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# The 'Me' in #MeToo: Analysing a 'Global Movement' in the Context of African Women's Movements

*OLIVIA AUSTIN evaluates the MeToo movement's intersectional value within the context of African feminist movements and narratives.*

**I**t would be virtually impossible to live in a Western society and not have heard of the #MeToo movement. Lauded as a 'phenomenal leap' (Davey 2019) and a 'global movement' (Sen 2020), the campaign has brought significant attention to the systemic gender-based violence perpetrated in society. In Africa, gender-based violence is one of the most significant threats to women and their ability to lead safe and prosperous lives. In its current form, #MeToo has facilitated an important disruption to mainstream discourses surrounding violence against women, but it is still hindered by its lack of inclusivity. The question inevitably arises: can #MeToo really be considered so successful if it is failing to include or represent marginalised women who face some of the greatest atrocities in the world?

This paper will examine both the successes and shortcomings of the #MeToo movement before looking at the women's movement in Africa and why it has struggled to gain the same level of international recognition as #MeToo (Kangere et al. 2017, 900). Comparing the #MeToo movement and the women's movement in Africa highlights the complex intersectional struggles confronting women in Africa which broad, Western-centric movements such as #MeToo can fail to acknowledge. With that said, there is significant potential for #MeToo to be truly influential in the African context once it returns to its roots of recognising the shared experiences of women globally and amplifying the voices of women which, for too long, have been suppressed.

## Origins and Limitations of the 'MeToo' Movement

#MeToo can trace its origins to the 'Me Too' movement founded by Tarana Burke in 2006 (Boyle 2019). The movement exploded overnight in 2017, when within 24 hours of actress Alyssa Milano encouraging women to share their experiences of sexual violence, there were 500,000 tweets and twelve million separate Facebook comments, posts, or reactions under the hashtag #MeToo (Gleeson and Turner 2019, 53-71). The movement has only grown since and has been highly successful in spotlighting the discussion of gender inequalities and violence. Part of the reason that #MeToo is considered such a success is its use of social media as a platform for raising awareness. The movement turned social media into a space where women can share and recognise instances of personal and private oppressions, acting as a catalyst for change (Gleeson and Turner 2019, 53). This broke down significant barriers between women, who previously may have felt isolated and oppressed by stigma or shame. Historically, spontaneous, shocking movements such as #MeToo have tended to fade into the background as the news cycle moves on. However, this movement has cemented itself in a long-term discourse, showing that not only was it necessary to address the deep-rooted violence and inequalities that women face, but also that these issues will take generations of re-education and re-structuring to overcome.

Despite being viewed as such a successful movement with significant global scope, the #MeToo movement is brimming with 'points of tension, contradiction and polarisation' (Fileborn and Loney-Howes 2019, ix). The

movement has been widely criticised for failing to recognise the intersectional struggles of minoritised and marginalised women, and it has not done enough to amplify their voices. Rather, #MeToo's focus has been on affluent white women and their struggles in the workplace (Fileborn and Loney-Howes 2019, 335-336), creating a sense of ambivalence among many women who feel excluded or unable to relate to the movement itself. Moreover, there has been insufficient consideration of the limitations of social media as a platform for change; due to a lack of digital literacy and language barriers (Boyle 2019), some of the most vulnerable women remain isolated and underrepresented. Examining #MeToo in the context of the African women's movement highlights these limitations which have constrained its ability to act as a meaningful platform for change on the continent. For the movement to be considered truly successful it must trickle down to all levels of society, not solely amplify the voices of those with privilege and access. Instead, by finding ways to share the experiences of marginalised women, it must recognise their complex struggles and push for legitimate change.

### Limitations of the African Women's Movement

Unfortunately, several restrictions plague the African women's movement such that the achievements evident in the legal and political systems are not enough to truly liberate women (Gouws and Coetzee 2019). Currently, the movement is significantly hindered by a lack of financial and political resources. Oppressive customary traditions limit women's access to land ownership and prevent them from developing as individuals or trap women in cycles of poverty and dependency (Kwagala-Igaga et al. 2005, 276). Moreover, African movements comparable to #MeToo, such as South Africa's '16 Days of Activism' campaign, in which women take to the streets for sixteen days once a year to raise awareness of violence against women, fail to embed themselves in the long term: 'when the sixteen days are up, people forget' (Zondi 2015). This can largely be attributed to the entrenched patriarchy, which, in the South African context, has spawned 'a [sic] ubiquitous masculinity throughout all sectors' (Andrews 2006, 437). The main hurdle is overcoming structures of patriarchal oppression in the private sphere. While the public sphere is regulated, the private sphere generally remains exempt from government scrutiny. Education is not focused on long-term behavioural change to break the cycle of violence (Dhever 2020), and limited female representation in the public sphere means that there are few means by which this can be successfully addressed. Some elements of #MeToo could be utilised as a movement seeking to liberate women in the private sphere. While this would require significant reform of the movement and consideration of the complexities which exist in the African context, it could be a means of achieving long-term structural change.

Despite its limitations, the African women's movement has evident potential, and a thriving community of women's groups are pushing for and attaining change. Many women across Africa face a series of overlapping structures of oppression, including embedded cultural beliefs which present women as 'second-class' citizens (Kwagala-Igaga et al. 2005, 273). Women therefore engage in creative solutions. Since 1990, 38 African constitutions have been rewritten to include greater measures to tackle sexual violence and achieve greater equality (Tripp et al. 2008, 6). Regional organisations, such as the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Protection Network, have greatly increased the strength of their representation, growing over a decade from a network of 25 women's organisations to a membership of over 1,000 groups across 21 countries (Kangere et al. 2017, 900). Moreover, on an individual level, many successfully challenge oppressive and violent customs and laws, particularly regarding property and marriage rights as well as helping women to escape relationships of financial dependency (Kwagala-Igaga et al. 2006, 274). So-called 'hashtag activism' is also present across Africa. Women's movements across the continent have used social media as a means of 'popularising feminism' and sharing an accessible feminist analysis of sexual violence to stimulate action in changing social norms (Kangere et al. 2017, 900). For example, the GBV Prevention Network has launched two successful social media campaigns: the #LifeWithoutPatriarchy campaign that reached over 19,000 people, and 'Let's Talk About Power' that united over 70,000 voices under the hashtag #Power101 (Kangere et al. 2017, 900). Evidently, the women's movement in Africa is neither new nor small—and it is constantly adapting, using a plethora of methods and messages to advance the position of women.

However, when examining comparable #MeToo figures, the obvious question is why one movement was able to garner such significant attention. In Africa there are clear limitations on internet accessibility and a lack of safety in online activism, demonstrated by the arrests of online activists such as Uganda's Stella Nyanzi (Kangere

et al. 2017, 901). However, another important factor accounting for the differences are neo-colonial structures which disproportionately amplify the voices of white women. Women's movements in the postcolonial world and the direct action of poor women have for too long been ignored by mainstream media and academia, creating an assumption that women's movements and the challenges they face are the same all over the world (Gouws and Coetzee 2019). Despite the examples of women's movements across the Global South and their thriving presence in Africa, it was only when affluent white women chose to speak up that the world and the mainstream media chose to pay attention. This creates the illusion of #MeToo as an inclusive, global platform of action (Kagal et al. 2019, 133).

In reality, the concepts and principles championed by the affluent women at the forefront of #MeToo—centering largely on issues of sexual violence and inequality in the workplace—are not the same struggles encountered by all women across the globe. While focusing on violence and inequality in the workplace is still of great importance, for some women living in rural Africa the emphasis is likely to fall far more on 'bread and butter' issues such as improving their personal financial situation in order to ensure their own safety and development (Kagal et al. 2019, 135-6). Furthermore, #MeToo has struggled to gain traction in Africa due to the vastly different systems of belief surrounding the ideas of 'feminism.' In Africa, the term is often accompanied by the baggage of it being a foreign, Western concept (Tripp et al. 2008, 7), which has limited the extent to which #MeToo has been able to root itself in the ongoing discourses of gender-based violence in African communities. This is where #MeToo has moved too far beyond the foundations of Tarana Burke's original movement, which aimed at demanding support and recognition for young women of colour and attempting to rectify the lack of intersectional activism against GBV by acting as a movement of solidarity (Boyle 2019, 5). Focusing on a particular manifestation of violence, instead of on its structural roots which extend across the globe, widespread gender-based violence is allowed to continue (Kagal et al. 2019, 136). However, by refocusing the movement, there is an opportunity to move away from this sense of alienation and to include the voices of women in Africa from a whole range of backgrounds and social contexts. A North-South partnership such as this could share resources (Kwagala-Igaga et al. 2006, 282) to create a powerful, global force of women that the world cannot ignore.

To an extent, #MeToo has represented a step forward by bridging the gap between women in the global North and South. Historically, global narratives of violence against women have been rooted in division, between ideas of 'us versus them' and binaries of 'East versus West' (Kagal et al. 2019, 134). Bringing attention to the fact that sexual violence and inequality remains a central pillar of systemic patriarchy in the West blurs divisions and unites women based on a shared struggle. However, in the context of Africa, this element of #MeToo has not been prioritised enough. Tracing the movement back to its roots, in conjunction with a more comprehensive intersectional analysis, could lead to greater inclusivity, thus helping women who are still vulnerable in the private sphere. Simply, Tarana Burke emphasises the importance of 'Me Too' for its ability to enable women to acknowledge their shared experiences, stating that 'it situates the individual in the conversation whilst also allowing us to see the bigger picture, thus meaning no one woman should carry the weight of "Me" alone' (Boyle 2019, 12). The movement now needs to look beyond its Western-centric concepts of female empowerment and tackling sexual violence. It ought to provide a supportive platform to encourage marginalised women to speak up and form their own narratives and identities around what it means to be equal and safe as a woman. By combining these efforts with those of the African women's movements that are already making progress, #MeToo could become a shining example of what it means to be a truly global movement based on inclusivity, representation, and diversity.

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# The Evolution of Ethnicity in Rwanda in the Aftermath of the 1994 Genocide

*JACK KERRIGAN evaluates the 'duality of rule of law' in regards to Rwanda's Twa population in the context of the 1994 genocide.*

**I**n a message that is driven home each anniversary of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, Rwandan President Paul Kagame defiantly declared, 'Our never again means never again' (The New Humanitarian, 2004). The post-Genocide period in Rwanda has been characterised by an ambitious nation-building programme as well as strong economic growth that is representative of an apparently remarkable series of successes. The country has sought to distance itself from the genocidal atrocities, which are barely a generation old, with reforms. Such reformative measures include the outlawing of identification through any means other than 'Banyarwanda' [people of Rwanda] (Hartley, 2015) in an attempt to instill harmonious ties between citizens, dissipating ethnically centred angst which was synonymous with the 1994 genocide.

The narrative of ambitious socio-economic development, however, is not altogether accurate. Civic liberties are currently diminishing, and there remains a systematic marginalisation of subsections of the population, namely the Twa minority. This article demonstrates that, whilst Rwanda has achieved remarkable and swift change that deserves recognition, fundamental and systematic divisions remain within the nation, manifesting in a widening chasm of development and ethnicism.

In Rwanda, ethnic discrimination is forbidden, but ridicule and maltreatment of the Twa continue with few repercussions. Rather than fostering unity, the genocide has set a precedent for an apparently perpetual form of inequality, marginalising the aforementioned Twa. This article shall first provide some context for the topic at hand, discussing the genocide in short, before presenting some recent successes of Rwandan society. These successes stand in stark contrast with the maltreatment of the Twa population, which will be the focus for the remainder of the essay.

Within Rwanda there are three primary ethnic groups: the [Ba]Twa, Hutu, and Tutsi. The Twa, considered to be the country's indigenous people, though they make up just under one percent of the population (Kamanzi, 2019). Despite lasting for only 100 days and being primarily targeted at tutsi individuals (with it widely accepted that between 250,000 and 800,000 tutsi were killed) by Hutu genocidaires, between 10,000 and 30,000 of the Twa population were also killed during the genocide period (Guichaoua, 2019). Furthermore, between 10,000 and 30,000 of the Twa population were also killed. The pertinence of ethnic lines within Rwandan society both during and prior to the outbreak of violence is clear (Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO), 2008).

Contemporary Rwanda is almost unidentifiable with the nation that crawled out of the 1994 genocidal period. There has been a substantial increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from 753 million US dollars at the end of 1994, to 10.3 billion dollars in 2019 (The World Bank, 2021), while the country's Gross National Income (GNI) per capita PPP has increased from 350 dollars in 1994 to 2,250 dollars in 2019 (The World Bank, 2021). Rwanda's economic development can be attributed to the country's technocratic approach in this sphere; the nation saw the implementation of an effective market economy coupled with average tariff reductions of eighteen percent (Malunda, 2012). Due to this, the prices of goods are indicative of real cost rather than arbitrary nominal levels which were previously set by the governing party. Rwanda is, as a result, equipped with an economic system less disposed to resource misallocation and general shortages. Consequently, when conflated with foreign aid and alternative forms of investment, Rwanda has achieved remarkable



economic growth rates, which have averaged approximately eight percent per annum following the genocide (Rostagno, 2012). Furthermore, life expectancy has shown an upward trend, rising to 68.7 at the end of 2018, from a low of 26.2 during the genocidal period, and 50.2 prior to it (Rostagno, 2012). Thus, at first glance, such strong performance in a variety of major indicators may clearly account for the glowing praise from commentators, such as G. Ruhumuliza (2019) who described Rwanda as 'Africa's most inspiring success story.'

Further praise for the Rwandan government is deserved due to the country's apparent prioritisation of gender equality and healthcare. Just ten years after the genocide, women occupied nearly half the seats in the lower house of Parliament and represented nearly 70 percent of Rwanda's population immediately after the genocidal period (Enda, 2003). This commendable commitment to gender equality is reflected in the nation's move to outlaw polygamy (Hartley, 2015) as well as in healthcare, wherein Rwanda's Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) has dropped from 1300 in 1990 to 290 in 2015 (Gurusamy, 2018). Such a decrease made Rwanda 'one of the few countries to have met Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5' (Gurusamy, 2018), which are the improvement of maternal health and reducing child mortality, respectively. The latter of these can be shown given that Rwanda's under-5 mortality rate (U5MR) was 151 in 1990 but fell to 39 by 2016, comfortably surpassing the outlined MDGs. Whilst this can, in part, be attributed to the effect of global technological advances in healthcare, Rwanda's 5.2 percent rate of reduction in U5MR is better than the global rate of 3.2% (Gurusamy, 2018). Equally, Rwanda has achieved the highest global average annual reduction in both the U5MR and maternal mortality rates (UNICEF, 2020). By decentralising healthcare, training local community volunteers in basic medical screening practices, and introducing the auditing of maternal deaths (amongst other practices), Rwanda has been able to better care for citizens in healthcare matters at both individual and societal levels, whilst also accommodating a structured and seemingly positively implemented gendered approach. This has led to praise from the likes of the South African Institute of International Affairs, who recognise Rwanda as a figurehead of the African Group when it comes to commitments to women's rights (Jordaan, 2019). However a deeper analysis of women's rights successes reveals discrepancies in the Rwandan approach, based upon the prevalent, though unofficial, ethnic divide between the Twa and larger society. Despite the Rwandan government's laws barring discrimination based on ethnicity, there are significant divergences in women's healthcare when applied to Twa. Such as that more than fifteen percent of Twa women are HIV positive and receive, relative to their compatriots, little assistance on this matter (Kalimba and Jensen, 2010). Further, Twa women tend to possess 'low level[s] of education,' and 'suffer from sexual abuse and some have to resort to prostitution in order to survive' (Kalimba and Jensen, 2010).

Such dual standards in terms of equality of opportunity within Rwanda are thus readily apparent, as ethnicity clearly remains a matter of marked prevalence. There is an apparent absence of repercussions for those who continue to marginalise the Twa, an issue which shall continue to be explored throughout this essay.

Building upon the notion of government duality in policy regarding ethnicity, local non-governmental organisations were forced to change 'indigenous' in their titles to that of 'potters' (Hartley, 2015), a policy which formally removed the mention of ethnicity, in relation to the group, in accordance with Rwandan law. The official purpose behind such an attempt to diminish ethnicity is, as the Rwandan constitution states, orientated on the state's first 'fundamental principle.' This principle lies in Article 8 of the Constitution, which purports that the 'fighting [against] the ideology of genocide and all its manifestations, i.e., eradication of ethnic, regional and other divisions and promotion of national unity' (Rwandan Constitution). Seemingly, championing an imbued common good, this has seen the implementation of a national heritage term, 'Banyarwanda' (people of Rwanda) (Hartley, 2015), and the prosecution of those who seek to undermine such an identity, or individually proffer an alternative identity for themselves. Such prosecution is in accordance with Law No.47/2001, 'Instituting Punishment for Offences of Discrimination and Sectarianism,' which underlines the necessity to 'punish anyone found guilty of fuelling conflicts among Rwandans and sowing divisions among them' (Hartley, 2015), with punishments including prison sentences of up to 30 years and fines of up to five million Rwandan francs (\$8800 USD) (Thompson, 2009). While it may be assumed that the prohibition of incursions onto civic identity would promote individual liberties, for it deters ideas of harassment, the reality is a far cry from such a take, as the prevailing case of the Twa people effectively demonstrates.

We can further this point as, despite the outlawing of inequality along ethnic lines, ethnicism towards the Twa is 'overt' (Thompson, 2009), at times. This is apparent given the Community of Rwandan Potters have stated that, 'a very high number of children [are] born outside of marriage, particularly to

other Rwandan men who are not willing to recognise the child or its mother because of discrimination' (Kalimba and Jensen, 2010). Therefore, it is clear that the 'one Rwanda for all Rwandans' (Laws et al, 2019) rhetoric is seemingly not standardised for the entirety of the nation and, rather, ethnically based differences remain a focal point of societal structures. Kinyarwanda (the official language of Rwanda) radio stations 'continue to broadcast [prejudiced] jokes insulting Batwa' (Hartley, 2015), whilst the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights took note of the continued marginalisation of the group (UNPO Report, 2013) and made recommendations to Rwanda on how to tackle the issue. Thus, despite effective anti-discrimination laws existing in terms of equating the indigenous group with their national counterparts, there is little enforcement for the protection of them, with few repercussions for both Hutu and Tutsi groups who remain 'racist in their perception of [Ba]Twa as sub-human' (Thompson, 2019). In turn, there is an apparent chasm of inequality owing to the perpetuated stereotypes and duality, in terms of the accountability and lack of enforcement of rule of law, relating to the protection of Twa individuals.

Additionally, the lack of existing accountability for those who commit acts of an oppressive nature effectively perpetuates the marginalisation and mistreatment of the Twa population. The reality of the situation is that judgements regarding who plants 'divisions' within Rwandan society (as per the aforementioned Law No.47/2001) is arbitrary, given the exceedingly vague outline of the term, and is frequently taken to be instrumentalised as a method of oppression while, at times, blatant representations of perpetuating 'division' go unpunished. Such ambiguity is made salient as Rwandan law defines divisionism as, 'the use of any speech, written statement, or action that divides people, that is likely to spark conflicts among people, or that causes an uprising which might degenerate into strife among people based on discrimination' (Rwandan Law No. 47, 2001). From this definition, it is clear to see how several scholars believe that such a law is utilised as a tool of excessive conventional state power (Amnesty International, 2013; Reyntjens, 2013; Longman, 2017) due to the flexibility with which the law can be shaped and utilised as a result of its ambiguity.

For Rwanda to more effectively reconcile the entirety of its population, a consistent handling of civic incursions must be implemented so as to dispel continued oppression, which manifests itself in an apparent duality of rule when it comes to holding those who commit acts of ethnically driven oppression accountable. Somewhat ironically, by repressing individual memory through the means of ethnic outlawing and indoctrinating a blameless genocidal account, it is the ruling party of Rwanda who are most culpable of their self-imposed commitment to prohibiting genocidal denial. By banning ethnicity, President Kagame dictates mere memory to being trivialised as a source of 'divisionism,' in turn dictating that, as Cohen (2001) argues, present-day Rwanda sees 'collective memory [be] pressed into shape by being repressed.' In seeking to dispel divisions which are not yet three decades old, 'the decree on ethnicity makes them all the more pregnant with mutual enmities' (Lemarchand, 2009). By discounting ethnic undertones in Rwandan society, the Rwandan government does not dispel them but harbours various resentments, which may only later blow 'like a volcano,' as Reyntjens (2013) argues. It is thus readily apparent that by subjugating the entirety of a sub-section of the population, enmities will only continue to manifest themselves, as they have done in the form of discrimination towards the Twa.

Rwanda has seen remarkable drives of change and is certainly unrecognisable in comparison to 1994. Yet, there is a certain degree of commonality between past and present Rwanda: it remains ethnically focused, despite official government desires seemingly wishing otherwise, as shown by the duality of rule of law when it comes to the Twa population. We must accept that there are challenges in governing such an emergent body, given the insecurities that are undoubtedly present within society, however, that is not to excuse the shortcomings of Rwandan society in terms of equality and liberty, for there are certain inequalities of rule at hand. This conclusion owes itself to the mismatched scales of development and the persecution of the Twa as an ethnicity, which when conflated with undeniable civic injustices, represents a large failing on behalf of the Rwandan government's behalf. While economic output is commendable, as are other elements of genuinely positive reform that Rwanda has implemented, it must not act as a guise for the subjugation of an entire sub-section of the population in a manner which is assuredly discriminatory.

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# They Eat Everything

## How the desert locust plague compounded existing crises in the Horn of Africa

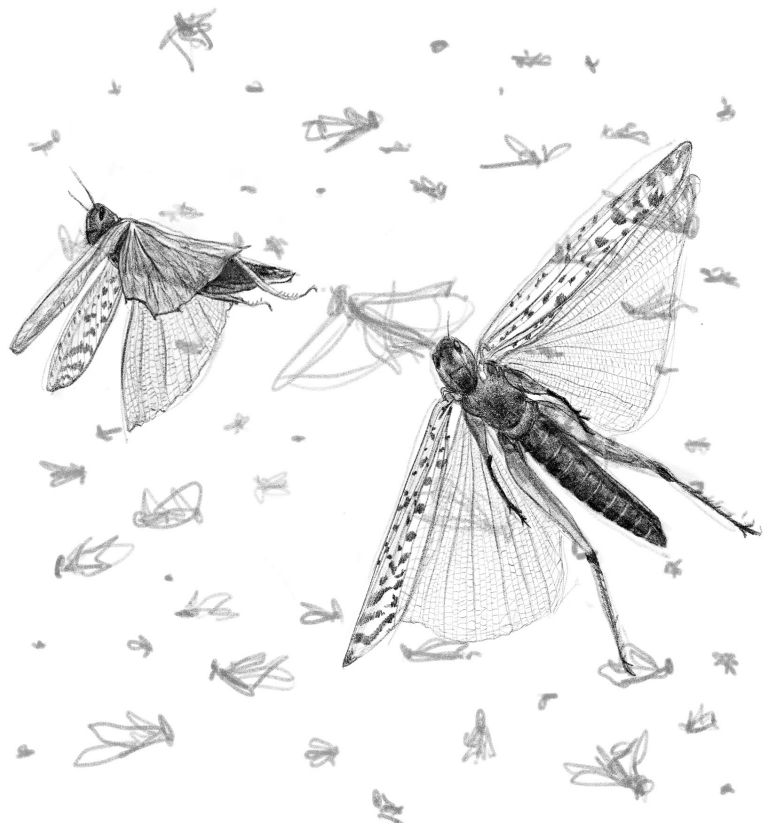
*DECLAN ROBINSON* investigates how locust swarms exacerbate existing political instability in the Horn of Africa.

**S**ince early 2020, East Africa, the Arabian Gulf, and large parts of India and Pakistan have been ravaged

by the worst outbreak of desert locusts in almost a century. Despite efforts by national governments and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the plague continues to this day—and the Horn of Africa suffers the brunt of the disaster. The economies and governments in this region have struggled to respond, already rocked by climate-change-related extreme weather events, sectarian violence, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Ultimately, the desert locust plague of 2020 to 2021 is just one event in a series of complex disasters. Responses to the plague have varied across nations; wealthier, more stable countries such as Kenya and Tanzania are better able to combat the threat than their less economically developed neighbours Ethiopia and Somalia, where violence and civil conflict continue to be an issue. The swarms, however, respect no borders. Any possible solution to a situation as geographically broad

and politically complex as this will be both complicated and expensive. This article examines how the locust disaster fits into the evolving landscape of the East Africa region, how scientific and political forces impact and compound the ongoing crisis, and why certain nations have fared better than others in the face of this threat.

Before any well-informed consideration of the desert locusts' geopolitical impact can be made, there first must be a working understanding of the biological and ecological factors at play. The desert locust (*Schistocerca gregaria*) is a large member of the grasshopper family, weighing approximately two grams and measuring, on average, between six and eight millimetres long when fully grown (The Natural Resources Institute 1990). They lay their eggs two to four inches below ground in moist, warm soil, with larvae hatching anywhere between ten and twenty days later (Mackean 2004). Under normal circumstances, locusts, like other members of the grasshopper family, live a solitary lifestyle, spending their four-month lifespan away from other locusts to avoid competition for food and conflict for mates. However, during particularly dry periods, they tend to congregate in smaller areas as



their breeding grounds recede. This close proximity releases serotonin in the bodies of developing grasshoppers during the early stages of their lifespan that increases their appetite and makes them more sociable and prolific, leading to a shift from the so-called “solitary stage” to the “gregarious stage” (National Geographic 2015). When increased rains after an extended period of dryness bring greater abundance of both vegetation and breeding grounds, these groups of locusts can grow extremely quickly, leading to the swarming behaviors that make the pest so infamous (National Geographic 2015). These swarms have been known to contain up to 80 million locusts and spread over hundreds of square kilometres as they migrate, sometimes consuming as much food in a single day as 70,000 people (United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) 2009). A swarm the size of Rome—about 1,200 square kilometres—can eat as much food in a day as the entire population of Kenya (FAO 2009).

Changing climatic factors have further aggravated the situation. Rising temperatures in the Indian Ocean which are exacerbated greatly by general warming of the oceans due to climate change have led to increased cyclone activity in historically dry areas along the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Gulf (Stone 2020). The wet conditions these cyclones produce have led to several seasons of exponential locust breeding between 2017 and 2019. These swarms migrate with the winds across large expanses of land and bodies of water, laying eggs for future swarms as they pass through (Kennedy 1951, 163). Somalia and Yemen served as the main breeding grounds for the swarms that formed the 2020 plague. The instability of local governments and the prevalence of violent civil conflict in these countries make preliminary monitoring by governments or NGOs is nearly impossible; large swarms therefore develop largely undetected (Price 2020). Though the current locust plague spread as far as Northern India, it has been most acute in East Africa and has taken advantage of many of the preexisting political issues that have hampered the region for years. Thus, when the winds brought these long-festering locust swarms to East Africa in the summer of 2020, governments and international observers were caught off guard.

While desert locusts have been a persistent issue in this region of the world, the effects of climate change have made this most recent plague more widespread and intense, complicating official response efforts. In recent years, the effects of climate change in East Africa have caused abnormally long periods of extreme drought followed by short periods of increasingly intense rainfall, often causing sudden and severe flooding that destroys homes, ruins crops, kills livestock, and contaminates water sources. In 2020, flooding alone forced over 1.5 million people in the East African Community (EAC) from their homes (BBC 2020). In addition to the destruction wrought by flooding, the wet conditions provided fertile breeding grounds for desert locusts, thus intensifying the spread of the swarms. This has been particularly difficult for rural communities, where a combination of locusts and flooding can destroy both the vital crops for a community’s income and the infrastructure needed for humanitarian aid to reach them in a timely manner (FAO 2021). Additionally, after twenty days, the eggs laid by the first swarm of locusts on their way through an area will hatch in the damp soil left by floods, creating another band of young grasshoppers that will ravage the already depleted farmland and further exacerbate damage to agricultural communities.

The economies of East Africa are particularly vulnerable to the specific threat that desert locusts present, with agricultural products composing over 50 percent of total exports from the EAC. In Kenya, the region’s largest economy, agriculture is closer to 60 percent; in some smaller countries such as Uganda, the proportion is as high as 70 percent (Ross and Mandler 2018). More importantly, however, a large share of these countries’ populations rely on small-scale agriculture for their food and income, with over 75 percent of the populations of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda engaged in smallholder farming (Lokuruka 2021). These smallholder farmers have already been hit hard by the impact of COVID-19 on both domestic and international markets. Survey results show that over 80 percent of farmers in Kenya have seen rises in the cost of living as well as declining revenues (60 Decibels 2020). Furthermore, international lockdowns caused a spike in prices for seeds, fertiliser, and farming equipment while significantly reducing demand for cash crops such as coffee. Local lockdowns have made it nearly impossible for smallholders to sell their crops in domestic markets (Precision Agriculture for Development 2020). Smallholders across East Africa, regardless of the desert locust impact, have reported dire financial situations, with many forced to skip meals, borrow money, delay debt repayments, or sell off assets (60 Decibels 2020). The fact that these economic results cannot be attributed to the locusts, COVID-19, violent conflict, or extreme weather alone demonstrates the confluence of issues that rural East Africans are facing. However, in order to closely examine how and why East African societies have performed differently

COVID-19 response, allowing healthcare to reach poorer communities outside major population centres. Moreover, while the Kenyan public health system still suffers from many systemic issues, it was able to cope with the COVID-19 crisis more effectively than international observers initially predicted, freeing up administrative resources to coordinate the desert locust response (Tandon et al. 2003).

Though not immune to outbursts of sectarian violence, Kenya is markedly more stable than its neighbours in Somalia, Ethiopia, and South Sudan, allowing for a coordinated effort both external to and within its own government to effectively respond to desert locust swarms. This stability has allowed the Kenyan government to coordinate with international organisations—primarily the FAO, the World Bank, and the Desert Locust Control Organisation for Eastern Africa (Hamisi 2021). These NGOs are able to provide additional capital and manpower to supplement that of the Kenyan Civil Service, allowing for widespread locust-monitoring coverage. The Kenyan government's decided effort to integrate their locust responses with local government officials at the county level allows outbreaks to be quickly reported, accurately tracked, and efficiently controlled while minimising extraneous resource expenditure in areas that are at low risk for swarms (Limbe 2020). Thus, despite early stumbles, the desert locust response in Kenya has largely been a success. 156 of the 187 active swarms in the country were under control as of 16 February 2021 due to a rigorous aerial monitoring and pesticide deployment program, which was coordinated smoothly between international NGOs, local officials, the Kenyan Air Force, and national governmental administration (Hamisi 2021).

If the stability, international outreach, and effective governance of the Kenyan government led them to fare so well in the 'crisis-within-a-crisis' of the 2020-2021 desert locust plague, it is precisely the opposite that led Ethiopia's government to failure. At the beginning of the plague, the hurdles facing Ethiopia were substantial but still comparable to other less economically developed nations in the area, such as Uganda or South Sudan: inefficient government bureaucracy that discourages international aid, lack of suitable infrastructure making pest control and aid delivery operations difficult, and an extremely weak healthcare system that struggles to adequately meet demands under normal circumstances (Tandon et al. 2003). However, with the outbreak of civil war between the national government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front in November 2020, the humanitarian circumstances in the country's north worsened exponentially, and desert locust control operations have been almost wholly neglected. As the Ethiopian military blocked off the northern province of Tigray and cut all communications and travel to and from the area, international observers and humanitarian organisations are unable to respond to the reports of widespread hunger, disease, sexual violence, looting, and abuse (Gavin 2021). Additionally, the civil war has radically altered the government's priorities, drawing crucial manpower, funding, aircraft, and logistical support away from locust monitoring and control operations as the conflict escalates (Gardner 2020). Thus, the locust control operations in Ethiopia are progressing without the governmental support they need, and violent conflict complicates the efforts of foreign governments and international NGOs to fill the gap.

The implications of these halted operations cannot be overstated: without monitoring and pesticide spraying in Ethiopia, locust swarms will continue to breed within the country, spreading across borders to other nations with the seasonal winds and further elongating the plague. With the escalation of the civil war in Tigray, Ethiopia and neighbouring Somalia promise to be a large geographic area where desert locusts can propagate unmonitored and uncontrolled. This means that locust control operatives are often unaware of immature swarms in Ethiopia and Somalia until they are fully developed and able to be picked up remotely by satellite imaging. As long as these swarms remain in Ethiopia and Somalia, the resources to fight them are extremely limited; military and civil personnel are unable to respond and international NGOs are unwilling to risk sending staff into areas experiencing conflict. This lack of intervention not only allows the swarms to operate largely unopposed in these areas, but it also necessitates increased resources and manpower in nearby countries over the long term as large, fully developed swarms from Ethiopia and Somalia are blown across borders. The situation is not completely dire, however, as FAO control operations save an estimated 2.7 million tonnes of cereal crops in 2020 alone, an estimated value of 800 million US dollars for smallholder communities, and enough food to feed eighteen million people for a year (AllAfrica News 2020). Additionally, new tools utilising artificial intelligence, machine learning, and satellite imaging technology have been rapidly developed by innovators in East Africa, including an app called Kuzi, which uses predictive software to warn farmers of possible locust threats by text message (Okoth 2021).

The current desert locust plague looks set to be a long-term issue, with instability and violence in Ethiopia and Somalia combining with increasingly extreme weather events to create ample breeding ground for locusts to gather undiscovered until the swarms are fully mature and at their most dangerous. While government stability and international coordination have proven to be the best way to combat desert locusts and other natural disasters that the changing climate will bring, the extreme pressures that these crises place on less economically developed nations are likely to exacerbate the very instability that makes governments and NGOs unable to effectively respond in the first place. The desert locust problem is not an isolated issue and will require costly, nation-specific, and complex long-term solutions that address the root of the problem as well as its effects.

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# The Miracle of the Han River

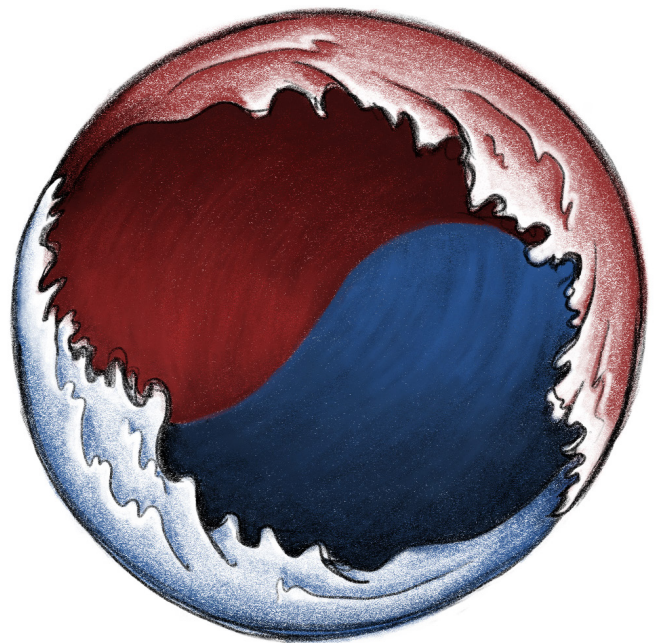
## The rise of Korean popular culture

*EMMANOUELA EVGENIOU evaluates states' endorsement of science as a means of legitimisation.*

**1** 992 proved to be a significant year for South Korea: was the year the Korean government changed the world's perception of South Korean culture and promoted the concept of Hallyu to the world. Hallyu—or the Korean Wave—is the dissemination of Korea's traditional and popular culture. This concept was first introduced during the 1990s but has gained popularity

This article examines the recognition of the previously discounted cultural industries and their contribution to domestic Korean economic prosperity. To conceptualise their merits, I will examine the role of the Korean government in the commodification of Korean popular culture, the role of the media in its dissemination, and extent of the cultural industries' economic contribution. As it was in the 1990s and the decades thereafter that the rest of East and Southeast Asia became most exposed to Korean popular culture. The cultural industries are significant to our understanding of Korea's presence in the global markets, as this surge led to the restructuring of Korea's industrial/manufacturing industries.

The original definition of cultural industries proposed by the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory (Adorno and Horkheimer 1973) is a condescending view of culture in which its commodification degrades its ability to be appreciated and dignified. Cultural industries will instead be defined, for the purpose of this article, as industries that rely on the commodification of culture intended for consumer-oriented economies (Otmazgin 2011, 307-308). With this definition, cultural industries share the same principles as heavy and electronic industries, which rely on resources, labor, and technology. However, unlike manufacturing in heavy industries, the production of cultural products is more complex. 'Cultural industries' is an umbrella term that encompasses the utilisation of both individual creativity and cultural heritage. They thus rely on the valorisation and cultivation of individual creativity, as well as the conservation of cultural heritage in such a way that it can be capitalised upon (Otmazgin 2011, 310; Dal and Otmazgin 2014, 45). This can be both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, the cultural industries enjoy the privilege of autonomy and exploration of unconventional media to appeal to audiences and consumers (e.g., the use of social media to disseminate pop culture). On the other hand, they ultimately rely on the systematic extraction and mobilisation of creativity, a considerable disadvantage compared to the



other industries that can rely on physical resources (Negus 1992, 46). Nevertheless, the established network that underpins cultural industries in South Korea has proliferated both regionally and globally in the last few decades. This created incentives and opportunities to further integrate cultural industries within the economy. As a result of Hallyu, millions of people are familiar with Korean popular culture, from K-dramas to the Oscar-winning film 'Parasite' to Korean Idols. This is evident in the worldwide recognition of certain Korean celebrities, as some—including musician Psy and director Bong Joon-ho—even became household names.

Although South Korea was formed in 1948, it was not until after the end of the Korean War (1950-1953) that policies for economic growth were formulated. South Korea has a history of development policies and government market intervention, ranging from the creation of macro-conditions for economic growth to explicit and implicit attempts to guide said growth (Otmazgin 2011, 311). However, no cultural policies were included in the economic development plans of the authoritarian regimes that followed the Korean War. The cultural industries were not considered a profitable source of national revenue and thus were not regarded as an object of Western academic concern (Otmazgin 2011, 311). A window of opportunity arose in the late 1980s, with the creation of several social movements such as the Gwangju Uprising and the June Democracy Movement of 1987. These movements opposed the military government, as well as the proliferation of American and Japanese cultural goods in the Korean market, demanding the protection of Korean values instead (Ahn 2006). Soon enough, the collapse of Chun Doo-hwan's authoritarian government in 1987, and the structural reforms of the incoming Roh Tae-woo government in 1988, allowed for the conception of cultural policies. Roh's cultural policy was based on the 'ten-year master plan for cultural development,' which aimed to establish a cultural identity through the promotion of the cultural industries domestically, regionally, and internationally (Ministry of Culture 1990).

The previously disregarded cultural industries were now strategically used to reinforce nation-building and the creation of a new (younger) Korean national identity. This was believed to prevent the perceived harmful influence of foreign cultures in Korea (Chua 2000, 12-13). This process was incremental; the administrations of Kim Young-Sam and Kim Dae-Jung underpinned the role of the Ministry of Sports and Culture, introducing a series of cultural symbols that appeared in the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul and again in the 2002 FIFA World Cup (Dal 2011). Their aim was to popularise Korean national identity and culture. The nascent cultural industry lacked the necessary infrastructure, but subsequent administrations have continued on the same project. Hallyu has successfully disseminated Korean cultural heritage and traditional arts. This is evident in the active involvement of chaebols in the further propagation of the cultural industries. Chaebols are large manufacturing and industrial conglomerates that are typically family-controlled. Their institutionalisation has resulted in close connections with the Korean government, and they consequently enjoy more power than an ordinary corporation would. The partnerships and cooperation between Korean Idols and chaebols such as LG, Samsung, and Hyundai Heavy Industries has attracted many domestic and international investors (Shin 2008, 15-31; Yim 2002, 37-48). The outcome of their combined efforts is particularly significant for the protection of Korean cultural heritage in an era of globalisation. The regulation of the Korean cultural industries' foreign competitors is regarded as beneficial for their effective growth in a time when the intermixing and overlapping of foreign cultures and norms with domestic ones is inevitable (Eckert 2000, 119-154; Yim 2003, 177).

These moves amount to a neo-Schumpeterian economic approach adopted by the Korean government: a theoretical framework that holds the concept of innovation at its core. Innovation in this case encompasses the technological, organisational, and institutional transformations necessary to overcome obstacles that constrain economic development (Hanusch and Pyka 2007, 275-289). Consequently, the various economic transformation processes of neo-Schumpeterian economics accommodate the seamless integration of the cultural industries. The government achieves this by creating favourable economic conditions at home. The neo-Schumpeterian role of the Korean government, in encouraging the growth of the cultural industries, is in fact a reaction to the organic rise of popular culture rather than to the centralised network that underpins the heavy industries (Woo-Cumings 1999). This is evident in the formulation of specialised industries within the Ministries of Information and Communication and of Culture and Tourism. The Cultural Industry Bureau, whose strategic focus on public opinion and domestic discourse shapes cultural policies and thus the growth of the cultural industries, exemplifies this. Favorable external factors (such as the size of the domestic market) are also important; with a proportionally smaller domestic regional market, Korea must master its cultural policies to become a leading exporter in cultural products and investments (Otmazgin 2011, 311). The gradual acknowledgment of the cultural industries'

to the development of expertise in cultural industries to further their growth (Lee 2008, 175–189). Additionally, the vast research of independent academics on the socio-cultural and economic aspects of Hallyu has gained salience in the media, as seen in the accounts of Dal Yong-jin and several other professors in international academia (Dal and Kwak 2018). When combined with the efforts of social movement programmes instigated by the non-profit organisation Korean Cultural Centre, it is evident that the cultural industries have reached similar levels of recognition as the heavy industries (Keane 2006, 835–855).

This institutionalisation of the aforementioned actors has established cooperation with two government-supported agencies: the Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA) and Korea Foundation for Asian Cultural Exchange (KOFACE). KOCCA has an export-oriented focus on infrastructure, while KOFACE focuses on the growth of the cultural industries. Institutionalisation has intensified the competitiveness, commodification, and export of cultural products in major consumer-oriented economies, such as the US, UK, and Japan. This intense effort has been particularly influential on public opinion and discourse, as the institutionalisation of actors unrelated to Hallyu has gained considerable legitimacy among Korea's business circles and bureaucrats (Otmazgin 2011, 312–320). However, it is important to note that this institutionalisation does not function as a centralised system. Both cultural and export industries share the same objective of appealing to a wide consumer market, and this can be predominantly achieved by fully integrating the cultural industry into the economy. The valorisation of Korean culture and its products can stimulate economic growth efficiently. Most notably, it can gain the support of the business community and the bureaucrats who see K-pop culture as a golden opportunity for profitable exports and recognition as an independent and innovative cultural power. Consequently, the introduction of pop culture and cultural industries to investors has encouraged cooperation between Korean companies and facilitated consumers' preferences in a market economy (Keane 2006, 840; Otmazgin 2011, 320). According to the numbers published by KOCCA, exports due to Hallyu in the years following the integration of the cultural industries massively increased Korean national income. From 2005, exports were worth over 600 million US dollars, increasing to 1,373 million dollars in 2006, and tripling to 4,302 million dollars in 2011 (UNCTAD 2017, 25–26). Unsurprisingly, this dramatic increase earned the Korean cultural industries eighth place in the most profitable cultural industries global rankings by 2010 (Wilkofsky Gruen Associates Inc. 2009). The Korean government's involvement was essential, as evidenced by the various coalitions and networks that were formed under its guidance. Its involvement was crucial not only for the propagation of the cultural industries domestically and abroad, but also in employment opportunities, creating over 69,000 jobs globally (Creative Industries and Contents 2013). This trend continued in the following years, with exports increasing by over 5,000 million dollars in 2013 and 9.62 billion dollars in 2018 (UNCTAD 2017, 26; Waldeck, P., & 21, A. 2020). This increasingly expansionist trajectory can be attributed to the well-funded cultural industries, which are underpinned by the Korean government's infrastructure. This is visible in the government's utilisation of Hallyu's income, which it invested back into the cultural industries, focusing on the digital content infrastructure and sponsoring several festivals both domestically and internationally (Otmazgin 2011, 317). This active dissemination of Korean cultural products has the further benefit of promoting an attractive international image. It facilitates both Korean national interests and domestic economic growth, while creating a stabilising force against the volatile nature of cultural products. The Korean government aims to continue its support of the cultural industries to diversify its economy and promote job creation, particularly through the strengthening of small and medium-sized enterprises and start-ups in the creative economy (UNCTAD 2017, 7). As a result, even the hardest of conservatives—whose initial response was that of 'aversion' towards the 'degradation' of culture—revised their opinions, now seeing it as a 'proud manifestation of their national sentiments and...a way to preserve and strengthen Korean identity in the face of globalization' (Ministry of Information and Communication 2005; Lee 2008, 175–189).

The approach adopted by the Korean government has received criticism from various intellectual communities. Cultural critics berate the Korean government for supporting a culture of 'excessive' and 'wasteful' materialism (Otmazgin 2011, 319). Milton Friedman avidly argues that the nation-state should not foster its national, cultural, and economic sectors, as state-run institutions are not as successful in instigating growth (Friedman 1982). Another issue raised is that of 'cultural imperialism.' However, there is little empirical evidence of this claim; the spread of South Korean popular culture has not been detrimental to its foreign relations. On the contrary, it has provided South Korea with increasing amounts of soft power (Habermas 1989; Kelley 2008; Schmidt 2008). Consequently, as there has been little opposition to the spread of Korean culture abroad or to the Korean government's support of the cultural industries, Hallyu continues its expansion in the international community. This can be attributed to the contrasting development approaches of the Korean government, while the heavy industries are highly centralised, the cultural industries are decentralised. It is plausible that the legitimisation and

dissemination of Korean values may strain their relations in the long run; however, the Korean government is successfully using the cultural industries to achieve economic and foreign policy goals. Since public discourse expresses overall satisfaction with this cultural commodification, the government has no reason to cease its involvement. The aforementioned approach to the cultural industries can be perceived as a departure from the centralised, top-down approach to economic policymaking that the Korean government has utilised since its formation (Otmazgin 2011, 311-317). Essentially, the Korean government has adapted to the needs of the decentralised system of the cultural industries, intervening in their relations between chaebols solely to promote Korean national interests.

South Korean development policies in the 1990s have promoted the rise of the cultural industries, helping to disseminate consumer-oriented aspects of Korean popular culture both domestically and internationally. Nevertheless, the acknowledgment of the cultural industries was incremental; it took several years for different governmental agencies to form coalitions with other policy actors to finally create a fully integrated cultural industry. The domestic discourse of local universities, governmental agencies, and investors has proven to be of particular significance. These combined efforts have built the necessary infrastructure to make the commodification and export of cultural products more viable, which can be attributed to the decentralised and reactive role of the Korean government towards cultural policies. While a centralised system was used for the heavy industries, the decentralised system used for the cultural industries allows for public opinion to shape cultural preferences. The lack of a centralised structure may pose an obstacle to this volatile industry in the future, however. For the expansion of the cultural industries, it is essential to secure a stable flow of resources as well as the necessary agencies that can promote the exports to consumers. Ultimately, the active involvement of the government is essential for the long-term prosperity of the cultural industries.

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# Black Britain, Structural Racism, and the COVID-19 Pandemic

*LUCIEN MP STADDON FOSTER analyses how structural racism in the UK exacerbated the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Black Britons*

**C** COVID-19 has infected over four million people in the United Kingdom (UK), killing over 120,000 people and causing widespread socioeconomic devastation (Dong and Gardner 2020). However, evidence suggests that low income and non-white demographics have been disproportionately affected, suffering more severe financial losses and representing a larger proportion of infections, hospitalisations, and deaths than their respective share of the population (Haque, Becares and Treloar 2020; Marmot et al 2020; Sze et al 2020; Ethnicity sub-group of SAGE 2020; Webb Hooper, Napoles and Perez-Staple 2020; Abuelgasim et al 2020; Gu et al 2020; Bracke et al 2021; Jaspal 2020). Much of the research and discourse regarding this disparity has heavily relied on classifications such as Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME), which group non-white people into one seemingly homogenous demographic. al. 2003; Lee 2009; Ahmed 2020). This term misrepresents ethnic minority populations and disregards the stark differences in health and financial outcomes between them (Jaspal 2020; Jaspal 2020; Raisi-Estabragh et al. 2020; Platt and Warwick 2020). Platt & Warwick (2020) and SAGE (2020) propose that research must depart from these impractical ethnic categorisations to sufficiently assess the drivers of these inequalities. Accordingly, this paper exclusively considers Britain's Black population, or those of Black African, Black Caribbean, and Blacked Mixed descent, who have demonstrably suffered more than other groups according to infection, morbidity, mortality, and many economic statistics. In order to methodically analyse this disparity and the unique differences between Black ethnic groups, this article groups Black demographics under the socio-political classification of race while separating them by their genetic make-up, heritage and cultural identity, and ethnicity (Burchard et al. 2003; Lee 2009; Ahmed 2020).

The causes of racial disparity in health outcomes are heavily debated, ranging from suggestions of ethnicity-based biological disadvantages and susceptibilities to entirely environmental and sociological explanations of vulnerability (Raisi-Estabragh et al 2020; Diderichsen, Hallqvist and Whitehead 2019; Khazanchi, Evans, and Marcelin 2020). While the possibility of genetic and biological explanations falters under further scrutiny and research, some leading politicians and mainstream media outlets—such as Home Secretary Priti Patel and The Telegraph—gravitate towards these eugenics-based explanations due to their perceived simplicity or their reluctance to engage with anti-racist theory (Raisi-Estabragh et al 2020; Ahmed 2020; Almeida 2021; Green 2020; Mundasad; Trilling 2020). Subsequently, the government's policies and responses often prove ineffective in addressing this disparity for they misinterpret, or simply ignore, the systemic roots of these inequalities. This article challenges these explanations and, instead, argues that the leading cause of COVID-19's ethnic disparity is the multi-faceted phenomenon of structural racism.

Structural racism is defined as the macro-level system of discrimination where biased and prejudiced ideology and practices become embedded in organisational structures. It influences governance and decision-making to produce interconnected and self-perpetuating inequalities in socioeconomic status and opportunity, quality of care from government institutions, and personal health and lifestyle (Powell 2008; Bonilla-Silva 1997; Karlsen and Nazroo 2002; Krieger et al 1993; Gee and Ford 2011; Egede and Walker 2020). As a result, structural racism can cause Black and other minority groups to live unhealthier, more difficult, and ultimately shorter lives (Marmot



et al 2020; Platt and Warwich 2020; Bonilla-Silva 1997; Adebowale and Rao 2020; DuBois 2003; Krieger 2000; Hardeman, Medina and Kozhimannil 2016; Bailey et al 2017; McKenzie 2003; Paradies et al 2015; Sondik et al 2010).

It is therefore worth investigating the role of structural racism in producing the asymmetric distribution of infections, adverse health outcomes, and economic hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK. By shaping policy, socioeconomic circumstance, access to care, and personal health, structural racism has caused the UK's Black population to be more severely affected by the pandemic. While dedicated anti-racist analysis of the pandemic in Britain is limited, structural racism is specifically cited as a driver of disproportionate suffering among African Americans in the United States (Egede and Walker 2020; Bowleg 2020; Brandt, Beck, and Mersha 2020; Millett et al. 2020). Thus, this article considers racism as causative and aims to use an anti-racist lens to understand its role in determining COVID-19 outcomes for Black individuals in the UK (McKenzie 2003; Godlee 2020; Haque, Harman, and Wenham 2020; Patel et al 2020).

## Contributions to COVID Exposure

Black individuals are more likely to test positive for COVID-19 than any other demographic (Figure 1) (Sze et al 2020; Ethnicity sub-group of SAGE 2020; Platt and Warwich 2020; Mulholland, Sinha, and Sinha 2020). Typically, the transmission rate of infectious diseases rises in deprived and densely populated areas (Mathur et al 2020; Zhau et al). Yet, when adjusted for age, sex, geography, and deprivation, Black people remain twice as likely to test positive as their white counterparts; race and ethnicity are therefore still important (Sze et al 2020; Pan et al 2020). Structural racism contributes to this disparity by controlling employment prospects and limiting access to quality housing, which, in turn, impacts the likelihood of COVID-19 exposure and infection (Ethnicity sub-group of SAGE 2020; Platt and Warwich 2020; Powell 2008; Bonilla-Silva 1997; Office for National Statistics 2020).

Black workers are more likely to be in essential and low paid jobs than any other ethnic group (Ethnicity sub-group of SAGE 2020; Platt and Warwich 2020; Powell 2008; Bonilla-Silva 1997; Office for National Statistics 2020). For instance, 25 percent of Black British and 37 percent of Black African people work in key sectors, such as healthcare and deliveries (Jaspal 2020; Jaspal 2020; Farquharson, Rasul, and Sibieta 2020). Consequently, key workers cannot adhere to stay at home orders or often are actively working on the frontline, sometimes with limited Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), putting them at higher risk (Platt and Warwich 2020; Mathur et al 2020; Nguyen et al. 2020).

While initial exposure is generally determined by labour roles, infection rates are compounded by poor access to housing (Ethnicity sub-group of SAGE 2020; Raisi-Estabragh et al 2020). Structural racism often limits Black people's access to adequate housing by diminishing employment prospects and earnings and reducing purchasing power. Black individuals are more frequently unemployed due to racism in hiring practices and reduced access to sufficient education, training, and job opportunities—six-point-two percent of the long-term unemployed population is Black (Bonilla-Silva 1997; Harari, Keep, and Brien 2021; Office for National Statistics 2020; UK Government 2017). Furthermore, Black workers, who already have reduced access to high paying jobs, typically earn seven-point-seven percent less than white workers in the same occupation (Evans 2019; Hu 2020; Weekes-Bernard 2017). Consequently, Black workers are more likely to live in overcrowded, multi-generational or multiple-occupancy housing—sixteen percent of Black African households are overcrowded compared to just two percent of White British households (Platt and Warwich 2020; Khunti et al 2020). The risk of COVID-19 infection increases as more workers are packed into a single property and self-isolation periods become increasingly difficult to follow as they are more financially disruptive to the household. Furthermore, reduced access to employment and housing has left Black people disproportionately homeless in Britain; they represent fourteen percent of the homeless population, despite only being three percent of the national population (Office for National Statistics 2020). Therefore, at least one-point-five percent of the Black population is unable to shelter and mitigate their risk of exposure to COVID-19, further increasing the likelihood of infection (Lewer et al 2020; Bavel et al 2020; Lima et al 2020).

Structural racism has thus exacerbated the risk of exposure to and infection of COVID-19 by limiting Black individuals' access to sufficient housing, employment, and protection. As Black people are over-represented in essential labour roles and homeless populations, national lockdown rules have proven less effective in reducing infection rates. The government must do more to prioritise those at a greater risk of exposure and infection by

providing adequate PPE for all frontline and essential workers and additional protection for the most vulnerable in society. Otherwise, the disproportionate suffering of Black and similarly affected minority groups will persist.

## Contributions to COVID Morbidity and Mortality

Black people are also more likely to become severely ill and require intensive care than their white counterparts (Karlsen and Nazroo 2002; Krieger et al 1993; Gee and Ford 2011; ICNARC 2021; Adegunsoye, Ventura, and Liarski 2020). As of August 2020, ten-point-nine percent of COVID patients requiring advanced respiratory support were Black, and of those critically ill, Black individuals were two to three-point-seven times more likely to die (even when accounting for age, sex and deprivation) (Ethnicity sub-group of SAGE 2020; Raisi-Estabragh et al 2020; ICNARC 2021; Office for National Statistics 2020; Aldridge et al 2020). Structural racism has contributed to these disparities by increasing the prevalence of pre-existing health conditions and comorbidities, such as diabetes, obesity, hypertension, acute stress, and respiratory issues. This inequality is then further intensified through limited access to healthcare resources and the quality of care received during illness (Sze et al 2020; Webb Hooper, Napoles and Perez-Staple 2020; Gu et al; Egede and Walker 2020; Hardeman, Medina and Kozhimannil 2016; Simpson et al 2015; Chaturvedi 2003; Adebowale and Rao 2020).

Although there is no straightforward relationship between obesity and ethnicity, structural racism limits access to wealth and high-quality education, which, in turn, increases the prevalence of unhealthy diets and lifestyles among the Black population (Khazanchi, Evans, and Marcelin 2020; Adebowale and Rao 2020; Mazzocchi and Traill 2008; Gatineau and Mathrani 2011; Smith et al 2000). Consequently, 73 percent of Black adults in England are overweight, compared to 63 percent of white adults; Black adults are therefore more likely to suffer from diabetes, obesity, and hypertension, all of which are well-understood exacerbators of COVID mortality (Pareek et al 2020; Dietz and Santos-Burgoa 2020; Lippi and Henry 2020; Khan and Beevers 2005). Furthermore, those suffering from acute stress, which is more prevalent in Black ethnic groups, tend to have reduced immunity and are more likely to suffer from hypertension (Napoles and Perez-Staple; Karlsen and Nazroo 2002; Lewer et al 2020; Bavel et al 2020; Lippi and Henry 2020; Barajas et al 2019; Bhopal 1998). Structural racism also produces pre-existing health inequalities through environmental racism, the process by which Black individuals are ushered into neighbourhoods with reduced sanitation, greater air pollution, and less access to green space (Holifield 2001; Bullard 2002; Westra and Lawson 2021; Astell-Burt et al 2013). Air pollution causes people of all ages to develop respiratory problems which have been shown to increase COVID-19 morbidity and mortality (Travaglio et al 2021; Wu et al 2020). Given the effects of environmental racism, Black people often suffer respiratory issues more severely (Brandt, Beck, and Mersha 2020; Dyer 2020). Thus, by influencing access to healthy lifestyles and environments, structural racism increases the occurrence of pre-existing health conditions known to exacerbate COVID-19 morbidity and mortality, causing Black populations to suffer the consequences disproportionately.

By limiting access to services and reducing care quality through widespread misdiagnosis or dismissal of symptoms and false assumptions regarding resilience, structural racism intersects with healthcare institutions to exacerbate the risk of severe illness and death (Gee and Ford 2011; Hardeman, Medina and Kozhimannil 2016; Adebowale and Rao 2020; Bhopal 1998; Hotine 2020). Biased medical training and a history of prejudice and misconduct has deteriorated trust between Black communities and the NHS, worsening health inequalities and creating strained relationships with healthcare institutions, particularly among the elderly (Napoles and Perez-Staple; Hardeman, Medina and Kozhimannil 2016; Haque, Harman, and Wenham 2020; Bavel et al 2020; Yang 1994; Quille 2018; Esmail and Carnall 1997; Brenick et al. 2017). For instance, an aggressive immigration policy and past experiences of discrimination from healthcare workers may render Black individuals less likely to seek professional help and support, increasing vulnerability to both COVID-19 itself and Women's Budget Group 2017). Black families and individuals are therefore typically less resilient to financial disruption, sometimes resulting in poverty or dependence on Universal Credit (Jaspal 2020).

Structural racism has exacerbated the financial strain on Black households, disproportionately disrupting Black workers' jobs and wages and limiting their ability to withstand and adapt to income shocks due to reduced wealth and job security. While some earnings are retained by those in 'key worker' positions, they cannot offset the financial losses facing those in closed and insecure sectors of the economy, meaning the Black population has

itself and misinformation surrounding it (Napoles and Perez-Staple; Bavel et al 2020; Khan and Nassrally 2020; Lockyer et al. 2020). Quille (2018) and McKee (2018) both report that following the Windrush Scandal in 2018—in which life-long British residents of Caribbean descent were deported and denied services—elderly Black people were less likely to trust government institutions, such as the NHS, out of fear of deportation and discrimination. As the elderly are significantly more vulnerable to COVID-19, this may greatly exacerbate the risk of hospitalisation and death for older Black individuals (Kadambari, Klenerman and Pollard 2020). Similarly, biased and insufficient medical training has contributed to disproportionate mortality by promoting misconceptions of how symptoms present on dark skin and false narratives of pain thresholds. For example, emergency call operators during the early stages of the pandemic were briefed that blue lips were a crucial indicator of severe COVID-19, even though this symptom is only visible on lighter skin (Goodman, de Prudhoe, and Williams 2021; Kale 2020). Consequently, in some cases, those with dark skin were denied lifesaving support (Goodman, de Prudhoe, and Williams 2021). Furthermore, racist notions of increased pain tolerance and resilience are commonplace within healthcare institutions and medical training, leading to the suffering of many Black patients being underestimated and undertreated (Gee and Ford 2011; Bhopal 1998; Anderson, Green, and Payne 2009; Goyal et al 2015; Burgess et al 2014; Josefson 2000; Singhal, Tien, and Hsia 2016). Reports from Kushnick (1988), Hoffman (2016) and Lim (2021), among others, illustrate how deeply entrenched these ideas are in medical training and culture. Lim (2021) cites a 2017 British medical textbook stating, ‘Blacks often report higher pain intensity than others’ (Sini 2017). These outdated ideas, Black COVID-19 patients may receive insufficient care and treatment, heightening the risk of ICU admission and death (Jaspal 2020; Haque, Harman, and Wenham 2020).

## Structural racism in COVID-19’s economic fallout

The pandemic has placed unprecedented stress on the UK’s economy, causing widespread financial disruption and forcing 900,000 British adults into unemployment (Leaker 2021; Harari, Keep, and Brien 2021; Devakumar 2020). Insecurity of employment and income have also disproportionately affected Black workers and their families, with 63 percent of Black adults reporting lost business, wages, and hours compared to 47 percent of white British workers (Haque, Becares, and Treloar 2020; Bracke et al 2021; Burchard et al 2003; Hu 2020; Powell, Francis-Devine, and Foley 2021). Structural racism produces the unequal distribution of wealth and labour, often limiting the financial protection and security available to Black households and reducing their resilience to income shocks (Bonilla-Silva 1997; Karlsen and Nazroo 2002; Evans 2019; Khan 2020; Gould and Wilson 2020). However, as some sectors are considerably more diverse than others, and the degree of pandemic-induced disruption varies, these outcomes are often complex and sometimes contradictory.

Black workers are more likely to have insecure employment, are over-represented in the gig economy, and are more likely to work on zero-hour contracts, limiting their financial resilience and reducing access to protection schemes like furlough (Platt and Warwick 2020; Weekes-Bernard 2017; Catney 2015; Brynin and Longhi 2015). Furthermore, Black African and Black Caribbean men are 50 percent more likely to work in a sector or industry halted during lockdown than White British men, worsening financial losses (Bracke et al 2021; Platt and Warwick 2020; Hu 2020; Powell, Francis-Devine, and Foley 2021). The over-representation of Black adults, particularly African women, in ‘key worker’ roles slightly offsets this, as they have continued working throughout the pandemic; this makes them less susceptible to severe financial losses than other non-white demographics, though they are more exposed to COVID-19 (Sze et al 2020; Bracke et al 2021; Platt and Warwick 2020).

While Black households on average have suffered less severe income shocks than some other minority groups, pre-existing inequalities caused by structural racism aggravate their devastation (Gould and Wilson 2020). The entrenched structural racism in education and employment practices limits Black workers’ employment prospects and earnings; Black individuals are twice as likely to live in poverty, and just 30 percent of Black households have enough savings to cover one month of expenses compared to 60 percent of white households (UK Government 2017; Powell, Francis-Devine, and Foley 2021; Khan 2020; Runnymede Trust and Women’s Budget Group 2017). Black families and individuals are therefore typically less resilient to financial disruption, sometimes resulting in poverty or dependence on Universal Credit (Jaspal 2020).

suffered more severely than the rest of Britain. While furlough schemes have proved effective for many in secure employment, current strategies fail to provide adequate support and protection to those in the gig economy and on zero-hour contracts, leaving many low income and minority households at a greater risk of poverty.

## Conclusion

There are many ways in which the current administration's response has failed the British population during the COVID-19 pandemic, as illustrated by the vast systemic inequalities, immense death toll, and financial devastation facing British workers and families. But, according to most medical and financial metrics, Britain's Black population has suffered the most severely and disproportionately, as the systemic disadvantages caused by structural racism have left Black households increasingly exposed and vulnerable to the virus and its economic fallout. The UK Government has failed to recognise and remedy these inequalities and sufficiently protect Black communities and individuals. Instead, political leaders, such as Home Secretary Priti Patel, Craig Whittaker MP, and Kemi Badenoch MP, misappropriate this disproportionate suffering to push their racist, eugenicist and overly reductionist narratives to dismiss and downplay their shortcomings and failures (Almeida 2021; Williams 2020; BBC News 2020). Without a significant change in policy and the acknowledgement of structural racism's existence, let alone its causative role in COVID-19 disparities, many Black and other minority groups—particularly those with low incomes—may never recover from the pandemic.

Ultimately, our understanding of COVID-19 and its associated inequalities remains somewhat limited (Devakumar 2020). Future research into the long-term implications of the pandemic and its inequalities no longer scapegoats Black and minority communities in order to absolve the current administration of its biases and failures. In the meantime, perhaps marginalised communities can find safety, security, and support through grassroots organisations in the absence of adequate government action.

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# Interparliamentary Relations within the United Kingdom in the Changing Context of Brexit

*JUUSO JÄRVINIEMI explores the impact of Brexit and evolution of devolved powers on the future of interparliamentary relations between UK governments.*

**A**t the end of the 1990s, the United Kingdom (UK) devolved various powers from Westminster to establish the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Assembly (now the Welsh Parliament), and the Northern Ireland Assembly. This created a web of new interinstitutional relationships within the UK. While relations between the UK and devolved executives have been debated extensively, interparliamentary relations (IPR) have received less attention (Evans 2019, 99). This paper will assess the effectiveness of IPR within the UK. Following Winetrobe (2002), IPR is defined as the encompassing reciprocal relations between the devolved parliaments as well as their individual and collective relations with the Westminster Parliament.

The literature has identified three possible functions of IPR: scrutiny of intergovernmental negotiations, influencing legislation, and joint evidence gathering (Benz 2017, 503; Bolleyer 2017, 523; Evans 2019, 100; Evans 2020). Since devolution, the UK can be described as a 'quasi-federal' state (Bogdanor 2003, 228; Gamble 2006, 22). Although the UK presents a distinctive state formation, as each of the devolution settlements are unique and devolved powers are not outlined in a codified constitution (Swenden and McEwen 2014, 488–489), insights from functioning IPR within other multi-level polities provide a useful starting point for analysing the mechanism in the UK. This paper's assessment of British IPR is grounded in a broader understanding of 'what interparliamentary relations are good for' by considering the three aforementioned aspects of IPR in turn.

This analysis will demonstrate that interparliamentary cooperation in scrutinising intergovernmental relations (IGR) has been deficient in the UK, but Brexit has given impetus for new institutional structures. Furthermore, multilevel coordination in order to pass legislation has been maintained by executives rather than legislators. Finally, interparliamentary cooperation in evidence-gathering suffers from various issues, even if parliaments have been able to hold joint evidence sessions. In sum, British IPR remains underdeveloped in a number of ways, but institutional changes—such as the ones brought about by Brexit—are placing new demands on parliaments to deepen their cooperation.

## The Scrutiny of Intergovernmental Relations

Interparliamentary cooperation in scrutinising IGR has generally been found to be lacking in the UK. Benz (2017) writes that IPR could help bring public deliberation and accountability to multilevel governance, while Bolleyer (2010, 415) notes that interparliamentary arrangements often parallel intergovernmental cooperation structures to 'establish a counterweight.' Accordingly, a House of Commons (HoC) Justice Committee report (2009) recommended the establishment of a parliamentary body consisting of the UK and devolved legislatures. This would scrutinise the work of the Joint Ministerial Committee, where the UK and devolved executives meet to coordinate their relations.

Aside from the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (which has no scrutiny role, and also involves the Irish Parliament), such a forum does not yet exist (Evans 2019, 100–101). Moreover, Trench (2014, 18) argues that the lack of transparency in IGR, including in the Joint Ministerial Committee, leads parliaments to not receive adequate information to hold executives to account. Committee inquiries in the House of Lords (HoL) Select Committee on the

Constitution (2015) and the Scottish Parliament Devolution (Further Powers) Committee (2015) have also found parliamentary scrutiny of IGR to be deficient; the latter suggests stronger interparliamentary cooperation as one remedy. In sum, the weak scrutiny of IGR has undermined parliamentary accountability in the UK.

Brexit has raised the stakes of intergovernmental negotiations within the UK, heightening the need for parliamentary scrutiny. Before British withdrawal from the European Union (EU), devolution was largely built upon a clear delimitation between devolved and ‘reserved’ (non-devolved) competences, which somewhat limited the extent of IGR (Sandford and Gormley-Heenan 2020, 112–113). However, Brexit has required the UK and devolved governments to agree on constitutionally significant and politically difficult decisions concerning which level of government should take on policy competences that once belonged to the EU and have now been ‘repatriated’ to the UK (Sandford and Gormley-Heenan 2020, 112–113). Furthermore, a 2018 intergovernmental agreement on ‘common frameworks’ (UK Government, 2018; HoC Scottish Affairs Committee 2019, 24–25; Institute for Government 2020) made provisions for the UK and devolved governments to make decisions concurrently in a range of repatriated policy areas. These provisions intersected with devolved competences, presupposing extensive intergovernmental coordination in the future. As the UK is negotiating new international agreements with third countries post-Brexit, devolved governments may wish to influence the process (HoL Liaison Committee 2020, 2). The repatriation of competences from the EU has thus precipitated more extensive and contentious intergovernmental negotiations within the UK.

Correspondingly, Brexit has strengthened interparliamentary cooperation. The Interparliamentary Forum on Brexit (IPFB), founded in October 2017, met eight times between 2017–2019 (HoL EU Select Committee 2017). It brought together representatives from the UK, Welsh, and Scottish parliamentary committees dealing with Brexit-related issues and seeking to improve the legislatures’ collective scrutiny of the Brexit process (Sheldon and Phylip 2020b). The Forum has highlighted the legislatures’ common concerns to ministers—such as the EU Withdrawal Bill proposed to the UK Parliament and the intergovernmental work on Brexit—and those who participated in the IPFB generally felt positive about its work (Sheldon and Phylip 2019; Sheldon and Phylip 2020a). However, the IPFB meets irregularly and on an informal basis, and it struggles to consistently involve HoC members. This irregularity weakens the effectiveness of its scrutiny and influence (Sheldon and Phylip, 2019). Remarkably, there are no records of IPFB meetings from 2020 (Scottish Parliament, 2021). There have been calls for more formal interparliamentary scrutiny mechanisms—even from the Forum itself—but the specifics of the composition and funding of such a body remain to be seen (IPFB 2019; HoC Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee 2018, 46; Sheldon and Phylip 2020a). Conversely, the HoL Liaison Committee (2019) commends the use of informal structures.

In sum, Brexit has given rise to new forms of interparliamentary cooperation in scrutinising IGR, and the concurrent exercise of some repatriated powers will continue to call for strong IPR in the future. However, the IPFB (which so far acts as a prime arena for this work) suffers from a lack of consistency and influence. Thus, we can expect debates on the appropriate setup for interparliamentary scrutiny of post-Brexit IGR to continue. In September 2020, the development of the HoL Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee (CFSC) demonstrated a need to create synergies between the work of the Committee and that of devolved legislatures.

## Passing Legislation

Interparliamentary interaction in the legislative process is largely bilateral, marked by legislative consent motions. Bolleyer (2017, 523) views ‘collective lobbying of legislation’ at different levels of government as one manifestation of interparliamentary activism in federations. However, in the UK, the variation between devolution settlements for each constituent nation has produced separate bilateral arrangements between the UK and the respective devolved parliaments when it comes to passing legislation (Winetrobe 2002, 65–67).

Nonetheless, the Sewel Convention, which holds that Westminster does not normally legislate on devolved matters without devolved parliaments’ consent, has turned legislative consent motions (LCM)—which are considered in the relevant devolved Parliament when Westminster wishes to legislate on a devolved matter—into a feature present in each devolution settlement (see UK Parliament Glossary 2020). The Scotland Act 2016 and the Wales Act 2017 put the Convention on a statutory footing in the respective

devolution settlements (Cowie and Torrance 2020, 5–6). However, the mechanism remains non-binding because the Westminster Parliament may legislate even if the relevant devolved parliament refuses to grant legislative consent (Sandford and Gormley-Heenan 2020, 115–116). When the UK and devolved powers can agree on a policy objective, the motions facilitate interinstitutional cooperation as devolved parliaments avoid having to pass duplicates of Westminster legislation (McHarg 2018; Cairney and Keating 2004, 120).

LCMs have been largely uncontroversial, and a great majority of them have passed since the mechanism's inception in 1999. However, throughout Brexit negotiations, Westminster passed high-profile legislation despite devolved parliaments refusing consent, which reopened disputes about the function of parliamentary sovereignty in the UK (Paun et al. 2020; Gormley-Heenan and Sandford 2018, 289–292; Douglas-Scott 2019, 17). Thus, if LCMs were designed to paper over constitutional conflicts between the UK and devolved parliaments' respective powers, then Brexit has exposed some of its limitations (Sandford and Gormley-Heenan 2020, 115–116). LCMs may have fostered amicable interinstitutional relations in normal conditions, but the mechanism hardly proves resilient to the exceptional circumstances of Brexit. That said, the Coronavirus Bill passed by the UK Parliament in March 2020 received swift legislative consent from each devolved legislature, demonstrating their ability to cooperate rapidly during the pandemic (UK Parliament 2020).

Over the years, the devolved parliaments' ability to scrutinise Westminster legislation through the LCM mechanism has somewhat improved. In the early years of devolution, some feared that the LCM process would undermine the devolved parliaments' powers by limiting the extent to which they can scrutinise Westminster legislation regarding devolved matters (Winetrobe 2002, 66; Cairney and Keating 2004, 132–133). In an event that may have contributed to addressing this concern, the 2007–2011 session of the Scottish Parliament granted conditional legislative consent for the Scotland Bill, subject to Westminster's examination of certain amendments (McEwen and Petersohn 2015, 198; McCorkindale 2015). Moreover, revisions in the Scottish Parliament Standing Orders have, with time, provided a more formalised procedure for scrutinising LCMs in Scotland (McHarg 2018).

In the context of Brexit, McCorkindale (2016, 356) argued that giving conditional legislative consent could be suitable for demanding concessions on procedural matters, such as devolved parliaments' opportunities to scrutinise the subordinate legislation flowing from the bill. However, the LCM process could hardly make the UK government change the core substance of the legislation. The fact that Westminster ultimately ignored the devolved parliaments' formal withholding of legislative consent on the EU Withdrawal Agreement Bill (Paun et al. 2020) lends support to McCorkindale's estimation that LCMs are an insufficient tool for devolved parliaments to influence highly salient substantive issues. However, Rawlings (2018) found that in the process leading up to the 2016 Wales Act, the LCM process gave the Welsh government important leverage during intergovernmental negotiations on the principles of UK government funding of Wales. The finding suggests that LCMs can in fact help the devolved level gain substantive concessions, and that Brexit might constitute an exception rather than the rule. All in all, despite some limitations, LCMs give devolved institutions some degree of scrutinising power over Westminster legislation concerning devolved matters.

At the same time, poor interparliamentary coordination has contributed to legislatures being sidelined from the LCM process. The Calman Commission on Scottish Devolution (2009) recommended that the UK and Scottish Parliaments create better mechanisms for communicating their views about individual LCMs.

This would have strengthened the Sewel Convention principle concerning interparliamentary and not just intergovernmental relations; similar calls have been repeated for Welsh devolution (HoC Scottish Affairs Committee 2010, 8; Griffiths and Evans 2013, 505). Nonetheless, Gormley-Heenan and Sandford (2018) highlighted the continued lack of interparliamentary coordination mechanisms for addressing matters of legislative consent and argued that intergovernmental negotiations—rather than legislatures—dominate the process of consent-giving. Bolleyer's (2017, 523) conception of interparliamentary activism involves parliaments joining forces to 'strengthen the weight of genuine parliamentary perspectives and interests' in the legislative process; however, stronger interparliamentary cooperation would be required for this to happen in the context of LCMs in the UK.

## Evidence-gathering

In cases where decision-making affects multiple legislatures, joint evidence-gathering can save the legislatures' resources and witnesses' time. Evans (2020) argues that joint evidence sessions between the parliaments within the UK are becoming more frequent because the overlap between the powers of different levels of government has increased. Originally, the powers of the Welsh Parliament (Senedd) were limited to secondary legislation; then, from 2007 to 2011, the Senedd had to separately request powers from Westminster when it wished to legislate. This interdependence risked duplicating scrutiny between HoC and the Senedd, which led the HoC to formally allow its Welsh Affairs Committee to hold joint evidence sessions with Senedd committees (Evans 2019, 102–105; Griffiths and Evans 2013). Since 2016, the UK and Scottish governments have held shared powers over Scottish welfare and fiscal policies. This has encouraged committees from the respective parliaments to hold informal joint meetings and prompted the HoC Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) to recommend extending the formal possibility of joint evidence sessions beyond the special case of the Senedd (Evans 2019, 102–105; HoC PACAC 2016a, 30). However, four years on from the PACAC recommendation, the HoC Standing Orders have not been changed accordingly (HoC Standing Order 137A). In sum, the formal provisions for holding joint meetings can respond to the requirements of the devolution settlements, though this has proven to be slower in the case of Scotland than in Wales.

The formal rules only tell part of the story. Even the Welsh Affairs Committee has held several informal joint video conferences with the Senedd, while a 2015 HoL committee report found that the formal option of Welsh Assembly Members attending the HoC Welsh Affairs Committee was not regularly used (Evans 2019, 104; HoL Select Committee on the Constitution 2015, 52). Moreover, parliaments have been able to work around formal constraints on joint committee meetings, even if it has required imaginative arrangements such as formally listing another legislature's members as 'witnesses' of a meeting (Evans 2020, 230; Evans 2019, 104). Though the formal procedures remain restrictive, parliaments are capable of holding joint meetings according to the demands generated by the devolution settlement.

Other obstacles prevent evidence-sharing and joint meetings between parliaments. After the EU referendum, the devolved parliaments failed to coordinate their Brexit-related inquiry work, despite their interdependence in EU affairs opening up such possibilities (Gormley-Heenan and Sandford 2018, 292–293). Moreover, the Calman Commission (2009) found that HoC Select Committees were not using their right to share evidence with committees of devolved parliaments. The HoC's PACAC committee heard in 2016 that parliaments could save resources by commissioning more joint research (HoC PACAC 2016a, 29; HoC PACAC 2016b, 41). Finally, granting passes for members of devolved parliaments to access the Westminster Parliament building has been discussed for over a decade as a means of facilitating joint meetings, but the idea hasn't come to fruition (Commission on Scottish Devolution 2009, 133; Commission on Devolution in Wales 2014, 161; Evans 2019, 111). The UK and devolved parliaments may, however, invite ministers from another level of government to attend committee meetings and give evidence. Such sessions have taken place, though not as regularly as had been hoped (Winetrobe 2002, 64; Commission on Scottish Devolution 2009, 133). One such session was the November 2020 HoL Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee meeting with Scottish and Welsh government ministers, in which common frameworks for powers of different levels of government to overlap were discussed (HoL CFSC 2020). Nonetheless, various improvements remain to be made in British IPR for joint evidence-gathering to be optimised.

## Discussion and conclusion

The above discussion revealed that extra-governmental institutional changes within the UK continually influence the dynamics of IPR, but parliaments have also been slow to address certain hurdles to interparliamentary cooperation. In analysing the EU political system, Benz (2017) finds that interparliamentary relations in the EU have evolved in response to Treaty changes and political challenges like the Euro crisis. Similarly, IPR within the UK is undergoing constant change, instigated by modifications in the devolution settlements and Brexit. The increased overlap of policy powers and need for coordination between levels of government places growing demands on interparliamentary cooperation, which has been recognised both in

the UK and in devolved parliaments (HoC PACAC 2018, 43–45). One could therefore expect interparliamentary cooperation to strengthen in the UK in the coming years. At the same time, various deficiencies in IPR, such as the restrictive HoC Standing Orders and the lack of mutual recognition of parliamentary passes, have gone unaddressed for years, which raises doubts about parliaments' commitment to IPR. While parliamentarians' limited time may explain inactivity in some aspects of IPR, such as joint meetings (HoC PACAC 2016a, 29), it hardly serves as an excuse for holding back from less burdensome procedural changes.

There is broad support for the principle of stronger IPR, but the responsibility for implementing concrete solutions falls upon the parliaments themselves. In his early assessment of British IPR, Winetrobe (2002, 69) supported the 'organic' development of coordination mechanisms, occurring upon the legislatures' joint initiative. The same attitude has persisted over the years, as the UK government has stated that it supports the development of IPR but expects the initiative to come from legislatures. The HoC Liaison Committee, however, has been wary of developing IPR through a 'Westminster-driven' process (HoC Liaison Committee 2019, 102). It has proven difficult to find consensus on whether IPR should be strengthened through more formal institutional structures or whether informal settings provide a sufficient basis for closer IPR (HoC PACAC 2016a, 29). Though the political context is favourable for the deepening of IPR, the process requires agency from legislatures regardless of the form it takes. The emphasis on political will for interparliamentary cooperation corresponds with Bolleyer's (2010) finding that the degree of interparliamentary activism is determined not by the availability of resources but by the parliaments' willingness to defend distinctly parliamentary interests. The next few years will show whether Brexit and other changes have produced a sufficient sense of urgency for parliaments to develop IPR further.

In conclusion, despite deepening in certain aspects, British IPR remains underdeveloped in a number of ways. Interparliamentary cooperation for scrutinising intergovernmental relations has traditionally been found lacking, though the increased scope and salience of IGR during the Brexit process has already pushed parliaments to strengthen their cooperation mechanisms. Nonetheless, the demand for scrutiny of IGR remains high; so far, work within interparliamentary structures has appeared inconsistent. As for the passing of legislation, stronger interparliamentary communication on LCMs could help legislatures reclaim the Sewel Convention as a matter of interparliamentary rather than just inter-executive relations. More broadly, the UK and devolved parliaments' differences regarding Brexit have put the Sewel Convention under strain, even if the Convention has fostered interinstitutional relations under normal circumstances. Finally, the need to hold joint evidence-gathering meetings has depended on the modalities of the devolution settlement, and parliamentary committees have proven capable of arranging joint sessions despite the somewhat restrictive formal rules on the matter. However, interparliamentary cooperation in producing inquiries has proven deficient.

The parliaments themselves hold the initiative for developing IPR, and political will plays a crucial role in this. Building on this argument, future research could explore which parliamentary actors have the strongest interest in developing specific aspects of IPR, while considering which actors the current state of interparliamentary cooperation arrangements benefits most. Such an analysis could evaluate potential differences between the interests of legislators from different parliaments or between opposition and governing party parliamentarians.

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# COVID-19, Biopolitics, and the Hegemony of Science

*BILL HODGKINSON evaluates states' endorsement of science as a means of legitimisation.*

**U**tilising the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics, this article explores the relationship between science and the state. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the state has endorsed science to legitimise extensive curbs on personal freedom, often in the form of 'lockdowns,' where one is permitted to leave their home only for essential shopping and exercise. However, in doing so, it enshrines Agamben's reductionist, biopolitical theory of 'bare life' (Agamben 1998, 8). Furthermore, the endorsement propels the anthropocentric, humanist dogma that science can free humans from the constraints that other animals endure. Given these ramifications, the relationship between state and science must be questioned and examined thoroughly.

The notion of biopolitics emerges from Michel Foucault's definition of biopower: the power of the state to 'foster life or disallow it to the point of death' (Foucault 1990,138). From this, Foucault and others have understood biopolitics as 'a way to describe the managing of populations through statistical, population-level regulations' (Sylvia 2020,1). This occurred once 'biological existence was reflected in political existence' (Foucault 1990, 142), such that the very facts of existence, including birth rate and death rate, fell under the management of the state. In this way, we may understand states as trying to coerce their populations into achieving specific goals, whereby the body, and by extension biology itself, becomes the site of new forms of politics. As 'biology becomes a resource in a multidimensional sense—versatile material through which the state and new populations can be made to appear' (Petryna 2004, 265), the state's power is revealed and new, mostly 'at risk' populations form. The category of 'at risk' once again emerges from facts of existence: age, respiratory conditions, and underlying health conditions. Here, we can employ the term 'biological citizenship' which 'describes forms of belonging, rights claims...made on a biological basis such as...disease state' (Oxford Bibliographies 2021). In this respect, those vulnerable to COVID-19 become legally, medically, and politically understood in a reductionist capacity. The literature surrounding biopolitics has broadened to include the concepts of biomedicine, biocapital, and bioeconomy. The advancement of science, and the genetic engineering and genome sequencing that are now able to take place, have all contributed to the field of the 'politics of life' (Rose 2007, 3).

At the time of writing, the global death toll from COVID-19-related deaths stands at over two million. The state has bolstered itself to respond to the pandemic. Previously, states held the distinctly neoliberal view that individuals were responsible for their own health, and therefore self-maintenance was the fullest expression of citizenship. The pandemic has sparked the state's unprecedented interest in the public's health. Severe limits on personal freedom, devised to stop the spread of the virus, have become commonplace in many countries, as is the tracking of individuals to ensure 'self-isolation' upon testing positive for the disease. The consequence is a severe reduction of social existence. This change has resulted in what Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben called 'bare life:' a naked, unsocial existence. At the start of Italy's first lockdown, Agamben expressed a quasi-conspiracist argument that such a lockdown was 'entirely unfounded' and aimed to create a 'state of exception' (Peters 2020, 556). Somewhat unfortunately, time has proved his argument wrong: at the time of writing, his native country's death toll stands at over 80,000. However, his concept of 'bare life' provides a useful framework to investigate the state's endorsement of science during the pandemic and why it must be questioned.

The substantial curbs placed on the individual's freedom, such as the tracking systems now implemented in many countries, indicate that we have seen an expansion of the state's power. By only allowing people to leave their homes for 'essential reasons' and banning protests, the state has severely reduced individuals' social existence and the dignity of life. What has allowed the state to fully realise its extension of powers? 'Following the science' has become a soundbite for most governments to legitimise the restrictions they are placing on their peoples. The now-familiar sight of heads of state giving speeches, flanked by scientific advisors, is intended to reassure the public that the decisions are made with the advice of experts in the field. This, in itself, is neither wrong nor malignant; preserving lives using the advice of experts is an admirable aim. However, severe limitations on personal freedom are not a conclusive solution but instead represent 'an endlessly temporary defence of minimal existence' (Redfield 2005, 342); 'survival, after all, is a perpetually temporary outcome' (Redfield 2005, 346). We see cracks in the 'following the science' argument when we investigate why different countries have 'followed the science' to different ends. New Zealand has engaged in a 'zero-COVID' strategy to eliminate all cases from the country, while Sweden, by contrast, had almost no lockdown and instead pursued a strategy of 'herd-immunity.' The reason is that science is not a united body of knowledge, as it has been framed during the pandemic, but rather a field of contesting theories and knowledges where the lines are sharply drawn. This may partially explain the divergent methods states followed in their attempts to contain the pandemic. Thus, we see that science has been endorsed by the state in order to legitimise their impositions on freedom.

To comment that science is now the predominant paradigm in politics is not new: indeed, the 'medicalisation of politics' (Rose 2007) has been made explicit by several thinkers. However, the state's move to adopt science so explicitly, in an attempt to legitimise the measures on the people, must be rigorously examined. This is because the reductionist methodology that grants science its impressive predictive power is in tension with the actual nature of living when it is applied in human lives, understood here as biopolitics, as it has been throughout the pandemic. This is called reductionist biopolitics. This tension is the difference between bios, the biographical life of elaborated, complex human experience, and zoë, or zoological life, which is the state of being common to all animals. Originating from Greek, these terms were first notably resurrected by Hannah Arendt and were subsequently developed by Agamben in *Homo Sacer* (Arendt 1959, 58; Agamben 1998, 8). There is significant debate as to whether Agamben employs these definitions correctly, but for our purposes bios how we experience our lives, or how history views life, and zoë is how science views it. This view is developed from Isaiah Berlin, who stated that 'a concentrated interest in particular events or persons...not as instances of generalisation, is a prerequisite of... historical sense' (Berlin 1998, 54). Berlin later contrasts that with '[scientists] must abstract, generalise, idealise, quantify' (Berlin 1998, 57). In this way, we see that the reductionist view of life that science entails, i.e. reducing it to zoë, is necessitated by its stringent methodology. How else would the great discoveries be made? How, without this abstraction, would the vaccine that appears to be our salvation have been discovered? However, many have argued that it reduces life to 'bare life' (Agamben 1998, 8), a form of naked unsocial existence. Biopolitics thus represents a reduction from bios to zoë, furthering the need to question and examine the state's adoption of science.

An additional implication of this is that in endorsing science so explicitly, the state not only justifies its laws, but also legitimises the advancement of science from the sphere of fact to the sphere of values. This can most clearly be seen in the humanist belief that increasing scientific knowledge will allow humans to 'free themselves from the limits that frame the lives of other animals' (Gray 2005, 3): 'this is faith, not science' (Gray 2005, 4). With the discovery of the vaccine potentially signifying the end of the pandemic, politics endorses an anthropocentric, humanist dogma. The prevalent belief is that the virus has been conquered by human intelligence. Yet, this is the wrong lesson to take from the pandemic: it has shown how precarious our lives are, how intertwined our existence is with the planet's, and it has revealed that 'our society structurally relies on the incessant production of differential vulnerability and social inequalities' (Sfetcu 2020, 9). Furthermore, it has increased the monopoly that science currently has on thought and knowledge. While 'It is commonly assumed that science will someday yield a single unchanging view of things' (Gray 2019, 12), this is misguided as science 'can only be a tool the human animal has invented to deal with a world it cannot fully understand' (Gray 2019, 13). There is little reason to believe that the progress made by science will result in only one view.

This argument has been countered in the context of COVID-19 by some thinkers who argue that we 'must be careful not to hit the wrong target: an entire civilization is in question, there is no doubt about it' (Nancy J.L. 2020, 4). Nancy further argues that the government is 'nothing more than grim executioners' and that blaming

it seems 'more like a diversionary manoeuvre than a political reflection' (Nancy J.L. 2020, 4). In this rebuttal to Agamben's aforementioned argument, it is clear that Nancy is opposing the deployment of the paradigm of biopolitics. However, it remains very clear that politics and biology have 'progressively formed an ever tighter knot, with problematic and sometimes tragic results' (Esposito 2020, 5). While Agamben may extend his argument too far, Nancy's stance that the government is simply made up of 'grim executioners' may also be rejected. Throughout the pandemic, states' actions have further tightened the 'knot' between politics and biology.

The tension, then, lies in this: politics, as the pursuit of partial solutions to recurring human evils, is an essentially human endeavour. As such, it requires a biographical, historical view of life. Science, falsely presented throughout the pandemic as an objective, iterative search for truth, is unable to answer the bios questions: How does one live meaningfully? How should one treat others? Common sense, ethics, and other edifices of shared, lived human experience act as a guide to these bios questions, but ultimately they are answered in living itself. Consequently, if everything could be scientifically explained, humans would still need to imbue it with meaning. Science, in other words, provides no worldview; it prescribes no way of living. This is neatly summed up by Feynman who wrote that science gives us keys to heaven or hell, but does not tell us how to use them (Feynman 1998). Human beings are irrational: creativity, charity, and the best of the human experience are inextricably bound to illogicality and chaos. To see the state endorse science so explicitly means that all forms of knowledge must be viewed through the lens of science and, in doing so, results in a binary choice between fact and falsehood. This endorsement means that the myths of religions, the teachings of ethics, and the generality of common sense are subjected to a falsification test for which they were never intended. These articles of shared human experience are meant to tell us something about human nature. To subject them to simple tests of fact and falsehood is to miss the point of their existence and to deny their utility in times of crisis. Thus, the endorsement of science by the state leads to a reductionist view of life.

Through the lens of biopolitics, it can be seen how the state and science have intertwined during the COVID-19 pandemic, and, more specifically, how the state endorses science in order to legitimise its new laws. In doing so, it enshrines a reductionist biopolitical view of life, reducing living to a minimal existence. Furthermore, the monopoly science has on knowledge further increases with the state's endorsement and leads to an anthropocentric, humanist dogma. This must also be examined critically since it denies other forms of knowledge and makes life a thinner, poorer experience.

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# Politics of the Extraordinary: A New Way Forward for Security Analysis

*ADITH SRINIVASAN reformulates and synthesizes securitization theory as a domain of politics.*

**T**his article reconceptualises securitisation theory as a theory of politics rather than merely a theory of the political. Rather than being external to politics, securitisation is in fact an essentially political process that has the potential to fundamentally reshape the state, society, and institutions through what Andreas Kalyvas (2008, 271) calls 'politics of the extraordinary'.

Through a discussion of the theoretical limitations of the Copenhagen School's approach, this article makes a prima facie case for securitisation as politics of the extraordinary. The application of this countermodel for security analysis will be illustrated by a case study of the securitisation of COVID-19 in the European Union (EU). Finally, this article will explore the implications of the theoretical case for politics of the extraordinary and present some future areas of research for students of the field.

## The Case From Theory: From Copenhagen to Politics of the Extraordinary

What is securitisation? For theorists of the Copenhagen School, it is exceptionalism (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 23; Taureck 2006; Williams 2003). They argue that, for an issue to become a threat and enter the realm of security, it must be elevated above the constant contention and contestation that traditionally characterise the realm of the political: "Security" is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics' (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 23). Securitisation is thus 'the staging of existential issues in politics to lift them above politics' (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 23). This movement of a securitised issue to a space beyond the 'normal run of the merely political' (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 5) is, in turn, signified by the adoption of emergency measures and the justification of 'actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure' (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 24): 'If... the securitising actor has managed to break free of the procedures or rules he or she would otherwise be bound by we are witnessing a case of securitisation' (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 24).

Although the Copenhagen School holds this exceptionalism to be a central component of successful securitisation, it simultaneously defends a position which holds exceptionalism to be only one of a constellation of signals which indicate that a particular object or phenomenon has been securitised. It is not necessary for emergency measures to be adopted, but the threat should 'gain enough resonance for a platform to be made from which it is possible to legitimise emergency measures or other steps that would not have been possible had the discourse not taken the form of existential threats, point of no return, and necessity' (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 25).

This lack of theoretical clarity regarding the threshold for successful securitisation poses a critical hurdle for the analytical model (Abrahamsen 2005; Aradau and van Munster 2007; Balzacq 2019, 340–344; McDonald 2008, 576–577; McInnes and Rushton 2011; Neal 2006; Vuori 2008). McDonald (2008, 566) observes, for example, that the first interpretation—namely securitisation as exceptionalism appears more often to be a generalisation from the nature of specific securitised objects, rather than an independently grounded feature of the analytical model. In other words, to argue that all threats



must be exceptional writes exceptionalism into the very logic of securitisation (Neal 2006; Roe 2012).

In contrast, the model for security analysis set forth here argues that there is space for both the exceptional and the non-exceptional in security politics. The non-exceptional is thereby moved from a space outside the scope of analysis to to centre stage as the counterpart to the exceptional. The central question, therefore, is not whether securitisation demands exceptionalism, but what distinguishes the exceptional from the non-exceptional in security politics.

## **The Politics of the Extraordinary: A Way Forward**

The politics of the extraordinary approach draws upon the work of Bigo (2002) and the so-called Paris School (Bigo and McClusky 2018; Abrahamsen 2005; Aradau and van Munster 2007) in illustrating the inherently political nature of the causes and processes of securitisation. For these theorists, securitisation and its concomitant operational discourse come to be seen as political tools, whose usage is both determined and shaped by the constant contests and struggles that are at play in the everyday, humdrum affairs of power politics (Bigo 2002, 68; Abrahamsen 2005, 75). Securitisation, rather than being external to politics, becomes embedded within the very fibre of the political itself (Bigo 2002; McDonald 2008; Krebs and Jackson 2007).

For the Paris School, therefore, all threats come to be seen as non-exceptional instances of ordinary politics. That exceptionalism is at least one possible outcome of securitisation, however, appears both inherent to the security dynamic itself (Huysmans 1998; Williams 2003) and observable in instances of mass political mobilisation (Aradau 2004; C.A.S.E. Collective 2006; Stritzel 2007; Huysmans 2004; Behnke 2006). Thus, in contrast to both the Copenhagen and Paris Schools, the politics of the extraordinary posits that while securitisation may indeed be exceptional in some cases, 'in a good many instances, securitization does not give vent to exceptional procedural rules that lie beyond politics' (Balzacq 2019, 343). Critically, therefore, securitisation may signify either the exceptional or the non-exceptional, depending on the case in question (Balzacq 2019, 342; Williams 2003, 521). Which outcome follows from a particular instance of securitisation is, in turn, dependent upon the presence of 'politics of the extraordinary.

According to Andreas Kalyvas (2008, 7), the politics of the extraordinary 'refers to those infrequent and unusual moments when the citizenry, overflowing the formal borders of institutionalised politics, reflectively aims at the modification of the central, political, symbolic, and constitutional principles and at the redefinition of the content and ends of a community.' In other words, the politics of the extraordinary provides a space for the public (the represented) to emancipate itself from the demands of elite-dominated politics and 'substantially rearrange or alter the fundamental norms, values, and institutions that regulate ordinary legislation and institutionalised politics' (Kalyvas 2008, 6). In this view, securitisation is not only a political process, but a democratic opportunity.

Whether or not this is the case, however, is not self-evident within the logic of security. There is no guarantee that securitisation will either emancipate or normalise. Whether it does so is entirely dependent upon the particular social and political relationships within state and society in each context (Aradau 2004; C.A.S.E. Collective 2006; Stritzel 2007): 'the politics of the extraordinary is a moment of transformation, the depth of which is not written a priori in the fabric of the process, but emerges out of the relations between representatives and represented' (Balzacq 2019, 343). Thus, what the politics of the extraordinary illustrates is that 'securitisation's outcomes are numerous, unpredictable, and non-linear' (Balzacq 2019, 343).

## **The Theory in Case: The Securitisation of COVID-19 in the EU**

We can see the politics of the extraordinary model in action through a case study of the securitisation of COVID-19 in the EU. It is worth noting at the outset, however, that what follows is not a methodologically rigorous test of the validity of the politics of the extraordinary approach. Rather, it is a study of the securitisation of COVID-19 in the EU in order to reveal some of the key insights that the new approach may yield, and thereby provide evidence of both its analytical utility, as well as its empirical plausibility.

## Securitisation of COVID-19 in the EU: Events

On 31 December 2019, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China reported a string of respiratory infections from an unknown cause (World Health Organization (WHO) January 2020; European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control 2020). On 11 March 2020, the Director-General of the WHO officially characterised COVID-19 as a pandemic (WHO March 2020) and, on the same day, the United States government suspended travel from the Schengen Area (BBC 2020). Governments across the EU soon rushed to close schools, initiate lockdowns, and shut down borders to reduce the spread of the contagion (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2021, 6).

## The Events from Copenhagen versus Politics of the Extraordinary

For theorists of the Copenhagen School, the securitisation of COVID-19 in the EU may appear to be a clear case of securitisation as exceptionalism. In the first few weeks since the initial report from the Wuhan Health Commission in late December 2019, the issue appeared deeply politicised, at least in terms of the appropriate policy responses (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 29). Not only did debate and discussion dominate the policy discourse during the initial stages of the outbreak (Stevig-Gridneff 2020), but the policy responses to the spread of the virus appeared—to states, at least—as a matter of choice, or a decision of their own prerogative. This is evidenced by a 13 February 2020 convening of the Council of the EU, wherein a majority of states rejected a proposal for the very same border closures which many would soon thereafter adopt (Council of the EU, Council Doc. 6038/20).

The turning point, according to one interpretation of the Copenhagen School, was the elevation of COVID-19 to the status of ‘pandemic’ by the WHO and the subsequent border closures by the US for all travelers from the Schengen Area. These moves appeared to signal the existence of an ‘existential threat,’ which necessitated exceptional response measures by the state. The subsequent flood of emergency measures thus represents the transition of the COVID-19 outbreak from the ordinary realm of the political to the exceptional sphere of security.

If the WHO’s elevation of COVID-19 to the status of ‘pandemic’ served as the catalyst that set the chain of exceptionalism in motion, what made this particular securitising move unique? The Copenhagen School addresses this class of concerns by acknowledging, as Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde (1998, 31) do, that security is ‘very much a structured field in which some actors are placed in positions of power by virtue of being generally accepted voices of security.’ In this view, because the WHO is seen as a legitimate authority in the field of global and public health, the discourse it engages in is bound to be more legitimate and persuasive than the discourse of an actor with less authority in the field (Elbe 2010, 169; Hanrieder and Kreuder-Sonnen 2014; Kreuder-Sonnen 2019).

Yet, this reasoning simply takes for granted an essential condition for successful securitisation. After all, the legitimacy of the WHO is itself predicated upon intersubjective understandings of both its knowledge and importance, which have been carefully constructed such that it now occupies a position of discursive privilege in its field. The ‘social capital of the enunciator’ (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 33) itself thereby becomes a function of the particular social and political relationships that exist in society. Both the political and the exceptional are thus observed in this instance of securitisation. The political shaped the means of securitisation by privileging a particular securitising actor with authority in the field, and the exceptional was embodied in the outcome. The exceptionalism of the policy responses was thus not a necessary feature of the securitisation process but rather an example of the politics of the extraordinary at play in the operation of security.

## The Conclusion: Charting the Way Forward for Politics of the Extraordinary

What then remains for the curious analyst? In short, quite a bit. It is clear that the politics of the extraordinary presents an alternative to the current approaches to security analysis. What remains to be done, however, is to present, study, and evaluate a coherent theoretical model of securitisation as politics of the extraordinary built from the ground up (Holbraad and Pedersen 2012). Under what conditions are the democratic politics of the extraordinary likely to be observed (Jabri 2006; Vuori 2008)? Does the negative potential of securitisation to expand the gap between the rulers and the ruled outweigh its positive potential to facilitate the development of a democratic social

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contract (Roe 2012)? These questions and more will lie at the heart of any model of ‘securitisation as politics of the extraordinary.’ What the approach teaches us first and foremost about securitisation is that ‘It is simply impossible—not only sociologically, but existentially—to grasp definitively its myriad possibilities’ (Williams 2015, 116).

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# Feminising Migration: 'Migrant Caravans' and Indigenous Resistance in Chiapas

*KATELL ANE investigates the challenges female migrants face in Southern Mexico.*

**I**n January 2020, hundreds of migrants crossed the Suchiate river separating Guatemala from Mexico. Once on Mexican shores, they faced batons and tear gas at the hands of the Mexican National Guard. Many of the 3,500-person '2020 Caravan' were fleeing gang violence and economic deprivation in their home countries of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador (BBC 2020). Those concerned about migration and violence in Latin America have heard iterations of this story for decades. Still fresh in collective memory are the 72 Central American migrants who were found massacred by cartel leaders just north of Tapachula, a border town on the Mexican side of the Suchiate river, in 2010 (Kovic and Kelly 2017, 8). Between April and September of that year alone, an estimated 11,000 Central American migrants were kidnapped (Kovic and Kelly 2017, 7). This story is not new, but the Central American migrant narrative takes on new meaning when viewed through a gendered lens: what scholars call the 'feminization' of migration (Lucio Maymon 2017, 2).

Central American women face some of the highest levels of femicide (i.e. gender-motivated murder) in the world (CGRS 2015). Approximately 70 percent of migrant women passing through the Mexican state of Chiapas are victims of sexual violence on their journeys (Damián Palencia 2017). Women disproportionately face violence and invisible barriers when they migrate and later settle (Guezmes García 2015). These numbers are clearly unacceptable. Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights stipulates that migrants have the right to life—that is, states have the obligation to prosecute violations of migrant safety (International Justice Resource Center 2015; UNHR 1990). Article 7 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families further establishes that the rights of migrants are to be respected without distinction based on sex (amongst other markers) (UNHR 1990). This article will explore the disconnect between the theoretical protection of migrants and the overwhelming levels of violence against Central American migrant women on Mexico's southern border. In adopting a gendered lens, this article draws attention to



expanding networks of care in the region, highlighting the resistance present at every step of the migrant journey.

In 1994, Mexico signed onto the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) as part of a decade-long effort to liberalise its economy (Pastor and Wise 1994, 460). The agreement devastated small farmers, leading to mass emigration from rural regions and grassroots uprisings against the appropriation of Indigenous lands by foreign investors (Ledón Pereyra 2015). NAFTA also forged closer political bonds between Mexico and the US, initiating a shift in US policy interests. Since the mid-90s, the US has been heavily interested in creating a so-called 'vertical border' within Mexico itself, in an effort to discourage and deport Central American migrants before they reach the US-Mexican border (Kovic and Kelly 2017, 3). In the words of former US Assistant Secretary of International Affairs, Alan Bersin, 'the Guatemalan border with Chiapas is now our southern border' (Kovic and Kelly 2017, 1). For those living in Chiapas, one of the most impoverished Mexican states (Anguiano Tellez 2008, 200), NAFTA's destruction of rural livelihoods hit particularly hard.. Local Indigenous groups take particular issue with the proliferation of the oil, hydroelectric, mining, and tourism industries that exploit the region's natural assets and fail to deliver their promises to Indigenous communities (Diaz 2016).

The global financial crisis of 2008 further aggravated tensions on Mexico's southern border. With rising unemployment came an increased migratory push for many Central Americans and rural Mexicans (Kovic and Kelly 2017, 5). Heavily funded by the US government, Mexico responded with Programa Frontera Sur (PFS), a plan to 'securitize' its southern border (Castillo 2016, 1). In 2016 alone, the US funnelled 75 million US dollars into Mexico's National Migration Institute, the agency in charge of PFS (Castillo 2016, 4). The plan funded heightened security measures along the Mexican-Guatemalan border and popular immigration routes, ostensibly in the name of security and prosperity (Castillo 2016, 2). Instead, it has coincided with reports of increased human rights violations. Just a year after implementation, theft, violent robbery, and assault increased by 81 percent in the four Mexican southern border states (Castillo 2016, 4).

Historically, migration studies have ignored gender, instead viewing female migrants as the companions of their migrating husbands, fathers, or brothers (Damián Palencia 2017). Yet this approach overlooks gender-specific push factors. For instance, women have a harder time accessing employment, goods, and resources in their home countries, forcefully incentivising them to migrate (Damián Palencia 2017). In fact, the Centre for Legal Action on Guatemalan Human Rights reports that women represent about 40 percent of total migration from the country to Mexico (Ramírez-López et al. 2012). 60 percent of these women are young Indigenous Mayan mothers, one of the most vulnerable populations in Latin America (Ramírez-López et al. 2012). A gendered approach to understanding Guatemalan migration would highlight the country's economic liberalisation in the 1980s, which prompted cuts in education and health service budgets. Without social safety nets, high rates of teenage pregnancy skyrocketed (Silvestre Camposeco 2016). A reported 98 percent of such teenage pregnancies in the province of Huehuetenango occur in children aged fourteen or younger, 80 percent of which are rapes by immediate family members (Silvestre Camposeco 2016). After giving birth, many of these girls are stigmatised and excluded from their communities, forcing them to migrate (Silvestre Camposeco 2016). Many women also migrate in search of employment opportunities to support their families (Damián Palencia 2017).

Not only do women face higher pressures to leave their communities than men, but they also come up against invisible barriers and higher costs when they do migrate. For instance, their modes of transportation are more limited. Women tend to steer clear of hopping trains, choosing instead to journey by foot or on public transport, both of which are slower and more costly methods of transportation (Damián Palencia 2017). Moreover, migrant women are more likely than men to experience violence and sexual assault, and many contract STIs (especially HIV) along the way (Ramírez-López et al. 2012). Sexual health concerns are especially prominent amongst migrant women passing through Chiapas, as sexual assault and propagation rates of HIV are elevated in border regions (Ramírez-López et al. 2012). These regions are also widely known as hubs of sex work and sex trafficking (Pintin-Perez, Rojas Wiesner, and Bhuyan 2018). In their ethnography of migrant sex workers in a 'tolerance zone' of Dominguez, a city in Chiapas, Pintin-Perez et al. (2018) note that migrant women disproportionately turn to the commercial sex trade as a source of income. In part, this is because working in the sex trade ensures more regular income and taking on a 'less deportable' status (Pintin-Perez, Rojas Wiesner, and Bhuyan 2018, 76). While many turn to the industry willingly or due to push factors, their participation in sex work often exposes them to high levels of violence. This is in part due to a shame-based public discourse around sex work in Mexico, which frames death and violence as natural consequences of participating in the industry (Pintin-

denying caregivers, leave many migrant women feeling perpetually guilty and ashamed for leaving their families (Damián Palencia 2017). This is paradoxical since many women migrate because of their need to provide for their families and continue to play a crucial role in supporting their children from afar (Damián Palencia 2017).

This gendered bias is further accentuated when it intersects with ethnicity. To understand these dynamics, it is necessary to consider the everyday aggressions women face in addition to the previously discussed macro-level violence they encounter (Carte 2014, 114). In Chiapas specifically, Carte notes that low-level government officials often perpetuate subtle and informal discrimination towards those most marginalised in Mexican society, such as Indigenous migrant women (Carte 2014, 129). Through microaggressions, refusal of service, 'demeaning or intimidating body language, negative attitudes, rude compliments, and arbitrariness,' low-level officials' gendered racism passes under the radar (Carte 2014, 115). In turn, this discrimination disadvantages both the women facing racist microaggressions and their dependents.

Just as the forces driving the current waves of migration are gendered, so too are the local responses to them. Alongside migrant women themselves, numerous actors—such as family members, immigrants' rights organisations, and religious groups—actively resist the exploitation of migrant workers and their homelands, fighting for visibility and accountability. For instance, *Movimiento Migrante Mesoamericano* protests human trafficking and Indigenous land grabbing (*Movimiento Migrante Mesoamericano* 2019). Similarly, the human caravan *Step by Step Toward Peace* walked from Central American villages to Mexico City looking for family members, naming those lost on large white boards, protesting at mass graves, and garnering media attention with human chains (Kovic and Kelly 2017, 8). Other groups care for migrants throughout their journey: *Jesus el Buen Pastor*, *Shelter Home of Mercy*, and *Casa del Migrante* provide free shelter and healthcare for migrants passing through Chiapas (Kovic and Kelly 2017, 6). Organisations like *Observatorio en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva* in Guatemala work to create an alternative to migration, by providing healthcare and educational services to young women in order to reduce sexual assault and teenage pregnancies in Indigenous communities (Silvestre Camposeco 2016). Grassroots activism against causes and impacts of feminised migration is proof of the agency and strength of migrant women and their communities. Though global political and economic forces shape and limit the choices of women passing through Chiapas, their reactions to social upheaval are marked with resilience and creativity. The emergence of this intricate network of care for migrant women cautions onlookers from conflating 'vulnerable' with 'weak.'

Adopting a feminised perspective of migrant caravans reveals suffering, injustice, and structural violence, unchecked by the very institutions meant to protect the most vulnerable. Between the impetus to leave, the hurdles throughout the journey, and the quality of life after settlement, the migrant experience through southern Mexico is moulded by gendered norms, expectations, and relationships. Yet this gendered lens also reveals a complex web of resistance. A plethora of independent communities invest time and effort into supporting migrants through networks of care. Ultimately, while they face disproportionate suffering, migrant women are not passive actors leading predetermined lives. To assume so would be to rob them of their agency. Perhaps making our understanding of the interplay between geo-politics, migration, and gender more nuanced might be the first step in leading a more focused response.

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# Trends of Press Suppression in Morocco

**AARON BOEHM** explores the collision between journalistic duty and self-censorship by coercion on behalf of the Moroccan monarchy and government.

**S**ince the liberalisation of the media in Morocco in the early 1990s, interactions between the media and political authorities have been defined by a struggle over who has the right to broadcast what. During the reign of King Hassan II (1961-1999), the state often surveilled a largely partisan press leading to widespread repression (El Kadoussi 2018, 676). Retributions against journalists and publications characterised this period of socio-political upheaval spanning from the early 1960s to the late 1980s. Keen to improve the image of Morocco abroad and improve ties with the European Union as a potential economic partner, Hassan II later attempted to alleviate domestic socio-political tension by implementing a series of significant opening measures (Ibid, 677). During this era private papers began to emerge, taking over the press scene previously dominated by partisan interests. El Kadoussi (2018, 675) identifies four phases in the history of the burgeoning Moroccan private press: uncertain beginnings (1991–1998), free retrospection (1999–2005), confrontation and censorship (2006–2011), and normalisation and self-censorship (2011–2016). Since 2016, a fifth phase has emerged: a return to confrontation and censorship. As the Moroccan social contract becomes increasingly fragile, journalists have displayed an increased willingness to provide critical coverage of the government. The following analysis seeks to highlight the role that the breakdown of the Moroccan social contract has played in stirring protests and critical coverage of the monarchy and consequently the ways in which the monarchy has sought to return to the period of normalisation and self-censorship.

The Moroccan political media economy is sensitive, and it is characterised by suppression and government censorship. As the political climate has fluctuated between positive reform and repression, three so-called 'red line issues' have remained consistent. Every journalist operating in Morocco knows these issues are forbidden: the monarchy, Islam, and Moroccan sovereignty over the Western Sahara (Benchenna and Marchetti 2020, 5). Such issues are closely linked to the monarchy's understanding of its legitimacy and the authoritarian bargain it has struck with its citizens. Briefly, an authoritarian bargain is an implicit agreement between a regime and its citizens, whereby citizens relinquish political influence in exchange for economic and political security (Olofsgård, Desai and Yousef, 2009). From independence in 1956 to the early 1990s, the Moroccan government pursued a highly repressive campaign to enforce these lines. However, liberal reforms in the early 1990s led to the relative loosening of press freedoms and the Moroccan press establishment experienced exponential growth in publication releases (Benchenna and Marchetti 2020, 13). With the explosive growth of online media following the advent of the internet, the government was confronted with an urgent need to reassert control over the media sector. Rather than actively prosecuting and suppressing journalists, the government reinforced legislation that underpinned the three red lines and bolstered a culture of self-censorship. The penal code is the primary legal framework through which this political control is asserted. Article 179, for instance, mandates between six months to two years imprisonment and/or a fine of 20,000 to 200,000 Dirham for 'defaming, insulting, or causing prejudice to the personal life of the king or the crown prince' (Human Rights Watch (HRW) 2017). Another article, 267.5, directs the same punishment for 'causing harm' to Islam (ibid). If the offense is committed via any form of print, audio-visual, or electronic media, the punishment is

increased to either imprisonment for two to five years or a fine of 50,000 to 500,000 Dirham, or both (ibid).

In the period between 2011 and 2016, Moroccan journalists largely conformed to the red lines established in the penal code. During the February 20 Movement protests in Morocco—part of the ‘Arab Spring’—Moroccan mainstream broadcasters and the press consistently relayed images of escalation in post-Arab spring countries, mobilising public opinion in favour of initiatives for stable reform within Morocco (El Kadoussi 2018). According to El Kadoussi (2018), three ‘lackluster features’ encouraged Moroccan journalists to self-censor and avoid the red lines: the disappearance of leading outlets such as *Le Journal Hebdomadaire* and *Nichane* from the media scene; the self-imposed exile of a number of the monarchy’s critics, such as Lamrabet, Jamaï, and Benchemsi; and the imprisonment of the *Almassae* director. In this phase journalists largely toed the government line, operating within the red lines and conforming to the conventions of self-censorship. However, as the political situation in Morocco began to change and unrest spread among the public, journalists were among the first to experience a return to the repressive policies of 2006–2011.

Crucial to understanding these developments is an awareness of the Moroccan social contract and how shifting political realities engendered this confrontation between journalists and the monarchy. The years between 2011 and 2016 witnessed developments in Morocco’s social contract. Within the Middle East and North Africa, the relationship between the state and society has largely been understood by academics as based on ‘an exchange of deliverables’ (Houdret and Amichi 2020, 2). This exchange consists of the state’s guarantee of basic livelihoods, opportunities, and physical security; in return, the population is loyal to the ruler and accepts the regime’s monopoly of power (Houdret and Amichi 2020, 2). Since Moroccan independence in 1956, two contracts have appeared. The first, under Mohammed V and King Hassan II, was based on the role of the state as regulator of services such as health, education, and access to basic amenities (Houdret and Amichi 2020, 2). It also addressed the state’s role as the chief employer, stemming from its monopoly on the means of production (Houdret and Amichi 2020, 2). In return, the population was meant to recognise the monarchy as the fundamental basis of the state political system. The second contract emerged following the ascension of Mohammed VI to the throne in 1999, signalling a shift from his father’s approach. The new social contract has been based on expanding social security, lifting subsidies on food and fuel, increasing access to basic services, and the fight against poverty (Haddad 2019). These changes are exchanged for an implicit agreement to work within the framework of ‘Monarchy, National Unity, and Islam’ with a goal of increased democratisation (Ibid).

In 2015, the World Bank’s North Africa and the Middle East Branch released a report calling attention to the breakdown of social contracts across the Middle East (Devarajan et al 2015). This report highlighted what the activist Jawad Moustakbal describes as the ‘two Moroccos’: one featuring the construction of developments and mega-projects, and the other featuring the persistence of a low Human Development Index (HDI) ranking, a high poverty rate, low education, and a reliance on the agricultural sector (Moustakbal 2017). Indeed, approximately 35 percent of the Moroccan workforce is employed in the agricultural sector (World Bank 2021), and nearly 40 percent of the population lives in rural areas (World Bank 2018); the monarchy’s control of water and land after independence was key to the creation of the first contract. Dissatisfaction with the discriminatory effects of these liberal agricultural policies, rising inequalities, and mounting difficulties in access to land, water, and livelihoods for the majority of farmers increasingly fuel protest and conflict (Houdret and Amichi 2020:17). Moreover, by implementing the International Monetary Fund’s structural adjustment program in the early 1980s, Morocco gave up its food sovereignty and became vulnerable to price fluctuations of staple goods on the global market (Moustakbal 2017). As a consequence of the neoliberal policies pursued by the monarchy since the 1980s, the *makhzen*—the patronage networks of Moroccan elite society—has taken over almost all political and economic decisions in the country (Ibid). Popular protests against cronyism and corruption have erupted across the country since 2016. Beginning with the *Hirak-Rif* protests in Northern Morocco, subsequent protests broke out in 2018, 2019, and 2020 in favour of government accountability and an end to endemic corruption (Rachidi 2019).

Dissatisfaction with increased cronyism, the breaking of the social contract, and protests across Morocco have increased the demand for critical coverage of the government and accurate reporting on the status of protests. Journalists have consequently been emboldened to write ‘outside’ the red lines, voiding the contract of self-censorship. As a result, the government has increasingly adopted strategies to actively suppress reports they deem a threat to their legitimacy. Three trends of prosecution are visible in this renewed campaign of active media suppression. The first and most prevalent is the securitisation of journalism in which critical words, as

coverage is deemed a national security threat and the journalist is arrested on security charges. One of the most prominent cases of this securitisation occurred in 2016 when a group of seven journalists were charged with ‘undermining state security’ after taking part in a Dutch-funded project aimed at training citizen journalists (Amnesty International 2016). In 2017, Abdelkabar al-Horr of *Rassdmaroc* was accused of ‘condoning terrorism, inciting a banned demonstration, and insulting state authority’ after his coverage of the HIRAK protests (RSF 2018). Mohamed Ahdad of *Al Massae*, Abdelhak Belachgar of *Akhbar Al Yaoum*, and Kaoutar Zaki and Abdelilah Sakhir of the website *Aljarida24* were prosecuted in 2018 on charges of ‘divulging confidential information’ following reporting on a parliamentary inquiry into the Moroccan Pension Fund (*L’Union de la Presse Francophone* 2018). Most notably, Omar Radi has faced extensive judicial harassment and over the course of ten years he has received twelve summonses, faced four legal procedures, and four weeks of interrogation (RSF 2020). He is now standing trial on charges of undermining national security for his coverage of the HIRAK protests (Ibid). By utilising a security narrative to frame journalists and their coverage as an existential threat to state and public security, the government seeks to legitimise their suppression of journalists.

The second trend in this campaign of suppression is an increased willingness to charge journalists with criminal offenses rather than press law violations. The *Rif Press* editor Mohamed El Hilali was arrested while covering protests and sentenced to five months in prison for ‘demonstrating without prior authorization’ (RSF 2017). Six other citizen-journalists were arrested in 2017 for violations of the penal code, with some facing charges which carry the death penalty (RSF 2017). A third trend is charges related to sexual assault or moral violations. Soulaïman Raïssouni, with *Akhbar Al-Yaoum*, was arrested in 2020 and is currently in custody pending an investigation into a sexual assault charge (CPJ 2021). Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has highlighted the misuse of sex charges against journalists who criticise Moroccan authorities, drawing attention to its use by the Moroccan intelligence service, as a pretext to keep journalists detained for extended periods of time, while an investigation is conducted (RSF 2020). Omar Radi has also faced accusations of rape by the government. Articles 489, 490, and 491 of the Moroccan penal code, which criminalise homosexuality, abortions, fornication, and adultery, respectively, have been used to prosecute journalists who refuse to self-censor. In 2019, Hajar Raïssouni, a reporter with the *Akhbar Al-Yaoum*, was sentenced to a year in prison on charges of ‘having an illegal abortion’ and ‘extra-marital relations’ (Amnesty International 2019).

This active suppression of Moroccan journalists is a distinct shift from the period of 2011-2016, whereby journalists largely abided by the rules of self-censorship. It is concurrent with protestors’ demands for government accountability and the shift signals a new phase of press censorship in Morocco, as the government attempts to rebuild the system of passive censorship, which existed earlier in the decade, through the meting out of severe punishments for infringements of the red lines. However, as the monarchy and *makhzen* continue to contravene the Moroccan social contract and protests persist, journalists are compelled to deliver coverage of events. The words of Omar Radi neatly summarise the nature of this current period of suppression: ‘[the government] is now past self-censorship because journalists can no longer strike a balance between criticism and transgression, and therefore withhold from writing about anything remotely critical’ (Metivier 2019, 43). In other words, as the social contract in Morocco continues to deteriorate, the space for criticism has become ambiguous; the Moroccan government must rely on coercion and active suppression to reclaim a culture of self-censorship.

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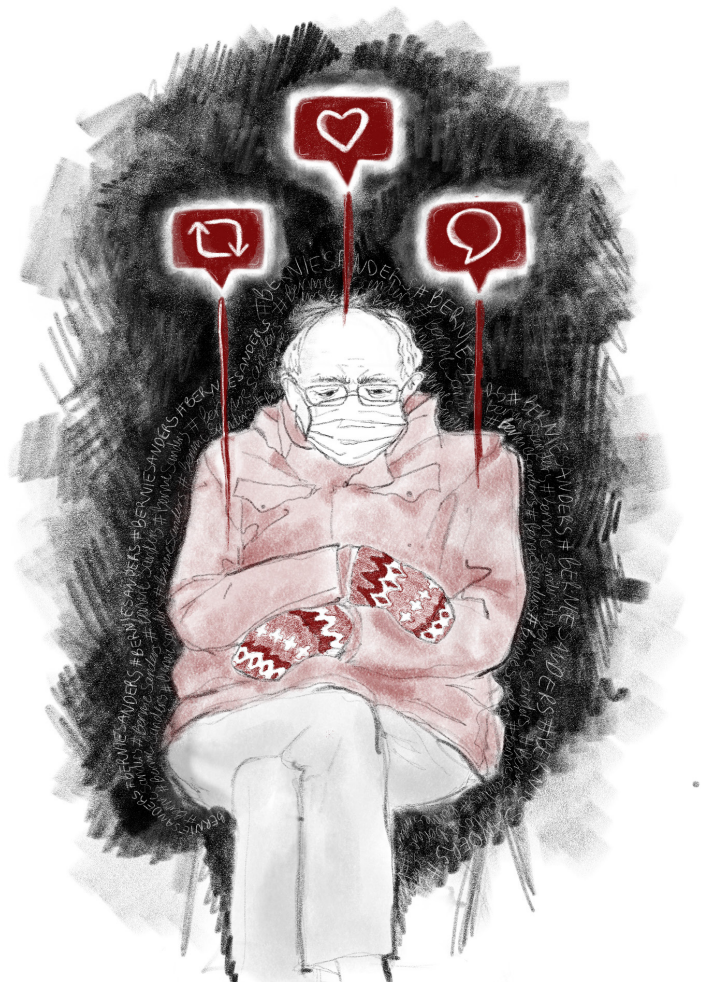
# Social Media as a Measure of Public Opinion

**SAMANTHA KICHMAN** evaluates the quantitative value of social media analysis in capturing emergent public opinion trends.

**S**ocial media has increasingly permeated public life, becoming a space for conversations about politics, culture, sport, and more. Its ubiquity encourages users to craft online personas which match their in-person identities; scholars thus view it as a potential mechanism of measuring public opinion (Mellon and Prosser, 2017; Vaccari et al., 2014; Anstead and O’Loughlin, 2014). While difficult to define, public opinion is generally understood as the preferences of the many, and it was historically measured by opinion polls and media coverage (Anstead and O’Loughlin, 2014). Now, social media presents a potential new form of vox populi (Tworek, 2018), providing temporal, discursive reactions to current events and allowing researchers and commentators to access unframed opinions and better ascertain political outcomes. This article assesses the extent to which social media can be a useful determinant of public opinion—or if it is simply another fad.

## Problems with using Social Media to Observe Public Opinion

It is no secret that social media can be manipulated through fake ‘troll’ accounts. Lukito et al. (2018) found that tweets crafted by Russia’s Internet Research Agency (IRA) permeated mainstream media coverage of public opinion. This interference calls the validity of assessing public opinion online into question, as certain accounts exist solely to provoke discord. Similarly, several scholars (Howard et al., 2017; Bradshaw and Howard, 2018; Vosoughi et al., 2018) have found social media to be a useful mechanism by which to spread fake news and propaganda. Specifically, Linvill and Warren (2018) found that in the 2016 Democratic Primary, the IRA used faux-Leftist accounts to attack Hillary Clinton, creating divisive content that supported Sanders. Rather than depicting the opinions of genuine Sanders supporters, these accounts systematically sowed discord and division through inflammatory content. Moreover, because falsehoods diffuse faster than truths (Vosoughi et al., 2018)—potentially





attributable to their inflammatory, ‘viral’ nature—social media allows fake accounts to not only widely disseminate falsehoods masquerading as genuine public opinion, but also to manipulate observers’ opinions.

Another potential caveat to using social media as a measure of public opinion is its non-representative nature. For example, only 21 percent of the U.S. populace used Twitter in 2016 (Pew Research Center, ‘Social Media Fact Sheet,’ 2019), and even fewer created political content (Pew Research Center, ‘National Politics on Twitter,’ 2019). In addition to the small sample size, scholars have found evidence that social media users are demographically non-representative of the general population (Vaccari et al., 2014, Barbera and Rivero, 2015; Jungherr, 2016; Mellon and Prosser, 2017), especially in the American context where users tend to be younger, slightly more educated, and more urban (‘Social Media Fact Sheet,’ 2019). Therefore, demographically, social media is far from a microcosm of public opinion. As demographics change (in the U.S. and elsewhere), the electorate will be increasingly made up of those who have grown up in the internet age, potentially making social media a more potent representation of public opinion. However, for now, the composition of the platforms is still too limited.

Crucially, social media may also grant particular attention to ‘unrepresentative, manipulable, loud, and likely polarised opinions’ (McGregor, 2019, 1082). Echo chambers and filter bubbles, two pervasive aspects of the mediated existence of social media, heighten more polarised opinions as users feed off each other. Both the Sanders campaign and the broader, intensified dynamic of the primary elections exemplify this. As stated above, due to the need to explicitly register with a party to participate, primary voters tend to be in more engaged parts of the electorate. In the Sanders campaign, the strong primary opinions of a small fraction of Sanders’ online coalition led to the construction of meta-narratives like that of the ‘Berniebro’ (Meyer, 2015). This group of particularly vocal young, white men captured media attention even though they did not adequately reflect polling data on Sanders’ coalition or their opinions (Staples, 2019; Golshan, 2019; Morning Consult + Politico, 2019). Rather than being reflective of all Sanders supporters, ‘Berniebro’s’ are an internet minority that co-opted the media’s attention, creating a largely inaccurate discourse about Sanders’ coalition. Moreover, the amplification of this coalition, and how they were framed in the media, managed to silence Sanders’ female supporters, drawing negativity to the movement and inaccurately reflecting the coalition. Particularly divisive opinions on social media lend themselves to reductive and inaccurate frames in the larger media system. Ascertaining public opinion is difficult with so much interference and noise; this is further complicated when the media frames online opinion to fit a particular narrative rather than to reflect general public opinion.

## Useful Aspects of Social Media for Understanding Public Opinion

As well as attempting to discern whether social media is a metric of public opinion, determining how it can be useful, particularly in measuring elements of public opinion, also warrants attention. Klasjna et al. (2018) found that social media can provide insights into emerging public opinion. Indeed, as it is not reliant on prompting, unlike typical opinion polls, social media can uncover relevant issues to the fraction of the public on these platforms in real time. Klasjna et al. (2018) suggest that this could also allow us to monitor the intensity of particular sentiments via engagement with that content. Sanders’ initial 2016 rise is indicative of such a phenomenon: he garnered little press attention, yet was the most discussed primary candidate on Reddit (Barthel et al., 2016). After becoming a social media phenomenon, Sanders’ campaign maintained this momentum despite appearing an unlikely contender to the mainstream media. As such, this social media engagement demonstrates the potential to observe emergent usurpers as they begin to gain traction. This indicates that social media could allow researchers to ascertain emerging public opinion and its potential potency as insurgent candidates appear in the public consciousness.

McGregor (2019) shows how journalists use social media to inform their coverage of public opinion. If a particular candidate garners significant attention online, they become more salient in the media. If we understand this phenomenon as an act of media constructionism, it resembles Chadwick’s (2013) hybrid media system. In Chadwick’s theory, relations between political actors, media, and the public exist within complementary and competitive actions amongst older and newer media logics. Journalists, representative of older media, construct particular narratives of opinion based on emergent ideas on new (social) media. Therefore, social media is treated by journalists as indicative of relational and constructed public opinion. Working cyclically, the media makes social media movements more salient in their coverage, and in turn, these

movements appear more readily in the public's mind. In this framework, however, it is possible that none of this is indicative of genuine opinion but, rather, of circumstantial depictions of opinion. Additionally, journalists' coverage of these opinions, or lack thereof, may then attract online scrutiny in an ever-flowing feedback loop.

Another means by which social media may be useful in measuring public opinion is its discursive nature. Anstead and O'Loughlin (2014: 214) regard social media as an 'organ of public opinion,' allowing for a 'more conversational definition of public opinion.' Social media sheds light on how opinions are discussed and potentially acquired through online conversations. Online debates are less subject to analysts' framing in composing questions (Klasnja et al., 2018); instead, they are commentary and discussions born of direct reactions, providing a more organic, albeit not wholly representative, picture of public opinion. Returning to Sanders, Groshek and Koc-Michalska (2016) found that politically active social media users were more likely to support Sanders' Democratic populism, and that, because of these users, the online discourses surrounding democratic policy were shaped by Sanders supporters' heavy representation online.

In contrast, some scholars (Sunstein, 2007; Phillips, 2016; Engesser et al., 2017) worry that these internet dialogues can lead to homogeneity and polarisation. There is certainly cause for concern about echo chambers and filter bubbles, but these potentialities too are useful for measuring public opinion. Polarised and homogeneous environments may explain how people construct particularly strong political identities. Much has been made of the bitter unofficial online communications that occurred alongside the Sanders campaign. This effect may be explained if we understand that primary supporters can be the most emphatic supporters of a given political candidate. Moreover, circulating informal communications offered campaigners and regular supporters opportunities for more personalised and culturally relevant engagement (Penney, 2017). Observing online controversies allows researchers to witness the real-time development of factional political opinions. Passionate exchanges demonstrate users' propensity to 'fight' for their candidate. Within a hyper-engaged electorate (as seen with the primaries), social media depicts how strongly held opinions can become stronger. In an increasingly politically polarised society (Newport, 2019), social media simultaneously depicts and contributes to the growth of divided opinions.

Social media profiles are constructed selves, rooted in how we would like to be perceived (Boyd, 2010). McGregor (2018:13, original emphasis; 99) argues that social media is 'inherently public and relational' and even found individuals voicing support for Sanders online in 2016 who privately intended to vote for Clinton. Again, this mirrors the primary electorate, where conversations taking place online were driven left even as the more traditional choice was predominantly supported. Online public personas performatively reflect idealised opinions rather than realistic ones. This makes social media an ineffective measure of true public opinion, but still has an alternate use. While not explicitly helpful for predicting election outcomes, how people want to be perceived online can suggest turning ideological tides or electoral changes that have not yet fully come to fruition. Indeed, while Sanders did not manage to secure the nomination in either 2016 or 2020, he did change the USA's ideological landscape in challenging the neoliberal hegemony (Rehmann, 2016), and perhaps permanently altered public opinion and conscience.

## Conclusion

Social media is one of several tools to measure facets of public opinion and its development. Nevertheless, it is complicated and diverse, making it unlikely any single tool will ever give researchers a complete picture.

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