, specifically in the realm of gender. Furthermore, Appiah credits feminist theories for helping scholars recognize and make sense of other social inequalities such as discrimination based on race, ethnicity, or culture, all elements discussed extensively in Appiah's book.

Interestingly, however, Appiah is keen on absolving identity as his book's central object of critique. Instead, he frames essentialist ideologies behind some communities' widespread tendency to engrain and ultimately weaponize their identity differences. Since identity as a social construct matters significantly to its adoptees, more often than not, this personal significance or association is abused by various groups at different times and spaces, placing the devout followers of a particular religion or culture under the influence of exploitative tactics employed by those with power and veiled agendas. In response to such dynamics, the author prescribes that individuals ought to recognize these potent, highly overlooked procedures as an ultimate necessity on the path towards a world where difference ceases to be a primary element of conflict and division between different societies.

However, the author states that it is far from enough to appreciate and pay attention to the inherent ties that connect different communities. Pleas for a more united and inclusive world are

made in the book; since no culture is pure, Appiah encourages loosening up identity structures to remedy identity politics' ugly mishaps. Whether in the form of social movements or worst-case scenarios such as ethnic genocides, identity-related clashes have demonstrated an alarming ability to engulf the world in bloody conflicts every human could do well without. As the text entails, those grim possibilities could be averted if communities collectively decide to rid themselves from essentialist rigidity – by reshaping and reordering their identity associations into the more tolerant and less idealistic structures they are ought to be, to achieve a more harmonious coexistence.

In praise of Appiah's arguments on identity, his book is particularly fitting to the current socio-political climate in the United States, and increasingly worldwide – the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has been a direct reaction to the weaponization of race and ethnicity by powerful, predominantly white elites. In the text, Appiah identifies social exclusion, ethno-cultural conflict, and toxic identity politics as direct consequences of the rigidity and conservatism of nativist essentialists in fortifying their associative differences amongst the broader social polity. Appiah's validation for this argument emanates from his view that groups – be they religious, ethno-racial, or political – hold significant internal diversity rather than a fundamental, unchanging homogeneity around an essence or a "deep similarity that binds people of that identity together."[86] Indeed, the tendency of essentialist philosophies to embed identity differences, such as on the basis of race and ethnicity, proves particularly dangerous as they perpetuate politics of domination, a key target of the BLM movement, where "race becomes the common currency of negation and affirmation, dominance and resistance."[87] While Appiah's

---

[86] Appiah, *Lies that Bind*, xv.
[87] Appiah, *Lies that Bind*, 122.

insights do not completely align with the BLM movement, his book offers powerful tools to help people make sense of some of the underlying identity factors that have originally paved the way for the need to establish BLM and other social movements.

Appiah's book also helps augment our understanding of race, class, and culture within the context of socio-political phenomena such as *populism*: a movement birthed out of people's utter frustration with the domination of virtually every aspect of social, political, and cultural life by a group of ultra-educated, wealthy, powerful elites. As Appiah points out, a potently visible implication of this deep resentment towards ruling elites is the steep rise of right-leaning, populist leaders to power worldwide. The book reflects a particular emphasis on Donald Trump's rise to power. Globally, stark similarities can be found in the political progressions of less audacious figures such as Canadian premier Doug Ford of Ontario or Brazil's president Jair Bolsonaro amongst other populist political actors.[88,89] It is no secret that the United States and Brazil, two important global powers recently engulfed by powerful populist waves, are currently grappling with toxic identity politics; America witnessed the epitome of populist outrage in the recent storming of Capitol Hill by Trump supporters, while populism in Brazil has placed proponents of Bolsonaro's party against Indigenous tribes in the Amazon as the Brazilian government continues to plow through their lands for developmental purposes. Indeed, as identity politics eventually intensify, social divisions and clashes may become much more frequent, leading to the dire prospect of weaker liberal democratic values in the long run.

---

[88] Michael Petrou, "The benign face of right-wing populism," *International Politics and Society*, 2018, https://www.ips-journal.eu/regions/north-america/the-benign-face-of-right-wing-populism-2729/.

[89] Jordan Kyle and Limor Gultchin, "Populists in Power Around the World," *Tony Blair Institute for Global Change*, 2018, https://institute.global/policy/populists-power-around-world.

Despite its argumentative virtues, the book may nonetheless arouse tension. A real issue with Appiah's rhetoric lies in his inclination towards opposing representation of distinct groups on the basis of their different perspectives. The text suggests that since identities are ought to be fluid or loosened up, no single group is more worthy of official recognition of their views than others as that would indicate some inherent importance to their particular identity over that of others, leading to exclusion and possible division. While there may be truth to it, such a stance is problematic because it denies the basis for some groups' cultural purity, such as in the case of the Azeri-Armenian conflict.[90] Armenians and Azeris have long posed equally competing claims to the Nagorno-Karabakh territory in Azerbaijan. As a result of unresolved historical and social quandaries, as well as foreign influence, both ethnic groups find themselves today at the brink of war once again due to unresolved identity clashes.[91] Upon applying Appiah's logic to this area, it becomes evident that it falls short of providing meaningful resolutions in a conflict of such magnitude and depth. Such is the case since no party would rationally lay down their arms and attempt to loosen their identity associations without first reaching satisfactory agreements – geographical and socio-political rights in this case – to mend and reconcile historical hurts. The same could be said about the BLM movement; Appiah's calls for identity fluidity may prove futile in any attempt to apply them to black people in America and the world since their most crucial demands and resistance efforts are based on their identity coming under threat. After all, Appiah denounces the inflexibility of identity associations while the whole BLM movement has been predicated on the notion of black identity pride. Indeed, such areas of concern beg the

[90] Council on Foreign Relations, "Nagorno-Karabkh," 2020, https://www.cfr.org/nagorno-karabakh.

[91] C.F.R., "Nagorno-Karabakh."

question: *to what degree is the 'loosening of identities' effective in addressing historical hurts between clashing groups in the settlement of current feuds*?

Appiah's book adopts a moderately utopian vision when it pleads for people to try to be more fluid towards their identities, perhaps amounting to advice that errs on the side of tone-deaf. For a case in point, India's Muslim minority had been long ostracized by Hindu majority. As India's largest minority group, Indian Muslims have experienced severe socio-political and economic marginalization for a long time, and more particularly so since Narendra Modi seized power.[92] With the coronavirus pandemic at full swing in India, "many Hindus say Muslims are deliberately attempting to spread coronavirus to wage a holy war or jihad against the majority Hindus."[93] The pandemic has escalated tensions between Indian Hindus and Muslims as the former continues to scapegoat the latter for the spread of the coronavirus, and has regrettably provided one party a convenient pretext to continue its oppression of the other in the form of attacks on mosques, homes, and bodies. It seems impossible then to expect, let alone ask, marginalized groups who have borne the brunt of inequality to drop their demands to realize Appiah's remedies. Centuries of damage and trauma cannot be expected to vanish once oppressed people drop their rigid, essentialist loyalty towards their respective identities. Certainly, atrocities would not be magically erased once identities become more fluid and adaptive. On the bright side, however, what is perhaps realistic about Appiah's vision is its call for more tolerance and patience amongst the ocean of different identities. If achieved, one day, communities can then avoid a lot of trouble and nuisance down the road. The book's arguments chart a path for people, and scholarship, to reconsider current and future policies designed to

---

[92] Sameer Yasir, "India is Scapegoating Muslims for the Spread of the Coronavirus," Foreign Policy, 2020, https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/22/india-muslims-coronavirus-scapegoat-modi-hindu-nationalism/.

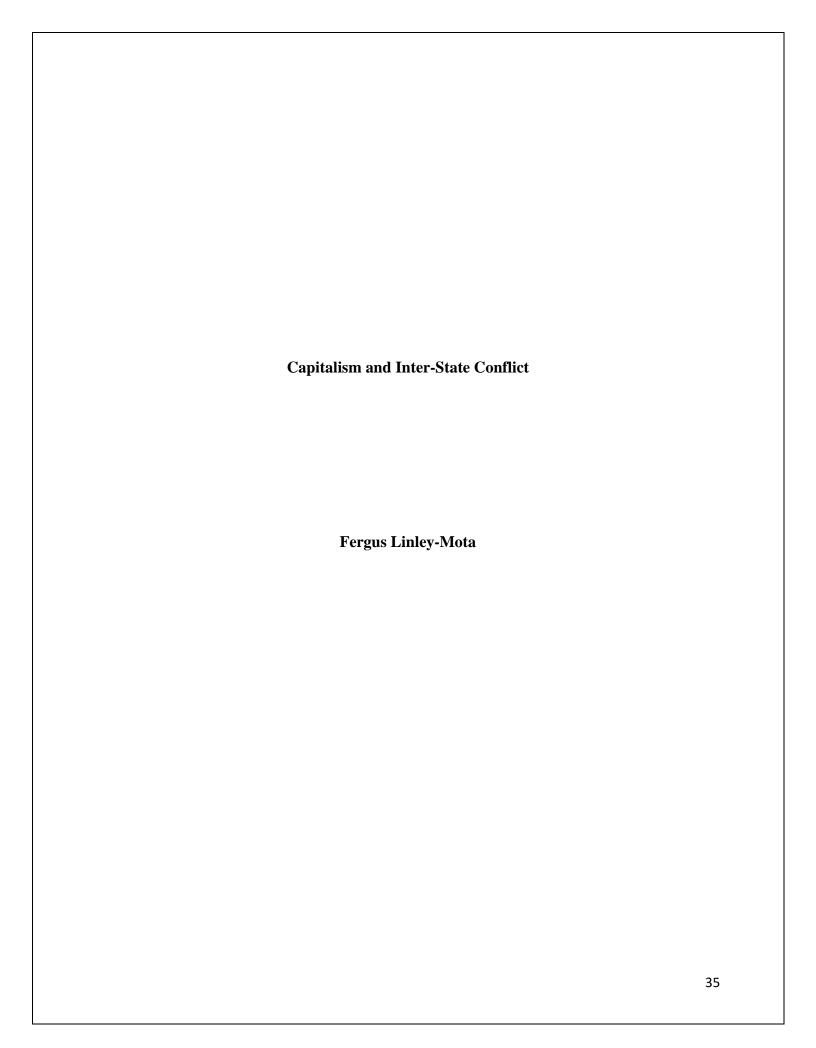[93] Yasir, "India is Scapegoating Muslims for the Spread of the Coronavirus."

combat social inequalities. In this realm, as Appiah correctly points out, economic redistributive reparations alone are not enough to resolve identity claims and conflicts. Rather, Appiah rightly eyes redistributive justice based on cultural and social capital as a decisive means in realizing his vision for identities and the world they inform.

Bibliography

Appiah, Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. Newyork: W.W. Norton, 2006.

Appiah, Anthony. *The Lies that Bind: Rethinking Identity*. Newyork: Liveright Publishing Corp., 2018. Kindle Edition.

Council on Foreign Relations. "Nagorno-Karabakh." 2020. https://www.cfr.org/nagorno-karabakh.

Kyle, J. and Gultchin, L. "Populists in Power Around the World." *Tony Blair Institute for Global Change*. 2018. https://institute.global/policy/populists-power-around-world.

Petrou, M. "The benign face of right-wing populism." *International Politics and Society*. 2018. https://www.ips-journal.eu/regions/north-america/the-benign-face-of-right-wing-populism-2729/.

Yasir, Sameer. "India Is Scapegoating Muslims for the Spread of the Coronavirus." Foreign Policy. 2020. https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/22/india-muslims-coronavirus-scapegoat-modi-hindu-nationalism/

Capitalism and Inter-State Conflict

Fergus Linley-Mota

Throughout all of recorded history and throughout the world, war between states has been a fact of life. As such, it is one of the world's most fundamentally 'global' issues. With the emergence of capitalism and the parallel rise of the nation-state as the archetypal form of political and social organization, however, the role of the latter in propagating and legitimizing conflict has moulded itself increasingly to the central tenets of the former. This paper will examine the links between capitalism and inter-state conflict, drawing attention specifically to the ways in which the nation-state uses war with other states, as a means of penetrating previously under- or unexploited markets for further capital investment, as well as to increase the accumulation of raw materials and cheap sources of energy. In order to unpack this relationship, the U.S.-led invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003 and the Boer war – fought between the British Empire and Boer population of South Africa – will be used as case studies, demonstrating both the use of inter-state conflict to ensure the sustained economic growth needed to prop up the capitalist system, and the role of the nation-state as a manufacturer of public consent for such initiatives. Furthermore, the Marxist concept of primitive accumulation will be employed as a lens through which to properly conceptualize the inherent link between inter-state conflict, processes of capital expansion, and accumulation.

I. A Capitalist Peace?

Prior to delving further into the links between capitalism and inter-state conflict, it is important to note that, since the Enlightenment, dominant intellectual currents emanating from the West have generally leaned towards the position – one completely incompatible with the arguments set forth in this paper – that, put simply, capitalism inherently engenders peace. Indeed, "enlightenment figures like

Montesquieu and Smith argued that market interests abominate war,"[94] and the position that economic integration, the promotion of free market capitalism, and inter-state commerce all serve to eliminate the need for conflict between states has been reiterated and supported repeatedly in the centuries since – examples include Gartzke and Mousseau, among others.[95] [96]

While it may be true, however, that the political-economic relationships necessary for inter-state commercial interaction in a capitalist system - especially in the current, globalized system – do, to a certain extent, limit the centrality of the state in economic matters and promote economic interdependence, what is lost in this position is a proper understanding of the initial means through which the conditions of capitalism are established in the first place. As noted by Marx, "underneath the origin of this process [of economic integration as a means of avoiding war] lies the usually violent expropriation of workers, who previously were independent owners, being initially separated from the means of production by "non-economic" processes, i.e., direct physical violence."[97] This violent foundation upon which capitalism is built, labelled "primitive accumulation" by Marx, has often taken the form of inter-state conflict, in which capitalist, industrialized states, have invaded and occupied less economically productive states in order to expand markets for investment and accumulate more resources. As in the cases of both Iraq and South Africa – along with a host of other cases – capitalism's inherent need for sustained economic growth has often led to (frequently asymmetrical) instances of inter-state conflict, in which the state has been weaponized and geared towards capital expansion and accumulation. In applying the concept of primitive accumulation to cases such as these, one comes to see that inter-state war is not

---

[94] Erik Gartzke, "The Capitalist Peace," American Journal of Political Science 51 (January 2007): 170.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Mousseau, Michael, Håvard Hegre, and John R. O'neal. "How the Wealth of Nations Conditions the Liberal Peace." European Journal of International Relations 9, no. 2 (2003), 277-314.

[97] João Carlos Graça and Rita Gomes Correia, "War and Capitalism: Some Important Theories and a Number of Relevant Facts," Sotsiologicheskoe Obozrenie / Russian Sociological Review 14, no. 4 (2015): 94.

an aberration in an otherwise inherently peaceful system, but rather a fundamental step catered to the intrinsic needs of the capitalist system.

II. Expansion and Accumulation

One notable way in which capitalism lends itself to the spread of inter-state conflict through primitive accumulation, is in the nation-state's use of war to open up markets and create new areas of free trade into which domestic corporations can pour in pursuit of profit, as well as to gain control of key energy sources so as to maintain and accelerate economic growth. In response to capitalism's inherent and insatiable need for a "ready supply of raw materials and an increasing demand for goods, along with ways to invest profits and capital,"[98] the military apparatuses of the world's most powerful economic powers have been consistently mobilized in order to force open new markets and gain control of key resources via conflict with other, typically, less powerful states. In a contemporary context, there is perhaps no more effective example of this than the invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq by a coalition of states spearheaded by the United States in 2003, in which war between the U.S.-led coalition and Saddam Hussein's Iraqi government was used by the former as a means to secure vast reserves of petroleum – which, along with coal and other natural gases, is one of the world's "cheapest sources of energy"[99] – and expand capitalist production and investment into a potentially profitable new market.

Following a massive public relations campaign in which the US and UK administrations made sustained attempts to garner support for military intervention in Iraq from both the international community and their domestic constituents – a process that will be elaborated upon later in this paper – the United States, Britain, and a number of smaller military contingents from forty different countries

---

[98] Richard H. Robbins, Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism (New York: Pearson Higher Ed, 2013), 80.

[99] Ibid., 123.

began the invasion of Iraq on March 19, 2003. The duration of the actual conflict would prove to be quite short as, amid "the swiftest land advance in history,"[100] U.S.-led forces demonstrated their overwhelming military supremacy by ousting the Hussein regime in less than a single month. This fast and categorical victory was followed immediately by the establishment of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), an American-installed administrative apparatus headed by presidential envoy Paul Bremer, and ostensibly dedicated to "governing Iraq and promoting the development of a functioning democracy."[101] In reality, however, the main goal of the CPA's administration of the post-war Middle Eastern state "was founded on the ambition of 'liberalizing' Middle Eastern economies by eliminating the state-centered economy in Iraq."[102] As well as immediately initiating the process of privatizing Iraq's economy through such measures as "making numerous utilities, telephone networks, and large companies available for purchase by Western buyers,"[103] Bremer and the CPA also systematically removed all tariffs and import taxes on products both entering and leaving Iraq, permitted 100% ownership of Iraqi businesses by foreign actors, prohibited any requirements that profits generated by foreign companies be reinvested in the country or that such companies hire local workers, and lowered the corporate tax rate by more than 20%, among other liberalizing and deregulating economic restructuring policies.[104] Essentially, the U.S. used its administrative supremacy, gained through military conquest of the country, to transform Iraq into a neoliberal paradise in which corporations could invest with complete impunity and reap immense profits – a process of imposed economic adjustment that would have been made all the more difficult had any system of democratic checks and balances been allowed to exist in the country. As noted by Robbins, "Iraq represented a situation in which free trade reforms could be imposed by force with no interference

---

[100] Rick Fawn and Raymond A. Hinnebusch, "The Iraq War: Unfolding and Unfinished," in The Iraq War: Causes and Consequences (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Pub, 2006), 8.

[101] James Dobbins et al., Occupying Iraq: A History of the Coalition Provisional Authority, (RAND Corporation, 2009), xiii.

[102] Michael Schwartz, "Neo-liberalism on crack," City11, no. 1 (2007): 22.

[103] Fawn and Hinnebusch, "The Iraq War," 9.
[104] Robbins, Global Problems, 118.

from democratic institutions."[105] These reforms, and the avenue through which they were implemented, demonstrate clearly the nation-state's role within capitalism "to provide to corporate sponsors unregulated access to markets and resources and to establish rules, laws, and regulations that maximize the ability of corporations to profit,"[106] and the use of inter-state war as a means of successfully achieving this function.

Along with the forcible opening of new markets to corporate exploitation, the American-led military effort in Iraq was also key in securing U.S. control of the Middle Eastern country's vast reserves of oil – one of the world's cheapest and most efficient energy sources. Indeed, "following the initial U.S. incursion into Baghdad, American forces seized and occupied the Oil Ministry while allowing looters to overrun all the other government buildings in the neighbourhood,"[107] demonstrating the centrality of this raw material to the war effort. This example of the American nation-state's use of violent invasion to secure Iraq's petroleum reserves is made all the more significant, when one considers the profound importance of such cheap and efficient sources of energy to the process of capitalist accumulation and consumption. Put simply, "economic growth is directly tied to energy consumption."[108] This is due to the fact that sources of energy are needed to power the technological acceleration of capitalist accumulation, which is in turn necessary for the eternal maintenance of economic growth – which, as noted by Robbins, is "the prime directive of the culture of capitalism."[109] It is the nation-state's responsibility within the capitalist structure of relations "to ensure access to energy and to cheap energy,"[110] and as such the Iraq War offers ample evidence of the way in which competition for access to cheap and efficient energy sources, driven by capitalism's inherent need for growth, can lead to inter-state conflict as a means of primitive accumulation.

---

[105] Ibid., 119.
[106] Ibid., 118.
[107] Michael Klare, Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Dependency on Imported Petroleum (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007), 5.

[108] Robbins, Global Problems, 122.
[109] Ibid., 3.
[110] Ibid., 123

Of course, nation-states – especially those with representative political systems – cannot always easily find domestic and international support for the pursuit of war as a means to expand markets and gather resources for capital accumulation. As such, one of the key roles of the nation-state under capitalism is to, in the words of Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, "manufacture consent" for policies and key events through the manipulation of mass media sources, and consequently, of public perceptions. In the case of the American invasion and occupation of Iraq, the United States government and its allies mounted immense propaganda campaigns geared towards this very purpose, with the ultimate goal of providing public legitimacy to a conflict that essentially had its roots in capitalist expansion and accumulation. In an attempt to leverage support for the conflict, both domestically and from the broader international community, the Bush administration and its allies – most notably the United Kingdom under Tony Blair – levelled a series of public, damning and ultimately mostly unfounded accusations at Saddam Hussein's authoritarian government. Most notable among these were the claims that Iraq had been developing weapons of mass destruction (WMD), training and sheltering Al-Qaida operatives, harbouring biochemical weapons, and that the country's administration had been involved meaningfully in the attacks of September 11, 2001 – assertions designed to depict Iraq as a key battleground in the 'war on terror' that the U.S. had launched following 9/11.[111] While these claims met with significant pushback from many member-states in the UN, they were relatively successful in garnering internal support in the United States for military action around the time of the invasion. Ultimately, the United States government's manipulation of public perception in favour of its war effort in Iraq provides an effective demonstration of the nation-state's role as a manufacturer of consent, moulding the culture in favour of conflict as a means to promote capitalist expansion and accumulation. That, three years after the inception of the American occupation, "90 percent of the American troops fighting in Iraq still believed that Saddam was directly responsible for 9/11,"[112] is indicative of the nation-state's ability to use propaganda as a means to obscure the connection between inter-state conflicts and

---

[111] Fawn and Hinnebusch, "The Iraq War," 1-7.
[112] Robbins, Global Problems, 114.

some of capitalism's most fundamental tenets – namely, the expansion of markets and accumulation of energy sources through primitive accumulation by force as a means to ensure continuous economic growth.

The processes of primitive accumulation described here, in which the nation-state uses war as a means to expand markets for investment and accumulate energy sources in order to meet the requirements of continual capital growth, is hardly confined to U.S. action in the Middle East. For example, British colonialism – brought about via large-scale military conquest – provided the massive 19th century imperial power with a "recognized solution to the need to expand markets [and] increase opportunities for investors." Cecil Rhodes, the influential (and tyrannical) British colonial figure, remarked that "we colonial statesmen must acquire new lands for settling the surplus population, to provide new markets for the goods produced in the factories and mines."[113] Indeed, in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries "much of empire building was based on a capitalist drive,"[114] as a group of European nation-states – led at the time by Britain, the world's foremost power – "sought to carve out a sphere of domination in Asia, Africa, and South and Central America that, with the help of nationalism, racism, and xenophobia, turned economic competition into political and military conflict."[115] These conflicts, occurring both between different imperial nation-states – such as the tensions between France and Germany surrounding control of the industrially significant region of Alsace-Lorraine, following the Franco-Prussian war of the late 19th century – and, more asymmetrically, between imperial powers and their territorial subjects, were often defined by the competition for key markets and resources.

One such conflict was the Boer war of 1899 to 1902, in which the British Empire entered into conflict with the South African Boer provinces of Transvaal and Orange Free State, which had made bids for independence following the discovery of vast gold mines in their territory. While it was of course

---

[113] Ibid., 80.

[114] Simon Stander, Why War: Capitalism and the Nation-State (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2014), 80.

[115] Robbins, Global Problems, 83.

influenced by the desire of South Africa's Boer population to obtain more civil rights, free from British rule, the Boer War was guided most by "the interest of various parties in grabbing enormously valuable gold supplies, strengthening the nation-state of Britain, furthering imperial militarism, and satisfying the needs of finance and banking capital based in the City of London."[116] These motivations – and, more broadly speaking, British military involvement in South Africa in its entirety – reflect a wider trend in which the nation-state employs conflict as a means to achieve the necessary capitalist step of primitive accumulation, appropriating key resources and forcing open new markets in order to further economic growth through war. As with the American invasion and occupation of Iraq, the Boer War of 1899 to 1902 offer a clear link between capital expansion and accumulation, as well as violent inter-state conflict.

Conclusion

Across centuries and continents, the nation-state's use of war as a means to penetrate new markets for capital investment, and acquire more raw materials for the acceleration of capital growth – along with its manufacturing of public consent for such violent endeavours through massive propaganda campaigns – provides clear evidence of the fundamental connection between inter-state conflict and some of capitalism's most core principles. By understanding conflicts such as those explored above through a Marxian lens of primitive accumulation, one comes to see that, contrary to the Smithian idea that capitalist activity and economic integration are inherently peaceful in their execution, war between states can in fact be understood as an intrinsic aspect of the processes of economic expansion and capital accumulation so fundamental to capitalism.

While the central actor in any conceptualization of inter-state war must be, as demonstrated by the bulk of this essay, the nation-state – with dominant corporate interests playing key roles as well,

---

[116] Stander, Why War, 186.

especially as economic motivators and beneficiaries of such conflicts – it is worth mentioning that the main victims of inter-state conflict are invariably civilian populations, who are murdered, abused, and displaced in large numbers as the polities in which they live are torn apart in service of some broader political-economic goal. Although nation-states are most often the central unit of analysis when considering military conflict, it is ultimately real people, not politico-cultural concepts and institutions, which bear the burden of inter-state war.

Given this reality, as well as the crucial and combined role of the state as both war machine and manufacturer of consent, if there exists a 'solution' to the intertwined nature of capitalism, the nation-state and war – described by Simon Stander, along with imperialism and valuable energy sources, as "the deadliest mixture that the modern world can put together"[117] – it can most certainly not be pursued at the level of the nation-state. As such, it may be that the link between capitalism and inter-state conflict can be best challenged, at least in countries with democratic political systems, by a well-informed and politically mobilized civil society, composed of citizens both willing and able to identify and reject the sort of 'spin' seen in the lead up to the Iraq War. Whether or not this sort of mass mobilization is possible, either within or outside of existing political avenues, is up for debate. What is certain, however, is that the existing capitalist system – which in its inherent necessity for constant economic growth, provides the impetus for conflict between states – must be fundamentally altered for any meaningful alternatives to the current relationship between capital expansion, accumulation, and inter-state war to emerge.

---

[117] Ibid., 187.

Bibliography

Carlos Graça, João, and Rita Gomes Correia. "War and Capitalism: Some Important Theories and a Number of Relevant Facts." Sotsiologicheskoe Obozrenie / Russian Sociological Review 14, no. 4 (2015), 92-114. doi:10.17323/1728-192x-2015-4-92-114.

Dobbins, James, Seth G. Jones, Benjamin Runkle, and Siddharth Mohandas. Occupying Iraq: A History of the Coalition Provisional Authority. RAND Corporation, 2009.

Fawn, Rick, and Raymond A. Hinnebusch. "The Iraq War: Unfolding and Unfinished." In The Iraq War: Causes and Consequences. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Pub, 2006.

Gartzke, Erik. "The Capitalist Peace." American Journal of Political Science 51 (January 2007), 166-191.

Klare, Michael. Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Dependency on Imported Petroleum. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007.

Mousseau, Michael, Håvard Hegre, and John R. O'neal. "How the Wealth of Nations Conditions the Liberal Peace." European Journal of International Relations 9, no. 2 (2003), 277-314. doi:10.1177/1354066103009002005.

Robbins, Richard H. Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism. New York: Pearson Higher Ed, 2013.

Schwartz, Michael. "Neo-liberalism on crack." City 11, no. 1 (2007), 21-69. doi:10.1080/13604810701200730.

Stander, Simon. Why War: Capitalism and the Nation-State. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2014.

Democratic Responses to the Rise in Contentious Politics

Yashar Tasouji

Abstract:

Starting with the 2011 Arab Spring, through to present-day cases across the world such as in Hong Kong and the United States, there has clearly been a rise in protest and political contention globally in the past decade. With a focus on democracies of the West, this paper aims to (1) contextualize why and how the rise in contentious politics has come about and (2) explore democratic tools that are available to governments. To contextualize Western democratic political contention, this work follows the historical process of disenchantment with the democratic process through the rise of neoliberalism and post-politics, which has led to what some might call anti-elite, anti-establishment, or populist movements. On the other hand, social media and technological tools have augmented political polarization and the proliferation of misinformation and fake news. These forces have also contributed to a degradation of confidence in experts and, as a result, a lack of rational and fact-based policy, notable in the present-day through the lack of climate change action and incoherent COVID-19 responses. The paper responds to these circumstances through three potential institutional democratic solutions: (1) a technocratic 'Professional Committee,' to recommend rational and fact-based policy, (2) a 'People's Jury' and organized 'Political Briefings' to provide public scrutiny of policy decisions and facilitate transparent communication, and (3) a 'Political Media Platform' to respond to the degradation of information gatekeepers and the digital information age. These solutions are formulated with the objective of strengthening 'rule by the people,' reorganizing 'rule by the experts,' and revamping information distribution, verification, and political communication in the digital age. In an era characterized by increasingly interconnected global communities, impending irreversible climate change, COVID-19, and increasing economic inequality, the

ways in which we make decisions and co-exist with one another are vital to our survival more than ever before.

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that protest politics is on the rise. Starting with the 2011 Arab Spring, through to present day cases across the world such as in Hong Kong[118], the United States[119], and Thailand[120], among other contemporary cases, it is clear that there has been a rise in protest globally in the last ten years[121]. Particularly in the West, contentious politics has taken on an anti-establishment, populist, anti-elite tone, beginning with the anti-corruption Occupy movement (spurned by economic inequality, particularly revealed after the 2008 financial crisis and subsequent bailing-out of mega-corporations), leading to the election of President Donald Trump in the United States[122] and climaxing with the January 6 Capitol Hill riot.[123]

The central question I wish to explore is: what democratic solutions are available to the West in response to the recent surge in protest politics, namely anti-elite, populist movements?

---

[118]Preeti Jha, "Hong Kong protests: The flashpoints in a year of anger," *BBC News*, August 31, 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-53942295.

[119] Ray Sanchez, "Black Lives Matter protests across American continue nearly 2 months after George Floyd's death," *CNN*, July 23, 2020, https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/23/us/black-lives-matter-protests-continue/index.html.

[120] Author unavailable; analysis by Jonathan Head of BBC News, "Thai protests: Tens of thousands gather again in mass defiance of government," *BBC News*, October 15, 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-54548988.

[121] Howard Ramos and Kathleen Rodgers, *The Promise of Social Movement Societies* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), p. 3-4.

[122] Kirk Hawkins, Levente Littvay, *Contemporary US Populism in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 1-3.

[123] Ted Barrett, Manu Raju, Peter Nickeas, "US Capitol secured, 4 dead after rioters stormed the halls of Congress to block Biden's win," *CNN*, January 7, 2021, https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/06/politics/us-capitol-lockdown/index.html.

To give some context to this question, we must ask ourselves: what are the driving forces of the increase in protest and contentious politics today? Throughout this paper I combine two spheres of literature to answer the latter, contextual question: (1) post-politics and neoliberal rationality, and (2) political polarization and the forces of social media. Briefly put, post-politics refers to a state of politics whereby agnostic debate and contestation of ideas, assumed vital to a healthy democracy, are non-existent due to a popular acceptance of a 'consensus in the centre' of the political spectrum. Neoliberal rationality, on the other hand, is the notion that political questions can be solved using neoliberal logic such as cost effectiveness. This ultimately leads to a political landscape that is ruled by experts (not citizens) and ignorant of traditional democratic principles such as debate and deliberation. These issues are exacerbated by social media and the political polarization that has accompanied it, whereby technological factors such as digital echo chambers (i.e., digital information feedback loops), intensified by cognitive biases such as homophily (i.e., the tendency to gravitate towards those who are like you) make democratic contestation difficult not only through an inability to agree on what information is true (e.g., fake news) but through polarization which occurs beyond the direct control of any democratic agent. I use this context to answer my central question on the sorts of democratic solutions that can be formulated to respond to the recent surge in anti-elite, populist movements. Broadly put, I suggest transparent and participatory institutional frameworks and a state-sponsored political media platform as the best state responses to the rise in protest politics.

This research is important because it is the next frontier of political science. The invention of a new medium of communication is a rare phenomenon; the advent of the internet and the rise of social media has upended virtually every facet of our lives, particularly political processes. As noted by Canadian philosopher Marshall McLuhan in 1964, "the medium is the

49

message"[124] - this concept has never been more relevant than it is today, given the invention of the internet and all the new mediums that were created within it (and are still being created), which are drastically transforming political and social interactions. This warrants a re-analysis of all political and social phenomena.

CONTEXT: WHY PROTEST POLITICS?

There is general consensus within democratic literature of an era of 'post-politics' as well as a neoliberalization of the democratic process in the West; these conditions have brought about a disenchantment with democratic process, thus contributing to the era of protest that we see today. Chantal Mouffe in *For a Left Populism* describes post-politics as the idea that there is a "consensus in the centre," effectively rendering "the adversarial model of politics and the left/right opposition" obsolete. She connects this to "neoliberal globalization," which reduced political questions "to mere technical issues to be dealt with by experts."[125] These points are complementary to Wendy Brown's notion of "de-democratization," whereby 'the people' have lost democratic power. Brown indicates three reasons for this: (1) "major democracies today feature a merging of corporate and state power… evidenced in outsourced and privatized state functions… [and] the growing prevalence of investment bankers and corporate CEOs as ministers and cabinet secretaries," (2) the transformation of 'free' elections to "circuses of marketing and management" whereby "citizens are wooed by sophisticated campaign marketing

---

[124] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964). "The medium is the message" refers to the idea that any 'medium' (for McLuhan, any extension of the person - basically any technology) has a profound effect on the particular 'message' being conveyed in the first place: "Many people would be disposed to say that it was not the machine, but what one did with the machine, that was its meaning or message. In terms of the ways in which the machine altered our relations to one another and to ourselves, it mattered not in the least whether it turned out cornflakes or Cadillacs." (p. 8)

[125]Chantal Mouffe, *For a Left Populism* (New York: Verso, 2018), p. 4-5.

strategies that place voting on a par with other consumer choices," and (3) neoliberalism as a

political rationality, replacing democratic principles with neoliberal principles such as

"cost/benefit ratios, efficiency, profitability, and efficacy," which ultimately reconfigures the

state to be "a business management operation."[126] These points suggest that 'the people' have

been replaced by 'the experts.' Simply put, since democratic principles of choice and popular

involvement are no longer significant in the face of neoliberal rationality (resulting in the

discarding of adversarial democratic models), it is 'the experts' who are assumed to be most apt

at finding the 'objectively correct' or 'politically correct' solution to each policy issue,

drastically devaluing the role of 'the people' in modern democratic systems. Thus, it is logical to

contend that the rise in protest is at least partially attributable to the effects of post-politics and

the proliferation of neoliberal rationality within governance systems. Critically, these points

provide a compelling narrative for the particular proliferation of anti-elite movements in the

West.

Second, I consider the role of social media in the rise of protest politics, which has

exacerbated political polarization. Political psychological literature points to the polarizing

effects of social media through cognitive tendencies such as motivated skepticism,[127]

---

[126] Wendy Brown, "We are all Democrats Now," *Theory & Event* volume 13, issue 2 (December 2009): p. 2.

[127] Charles S. Taber, Milton Lodge, "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs," *American Journal of Political Science* volume 50, issue 3 (June 2006): Motivated skepticism refers to a bias towards evidence: scientists and citizens alike "are prone to overly accommodate supportive evidence while dismissing out-of-hand evidence that challenges their prior attitudes." (p. 755-756). In their study, they find evidence of "disconfirmation bias," whereby participants "counter-argue the contrary arguments and uncritically accept supporting arguments," as well as a "confirmation bias" whereby participants seek our confirmatory evidence. They conclude that these attitudes lead to "attitude polarization," which "suggests that those on either side of the issues should become more attitudinally extreme in their positions." (p. 764-765).

heuristics,[128] and homophily.[129] These tendencies have been heightened by social media through mechanisms such as digital echo chambers,[130] including micro-targeting and filter bubbles,[131] and the proliferation of fake news.[132] Focusing on fake news, the literature supports the notion that credible news organizations, so-called 'gatekeepers,' have lost support and influence.[133]

The effect of social media and fake news are not novel, as the power of propaganda is well-known throughout history, particularly through its use in World War I and II.[134] On the other hand, the introduction of new communication mediums and technology (the most common

---

[128] David Moscrop, *Too Dumb for Democracy* (Princeton University Press, 2019), p. 125. Heuristics refers to the "mental shortcuts" that individuals make when reaching conclusions, which is helpful for knowing when to run away from a bear but can undermine political judgements, which usually require a thoughtful process.

[129] Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), p. 9. Homophily refers to the tendency of individuals "to seek people who are like themselves or who agree with them," which has been intensified by the revolutionizing of communication through the internet era which allows for homophily to blossom within digital communities across time and space.

[130] John Brummette, Marcia DiStaso, Michail Vafeiadis, and Marcus Messner, "Read All About It: The Politicization of 'Fake News' on Twitter," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* volume 95, issue 2 (May 2018): p. 502-503. A digital echo chamber refers to the lack of exposure to conflicting views on digital mediums due to homophily, exacerbated by advanced technological tools such as search engines and algorithms meant to give users content they would be most interested in, which ultimately "impedes the notions of pluralism and the marketplace of ideas."

[131] Moscrop, *Too Dumb for Democracy*, p. 155. 'Micro-targeting' refers to ads that are focused on "specific subsets of individuals," while 'filter bubbles' refer to "an isolated information space that occurs when online algorithms show you only what they think you want to see."

[132] Brummette, DiStaso, Vafeiadis, Messner, "Read All About It: The Politicization of 'Fake News'," p. 501. "...'fake news' stories received more engagement from Facebook users than the news stories of credible news organizations."

[133] Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas*, p. 266-267. "... nobody was watching what spread; traditional gatekeepers, now dependent on [social media] platforms to spread their own stories, were critically weakened. The internet made it easy for anyone to quickly set up a webpage, and Facebook's user interface made it hard to tell the legitimate news outlets such as the New York Times or Fox News apart from fake ones such as the 'Denver Guardian' [...] Mass media had already been losing credibility both due to its own missteps and failures, but also due to a sustained attack against its normative function as gatekeepers for facts."

[134] Brummette, DiStaso, Vafeiadis, Messner, "Read All About It: The Politicization of 'Fake News'," p. 498. "The connection between 'fake news' and politics has been evident throughout history especially with the use of political propaganda by the British and the Americans in World War I, as well as by the Nazis and the Communists in World War II..."

example being writing and the printing press, but applicable to radio and now the internet and social media) is known to uproot and transform the fundamentals of communication.[135]

Although some theorists would argue that polarization is in fact healthy for a democracy (i.e., it leads to more debate and exposure to different perspectives), I make the assertion that extreme polarization (e.g., modern US politics), is in fact a major driving force of the increase in protest and conflict in Western society. The result is a rise of anti-establishment sentiment which has manifested in the form of far-right and far-left extremist groups such as Antifa and Proud Boys, as well as alt-right, neo-Nazi/neo-Fascist, or white supremist ideologies. Furthermore, polarization has contributed to political gridlock on key policy areas such as climate change and, in the case of the United States, federal COVID-19 response. Although debate is valuable to a healthy democracy, inflexible policy stances based on political resentment are detrimental to a democratic system, especially when rational and fact-based policy action is required (e.g., the climate crisis, COVID-19).

It is important to indicate a fundamental theoretical assumption of mine here: that it is most desirable to have a moderate political climate. The basis of this assumption goes to perhaps the most central question of all of political science: can human conflict be 'solved'? My assumption contends that it is in our best interests to get as close as possible to 'solving' human conflict, i.e., to minimize conflict in the hopes of achieving a political society which can work together to achieve great things. However, as discussed above, supporters of radical democracy

---

[135] Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas*, p. 7. "... digital technologies are not the first technologies that have affected how we interact over space and time and have shaped our sense of community, identity, and the public sphere… Writing, for example, is among the earliest technologies that changed the relationship between our worlds and the passage of time." The same principles can be applied to radio technology, which coincided with the use of propaganda in World War I and II.

may contend that the current era of protest is healthy for society and democracy, as it proves that there is a healthy marketplace of ideas and 'the people' are fighting to have their voices heard. They may also argue that a moderate society which avoids conflict is unable to adapt to changing times and needs, or that the lack of exposure to different ideas or perspectives is a weakness. Although these arguments are fair, and I will not provide a detailed rebuttal here, I contend that adversarial or radical democratic philosophy ignores the realities of human cognitive behaviour discussed earlier and does not lead to satisfactory political outcomes in all cases; competition is healthy, but only in moderation. Strong political outcomes are difficult to achieve in a polarized political system wrought with conflict. Thus, a moderate level of conflict which is aimed at reaching *consensus* is most desirable.

So far we have established the following: 'the people' have lost power due to the forces of post-politics and neoliberal rationality, compounded by the effects of social media which have aggravated political polarization while simultaneously breaking-down so-called 'gatekeepers' of facts and information (mass media), thus contributing to the rise of protest. This provides an explanation to our contextual question of 'why is there a rise in protest politics today?' The question we must now turn to is, what democratic solutions can states of the West implement in response? For this inquiry, I offer two solutions. Solution 1 attempts to take 'the best of both worlds' by retaining the rationality of 'rule by the experts' while facilitating public spaces and avenues for protest, participation, and democratic contention. Solution 2, on the other hand, attempts to bring politics into the digital realm by revamping the verification and distribution of information.

SOLUTION 1: RULE BY THE EXPERTS + RULE BY THE PEOPLE

Solution 1 suggests institutional frameworks to enhance models of 'rule by the experts' on the one hand, and 'rule by the people' on the other. The **'Professional Committee' (PC)** is proposed in response to the former, while the **'People's Jury' (PJ)** and **'Political Briefings' (PBs)** is proposed for the latter. The Professional Committee attempts to improve the current 'rule by the experts' model of the West to make it more transparent, affording more accountability for political leaders and experts while enhancing the voice of experts as opposed to political leaders. The disadvantage of this approach is its preservation of some aspects of post-politics and neoliberal rationality: the PC does not directly return power to 'the people,' but rather attempts to improve the current role of experts in democratic decision making. That being said, the PC is still more 'people friendly' as it takes power from political leaders and gives it to meritocratically chosen professionals. On the other hand, the People's Jury and Political Briefings attempt to facilitate public communication while acting as a tool of democratic and popular oversight on politicians and the PC. The advantage of this approach is the creation of an *institutionalized* voice for 'the people' beyond voting.

The Professional Committee: Reformatting 'Rule by the Experts'

Currently, in the West, it is 'rule by whomever gets voted in' with the hopes that they follow the advice of, or appoint, adequate experts. This leaves too much discretion to elected political leaders while failing to provide a satisfactory directive role to experts and rational, fact-

based policy. The handling of COVID-19 by President Donald Trump[136] [137], or the failure of governments to respond to the climate crisis, are striking red flags to the inadequacy of the current model.

The **Professional Committee (PC)** responds to this degradation of rational, fact-based policy, whereby a committee of qualified experts, divided into policy areas (environment, economy, health, etc.) and chosen meritocratically, are given the task of setting the agenda for each policy area via the submission of policy proposals to political leaders, who are expected to follow the proposals or publicly explain why not during a Political Briefing. The PC should suggest multiple policy approaches which spell out the pros and cons of each approach, with the final decision being made by elected politicians. The PC will also go hand-in-hand with another solution I will suggest later, the Political Media Platform, to ensure transparency and facilitate a degree of digital participation from the public. If political leaders ignore PC proposals, the feature of transparency during Political Briefings and within the Political Media Platform will broadcast this to the public and hold the leader accountable for their choice to go against expert advice.

Operationalizing this concept further, I suggest that members of the PC are selected based on merit: experience in the field, education, attitude and character, society involvement,

---

[136]Cameron Peters, "A detailed timeline of all the ways Trump failed to respond to the coronavirus," *Vox*, June 8, 2020, https://www.vox.com/2020/6/8/21242003/trump-failed-coronavirus-response. President Trump consistently went against or failed to endorse the advice of qualified health experts and spread misinformation about the virus (going as far as calling it a hoax), among a multitude of other failures.

[137] Aamer Madhani, Zeke Miller, "Trump plays down virus as he steps up pitch for second term," *AP News*, October 17, 2020, https://apnews.com/article/virus-outbreak-donald-trump-fort-myers-media-florida-0a05d69faf3228057c7c95d188065a2d. President Trump spread misinformation about the virus, went against the advice of leading infectious disease experts, and shunned the practice of mask-wearing while incorrectly citing a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study to suggest that mask wearing does not mitigate the spread of the virus. Dr. Anthony Fauci, a top infectious disease expert in the US, contradicted Trump when he noted that the country is not in fact 'rounding the corner' of the virus, based on data.

citizenship, and a standard of knowledge in other fields such as history and politics can be pre-requisites for the position. Perhaps they can be deemed qualified by achieving a grade threshold on a 'PC exam,' before moving to later stages of the appointment process (interviews, background checks, etc.)[138] Furthermore, members of the PC are not alone: they are supported by a team of experts in their field who provide advice, information, and oversight to the members. This team of supporting experts may also be meritocratically chosen, or appointed by the chosen PC member. Ultimately, the PC pressures politicians to follow expert advice, while ensuring that experts are given a structural/institutional framework to facilitate the voice and influence required to put forward rational, fact-based policy into the public sphere.

PC-members would need to be chosen by an independent, third-party committee that is somewhat distanced from the government, or else the 'pro-establishment' nature of this solution would not be adequately counter-balanced. The Canadian model of Judicial Advisory Committees (JACs), who are responsible for "assessing the qualifications for appointment" of federal judicial applicants, is a potential real-world operationalization of how PC-member appointments may occur. JACs, which are regionally based according to province, consist of "seven volunteer members representing the bench, the bar, and the general public," three of which are 'general public' nominees which can be any member of the public regardless of legal training. The committees are appointed by the Government based on predetermined selection criteria. Each JAC submits three names, from which the Governor General makes the judicial appointment.[139] PC-member appointment bodies may follow a similar model of a committee

---

[138] See Tongdong Bai, *Against Political Equality: the Confucian Case* (Princeton University Press, 2020) for a more in-depth discussion and operationalization of meritocratic governance systems (p. 70-95).

[139] Canadian Federal Government, "Guide for Candidates," *Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada*, October 2016, https://www.fja-cmf.gc.ca/appointments-nominations/guideCandidates-eng.html.

composed of experts in the relevant field as well as members of the general public, except the final responsibility of appointment should remain within the independent appointment body. Additionally, it may be advantageous to have the 'general public' portion of the appointment body be elected by citizens to bolster independence from government, while experts of the relevant field are appointed by the Government and/or recommended by applicable existing professional organizations (e.g., doctors or engineers' unions).

The People's Jury and Political Briefings: A Two-Pronged Approach to 'Rule by the People'

The PC does not do well in response to post-politics and anti-elitism, as it only slightly transfers power to the people via meritocratically chosen experts**.** The **People's Jury (PJ)** and **Political Briefings (PBs)** are meant to counteract this deficiency by giving the tools to hold political leaders and experts accountable while facilitating a degree of public participation. The PJ relies on planned PBs, whereby the PC and political leaders are required to publicly communicate their policy proposals and decisions while being subject to on-the-spot criticism and questioning by the PJ.

A PB would function like a press briefing, except the PC and political leaders would be required by law to participate and they would occur in a regular (e.g., monthly) format. During PBs, the PJ would have time to discuss and respond to policy proposals and decisions. I will not operationalize this concept in detail here, however, I imagine that the PJ would be randomly selected, much like a legal jury, with potentially some experts or 'moderators' available to provide information and aid deliberations. The idea is to subject PC members and political leaders to public pressure for their proposals and decisions, raising the standard of accountability. This process also forces government to be transparent about their policy actions and decisions, dispelling the possibility of enacting policy away from the public eye. This also

provides a path for holding politicians and their parties publicly accountable for their campaign promises, whereby the lack of which has fueled democratic disenchantment.

Furthermore, PBs can be sites of planned physical protest, with space and coverage set aside for protestors to be heard. A real-world model of this exists in Singapore, whereby a 'Speaker's Corner' was established in Hong Lim Park in 2000: an "outdoor venue where [Singapore] citizens are permitted to give public speeches." Essentially, the Speaker's Corner is an institutionalized public space for issue discussion, with its first demonstration occurring in 2008, which led to an increase in events and activities, at times attracting crowds of hundreds or more.[140]

In summary, I have suggested new institutional frameworks meant to combine the rationality of rule by the experts with the accountability and inclusivity of rule by the people: the Professional Committee for the former, and the People's Jury and Political Briefings for the latter.

SOLUTION 2: POLITICS ENTERS THE SOCIAL MEDIA ARENA

The **'Political Media Platform' (PMP)** is the 'glue' that brings together Solution 1 suggestions and responds to the contemporary political information sphere. The PMP not only aids in 'rule by the experts' and 'rule by the people' processes, but responds to the collapse of information 'gatekeepers' (mass media outlets) by providing a centralized, reliable source of information while institutionalizing and digitizing political information and policy. In this way,

---

[140] Cheryl Sim, "Speaker's Corner," *Singapore Government Agency Website*, September 2014, https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_515_2005-01-25.html.

the PMP also responds to the proliferation of fake news by recording political discourse, dispelling anonymity, and subjecting the discourse to legal challenge.

The Political Media Platform: Bringing Politics Into the Internet Age

The primary function of the PMP is to digitize political discourse. This means (1) digitally documenting and broadcasting the actions of government, providing utmost transparency and accountability, (2) facilitating a medium whereby constituents may communicate with government and each other, effectively fulfilling the role of a 'suggestion box' and a political chatroom, and (3) acting as a platform of credible non-partisan information. These three functions respectively respond to (a) the lack of accountability and transparency to experts and leaders, (b) the lack of communication between government and the public, and (c) the collapse of information 'gatekeepers' and the proliferation of fake news.

The PMP must be launched as the 'official' platform for political discourse. This is why the PMP would likely need to be at least sponsored, if not fully launched, by the state. Party platforms, policy proposals/projects, voting information, election results, as well as Solution 1 suggestions must be published within the program. As a result, discourse published through the PMP must hold legal weight. These are the ways in which the PMP will ensure accountability and transparency in public discourse. Additionally, the PMP can be used to record public personal information such as citizenship, residency, driver's licenses, etc. These factors remedy the anonymity inherent within internet discourse, which currently allows for twitter bots and others to spread misinformation[141] or individuals to spread hate while rarely being held

---

[141] David M. J. Lazer et. al., "The science of fake news," *Science* volume 359, issue 6380 (March 2018): p. 1095. "By liking, sharing, and searching for information, social bots (automated accounts impersonating humans) can magnify the spread of fake news by orders of magnitude."

accountable. Such public personal information need not be publicly available to all, but should be easily accessible by authorities if legal action or accountability is necessary.

The PMP can also facilitate public participation. Through the use of 'policy threads,' users may explore policy proposals and projects by sorting by policy (i.e., environment, economy, etc.) or even jurisdiction (national, provincial, municipal). Users can submit criticism or suggestions through text-messages or likes/dislikes. The PMP could organize which policy threads are most visible based on a balance between how popular a policy thread is and how important the policy area really is; this allows for proportional representation as well as 'affirmative action' for uninteresting yet vital policy areas. Furthermore, the PMP could facilitate communication between all parties via comment sections, personal or group messages, and 'pages' that can be joined and followed. These participatory elements will, at the very least, provide a 'feedback loop' for government to gauge public sentiment on policy issues.

Finally, the PMP will act as an information gatekeeper by publishing fact-based journalism while censoring misinformation. This is the most problematic feature of the PMP, as it is subject to corruption and highly arbitrary. How can we be sure that the reporting is non-partisan, or that the state is not engaging in behind-the-scenes agenda setting, information suppression, or propaganda? Democratic systems of the West often require a *free* press who operates separately from the state. However, the free press of the West has resulted in highly partisan and polarizing journalism, hateful propaganda, willfully ignorant reporting, and influence from special interests. Therefore, while it is true that state-run media can be problematic, a free press also has its disadvantages, especially observable in the case of US mass media. As such, a 'middle-ground' approach may be the most beneficial, whereby an institutionalized standard of journalism (perhaps based on fact-checking and access to primary

sources) is facilitated, while the independence and freedom of journalism continues to be protected. Perhaps a third-party oversight group can ensure that the process is not gamed, financial considerations can be predetermined (i.e., state grants cannot be redacted, private sponsors are not allowed, ad revenue is banned, etc.), or stories and their authors can be held legally accountable for breaking the rules or operating in ill-fate[142].

Under this model, current media groups and systems would continue to exist, except they would compete with the PMP, who would be the 'official' platform for political information - institutionally setting itself apart from the free press. One way of facilitating this distinction is through the legal weight afforded to political discourse published on the PMP. For example, policy promises made by politicians on non-PMP media platforms would not be subject to legal or popular challenge via the PJ or PB, whereas a political leader's campaign promises and governance platform, which would be required to be published on the PMP, would be subject to such challenges. At the same time, the continued existence of media organizations ensures that 'freedom' of information remains intact, allowing for the publication of stories that may not be approved or required by the PMP. However, free media groups should still be required to meet a standard of verifiable journalism or be subject to financial or legal repercussions. In short, willfully ignorant reporting, blatant lies, and hate speech should be banned and legally regulated as it significantly degrades public debate and political cooperation.

In order to work, the PMP must have a degree of enforcement. Political leaders and the PC would be required to publish their governance platforms, campaign promises, policy

---

[142] Again, these solutions are not fool-proof: like all human institutions, they are subject to gaming and corruption. Although there is no room for it here, I believe some sort of oversight organization is the best solution to these issues, and is potentially the only way to achieve the ideal balance between authoritarian and democratic political systems.

recommendations, etc., on the PMP, while users may be required to achieve a quota of policy engagement per year, for example. Incentives such as tax breaks or rebates can also be used to motivate public participation.

In summary, the PMP digitizes political discourse, thrusting politics into the realm of social media. Transparency and accountability, public-to-government communication and participation, and a revamping of journalism and credible information are the pillars of this solution.

COUNTER-ARGUMENTS & DISCUSSION

Adopting a realist perspective, I concede that a redistribution of economic benefits and a comprehensive welfare state are likely more effective solutions for responding to contentious politics in the West, as opposed to the institutional solutions suggested above. This is not to say that the solutions discussed thus far would not be beneficial given the current state of affairs, but rather that there may be more 'direct' remedies. As such, one may argue that a contributing factor for the rise in protest politics or socio-political unrest in the West is a shrinking middle class, which has coincided with a growing gap between the rich and the poor.[143] [144] Thus, improving economic conditions (or *perceptions* of economic conditions, perhaps) for 'the people' (typically the middle class) will likely have a profound effect on reducing contentious politics. I will not engage critically with the notion of economic redistribution; my purpose is to indicate that there is a potential counter-argument here which asserts that the rise of contentious

---

[143] Yael Tamir, *Why Nationalism* (Princeton University Press, 2019), p. 20. "The move from state globalism to individual globalism had brutal outcomes for the developed world; the most obvious was the collapse of middle classes and the rapid growth of social and economic gaps."

[144] On a related note, perhaps what is important is an *improving* economic state - having needs met is not enough for people to be sated, rather their 'needs' are ever growing.

politics can be attributed to deteriorating economic conditions. Thus, improving economic conditions (e.g., establishing a comprehensive welfare state) is a potentially more directly effective solution than what I have suggested. However, this 'welfare state' approach does not adequately address the issue of public participation and social media, which have been addressed by the solutions developed here. While a comprehensive welfare state can help solve many of the problems I have indicated, and should certainly be explored and practically operationalized by future scholars and policymakers, there remains social and institutional benefits of my proposals that cannot be realized by economic solutions alone.

Of course, there are potential drawbacks to each of my proposals. The Professional Committee and Political Media Platform can be critiqued as moves towards *even more* elite rule, which seem counter-intuitive in a context of contentious politics due to domination by the political elite. However, the meritocratic nature of the PC offsets such critiques by retaining the benefits of rational expert rule while encompassing a wider array of individuals into the political process, indicating the democratic affinity of this proposal. Furthermore, Political Briefings and the People's Jury work to counteract the elite nature of the PC by establishing institutional apparatuses to facilitate public contestation and hold political leaders accountable via transparency. On the other hand, while the PMP is vulnerable to authoritarian corruption by the state, the free press of the West has its fair share of poor outcomes (e.g., politically motivated and biased reporting). The PMP seems to be an effective 'happy-medium,' as it attempts to institutionalize political information and participation while leaving intact the free press as it is today, perhaps with minor regulatory additions.

Another critique for the PMP comes from an appreciation for the marketplace of ideas[145]: why control or regulate political discourse if our goal is to reinvigorate public debate, should we not allow ideas to be publicly contested (i.e., accepted or discarded by society) in a *laissez-faire* system of discourse? The short answer is that, left to our own devices, forces outside of our direct control such as cognitive biases or digital algorithms significantly degrade the marketplace of ideas on digital mediums. For example, how can a democratic agent be expected to hear each perspective and engage with proponents of different viewpoints when their search algorithms only suggest content which conforms to their current views? Although I agree that a marketplace of ideas is important for a healthy democracy (and the PMP may disturb a 'raw' marketplace of ideas), we must seriously consider whether we can apply the same logic to digital mediums. I feel that we must move more towards digital control and regulation, because the current laissez-faire arrangements of digital discourse have arguably fallen victim to the forces of social media and cognitive bias.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I have set out in answering two questions: (1) what factors have contributed to a rise in protest and contentious politics and (2) what can states of the West do in response, namely to the rise of anti-elite populist movements? I refer to the concepts of post-politics and neoliberal rationality to illustrate disenchantment with democratic processes, while pointing to impacts of social media and fake news (exacerbated by cognitive tendencies and digital algorithms) to indicate explanations to the rise in contentious politics. In response, I

---

[145] The 'marketplace of ideas' refers to the concept that government should be minimally involved with the regulation of speech and expression, whereby ideas are expected to succeed or fail based on their own merits, through popular contestation. (Brummette, DiStaso, Vafeiadis, Messner, "Read All About It: The Politicization of 'Fake News'," p. 502.)

formulated institutional solutions that attempt to (a) reformat 'rule by the experts' via the Professional Committee, (b) reinvigorate 'rule by the people' via the People's Jury and Political Briefings and (c) digitize political discourse and enhance solutions (a) and (b) via the Political Media Platform. This paper acts as an introduction and foundation of the ideas and their merits; I hope future scholars may improve upon these ideas and critique the analysis.

Bibliography

Author unavailable. Analysis by Head, Jonathan of BBC News. "Thai protests: Tens of thousands gather again in mass defiance of government." *BBC News*. October 15, 2020. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-54548988. Accessed October 19, 2020.

Barrett, Ted, Raju, Manu, Nickeas, Peter. "US Capitol secured, 4 dead after rioters stormed the halls of Congress to block Biden's win." *CNN*. January 7, 2021. https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/06/politics/us-capitol-lockdown/index.html. Accessed January 15, 2021.

Brown, Wendy. "We are all Democrats Now." *Theory & Event* volume 13, issue 2. December 2009. Accessed October 19, 2020.

Brummette, John, DiStaso, Marcia, Vafeiadis, Michail, Messner, Marcus. "Read All About It: The Politicization of 'Fake News' on Twitter." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* volume 95, issue 2. May 2018.

Canadian Federal Government. "Guide for Candidates." *Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada*, October 2016. https://www.fja-cmf.gc.ca/appointments-nominations/guideCandidates-eng.html.

Hawkins, Kirk, Littvay, Levente. *Contemporary US Populism in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Jha, Preeti. "Hong Kong protests: The flashpoints in a year of anger." *BBC News*. August 31, 2020. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-53942295. Accessed October 19, 2020.

Lazer, David M. J. et. al. "The science of fake news." *Science* volume 359, issue 6380. March 2018.

Madhani, Aamer, Miller, Zeke. "Trump plays down virus as he steps up pitch for second term." *AP News*, October 17, 2020. https://apnews.com/article/virus-outbreak-donald-trump-fort-myers-media-florida-0a05d69faf3228057c7c95d188065a2d.

McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.

Moscrop, David. *Too Dumb for Democracy*. Princeton University Press, 2019.

Mouffe, Chantal. *For a Left Populism*. New York: Verso, 2018.

Peters, Cameron. "A detailed timeline of all the ways Trump failed to respond to the coronavirus." *Vox*. June 8, 2020. https://www.vox.com/2020/6/8/21242003/trump-failed-coronavirus-response. Accessed October 19, 2020.

Ramos, Howard, Rodgers, Kathleen. *The Promise of Social Movement Societies*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015.

Sanchez, Ray. "Black Lives Matter protests across American continue nearly 2 months after George Floyd's death." *CNN*. July 23, 2020. https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/23/us/black-lives-matter-protests-continue/index.html. Accessed October 19, 2020.

Sim, Cheryl. "Speaker's Corner." *Singapore Government Agency Website*, September 2014.

https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_515_2005-01-25.html.

Taber, Charles S., Lodge, Milton. "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political

Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science* volume 50, issue 3. June 2006. Accessed

October 19, 2020.

Tamir, Yael. *Why Nationalism*. Princeton University Press, 2019.

Tongdong Bai. *Against Political Equality: the Confucian Case*. Princeton University Press,

2020.

Tufekci, Zeynep. *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*.

New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017.

Book Review – *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* **(2020); Cho Nam-Joo**

Seif Kazamel

Despite the many strides and acts of transcendence within the last 100 years, discrimination based on gender remains a persistent phenomenon, often covertly, in many societies today. Observed based on biological, cultural, philosophical, or socio-political factors, gender inequality refers to the process by which men and women are not viewed or treated as equals, resulting in socio-economic divergences between both genders. Studies have shown that elevated gender inequality is often attributed to ultra-conservative societies or linked to meagre socio-economic conditions.[146] Nonetheless, it is not strictly confined to such environments. Novelist and former television scriptwriter Cho Nam-Joo demonstrates such realities in *Kim Jiyoung*, *Born 1982*. This relatively short tale, first published in 2016 and adapted for film in 2019, chronicles some of the main challenges experienced by the protagonist, Kim Jiyoung, and her life as a woman and mother in South Korea – a country widely recognized today for its socio-economic prosperity and modernism.

The novel is primarily divided into slim accounts of Jiyoung's childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, and marriage. Narrated in chronological order by her male therapist, Jiyoung's story as an ordinary woman driven to the point of mental derangement provides a compelling account of South Korean women's experiences in a country still plagued by severe structural discrimination based on gender. While the novel serves a crucial purpose by contextualizing gender relations in a developed country such as South Korea, it also acts as a wake-up call, especially during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, the current health crisis has exposed women to increasingly adverse circumstances such as grappling with widening pay gaps, taking

---

[146] Pamela Waldron-Moore & Leslie R. Jacobs, "Gendered Inequity in Society and the Academy: Policy Initiatives, Economic Realities and Legal Constraints," *Forum on Public Policy* (2010): 1, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ903473.pdf.

on most of the labour at home and on the frontlines, and, in many cases, losing employment altogether.[147]

From an early age, Jiyoung and her older sister struggled with gender discrimination in its many forms as they traversed through different chapters of life – school, employment, and marriage. Jiyoung's first encounter with gender discrimination was not out in the world, but at home; she recollects being occasionally reprimanded by her grandmother for digging into her younger brother's milk formula. To her grandmother, boys and their affairs were virtually sacred and off-limits, leaving Jiyoung confused and uncertain about the roots of such unfounded bias. But such biases were not unfounded, at least to most South Koreans. The novel paints South Korean culture as one based on patriarchy and male dominance, allocating significant preference to boys over girls and men over women in most socio-economic and bureaucratic affairs. In school, Jiyoung experienced discrimination in class, during lunch breaks, and over dress codes. Despite the lucidity of such biases, "Jiyoung had a hard time voicing her complaints because she wasn't used to expressing her thoughts."[148] According to the novel, this lack of the ability of girls and women to cast doubt on those biases had been the norm, exemplified over other areas such as "why men's national registry numbers begin with a '1' and women's begin with a '2' " in South Korea.[149]

Nevertheless, such realities were not exclusive to Jiyoung's generation alone. Before her, Jiyoung's mother and grandmother also experienced, and at times, indirectly abetted, gender inequalities within social interactions, work, as well as in child-rearing and home-making

---

[147] Troy Stangarone, "COVID-19 Has Widened South Korea's Gender Gap," The Diplomat, 2021, https://thediplomat.com/2021/02/covid-19-has-widened-south-koreas-gender-gap/.
[148] Nam-joo Cho, *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press Inc., 2020), 31, Kindle.
[149] Cho, *Kim Jiyoung*, 33.

responsibilities. In a highly unequal society driven by males' superiority over females, boys' birth was widely preferred over girls. Indeed, "it was a time when people believed it was up to the sons to bring honour and prosperity to the family, and that the family's wealth and success hinged upon male success."[150] Such dispositions capitalized on abortion – legalized based on medical complications since the 1970s – eventually leading to a significant increase in female abortions as "common practice, as if 'daughter' was a medical problem."[151] As a result, these activities led to a highly imbalanced male-to-female ratio as abortion of females soared in the 1980s and early 1990s. By the year 1990, there were approximately "116.5 boys born to 100 girls."[152] Under such circumstances, Jiyoung and her sister were considered lucky to be allowed to live, since it was not long before Jiyoung's mother succumbed to societal pressures and "erased Jiyoung's younger sister" from existence out of deep frustration with not conceiving sons.[153]

During her adolescent years, Jiyoung was exposed to more implicit forms of discrimination. As most girls reached puberty around seventh or eighth grade, Jiyoung observed that some of her friends' families celebrated the milestone by hosting parties with cakes and flowers for their daughters. But to Jiyoung's family, like most South Korean families, a female's menstruation "was a secret shared only among mothers and daughters – an irritating, painful, somehow shameful secret," forcing family members to avoid naming it or directly referring to it during conversations.[154] As Jiyoung grew older, she began to get exposed to the many facets of gender discrimination through her friends' experiences and eventually her own during school and

---

[150] Cho, *Kim Jiyoung*, 25.
[151] Cho, *Kim Jiyoung*, 20-21.
[152] Cho, *Kim Jiyoung*, 36.
[153] Cho, *Kim Jiyoung*, 21.
[154] Cho, *Kim Jiyoung*, 40.

later, employment. The novel highlights an instance when Jiyoung thought she was being pursued by a suspected 'predator' on her way home late at night. Upon reaching safety, she was scolded by her father, who, instead of taking his daughter's side, proceeded to instruct her on 'lady-like' dressing etiquette, before holding her responsible for not doing more to avoid potentially dangerous places and people. In this instance, Jiyoung experienced her first instance of 'victim-blaming,' a distinctive aspect of gender inequality that many women and girls continue to experience worldwide to this day.[155]

Upon Jiyoung's graduation from college in 2005, a poll determined that "only 26.9 percent of new employees at 100 companies were women."[156] As the novel points out, the drivers behind such patterns followed a two-fold logic: preferential hiring practices towards males were grounded in the fact that men deserved compensation for years lost during military service and their assumed prospects of leading future households. But it was also because, as experienced by one female character in the novel, companies found smart, determined women "taxing," in contrast to the type of female employee preferred by most CEOs – submissive and undemanding.[157] It is no doubt then that, as the author demonstrates through footnotes, South Korea ranked quite poorly amongst the OECD countries concerning gender wage gaps. In 2014, South Korea was titled "the worst country in which to be a working woman" as per the Economist's glass-ceiling index.[158] As of 2020, East Asian women faced "a ceiling that appears to be made of bulletproof glass,"[159] with South Korea taking the last place on the index.

---

[155] Alexa Karczmar et al., "Changing the Culture of Victim Blaming," *Women's Health Research Institute*, accessed December 2nd, 2020, https://womenshealth.obgyn.msu.edu/blog/changing-culture-victim-blaming.
[156] Cho, *Kim Jiyoung*, 64.
[157] Cho, *Kim Jiyoung*, 65.
[158] Cho, *Kim Jiyoung*, 84.
[159] The Economist, "Go North, Young Woman," 2020, https://www.economist.com/business/2020/03/07/go-north-young-woman.

According to the latest data, South Korean women earn, on average, 35% less than their male counterparts and fill only one in seven and one in 30 leadership and board positions, respectively.[160] Such statistics confirm the argument that rapid development and modernization are not always considered antidotal to social diseases such as gender inequality.

Certainly, Jiyoung's marriage and her daughter's birth pitted Jiyoung against a myriad of unfavourable challenges. Even after years of struggle to break the glass ceiling, Jiyoung's child-rearing responsibilities trumped all else, forcing her to quit her job to dedicate herself as a full-time mother. Furthermore, Jiyoung's husband was not of much help, especially as he casually offered to "help out" with parenting responsibilities during times of need.[161] Naturally, Jiyoung pondered why he kept offering to 'help out' as if he was "volunteering to pitch in on someone else's work."[162] Unfortunately, for women who chose their families over their jobs, the prospect of returning to the workforce immediately becomes immensely more complicated since "more than half of the women who quit their jobs are unable to find new work for more than five years."[163] However, it was not until one day while out on a stroll with her infant daughter that Jiyoung reached her breaking point. According to the narrator, that took place after she was called a "mum-roach" – slang for married, unemployed mothers or wives who allegedly live on and squander their husbands' hard-earned money. This moment was one of deep hurt for Jiyoung as she suddenly felt awfully discredited, and her career and family sacrifices unfairly overlooked. Following that incident, Jiyoung was never the same. Her frequent brushes with family and society over the years, combined with the culmination of her suffering after strangers made the

---

[160] The Economist, "Go North, Young Woman."
[161] Cho, *Kim Jiyoung*, 97.
[162] Cho, *Kim Jiyoung*, 97.
[163] Cho, *Kim Jiyoung*, 107.

insensitive mum-roach reference, were likely suspects behind Jiyoung's descent into madness as she struggled to cater to the countless demands of the many different parties in her life, eventually breaking her sanity. In the words of her psychiatrist:

> "*Jiyoung became different people from time to time. Some of them were living, others were dead, all of them women she knew. No matter how you looked at it, it wasn't a joke or a prank. Truly, flawlessly, completely, she became that person.*"[164]

One issue that stands out in the fact-based novel is its lack of a stronger emphasis on the prevalence of sexual harassment in South Korea. While the novel identified a few instances in Jiyoung's experiences as sexual harassment, the author fell short of augmenting such a crucial part of the picture through facts and data as she had done with other facets of gender inequality. Particularly, the novel fails to highlight the fact that "sexual assault and harassment are persistent forms of gender-based violence that are rooted in gender inequality."[165] In South Korea, the latest figures indicate that "the percentage of sexual harassment crimes were an alarming rate of 98% of the assaulters being men and of the victims, 86% were shown to be women."[166] More worrying still, the "sexual harassment crimes rate for reported sexual crimes stand at an astonishing rate of 3.4 reported cases every hour," with the majority of reported incidents taking place in the workplace.[167] Indeed, the inclusion of such a vital component would have

---

[164] Cho, *Kim Jiyoung*, 113.
[165] Canadian Women's Foundation, "Sexual Assault and Harassment in Canada | The Facts," accessed December 2nd, 2020, https://canadianwomen.org//the-facts/sexual-assault-harassment/.
[166] Hanyang Dis University, "Sexual Harassment in South Korea," accessed December 2nd, 2020, http://dis.hanyang.ac.kr/lyceum-vol-1/sexual-harassment-in-south-korea/.
[167] Hanyang Dis University, "Sexual Harassment in South Korea."

strengthened an already unusually valuable novel, one that received quite the attention in the conservative Asian country.[168]

Still, albeit sounding monotone and particularly undramatic throughout, Cho's novel's perhaps most striking advantage had been its timing. 2016, the year the novel was first published in Korean, was a tense year of reckoning for South Korea. It coincided with the murder of a South Korean woman in a suspected hate crime, paving the way for major gender equity reforms, which were further augmented by the arrival of the 'MeToo' movement in South Korea two years later.[169] Moreover, Nam-Joo's novel also sheds light on the link between gender inequality and mental illness, often understudied and overlooked in most scholarships and policy-making procedures, yet highly contributive to the plight of women worldwide.[170] It is in this respect that Cho's novel does not merely emphasize the troubles of everyday Asian women. Rather, it serves as a wake-up call for Western societies, presumed leaders on women's rights and equality, who often ally themselves economically and politically with many Asian, African, and Middle-Eastern governments who subject their female citizens to severe gender discrimination in almost all dimensions of life without preconditions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly exposed the world, and especially women, to several new challenges and threats. However, it has mostly pronounced existing social disorders much more than it has created new ones. With that reality in mind, the novel provides a timely perspective into the unique world of women and the countless difficulties they have endured for

---

[168] Shin Joon-Bong, "Bringing to light the subtle sexism in modern Korea: Cho Nam-joo's book reflects the discrimination many women face daily," *Korea JoongAng Daily*, September 5th, 2017, https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3038016.
[169] Rukhsana Shama, "Korea urged to improve sexual harassment law after Seoul mayor's death," *The Korea Times*, July 28th, 2020, https://koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2020/07/176_293226.html.
[170] Shoukai Yu, "Uncovering the hidden impacts of inequality on mental health: a global study," *Translational Psychiatry* 8, 98 (2018), https://doi.org/10.1038/s41398-018-0148-0.

many centuries. As gender issues ebb and flow worldwide, the onus is on Western leaders to demand and secure more gender reforms from their non-Western partners. Realistically, however, such demands can only do so much if people and institutions remain unwilling to see change. At one point, Jiyoung wonders, "do laws and institutions change values, or do values drive laws and institutions?".[171] Like Jiyoung, the novel is guaranteed to strike its readers with not only the urge to ask such questions but also, hopefully, instill them with the impulse to find answers in the face of persistent social dilemmas and outdated gender stigmas and sentiments.

---

[171] Cho, *Kim* Jiyoung, 89.

Bibliography

Canadian Women's Foundation. "Sexual Assault and Harassment in Canada | The Facts."
Accessed December 2nd, 2020. https://canadianwomen.org/the-facts/sexual-assault-harassment/.

Cho, N. *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press Inc., 2020. Kindle Edition.

Hanyang Dis University. "Sexual Harassment in South Korea." Accessed December 2nd, 2020.
http://dis.hanyang.ac.kr/lyceum-vol-1/sexual-harassment-in-south-korea/

Joon-Bong, S. "Bringing to light the subtle sexism in modern Korea: Cho Nam-joo's book reflects
the discrimination many women face daily." *Korea JoongAng Daily*, September 5th, 2017.
https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3038016.

Karczmar, A., Kim, A., Rashedi, A., Arroyo, C., Cleveland, C., Smeyers, C. L., Tingen, C.,
Schrader, E. K., Meyer, E., Shim, J., Clark, K., Stevenson, L., Bernhardt, M., Castle, M.,
Runge, M., Lyleroehr, M., Admin, M., Fisher, N. F., Johnson, N., … T.K. Woodruff.
"Changing the Culture of Victim Blaming." *Women's Health Research Institute*. Accessed
December 2nd, 2020. https://womenshealth.obgyn.msu.edu/blog/changing-culture-victim-blaming.

Shama, R. "Korea urged to improve sexual harassment law after Seoul mayor's death." *The Korea
Times*, July 28th, 2020. https://koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2020/07/176_293226.html.

Stangarone, T. "COVID-19 Has Widened South Korea's Gender Gap." The Diplomat. 2021.
https://thediplomat.com/2021/02/covid-19-has-widened-south-koreas-gender-gap/.

The Economist. "Go North, Young Woman." 2020.

  https://www.economist.com/business/2020/03/07/go-north-young-woman

Waldron-Moore, P., and Jacobs, L. R., "Gendered Inequity in Society and the Academy: Policy

  Initiatives, Economic Realities and Legal Constraints," *Forum on Public Policy* (2010): 1–

  14. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ903473.pdf.

Yu, S. "Uncovering the hidden impacts of inequality on mental health: a global study."

  Translational Psychiatry 8, 98 (2018). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41398-018-0148-0.

The Need for a New Agricultural Paradigm: Hunger, Climate Change, and Global Agribusiness

Jade Cameron

As of 2018, persistent and growing global hunger has afflicted 821 million people worldwide and is only increasing due to the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic[172]. Centuries of imperialism, colonialism, and uneven development have entrenched global inequalities to the extreme, resulting in the unequal distribution of food resources worldwide. Because of this, the expansion of agriculture is often touted as a necessary and benevolent global goal. However, within the dominant agricultural paradigm of industrial multinational agribusiness [173], in which corporate control over intensive production for profit is the norm, the expansion of this model has severe, often invisibilized consequences[174] [175] [176].

The premise of agricultural expansion rests on several critical faulty assumptions about agricultural production that will be examined in this paper. First, it presumes that hunger derives from a lack of access to food[177]. Second, it assumes that capitalistic market-led intensive agriculture will increase the production of food[178]. Finally, and most faultily, it assumes and that this paradigm will be tenable in the immediate and distant futures of drastic climatic change [179]. These assumptions and the paradigm they uphold have critical consequences for the social, ecological, and political futurity of food production. This paper will deconstruct these myths and their effects, exposing the lies and destruction of current global agricultural practices to propose a complete paradigm shift that centres local, sustainable food production for a more just and tenable global future.

---

[172] UNICEF Canada, "Global hunger continues to rise, new UN report says," UNICEF

[173] Pablo Lapegna, *Soybeans and power: Genetically modified crops, environmental politics, and social movements in Argentina* (New York NY: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[174] Stefano Liberti, *Land Grabbing: Journeys in the New Colonialism* (London UK: Verso, 2014).

[175] John Weis, *The Ecological Hoofprint: The Global Burden of Industrial Livestock* (London UK: Zed Books, 2013).

[176] Bill Winders, *Grains* (Cambridge UK: Polity Press, 2017).

[177] Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 1981).

[178] Gerardo Otero, *The Neoliberal Diet* (Austin TX: University of Texas Press, 2018).

[179] Weis, *The Ecological Hoofprint.*

The Current Agricultural Paradigm: Industrial Multinational Agribusiness

The current agricultural model not only fails to address issues of global hunger and climate change, but is explicitly implicated in their exacerbation. If the global community intends to eliminate hunger and curtail climate change, as expressed in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development [180], world leaders must disrupt the current agricultural model and embrace a new paradigm that shirks big agribusiness and instead centres localized, small-scale, ecologically-sustainable food production[181].

Modern agriculture is currently characterized by economies of scale, with input-intensive industrial production guided by a rationale of efficiency, ever-increasing output and maximized profits[182]. It generally entails mono-cropping; a "technological package" of transgenic/genetically-modified (GMO) seeds; agrochemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides; and labour-displacing machinery[183]. Furthermore, it is dominated by an increasingly consolidated oligopoly of multinational corporations with tremendous economic and political power exercised through intensive lobbying over state and international regulations[184].

The modern agricultural paradigm is also deeply embedded in a hegemonic cultural narrative of technological progress that venerates a dichotomy between 'man' and 'nature,' whereby technology is the vital tool for the former to conquer and control the latter, with the development of sedentary agriculture seen as a key development of civilization[185]. Here, the

---

[180] United Nations, "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda,"
    https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld
[181] Jeffrey Ayres & Michael J. Bosia, "Food Sovereignty as Localized Resistance to Globalisation." in *Globalizations,* 2011, 8(1), 47-63.
[182] Otero, *The Neoliberal Diet.*
[183] Norma Giarracca & Miguel Teubal, "Argentina: Extractivist Dynamics of Soy Production and Open-Pit Mining," in *The New Extractivism: A Post-Neoliberal Development Model or Imperialism of the Twenty-First Century?,* Ed. H. Veltmeyer & J. Petras (London UK: Zed Books, 2014), 50.
[184] Otero, *The Neoliberal Diet,* 12.
[185] Weis, *The Ecological Hoofprint,* 61.

"chronic biophysical contradictions" of natural environmental production limits, such as natural cycles of soil fallowing and limited local watersheds, are treated as problems to be solved through a "treadmill" of "biophysical overrides," rather than fundamental ecological constraints on future sustainability[186]. While this narrative wields tremendous legitimacy on its own, the modern agricultural paradigm depends on several parallel assumptions to be positioned as a solution to global hunger.

The Assumptions Upholding the Current Paradigm

The understanding that hunger can be solved by producing more food still holds influence in popular thought, despite over forty years since Amartya Sen's Nobel Prize-winning research on famines concluded that it is not a lack of food, but rather a lack of *entitlements* to food that determines whether people go hungry [emphasis added][187]. Encompassed in this is a Malthusian framing of population growth as a core cause of hunger, and even further, poverty and environmental destruction[188]. However, mounting critical evidence shows that current global food production is more than adequate to meet the needs of the growing global population[189]. Moreover, even in times of famine, the industrialization of agriculture and corresponding commodification of its products perpetuates a system wherein "[food] commodities flow in the direction of profits rather than need" resulting in tremendous waste in the Global North in parallel with hunger in the Global South [190].

This leads into a second assumption: that market-led industrial agriculture increases food production[20]. The idea that industrialized agriculture produces more food than traditional small-

---

[186] Ibid, 8, 104.

[187] Sen, *Poverty and Famines.*

[188] Weis, *The Ecological Hoofprint,* 34-35.

[189] Lapegna, *Soybeans and Power,* 8.

[190] Winders, *Grains,* 84.

[20] Weis, *The Ecological Hoofprint*

scale farming is representative of the "Jevon's paradox," wherein "overall volume increases in resource use tend to accompany efficiency gains" [191]. Here, the purported productivity advances of transgenic crops, industrial methods, and massive-scale operations obscure their increased consumption of water, soil, and energy inputs, not to mention their depletion or complete destruction of the renewability of these resources [192]. In this way, productivity is measured by sheer output without consideration of the extreme additional inputs necessary to reach these output levels.

Simultaneously, an orientation toward profit favours high-return agricultural investments, which are not in fact direct food crops, but rather grains such as wheat, soy, and maize [193]. These are highly subsidized in US-oriented global markets, and largely funnelled into feed for similarly high-return animal products[194], diverted towards lucrative "biofuel" production[195], or processed into nutritionally-deficient, commercially marketable "psuedo-foods" that are detrimental to global health outcomes[196]. The "financialization" of agriculture, in the form of an influx of speculative investment capital following the 2008 global financial and food crises[197], represents an even deeper subjugation of food production to capital accumulation as a core goal of agribusiness[198].

Social, Ecological, and Political Consequences of the Current Paradigm

The idea that this paradigm provides a tenable solution to world food needs in the context of global climate change ignores the ways that it directly contributes to environmental

---

[191] Weis, *The Ecological Hoofprint,* 115.
[192] Ibid
[193] Winders, *Grains,* 105.
[194] Weis, *The Ecological Hoofprint.*
[195] Winders, *Grains,* 78.
[196] Otero, *The Neoliberal Diet,* 172.
[197] Ibid, 30.
[198] Giarracca & Teubal, "Argentina", 52.

destruction and undermines long-term agricultural sustainability[199]. Globally, agribusiness is implicated in the deforestation of crucial carbon sinks, the widespread misuse and contamination of water resources, the depletion and desertification of soils, the proliferation of greenhouse gas emissions and the destruction of biodiversity [200] [201] [202].

These environmental impacts are also compounded by myriad negative social effects. For example, the agribusiness model perpetuates the dispossession of Indigenous and rural communities by widespread "land grabbing" schemes wherein large corporation and foreign governments purchase or indefinitely lease productive land in the Global South, relegating it inaccessible to local populations [203] [204]. This results in the displacement of subsistence practices as well as labour prospects by an "agriculture without farmers"[205]. Furthermore, it entrenches inequalities and uneven entitlements as communities are eroded and entire livelihoods are rendered impossible[206]. The result is ongoing colonial and imperial violence against Indigenous peoples, the rural poor, peasants, and their lands for the benefit of multinational corporations.

In this way, industrial agribusiness paradoxically exacerbates the very issues it is purported to solve, as it diverts agriculture away from accessible food crops and embodies an "extractivist" mode of production for capital accumulation that represents "an inherent unsustainability in terms of economic and social development" [207]. Furthermore, global agribusiness can be seen as an acute manifestation of the "capitalist world-ecology" that is at the

---

[199] Weis, *The Ecological Hoofprint.*
[200] Otero, *The Neoliberal Diet.*
[201] Giarracca & Teubal, "Argentina".
[202] Weis, *The Ecological Hoofprint.*
[203] Grain (2013) Collating and dispersing: GRAIN's strategies and methods, in *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 40:3, 531-536.
[204] Liberti, *Land Grabbing.*
[205] Giarracca & Teubal, "Argentina," 56.
[206] Lapegna, *Soybeans and Power.*
[207] Giarracca & Teubal, "Argentina," 48.

root of global climate change, wherein corporeal Earthly realities are subjugated to the constructed reality of capital[208].

The current framework in which the agribusiness paradigm thrives is one of "neoregulation," as termed by Gerardo Otero, wherein a discourse of free market trade and benevolent investment obscures the "uneven" implementation of neoliberal policies[38]. Such policies privilege the interests of industrialized states and their multinational agribusiness corporations at the expense of developing states and their populations[209]. This is exemplified by the World Trade Organization's stance on reforming agriculture to "increase market access *and* improve the livelihoods of farmers*" through targeting export subsidies (WTO, emphasis added). In practice, this is likely to be implemented by developed states against developing states, without addressing the entrenched protectionisms that advantage US-based grain producers, nor examining how or if these two goals are compatible [210]. While the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) explicitly recognizes that the global agricultural industry is "highly concentrated, integrated and globalized" and identifies several progressive policy objectives, it maintains the rhetoric of productivity and efficiency that favours industrialization[211]. Ultimately, the multilateral regulation of agriculture remains all but confined to issues of trade rather than addressing global hunger and the myriad negative impacts of the current paradigm.

Conclusion: A New Paradigm of Local, Sustainable Food Production

In this context, a new agricultural paradigm must challenge the techno-productivist discourse of industrial economies of scale to revalue localized, small-scale farming and reframe

---

[208] Weis, *The Ecological Hoofprint.* 38.
[209] Ibid, 38.
[210] Winders, *Grains.*
[211] Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, "What We Do," United Nations 2019, http://www.fao.org/about/what-we-do/en/

natural ecological limits as crucial to future sustainability[212] [213] [214]. This requires a policy framework at the national and international levels that confronts the power consortium of multinational agribusiness oligopolies, safeguards the rights of agricultural communities worldwide, and protects the environment[215] [216].

The benefits of this new approach include the revitalization of rural communities, the absorption of surplus labour, the prevention of further colonial dislocation, and the provision of meaningful livelihoods to multitudes of people[217]. In addition, better environmental practices and protections would contribute to the mitigation of climate change and amelioration of its immediate effects on food resources[218]. Furthermore, this paradigm would reorient agriculture towards food production in the interests of abolishing world hunger, protecting environmental sustainability, and ensuring inclusive social and economic development[219]. In the face of increasing hunger and impending climate crises, confronting these issues requires nothing less than a complete agricultural paradigm shift.

---

[212] Ayres & Bosia, *Beyond Global Summitry.*
[213] Otero, *The Neoliberal Diet.*
[214] Weis, *The Ecological Hoofprint.*
[215] Otero, *The Neoliberal Diet.*
[216] La Via Campesina, *What Are We Fighting For?* n.d.
https://viacampesina.org/en/what-are-we-fighting-for/
[217] Otero, *The Neoliberal Diet.*
[218] Weis, *The Ecological Hoofprint.*
[219] La Via Campesina, *What Are We Fighting For?.*

Bibliography

Ayres, J., & Bosia, M. J.. "Beyond Global Summitry: Food Sovereignty as Localized Resistance

    to Globalization." *Globalizations 8*(1) (2011): 47-63.

Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. "What We Do," United Nations,

    2019. http://www.fao.org/about/what-we-do/en/.

Giarracca, N., & Teubal, M.. "Argentina: Extractivist Dynamics of Soy Production and Open-Pit

    Mining," *The New Extractivism: A Post-Neoliberal Development model or imperialism of the*

    twenty-first century? Veltmeyer & J. Petras Ed. London, UK: Zed Books Ltd (2014): 47-79.

Grain. "Collating and Dispersing: GRAIN's Strategies and Methods," *Journal of Peasant Studies*

    40(3) (2013): 531-536.

La Via Campesina. (n.d.). What are we fighting for?. Retrieved from

    https://viacampesina.org/en/what-are-we-fighting-for/

Lapegna, P.. *Soybeans and Power: Genetically Modified Crops, Environmental Politics, and*

    Social Movements in Argentina. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Liberti, S.. *Land Grabbing* (E. Flannelly, Trans.). London, UK: Verso, 2013.

Otero, G.. *The Neoliberal Diet.* Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2018.

Sen, A.. Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation. Oxford, UK: Oxford
  University Press, 1981.

UNICEF. "Global Hunger Continues to Rise, New UN Report Says," UNICEF Canada 2018.
  https://www.unicef.ca/en/press-release/global-hunger-continues-rise-new-un-report-
  says?ea.tracking.id=19DIAQ08OTE&19DIAQ02OTE=&gclid=CjwKCAiA5o3vBRBUEiwA
  9PVzalWIIJJ4b9g21m3PmLXnyKNVE0P5fKzY6kD1RTuNO9VgjPIll0kn5RoCN84QAvD_
  BwE.

United Nations. "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda," United
  Nations, 2015. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld.

Weis, T. *The Ecological Hoofprint: The Global Burden of Industrial Livestock*. London, UK:
  Zed Books, 2013.

Winders, B. *Grains*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2017.

World Trade Organization. "Agriculture," W.T.O. (n.d.).
  https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/agric_e/agric_e.htm.