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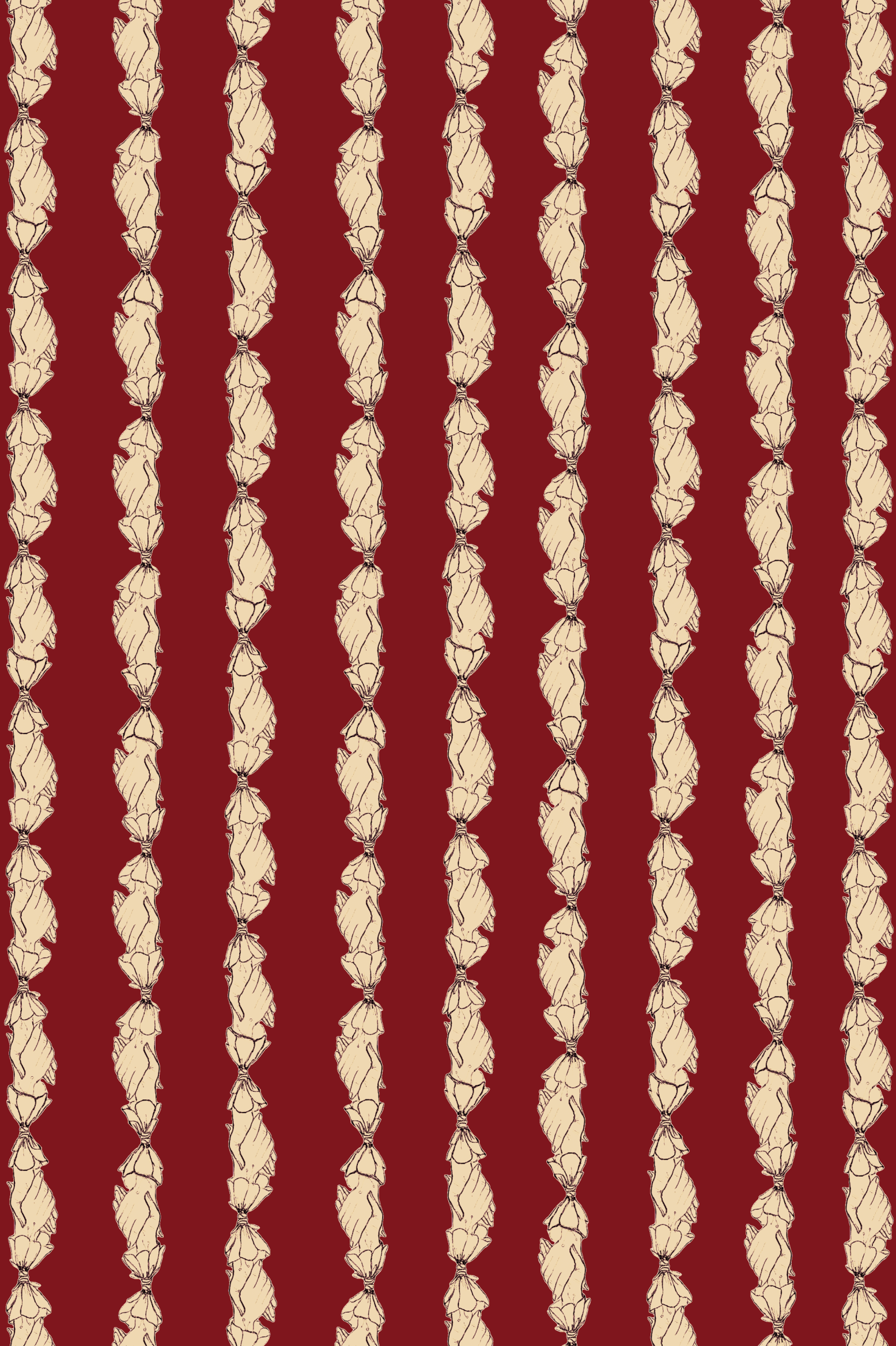
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**A**s the **COVID-19 pandemic** settles into the new status quo, the power of the community to come together—and to divide—is increasingly evident. From the global discussion of systemic racism instigated by the Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020, to the military disarray and coups of Myanmar, to COP26 in Glasgow, Leviathan centred our focus on the theme of Community to propel thoughtful discussion amongst the student body.

Together with our friends from Edinburgh Political Union (EPU), we have striven to engage students in a series of passionate debates. While the EPU hosted a number of engaging events including a discussion with Former Presidential Advisor Dr. Peter Feaver on America and the world and a panel discussion on Political Apathy, we helped students enter the conversation through academic writing.

The pandemic presented a series of challenges for Leviathan, and in response, we are publishing all of our articles in print as well as online. Our articles grasp a wide array of perspectives on the broad theme of community. Doing so allowed for more optimism during a time of unprecedented turbulence.

Our contributors and editors have worked tirelessly to bring the highest level of academic political writing to our student body and beyond. Darina Stoyanova investigates the complex role of violence in the Venezuelan city of Caracas, focusing on the barrio communities. In India, Tharun Venkat ambitiously explores the relationship between religion and politics in the postcolonial era. Back to the UK, Jack Liddall explores the seemingly contradictory forces of decentralisation and centralisation of political power in the UK post-devolution. Claire Rose Reilley Panella evaluates instances of mutual aid networks that arose during the COVID-19 pandemic and their long-term efficacy, while Paul Gerard Tomlinson explores the role of food banks in the United Kingdom as both necessary charitable organisations and, simultaneously, a sign that large-scale governance has shortcomings. Alex Lemery analyses climate talks and the role of the international community and dynamics between certain nations. Krisztina Kocsis provides an inclusive take when making an argument concerning the states of nuclear weapons after the Cold War.

We wouldn't have been able to work on so many amazing articles had it not been for our own community: our writers, regional editors, copy editors, peer reviewers, and our administrative team. We hope that you will enjoy reading Leviathan as much as we enjoy bringing it to you!



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# Secularism vs. Sectarianism: The Turbulent Relationship Between Politics and Religion in Post-Colonial Indian Communities

**THARUN VENKAT** explores the root causes of modern-day conflicts in India over political-religious questions and the role of the constitutional principle of secularism.

Post-colonial India has long struggled with balancing religion and politics within its diverse polity. The ongoing travails of Indian minority communities under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is only the most recent example (Sahoo 2020, 12). India is a diverse and multifaceted country, and as in other multicultural nations like the United States, there are a myriad of debates about who belongs to the ‘Indian community.’ Due to burgeoning Hindu nationalism within India, this has been increasingly tied with religious identity. Post-colonial India was framed as a secular and inclusive nation-state by its founding fathers, most notably Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi (Karfa 2020, 132). Secularism and freedom of religion were enshrined within India’s constitution, but these concepts hold infinite interpretations within this diverse community (De Roover et al. 2011, 573). Disagreements arose when the secular constitution was framed, and India has witnessed Hindu majoritarian political tendencies emerging ever since (Ganguly 2003, 13). The 1947 partition—which cost over a million lives—bloodied the new India, making it wary of the religion’s potential to invoke inter-community tensions (Sen 2010, 3; Bhargava 2002, 1). The constitution, a document meant to contain India’s core values, was planned to avoid the repetition

of such tragedies. The drafters knew that liberal democracy was necessary to avoid communal and parochial tensions from exploding (Karfa 2020, 136). However, despite their best efforts to secularize India for its own security, these attempts have largely been in vain. Democracy relies on compromise and inclusion, yet tensions fuelled by both implicit and explicit support from India’s overzealous political class have only served to weaken India’s founding principles (Gupta 2007, 30). While the Modi government is the culmination of decades of this tumultuous experiment, India has had a harrowing past concerning the relationship between religion and politics.

For context, certain parameters and key events must be established. This article is primarily concerned with contextualising Modi’s eventual rise to power, and, therefore, discusses post-colonial religious altercations with politics to establish the presence of religious issues in Indian politics. Religious majoritarianism and its adverse effects on the relationship between religion and politics shall be examined in three key areas. First, this article discusses legal issues by examining the Hindu Code Bill debates, demonstrating how India’s founding fathers, including Nehru, framed secularism within India’s constitution as one that was radically different from the West. ‘Nehruvian’ secularism





A Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) organised march in Bhopal, India.

*Image: Suyash Dwivedi | WikiCommons*

was meant to instigate reform within religious hierarchies, as well as safeguard religious freedom (Karfa 2020, 135). This article will subsequently examine the events surrounding Babri Masjid, a saga concerning an alleged historical wrong committed upon Hindus by Muslim invaders, who built a mosque in place of a temple to the Hindu god Rama (Karfa 2020, 135). It remains one of India's most highly contested issues, but the politicisation of the site is notable, especially by the Hindutva right and their banner organisation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS); this gives us a key historical context to the relationship between religion and politics. The final incident is the 2002 anti-Muslim pogroms in Gujarat, where political negligence killed approximately 2000 people, giving a distinctly political angle to the relationship between Indian politics and religion (Sen 2010, 4). These are arguably the most significant areas to discuss, given that Gujarat's Chief Minister at

the time, Modi himself, currently occupies India's premiership (Ganguly 2003, 12-13). Though countless other incidents in India's post-colonial history are relevant, the events discussed here established the dangerous legal, historical, and political relationship between Indian politics and religion—one which is consistently changing for the worse.

As Gupta (2007, 31) notes, practising democracy is difficult. Historically, it is an unnatural social arrangement, especially among a diverse population like India's. Democracy's primary purpose is to overcome the primal impulse within humans to view those different from 'us' as 'them' (Gupta 2007, 35-36). Liberal democracy in particular seeks to assign belonging based on citizenship, allowing all to prosper fairly, rather than become a solely nationalistic state based on birth, blood or creed; secularism is one key aspect used to ensure rights and liberties are protected within nation-



states (Gupta 2007, 32). Western secularism, the kind embodied by the United States, focuses largely on freedom of religion being created through non-intervention from governments, called ‘assimilative’ secularism (Jacobson 1996, 6). Indian secularism, and the concomitant equal stature given to all religions, is instead supposed to be ‘ameliorative’ (Khalidi 2008, 1546). However, such ameliorative processes were manipulated to corrupt secularism, and the value of freedom of religion to one of the world’s most diverse communities (Jacobsohn 1996, 23). This was not its original intention. It aimed to implement reform within religions to level inequalities inherent in religious hierarchies, such as gender or caste (De Roover et al. 2011, 585-586). Nehru and others believed the government should actively ensure equality existed between, and within, religions through constitutional secularism and legal reform, achieved via legislation and judicial fiat, even when contradicting conventional religious practices (Jacobsohn 1996, 39-40). Passed later as four separate acts between 1952 and 1956, the Hindu Code Bills helped to remove gender-based divisions by granting both sexes equal property rights, marriage rights, and abolishing the practice of dowries (Som 1994, 172). However, opposition came from Nehru’s more traditional allies, as well as the Hindutva right, about upsetting traditional practices—practices which are now seen as misogynistic and contrary to liberal democratic values (Som 1994, 171-172). Further criticism came from those arguing these bills left Muslim personal codes and concomitant gender disparities untouched; Muslim women still received disproportionate inheritances, and practices like polygamy are legal for Muslim men while forbidden for Hindu men (Khalidi 2008, 1547). Reform was not immediate and seemingly accounted for minority appeasement through only reforming the practices of the majority. Legislative change from above did not necessarily equate to actual social change, often resulting in a conservative backlash. These reforms help to better explain the legal foundation of the relationship

between religion and politics in India, in which a disparity remains between the supposed intentions of the founding fathers and reality. This article will argue that this already complex relationship changed largely for the worse.

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*“These reforms help to better explain the legal foundation of the relationship between religion and politics in India, in which a disparity remains between the supposed intentions of the founding fathers and reality.”*

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The historical relationship between religion and politics in India can be understood better by examining the Babri Masjid issue and Hindu nationalists’ wishes to create a Hindu Rashtra (nation). Babri Masjid remains at the core of the political ambitions of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Singh (RSS), a volunteer Hindu nationalist charitable and political organization; Bharat Mata’s (Mother India’s) children were solely Hindus to them (Reddy 2011, 441). The Bharatiya Janata Party, RSS’ political wing, keeps Babri Masjid as a wedge issue within its manifesto, championing proposals to build a Hindu temple to Rama over Babri Masjid, his hypothesised birthplace, under Ram Janmabhoomi’s banner (Reddy 2011, 444-446). The mosque was allegedly constructed over a previous Hindu temple by Muslim invaders, though most historians argue there is little evidence on which to base this claim (Bacchetta 2000, 256). This purported encroachment onto holy Hindu territory led to the RSS demanding justice for this alleged historical wrong (Bacchetta 2000, 256-257). Key members invoking its destruction were BJP leader Lal Krishna Advani and future BJP PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee; the Liberhan Commission, ordered to investigate the incident, named both specifically (Ananth 2010, 12). The Commission also noted Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh’s failures in deploying insufficient security forces to hold back



the nationalist crowds; notably, Singh had won the 1991 state general election by appealing to this Hindu nationalist desire to construct the temple (Ananth 2010, 12). Congress had been reluctant to hold back Hindu nationalists from imposing within Babri Masjid long prior; they even allowed foundation stones for a Hindu temple to be placed near the complex (Ganguly 2003, 19). Meanwhile, the BJP utilised this crisis in their electoral strategy, winning the 1998 general election with the promise to reconstruct the temple (Bacchetta 2000, 258). India itself faced more violence between Hindus and Muslims in the aftermath of the mosque's demolition, and Hindutva leaders had few qualms in capitalising on this for political gains. Meanwhile, Rao dismissed the state government, but took little action to quell inter-communal violence over Babri Masjid's destruction, showing either a disregard for, or a lack of control over, Hindu-Muslim religious tensions in India (Ganguly 2003, 20). 2000 more lives were lost due to dubious historical claims by a Hindu supremacist organisation, and insufficient action simply emboldened the RSS and associated groups to demand further Hinduisation. Even at the highest levels of government, however, politicians have been complicit in political violence in the name of anti-secular objectives.

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*“Even at the highest levels of government, however, politicians have been complicit in political violence in the name of anti-secular objectives.”*

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Politicians exploiting societal differences is commonplace in every nation. However, political complicity in actual violence is rampant and contributes to the most significant factor in analysing the relationship between politics and religion. The relationship did not calm at the turn of the century; 2002 brought one of post-colonial India's darkest episodes, interlinked with previous altercations over Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, and under Modi's

own gaze as Gujarat's Chief Minister. After Hindu pilgrims returned to their home state, they chanted Hindu nationalist slogans aboard their train, taunting and threatening Muslim passengers. In Godhra, a mob of Muslims attacked and burned a railway carriage, killing 59 Hindu pilgrims (Ganguly 2003, 11). Following this incident, nearby Hindu leaders gathered and sought mob revenge, which would lead to the deaths of another 2000 or so Muslims (Sen 2010, 4). Even more worryingly, credible allegations of complicity arose in relation to the Modi administration (Ganguly 2003, 11-12); Modi himself has expressed scant remorse over these deaths. Modi's government took days to act over the incident, costing hundreds of Muslim lives. Jaffrelot (2003, 5-7) describes this concentration of anti-Muslim violence as highly organised, with lists drawn up of specific Muslim targets. The national government, under Modi's ally, Vajpayee, refused to condemn Modi's state government, and unlike Rao in 1992, did not impose President's rule on Gujarat despite clear failings to maintain peace and order (Ganguly 2003, 12). The RSS—and by extension, the BJP—are the most important component of these religious movements, with both its past and current leader heavily interconnected with political failings in Gujarat. They had succeeded in gaining political favour in the 1998 elections, and the man in charge of Gujarat during the riots of 2002 is amongst the most powerful men in the world (Jaffrelot 8-9). Sahoo (2020, 9) highlights Indian polarisation at its worst under Modi, whose political colours were revealed in Godhra. Modi may not have ordered the killings himself, but he undoubtedly turned a blind eye toward a tragedy he has shown no remorse over.

In conclusion, Hindu identity politics is primordial in nature, reflecting how politics and religion, as warned by India's founding father, do not mix well in efforts to build peace. There was a post-colonial bargain struck within India's diverse polity by the founding fathers, and liberal democracy was needed to prevent any religious tendencies from turning India into a discriminatory state. Religion

would be private and would allow free conduct, cognisant of its divisive capabilities. This has been twisted through political meddling to prioritise the Hindu majority, with Modi's administration being a mere culmination of these efforts. Babri Masjid, and Congress' weak response, alongside minority appeasement through not addressing discrepancies in religious law reform, shows how all components of India's broad political spectrum have insufficiently maintained post-colonial secularism within India, right from the start (Sahoo 2020, 11). The relationship between religion and politics in Indian communities has changed, deepened, and worsened. It has largely failed to cultivate a secure, secular culture in India, allowing religion and identity to interfere in politics. Bharat Mata was meant to be inclusive of all peoples, regardless of race, creed, gender or religion, and no Mother should disavow hundreds of millions of her Muslim children so harshly, over a difference in beliefs, to service dangerous nationalism. Change must occur for the better, establishing, or perhaps re-establishing, a truly inclusive secular democracy. However, with India becoming increasingly polarised over the role of religion in politics, exemplified in places like Babri Masjid, the situation will likely worsen.

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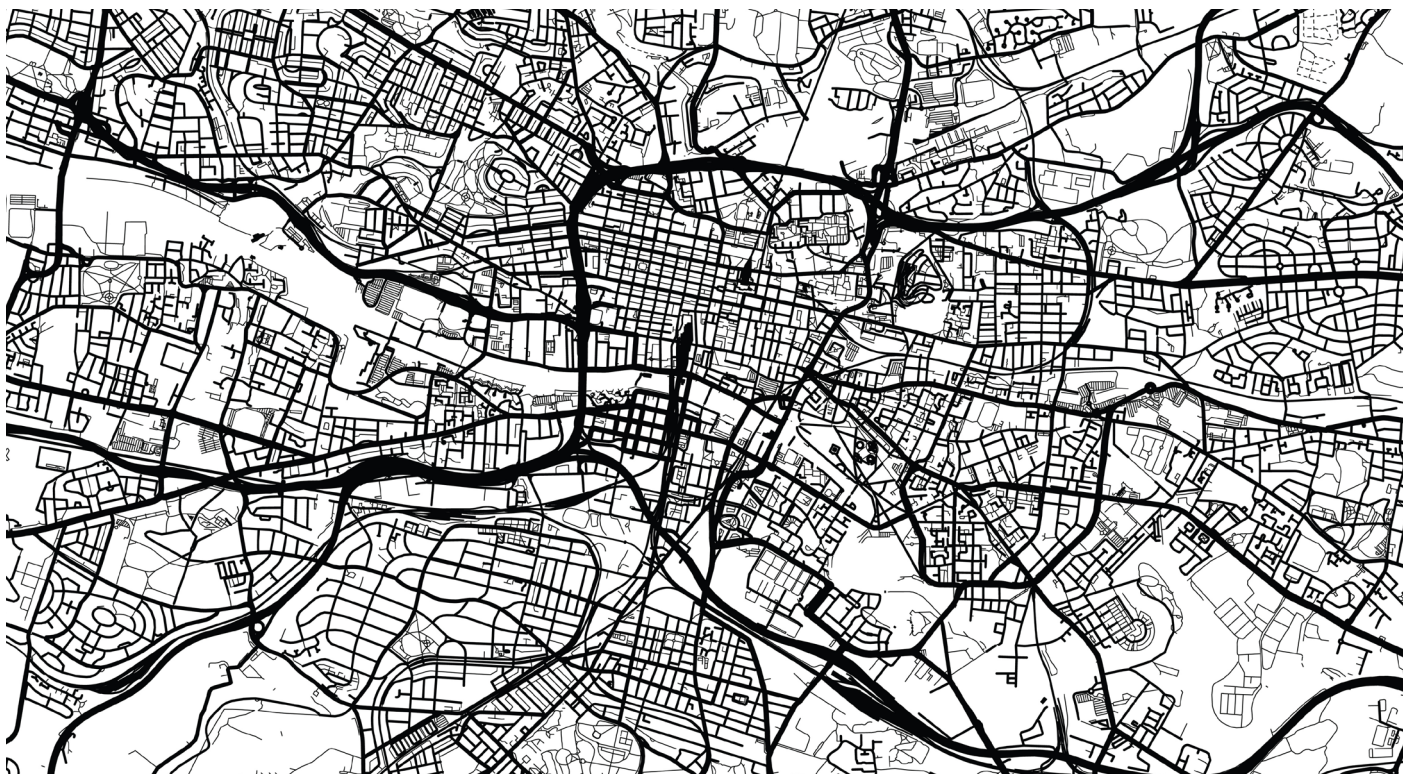
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# The Contradictions and Politics of Bringing Power Back to Scotland's Local Communities

*JACK LIDDALL* analyses the conflicting pushes to centralise political power in Scotland while maintaining the power of local communities.



Vector Map of Glasgow

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In 2014, a report by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) showed that Scotland has become ‘one of the most centralised countries in Europe’ (Commission on Strengthening 2014, 4). Since 2007, the Scottish National Party (SNP) has consistently voiced demands for more devolved powers and greater autonomy from the UK (Scottish Parliament 2016). This article seeks to understand the apparently contradictory politics of demanding the decentralisation of Westminster governance whilst centralising at Holyrood. Firstly, this article will establish whether the Scottish Government is centralising powers, using three measures drawn from multi-level governance literature.

It will be argued that this centralisation has had a detrimental impact on the autonomy of local governments and their communities. Secondly, this article argues that the demands of domestic politics and general political expediency are the most convincing reasons for Scottish Government centralisation.

## *Scottish Government centralisation and local communities*

### **Centralisation: the theory**

A working definition of de/centralisation must be adopted in order to assess the extent to which the Scottish Government is centralising its devolved

powers. Unsurprisingly, de/centralisation is a contested term in the literature on local and multi-level governance. In evaluating the Scottish context, areas of consensus within the scholarship have been synthesised to conceptualise de/centralisation as constituting three dimensions: a) policy-making powers, b) resource allocation powers and c) the culture of decision-making.

In terms of dimension (a), Gaskell and Stoker (2020, 34) understand centralisation as where power lies, referring to the ability of ‘subnational governance actors’ (for this article’s purposes, this means Scottish local authorities) to ‘sanction decisions’ and ‘influence policymaking.’ Homsy et al. (2018, 574) proposed a framework of multi-level governance that similarly seeks to consider who has the ‘sanctioning and coordinating authority’ as a means of understanding the extent of centralisation.

Dimension (b) considers the more material side of power—who has the resource capacity to influence and implement decision-making. Comparing collaborative and centralised governance methods, Gash (2016, 455) highlights this measurement as the extent to which governance actors ‘share responsibilities and resources. Suggesting the key components of ‘[de/centralisation] measurement schemes,’ Dardanelli (2020) highlights the importance of differentiating between the powers to construct policies and the powers to ‘raise the resources needed to pay for them.’

Gaskell and Stoker (2020, 37) also recognise the significance of ‘celebrating difference,’ hence the ‘cultural’ aspect in dimension (c). ‘Celebrating difference’ refers to an understanding by the central government of the benefits of diverse solutions to locality-specific issues that communities face (Gaskell and Stoker 2020, 34). Describing a spirit of collaborative governance, Gash (2016, 455) has emphasised how policy design can stem from ‘joint decision-making efforts,’ rather than purely unilateral or consultative approaches. A general culture of shared decision-making was

also important to the components of multi-level governance proposed by Homsy et al. (2018, 574), with one element being the extent of the ‘co-production of knowledge,’ meaning that local knowledge was part of the policymaking discourse at a central level.

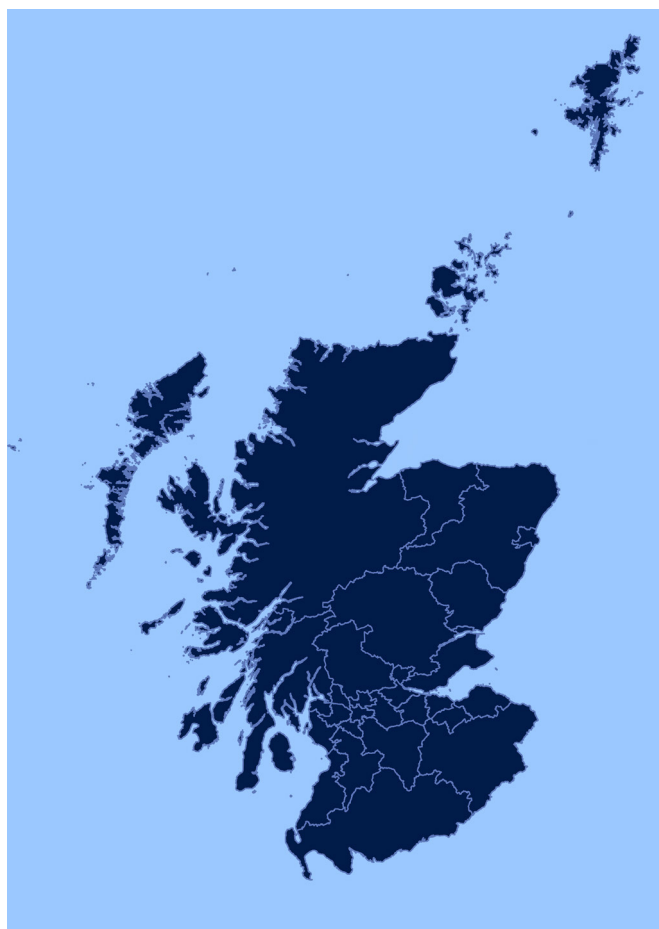
Finally, it is worth mentioning that it is unhelpful to assume that centralisation is necessarily a negative means of governance, or indeed that more collaborative or symmetrical multi-level systems of governance always yield more effective or democratic results. However, it certainly means that power is taken away from the local level.

### **Centralisation: the evidence**

The empirical evidence—drawn particularly from government documents and political discourse analysis—follows the above tripartite index of de/centralisation.

On the measurement of policy-making powers, there has been a considerable centralising impetus from the Scottish Government. One of the most recent centralising moves relates to the manner in which the Scottish Government is consulting on and implementing a largely popular policy: a National Care Service. Recommendations published in March 2021, following a review of adult social care, suggested that the statutory requirement for local authorities to provide care support be removed in favour of entrenching the accountability of government ministers for social care (Scottish Government 2021b, 70). The report held that local authorities would instead become ‘key partners in Integration Joint Boards,’ through which they would influence decision-making (Ibid). This constitutes a clear centralising shift; where decision-making power is currently being held statutorily by local authorities, it would be given to ministers and, at least in principle, re-shape the role of local authorities into a more consultative one. Indeed, COSLA (2021b) expressed its ‘grave concern’ at the recommendations regarding the prospective





The 32 Scottish Council Areas

*Image: Nilfanion / WikiCommons*

governance of a National Care Service. In particular, the leaders of Scotland's councils stated their unanimous rejection of what they believe constitutes 'the removal of local democratic accountability' (Ibid). In terms of what the Scottish Government's plans for a National Care Service would mean for children's social care, COSLA also called these proposals 'an attack on localism and on the rights of local people to make decisions democratically for their place' (CYPNOW 2021).

The Scottish Government has further centralised by directing resources away from local government. From 2013/14 to now, the Scottish Government has experienced a real-time increase in revenue funding of three-point-one percent, whilst the local government has suffered a two-point-four percent decrease (COSLA 2021a). Thus, in prioritising central funding, the Government is passing on disproportionate shares of cuts to local governments. Furthermore, local authorities have consistently

complained that the Government has sought to constrain its ability to decide the rate of council tax, in particular by offering financial incentives to freeze tax rates (Ibid). COSLA's Resources Spokesperson Gail Macgregor lamented that the Government impinged on their 'democratic right to determine their own council tax rates' (Ibid; Scottish Fabians 2021, 61). Clearly, resource allocation has been a tool through which centralisation has occurred, and local authority powers have been curtailed. There are examples of civil service jobs being centralised, diminishing local governments' ability to implement policy efficiently. In 2018, the Government came under particular pressure over plans to increase the proportion of civil service jobs based in Edinburgh and Glasgow to 80 percent (McPherson 2018). Indeed, the Public and Commercial Services Union noted a clear 'centralising tendency of the Scottish Government' in civil service occupations (Ibid).

Considering the cultural dimension of de/centralisation, the rhetoric and principles underlying central governance are important. Government and party discourses display the perception the central government has of local democracy. It is true that in recent years, the Government has committed in principle to devolving more power to local levels. In initiating a Local Governance Review, it has called on Scotland's 'diverse communities' to have 'greater control and influence over decisions that affect them most' (Scottish Government 2019a). Council leaders recognised the effort the central government was making to recognise the importance of local governance, declaring in a joint statement in March 2021 that both central and local governments had a 'clear appetite' to 'reinvigorate modern democracy across Scotland' (Scottish Government 2021a). However, a more critical evaluation of Government discourse around local democracy reveals a lack of detail and substance in what are often general and ambiguous statements about 'partnership working' and 'shared visions.' For example, in its last three 'Programme for Government' documents, discerning exactly how the Scottish Government

intends to provide local governments with a seat at the table on key policy issues is often challenging. In these programmes, the number of times ‘local governments’ or ‘local governance’ is mentioned has decreased from 24 to fifteen to eleven (Scottish Government 2019/20; 2020/21; 2021/22). Yet, when local government is mentioned, the programmes most often describe an intention to work ‘in partnership’ (Scottish Government 2019/20, 16), ‘in conjunction’ (Scottish Government 2020/21, 13) or ‘cohesively’ (Scottish Government 2021/22: 48) with local representatives. This involves little, if any, detail as to what that ‘partnership working’ entails—in particular, whether it involves joint decision-making or central government veto and what the mechanisms actually are for local governments to contribute their perspectives. Each year’s report has included a small section dedicated to local governance, in which the Government’s ‘Local Governance Review’ was discussed. The programmes state that the review considers how a ‘new tier of democracy can be made;’ that is, how the gap between local and national government can be bridged (Scottish Government 2020/21, 115). Although largely due to COVID-19, the intended legislation following the review remains underdeveloped: the Government remains in the preliminary stages of constructing an effective democracy at all levels of society. The SNP Manifesto 2021 (which mentions local government just ten times) also said it would ‘complete the review’ and bring forward a bill, suggesting again that the Government is only beginning to consider how to properly integrate local government into central decision-making (SNP 2021, 40).

### **The contradictory politics of bringing power closer to the people**

The question then remains: why does the Scottish Government—which has been dominated by the pro-independence SNP since 2007, who demand greater autonomy from the UK Government—centralise power in a manner similar to the UK Government it

criticises?

The first approach to answering this question is theoretical. If we conceptualise politics as ‘who gets what, when, how’—as a constant battle over power—then centralisation could be perceived as a logical strategy (Laswell 1936). Once a party, or even an institution like the Scottish Government, has power, it seems counterintuitive to give it away. Faguet (2004, 23) maintains that naturally, those at the centre will ‘benefit directly from a highly centralised government’ and so it is in their interests to consolidate this status quo. In the same way, the Scottish Government—particularly one which received more devolved powers in 2016 from the UK Government—wants to retain control over a range of policy issues. Moreover, the SNP has grown to dominate party politics in Scotland—forming a minority government with 47 seats in 2007 and winning the most seats in 2011 (69) and 2016 (63) (Scottish Parliament 2016). Having a majority in government and a strong grip on the legislative process surely only encourages the retention of power at the centre—why demand more power if you are simply going to give it away?

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*“Having a majority in government and a strong grip on the legislative process surely only encourages the retention of power at the centre—why demand more power if you are simply going to give it away?”*

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Another possible reason is that the Scottish Government is, as a fairly new institution at barely two decades old, seeking to prove its legitimacy. Thus, it has centralised power in order to show that it can effectively execute policy decisions (Hassan 2020). However, this reason is no longer so compelling since polls show that Scots want to keep the devolved institutions and actually trust them more than Westminster (What Scotland Thinks 2020). So, concerns over proving legitimacy are



probably not paramount to the centralising impetus anymore (at least in terms of proving legitimacy to Scots). The Parliament was also established by a national referendum, so undermining or retracting its powers is politically impractical, if not impossible (Maer et al. 2004).

Overall, considering the influence of domestic politics on centripetal forces is rather more convincing. By centralising, the Scottish Government can more easily purport to speak for Scotland; it can present itself as one unified ‘Scottish lobby.’ For example, on Brexit (where Scotland voted differently to England and Wales yet still left the EU as part of the UK), the Scottish Government has presented itself as the only effective institution which can properly speak for Scottish interests. In *Scotland’s Place in Europe* (2016), produced by the Government following Brexit, the First Minister presented the Scottish Government and Parliament as the only legitimate loci for the expression of Scottish interests. The First Minister maintained that it was the Scottish Government which would ‘ensure Scotland’s voice is heard and acted upon’ and that Westminster Governments ‘that Scotland doesn’t vote for’ are ‘imposing policies that a majority in Scotland does not support’ (Scottish Government 2016, vi). It is not surprising that the First Minister views the Scottish Government/Parliament to be the primary body through which Scottish views are expressed, but it is illuminating that this is contrasted with a UK Government which is said to have less legitimacy in representing Scotland. It evinces this ‘Scottish lobby’ power of the Scottish Government; a power that can perhaps only truly come from one strong, centralised Scottish Government.

Even on local community-specific issues, the Scottish Government presents itself as the representative of Scottish people, perhaps to the detriment of local democratic voices. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, the Scottish Government arguably adopted a style of presidentialism, with the First Minister delivering daily briefings and the effort being centrally

led, with little influence from or voice for local communities (Hassan 2020). Local communities are diverse and varied—from rural to urban, coastal to inland—but local initiatives were not put in the spotlight (Hassan 2020). A centralised state facilitates the Scottish Government to present itself in this manner; to harness the ‘Scottish lobby’ power.

Another reason why the ‘Scottish lobby’ power is important to the current government is highly party political. The SNP Government wants independence, and it is arguably much easier to present that case to the Scottish people and the UK Government if the Scottish Government is a very singular, centralised authority. Indeed, much literature has been published exploring the ‘paradox of federalism’ (Erk and Anderson 2009, 191). It suggests that decentralising power has both ‘secession-inducing’ and ‘secession-preventing’ effects. Some in the UK Government have resisted devolution to Scotland because they believe it gives secessionist movements, like that of the SNP, the institutional apparatus to push for independence. It could be suggested then that the Scottish Government is an effective means by which the SNP can constitute a ‘Scottish lobby,’ presenting itself as the only true representative voice of the nation and, indeed, pushing for independence. Decentralisation within Scotland could dilute the power of the Scottish Government as an institution to achieve these political goals. Hence, perhaps, the reluctance of an SNP Government to do so.

To conclude, by reclaiming certain policy issues and public services for central operation, by systematic resource control (and resource deprivation for local authorities) and by an underdeveloped, weak discourse around shared and collaborative governance, the Scottish Government clearly has and is centralising devolved powers at Holyrood. This seemingly contradictory centripetal impetus can be largely attributed to political expediency, due to the importance of a highly centralised ‘Scottish lobby’ to the SNP Government’s political aims.





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# Banking On Kindness: An Analysis of Food Bank Operation in the United Kingdom

*PAUL GERARD TOMLINSON evaluates the role of food banks in the United Kingdom as both charity and as a failure of government to reduce poverty.*

While food banks may seem a mundane issue during an era where sensationalism is the main factor in determining government action (Robinson 2002), it is no less vital. Food banks and their close ties to their local populations are a crucial part of a conversation about community. This article will explore differing views of food banks as charitable and admirable on the one hand and a failure of society on the other. It will then examine the justifications and evidence for these viewpoints and their ramifications. From this, the relationship of food banks to surrounding communities, and the attitude which seems most suitable for a post-COVID world will be examined. Ultimately, a renewed approach towards food banks and poverty reduction needs to be adopted that centres community action.

While the quality of food on supermarket shelves has been an issue since the 1990s (Davison 1993), the lack of food and emergency relief in the UK is a relatively recent and quickly-growing issue. Food banks operated in 251 local authorities in 2014, up from 29 in 2009 (Loopstra 2015). One in six GPs across the UK referred patients to food banks in 2014 (Matthews-King 2014), and hospitals have reported increased treatments for malnutrition (Caplan 2015). Demand for food banks continues to grow, yet they seem unable to capture the nation's long-term attention or political priority. Food banks featured

in each of the UK's political parties' 2015 and 2019 manifestos (except those of the Conservatives)—and yet, media coverage has remained relatively low (Caplan 2015). One potential reason for this could be that some do not see increased reliance on food banks as a problem at all: leader of the House of Commons, Jacob Rees-Mogg, described the rise in food banks in the UK as 'rather uplifting' (BBC News 2019), while British journalist Robin Aitken, who founded the Oxford food bank, has gone further in saying they are a 'cause for national pride' (Aitken 2020). This perception of food banks harkens to the classic debate of 'Welfare vs Charity' in the community. Aitken argues that welfare could never go far enough to ensure food for every citizen, so those who fall through the cracks should embrace charity (Johnson 1970). This optimistic appraisal does not appear to be reflected amongst the British people; YouGov polling reveals that nine out of ten Britons see hunger as a problem in the UK (The Trussell Trust 2019). Emma Revie, the Chief Executive of the Trussell Trust (the largest UK food bank network), denounced her banks as a 'sticking plaster' over the root causes of widespread poverty (Butler 2020). Some posit that there is a middle ground in which combining both state, enterprise, and community could combat food poverty most effectively (Bartholomew 2020). Through an analysis of these differing viewpoints, this article argues that increasingly community-oriented action





Storage shelves of a Trussell Trust food bank in Rotherham, England, UK

Image: HASPhotos | Adobe Stock

due to the COVID-19 pandemic could allow the UK to move beyond short-term or exclusionary food-banking practises.

### Food banks as ‘Big Society’

Since his election in 2010, former Prime Minister David Cameron advocated his policy of ‘Big Society,’ a merging of free-market capitalism with a communitarian ideology of volunteering (Walker 2013). The Conservative campaign described the degradation of social responsibility and rise in violent crime as causing a ‘Broken Britain’ (Gentleman 2010), and this patriotic blend of business with charity, facilitated through the moral reasoning of religion, was to be the remedy.

In theory, religious belief could be the ointment for a broken society; studies tied it to greater longevity (Kune et al. 1993) and a greater sense of social responsibility (Furbey 2006). The government in turn has not been blind to the role religion could play in fostering ‘community;’ the Department for

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs published a case-study that an ‘annual church cycle of prayer and celebration contribute to a sense of belonging and wellbeing’ (Farnell et al. 2006: 6). If these findings are taken onboard, the close ties between food banks and faith would indicate that they are a force for good within the community. In 2014, 43 percent of the food banks in the UK were operated by the Trussell Trust, which is a Christian charity. Around twenty percent were operated by other Christian groups, such as the Besom, 31 percent were run by individuals, and around four percent by the secular organisation FareShare (Clarke 2014). Taken together, religious organisations administer over half of all food banks in the UK.

Religion’s role in motivating community volunteering cannot be understated, and data regarding the Trussell Trust, which is associated with the Church of England, verifies this connection. Although the Trussell Trust remains the trailblazer, countless similar food banks have since been founded, many with connections to a



variety of church groups and faith organisations (Church Urban Fund 2013). The role of churches in food bank volunteering has grown considerably in the past decade (Cooper and Dumpleton 2013). Indeed, the Trussell Trust has stated that food banks ‘provide Christians with a tool for undertaking the social action work that their faith calls them to do’ (Lambie 2013). This rhetoric is backed by action: Trussell Trust food banks are no longer intended to be a temporary failsafe, but are rather routine bases for those in need, with one food bank opening per week in the first half of 2011 (Lambie 2013: 16). David Cameron declared in 2014 that ‘Jesus invented the Big Society,’ and that his government was merely continuing his work (Withnall 2014). It is worthwhile exploring just how far food bank operation aligns with Cameron’s comparison.

It is little surprise that religious organisations took it upon themselves to put the coalition’s ‘Big Society’ into practice. The UK is one of the most multicultural communities in Europe, and religious communities other than Christians are involved with food banks. Islam is the second-largest religion in the nation (four-point-seven percent of the population to Christianity’s 59 percent), and the clear link between Islamic scripture and a call for

charity is evident (Office for National Statistics). One case study is the UK’s ‘only 24/7’ Muslim Salma independent Food Bank in Birmingham, which cites as inspiration ‘The Night of Power’ (or the Laylat Al Qadr): the 27th night of Ramadan, alongside the Prophet Mohammed’s teachings that ‘no Muslim may go to sleep satisfied if their neighbour goes hungry’ (Salma Food Bank 2021). The bank has helped thousands, delivering 150,000 food parcels and donating 920 tonnes of food as of 2021. Furthermore, religious denomination of the recipients is not considered with 95 percent of them are non-Muslim, and 80 percent of volunteers are of a different faith (Salma Food Bank 2021). However, despite the Salma food bank exemplifying religious inspiration for a non-discriminatory charity, the connection between faith and food relief is not always as seamless. Many Christian food banks, in contrast, have received complaints that they do not cater to certain religious dietary requirements (such as kosher or halal food). A study by the University of York considered 67 food aid providers in Bradford, a city with a 25 percent Muslim population, and found that numerous organisations have neglected religious food requirements which could lead to the inadvertent ‘exclusion of ethnic and religious



Food bank donations

*Image: michelmond | Adobe Stock*



groups' (Power 2017). Through these examples it is clear that religion's strong influence on food relief benefits many, but at a potential exclusionary cost.

### **Unholy Trinity: State, Enterprise and Charity**

In contrast, the secular charitable organisation FareShare collects almost-expired ingredients from supermarkets and delivers these to charity bases (NatCen 2014). Since its pilot in 2012, the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the devolved Scottish Government have championed FareShare as a remedy for food poverty. The UK Government invested £16 million in FareShare in 2020 to combat a "winter of hunger" (Grocer 2020), and the Scottish Government granted £200,000 to FareShare as recently as August 2021 (FareShare 2021). Funded largely by the government, supplied by private business, and operated by volunteers, FareShare delivered to 900 food banks in 2018 (Bartholomew 2020), and support for the scheme has extended far beyond the halls of Westminster. Colette Rogers of the Public Health Agency appraises FareShare as a 'successful food redistribution model' that increases employable skills for volunteers and gives more than it takes: for 'every £1 invested, £8 of social and economic return will be generated' (Rogers 2014). Capitalism and its focus on increasing profit is one of the causes of growing poverty (Lohnes 2019). Interviews with FareShare volunteers suggest that the organisation has taken advantage of capitalist tenets to drive charity. For example, the high level of competition between supermarket retail chains leads them to 'copy each other,' so once one chain partners with FareShare, others are sure to follow (Mumford 2019). FareShare's multifaceted operations are a decided step away from the individualist mindset that poverty is a result of personal decisions, and should, therefore, be remedied with individual charity (Lowrey 2020).

FareShare's attempts to unite different groups to tackle food poverty are highly relevant in the wake of COVID-19. This said, no one strategy of dealing

with an issue like food poverty is beyond criticism. A move away from government-led initiatives to tackle food poverty in favour of private enterprise and religious organisations could cause privatisation, marginalisation, and individualisation of poverty relief (Williams 2001, Lawson 2007). Privatisation is evident in the financial aid of supermarket chains, and some emergency food relief recipients have described the terminology of 'desperation' as alienating (Lister 2004). In an ethnographic study of food banks in an affluent suburb of Kent compared to a Welsh tourist town, anthropologist Pat Caplan (2015) describes the hours of paperwork required and the stringent requirements of eligibility vouchers that limit support for those who apply.

The increasingly symbiotic nature of food banks and local welfare apparatus is also a point of concern. Whilst the Trussell Trust's goal is that 'every town should have one,' groups such as the Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) instead envisions 'a country without the need for charitable food and in which good food is accessible to all' (IFAN 2021). IFAN was founded in 2016 and has grown to be the second-largest food bank agency in the UK with 400 locations (ibid). It is differentiated by not requiring government referrals to prove eligibility and their stance that food banks should not act as a structure of communities but should rather be tools to push for permanent change (Bartholomew 2020).

### **Conclusion**

While similar in their provision of emergency food relief, food banks run by Trussell Trust, FareShare, and IFAN all vary in practice and ideology. Trussell Trust lauds food banks as a vehicle not only for community support, but also to fulfil one's spiritual duty. FareShare has pursued collaboration with government and business, whilst IFAN has called upon the former to remind the public that although food banks are necessary, they are not the answer. Food banks serve the community, yet the different visions across groups

threaten to obscure the larger issue: a government failing to deliver the human right to food (Loopstra 2019). However, the community-driven mindset to tackle COVID-19 offers a unique opportunity for change. Rhetoric has changed, from Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher stating there is ‘no such thing as society’ to Cameron’s ‘Big Society.’ In real terms, however, poverty has increased, with three-point-two million children living on relatively low income by 2019/20 (UK Parliament 2021). This could suggest a certain apathy—if the British people are ‘in-doubt,’ they vote in such a way that ignores such statistics (Saatchi 2016). However, we know this not to be the case. For nearly two long years, the British people have joined together in a national effort against a pandemic to protect the NHS which serves us all, and to save the lives of countless others we will never meet. Although this article has explored different approaches to food banking, their volunteers and donations suggest nothing close to apathy. COVID-19 has gripped the attention and commanded collective action because, unlike hunger, it can kill anybody (Bhopal 2020). If COVID-19 has truly ushered in a new wave of community thinking within the UK, food banks could be the crux from which a renewed sense of community thinking emerges.

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# Cycles of Violence and Development in Caracas' *Barrio* Communities

**DARINA STOYANOVA** shows how ineffective development projects in Caracas affect socioeconomic inequality and violence among the most marginalised communities.

**S**ocial fragmentation, economic downturn, and urban violence characterise day-to-day life across Venezuela's largest cities. In Caracas, these issues are exacerbated within the improvised urban spaces known as *barrios*, the informal settlements created and occupied by society's most socioeconomically marginalised individuals. Several political regimes have promoted the development of the *barrio* communities through the provision of alternative housing as a solution to urban violence and poor living conditions. Despite these efforts, crime and homicide data continues to place Caracas as one of the most 'violent' cities in the world (UNODC 2013; CCSPJP 2019).

It is important to consider the real impact of these development projects from the perspective of the affected communities. Within this context, this article seeks to explain poor violence-reduction outcomes as the result of the ineffectiveness of the development projects in delivering the social change necessary to address socioeconomic marginalisation. As existing social structures are not challenged by the housing projects, marginalisation persists and the spatial practices of

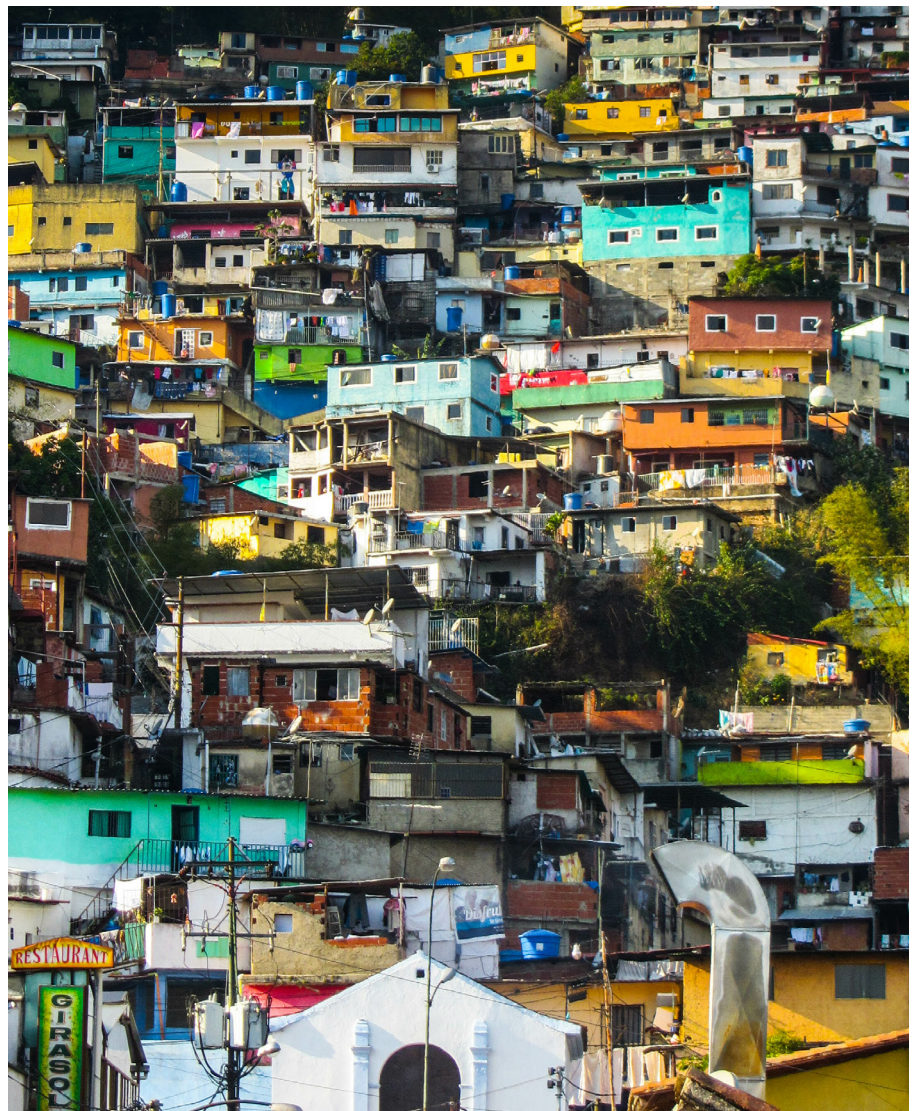


Image: Ekaterina McCloud / Adobe Stock

the informal communities are reproduced in their new settlements, perpetuating an endless cycle of violence and development. In order to accommodate social change within the formalised structures of the political economy, experts must first rethink development and violence in the context of the vernacular experiences at the grassroots.



### Inside ‘Violent’ Caracas

Homicide, armed robberies and burglaries, revenge attacks, confrontations between barrio gangs, and contract killings (*sicariatos*) are amongst the leading types of crime across Caracas (Tremaria 2016). Both victims and perpetrators of these crimes come predominantly from the impoverished and overpopulated marginal districts of the barrios, though other urban areas are also affected as a natural result of human mobility (Zubillaga 2013). The type of violence in Venezuela’s capital cannot be solely characterised as a cartel war, civil conflict, or gang struggle (Tremaria 2016; Leon 2020). Rather, it represents an amalgamation of criminal acts, threats, and other harmful behaviours whose main causal determinants are social inequality and economic discrimination (*ibid.*). Consequently, violence in Caracas and other Venezuelan cities can be situated under the umbrella of ‘urban violence.’

Urban violence goes beyond the physical, visible, and criminal acts of harm that occur in the city. In fact, the ‘urban’ does not refer to the place in which instances of violence arbitrarily occur, but rather to the process of neoliberal urbanisation that disproportionately affects some while benefiting others, thus producing the conditions of socioeconomic inequality in which violence manifests (Pavoni and Tulumello 2020). Urban violence should, therefore, be understood as encompassing the physical and psychological, visible and invisible, criminal and structural harms which arise as a consequence of social marginalisation and unequally distributed economic hardship (Luckham 2017). That said, residents of the barrios are not inherently marginal. Rather, they have been marginalised through historical encounters such as rural-to-urban migration, stigmatisation of the barrios as crime-dens and their inhabitants as criminals, and the securitised geographical segregation of the barrio inhabitants away from the central metropolitan areas (Irazábal et al. 2020). Urban violence in the barrios is

therefore not an innate characteristic of the informal community but a grievance that develops as a response to the conditions perpetuated by the chronic alienation of the barrio inhabitants from the formal community of the urban city. Indeed, to understand urban violence and the role of development in Caracas, as anywhere else, we must first consider the historical events and circumstances of marginalisation that have given it impetus.

With the discovery of large oil reserves in Venezuela in the early twentieth century, rapid migration from rural regions fuelled the dramatic expansion of urban areas, where newly arrived communities sought to settle. These migrants, however, did not have the financial means to afford formal homes, and instead created makeshift settlements in the cities’ peripheries, which came to be the barrios (Velasco 2015). In the 1970s, under Carlos Andrés Pérez’s first administration, the country accrued vast revenues from its oil industry, though these profits did not have the desired trickle-down effect of reaching the barrios or the working-class neighbourhoods, thus exacerbated existing socioeconomic inequality (Irazábal et al. 2020). After assuming presidency again in 1989, Pérez imposed sweeping neoliberal economic reforms under recommendations from the International Monetary Fund to the result of severe restrictions in public expenditures and reductions of price controls that disproportionately affected the impoverished countryside and the urban poor (Ellner 2010). The Caracazo protests emerged in February 1989 as a response to these changes, in the form of protests, riots, and mass lootings, which were violently suppressed by military troops, resulting in hundreds of deaths (*ibid.*). Though political unrest somewhat calmed during the subsequent presidency of Hugo Chávez, the heavily segregated socio-spatial composition of the big cities persists today (Irazábal et al. 2020).

In this context, development becomes a series of projects and practises aimed at reducing poverty and preventing violence. The international development



One of the *barrio* communities in Caracas, Venezuela

*Image: Giong63 | Adobe Stock*

community overwhelmingly presents violence and development as somewhat mutually exclusive, implying that one can counteract the other (Luckham 2017). Typically, homicide rates are expected to decrease as development improves, as represented by the negative correlation between homicides rates and Human Development Index values observed worldwide (UNDP 2013). As Tremaria (2016) points out, however, Venezuela is among the few exceptions to this trend. Despite undeniable improvements in the country's overall socio-economic development by virtue of accrued oil revenues, homicide rates have soared (Zubillaga 2013; Leon 2020). The theoretical puzzle of persistently high violence under improving socioeconomic conditions has therefore continued to guide research interest in Venezuela and its capital.

This article seeks to explain how development efforts have not been effective in delivering the social change needed to promote social inclusion and address the unequal social distribution of the benefits from the improved socioeconomic conditions of the nation (Tremaria 2016). The development initiative has, therefore, failed to take the necessary action

against the causal determinants of urban violence in Venezuelan society and has instead offered a type of surface-level remedy, a 'band-aid,' to an otherwise deep-rooted issue (*ibid.*). The following discussion explores these shortcomings with reference to some of the most notable housing projects.

### **Developing the *Barrio* Communities**

Under the dictatorship of General Marcos Pérez Jiménez (1952–1958), the state housing institute Banco Obrero was tasked with undertaking an intensive housing initiative to eradicate informal settlements in Venezuela (Foster 2021). The ensuing 2 de Diciembre housing complex of 37 superblocs was a radical effort to modernise Caracas. After a military coup overthrew Jiménez, squatters rushed to occupy the new superblocs and, without state support, gradually transformed the housing complex which was meant to signal the end of the *barrio* into a *barrio* itself (Velasco 2015). The development project thus resulted in the construction of buildings devoid of any greater socioeconomic context and facilitated a movement between *barrios*, not

social classes. In 2012, the renamed 23 de Enero superblocs experienced an annual homicide rate of 105 per 100,000 inhabitants, amongst the highest in the city (Leon 2020). With hindsight, it is clear that the Jiménez mission was little more than an attempt to modernise only the appearance of urban society, rather than to fundamentally transform its composition.

Development projects aimed at providing alternative housing saw better success under the presidency of Hugo Chávez (1999–2013). To the drum of overwhelming public support, the Chavista government adopted various social programmes, known as the Bolivarian Missions, to address issues concerning food, housing, medicine, and literacy. Within the area of housing, barrio inhabitants were offered new legal opportunities to occupy a housing unit under Misión Hábitat and its successor, the Gran Misión Vivienda Venezuela (GMVV). The latter's objective was to address the issue of the national housing deficit by building 300,000 homes on average per year from 2011 to 2019, or the exceptionally ambitious figure of over 1,000 homes per working day (Passarello Luna 2019). Since the passing of Chávez in 2013, President Nicolás Maduro has taken charge of the GMVV and other projects. As of 2019, the Maduro government claims to have successfully built more than three million housing units, though the accuracy of these figures has been called into question, given that many of the buildings are left unfinished and the demand for public housing continues to exceed supply (Passarello Luna 2019; Irazábal et al. 2020).

Despite the large-scale efforts devoted by the government, these projects have failed to solve the problem of urban violence. For instance, the socialist project Ciudad Caribia, Chávez' idealised planned community located to the west of Caracas, where some barrio inhabitants have been relocated, has in recent years been placed under surveillance for rising criminal activity (Venezuela Investigative Unit 2016). Furthermore, these communities remain excluded from the rest of society, both in terms

of geography, since they are usually relocated elsewhere in Caracas' periphery, and in terms of their social position relative to other urban inhabitants (Irazábal et al. 2020). In some instances, their socioeconomic situations may even have worsened, as they have been relocated far from the city jobs and are susceptible to additional risks such as road cave-ins and forced reliance on buses, only half of which are operational (Passarello Luna 2019). Thus, as these communities are impeded from accessing other areas, hospitals, or their city jobs, their social struggles to participate in society continue without much improvement, despite better housing conditions. Moreover, Irazábal et al. (2020) report that the former barrio inhabitants continue to suffer from stigmatisation and discrimination, as the housing projects have not improved their social standing and economic ability to afford the same opportunities as other urban inhabitants. Consequently, even the development projects under the Chavista vision have failed to resolve issues of social exclusion and marginalisation, which continue to act as catalysts for urban violence.

Central to understanding why an element of social change is necessary for the success of such development projects is the concept of spatial practises, namely the ways through which a community deciphers and alters its space as it masters and appropriates it (Lefebvre 1991). As the informal communities occupy the new housing spaces, they seek to include the vernacular spatial and technical experience obtained through building and maintaining the barrios, transposing it onto their new homes and thus reproducing the spatial practises already known to them. These practices include challenging the rigid physicality of the buildings by repurposing physical spaces to allow for greater functionality, securing windows and doors to protect from burglary, as well as other technical conventions of barrio construction and collective social traditions (Rohde 2017; Irazábal et al. 2020). As a result, new housing complexes in fact become physical vessels that facilitate the sustenance



of existing social structures (ibid.). Therefore, without delivering social change to improve social inclusion and address the informal communities' marginalisation, the reproduction of existing spatial practices will continue to perpetuate urban violence. To accommodate such change, future governments and development experts must recognise the importance of re-evaluating their assumptions about development and violence against the vernacular experiences of the communities they aim to aid.

### **Violence and Development at the Grassroots**

A grassroots approach to development emphasises the importance of local knowledge as opposed to representational knowledge, as images portrayed by professionals are 'universal, reductionist, standardised and stable,' but the realities of marginalised people are local, complex, diverse and dynamic' (Chambers 1995, 173). Placing development in the sphere of the vernacular allows us to extend the development discourse from the expert to the local individual, thus transforming an exclusionary discourse within a homogenous group into a dialogue between groups with different knowledge and lived experiences. By doing so, we allow for a diverse discourse that can better understand the challenges faced at the local level and generate alternative solutions which are tailored to address specific needs, as opposed to relying on broad assumptions as to what these might be. As in the case of development, local knowledge is also at the core of understanding urban violence. Placing violence reduction in the vernacular emphasises that informal communities are not just social categories but groups that perceive, cope with and respond to violence in ways that may differ from external assumptions (Luckham 2017). The focus of any development project aimed at violence reduction should therefore rest on understanding how these groups perceive violence, how they navigate its threats, and how they envision their own security (ibid.).

Once actively pursued, the inclusion of grassroots knowledge and experiences in the planning of development projects can then connect local realities to the makings of power, society, politics, and economics—the interactions of which occur far beyond the local level. There cannot be any significant transformation of the informal communities without social changes that take into account their perspective, thus allowing their voices to be heard and their social and economic hardship to be eased in the long run. Otherwise, the size of the impoverished and overpopulated barrio-like spaces will continue to grow, as will the number of people who have been pushed to the margins of society. Until action is taken to address the structures that produce inequality and marginalisation, there is no end in sight for the cycle of violence and development.

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# The New Doctrines of Deterrence: Power Shifts in the Multi-Polar Nuclear Order

*KRISZTINA KOCSIS details the global dynamics of nuclear weaponry in the post-Cold War era.*

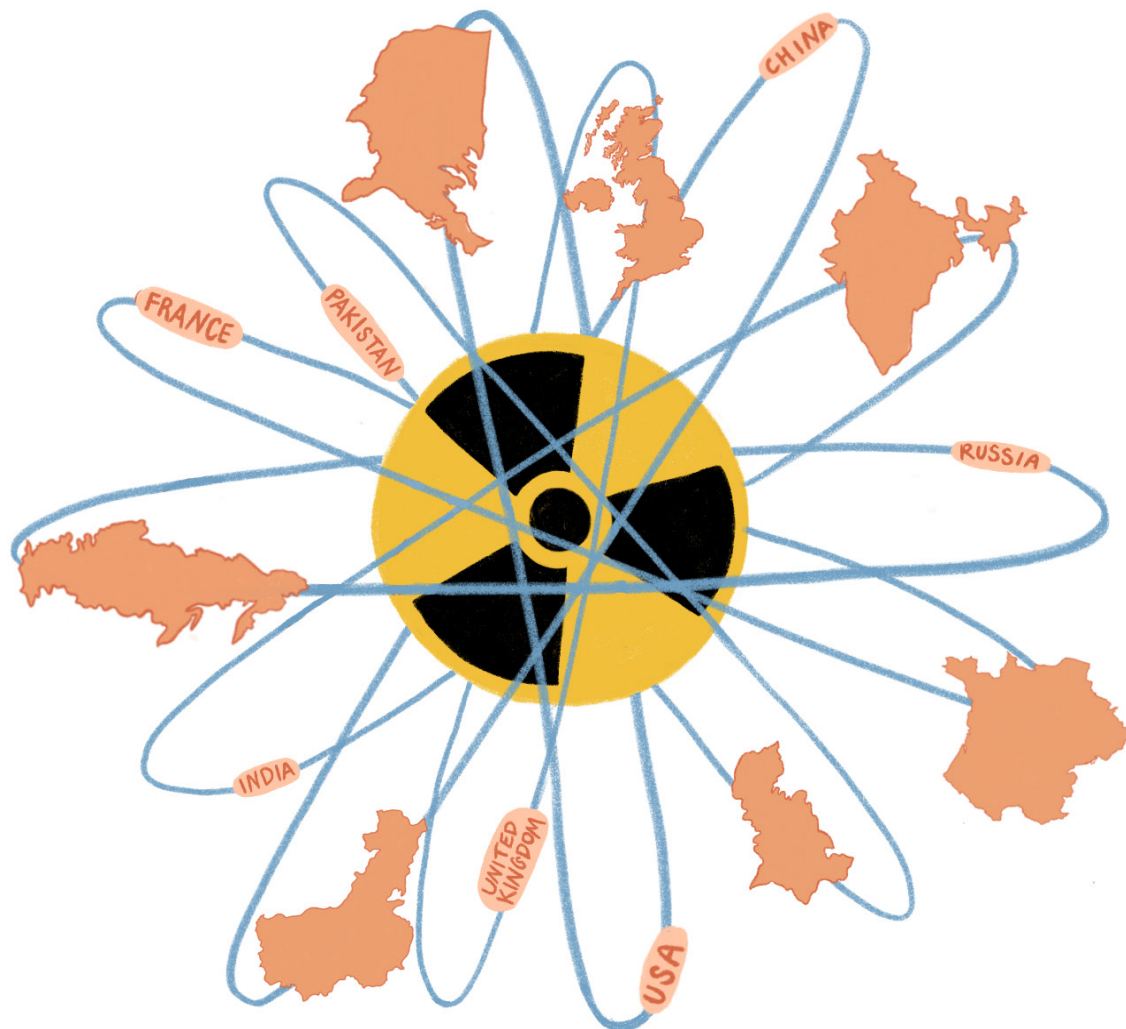
The Cold War bipolarity between the United States and the Soviet Union was underscored by the possession of nuclear weapons which assured the equal capability of both sides to annihilate their adversary. This delicate balance was referred to as ‘the doctrine of deterrence,’ ‘the politics of fear,’ and especially ‘mutually assured destruction’ (MAD); safety became a ‘sturdy child of terror’ (Churchill 1955). The nuclear order of the Cold War divided the world into two ‘magnetic fields,’ which in their gravitation established alliances, or ‘nuclear umbrellas’ (Freedman 2019). The power dynamic rested on a seemingly straightforward symmetry. If one superpower were to launch a missile, the other would retaliate. However, with the dissolution of the straightforward bipolarity of the Cold War and the reorganisation of alliance systems, the doctrine of deterrence no longer held. A multitude of states either acquired nuclear weapons or were in the process of developing them. As a result, the doctrine of non-proliferation was developed, which aimed to neutralise a global order inseparably underscored by the presence of weapons of mass destruction (Miller 2019). Still, the ‘non-proliferation regime’ and the institutional establishments around it resulted in a system that solidified the status quo and maintained the hierarchy between the already established ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ (Ruzicka 2018). The non-

proliferation system fails to neutralise the nuclear arena; nuclear weapons continue to underscore the global order. Consequently, the doctrine of deterrence still exists today in the third nuclear era. However, the doctrine has to be redefined: safety is still a ‘sturdy child of terror,’ but the terror of today exists in a complex and tangled web of international relations that is more fragile, more delicate, and ever more unpredictable.

The Cold War’s clear bipolar order disintegrated, which resulted in an even starker imbalance between the two side’s alliances through the unequal development of technological and military capabilities and the diverging number of contemporary allies (Dodds 2013). At the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the two ‘magnetic fields’ changed their gravitational power. The post-Soviet member states gravitated towards the United States and its alliance, while Russia was left without a significant alliance base. Furthermore, the United States defined itself as the upholder of the global order, which created an image as the ‘patron-state’ of not only its growing European alliance but also the multitude of countries aiming to integrate into the institutionalised and alliance-bound international order (Dodds 2013).

With the end of the Cold War’s bipolar nuclear order and the beginning of the proliferation process, the former superpowers and the newly founded nuclear-weapon states (NWS) articulated a new





*Illustration by Anastassia Kolchanov*

narrative, namely that nuclear weapons and their further proliferation were inherently destabilising and that their elimination was desirable (Ruzicka 2018). This reasoning was strengthened by the newer NWS, who were either outside of traditional alliance blocks or loosely tied to them. Institutions were constructed around these concepts. However, these efforts carried an underlying tone of preserving the structural power of the status quo by the already established NWS, due to the knowledge that any further proliferation would disrupt the unique global position they enjoyed. Rising power hierarchies were implemented in the institutional structures of global security and strategic positionality, namely the United Nations Security Council, whose five permanent members (the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom and France) are all nuclear powers and dictated the rules of the institutional establishments of the ‘nuclear

regime’ (Lodgaard 2011).

The first regulating body, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), was established in 1957. It was designed primarily for the US and the USSR to oversee the civilian use of nuclear energy by smaller states. However, its regulatory efforts can be easily evaded. The dual-use problem entails that the states which use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes can proceed with the development of nuclear technology for military purposes virtually unnoticed (Młynarski 2017). These issues undermine the IAEA’s ability to effectively prevent proliferation. Still, the restriction of states’ access to nuclear energy for peaceful means was a structural attack on their economic development. Consequently, the IAEA’s work was to monitor the international distribution of nuclear energy and its use (Młynarski 2017).

This surveillance was extended by the signing

of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968. This treaty is considered to be the most comprehensive legal establishment of the ‘non-proliferation regime,’ established around three main concepts: disarmament of current NWS, non-proliferation, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy (Lodgaard 2011). Due to their structural inequality, the compliance of states is assured on many levels. Weaker states are largely deprived of nuclear energy through NPT-connected trade deals which sets back their economic power, especially for developing countries, but compliance is tied to IAEA monitoring, the breaching of which results in sanctions (Dalton et al. 2013). In the case of NWS, these regulations do not hold, and their pledge for disarmament has not been legally complied with. It is a vaguely promised future endeavour; nevertheless, after an era of significant reduction of nuclear arsenals, currently the modernisation and increasing the number of nuclear weapons is undertaken by the United States, Russia, China and non-Security Council states as well, and non-nuclear states possess little power to enforce the reduction of supplies (Müller 2017).

In the late days of the Cold War, superpower-exercised pressure was crucial in the regime’s formation. However, the bipolarity of the Cold War left room for certain states to manoeuvre through the selective membership of nuclear non-proliferation treaties. France and China, for example, were signatories of the IAEA but not of the NPT, maintaining the possibility for the development of weapons. This was also true for states on the ‘periphery’ of the Cold War order who received less overt supervision from the superpowers but still had the potential to produce nuclear weapons, such as India, Pakistan, South Africa, Brazil, and Argentina (Ruzicka 2018). Yet, the shift of power away from Russia and towards the US allowed American international alliance networks to exercise unprecedented influence on emerging nuclear states. As a result, only four states had the potential to be economically and militarily strong enough to ‘allow

themselves’ to be established nuclear powers after the 1990s: India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea. For other states, the materially inferior status seemed more beneficial than taking the risk of nuclear production (Ruzicka 2018).

Despite the well-established global hierarchy of nuclear ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots,’ underlying issues of extended deterrence are still present (Legvold 2019). The US and Russia, after a period of seemingly peaceful and progressive arms negotiations, are employing increasingly hostile rhetoric and are launching modernisation campaigns (Moniz and Nunn 2019). The United States is ultimately superior in terms of conventional weaponry, which historically relegated nuclear weapons to a lower priority. In contrast, due to Russia’s conventional military inferiority during the Cold War, more emphasis was placed on developing nuclear arsenals; this dynamic triggers US preparation in the currently hostile security relationship (Legvold 2019).

China, as an emerging global superpower, presents a fascinating contrast to the aforementioned relationships. The stark imbalance characterising the US-China relationship in the Cold War is now less distinct economically. Even if their nuclear capabilities are still radically asymmetrical, the nuclear component is becoming more dominant in the relationship with China’s rapid modernisation efforts. Considering India and Pakistan, their nuclear capabilities have developed as a result of their bilateral regional disputes and asymmetric conventional arms race, and this relationship has barely changed. However, with China and India becoming nuclear powers, regional border disputes are gaining new dimensions, and constructions are a high-risk security environment around the Indian Ocean (Legvold 2019). Israel exercises strict nuclear non-proliferation pressures in the Middle East. North Korea, the least transparent and predictable nuclear power, generates constant preparedness from the United States and makes the Korean Peninsula another high-risk security hotspot (Ruzicka 2018).

These relations are further complicated by

the complexity of adversarial relations. China, India and the United States identify three-way competition which gives a new push to their arms race. Pakistan and Russia remain largely focused on single adversaries, but in the case of Russia, now the opponent's nuclear alliance further polarises the already profound imbalance (Legvold 2019). Sir Lawrence Freedman (2019, 74) argues that in the early stages of the Cold War, 'political order was a possible casualty of nuclear disorder; now it is more likely that the nuclear order can be put at risk as a result of political disorder.' The role of nuclear weapons and their deterrent function has changed since their first invention. They are no longer primarily symbolic tools tied to a notion of balance between two powers and conditional threats between them. Due to their proliferation and the consequent power asymmetry between states owning them, their deterrent effect is defined by the actual potential of their use—a possibility some states emphasise and instrumentalise more than others based on their perceived relational strength or weakness. Even though nuclear weapons today are not in the spotlight of the international system as they used to be at the height of the Cold War, they continue to influence state security narratives. While some states, such as Russia, contribute more significant weight to its nuclear capacities, the United States and its alliance keeps nuclear weaponry less to the centre of everyday political discourse. However, the United States needs to keep its nuclear power within this discourse, as even though it has little interest in nuclear escalation due to its conventional strength, its alliance system maintains reliance on its capacities. Consequently, when signs of conflict escalation are present today, nuclear weapons are more visible and receive heightened importance in state security narratives, even though the potential for an actual nuclear conflict remains negligible. These narratives, however, are indicative of how they became the ultimate symbols of military might and capability to induce terror, something still resembling their initial Cold War roles (Freedman

2019).

The future of the nuclear order is still unknown. Much depends on the new US administration and the alliances or disputes it is willing to develop with its allies and adversaries equally: whether the European network will harmonise its nuclear efforts with those of the US to construct an arms development to complement it, not to replace it in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (Hagel et al. 2021). In the meantime, new countries are articulating interest in developing nuclear weapons—many of whom are US allies. The future of nuclear politics is to be the result of diplomatic and economic relations first and foremost, but the current state of nuclear deterrence rests on a highly sensitive global security environment with regional disputes and fragile stalemates. However, today's international political order is still underpinned by nuclear weapons which are to different extents instrumentalised by states in their security narratives and discourses, creating a new nuclear order which is still in flux and is far from the straightforwardly defined contours of the Cold War. The future of deterrence is unknown, and there are few reasons for optimism.

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# Mutual Aid During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond

**CLAIRE PANELLA** evaluates instances of mutual aid networks that arose during the COVID-19 pandemic and their long-term efficacy.

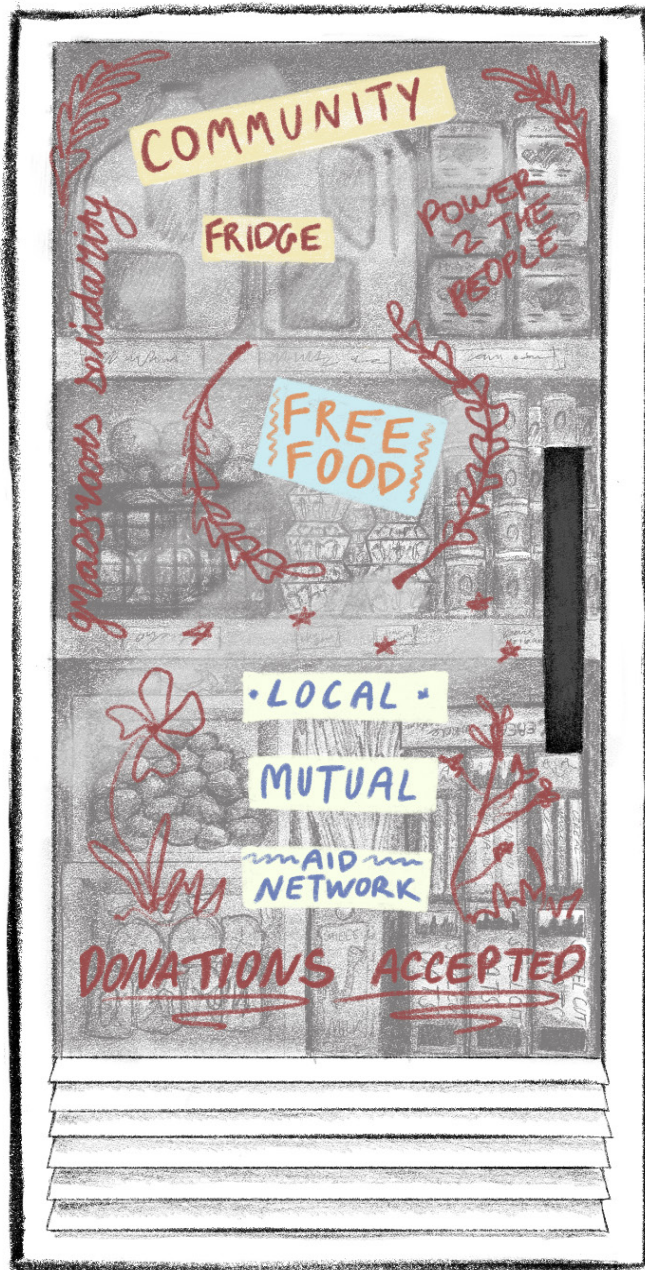


Illustration: Anastassia Kolchanov

Governmental responses to COVID-19 have failed to fully address the impact of the pandemic, especially with regard to already-marginalised populations. Instead, gaps in state-funded welfare programs have been filled by non-profit organisations, and small, community based mutual aid networks. These organisations have provided everything from food to assistance with everyday tasks, running errands for those shielding, and providing medical care and information. The first half of this paper will discuss the successes of mutual aid groups in compensating for the shortcomings of state welfare systems, focusing on the examples of the UK, the US, and Brazil. The second half will outline the dangers of becoming overly reliant on these types of community support, concluding that while mutual aid as a decentralised first response can be a useful, or even crucial, stopgap in times of crisis, it is not a long-term alternative to states creating and maintaining universally accessible centralised safety-nets.

## Mutual Aid in the Early Stages of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on individuals and communities across the globe over the past two years, but the degree to which different groups have been affected varies greatly. Poverty proved to be an additional

risk factor for severe illness and death from COVID-19, especially where public healthcare and other social safety nets were lacking (Stiglitz 2020). Additionally, in some already-struggling areas, COVID-19 was just one of many challenges, and not always the most pressing when compared to more immediately existential threats, such as insecure access to food and housing (Carstensen, Mudhar, and Munksgaard 2021, 17).

In response to this crisis, there has been an eruption of spontaneous, community-led responses to mitigate the economic and social impacts of steps taken to limit the spread of COVID-19 and protect those most vulnerable from exposure to the virus (Carstensen, Mudhar, and Munksgaard 2021, 7). These local, horizontally-organised groups constitute a form of mutual aid. Mutual aid is the structure of community self-help where people join together to meet vital needs without relying on official bodies or formal processes (Power and Benton 2021). It is regularly observed wherever disaster strikes as a spontaneous first response to help others in the community (Matthewman and Uekusa 2021, 967). Furthermore, mutual aid is typically more agile than governments and large-scale non-profit responses to crises, and thus can be seen as crucial in the early stages of a disaster or crisis (Carstensen, Mudhar, and Munksgaard 2021, 8).

During the early stages of pandemic-related lockdowns in 2020, the UK became the site of one of the world's largest mutual aid networks, including more than 4000 individual groups (Shabi 2021). These groups offered different services according to community needs. Some of the most common services offered were food delivery, grocery shopping, and transportation to medical appointments for the elderly and those at high risk (Power and Benton 2021). Individuals became organisers or participants in these groups in huge numbers, using digital platforms like Facebook and Slack to coordinate assistance (Howard and Rebecca 2020, 167). In many cases, these mutual aid groups

sprang up in response to COVID-19 related concerns where there had been no previous organisations and were credited with creating a newfound sense of community in these neighbourhoods (Howard and Rebecca 2020, 167). In addition to the material aid provided, many volunteers involved in these groups reported an increased sense of wellbeing and purpose through aiding their communities, which was important in a time of increased social isolation (Power and Benton 2021).

In the US, the federal government failed to provide an adequate early response to the pandemic. There were issues with distribution of crucial supplies like personal protective equipment and accurate tests, a lack of coordination and coherence in a response plan, as well as dismissals of danger and misinformation from the highest levels of government (Jun and Lance 2020, 362). There is a long history of mutual aid in the US, particularly among marginalised communities. The Black Panthers breakfast program is a notable historical example of mutual aid, and more recently Black Lives Matter (BLM) organisers have started mutual aid projects (Lowrey 2021). Washington DC's BLM mutual aid network adapted itself to COVID-19 by expanding to cover the entire city, and became the template for many other mutual aid projects across the country (Jun and Lance 2020, 363). This group has met diverse community needs, from food to transport to providing laptops for schoolchildren who are learning remotely, and sanitation supplies to people experiencing homelessness (Jun and Lance 2020, 364). Other mutual aid groups across the country have adapted to serve the unique needs of indigenous communities, undocumented immigrants, and the incarcerated; these groups were marginalised by the state prior to the pandemic and thus suffered outsized consequences (Bergman et al. 2020, 199).

Brazil also suffered from fragmented and scientifically unsound information being disseminated from the highest levels of government, as well as other structural challenges. Brazil has



one of the most unequal wealth distributions in the world, and many of its poorest citizens depend on unreliable, low-paying, informal work which disappeared during the pandemic (Zettler and Rebecca 2020, 249). These people often reside in Brazil's many favelas (densely populated urban areas of extreme poverty) facing poor sanitation, a lack of food security, and lack of access to health information - all of which compounded the impact of the pandemic (Phillips 2020). Many health directives, such as staying at home, isolating alone in a room, or washing hands with soap and running water were simply not applicable to those living in these conditions (Zettler and Rebecca 2020, 250). Even when the government offered a payment of approximately \$115 per month and froze electricity bills for the poor, many were not able to access these resources due to a lack of documents or bank accounts (Phillips 2020). Instead, the established mutual aid networks operating within the favelas provided necessary aid (Phillips 2020). The aid activities of these groups included distributing food, soap, and basic supplies, as well as education on disease prevention through diverse media, like graffiti and rap music, in an effort to reach residents without access to official channels of information (Zettler and Rebecca 2020, 253).

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*“These cases highlight the benefits of mutual aid in times of crisis. Such organisations are able to respond quicker than governments or larger aid organisations (Carstensen, Mudhar, and Munksgaard 2021, 18).”*

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These cases highlight the benefits of mutual aid in times of crisis. Such organisations are able to respond quicker than governments or larger aid organisations (Carstensen, Mudhar, and Munksgaard 2021, 18). Those who participated as volunteers also felt the benefits of community, solidarity and a sense of purpose (Power and Benton 2021). This was an important lifeline to many who lost a sense

of structure as measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 forced them to stop normal activities.

In interviews with four people involved in UK mutual aid efforts, all described an increased sense of wellbeing and a restored faith in people as caring and community-centred (Howard and Rebecca 2020, 172). Those interviewed all expressed hope that some of the transformations due to the pandemic would be permanent, and that their communities would remain connected and dedicated to performing everyday acts of mutual service (Howard and Rebecca 2020, 172). This hope for a future that is better than a return to ‘normal’ demonstrates the lasting impacts of mutual aid on communities. There is some evidence that mutual aid groups in the UK will continue post-pandemic. While there was a drop in group membership as the country exited lockdown, many groups shifted to other focuses, like addressing food insecurity or poverty, or helping members of the community experiencing homelessness (Power and Benton 2021).

### **Limitations of Mutual Aid in the Long Term**

While mutual aid can be an effective first line of response in times of crisis, it is important to recognise that these initiatives arise because other assistance is unavailable (Matthewman and Uekusa 2021, 969). The emergence of mutual aid to meet basic needs implies the absence of sufficient state provisions. The challenge of transitioning from crisis specific networks to permanent sources of support is weighing on many mutual aid networks in the US and the UK. In the UK, mutual aid groups are increasingly relied upon to provide assistance with complex issues like housing debt and mental illness due to insufficient resources in public services, despite volunteers' lack of training or capabilities to deal with these issues (Power and Benton 2021). In the US, mutual aid groups are struggling to face challenges they were not formed to address, taking on the logistical and financial challenges required to provide stable and reliable aid to those who need it

on a regular basis, and not just as a stopgap (Freytas-Tamura 2021). Brazil's favelas are an example of communities that have learned that little—if any—state support is available, and thus mutual aid forms the main social safety net.

This pressure on mutual aid groups to provide ongoing support in areas that are typically the responsibility of the state can be seen as an abdication of state responsibility for some of the most vulnerable populations. Research has found that, in many cases, mutual aid is centred on sharing and redistributing resources to those who need them most but not on developing sustainable, alternate or supplementary income sources (Carstensen, Mudhar, and Munksgaard 2021, 19). Furthermore, not all communities can support the formation of a mutual aid network. While for some it is a viable crisis solution, historically disadvantaged areas can often lack the social infrastructure for mutual aid and thus fare worse when crises do occur (Matthewman and Uekusa 2021, 977). This is compounded by the fact that socio-economic status, race, and other sources of social capital are important for determining which communities can access additional resources in partnership with mutual aid efforts (Matthewman and Uekusa 2021, 975).

Relying on communities that are already underserved to redistribute their limited resources among themselves should not be seen as a viable, permanent alternative to long-term larger redistribution of resources through major state welfare programs. In a system where entire communities are disadvantaged based on class, race, or other marginalised identities and unable to reach an acceptable standard of living, mutual aid can be a solution for keeping more people afloat. However, it fails to address the root of the problem: societies with deep wealth divides and unequal access to resources. Modern neoliberal welfare states often focus on full employment and fiscal balance, limiting efforts aimed at equality and linking benefits to employment, or the search for it (Myles and Quadagno 2002, 45). In times when employment is unsafe or unavailable for many, this

strategy shows its weaknesses. Welfare aimed at those of working age is popular, suggesting political viability for expansion rather than contraction of the welfare state (Curtice 2020, 104). As the post-industrial economy evolves and societies face new, globally scaled problems, new strategies and paradigms must emerge to serve the changing needs of people within these welfare states. Redistributive welfare policies remain crucial to address the problems caused by society-wide inequality, by providing opportunities and resources to help compensate for historical disadvantages.

Finding a balance between encouraging these organisations and becoming too reliant on them can be difficult. Many people realised during the pandemic that the status quo social 'safety net' left too many uncared for in times of crisis and are now hoping for permanent social change (Howard and Rebecca 2020, 168). Mutual aid groups can be a source of tangible human security, intangible social infrastructure and community, and a strong first response in times of crisis and should thus be encouraged as a way to build resilience (Jun and Lance 2020, 374; Matthewman and Uekusa 2021, 979). However, the link between the presence of strong mutual aid networks and the absence of appropriate levels of government services should be interrogated and gaps in the formal social safety net should be addressed.

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# Montreal to Glasgow – the Role of the International Community for the Past 30 Years of Climate Justice

*ALEX LEMERY connects COP26 to past climate talks and the role of the international community in solving the climate crisis.*

With the pressure of irreparable climate damage ever-growing (IPCC 2021), international efforts to continue on the current trajectory of emissions reduction are tied to a tight timeframe. Prospects of ‘climate crisis’ are predicated upon the ‘all but inevitable’ tipping point of global temperature exceeding 2°C (above pre-industrial levels) ‘beyond which dramatic, albeit uncertain, effects on food production, water resources, health, the environment and human settlement are likely’ (Kallis 2018, 81). By firstly examining pre-2000 international conferences, particularly how the failure of the Kyoto Protocol created a deadlock for the international community to meaningfully further climate justice (Durand 2012; Rosen 2015), this article considers how the political changes at the turn of the millennium instigated a new wave of climate talks, with specific emphasis on the lessons of the Paris Agreement. From Montreal to Glasgow, international cooperation in combating climate change is closely linked to distinguishing between high- and low-emitting nations. As such, given the centrality of a few high-emitting countries, chiefly the United States (US) and China, climate talks depend on a delicate balance between global goals, the preservation of national interests, and trust.

## *Pre-2000*

The Montreal Protocol, universally ratified on 16 September 1987, brought the international

community together to confront the threat of the rapidly deteriorating ozone layer (Velders et al. 2007). This problem, discovered in 1974 by Molina and Rowland (2004), was primarily attributed to the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) as propellants and coolants. In a case of great international cooperation, only fourteen years elapsed between the scientific discovery of CFCs’ adverse effects and an international agreement being signed for their phase-out (Rowland 1989).

The success of the Montreal Protocol was due to its flexibility, the ready availability of a technological solution, the problem’s high profile, and its delineation between low- and high-emitting nations. Moreover, the 1985 Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer established a common understanding of the issue of ozone depletion, facilitating Montreal’s success. It established the precedent of ‘States negotiat[ing] a framework convention’ before ratifying international protocols (Weiss 2009, 1). Technologically, alternatives to CFCs (hydrochlorofluorocarbons, HCFCs) were inexpensive to synthesise and endorsed by the US chemical production industry (Beron, Murdoch, and Vijverberg 2003). The economic rationale was apparent: invest in HCFC production, and eschew the costs of continued CFC use.

All CFC-emitting nations were divided into ‘high-emitters’ and ‘low-emitters’, with a differentiated plan of phase-out allocated to each group. High-emitters adhered to a strict timeline to phase out their CFC use, while low-emitters



*Illustration: Anastassia Kolchanov*

could delay their phase out by up to ten years. Moreover, high-emitters established the Multilateral Fund, ‘allow[ing] for universal participation in the agreement and facilitated the process of moving away from ozone-depleting substances in developing countries’ (DeSombre 2000, 70). It was crucial that all nations ratified this deal, otherwise, CFC production could be relocated to unprohibited countries, undermining the efficacy of the solution. While the Protocol’s success could be attributed to the convenience of a readily available alternative rather than a shift in global mindset, the strategy worked.

Following Montreal, nearing the end of a century of international conflicts and a Cold War, the imperative for worldwide cooperation in facing the climate threat provided the impetus for the meeting of 172 countries in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was formed in 1988 as global warming ascended the list of international priorities (Bolin 2007; Keeble 1988). Following Vienna’s precedent, the international community met to establish a framework convention with the intention of following with a protocol of global action (Weiss 2009). For the degenerating ozone, this was Vienna.

For global warming, it was Rio de Janeiro.

The Rio Earth Summit opened a host of legally binding agreements for signature, referred to as the Rio Convention. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) established an annual Conference of the Parties (COP) to face the climate threat (Freestone 1994). Adopting a macro-historical perspective, the international community's modus operandi for global cooperation was hitherto characterised by iterative and insular problem-solution interactions, rather than a holistic and established global approach. Plans were proposed at Rio; precedents were set. This international cooperation demonstrates how, despite a history of climate injustice, we were just beginning to look at its solutions (Little 1995). Thus, the Summit was criticised for failing to affect positive change on long-standing issues central to climate justice, such as poverty and pollution (Palmer 1992). Rio also failed to offer solutions with sufficient common ground to onboard high-emitting nations: William K. Reilly, the Administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at the time, admitted that international community demands and US imperatives were difficult to negotiate. This lack of unity foreshadowed Kyoto's greater disappointment to come (Osborn and Bigg 2013).

The Kyoto Protocol, which sought to ensure countries' commitment to self-imposed but internationally negotiated and legally binding emission caps (UNFCCC 1997), failed because of its rigidity, its rejection by the US on account of not placing obligations on low-emitting nations, and, specifically, for failing to place emission reduction obligations on China. The framework was stringent, regulatory, and top-down, leaving nations with little autonomy. In an attempt to ameliorate the stringency of the Protocol, Article 12 incorporated market mechanisms, such as cap-and-trade carbon pricing, as part of permissible strategies to achieve national emission goals. These offered a degree of discretion for how the strict targets of the Protocol could be met (Copeland and Taylor 2005). Notably, the

novel Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) was proposed to allow high-emitting (Annex 1) nations to offset their emission reductions by investing in low-emitting (non-Annex 1) nations' sustainability projects (Yadav 2021). This would effectively raise the cap of permissible emissions in Annex 1 nations while simultaneously providing the capital that non-Annex 1 nations lacked to develop sustainably without constraining their economies (Wilcoxon and McKibbin 1999).

Nonetheless, it failed to win back the eroded faith of the US on the grounds of insufficient obligations for non-Annex 1 nations (O'Neill and Oppenheimer 2002). While the Kyoto Protocol followed Montreal's precedent of differentiating countries by their emission contributions, Kyoto gave low-emitters zero obligations, rather than delayed obligations as in Montreal. The noncommitment of non-Annex 1 nations, which afforded countries like China no legal obligations, stalled US support for the Protocol and climate action (Durand 2012). The US and other 'detractors of the protocol [...] have cited their dissatisfaction at seeing China [...] able to abide by the same emission standards as Burkina Faso or Haiti' (Durand 2012, 9). Ultimately, Congress passed the Byrd-Hagel Resolution by an overwhelming majority, prohibiting US participation if the Protocol harmed its economy or failed to include non-Annex 1 obligations—an admonition that went unheeded, since the US did not sign the Kyoto Protocol (Lisowski 2002). Subsequently, the simple non-participation of the US debilitated the international community's efforts to address climate injustice for the next decade.

### *Post-2000*

The failure of Kyoto concluded the twentieth century with little hope for climate justice. The economic growth of developing countries had accelerated rapidly, with China eclipsing the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of the US in 2007 to become the world's highest emitting country (Li et al. 2012; Nejat



et al. 2015; Ma et al. 2019). The efficacy of the entire international community was shackled to the decisions of key high-emitting nations. Of the two biggest greenhouse gas emitters, one did not sign the Protocol and the other had zero obligations as a non-Annex 1 country. The turn of the millennium brought with it new pressures and a President promising a new direction for the US (Brewer 2012). Bailey (2019, 852) underscores that hope for climate justice was foundational to Barack Obama's successful inauguration: 'he had provided details of what he wanted to do, Democrats controlled Congress and opinion polls revealed high levels of public knowledge and concern about the problem at the time.' Anticipation was high in the lead up to 2009 for COP15 in Copenhagen.

Unfortunately, the agreements reached during COP15 in Copenhagen proved to be a lesson in the trade-off between effectiveness and participation. While more nations ratified the Copenhagen Accord than the Kyoto Protocol, it received widespread criticism for being unambitious and insubstantial (Vaughan and Adam 2009; The Financial Times 2009; The BBC 2009). The final document was only two and a half pages of non-legally binding statements demonstrating an understanding of the scientific consensus that climate change is a legitimate, nuanced threat, for which non-Annex 1 countries will require the support of Annex 1 countries (UNFCCC 2009). However, there were incremental victories claimed at Copenhagen for climate justice. Firstly, it established the crucial scientific threshold that 'the increase in global temperature should be below 2 degrees Celsius' in official writing (UNFCCC 2009, 1). Secondly, as the low responsibility engendered widespread ratification, it was an Accord to which both the US and China could sign. Thirdly, Copenhagen set the precedent for how climate targets are established to this day: targets are domestically determined in a voluntary manner, departing from Kyoto's externally negotiated method.

Following Copenhagen, the next COP of

significance convened in Paris in 2015. Before COP21, in 2014, Obama conducted early climate negotiations with Xi Jinping to 'disentangle the climate talks from their own geopolitical tensions' ahead of time (Prys-Hansen and Klenke 2021, 9). This resulted in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs): non-legally binding but public self-imposed targets. Both China and the US announced commitments to new, stronger emission goals, hoping that the social pressure of these public agreements would enforce their upkeep and the ambition demonstrated by the two leading emitters would engender ambition at Paris. With almost 200 NDCs proclaimed by countries globally by the time COP21 convened (Zhongming et al. 2021), these hopes seemed increasingly founded. While the Copenhagen Accord was signed by 80% of globally emitting nations, NDCs were proposed by 97% (Pricing Nature 2021), with many Contributions of greater ambition than the Accord.

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*“There are no strict international penalties for climate injustice (a model that failed with Kyoto), and the wide adoption of the NDCs demonstrates the virality of the US and China's enthusiasm and ambition.”*

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The US withdrew from the Paris Agreement in 2020 under the Trump administration. Biden re-entered in 2021. Crucially, the international community's engagement with climate action is predicated upon trust. There are no strict international penalties for climate injustice (a model that failed with Kyoto), and the wide adoption of the NDCs demonstrates the virality of the US and China's enthusiasm and ambition. The 'failure among industrialised states to uphold many previous commitments,' Prys-Hansen and Klenke (2021, 3) argue, 'has led to a significant lack of trust in the negotiations.' The indecisiveness of the US to keep its promises under the Paris Agreement sent a clear message to the rest of the international community:

the commitments of the US are valid until its next Presidential election.

Paris provided much of the blueprint for Glasgow's COP26 intransigence. Another non-legally binding agreement, the Glasgow Climate Pact, was produced with pledges continuing the trend of cutting CO2 emissions. While the pledges, if met, would only limit global warming to ~2.4 ° C, this continues the positive trend of steadily increasing ambition for climate action as 'Glasgow was the largest UN climate conference ever, followed by Paris in 2015 and Copenhagen in 2009' (Michaelowa 2021, 302). For the first time in the history of COP agreements, fossil fuels have finally been specifically mentioned and the detriments of their continued use are being framed evermore undeniably to the international community (UNFCCC 2021, 3).

Crucial progress was made for standardising international carbon market mechanisms, an idea already proposed as part of CDM in the Kyoto Protocol. Article 6 of the Paris Agreement was drafted to clarify the rules of international market mechanisms, and specifically to address the problem of 'double-counting' in the CDM scheme of Annex 1 nations investing in non-Annex 1 sustainability projects. This loophole would potentially allow multiple countries to claim the credit of one country's emission reduction efforts, thus allowing nations to pollute more than the system should allow (McKee 2021). Despite the popularity and widespread ratification of the Paris Agreement, Article 6 did not reach a consensus among the international community and so remained under negotiation until COP26. The Glasgow Climate Pact was published with a long-awaited resolution (Kizzier 2021): new 'corresponding adjustments' will provide common rules for emission credit counting going forward, inclusive of all ongoing CDM projects. 'Thus, stringent rules were combined with lenient CDM transition' (Michaelowa 2021, 7).

In conclusion, the Glasgow Climate Pact can most aptly be criticised on the grounds of its insufficient ambition, rather than of the soundness

of its proposals. This mirrors other conventions; ambition is sacrificed for economic rationale, flexible participation, and high- and low-emitting national contexts. In the final moments of the meeting, India and China edited the Pact's wording of a 'carbon phase-out' into a less stringent 'phase-down,' weakening a key resolution. Climate activist figureheads such as Greta Thunberg have condemned COP26 as ineffectual (Al Jazeera 2021). However, environmental journalist David Roberts (2021b; 2021a) is quick to urge against despair: ultimately, 'COP26 was a snapshot of a world moving to address a crisis, agonisingly slowly but gathering speed [...] there's also nothing wrong with acknowledging and celebrating the progress that's been achieved.' While the international community of governments may not be the current custodians of climate justice, they have an obligation and imperative to take up this mantle of responsibility. On the road to Glasgow, we made progress and lost it at a time when we can no longer afford intransigence.

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